Examining Terrorist Organization’s Social Networks

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Big Allied And Deadly (BAAD) Dataset

• Original dataset built of MIPT relational data
• Covered the period 1998-2005, one block
• Collected network data and attribute data
  – Ally, Faction, Suspected Ally, Founder, Rival, etc
  – Group size, Ideology, Home base, etc
• Final BAAD 1 dataset contained information on 395 terrorist organizations
Two Key Findings from BAAD 1

• Terrorist Organizations appear to be broken into syndicates, largely based on some combination of geography and ideology

• The more alliances (using a simple degree measure) a terrorist organization has the more lethal it is (Asal & Rethemeyer 2008)
BAAD 2: Preliminary Data

• Major improvements over BAAD 1:
  – Time series data over 10 years, 1998-2007
  – Gathered from a wider selection of open sources
  – Data on ideological, material, or membership nature of the relationships

• Currently are cleaning data

• Many more organizations involved

• Density of connections, especially across syndicates has greatly increased
BAAD 2 “Main Network”
BAAD 2 “Christian Identity Network”
BAAD 2 “ISI 1 Step Egocentric Network”
Current Research

• 3 Types/Motivations for Terrorist Alliances:
  – Ideological Solidarity
  – Enemy of my Enemy
  – Business Alliances

• When/Why these types of alliances form?

• What are implications for the overall structure and fighting these types of terrorist alliances?
Questions?