

CONFRONTING VIOLENT WHITE SUPREMACY
(PART VI): EXAMINING THE BIDEN
ADMINISTRATION'S COUNTERTERRORISM
STRATEGY

HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL
LIBERTIES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND REFORM

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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CONFRONTING VIOLENT WHITE SUPREMACY (PART VI): EXAMINING THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION'S COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY

Wednesday, September 29, 2021

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:07 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, and on Zoom. Hon. Jamie Raskin (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Raskin, Maloney, Mfume, Wasserman Schultz, Kelly, Pressley, Norton, Ocasio-Cortez, Tlaib, Davis, Mace, Comer, Higgins, Sessions, and Donalds.

Also present: Representatives Lawrence (waived on).

Mr. RASKIN. The committee will now come to order.

Without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a recess at any time.

This is the Oversight Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. Before we get started, I want to acknowledge Congresswoman Nancy Mace of South Carolina. The representative of Charleston is our new ranking member, and I want to congratulate her on being the new ranking member. And I am going to ask unanimous consent that we recognize her as the new ranking member.

And without objection, we will do that.

Ms. Mace has had a fascinating career. She is an active legislator and she is a great writer, whose memoir, *In the Company of Men: A Woman at the Citadel*, tells the story of her being the first woman ever to graduate from The Citadel. She has a great interest in civil rights and civil liberties, and we have already spoken about her specific interest in mental health services for the prison population. So, Congresswoman Mace, I very much look forward to working with you in the months ahead, and congratulations on being our new ranking member.

Also, without objection, Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence and Congressman Glenn Grothman shall be permitted to join the hearing today and be recognized for the purpose of questioning the witnesses.

Hearing no objection, they will be waived on for those purposes.

This is the sixth hearing in our subcommittee's series on the crisis of violent white supremacy, something the members know we have been following closely for several years. For more than two

years, we have worked to explore various aspects of this worsening crisis in American democracy and to urge the Federal Government to prioritize a robust and comprehensive response. I want to play a quick video that sums up our prior hearings, particularly the need for an executive-branch-wide strategy to address the rise in domestic violent extremism. I am relieved that we can finally have the hearing today to discuss exactly what that strategy is now, and this strategy incorporates many of the recommendations that our subcommittee has been working for in prior hearings. Please play that video if you would.

[Video shown.]

Mr. RASKIN. So good morning, everyone, and I want to thank our witnesses for joining us today, and I want to thank all the members who have come to participate in this critical hearing. As you just saw in the video compilation, the hearing is sixth in a series about the Nation's crisis with violent white supremacy and the need for the government to mount an effective and comprehensive response to this fundamental threat to the safety of the American people and the security of the American republic. This is not just an important, but today's is an historic hearing because for the first time, an Administration has answered our call to set forth a comprehensive whole-of-government strategy to deal with the threat.

The Biden Administration took power only two weeks after the January 6th insurrection. That day, the whole world watched the storm troopers of violent white supremacy act as the vanguard of a mass violent political insurrection against the Government of the United States that smashed our windows, invaded our Capitol, wounded and injured more than 140 Capitol Police officers and Metropolitan Police Department officers, and left several people dead. The protest that turned into a riot and an insurrection had been promoted and incited by then-President Donald Trump.

The well-trained battalions of domestic violent extremists consisted of Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, Three Percenters, Q-Anon followers, Aryan Nations, Boogaloo Boys, armed militiamen, white Christian nationalists, and other violent extremists. They rallied behind the banner of Donald Trump's Big Lie: asserting that he had won the 2020 Presidential election and that it was being stolen from him. In fact, Joe Biden received more than 7 million votes more than Donald Trump and won by a margin of 306 to 232 in the Electoral College. And yet Trump's Big Lie unified these disparate violent groups into a mass street movement to "stop the steal" and storm the Capitol to interrupt the counting of Electoral College votes for the very first time in the history of the United States, nearly toppling the peaceful transfer of power in our country.

Although warning signs had been popping up everywhere for weeks before the insurrection, Federal law enforcement never produced a formal threat assessment about the risks of violence on that day. That indicates a systematic failure to grapple with the magnitude of the threat facing the republic. And let's be clear that the most dangerous domestic terror threat facing America today comes from the forces that attacked our government on January 6th. In October 2020, President Trump's own acting Secretary of

Homeland Security singled out white supremacist extremists as “the most persistent and lethal threat in the homeland.”

Just two days after being sworn in, President Biden ordered Federal law enforcement and intelligence officials to study the threat of domestic violent extremism. He understood that a post-9/11 counterterrorism framework, set up primarily to combat international threats, like al-Qaeda and ISIS, was not designed to address the domestic terrorist violence that threatens us today. The results of their review became public on June 15th when the President released the first-ever National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism.

The strategy outlined four main pillars to guide Federal agencies. First, the strategy calls for more analysis and information sharing related to domestic terror threats. Second, it asks agencies to determine how to better prevent domestic terror recruitment and mobilization of violence. Third, it tasks the government with disrupting and deterring domestic terror. And fourth, it calls on the government to confront long-term contributors to domestic terror, including racism. This strategy offers exactly the kind of coordinated governmental response that members of this subcommittee have been asking for for more than two years.

During our prior hearings, we were warned over and over again by witnesses with years of counterterror experience and Federal law enforcement experience that the Trump Administration had no cohesive plan to confront the enormous problem facing us. We learned that the Federal Government was not devoting sufficient personnel or resources to monitor or confront the white supremacist threat of violence spreading across the globe. In fact, we heard from Trump Administration officials themselves that the Administration, frankly, lacked any strategic plan to prevent or combat white supremacist violence.

With the release of this new strategy, the Administration has finally ensured that the U.S. has a blueprint to defend ourselves. The strategy calls for more resources to boost state, local, tribal, and territorial efforts to tackle the threat. This includes more information sharing, more analysis, and data-driven guidance on potential indicators of violence. It also lays out a new public health-focused framework for terror prevention that will enlist all sectors of government and society to work together as a bulwark against violence and provide an off ramp for those who are caught up in the clutches of hate. These sweeping objectives will require enormous implementation efforts, coordination, and oversight. I hope we can use this hearing to explore how these efforts are already under way and what Congress can do to help.

We should also take this opportunity to discuss how the Administration's strategy will balance its urgent investigative and enforcement priorities with the constant need to uphold the civil right and civil liberties of all Americans. I am confident that the witnesses before us today will be able to clarify how these counterterror efforts will respect the rule of law and democracy, the democracy that we, in fact, are seeking to protect against terrorist violence.

We are facing an unprecedented situation in which political leaders, up to and including a former President, have been actively promoting corrosive anti-democratic messages that circulate paranoia,

cynicism, and violence. This cesspool of conspiracy thinking is activating unstable individuals predisposed, because of a mixture of ideological grievances and personal disappointments, to commit violence. This is a problem that demands the attention of all of us and, indeed, everyone in the country who believes in the constitutional order.

On January 6th, we saw a glimpse of a post-democratic, chaotic America. In that violent mob which stormed the Capitol of the United States, there was no room for civil rights or civil liberties for anyone, either for the marchers, or for the officers who were being beat up, or the American people, or the Congress. There was no room for equal justice under law. There was no room for meaningful dissent. Our government has finally woken up to the need to combat, comprehensively and effectively, white supremacists and militia-based violent extremism. I hope that this hearing will bring more clarity and exposure to the Biden Administration's strategic plan and help illuminate what Congress can do to ensure that it is both effective and, of course, respectful of the civil rights and civil liberties of the people. We must all work together to defend our democracy and our freedom.

And with that, I will invite our new ranking member to provide an opening statement of her own.

Ms. MACE. Thank you, Chairman Raskin. And, first of all, thank you for the introduction this morning. It is an honor to be here and an honor to work on the Civil Rights and Civil Liabilities Subcommittee with you on Oversight.

Americans of all color, races, nationalities, and religions deserve to live in a country where they can sleep safe at night, knowing our law enforcement personnel at all levels of government are working around the clock to thwart attacks in our communities, not just white communities, but communities of all colors all across the country. Every citizen, regardless of the color of their skin, their zip code, the amount of money they make, what they look like, what their religion is, or where they are from deserve to live in safe communities.

Whether motivated by racism or white supremacy, radical Islam, fascism, anarchy, or antifa, terrorists from across the spectrum and across the world should be warned that the United States will not bend to their will, and we will not succumb to fear. My own district in South Carolina's First Congressional District has witnessed the horrors of domestic terrorism. Six years ago this summer, a Nazi-worshipping white supremacist by the name of Dylann Roof killed nine Black church members at Mother Emanuel. This horrific experience, trauma, horrific event, this tragedy inspired me and countless others in untold ways to work to root out the worst evils in our community. In Charleston and our state of South Carolina, we decided to root out the evil, and there is no room for racism in Charleston, in South Carolina, or our country.

Mother Emanuel not only illustrates the tragedy of domestic terrorism in the United States, but also illustrates the difficulty that law enforcement face when confronting such threats. A recent threat assessment by the intelligence community notes the difficulty of disrupting lone offenders who radicalize independently and mobilize without direction from any movement or organization.

Yet the domestic terror threat is not only a threat we face today. More Americans are falling victim to violent crime every year with over 20,000 murders occurring in 2020 alone. In 2021, year to date so far, we are up 10 percent over last year, and murders jumped 30 percent from 2019 to 2020, according to FBI statistics.

Additionally, the threat of international terrorism grows by the day. The Biden Administration's own officials have noted that al-Qaeda may reconstitute in the Taliban-controlled country of Afghanistan within as little as one to two years. And by all accounts, what we have all witnessed over the last several weeks in Afghanistan, how we botched the exit, that may become a reality sooner than we ever could have anticipated or imagined because of how we exited from Afghanistan, giving billions of dollars of equipment and military arms and artillery to the Taliban, selling that equipment to Iran. And God knows how much money they have in the banks to use against us today. The threats we face today, whether or foreign, are real, and we must ensure adequate oversight of our government's plans to detect and disrupt all of these threats.

The Biden Administration published its plan to combat domestic terrorism this summer. This new focus builds upon the prior Administration's efforts to combat domestic terrorism, which led to a record number of domestic terrorism charges filed by the Department of Justice prosecutors in 2020. I wholeheartedly support this effort to combat domestic terrorism threats. At the same time, we must ensure we are not myopically or singularly focused on threats from within to the detriment of efforts to deter threats from without. It is also essential that any effort to combat domestic terrorism be focused on targeting and disrupting violent behaviors, and that our government not target individuals solely because of their ideologies or beliefs. We must ensure any plan to combat domestic terrorism includes protections of fundamental rights and liberties guaranteed by our Constitution.

I look forward to hearing about these issues and more today from three career civil law enforcement witnesses. I especially look forward to hearing about their efforts, in collaboration with partners at the Federal, state, and local level, to detect, disrupt, and prosecute terrorist threats, whether foreign or domestic. Their service, and that of the men and women in law enforcement working for them, is a testament against the irresponsible, reckless, and dangerous defund the police rhetoric we continue to hear from some on the left today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Mr. RASKIN. And thank you, Representative Mace, for your very thoughtful statement. And I neglected to thank Representative Sessions, wherever he is, for his service to the subcommittee before he made his move.

I now am delighted to recognize the chairwoman of the full Oversight Committee, Representative Carolyn Maloney, for five minutes, for her opening statement. And she has been such a great leader in defending civil rights, civil liberties, and democracy against violent white supremacy.

Chairwoman Maloney. Thank you, Chairman Raskin. I am pleased to be here today examine the Biden Administration's comprehensive strategy for addressing the threat posed by violent

white supremacy and domestic terrorism. This subcommittee, under Chairman Raskin's leadership, has long warned of the need for the Federal Government to address domestic terrorism, and on January 6th, many of us in this room witnessed this terror firsthand.

On that day, militia groups and other violent extremists led an attack on our Capitol, and the battle flag of the Confederacy, the symbol of white supremacy, was brought into the halls by force for the first time in American history. That threat did not arrive unannounced. In recent years, domestic terror attacks by white supremacists, anti-Muslim, and anti-government extremists on the far right have surged. Yet during the same time period, the FBI have arrested fewer, not more, domestic terrorists. During the Trump Administration, top officials focused on the threat posed by far-left extremism, while a right-wing insurrection against the Capitol was planned in plain sight on social media, in the newspaper, on the airwaves. I commend the Biden Administration for recognizing the gravity of this threat and meeting it head on.

Many of the proposals in this National Strategy represent a sea change from the previous Administration and are long overdue. Confronting domestic terrorism and white supremacist violence requires a whole-of-government approach, pulling from all the resources of the Federal Government, as well as state, local, and tribal partners. I encourage the Biden Administration to forge meaningful partnerships with community leaders to support mental health services, restorative justice initiatives, bystander intervention programs, and more. With this shift in strategy must also come a renewed commitment to effective oversight. Over the last 2 decades, our domestic national security strategy has far too often targeted communities of color, and Muslim communities in particular.

We must ensure that the Federal Government does not fall back on flawed tools or faulty shortcuts in the name of national security. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about how we can achieve these new investigative priorities, the safeguards that will protect the civil rights and civil liberties of all Americans. Thank you, Chairman Raskin, for calling today's hearing and each of our witnesses for joining us here today, and I yield back. Thank you.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you so much, Chair Maloney. And I am now delighted to recognize the ranking member of the full Oversight Committee, Mr. Comer, for five minutes for his opening statement.

Mr. COMER. Thank you, Chairman Raskin, and let me begin by thanking Representative Sessions for his leadership as ranking member of this committee. I think everyone knows Representative Sessions took a job in a new position on the Financial Services Committee, so I want to now congratulate Representative Mace for her rise as the ranking member of this subcommittee. I know she is going to do a tremendous job.

I want to thank the witnesses for appearing here today. The men and women of the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, work tirelessly to keep Americans safe from terrorist attacks. As we continue to hear harmful defund the police rhetoric from some

on the left, I am reminded of the bravery of law enforcement officers who put their lives on the line every single day to keep us safe from threats, both foreign and domestic.

Crime is on the rise in the United States. At the same time, we face terror threats from within and without. Now more than ever, it is essential that our law enforcement have the tools they need to combat these ever-growing threats, and it is equally essential that we recognize their sacrifice and service. Law enforcement in this country is not systematically racist or irredeemable beyond reform, as some of my colleagues would assert. In fact, we will likely hear from witnesses today what they were doing to protect Americans, especially racial minorities, from racially motivated violent extremist plots. That isn't to say law enforcement need not respect the bounds of the law or protect the civil rights and civil liberties that we hold so dear.

Our country is a country ruled by law, and the Constitution is the supreme law of the land. That document guarantees many of the fundamental freedoms we take for granted in our country: the freedoms of religion, of speech, of peaceable assembly, of association. It is essential that any strategy to combat domestic terrorism keep in mind the goal of preventing violent terrorist attacks. At the same time, we must safeguard our fundamental freedoms and not allow prejudice against religion or ideology to cloud our responses. Our strategy to combat all violence must be focused on that violence and be completely neutral as to ideological motivations, no matter how repugnant. We must target dangerous people because of their violent actions and not their protected beliefs.

I hope that today's hearing will demonstrate to the Biden Administration that Congress is providing oversight over their plans to combat domestic terrorism, and I look forward to hearing from witnesses today what safeguards are in place to ensure that civil rights and civil liberties are protected. It is unfortunately a rare occurrence in this Congress for the majority to invite Biden Administration witnesses. I hope the majority will continue this trend and finally begin to hold the Biden Administration accountable for the crisis on the southern border and the disastrous Afghanistan withdrawal.

Once again, I thank the witnesses for appearing today, and I look forward to hearing about the work they are doing to keep Americans safe from terrorist attacks. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. RASKIN. And, Mr. Comer, thank you very much for your thoughtful remarks. And now I get to introduce three extraordinary witnesses. I am not going to be able to go into detail on their bios, but let me quickly introduce the three of them before we get started.

Our first witness is John D. Cohen, who is the coordinator for counterterrorism at the Department of Homeland Security. He has more than 3 decades of experience in law enforcement, counterintelligence, and homeland security. He has studied mass casualties and is currently studying the impact of internet-based communications technologies on crime and homeland security. Then we will hear from Timothy Langan, who is the assistant director for the Counterterrorism Division at the FBI. He first joined the FBI

back in 1998, was assigned to the Dallas Field Office, later Washington. He has investigated counterterrorism, Mexican drug trafficking, and violent crimes. Prior to joining the FBI, he served in the Marine Corps and was a police officer and undercover narcotics detective. And finally, we will hear from Brad Wiegmann, who is the deputy assistant attorney general for the National Security Division at the Department of Justice. Most of his career over the last 25 years has been focused on national security, including counterterrorism, intelligence, counterproliferation, cyber policy, and law enforcement.

So I want to welcome all three of our witnesses. The witnesses will be please unmuted so we can swear you in. Please raise your right hands.

Do you swear or affirm the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

[A chorus of ayes.]

Mr. RASKIN. Let the record show that the witnesses have all answered in the affirmative. Thank you.

Without objection, your written statements will be made part of the record.

And with that, Mr. Cohen, you are now recognized for your five minutes of opening testimony.

**STATEMENT OF JOHN COHEN, COORDINATOR FOR
COUNTERTERRORISM, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**

Mr. COHEN. Chairman Raskin, Ranking Member Mace, thank you very much. It is an honor to be here. It is an honor to be with the members of the committee, and Chairwoman Maloney and Ranking Member Comer. You will find in my opening statement that I actually agree with much of what was said in the opening statements that were made previous to me.

As mentioned, in June of this year, the Biden-Harris Administration released its National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism. The strategy notes that the domestic terrorism threat is not a new threat within the United States, but it does, for the first time, at least in my experience, offer a comprehensive whole-of-government approach in combatting that threat. Chairman Raskin, you have already gone through the elements of the strategy, so I won't repeat that, but I will say is that the Department of Homeland Security worked closely with the FBI, the Justice Department, the White House, and the rest of the Federal interagencies to develop the strategy, and we continue to work closely with those organizations, as well as state, local, tribal governments, the private sector, community leaders, civil society organizations, advocacy groups, as we seek to implement the strategy.

I'd like to take a few minutes, if I can, to describe our underlying understanding of the threat that we face currently within the country because I think it will provide some context to our discussions today about what the Department is doing.

While we certainly are facing a threat that has an organizational dynamic that involves groups of individuals that coalesce around and even engage in violent and destructive behavior in furtherance of extremist or a blend of extremist beliefs, it is important to re-

member that it is also a threat that is very individualized in nature. As repeatedly assessed by DHS and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, when looked at from a lethal perspective, the most significant terrorism-related threat facing the U.S. today comes primarily from lone offenders, individuals who engage in violent activity inspired by extremist beliefs or a blend of extremist beliefs, or a blend of extremist beliefs and personal grievances that are most often cultivated through the consumption of online content.

This is a trend that began several years ago and has continued to evolve. And while, as we look back at past attacks, the specific motives behind these attacks vary, analysis and research tells us that many of the attackers share common behavioral characteristics. In particular, these are people who tend to be angry, socially disconnected, seeking a sense of life meaning. They spend significant time online, and ultimately self-connect with a cause or grievance to justify the use of violence as a way to express their anger and achieve a sense of social connection and self-worth.

It is a threat that does not often fit into traditional terrorism-or-extremism-related definitional categories. In fact, this is one of the primary challenges in trying to define and investigate these types of threats. Those who engage in violence often self-connect with a combination of extremist beliefs or a blend of extremist beliefs and personal grievances. Terms of art like “salad bar extremism” and “hybrid ideologies” are references to the fact that attackers adapt a blend of ideological beliefs and grievances.

This is a threat that manifests itself both in the physical and digital environments. Online content, disinformation, false narratives, and conspiracy theories spread by foreign nation-states, international terrorist groups, and extremist thought leaders fuel much of the violence we are experiencing in the country today. Domestic and foreign threat actors purposely seek to exploit the fractures in our society, the anger and discord in our political discourse to sow discord and inspire acts of violence.

In addressing this threat, we have to understand a few things. From an intelligence perspective, we need to think differently about how we look at information. Pre-incident indicators may be apparent through public actions or communications. Covert collection may not be necessary to capture valuable intelligence, but analysts need to be able to distinguish between constitutionally protected speech and threat-related activity.

Preventing acts of violence. Joint terrorism task forces have for years kept our communities safe through multijurisdictional investigations into potential terrorism threats. Community-based prevention programs are needed to complement the efforts of the JTTF.

The threat posed by high-risk individuals who do not meet the investigative threshold necessary for terrorism-related investigations. This means providing grant funding, training, technical assistance to local communities so that law enforcement, mental health professionals, social service providers, educators, and community groups can work together to identify those individuals who are traveling down the path of violence and develop strategies to manage those folks.

Let me close by saying real quickly that we recognize that we are facing a broad, complex, and diverse threat environment. We're dealing with an evolving foreign terrorism threat. We're dealing with a multiyear trend of increased violent crime. We're dealing with disinformation and other covert actions by foreign intelligence services. We're dealing with a broad range of cyberthreats. We need, at the Department, to be able to deal with all of those threats effectively as well as the threat posed by domestic terrorists, violent extremists, and targeted violence. Let me also say finally that it is not our job to police thought. It is not our job to infringe on the constitutional rights of Americans. It is our job to prevent violence, and the men and women of DHS work closely with law enforcement across the country to do that.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much for your testimony, Mr. Cohen. And, Mr. Langan, you are now recognized for your testimony. Five minutes.

**STATEMENT OF TIMOTHY LANGAN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR,
COUNTERTERRORISM DIVISION, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**

Mr. LANGAN. Good morning, Chairwoman Maloney, Ranking Member Comer, Chairman Raskin, Ranking Member Mace, and members of the subcommittee. I am honored to be here today representing the dedicated men and women of the FBI's Counterterrorism Division, and I appreciate the opportunity to be here to discuss the FBI's role in implementing the National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism.

Preventing acts of terrorism is the FBI's No. 1 priority. The great terrorism threat facing our homeland is that posed by lone actors or small cells who typically radicalize online and look to use easily accessible weapons to attack soft targets. We see this threat within both home-grown violent extremists, or HVEs, who are inspired by foreign terrorist groups and domestic violent extremists, or DVEs, whose inspiration stems from domestic influences.

Domestic terrorism has been and continues to be a top priority for the FBI. Although the strategy is new and is the first national strategy focused entirely on mitigating domestic strategy, this is not the first time domestic terrorism has been included in our Nation's counterterrorism strategy, largely due to the FBI's focus on this threat. The FBI participated heavily in the development of the strategy and is the leading agency for the domestic terrorism threat. We have a key role in working with our partners to implement the strategy. The strategy outlines four strategic pillars that guide the U.S. Government's collective response to domestic terrorism. These pillars require the FBI to fully leverage our partnerships with Federal, state, and local law enforcement, the private sector, academia, and our foreign counterparts.

Pillar one calls for us to understand and share domestic terrorism-related information. The FBI has already bolstered our analytical resources focused on this threat. We continue to disseminate intelligence products to our partners to identify actionable intelligence, trends on domestic terrorism threats, and tactics and tradecraft used by DVEs. Many of these intelligence products are

produced jointly with the National Counterterrorism Center and the Department of Homeland Security in the form of joint intelligence bulletins. We also look to strengthen our two-way exchange of information with our state and local law enforcement partners as they are often in the best position to identify important facets of a threat.

The second pillar calls upon the government to prevent domestic terrorism recruitment and mobilization of violence. To this end, the FBI is supporting our Federal partners to highlight available resources related to prevention. We are working with NCTC and DHS to update the Homegrown and Violent Extremist Mobilization Indicators Guide, which in 2021 will, for the very time, articulate potential indicators of DVE mobilization to violence. We also are working with DHS and the Department of Justice to research and share best practices for curbing prison radicalization.

Pillar three looks to disrupt and deter domestic terrorism activity. Internally, the FBI has prioritized key domestic terrorism threats at the same level as certain international terrorism threats, such as ISIS and HVEs. The FBI is destructing domestic terrorism plots and actors, often in close coordination with state and local law enforcement within the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force framework. The final pillar seeks to confront long-term contributors to domestic terrorism, which is a goal that is not specific to just the FBI, but a shared responsibility among the American people.

The FBI takes seriously its mission to both uphold the Constitution and to protect the American people. Regardless of a person's ideology, the FBI will actively pursue the opening of FBI investigations when an individual uses or threatens the use of force, violence, or coercion in violation of Federal law and in furtherance of social or political goals. Thank you and I look forward to answering your questions.

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Langan, thank you very much for your thoughtful testimony. And finally, we will recognize Mr. Wiegmann for your five minutes.

STATEMENT OF BRAD WIEGMANN, DEPUTY ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL, NATIONAL SECURITY DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr. WIEGMANN. Good morning, Chairman Raskin, Ranking Member Mace, Chairwoman Maloney, Ranking Member Comer, and distinguished members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Department of Justice.

The terrible tragedies arising from domestic terrorist attacks in the United States in recent years are unfortunately all too familiar. In 2015, as Ranking Member Mace mentioned, a white supremacist shot and killed nine Black men and women during a Bible study at a church in Charleston. In 2017, a man with neo-Nazi views drove his car into a crowd of peaceful protestors in Charlottesville, murdering one and injuring many more. In 2018, a man espousing antisemitic views shot and killed 11 Jewish worshippers at their synagogue in Pittsburgh. In 2019, 23 people, most of whom were Latino, were gunned down by a white nationalist while shopping at a Walmart in El Paso.

There are also many others who have been arrested and prosecuted before they had a chance to do harm: a white nationalist convicted last year in Maryland, was stockpiling assault weapons and planning attacks on minorities and elected officials; a man sentenced earlier this year for plotting to blow up a synagogue in Colorado; six men charged with conspiring to kidnap the Governor of Michigan. And as you know, the Department of Justice and the FBI are now engaged in a massive investigation in response to the violent attacks on the U.S. Capitol on January 6th in which more than 600 people have been arrested. We continue to face an elevated threat. The FBI has more than doubled the number of domestic terrorism investigations over the last several years. As has been alluded to earlier in the hearing, the top threats we face are from those we categorize as racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists, as well as anti-government or anti-authority violent extremists.

As the Attorney General said earlier this summer, the first-of-its-kind National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism is designed to provide a principled path for the Federal Government's efforts to counter this heightened threat using all available tools. It's the culmination of an effort undertaken at the President's direction by agencies across the Federal Government, from the Justice Department to the Departments of Homeland Security, Defense, State, Health and Human Services, and others. There are four pillars that have already been mentioned today, so I won't go through them again in detail, but just to say, in general, what we're doing at the Department of Justice in order to implement this strategy.

This includes dedicating more resources to counter this threat—we've included a request for \$100 million more to address domestic terrorism—increasing our focus on domestic terrorism in the intelligence we collect; ensuring we can share as much information as we can with Federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial partners; deepening our collaboration with our foreign partners and allies to explore links to international counterparts of domestic extremists. And that's something I would characterize as new in this strategy is we are seeing connections around the world, and that's something that this strategy recognizes and calls on us to focus on. Ensuring that we are working with the tech sector, since so much radicalization occurs online. That's a big focus of this strategy as well. And ensuring that we have sufficient training both at the state and Federal level.

Finally, I want to just mention two other points that are embodied in this strategy and that the other witnesses have mentioned today as well as the members of the committee, but that are crucial to this whole effort. First is that this strategy recognizes that merely espousing an extremist ideology is not a crime, nor is expressing hateful views and associating with hateful groups. Any steps to counter domestic terrorism must be focused on violent acts or true threats of violence so as to safeguard Americans' civil rights and civil liberties. There are longstanding guidelines that prohibit the FBI from engaging in investigative activities solely for the purpose of monitoring activities protected by the First Amendment or

other constitutional rights, and this is a core value for the Department of Justice and the FBI.

Second is the strategy also recognizes, as others have alluded to today, it is absolutely critical that we condemn and confront domestic terrorism regardless of the particular motivating ideology. The definition of “domestic terrorism” in U.S. law makes no distinction based on political views, be they left, right, or center, and neither should we.

In closing, I want to note that this strategy is not just a document that we’ve written to put on a shelf. Actively, work is being done to implement it. That’s under way and will be ongoing for months and years to come. So thank you for the invitation to testify today, and I look forward to answering your questions.

Mr. RASKIN. I want to thank all of the witnesses for their excellent testimony today, and I will recognize myself for my five minutes of questioning.

Mr. Wiegmann, let me start with you, picking up on that last point. It seems to me that we have a very difficult problem because so much of the domestic violent extremist activity that takes place is motivated, and inspired, and incited by speech online. So what does it mean to say that the government wants to disrupt and deter domestic terror activity when that activity, as Mr. Cohen testifies, often arises from lone actors, individuals who get inspired by disinformation and propaganda that they read online?

Mr. WIEGMANN. Yes, and thank you for that question. If your question is—what are the rules that we have around online activity and how we investigate that? Is that your question?

Mr. RASKIN. Yes.

Mr. WIEGMANN. Yes. So, again, as I mentioned in my opening statement, we cannot collect information solely on the basis of hate speech or First Amendment protected activity. So if someone is online saying they hate a particular religious group or ethnic group, that in and of itself is not enough to initiate investigative activity, but if it is coupled with any kind of indications of violence, that would be something that we could investigate. We have a whole set of detailed rules, both in the Attorney General guidelines that were developed in the 1970’s in response to the abuses from the 60’s and 70’s that were identified in the Church Committee Report, and then the FBI has an extensive manual, which I actually brought with me today. It’s called the Domestic Investigations and Operations Guide. I don’t know if you all can see that on the video, but it is a very thick, kind of the size of a phone book, set of rules that we have for the different phases of an investigation, when you can initiate an investigation, and it talks about the First Amendment constraints. It talks about freedom of association. It talks about freedom of speech, freedom of religion. And the FBI has lawyers that are actively involved in all investigations, but, in particular, in domestic terrorism investigations, to ensure that will that we are walking that line.

It is a reasonable set of rules. I don’t want to over emphasize. I think we can still investigate the activities as we see fit. It is just that you need more than speech alone in order to investigate. I don’t know if that answers your question.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes, thank you. Mr. Cohen, let me come to you. I think most of us who experienced January 6th would consider the government's advance threat assessment and planning to be woefully inadequate. What has been learned from what took place on January 6th, and, you know, are there lessons that will correct the kind of inadequate response that the government had?

Mr. COHEN. Thank you for that question, Mr. Chairman. We learned several lessons. One, as I alluded to in my opening statement, we, from an intelligence perspective, have to look differently at information that comes to our attention. You know, there is a traditional thought process within the intelligence community that ascribes a greater level of credibility to information that has been collected through covert or sensitive collection platforms. But as we can all agree, there was a substantial amount of information on public-facing social media and online platforms that describe the intent of individuals to come to Washington, DC, and engage in destructive and even violent behavior in response to their belief that the election had been compromised, or had been rigged, or had been stolen.

As I compare what happened prior to January 6th and what happened recently on September 18th when we were seeing similar traffic on public-facing websites, is there was a much greater level of security preparations by local authorities, Federal authorities, and others. There was a much higher level of information-sharing between DHS, the FBI, and Federal agencies, as well as state and locals.

We have to also understand and become better aware at understanding what narratives that are being promoted on threat-related platforms are more likely to be an indicator of potential violence and use that information to inform physical security measures that could actually serve as a disincentive. One of the things that we observed between January 6th and January 20th was that those who were calling to come back to Washington during the Inauguration and continue, from their perspective, the fight against what they viewed as a stolen election, they saw that there were security preparations in place, and they made the decision and were disinclined to come to Washington as a result.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much, and I will now yield to the ranking member for her five minutes of questioning.

Ms. MACE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I was preparing for this hearing, and being on a subcommittee chaired by Mr. Raskin, you got to be prepared, I was actually kind of shocked to discover there was not a lot of good data out there that I could find on domestic terrorism. So I have a few questions that I would like to try to quantify some of this. And this is the sixth hearing on white supremacy in this series, so I would be interested to hear from Mr. Cohen first. Understanding that statistics might be difficult to quantify, are you able to sort of give us an estimate on the number of casualties due to domestic terrorism overall in the U.S. over the last 10 or 20 years? I read somewhere in one study it was around 250. That seems kind of low to me, not accurate. Are we talking hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands? Do we know the number of casualties due to domestic terrorism?

Mr. COHEN. So thank you for that question, Ranking Member. As we had discussed yesterday, I went back and started trying to pull some of those same statistics in preparation of the hearing, and as you point out, it is difficult. In some cases, it is typical to ascribe the motive of a mass casualty attack or an act of targeted violence directly to a single extremist motivation. In other cases, it is a combination of an extremist ideological belief and personal grievances. In other cases, it may be ascribed to someone's behavioral health or mental health status.

I think that if you look strictly at the issue of events from a prosecutorial perspective that can be ascribed to a white supremacist belief, I would have to defer to the FBI from the perspective of Federal charges. But, again, the capturing of statistics in this is complicated, but it is certainly something that we need to be able to do better if we are going to tell a convincing narrative about why this is a significant problem facing the country.

Ms. MACE. Yes. I feel like we ought to know the number, the answer to that. My next question is for Mr. Wiegmann. Many of the atrocities and mass shootings we have seen have not only been perpetrated by racists and racist ideology and extremists, but also by individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. How would or how does the Department of Justice distinguish between individuals who are committing acts of violence due to mental health crisis versus those who are domestic extremists motivated by a racist or political ideology?

Mr. WIEGMANN. So if they have committed a crime, it doesn't matter whether it is due to a particular ideology or mental health conditions. As the other witnesses have alluded to today, it could be a combination of those things, a combination of different ideologies and mental health problems. Many of these people do have mental health problems, so they can be prosecuted regardless of that. And I think the FBI tries to keep statistics about the ideology, but it can be challenging because it can be a mix of different motivations that are involved.

Ms. MACE. OK. And then, Mr. Langan, the FBI works to prevent both international and domestic terrorism threats. Are you able to give me a breakdown of the caseload? What percentage is domestic terrorism versus foreign terrorism threats of the cases that we work on?

Mr. LANGAN. Yes. Yes. For domestic terrorism threats, currently we are approximately over 2,700 threats, and for the international terrorism threats, we are under 1,000. And I did have some information on homicides and deaths for the last five years, but not for last 10 if you are interested in those.

Ms. MACE. Yes, I would love that.

Mr. LANGAN. As far as international terrorism-related deaths, from 2015 to 2020, there were 80 recorded deaths in the homeland, and for that same time period for DT attacks, there were 83 deaths in that five-year period.

Ms. MACE. Thank you. And then another question, Mr. Langan. I read an article in The New Yorker this week about, I am calling it "intelligence sabotage," an environmental activist advocating to blow up pipelines, not going as far as kidnapping people. But does

the FBI consider environmental intelligence sabotage domestic terrorism?

Mr. LANGAN. Any threats to human life are considered terrorism by the FBI. The ideology is various, but we take any threats that would be toward violent acts to be serious.

Ms. MACE. Thank you.

Mr. RASKIN. The gentlelady yields back. Thank you. And we will now go to Ms. Wasserman Schultz for her five minutes of questioning.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The decision by the Biden Administration to release the National Strategy document explicitly focused on fighting domestic extremism was an unprecedented decision made in response to what was clearly an alarming surge in domestic terror threats. I would like to submit for the record, Mr. Chairman, these statistics from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, especially in light of the ranking member making a reference to there being a lack of data[SA1], which is not accurate. The number of—

Mr. RASKIN. Without objection.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you very much. The number of domestic terrorist plots has been on the rise in recent years, and in 2020, that figure reached its highest level in at least a quarter century. Ninety percent of those plots were committed, as you can see, by domestic extremists, 67 percent by far-right groups. Only five percent were inspired by violent jihadist ideologies. Nevertheless, as recently as 2018, the Trump Administration's national counterterrorism strategy emphasized that international jihadist organizations were the top terrorism threats and devoted only a few sentences to domestic threats. In announcing this strategy, Attorney General Merrick Garland promised to, and I quote, "respond to domestic terrorism with the same sense of purpose and dedication that previous Administrations have devoted to foreign-based terrorist threats."

Mr. Wiegmann, you are the principal deputy assistant attorney general tasked with implementing the strategy, and I commend you. What work is the Department of Justice already doing to implement the changes called for in the strategy, and what still needs to be accomplished to better respond to the rise of violent white supremacists and other forms of violent extremism?

Mr. WIEGMANN. Thanks for that question. So as I alluded to in my opening testimony, there is a whole range of activities that we are undertaking under Attorney General Garland's leadership to address domestic terrorism. In addition to the January 6th investigation, which I mentioned, obviously we have our ordinary cases that we are pursuing all across the country. The FBI has more than doubled the number of domestic terrorism investigations, so that reflects the increased threat level that we are seeing. But as I also mentioned in my opening testimony, there are a whole range of other policy initiatives that we have launched at DOJ. This includes reinvigorating the Domestic Terrorism Executive Committee, which is an information-sharing and policy oversight forum that the Department of Justice chairs that includes elements of the interagency.

We have broadened our approach so that we are working more with other parts of the government, be it HHS or the intelligence community, to focus on this threat. We have asked for more resources to deal with the increased caseload that we are seeing. We are focused also on prevention efforts, so we are on our toes on that issue as to how we can work to, when we do identify people that are posing a threat of domestic terrorist attack, but maybe not yet committed a crime——

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you.

Mr. WIEGMANN [continuing]. Or Federal charges would not be appropriate, as to what other mechanisms we can develop to ensure——

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you, Mr. Wiegmann. I have got another question I wanted to ask you about.

Mr. WIEGMANN. Sure.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I am a founder and co-chair of the congressional Caucus on Black-Jewish Relations, and so I am all too familiar with how real these threats are, and especially those targeting Black and Jewish communities. We clearly have to have a counterterrorism effort that acknowledges the extent to which minority communities are under attack. Can you explain how the strategy will directly address the dangers posed to racial and ethnic minorities?

Mr. WIEGMANN. Yes. So the strategy is ideology neutral, but obviously recognizes that the most lethal attacks that we have had in recent years, including some of the ones I mentioned in my opening statement, have been from racially motivated violent extremists, including targeting synagogues and Jewish worshippers, African Americans, Latinos, other ethnic groups. So because that is the No. 1 threat, it is inherent in the strategy that that is going to be a key focus of ours. I don't know if that answers your question.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you. I would like to underscore the significance of what we are discussing here. Since 9/11, the Federal Government has overwhelmingly focused its counterterrorism mission on combating foreign terrorist organizations and their potential presence in the United States. This document represents a blueprint for a Federal Government that is hopefully more reactive to the threat landscape that we actually face today. Mr. Cohen, as the counterterrorism coordinator for the Department of Homeland Security, what do you see as the biggest shifts in the threat landscape in the two decades since 9/11, and do you see this strategy as a long-overdue shift away from a post-9/11 paradigm focused primarily on foreign sources of terrorism?

Mr. COHEN. Thank you for the question. I think that from a shift perspective, our counterterrorism strategies in the past focused on combating activities of foreign-based organizations who sought to introduce operatives into the U.S. to carry out attacks. What we are dealing with now, as we have discussed, has more to do with lone individuals who self-connect with ideological beliefs that they acquire through their online activity. They will act on behalf of an ideological belief or even a terrorist group but operate independent of that group. So many of the tools and resources that we have used, such as those of our intelligence community, our military,

and other counterterrorism capabilities, don't necessarily apply to a significant part of the threat. We have to use new tools. We have to work with communities more closely in order to identify high-risk individuals and take steps to manage the threat they pose.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you. And, Mr. Chairman, I know I am at a time, but if I could enter into the record, since I don't have time to make reference to it, this last slide that would show that we have domestic terrorism investigations that have more than doubled since 2017, from 1,000 to 2,700 cases.

Mr. RASKIN. Without objection.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you.

Mr. RASKIN. Without objection, we will enter that.

Mr. RASKIN. And thank you, Ms. Wasserman Schultz, for your questions.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I appreciate that, and I yield back.

Mr. RASKIN. And I am now delighted to go to Representative Sessions, the former ranking member, but we are delighted still to have you with us, Mr. Sessions.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and I want to thank this panel for being there. Mr. Cohen and Mr. Wiegmann, are there any cities that do not fully participate and share information with you about criminal activity that occurs within their jurisdiction?

Mr. COHEN. I cannot, as we are sitting here, think of any cities. In fact, I would have to say that over the last 10 months, we have dramatically expanded our information sharing with state, local, tribal governments, and the private sector to the point where we are having biweekly meetings to discuss emerging threats and operational issues.

Mr. WIEGMANN. I am not aware. I defer to the FBI on that question.

Mr. SESSIONS. OK. Mr. Langan?

Mr. LANGAN. Yes, sir. Thank you. We have 56 field offices, and every one of our field offices has a joint terrorism task force that consists of over 200 joint terrorism task forces and hundreds of state and local law enforcement officials. I am not aware of direct information related to any particular cities or localities that are not sharing, and we concentrate, again, on those enhanced relationships and partnerships through our JTTFs.

Mr. SESSIONS. Yes. Thank you. And sure you do, and I would expect that that relationship would be shared. So in other words, you are saying that if there were a cartel member or a person that was picked up for being arrested, let's say in Seattle, for anything, if there was a link to violence or terrorism, you would then have access to that information, know who that person was. I hear you saying that, Mr. Cohen.

Mr. COHEN. Look, I left the Department in 2014 after a stint in the Bush Administration and then the Obama Administration. I came back in 2021. I have to say that I was somewhat disappointed at the state of information sharing upon my return. Some of the information sharing relationships the Department had forged over years had atrophied, and that is why it has been such a big priority for us to reestablish those lines of communication, the lines of communication, the trust, and the technology that we use to exchange

information. So I can't sit here today and say to you that over the last several years there were not instances in which information that was gathered by the Federal Government or information that had been gathered by state and locals was shared effectively. I can tell you that it is a top priority for the Department under Secretary Mayorkas to reestablish those lines of communications on a very tactical, granular, and operational level.

Mr. SESSIONS. Well, what I would ask all three of you, if you could please provide information to me or to our subcommittee chairman about any jurisdiction that has expressly made a decision that they will not share information that was gathered or garnered on a local basis with, as you suggest, the task forces or with Federal law enforcement. I think it is important to note that in Texas, we have had, over our past, a number of people, including those that have been what I would call mass murderers, who have done things that may have been minor, but they came to the attention of local people. They were criminal violations, and I would like to make sure that no matter where in the United States, that that information would be available so that if they reappeared somewhere, we had information where we could quickly make sure we knew who they were. And so I would ask all three of you, please, on a positive basis, to send either to the committee chairman or to myself, Congressman Pete Sessions, information that you would certify, you know, send me if there is any location, or locale, or state, or city that does not actively share because of their own decisionmaking that they made.

I want to thank all three of you. I think that what the chairman is doing by having this hearing is important. We need to identify, we need to know who these people are, we need to understand about them, and I applaud all three of you. But my address is Rayburn 2204, and I would appreciate hearing from all three of you as to that question.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the time. Thank you very much.

Mr. RASKIN. And thank you so much, Mr. Sessions, for your questioning. I am happy now to go to Representative Mfume for his five minutes. Before, though, I do want to remind all the members of the committee, please wear a mask in accordance with the Oversight Committee rule that we are supposed to be wearing masks when we are not asking questions. So thank you all for modeling good behavior here. And, Representative Mfume, the pride of Baltimore, we come to you.

Mr. MFUME. Well, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I want to thank you and the ranking member for deciding to hold this hearing and then to bring it into existence. I appreciate your leadership of this committee obviously. I have two points I know that I want to make here as I try to muddle through this. I mean, so much of this is subjective, and then there is a lot of it that is objective. And both of you, or all three of you, are in agencies now that are trying, as I understand, to make sure that we maximize our efforts. And I will grant to you that it is a tough, tough job.

One of the things that I do want to go back to was, the gentlewoman from Florida raised a point that I was looking at making earlier, and that is that since 2017, domestic violence cases and threats have more than doubled. And so, if that is taking place, can

any of you, or all three of you talk about how your efforts are matching the doubling, if not the tripling, of those threats in those instances?

Mr. COHEN. I can go first, Congressman. This is John Cohen. This year, we identified domestic violent extremism as a priority in the FEMA Grant Program, meaning that a portion of those grants have to be dedicated to activities at the state and local level intended to address the threat posed by domestic violent extremists. We just awarded an additional \$20 million in what I call innovation grants, grants that are going to localities across the country that are intended to fund the evaluation of community-based violence prevention programs, which I alluded to in my opening statement, which we see as a tool in helping communities to be better able to detect, assess the risk posed by individuals, and to manage the threat that they pose through the use of mental health support, social service support, and other multidisciplinary threat management strategies.

We have expanded the number of people that we have focusing on conducting analysis in the Office of Intelligence and Analysis, which I also run now. More analysts are focusing on the threat posed by domestic violent extremists, domestic terrorists, home-grown violent extremists. We have also expanded our efforts to analyze and evaluate online content, particularly that content that is present on platforms or communities that we know are associated with international terrorists and domestic violent extremists. That is just a snapshot of some of the things that we are doing at the Department or have started doing in the Department since the release of the strategy.

Mr. MFUME. Anyone else want to—

Mr. LANGAN. Yes, sir. At the FBI, we have surged our resources to reflect the increased number of cases and threats that we are seeing in the DT space. At one time after January 6th, we increased our resources over 260 percent to address those threats. In addition, in 2019, we created a Hate Crimes-DT Fusion Cell. So we continue to evaluate the threat in all 56 field offices individually to make sure that we are allocating the appropriate resources regarding the threats and where they are in each of our field offices, and then collaborating that back here at headquarters.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you very much. I know it was alluded to earlier about whether or not the level of interagency cooperation was adequate or not. I want to go back to that, and on the record here, can you give me, either of you or all of you, some specific sense of how your agencies are working together to improve interagency cooperation, which I think, and I am sure all of you would agree, is absolutely essential in terms of dealing with this problem?

Mr. COHEN. I speak weekly with the deputy director of the FBI. Every call or briefing that we do with state and local authorities or the private sector, we conduct in coordination with the FBI. In particular, as we are in the process of developing a public education campaign for school-age children focusing on online resilience, we are working with the Department of Education. We are working with the Justice Department. We are working with the FBI. We have prevention coordinators who are assigned across the country to work with local communities. Most of those prevention

coordinators are co-located within the U.S. attorneys' offices for the jurisdictions that they are operating within.

I would say that the level of coordination and cooperation, particularly between the Justice Department, the FBI, and the Department of Homeland Security, is probably the strongest that I have seen in the many years that I have worked in government.

Mr. MFUME. Thank you, Mr. Cohen. Mr. Chairman, my time has expired. I want to thank you again for holding this hearing, and I yield back.

Mr. RASKIN. And thank you for your questioning, Mr. Mfume. I am going to come now to Mr. Donalds for his five minutes. I just do want to restate that the committee rule about masks and tell fellow members that on Monday, I had a call from the Capitol physician—I was in a committee meeting; I don't know if it was this committee or another—from the prior week where a member of came down with COVID-19, and I had to go and be tested. So it continues to be a real threat in the halls of Congress.

Mr. Donalds, you are recognized for your five minutes.

Mr. DONALDS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am glad you are healthy. I hope the other member that tested positive is healthy as well. That member was vaccinated. Well, obviously that is another issue for another day. Let's just get right to it. Thanks for holding this hearing.

Obviously domestic terror in the United States is something that is very important. We must take it seriously. There can be no quarter for terrorism from anywhere, whether it is around the globe or here at home, against anybody in our Nation. And I think we all share that same vow of obligation to do everything we can to stop it in its tracks, period, full stop. But I do want to dig into some of the details. Mr. Langan, in the domestic terrorist assessment, the March 2021 assessment, it says domestic violence extremists are motivated by a range of ideologies. At the FBI, do you actually have the ability today to actually quantify the range of ideologies that exist?

Mr. LANGAN. Thank you, sir. We categorize them in five main categories for domestic violence, and that is racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists, anti-government/anti-authority violent extremists, animal rights and environmental violent extremists, abortion-related violent extremists, and then a catch-all category are our overall categories that we capture the domestic violent extremists in.

Mr. DONALDS. OK. So you guys quantify them to specific, I guess I will say, probably specific categories of politics, but not political ideology?

Mr. LANGAN. Not politics, sir, but ideology that would represent one of those. For example, within racially/ethnically motivated, we could have subcategories for white supremacist-driven or other ethnic groups that would be driving that. So there is a way for us to capture it and we do.

Mr. DONALDS. OK. My last point, and it is really an important question for you. We are discussing white supremacy, so I do want to bring up something or bring up somebody who was deemed the black face of white supremacy, Mr. Larry Elder. He was actually dubbed that by a columnist at the Los Angeles Times. Ironically,

while Mr. Elder was walking through a neighborhood, he was attacked by a white person wearing a gorilla mask who assaulted Mr. Elder. Does the FBI consider that to be domestic terror and/or white supremacy?

Mr. LANGAN. Sir, I have to look at the specifics of the case. So, in general, any acts of violence that are committed against an individual—

Mr. DONALDS. Mr. Langan, it was a very specific case. Everybody saw it. Well, let me bring that back, Mr. Langan. I apologize. Not everybody saw it—

Mr. LANGAN. It may be investigated locally.

Mr. DONALDS. It actually wasn't really reported that widely, so I will explain this scene, if you will. If there is a Black man walking down the street who is running for the Governor's mansion in the state of California, and a white person in a gorilla mask assaults him on the street, does the FBI consider that white supremacy and/or domestic terror?

Mr. LANGAN. So, again, any act of violence that would be committed against an individual as a result of an ideology of the individual. So we would have to look at the motivation of that individually or possibly also a hate crime. We work with the Department of Justice to identify the particulars. Initially, on a case like that—again, it may be pursued right now by the local officials—we would work heavily with our local officials initially on identifying the fact patterns of the investigation, again, as I mentioned, through our JTTFs and quickly determine if we would be able to apply Federal law against the individual on the investigation, and at least provide investigative assistance.

Mr. DONALDS. I appreciate that. I appreciate your candor. And, you know, I really do want to thank you, the FBI, the Department of Justice, and Homeland for your efforts to, frankly, keep all Americans safe. And with that, I yield back.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Donalds. I am coming to my friend, Ms. Kelly, Robin Kelly, the distinguished representative from Illinois.

Ms. KELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and congratulations to Ranking Member Mace. Congratulations to you.

In touting this counterterrorism strategy as a reset for Federal counterterrorism policy, Administration officials have often cited the fact that they will be taking a "public health approach to violence prevention" that will involve a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. The strategy states that this will involve not only efforts from DHS and other Federal law enforcement, but also "community-facing components" of the Department of Justice, Health and Human Services, and Education. Mr. Cohen, you have been an instrumental player in formulating this new public health approach to counterterrorism. What does the Administration mean when it says it is taking a public health approach to counterterrorism?

Mr. COHEN. Thank you very much for that question. It is an important question. What the public health approach refers to is that it brings together, on a multidisciplinary basis, resources from across the community so that individuals who may pose a risk to that community, based on behavioral health issues, based on family

issues, based on educational issues, but they pose a risk of violence all the same, those individuals can take part in services that address the underlying issues that are perhaps responsible for them traveling down the path of violence.

I will contrast it to the approach of countering violent extremism back in 2012—2013 timeframe, which is an effort that I was a part of, but as I look back in retrospect, I find that we probably had some flawed assumptions that went into the development of that strategy. And we certainly underestimated the level of distrust that existed between communities of color, in particular, Arab-American and Muslim communities and government. And I think that strategy focused on the belief that attackers came from specific communities, so we needed to work with specific communities in order to have them support efforts to prevent attacks by those people.

This approach recognizes that those who are engaging in violence come from a broad cross-section of racial, ethnic, socioeconomic elements of our community. It is not limited to a specific community, and that oftentimes non-law enforcement intervention strategies—mental health support has been mentioned several times—that is a key part of this public health strategy. But providing access to inpatient and outpatient mental health support is an example of the type of threat prevention activities that can be applied at the community level.

Ms. KELLY. Thank you. I agree that prevention programs that focus more on increased access to social services and public health are necessary steps toward a more effective Federal response. Given that other agencies will be involved, what is the precise role that DHS will play in helping to set up these public health prevention programs that involve other non-law enforcement agencies?

Mr. COHEN. A great question. So our primary role comes in several areas. One is providing financial support through our grant programs so that planning activities and the types of activities that we were just discussing that are proven to be effective in reducing the risk posed by individuals or groups of individuals can leverage grant funds provided by the Department. We also work closely with the Justice Department and the FBI through the Behavioral Analysis Unit. We work with the Secret Service through the National Threat Assessment Center. We work with representatives from various, you know, mental health-related organizations to provide training and technical assistance in the area of threat assessment and threat management, making sure that local communities have the ability to bring together, on a multidisciplinary basis, the right skill sets to assess whether somebody who is exhibiting behavioral characteristics associated with threat-related activity, to assess whether they pose a risk, and then to develop a plan to assess that risk.

Ms. KELLY. Let me just interrupt you——

Mr. COHEN. Sure.

Ms. KELLY [continuing]. Just quickly because my time is running out. What do you say to some of the criticism that you are getting as far as mixing law enforcement agencies or intertwining these with public health agencies?

Mr. COHEN. I think it is a valid concern, and we work very hard to, one, make sure that we have the right interagency partners

that can come together to help develop these solutions. But also we are very focused on reestablishing or rebuilding, or, in some places, establishing for the first time, trust between the Department, and community organizations, and community members that may not have a lot of trust or not be willing to communicate with the Department.

Ms. KELLY. Thank you. I am out of time. I yield back.

Mr. RASKIN. Representative Kelly, thank you so much for questioning. I go now to my friend, Mr. Higgins from Louisiana.

Mr. HIGGINS. I thank the chairman and the ranking member for convening this hearing today, and I am going to ask the chairman to perhaps consider engaging in my line of questioning, if I have time. I am happy to yield time, or perhaps he could use his authority as chair to comment because it may surprise America to know that that you, Chairman Raskin, and I have cultivated a very respectful friendship over the course of five years, and we have had many deep and meaningful discussions regarding our Constitution and the rights and freedoms of the citizenry that we serve. And today we have before us, Chairman, the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, and the Department of Justice to inquire regarding the Biden Administration's National Strategy to Combat Domestic Terrorism.

And I am concerned, Mr. Chairman, that in this era of enhanced scrutiny that the citizenry is subject to, as government attempts to further secure our Nation and our homeland, which is indeed a righteous role, I am concerned about oppression, Mr. Chairman. And, you know, Americans face many, many levels and types of government intrusion into our lives, and that is a debate for another day, regarding the vaccination mandates, restrictions on assembly, and freedom to travel the land, public condemnation, public shaming. It doesn't really reflect, to many of us looking upon this and witnessing this and feeling this, it doesn't feel like America. We actually feel an oppressive government boot upon our throat, and America has the right to express strong national views

So, Mr. Wiegmann, the President's strategy, the National Strategy to Combat Domestic Terrorism, states that the Administration will respect that civil rights, and civil liberties, and privacy protections are constitutionally guaranteed protections and freedoms. However, we have seen over the years, with the implementation of the PATRIOT Act, that data collection and usage of that data can sometimes be very shady, and we do indeed feel that that our privacy has been infringed upon and our constitutional rights and protections have been trod upon. So how does the Department plan to increase its scrutiny? We have heard "threat assessment," as it has been described, as a main focus of this strategy to target Americans that may express strong national views, and we have the right to express strong national views. So, Mr. Wiegmann, how does your Department plan to balance this?

Mr. WIEGMANN. So as I mentioned earlier, it is a core aspect of both the strategy and the Department's policy that we need to and must, as we try to protect Americans from the threats that we have all talked about today, that we do so in a way that respects privacy and civil liberties. I know the Attorney General is committed, and all of us at DOJ and FBI are committed, to upholding

the rights of all Americans as we try to fight domestic terrorism, and that means that there are limits on how we conduct our investigations. We as——

Mr. HIGGINS. Right, good sir. If I may interject in the interest of time, our founders intended as Article III was drafted that the innocence of every citizen should be the primary focus. And indeed, it was clearly stated during the founders' debates as our Constitution was born and the actual writ was determined, they acknowledged that they would rather see a guilty man walk free than an innocent man be convicted and incarcerated. How does your policy, as you intend to implement it, increase scrutiny and surveillance of American citizens? How can you balance that? How can you guarantee that? We cannot sit by as a Congress and as constitutional servants to the people and allow our Nation to become a surveillance state, so you have a very delicate balance to maintain, a thin line. Please address my question, sir.

Mr. WIEGMANN. Well, you are right. It is a balance. It is a balance that we are striking every day at DOJ as we undertake our investigations, as we determine whether a search is appropriate, as we determine whether opening an investigation is appropriate, and what I can tell you is that it is a core value at DOJ and FBI. I can't say that we are always perfect in how we strike that balance, but it is something that we work on very hard every day to make sure that we are following the rules that we have set forth, both in the statutes that Congress has given us to investigate criminal activity and in the policies that we have adopted, over and above that, to make sure that we are respecting fundamental privacy rights and constitutional rights. So that is a critical issue for us. You are right to raise it, and it is something that we have to work out on a daily basis.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, good sir, for your response. Mr. Chairman, thank you for your kindness and your accommodation. My time is expired. I yield.

Mr. RASKIN. And thank you, Mr. Higgins, for your very thoughtful questioning. I know you speak for millions of Americans across the political spectrum in wanting to ensure that Americans civil rights and civil liberties are not sacrificed by the government in the creation of a surveillance state, at the same time that we are doing everything we can to protect ourselves against terrorist violence. So we have had a staff briefing for both the majority and minority staff with the FBI on the need for oversight on their assessment investigations, so this is a matter that we clearly are all focused on. And we have been in touch with the ranking member, Ms. Mace, about pursuing this very question. OK. Thank you.

And I will now come to Ms. Pressley, the gentlelady from Massachusetts, for her five minutes of questioning.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Thank you, Chairman Raskin. I really appreciate your continuing the series of hearings on how we confront violent white supremacy. The Federal Government certainly has a significant role to play in deterring and ending domestic terrorism at the hands of violent white supremacists. And confronting this threat, I believe, requires law enforcement agencies to recognize how they have contributed to the harm, destabilization, and trauma of Black and brown communities.

In recent years we have seen white supremacists commit massacres that target people of color, religious minorities, and others, from Charleston, South Carolina, to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to El Paso, Texas, to the city of Winthrop in my own home state of Massachusetts. The surge of violent organized white supremacy knows no bounds and has claimed the lives of far too many of our neighbors. Moreover, Federal law enforcement has a well-documented history of attacking these same communities. The truth is racial and religious profiling and counterterrorism has disproportionately targeted marginalized communities, including Muslims, Sikhs, immigrants, and Black people. As the Biden Administration is crafting a more effective domestic counterterrorism policy, we have to not lose sight of the fact that the victims of these violent incidents come overwhelmingly from marginalized communities.

Mr. Langan, the FBI is responsible for tracking these domestic terrorism threats across the country. Would you agree that as we see a rise in domestic terrorist incidents, that we also see an increase in the surveillance and the targeting of communities of color being targeted? Yes or no.

Mr. LANGAN. So I agree we have definitely seen a rise of those domestic terrorism cases, and as such, we continue, as we brought up on the last point, also continue to be very focused on ensuring that we are addressing the civil rights needs. It is part of a two-part process, a two-mission——

Ms. PRESSLEY. I am sorry. Excuse me. Excuse me, Mr. Langan. I am sorry. I just want to make sure you understand my question. I am just going to reclaim my time, and it is just a “yes” or “no” question. As we see an increase in domestic terrorist incidents, do we also see an increase in the targeting and the surveillance of communities of color? Yes or no?

Mr. LANGAN. No, I am not seeing that as far as my data is showing me.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Without objection, I would like to enter into the record, Mr. Chair, a study from the Brennan Center titled, “Countering Violent Extremism in the Trump Era,” which estimates that 85 percent of countering violent extremist grants and over half of the programs targeted minority groups.

[No response.]

Ms. PRESSLEY. Mr. Chair?

[No response.]

Ms. PRESSLEY. OK. I assume that is accepted without objection.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. [Presiding.] Without objection, it is accepted.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Thank you.

Ms. PRESSLEY. In the district I represent, the Massachusetts 7th, Somali immigrants living in Roxbury are directly targeted. Across the country, we see Muslims, Black Lives Matter activists, LGBTQ folks, refugees, and others that are also targeted and subjected to heightened surveillance. These communities are overwhelmingly the victims of domestic terrorism, not the perpetrators. Mr. Cohen, how will the new Federal strategy encourage DHS to emphasize the protection, rather than the surveillance, of these marginalized communities?

Mr. COHEN. So, Congresswoman, let me just first say, as I alluded to earlier, I agree that there were issues with the CVE Program, and in many respects, one of the big issues that we found is that we underestimated the amount of distrust between communities of color, and, in particular, Arab-American and American Muslim communities and law enforcement. There was a perception that the CVE Program, which was started with good intentions, was mainly a subterfuge to facilitate surveillance of communities of color, Arab-American and Muslim communities. That is why we have done away with it. That is why the approach that we are taking in the Biden Administration is antithetical to the approach that we took as part of the Countering Violent Extremism Program.

To the second part of your question, we have work to do. I spend a lot of my time each week reaching out and working with state and local law enforcement, but I probably spend an equal amount of time meeting with groups like the Brennan Center, civil rights/civil liberties organizations, advocacy groups, faith-based organizations—

Ms. PRESSLEY. Excuse me. I am sorry. I am running out of time. I am going to reclaim my time for a moment. Mr. Cohen, as we close here, can you share an example, since you are having those broader discussions, of how the counterterrorism strategy has been altered because of feedback that you have received directly from community stakeholders who have traditionally been targeted?

Mr. COHEN. Yes. We have been asked to specifically focus on funding community-based programs that are organized and managed at the community level versus having them organized from Washington or by law enforcement organizations.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Well, it is good to hear about those efforts to engage with those vulnerable communities, and nevertheless, these same communities who are targets of domestic terrorism, they do still appear to be the main focus of many intrusive Federal efforts. It is unacceptable for communities of color to bear the brunt of white supremacist violence at the hands of domestic terrorists, and to then be disproportionately targeted by Federal law enforcement in response to domestic terrorism. So, you know, I look forward to these ongoing conversations as you are recalibrating a strategy here. And thank you for, you know, a commitment to recognize that violent white supremacy is a systemic threat to our Nation, to our democracy, and specifically to marginalized communities.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Ms. PRESSLEY. Thank you, and I yield.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Thank you so much, and the chair now recognizes Representative Comer.

Mr. COMER. Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to yield the balance of my time to the distinguished ranking member, Ms. Mace.

Ms. MACE. Thank you, Congressman Comer. Mr. Langan, earlier this morning when Congressman Donalds was speaking, you mentioned in the FBI and domestic terrorism, there are these subcategories of domestic terrorism: racial, anti-government, animal, environmental, abortion, and catch-all. I think those are what I heard. Under the anti-government category or subcategory of domestic terrorism, would that include groups like antifa or Black

Lives Matter folks who commit violence or acts of domestic terrorism?

Mr. LANGAN. Well, we don't identify groups, but individuals' action. So if individuals are committing actions that would be in furtherance of anti-government or anarchist ideals, then they would fall into that category.

Ms. MACE. So would you quantify antifa as an anarchist group then under that subcategory? I mean, it is an anarchist group, right, or related?

Mr. LANGAN. There are individuals—I think the director previously described them as a movement—and there have been individuals that have associated or identified with antifa that have conducted violent acts that we would categorize as anarchist.

Ms. MACE. How many acts of violence or domestic terrorism has antifa committed over the last two years?

Mr. LANGAN. Since we don't categorize antifa, nor do we collate information regarding antifa, that movement, we don't have that, but we could provide you information on anarchist threats and cases in general.

Ms. MACE. How many open cases of anarchist violence and domestic terrorism have occurred over the last two years?

Mr. LANGAN. Can you hear me now?

Ms. MACE. Yes.

Mr. LANGAN. OK. So we have as far as arrest activities for the anti-government, anti-authority, we have 75 total arrests, and within that would be the anti-government, 36 being of anti-government and 21 being militia violence. That is all part of our anti-government authority.

Ms. MACE. OK. Interesting. I mean, antifa is real. It is not a myth. I have been a victim of some of the anarchist antifa type of activity, violence, whatever you want to call it. I even had my house spray painted this summer. Democrats told me it wasn't Antifa. It was anarchy. I don't really know the difference. I have one more question at the end for Mr. Cohen, and really appreciate all of your testimonies this morning, and I want to thank each and every one of you for being here today, but discuss the importance of working with Federal, state and local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement partners and agencies. This partnership is immensely critical to protecting all of our communities from terrorism, domestic and foreign, racially motivated or otherwise. But I am dismayed by the recent push by many on the left to defund the police and slash law enforcement budgets and personnel at a time when crime is clearly on the rise. Mr. Cohen, do you believe defunding state, local, tribal, and territorial partners, law enforcement agencies is going to help solve our domestic terrorism problem? Yes or no?

Mr. COHEN. I mean, I was a police officer. I am proud of my profession. I think law enforcement has a critically important role to play in protecting our communities, whether it be from crime or terrorism. Law enforcement agencies also have to behave in a non-discriminatory manner to be—

Ms. MACE. Mr. Cohen, do you believe that defunding state and local police funding is going to help solve domestic terror? Yes or no?

Mr. COHEN. No, we need police.

Ms. MACE. Is there any scenario where defunding the police would prevent the next Dylann Roof?

Mr. COHEN. I would just go back to what I said before. I think law enforcement plays a critical role in preventing acts of domestic terrorism.

Ms. MACE. I believe the answer is no. I want to thank you all for your time today. Mr. Chairman, I am shocked by the few arrests that we have in cases open regarding antifa. I would like to request unanimous consent that the following documents be entered into the record: the first, an article from the *Post and Courier* detailing vandalism committed at my home by anarchists and antifa-related individuals allegedly based on the symbolism and the comments made on my home at the time; an article from *The Wall Street Journal* showing \$840 million in cuts to police budgets last year; an article from *The New York Times* explaining that there were 300 Federal protest cases involving mostly arson or assaulting police officers.

Mr. RASKIN.[Presiding.] Without objection.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much, Ms. Mace, and we were, of course, very sorry to learn about the vandalism that took place at your home. And I want to submit for the record and, I think in answer to some of the questions you are raising, a 2020 report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies, which will reflect the number of political murders committed in the country[SA3][SA4] The report reflects that since 1994, far-right domestic extremists murdered 329 Americans in violent attacks. The report reflects no murders committed by antifa during that 25-year timeframe. Since the report was released, though, we did find one killing linked to antifa, the perpetrator of which—his name is Michael Reinhoehl—was killed by law enforcement shortly after the murder took place. But without objection, we will enter that one into the record.

Mr. RASKIN. And I am delighted now to go to the representative of the District of Columbia, Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for this important series of hearings. As we discuss the Administration's decision on domestic terrorist threats, it is important to look at what kind of domestic violent extremism most threatens Americans. I would, therefore, Mr. Chairman, like to enter into the record this New York Times report from February 2021. It details how the Trump Administration's obsession with antifa hindered Federal law enforcement's attempts to counter the rising tide of right-wing violence.

Mr. RASKIN. Without objection.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. NORTON. This is a question for Mr. Cohen. Mr. Cohen, the report details how personnel and other resources were diverted from investigations into white supremacist and far-right anti-government groups to satisfy President Trump's desire to target so-called antifa activists. May I ask you, Mr. Cohen, how does the Biden Administration's new strategy help to better equip the Federal Government in its fight against white supremacist and other far-right violence? Specifically, I am interested in how this strategy

seeks to address the intelligence and information-sharing failures that preceded the insurrection.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you, Congresswoman. I think it seeks to address it in several ways. One, the guidance is very clear. Our responsibility is to work with Federal, state, and local organizations to prevent acts of violence. We shouldn't be prioritizing one over the other simply because of the political beliefs or the ideological beliefs associated with those who are in elected service. We should be focusing, in an objective, threat-based way, on those individuals and groups, regardless of their ideological belief system, that are planning acts of violence.

What the strategy also does is it builds a toolbox that can be used not only at the national level, but it expands the toolbox that can be used at the community level in order to address emerging threats within those communities that are posed by those who embrace extremist ideological beliefs. It also prioritizes the sharing of information not only between Federal authorities and state and local authorities, but also with community organizations, educators, others, and the tech sector, and those who conduct analysis and research into emerging trends in the online space, because, as we talked about before, the fuel for a lot of this violence comes through the consumption of online content that's specifically placed there by individuals who are seeking to inspire acts of violence.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you. In this hearing, I think it has already been clear that the preeminent terrorist threat facing our country comes from white supremacist extremists and far-right militia extremists. This really shouldn't be a controversial notion. So I would like to introduce this data analysis by The Washington Post, which shows that since 2015 the number of terrorist plot that is by far-right groups dwarfs those by left-wing groups, 267 to 66. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. RASKIN. Without objection.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Langan, in March, the FBI director, Christopher Wray, reiterated that there is no evidence that left-wing groups were linked to the attack on the Capitol, but said that the individuals there were tied to white supremacy and right-wing militia extremism. Mr. Langan, has any evidence come to light in the intervening months to change that assessment?

Mr. LANGAN. Well, ma'am, we continue to investigate the actions and the crimes of January 6th. As of today, there have been over 600 arrests made and over 1,400 investigations into it. And we look at the individual actors as that, individuals for each of those occurrences, and don't overlay one baseline over any one of those individual subjects on what their motivation is. And it requires an investigation into each one to determine what their individual ideology was to motivate them toward the act of violence or to commit Federal crimes.

Mr. RASKIN. And, Representative Norton, a technical snafu. You actually were given a couple extra minutes, but in deference to you, I will give you one more question if you would be willing to take that.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This question is really for Mr. Cohen. I am sorry, Mr. Langan. Mr. Langan, do you agree with the director of national intelligence's March 2021 conclusion

that white supremacist extremism and military extremists are our “most lethal” threats? Mr. Langan?

Mr. LANGAN. You know, as I said earlier, the most lethal threat is that posed by lone actors that have an ideology that both support HVEs and DVEs. Regarding the issues, regarding military, you know, we work closely with our partnerships on identifying individuals within any positions of trust, to investigate vigorously individuals that may be radicalizing their views and those positions. So as far as the racially motivated violent extremists of the white supremacist categories, we have the most investigations and the most amount of subjects involving that categorization.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much. The gentlelady’s time has expired. Thank you, Ms. Norton, and I come now to the vice chair of the subcommittee, Ms. Ocasio-Cortez.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Thank you so much, Chairman Raskin. You know, in a 2006 bulletin, the FBI detailed the threat of white nationalists infiltrating police departments, a coordinated effort. This bulletin came during a time when a neo-Nazi gang, formed by members of the L.A. Sheriff’s Department, were found harassing Black and brown communities. And while this was about 15 years ago, according to recent reporting from The New York Times in addition to PBS, it is found that despite those efforts, it doesn’t look like things have improved. And I would like to submit both of these documents to the record.

Mr. RASKIN. Without objection.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Police officers have been dismissed across the United States, including Virginia, Texas, Florida, Michigan, Nebraska, and Louisiana, for having ties to the Ku Klux Klan. And we also know that more than 30 active or retired police officers joined the January 6th attack on the Capitol, and at least seven are facing charges connected to that day. Director Langan, I take it you are familiar with this 2006 bulletin, correct?

Mr. LANGAN. I may have to review that bulletin, ma’am, to recall it exactly.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. No worries. To your knowledge, what do we know about the radicalization efforts among certain officers already in police departments and the effort to recruit white nationalists joining police departments across the United States?

Mr. LANGAN. Yes, ma’am. Well, as I mentioned before, individuals that are in positions of trust, and have radicalized ideas, and gravitate toward hate and violence are very concerning as they have always been. We work with our local partners very closely to help identify and to educate their departments on proper vetting and on standards of acceptance, so we are constantly working to try to make sure that that does not exist. I can speak that an overwhelming amount of law enforcement interactions that we have with the FBI are positive, and that does represent a very, very small amount of law enforcement, but an amount that can never be tolerated.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Thank you. One aspect of the Biden Administration’s counterterrorism strategy is the focus on detecting these insider threats; that is, ensuring that no one in state or Federal law enforcement abuses their position by engaging in domestic ter-

rorism-related activities of any kind. Now, what happens when the FBI does find instances of white nationalists in local law enforcement? What does the FBI do?

Mr. LANGAN. Well, if the individuals are part of an ongoing or conducting or plan to conduct any type of criminal actions, we would, along with the U.S. Attorney's Office, try to open investigation and determine whether or not there are charges. If the individual is showing that they have memberships of a group that may be deemed to be a racist or a group that is focused on hate, that becomes the departmental issue on how they will proceed with that employee.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. OK. So it sounds like there isn't a protocol for what to do when a police officer is found to be part of a white supremacist organization.

Mr. LANGAN. No, ma'am, there is no central method to notify the FBI about violent extremism, again, stressing the importance of partnership between local law enforcement and the FBI and DHS.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. OK. Perfect. That is something that I just would like the committee to note, that there is no currently existing protocol of what to do when a member of law enforcement is discovered to be part of an organization like the Ku Klux Klan, but this is very important information. I thank you for your candor. Now, during a briefing in March of this year, the FBI did promise to provide this subcommittee with information on how we could set up a reporting structure that would give Federal law enforcement capability to track white supremacist threats between state and local police. Now, despite multiple efforts to followup, we have yet to receive a reply. Can we get a commitment to securing that answer on this as quickly as possible from the Department?

Mr. LANGAN. Ma'am, I will look into that and get back with your office. I recently took this post, but I will look into those requests—

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Sure.

Mr. LANGAN [continuing]. And get back with your office.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Thank you so much.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Now, Mr. Cohen, the committee is currently investigating an incident of CBP's response to a massive Facebook group of thousands of CBP officers where many posted violent racist content, including mocking the deaths of migrants and threatening Members of Congress. Just last week, we saw agents violently confronting and whipping Haitian migrants. So, in light of this latest incident, how does Secretary Mayorkas plan to accelerate efforts to root out incidents of violent racism within DHS' ranks?

Mr. COHEN. So the Secretary has instructed the Office of Security as well as the Human Capital Office and others to do several things: one, to evaluate, through the Insider Threat Program, whether there are open investigations into domestic violent extremist behavior by our employees, to review our hiring practices and our employee practices to ensure that domestic violent extremists' ideological beliefs are not influencing the decisionmaking of personnel working within the Department of Homeland Security. And I would say as someone who spent 35-plus years in law enforcement and homeland security, the exercise of law enforcement re-

sponsibilities have to be free from discriminatory practices. Decisionmaking can't be based on implicit or unconscious biases of individuals or the organization, quite frankly. And even the perception that individuals who are holding positions of public trust, particularly those who enforce our laws, even the perception that they hold racially biased or extremist attitudes can undermine faith and confidence in those organizations. So it is a significant concern for the Department, and the Secretary has instructed a very aggressive effort to address it.

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ. Thank you very much.

Mr. RASKIN. The gentlelady yields back. Let's see. Is Mr. Biggs present? He is not. OK. I am going to go to the gentlelady from Detroit, Michigan, Ms. Tlaib, for your five minutes of questioning.

Ms. TLAIB. Thank you so much, Chairman. My first question is to Assistant Director Langan. Do you have any evidence that antifa formally exists as an organization?

Mr. LANGAN. Ma'am, we do not look into domestic organizations, so I don't have further data—

Ms. TLAIB. So there is no evidence that antifa is an organization in our country.

Mr. LANGAN. I can't speak to that, ma'am.

Ms. TLAIB. OK. Now that I got that a little bit clearer here, I am very concerned about an exception that gives way for systemic, I think, targeting, I believe, in black Muslim and immigrant communities, which I believe is dangerous and can pull resources away from real dangers in our country. The strategy document produced by the Biden Administration maintains an exception in 2014 through the Department of Justice's guidance that permits racial or ethnic profiling in cases of "national security" or "border investigation."

We know that hundreds of documents show that the Department of Homeland Security used its powers to collect information of Black Lives Matter activists for years since the protests in Ferguson, Missouri after the murder of Michael Brown. Just last summer, DHS used aircraft to monitor Black Lives Matter protests in at least 15 cities across the country. Isn't that right, Mr. Cohen?

Mr. COHEN. Congresswoman, I wasn't at the Department at that time, so I have no insights regarding those activities.

Ms. TLAIB. Well, I think it is racist, unacceptable, and must end. I would like to turn to another element of the strategy document that deeply concerns me and concerns many civil liberties attorneys as well as advocates: the focus on how suspected potential domestic terrorists increasingly utilize social media and other internet forums to organize. Under existing rules, the FBI may conduct online surveillance assessments without a factual predicate or something of criminal wrongdoing. So this invasive type of what they call proto-investigation has been used by the FBI to target black civil rights activists. And given the FBI's lax attitude toward white supremacist infiltration of our law enforcement that my good colleague from New York brought up, it raises very serious civil liberties concerns.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit an article, this article by former FBI Agent Michael German explaining—

Mr. RASKIN. Yes, indeed. Without—

Ms. TLAIB. Thank you.

Mr. RASKIN. Yes, without objection.

Ms. TLAIB [continuing]. Explaining how the FBI has abused its investigative powers. I would like to add that in just the past few years, you all, FBI, conducted an intelligence operation called “The Iron Fist” that prioritized surveillance of so-called “black identity extremists” over increasingly active and violent white supremacist groups. I am going to repeat that. They are using more resources to go toward a so-called Iron Fist Program of some sort against black identity extremists over active violent white supremacist groups in our country. So, Mr. Langan, yes or no, has Iron Fist or similar programs used to target black activists for surveillance been totally dismantled under the current Administration? Yes or no.

Mr. LANGAN. Ma’am, I have to look into the aspects of that investigation, but as far as when it comes to First Amendment freedom of activity, the FBI vehemently defends the civil liberties of Americans. And it is part of our dual-pronged approach of both protecting Americans and also protecting their rights.

Ms. TLAIB. So Assistant Director, is the FBI currently conducting any surveillance right now of the Black Lives Matter movement?

Mr. LANGAN. Ma’am, for one, I can’t speak to current ongoing investigations, but we only would focus surveillance on individuals that we believe are going to be involved in or promoting violence against other individuals.

Ms. TLAIB. So you don’t know if the Iron Fist is still active, this so-called Iron Fist program of some sort. Is that active right now at the FBI?

Mr. LANGAN. I can look into it, ma’am, and we will definitely get back to your office.

Ms. TLAIB. Well, Mr. Chairman, if I may, the FBI’s action in this so-called black identity extremist program at best indirectly aided white supremacy in our country and put many of us in danger and continues to endanger our country. So time and time again, we give the FBI another chance to right its wrongs, and time and time again, it proves itself incapable of acting as an organization without racial bias. The failure, really, truly, specifically, to address these issues in this strategy document itself requires Congress to consider whether it must act on its own to codify safeguards to prevent a reoccurrence of this kind of discriminatory overreach we saw in prior errors of counterterrorism.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this critically important hearing, and I yield.

Mr. RASKIN. I thank the gentlelady for her remarks. We will go to Mrs. Lawrence, who is recognized for five minutes, for her questioning.

[No response.]

Mr. RASKIN. Is Mrs. Lawrence there?

[No response.]

Mr. RASKIN. I think you have to unmute, Mrs. Lawrence.

[No response.]

Mr. RASKIN. Do we need to unmute her?

Mrs. LAWRENCE. I am unmuted. Thank you. Thank you for your patience. Thank you so much for this hearing, and I have a few

questions. When we talk about the investigations, I want to followup on the questions that my colleague, Representative Tlaib, just mentioned. I want to ask, when you say you don't know if it is ongoing or if it is happening, given the FBI's most recent data release on hate crimes, how is the Department of Justice working to resolve hate crimes, some of which qualify as acts of domestic terrorism? Can you either of you speak to what is being done to address the rise in hate crimes, because all the data is pointing to that?

Mr. LANGAN. For the FBI, ma'am, I can address that to an extent. In 2019, the FBI created a Hate Crimes-Domestic Terrorism Fusion Cell because of the overlap with domestic terrorism ideologies that also incorporate hate and hate crimes against individuals. Hate crimes alone is under our Criminal Investigative Division, but being that we are exceptionally concerned about the rise in hate crimes and the influence that individuals with ideologies have to promote hate crimes and continue, that is one way that we are actively and proactively trying to mitigate that threat from the Bureau.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. So, when we talk about hate crimes, and we know that some of them are actually acts of domestic terrorism, does the FBI send that somewhere else? What happens when you see that connection?

Mr. LANGAN. Yes, ma'am. So several things happen. The FBI would start the investigation, and then we, of course, try to determine the scope and extent of the investigation, if there are others involved, the motivation of the individuals that act. And there is nothing that keeps us from having a categorization that captures it both as a domestic terrorism act and also a hate crime as well. As far as if it falls on the crime side, it is more particularly motivated by that offender's bias toward a person, and the domestic terrorism side, more along social-political goals and views. Again, we see that sometimes those overlap, and the important thing is that the FBI never lets that victim fall through the cracks. They are covered by multiple layers of investigative resources and then in the outcome with what the United States Attorney's Office feels is the best charge aging mechanism, and then follows up on that.

Mr. WIEGMANN. If I could just jump in on that. That is absolutely right from the Department of Justice perspective. We in the National Security Division work very closely with our colleagues in the Civil Rights Division who oversee hate crimes charges. Some acts, for example, the Dylann Roof attack in Charleston several years ago, was both an act of domestic terrorism and qualified as a hate crime. I believe it was prosecuted under hate crimes charges because those are deemed the most effective way of addressing the threat. So we just decide on a charge based on what is going to be most effective in dealing with the threat. I also want to mention that the Attorney General has appointed a hate crimes coordinator to centralize all those efforts—

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Oh, that's fantastic.

Mr. WIEGMANN. All of the Department's efforts to combat hate crimes, and starting October 1, so just in a few days, the FBI is elevating hate crimes and criminal civil rights violations to its highest national level threat priority. And we have also launched

a national anti-hate crimes campaign involving FBI field offices all across the country to encourage reporting of hate crimes and hate crimes incidents. So I wanted to give you some updates on what we are doing in that area.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Just to give a personal analysis, for me, being an identifiable black woman in America, hate crimes are often, to me, not identified so, but when it is done for religious or other groups, it is immediately identified as a hate crime. And I would love to have some conversations with the new appointee on hate crimes. The last question is how can the Federal Government law enforcement work with community partners to combat white supremacy and hate crimes? To give you an example, our faith-based organizations often are immediately involved when there are hate crimes and when there are synagogues, and churches, or temples, because we are uniquely connected to our community. How can you better work with these community partners and give us some input on how we can combat white supremacy and hate crimes.

Mr. RASKIN. The gentlelady's time has expired, but please answer the question.

Mr. LANGAN. Ma'am, I will answer it quickly. From the FBI standpoint, the building of trust between our government and communities that are affected by these horrible crimes is of utmost concern to the FBI. I know in every one of our field offices, we have community outreach specialists and extremely robust programs that conduct outreach to those exact groups that you are talking about, faith-based organizations, organizations that focus on at-risk individuals. And we have direct communication and contact with and strategies on how to, one, bolster that trust and also how to strengthen those relationships and reporting mechanisms. So it is of great concern, and I agree with you. Those are the avenues that we need to take to combine our efforts of government efforts along with social efforts.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. RASKIN. Thank you very much for your questioning, Mrs. Lawrence. And I come now to Congressman Davis and recognize him for his five minutes of questioning.

Mr. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Let me thank you for holding this very important hearing. And I also want to thank certainly all of the witnesses for their testimony. I have been listening intently, and I can tell you that I think the information and concepts that are being shared are very important, and so I consider this to be a very important hearing.

Racism and white supremacist ideologies are a cancer on our society and a clear threat to the Nation's security. Racism underlies much of the domestic terrorism that we face each and every day. I am deeply concerned that racially motivated extremists and militia and anti-government extremists are becoming inextricably intertwined into a form of ethno-nationalistic extremism that this country has not seen since the fall of Jim Crow. I am pleased that combatting racism is one of the central tenets of the National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism, specifically the fourth pillar which states, and I will quote, "Tackling the threat posed by domestic terrorism over the long-term demands substantial efforts to confront the racism that feeds into aspects of that threat."

And so, Mr. Cohen, I hope you can provide some clarity on the Department's efforts to confront racism as part of the national strategy. Let me ask you what efforts, if any, has the DHS made to prioritize rooting out racism and bigotry in its programs and policies, and has DHS developed any programs to combat racism through education and research? And if so, how does this plan expect to be measured?

Mr. COHEN. Thanks, Congressman. Very difficult question that you just asked. So a central element of our efforts to deal with domestic terrorism focus on the work of our Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Office that works with communities across the country in order to identify ways the Department can improve, one, the way it operates to ensure that we carry out our mission in a non-discriminatory manner. We also work closely with communities of color across the country to understand their concerns, to address their needs, to establish lines of communication, to start rebuilding a relationship of trust between the Department, the Department's operational elements, and those communities. One other way, real quickly, is the work that we are doing with regard to online activity. In today's age, much of the fuel that drives the spread of racist ideological beliefs occurs online, and building resilience, particularly amongst our young people, to those hateful messages of racism is another part of the efforts under way at the Department.

Mr. DAVIS. Well, let me ask you quickly, are there other agencies inside the government that DHS is working with to help facilitate movement of these plans and actions?

Mr. COHEN. On confronting racism, it is a discussion that is being driven by the White House through the Domestic Policy Council. We work with the rest of the government. What I would like to be able to do, with your indulgence, is to get back to your office with some more specificity on how exactly we are doing that.

Mr. DAVIS. Well, thank you very much. I appreciate your testimony. I appreciate your answers. And, Mr. Chairman, again, I do think this is a very important hearing, and I thank you very much for your leadership.

Mr. RASKIN. Well, and, Mr. Davis, thank you for your very thoughtful questioning and for your comments. I just have a few final questions I would like to ask Mr. Cohen, and I am happy to yield to the ranking member of she had any lingering questions she wanted to clean up.

First of all, Mr. Cohen, in May, we as a subcommittee requested documents and information from the Department of Homeland Security about how it has analyzed the threat of far-right militia extremism, including its connection to white supremacist groups. We still have not heard back on this inquiry. I am wondering if you could commit to working with us to get a response as quickly as you could.

Mr. COHEN. Yes. Absolutely, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. RASKIN. I appreciate that. And then I wanted to ask you a final substantive question, which is, I guess all of you witnesses have remarked upon the linkage between disinformation and propaganda and the incitement of terrorist activity and violence. And I am just wondering if you would speak to the problem of mainstream political leaders, or leaders identified with the mainstream

of American political culture, trafficking in disinformation or propaganda that gives aid and support to the movements of violent white supremacy.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Chairman, that is an important question, and if you will indulge me for a moment I would like to place my answer into context. As I look at the threat environment after spending over 35 years working in this field, I equate it to a perfect storm. On the one hand, we are a Nation that has become deeply divided, polarized. People tend to view those who hold opposing opinions to their own as the enemy. We have far too people who are angry about their plight in life or angry about how they view the state of the Nation, and we have far too many people in this country who view violence as a legitimate way in which to express that anger. The fractures in our country run deep, whether it is on immigration, our response to COVID, issues of race, the role of government, the integrity of our election process, and credibility in our government. These are issues that our Nation is deeply divided about.

Our adversaries know this, and they seek to exploit those fractures in our society by spreading false narratives, conspiracy theories, disinformation in an effort to sow discord, inspire acts of violence, undermine confidence in our government structure, weaken our relationship with our friends and allies abroad, and destabilize our Nation. So when public figures, and this is really important because these narratives are typically introduced on discreet, small platforms, whether it is by a foreign intelligence service, an international terrorist group, or domestic terror organization. They will introduce these narratives onto small platforms in discreet discrete communities in the hopes that they will be amplified and eventually introduced into the mainstream ecosystem.

So when public figures, whether they be in the media, or they are elected officials, or former elected officials, amplify and spread those narratives, they validate them. And when they validate them, they increase the potential that an individual who is vulnerable to being influenced, vulnerable to being influenced to commit an act of violence, will see this as a legitimate rationale for committing an act of violence. So in a sense, when these disinformation narratives are amplified by public figures, it not only supports our adversaries, but it brings more volatility to the threat environment.

Mr. RASKIN. I appreciate very much the lucidity of your response there. I assume there is not too much that you as law enforcement officials can do about that, but you are at least blowing the whistle on a really important and disturbing trend. If I am reading you correctly, we do have foreign adversaries who try to exploit political and social fractures in our country by injecting disinformation and propaganda that then can be picked up, and further deepen and exacerbate those conflicts. I appreciate that. And I don't know, Ms. Mace, if you had any final questions you wanted to ask?

Ms. MACE.[Inaudible.]

Mr. RASKIN. Well, with that then, I want to thank all of our witnesses for a really tremendous hearing, and I want to thank all the members of the committee for participating.

Members will have, let's see, how many days? Without objection, all members have five legislative days within which to submit additional written questions for the witnesses to the chair, and we will

forward them to the witnesses for their response. We ask you to respond as quickly as you can if you would.

And I just want to thank you all for your service to the country. At this moment of democracy under threat in many different ways, your work is absolutely essential, and we look forward to continuing to work closely with you in the future to further fortify and solidify America's democratic institutions.

With that, the hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:24 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]