

# **(U) White Supremacy: Contexts and Constraints for Suicide Terrorism**

20 April 2007



Federal Bureau of Investigation  
**Intelligence**  
ASSESSMENT

**HANDLING NOTICE:** This information is the property of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and may be distributed to state, tribal, or local government law enforcement officials with a need-to-know. Further distribution without FBI authorization is prohibited. Precautions should be taken to ensure this information is stored or destroyed in a manner that precludes unauthorized access.

Prepared by

**FBI**

**Counterterrorism  
Division**

**(U) White Supremacy: Contexts and Constraints for Suicide Terrorism**

**(U) Scope Note**



b7A

(U) This assessment draws information from FBI investigations and open sources available as of March 2007 to examine the potential for domestic white supremacist extremists to adopt the tactic of suicide terrorism. This assessment defines *suicide terrorism* as a terrorist incident that intentionally claims the life of the perpetrator. This definition includes instances in which a terrorist intentionally kills himself or herself while attempting to kill others and operations in which the terrorist does not expect to survive the attack, even if he or she is actually killed by police or other defenders. This assessment discusses suicide terrorism from perspectives of both organized suicide campaigns and the potential for the white supremacist movement to generate lone offenders who will commit suicide terrorism on the movement's behalf.

**(U) Key Judgments**

- (U//LES) The perceived effectiveness of suicide terrorism has contributed to its global proliferation as a modern terrorist tactic. Despite differences in ideology, many common features exist among groups engaging in suicide terrorism campaigns, which provide a baseline for assessing the potential for the domestic white supremacist extremist movement to adopt the tactic.
- (U//LES) Fragmented in nature and absent strong leadership, the white supremacist extremist movement in the United States lacks the necessary infrastructure to support the widespread adoption of this tactic as observed in groups overseas. The threat of suicide terrorism from the movement derives less from groups engaging in coordinated, well-orchestrated campaigns of violence, and more from individuals acting alone upon the messages of hate espoused by these groups.
- (U//LES) White supremacist ideology provides some support for suicide terrorism, including it in its rhetoric and cultivating a martyr culture. These provide the movement with an ideal of self-sacrifice and a context for individuals to put themselves into fatal situations on behalf of its causes.
- (U//LES) White supremacists, however, have expressed only sporadic interest in suicide terrorism and see its potential primarily as a means of uniting the fractured movement, rather than as a strategy for effectively advancing the movement's causes.
- (U//LES) The white supremacist extremist movement would likely need to experience an extreme sense of crisis before it would adopt the tactic of suicide terrorism. Contemporary issues that heighten a sense of marginalization include immigration and globalization, which feed racial tensions and the movement's paranoia over an alleged Zionist conspiracy to destroy the white race. Individual acts of suicide terrorism protesting these issues could both unify the movement and inspire others to repeat the tactic in what could collectively amount to a worst-case scenario "campaign" of lone offender suicide attacks.

**(U) Introduction: The Global Proliferation of Suicide Terrorism**

(U) The perceived effectiveness of suicide terrorism has contributed to its global proliferation as a modern terrorist tactic.<sup>1</sup> In response to current terrorism trends, recent literature on suicide terrorism focuses upon international terrorist groups engaging in modern suicide campaigns. A survey of this literature<sup>2</sup> reveals general consensus on several aspects of groups engaging in these campaigns. In particular, these groups tend:

- (U) to be **well-organized** and use the tactic in advanced stages of conflicts when other strategies have failed.
- (U) to have clearly articulated **long-range goals**, often pursuing nationalistic causes against real or perceived foreign occupiers.
- (U) to seek **extensive training** and maintain substantial infrastructures in support of the tactic.
- (U) to engage in suicide terrorism as a calculated means of **mobilizing their bases**, attracting recruits, and gaining financial and popular support.
- (U) to participate in suicide terrorism campaigns when their societies are accepting of violence against civilians; **community approval** often translates suicide attacks into altruistic acts of martyrdom.

(U) Where this literature discusses the threat of suicide attack against the US homeland, it does so in the context of foreign or domestic jihadist groups. Although generally considered an unlikely tactic for white supremacist extremist groups, elements within the white supremacist movement have espoused or glorified suicide terrorism. The common features mentioned above, however, provide an empirical basis for assessing the domestic white supremacist extremist movement's potential to adopt this tactic.

**(U) Constraints for Suicide Terrorism Campaigns**

(U//LES) The white supremacist extremist movement has fostered numerous organizations—some in existence for decades—dedicated to clearly articulated objectives of establishing white supremacy over other races, or otherwise preserving the white race by seeking to destroy America's alleged Zionist Occupied Government (ZOG) and establishing a separate, whites-only nation. Despite its ability to translate common hatreds into group identities, the movement currently experiences divisiveness and a lack of strong national leadership,<sup>1</sup> which severely undermine the strong social bonds (e.g., friendship, kinship, discipleship) and supporting infrastructures observed of groups waging suicide terrorism campaigns overseas.

---

<sup>1</sup> (U) The Shia group Hizballah's successful use of suicide bombings against foreign powers in Lebanon during the 1980s contributed to the adoption of this tactic by Sunni groups in the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, Europe, and Africa and by Sri Lanka's secular Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Farhad Khosrokhavar, *Suicide Bombers: Allah's New Martyrs* [London: Pluto Press, 2005]:70-109).

<sup>2</sup> (U) Recent literature on suicide terrorism consulted for this assessment include: Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Khosrokhavar, *Suicide Bombers*; Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Bombing* (New York: Random House, 2005); and Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003).

(U//LES) Suicide terrorism campaigns tend to require not only internal group support, but also the support of the group's society. Contrary to societal support often experienced by foreign terrorist groups waging suicide terrorism campaigns, the lack of national or regional public sympathy for white supremacist causes restricts the community that would support suicide attacks to extremists within the movement itself.

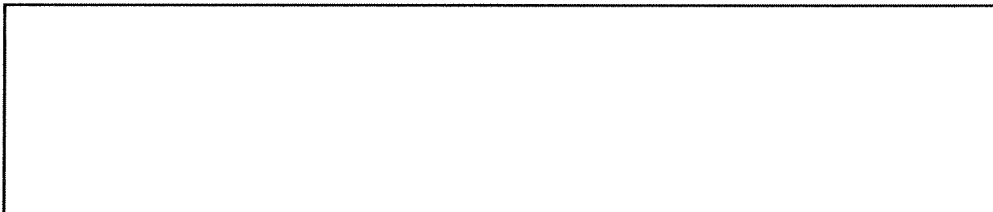
(U//LES) The successful employment of suicide terrorism as a tactic by different groups overseas has depended upon their receiving training from others experienced with the tactic. Despite sympathy occasionally expressed on behalf of groups like Hizballah in its struggle against Israel,<sup>ii</sup> there is little indication of white supremacists having learned or seeking to acquire training from foreign terrorist organizations. Although white supremacist extremist groups in the United States could adopt suicide terrorism as a tactic after indirectly observing its use overseas, its adoption without systematic training reduces the likelihood of its effectiveness as part of a strategic campaign. This need not, however, diminish its potential as an uncoordinated, lone offender tactic.

#### **(U) Support for Suicide Terrorism by Lone Offenders**

(U) Despite the constraints against suicide terrorism campaigns, the white supremacist extremist movement possesses nascent features supportive of suicide terrorism, including envisioning it in its rhetoric and supporting a martyr culture. White supremacist literature describes suicide terrorism as an effective tactic for achieving its goals:

- (U) *The Turner Diaries* has served as tactical literature for the white supremacist movement and inspired the formation and violent campaign of the group, The Order, and Timothy McVeigh's 1995 truck bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.<sup>iii</sup> This novel, authored by deceased National Alliance founder William Pierce, discusses suicide operations as a tactic used against ZOG to achieve the objective of a separate whites-only region within the United States. The novel ends with protagonist Earl Turner committing an act of suicide terrorism thereafter commemorated by a fictional "Day of the Martyrs." In addition, *The Turner Diaries* advocates a collective-memory "Record of Martyrs" to provide suicide operatives a legacy within the movement.<sup>iv</sup>

(U//LES) White supremacist groups are unlikely to publicly sanction acts of violence committed by their members. The extremist movement has long advocated "leaderless resistance" tactics, which advise individuals to distance themselves from group affiliations prior to committing violent acts:<sup>v</sup>


- 

b7A  
b6  
b7C



b7A

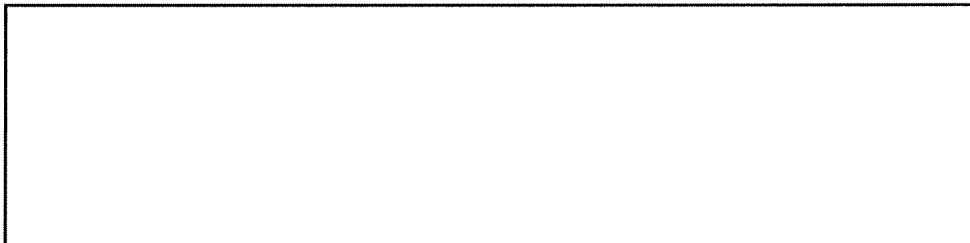
(U//LES) The threat of suicide terrorism from the white supremacist extremist movement derives less from groups engaging in campaigns of violence, and more from individuals acting upon the messages of hate espoused by these groups. This rhetoric initially included approval of the 9/11 attack,<sup>4, viii</sup> and continues periodically to applaud the dedication suicide operatives display for Islamist and other foreign extremist causes:

- 


b7A

*(U) Mobilizing the Base*

(U//LES) Threats or statements regarding suicide terrorism, which have occurred sporadically within the white supremacist extremist movement since 9/11, tend to be uncorroborated or prove non-credible upon further investigation. These reports nevertheless provide insight into internal frustration at the current state of the movement, for which the threats, if acted upon, would serve as a means of unifying and mobilizing the base of support.

- 

b6  
b7A  
b7C

- 

b7A

(U//LES) These cases suggest the tactic as an ad hoc attempt to unite a fractured movement rather than as a long-range strategy for advancing that movement's causes. These cases also illustrate how white supremacists primarily associate suicide attack with targeting of Jews rather than other minority groups. This may be due to the association of ZOG with the US government and economic infrastructure, or the possible influence from international events, and the mimicking of targets selected by jihadist and Palestinian rejectionist groups overseas.

<sup>3</sup> (U) Under the leadership of Matthew Hale, the Church of the Creator became the World Church of the Creator, and in 2002, due to trademark infringement, the Creativity Movement.

<sup>4</sup> (U) Propaganda currently appearing on white supremacist Internet Web sites plays upon broader public sympathies by condemning the 9/11 attack, though it directs blame for its occurrence on the United States' alliance with Israel.

*(U) Martyr Culture*

(U) Groups that engage in suicide terrorism cultivate martyrdom as a means of translating socially objectionable suicide into socially acceptable acts of self-sacrifice.<sup>5,xii</sup> While a few white supremacists have disparaged attacks that end in suicide as cowardly,<sup>xiii</sup> it is broadly upheld as a noble death in groups influenced both by religious (Christian Identity, Odinism) and more secularistic ideologies (National Alliance, Creativity) that support the movement.

- (U) Odinists embrace a warrior mentality that necessitates martyrdom through violent action as a means of attaining eternal life in Valhalla. Fighting on behalf of the faith and surviving is insufficient to attaining this goal.<sup>xiv</sup>
- (U) Church of the Creator founder, Ben Klassen, endorsed suicidal fighting to the death, and cited those who died defending the Alamo as exemplary models for the white supremacist movement.<sup>xv</sup>

**(U) Odinism and Martyrdom\***

(U) Odinism, as interpreted within the white supremacist extremist movement, blends warrior mythology and occult practices honoring the Northern European pantheon headed by the Nordic god Odin (Germanic "Wotan") into a violent and racist ideology. Racist Odinism perceives a threatened extinction of Northern European ethnicity and loss of pre-Christian folk and tribal values, which it attributes to Jewish conspiracy. Odinism has a broad following among racist skinheads and has open sympathies with National Socialism, which historically embraced Wotanism as an aspect of Aryan culture during Weimar and Hitler-era Germany.

(U) Odinists seek to emulate the warrior aspects of their deities and the Viking berserker, and find justification for violence in David Lane's "14 Words"—*We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children*—which are iconic for the white supremacist movement. Odinism promotes the necessity of martyrdom through death in battle as the sole means of attaining immortal life in Valhalla ("hall of the slain").

\* (U) Principle source: Jeffrey Kaplan, *Radical Religion in America: Millenarian Movements from the Far Right to the Children of Noah* (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1997):69-99.

(U) Evidence of martyrdom as a broadly held concept within the white supremacist movement also includes commemorative martyrs' days, some of which resulted from fatal confrontations with law enforcement:

- (U) White supremacists recognize 13 February as the day of martyrdom for tax evader, Posse Comitatus member, and Christian Identity adherent Gordon Kahl. Kahl was killed in a 1983 shootout in Arkansas with federal authorities that also resulted in the death of a local sheriff.
- (U//LES) Northwest Hammerskins, AN, and other white supremacist groups, commemorate 9 December as the date of Robert Mathews's death in 1984 in a house

<sup>5</sup> (U) Examples of the importance of martyrdom in modern suicide campaigns include Hizballah's 11 November annual Martyrs' Day celebration, which commemorates its first suicide attack in 1982, and Sri Lanka's secular Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's 5 July annual Heroes Day celebration, which commemorates its first suicide attack in 1987.

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY/LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE

fire that erupted during a shootout with the FBI on Whidbey Island, Washington. Inspired by Kahl's death, Mathews formed the violent white supremacist group, The Order. An adherent of Odinism, Mathews wrote "I have been a good soldier, a fearless warrior. I will die with honor and join my brothers in [heaven]."<sup>xvi</sup>

- (U//LES) Volksfront, Northwest Hammerskins, and other white supremacists hold an annual Martyrs' Day commemoration for Eric Banks, a racist skinhead from Portland, Oregon, who was fatally shot on 1 January 1993. Supporters also hold fund-raising events toward erecting a memorial stone for Banks on Volksfront property in Washington State.<sup>xvii</sup>
- (U) The Creativity Movement Web site includes Benjamin Smith in its List of Martyrs for his death following his 1999 shooting spree.<sup>xviii</sup>

(U//LES) These martyr ideologies and commemorations provide the movement with an ideal of self-sacrifice and a context for individuals to put themselves into fatal situations on behalf of their causes.

**(U) Outlook**

(U//LES) The white supremacist extremist movement would likely need to experience an extreme sense of crisis before it would adopt the tactic of suicide terrorism. Contemporary issues that heighten a sense of marginalization include immigration and globalization concerns, which feed racial tensions and the movement's paranoia over the alleged ZOG conspiracy to destroy the white race. Such a reactionary development, however, would occur in competition with the movement's current attempt to promote awareness of these issues through First Amendment activities, which tend to moderate the organized movement's violent extremism in exchange for seeking greater public approval. In addition, groups will likely continue to distance themselves from violence given their current advocacy of leaderless resistance as a means of avoiding law enforcement scrutiny.

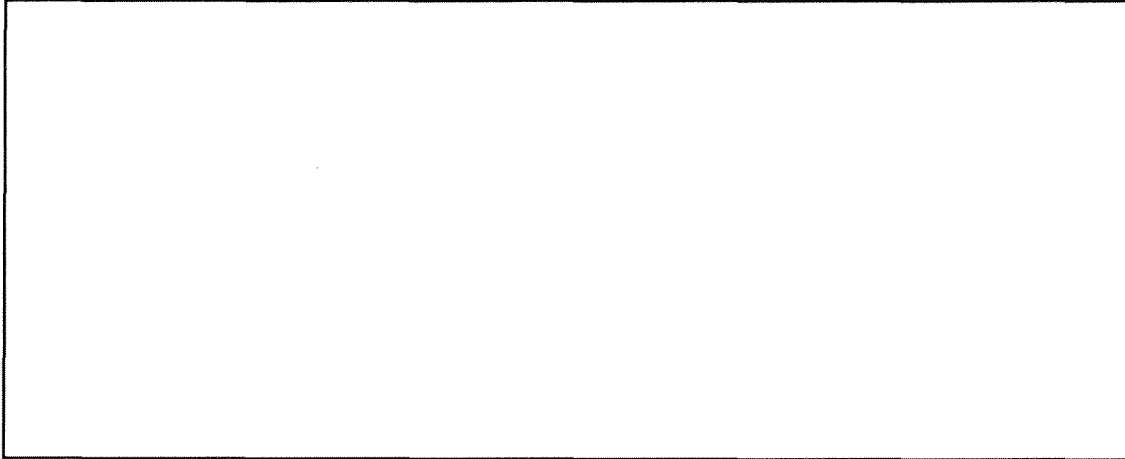
(U//LES) Lone offender attacks pose the most likely scenario for suicide terrorism within the white supremacist extremist movement, especially as the movement remains fractured and with ambiguous national leadership. An act of lone offender suicide terrorism could, in fact, both unify the movement and inspire individuals to repeat the tactic in what could collectively amount to a worst-case scenario "campaign" of lone offender suicide attacks.

(U//LES) Although there is no evidence of white supremacists receiving training overseas from foreign terrorist organizations, some US military personnel, contractors, and civilians have encountered the tactic in the defense against the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan. This has potential implications for those exposed to incidents of suicide terrorism during their service, and who seek to participate in the white supremacist extremist movement upon returning to the United States. Those who consider suicide terrorism to have been an effective strategy overseas may seek to apply the tactic to the movement's stated insurgency at home.

UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY/LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE



**(U) Intelligence Gaps**



b7A



b6  
b7C

(U) Endnotes



<sup>iii</sup> (U) William L. Pierce (pen name Andrew Macdonald), *The Turner Diaries* (Hillsboro, WV: National Vanguard Books, 1978). See also, George Michael, "The Revolutionary Model of Dr William L. Pierce," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15 (2003): 62-80 (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>iv</sup> (U) Pierce, *Turner Diaries*, e.g., iii-iv, 99, 204-5 (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>v</sup> (U) In addition to Pierce's *The Turner Diaries* and *Hunter* (Hillsboro, WV: National Vanguard Books, 1989), compare also David Lane's guidance for Wotanists (individuals and small cells personifying the warrior spirit of the Germanic god Wotan) to sever ties with political white supremacist groups prior to conducting terrorist attacks (David Lane, "Wotan Is Coming," *WAR*, 1993); cited in Kaplan, *Radical Religion in America*, 93-94 (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>vi</sup> (U) FBI Counterterrorism Division, (U) *The Lone Terrorist: The Search for Connection and its Relationship to Societal-Level Violence* (September 2001): 14, 51-52 (UNCLASSIFIED).



Information (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>ix</sup> (U) FBI Case Information (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>x</sup> (U) FBI Case Information (SECRET; UNCLASSIFIED tearline).

<sup>xi</sup> (U) FBI Case Information (UNCLASSIFIED); FBI Case Information (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>xii</sup> (U) Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004): 82-83; Khosrokhavar, *Suicide Bombers*, 92 (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>xiii</sup> (U) FBI Case Information (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>xiv</sup> (U) FBI Counterterrorism Division, (U) *Project Megiddo: A Threat Analysis for the New Millennium* (August 1999): 18 (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>xv</sup> (U) Ben Klassen, *Nature's Eternal Religion* (Milwaukee: Church of the Creator, 1973): 466-68; *The White Man's Bible* (Milwaukee: Church of the Creator, 1981): 386-92; *RAHOWA! This Planet Is All Ours* (Otto, North Carolina: Church of the Creator, 1987): 157-65 (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>xvi</sup> (U) FBI, (U) *Project Megiddo*, 12 (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>xvii</sup> (U) FBI Case Information (UNCLASSIFIED).

<sup>xviii</sup> (U) <http://www.rahowa.com/martyrI.html> (UNCLASSIFIED).

b7A

**FBI Customer Satisfaction Survey**

**Return to:** Domestic Terrorism Analysis Unit, Counterterrorism Division

Marking instructions: Circle the appropriate response accordingly.

- 1 Strongly Disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neither Agree or Disagree
- 4 Agree
- 5 Strongly Agree
- N/A Not Applicable

**Dear Customer:**

Please take a moment to complete this survey and help evaluate the quality and value of FBI products. Your response will help us serve you more effectively and efficiently in the future.

Thank you for cooperation and assistance.

Product Title White Supremacy: Contexts and Constraints for Suicide Terrorism (UNCLASSIFIED)

Product Date 20 April 2007

Customer \_\_\_\_\_

Intelligence Function/Investigative Program \_\_\_\_\_

**Quality**

1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
						This product was delivered within established deadlines.
						The product was timely and relevant to your mission, programs, priorities or initiatives.
						The product was clear and logical in the presentation of information with supported judgments and conclusions.
						The product is reliable i.e., sources well documented and reputable.

**Value**

1	2	3	4	5	N/A	
						The product contributed to satisfying intelligence gaps or predicated cases or intelligence operations, especially in previously unknown areas.
						The product resulted in change in investigative or intelligence priorities and/or a shift from unaddressed to addressed work, or vice versa.
						The product resulted in more informed decisions concerning investigative or intelligence initiatives and/or resource allocation.
						The product identified new information associated with pending matters or offered insights into information that could change the working premise in a program or initiative.

**Comments**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---