

How the FBI Is Evolving to Meet Threats in a Changing Environment

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Mark Giuliano was appointed deputy director of the FBI in December 2013, and in this capacity oversees all of the bureau's domestic and international investigative and intelligence activities, as well as a number of other functions



Brief Analysis

The bureau's deputy director discusses the diverse range of domestic and foreign threats to the homeland, including potential terrorist activity stemming from the war in Syria.

The following is an excerpt from the statement Mr. Giuliano prepared for this off-the-record event. [Download the PDF](#) to read his full prepared remarks.

The recent flood of militants into Syria poses a serious challenge as these individuals could be trained to plan and carry out attacks around the world. It is also possible that foreign terrorist organizations could seek to leverage U.S. or Western persons to facilitate terrorist activity, as al-Qaeda and its affiliates continue to adjust their tactics, techniques, and procedures for targeting the West.

Several U.S. persons have been identified after traveling, or attempting to travel, to participate in the conflict in Syria. Since March 2013, the FBI has arrested a few individuals who either fought in Syria and returned to the United States, or attempted to travel to join in the conflict either with Syrian opposition groups or pro-Assad regime elements. A few examples of this include Eric Harroun, Basit Javed Sheikh, and Mohammad Hassan Hamdan:

- In March 2013, the FBI arrested Arizona-based Eric Harroun upon his return to the United States from Turkey after having fought in Syria with al-Nusrah Front.
- North Carolina-based Basit Javed Sheikh was arrested in November 2013 for attempting to provide material support to al-Nusrah Front as he was attempting to board a flight overseas to join al-Nusrah Front.
- In March 2014, Michigan-based Mohammad Hassan Hamdan was arrested at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport as he was attempting to travel to Syria to fight alongside Hezbollah, a foreign terrorist organization.

The key take-away for us is that this conflict has resulted in a real long-term threat for the United States and its

interests. There is not only potential for further radicalization, but the cross-over and collaboration of various terrorist groups.

To succeed in combating terrorism we must remain intelligence-driven, continue to scan for looming threats, effectively share information with the right people at the right time, and continue our close collaboration with our partners around the world; the U.S. Intelligence Community; federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement; and public and private organizations. Close relationships with our partners is a requisite for the success of the FBI's unique national security and law enforcement missions. We must do all of this while respecting the rule of law and safeguards guaranteed by the Constitution...

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