ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: ASSESSING THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR: MEASURING THE IMPACT OF US FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION DESIGNATION ON SALAFI JIHADIST GROUP BEHAVIOR

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This study evaluates the impact of foreign terrorist organization (FTO) designation, a core US counterterrorism tool that unlocks legal, financial, and administrative penalties for terrorist groups, against Salafi jihadist terrorist organizations. Using publicly available data from 2001 to 2018, this research takes a quantitative and qualitative mixed methods approach to evaluate if FTO designation of Salafi jihadist terrorist groups alters their behavior by reducing terrorist membership or changing their attack patterns and lethality. The quantitative portion examines the impact of designation across three primary dependent variable behavior categories:

group and membership size; attacks and lethality; and targeting. The qualitative portion looks at the range of possible best to worst case behavior outcomes for groups after designation and seeks to determine which, if any, designation-associated activities drove a reduction in violence.

FTO designation did not advance US policy objectives of reducing terrorist group and membership size, decreasing the number and lethality of attacks, or hardening targets against Salafi jihadist attack. Post-designation Salafi jihadist areas of operations experienced overall growth in the number of groups and membership. FTO designation reverses some pre-designation trends in rising attack frequency and lethality, but the results are not statistically significant. Moreover, designation does not significantly impact group targets or attack type.

The qualitative case studies use US government reported data on designation-associated activities alongside captured media to explain variance in group outcomes post-designation. The case studies reveal that a terrorist group's international versus national presence prior to designation better explains variation in outcomes than designation-associated activities. Groups able to flex across national boundaries were seemingly more resilient to CT pressure. The most international group was the most unaffected by designation, while the most nationally focused group was the most impacted.

While FTO designation was not causally linked to the desired Salafi jihadist behavioral outcomes, the directional shift in some groups attack frequency and lethality shortly following designation suggest designation's impact warrants further study, including gathering improved official data and yearly metrics on designation-associated effects. As the US reduces its CT footprint, FTO designation and associated metrics can help guide future operations to target Salafi jihadist groups more efficiently, informing future US government CT efforts.

ASSESSING THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR: MEASURING THE IMPACT OF US FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION DESIGNATION ON SALAFI JIHADIST GROUP BEHAVIOR

by

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Preface

The majority of this research was completed while on a Research Fellowship at the National Intelligence University (NIU) from 2020-2022, the United States' Intelligence Community's accredited degree-granting institution. Per the conditions of the Fellowship, the work specific to NIU will be published in a monograph available on NIU's website titled "Assessing the Global War on Terror: Measuring the Effectiveness of U.S. Foreign Terrorist Organization Designation on Salafi Jihadist Group Behavior." The monograph excerpts much of the research presented here in a more condensed format for a government audience. Both NIU and University of Maryland were aware of the dual use of the dissertation for the monograph and approved the arrangement.

Despite their similarities, the dissertation that follows is the more definitive work as it contains the complete data, conclusions, and implications of the totality of the research. It also was reviewed multiple times by the US government for classified information prior to publication. All information in this document is unclassified.

The views reflected in the dissertation represent the analysis and conclusions of the author, not any official position of National Intelligence University, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Department of Defense, the intelligence community, or the US government. All of the information contained herein is the intellectual property of the author, who holds the copyright.

Dedication

This final step in the doctoral program I dedicate with love to my late father, who famously left his own doctoral program when I arrived into the world. While he did not live to see this work completed, he was and remains my biggest fan, academic inspiration, and stalwart editor. It is finally done Dad—dissertation complete!

This dissertation is also dedicated with love to my darling daughters. Thank you both for your patience, understanding, and support as Mommy worked during nights, weekends, through a pandemic, and countless time we'd rather have spent together. May you inherit the peace and security two decades of counterterrorism sought to secure for our nation and the world. I love you more…

Acknowledgements

Any work that evaluates the effectiveness of counterterrorism must first acknowledge both the victims and families of the heartbreaking violence referenced within these pages and the efforts of countless professionals in public, military, and emergency services whose professional calling drives them to prevent such atrocities. I never forget the former and am proud to serve with the latter. Above all this work attempts to further the efforts of both groups toward peace.

This research would not have been possible without the support of the US government, particularly the Office of the Director of National Intelligence's National Intelligence University (NIU) Research Fellows program and the Department of Defense's financial support, full time study programs, and flexible scheduling. More colleagues and supervisors than I can name at both institutions supported completing this work over the last nine years, including reviewing multiple drafts and ensuring the COVID pandemic did not derail my progress. I am deeply grateful to all of you for your time, talents, moral support, advice, counsel, and bureaucratic efficiency. Of special note, Stacey Pollard, Adam Jungdahl, Robert Smith, and LeeAnn Scheuer spent significant time with the manuscript and their edits improved it immeasurably. Without the support of John M., Steve V., Bob H., Pete H., Natalie L., Regina H., Carolyn S., Teresa J., Shannon S., Jamie V., Jill H., Jay F., George B., Dan Z., and Jason J. this dissertation would never have been written. Scott Cameron, Manolis Priniotakis, and my fellow NIU Fellows from 2019-2022 also deserve appreciation as their lives, passions, and research enriched my own.

My research benefitted from caring advisors from the start, to include my first advisor—the late John Steinbruner—as well as my incomparable mentor and friend Bruce Hoffman. Without the follow-on guidance and commitment of Nancy Gallagher and Alec Worsnop this work would long ago have been abandoned—they have both served as mentors, guides, and cheerleaders. Kim Cragin is a friend and accomplished researcher and I depended on both talents to advise me. Gary LaFree founded the database upon which this work was based and generously supported my work by joining the committee. I.M. "Mac" Destler and Charles Harry offered no end of encouragement and engaging questions. David Crocker and Robert Sprinkle not only

provided the invitation to join Maryland's School of Public Policy but also ensured that I was set up to graduate from it. All of these scholars and countless colleagues at University of Maryland and Georgetown University inspired and supported my work.

Since 2019 I have had the honor of teaching as an adjunct professor at my alma mater, Georgetown University's Security Studies Program (SSP), and my students deserve special thanks. Their intellectual curiosity and insights motivated and improved my work. I am grateful for their trust and commitment to counterterrorism, as they are the future of the field. I am also thankful to my colleague Chris Costa, a distinguished practitioner and scholar, for his kindness.

I have worked alongside and in support of countless servicemembers and intelligence professionals, some of whom I cannot identify here, whose sacrifices and imprints on my life and our security are immeasurable. Those nearest and dearest, known only to me, have been alongside the entire journey cheering me on in their non-existent spare time. A few deserve special mention: Mike F. provided the opportunities and trust that led to further academic study; an encouraging comment from Vice Admiral Howe both irrevocably altered my life and gave me the courage to pursue a doctorate; and the late Terry Bishop opened the door to my career, led me through it with good humor, and never lost touch as I found my path.

Last, but certainly not least, no work of this magnitude could be completed without the love and support of one's family—and I have been blessed beyond measure by mine. My loving grandparents made all of this possible in ways they could never imagine. My father provided advice, encouragement, and counsel until the last possible moment and is dearly missed. My mother is the heart of our family and my sisters by choice and our extended family lifted us up and carried us through the last few years, especially during the early days of parenthood and the later days of grief. My husband's patience and love are the pillar of our lives and have afforded me the rarest of gifts: prioritizing my service, education, and career equally with his own. Our commitment to one another is matched only by our love for our girls, one of whom made us parents the same year this process began. To her and her sister I now owe countless hours of play, vacation days, zoo trips, and parks, while wearing the silliest of hats.

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Chapter 1: Terrorism, Counterterrorism, and Measures of Effectiveness

1.1 Introduction

For over 20 years US national security policy centered on the elimination, defeat, and disruption of two key jihadist groups: al-Qa'ida and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).[1] Yet measures of national-level effectiveness of US and allied progress against al-Qa'ida, ISIL, and affiliated Salafi jihadist terrorist groups have long eluded policymakers and academics.[2] In part, this gap in research is due to the complexity of terrorism as a phenomenon and that the multi-disciplinary community that studies the topic approaches the problem from a range of overlapping but inconsistent areas of expertise.

The struggle to evaluate counterterrorism's effectiveness has persisted since the early days of the conflict, when a 2005 Congressional Research Service called for the "formulation of practical, useful measurement criteria," through to the present day, particularly due to the lack of accurate data from conflict zones.[3] The counterterrorism research community also lacks agreement on measurement criteria as the result of "the inherent secrecy and compartmentalization of both terrorist organizations and government responses," which leaves data incomplete even under the best of circumstances.[4] Measuring counterterrorism's effectiveness is therefore a worthwhile but difficult task for the academic and policy

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[1] This study uses the term Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to refer to the successor organization to al-Qa'ida in Iraq that also is known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or Daesh. All three terms are synonymous with the same global Salafi jihadist organization.

[2] Raphael Perl, *Combating Terrorism : The Challenge of Measuring Effectiveness*, (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2005), http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/57513.pdf.

[3] Ibid.; Erik W. Goepner, "Measuring the Effectiveness of America's War on Terror.(Learning from Today's Wars)," *Parameters* 46, no. 1 (2016).

[4] Perl, *Combating Terrorism : The Challenge of Measuring Effectiveness*.

communities given the wide scope of government counterterrorism activities over the last two decades, the opaque methods and goals, the lack of consistent comparable data, and the confusing desired end states of associated policies.[5]

This study fills part of that gap by focusing on the measurable impact of Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) designation, a core national-level US counterterrorism tool, from 2001-2018 on Salafi jihadist foreign terrorist organizations. As a publicly declared whole-of-government policy choice, Foreign Terrorist Organization designation provides a unique window to assesses how and where the articulated goals of US policy have been achieved, and to identify recommendations to improve future counterterrorism policy. FTO designation was designed prior to September 11, 2001, as a central way to focus US interagency resources to reduce the risk the terror group posed to US interests. Evaluating the success of that narrow but central part of US counterterrorism policy in the post-9/11 era is therefore more important than ever as government resources are needed to counter pressing challenges from major near-peer state competitors and re-emergent domestic terrorist threats.

1.2 Measuring Counterterrorism Progress Against Salafi Jihadist Group Behavior

1.2.1 Scope and Definitional Problems Hinder Measures of Effectiveness

Definitional problems surrounding terrorism have limited the development of a comprehensive strategic and academic understanding counterterrorism's purpose and targets since long before 2001.[6] After September 11 these definitional problems were exacerbated due to

[5] Martha Crenshaw and Gary LaFree, *Countering Terrorism* (Washington, District of Columbia: Brookings Institution Press, 2017).

[6] Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*, Third edition. ed., Columbia Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017)., 1-44.

the unprecedented nature of the attack itself.[7] President Bush's announcement of a global war against terror to a joint session of Congress after the attack explicitly began with al-Qa'ida, but went beyond the group and its associates to declare a war on "terror" itself.[8] As Hoffman states the "consequences of his semantic choice, whether deliberate or not, nonetheless proved as portentous as they were significant: heralding a virtually open-ended struggle against anyone or anything that arguably scared or threatened Americans."[9] Thus, the United States began to integrate the full resources of the defense, diplomatic, foreign policy, intelligence, and security communities in a campaign to eliminate a multifaceted, multigenerational—yet still poorly defined—terrorist threat. Hoffman and Martha Crenshaw both highlight this fundamental flaw in the early articulation of US counterterrorism policy in their respective work, with Crenshaw arguing that Bush's declaration of war against any and all terrorism made the early goals of the conflict in both "too ambitious and too ambiguous."[10] This initial scope and definitional problem of the conflict has stymied efforts to measure effectiveness in the intervening decades.

Despite the definitional issues at the outset, two decades into the most costly and longest war in American history, the academic and operational counterterrorism communities now broadly recognize that kinetic power and targeted strikes have not and will not completely

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[7] Ibid., 19.

[8] Ibid.19. President Bush specifically stated "Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated." President United States, *Our Mission and Our Moment : President George W. Bush's Address to the Nation : Before a Joint Session of Congress, Washington, D.C., September 20, 2001*, Commemorative ed. ed., Address to the Nation : President George W. Bush : Before a Joint Session of Congress, Washington, D.C., September 20, 2001 (Washington, D.C: [White House], 2001).

[9] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*., 19.

[10] Martha Crenshaw, *Explaining Terrorism : Causes, Processes, and Consequences*, Cass Series on Political Violence (London, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2011)., 181.

eliminate the threat posed by terrorist organizations.[11] Recent efforts to assess US CT effectiveness focus on how well it reduces, rather than eliminates, terrorists' ability to harm US interests and on evaluating kinetic and nonkinetic tools to quantify US government efforts to target terrorist groups. These studies focus on identifying where pockets of success against terrorist groups have emerged in the last twenty years.[12] These studies are often limited in their application as they lack consistent baselines and metrics to compare groups across geographic, regional, cultural, and language boundaries as well as the various US government methods to counter distinct terrorist groups. Extrapolating those comparisons to national-level impacts is therefore even more challenging, given the inconsistent points of comparison.

1.2.2 Consistent Point of Comparison: US Government Counterterrorism Strategies

Despite the inconsistencies in measuring effectiveness, the four official post-9/11 United States government counterterrorism strategies from Presidents Bush, Obama, and Trump are remarkably consistent, allowing for comparisons across administrations on US strategic goals. All four strategy documents focus on defeating international terrorism, defined as eliminating terrorist organizations and their aspirants (although they differ on whether that is a primary or secondary goal); denying terrorists the ability to attack US territory, citizens, or interests; and defending or hardening defenses to prevent terrorist attacks against critical infrastructure and the

[11] Daniel Milton Seth Loertscher, Bryan Price, and Cynthia Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts," The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts (2020)., 1; Brian Dodwell and Don Rassler, "A View from the Ct Foxhole: Ltg Michael K. Nagata, Director, Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning, Nctc," CTC Sentinel 10, no. 6 (2017).; Bruce Hoffman, "The War on Terror 20 Years On: Crossroads or Cul-De-Sac?," Tony Blair Institute for Global Change: Global Challenges, Counter-Extremism (2021).

[12] Seth Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts."

use of weapons of mass destruction.[13] These goals, detailed in Appendix A, inform the dependent variables for this study. [14]

While each administration shared the same strategic goals, they focused on different groups. In fact, each administration added (and in only two cases removed) Salafi jihadist foreign terrorist designations from 1999-2018.[15] Moreover, in the post- 9/11 period nearly every Salafi jihadist group was designated an FTO, meaning there is a lack of control groups to compare designated groups with non-designated groups. This continuous growth implies that the same amount of CT resources were continually divided against an ever-increasing number of targets during the past 20 years (Appendix B).[16] Furthermore, the addition of and focus on new groups suggests any impact of an FTO designation may wane as different groups become the target and focus of different Presidential administrations.

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[13] The objectives of US counterterrorism strategies used in this study are sourced from the four national level strategy documents produced by the White House since September 11, 2001, specifically: President Bush's *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, (Washington, D.C: Executive Office of the President, 2003).*; "National Strategy for Combating Terrorism," ed. D. C. White House Communications Agency Washington (2006).; as well as President Obama's *National Strategy for Counterterrorism, (Washington, D.C: Executive Office of the President, 2011).*; and, President Trump's Office United States. White House, National Strategy for Counterterrorism of the United States of America, (Washington, DC: The White House, 2018), https://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo109871.

[14] It is also important to note that these formal strategies also serve a political purpose to reassure and inspire citizens beyond simply stating US policy. Randall A. Yim, Emerging Threats United States. Congress. House. Committee on Government Reform. Subcommittee on National Security, and Relations International, Combating Terrorism : Evaluation of Selected Characteristics in National Strategies Related to Terrorism : Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations, Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives, ([Washington, D.C.]: U.S. General Accounting Office, 2004), http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS57221., 3.

[15] Thomas J. Badey, "Us Counter-Terrorism: Change in Approach, Continuity in Policy," *Contemporary Security Policy* 27, no. 2 (2006).; Joshua A. Gelzer, "Trump's Counterterrorism Strategy Is a Relief," *The Atlantic* (2018), https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/10/trump-counterterrorism-strategy/572170/.

[16] This growth accounts for the rebranding and merger of several groups into new organizations, which can be argued doesn't represent growth per se but rather movement of individuals across groups. For more on the nuances of Salafi jihadist group membership see Chapter 4: Eliminating Terrorist Groups.

Despite the growth in targeted groups, developing consistent national-level metrics from these strategies is relatively straightforward given their similarities. With each new designation, the United States sought to reduce the number of terrorist organizations and their membership, reduce the impact of their attacks, and prevent mass casualty or catastrophic attacks. In other words, if FTO designation facilitates progress toward these strategic goals for any specific groups, that may provide evidence to measure overall counterterrorism effectiveness.[17]

When considering overall US strategic goals, it is important to note that this is not the first study to consider whether US CT policy has reduced terrorist group membership, made terrorist attacks less lethal, or changed terrorist attack patterns. Rather, this work builds on existing expertise resident in the CT community that has long sought to quantify the global jihadist threat. The difference is that this study considers those outcomes in specific relation to FTO designation. The established academic consensus is that more Salafi jihadist groups are operating in more places in 2020 than on 9/11,[18] terrorist lethality has increased over the vast majority of intervening years,[19] and hardening of targets has led to more soft-target and target-of-

[17] Seth Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts.", 23.

[18] According to Seth G. Jones et al., The Evolution of the Salafi-Jihadist Threat : Current and Future Challenges from the Islamic State, Al-Qaeda, and Other Groups, (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2018)., there were 67 Salafi-jihadist groups across the globe in 2018, a 180 percent increase from 2001. According to Robin Wright's estimate, Islamic State is widely reported to have attracted ~ 40,000 foreign fighters from at least 110 countries during its heyday just in Iraq and Syria, compared to the 170 alleged core al-Qa'ida members in 2002. Robin Wright, "Are We Nearing the Endgame with ISIS?," *The New Yorker* (2017), https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/are-we-nearing-the-endgame-with-isis. Additional assessments affirm the growth of Salafi jihadist groups post-9/11, including: Bruce Hoffman, "Al-Qaeda's Resurrection," *National and Defense Program* (2018), https://www.cfr.org/expert-brief/al-qaedas-resurrection; Leah Farrall, "How Al Qaeda Works: What the Organization's Subsidiaries Say About Its Strength," *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 2 (2011).; Katherine Zimmerman, "Beyond Counterterrorism: Defeating the Salafi-Jihadi Movement," *Foreign and Defense Policy* (2019), https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Beyond-counterterrorism-one-pager.pdf?x88519.

[19] Gary LaFree, "Will Terrorism Continue to Decline in 2019?," (START National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2019).; Gary LaFree and Laura Dugan, "Evolution of Global Terrorism: The

opportunity attacks.[20] All of these general conclusions, however, have not been carefully weighed or compared across groups before and after FTO designation.

1.2.3 Understudied Point of Comparison: Foreign Terrorist Organization Designation

Since 1997, the US government has used an interagency process to formally designate Foreign Terrorist Organizations under the authority granted to the Secretary of State in the 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA).[21] The publicly available Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) designation framework—which was used before and after September 11, 2001—identifies terrorist organizations of national security concern and pinpoints a moment of consolidated interagency action concerning the threat those groups pose, regardless of geography, ideology, or history. FTO designation is, by design, an interagency process that allows the whole US government to "collect and share information about and take action on terrorists posing a threat to the national security of the United States."[22] While FTO designation has been dismissed by scholars as a political process given the public and at times partisan debate regarding the designation of state and non-state groups, FTO designation reserves the authority for designation to the Department of State (hereafter State Department or DOS) under

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Growing Lethality of Attacks," in *Peace and Conflict 2017*, ed. Ravinder Bhavnani David Backer, and Paul Huth (New York: Routledge, 2018).

[20] Alex P. Schmid, "Layers of Preventive Measures for Soft Target Protection against Terrorist Attacks," in *Handbook of Terrorism Prevention and Preparedness*, ed. Alex P. Schmid (The Hague, Netherlands: ICCT Press, 2020).

[21] For a full history of the early utility of the FTO designation process see: Audrey Kurth Cronin, *The "FTO List" and Congress: Sanctioning Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations*, Major Studies and Issue Briefs of the Congressional Research Service. Supplement ; 2003, 03-Rl-32120. (Washington, D.C: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2003).

[22] United States Government Accountability Office, "Combating Terrorism: Foreign Terrorist Organization Designation Process and U.S. Agency Enforcement Actions," (Washington D.C. : United States Government Accountability Office, 2015)., 1

the authority of the President.[23] FTO designation therefore reflects the priorities of the President and are "unique [in] importance not only because of the specific measures undertaken to thwart the activities of designated groups but also because of the symbolic, public role it plays as a tool of U.S. counterterrorism policy."[24] Using designation as a starting point scholars can identify a moment of clear counterterrorism policy execution (date of designation) and compare the changes to observable behaviors (variables) after designation across disparate terrorist groups at a strategic level.

Since FTO designation began in 1997 the US has designated 88 terrorist groups, eventually removing 15 from the list, resulting in 73 current designations.[25] Unlike President Bush's expansive declaration of war, however, the vast majority of declared FTOs added after September 11, 2001 have been Salafi jihadist groups.[26] FTO designation grew from nine Salafi

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[23] The full Foreign Terrorist Organization process will be described at length below, but for clarity at this point it is important to mention that at present the only way Congress can prevent a designation is by an Act of Congress that specifically disapproves a designation. See *8 USC 1189: Designation of Foreign Terrorist Organizations*. Congress cannot lift a designation, although at times members of Congress have proposed legislation to amend the AEDPA to allow greater Congressional oversight. See for example "As POTUS Looks to Remove Iranian Group's Terrorist Designation, Grassley Wants Congress to Have a Say," news release, March 18, 2022, 2022, https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/as-potus-looks-to-remove-iranian-groups-terrorist-designation-grassley-wants-congress-to-have-a-say. For more on the alleged politicization and impact of FTO designation see: Anna Meir, "What Does a "Terrorist" Designation Mean?," The Lawfare Institute, https://www.lawfareblog.com/what-does-terrorist-designation-mean.

[24] Cronin, *The "FTO List" and Congress: Sanctioning Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations*., 5.

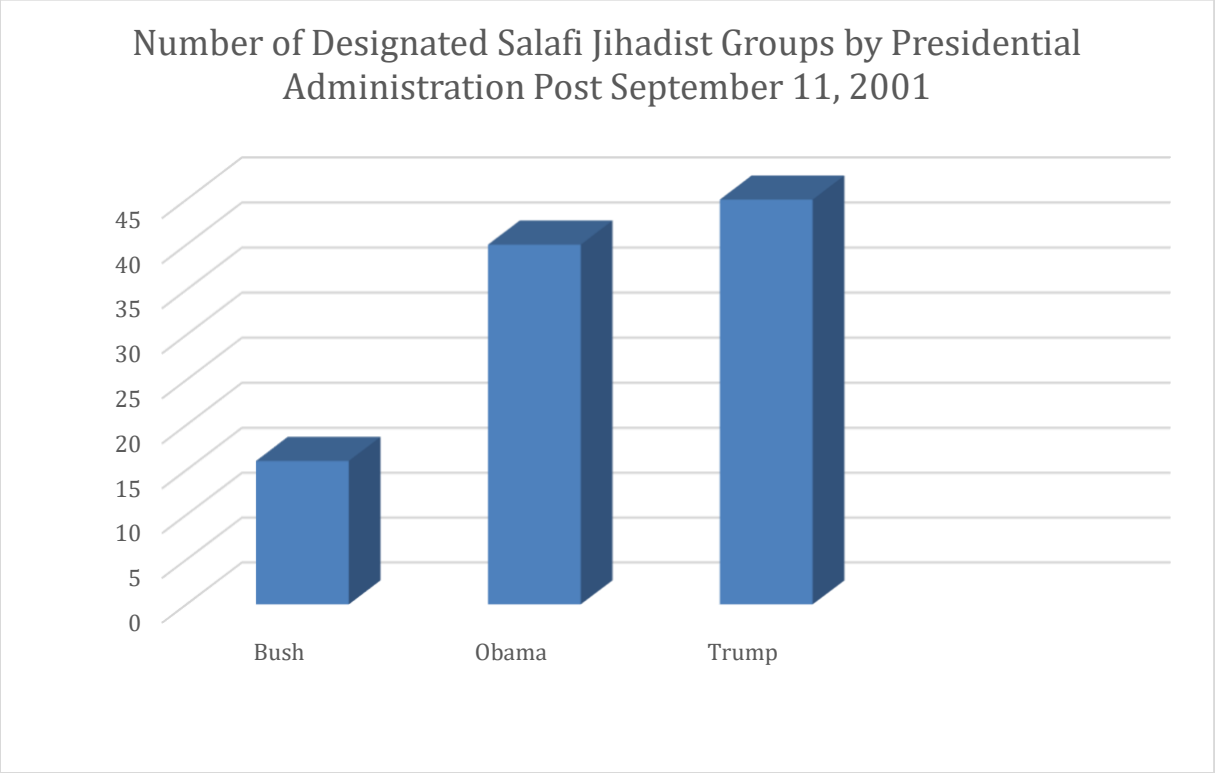
[25] United States Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/.

[26] Only two groups in this study, al-Qa'ida and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, have designation dates that pre-date September 11, 2001, but occur after the bulk designation in October 1997. Abu Sayyaf was also designated pre-9/11 but in the initial batch of bulk designations done in October 1997. All the bulk designation groups, to include Abu Sayyaf, were excluded as the first use of FTO designation did not follow a similar pattern as groups designated post-9/11. Despite al-Qa'ida and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan's designation prior to September 11, 2001, both were considered for inclusion in this study. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan was later excluded due to the lack of terrorist incidents. See Appendix C for the list of included groups and reasons for excluding certain groups. See also Cronin, *The "FTO List" and Congress: Sanctioning Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations*., 6 for an explanation of the original bulk 1997 FTO designation.

jihadist groups in the initial post-9/11 period under the Bush administration to 45 by the end of 2018 (Figure 1).[27] This is consistent with the US government's focus on counterterrorism to defend against al-Qa'ida, ISIL, and like-minded groups post-September 11, 2001.

This research therefore narrows the aperture from the original characterization of the global war on terror by focusing only on Salafi jihadist groups who advocate returning to a pure form of Islam and believe that violent jihad is a religious obligation.[28] Most of these groups are

Figure 1: Number of Designated Salafi Jihadist Groups by Presidential Administration



[27] Legal challenges have also questioned the constitutionality of foreign terrorist organization designation, primarily over the alleged lack of due process owing to the classified nature of some supporting material in the intelligence community review step. Despite the challenges, US courts have repeatedly reinforced the Secretary of State's authority under the AEDPA. See Jason I. Poblete, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations and the Listing Process in a Post-9/11 Context," *SSRN Electronic Journal* (2005).

[28] Jones et al., *The Evolution of the Salafi-Jihadist Threat : Current and Future Challenges from the Islamic State, Al-Qaeda, and Other Groups*., 4. and Sam Heller, "Rightsizing the Transnational Jihadist Threat," no. 12 December 2018 (2018), https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/rightsizing-transnational-jihadist-threat.

affiliates or aspirants of al-Qa'ida and ISIL's global ideologies and advocate a war against the West and the United States in particular. While President Bush's original declaration created a "range of potential adversaries" that "extended beyond Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda's leader, and his minions," measuring US effectiveness in the intervening conflict should be scoped more tightly to the terrorist groups responsible for the September 11 attacks, their allies, and adherents.[29]

This distinction is reinforced by the Congressional authorization for the global war on terror, referred to as the Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) which authorized the President to:

> Use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.[30]

This research therefore excludes Sunni political groups and Shi'a and other terrorist organizations outside the primary US national security conflict during the campaign, allowing the dissertation to focus on the groups historically of highest US national security concern represented in Figure 1.[31] This practical distinction is underpinned by the legal authority providing the President war powers to execute the global campaign against Salafi jihadist groups

[29] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*., 19.

[30] *Authorization for Use of Military Force*, Public Law 107 - 40, (17 September 2001).

[31] Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *Open Hearing on Worldwide Threats*, February 13 2018.; and House Homeland Security Committee, *Worldwide Threats to the Homeland: Statement before the House Homeland Security Committee*, September 17, 2020.

and moves beyond rhetoric to focus on the actual targets of the conflict over the last twenty years.

Despite the use of FTO designation as a core tool against both Salafi jihadist groups in the global war on terror and other terrorist organizations more broadly, little research has been focused on its efficacy.[32] A September 2020 study by West Point's Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) offered an examination of the purpose of designation and descriptive statistics on implementation, noting that despite the widespread use of FTO designations, "Outside of the intended financial impact, the broader efficacy of both the FTO and SDGT lists is unclear at best."[33] More importantly, it affirmed that further study of FTO designation was required and called for "data and resources to provide metrics for evaluation" as an "important part of determining when these designations are most effective."[34] This work furthers those efforts and considers the role and impact of FTO designation in combating specifically Salafi jihadist groups.

1.3 Research Design

1.3.1 Research Question

Using publicly available data, this study examines whether designating a group as a FTO and associated designation activities, alters terrorist activity. To that end, the following research question is proposed:

[32] Seth Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts.",VII. The abbreviation SDGT stands for Specially Designated Global Terrorist and will be discussed in depth in Chapter 2.

[33] Ibid.,VII

[34] Ibid.,VIII

What is the measurable impact of US national-level counterterrorism designations from 2001-2018 on Salafi jihadist foreign terrorist organizations, and how and why do designation outcomes differ across these organizations?

In seeking to answer the research question, five sub-questions will be answered. Questions 1 and 2 concern the existing literature and designation process; 3 and 4 form the basis of the quantitative and qualitative findings, and 5 and 6 are the foundation for the conclusion.

1. What are the articulated national-level goals and objectives of US counterterrorism policy since September 11, 2001?
2. How has the US government used the foreign terrorist organization (FTO) process and the follow-on actions to target Salafi jihadist groups?
3. What is the impact of FTO designation, or more precisely designation-associated activities, on the frequency, lethality, and destructiveness of terrorism committed by Salafi jihadist groups?
4. What variables may account for variation in outcomes of FTO designation-associated activities?
5. What lessons can be drawn from this research to improve US counterterrorism policy and operations?
6. What further research is needed to make more efficient use of shrinking resources for counterterrorism?

1.3.2 Roadmap

To answer these questions, this dissertation surveys the academic and policy literature to develop definitions for terrorism and counterterrorism, assess existing measures of effectiveness, and review debates regarding which aspects of counterterrorism policy have had the greatest

impact on terrorist organizations, given that terrorist organizations can evolve and change for reasons independent of targeting. It then proposes a research design that FTO designation as a proxy point of departure for measuring the short and longer-term impacts of national-level US counterterrorism activities on three sets of objectives – eliminating groups, reducing the number and lethality of attacks, and hardening targets against sophisticated attack types, weapons, and target sets. Finally, it focuses on case studies of four group across a range of behavior outcomes post-designation, to determine when and how FTO designation is most effective.

1.3.3 Conclusions

Despite the well-documented and broadly accepted aggregate increase in terrorist groups, members, attacks, and lethality—this dissertation reveals pockets of evidence that FTO designation activities may lessen the frequency and lethality of Salafi jihadist attacks for specific groups, particularly if a targeted group is physically or ideology contained to a single geographic locale. Even though there are more groups engaging in more attacks with more lethal consequences worldwide, trends identified in this research suggest a small change in attack frequency and lethality post-FTO designation for some groups—but these results are neither statistically significant nor causally linked to the designation itself. Rather, FTO designation throughout the study serves as a proxy for US counterterrorism action and calibrated focus, delineating a "before" and an "after" categorization that may be broadly useful for conceptualizing future research given the limited open-source data available on targeted groups and members. This dissertation challenges and complements current understanding by identifying places where the established Salafi jihadist increase in groups, members, attacks, lethality, and targeting has changed, stalled, or temporarily reversed, as potential indicators of US government impact that run counter to established global trends.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The key bodies of literature that speak to the potential impact of FTO designation on Salafi jihadist group behavior include: definitions of terrorism and counterterrorism (CT); surveys of existing measures of CT effectiveness; assessments of how the US government has used FTO declarations to prompt and coordinate actions against targeted groups; and the limited existing measures of FTO designation's effectiveness. Any assessment of FTO designations also requires understanding the articulated objectives of US CT policy since 9/11—specifically how the US government defines success—and recognizing that terrorist groups' organizational structure, behavior, and capabilities also evolve independent of FTO designation and other CT activities.

2.1 Defining Terrorism & Counterterrorism

The definition of terrorism is so fraught with controversy that terrorism researcher Walter Laqueur once famously labeled the term indefinable.[35] Terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman devoted 44 pages of his book, *Inside Terrorism*, to modern definitions of terrorism before settling on differential criteria to distinguish the phenomenon from other types of violence. Hoffman's definition—"the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change"[36]—shares many features with the more than 20 definitions currently used by the US government.[37] As Hoffman points out, such variation in

[35] Walter Laqueur, *Terrorism. (3. Print.)* (Boston - Toronto: Little Brown, 1977)., 7; *The Age of Terrorism*, 1st American ed. ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1987)., 11, 142-156 and Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*., 36.

[36] *Inside Terrorism*., 1-44.

[37] Ibid., 32.

official definitions "reflects the priorities and particular interests of the specific agency involved."[38] For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation's definition of international terrorism as articulated in Title 18 of United States Code, Chapter 13B:

> Involve violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or of any State; appear to be intended—to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and occur primarily outside the territorial jurisdiction of the United States, or transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear intended to intimidate or coerce, or the locale in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum.[39]

In contrast, the State Department's definition of international terrorism is found in Title 22 of US Code, Section 2656f(d), specifying that: "the term international terrorism means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than 1 country" and "the term "terrorism" means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents."[40] Given these agency-specific definitions of terrorism, achieving interagency agreement to label a group an FTO becomes noteworthy as a consensus-based decision that highlights the threat a group poses across agency definitions and jurisdictions.

Of all the US government definitions, Hoffman argues that the State Department emphasizes the premeditation and political nature of the act and the "subnational" status of the

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[38] Ibid., 33.

[39] *Title 18 - Crimes and Criminal Procedure*.

[40] *22 U.S. Code § 2656f - Annual Country Reports on Terrorism*.

actor.[41] This research adopts that definition principally because the State Department oversees the FTO designation process, which makes its definition most closely align with the measures of this study. The University of Maryland's National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Response to Terrorism (START) also uses this definition to aggregate open-source data on terrorist incidents on behalf of the US government, which informs this dissertation.[42] Although many other definitions of terrorism exist in the academic and policy communities, settling on this one sets consistent parameters for the research.

The definition of counterterrorism is similarly complex. Depending on the source, CT can include a range of military, nonmilitary, political, financial, and engagement activities designed to impede the violent aims of a nonstate actor.[43] United States government CT practices during the past 20 years have included increasing domestic spending, hardening potential targets, imposing economic sanctions against specific groups, and, more visibly, deploying military forces overseas and executing targeted strikes. DoD's definition of CT as articulated in Joint Publication 3-26 reflects these broad activities, stating that "CT activities and operations are taken to neutralize terrorists, their organizations, and networks in order to render them incapable of using violence to instill fear and coerce governments or societies to achieve their goals."[44]

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[41] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*., 33.

[42] Counterterrorism United States. Department of State. Office of the Coordinator for, "Country Reports on Terrorism," (2004), http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS68317.; National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), "Annex of Statistical Information: Country Reports on Terrorism 2017," (Washington D.C.: University of Maryland, 2017).

[43] Martha Crenshaw and Gary LaFree, *Countering Terrorism*., 168-170.

[44] United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, Counterterrorism, ([Washington, D.C.]: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2009), http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo28939., I-5.

This definition—while specifying the desired behavior change to render the targeted group *incapable of using violence*—does not specify the full range of national, operational, and tactical activities included. For example, public diplomacy efforts to counter violent extremism, commonly known as Countering Violent Extremism, have been central to State Department efforts to counteract the cycle of radicalization that draws new recruits to terrorist ranks through counter messaging, diplomatic assistance, and rehabilitation programs but do not appear in Joint Publication 3-26.[45]

This definitional gap is highlighted in the 2017 book *Countering Terrorism* by Martha Crenshaw and Gary LaFree who argue that the difficulties "conceptualizing exactly what the content of counterterrorism is, or should be, impede efforts to determine its effectiveness."[46] Given inconsistencies in counterterrorism definitions, this research considers a range of military and nonmilitary activities applied against specific Salafi jihadist groups as outcomes of the designation process, rather than prescribing an overly broad or narrow definition. This helps counter Crenshaw and LaFree's caution that "the breadth of definition of counterterrorism and the incredible range of actions that are typically included make it extremely challenging to establish priorities, integrate activities, and then to analyze outcomes."[47] As FTO designation is the outcome of a whole of government policy process, all CT activities undertaken by the

[45] Under Secretary for Civilian Security United States Department of State, Democracy, and Human Rights, "Programs and Initiatives," https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/ct/programs/index.htm#CVE.; United States Department of State, "Programs and Initiatives," https://www.state.gov/bureau-of-counterterrorism-programs-and-initiatives/.

[46] Crenshaw and LaFree, *Countering Terrorism*., 168.

[47] *Countering Terrorism*., 170.

involved agencies with respect to or timed to coincide with designation can be weighed against observable outcomes, in response to Crenshaw and LaFree's concerns.

2.2 Measures of Effectiveness for Counterterrorism

Crenshaw and LaFree also consider at length whether counterterrorism's effectiveness can be evaluated. They point out that the many disciplines involved in researching terrorism—ranging from psychology to social science—have wrestled with how to measure CT policy's effectiveness because of difficulties in defining the scope of CT activities, conceptualizing ends and means, determining metrics to measure progress, and using valid statistical methods in a data-limited discipline.[48] Much of this difficulty arises because CT activities involve exercising national power across a range of diplomatic, economic, financial, information, intelligence, law enforcement, and military instruments.[49] Aggregating the effects of these combined elements of national power into one comprehensive national-level measure of effectiveness against the range of groups targeted since 9/11 is a monumental task—and beyond the scope of this research. Indeed, West Point's CTC on the impact of FTO designation concluded that, "evaluating the efficacy of all of the world's counterterrorism efforts, regardless of whether they involve the military or not, is far beyond the scope of this report." [50]

Even measuring the impact of national-level CT policy is difficult given that CT is by necessity an opaque process targeting clandestine actors with differing geography, history, and

[48] Ibid., 165-193.

[49] Brian Greata Christopher Goodyear, Timothy Payment and Martin Wetterauer, "Countering Threat Networks: A Standard Lines of Effort Model," *Small Wars Journal* (2017), https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/countering-threat-networks-a-standard-lines-of-effort-model.

[50] Seth Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts.", 1.

motivations. A December 2019 *Perspectives on Terrorism* review of literature on countering terrorism and violent extremism identified more than 200 academic articles published since 2008 that attempted to aggregate, measure, and analytically frame metrics of CT effectiveness.[51] This volume of work suggests, as Crenshaw and LaFree argue, that a one-size-fits-all approach to measuring counterterrorism's effectiveness is out of reach.[52] Some scholars argue that to be effective CT actions must address the ideology, geography, and history of specific groups.[53] Others hold that comparing interventions across geographic locales reinforces methods that work by their use in differing contexts.[54] The lack of agreement on aggregated national-level CT measures has driven research on establishing measures of effectiveness at the tactical and operational levels to inform military decisionmakers on activities in specific areas of operations. However, much of this specialized work does not address the range of diplomatic, economic, financial, information, intelligence, law enforcement, and military activities involved in national-level CT efforts.

Think tanks, like the RAND Corporation, and established counterterrorism scholars like Max Abrahms, Kim Cragin, Sara Daly, and Brian Jackson attempt to fill this gap by arguing for designing and evaluating CT interventions by group to address both terrorists' ability to sustain

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[51] Joshua Sinai, Jeffrey Fuller, and Tiffany Seal, "Effectiveness in Counter-Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism a Literature Review," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13, no. 6 (2019)., 90-108.

[52] Crenshaw and LaFree, *Countering Terrorism*.,192-193.

[53] Ben Connable, Institute National Defense Research, and Corporation Rand, *Embracing the Fog of War : Assessment and Metrics in Counterinsurgency*, 1 online resource (xxxi, 308 pages) : color illustrations, maps vols. (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2012)., 29; Richard English, *Does Terrorism Work? : A History*, First edition. ed. (Oxford, United Kingdom ;: Oxford University Press, 2016)., 123-124; Seth G. Jones and Martin C. Libicki, How Terrorist Groups End : Lessons for Countering Al Qa'ida, (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2008)., 51; Tricia Bacon, *Why Terrorist Groups Form International Alliances* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018)., 281-283

[54] Beatrice de Graaf, *Evaluating Counterterrorism Performance : A Comparative Study*, Contemporary Terrorism Studies (London ;: Routledge, 2011).

their organization and to conduct operations across multiple theatres.[55] Variations of this analysis, particularly in the US military, refer to an "effects-based" approach that targets a terrorist organization's processes and its ability to generate outcomes, often measured as incidents of terrorism.[56] In other words, as long as the interventions against a particular group reduce the number of incidents, the interventions can be categorized as broadly effective. These approaches allow for more consistent comparisons across groups, as reductions in operational effectiveness can be compared between geographic areas and across disparate groups. This study will similarly use a reduction in incidents and accompanying lethality as one measure of effectiveness.

Researchers broadly agree that process and outcome impacts should be measures of success across all types of terrorist groups. Process impacts include: removing terrorist leaders; disrupting recruitment; impeding communications and travel; eliminating terrorist funding; disturbing group cohesion; and degrading technical or learning capacity.[57] Outcome impacts include reduced attack frequency, diminished consequences (e.g., lower sophistication of attacks, fewer casualties, less property damage, curtailed political or economic effects), and operational

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[55] Brian A. Jackson and David R. Frelinger, *Understanding Why Terrorist Operations Succeed or Fail* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009).; Kim Cragin, Sara A. Daly, and Corporation Rand, The Dynamic Terrorist Threat : An Assessment of Group Motivations and Capabilities in a Changing World, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corp., 2004).; Max Abrahms, "What Terrorists Really Want: Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy," *International Security* 32, no. 4 (2008).

[56] Connable, National Defense Research, and Rand, *Embracing the Fog of War : Assessment and Metrics in Counterinsurgency*.

[57] Brian A. Jackson, John C. Baker, and Justice National Institute of, Aptitude for Destruction. Volume 1, Organizational Learning in Terrorist Groups and Its Implications for Combating Terrorism, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corp., 2005)., ix-xv; R. V. G. Clarke and Graeme R. Newman, *Outsmarting the Terrorists*, Global Crime and Justice, 1931-7239 (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2006)., 79-83; Stephen Vertigans, *The Sociology of Terrorism : Peoples, Places and Processes* (Abingdon, Oxon ;: Routledge, 2011)., 140-147; Susanne Martin and Leonard Weinberg, The Role of Terrorism in Twenty-First-Century Warfare, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017).; Jacob N. Shapiro, The Terrorist's Dilemma : Managing Violent Covert Organizations, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013). doi:10.1515/9781400848645.

difficulties (e.g., lack of safe havens and logistical support.)[58] How best to achieve these goals and measure the change is where the literature diverges, most notably around which CT tools have the greatest impact on terrorist organizations' behavior. Audrey Kurth Cronin focuses on the demise of terrorist organizations, which she argues is only rarely caused by a CT actions.[59] Hoffman focuses less on eliminating groups than on denying their efforts to win attention, acknowledgement, recognition, authority, and governance.[60] Both scholars allude to disrupting terrorists' ability to regenerate their organizations (process) and execute attacks (outcomes), which are generally considered the hallmarks of a successful CT campaign and align closely with the military's effects-based approach. Their work ties a group's operational longevity to their ability to sustain membership, which is why this research treats group membership numbers as a behavioral outcome.

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[58] Diego Muro, *When Does Terrorism Work?*, Routledge Studies in Extremism and Democracy (Abingdon, Oxon ;: Routledge, 2019).; Andreas Wenger and Alex S. Wilner, Deterring Terrorism : Theory and Practice, (Stanford, California: Stanford Security Studies, an imprint of Stanford University Press, 2012).; Peter M. McCabe and Joint Special Operations University (U.S.), *Countering Transregional Terrorism*, Jsou Report.; United States Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism, (Washington, DC: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2006), http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS66747.; David Kilcullen, Out of the Mountains : The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla, (Oxford ;: Oxford University Press, 2013).; Shapiro, *The Terrorist's Dilemma : Managing Violent Covert Organizations*.; Blake W. Mobley, Terrorism and Counter-Intelligence : How Terrorist Groups Elude Detection, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).; Perl, *Combating Terrorism : The Challenge of Measuring Effectiveness*.; David Omand, *Securing the State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).; John Mueller and Mark Stewart, Chasing Ghosts : The Policing of Terrorism, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016).; Richard A. Posner, Revolution Hoover Institution on War, and Peace, *Countering Terrorism : Blurred Focus, Halting Steps*, Hoover Studies in Politics, Economics, and Society (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

[59] Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends : Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

[60] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism.*, 268.

2.3 Counterterrorism's Impact on Terrorist Organizations

This research is also grounded in debates over which CT policies most reduce the frequency, lethality, and destructiveness of terror attacks. One debate focuses on the effectiveness of removing terrorist leaders, i.e., the targeted killing/decapitation of terrorist groups.[61] This metric is arguably easier to measure and analyze than most other CT activities because social scientists can identify the specific CT action and gauge its impact on the group, although even those assessments can be contradictory as they rely on inference of clandestine organizations.[62] Although some research argues that targeted strikes against terrorist leaders degrade an organization and its ability to mount attacks, different studies suggest this holds true only for highly centralized organizations and can provoke a backlash that drives up recruitment.[63] A third group of scholars argue that the measures of effectiveness for targeting terrorist leaders are biased: those seeking success will measure reduced attacks as the dependent

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[61] Bryan C. Price, "Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism," *International Security* 36, no. 4 (2012).; and Targeting Top Terrorists : Understanding Leadership Removal in Counterterrorism Strategy, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019).

[62] "In recent years it has been one of the most commonly studied counterterrorism tactics, probably because despite government secrecy assassination represents a relatively concrete behavior that is easier than most tactics to quantify." Crenshaw and LaFree, *Countering Terrorism*., 84.

[63] For literature on targeting killing see: Price, "Targeting Top Terrorists: How Leadership Decapitation Contributes to Counterterrorism."; *Targeting Top Terrorists : Understanding Leadership Removal in Counterterrorism Strategy*.; Alex S. Wilner, "Targeted Killings in Afghanistan: Measuring Coercion and Deterrence in Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33, no. 4 (2010).; Pb Johnston, "Does Decapitation Work? Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Targeting in Counterinsurgency Campaigns," *International Security* 36, no. 4 (2012).; Daniel Byman, "Essays - Do Targeted Killings Work?," *Foreign affairs*. 85, no. 2 (2006).; "Why Drones Work: The Case for Washington's Weapon of Choice," *Foreign Affairs* 92, no. 4 (2013).; Megan Smith and James Igoe Walsh, "Do Drone Strikes Degrade Al Qaeda? Evidence from Propaganda Output," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 25, no. 2 (2013).; Austin Long, "Assessing the Success of Leadership Targeting," *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point Sentinel* 3, no. 11-12.; "Whack-a-Mole or Coup De Grace? Institutionalization and Leadership Targeting in Iraq and Afghanistan," *Security Studies* 23, no. 3 (2014).; Audrey Kurth Cronin, "Why Drones Fail: When Tactics Drive Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* 92, no. 4 (2013).; Jenna Jordan, "When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation," *Security Studies* 18, no. 4 (2009).; "Attacking the Leader, Missing the Mark: Why Terrorist Groups Survive Decapitation Strikes," *International Security* 38, no. 4 (2014).; and, Eric van Um and Daniela Pisoiu, "Dealing with Uncertainty: The Illusion of Knowledge in the Study of Counterterrorism Effectiveness," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 8, no. 2 (2015).

variable while those looking for failure measure civilian casualties as the dependent variable.[64] Yet removing terrorist leaders is just one part of the US government campaign against Salafi jihadist groups.[65] Crenshaw and LaFree argue that when focusing on specific aspects of CT policy in lieu of a broader holistic approach, "researchers and policymakers should beware of confusing short-term success in assassinating a suspected terrorist with reducing the number of future attacks over the long run."[66] An alternative perspective is that policymakers accept that their efforts will have more short-term success as a policy trade off, weighing the "certainty of today against the possibility of tomorrow," according to counterterrorism expert Kim Cragin.[67] Regardless of the tradeoff, assessments of counterterrorism interventions are often time-limited, as the broader strategic impact of interventions applied over time is difficult to assess.

Last, grounding the analysis of counterterrorism interventions in rigorous statistical techniques is a fraught exercise, particularly as researchers are dealing with generally secretive operations against clandestine organizations. According to Crenshaw and LaFree, "This no doubt explains why the vast majority of research on counterterrorism strategies have been based on expert opinion or qualitative case studies."[68] Reviews of quantitative analysis in counterterrorism research conducted from 1988 to 2010 found scant use of rigorous techniques, with a notable 2006 review of over 20,000 studies identifying "only seven which contained moderately rigorous

[64] "Dealing with Uncertainty: The Illusion of Knowledge in the Study of Counterterrorism Effectiveness."

[65] Cronin, "Why Drones Fail: When Tactics Drive Strategy."

[66] Crenshaw and LaFree, *Countering Terrorism*., 193

[67] Kim Cragin, July 15 2022.

[68] Crenshaw and LaFree, *Countering Terrorism*., 185.

evaluations of counterterrorism programs."[69] The review concluded that as a result there was "little scientific knowledge about the effectiveness of most counter-terrorism interventions."[70] Nevertheless Crenshaw and LaFree identify interrupted time series analysis, meta-analysis, and ecological variation models as promising areas for future effectiveness research.[71]

In summary, although empirical research on CT's effectiveness has produced voluminous studies on its impact across a range of activities, a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of the national-level US campaign during the past two decades is lacking because of difficulties in defining the full scope of terrorism and counterterrorism, conceptualizing ends and means, identifying proper metrics to measure progress, weighing short-term vs. long-term results, and grounding analysis in statistical methods.[72] This research represents a modest effort to fill a small part of that gap by focusing on FTO designation and its impact, using interrupted time series and qualitative analysis.

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[69] Cynthia Lum, Leslie W. Kennedy, and Alison J. Sherley, "The Effectiveness of Counter-Terrorism Strategies," *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 2, no. 1 (2006). See also: van Um and Pisoiu, "Dealing with Uncertainty: The Illusion of Knowledge in the Study of Counterterrorism Effectiveness."; Alex P. Schmid and Rashmi Singh, ed. *"Measuring Success and Failure in Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism – U.S. Government Metrics and the Global War on Terror."* vol. After the War on Terror: Regional and Multilateral Perspectives on Counter-Terrorism Strategy (London: RUSI Books, 2009).; and A. Silke, "The Devil You Know: Continuing Problems with Research on Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13, no. 4 (2001).

[70] Lum, Kennedy, and Sherley, "The Effectiveness of Counter-Terrorism Strategies.", 3.

[71] Crenshaw and LaFree, *Countering Terrorism*., 185-192.

[72] Ibid., 165-195.

2.4 Foreign Terrorist Organization Designation in Depth

2.4.1 History

Foreign Terrorist Organization designation began in October 1997 with the en-masse listing of 30 groups, following the 1996 passage of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA). United States legislators at the time were attempting to enact, "the toughest anti-terrorism bill to ever become law," to coincide with the one year anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, which until September 11 was the deadliest terrorist attack on US soil.[73] The AEDPA consolidated a multitude of potential domestic and international anti-terrorism legislation into one omnibus bill, to include modifying federal privacy laws, the right to sue foreign governments complicit in terrorist acts, FTO designation, tightening immigration counterterrorism procedures, and restricting materials to support building plastic and catastrophic explosives.[74] According to a Congressional Research Service report at the time the law was the culmination of more than a decade of legislative debate to increase the legal, financial, and criminal penalties on terrorists and their supporters.[75]

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[73] Senator Robert Dole, "Mr. President, just short of a year ago, this country was rocked by an attack on the Alfred Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, OK. In the wake of that horrible incident, in only a matter of weeks, the Senate responded by passing the Dole- Hatch comprehensive antiterrorism legislation by a vote of 91 to 8 on June 7, 1995. Most of its provisions were drawn from earlier Republican crime packages. Over the past month, we have worked in a bipartisan manner to craft what would surely be the toughest antiterrorism bill ever to become law." Robert Dole, "Terrorism Prevention Act - Conference Report," in *Congressional Record* (Washington D.C.: United States Senate, 1996)., S3473; The Oklahoma City bombing remains the deadliest domestic terrorism attack on US soil. For more on its impact see: States United, *Responding to Terrorism Victims: Oklahoma City and Beyond* (Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime, 2000). The debate over the AEDPA also cited the Lockerbie Bombing of Pam Am Flight 102 over Scotland in 1988 and the 1985 Achille Lauro cruise ship hijacking as justification for the provision in the AEDPA to allow US citizens to sue foreign governments for compensation for the victims of terrorist violence. See full debate in: "Terrorism Prevention Act - Conference Report," in *Congressional Record* (Washington D.C.: United States Senate, 1996).

[74] Charles Doyle, "Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996: A Summary," ed. Service Library of Congress. Congressional Research (Washington D.C.: Homeland Security Digital Library, 1996).

[75] Ibid.

Title III of the AEDPA focused on International Terrorism Prohibition, which established the procedure for designation and wrestled with severing the connection between international terrorists and their material and financial support without running afoul of First Amendment protections on free speech.[76] It threaded that needle by categorizing financial or material association with a terrorist organization as beyond the free speech protections of the First Amendment, criminalized financial or material support to designated organizations, and limited designations to foreign entities.[77] FTO designation was therefore originally designed as a nonkinetic means to limit international terrorist funding and means of support, thereby disrupting their global operations. US national security was therefore tied to minimizing global terrorism broadly prior to September 11, 2001, drawing from the debate regarding the AEDPA. The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon further reinforced and punctuated the connection between US national security and reducing international terrorism.

It is against this metric the dissertation will judge the efficacy of FTO designation against Salafi jihadist organizations, while acknowledging the use of designations has refined and expanded in the intervening decades, particularly after September 11, 2001. Senator Hatch summed up the intent of the original FTO provision during the floor debate stating, "Designation of terrorist organizations, we start to put a stop to terrorist organizations. It would certainly stop the fundraising. We have language that will stop the raising of funds in the United States of

[76] Ibid.

[77] First amendment protections remain why the concept of "listing" or "designation" domestic terrorism groups seems anathema under US law and why calls for a domestic terrorism law generally do not advocate for a list similar to FTO designations for domestic groups. See *National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism*, (Washington, DC: Executive Office of the President, National Security Council, 2021).

America that are sponsoring terrorism all over this world."[78] After 2001, FTO designation evolved into a primary tool to counter Salafi jihadist groups and was used alongside kinetic, diplomatic, and other tools as a core component of whole of government campaigns against targeted groups. President Bush defined the war on terror in global terms, citing a war on terrorism the tactic vice specific groups.[79] In the post-9/11 world, FTO designation became how the US government defined and documented the international terrorist organizations of greatest US national security concern for targeting.

2.4.2 In Law

By law, to be designated an FTO an organization must be foreign, must engage in terrorist activity or retain the capability to engage in terrorism, and must threaten US citizens or US national security through their activity.[80] The US government must complete six interagency steps to validate that the terrorist organization poses a threat to US interests. Vetting is conducted by the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Justice, and Treasury, the intelligence community (IC), and the National Security Council (NSC).[81] Although FTO designation is not the US government's only "listing" tool, it is a recognized point of "lucidity in the complicated

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[78] Orrin Hatch, "Terrorism Prevention Act - Conference Report," in *Congressional Record* (Washington D.C.: United States Senate, 1996)., S3456

[79] United States, *Our Mission and Our Moment : President George W. Bush's Address to the Nation : Before a Joint Session of Congress, Washington, D.C., September 20, 2001*.

[80] *Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996*, 104-132, (April 24 1996).; and Terrorism United States. Department of State. Office for Combatting, "Patterns of Global Terrorism," (1983), http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS1488.

[81] U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Combating Terrorism: Foreign Terrorist Organization Designation Process and U.S. Agency Enforcement Actions," (Washington D.C.2015)., 21; and U.S. Department of State, "State Department Terrorist Designations of ISIS Affiliates and Senior Leaders," news release, 27 February 2018, 2018, https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/02/278883.htm.

interagency process of coordinating the actions of Executive agencies, by giving them a central focal point upon which the efforts converge."[82]

Designation has an immediate legal effect on groups as FTO designation allows (but does not require) agencies to engage in concurrent action pursuant to their independent authorities, including:

- Criminal prosecution and civil penalties for individuals that provide "material support or resources" to the listed terrorist organizations (Justice Department).[83]
- Immigration and international movement restrictions for individuals that provide resources or support to listed organizations (Homeland Security).[84]
- Banking restrictions to freeze all group assets under US financial control (Treasury).

Designation also has informal consequences, including "naming and shaming" groups publicly and using public diplomacy to press the international community (specifically the United Nations (UN) and European Union) to also designate and sanction.[85] It removes the ambiguity terrorist organizations may claim as freedom fighters and unmasks support to affiliated charitable organizations by unambiguously stating the danger and threat the organization poses, and the consequences for supporting it from a US legal perspective.[86]

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[82] Cronin, *The "FTO List" and Congress: Sanctioning Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations*., 7.

[83] Congressional Research Service, "Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO)," *In Focus* (2019), https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10613.

[84] Office, "Combating Terrorism: Foreign Terrorist Organization Designation Process and U.S. Agency Enforcement Actions."

[85] Seth Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts.", 17.

[86] Cronin, *The "FTO List" and Congress: Sanctioning Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations*., 8.

FTO designation is a tool of public and private diplomacy, as it specifically lists organizations of concern to US national security—a potential boon to public or private bilateral or multilateral partnerships. As the Congressional Research Service notes, "Clearly labeling what the United States government considers a foreign terrorist organization can have significant domestic and international foreign policy advantages. It can be a powerful diplomatic tool."[87]

2.4.2 In Practice

Designation can begin one of four ways, but all ultimately invoke the authority of the State Department to lead the process: 1) an entity at the State Department (usually but not exclusively the Bureau of Counterterrorism or State-CT) can request an entity be added based on their research or an assessment of current threats to the US; 2) an intelligence community organization can generate a threat assessment that prompts State-CT to initiate a designation; 3) a US agency or a policymaker can request a designation; or 4) a foreign government or international body (like UN) can request a designation through US government channels.[88] Designation is therefore more than just a "yes" or "no" decision by the US government, it is a highly specialized policy process that is initiated in response to a perceived threat to the US.

FTO designation requires interagency consensus as illustrated in the Government Accountability Office's graphic below (Figure 2, next page). Preparing the clearance package—which is subject to judicial review—and gaining consensus is a laborious interagency process led by the State Department that can take from three days to a more typical nine months.[89]

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[87] Ibid., 8.

[88] Seth Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts.", 17.

[89] Ibid., 18.

Once the designation is finalized and published in the Federal Register, the State Department typically makes a public statement to the press, although these can also come from the White House or the President directly, as designations reflect the policy priorities of the President.[90]

Figure 2: FTO Designation Process

Source: Government Accountability Office, 2015

Designation unlocks the previously identified formal activities: material support charges, international movement restrictions, and asset seizures, under the authority of the agencies involved in designating. For example, any assets belonging to a designated organization can be frozen immediately by the Treasury Department. The Justice Department can bring material support charges against FTOs under Title 18 of the US Code, 2339A and 2339 B, against anyone who, "knowingly provides material support or resources to a foreign terrorist

[90] Zeke Miller, "Biden Revokes Terrorist Designation for Yemen's Houthis," *A.P. News*, 5 February 2021 2021.; Elena Chachko to Sanctions, 10 April 2019, 2019, https://www.lawfareblog.com/us-names-iranian-revolutionary-guard-terrorist-organization-and-sanctions-international-criminal.; Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken, "Revocation of the Terrorist Designations of Ansarallah," news release, 12 February 2021, 2021, https://www.state.gov/revocation-of-the-terrorist-designations-of-ansarallah/.; The White House, "Statement from the President on the Designation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a Foreign Terrorist Organization," news release, 8 April 2019, 2019, https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-designation-islamic-revolutionary-guard-corps-foreign-terrorist-organization/.

organization, or attempts or conspires to do so."[91] Immigration consequences fall to the Department of Homeland Security, which has the authority to bar or remove associated individuals from the United States.[92] These consequences are significant as they infringe on First Amendment protections extended to US citizens by limiting association and due process, which is why the FTO designation is frequently critiqued by organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union.[93]

The FTO designations supplanting of First Amendment rights for designated groups is why there is no commensurate listing process in the domestic US context. As Mary McCord, the Legal Director for the Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection at Georgetown University, highlighted in a hearing before the House Committee on Financial Services, "U.S. law provides for the designation of foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) like ISIS and al Qaeda that engage in terrorist activity, even if those same organizations might engage in other activity that would be protected by the First Amendment if they were based in the U.S."[94] McCord detailed that the criminal enforcement provisions and financial provisions allow for greater intrusiveness by law enforcement and the financial industry into activities that might otherwise appear unconnected to terrorism, often a deliberate obfuscation by clandestine groups seeking to engage in harm:

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[91] *Title 18 - Crimes and Criminal Procedure*.

[92] *8 U.S. Code § 1182 - Inadmissable Aliens.*; and United States Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations " https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/.

[93] "The "Foreign Terrorist Organization" Designation Scheme," https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/fto_designation_briefer_final.pdf.

[94] House Committee on Financial Services Subcommittee on National Security, International Development, and Monetary Policy, *A Persistent and Evolving Threat: An Examination of the Financing of Domestic Terrorism and Extremism*, January 15, 2020.

> Focusing on criminal enforcement tools, the statute that criminalizes providing material support to a designated FTO, 18 U.S.C. § 2339B, provides the basis for law enforcement and the intelligence community to open investigations on suspicion that an individual or entity may be financing a foreign terrorist organization, regardless of the purpose of the financing. In other words, even if a person wants to fund only the "humanitarian" operations of an FTO, it is prohibited. The material support statute drives U.S. financial services providers to implement sophisticated risk-management protocols for detecting potential misuse of their services for foreign terrorist financing.[95]

FTO designation is therefore a unique tool in that it is only applied to foreign entities, while unlocking additional tools for domestic law enforcement otherwise unavailable given Constitutional protections. The public announcement of the designation and publication to the Federal Register is designed reinforce the "knowingly" in Title 18, but also to spur informal consequences, to include international sanctions and raising public and international awareness regarding the threat posed by specific groups.[96]

Yet decisions to designate do not happen in a vacuum, the implementation of FTO designation-associated activities can and does differ depending on the group—sequenced alongside a range of tools under the authorities of the involved departments and agencies. As McCord's testimony details above, designation allows for agencies to take more aggressive measures against listed groups but does not require it. Implementation of agency activities post-designation is still left to individual departments and varies, dramatically, as this dissertation illustrates. This research therefore represents a starting point for greater understanding of FTO designation—and the associated activities it unlocks— by specifically looking at if the year of

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[95] Ibid.

[96] Cronin, *The "FTO List" and Congress: Sanctioning Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations*., 9; Seth Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts.", 7

designation—represents a turning point for a group's trajectory. This research will further seek to identify trends if and when the tools applied through designation measurably alter a group's behavior.

Designation is also not immediate given the levels of bureaucratic multi-agency review and the requirement for designations to withstand judicial scrutiny. The listing process takes considerable time with an average of 6-9 months.[97] Generally groups are not designated until they are on an operational upswing such that designation is warranted. Groups have to first demonstrate they are of a credible threat to US interests to justify designation—and that generally requires a consistent pattern of attacks targeting Western interests or a spectacular high-profile attack.[98]

The ability of terrorist groups to operate faster than the speed of bureaucratic inertia or change their name (which impacts their listing) has been used to critique the efficacy of FTO designation. According to the 2003 Congressional Research Report on the list the FTO designation tool can sometimes be an inflexible tool in a globalized world:

> Nonstate actors such as terrorist organizations are often able to change their names and/or characteristics much more quickly than ponderous bureaucratic lists can reflect. This is a serious problem in an era when international terrorism is increasingly globalized in its reach and capabilities, with borders becoming more permeable and less relevant, in an age of Internet links and open trade areas. Likewise, such lists are not very effective in dealing with ad hoc activities engaged in by "volunteers," who may not have a clear long-

[97] "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts.", 7.

[98] The pattern of increasing attacks is observable across the data used in this study, and is referenced specifically in "The Terrorist Lists," "The fact that the number of attacks carried out by groups prior to their designation generally increases raises an important point for considering the efficacy of the FTO list in terms of attack data. Given that most of the listed groups appear to be on an upward trajectory in terms of the number of attacks they carried in the time immediately preceding their designation, should the standard of success of the FTO list be a reduction in the overall number of attacks or should success be considered if the upward trend in the number of attacks only diminishes and the group simply maintains the status quo?" Ibid., 15. This concern will be addressed more specifically in Chapter 3.

term relationship with an organization. This has become a particular worry with respect to Al Qaeda, for example.[99]

Yet, while FTO designation is not a perfect tool, it has been adopted against nearly every Salafi jihadist group since 9/11 and become a cornerstone of US counterterrorism policy in the post-9/11 era. FTO designation is a coalescing point for US government agencies' attention, activities, and focus and therefore a multi-pronged and potentially powerful CT policy choice. It reflects Presidential priorities and is the trigger for a basket of formal legal and informal designation-associated activities that the involved US government agencies control. Put simply, "An FTO designation gives the U.S. Government more policy arrows in its counterterrorism quiver."[100] Measuring its efficacy to diminish the capabilities of international terrorist organizations and therein enhance US national security is therefore the subject of this work.

2.4.3 Right Tools, Right Time: Terrorism Lists and Sequencing

FTO designation is not the only tool in the US government toolbox, making sequencing of FTO designation in the policy context an issue to contend with in any analysis of effectiveness. Sequencing issues take two forms in this dissertation: the sequencing of FTO designation itself in comparison to other counterterrorism tools used against a group and the sequencing of designation-associated activities applied after the designation is finalized. Both will be addressed in turn.

Other listing mechanisms for terrorism groups allow for some sanctions and movement restrictions. The other "lesser" US government terrorism lists are far more focused on narrower

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[99] Cronin, *The "FTO List" and Congress: Sanctioning Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations*., 8.

[100] Seth Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts.", 7.

policies and easier to enact as they do not require the full interagency clearance process or judicial burden detailed above. Lists focused on economic sanctions include: the state sponsor of terrorism under the Export Administration Act of 1979; the specially designated terrorists under the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act and 1995 Executive Order 12947; and the Specially Designated Terrorist Organization (SDTG) list established after the September 11, 2001 attacks under Executive Order 13224.[101] All of these lists combined with the FTO designation list make up the terrorism-specific portion of the "Specially Designated and Blocked Persons" (SDN) list kept by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the Treasury Department, which blocks the assets of individuals and groups associated with any of the above lists.[102] The Terrorist Exclusion List (TEL), enacted under Section 411 of the 2001 Patriot Act, is focused on immigration activities and allows the US government to exclude individuals associated with the 56 organizations on the list from entering the United States.[103] Simply put, any of these listing tools can be used individually against a group, or arranged in a campaign, in any order. FTO designation remains however the most important tool the US government has to identify, sanction, and target activities against terrorist groups. In the hierarchy of these tools, it ranks highest, as it affords the broadest range of actions, is the most narrowly applied, and must stand

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[101] *96-72, the Export Administration Act*.; *95-223, International Emergency Economic Powers Act* ; Presidential Executive Order 12947, "Prohibiting Transactions with Terrorists Who Threaten to Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process," *Federal Register* 60, no. 16 (1995).; George W Bush, "Executive Order 13224—Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions with Persons Who Commit, Threaten to Commit, or Support Terrorism,"ibid. (2001). See also: Cronin, *The "FTO List" and Congress: Sanctioning Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations*.; and Seth Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts."

[102] U.S. Department of Treasury, "Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List (Sdn) Human Readable Lists," https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/financial-sanctions/specially-designated-nationals-and-blocked-persons-list-sdn-human-readable-lists.. For more on the Office of Foreign Assets Control list see Cronin, *The "FTO List" and Congress: Sanctioning Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations*., 4.

[103] Bureau of Counterterrorism U.S. Department of State, "Terrorist Exlusion List," https://www.state.gov/terrorist-exclusion-list/; Patriot Act, "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA Patriot Act) Act of 2001," *Public Law* 107 (2001).

up to legal challenge and review. But, it is not always applied first, which is an important caveat on this research.

Additionally, departments and agencies involved in designation also have independent authority in countering some terrorist activity outside of FTO designation or other lists. For example, military activities against Salafi jihadist groups aligned with al-Qa'ida have long been authorized under the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force, which clearly states:

> That the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.[104]

FTO designation is therefore not a prerequisite to using other available tools in the counterterrorism toolbox nor is there a formal order in which these tools must be, or are typically, applied. FTO designation can precede any of these other tools, or follow military activities, SDTG and TEL listing. For example, a 2018 State Department Fact Sheet titled "Designated ISIS Branches and Individuals" detailed 40 individuals designated under SDTG status and Executive Order 13224, 13 ISIL affiliates designated as FTOs, and 5 ISIL related groups designated as FTOs, all stemming from determinations made between 2011-2018.[105]

Precise sequencing of which types of counterterrorism tools precede or follow FTO designation is neither desirable given the need for adaptability on the part of the US government nor necessary for an evaluation of FTO designation as a tool on its own merits. By focusing on

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[104] *Authorization for Use of Military Force*.

[105] This is in addition to ISIS' original designation as al-Qa'ida in Iraq in December 2004. Office of the Spokesperson U.S. Department of State, "Designated ISIS Branches and Individuals," news release, 27 February 2018, 2018, https://2017-2021.state.gov/designated-isis-branches-and-individuals/index.html.

the year of FTO designation and its associated follow-on activities researchers can pinpoint if the additional authorities brought to bear against Salafi jihadist groups under FTO designation are effective—while acknowledging other tools are constantly at play alongside or preceding designation.

A full counterterrorism campaign therefore includes the calibrated application of all available governmental tools, usually integrated under the Department of Defense (DoD) term of art "all instruments of national power" utilizing each individual department or agency's authorities (some of which are unlocked by FTO designation itself).[106] Successive US government CT strategies refer to this methodical application of tools but none more explicitly than the National Strategy for Counterterrorism in 2011. Under the heading "Pursuing a Whole of Government Effort," the Strategy states:

> To succeed at both the tactical and strategic levels we must foster a rapid, coordinated, and effective CT effort that reflects the capabilities and resources of our entire government. That is why this Strategy integrates the capabilities and authorities of each department and agency, ensuring the right tools are applied at the right time to the right situation in a manner consistent with U.S. laws.[107]

The second sequencing issue comes into play after designation. Simply because FTO designation unlocks a particular policy tool does not mean the relevant department or agency will be a position to leverage that tool—unlocking a tool does not guarantee its use. Counterterrorism tools can only be applied if enough is known about the clandestine groups they are levied against

[106] Instruments of national power traditionally refer to the Department of Defense acronym DIME or diplomatic, informational, military, and economic, but encompasses the full range of national level activities in modern Defense doctrine For a full definition of the instruments of national power see Staff United States. Joint Chiefs of, Strategy, ([Washington, DC]: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2018), https://fas.org/irp/doddir/dod/jdn1_18.pdf.

[107] *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*., 7.

to use designation-associated activities. Material support charges, for example, require individuals to be identified alongside evidence of their support to designated groups; similarly financial sanctions require the Treasury Department to clearly identify assets belonging to a designated group. Not every FTO designated group included in this study was therefore subject to the same application or sequencing of designation-associated activities. Moreover, process tracing each FTO designation alongside other policy tools to all possible designation-associated activities mapped to terrorist behavior is understandably beyond the limits of this research.

Rather, this dissertation looks at FTO designation as a tool adopted to produce better strategic outcomes beyond other list types and policy tools, consistent with its more judicial, narrowly applied, and heralded use. It then looks at designation-associated activities applied to specific groups through qualitative case studies to see which application of designation-associated activities may explain changes in group behavior post-designation. Rather than seeking to identify a definitive causal link between designation and behavior, this research focuses on exploring if the year of FTO designation, alongside the many other tools used to generate the outcomes the United States seeks, impacts terrorist group behavior.

2.4.4 Designation's Controversies: Policy Tool or Political Symbol?

Designation is not without controversy. Because of its interagency policy locus current and former national security professionals and foreign governments have criticized designation as largely political or symbolic.[108] Complaints that the list is political rather than operational were particularly acute surrounding the designation of the Haqqani Network (HQN) in 2012,

[108] Karen DeYoung, "Obama Administration Divided over Designating Haqqani Network as Terrorist Group," *The Washington Post*, 31 August 2012 2012.

years after it had been established as a US national security concern. The complaints have risen again most recently over designating drug cartels and white supremacist organizations.[109] In a 2018 interview, for example, former DNI James Clapper cited the designation of FTOs as "more symbolic—more political—than substantive," indicating that at his level designation did not drive intelligence decision-making.[110] Midway through the interview, however, Clapper revealed FTO designation did have an internal government purpose, citing the list's utility in determining personnel allocation and management of IC resources. He stated:

> I think it did cause us to ensure that people were paying attention to this group [that] they might not have otherwise…. I do think it would add some impact there if you went to, for example, a DNI organization [such as] the National Counter Terrorism Center. They do pay attention to who is on that list, and they do have people and analysts assigned to track each one of them.[111]

Clapper's observation highlights the duality of the list and reflects the academic discourse surrounding its use: FTO designation is symbolic and used as a tool of public diplomacy in its

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[109] Joshua Foust, "The U.S. Finally Blacklists an Afghan Terrorist Group," *The Atlantic*, 15 September 2012 2012.; Scott Englund, "Mexican Drug Cartels Are Violent-but They're Not Terrorists," *War on the Rocks* (2020).; Anna Meier, "The U.S. Labeled a White Supremacist Group as 'Terrorists' for the First Time. It's Less Significant Than You Think.," *The Washington Post* (2020), https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/04/30/us-labeled-white-supremacist-group-terrorists-first-time-its-less-significant-than-you-think/.; BBC News, "Russian White Supremacists Are Terrorists Says Trump," *BBC News* (2020), https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52186185.; Conor Finnegan, "State Dept. Labels White Supremacist Group Terrorists for 1st Time Ever," (2020), https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/state-dept-labels-white-supremacist-group-terrorists-1st/story?id=69998908. Of note: the Russian Imperial Movement was designated as an SDTG, a related but lesser-level designation than full FTO status. See: Coordinator for Counterterrorism Nathan S. Sales, "Designation of the Russian Imperial Movement " news release, 6 April 2020, 2020, https://2017-2021.state.gov/designation-of-the-russian-imperial-movement/index.html.

[110] Tim Legrand, "'"More Symbolic—More Political—Than Substantive": An Interview with James R. Clapper on the U.S. Designation of Foreign Terrorist Organizations," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 30, no. 2 (2018)., 356-72.

[111] Ibid., 364.

informal capacity, yet it is also used to inform bureaucratic priorities, drive the US government's operational CT focus, and allocate resources.

Most criticism about politicization involves situations where the United States is designating part of a foreign government or a group operating as an extension of a foreign government, such as HQN and the 2019 designation of the Iranian Quds Force.[112] For this dissertation, focusing on the relatively less controversial Salafi jihadist groups aligned or affiliated with al-Qa'ida and ISIL and excluding the broader additions to the FTO list will allow a tighter focus on the intended targets of US national security.[113] While politics may play a role in determining when a Salafi jihadist group, or any other group, is listed—the impact of the listing should arguably be the same across like-groups. While this research cannot control for the politicization of US national security priorities comparing like-groups is an attempt to acknowledge the limitations of this research given the acknowledged blending of politics and public diplomacy with US national security priorities in the FTO designation process.

2.5 Impact of FTO Designation in Existing Literature

Existing literature on the impact of FTO designation is nascent and largely examines the discrete outputs of the process, for example focusing on asset seizure, criminal prosecution, or

[112] Suzanne Maloney, "What Both Trump and His Critics Get Wrong About the IRGC Terrorist Designation," Commentary, *Brookings Institution* (2019), https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/04/11/what-both-trump-and-his-critics-get-wrong-about-the-irgc-terrorist-designation/.

[113] Focusing on Salafi jihadist threats also narrows the aperture of the original characterization of the conflict by referring only to groups who advocate to return to a pure form of Islam and believe that violent jihad is a religious obligation, which usually, but not always, means advocating for a war of all Muslims against the unbelievers, typically the West. This criterion also helps to distinguish Sunni political groups from Salafi jihadists, excludes Shi'a and other terrorist organizations outside the primary conflict, and focuses on the groups historically of highest US national security concern. It also distinguishes this work from others that include the full range of groups declared by the United States, regardless of ideology.

critiquing the process's susceptibility to politicization.[114] The aforementioned West Point CTC study provides an important touchstone for academics measuring FTO designation's total effect as it is the first study to take a detailed quantitative look at the effects of designation in aggregate on group behavior. For example, as shown in Figure 3 on the following page, the study used descriptive statistics to identify a rise in terrorist attacks preceding designation and a small decrease about 3 years after designation. The study additionally noted that the average number of fatalities increases during the 2 years immediately after designation.

One other quantitative work has assessed the impact of designation itself. It found that US allied countries experienced a small but statistically significant decrease in attacks by designated groups, which speaks to the efficacy of designation as a diplomatic tool.[115] Although these initial studies are important, these two studies do not focus specifically on Salafi jihadist groups, cover the entirety of the U.S. counterterrorism campaign, nor provide qualitative context for the designation process and its impact as part of coordinated US government strategy.[116]

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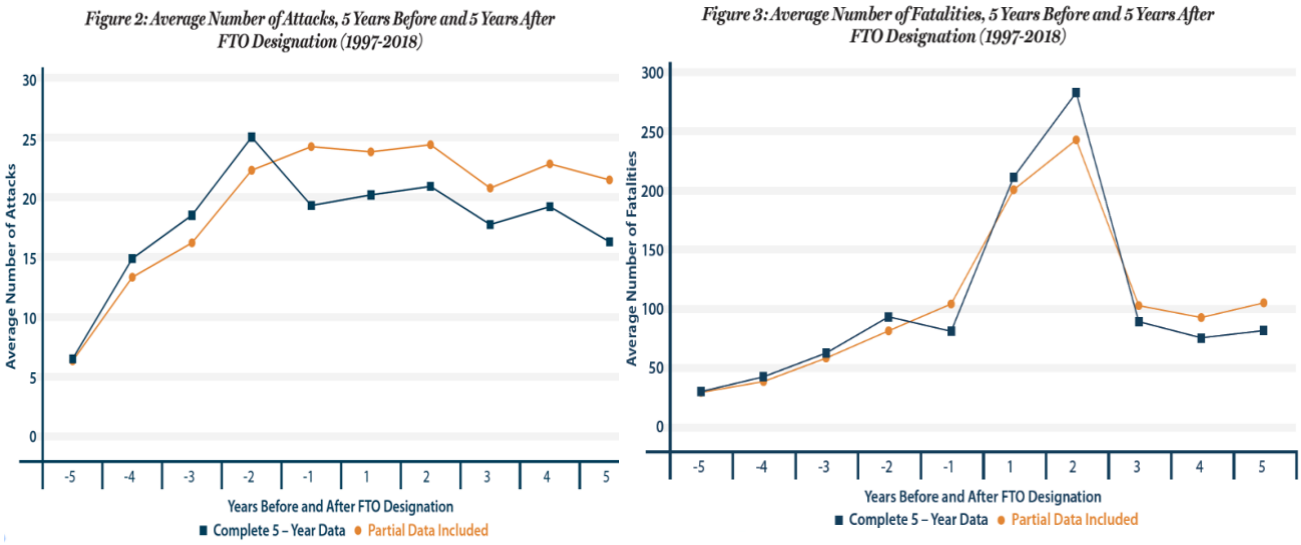
[114] Brian J. Phillips, "Foreign Terrorist Organization Designation, International Cooperation, and Terrorism," *International Interactions* 45, no. 2 (2019).; Poblete, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations and the Listing Process in a Post-9/11 Context."; Office, "Combating Terrorism: Foreign Terrorist Organization Designation Process and U.S. Agency Enforcement Actions."; and Anna Grace Cotter and University of Michigan, *The Politics of the Terrorist Watch List* (2016).

[115] Phillips, "Foreign Terrorist Organization Designation, International Cooperation, and Terrorism."

[116] Ibid.

Figure 3: Average Number of Attacks and Fatalities Relative to FTO Designation

Source: CTC West Point 2020



These studies also raise unanswered questions about designation and its impact on terrorist behavior, for example:

- "Should the standard of success of the FTO list be a reduction in overall attacks or should success be considered if the upward trend in the number of attacks only diminishes"?[117]
- Why does the ferocity (lethality) of violence seem to peak 1-2 years after designation? Is it already on an upward trend pre-designation, or does designation impact a group's targets?[118]

This existing work establishes the benefit of further quantitative evaluation of the impact of FTO designation and reveals interesting— and as yet unexplained—phenomena occurring in the periods 1-2 years and 3-5 years after designation.

Where the CTC study illuminates possible effects the authors determined that "these impacts are often second-order effects from the designation themselves, such as increased awareness of a group or enhanced prosecution through leveraging material support to FTO

[117] Seth Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts.", 16

[118] Ibid.

charges."[119] Their findings suggest intermediate variables—or the designation-associated activities prompted by the "fact of" designation—are driving the difference in outcomes in terrorist behavior.

The existing literature on FTO designation also highlights the difficulty in measuring the impact of CT activities by counting the absence of attacks. It notes that given the policy goal is the reduction or elimination of an irregularly occurring event (terrorist attacks), the measurement challenge extends beyond terrorism studies:

> It is difficult to find a clear statement of how the U.S. Government measures and assesses the efficacy of the FTO list…Indeed if one of the goals of the FTO process is to deter negative activities, how can one measure if that impact is successful? Measuring how an action taken leads to actions not taken is an incredible [*sic*] difficult challenge, one that goes far beyond the field of terrorist designations.[120]

One way of addressing this gap is to consider the impact of FTO designation beyond attack frequency and lethality, which is why the dependent variables chosen in this study expand the range of operational outcomes to include the type and targets of an attack, in addition to the traditional measures most often used to measure CT activities' effectiveness. Nevertheless, this research is subject to many of the same limitations as the primary quantitative analysis as it seeks to measure the absence of events.

2.6 Changes in Terrorist Group Behavior Independent of US Action

Another important caveat to this research is that not all changes in terrorist group behavior, even if they occur during the years following designation, should be attributed to

[119] Ibid., VII.

[120] Ibid., 10-11.

designation or the associated activities of the United States or its allies. Some changes in terrorist behavior are a response to group dynamics that have little or nothing to do with CT activities.[121] Moreover, US government activities against terrorist groups are not universally applied after designation, and not all of the groups the US government is concerned about from a national security perspective are designated or designated immediately.[122] Counterterrorist states continually adapt to terrorist behavior and vice versa, and this research is likely to include instances where designation followed a change in US government activities rather than preceded it, where terrorist behavior changed absent any clear US action, or where designation never occurred.

The literature on organizational dynamics in terrorist groups demonstrates that changes within an organization are not necessarily tied to US policy activities and can be driven by internal rather than external dynamics. For example, the public split between al-Qa'ida and ISIL in 2014 cleaved the associated global terrorist movement in two due to a public disagreement between the organizations in terms of tactics and goals—and the personal enmity between Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu-Bakr al-Baghdadi.[123] The al-Qa'ida/ISIL divorce was the latest

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[121] Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends : Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*.

[122] Office, "Combating Terrorism: Foreign Terrorist Organization Designation Process and U.S. Agency Enforcement Actions."; DeYoung, "Obama Administration Divided over Designating Haqqani Network as Terrorist Group.".

[123] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*., 313-341.; Daniel L. Byman and Jennifer R. Williams, "ISIS Vs. Al Qaeda: Jihadism's Global Civil War," (2015), https://www.brookings.edu/articles/isis-vs-al-qaeda-jihadisms-global-civil-war/.; William Faizi McCants, *The ISIS Apocalypse : The History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State*, First edition. ed., History, Strategy, and Doomsday Vision of the Islamic State (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015).; Fawaz A. Gerges, *ISIS: A Short History*, ISIS: A History . (Princeton, New Jersey ;: Princeton University Press, 2016).; Jessica Stern, *ISIS : The State of Terror*, ed. J. M. Berger, First edition. ed., Islamic State of Iraq and Syria : The State of Terror (New York, N.Y: Ecco Press, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2015).; Joby Warrick, *Black Flags : The Rise of ISIS*, First edition. ed. (New York: Doubleday, 2015); Michael Weiss, *Isis : Inside the Army of Terror*, ed. Hassan Hassan, Second edition ; revised and updated ed. (New York: Regan Arts, 2016).

evolution of a pattern of union and dissolution characteristic of al-Qa'ida's global brand of jihad developed over decades via the merger of otherwise local or regional terrorist groups.[124]

The existing literature also suggests that patterns of affiliation and splintering enhance the longevity of terrorist movements (and are, therefore, survival strategies)[125] and that the ensuing competition between splinter groups increases violence or shifts targets.[126] In other words, US policies that promote splintering can occasionally be counterproductive to reducing terrorist attacks, at least in the short term. For example, ISIL adopted the affiliation and franchising model that underpinned al-Qa'ida's expansion from 2001 to 2014 and now its ability to claim affiliates of its own offers a prime example of how internal dynamics and priorities drive terrorist behavior.[127] Additionally, despite the complicated dynamics among core, affiliate, and alliance groups examined in the academic literature, policymakers and academics tend to focus on the core groups in assessing the threat Salafi jihadist groups pose to the United States.[128] This

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[124] Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*., 313-341.; Amy Buenning Sturm, *Is the Sound Bite Mightier Than the Sword? Strategic Communications as a Tool to Export the Global Jihad, 2001-2009* (Thesis (M.A.)--Georgetown University, 2010, 2010).; and Bacon, *Why Terrorist Groups Form International Alliances*.

[125] C. W. Mahoney, "Splinters and Schisms: Rebel Group Fragmentation and the Durability of Insurgencies," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2017).; Brian J. Phillips, "Terrorist Group Cooperation and Longevity," *International Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (2014).

[126] Stephen Nemeth, "The Effect of Competition on Terrorist Group Operations," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58, no. 2 (2014).

[127] State, "State Department Terrorist Designations of ISIS Affiliates and Senior Leaders."

[128] The *National Strategy for Counterterrorism 2011* illustrates this tension, stating: "Therefore, this National Strategy for Counterterrorism maintains our focus on pressuring al-Qa'ida's core while emphasizing the need to build foreign partnerships and capacity and to strengthen our resilience. At the same time, our strategy augments our focus on confronting the al-Qa'ida-linked threats that continue to emerge from beyond its core safe haven in South Asia." President United States. Executive Office of the, National Strategy for Counterterrorism, ([Washington, D.C.]: [Executive Office of the President], 2011), http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo9627. See also President Barack Obama's 2014 claim that al-Qa'ida's affiliated movements, like ISIS at the time, represented a more "junior-varsity" version of a terrorist group. David Remnick, "Going the Distance: On and Off the Road with Barack Obama," *The New Yorker* January 27 2014.

research will assess behavioral change among and within both the core and its affiliate groups targeted by US CT policy from 2001-2018.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This research uses a mixed methods approach that combines quantitative measures—using publicly available data to assess the potential impact of designation—with qualitative case studies on how and why designation outcomes differ across targeted Salafi jihadist terrorist organizations. Twenty Salafi jihadist groups designated between 1998 and 2018 were selected for the study,[129] based on the criteria that they had at least 50 instances of terrorism, with at least one year of attack data preceding and following designation. The full list and reasons for the selection of groups in this study appears in Appendix C.

3.1 Variables and Hypotheses

3.1.1 Independent Variable

Designation, a proxy for US whole-of-government targeting and attention, is the independent variable and the agency-specific activities that accompany designation are intervening variables. The independent variable is aggregated to the year of designation (0) for each group from 2001-2018 and arranged on a time series from "years preceding" to "years following" designation to facilitate cross-group comparisons. Year of designation was chosen as the independent variable as there were insufficient un-designated Salafi jihadist groups between

[129] The 50 attacks limit ensures each group has enough data to measure a change from FTO designation, rather than random chance, which is required to measure differences in outcomes over time series data. Some groups, like Boko Haram, with overlapping/adjacent geographic regions were grouped as overlapping designation dates suggest concurrent US targeting. This number was also narrowed after a critical examination of groups' ideology (informed by the Stanford Militant Mapping Project and Council on Foreign Relations Backgrounders) suggested several were not primarily Salafi jihadist organizations. Additionally, adding Abu-Sayyaf was considered, but excluded because only 4 attacks were available in the GTD data, and it was the only Salafi group listed in the first batch of FTO designations in 2007.

2001-2018 to develop a control group, as groups were often designated a few years or immediately after emergence.

3.1.2 Dependent Variables

The dependent variables include three desired outcomes of FTO designation drawn directly from the US strategic goals identified in the national-level CT strategies. These three effects, consistently articulated across all three President's strategies, are measured as desired outcomes of the FTO process and substituted as the metrics sought by FTO designation.

1. Eliminating terrorist groups[130]—measured by the change in number of groups and members broken down by operational area, as terrorists do change affiliations within their sphere of operations.[131]

2. Reducing terrorist attacks against US territory, citizens, or interests—measured by the yearly number of attacks perpetrated by a group, the number of Americans killed or wounded, and the overall number of injuries and fatalities caused by the attacks.

3. Hardening defenses against critical infrastructure—measured by changes in attack type (e.g., simultaneous or suicide), weapon type, and target pre- and post-designation.

While damages caused by attacks would ideally be included here, the available data on incident damage was so incomplete that adding the measure would not contribute to the

[130] Given the evolution from the goal of "eliminating" terrorist groups referenced in the Chapter 1 to the contemporary academic and operational consensus that "reduction" is the actual policy aim, eliminating is used here as a term of art that reflects the directional goal, while the actual measurement expected to support the hypothesis is a reduction. A goal of 0 terrorist groups is not a genuine or rigorous metric for measuring counterterrorism's effectiveness.

[131] Geographic area does not refer to a specifically recognized geographic region, but rather the area of operations in which the terrorists live, execute attacks, and obtain sanctuary.

understanding of pre- and post-designation terrorist attack patterns. Additionally, it is important to note that each of the selected variables is more complex than articulated here: splintering can impact the elimination variable; terrorist attacks can increase before they reduce in reaction to events outside of designation; and simply hardening defenses may not work in the face of an adversary's increasing capability. Nevertheless, these outcome variables are the most consistently sought in national-level strategy documents from 2001-2018 and therefore the best objective measures of effectiveness.

Examining outcomes from these consistent benchmarks for national-level policy goals builds on a model developed by David Easton in 1975 for evaluating policy effectiveness. Limiting measures of effectiveness to these national-level policy outcomes, despite their complexity, also addresses many of the challenges in defining the scope of counterterrorism efforts and their effect, which is measured inconsistently at best according to the aforementioned literature. This approach allows for a measure of what Easton called "impact effectiveness"—the lasting impact of the application of US CT policy over time across the three dependent variables—answering Crenshaw and LaFree's concerns that immediate measures alone are insufficient for gauging the success of CT interventions.[132]

3.1.3 Intermediate Variables

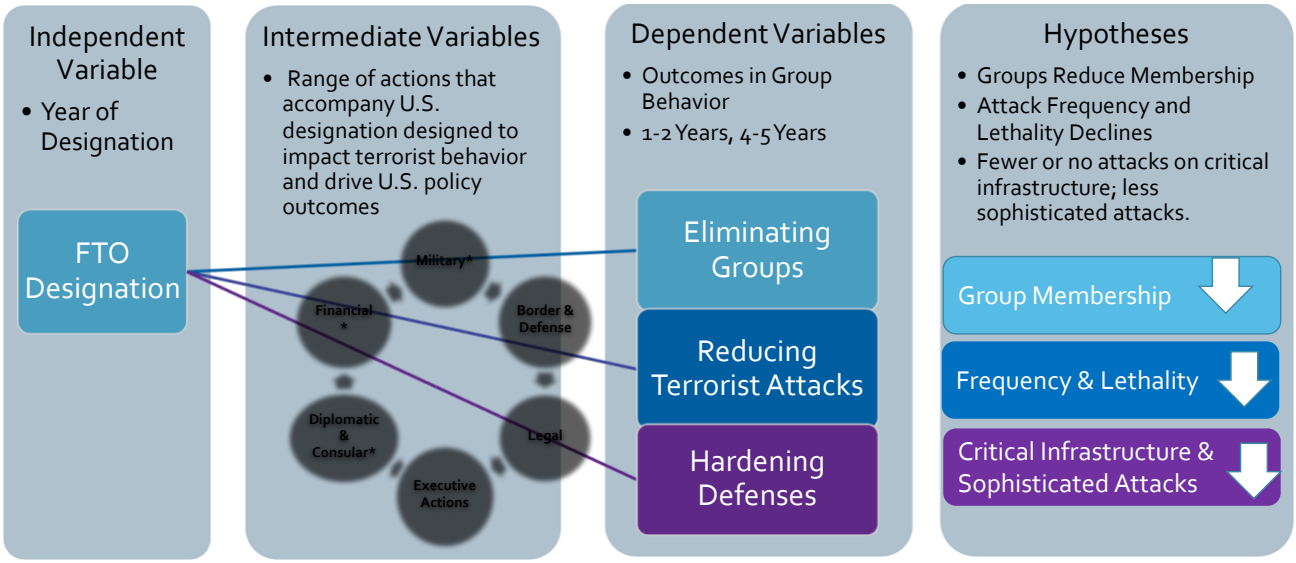
The intermediate variables are the actions that accompany US designation to drive desired US policy outcomes. As illustrated in Figure 4 on the next page, they include military activities (strikes or military campaigns); defense support/security cooperation measures (joint task forces

[132] David Easton, *A Framework for Political Analysis*, Prentice-Hall Contemporary Political Theory Series (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1965).; Crenshaw and LaFree, *Countering Terrorism*., 193.

or joint security operations); legal charges (material support to terrorism); executive actions (executive orders, for example the entities named under Executive Order 13224); diplomatic and consular activities (visa and passport restrictions); and financial sanctions.[133] Intelligence collection activities and clandestine operations are excluded as those are not possible to measure with publicly available data.

All the intermediate variables are drawn from the authorities of the US agencies involved in the decision to designate and detailed in the United States Country Reports on Terrorism, which annually catalogs all US government activities against FTO designated groups. Rather than comprehensively address all the possible intervening variables for the groups included in this study—case studies will assess the likely role of intermediate variables in driving the outcomes measured by the quantitative data. A visual representation of the study, including the hypotheses from the next section, appears in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Visual Representation of Study



[133] References for military activities are taken from the United States Department of State's Country Reports on terrorism and range from military strikes, if referenced, to full joint military campaigns. While ideally disaggregating military from the nonkinetic impact of FTO designation is ideal, in practice they are impossible to disentangle. Therefore, military activities are considered alongside similar department and agency-specific actions. For more on the methodology related to the intermediate variables see 3.3 Research Design: Qualitative Analysis and Chapter 7: Explaining Variation in Overall Impact – Case Studies

3.1.4 Hypotheses

This study hypothesizes that US designation will have a measurable effect on the behavior of terrorist groups, quantified most clearly through overall trends toward lower membership, reduced frequency/lethality of attacks, and fewer/no attacks on critical infrastructure and/or using weapons of mass destruction. Each hypothesis is broken out individually and the subject of a chapter that follows to specifically measure each dependent variable after foreign terrorist organization designation. Confirming the hypotheses means:

1. Group membership (and total number of adherent groups) declines (Chapter 4)
2. Terrorist incident frequency and lethality declines (Chapter 5)
3. Attacks targeting critical infrastructure and attack sophistication declines (Chapter 6)

The directionality of the hypotheses are drawn from the goals of the policy choice to designate, because the existing literature found weak or no relationships between designation and terrorist outcomes. The null hypotheses are the inverse of the above: that FTO designation has no impact, or potentially worse, causes an upward trendline in membership, attacks, and target complexity. However, as terrorism is an inherently irregular phenomenon the dissertation seeks changes in long term trends and trajectory to confirm the hypotheses, rather than drawing conclusions from precipitous spikes or declines.

The long-term impact of designation is expected to wane at the four- to five-year mark, as additional groups are designated and new Presidential administrations transition, splitting US policy focus across more groups. It is unrealistic to expect policy impacts from decisions like designation to persist across multiple administrations—so the dissertation focuses on the short term (1-2) and long term (4-5) year out effects of the choice to designate.

3.2 Research Design: Quantitative Analysis

3.2.1 First Dependent Variable and Hypothesis One: Eliminating Terrorist Groups

The first dependent variable—eliminating terrorist groups—is measured using terrorist group and membership data drawn from the State Department's Annual Country Reports on Terrorism (pre-2004, Patterns of Global Terrorism), which detail the yearly count of approximate terrorist group members. Although these estimates are often provided in wide ranges (e.g., 500-1,000) or vague statements (low thousands[134]), aggregating them into a meta-analysis of group trends in different regions over time compensates for changing affiliation patterns and allows for a comparison of estimated group totals pre- and post-designation.

Confirming the first hypothesis requires comparing the number of groups and their members pre- and post-designation, as US designation-induced measures should prompt a drop in the number of individuals and groups attacking Western interests. In practice, however, measuring Salafi jihadist group and membership changes is not that straightforward because groups splinter, change names, and form alliances—all of which impacts group and membership counts. Assessing the membership data for the 20 Salafi jihadist groups in this study requires an awareness that terrorist groups switch affiliation, especially in their local area. The Stanford Militant Mapping project offers a visualization tool for tracking the patterns of alliance and affiliation that shape the membership of terrorist groups. Examining North Africa example from

[134] When data is nonspecific "hundreds" or "thousands," it will be annotated as the lowest possible number (hundreds=200, thousand=1000, thousands=2000s).

Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Mali in the early 1990s to 2018 via the Militant Mapping tool provides an illustrative example.[135]

The Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GPSC) of the 1990s gave birth to al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb, which both aligned with and competed against Ansar al-Dine, based primarily in Mali. As the Islamic State left al-Qa'ida to form its own vanguard, Ansar al-Shari'ah emerged in Tunisia and Libya. Eventually the North African Salafi jihadist affiliates split and merged yet again, joining a splinter which eventually merged to become al-Mourabitoun and, ultimately, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM). The Stanford data show that Salafi jihadist groups in North Africa, and by extension globally, generally develop within a single country or area of operation during the same period, but their development does not necessarily conform to country or regional boundaries. Their rivalries, alliances, and splits dynamically alter group and membership counts and, while they often cross borders, some group names and membership are specific to individual states (e.g., Ansar al-Sharia Libya and Ansar al-Sharia Tunisia).[136]

As the overall trend of a general increase in Salafi jihadist groups globally is also well-established post-9/11, the impact of US designation-related activities can also be assessed through a flat or smaller increase in group membership across targeted groups and regions compared to the established growth in the overall global Salafi jihadist population. While the consistent goal of US policy since 2001 has been the elimination of terrorist groups, a reduction of or stall in group or membership growth is step toward that goal and indicative of support for the hypothesis. Particularly, as Paul Staniland details among the insurgent groups he studied in

[135] For more information see the graphical representation at: Stanford University, "North Africa," http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/maps/view/north-africa.

[136] Ibid.

South Asia “a rapid collapse after hitting a high-water mark was extremely rare,” further illustrating why evidence of broader trends in declining membership are preferred for assessing the impact of FTO designation.

Given the changing group dynamics and the highly local nature of jihadist affiliation, membership and group counts are considered by dividing the 20 groups into seven broader categories, based on the groups’ specific location: North Africa, Afghanistan/Pakistan, Iraq/Syria, Arabian Peninsula, Somalia, Nigeria, and Southeast Asia. These categories allow for easier aggregation of State Department membership numbers, which are presented by individual group, but usually also specific to a country. These categories do not overlap to conventional geopolitical characterizations of regions, as membership in individual groups historically is more granular. Indications of US impact that confirm the hypothesis should be visible in declining aggregated group and membership counts, or stalled increases in growth in a specific location.

As a caution on the meta-analysis, terrorist group formation, splintering, and affiliation can happen more nimbly than the FTO designation process—a reality emphasized by the State Department press releases indicting the Federal Register record has been updated to include alternate names of designated groups.[137] Therefore, FTO designation and updated naming conventions can and does lag behind group evolution, as the bureaucratic process can be lengthy

[137] For example see United States Department of State, "Amendments to the Terrorist Designations of Al-Shabaab," news release, July 19, 2018, https://immpolicytracking.org/media/documents/Al-Shabaab_State_Dept_Press_Statement.pdf.; "Terrorist Designations of Balochistan Liberation Army and Husain Ali Hazzima and Amendments to the Terrorist Designations of Jundallah," news release, July 2 2019, https://2017-2021.state.gov/terrorist-designations-of-balochistan-liberation-army-and-husain-ali-hazzima-and-amendments-to-the-terrorist-designations-of-jundallah/index.html.; "Amendments to the Terrorist Designations of Al-Nusrah Front," news release, May 31 2018, https://2017-2021.state.gov/amendments-to-the-terrorist-designations-of-al-nusrah-front/index.html.

(as discussed in Chapter 2).[138] Nevertheless, the aggregated counts presented in the dissertation include the State Department's best estimate of group membership and establishes trendlines useful for testing the hypothesis. While the data has natural limitations due to possible government bias and the lag effect of groups growing and forming that are not yet designated due to the length of time the process takes, the underlying counts are still indicative of broad membership trends.

3.2.2 Second Dependent Variable and Hypothesis Two: Reducing Attacks and Lethality

The second dependent variable and hypothesis, focused on reducing attacks and lethality, can be measured using more traditional quantitative techniques as attack data provides more specificity on group behavior. While traditional linear regressions would suffice for this data, terrorism researchers prefer interrupted time series analysis and other techniques to differentiate terrorist attack patterns before and after counterterrorism treatment effects.[139] The terrorist attack and lethality data in the University of Maryland's START Global Terrorism Database (GTD) is much more specific than the militant counts in the first dependent variable and includes specific breakouts for the number of individuals killed in each attack. Although US policy emphasizes the objective of reducing terrorist attacks and deaths of Americans, these numbers would often

[138] This will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 7.

[139] Cox proportional hazard modeling would also have provided an alternative to this analysis, per the comments of Gary LaFree on an earlier draft of this work. "Instead of looking for a statistically significant shift in a temporal timeline (like Box-Jenkins), the researcher instead looks at the time between attacks. The idea is that if the time between attacks slows down, it indicates a deterrent effect. If it speeds up, it may indicate a "backlash" effect. This method usually has the advantage of giving the analyst a lot more statistical power." While the author weighed redoing this analysis using the alternative method, it is likely to yield the same inconsistencies in significance given the disparate attack patterns for the included groups as the results presented in this dissertation. Nevertheless, the Cox proportional hazard model remains an option for future research to validate or challenge this work's results. Gary LaFree, June 30 2022.; Gary Lafree, Laura Dugan, and Raven Korte, "The Impact of British Counterterrorist Strategies on Political Violence in Northern Ireland," *Criminology* 47, no. 1 (2009).

be too small for statistical significance, so this analysis analyzes data on all attacks and deaths by designated Salafi jihadist groups in the GTD. For the dissertation an interrupted time series analysis was chosen as the quantitative method in lieu of a linear or interrupted regression given the specific irregularities of terrorist attack data, namely the underlying randomness of the data combined with autocorrelation and seasonality issues. By aggregating the data at the yearly level, the interrupted time series attempts to control—as much as possible—for the irregularities in the data, while identifying underlying changes in frequency and lethality that may reflect designation's impact.[140]

Specifically, the dissertation's second hypothesis predicts increasing terrorist attacks pre-designation (an upward sloping line) followed by a decrease post-designation, seen as a change in the line's slope and trajectory. Consistent with this expectation, the West Point CTC study noted in their review of terrorist attack data across all types of FTO designated groups that, "On average, there is a significant uptick in operational activity for FTOs in the years preceding their designation." This trend is clearly visible in the West Point study's moving averages model over the 5 years pre- and post-designation attacks in Figure 3, hence the group's designation.[141] Given the expected (and desired) change post-designation, the standard regression formulation is not well suited to a nuanced understanding of the data trends. An interrupted linear regression would

[140] Measurement of the impact of an independent variable (years pre- or post-FTO Designation) on outcomes (e.g., terrorist attacks, lethality, etc.) can be conducted using a simple linear regression, modeled as $y = \alpha + \beta x + \varepsilon$. In this model, the slope of the line (y) is driven by the impact of the independent variable (x) on the coefficients. However, this model assumes that the slope of the regression line does not change over time, when this dissertation seeks to assess if and how the effects of coordinated activities initiated by designation change over time.

[141] Seth Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts.", 15.

also probably suffice for the purposes of demonstrating a relationship between designation and terrorist behavioral outcomes. It would look like this:

$$y = \alpha + \beta 1T + \beta 2X + \beta 3XT + \varepsilon.$$

where, T represents time and the study is broken into phases before (β1), at (β2), and after (β3) an interruption or treatment. However, this interrupted linear regression does not account for autocorrelation or seasonality in the data.

An interrupted time series (ITS) analysis provides a statistical technique that accounts for autocorrelation (the possibility of a relationship between two data points in a series) and seasonality (the possibility of a seasonal or time of year impact) in panel data—making it a slightly superior test of incidents and lethality than the standard or interrupted linear regression models above. An interrupted time series is also the technique preferred by Crenshaw and LaFree, as it allows for both deterrence effects (attacks decline following an intervention) and backlash effects (attacks increase following an intervention).[142]

Autocorrelation is particularly tricky with terrorist attack data, as data points in a time series are likely—but not necessarily—related to the data points that precede and postdate each event. Because a group enjoying an increase in attacks probably is fueling that increase with growth in capability, membership, and organizational support, an increase (or decrease) in one year of attack activity is often part of an overall trend. Thus, any given year of terrorist activity is likely related to and building off the capability exhibited by a group in the years before, or autocorrelated to the previous years. This trend can be seen easily when you aggregate terrorism attack data to the country level—like the START graph from the University of Maryland's

[142] Crenshaw and LaFree, *Countering Terrorism*., 186.

Terrorism 2019 overview depicted in Figure 5 below. Year-over-year trends are additive and the previous years' trends violate the principal of data independence for a pure linear regression model.[143] Additionally, seasonality can be an issue in terrorist attack data if compared month by month. The US government often cited the Afghan Taliban's summer "fighting season" as an explanatory factor in the annual increase in attacks in Afghanistan during the summers from 2002 onward. To mitigate seasonality concerns, GTD data provided in a day/month/year format

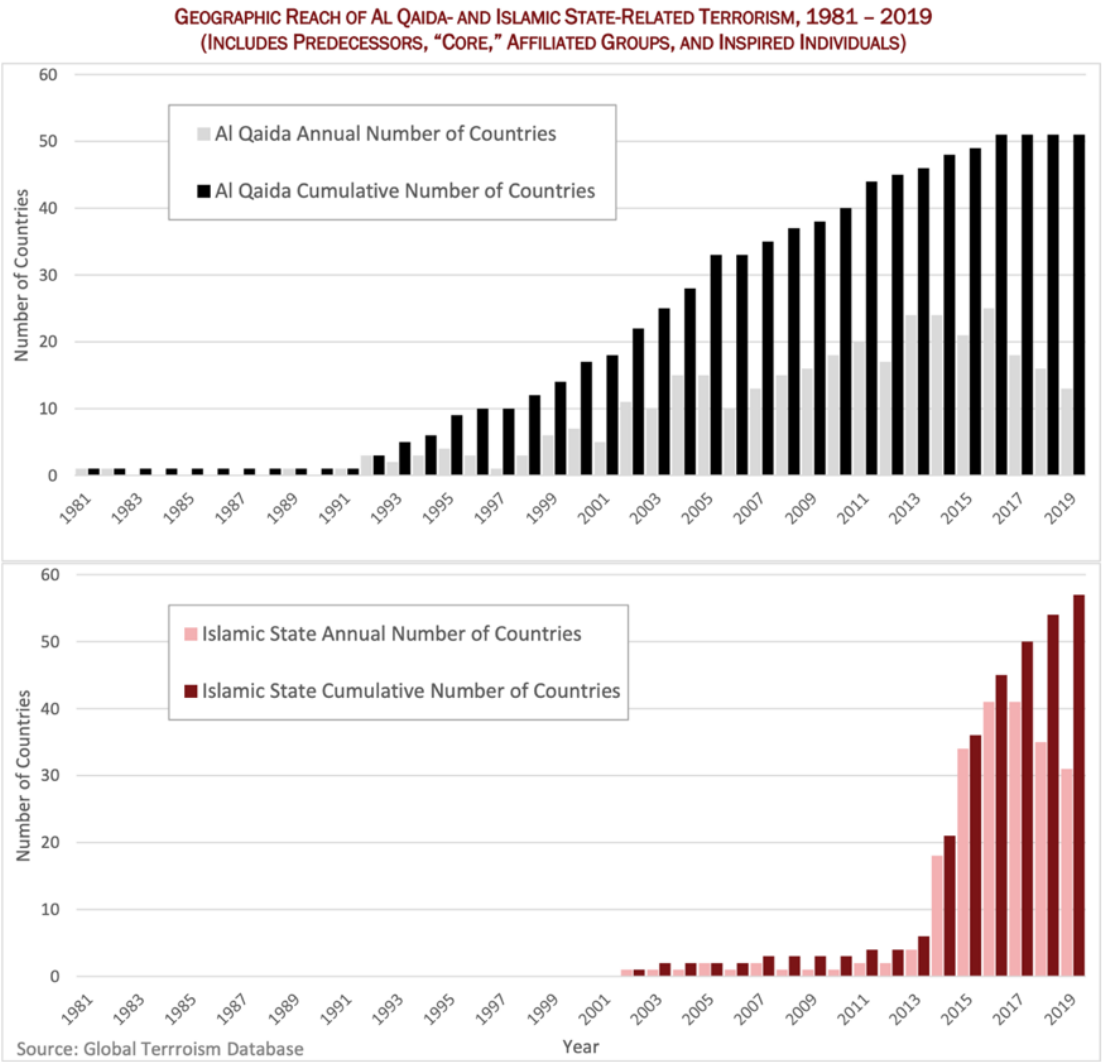


Figure 5: Year Over Year Attack Trends AQ and ISIL 1981-2019

Source: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), 2019

[143] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, "Global Terrorism Overview: Terrorism in 2019," in *Background Report*, ed. START (College Park, Maryland: University of Maryland, 2020)., 7

was aggregated yearly, by group, to control for any seasonal trends. This aggregation also controls for variation in monthly trends by comparing overall years to one another.

To account for autocorrelation and seasonality while assessing CT interventions and trends over time researchers in economics and criminology adopted interrupted time series analysis as a quasi-experimental design methodology based on medical interventions (which also wrestle with autocorrelated time-series data and seasonality). For decades, health professionals have used interrupted time-series analyses to divide treatment and control groups in public health experiments. For example, in 2017 *The International Journal of Epidemiology* published a tutorial on "Interrupted Time Series Regression for the Evaluation of Public Health Interventions" that stated:

> The interrupted time series (ITS) study design is increasingly being used for the evaluation of public health interventions; it is particularly suited to interventions introduced at a population level over a clearly defined time period and that target population-level health outcomes. ITS has been used for the evaluation of a wide range of public health interventions including new vaccines, cycle helmet legislation, changes to paracetamol packaging, traffic speed zones and precautions against nosocomial infections, as well as in the evaluation of health impacts of unplanned events such as the global financial crisis.[144]

The traffic pattern intervention is an apt analogy for this study, as FTO designation is somewhat akin to installing a speed bump on a road; both interventions are designed to interrupt an irregular but dangerous human behavior pattern. For example, seizing the assets of a declared foreign terrorist organizations is a way of slowing their operational planning by limiting funds

[144] James Lopez Bernal, Steven Cummins, and Antonio Gasparrini, "Interrupted Time Series Regression for the Evaluation of Public Health Interventions: A Tutorial," *International Journal of Epidemiology* 46, no. 1 (2016)., 348.

available to plot attacks. While speed bumps are applied to all travelers on the road— individual drivers can choose to respond to them differently, much like the humans that make up terrorist groups. In the example above, that may require turning to more illicit funding, or delaying operational planning (which would be seen as a decline in overall attack trends).

Driving speeds, like terrorist attacks, have their own unique determinants—the individual drivers, weather, road, time of day, and countless other factors—all of which cannot be controlled for in a traditional regression. Yet, by comparing traffic speeds before and after installing a speed bump, public policy researchers can estimate how the intervention reduced a road's speed even though not all driving speeds are determined by the new bump (or frequency of terrorist attacks by designation/US action). The policy intervention can also have an opposite, inconsistent, or overall lack of effect—drivers, for example, can continue to accelerate over the new speed bump—a backlash effect. Although the overall trends in driver speeds pre- and post-intervention can be measured quantitatively, those measures are not definitive, nor do they prove causation. Rather the statistical results are suggestive of overall trends.

One of the advantages of comparing the behavior trends of groups pre- and post-designation is that this study avoids using non-designated groups as comparison or control groups, which would be comparing apples to oranges. As articulated previously for Salafi jihadist groups, given that most active groups threatening US interests were designated over the eighteen years in this study, there is simply not a viable control group. Like the road analogy, comparing roads where drivers are not speeding to the changes in the roadway with the new speed bump does not provide a valid control group. The speed on less frequently trafficked roads (and the trajectory of less operational non-designated groups) is not a fair comparison to a road where the speeds (or frequency of attacks) are increasing and being targeted for reduction.

Therefore, comparing non-designated groups to designated ones is less useful than an ITS analysis—even if the data was available. The groups that are designated as FTOs meet the criteria of section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), indicating a threat to the US and are not and should not be compared to groups that do not meet that basic standard.

A survey of ITS analysis in terrorism research by Robert Apel and Henda Hsu in *The Handbook of the Criminology of Terrorism* details two ITS methods that researchers primarily use to evaluate counterterrorism interventions.[145] The first is an autoregressive integrated moving average model (ARIMA), known as a Box-Jenkins method, which attempts to account for the relationship between data points in a time series by comparing the moving averages pre- and post-intervention, while also accounting for the time since intervention. The second method, a vector autoregression model (VAR) is recommended when "interest is in an estimation of an interruption in more than one time series."[146] The variance in models means the most important step in time series analysis of terrorist interventions is to: "Identify the most parsimonious model, from the class of many possible specifications, that best characterizes how the time series unfolds. Identification of the noise model includes considerations of such things as stationarity, seasonality, autocorrelation, and a moving average."[147]

This research uses the ARIMA/Box-Jenkins method to determine the impact of designation on attack frequency and lethality, as it only examines one time series – the linear progression of attacks, making it more appropriate for this dissertation than a VAR model. The

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[145] Robert Apel and Henda Y. Hsu, "Interrupted Time Series Analysis in the Study of Terrorism," in *The Handbook of the Criminology of Terrorism* (2016).

[146] Ibid., 276.

[147] Ibid., 280.

method prescribes an iterative process for selecting the precise model to indicate the probable impact of a single intervention over time, while accounting for irregularities in time series data.

While The ARIMA/Box-Jenkins method is an established tool for measuring counterterrorism interventions and consistent with best practices in assessing their impact—there are some problems with using it on attack data. Interrupted time series in the medical field and in the road example assume the dependent variable (illness or road speed) is random before treatment. While terrorist attack data is seemingly random, it can follow patterns where a group is on an operational upswing or downswing based on the capability of a group over time, buoyed by expertise, operational planning, or counterterrorism interventions beyond the reach of the data in this study. Therefore, the model should not be viewed as causal—rather indicative of overall trends. A good way of thinking about this is to extend the road speed analogy above. The speed on the hypothetical road might be impacted by nearby road closures or overall changes to the legal speed limit within the city—independent of and happening in the background of the intervention—the speed bump. Similarly terrorist activities can and are impacted by exogenous trends outside of the foreign terrorist organization designation process. Therefore, the model in this dissertation will look for overall changes in the trendlines of group behavior as indicators not determinants of US policy success.

The exact selection and specification of the model for measuring the impact of FTO designation on attack frequency and lethality is addressed in Chapter 4. In both incidents and lethality, the second hypothesis predicts a reduction in associated values to demonstrate effectiveness, which the model will assess. To supplement the model, a frequency table for the death and injury to Americans because of terrorist attacks is also included in Chapter 4 to compare the targeting of US persons pre- and post-designation. However, given the low number

of American casualties as articulated above, ITS was not well suited to this component of measuring impact.

3.2.3 Third Dependent Variable and Hypothesis Three: Hardening Targets

The third dependent variable and hypothesis is focused on the strategic goal of hardening of defenses, which can be done by measuring outputs (jersey barriers built, dollars dedicated to embassy fortifications, etc.) to decrease or eliminate attacks on critical infrastructure and attacks using weapons of mass destruction (WMD)--but it can also be deduced by the changing attack patterns and behavior of the terrorists themselves.[148] The latter was chosen for this dissertation as the data was readily available in the GTD. While this variable is arguably the most complex dependent variable in this study because it measures what terrorists target over time, it provides an overview of how groups are altering attack patterns and compares pre-designation preferences to post-designation preferences. The GTD annotates attack types by category, weapon, and target type and therefore provides potential avenues for measuring changes pre- and post-designation that relate to critical infrastructure and WMD.

Because these variables are represented categorically in the GTD, ITS is less useful for illustrating potential post-designation changes in terrorists' targeting. Given the many potential reasons other than hardening of targets for terrorists changing tactics—particularly during ongoing conflict—significant changes post-designation will be noted, but very limited conclusions can be drawn. Again, rather than causal connections the dissertation seeks overall

[148] Additionally, tracking CT spending to effectiveness is beyond the scope of this research. It has been attempted by think-tanks like the Stimson Center, but they determined "The United States currently lacks an accurate accounting of how much it has spent on the fight against terrorism. Without accurate data, policymakers will have difficulty evaluating whether the nation spends too much or too little on the counterterrorism (CT) mission, and whether current spending is doing its job effectively or efficiently." The Stimson Center, "Counterterrorism Spending: Protecting America While Promoting Efficiencies and Accountability," (Washington D.C.: The Stimson Center, May 2018).

changes in pre- and post-designation behavioral trends to assess effectiveness. Nevertheless, post-designation decreases in sophisticated (simultaneous) attacks, the use of WMD, or the targeting of US government or critical infrastructure will confirm the third hypothesis, while increases will contradict it. Although data limitations preclude ITS, comparisons of an FTO's attack type, targets, and weapons used pre- and post-designation will allow a nominal assessment of designation's effect on terrorist targeting behavior, which remains a key strategic outcome for US policy.

3.2.4 Data Collection Sources, Strategy, and Challenges

The primary sources of quantitative data are the University of Maryland's GTD and the DOS's *Country Reports on Terrorism* (previously called Patterns of Global Terrorism), which housed the official repository of statistics on global terrorism the US government from 2004 until 2017, becoming one of the most complete openly available primary datasets on FTOs.[149] Using the GTD data for this study keeps the data consistently drawn from the same official US government source for most of the years 2001 to 2018 included in this study to inform the analysis of attack frequency, lethality, and targeting. Additionally, as the DOS tasked the University of Maryland's START Center in to provide the statistical annex dataset for the annual *Country Reports on Terrorism* from 2012-2017, the data reflected in the qualitative portion of

[149]Prior to 2012 the official State Department data was computed by the National Counterterrorism Center through the Worldwide Incidents Tracking System (WITS), which was ingested into the START database in 2012. WITS monitored terrorist incidents for the US government from January 1, 2004, to December 31, 2005. See "State Department Contracts Start to Provide Terrorism Data and Analysis," news release, November 16 2022, https://www.start.umd.edu/news/state-department-contracts-start-provide-terrorism-data-and-analysis.; (START), "Annex of Statistical Information: Country Reports on Terrorism 2017."; Inc. Development Services Group, "Annex of Statistical Information: Country Reports on Terrorism 2020," (Washington D.C.2021)., 1; and, John Wigle, "Introducing the Worldwide Incidents Tracking System (Wits)," *Perspectives on Terrorism (Lowell)* 4, no. 1 (2010). In 2018 the State Department contracted Development Services Group, Inc. and the Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center operated by the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University to take over the statistical analysis for official US government terrorist attack data.

the analysis drawn from *Country Reports* series mirror the attack data in the GTD for five of the eighteen years included in this research.[150]

The GTD contains data on more than 180,000 terrorist incidents going back to 1970, including the group or groups claiming credit (attribution), the number of people killed and injured (lethality), and whether they were simultaneous or connected (sophistication). The data is presented in panel format and coded by incidents—arranged by date, year, and country, and attributed to a group if possible. Attribution and coding the data, however, presented several challenges.

Because each row represents a single terrorist incident on a specific date and in a specific location, simultaneous attacks across a city/country appears in several rows. The 9/11 attacks, for example, encompass four rows: one for each tower in New York City, the Pentagon in Virginia, and the crash in Pennsylvania.[151] Although an extra step, the straightforward and consistent entry method does enable researchers to aggregate or separate data for complex and simultaneous attacks as needed, which is one reason START's GTD has served as the baseline dataset for counterterrorism researchers for decades.

The database set up illustrates some of the difficulty surrounding attribution of an attack to a group—a task that has long vexed the security practitioner and academic communities. Although each row represents a single event at a single location, it can include as many as three groups that reportedly participated in or claimed responsibility for the attack. Furthermore, each

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[150] "Country Reports on Terrorism - Statistical Annex," National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, https://www.start.umd.edu/research-projects/country-reports-terrorism-statistical-annex. Of note, as NCTC housed the data prior to 2012 in WITS and WITs became part of the GTD, the dataset covers the entire period of this study as official US government data except for the years 2001-2004.

[151] While the 9/11 attacks here are used as an example, they were excluded from the quantitative analysis due to the statistical aberration they represent within terrorism trends. See Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*., 19.

of these group names can have as many as three subgroups, representing group offshoots or local names. A single incident can be attributed to as many as six actors—or to none at all. Some researchers criticize the GTD for this lack of attribution, but for this study, it was the overlapping attribution across groups that posed a unique challenge.[152]

To account for data duplication, this study created an individual line of code for each group that participated in an attack. For example, an attack attributed to al-Qa'ida, the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and Laskar-i-Tayyiba (LET) would appear in three separate lines, one for each group. The duplication was intentional to capture all attacks attributed to a specific group, even if it acted in concert with others. Attribution in the GTD reflects "what is reported in open-source media accounts, which does not necessarily indicate a legal finding of culpability," and may or may not reflect the claims of the group's themselves.[153] Duplicating the counts risks inflating the incident and lethality counts, but is the only way to ensure that when, for example, al-Qa'ida, TTP, and LET are individually analyzed pre- and post-designation, the data includes any possible attack associated to those groups.

To control for the inflated numbers caused by duplication, groups were removed from the quantitative analysis where the near entirety of a group's activity duplicated another's, reducing 42 Salafi jihadist groups to 20. For example, all 16 attacks in the START database attributed to al-Mulathamun Battalion (AMB), which broke away from al-Qa'ida in the Maghreb (AQIM) in 2012, overlapped with AQIM, which rendered an independent assessment of AMB meaningless

[152] Vincent Bauer, Keven Ruby, and Robert Pape, "Solving the Problem of Unattributed Political Violence," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61, no. 7 (2017).

[153] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, *Global Terrorism Database Codebook: Inclusion Criteria and Variables* (2019)., 43.

outside of AQIM.[154] Al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent was similarly excluded because every attack attributed to the group was cross-listed with some other group in the study. While assessing these groups individually would be ideal, their offshoot and overlapping status from larger parent groups made them impossible to assess. The reason for inclusion or exclusion, along with notes regarding duplication are all detailed in Appendix C, which illustrates the groups and incidents included in this study.

Working with the longitudinal data was also complicated by unequal gaps between when a group was founded and its designation. The Haqqani network, for example was founded in the early 1970s but not designated until 2012, while al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) was designated just a year after it was founded in January 2009. The West Point CTC study on *The Terrorist Lists* also notes the "tail" behind designation is not equal among groups.[155] Selecting groups with significant data pre- and post-designation (ideally 5 years on either side) allows for a more rigorous evaluation of impact. Yet, in many cases this data is lacking, as DOS and START in many cases did not code or account for groups until the year preceding designation. The "Years of Available Data" table in Appendix C shows data available for each group, an important caveat on this overall report.

3.2.5 Assumptions

The quantitative portion of this dissertation assesses the activities of a group pre-designation compared to post-designation to assess overall trends. It does not assume that all

[154] AMB also did not meet the minimum 50 attacks required for the ITS, so it was excluded for multiple reasons.

[155] Seth Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts.", 14.

post-designation changes are solely attributed to FTO designation. The rhythms of terrorist activity often depend on location, group, and capability independent of designation. For example, because AQIM historically has been less lethal than its peers, one cannot assume that a post-designation flat curve or downward slope on attack frequency is due to US government designation. Aggregating the groups and arranging the ITS by date of designation helps control for individual group factors.

Another assumption, which is also a challenge throughout the dissertation, is that designations effects should be quantitatively significantly lower in the year immediately following designation or 1-2 years after. Given the lengthy bureaucratic processing time preceding most designations to justify and catalog the threat to US national interests to proscribe the designation, as discussed in Chapter 2, most terrorist organizations are enjoying an operational upswing when they are designated. This reality raises questions regarding if a decline is even an appropriate measure of success, if maintaining the status quo would still diminish the overall threat posed by groups. CTC raised this assumption issue specifically in their work, asking:

> Given that most of the listed groups appear to be on an upward trajectory in terms of the number of attacks they carried in the time immediately preceding their designation, should the standard of success of the FTO list be a reduction in the overall number of attacks or should success be considered if the upward trend in the number of attacks only diminishes and the group simply maintains the status quo?[156]

Moreover, if bureaucratic inertia can delay designation, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the formal actions that designation unlocks could also lag behind the decision to designate as

[156] Ibid., 15.

departments and agencies work through their internal processes to formalize sanctions, material support charges, etc. allowing the operational curve to continue to swing upward before declining. When presented with the working paper for this dissertation, a group of experienced counterterrorism professionals concluded based on their experience that it takes one to two years for US policy decisions, to include designation, to result in concrete action by responsible departments and agencies against targeted groups.[157] It is equally possible that groups are responding to the public diplomacy aspect of the designation and embracing their higher profile, but can only sustain complex operations for a limited period as the United States focuses more efforts against their activities post-designation. One control on the timing issue of this assumption is that the year of designation in this analysis is considered "Year 0" or the baseline, rather than year one. Given the variation in the speed of designations and designation-associated activities across the 20 groups in this dissertation, there is simply no better date to choose to begin to judge efficacy than the year following designation.

One of the other major critiques of this work is that it does not account for disrupted attacks, which normally would be a key indicator in the success or failure of any counterterrorism campaign. While disrupted attacks would re-enforce data on FTO designation's outcomes, particularly if disrupted attacks increased post-designation—the fact remains by tightly focusing on whether the number/lethality of successful attacks regardless of disrupted attacks is a more inclusive measure. A decline post designation in this dissertation can come from a designated group that is both too weak to conduct attacks, or still capable but disrupted. Therefore, disrupted attack data would likely only add to the baseline totals presented in this

[157] Amy Sturm, "Discussion with National Intelligence University Students," (May 11 2021).

research. Moreover, as attack disruptions are often the result of clandestine intelligence, law enforcement, or military efforts they were beyond the purview of this open-source research. As disruptions would only increase the total of successful attacks represented across the quantitative data—the conclusions from this research are still valid as a baseline for understanding designation's impact on Salafi jihadist groups. [158]

The quantitative portion of the research seeks to find indicators of US government outcomes against terrorist networks after designation based on the assumption that the government undertook aggressive designation-associated actions—the intervening variables—that drove the group to change its behavior. Even if a relationship between designation and outcomes in terrorist activity is established through the quantitative analysis, a straight line from US government designation to terrorist outcome is far from certain. Rather, this research humbly suggests the quantitative data will provide indications of where designation and more importantly the unlocked activities associated with designation contributed to the measured change in terrorist behavior.

3.3 Research Design: Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis explores the intervening variables more closely, providing an initial examination of how and why US government actions that accompany designation could drive different policy outcomes. As noted in Chapter 2, the range of US government activities that accompany designation can include: military and intelligence activities; diplomatic and consular activities; legal actions, material support to terrorism legal charges; executive actions;

[158] The author did attempt to gain access to a partial database of disrupted plots targeting the US from numerous colleagues in both academia and government to reinforce the number/lethality model, at the request of the committee, but permissions could not be secured in time to augment this research.

border and immigration activities; and financial sanctions—all derived from the authorities of the government agencies involved in the decision to designate. One additional category—international organization action—was added to the case study coding to identify where international action may have played a role in outcomes. Coding the influence of designation-associated activities enables the qualitative analysis to explore how US government activities accompanying designation (the intervening variables) helped achieve desired outcomes post-designation.

3.3.1 Case Study Design

This study uses diverse cases, as measured by the quantitative results of incidents over time, to illuminate potential outcomes for designation. While other case study methodology using typical cases, extreme cases, influential, or deviant design may have led to a different selection of cases——a diverse case approach allows for both exploration of the potential impact of designation and potential confirmatory analysis.[159] Moreover, as the initial quantitative analysis suggests, influential cases or deviant cases, such as the rise of ISIL in 2014, actually radically changes the trajectory of terrorist attack behavior and is less representative of the totality of the impact of designation. Additionally, diverse cases were selected to remove any potential selection bias on the part of the researcher and to counter concerns that a random sample would not be representative of the most prominent outcome sought by designation: less terrorism over time.[160]

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[159] Jason Seawright and John Gerring, "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options," *Political Research Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2008).

[160] David Collier and James Mahoney, "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research," *World Politics* 49, no. 1 (1996).

To select the diverse cases the terrorist groups were arrayed in a quad chart, considering the short-term (1-2 year) and long-term (4-5 year) impact of designation on terrorist incidents and lethality—the most diverse examples of the range of potential impacts drawn from the trends in the quantitative findings.[161] Target and attack type were excluded from the final case selection because the results of these two pre-/post-designation comparisons were tenuous at best. The lack of clear results still proved useful for developing the qualitative cases, as it demonstrated the impact of designation and associated activities varies widely by group.

Figure 6 on the following page shows the array of short-term (X-axis) and long-term (Y-axis) outcomes considered in this study—unusually putting the two-time continuums on two different axes to identify continuous and dis-continuous trends post-designation. Groups were arranged on the axis based on how their individual data reflected the broader trends identified in the quantitative data. Because the desired effect is a decrease in events and lethality, somewhat counterintuitively, the upper right quadrant reflects the least desired outcome and the bottom left quadrant the most desired.[162] Case studies were selected from each quadrant, indicative of the full range of diverse outcomes from designation.[163]

[161] The Short- (1-2 year) and Long-term (4-5 year) time horizons reflect the trend observed in the quantitative analysis—1- to 2-year changes in incidents were not the same for lethality, and the potential impact of designation was stronger 4 to 5 years out. These timeframes are also consistent with the length of Presidential counterterrorism strategies, after which new groups were generally added and focused on for designation.

[162] The author concedes that the political cynic may prefer short term to long term outcomes, but the entire dissertation treats the counterterrorism problem as one of executing articulated US government policy and strategy, all of which point to enduring outcomes like defeat and destroy, which suggest a desired permanence beyond the short term.

[163] Seawright and Gerring, "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options."

Figure 6: Qualitative Case Studies: Range of Outcomes

Long Term Impact	Short Term Impact: Yes	Short Term Impact: No
No	Next Least Desired Outcome: No long-term, but a short-term impact Next Least Desired Outcome: 3	Least Desired Outcome: No long-term or short-term impact Least Desired Outcome: No long-term or short-term impact 4
Yes	1 Most Desired Outcome: long-term and short-term impact Most Desired Outcome: long-term and short-term impact	2 Next Most Desired Outcome: long-term, but no short-term impact Next Most Desired Outcome: long-term, but no short-term impact

To generate the case study selection criteria, all 20 groups included in the ITS analysis were arranged in a similar four-quadrant matrix, based on the short-term and long-term impact on their activities. To generate the matrix, the total number of attacks by a group in the year prior to and the year of FTO designation was compared to the total number of attacks 1-2 years and 4-5 years after designation. The data was then coded:

-1 = fewer events or lower lethality

0 = no impact

+1 = more events or greater lethality

Similarly, to generate the lethality range, the total number of individuals killed or wounded in terrorist attacks by the group in the year prior to and the year of FTO designation was compared to the same measure 1-2 years and 4-5 years after designation. To combine the measures of

impact and lethality, the (-1, 0, 1) inputs for short-term and long-term impact were added together to get an overall short-term and long-term score on a range from:

-2 = fewer events AND less lethality

-1 = fewer events OR less lethality

0 = no impact

1 = more events OR greater lethality

2 = more events AND greater lethality

Of note, al-Nusrah, ISIL-Khorasan, ISIL-Libya, and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen were dropped from qualitative consideration because of the lack of long-term post-designation data on the groups, which dropped the number considered for the qualitative case studies to 15. Additionally, all 0's on the axis line are indicative of mixed results—either fewer events with more lethality or the inverse—and put them in the "no impact" box in the column where the zero score appears.

LET and Jemaah Islamiyah (JEM) cannot be allocated along the quad chart, because both have contradictory short-term and long-term impacts (-1/+1) that cancel out the effect. In other groups, like the Indian Mujahideen and the Haqqani Network, the desired effect of declining attacks and lethality is clear in the short term or long term, respectively, and thus can be allocated to boxes 2 and 4, respectively. Figure 7 on the following page reveals likely candidates for the diverse case study selection in each quadrant.

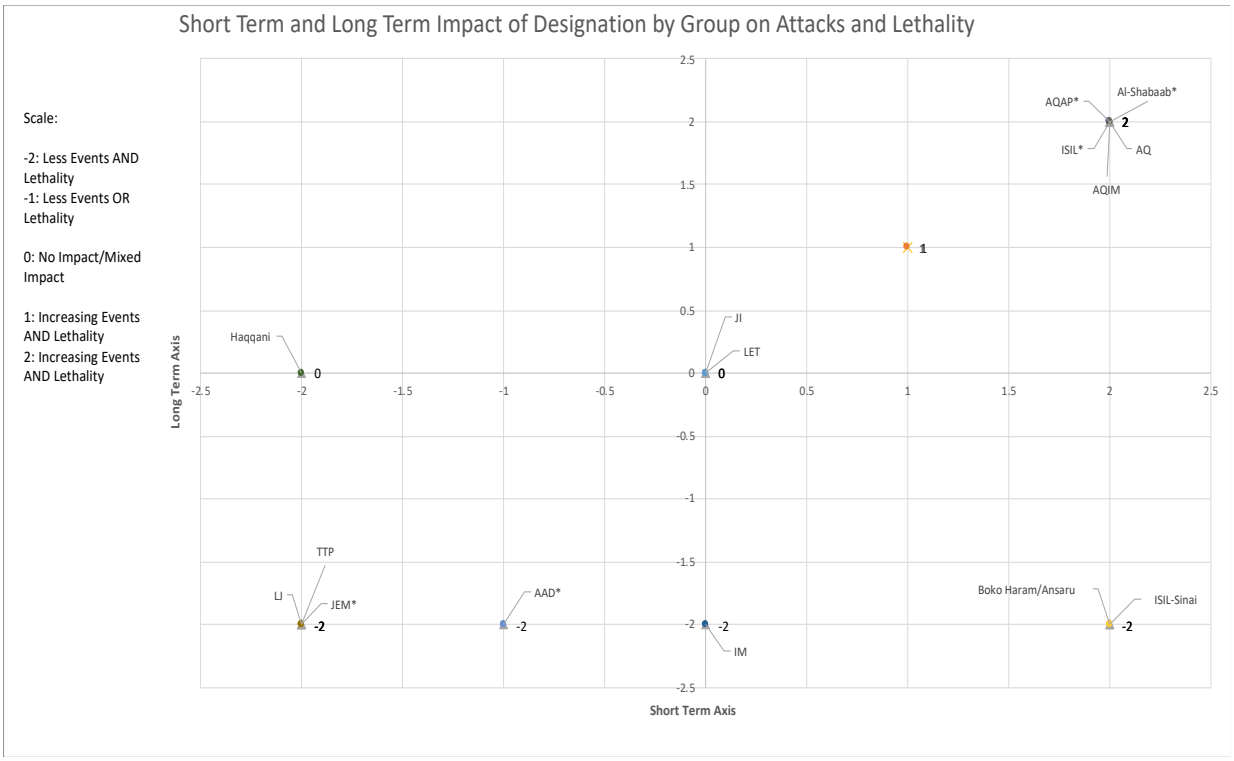


Figure 7: Short-term and Long-term Impact on Attacks and Lethality, by Group

3.3.2 Data Sources & Selected Cases

Once the groups are arranged in the matrix, the diverse cases are clearly visible in the corners of 3 of the 4 quad charts. The final cases were then selected, one from each quad, based on the qualitative data available on US government activities that accompany designation. The selection criteria revealed several candidates for each outcome, but a closer examination indicates that JEM, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), al-Shabaab, AQAP, and Ansar al-Dine (AAD) have very short pre-designation phases (the year of designation and one year before) that limits the amount of qualitative data available for a case study. As Crenshaw and LaFree noted, consistently available information on groups and CT activities against their activities is sparse.[164] Nevertheless, every attempt was made to cover the full range of US

[164] Crenshaw and LaFree, *Countering Terrorism*., 181

activities following designation for the selected cases, with the necessary exclusion of IC activities because of the lack of publicly available information.

The data sources for US government activities come from Department of the Treasury summaries of financial sanctions; material support charges from the Department of Justice; annual summaries of US government activity in DOS's Country Reports on Terrorism; and captured media reflecting the terrorists' perspective of the impact on their activities. These four sources cover the official legal activities that can accompany designation (financial sanction and material charges) as well as the range of activities that can informally accompany designation (DOS summaries, captured media). These sources do not cover all groups equally, however, so data availability ultimately determined the final selection of the Haqqani Network (HQN), TTP, AQIM, and Boko Haram as the "best examples" of the diverse range of designation outcomes. Figure 8 below reflects the final case studies as examples of each outcome from designation.

Figure 8: Qualitative Case Studies: Group Selection

Long Term Impact	Short Term Impact: Yes	Short Term Impact: No
No	Short-term, but no/mixed long-term impact: Haqqani Network (3)	No long-term or short-term impact: AQIM (4)
Yes	Long-term and short-term impact: TTP (1)	No short-term, but long-term Impact: Boko Haram/ Ansaru (2)

Department of Treasury summaries of terrorist financial sanctions appeared in Terrorist Assets Reports (TARs) and are straightforward to compare across groups. The material support charges information is listed by associated group from a database used with permission of National Intelligence University. The annual Department of State's Country Reports on Terrorism were cataloged and coded for narrative references to designation-associated activities under the country entries impacted by the each of the selected groups. The initial coding categories were derived from the independent variables, corresponding to the six expected designation-associated activities illustrated in Figure 4: Visual Representation of Study appearing on page 51 specifically: military activities, security cooperation, legal charges, executive actions, diplomatic and consular activities, and financial sanctions. To cover the full range of possible activities, interventions pursued by the US government were coded according to the legal responsibilities of the agencies in the FTO process. [165] The codes roughly corresponded to the State Department's reporting on activities in collaboration with their fellow government agencies: military activities (DoD); immigration, border, and defense activities (Homeland Security); legal activities (Justice); executive actions (National Security Council); diplomatic and consular activities (DOS); and financial activities (Treasury) in the qualitative analysis.

The codes were then expanded to categorize themes that provided plausible alternative explanations beyond designation-associated activities, as a check on bias for the qualitative coding—to include international organization action. Appendix D illustrates the full list of codes applied to the narratives in the State Department's Country Reports on terrorism. Captured media

[165] Jacquelyn L. Williams-Bridgers, "Combating Terrorism: U.S. Government Strategies and Efforts to Deny Terrorists Safe Haven," (Washington, D. C.: United State Government Accountability Office 2011).

was obtained from CTC's Harmony project and the released media from the Office of Director of National Intelligence from the 2011 Abbottabad raid against Usama Bin Laden and coded with the same themes as the State Department Reports, while incorporating additional codes 1-3 and 21-30 that were specific to the jihadist self-articulated experience (i.e. authority in jihad, corrections to jihadists, jihadist difficulties, jihadist needs from headquarters, lack of material and external support, etc.) The full list of codes with all explanatory factors considered in the qualitative analysis appears in Appendix D. As an important caveat on the coding, each mention of an activity was not duplicated so for example in the Multinational Joint Task Force example for Boko Haram—despite repeated mentions in the narrative for multiple countries—it was counted as one "code" as its operation reflected a singular potential activity as an outflow from designation. This counting schema helped avoid inflated counts from lengthy narratives that extolled the virtues of a single program or activity over many paragraphs or pages.

3.3.3 Assumptions and Difficulties with this Approach

The qualitative analysis is designed to assess the intermediate variables, specifically if changes for group outcomes post-designation can be attributed to a different application of activities accompanying designation. Yet, the literature suggests there are many examples where the US government had little to do with changes in group behavior or where changes in group behavior are not related to designation, as addressed in Chapter 3.[166] Therefore, documents from terrorists themselves from captured media was specifically included within the case studies as a

[166] Audrey Kurth Cronin, "How Al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups," *International Security* 31, no. 1 (2006).; Mahoney, "Splinters and Schisms: Rebel Group Fragmentation and the Durability of Insurgencies."; Phillips, "Terrorist Group Cooperation and Longevity."; Tricia Bacon, "Strange Bedfellows or Brothers-in-Arms: Why Terrorist Groups Ally" (Georgetown University, 2013); *Why Terrorist Groups Form International Alliances*.; and Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends : Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*.

check on conclusions. This data reflects the terrorists' own interpretation of their activity, alliance formation, organizational change, and assessed capability compiled from their own communications. Captured media was not available for every group, but every effort was made to identify additional source material that reflects the groups' assessment of US government influence on their behavior, or dynamics independent of US activity. However, in general there was a paucity of captured media available for the chosen groups resulting in very little available data to analyze. Due to the potential bias of and limited availability of captured media, conclusions drawn from the captured media are weighed alongside the additional data. To improve the insight of this tool, only internal letters and correspondence not made for public propaganda were used to assess the strategic calculus and concerns of the designated groups (i.e. released video propaganda was not assessed).

3.4 Outline of Findings Presentation

The following three chapters present the findings of each section of the research by quantitative hypothesis before aggregating the results together in Chapter 7 with the qualitative analysis leading to Chapter 8's conclusion. Chapter 4 measures the impact of FTO designation on eliminating groups via membership counts broken down by area of operations. Chapter 5 focuses on reducing terrorist attacks and lethality and includes the interrupted time series analysis and associated attack frequency data. Chapter 6 assesses the impact of FTO designation on hardening targets by examining attack type and target behavior pre- and post-designation. The trendlines identified on attack frequency and lethality presented in Chapter 5 are then carried forward into Chapter 7 where the qualitative case studies examine if designation-associated activities drove behavior change. The conclusions in Chapter 8 consider the totality of the

findings and finishes with an assessment of FTO designation's total impact on the Salafi jihadist groups and considers policy implications.

Chapter 4: Eliminating Terrorist Groups

This chapter assesses hypothesis one and seeks to answer if after foreign terrorist organization designation if there is a meaningful decline in Salafi jihadist group membership. This is assessed by looking at a) the total number of groups active in each area and b) the total Salafi jihadists belonging to those groups. Confirming the hypothesis would mean the overall number of groups and ideally the number of adherents to groups declines, possibly even eliminating them. The overall findings demonstrate that the available data is extremely poor, lacking the kind of detail required to establish any conclusions about the impact of FTO designation on Salafi jihadist group membership with confidence. Moreover, the number of groups and members in aggregate increase, confirming the null hypothesis.

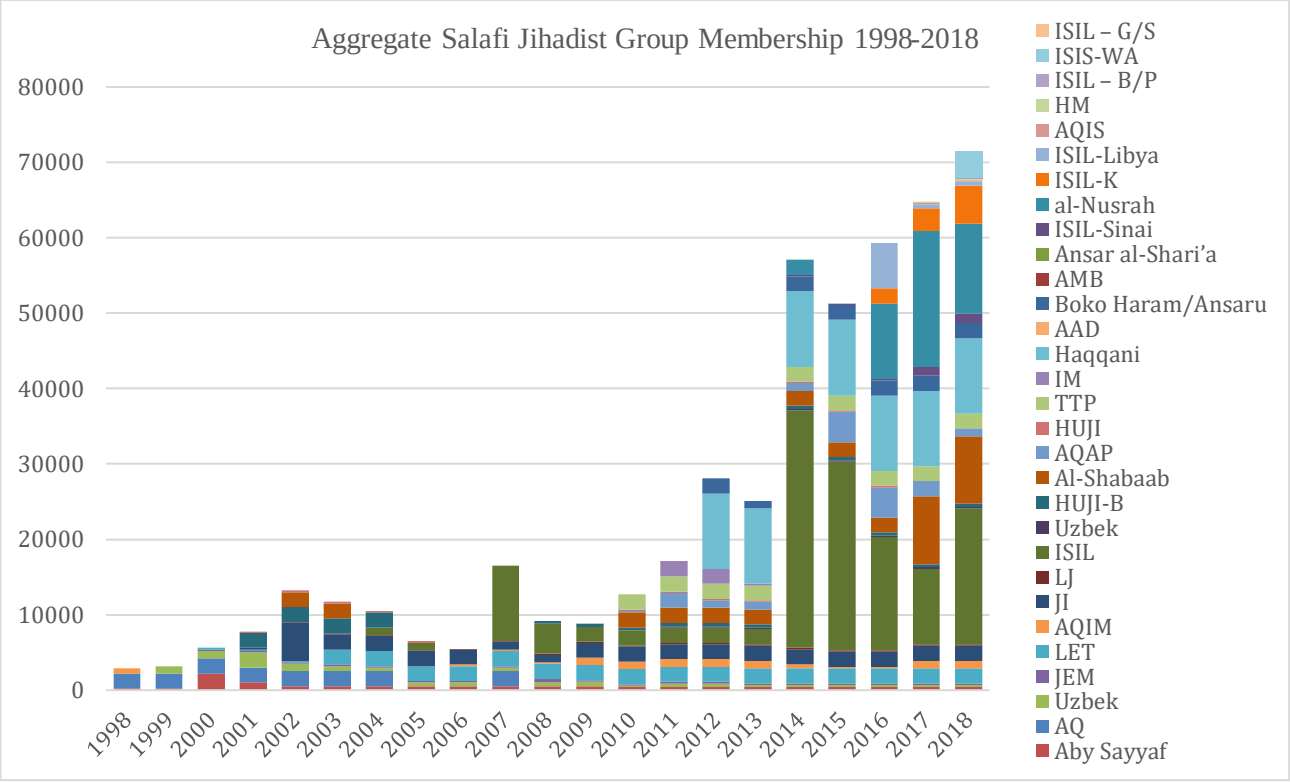
4.1 Overall Findings

The findings on the impact of FTO designation against the Salafi jihadist groups do not confirm this study's hypothesis because more areas of operations experienced greater growth in the number of groups and membership post-designation than pre-designation. More designated Salafi jihadist groups are currently operating in more areas of concern across the globe than on 9/11. The data from State Department's Country Reports on Terrorism used in this study indicates 2,200 jihadists were active in 1998 and over 71,500 by the end of 2018. Figure 9 on the next page includes the approximate membership over time of 18 of the 20 groups included in this study.[167]

[167] Ansar al-Dine (AAD) and Ansar Ansar al-Shari'a were excluded because of a lack of membership data.

Because the upward curve in growth of Salafi jihadism group membership worldwide was not the same across all groups, however, more granular measures of membership in specific areas of operation are worthy of exploration. The assessment of group and membership trends is broken down into seven areas of operation below—North Africa; Afghanistan/Pakistan; Iraq/ Syria; Arabian Peninsula; Somalia; Nigeria; and Southeast Asia. In some area, such as North Africa and Southeast Asia, designation appears to have a controlling and dampening effect on group and regional growth 1-5 years later. Some of the growth represents shifts in group allegiance and identity as new groups emerge, splinter from, and replace legacy organizations. In Afghanistan/Pakistan for example, the number of militants appears largely consistent, but group affiliations have changed. Given the membership changes specific to geographic area, amplifying data regarding group formation dates and mergers are noted in the charts alongside group and membership growth in the regional breakdowns that follow.

Figure 9: Aggregate Salafi Jihadist Group Membership 1998-2018



Across all the areas of operations poor official data on group membership—often oddly unchanging from year to year—make it impossible to estimate trends with any confidence. For a clearer assessment of designation's impact on membership, official US government data on groups pre- and post-designation would need to be significantly improved. Moreover, since the sourcing for terrorist membership numbers identified in the *Country Reports on Terrorism* is not transparent, additional information is required for a full assessment of membership trends. Based on what is available at present, however, the impact of FTO designation on Salafi jihadist group numbers and membership tracks with broader trends identified in the literature, indicating FTO designation does not appear to have an overall effect of lessening groups or members.

4.2 Breakdown of Findings by Area

Findings for each area of jihadist operations follow, broken down into membership counts, with some amplifying comments to interpret the data. Charts are presented by yearly growth with red lines to reflect designation dates of groups in the region and green lines to indicate the formation of or naming of a new group, both of which impact regional growth dynamics. The counts reflected in the chart represent all jihadists in the region associated with Salafi jihadist groups, extracted from the State Department Country Reports on Terrorism data. A full copy of the meta-analysis appears in Appendix H.

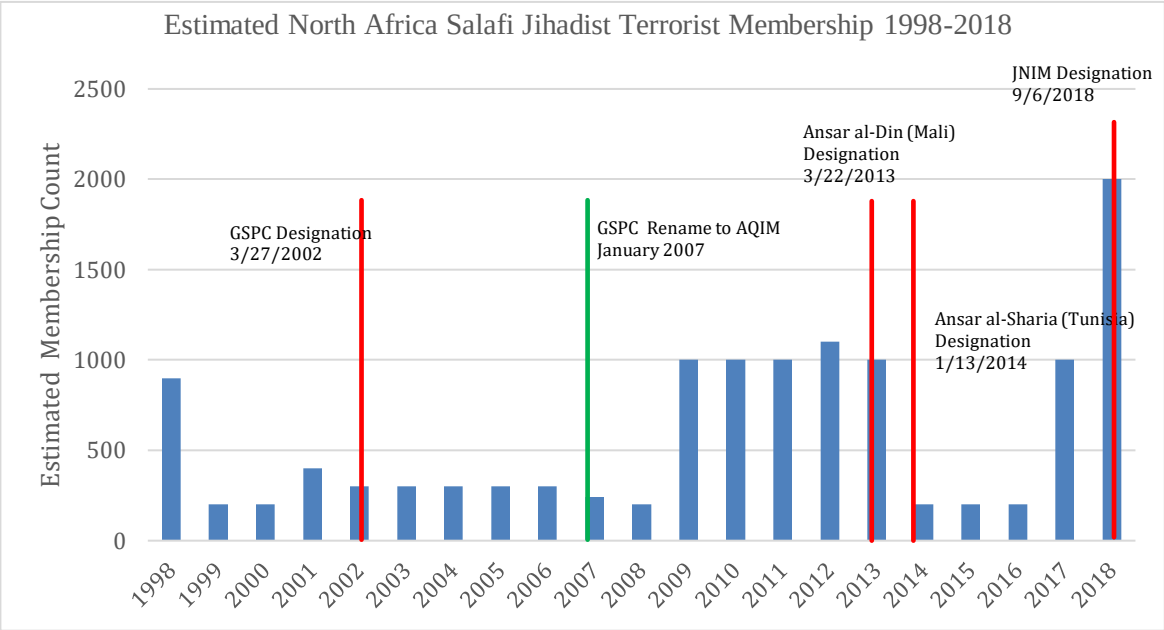
4.2.1 North Africa

North African jihadist membership centered in Algeria, Mali, and Tunisia leveled off at about 300 jihadists in approximately 2002 according to the United States State Department—a significant drop from the late 1990s, when an estimated 900 to 1000 jihadists belonged to the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). While

the GSPC was designated in March 2002, the decline in membership between the late 90s and early 2000s is likely not an indicator that early US efforts to counter the spread of jihadist groups worked, but rather a reflection drop in North African jihadists after the collapse of the GIA. Nevertheless, the flattened GSPC growth post-2002, before the emergence of AQIM, is interesting in context of the focus of the US-led effort to counter terrorism post-9/11.

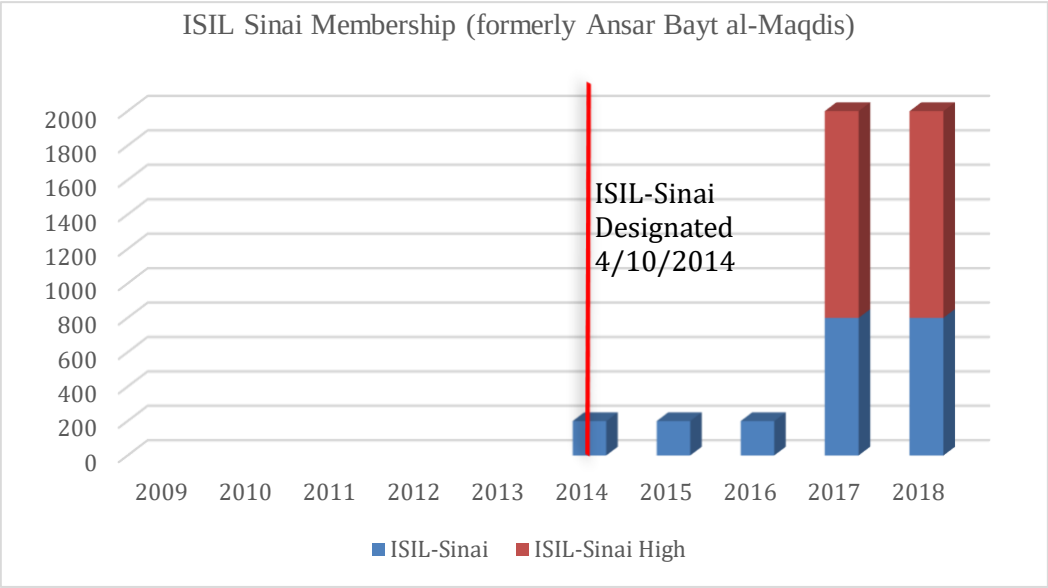
The precipitous drop in membership after the FTO designation of Ansar al-Dine (Mali) and Ansar al-Sharia (Tunisia), however, suggests that CT efforts in 2013-2014 were effective at flattening growth, for about 3 years. A new alliance in March 2017 among Ansar al-Din, al-Murabitun, and AQIM's Sahara branch—Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM)—under the al-Qa'ida banner drove up Salafi jihadist numbers to 1,000-2,000 and prompted JNIM designation. These patterns of flattened membership after major designations, occurring in the context of an ever-increasing global problem, makes them more compelling as potential evidence of US effectiveness 1-3 years after designation in North Africa. Figure 10 illustrates the approximate membership changes in North Africa in Algeria, Tunisia, and Mali.

Figure 10: Estimated North African Salafi Jihadist Terrorist Membership, 1998-2018



ISIL-Sinai, formerly Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM) is the primary group in Egypt to assess in terms of membership changes pre- and post-designation. Although Egypt's role in the global jihadist movement predates al-Qa'ida's and ISIL's modern iterations, by 9/11 "Blind Shaykh" Omar Abdel Rahman's Jamaat al-Islamiyya[168]had ended its activities and Ayman al-Zawahiri's Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) had merged with al-Qa'ida. ABM declared allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in November 2014, joining new ISIL affiliate pledges in Algeria, Yemen, Libya, and Saudi Arabia.[169] Emerging after the 2011 Arab Spring, ABM claims Egyptian origins, but some analysts suggest the group shares its ideology, founding, and vision with the Gaza-based Mujahideen Shura Council. By early 2014 ABM's increasingly violent attacks against Cairo and along the Nile Delta earned it FTO designation.[170]

Figure 11: ISIL Sinai Membership 2009-2018



[168] Nelly Lahoud, "The Province of Sinai: Why Bother with Palestine If You Can Be Part of the "Islamic State"," *CTC Sentinel* 8, no. 3 (2015)., 12.

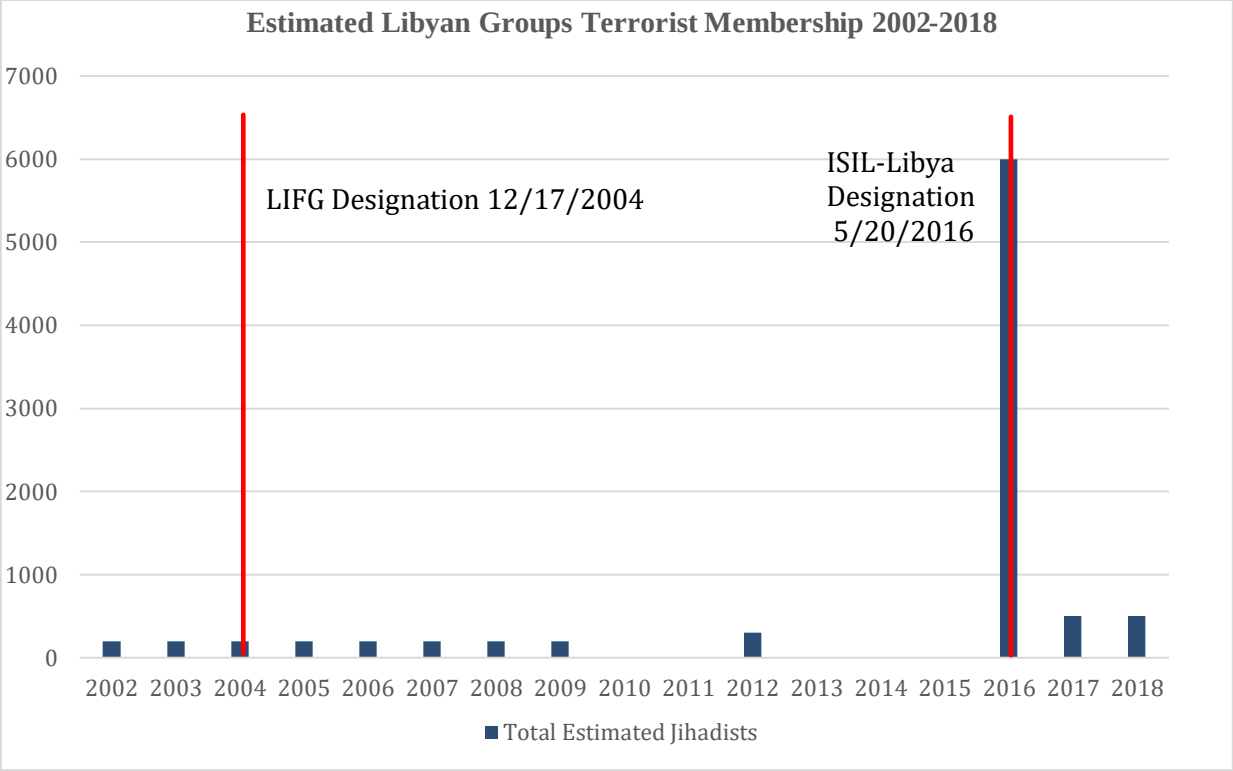
[169] Holly Fletcher, "Egyptian Islamic Jihad," in *CFR Backgrounder* (Council on Foreign Relations, 2008).

[170] Zack Gold, "Wilayat Sinai: The Islamic State's Egyptian Affiliate," ed. The Intstitute for National Security Studies (Tel Aviv University).

ISIL-Sinai's estimated membership has grown from 200 estimated members in 2014 membership to 1,200 in 2018, likely stemming from the group adopting the ISIL-moniker (Figure 11, previous page). Given the limited data for the group (only 5 years), and the relatively quick US designation, few conclusions should be drawn. The Egyptian case demonstrates designation does not have the impact on membership that policymakers desired.

The Libyan counts in North Africa are too poor to draw any useful conclusions, as illustrated in Figure 12 below. Membership in the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group remained flat at 200 fighters from 2002-09, which raises questions about how the data was obtained. Was the count rerun every year from zero or was the previous year's number assumed to be accurate? Accurate membership data is needed for analysts and policymakers to assess the impact of designation. The nuances of State Department data collection, conducted by the State

Figure 12: Estimated Libyan Groups Terrorist Membership 2002-2018



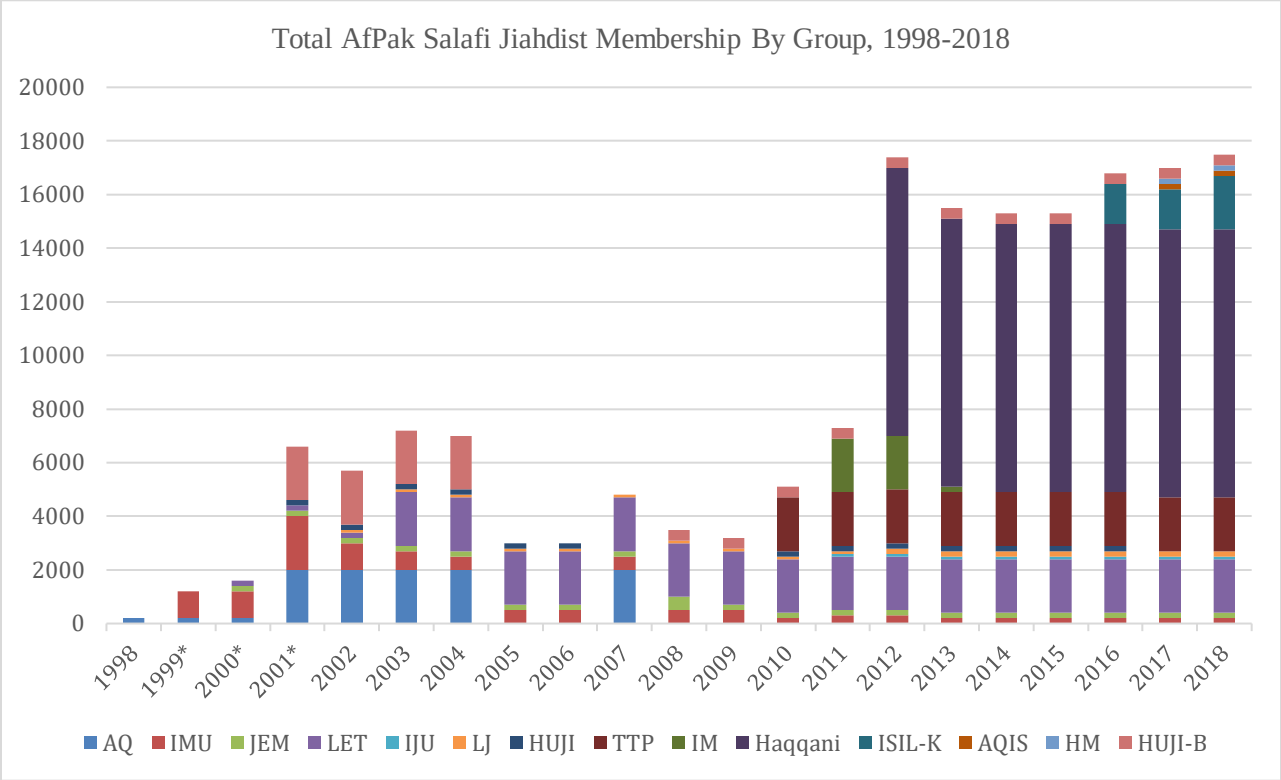
Department's Bureau of Counterterrorism, are beyond the scope of this work, but if the

underlying data is not accurate in tracking terrorist group membership, it raises the question of how analysts and policymakers would know if a group is losing or gaining members after designation. That is not to criticize the painstaking work of accounting for terrorist group membership, particularly in conflict zones like Libya, but rather to reemphasize that measuring CT effectiveness is fraught with complex data issues given the clandestine nature of groups.

4.2.3 Afghanistan and Pakistan

Afghanistan/Pakistan (Af/Pak) is the most complicated area in which to track Salafi jihadist group membership, particularly post-9/11, and arguably the most important for measuring progress. With the most designated Salafi jihadist groups of any region, the counts are particularly complicated. Figure 13 on the next page shows aggregate membership escalating from 200 fighters in 1998 to more than 17,000 by 2018, but it also shows largely static membership within individual groups—the increase has come from the proliferation of jihadist groups from one to fourteen. For example, al-Qa'ida's 200 members before 2001 grew to 2,000 after 9/11, and stayed steady through 2004, when the State Department stopped estimating total membership (Figure 13). The number reappeared in official counts in 2007—but has not been reestimated since. The lack of data stymies any useful analysis of al-Qa'ida membership in Af/Pak in the intervening years.

Figure 13: Total AfPak Salafi Jihadist Membership by Group

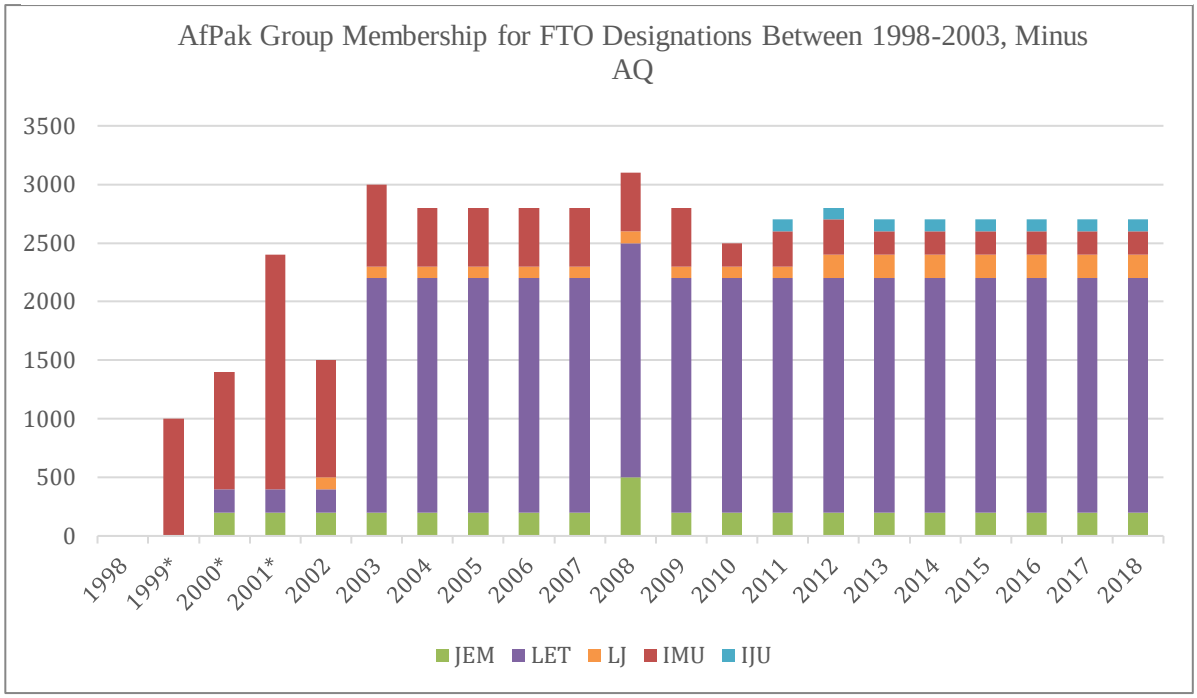


A chronological examination of group membership illustrates the difficulty in using changes in group membership to assess FTO designation's impact on regionally aligned groups. Looking at membership of the groups designated soon after 9/11 (2001-2003), such as Jaish-e Mohammed (JEM), Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LET), and Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ), shows that the groups' individual membership ebbs and flows, but regional membership remains in the 2-3,000 militant range for 15 of the past 21 years, if al-Qa'ida is taken out of the mix (Figure 14, following page). Static Salafi jihadist membership across groups designated in the same period suggests group membership is a less effective metric than proposed to assess designation's impact in Af/Pak.

Yet, before we discard the membership metric for Af/Pak, it is important to note the debate within the CT community about whether LET, LJ, and the HQN meet the definition of Salafist jihadism. The Blair Institute for Global Change excludes LET, HQN, and the Taliban

from their criteria for jihadism based on the groups' inconsistent "Support for expansion of Muslim lands."[171] Because all four groups pre-date al-Qa'ida's and ISIL's vision of global jihad,

Figure 14: AfPak Group Membership for FTO Designations 1998-2003, Minus AQ



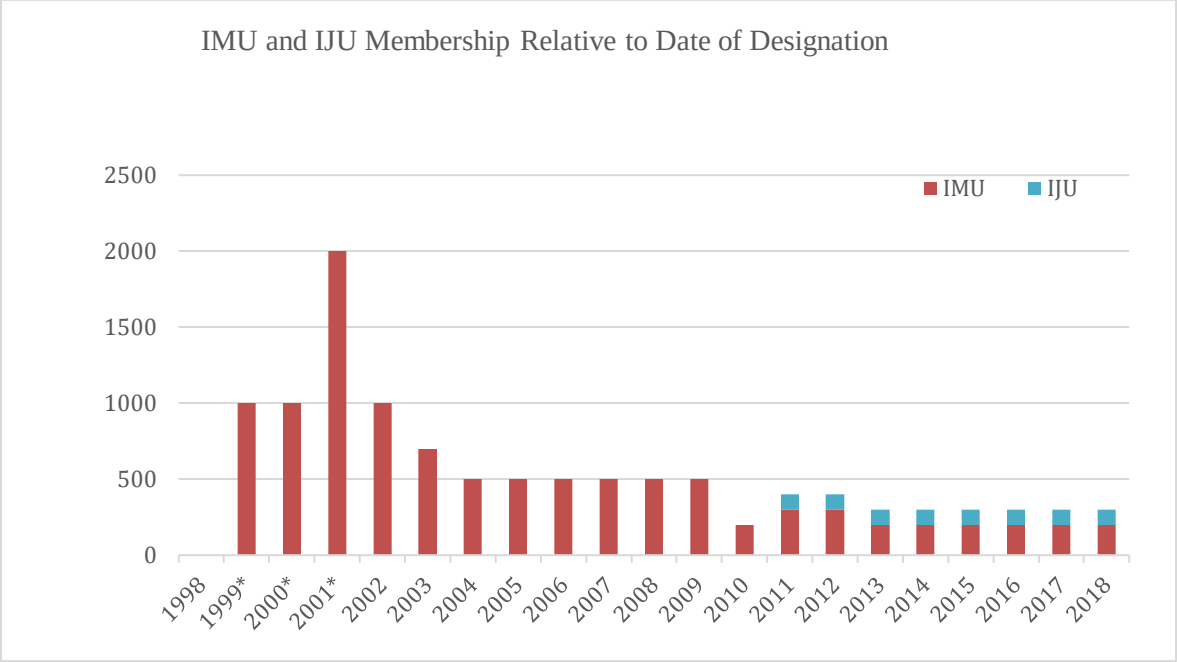
it is worth considering excluding these groups.

Doing so leaves the Uzbekistan-based groups from the early days of the Global War on Terror. The Uzbek groups were excluded from most of this study because of their low level of terrorist incidents, but their influence on group and membership numbers in the Af/Pak region is worth noting. CT efforts appeared to have lowered membership in the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), designated in 2000. The group's membership peaked at around 2,000 post-9/11 and since shrunk to a mere 200 members (Figure 15, following page). Even accounting for the split with the follow-on group the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), designated in 2005, US success

[171] Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, "Violent Islamist Extremism: A Global Problem," (2018)., 14.

in discouraging membership in Uzbek groups affiliated with Salafi jihadist ideology has been strong, which may account for their lack of attacks in the GTD dataset.

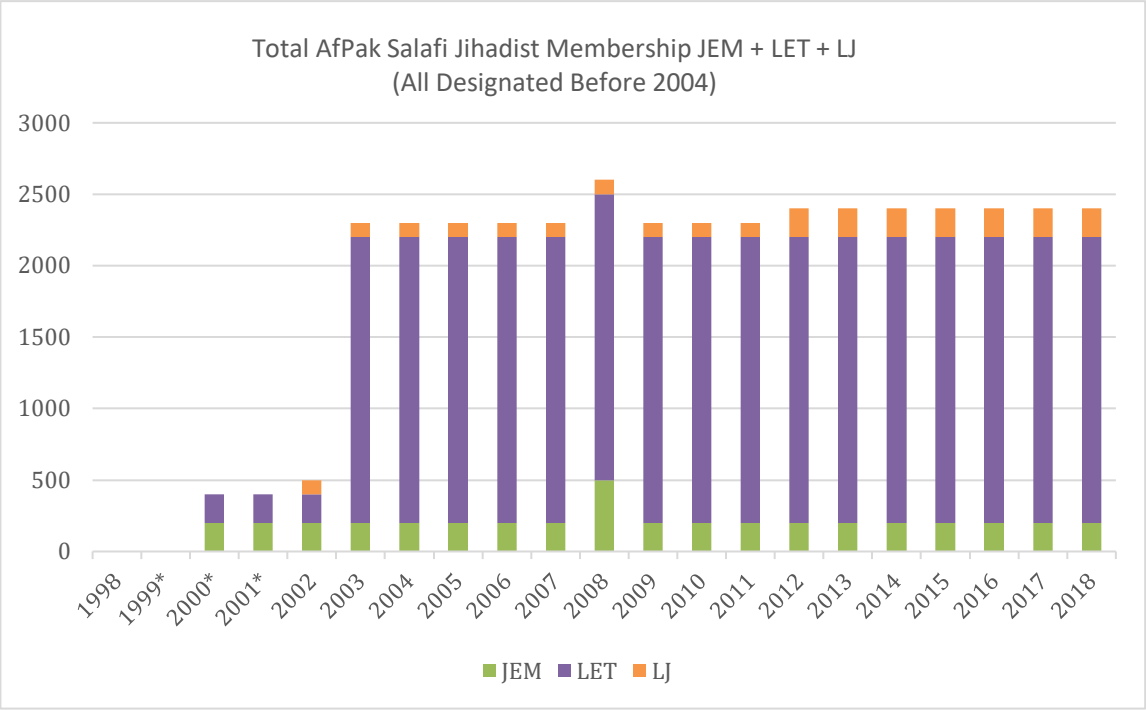
Figure 15: IMU and IJU Membership Relative to Date of Designation



The last grouping in terms of membership in the Af/Pak region are the native Pakistani group, the first crop of which were designated between 2001 and 2003. The consistency in membership in Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM) at about 200, Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LET) at 2,000, and Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ) 100-200 members provides little insight into the impact of US CT efforts. Like with Libya, the static membership numbers for these Pakistani-based groups raises questions about State Department data, or another cause of the unusual consistency compared to the Uzbekistan groups. It is possible that the nativist Pakistan groups remained relatively stable because of different designation-associated US activities. The different trendlines in membership following US designation for the Uzbek and Pakistani groups are a particularly interesting finding because of the debate about Salafi jihadi ideology and the longer history of some of the

Pakistani groups—LET and LJ date back to 1990 and 1996, respectively.[172] Figure 16 below depicts the membership of these groups.

Figure 16: Total AfPak Salafi Jihadist Membership, JEM+LET+LJ



The rest of the Af/Pak groups, HM, HQN, HUJI/HUJI-B, IM, ISIL-K, and TTP were not designated until after 2006. The only Af/Pak group designated after the initial Bush administration response to 9/11 was the Islamic Jihad Union in 2005, when it left IMU. The rapid designation of six Af/Pak groups before 2003 and the precipitous drop after invading Iraq in 2003 underscores the broader point of this work: US government policy attention and priority is reflected, at least in part, in the designation patterns of FTOs.

[172] Stanford University, "Lashkar-E-Taiba," in *Mapping Militant Organizations* (2018)., and "Lashkar-E-Jhangvi (Lej)," in *Mapping Militant Organizations* (2018). For comparison, JEM was founded in 2000.

Except for ISIL-K, these Af/Pak groups suffer from the same statistically unlikely data consistency problems as the Libyan data. For 2010-18, State Department records show a consistent 2,000 members for TTP, designated in 2010, and 10,000 members from 2012-18 for HQN, designated in 2012. Kashmir-based Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), designated in 2017, has a consistent 200 members the year of and the year after designation. HUJI is recorded as having several hundred members from 2001-2018 and HUJI-B as having 2,000 members from 2001 to 2004 and 400 members from 2008-2018. The only outlier is the Indian Mujahedeen, an India-based Islamic group that claimed a string of attacks across India in 2008.[173] After its designation in 2011, the State Department calculated it had 2000 members, but that number dropped to several hundred by 2013, possibly due to improved CT cooperation between the US and India.[174]

The last group, ISIL-Khorasan is made up of former members of TTP and other Af/Pak militant groups. ISIL-K announced its affiliation with ISIL in January 2015[175] and quickly declared war on the Afghan Taliban, compounding the number of militant groups in Afghanistan competing for military and political power. [176] ISIL-K was designated in 2016 and estimates of its size have grown from 1,500 fighters in 2016 to as high as 5,000 fighters in 2018. This growth should have led to a decline in competing regional group membership, but this splintering trend

[173] Namrata Goswami, "Backgrounder: Who Is the Indian Mujahideen?," https://idsa.in/backgrounder/IndianMujahideen.

[174] Counterterrorism United States. Department of State. Office of the Coordinator for, "Country Reports on Terrorism," (2013), https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2013/index.htm., 185-187.

[175] Don Rassler, "Situating the Emergence of the Islamic State of Khorasan," *CTC Sentinel* 8, no. 3 (2015).

[176] Stanford University, "The Islamic State in the Khorasan Province (Is-Kp)," in *Mapping Militant Organizations* (2018).

is not reflected in the data, which compounds the confusion regarding total Salafi jihadist group members operating in Af/Pak.

In summary, the Salafi jihadist groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan seem largely unchanged in total membership across the region despite US designation, except for the Uzbekistan groups, where clear gains can be identified post-designation and targeting. This highlights the importance of future qualitative research in this area, to determine if and how different groups were treated in the same area of operations post-designation by accompanying activities. If different designation-associated activities account for differences in militant counts it will help support the hypothesis, if not it is equally possible that designation did not have the desired impact on group members or that the data on Salafi jihadist group membership is simply too poor to draw useful conclusions.

4.2.4 Iraq and Syria

The membership counts for the ISIL and al-Nusrah groups, competing under the global ISIL and al-Qa'ida banners respectively, belie the evolution of the groups, their relationship, and the designation and targeting of the groups by US policy. ISIL was first designated as its predecessor organization, al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) in December 2004, with the State Department adding al-Nusrah as an alias of the group in December 2012.[177] The estimated number of jihadists in Iraq and Syria remained comparatively low until the Syrian uprisings in March 2011 and the US withdrawal from Iraq.

[177] Department Spokesperson Victoria Nuland, "Terrorist Designations of the Al-Nusrah Front as an Alias for Al-Qa'ida in Iraq," news release, 11 December 2012, 2012, https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/12/201759.htm.

The number of jihadists, estimated to be 5-10 thousand at the height of the Iraqi insurgency in 2006-2007, doubled by 2014. The drop since then, reflected in both the low-end and high-end State Department estimates of ISIL's total membership, is largely attributed to direct military intervention orchestrated by the United States Coalition to Defeat ISIL beginning in late 2014.[178] When it announced the global coalition to defeat ISIL in September 2014, the United States identified specific lines of effort to defeat ISIL by providing significant military support to local forces, impeding the flow of foreign fighters, disrupting financing, easing the humanitarian crisis, and using counter-messaging to expose ISIL's true nature—a more aggressive CT campaign than most FTOs experienced, but consistent with many of the tools used on a smaller scale against other groups post-designation.[179] The total membership estimates on the high and low end subsequent to the efforts against AQI and later ISIL are depicted in Figure 17 on the next page.

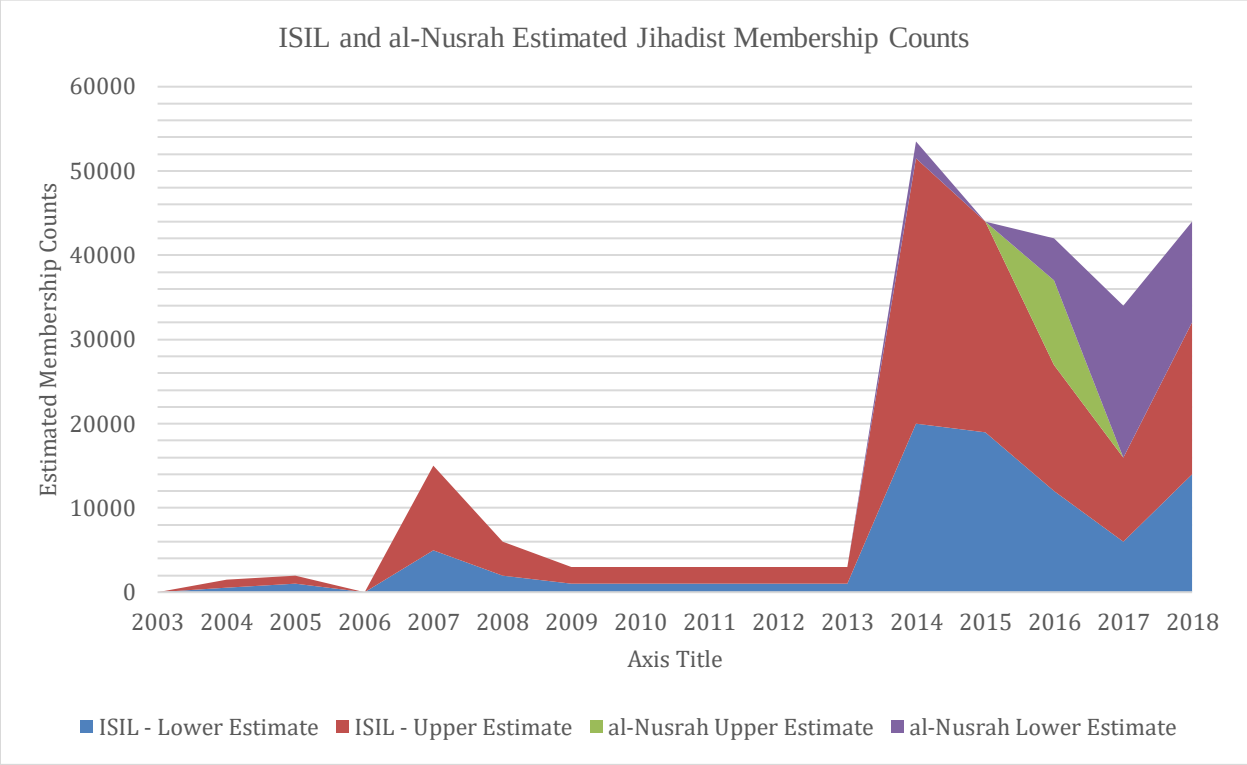
Based on both the lack of change in membership reflected after designation, and the role of military force, it is reasonable to propose a slight modification of the original hypothesis in Iraq's case. In areas of active US military engagement (Afghanistan, Iraq, and other areas of operations) designation may serve as a less compelling proxy than military force for US policy attention and focus. In the cases where US forces are engaged in or supporting major joint

[178] For details on the extent of the intervention and the US government's claims of military success, see United States Department of State, "Country Reports on Terrorism, 2015," (2016)., 1. "At the end of 2015, 40 percent of the territory ISIL controlled at the beginning of the year had been liberated. In Syria, local forces expelled ISIL fighters from several key cities along the routes connecting the two ISIL strongholds of Raqqa and Mosul, and reclaimed about 11 percent of the territory ISIL once controlled. These losses demonstrated the power of coordinated government action to mobilize against and confront terrorism."

[179] U.S. Department of State, "About Us – the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS," https://www.state.gov/about-us-the-global-coalition-to-defeat-isis/.

combat operations the proxy measure may not be needed. Future studies should compare the role of designation in combat versus non-combat operations to see if the tools used vary outcomes.

Figure 17: ISIL and al-Nusrah Estimated Jihadist Membership Counts



4.2.5 Arabian Peninsula

Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula is the chief FTO included in this study based in the Arabian Peninsula, as ISIL-Yemen—an offshoot and now competitor of the al-Qa'ida affiliate—was not designated as an FTO and remains a Specially Designated Global Terrorist group under Executive Order 13224.[180] Al-Qa'ida's roots in Yemen and Saudi Arabia date back to the founding of the organization as Bin Laden was famously a Saudi Arabian with Yemeni ancestry

[180] Bush, "Executive Order 13224—Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions with Persons Who Commit, Threaten to Commit, or Support Terrorism."; United States Department of State, "Executive Order 13224," https://www.state.gov/executive-order-13224/#state.

on his mother's side.[181] During al-Qa'ida's early years Saudis and Yemenis flocked to join the Afghan jihad, some serving as bin Laden's early bodyguards and first recruits who spread the global vision of jihad back to the Arabian Peninsula after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989.[182] While Saudi Arabia was largely able to contain the remnants of al-Qa'ida on the Peninsula from 2001 until around 2007 members of the group found refuge in nearby Yemen and were able to regroup following a February 2006 prison break that allowed 23 al-Qa'ida members to go free in Yemen.[183] Despite the extensive historic links between Salafi jihadists in the Arabian Peninsula and al-Qa'ida, AQAP was not designated until January 2010, a year after the Saudi branch of al-Qa'ida formerly merged with the Yemeni branch and announced their new moniker "al-Q'aida in the Arabian Peninsula."[184] Precipitating the

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[181] Peter L. Bergen, *The Rise and Fall of Osama Bin Laden* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2021).; Michael Scheuer, *Through Our Enemies' Eyes : Osama Bin Laden, Radical Islam, and the Future of America*, Rev. , 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C: Potomac Books, Incorporated, 2006).

[182] Najwa Bin Laden, Omar Bin Laden, and Jean P. Sasson, *Growing up Bin Laden : Osama's Wife and Son Take Us inside Their Secret World*, 1st ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2009).; Abdel Bari Atwan, *The Secret History of Al Qaeda* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).; Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower : Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf, 2006). See also Sturm, *Is the Sound Bite Mightier Than the Sword? Strategic Communications as a Tool to Export the Global Jihad, 2001-2009*., where much of the original research for this section was conducted and previously authored in a thesis by this researcher.

[183] *Al Qaeda in Yemen and Somalia : A Ticking Time Bomb : A Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Eleventh Congress, Second Session, January 21, 2010*, S. Prt. ; 111-40. (Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 2010).; Andrew McGregor, "Al-Qaeda's Great Escape in Yemen," in *Terrorism Focus* (2006).

[184] *Designations of Foreign Terrorist Organizations; in the Matter of the Designation Of: Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (Aqap), Also Known as Al-Qa'ida of Jihad Organization in the Arabian Peninsula, Also Known as Tanzim Qa'idat Al-Jihad Fi Jazirat Al-Arab, Also Known as Al- Qa'ida Organization in the Arabian Peninsula (Aqap), Also Known as Al- Qa'ida in Yemen (Aqy), Also Known as Al-Qa'ida in the South Arabian Peninsula, as a Foreign Terrorist Organization Pursuant to Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as Amended.*, Public Notice 6875.

designation was a series of high-profile AQAP attacks against Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Nayef and US Northwest Flight 253 from Amsterdam to Detroit on Christmas Day 2009.[185]

Regrettably, despite the extensive history of al-Qa'ida activity in Yemen and Saudi Arabia the State Department did not publish annual figures regarding Salafi jihadist membership in the Arabian Peninsula until 2010, the first year of designation. In 2010, membership was estimated at 200 but by 2011 that number had jumped to 2000. Estimates peaked in 2015-2016 that as many as 4,000 members belonged to AQAP, and then declined again to 1000 by 2018. The fact that the 2018 numbers were five times the estimated total in the year of designation points to the lack of success in countering Salafi jihadist expandion in the Arabian Peninsula both prior to and subsequent to designation (Figure 18).

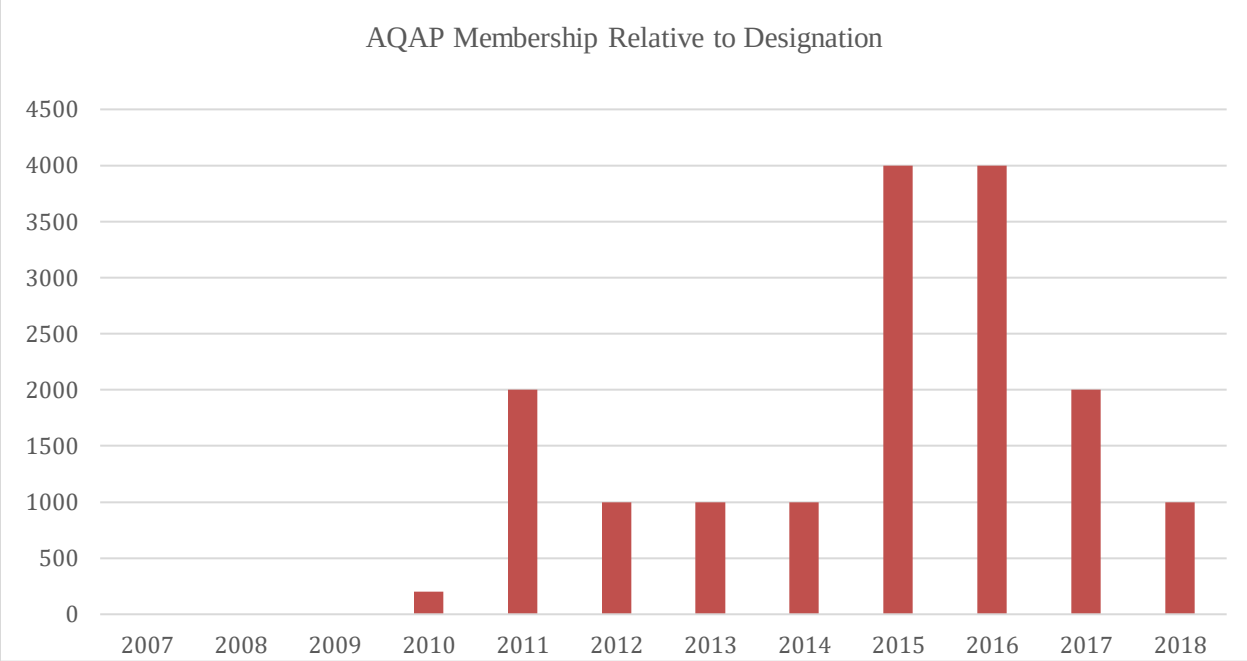


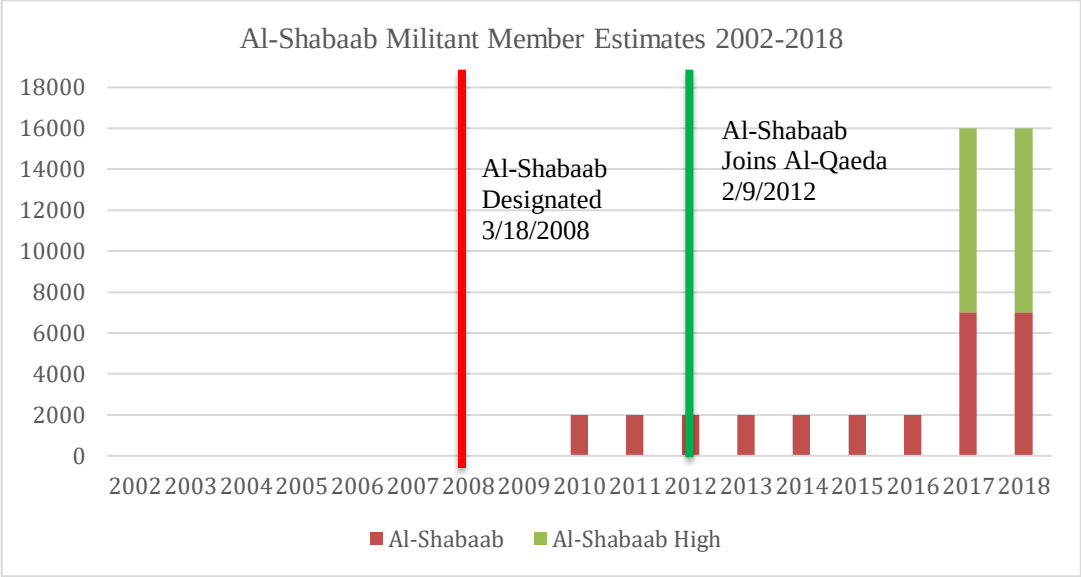
Figure 18: AQAP Membership Relative to Designation

[185] Sturm, *Is the Sound Bite Mightier Than the Sword? Strategic Communications as a Tool to Export the Global Jihad, 2001-2009.*

4.2.6 Somalia

Al-Shabaab, which emerged from the Islamic Courts Union in Somalia, was founded in December 2006[186] and pledged allegiance to al-Qa'ida in 2009, but it was not formally welcomed into the Salafi jihadist fold by Ayman al-Zawahiri until 2012.[187] The earliest State Department count of Shabaab's membership numbers appeared in 2010 and stayed consistent at 2,000 until 2017, which would appear to confirm the hypothesis, except again there are likely data problems with the static nature of the State Department reported demographics. Static growth may be indicative of designation's effectiveness at holding a group below the expected rise of an undesignated group, but it also re-illustrates the lack of transparency regarding the origins and suspicious repetition of jihadist membership counts. The large jump in Shabaab's strength in 2017-18—to between 7,000 and 16,000—leaves one again skeptical of official estimates of clandestine group size in determining the impact of designation (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Al-Shabaab Militant Member Estimates 2002-2018



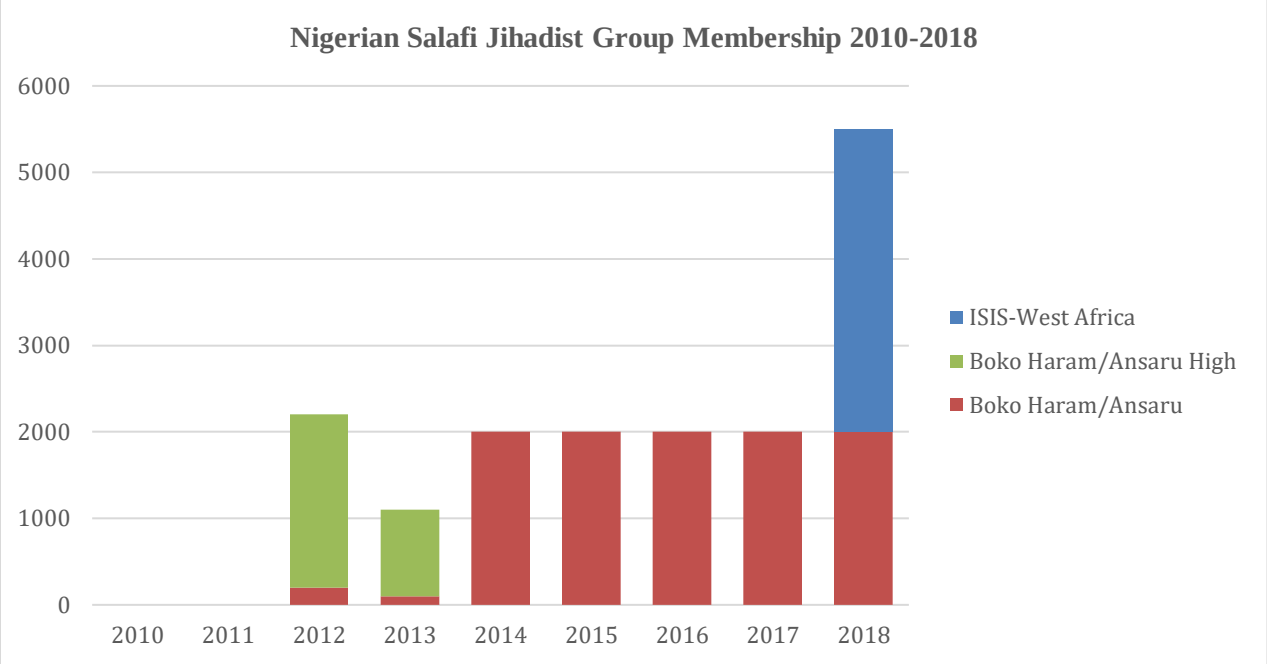
[186] Stanford University, "Al-Shabaab," in *Mapping Militant Organizations* (2019).

[187] Katharine Houreld, "Somali Militant Group Al-Shabaab Formally Joins Al-Qaida," *The Guardian*, 9 February 2012 2012.

4.2.7 Nigeria

The network of allied Salafist jihadist factions that has emerged in Nigeria since 2010, known as Boko Haram, was formally designated, along with its rival Ansaru, in 2013. Their designations seem to have had no impact on membership. In fact, 2013 was the low point for State Department membership data on the group until it merged with ISIL and a splinter group renamed itself ISIL-West Africa, causing a noticeable change in the group's assessed members (Figure 20). This raises interesting questions about the differences between Nigeria and parts of North Africa, where designation appeared to be followed by years of flat membership growth. Were actions that accompany designation (sanctions, criminal charges, military and partnership activities) used more often in North Africa than against Boko Haram? Further research should compare the sequencing of activities used against Boko Haram/Ansaru pre- and post-designation to further assess how the Nigerian groups and US efforts against them compare to other African Salafi jihadist groups.

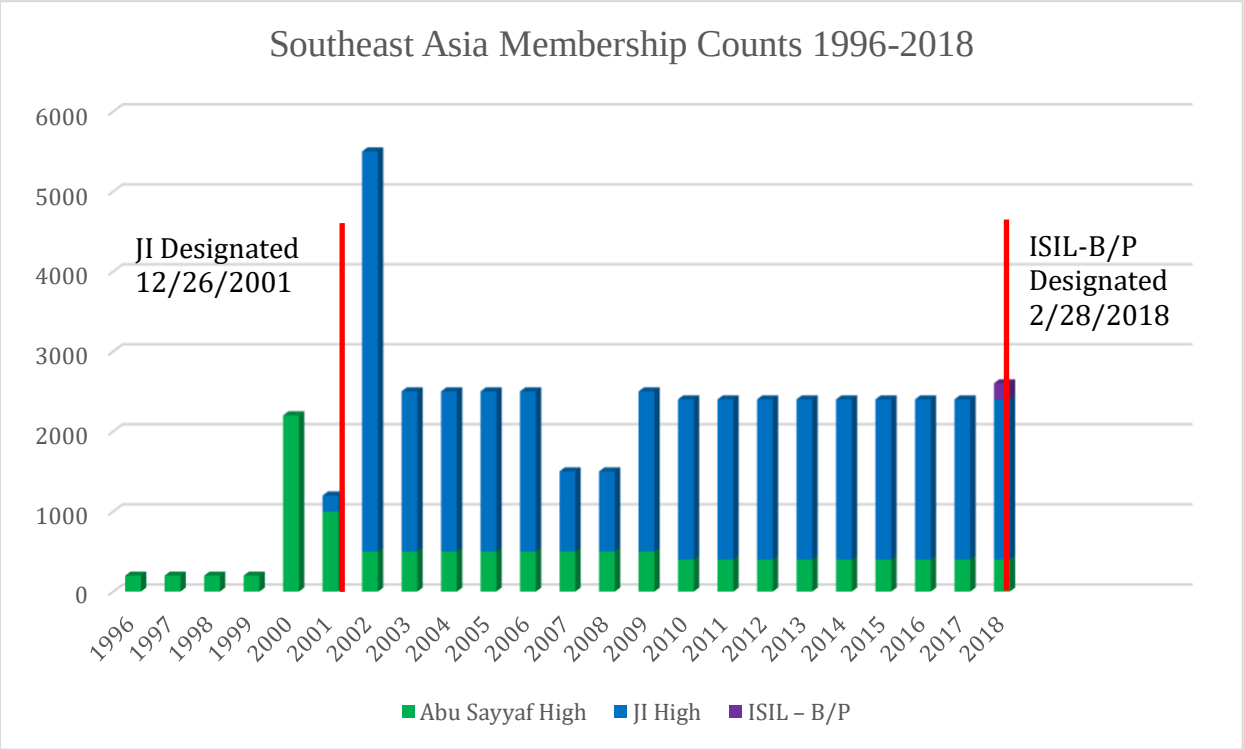
Figure 20: Nigerian Salafi Jihadist Group Membership 2010-2018



4.2.8 Southeast Asia

The oldest designated Salafi Jihadist group in East Asia, Abu Sayyaf, was originally founded in 1991 and designated an FTOs in the first batch by the State Department in October 1997.[188] Abu Sayyaf's designation date puts it outside the bounds of this research, but its group membership is still relevant to tracking the overall membership of Salafi jihadist groups in East Asia after 9/11. Abu Sayyaf's membership was estimated in the low hundreds until 2000, when membership abruptly jumped to 2,200 before falling to the low thousands and settling at the 200-500 range from 2002-2018 (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Southeast Asia Membership Counts 1996-2018



[188] Stanford University, "Abu Sayyaf Group," in *Mapping Militant Organizations* (2018).

Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), a comparably larger organization based primarily in Indonesia, emerged in 1990, with the goal of establishing an Islamic Caliphate in Southeast Asia.[189] JI engaged in several high-profile bombings and attacks, particularly against Christians in Southeast Asia in the early 2000s. The Bali nightclub bombing in October 2002 killed more than 200 people, including 88 Australians and landed JI on the State Department's designation list less than two weeks later.[190] JI's founding leaders were killed in 2009 and 2012, and the group's membership has remained largely static in the intervening period between 500-2,000 fighters. Regardless of the low or high end of the State Department estimates of JI membership, the trendlines of JI's size within Southeast Asian Salafi jihadist groups remain similar over the study, indicating an overall decline in the number of total Salafi jihadists operating in Southeast Asia. Data on group membership in the region after ISIL Bangladesh/Philippines designation on February 28, 2018, would be helpful to compare to the trendlines from the early 2000s, but the impact is outside the bounds of this study. Nevertheless, the 2019 Country Reports on Terrorism cited several hundred supporters for ISIL-B and an unknown number in the Philippines.[191] How those numbers trend in future years will be indicative of the effectiveness of designation in Southeast Asia in deterring membership growth.

4.3 Summary

This research did not find a clear association between designation and a drop in membership, but poor data quality makes it impossible to say whether there really was no effect

[189] "Jemaah Islamiyah," in *Mapping Militant Organizations* (2018).

[190] Ibid.

[191] Counterterrorism United States. Department of State. Office of the Coordinator for, "Country Reports on Terrorism," (2020), https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/; ibid., 269 & 272.

of designation on membership or if activities triggered by designation kept growth from going up more steeply. Any impact cannot be determined with confidence given the paucity of data in the State Department's official numbers. Except for a few limited groups in Algeria, Mali, and Tunisia within North Africa, Afghanistan/Pakistan, Somalia, and Southeast Asia, terrorist group membership growth otherwise followed the exponential growth trends in the established literature. The flatter growth trends for a handful of designated groups that might have indicated a potential stall in otherwise rising membership could not be validated given the poor and duplicative data on group membership overall. Terrorist attack data is much more precise in its reflection of group capability relative to designation and the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Reducing Terrorist Attacks and Lethality

This chapter assesses hypothesis two and seeks to answer if after foreign terrorist organization designation if there is a meaningful decline terrorist attacks or the lethality of those attacks. This is assessed by looking at a) the total number of attacks pre- vs. post-designation and b) the total number of people, and Americans specifically, killed in attacks pre- vs. post-designation. Confirming the hypothesis would mean the overall number of attacks and ideally the number deaths because of terrorist attacks declines post-designation. This is arguably the most operationally relevant way to measure strategic success in the conflict against Salafi jihadist terrorism, as the desired impact is a lessening of severity of attacks against US territory, citizens, or interests. While it is unreasonable to expect an immediate return on investment for US counterterrorism designation, particularly as designation is the decision-point that unlocks associated activities, a modest reduction in terrorist violence in the form of fewer attacks and/or reduced lethality following designation would confirm the hypothesis.

As explained Chapter 3, this dissertation uses an interrupted time series autoregressive moving averages model (ARIMA), otherwise known as the Box-Jenkins method, to analyze the frequency of terrorist attacks pre- and post-designation with FTO designation as the independent variable and incidents of terrorism and lethality by year as the dependent variables. Additionally, lethality counts for US persons are included in frequency tables for context on the number of Americans killed or wounded in terrorist attacks, given the FTO designation criteria requires that a group "threatens the security of United States nationals or the national security of the United States."[192] The overall findings demonstrate that while the frequency and lethality slopes change

[192] *Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996*.

directionality and in some cases decline post-designation, the drops are not statistically significant enough to establish any conclusions or causality about the impact of FTO designation on the frequency or lethality of Salafi jihadist terrorist attacks.

5.1 Overall Findings

The models for incidents and lethality that follow show that designation decreases the slope of terrorist incidents and lethality, but the results are not statistically significant, meaning the changes can also be attributed to chance. The full findings are detailed below, but the totality of the quantitative results for attacks and lethality reject the hypothesis, suggesting designation does not have the desired impact on the behavior of Salafi jihadist groups. The null hypothesis that designation is not producing the results the US government seeks—or at least not designation alone—is consistent with the findings and literature.

Despite validating the null hypothesis, for some groups the year of designation marks a change in the slope of the line of increasing attacks, indicating that there are likely intervening variables that accompany designation that reduce the number of incidents of terrorist per year for those groups. This, more promising result, is explored in the qualitative analysis in Chapter 7 and the conclusions in Chapter 8. That effect increases after designation through at least year 7 for those groups. After that, ISIL' attack trajectory alters the data so significantly that aggregating the groups becomes problematic. Removing al-Qa'ida and ISIL from the analysis shows the effect more starkly, with precipitous drops in aggregated attacks by year 5. This raises interesting questions about the sequencing of designation-associated activities, the length of counterterrorism campaigns, and the role of international affiliation and how those factors impact group behavior.

Lethality peaks about a year after designation for most groups—further rejecting the hypothesis. For some groups however, the trendlines shift from an upward to a downward slope by year 2. For policymakers aiming to reverse rising terrorism trends by designation, an immediate surge in lethality the year after designation is not ideal, even if it is a function of incidents that were planned pre-designation.

As previously discussed in Chapter 2, designations tend to occur following an increase in terrorist activity, impacting Salafi jihadist groups while they are already on an operational upswing threatening US national interests, which prompts the decision to designate. Therefore, while a statistically significant shift in attack frequency was not uncovered, the directional shift following designation—even a lagging one—is an interesting finding worthy of future study. It is possible designation's associated activities lag years after designation, which already is a lengthy process—or that the effort required to reverse the upward momentum of an operationally expanded group results in less robust statistical results. While the quantitative findings necessitated rejecting the hypothesis, the directionality shift of the data for incidents and lethality—in some cases reversing an exponentially upward curve—makes FTO designation's effects worth further exploration. Opportunities to explore the temporal relationship between designation decisions and associated activities will be addressed throughout the following chapter, the case studies in Chapter 7, and explored in detail in Chapter 8's conclusions.

Although the number of Americans killed and wounded from FTO-associated terrorist activities is so low it is hard to draw any conclusions, the data show the number of US persons killed and wounded also peaks 1 year after designation, then stays relatively low 2-5 years after

designation, even excluding 9/11.[193] This result suggests changes in attacks and lethality in the years leading up to and following designation, particularly between years 1 and 2, and certainly by year 5, are still worth further study. The detailed breakdown of findings is explored in the following section.

5.2 Breakdown of Findings

5.2.1 Total Incidents

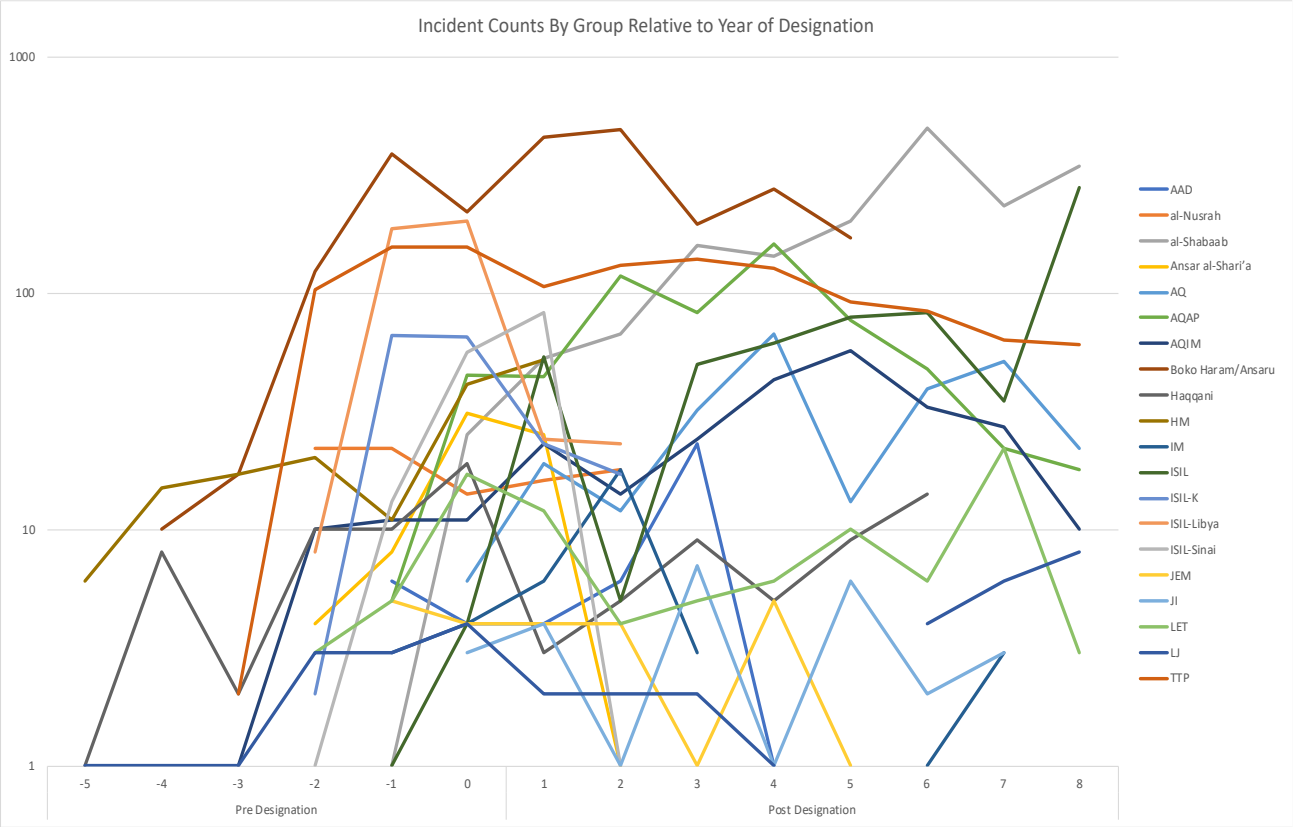
To build the incident model, data on the total incidents at years of designation was aggregated for all 20 groups in the study, and then the totals by years relative to designation were added, including dummy variables for the periods pre- and post-designation. These charts, depicted on the next page in Figure 22 and Figure 23, closely resemble the CTC model, except these only include the 20 Salafi jihadist groups that met the FTO designation and incident criteria required for this study. Additionally, because ISIL begins to skew the data in year 8, the groups were adjusted to a logarithmic scale for ease of comparison, and data past year 8 was excluded.

[193] The data for September 11, 2001, was removed from the quantitative analysis on attack frequency and lethality given its established outlier status among terrorist incidents. According to Bruce Hoffman, 9/11 is a statistical outlier: "A total of nearly three thousand people were killed in the attacks. To put that death toll into perspective, in the entirety of the twentieth century only thirty-four terrorist incidents had killed more than one hundred people. And until 9/11, no terrorist operation had ever killed more than five hundred people. Among the dead were citizens of some eighty different countries, although the largest number of fatalities by far were U.S. citizens. Indeed, more than twice as many Americans perished on 9/11 than had been killed by terrorists since 1968—the year acknowledged as marking the advent of modern, international terrorism" Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*., 19.

Figure 22: Incident Counts By Group Relative to Year of Designation

Years to Designation	AAD	al-Nusrah	al-Shabaab	Ansar al-Shari'a	AQ	AQAP	AQIM	Boko Haram/Ansaru	Haqqani	HM	IM	ISIL	ISIL-K	ISIL-Libya	ISIL-Sinai	JEM	JI	LET	LJ	TTP
-5									1	6			2						1	
-4								10	8	15									1	
-3					2		1	17	2	17	24								1	2
-2		22		4			10	123	10	20			2	8	1		44	3	3	103
-1	6	22	1	8		5	11	389	10	11	3	1	66	187	13	5		5	3	156
0	4	14	25	31	6	45	11	221	19	41	4	4	65	200	56	4	3	17	4	156
1	4	16	53	25	19	44	23	454	3	52	6	54	23	24	83	4	4	12	2	106
2	6	18	67	1	12	118	14	491	5		18	5	17	23	1	4	1	4	2	131
3	23		159		32	83	24	195	9		3	50				1	7	5	2	139
4	1		142		67	161	43	275	5			61			1	5	1	6	1	127
5			201		13	77	57	170	9			79				1	6	10		91
6			499		39	48	33		14		1	82					2	6	4	84
7			232		51	22	27				3	35					3	22	6	63
8			342		22	18	10					279						3	8	60
9			355		36		14					434					6	1	31	
10			260		33		9					1095					1	2	21	

Figure 23: Total Incidents by Group Relative to Year of Designation, Logarithmic Scale



5.2.2 Model Specifications

ARIMA/Box-Jenkins models are defined by three terms (*p, d, q*), where p identifies the number of auto-regressive components in the model, d represents the stationary (or nonstationary and differenced) components in the model, and q represents the number of moving average components in the model.[194] Ideally, values for *p, d,* and *q* are selected before running the analysis to ensure the model chosen best fits the data. In practice, researchers use a number of statistical tests to narrow down many potential Box-Jenkins/ARIMA models to find the best fit to the data pattern.

In this study, determining a best fit model was a mix of both. Autocorrelation issues are likely when a previous year's activity is correlated with the following year's incidents (so not representative of a random walk). Moreover, the randomness of terrorist attack data meant it probably would need to be differenced or logarithmically transformed to develop valid conclusions about trends. This suggests an ARIMA model of (1, 1, 0) for the type of intervention model and terrorist attack available in the GTD. A glance at the overall incidents per year of designation confirms the data is nonstationary.

Autocorrelation function tests were performed to determine the best-fit value of *p.* The results of Autocorrelation functions at lags through 16 (See Appendix E) confirmed that a (1, 1, 0) model—mathematically represented as: $\hat{Y}t = \mu + Yt\text{-}1 + \phi 1\ (Yt\text{-}1 - Yt\text{-}2)$—which is a first order autoregressive model with one order of nonseasonal differencing, would be a good fit for representing the data within a 95-percent confidence bound.[195]

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[194] Barbara G. Tabachnick, Linda S. Fidell, and Jodie B. Ullman, *Using Multivariate Statistics*, Seventh edition. ed. (New York, NY: Pearson, 2019)., 714-774.

[195] Robert Nau, "Statistical Forecasting: Notes on Regression and Time Series Analysis, Introduction to Arima Nonseasonal Models," Duke University, https://people.duke.edu/~rnau/411arim.htm#arima110.

Tabachnick and Fidell, in *Using Multivariate Statistics*, recommends taking the logs of incident totals in the data to smooth the extremes as the variability in the mean and dispersion.[196] This revealed less statistically significant (p = 0.035 vs. 0.014), and weaker relationships (-.205 vs. -63.6) at the point of designation, which stands to reason as logarithmic functions smooth extremes in data patterns. As terrorism is an inherently irregular phenomenon, the log transformation in this case was not of additional explanatory value, but the logs of the model are included in Appendix F for a point of comparison.

5.2.3 Results for Total Incidents

The ARIMA (1,1,0) model results for all 20 groups for near team (year 1) effects can be seen in Figure 24. Before designation, the coefficient for pre-designation (*d*Timeperiod), which equals the slope of the regression line, indicates an increase of 53.9 terrorist instances per year. This is consistent with the identified trend of a general increasing frequency of attacks by terrorist groups before US designation, often part of the justification for designation in the first place.[197]

Figure 24: ARIMA Model Parameters, Total Incidents

ARIMA Model Parameters

					Estimate	SE	t	Sig.
Total Incidents-Model_1	Total Incidents	No Transformation	Constant		-30.154	373.901	-.081	.937
			AR	Lag 1	-.021	.254	-.085	.934
			Difference		1			
	dTime Period	No Transformation	Numerator	Lag 0	53.906	89.005	.606	.553
	Interact	No Transformation	Numerator	Lag 0	-65.591	89.884	-.730	.475
	Designation	No Transformation	Numerator	Lag 0	154.542	427.865	.361	.722

[196] Tabachnick, Fidell, and Ullman, *Using Multivariate Statistics*., 721.

[197] Seth Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts."

In reading the output, the co-efficient for designation is disregarded as it is a dummy variable indicating before or after designation. The coefficient for interact (-65.60) is the difference between slope pre- and post-designation, with a *p* value of (0.47). Adding the pre-designation slope to the interact reveals the post-slope at the year of designation—a very slight decline in the slope of terrorist incidents—that is not significant.

Pre-Slope (53.91) + Interact (-65.60) = Post Slope (-11.69)

While this result is disappointing, of most interest is the long-term impact, ideally measured by a decline in the slope of terrorist incidents in the years after designation. As a test for validity, running the same ARIMA model at the year of designation+one (Year 1) does not improve the model, resulting in a pre-slope of 15.69, with an interact term of -26.30, giving a post-slope of -10.61 with a higher rate of random chance with a p value of 0.72. This validates year of designation as the better measure for the change in slope, even with imperfect results.[198]

The impact 1-8 years after designation (see Figure 25, next page) shows an increasingly downward slope from the pre-designation incident trendline at each additional year following designation—but with p values that become progressively higher (ranging from 0.36-0.41). Although this trend starts to reverse 8 years after designation, only 8 of the 20 groups studied had useable data at that time. This makes sense as the further one goes from intervention impacts

[198] Incidentally, I also ran one year prior to designation (designation-1), which resulted in strikingly similar results to the model used in the dissertation. The ARIMA model (1,1,0) for year before designation resulted in Pre-Slope (183.00) + Interact (-194.13) = Post Slope (-11.13)—nearly identical to the formula this dissertation focused on. Interestingly the significance improved with this version of the model (0.12). This likely indicates that concurrent to the designation process something is happening with the terrorist groups—either they cannot sustain the increasing curve of activities prior to designation, or the data is capturing US government or allied activities occurring simultaneous to the designation debate. Unpacking which of these factors is driving the increased statistical significance is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but the check validates using the date of designation or the year before as a better measure than the year after.

naturally wane given a multitude of other factors impacting the group and the locale in which they are operating. Additionally, at 8 years post-designation, ISIL's exponential attack growth begins to skew the data significantly, which renders analysis in years 8, 9, and 10 dubious at best. Therefore, the data presented in the full ARIMA model stops at year 7 (Figure 26).

Figure 25: Change in Slope After Designation, Incidents

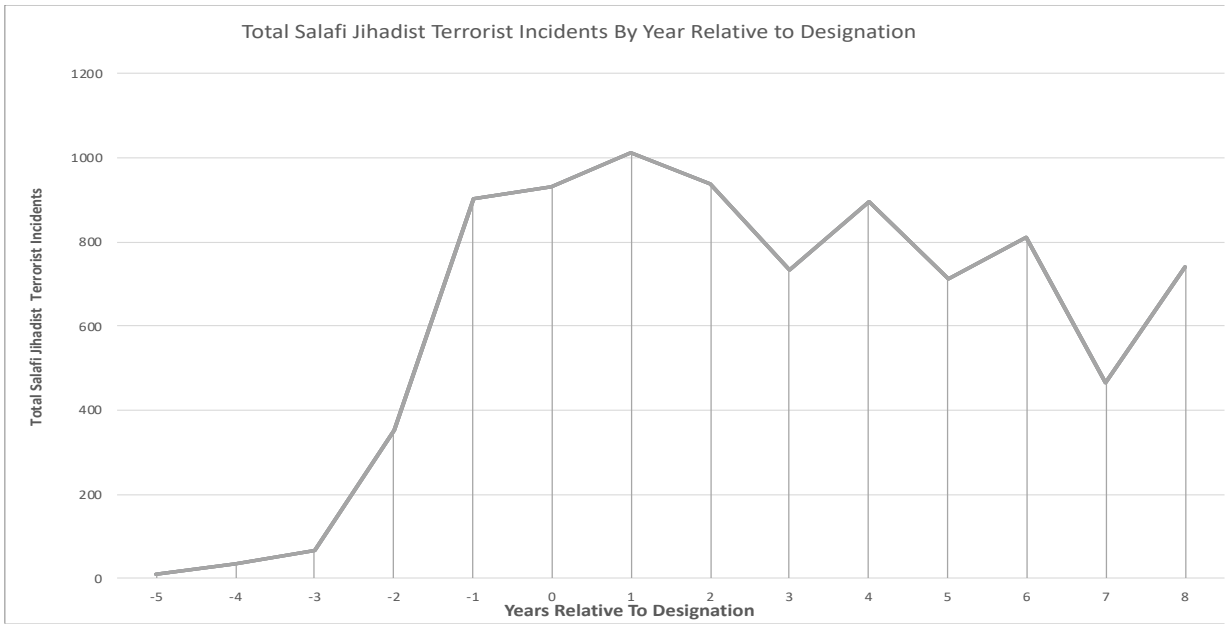


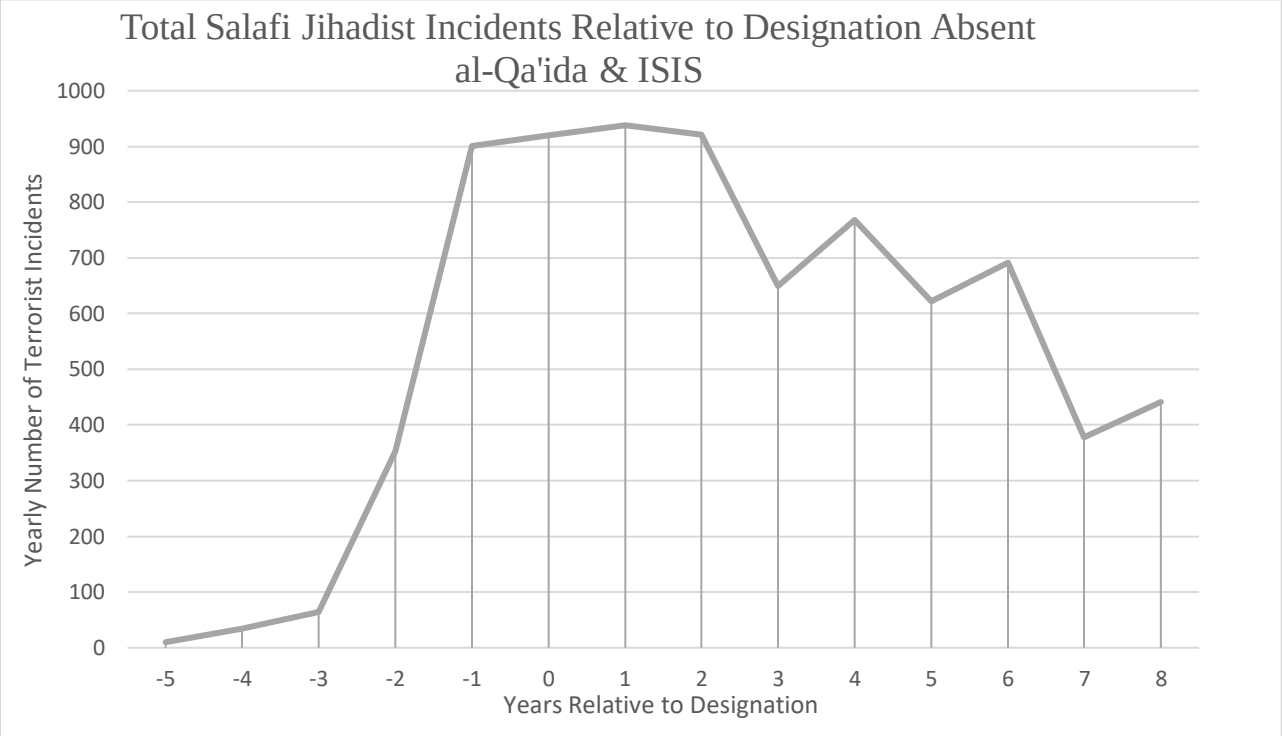
Figure 26: Co-Efficient for Designation Incidents

Year	Co-efficient for Designation	P-Value
1	-304.75	0.36
2	-370.39	0.36
3	-436.02	0.38
4	-501.65	0.38
5	-567.27	0.39
6	-632.87	0.40
7	-698.46	0.41

5.2.4 Total Incidents Minus al-Qa'ida and ISIL

ISIL's skewing of the data raised an interesting question—how would the interrupted time series change if the two largest groups, al-Qa'ida and ISIL, are removed? For this study, a full ARIMA model is not necessary, as the overall impact of foreign terrorist organization designation on Salafi jihadist incidents is clearly larger if the largest, most transnational groups are removed from the analysis, as shown in Figure 27 below. The implications are interesting as troops have withdrawn from Iraq and Afghanistan. The data demonstrates that jihadist incidents not fueled by the two groups decline more dramatically post-designation—which makes sense as presence of US troops in country provide both a target-rich field for attacks and a central point for terrorists to focus their efforts.[199] Reassessing designation's impact in areas subject to US

Figure 27: Salafi Jihadist Incidents Relative to Designation, Absent al-Qa'ida and ISIL



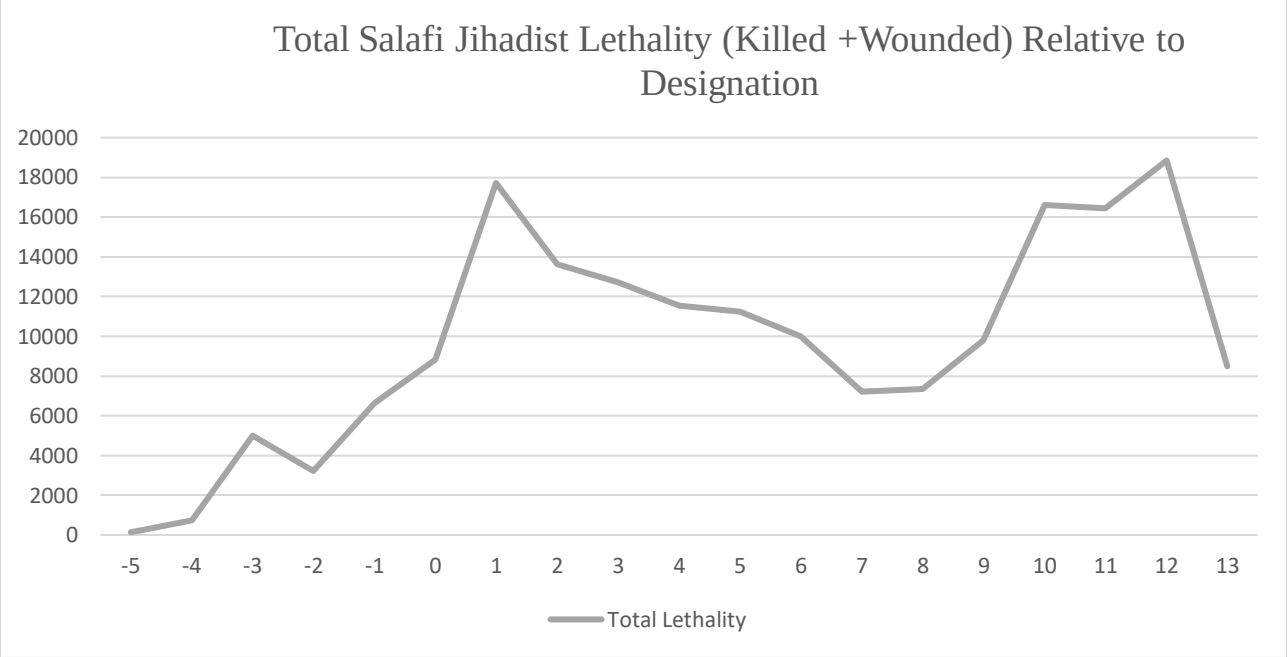
[199] Robert Anthony Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, Random House Trade Paperback ed. ed. (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2006).

military operations post-designation —while accounting for the varying sizes and composition of those activities—is therefore critical to further assessment of the policy impact.

5.2.5 Total Lethality

Figure 28 shows a significant visual decline in lethality after the first-year post-designation, indicating a potential lagging effect after the policy decision that may reflect the time required for implementation of designation-associated activities. To run a similar interrupted time series ARIMA model for lethality, the total number of individuals killed or wounded in terrorist attacks by each group was aggregated for each year relative to designation (nkill+nwound by group). Although this may exaggerate the true impact of terrorist incidents by including wounded people, the injuries from terrorist attacks can be life altering. Moreover, the difference between life and death is sometimes random or determined by the availability of medical personnel.[200] Therefore, to accurately capture the number of physically impacted

Figure 28: Total Salafi Jihadist Lethality (Killed and Wounded) Relative to Designation



[200] Bruce Hoffman, "The Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *The Atlantic* (2003), https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2003/06/the-logic-of-suicide-terrorism/302739/.

individuals in terrorist incidents, the number of wounded was added to the number killed to bias the results toward maximum potential lethality.

Adding together the total wounded and killed by group provides total lethality relative to designation, using dummy variables for the periods pre- and post-designation. The graph of total lethality (wounded+killed) relative to designation looks like the incident graph, which makes sense—lethality will only occur when a terrorist incident takes place (Figure 28, previous page).[201]

For lethality, the logarithmic transformation of the selected ARIMA (1,1,0) Model was also compared to the standard, which revealed that the *p*-value improved (0.29). However, to keep the analysis consistent, the natural logs model for lethality (see Appendix G) was not used to preserve the same parameters as the incident model (ARIMA 1,1,0). That the model improves slightly using natural logs for lethality affirms the methodology, but the result is still poor in terms of statistical significance. Even though the data indicates a reversal of some of the upward trend in incidents and lethality in the years after designation, there is nothing compelling to indicate this result is causal or tied to designation specifically. The lagging change for lethality may point more compellingly to specific US activities that accompany designation, the intervening variables, as the cause of variation in behavioral outcomes discussed in Chapter 7's qualitative findings.

[201] As a reminder, the data for September 11, 2001 was excluded, due to its statistical aberration. *Inside Terrorism*; ibid., 19

5.2.6 Results for Total Lethality

Figure 29 shows the ARIMA (1,1,0) lethality model results of the aggregated totals (nkill+nwound) for all 20 groups. The coefficient for pre-designation (dTimeperiod) is 494.8, indicating the slope of the lethality regression line increases considerably before designation, which is consistent with the existing research of increased attack lethality in the years before and 1 year after US designation.[202] In reading the model results, the coefficient for designation is

Figure 29: ARIMA Model Parameters, Lethality

ARIMA Model Parameters

					Estimate	SE	t	Sig.
Total Lethality-Model_1	Total Lethality	No Transformation	Constant		49.150	5532.879	.009	.993
			AR	Lag 1	-.242	.343	-.705	.493
			Difference		1			
	Interact	No Transformation	Numerator	Lag 0	-644.194	1333.047	-.483	.637
	dTime Period	No Transformation	Numerator	Lag 0	494.841	1311.232	.377	.712
	Designation	No Transformation	Numerator	Lag 0	1903.515	6676.979	.285	.780

disregarded because it is a dummy variable indicating pre- or post-designation. The coefficient for interact (-644.19) is the difference between the slope pre- and post-designation, with a *p* value of (0.64). Adding the pre-designation slope to the interact, we get the post-slope at the year of designation—a slight decline in the slope of lethality, even if the absolute value of the number of individuals killed and wounded increases in the first year after designation. The lack of statistical significance, however, rejects the hypothesis in favor of the null.

Pre-Slope (494.8) + Interact (-644.19) = Post Slope (-149.39)

While Figure 30 on the next page shows an increasingly downward slope from the incident trendline pre-designation at each additional year through year 8, the explanatory value of this analysis is poor. Like the previous incident data, ISIL skews the lethality total significantly beginning in year 8—rendering analysis in years 8-10 dubious at best. Additionally,

[202] Seth Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts."

the *p* values are higher for the lethality data, which appears far more variable than the incident data—rendering conclusions even more tenuous. The data presented again stops at year 7 to remove the ISIL outlier data.

Overall, the ARIMA model is not as clear or as strong as one would hope to demonstrate the impact of designation on terrorist lethality, in part because of the variation across the range of terrorist incidents (due to a variety of factors from their operational capability to the randomness of the target behavior/circumstances) and because lethality is a function of incidents. Still, the data change in directionality at year 2 is potentially important as it indicates some yet unexplained change in behavior after the point of designation. The lack of statistical significance of the directionality change could also be a reversion to the mean after a particularly violent year. This reversal of trends, however, suggests additional qualitative analysis on individual group behavior pre- and post-designation is required to gain a better understanding of what is happening to after designation to Salafi jihadist groups.

Figure 30: Change in Slope After Designation, Lethality

Year	Co-efficient for Designation	P-Value
1	-2606.91	0.60
2	-3250.97	0.59
3	-3894.93	0.59
4	-4538.80	0.59
5	-5182.58	0.59
6	-5826.28	0.60
7	-6469.91	0.60

5.2.7 Designation's Impact on American Casualties

Overall, the number of Americans killed or wounded in terrorist attacks by FTO-designated groups averages fewer than one person per year, which impedes statistical analysis. As with all lethality, the number of American citizens killed or wounded by terrorist attacks peaks 1 year after designation.[203] At first glance, researchers may conclude that FTO designation flattens lethality for Americans post-designation in the out years, but a descriptive comparison reveals more US persons fell victim to terrorist attacks in the years after designation. (See Figures 31 and 32). The difference is so small (45 people) that the change following FTO designation is inconclusive at best, again hardly distinguishable from random chance and, therefore, does not confirm the hypothesis. This is an important conclusion for policymakers who may hope to use designation to reduce American casualties from terrorist incidents.

[203] An interrupted time series proved less useful for examining the impact of designation on American casualties—a subset of overall lethality—because the numbers are too low for sophisticated quantitative techniques.

Figure 32: U.S. Person Lethality Relative to Date of Designation

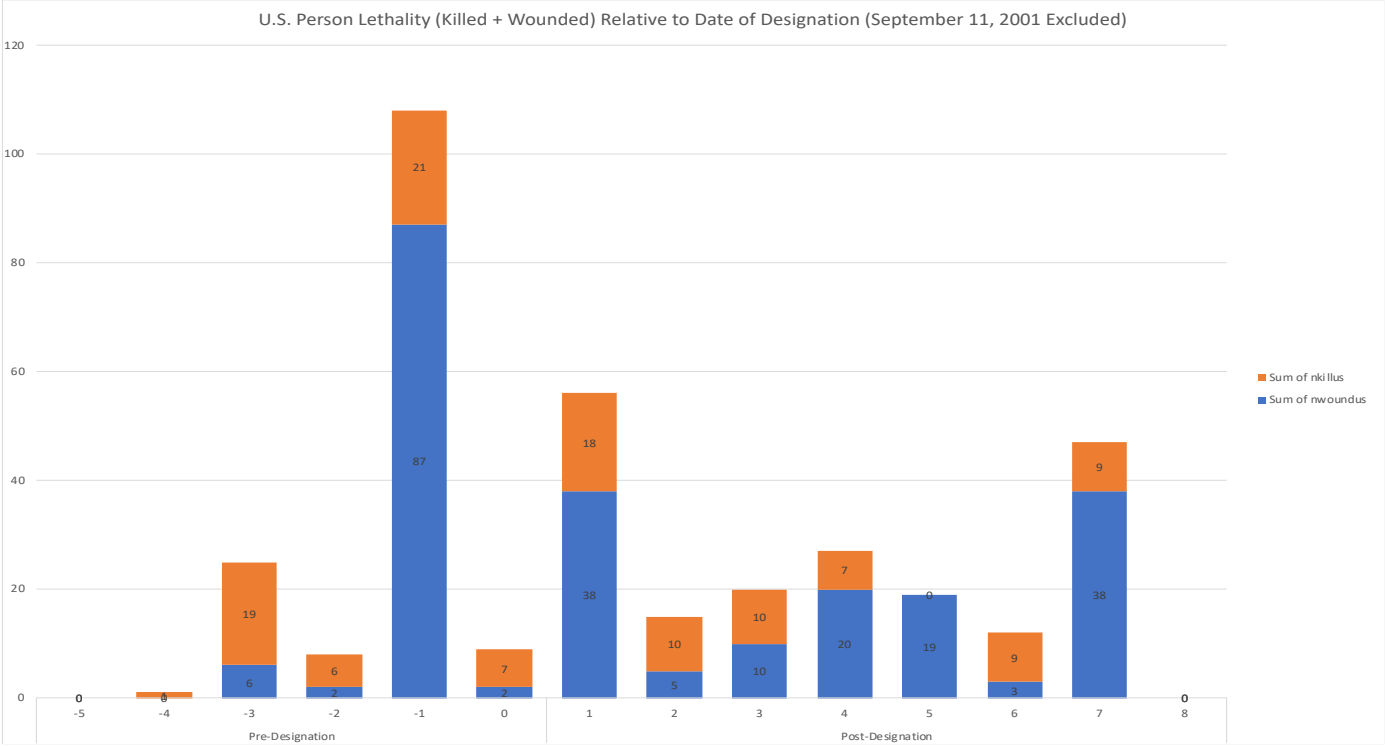


Figure 31: U.S. Person Lethality Pre and Post Designation

5.3 Summary

Designation activities do appear to be weakly associated with some changes in terrorist group behavior—reducing the number of terrorist incidents per year for some groups and, in some cases, the number of people killed and wounded—but the results are not statistically significant and represent little more than a random chance of impact. Interrupted time series analysis indicates designation is a complex independent variable, in some cases reversing escalating trends of terrorist incidents and lethality spikes and in others seemingly having no or a reverse impact. These findings reject the hypothesis and, consistent with the literature, suggest that designation does not have a clear impact on the most tactically important behavior of Salafi jihadist groups. However, promising trend lines identified in the interrupted time series are worthy of future study and inform the case studies in Chapter 7.

Chapter 6: Hardening Targets

This chapter assesses hypothesis three and seeks to answer if subsequent to foreign terrorist organization designation if there is a meaningful change in the tactics and targets chosen by Salafi jihadist groups. This is assessed by looking at a) changes in frequency across more sophisticated attack typology, specifically simultaneous and suicide attacks, or general attack type and b) the weapons and targets of those attacks. Confirming the hypothesis would mean that after designation the overall sophistication of attacks (particularly simultaneous or suicide) declines, possibly even eliminating them. While this measure is more difficult to quantify, interpret, and assess than the other dependent variables,[204] it is essential to evaluate if US counterterrorism policy is preventing the types of mass casualty and critical infrastructure attacks it aims to disrupt. Part of the reason for entire FTO designation determination according to the State Department is to provide an "effective means of curtailing support for terrorist activities and pressuring groups to get out of the terrorism business," and changing attack patterns can provide potential avenues to measure success in deterring groups from terrorist activities.[205] One of the potential deterrents unlocked by FTO designation are the financial sanctions levied against groups, intended to cut off the operational funds for planning and executing spectacular attacks.

Hardening defenses is the most complicated dependent variable in this study as confirming the hypothesis requires a change in attack targeting or type relative to designation, an absence of an attack or target type (for example a decrease in aviation targets). Crenshaw and

[204] Crenshaw and LaFree, *Countering Terrorism*., 177, "Success in counterterrorism may mean ascertaining what people do *not* do—they do not adopt radical ideas or attempt to travel to conflict zones to volunteer to fight for ISIS—as much as what they do. But, as is well known, there is no way to prove a negative—what people did not do or what did not occur."

[205] State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations".

LaFree argue this is one of the most difficult aspects of evaluating counterterrorism, as it involves measuring a negative:

> Success in counterterrorism may mean ascertaining what people do not do—they do not adopt radical ideas or attempt to travel to conflict zones to volunteer to fight for ISIS—as much as what they do. But, as is well known, there is no way to prove a negative—what people did not do or what did not occur.

Because there is no way to prove a negative, evidence of hardening defenses in this study is measured using five observable target and attack type variables from the START Global Terrorism database and by comparing terrorist attacks trends before and after designation. Specifically, the dissertation measures the number of multiple incidents or simultaneous attacks; the change in attack type; the number of suicide incidents; the weapon type; and the targets before and after designation. Overall, the data showed an increase in simultaneous and suicide attacks immediately after designation followed by an eventual decline by years 4-5, but no significant difference in the weapon types or targets before and after designation.

6.1 Overall Findings

The study found an increase in simultaneous and suicide attacks 1-2 years after designation, with a noticeable decline between years 4 and 5. This mixed effect indicates that any impact of designation, if it exists, lags years behind the decision to designate. This finding is consistent with the other quantitative findings and reinforces questions about designation-associated activities and sequencing. Additionally, attack type, weapon type, and target type remained remarkably consistent before and after designation—with a notable lack of use of weapons of mass destruction by Salafi jihadist groups both before and after designation. FTO designation and targeting, therefore, probably has little impact on choice of tactics, weapons, or

targets—an interesting finding for US agencies looking to harden defenses against terrorist attacks.

One additional note in the findings is aviation—a component of critical infrastructure that went from 1 percent of attacks to no attacks post-designation for all the Salafi jihadist groups in this study. This may reflect the impact of a US government focus, post-9/11, on eliminating aviation attacks, long considered the gold standard for the terrorist modus operandi. Yet even this change is not significant, nor can it be directly tied to FTO designation among a series of other policy choices aimed at securing international aviation post-9/11. The data simply indicates FTO designation and designation-associated activities do not meaningfully alter terrorist targeting behavior.

Among the US efforts to harden defenses against terrorists' use of chemical, biological radiological, and nuclear weapons (CBRN), nuclear is the most important given its potentially catastrophic destructive impact. As such, it is singled out under preventing weapons of mass destruction attacks in the 2006 and 2011 Counterterrorism strategies.[206] For this strategic goal, post-9/11 efforts seem successful as no FTO-designated Salafi jihadist groups have acquired, built, or used nuclear weapons despite the well-documented desire by al-Qa'ida and like-minded groups to acquire nuclear material before 2001.[207] However, because no Salafi jihadist or other ideologically-aligned terrorist organization had executed a successful nuclear attack before 9/11, the absence of both pre- and post-designation nuclear attack data precludes categorizing FTO designation as a successful hardening measure against nuclear attack.

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[206] "National Strategy for Combating Terrorism." 2006 and *National Strategy for Counterterrorism*. 2011

[207] Central Intelligence Agency, "Terrorist Cbrn: Materials and Effects," ed. Directorate of Intelligence (Washington D.C.: Combating Terrorism Center, 2003).

6.2 Breakdown of Findings

6.2.1 Simultaneous Attacks

In the first two years after designation, simultaneous attacks increase, before precipitously dropping after year 2 (Figures 33 and 34). These results are not surprising. Counterterrorism literature's long-established link between simultaneous attacks and lethality suggests the attack type of groups immediately post-designation trend toward more complex and lethal attacks.[208] One plausible explanation is that the United States only designates terrorist groups already enjoying an operational upswing, as addressed in Chapter 2, so the increase in simultaneous attacks is a continuation of that curve.[209] But, the simultaneous attack data drop after year 2 raises questions about that assumption.[210]

When presented with the data on simultaneous attacks, a group of experienced counterterrorism practitioners at National Intelligence University concluded that the uptick followed by a precipitous decline was not a surprise, as they observed it can take one to two years for US policy efforts to result in designation-associated activities to impact the operational behavior of the group. Therefore, to experienced practitioners the increase in simultaneous attacks was merely a continuation of an operational curve started prior to designation.[211] Interestingly, the data indicates that simultaneous attacks eventually declined from more than 30

[208] LaFree, "Will Terrorism Continue to Decline in 2019?."; Dugan, "Evolution of Global Terrorism: The Growing Lethality of Attacks."

[209] Seth Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts.", 15.

[210] Ibid.

[211] Sturm, "Discussion with National Intelligence University Students."

percent of overall attacks pre-designation to less than 25 percent post-designation, but that change cannot definitively be tied to US post-designation CT efforts to lessen the sophistication of attacks.

Figure 33: Simultaneous Attacks Relative to Designation

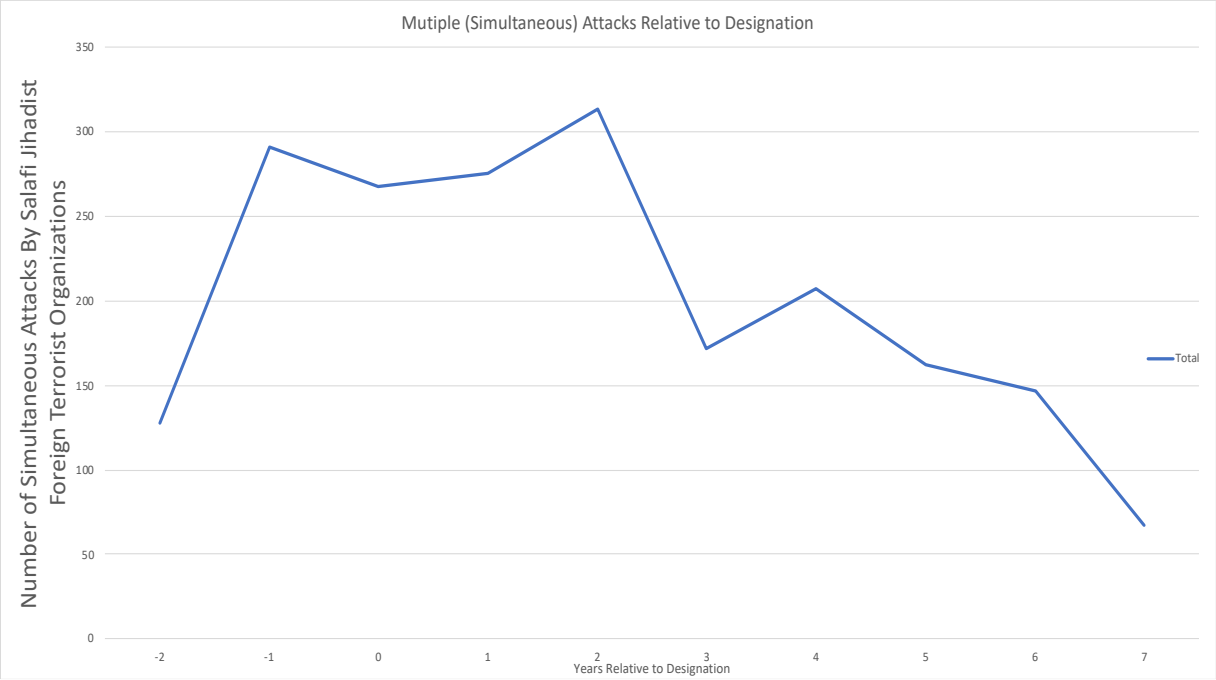
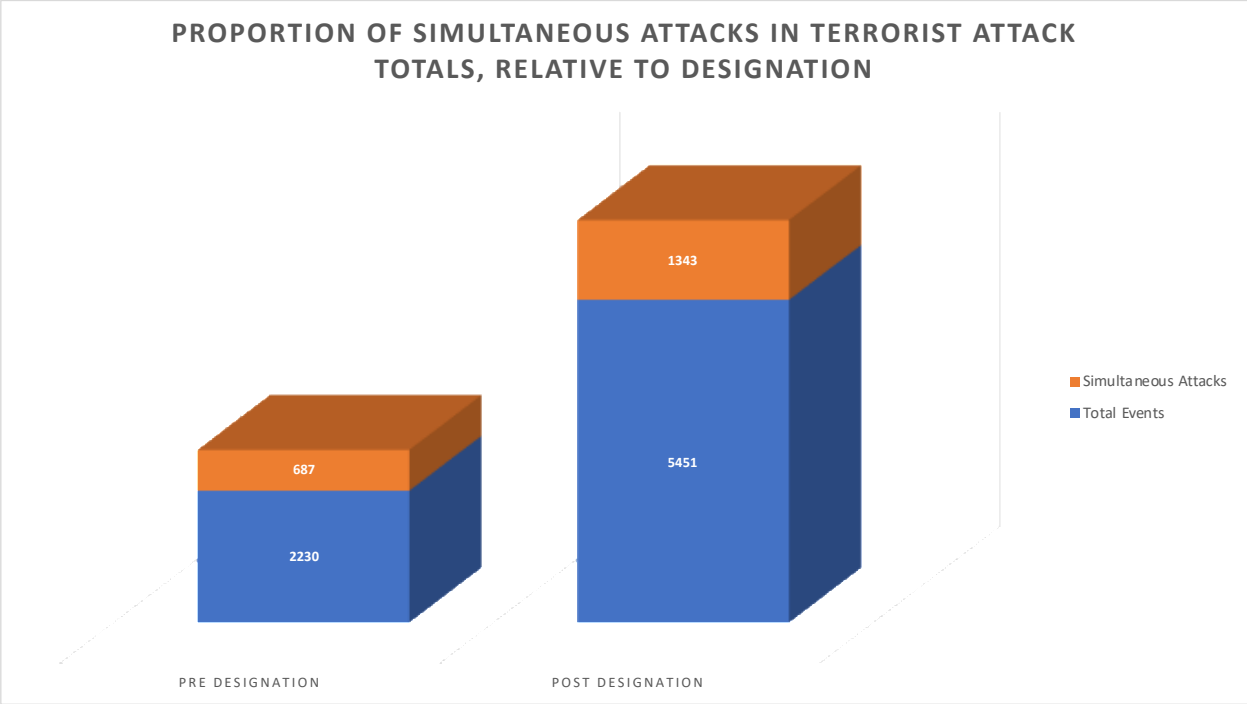


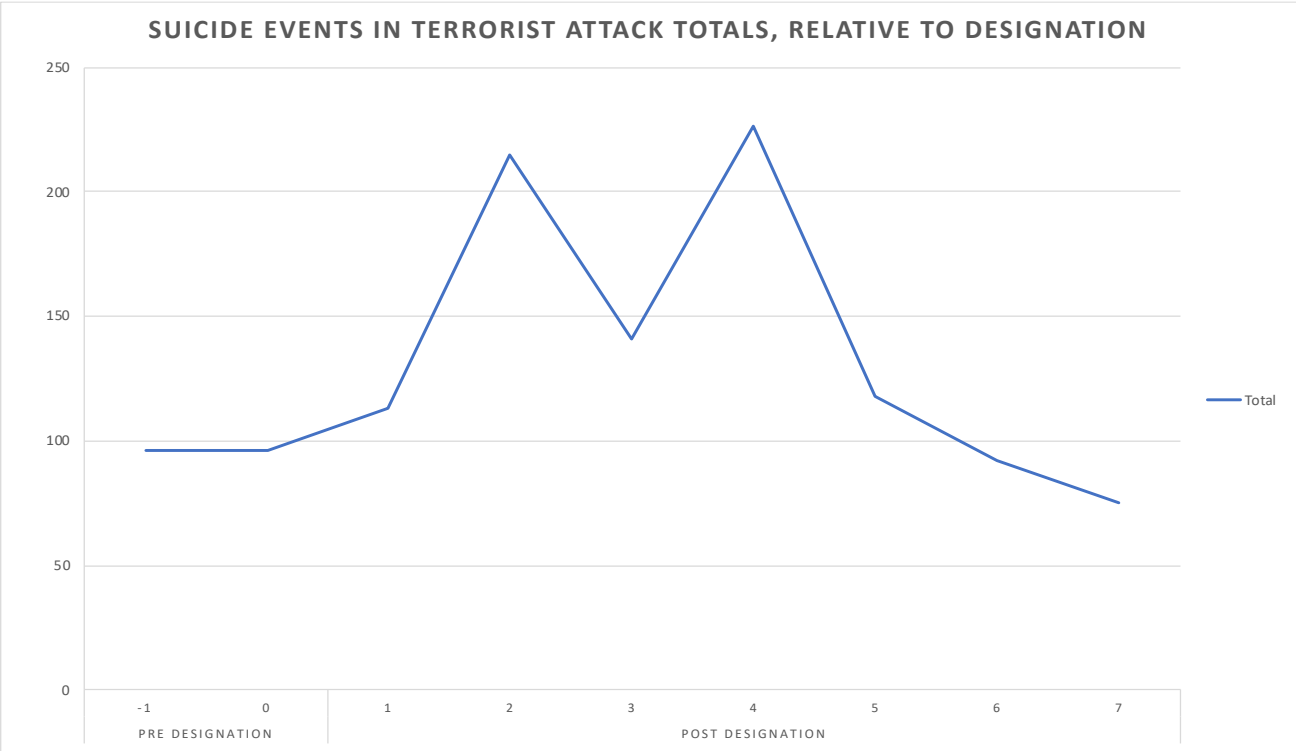
Figure 34: Proportion of Simultaneous Attacks, Relative to Designation



6.2.2 Suicide Attacks

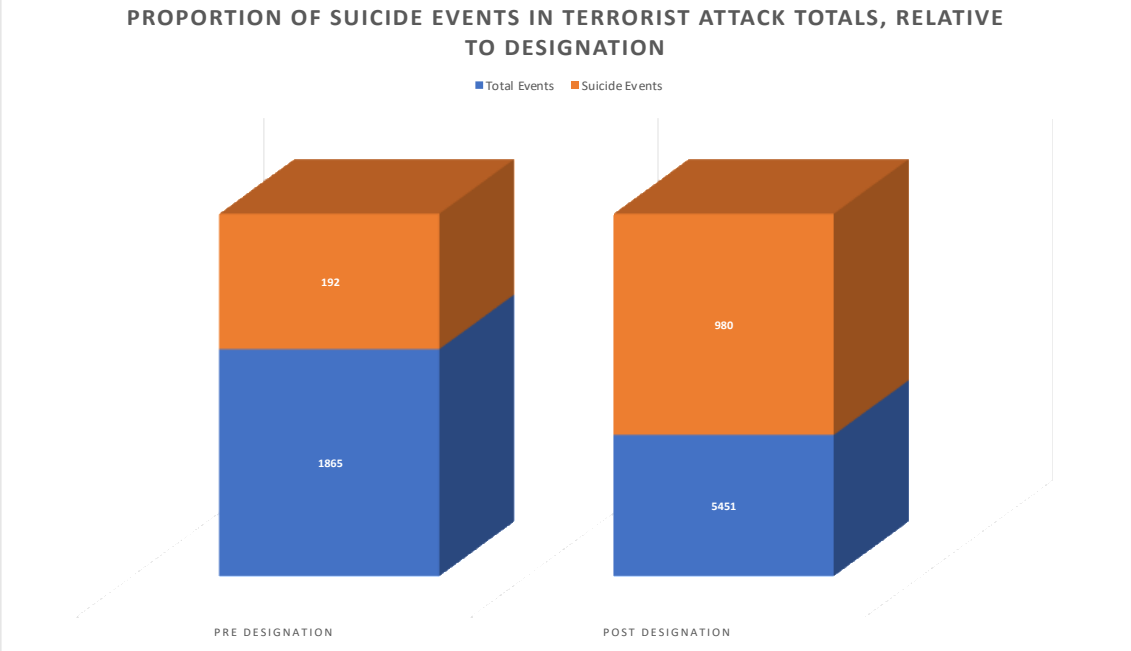
The number of suicide attacks is low overall and not indicative of FTO-associated changes. Because the number of suicide attacks the year before designation is the same as the year of designation (96), comparing the pre-designation suicide attack slope to post-designation is meaningless. An alternative analysis examining the proportion of suicide events as a percentage of terrorist attack totals reveals that prior to designation, suicide attacks made up 10 percent of all attacks by Salafi jihadist groups. After designation, the percentage increased to nearly 18 percent, indicating a tactical shift toward suicide attacks by designated Salafi jihadist groups (Figures 35 and 36).[212]

Figure 35: Suicide Events in Terrorist Attack Totals



the "Human Bombs."," *The New Yorker* 77, no. 36 (2001).; Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*., 139-182; Gal Luft, "The Palestinian H-Bomb: Terror's Winning Strategy," *Foreign affairs (New York, N.Y.)* 81, no. 4 (2002).; Walter Reich, *Origins of Terrorism : Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1998)., 192-207; Robert A. Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *The American political science review* 97, no. 3 (2003).; Robert Anthony Pape, *Dying to Win : The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, Random House Trade pbk. ed. (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2006).

Figure 36: Proportion of Suicide Events in Terrorist Attack Totals



6.2.3 Change in Attack Type

The GTD categorizes attacks into eight categories: armed assault, assassination, bombing/explosions, facility/infrastructure, hijacking, hostage taking (barricade), hostage taking (kidnapping), and unknown.[213] Interesting changes occur in attack type post-designation, including an 8-percent decline in armed assaults, a 3-percent decline in facility/infrastructure attacks, a 2-percent decline in hostage taking, and a 10-percent increase in less sophisticated bombings/explosions (Figures 37 and 38, next page).

[213] Terrorism, *Global Terrorism Database Codebook: Inclusion Criteria and Variables*., 23-42.

Figure 37: Pre-Designation Attack Type

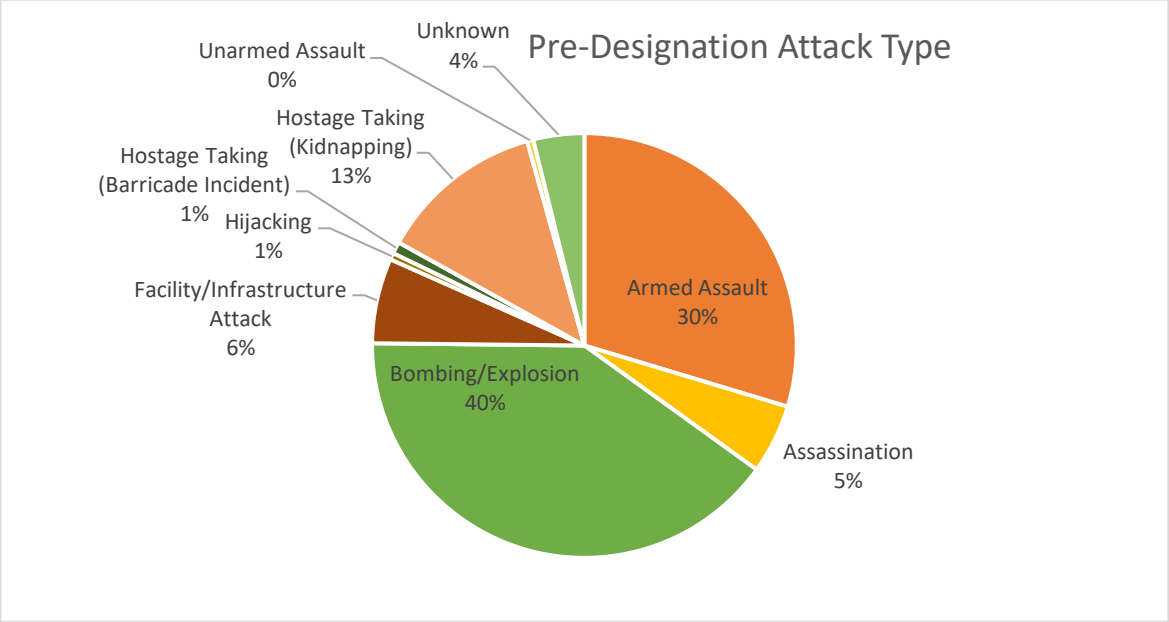
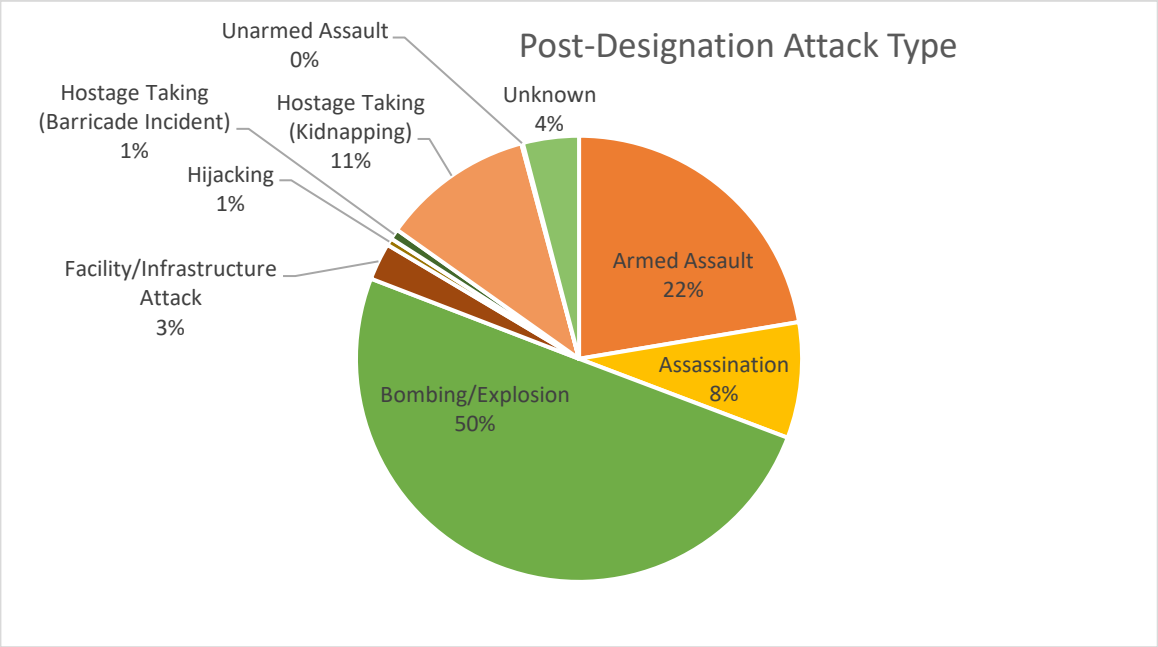


Figure 38: Post-Designation Attack Type



6.2.4 Change in Weapon Type

Although the GTD contains data for as many as four weapon types for each incident, this study assesses only the primary weapon type (weaptype1) relative to designation, as only 27 of the 20,001 records related to incidents in this dissertation had a second weapon type identified.

Weapon types in the GTD range from chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN), firearms, and explosives, and unknown. Yet only eight contained data during this time period: chemical, explosives, firearms, incendiary devices, melee, sabotage, unknown, or other. The weapons changes reflected post-designation are like the attack type above, with an increase in explosive attacks commensurate with the bombing type of the previous section and a reduction in firearm attacks. Otherwise, there is little to note in the pre- vs. post-designation weapons type for terrorist attacks (Figures 39 and 40).

Figure 39: Pre-Designation Weapon Type

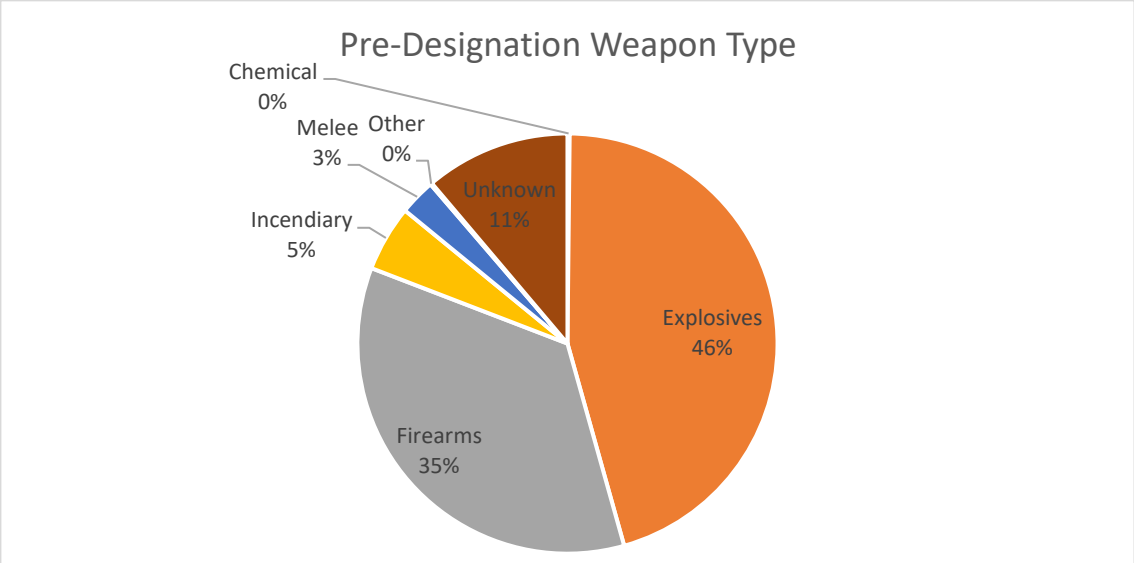
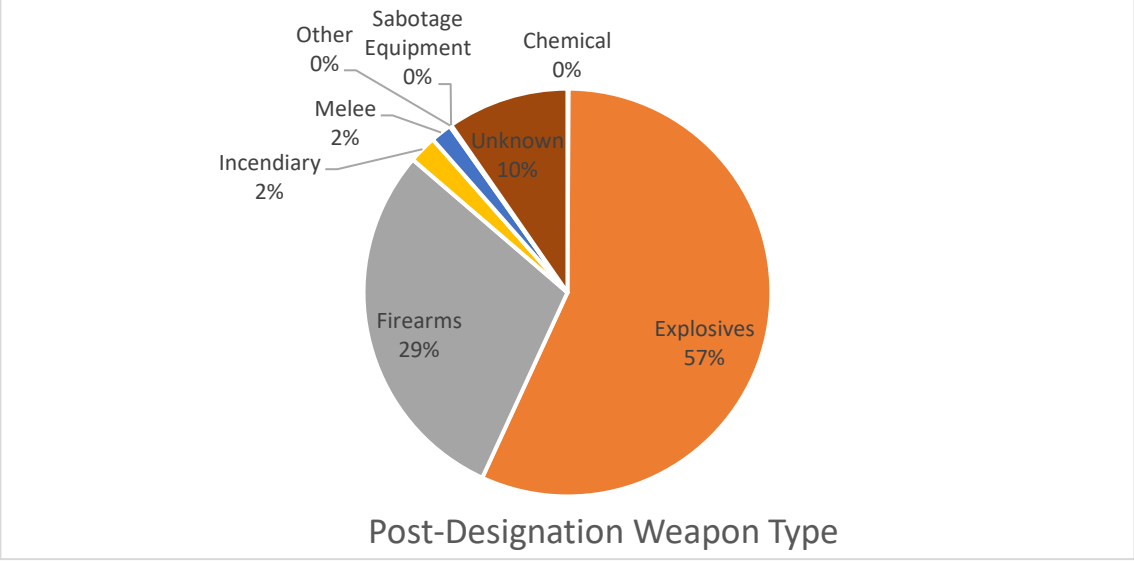


Figure 40: Post-Designation Weapon Type



6.2.5 Target/Victim Identification

The GTD defines target and victim information by as many as three variables, but this study uses only the first to assess the primary target/victim of terrorist incidents. Targets range from business to government to infrastructure. As pictured below in Figure 41 and 42 the aggregate target and victim type of terrorist incidents do not appear to alter significantly after designation.

Figure 42: Pre-Designation Target Type

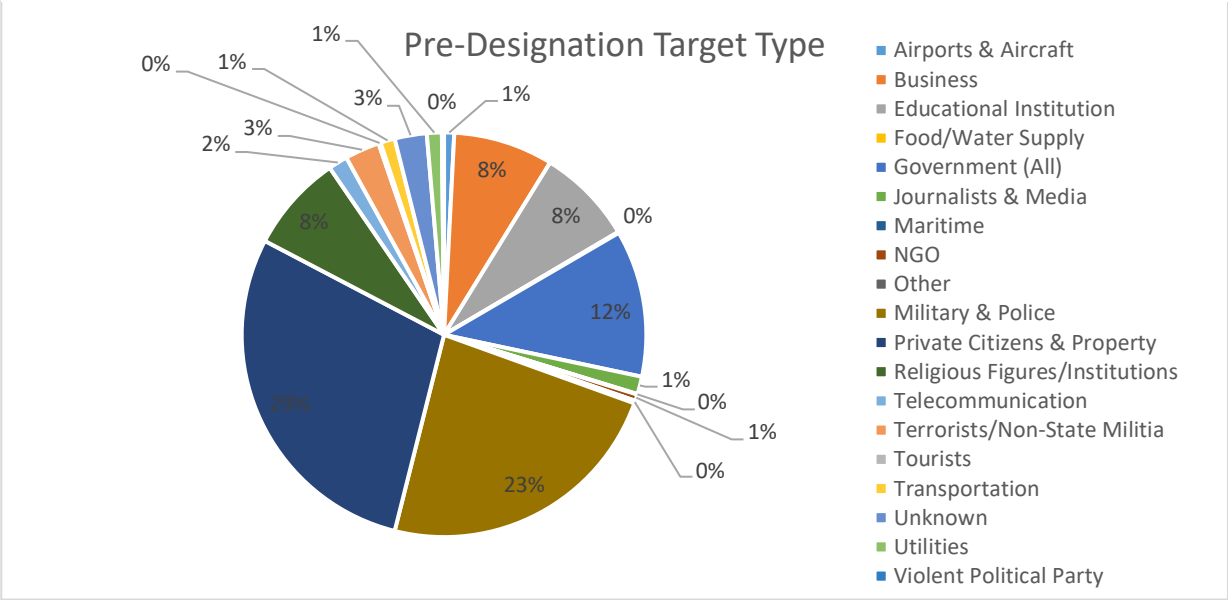
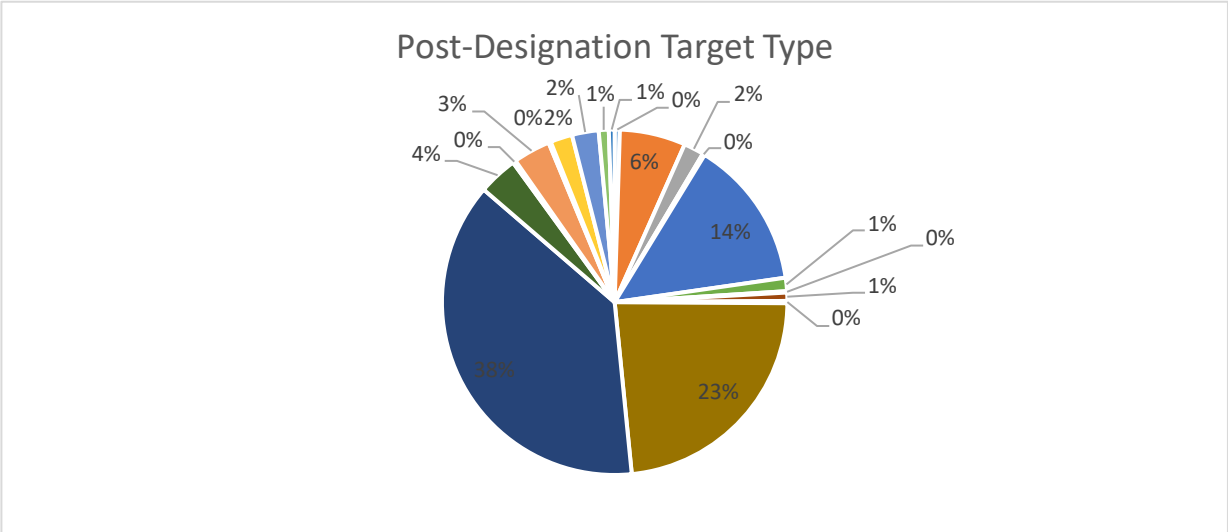


Figure 41: Post-Designation Target Type



6.3 Additional Findings on Hardening Defenses: Nuclear and Aviation Attacks

The consistent US goal of hardening defenses is to prevent terrorists from using weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, radiological, chemical, and biological)—but the most important of these is nuclear. On this most important measure, the efforts post-September 11 seem successful—none of the Salafi jihadist groups designated as FTOs during this study acquired, built, or used nuclear weapons. That is arguably a considerable potential measure of success for US counterterrorism, given the established and well-documented desire by al-Qa'ida and like-minded groups to acquire nuclear material since before 2001.[214] However, prior to September 11, 2001 no Salafi jihadist or other ideologically-aligned terrorist organization had executed a successful nuclear attack, so the absence of data both before and after designation in terms of nuclear attack data is insufficient to broadly categorize the effort to harden targets using the FTO designation process a success regarding nuclear weapons.

A closely related strategic goal is to prevent terrorists from damaging US and allied critical infrastructure—which is historically broadly defined[215]—but officially specified in 2013 Presidential Policy Directive 21 to include government facilities, transportation systems, utilities, and the food/water supply.[216] In comparing the charts above showing the percentage of attacks dedicated to these targets pre- and post-designation, very little change is evident. However, aviation targets declined from 1% of attacks pre-designation to 0% post-designation, even after removing September 11, 2001. Aviation is considered the gold standard of terrorist attacks by

[214] Agency, "Terrorist Cbrn: Materials and Effects."

[215] John Moteff and Paul Parfomak, "Critical Infrastructure and Key Assets: Definition and Identification" (2004).

[216] Presidential Policy Directive, "21 (Ppd-21)," *Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience* (2013).

most professional terrorist organizations and given continued interest in aviation-related attacks by Salafi jihadist groups—the drop in aviation attacks even of just 1% post-designation is a potential reflection of US efforts to stymie the attack preferences of designated groups.[217] While the data on hardening defenses above shows that FTO designation does not significantly impact attack type/targets, on these two measures of potentially catastrophic attacks—nuclear and aviation—the lack of attacks post-designation is worth noting.

6.5 Summary

In terms of hardening defenses, FTO designated the groups in this study exhibited an increase in simultaneous and suicide attacks 1-2 years after designation, with a decline between years 4 and 5. This mixed impact suggests that any designation-associated effect on targeting would lag after designation, consistent with the lethality findings, which increase in the 1-2 years after designation. Yet even in selection of attacks Salafi jihadist behavior did not clearly or convincingly respond to the act of designation itself. Attack type, weapon type, and target type remained remarkably consistent before and after designation—with a small increase in bombing attacks and a lack of weapons of mass destruction attacks both before and after designation. Overall, the data indicated too few changes in attack patterns to determine that designation made a significant impact on Salafi jihadist attack behavior—further evidence for the null hypothesis.

[217]Bruce Hoffman, "Aviation Security and Terrorism: An Analysis of the Potential Threat to Air Cargo Integrators," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 10, no. 3 (1998).;"Protecting American Interests Abroad: Us Citizens, Businesses, and Non-Governmental Organizations," (Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation, 2001).; "Al Qaeda, Trends in Terrorism, and Future Potentialities: An Assessment," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 26, no. 6 (2003).; *Understanding the Evolving Terrorism Threat Landscape Course Notes SEST 546* (Georgetown University and Council on Foreign Relations 2019), Lecture.

Chapter 7: Explaining Variation in Overall Impact – Case Studies

This chapter examines qualitatively if individual groups exhibited a change after FTO designation by comparing the end states of groups in the years after designation to identify trends and provides further explanation of the impact and drivers of changes to group behavior. While Chapters 4 and 6 indicated FTO designation had little impact on aggregated group membership and hardening defenses, Chapter 5 indicated some interesting directionality shifts after designation that while not significant, shows some groups experienced a change in the frequency of their attacks and lethality post-designation. Therefore, while in aggregate FTO designation may not have had a collective impact, it is worth exploring through case studies if specific groups may have experienced greater disruption in their attack frequency than others, and if that change coincided with the tools unlocked by designation.

This is assessed by looking at a) the attack frequency and lethality of individual groups pre- and post-designation, b) the identified actions of US government and allied counterterrorism efforts against the group after designation, and c) the reflections of the jihadists themselves on the impact to their operations. Confirming the hypothesis would mean that the attack frequency of a specific group declined post-designation, and that decline can be tied to identifiable US government action unlocked via designation, that is ideally reflected in the jihadists' communications regarding their own limitations. The overall findings demonstrate in cases where a group is more geographically limited the tools brought to bear corresponding with designation have a greater impact, whereas groups able to leverage cross-border sanctuaries, support, and refuge are better able to evade the impact of coordinated US activities.

Specifically the qualitative analysis attempts to explore if one or more of the US government activities that accompany designation make a significant difference in outcomes—

(a) military activity and intelligence activities; (b) diplomatic and consular activities; (c) legal actions, primarily material support to terrorism legal charges; (d) executive actions; (e) border and immigration activities; (f) financial sanctions or (g) international organization, or did the variation occur for some other reason?

To answer this question, case study data from one group across a range of four diverse outcomes was selected to explore the varied impact of designation-associated activities. The coordinated US government action against the TTP, Boko Haram, the Haqqani Network, and AQIM after designation were coded along these seven variables to determine the probable role of designation-associated activities. Case study primary sources were coded into additional categories and themes, based on their original content, to serve as a check to see if other non-designation factors influenced outcomes more than designation (Appendix D). This analysis revealed that designation-related activities are more likely to provide near and/or longer-term gains in cases where the groups geographical support and reach are limited.

7.1 Overall Findings

The case studies show initial evidence of a potentially significant, but unexpected finding: the characteristics of the groups' designated, specifically national vs. international orientation, goals, and operational focus seems better correlated to outcomes than designation-associated activities. In other words, the most international group, AQIM, was the most unaffected by designation, while the most regional, narrowly focused group, TTP, was most impacted (Figure 43, next page).

The qualitative research showed that the nature and operational focus of the designated groups likely effects the extent to which designation-associated activities will have their desired impact. Based on this research, the focus and geographic limits of groups likely drives more FTO designation outcomes than previously understood. This knowledge may allow more tailored actions accompanying FTO designation by policymakers and operational leader, or at least enhance understanding of where designation-associated activities are likely to have greater impact. A visual summary of the findings is presented in Figure 43 below and will be detailed in the breakdown of findings by group throughout this chapter.

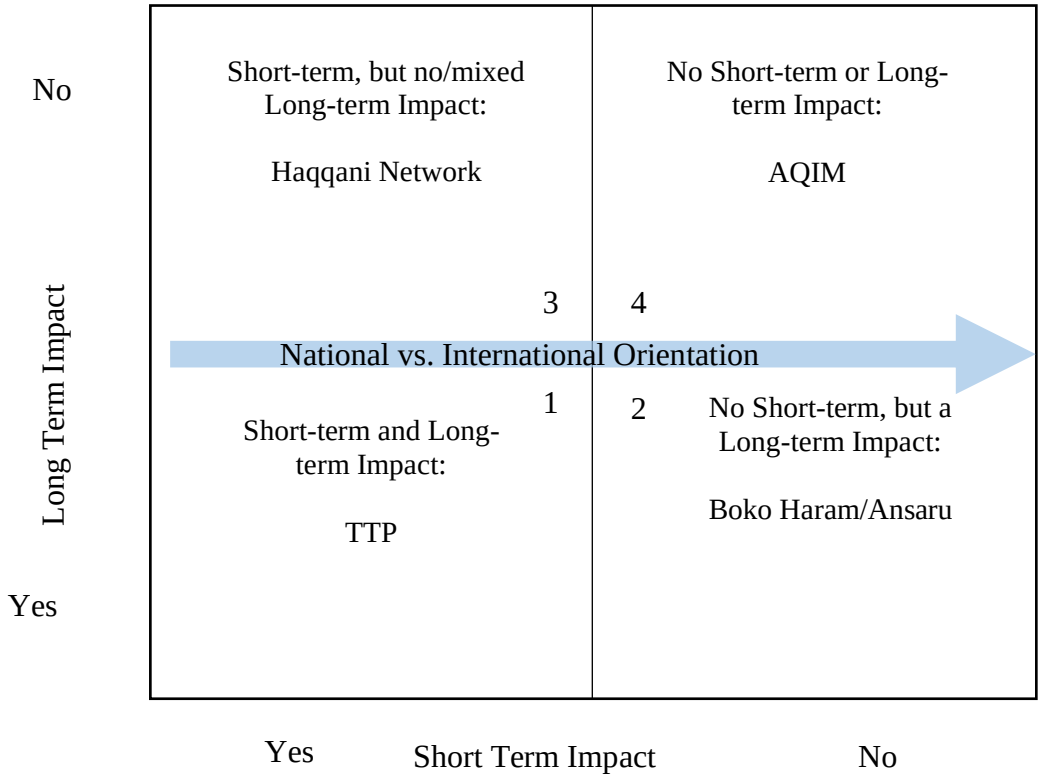


Figure 43: National vs. International Group Orientation and FTO Designation

7.2 Breakdown of Findings by Group

The remainder of this chapter will examine the impact of designation-associated US actions on TTP, Boko Haram, the Haqqani Network, and AQIM by comparing the impact of designation-associated activities on their attack and lethality behavior. The groups were selected as the best examples of a diverse range of outcomes following designations impact on incidents and lethality: TTP as the "best-case" for exhibiting both short- and long-term impact; Boko Haram for the next "best-case" for no short-term impact but a long-term impact; the Haqqanis for the "best-case" for short term but no long-term impact; and AQIM for no short- or long-term impact. While a range of groups represented these outcomes, these four were chosen as the best examples to identify how and when designation-associated activities drove behavioral outcomes based in part on the availability of primary source data (Chapter 3). The comparisons between groups use data coded from Department of Treasury summaries of terrorist financial sanctions accompanying designation; Justice Department material support charges accompanying designation; State Department's Patterns of Global Terrorism/Country Reports on Terrorism; and, captured media from the jihadists themselves.

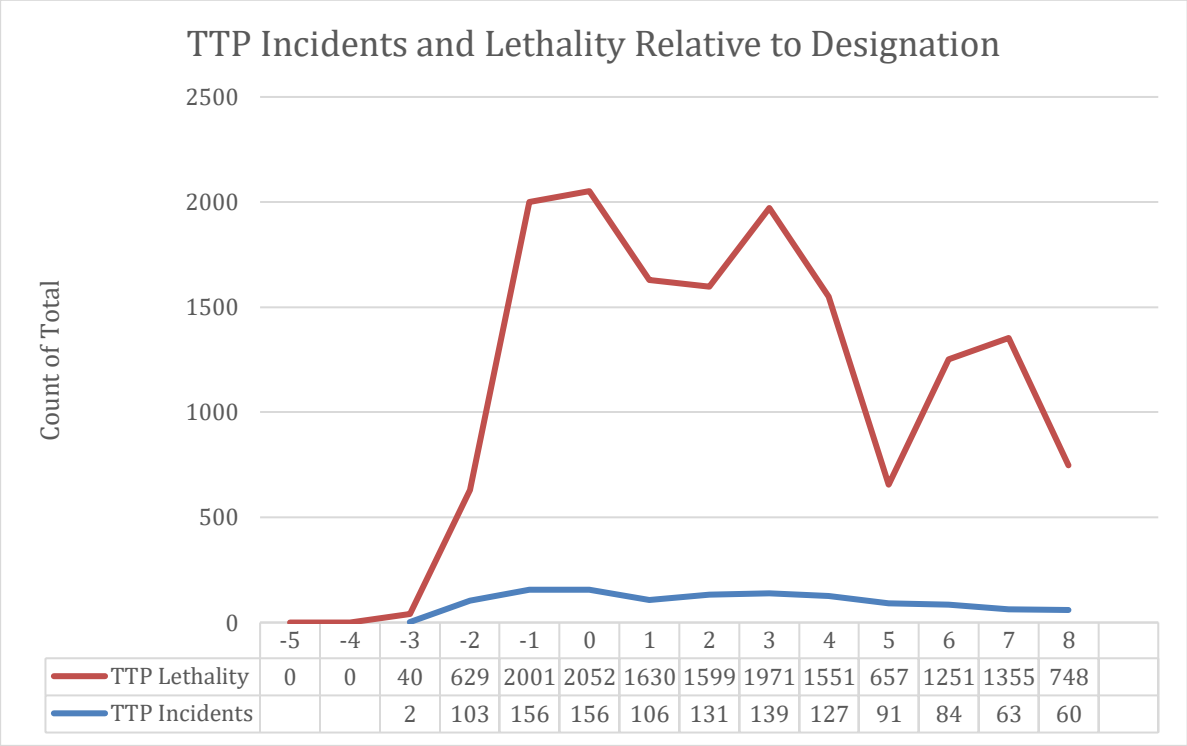
7.2.1 TTP: Designation Has Both Short- and Long-term Impacts

Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was formed in December 2007, under leader Baitullah Mehsud, and engaged in its first high-profile attack against a Pakistani military convoy in Mingora that same month, killing 13 people and wounding another 25.[218] Despite the TTP's founding as "as a by-product of the intra-jihadi politics that followed the 2001 U.S. invasion of

[218] Institute for Conflict Management, "Bomb Blasts in the North West Frontier Province - 2007," https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/nwfp/datasheet/2007.htm.; and Stanford University, "Tehrik-I-Taliban Pakistan," in *Mapping Militant Organizations* (2018).

Afghanistan" and its shared history and alliance with al-Qa'ida, the United States did not formally designate TTP a terrorist group until December 2010.[219] According to the quantitative data and case study methodology presented in Chapter 3, the TTP is the "best case" outcome for this study, where the group experienced both a short-term and long-term post-designation decline in incidents and lethality (Figure 44). Yet, even within the case study, the US government activities accompanying designation did not appear to drive the outcome. In fact, the two most significant follow-on activities cited in support of FTO designation—financial sanctions and material support charges to terrorism—barely factor into the TTP case study. Instead, the most important reason for the relatively successful outcome seems to be the relatively limited geographic reach and support of the TTP, compared to the other groups in this case study.

Figure 44: TTP Incidents and Lethality Relative to Designation



	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
TTP Lethality	0	0	40	629	2001	2052	1630	1599	1971	1551	657	1251	1355	748
TTP Incidents			2	103	156	156	106	131	139	127	91	84	63	60

[219] "Tehrik-I-Taliban Pakistan." and Abdul Sayed, "The Evolution and Future of Tehrik-E Taliban Pakistan," 21 December 2021 2021.

Official Department of Treasury data reflect a surprisingly small number of financially sanctioned groups during the past 20 years despite the growing FTO designation list. Until the early 2000s, Treasury focused on blocking the assets of only a small number of groups, primarily al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.[220] TTP does not appear until Treasury's 2017 Annual Report, which shows a mere $224 seized from the group.[221] By 2018, TTP's blocked assets rose to $318, clearly not enough to explain any post-designation changes in the group's behavior. This finding is surprising, because FTO designation's reputation as one of the most effective nonkinetic CT tools is linked principally to asset seizure and material support charges, the original purpose of its inclusion in the AEDPA (see Chapter 2).[222]

Neither are material support charges sufficient to explain change in TTP's behavior. In fact, the number of charges brought against individuals associated with groups in this study is surprisingly small. From 1998-2017, the Justice Department pursued material support charges (2339A and 2339B Cases) against only six named individuals associated with the TTP, convicting four, acquitting one, and dismissing charges against the last.[223] TTP was the only group whose members had material support charges levied against them during the study period,

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[220] For a full list of Treasury Summaries of Terrorist Asset Reports (TARs) focused on the impact of designations from 1994-2019, see: U.S. Department of the Treasury, "Counter Terrorism Sanctions," https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/financial-sanctions/sanctions-programs-and-country-information/counter-terrorism-sanctions.

[221] Office of Foreign Assets Control, "Twenty-Sixth Annual Report to the Congress on Assets in the United States Relating to Terrorist Countries and International Terrorism Program Designees," ed. U.S. Department of Treasury (Washington D.C.2017)., 10.

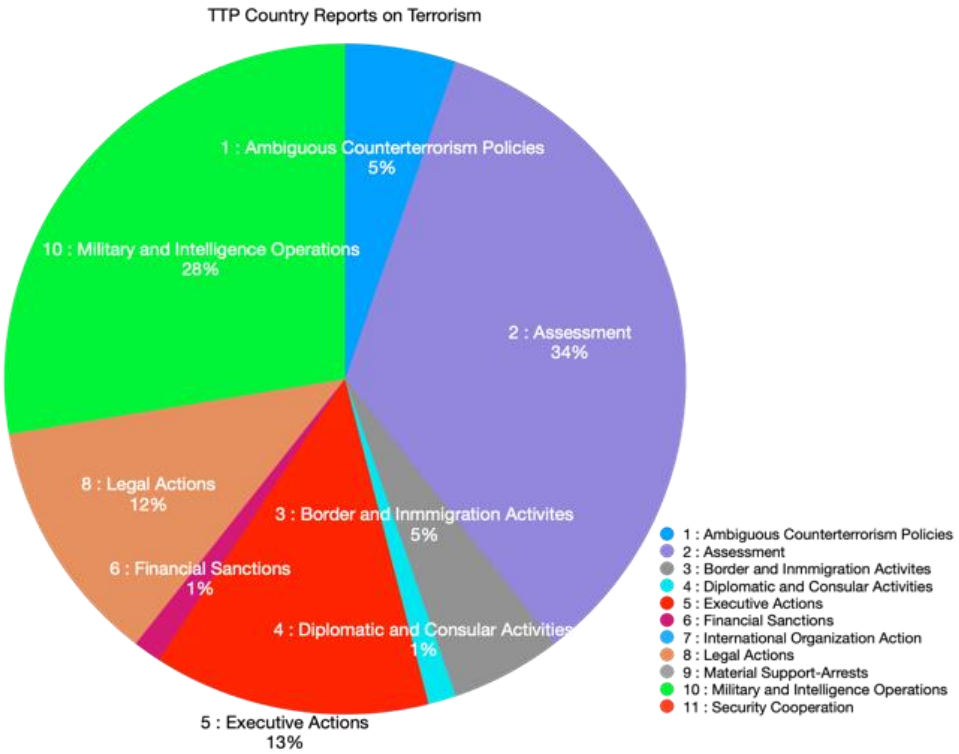
[222] The Treasury Departments lists terrorist sanction data annually, summarizing as "Blocked Funds in the United States Relating to the SDGT, SDT, and FTO Programs" in their annual report. While this data includes two other designation programs that can allow for US Treasury asset seizures, it is still broadly reflected of the impact of FTO designation on terrorist group asset seizures. Treasury, "Counter Terrorism Sanctions".

[223] Christopher Bailey, "Justice Department Material Support Database," ed. National Intelligence University (Author's Copy: Used by Permission, 2017).

but the low number of charges are unlikely to be the source of differentiation between outcomes among FTOs.

That leaves official State Department annual reports, the Country Reports on Terrorism, and captured media as the last sources of information for why FTO designation appears successful against TTP. Executive Action, which makes up 13 percent of the references to TTP in the official State Department documents, dwarfs the mere 2-3 percent for AQIM and Boko Haram, and is more comparable to the 23 percent for the Haqqani Network (HQN). This larger Executive-level national security focus on the TTP and HQN is interesting but does not fully explain why TTP's short-term and long-term behavior changed after designation (Figure 45).

Figure 45: TTP Country Reports on Terrorism



Captured media, the last data source for the qualitative case studies, is perhaps reflective of the driving factors for TTP. Even though captured media provides a very limited window into a group's decision making and includes only six letters relevant to the group, it is instructive when assessing how US policy impacts and interacts with terrorist group behavior. The data set is biased however because captured media is only selectively released by US officials and therefore reflects only a narrow aperture of the group's total operations.

Figure 46 shows several documents that helped illuminate TTP's concerns, including documents released as part of the Harmony Project at West Point CTC and captured media from the raid against Usama Bin Laden in May 2011. Three of the documents were specific to the TTP and identified as such, additional references to TTP were identified across the captured media and noted as appropriate in Figure 46.

Document and Date	Case	Number	Author	Coded Themes
Letter to Hakimullah Mahsud, 3 December 2010	TTP	SOCOM-2012-0000007	Atiyah Abd al-Rahman & Abu Yahya al-Libi	Authority in Jihad
Letter to Shaykh Azmaray (UBL), 4 February 2008	TTP	UBL Media	Unknown	Internal Alliance and Rival Formation
Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan Charter, Date Unknown	TTP	UBL Media	Unknown, commentary by Atiyah Abd al-Rahman & Abu Yahya al-Libi	Authority in Jihad; Internal Alliance and Rival Formation
April 2011 Atiyah Letter to UBL	AQIM	UBL Media	Atiyah Abd al-Rahman	Authority in Jihad; International Vs. National Terrorist Group
July 2010 Letter to Shaykh Abu Abdallah	AQIM	UBL Media	Atiyah Abd al-Rahman	Internal Alliance and Rival Formation; International vs. National Terrorist Group

Letter to Shaykh Mahmud Ref. Arab Spring	AQIM	UBL Media	Possibly UBL	Authority in Jihad

Figure 46: Captured Media Related to TTP

Of these six documents, which only reflect a portion of private communications, the thematic focus is al-Qa'ida senior leadership's advice on the appropriate authority, decision making, and targeting for jihadist organizations affiliated with their brand. While the frequency of the authority theme is significant, the debates focus more on who has the authority for internal Shura decision making than targeting strategies and are more reactive than prescriptive. The glaring exception is the document from August 2010, likely written by Bin Laden, which refers to an unknown letter from Shaykh Abu-Muhammad (likely a reference to Ayman al-Zawahiri) that raises the issue of "several Pakistani brothers" who "wanted to pledge their allegiance to the Pakistan Taliban" a reference to the TTP.[224] The response from Bin Laden is to direct Atiyah Abd al-Rahman (the likely recipient of the letter) to inform the Pakistani brothers directly:

> [Our] opinion is that they should stay with al-Qa'ida, the reasons being that it is a worldwide organization, not a national one; it has pledged its allegiance to the commander of the faithful, God preserve him; and al-Qa'ida has broader expertise in many areas. So, we believe our religion would be greater served by [their] remaining. They should be told this in so many words, and very politely, but if you believe our religion could be greater served through the Pakistan Taliban, then I leave it up to you.[225]

This theme—the comparative advantage of an international terrorist organization rather than a national one is a theme repeatedly articulated by al-Qa'ida leadership and later ISIL in extolling the virtues of joining their global movement. Those arguments were articulated by Bin

[224] Usama Bin Laden, *Dear Brother Shaykh Mahmud*, *Bin Laden's Bookshelf* (Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2010)., 7-8.

[225] Ibid.

Laden himself in the declarations of al-Qa'ida as a global movement intent on attacking the West in 1996 and the formation of the Anti-Crusader Islamic Front in 1998.[226] Al-Qa'ida's deliberate strategy of internationalizing its struggle by aligning with and enabling otherwise local jihads and encouraging them to broaden their targets and look to attack Western interests is well known and emulated by ISIL.[227]

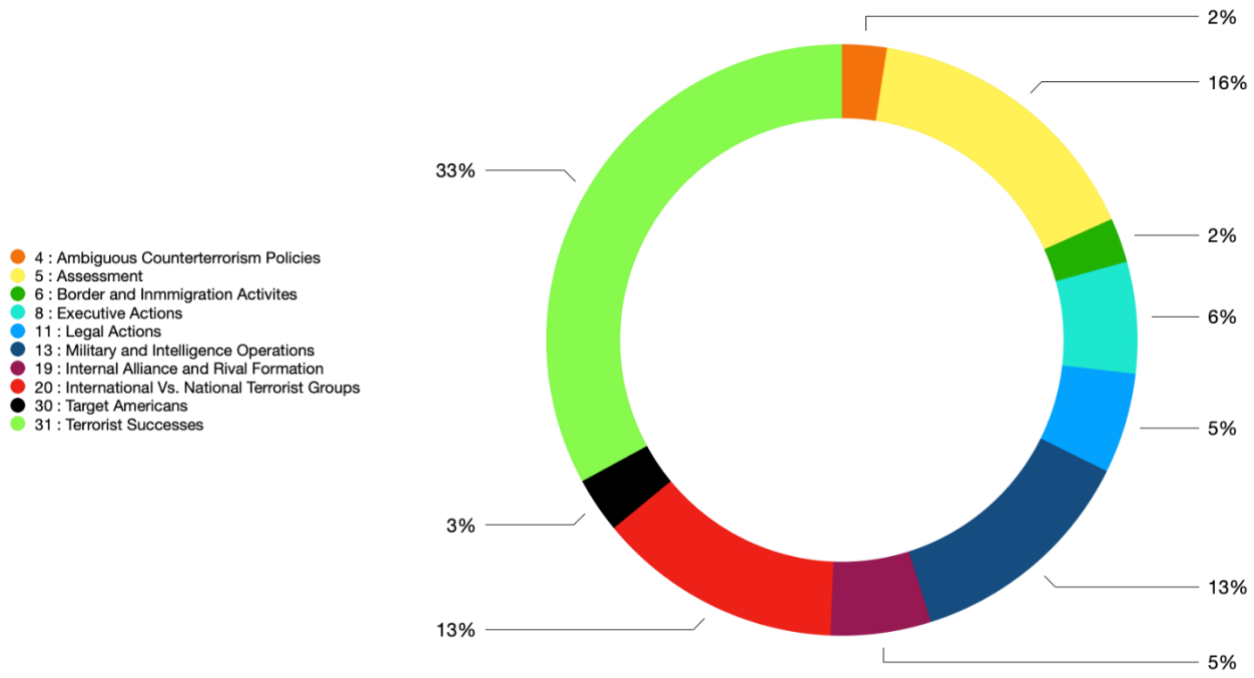
It is also indicative of broader patterns reflected across the data. As the chart below and the additional case studies show, the most likely explanatory factor for the different outcomes across designated groups became the international presence and support for the Salafi jihadist groups (Figure 47, next page).[228] Groups that were able to operate across borders with international presence were more resistant to CT pressure in the years after designation.

[226] Gilles Kepel and Jean-Pierre Milelli, *Al Qaeda in Its Own Words* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008).

[227] Sturm, *Is the Sound Bite Mightier Than the Sword? Strategic Communications as a Tool to Export the Global Jihad, 2001-2009*.; Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge;: Cambridge University Press, 2009).; Bruce Hoffman and Fernando Reinares, *The Evolution of the Global Terrorist Threat: From 9/11 to Osama Bin Laden's Death*, Columbia Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).; Graeme Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants," *The Atlantic Monthly* 315, no. 2 (2015).; Brian Fishman, *The Master Plan: ISIS, Al Qaeda, and the Jihadi Strategy for Final Victory* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2016).; Bergen, *The Rise and Fall of Osama Bin Laden*.

[228] The TTP captured media was also compared against control themes discussed in the Boko Haram and AQIM cases below, but the very limited captured media revealed only three themes: internal alliance and rival formation, authority in jihad, and confirmation of active communications between affiliates and core, none directly applicable to designation-associated activities and thus cut from the narrative.

Figure 47: TTP Beyond Designation Associated Activities, Top 10 Themes

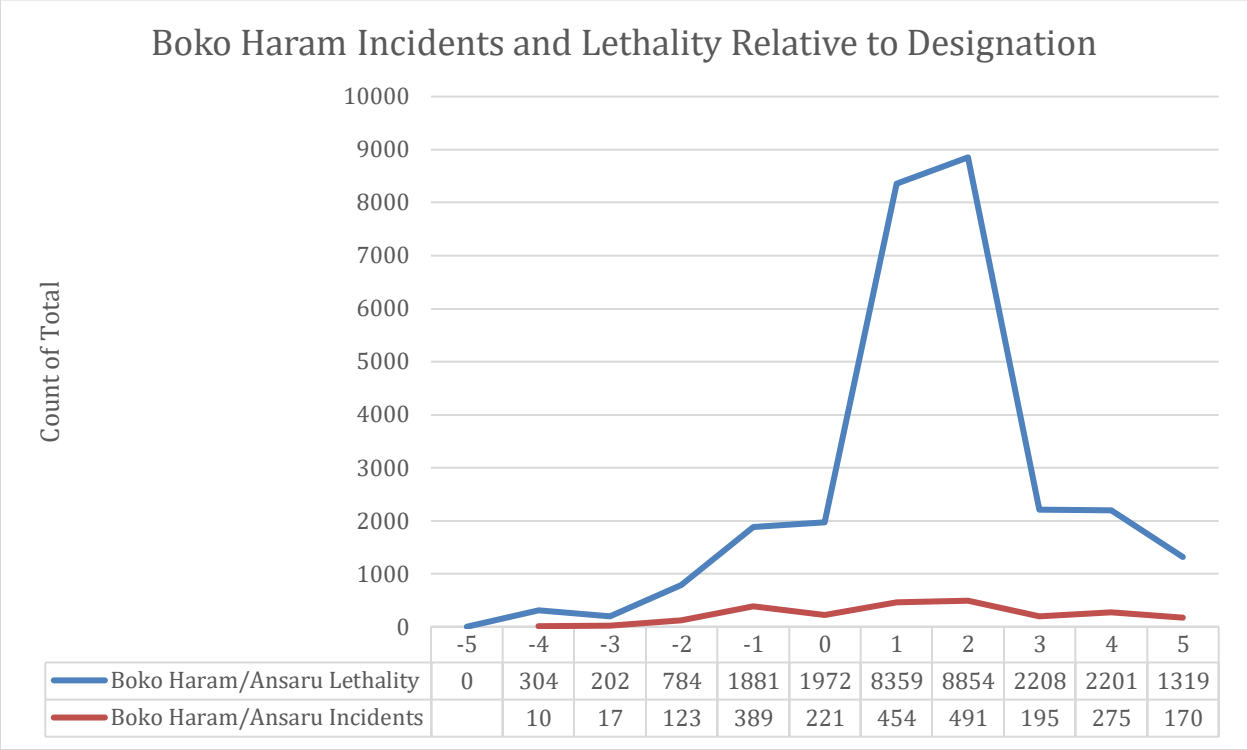


7.2.2 Boko Haram: Long-term Impact Only

For Boko Haram, designation's short-term impact was counterintuitive—an immediate increase in incidents and lethality preceded a gradual decline in incidents and lethality after year two. Boko Haram was founded in 2002 and designated in November 2013 after an increasingly brazen series of attacks against the UN and local Nigerian police and military forces.[229] Its designation, therefore, occurred while the group was on an upward trajectory of attacks and lethality in the 2 years before designation (Figure 48, next page).

[229] Stanford University, "Boko Haram," in *Mapping Militant Organizations* (2018).

Figure 48: Boko Haram Incidents and Lethality Relative to Designation



	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
Boko Haram/Ansaru Lethality	0	304	202	784	1881	1972	8359	8854	2208	2201	1319
Boko Haram/Ansaru Incidents		10	17	123	389	221	454	491	195	275	170

One of the immediate questions arising from the Boko Haram case, not answerable from the data, is why FTO designation was delayed despite Boko Haram's expanding international threat, particularly since the State Department Country Reports on Terrorism first mentions Boko Haram in 2009.[230] Press reports suggest that the State Department began a contentious debate about FTO designation for Boko Haram as early as 2012, when three Boko Haram leaders were included in the lesser Specially Designated Global Terrorist list.[231] According to *The Washington*

[230] Counterterrorism United States. Department of State. Office of the Coordinator for, "Country Reports on Terrorism," (2009), https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2009/index.htm., 27.

[231] Glenn Kessler, "Boko Haram: Inside the State Department Debate over the 'Terrorist' Label," *The Washington Post*, 19 May 2014 2014.; Nico Columbant, "Terror Label for Boko Haram Debated," *VOA News*, 20 February 2012 2012.

Post, Nigeria objected to the designation, fearing that blocked assets would hamper the humanitarian support needed to combat the group.[232]

In addition to Nigeria's alleged objections, in 2014 it was reported that the designation had been delayed for years by the State Department, due to the impression that designation provided a recruitment boost for organizations in the international press which might otherwise maintain a regional or local focus.[233] According to ABC News: "The refusal was based on State Department officials' belief between 2010 and 2012 that Boko Haram was not a transnational threat outside of Nigeria or a direct threat to the U.S. homeland." It is ironic and illustrative that the exact reason designation seems more efficacious based on the case studies, the national vs. international presence of a group, was at the crux of the debate to designate the group. While that debate dragged on, it appears Boko Haram was already experiencing an operational upswing, to include attacking more international targets beginning with the United Nations building in Abuja on August 26, 2011. Ultimately, Boko Haram internationalized its support prior to 2011 by seeking weapons, training, and support from al-Qa'ida, as documented in the captured media and in official estimates of Boko Haram's international terrorism outreach at the time of designation.[234]

Boko Haram is also a case where the designation-associated activities lagged significantly behind the already delayed decision to designate. According to the Treasury

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[232] Kessler, "Boko Haram: Inside the State Department Debate over the 'Terrorist' Label."; Columbant, "Terror Label for Boko Haram Debated."

[233] James Gordon Meek and Dana Hughes, "Debates in Dc Delayed Action on Boko Haram, Officials Say," *ABC News*, 8 May 2014 2014.

[234] "Boko Haram has also shared tactics, techniques, training and financing with other Qaeda affiliates in Africa, including the Shabab in Somalia and East Africa, American officials say." Eric Schmitt, "State Dept. Calls Group in Nigeria Terrorists," *The New York Times*, 13 November 2013 2013.

Department, asset seizures for Boko Haram did not begin until 2018—5 years after its designation—when $11,514 in assets were blocked.[235] Similarly, no material support charges were levied against Boko Haram/Ansaru members from 1998 to 2018, again undermining the two most touted policy benefits of the FTO designation.[236]

State Department's Country Reports on Terrorism reveal the bulk of US and allied designation-associated activities focused on Boko Haram came in two categories: military and intelligence operations and legal actions, mostly involving on legal and investigative improvements in the countries surrounding the Lake Chad region of Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria, where Boko Haram operates. The military and intelligence operations reflected as the dominant response to Boko Haram in the State Department's own reporting is fascinating, particularly US support in 2014 for creating a Multinational Joint Task Force between Cameroon, Niger, and Chad.[237] The Task Force's accomplishments were considered a major driver in countering the terrorist group, both in US government documents and in the group's own captured media. The top designated associated activities for Boko Haram are depicted on the following page in Figure 49.

Only two documents in the captured media were directly relevant to Boko Haram, both from the bin Laden raid (Figure 50, page 147). The letters, one from Boko Haram's leader Abubakar Shekau and the other from Abdallah Abu Zayd to the leader of AQIM, Abdelmalek

[235] Office of Foreign Assets Control, "Twenty-Seventh Annual Report to the Congress on Assets in the United States Relating to Terrorist Countries and International Terrorism Program Designees," ed. U.S. Department of Treasury (Washington D.C.2018).

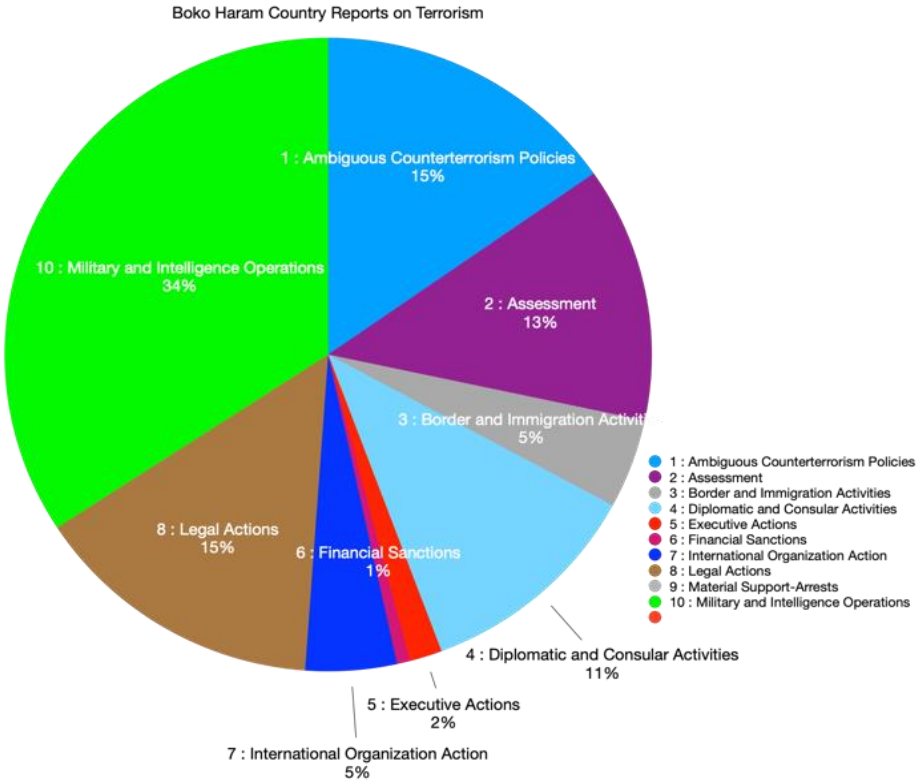
[236] Bailey, "Justice Department Material Support Database."

[237] Counterterrorism United States. Department of State. Office of the Coordinator for, "Country Reports on Terrorism," (2014), https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/index.htm., 9.

Droukdel, are seeking guidance to support Boko Haram's campaign against Nigeria and more broadly the West. While the letters deal primarily with authority in jihad and appealing to al-Qa'ida for support, the second highlights the difficulty Boko Haram had in direct military engagement, including the death of more than 200 fighters. Abdallah Abu Zayd reveals Boko Haram's strategy, based on his alleged communications with Shekau:

> When they withdrew, individually or in groups, some went to other countries and others went to the jungle. The enemy is unforgiving and will kill you for any offense. There are a lot of wounded brothers. They recounted another event in which the brothers raided an enemy center and took forty rifles. They escaped into the jungle and have not been heard

Figure 49: Boko Haram and Designation Associated Activities



> from since. They said they have been waging jihad, trying to kill the biggest of the criminals, but have achieved nothing so far. Right now they are trying to avoid confronting the enemy except through martyrdom operations and IEDs. Once they have real bases in the mountains or the jungle, then they can launch attacks.[238]

Document and Date	Case	Number	Author	Coded Themes
Letter from Boko Haram to al-Qa'ida, Undated	BH	UBL Media	Abubakar Shekau, Leader of Boko Haram	Authority in Jihad
Letter from Abdallah Abu Zayd Abd-al-Hamid to Abu Mus'ab 'Abd-al-Wadud, Undated	BH & AQIM	UBL Media	Abdallah Abu Zayd Abd-al-Hamid	Authority in Jihad Military and Intelligence Operations Lack of Material and External Support Operational Guidance from Leaders

Figure 50: Boko Haram Captured Media

The importance of military and intelligence operations against Boko Haram is significant and somewhat surprising, again given that FTO designation is publicly heralded as one of the most effective nonkinetic tools of counterterrorism. Yet, military and intelligence operations were in the top five themes reflected in the Boko Haram captured media. Boko Haram's case suggests that reconciling the kinetic effects of a nonkinetic public policy tool—beyond the scope of this unclassified project—is a worthy topic for future exploratory research.

The Boko Haram case study seems to affirm some of the TTP conclusions: Boko Haram's survival depended on their ability to hide in the jungle and engage in guerilla tactics against the CT forces of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. The State Department's Country Reports on Terrorism 2015 notes repeatedly the refuge provided to Boko Haram by the Lake Chad region's fluid borders and suggest that Boko Haram was able to operate by moving into other countries besides Nigeria. It states:

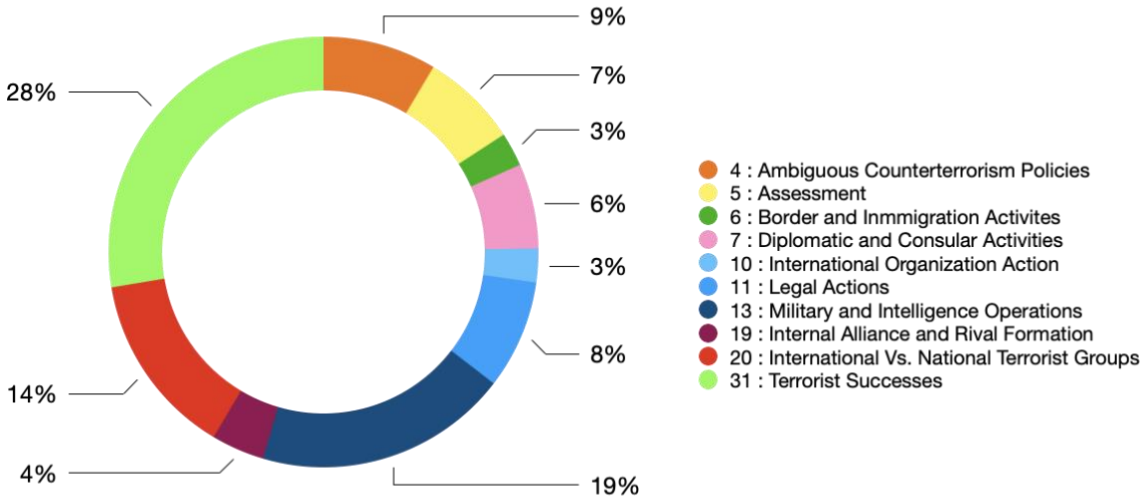
[238] Abdallah Abu Zayd Abd-al-Hamid, Captured Media, Bin Laden's Bookshelf, Monday, 3 Ramadan 1430.

> Boko Haram has increasingly crossed Nigerian borders to evade pressure and conduct operations. In February 2013, BH claimed responsibility for kidnapping seven French tourists in the Far North of Cameroon. Security forces from Chad and Niger also reportedly participated in skirmishes against suspected BH members along Nigeria's borders. In 2013, the group also kidnapped eight French citizens in northern Cameroon and obtained ransom payments for their release.[239]

After Nigeria was able to organize with its neighbors to "form and lead the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) that facilitated collaboration and coordination on counter-Boko Haram efforts," the number of terrorism incidents declined.[240] According to the State Department, beginning two years after designation Nigeria began to act more concretely in "cooperation with regional partners," allowing Nigeria to regain "control over much of the territory in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states that had been captured by Boko Haram."[241]

Boko Haram's international presence therefore allowed it to continue executing attacks after designation, and only international cooperation curtailed its progress beginning in 2015. For

Figure 51: Boko Haram Beyond Designation Associated Activities, Top 10 Themes



[239] State, "Country Reports on Terrorism, 2015.", 43.

[240] Counterterrorism United States. Department of State. Office of the Coordinator for, "Country Reports on Terrorism," (2016), https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/index.htm., 48.

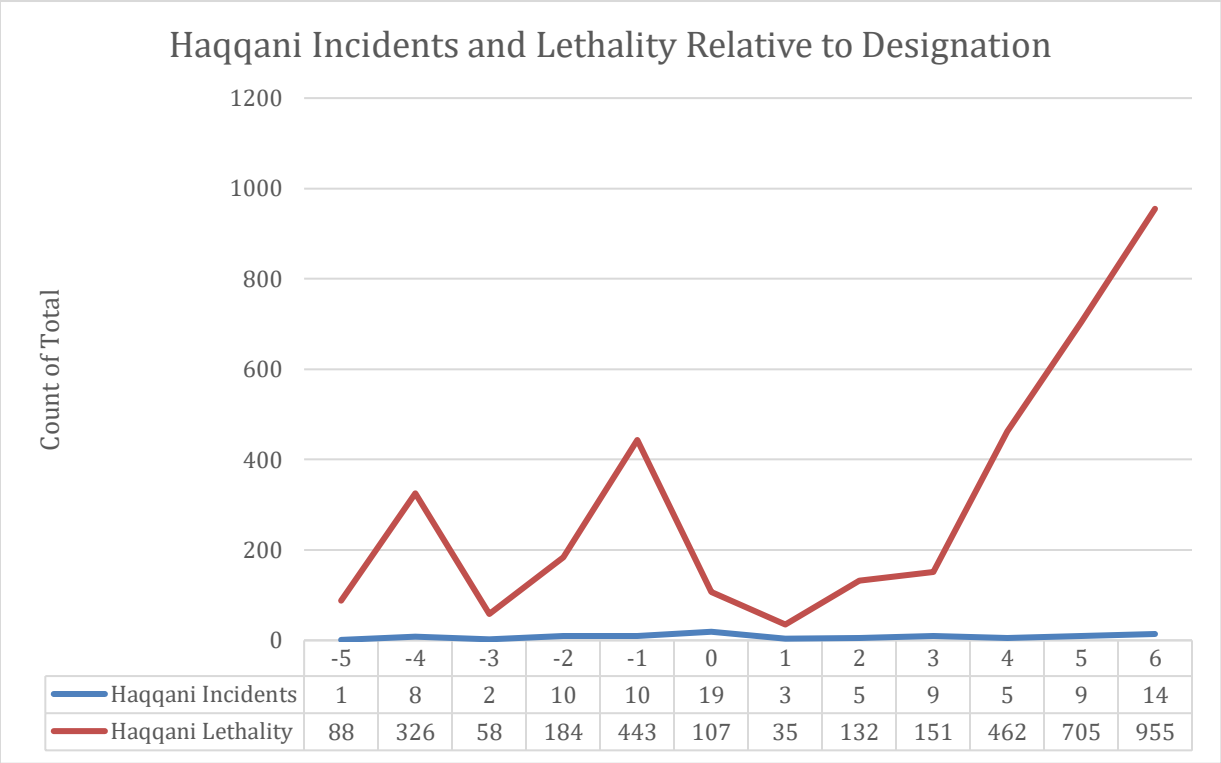
[241] State, "Country Reports on Terrorism, 2015.", 43.

the Boko Haram case study international vs. national presence exceeds all other themes in State Department reporting except terrorist successes and military and intelligence operations. This theme of international vs. national terrorist group and the significance of military operations also appears in the case studies on AQIM and the Haqqani Network.

7.2.3 Haqqani Network: Short-Term but No Long-Term Impact

The Haqqani Network is the most confounding case study in this research, as it exhibited some impact to incidents and lethality after its 2012 designation, but the effects were short lived. The trendline is easily visible in the Figure 52, where incidents and lethality dip in the immediate year after designation (between year 0 and year 1) and then dramatically increase. HQN also has a paucity of data compared to the other case studies.

Figure 52: Haqqani Network Incidents and Lethality Relative to Designation



	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Haqqani Incidents	1	8	2	10	10	19	3	5	9	5	9	14
Haqqani Lethality	88	326	58	184	443	107	35	132	151	462	705	955

No material support charges were brought against Haqqani figures from 1999-2018.[242] It is also not until 2017, 5 years after designation, that HQN even appears in the annual Treasury Asset Report, which notes $1,108 blocked from the group.[243] By 2018 that number had increased to only $3,626—a tiny amount compared to the $6,416,827 in al-Qa'ida assets blocked the same year.[244] For this case study, material support charges and financial sanctions are again less significant than expected at the outset of this research. The Country Reports on Terrorism reflect a similar lack of data on HQN, despite their founding in the early 1970s.[245] The Haqqanis are not even referenced until 2005 and, even then, their leader Jalaluddin Haqqani is identified only as a "leading Taliban figure" and mentioned only once.[246] It is not until 2007 that the HQN appears as anything other than a casual mention of its existence as a Taliban-associated affiliate, and then the reference focuses on Sirajuddin Haqqani's addition to the UN 1267 Sanctions Committee list of entities associated with Bin Laden.[247]

This highlights an interesting trend found in the State Department's HQN write-ups—while they contained little information about what was being done to counter the HQN beyond Pakistani military operations, they focused extensively on Executive Actions taken against

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[242] NIU Justice Department Material Support Database, by permission of Professor Christopher Bailey. Data beyond 2017 was unavailable in this database.

[243] Control, "Twenty-Sixth Annual Report to the Congress on Assets in the United States Relating to Terrorist Countries and International Terrorism Program Designees.", 14.

[244] "Twenty-Seventh Annual Report to the Congress on Assets in the United States Relating to Terrorist Countries and International Terrorism Program Designees.", 15.

[245] Stanford University, "Haqqani Network," in *Mapping Militant Organizations* (2018).

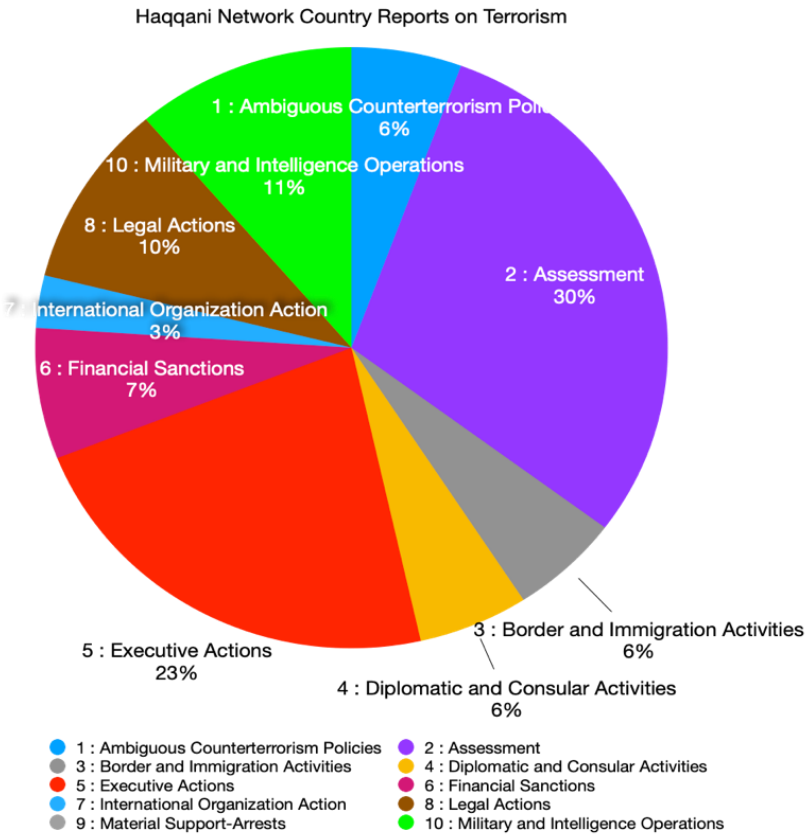
[246] Counterterrorism United States. Department of State. Office of the Coordinator for, "Country Reports on Terrorism," (2005), https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=462801., 153

[247] Ibid.; Counterterrorism United States. Department of State. Office of the Coordinator for, "Country Reports on Terrorism," (2007), https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2007/index.htm., 196.

Haqqani leaders. These actions included listing leaders in the FBI's Rewards for Justice program, sanctioning leaders, and adding Haqqani leadership to the Specially Designated Global Terrorism list, along with international sanctions.[248]

This focus is reflected in the coding of the Country Reports on Terrorism, with Executive Action making up more 20 percent of the cited designation-associated activity against the group (Figure 53).

Figure 53: Haqqani Network Designation Associated Activities



[248] U.S. Department of State Country Reports on Terrorism 2012-2018: available by year online from 2009-2017 at: "Country Reports on Terrorism," (2012), https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2013/index.htm.; and "Country Reports on Terrorism," (2018), https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2018/.

Only the TTP comes close to that level of cited effort, with 13 percent of the references against that group tied to Executive Action over the same period. If Executive Action made a significant difference against groups, however, researchers would expect those percentages to be flipped, where the best case, the TTP, experienced more Executive Actions. Future research can and should address the type, targets, and enforcement of Executive Actions taken prior to and after designations, as based on this data they may supplement other whole of government activities. Like the other case studies, military and intelligence operations and legal actions make up the next highest categorical references for designation-associated activities.

The Haqqani Network also lacked captured media to reference from the timeframe of this study. HQN was referenced three times in other captured media, but only in relation to its alliance with and direct communication supporting al-Qa'ida.[249] The only open-source HQN captured media available are nine documents from West Point CTC that date from the 1990s, illustrating HQN's longstanding connections with Pakistani intelligence and al-Qa'ida.[250] Yet these documents, while outside the scope of this study, further affirm the results from the other three case studies.

In a comprehensive evaluation of the Haqqani Network which focused directly on this body of captured media, researchers Ron Rassler and Vahid Brown establish that the source of

[249] All of these documents from the UBL raid and were declassified and released as part of the Usama Bin Laden bookshelf by the Director of National Intelligence. Likely 'Atiyah, *Letter Dtd 5 April 2011, Bin Laden's Bookshelf* (Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2011).; Unknown, *Gist of Conversation 11 Oct*ibid.; and Likely 'Atiyah, *Letter to Shaykh Abu Abdallah Dtd 17 July 2010*ibid. (2010).. The coded themes assessed from these 3 documents were: Authority in Jihad, Response to the Arab Spring, Hostage Directions, Operational Guidance from Leaders, and Internal Alliance and Rival Formation—none of which directly point to designation-associated activities.

[250] To see these original documents see, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, "Harmony Program," (2005).

HQN's strength is its nexus position among al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, and associated militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan.[251] They state:

> The Haqqani network maintains its nexus position by providing services or other items of value that suit the interests of its local, regional, and global partners. The primary way it does this is by functioning as a reliable and effective platform through which violence, driven by the specific interests of each actor, can be interjected into Afghanistan and/or launched abroad.[252]

Seen as a nexus-actor operating between local groups (the Taliban) and global groups (al-Qa'ida) the Haqqani Network's post-designation trajectory makes more sense. Initial designation-associated activities seem to coincide with changes in the group's behavior—but the

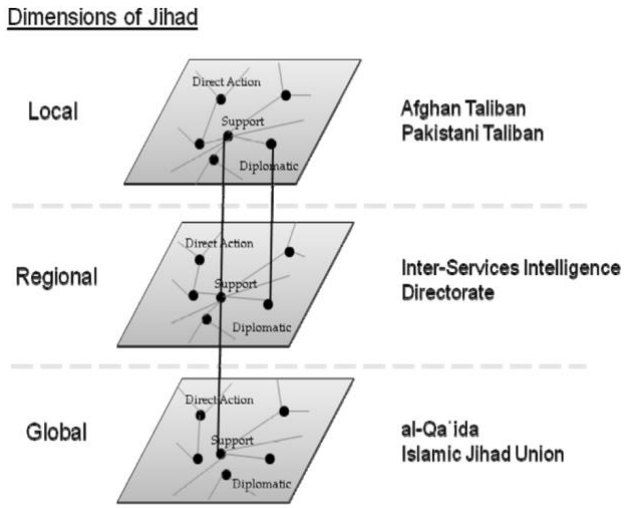


Figure 54: Haqqani Network as a Multi-Dimensional Actor

Source: CTC West Point

capability of HQN to regroup post-designation was probably stronger than other purely national

[251] Ron Rassler and Vahid Brown, "The Haqqani Nexus and the Evolution of Al-Qa'ida," ed. Combating Terrorism Center West Point (Combating Terrorism Center West Point, 2011)., 16.

[252] Ibid., 17.

or regional actors, given their nexus position. Figure 54 illustrates the advantages of the Haqqani's nexus strategy, capable of flexing its relationships at the local, regional, and global levels to further its relatively limited goals of "maintaining its autonomy and influence locally in Loya Paktia and North Waziristan, while also supporting efforts to spread jihad elsewhere."[253]

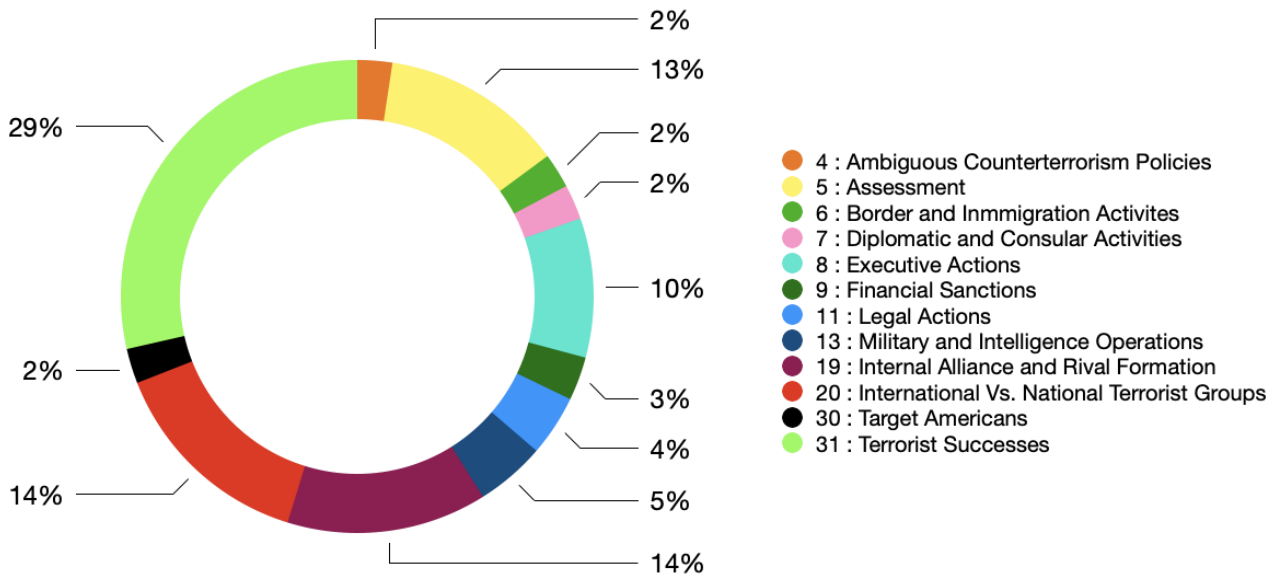
In other words, HQN paradoxically is a terrorist group engaged in local aims but enmeshed in supporting regional and global conflicts in furtherance of their agenda. As part of that strategy Rassler and Brown argue that the Haqqani Network has intentionally "portrayed itself as a local actor preoccupied with local concerns," while serving as "important to the development and sustainment of al-Qa'ida and the global jihad more than any other single actor or group."[254]

This paradox, which allows for greater adaptability for HQN, helps explain the confounding decrease in incidents and lethality immediately post-designation and the precipitous increase in incidents and lethality as the group adapts in the years after designation. It also may explain the belated designation of the Haqqanis, far later than other groups included in this study, as their local focus helped mask their nexus to international terrorism. This insight, while gleaned from older captured media, helps to strengthen the qualitative findings that the strategic orientation of a group is a better explanation for post-designation outcomes than designation-associated activities. This finding is affirmed in the top themes from the totality of the Haqqani case study, which once again reflects the international vs. national presence of the group ranks above references to all designation-associated activities (Figure 55, next page).

[253] Ibid., 15.

[254] Ibid., 2, 15.

Figure 55: Haqqani Network Beyond Designation Associated Activities, Top 12 Themes



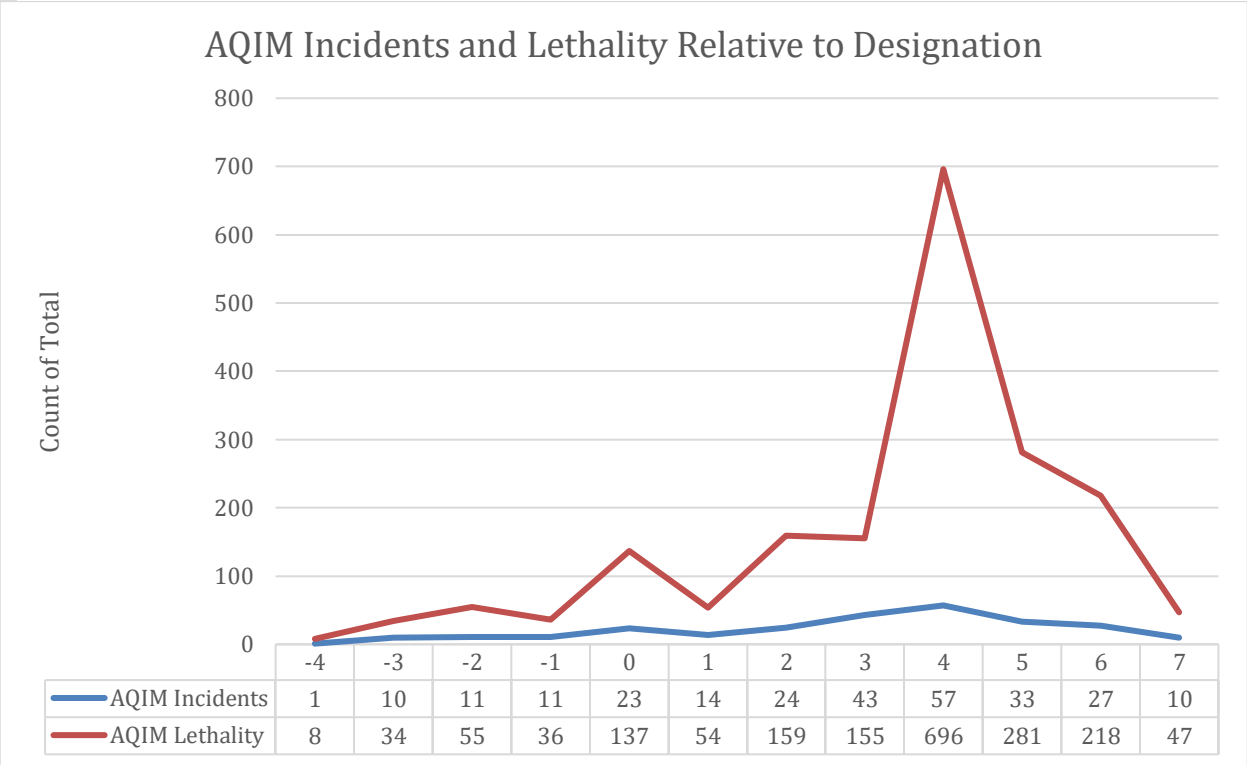
7.2.4 AQIM: No Short- or Long-Term Impact

Of the four case studies, al-Qa'ida in the Maghreb (AQIM) has the longest history of terrorism and the most available data, which shows that FTO designation quantitatively had no short-term or long-term impact on incident and lethality trends of the group—or the worst outcome post-designation across the case studies (Figure 56, next page). AQIM's designation is also the most interesting, as it was originally designated in March 2002 as the as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), but the designation was updated in February 2008 after AQIM formally merged with al-Qa'ida in September 2006.[255] Why the adjustment of the name change took more than a year speaks to the bureaucratic inefficiencies of FTO designation, which will be addressed again in Chapter 8.

[255] United States. Department of State. Office of the Coordinator for, "Country Reports on Terrorism"., 329.

Despite the increase in incidents and lethality after its 2002 designation, the State Department's Country Reports on Terrorism still narratively compares AQIM's incidents and lethality favorably with its 1990s-era predecessors. For example, the 2008 Report states for Algeria, "Despite the upsurge of AQIM activity in August, the overall security situation remained greatly improved from the situation of the late 1990s."[256] Yet, the data does not bear that out, rather it shows how the transition to AQIM and the merger with AQ evolved the international threat beyond the national limits of its predecessors, specifically expanding the former GSPC into the more lethal, international AQIM under the al-Qa'ida banner. According to the Department of State: "The Algerian military and security forces were often criticized as slow

Figure 56: AQIM Incidents and Lethality Relative to Designation



	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
AQIM Incidents	1	10	11	11	23	14	24	43	57	33	27	10
AQIM Lethality	8	34	55	36	137	54	159	155	696	281	218	47

[256] "Country Reports on Terrorism," (2008), https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2008/index.htm., 113.

to adapt to AQIM's changing tactics as well as slow to accept that they faced a better organized international threat in the form of AQIM rather than a purely internal threat."[257]

Al-Qa'ida's links to Algerian Islamists date back to the early 1990s, yet it was not until after a year of careful negotiations that the GSPC formally merged with al-Qa'ida in 2006, changing its name in January 2007 to al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb via a public announcement from Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. [258] According to this author's previous work, "adopting the Al-Qaeda moniker provided the group with additional funding and support and prevented a jihadist "brain drain" of Algerian fighters to Iraq, as the merger held the possibility of joining Al-Qaeda's global movement closer to home."[259] The decision to affiliate brought new fighters to Algeria, providing the support of fresh recruits.[260] By 2009, AQIM's propensity for targeting outside the region had greatly expanded, and British and European counterterrorism officials were expressing concern that battled-hardened foreign al-Qa'ida fighters were traveling to Algeria from Iraq to join and augment AQIM.[261]

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[257] Ibid., 113.

[258] Bruce Riedel, *The Search for Al Qaeda : Its Leadership, Ideology, and Future* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008); Sturm, *Is the Sound Bite Mightier Than the Sword? Strategic Communications as a Tool to Export the Global Jihad, 2001-2009*., 26.; BBC Monitoring Africa - Political, "Maghreb Al-Qa'idah Expert Comments on Possible Assasination Motive," *BBC News*, no. June 4, 2009 (2009).

[259] Michael Moss Souad Mekhennet, Eric Schmitt, Elaine Sciolino, and Margot Williams, "A Ragtag Insurgency Gains a Qaeda Lifeline," *The New York Times*, July 1, 2008; Sturm, *Is the Sound Bite Mightier Than the Sword? Strategic Communications as a Tool to Export the Global Jihad, 2001-2009*., 27.

[260] "How Did Al Qaeda Emerge in North Africa?," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 1, 2007.

[261] According to this author's previous work, "AQAP claimed responsibility for the May 2009 beheading of British citizen Edwin Dyer, citing the failure of British authorities to acquiesce to their demand to release Abu-Qatadah, a supporter of the Algerian jihadist movement, currently in British custody. On April 11, 2007, a few months after the official announcement AQIM conducted its first suicide operations, killing 33 people in the most lethal attack in Algeria in five years.[261] On December 11, 2007, in keeping with their consistent date preference for attacks, AQIM executed a simultaneous car bombing attack in Algiers against the United Nations presence in the capitol, killing 67 people. The British newspaper *The Independent* noted that the attack on the U.N. "marked a departure for Algerian militants," who had previously focused on domestic targets. AQIM also reached out to rebels in Nigeria, stating, "We are ready to train your people in weapons and give you whatever support we can in men, arms, and munitions

AQIM's public declarations of alliance with and adherence to al-Qai'da was therefore a strategic choice to expand its resources and provide a boon to the organization via formal affiliation with an international terrorist organization. Additionally, the State Department reporting makes clear AQIM's ability to transit Algeria, Tunisia, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, and Libya to evade counterterrorism pressure hampered consolidating counterterrorism gains.[262] This case study again reflects that the national vs. international focus and resources of a group may better explain the outcomes observed rather than designation-associated activities.

For AQIM, neither material support charges nor asset blockage appear to be drivers of change despite their cited utility in FTO designation. Of the 81 material support charges levied against al-Qa'ida from 1998-2017, none were associated with AQIM.[263] Only in 2020 was a material support indictment identified that specifically cited AQIM, 18 years after their designation.[264] Similarly, al-Qa'ida asset blockages, which appear in the Department of

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to enable you to defend out people in Nigeria." After repeated arrests of Algerian linked terrorists in Europe, including in France and Spain, Gilles de Kerchove, the head of counterterrorism for the European Union admitted, "their ambition is to attack in Europe," but warned in 2008 that he would not "oversell" this goal. From Sturm, *Is the Sound Bite Mightier Than the Sword? Strategic Communications as a Tool to Export the Global Jihad, 2001-2009*., 27-28. See also: Claire Soares, "Algerian Bomb Blases Linked to Al-Qa'ida," *The Independent*, December 12, 2007.; This Day (Lagos), "Nigeria; the Offer from Al-Qaeda," *Africa News*, February 8, 2010. Souad Mekhennet, "A Ragtag Insurgency Gains a Qaeda Lifeline."; Eric Schmitt and Souad Mekhennet, "Qaeda Branch Steps up Raids in North Africa," ibid., July 9, 2009. John Rollins, "Al Qaeda and Affiliates: Historical Perspective, Global Presence, and Implications for U.S. Policy," (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, February 5, 2010)., 14.

[262] For example, "Efforts by French and regional military forces – notably Chad and Niger – have significantly degraded the capacity of AQIM and al-Murabitun in northern Mali and across the wider Sahel. However, in 2015, these groups reverted to asymmetric warfare using remnant groups still located in northern Mali. AQIM increased its attacks on the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. Toward the end of the year, AQIM also directed attacks on hotels in Mali and Burkina Faso." State, "Country Reports on Terrorism, 2015.", 8.

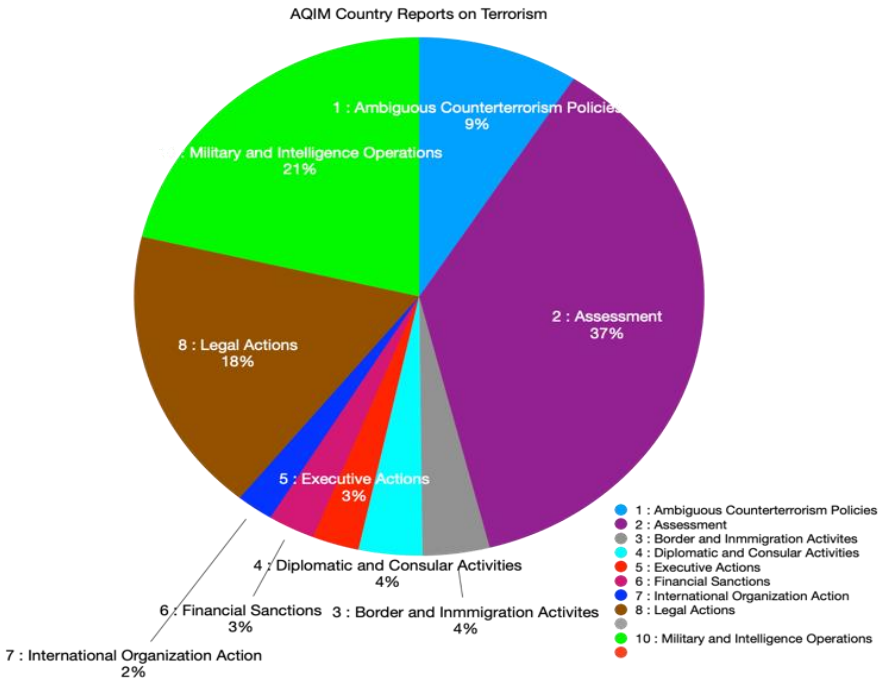
[263] NIU Justice Department Material Support Database, permission of Christopher Bailey. Data beyond 2017 was unavailable in this database.

[264] Eastern District of New York, "Malian Terrorist Leader Charged with the Death of U.S. Citizen Michael J. Riddering and Providing Material Support to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Al-Murabitoun," news release, 16 January 2020, 2020, https://www.justice.gov/usao-edny/pr/malian-terrorist-leader-charged-death-us-citizen-michael-j-riddering-and-providing-2.

Treasury's annual summaries from 1999 on, are not broken out by group until 2019, and even then do not include AQIM, making a full assessment of AQIM's asset seizures from Treasury reporting impossible.[265]

In a full review of the designation-associated activities touted by the State Department as utilized against AQIM, the Country Reports on Terrorism credit military and intelligence operations and legal actions in countries where AQIM operates, similar to the Boko Haram case study (Figure 57). It is worth noting that AQIM receives a longer narrative assessment of the

Figure 57: AQIM Top Designation Associated Themes



[265] Al-Qa'ida's assets are referred to as Usama bin Laden's assets in early Treasury Assets Reports, then later broken out by group. See: Office of Foreign Assets Control, "Twenty-Eighth Annual Report to the Congress on Assets in the United States Relating to Terrorist Countries and International Terrorism Program Designees," ed. U.S. Department of Treasury (Washington D.C.2019)., 11.

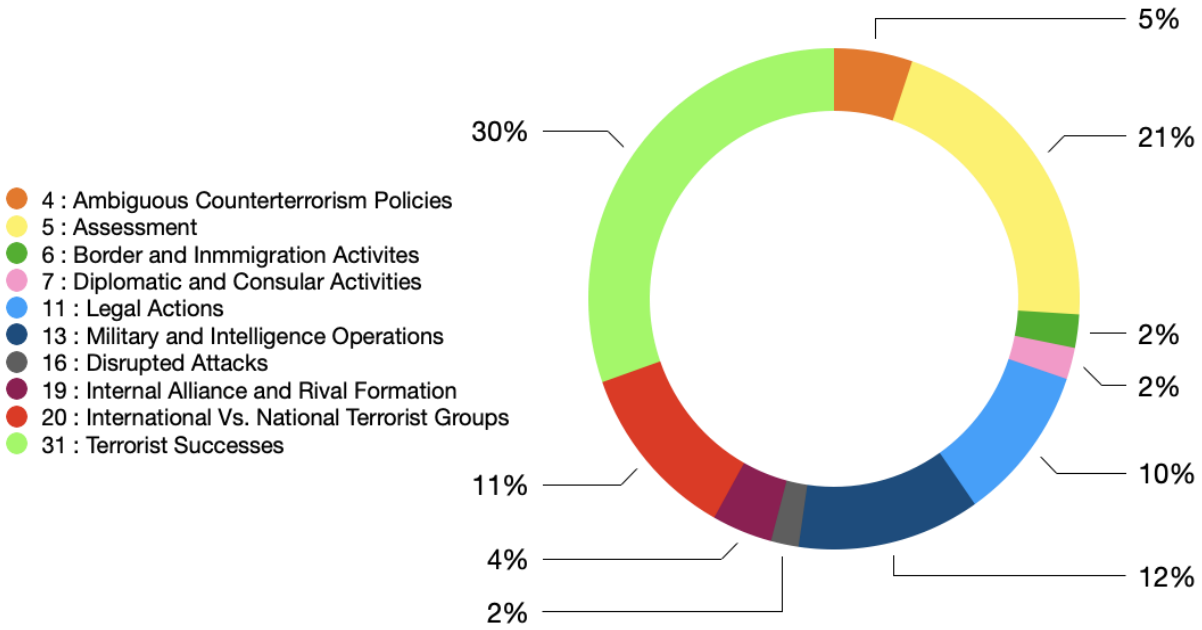
group's trajectory, threat to the West, and European partners than the other groups in this study, possibly because of the number of locations and areas in which it operated or as a warning to policymakers of the continuing threat posed by a group when designation and follow-on actions did not deter or reverse behavior. AQIM captured media is also the largest captured media repository in this study, encompassing 34 items from the Bin Laden raid, two letters released by West Point's CTC Harmony project, and one strategy document written by AQIM leadership that circulated in the Associated Press.

The designation-associated themes reflected in these captured documents focus primarily on AQIM's concern for military and intelligence operations and secondarily on financial concerns. Interestingly, a number of these documents focus on the business of hostage taking for ransom, an activity engaged in by AQIM with greater regularity and reported success than the other groups in this study.[266] One probable explanation for AQIM's resilience despite financial sanctions that come with designation is their ability to generate income from hostage-taking activity. Future research should compare the "return on investment" for hostage taking as a method of FTO-designation sanctions evasion.

If the coding is expanded beyond designation themes, however, the AQIM media tells a different story. As a control on the qualitative analysis, the captured media and Country Reports on Terrorism were coded for consistent themes beyond the seven that would support the hypothesis (Figure 58, next page).

[266] Rukmini Callimachi, "Paying Ransoms, Europe Bankrolls Qaeda Terror," *New York Times*, July 29, 2014.

Figure 58: AQIM Top 10 Themes from Case Study



The full list of alternative explanations considered for all the case studies appears in Figure 59 on page 162, but it is introduced here as the AQIM captured media provided the largest counterpoint to the argument that designation-associated activities were driving outcomes. AQIM's media reflects that their primary concerns are internally driven rather than externally focused, which likely reflects their greater sense of operational security in the face of CT pressure compared to the TTP or Boko Haram. The top themes include: seeking operational guidance from leaders; internal alliance and rival formation; authority in jihad; responses to the Arab Spring; recommendations on operational alignment; seeking or receiving directions on hostage taking; secret diplomatic negotiations with countries (usually regarding hostage payments); touting their own successes; or the psychology of the group. The top 10 themes reflected in the AQIM case study are depicted in Figure 58 on the previous page.

Military and intelligence operations and financial sanctions were 12th and 13th in importance. This reflection of internal AQIM priorities from their private communications with al-Qa'ida

leadership shows designation-associated activities were not a primary concern. This perhaps is not surprising given that AQIM is the example of no short-term or long-term impact from designation, but the themes reflected by all the case study captured media indicate greater concern with military and intelligence operations than any of the nonkinetic or designation-associated activities that are the focus of this study.

7.3 Additional Findings for Qualitative Case Studies

As a check on the qualitative case studies, this study compared the matrix coding of all the data from the Country Reports on Terrorism and captured media referenced in the case studies to look for alternative explanations beyond designation-associated activities. The results of this matrixed query, shown in Figure 59 on the next page, clearly demonstrate that the international vs. national focus of the group plays a part in both how it fares post-designation from the US policy perspective and how it adapts from a terrorist perspective.

Figure 59: Matrixed Query of All Case Study Themes

Coded Theme	AQIM	Boko Haram	Haqqani	TTP
1 : Authority in Jihad	3	0	0	0
2 : Active Communication Between Affiliates and Core	0	0	1	0
3 : Corrections to Jihadists	0	0	0	0
4 : Ambiguous Counterterrorism Policies	48	47	4	4
5 : Assessment	194	45	21	26
6 : Border and Immigration Activities	21	15	4	4
7 : Diplomatic and Consular Activities	19	35	4	1
8 : Executive Actions	14	5	16	10
9 : Financial Sanctions	14	2	5	1
10 : International Organization Action	11	14	2	0
11 : Legal Actions	96	50	7	9
12 : Material Support-Arrests	1	0	0	0
13 : Military and Intelligence Operations	112	109	8	21
14 : Security Cooperation	1	0	0	0
15 : Directions on Support to Mujahideen	0	0	0	0
16 : Disrupted Attacks	17	3	1	3
17 : Domestic Political Accommodations	2	6	0	0
18 : Hostage Directions	0	0	1	0
19 : Internal Alliance and Rival Formation	38	24	24	10
20 : International Vs. National Terrorist Groups	107	79	25	23
21 : Jihadist Difficulties	1	0	0	0
22 : Jihadist Needs from Headquarters	0	0	0	0
23 : Lack of Material and External Support	6	0	0	0
24 : Media Guidance from Leadership	14	9	0	1
25 : Operational Guidance from Leaders	1	0	0	0
26 : Psychological Operations	0	0	0	0
27 : Recommendations on Operational Alignment	0	0	0	0
28 : Response to Arab Spring	0	0	0	0
29 : Secret Diplomatic Negotiations with Countries	3	2	2	0
30 : Target Americans	15	8	4	5
31 : Terrorist Successes	283	159	0	54

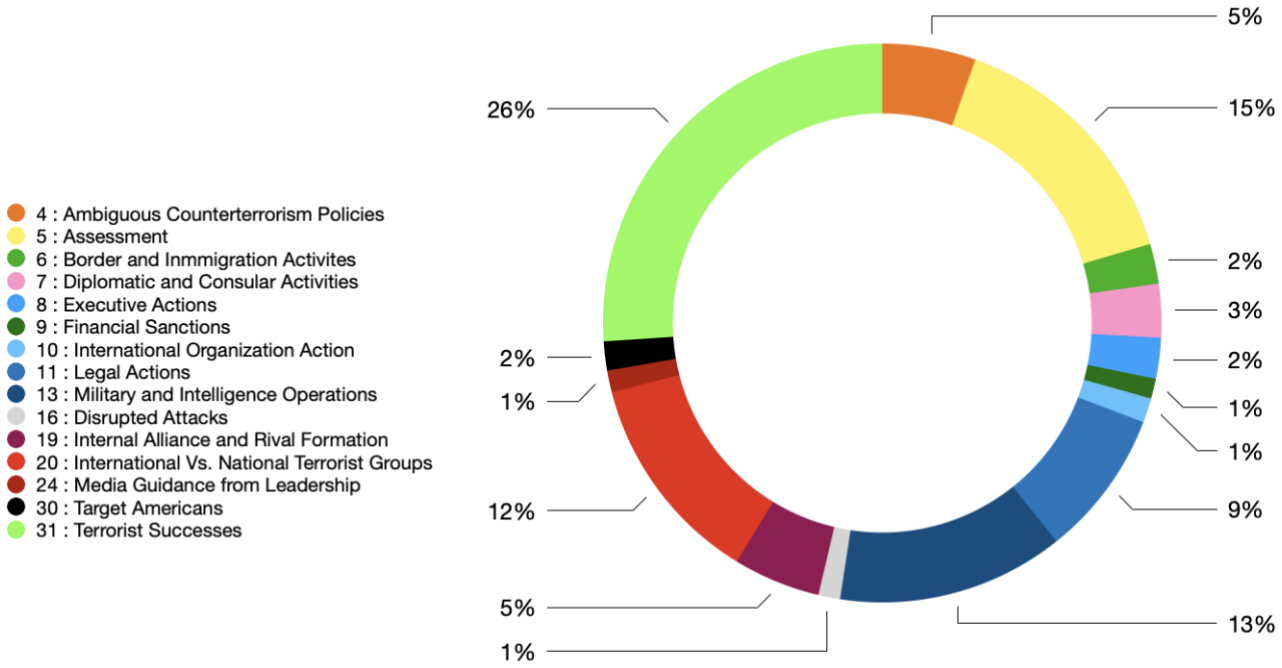
The coded reflections of the groups international vs. national presence in both official State Department documents and captured media were in order of least impacted by designation to most impacted: AQIM, Boko Haram, HQN, and TTP. Similarly, the international action coding followed suit, with AQIM cited as the target of the greatest number of international efforts, followed by Boko Haram, HQN, and TTP. While the military and intelligence effort to counter AQIM and Boko Haram was cited more often in the case study material—it was the only designation-associated activity to exceed the references to international vs. national presence.

7.4 Summary

Using the most promising results from the quantitative data, incidents and lethality, the case studies sought to explain the diverse range of short-term and long-term outcomes for designated groups and determine if differing application of designation-associated activities was driving the behavioral outcomes. The hypothesis was, however, not born out by the qualitative case studies—formal designation-associated activities do not appear to drive the difference in outcomes across the groups in this study. The types of tools most often touted as being triggered by designation – financial sanctions, legal action, etc. were rarely applied in the cases that had better outcomes and the designated groups rarely mentioned those actions, if at all, as posing major operational constraints. The group's international presence or, more important, the lack thereof, was a larger predictor of CT policy success. This finding is consistent with literature on the importance of sanctuary for a terrorist group's survival and makes logical sense given the nation-state centric role of the State Department and the purposes under which the FTO designation process began, prior to 9/11. The terrorist group's pre-designation posture is therefore likely a better predictor of policy success and may help fine tune designation activities and intelligence in support of future operations (Figure 60, next page).

Additionally, military and intelligence operations seemed the most impactful and most concerning activities assessed by the terrorist groups themselves, despite the nonkinetic focus of designation.[267] Moreover, where the military and intelligence themes were most prevalent was also where it they had the least long-term impact: AQIM (112) and Boko Haram (109). This counterintuitive result is an excellent subject for future research. Over reliance on kinetic tools may undermine the expressed non-kinetic primary purposes of designation, particularly as kinetic activities against Salafi jihadist groups take their legal authority from the Authorization

Figure 60: All Groups: International Presence and Goals Seemed to Matter More than Designation Associated Activities (Top 15 Themes from All Sources)



[267] The June 2015 GAO review of FTO designation focused on the civil and criminal penalties that result from FTO designation, stating, “The designation of FTOs, which can result in civil and criminal penalties, is an integral component of the U.S. government’s counterterrorism efforts. State’s process for designating FTOs considers input and information from several key U.S. agency stakeholders and allows U.S. agencies to impose consequences on the organizations and individuals that associate with or provide material support to FTOs. Such consequences help U.S. counterterrorism efforts isolate terrorist organizations internationally and limit support and contributions to those organizations.” Office, "Combating Terrorism: Foreign Terrorist Organization Designation Process and U.S. Agency Enforcement Actions."

for the Use of Military Force, rather than designation.[268] Military and intelligence tools have the potential to amplify violence more than using financial, legal, and diplomatic tools to coerce a change in behavior—and can be shorter in duration, and based on this research—shorten the duration of the effect. Even if military and intelligence tools are more effective short-term, the underused financial and legal avenues addressed in the case studies suggest future counterterrorism kinetic operations could be more carefully calibrated alongside greater nonkinetic designation-related efforts to target terrorist groups. This focus on the right balance for kinetic vs. nonkinetic tools to generate lasting outcomes will be increasingly important in the years ahead now that the US has withdrawn from major combat operations in many theatres formerly on the frontlines of the war against terror.

[268] *Authorization for Use of Military Force*.

Chapter 8: Conclusion and Implications

8.1 Overall Conclusions

This research measured if US foreign terrorist organization designation against Salafi jihadist groups impacted terrorist group behavior via their membership, incidents and lethality, and targeting. It further assessed if changes in group behavior, evident in some of the 20 groups included in this study, were the result of designation-associated activities. The hypotheses, that the US policy to designate terrorist groups resulted in a change in their behavior and that designation-associated activities determined outcomes, was not borne out by the data. Yet, the change in trajectory of some group behavior following designation is worthy of continued study, as the application of post designation tools did not match the professed benefits of the program. Most important, the nature of the groups' operational and geographic reach seemed a strong determinant of behavioral outcomes sought by the designation process—and points to the need to continue to understand the local support and reach of a group's influence in determining the likely response to US action.

The findings demonstrate that FTO designation itself does not drive changes in Salafi jihadist group behavior in terms of the frequency and lethality of their attacks. Any impact post-designation seems to have less to do with specific designation-associated activities, and more to do with the nature of designated groups and their national vs. international orientation and presence. These findings follow from the literature and are consistent with research on how terrorist groups end and the importance of sanctuary in sustaining a group. These findings also suggest a few ways the designation process, including the decision to designate, could be improved to target Salafi jihadist groups more efficiently.

8.2 Implications

The central finding that international vs. national posture has greater explanatory power for outcomes than designation-associated activities is supported by other bodies of academic literature on counterterrorism. Audrey Kurth Cronin's work on how terrorism ends, the benchmark for comparative CT case studies across all groups and types, suggests that the end of terrorist groups comes from a multitude of factors, but almost all are linked to internal and external support for the group.

> The relevant factors can be both internal and external: terrorist groups implode for reasons that may or may not be related to measures taken against them. Nor are they necessarily separate and distinct. Indeed, individual case studies of terrorist groups often reveal that more than one dynamic was responsible for their decline. The typical focus on government counterterrorist measures slights the capabilities and dynamics of the group itself and is frequently misguided; even among groups that decline in response to counterterrorist campaigns, the picture remains complex.[269]

According to Cronin's explanation, at least seven pathways can lead to a group's end: killing/capturing a leader; unsuccessful generational succession; achievement of the cause; transition to a legitimate political process; loss of popular support; repression; and transition out of terrorism to another illegal activity.[270] Consistent with her findings as applied to al-Qa'ida, where Cronin identifies global funding and communications as the means to the group's longevity, this study determined that the international vs. national positioning of a group ensures its longer survivability once it is targeted by US designation-associated activities.[271] Given the

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[269] Cronin, "How Al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups.", 18.; Ibid. *How Terrorism Ends : Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*.

[270] Ibid. *How Terrorism Ends : Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*.

[271] Ibid. "How Al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups."

multitude of tools at the disposal of the United States and allied countries it is, therefore, not surprising that the most geographically flexible groups in terms of both presence and support appear the most resilient to targeting. Arguably, despite the multitude of tools unlocked by designation these case studies showed that some were under-utilized. Why material support charges or sanctions were not brought to bear in more cases points to the need for more refined intelligence, greater resource support to non-kinetic counterterrorism activities, or higher bureaucratic prioritization. Whatever the reason, once designation unlocks the tools in the CT toolbox, it was surprising that in some cases those tools remained un-utilized.

As the US adjusted the strategy against Boko Haram to regionally support partnerships and border security, which seemed to improve success against the group, it also raises the questions about the interplay between US designations and international designation of terrorism groups. Much of what the State Department designation focuses on is nationally driven, even the Country Reports on Terrorism details activities in and with specific country partners, despite the transnational nature of terrorism. It is therefore in some ways unsurprising that a nation-state focused program run by the diplomatic arm of the US government seemingly has more success against groups within limited geographic boundaries. International cooperation and its role in counterterrorism before, during, and after designation was outside the scope of this study—but further research on how US designations feed into international designations and partner action is needed. It is doubtful that partner activities are solely the result of US or international designation, but rather the result of coordinated diplomatic, military, and intelligence activity. Understanding FTO's role in triggering international partnerships against specific terrorist actors, however, would be an invaluable enhancement to this dissertation.

The international posture and presence of AQIM and Boko Haram, as well as the ability of the Haqqani Network to adapt from local to regional actor, also reinforces sanctuaries or safe havens for terrorist organizations as a significant enhancement to terrorists' survivability. Sanctuary is widely recognized in the academic literature as critical to the success of any terrorist group, and a key target for CT efforts.[272] In 2015, 39 of the 58 groups that the United States designated as FTOs were assessed to have at least one safe haven.[273] Yet, all safe havens and logistics hubs are not created equal, as Elizabeth Grimm Arsenault and Tricia Bacon argue in their typology of safe havens, which requires tailored US government policies for each source of physical and logistical support.[274] Arsenault and Bacon use the example of Pakistan to break typologies of safe havens into three groups: government-enabled (LET in Pakistan); government-sponsored (HQN and the Afghan Taliban in Pakistan); and contested (al-Qa'ida and the TTP in

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[272]Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*. 11. Additional literature on the importance of terrorist safe havens includes: Investigations United States. Congress. House. Committee on Homeland Security. Subcommittee on Oversight and Management, *Denying Safe Havens Homeland Security's Efforts to Counter Threats from Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia : Hearing before the Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Management of the Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives, One Hundred Twelfth Congress, First Session, June 3, 2011* (Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 2012).; Robert D. Lamb, "Ungoverned Areas and Threats from Safe Havens," ed. D. C. Office Of The Deputy Assistant Secretary Of Defense For Policy Planning Washington (2008).; Brian Michael Jenkins to The RAND Blog, 2014, https://www.rand.org/blog/2014/08/disrupting-terrorist-safe-havens.html.; Research Service Library of Congress. Congressional Research, *Removing Terrorist Sanctuaries : The 9/11 Commission Recommendations and U.S. Policy*, Proquest U.S. Congressional Research Digital Collection (Ann Arbor, Mich: ProQuest, 2005).; Edward Newman, "Weak States, State Failure, and Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no. 4 (2007).; Aurélie Campana and Benjamin Ducol, "Rethinking Terrorist Safe Havens: Beyond a State-Centric Approach," *Civil Wars* 13, no. 4 (2011).; Cristiana C. Brafman Kittner, "The Role of Safe Havens in Islamist Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 19, no. 3 (2007).; = Rem Korteweg, "Black Holes: On Terrorist Sanctuaries and Governmental Weakness," *Civil Wars* 10, no. 1 (2008).; *Al-Qaida's (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa*, (West Point, N.Y: Combating Terrorism Center, United States Military Academy, 2007).; Service Library of Congress. Congressional Research, *Weak and Failing States : Evolving Security Threats and U.S. Policy*, Proquest U.S. Congressional Research Digital Collection (Ann Arbor, Mich: ProQuest, 2004).; Robert I. Rotberg, *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2004).; Bale *Denial of Sanctuary : Understanding Terrorist Safe Havens*, ed. Michael A. Innes (Westport, Conn: Praeger Security International, 2007).

[273] Elizabeth Grimm Arsenault and Tricia Bacon, "Disaggregating and Defeating Terrorist Safe Havens," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38, no. 2 (2014). .

[274]Ibid.

Pakistan).[275] Interestingly, Arsenault and Bacon's examples dovetail with this research, with the TTP—the most impacted by designation—operating from a contested space and HQN—the least impacted—in a government-sponsored safe haven.

These findings reflect a logical truism about the Foreign Terrorist Organization designation policy validated by this research. The program was established in 1996, well in advance of 9/11, in part as an informal public diplomacy tool to influence states to reduce support to terrorism within their borders. It is, therefore, not surprising upon further data analysis and discussion that designation appears more effective for groups based in and reliant on single-nation support, with more nationally limited goals. Groups operating across larger borders and territories like AQIM and Boko Haram exist in more permissive environments and are more difficult to counter, as the number of countries needed to collectively cooperate increases.

This reality is reflected in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA) requirement that the State Department include an assessment of each foreign country with a terrorist sanctuary in its annual *Country Report on Terrorism*.[276] Yet merely reporting on sanctuary presence is not enough. The findings of this research suggest that the decision to designate should factor in a group's international vs. national orientation as a predictor of policy and operational success—with a policy preference for designating the internationally oriented groups first, or at least more quickly. Emergent terrorist groups operating in multiple states, like Boko Haram from 2009 to 2012, should likely be considered for expedited designation rather than a more extended process, because delaying designation in that case specifically allowed the group to move further up the curve of incidents and lethality.

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[275] Ibid.

[276] *Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004*.

The findings also point back to the contradiction identified in the introduction of this research between the articulated importance of designation as a policy tool to unify whole of government CT efforts and its dismissal as a purely political tool. If designation were purely political or merely diplomatic, then delaying designation to appease a foreign power, like in the alleged Boko Haram example, would be immaterial. Yet, the increasing curve of terrorist incidents and lethality precipitating designations in this study and the change in slope post-designation for some groups indicate delaying designation may be inherently dangerous, as it delays collective US and international action.

Based on the case studies, designation should also potentially be enacted earlier against Salafi jihadist groups rather than waiting and risking the need to reverse an incline in attacks and lethality, or a more firmly established transborder sanctuary. Boko Haram was founded in 2002 and yet was not designated until 2013, eleven years after its founding. Similarly, while the al-Qa'ida links to the Haqqani Network dated back to the 1970s-1980s, it took 11 years after the attacks of September 11, 2001, for the HQN designation. Even when AQIM's designation was updated after the GSPC publicly announced their merger with al-Qa'ida, it lagged behind al-Qa'ida's announcement by more than a year. In fact, the best-case scenario in this study, the TTP, was also designated the fastest—in just three years. The lack of significance on designation's impact may be the result of these delays—which push designations so far to the right of operational acumen—that when the decision is finally made reversing the increasing trendline of attacks and lethality may be more difficult. Further study on the timing of designation and expediting designations for certain types of groups or name changes is warranted based on the data in this dissertation.

Earlier designation, however, runs afoul of the current bureaucratic process, which favors rigor over speed. The fastest FTO designation reportedly took three days, with the average processing taking 3-9 months, including five to 10 weeks just to gather the supporting justification material.[277] The complexities and length of the process are required to pass judicial review, yet there remain unanswered questions if speed could be increased for certain groups without undermining accuracy, particularly for Salafi jihadist groups closely and publicly aligned to ISIL and al-Qa'ida's global brands. Minor improvements in speed should not erode the painstaking efforts of agencies and their employees to analyze, vet, and propose designation, but an expedited process whereby earlier designations are prioritized for certain groups may reverse the trends of rising incidents and lethality sooner, and limit international presence. This research suggests more timely designation, in some cases, might reduce terrorist operational reach enough to justify a more expedited process—and perhaps make designations themselves more efficacious.

Paradoxically, while this research provides a compelling argument for earlier designation, it also raises questions about nonkinetic designation-associated activities. From 1998 to 2018, this research identified a lack of material support charges and Treasury asset blocks against the case study groups and a comparative over-reliance on military and intelligence support reflected in State Department and captured terrorist communications. This finding is consistent with an observation from the West Point CTC study that "While these prosecutions are important and, in some cases, play a factor in arguments for designating groups as FTOs, they are rarely tallied and

[277] "Moving the designation proposal through up to 10 different State Department offices can be a formidable chore in and of itself, and once out of the State Department, it must navigate through the bureaucracies of the Treasury and Justice Departments before coming back to the Secretary of State for the final decision…but the greatest impediment to timely designations lies in the interagency clearance process." Seth Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts.", 7.

presented as a metric tied to the impact of a designation, as are asset seizures in the TAR." They go on to argue that material support prosecutions are difficult to connect to terrorist disruptions, despite the tool being an oft-cited benefit of FTO designation.

> Not only that, but while these prosecutions certainly disrupt the activities of designated groups, it is difficult to draw the linkage between a group's designation, these domestic prosecutions, and whether the terrorist organization is ultimately weakened as a result.[278]

The lack of material support charges against declared FTOs in this study and the lack of a systemic metric to track the impact of this designation-associated activity is surprising for such a central counterterrorism tool.

West Point's CTC argues there are at least four reasons why the State Department does not track the outcomes of designation-associated activities more closely: "the primacy of short-term priorities, scarce resources, the presence of bureaucratic challenges, and the inherent difficulty of evaluating the success of counter-terrorism policy."[279] Although those reasons are certainly persuasive, it is worth noting that legal scholars have also questioned the utility of FTO designation and the related Specially Designated Terrorist Group (SDTG) designation as prerequisites for material support charges. Many SDTG designations, which limit entry into the United States, precede FTO designation, which reduces the added value of FTO designation.[280] Numerous reviews of 2339A and 2339B material support cases cite the rise in charges against domestic American Somali/al-Shabaab sympathizers under the Obama Administration for the increasing use of the statute after 2008, indicating its utility for domestically-linked international

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[278] Ibid., 10.

[279] Ibid., 11.

[280] Tessa Beryl Tilton, "United States Antiterror Law Is Missing the Mark: Changing the Material Support Statute to Hit the Target," *William and Mary Law Review* 60, no. 3 of 7 (2019).

terrorist cases.[281] If part of the rationale for FTO designation's utility is the material support charges that accompany designation, one simple conclusion from this research is that 2339A and 2339B cases are not used consistently against all groups, increasing the variation in designation's effectiveness. Of the cases in this study, the TTP—the most successful case—had the most application of material support charges, with 6 individuals charged under the statute (the other cases notably had none). More consistent tracking by the State Department of the efficacy of FTO designation via material support charges, combined with faster FTO designation for internationally active groups, could allow for more comprehensive evaluation of its utility, more targeted use, and likely better outcomes.

Finally, this research reinforces that nonkinetic CT tools are still under-studied and under-researched compared to their kinetic counterparts. The lack of high-quality data tied to designation-associated activities is a major oversight, consistently cited in this research. There is a missed opportunity in the annual Country Reports on Terrorism process to evaluate CT progress using consistent metrics on the full range of non-kinetic policy tools unlocked by FTO designation, contrasted with kinetic strikes, and yearly data on group and membership counts, incidents, lethality, and attack typologies. While the State Department may be resource challenged to provide that fidelity of data, it is necessary to demonstrate where the resources of this whole of government program will pay actual dividends, as CT efforts are pressed to become more cost-efficient.

Better metrics would reinforce and justify effective efforts and eliminate ineffective ones. For example, choosing to keep consistent measures of impact, similar to the annual Treasury

[281] Center on Law and Security, "Terrorist Trial Report Card:: September 11, 2001 – September 11, 2011," ed. Center on Law and Security (New York University School of Law, 2011)., 1-6.

Asset Reports, for border restrictions or legal prosecutions would demonstrate the efficacy of the designation program. As the West Point CTC study argues "Developing data and resources to provide metrics for evaluation is an important part of determining when these designations are most effective."[282] Improving the official data related to terrorist designation activities is not unprecedented. The TAR reports became increasingly sophisticated over the course of this study, evolving from lists containing a handful of groups to detailed accountings of assets seized compared to the preceding 2-3 years, beginning in 2005.[283] Similarly, the State Department has continually evolved its Country Reports on Terrorism at the behest of Congress and as an internal priority. For example, under the Obama Administration, the annual report included detailed summaries of the Voice of America efforts to provide counter programming metrics against terrorist propaganda. Beginning in 2010, some attempt was made to match the narrative style of the annual report to the purposes of the designation program, with sections broken out by country for an overview, legislative and legal actions, counter terrorist finance, attacks, and regional/international cooperation.

Yet, these reporting improvements paint only a positive picture of US progress and do not provide an objective year-to-year comparison. To be useful in gauging efficacy the reports need to be more candid in comparing year-to-year metrics on arrests, asset seizures, legal charges, etc. That is not to say they need to evolve into a quantitative bean counting exercise, but

[282] Seth Loertscher, "The Terrorist Lists: An Examination of the U.S. Government's Counterterrorism Designation Efforts."VII.

[283] Part of the reason for the improvement in data was the creation of the Office of Intelligence Analysis within the United States Department of Treasury in 2004. The author wishes to thank her intelligence colleague at Treasury for highlighting this fact: Office of Intelligence and Analysis, "Strategic Direction, Fiscal Years 2012-2015," ed. Department of the Treasury (Washington D.C.: Office of Intelligence and Analysis)., 2.

rather they should be developed to resemble the TAR reports in clarity, brevity, and consistency. Developing better metrics to evaluate nonkinetic CT programs will become increasingly important as withdrawals from areas of active combat operations accelerate. The US government and its allies will continue to rely more heavily on nonkinetic CT tools and improved data will help target designations and associated activities where they can be most effective. Improving the data is an essential requirement for efficient CT operations.

8.3 Areas for Future Research

Improved annual tracking of data on designation-associated activities would open numerous opportunities for additional research. First, this study has dealt only with Salafi jihadist organizations—so a similar comparative work could include all FTOs. While the West Point CTC study considered the full range of FTO groups via descriptive statistics, a more in-depth analysis of the qualitative and quantitative impact of all the specific FTO designated groups has yet to be developed and could be built off this dissertation. In addition to studying the individual groups themselves, this study could be used as a guide to facilitate comparisons of Salafi jihadist FTOs to other ideologically motivated groups to see if designation impacts types of groups differently.

Additionally, while the qualitative cases in this study were carefully selected based on the short-term and long-term quantitative data, a potential caveat exists as all the cases come from Africa or Afghanistan/Pakistan. That stems from the temporal reality of the location of modern Salafi jihadist groups, in the same way a study on terrorism in the 1970s would have been far more focused on Europe and North America—but it is worth acknowledging that geographically the cases were limited in scope. Additional qualitative case studies assessing the impact of FTO designation on a greater expanse of Salafi jihadist groups with more geographic diversity would

further validate or challenge the results. These studies should also consider the international vs. national orientation of groups and the role sanctuary plays in sustaining terrorist movements facing nonkinetic CT pressure.

One unexplained phenomenon that emerged from this study is the number of references to military and intelligence operations as compared to other formal designation-associated activities. Another area of future research is a comparison of kinetic strikes with nonkinetic tools to see how the blended effort impacts operations on a more granular level. As Chapter 4 showed, removing Afghanistan and Iraq significantly altered the quantitative results for incidents and lethality. Follow-on work should explore all the theatres of operations to which the United States deployed forces or engaged in targeted strikes and compare outcomes across designated groups. The US military drawdowns in Afghanistan and Iraq will also provide the opportunity to study the balance of kinetic vs. nonkinetic activities against designated groups and compare outcomes providing additional insight into designation as a policy tool.

Last, this study focused on US policy choices and outcomes and, while it included data on international partnerships in the qualitative coding, international alliances and actions were largely excluded from the analysis. This was in part because research has already been conducted on the potential diplomatic effects of designation in the existing literature referenced in Chapter 3.[284] However, the data presented in this dissertation suggests that international and multilateral partnerships in conjunction with designation also helps counter the cross-border international presence of groups like Boko Haram and AQIM and that in areas where local governments are complicit in supporting a group (HQN), terrorism is more difficult to combat. Additionally,

[284] Phillips, "Foreign Terrorist Organization Designation, International Cooperation, and Terrorism."

multilateral groups and international bodies like the UN often mirror and designate the same groups as the United States, and their efforts may have entirely different, or potentially similar results. Validating these results with more qualitative case studies focused on nonkinetic and designation-associated tools, in combination with local governments and international partnerships, will help support efforts to promote greater diplomatic and international cooperation on counterterrorism. This effort will be even more important as the United States leans harder on international partners following the military drawdowns and aims to work more CT missions by, with, and through international partnerships. It is also especially relevant to continue to study the international effects of FTO designation, and international partnering against these groups stemming from diplomacy surrounding designation, as the most successful groups in this study are using their international presence to withstand US action.

8.4 Conclusion

The US government is reallocating resources across the national security architecture to counter major nation-state actors and needs the continuing CT mission to be cheaper, faster, and more effective than ever before. This research shows FTO designation of Salafi jihadist groups does not have the broad measurable impact on behavior in terms of reducing the number of incidents perpetrated and their lethality, as policymakers would prefer. Rather, to the extent designation matters at all, it appears most effective when applied to groups already limited in their geographic presence. This is an important finding that can help tailor and target earlier designation in the policy process to geographic areas where it can be most effective.

While designation does not appear to impact group membership or targeting methodology, improved data and metrics focused on designation-associated activities may reveal greater kinetic and nonkinetic consequences of designation, allowing a further tailoring of this

important policy decision and associated tools in the counterterrorism fight. Even without improved metrics, this data shows earlier designation is likely preferable to later for Salafi jihadist groups and that internationally focused groups with more porous support are more adaptable and resistant to designation's effects, reinforcing the need to limit terrorist sanctuaries in trans-border regions.

Improved official data that includes year-over-year metrics of designation-associated activities can better inform US government efforts to counter terrorist groups using both kinetic and nonkinetic tools. These measurements, as demonstrated in this study, provide the tools to gauge the effectiveness of the national-level US CT mission more accurately and precisely against specific groups, which will in turn allow policymakers to more efficiently allocate resources to those activities having the greatest success, improving operations. Foreign terrorist organization designation has served as a cornerstone of our CT policy for more than 20 years. If designation's effectiveness is evaluated more comprehensively, building on this study with improved data, the results can potentially serve as a guide for where, when, and how to engage in and focus future US government CT efforts.

Appendices

Appendix A: Comparison of Objectives from US CT Strategies

Objectives (Goal - Objective)	Feb-03	Sep-06	Jun-11	Oct-18
Defeat - Identify Terrorists and Organization	X	(X)	(X)	(X)
Defeat - Locate Terrorists and their Organizations	X	(X)	(X)	(X)
Defeat - Destroy Terrorists and their Organizations	X	X	X (Specifically AQ)	X
Deny - State Sponsorship of Terrorism	X	X		X
Deny - Establish international accountability	X	X	X	
Deny - Strengthen international counterterrorism collaboration	X	X	X	X
Deny - Interdict and disrupt material support to terrorism	X	X	X	X
Deny - Eliminate Terrorist Sanctuary/Safehaven	X	X (Specifies Legal, Cyber, Financial)	X	X
Diminish - Partner capacity building	X		X	X
Diminish - Delegitimize terrorism (War of Ideas/Counter-radicalization/Strategic Communication)	X		X	X
Defend - US Citizens and Interests (Home and Abroad)	X	X	X (#1)	X
Defend - Implement National Strategy for Homeland Security	X			
Defend - Attain domain awareness (threat identification)	X			
Defend - Identify and protect critical infrastructure	X	X		X
Defend - Integrate defensive measures for US citizens abroad	X			
Defend - Create integrated incident management capability	X			
Prevent Attacks by Terrorist Networks - Deny terrorists entry into the US and disrupt international travel		X	(X)	X
Prevent Attacks by Terrorist Networks - Defend potential targets of attack		X		
Deny WMD to Rogue States and Terrorists - Determine Terrorist Intentions and Capabilities in WMD		X	X	
Deny WMD to Rogue States and Terrorists- Deny Material Access		X	X	
Deny WMD to Rogue States and Terrorists - Deter employment of WMD		X	X	

Deny WMD to Rogue States and Terrorist s-Disrupt movement of WMD materials, facilitation		X	X	
Deny WMD to Rogue States and Terrorists - Prevent and Respond to WMD-terrorist attack		X	X	
Deny WMD to Rogue States and Terrorists - Define nature and source of terrorist-employed WMD device		X		
Institutionalize Strategy: Enhance interagency collaboration		X (intellectual and human capital)	X	(X)
Degrade Links Between Terrorist Organizations			X	
Priority Action (New 2018): Amplify Impact of CT Operations Using Strategic Communications				X
Attack Capability: Prevent Development of Cyber				X
Deploy integrated Federal CT Community at Local Level				X
Support Intervention, Reintegration, and Counter Recidivism Efforts				X
Combat Terrorist Influence Online				X
Institutionalize Prevention Architecture				X

Appendix B: Targeted Groups Under Presidents' Terms/Strategies

#	Sept. 11, 2001 - Feb. 2003 Pre-Bush Strategy 1	Feb. 2003 - Sept. 2006 Bush Strategy 1	Sept. 2006- January 2009 Bush Strategy 2	Jan. 2009 - June 2011 Early Obama	June 2011-Jan. 2017 Obama Strategy	Jan. 2017-Oct. 2018 Early Trump	Oct. 2018-Dec. 2019 Trump Strategy (No New Designations)
1	**Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM)**	**Ansar al-Islam (AAI)**	**Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami/Bangladesh (HUJI-B)**	**Kata'ib Hizballah (KH)**	**Indian Mujahedeen (IM)**	**Hizbul Mujahideen (HM)**	*Hizbul Mujahideen (HM)*
2	**Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LET)**	**Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (formerly al-Qa'ida in Iraq)**	**al-Shabaab**	**al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)**	**Jemaah Anshorut Tauhid (JAT)**	**ISIL-Bangladesh**	*ISIL-Bangladesh*
3	**Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AAMB)**	**Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) (12/9/2015)**	*Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) (12/9/2015)*	**Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HUJI)**	**Abdallah Azzam Brigades (AAB)**	**ISIL-Philippines**	*ISIL-Philippines*
4	**Asbat al-Ansar (AAA)**	**Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM) (5/8/2013)**	*Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM) (5/8/2013)*	**Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)**	**Haqqani Network (HQN)**	**ISIL-West Africa**	*ISIL-West Africa*
5	**al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)**	**Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)**	*Ansar al-Islam (AAI)*	**Jundallah**	**Ansar al-Dine (AAD)**	**ISIL-Greater Sahara**	*ISIL-Greater Sahara*
6	**Jemaah Islamiya (JI)**	*Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM)*	*Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (formerly al-Qa'ida in Iraq)*	**Army of Islam (AOI)**	**Boko Haram**	**al-Ashtar Brigades (AAB)**	*al-Ashtar Brigades (AAB)*
7	**Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ)**	*Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LET)*	*Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)*	*Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) (12/9/2015)*	**Ansaru**	**Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM)**	*Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM)*
8	*al-Qa'ida (AQ) (10/8/1999)*	*Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AAMB)*	*Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM)*	*Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM) (5/8/2013)*	**al-Mulathamun Battalion (AMB)**	*Indian Mujahedeen (IM)*	*Indian Mujahedeen (IM)*
9	*Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) (9/5/2000)*	*Asbat al-Ansar (AAA)*	*Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LET)*	*Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami/Bangladesh (HUJI-B)*	**Ansar al-Shari'a in Benghazi**	*Jemaah Anshorut Tauhid (JAT)*	*Jemaah Anshorut Tauhid (JAT)*
10	**KEY**	*al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)*	*Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AAMB)*	*al-Shabaab*	**Ansar al-Shari'a in Darnah**	*Abdallah Azzam Brigades (AAB)*	*Abdallah Azzam Brigades (AAB)*
11	**Bold** = New During that Period	*Jemaah Islamiya (JI)*	*Asbat al-Ansar (AAA)*	*Ansar al-Islam (AAI)*	**Ansar al-Shari'a in Tunisia**	*Haqqani Network (HQN)*	*Haqqani Network (HQN)*
12		*Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ)*	*al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)*	*Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (formerly al-Qa'ida in Iraq)*	**ISIL Sinai Province (formerly Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis)**	*Ansar al-Dine (AAD)*	*Ansar al-Dine (AAD)*

13	*Italics* = Existing Designation (Carry Over)	*al-Qa'ida (AQ)*	*Jemaah Islamiya (JI)*	*Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)*	**al-Nusrah Front**	*Boko Haram*	*Boko Haram*
14	Underline = Delisted (Date)	*Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)*	*Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ)*	*Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM)*	**Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem (MSC)**	*Ansaru*	*Ansaru*
15			*al-Qa'ida (AQ)*	*Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LET)*	**Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al Naqshabandi (JRTN)**	*al-Mulathamun Battalion (AMB)*	*al-Mulathamun Battalion (AMB)*
16			*Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)*	*Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AAMB)*	**ISIL-Khorasan (ISIL-K)**	*Ansar al-Shari'a in Benghazi*	*Ansar al-Shari'a in Benghazi*
17				*Asbat al-Ansar (AAA)*	**Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant's Branch in Libya (ISIL-Libya)**	*Ansar al-Shari'a in Darnah*	*Ansar al-Shari'a in Darnah*
18				*al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)*	**al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent**	*Ansar al-Shari'a in Tunisia*	*Ansar al-Shari'a in Tunisia*
19				*Jemaah Islamiya (JI)*	*Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) (12/9/2015)*	*ISIL Sinai Province (formerly Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis)*	*ISIL Sinai Province (formerly Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis)*
20				*Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ)*	*Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM) (5/8/2013)*	*al-Nusrah Front*	*al-Nusrah Front*
21				*al-Qa'ida (AQ)*	*Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami/Bangladesh (HUJI-B)*	*Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem (MSC)*	*Mujahidin Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem (MSC)*
22				*Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)*	*al-Shabaab*	*Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al Naqshabandi (JRTN)*	*Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al Naqshabandi (JRTN)*
23					*Kata'ib Hizballah (KH)*	*ISIL-Khorasan (ISIL-K)*	*ISIL-Khorasan (ISIL-K)*
24					*al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)*	*Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant's Branch in Libya (ISIL-Libya)*	*Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant's Branch in Libya (ISIL-Libya)*
25					*Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HUJI)*	*al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent*	*al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent*
26					*Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)*	*Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami/Bangladesh (HUJI-B)*	*Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami/Bangladesh (HUJI-B)*
27					*Jundallah*	*al-Shabaab*	*al-Shabaab*
28					*Army of Islam (AOI)*	*Kata'ib Hizballah (KH)*	*Kata'ib Hizballah (KH)*
29					*Ansar al-Islam (AAI)*	*al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)*	*al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)*
30					*Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (formerly al-Qa'ida in Iraq)*	*Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HUJI)*	*Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HUJI)*
31					*Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)*	*Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)*	*Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)*

32					*Jaish-e Mohammed (JEM)*	*Jundallah*	*Jundallah*
33					*Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LET)*	*Army of Islam (AOI)*	*Army of Islam (AOI)*
34					*Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AAMB)*	*Ansar al-Islam (AAI)*	*Ansar al-Islam (AAI)*
35					*Asbat al-Ansar (AAA)*	*Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (formerly al-Qa'ida in Iraq)*	*Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (formerly al-Qa'ida in Iraq)*
36					*al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)*	*Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)*	*Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)*
37					*Jemaah Islamiya (JI)*	*Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM)*	*Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM)*
38					*Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ)*	*Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LET)*	*Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LET)*
39					*al-Qa'ida (AQ)*	*Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AAMB)*	*Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (AAMB)*
40					*Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)*	*Asbat al-Ansar (AAA)*	*Asbat al-Ansar (AAA)*
41						*al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)*	*al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)*
42						*Jemaah Islamiya (JI)*	*Jemaah Islamiya (JI)*
43						*Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ)*	*Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ)*
44						*al-Qa'ida (AQ)*	*al-Qa'ida (AQ)*
45						*Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU))*	*Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)*

Appendix C: Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations in Study

#	Name of Group	Date Designated	Years of Available Data	Number of Records	Notes
1	al-Nusrah Front	5/15/2014	5	134	heavy overlap with ISIL
2	al-Qa'ida (AQ)	10/8/1999 but use 9/11 as designation date.	21*	801	Included despite pre-9/11 Designation, overlap with some affiliates.
3	al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)	1/19/2010	10	1,050	includes some cross listings with ISIL provinces in Yemen not formally designated as FTOs
4	al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)	3/27/2002	20	262	
5	Al-Shabaab	3/18/2008	12	3,795	Does not include Al-Shabaab al-Mu'minin, a Zaidi Shi'a group active in Yemen, minimal overlap with ISIL
6	Ansar al-Dine (AAD)	3/22/2013	6	65	Mali-specific, overlap with AQIM
7	Ansar al-Shari'a	1/13/2014	5***	90	Called Ansar al-Shari'a in Benghazi, Darnah in Libya and Tunisia; heavy Overlap with ISIL-Libya
8	Boko Haram/Ansaru	11/14/2013	10	2,671	Combined Nigerian Groups, Same Designation Date
9	Haqqani Network (HQN)	9/19/2012	13**	113	overlap with TTP
10	Hizbul Mujahideen (HM)	8/17/2017	21****	283	significant overlap with LET and TTP
11	Indian Mujahedeen (IM)	9/19/2011	8	62	overlap with LET
12	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)	12/17/2004	16	7,233	formerly al-Qa'ida in Iraq Note: START stopped coding as AQI in 2013, from 2003-2014, largely, but not exclusively, overlapped with AQ (more than 650).
13	ISIL-Khorasan (ISIL-K)	1/14/2016	6	216	overlap with LET and TTP
14	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant's Branch in Libya (ISIL-Libya)	5/20/2016	5	553	overlap with Ansar al-Shar'ia
15	ISIL Sinai Province (ISIL-Sinai)	4/10/2014	6	219	formerly Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis
16	Jaish-e-Mohammed JEM	12/26/2001	11	112	
17	Jemaah Islamiya JI	10/23/2002	12	82	
18	Lashkar-e Tayyiba LET	12/26/2001	20	287	
19	Lashkar i Jhangvi (LJ)	1/30/2003	20	182	heavy overlap (45) with TTP and other South Asian groups
20	Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	9/1/2010	12	1,480	overlap with AQIS, ISIL-K, and LET
				Total: 19,806	

*Although AQ was designated in 1998, this study uses 2001 as the designation point because it is the only one designated before that date. As 9/11 changed how the United States targeted designated groups this provides a consistent point of comparison.

**Although 13 years of data was available, only 12 years was used because designation occurred more than five years after the first attack noted in the database. The ITS only measured incident trends starting five years before designation to provide consistency across groups.

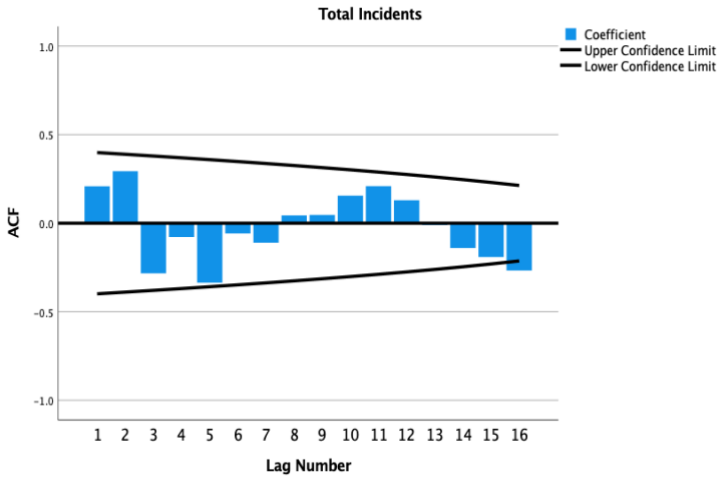
*** Ansar al-Shari'a incidents for 2017 and 2018 were excluded because they were tagged as possible "doubt terrorism" in the GTD Codebook.

***Although 21 years of data was available, only seven years were used because designation occurred more than five years after the first attack noted in the database. The ITS only measured incident trends starting five years before designation, to provide consistency across groups.

Appendix D: Qualitative Codes to Explain Designation Outcomes

Codes
1 : Authority in Jihad
2 : Confirmation of Active Communication Between Affiliates and Core
3 : Corrections to Jihadists
4 : Ambiguous Counterterrorism Policies
5 : Assessment
6 : Border and Immigration Activities
7 : Diplomatic and Consular Activities
8 : Executive Actions
9 : Financial Sanctions
10 : International Organization Action
11 : Legal Actions
12 : Material Support-Arrests
13 : Military and Intelligence Operations
14 : Security Cooperation
15 : Directions on Support to Mujahideen
16 : Disrupted Attacks
17 : Domestic Political Accommodations
18 : Hostage Directions
19 : Internal Alliance and Rival Formation
20 : International Vs. National Terrorist Groups
21 : Jihadist Difficulties
22 : Jihadist Needs from Headquarters
23 : Lack of Material and External Support
24 : Media Guidance from Leadership
25 : Operational Guidance from Leaders
26 : Psychological Operations
27 : Recommendations on Operational Alignment
28 : Response to Arab Spring
29 : Secret Diplomatic Negotiations with Countries
30 : Target Americans
31 : Terrorist Successes

Appendix E: ARIMA Incident Autocorrelation and Partial Autocorrelations



Autocorrelations

Series: Total Incidents

Lag	Autocorrelation	Std. Error[a]	Box-Ljung Statistic Value	df	Sig.[b]
1	.209	.199	1.095	1	.295
2	.294	.195	3.374	2	.185
3	-.283	.190	5.599	3	.133
4	-.078	.185	5.776	4	.217
5	-.336	.179	9.283	5	.098
6	-.058	.174	9.393	6	.153
7	-.110	.169	9.819	7	.199
8	.044	.163	9.892	8	.273
9	.047	.157	9.981	9	.352
10	.156	.151	11.049	10	.354
11	.210	.144	13.159	11	.283
12	.130	.138	14.050	12	.298
13	-.010	.131	14.055	13	.370
14	-.140	.123	15.357	14	.354
15	-.191	.115	18.101	15	.257
16	-.267	.107	24.391	16	.081

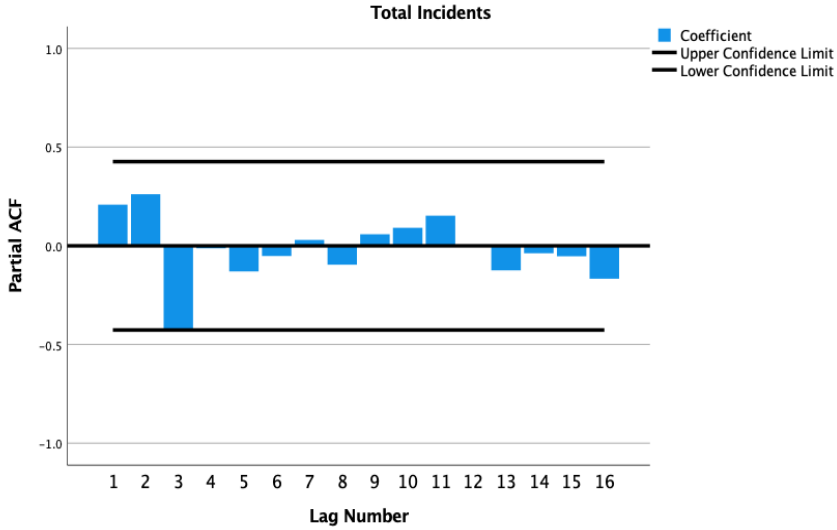
a. The underlying process assumed is independence (white noise).

b. Based on the asymptotic chi-square approximation.

Partial Autocorrelations

Series: Total Incidents

Lag	Partial Autocorrelation	Std. Error
1	.209	.213
2	.262	.213
3	-.430	.213
4	-.012	.213
5	-.129	.213
6	-.052	.213
7	.030	.213
8	-.096	.213
9	.059	.213
10	.091	.213
11	.153	.213
12	.005	.213
13	-.124	.213
14	-.038	.213
15	-.053	.213
16	-.167	.213



Appendix F: Log of Incident Model

Model Fit

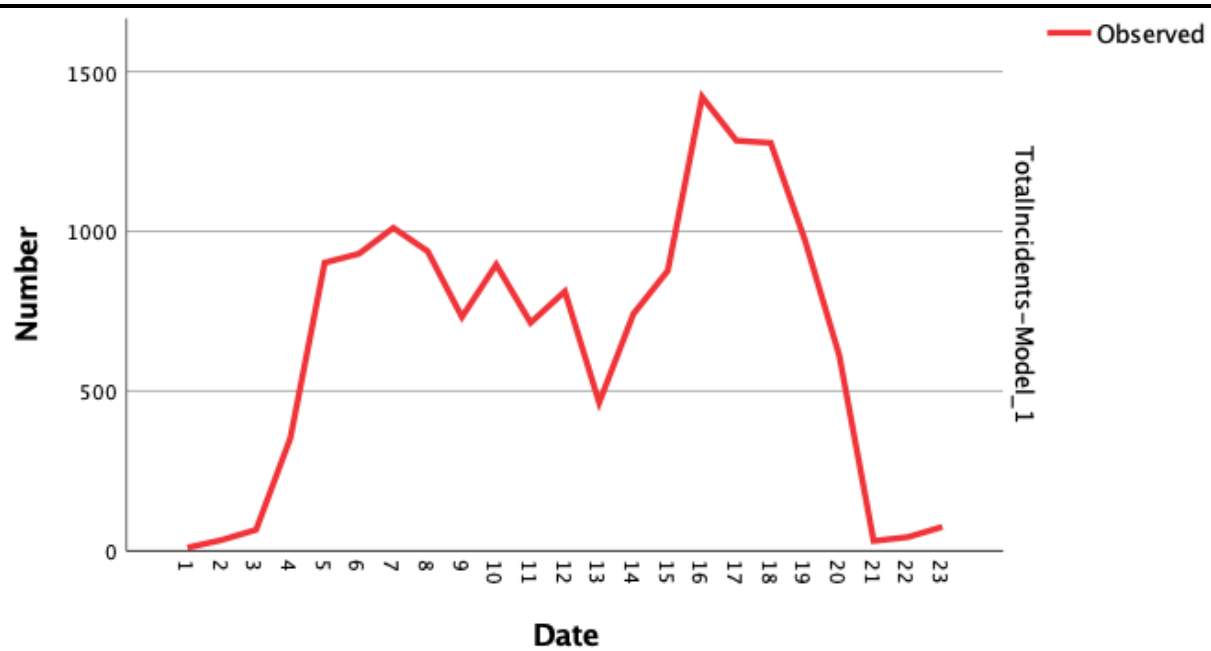
Fit Statistic	Mean	SE	Minimum	Maximum	Percentile 5	10	25	50	75	90	95
Stationary R-squared	.327	.	.327	.327	.327	.327	.327	.327	.327	.327	.327
R-squared	.101	.	.101	.101	.101	.101	.101	.101	.101	.101	.101
RMSE	454.107	.	454.107	454.107	454.107	454.107	454.107	454.107	454.107	454.107	454.107
MAPE	127.186	.	127.186	127.186	127.186	127.186	127.186	127.186	127.186	127.186	127.186
MaxAPE	1834.504	.	1834.504	1834.504	1834.504	1834.504	1834.504	1834.504	1834.504	1834.504	1834.504
MAE	294.103	.	294.103	294.103	294.103	294.103	294.103	294.103	294.103	294.103	294.103
MaxAE	1090.213	.	1090.213	1090.213	1090.213	1090.213	1090.213	1090.213	1090.213	1090.213	1090.213
Normalized BIC	12.939	.	12.939	12.939	12.939	12.939	12.939	12.939	12.939	12.939	12.939

Model Statistics

Model	Number of Predictors	Model Fit statistics: Stationary R-squared	Ljung-Box Q(18): Statistics	DF	Sig.	Number of Outliers
Total Incidents-Model_1	3	.327	14.187	17	.654	0

ARIMA Model Parameters

					Estimate	SE	t	Sig.
Total Incidents-Model_1	Total Incidents	Natural Logarithm	Constant		1.726	1.032	1.673	.113
			AR	Lag 1	-.092	.257	-.357	.726
			Difference		1			
	Designation	No Transformation	Numerator	Lag 0	-1.395	1.176	-1.186	.252
	dTime Period	No Transformation	Numerator	Lag 0	-.203	.245	-.829	.419
	Interact	No Transformation	Numerator	Lag 0	.170	.247	.690	.500



Appendix G: Log of Lethality Model

Model Fit

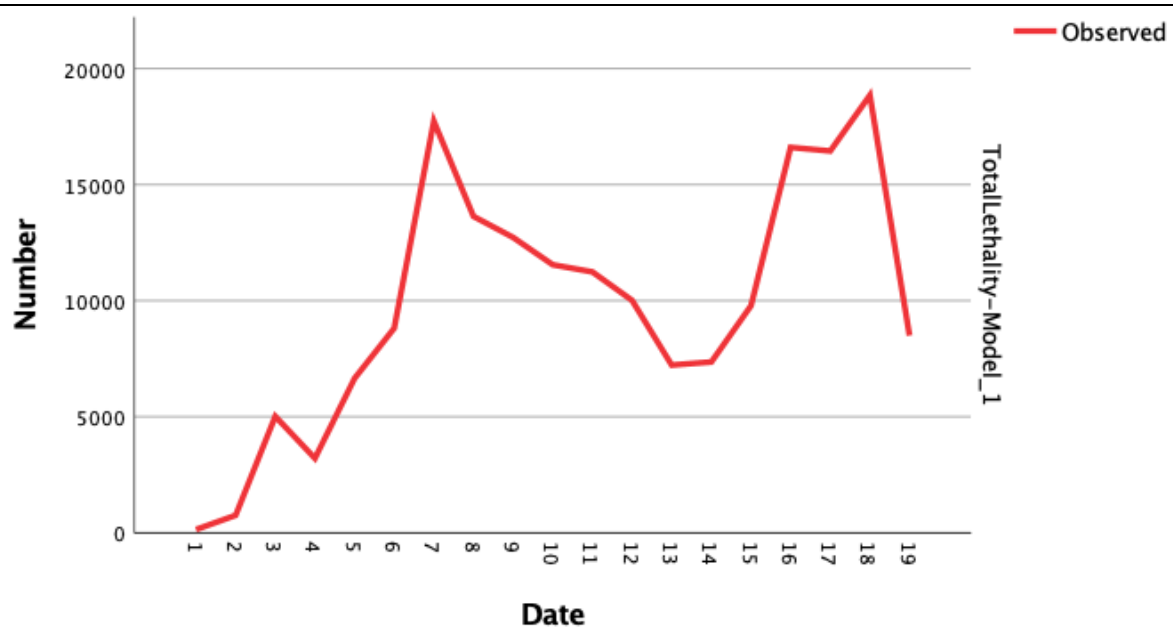
Fit Statistic	Mean	SE	Minimum	Maximum	Percentile 5	10	25	50	75	90	95
Stationary R-squared	.555	.	.555	.555	.555	.555	.555	.555	.555	.555	.555
R-squared	.078	.	.078	.078	.078	.078	.078	.078	.078	.078	.078
RMSE	5534.919	.	5534.919	5534.919	5534.919	5534.919	5534.919	5534.919	5534.919	5534.919	5534.919
MAPE	46.043	.	46.043	46.043	46.043	46.043	46.043	46.043	46.043	46.043	46.043
MaxAPE	242.795	.	242.795	242.795	242.795	242.795	242.795	242.795	242.795	242.795	242.795
MAE	3810.772	.	3810.772	3810.772	3810.772	3810.772	3810.772	3810.772	3810.772	3810.772	3810.772
MaxAE	10378.036	.	10378.036	10378.036	10378.036	10378.036	10378.036	10378.036	10378.036	10378.036	10378.036
Normalized BIC	18.041	.	18.041	18.041	18.041	18.041	18.041	18.041	18.041	18.041	18.041

Model Statistics

Model	Number of Predictors	Model Fit statistics: Stationary R-squared	Ljung-Box Q(18): Statistics	DF	Sig.	Number of Outliers
Total Lethality-Model_1	3	.555	.	0	.	0

ARIMA Model Parameters

					Estimate	SE	t	Sig.
Total Lethality-Model_1	Total Lethality	Natural Logarithm	Constant		2.366	.624	3.794	.002
			AR	Lag 1	-.282	.293	-.964	.353
			Difference		1			
	dTime Period	No Transformation	Numerator	Lag 0	-.382	.148	-2.577	.023
	Designation	No Transformation	Numerator	Lag 0	-2.182	.742	-2.943	.011
	Interact	No Transformation	Numerator	Lag 0	.368	.150	2.451	.029



Appendix H: Meta-analysis of Jihadist Membership

Group	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Aby Sayyaf	200	200	2200	1000	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
AQ	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	Unknown	Unknown	2000	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Uzbek		1000	1000	2000	1000	700	500	500	500	500	500	600	200	500	500	300	300	300	300	300	300
JEM			200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	500	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
LET			200	200	200	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000
AQIM	700	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Several Hundred	Several Hundred; 100-300, CRS Report	Several Hundred	200	200	200	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	500	200	200	1000	1000
JI				200	5000	2000	2000	2000	2000	1000	1000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000
LJ					100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
ISIL							1000	1000	Unknown	10000	4000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	31500	25000	15000	10000	18000
Uzbek							N/A	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
HUJI-B				2000	2000	2000	2000				400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Al-Shabaab					2000	2000	Unknown	Unknown		N/A	unknown	Unknown	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	9000	9000
AQAP										N/A	N/A	N/A	200	2000	1000	1000	1000	4000	4000	2000	1000
HUJI				200	200	200	200	200		N/A	N/A	N/A	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	Unknown	Unknown
TTP										N/A	N/A	N/A	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000
IM										N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2000	2000	200	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Haqqani										N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000	10000
AAD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Boko Haram/Ansaru										N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		2000	1000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000
AMB	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Ansar al-Shari'a										N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	N/A
ISIL-Sinai										N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	200	200	200	1200	1200
al-Nusrah										N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Rolled into ISIL	Rolled into ISIL	2000	Unknown	10000	18000	12000
ISIL-K										N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2000	3000	5000
ISIL-Libya										N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6000	500	500
AQIS										N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Unknown	200	200
HM										N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	200	200
ISIL – B/P										N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	200
ISIS-WA														N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3500
ISIL – G/S										N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Unknown

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