

THE TERROR NETWORKS AND THE HATE CRIMINALS

In response to Frazier Glenn Miller's arrest in the murder of 3 people at Jewish targets the other day, Peter Bergen reminds that white supremacist terrorists have been more dangerous in recent years than Islamic terrorists.

Now let's do the thought experiment in which instead of shouting "Heil Hitler" after he was arrested, the suspect had shouted "Allahu Akbar." Only two days before the first anniversary of the Boston Marathon bombings, this simple switch of words would surely have greatly increased the extent and type of coverage the incident received.

Yet the death toll in the shootings in Kansas is similar to that of last year's Boston Marathon bombings, where three people were killed and the suspects later killed a police officer as they tried to evade capture. (Many more, of course, were also wounded in the Boston attacks; 16 men, women and children lost limbs.)

In fact, since 9/11 extremists affiliated with a variety of far-right wing ideologies, including white supremacists, anti-abortion extremists and anti-government militants, have killed more people in the United States than have extremists motivated by al Qaeda's ideology. According to a count by the New America Foundation, right wing extremists have killed 34 people in the United States for political reasons since 9/11. (The total includes the latest shootings in Kansas, which are being classified as a hate crime).

By contrast, terrorists motivated by al

Qaeda's ideology have killed 23 people in the United States since 9/11.

But, as Bergen notes, thus far these murders have been called "hate crimes," not terrorism.

That's particularly interesting given this remarkable report from HuffPo's Ryan Reilly, while he was still at TPM. Back in 2012, Reilly interviewed Miller about his contacts with Kevin Harpham, the MLK bomber. As Reilly notes, Federal prosecutors had used Harpham's contacts with Miller to argue for harsher sentencing.

Less than a week after 36-year-old Kevin Harpham was arrested for allegedly attempting a racially motivated bombing of a 2011 Martin Luther King Jr. parade in Spokane, white supremacist leader Glenn Miller sent him a letter offering to help start a legal fund on his behalf.

"Keep your chin up and stay strong," Miller wrote in a letter dated March 14, telling Harpham that he and other members of an online white supremacist forum believed he'd "been set up."

[snip]

Federal prosecutors used Miller's jailhouse letter and Harpham's response – in which he said he might have Miller screen individuals as he looked for "someone to house sit for a while" – **as one of the factors that "supports the imposition of a sentence that will maximize the time the Defendant is incarcerated and subject to judicial oversight."**

Evidently Harpham's lawyers soon informed him it probably wasn't a good idea to be sending letters to a well-known white supremacist while in jail accused of a hate crime, as he didn't respond to any of Miller's follow up

letters.

“He’s kind of let me know he doesn’t want anything to do with me,” Miller said. “It’s not in his self interest to associate with me, and I can understand that, can’t you?” [my emphasis]

As I noted at the time, the FBI called Harpham a “lone wolf” “hate criminal.” That, in spite of the fact that the crime to which he plead guilty – attempted use of a WMD – is one of FBI’s favorite “terrorist” crimes with which to entrap young Muslims, and in spite of the fact that Harpham’s contacts with Miller and his abundant online activity showed him to be a part of a network sharing the same ideology.

Harpham was one of the few white people convicted of a terrorist enhancement crime (the 3 anarchists tied to Occupy who discussed bombing a bridge were also found guilty on WMD charges; both the Hutaree and Schaeffer Cox were initially charged with terrorist-associated crimes, but not found guilty of them; see this a post for Dianne Feinstein’s catalog of such crimes). Whether the FBI called Harpham one or not, he is technically a terrorist.

Just two years ago, they made a big deal out of Harpham’s ties to Miller and used that to substantiate the severity of Harpham’s crimes. Yet not only did the FBI not catch Miller in a sting before he killed. But they’re not even calling Miller a terrorist ... yet.

Miller and Harpham were participants in the same kind of network the FBI uses, if they’re Muslim, to identify targets for increased law enforcement attention. Harpham was convicted as a terrorist, in part, based on his ties to Miller.

And yet no one stopped Miller before he (allegedly) killed.