

# THE DYNAMIC TERRORISM LANDSCAPE AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR AMERICA

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

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# THE DYNAMIC TERRORISM LANDSCAPE AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR AMERICA

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,  
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:01 a.m., via Webex, Hon. Bennie G. Thompson [Chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Thompson, Jackson Lee, Langevin, Correa, Slotkin, Green, Swalwell, Titus, Watson Coleman, Rice, Demings, Barragán, Gottheimer, Malinowski, Torres, Katko, Higgins, Guest, Bishop, Van Drew, Miller-Meeks, Harshbarger, Clyde, Gimenez, LaTurner, Meijer, Cammack, and Pfluger.

Chairman THOMPSON. The House Committee on Homeland Security will be in order. Without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare the committee in recess at any point.

Today the committee is meeting to examine the dynamic terrorism threat landscape and discuss why the threat is dominated by domestic violent extremists, including White supremacists. Almost 1 year ago, this committee held its first hearing of the 117th Congress, examining the threat of domestic terrorism in the wake of the January 6 Attack on the Capitol. Since that hearing, I have taken on a new role, Chairman of the Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th attack on the U.S. Capitol, where I am working across the aisle to get the bottom of that attack.

Here, on the Homeland Security Committee, our mandate is to carry out broader oversight to better understand what DHS, the FBI, and other Federal agencies must do, together with their State and local and private-sector partners, to detect, prevent, and respond to terrorism.

Too often our public spaces are subject to shootings or hostage-taking or other violent plots that see grocery stores, schools, houses of worship, or concerts become crime scenes. In June 2015, a young man sought refuge in a Charleston church, expressing what seemed to be genuine interest in their regular bible study meeting. Motivated by a desire to start a race-fueled civil war, he opened fire, killing 9 African American members of the bible group that had just welcomed him in. Since that tragic attack, there have been countless other acts of terrorism and violence carried out by people with a variety of extremist views.

The FBI director testified before this committee that last year, his agency had the largest number of open domestic terrorism cases ever. He went on to say that the majority of those cases involve White supremacist extremists. He also described how violent

extremists are choosing aspects of different ideologies that fit their unique grievance, as if choosing individual items from a salad bar. Emergence of what the FBI has come to call salad bar ideologies is a paradigm shift of terrorism threats that have made it harder for law enforcement to prevent attacks.

Over the past year, threats posed by converging violent ideologies have increased as ideologies that once were thought of as fringe have become more mainstream. I appreciate the steps DHS and others have taken over the past year to try to address this issue, especially after the previous administration ignored it for 4 years. Certainly, the issuance of the first-ever National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism last June was an important step forward.

I also appreciate the work many in the private sector and civil society are doing to protect our communities and prevent the internet from being used to spread disinformation, radicalize people, or plan attacks. But much more must be done, and we are eager to hear from our witnesses and solutions today.

We must be clear-eyed about the threat from violent extremists and focus our efforts on finding appropriate solutions that improve our homeland security and allow people to go about their lives. Just last month, a man flew from the United Kingdom to the United States and made his way to a synagogue in Texas, specifically targeting worshippers for their Jewish faith. He pretended to be a homeless man seeking shelter and appealed to their humanity. Like we saw in 2015, at the Mother Emanuel Church in Charleston, the attacker preyed upon kindness of people of faith to carry out his attack. Thankfully, this time there was no loss of life.

Our job on this committee is to focus on security and keep our fellow Americans safe. We must prioritize helping people congregate in a manner that allow at-risk communities to live their religious tenets and show kindness to those in need.

Today, we have an expert panel of witnesses that will outline the dynamic terrorism threat landscape we face and present their ideas about what we ought to do moving forward. I look forward to their testimony and responses to our questions so that we can find a path to keep us all secure. American lives, our way of life, our very democracy are at stake.

[The statement of Chairman Thompson follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BENNIE G. THOMPSON

FEBRUARY 2, 2022

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The FBI director testified before this committee that last year that his agency had the largest number of open Domestic Terrorism cases ever. He went on to say that the majority of those cases involve White supremacist extremists. He also described how violent extremists are choosing aspects of different ideologies that fit their unique grievance, as if choosing individual items from a “salad bar.” The emergence of what the FBI has come to call “salad bar” ideologies is a paradigm shift in terrorism threats that has made it harder for law enforcement to prevent attacks. Over the past year, threats posed by converging violent ideologies have increased, as ideologies that once were thought of as “fringe” have become more mainstream.

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Chairman THOMPSON. With that, I recognize the Ranking Member, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Katko, for an opening statement.

Mr. KATKO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, and I thank the witnesses for being here as well. I anticipated that the Chairman would speak to the domestic violent extremism that is rampant in our country right now. So, I chose not to replot that ground for the most part. But I do want to make sure that the Chairman and everyone knows that I agree with your comments and we need to be mindful of that.

I want to talk more about what I see as kind-of the concern in the arena of the international extremism coming home here once again. So, our committee and the Department of Homeland Security were created to address terrorist threats facing the homeland. It is incumbent upon us to remember precipitating events and warning signs which led to our existence.

In 1993, a van containing over 1,000 pounds of explosives was detonated in a parking garage of the World Trade Center, killing 6 people and injuring 15 others. Ramsey Yousef, one of the plot’s leaders and a nephew of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, later told the FBI he had hoped to topple one tower into the other killing approximately 250,000 civilians. In 1998, 224 people died, including 12 Americans when nearly simultaneous bombs blew up in front of

the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Soon after, these attacks were linked to al-Qaeda.

In 2000, the *U.S.S. Cole* was refueling off the coast of Yemen when suicide terrorists launched an attack killing 17 American sailors. U.S. Government investigation determined that al-Qaeda was behind the bombing. Less than a year later, on a Tuesday morning in September, America learned exactly what al-Qaeda was capable of. Now, 20 years after 9/11, terrorist safe havens still exist in locations spanning from West Africa to, sadly, once again, Afghanistan.

I understand that Americans are exhausted by endless wars but we must remember wars are two-sided. The terrorist threat will not cease because we pick up and leave. We need to recognize that while it is possible to degrade terrorist operations when we utilize the power of American intelligence and military enterprises, it is just as easy for terrorism to reconstitute when it is given sanctuary. That is my concern today.

The war on terror is not a war which is going to end with a treaty signing and a ticker tape parade. It is not a war which we have won or lost. In fact, it is not over and probably never will be. However, the Biden administration has seemingly disengaged to some extent. The Biden administration's botched withdrawal from Afghanistan has cost the lives of 13 service members and has reinvigorated terrorist networks in the region and around the world. We must be clear-eyed about what is an evolving threat landscape and admit the failures that happened in Afghanistan.

There are two lessons we must learn from past experience. The first is, given safe haven, terrorist networks will undoubtedly utilize that time and space to plot attacks against the homeland in a more intricate nature. The second lesson is that we cannot ignore the signals foreign terrorist organizations are now sending. Many of these warning signs are seen internationally, but many are also seen here at home, unfortunately. Just 2½ weeks ago, a British citizen named Malik Faisal Akram barricaded himself along with several hostages inside the Congregation Beth Israel synagogue in Colleyville, Texas. Akram demanded the release of Aafia Siddiqui, a terrorist, who has been tried and convicted of attempting to kill U.S. officers in Afghanistan. As American citizens, we are incredibly grateful to our brave Federal, State, and local law enforcement agents for their actions during this incident. But we cannot take this outcome for granted.

Having experienced a Naval Air Station Pensacola shooting just a couple of years ago, we know that these attacks can be deadly. I am, to say the least, concerned about how Akram was able to obtain clearance through the Visa Waiver Program. He clearly had a troubled past and a very serious criminal record and the British knew about that. At a minimum, this should have triggered a heightened level of screening and vetting. Why it did not is something we need to examine and discuss. These are issues which I am addressing with the Department of Homeland Security and their agency partners, but which we all should be considering as we influence Homeland Security policy.

Additionally, the troubling lack of clear communication, information sharing, and effectiveness displayed by Homeland Security



among its interagency partners and Congress during recent events such as the one in Colleyville, gives me cause for continuing concern. The terror threat is one that we face on many fronts. We cannot ignore the battlefields in the Middle East, Afghanistan, and Africa. We must be cognizant of the growth of extremism in the West and work with our international partners to identify and neutralize the threat there. We must arm our Homeland Security colleagues with the tools they need to recognize the threat at ports of entry and keep those actors from making it to the interior of the United States.

Finally, we must combat the threat of terrorism whether foreign-born, or home-grown as my colleague, Mr. Thompson, pointed out, or domestic, which exists within our borders. If we don't maintain a holistic approach to combatting this threat, we will face more acts of terror on American soil. I hope that we can work together in this committee in the bipartisan manner we always do to get things done and continue to attack these very difficult problems. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

[The statement of Ranking Member Katko follows:]

STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER JOHN KATKO

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased that the committee is holding this important hearing today. Our committee and the Department of Homeland Security were created to address terrorist threats facing the homeland, and it is incumbent upon us to remember precipitating events, and warning signs, which led to our existence.

In 1993, a van containing over a thousand pounds of explosives was detonated in the parking garage of the World Trade Center, killing 6 people and injuring 1,500 others. Ramzi Yousef, one of the plot's leaders and the nephew of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, later told the FBI he had hoped to topple one tower into the other, killing approximately 250,000 civilians.

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Less than a year later, on a Tuesday morning in September, America learned exactly what al-Qaeda was capable of.

And now, 20 years after 9/11, terrorist safe havens still exist in locations spanning from West Africa to, once again, Afghanistan.

I understand that as Americans we are exhausted by "endless wars," but we must remember—wars are two-sided. The terrorist threat will not cease because we pick up and leave. We need to recognize that while it is possible to degrade terrorist operations when we utilize the power of the American intelligence and military enterprises, it is just as easy for terrorism to reconstitute when it is given sanctuary. The war on terror is not a war which is going to end with a treaty signing and a ticker-tape parade. It's not a war which we have won or lost. In fact, it's not over. However, the Biden administration has seemingly disengaged.

The Biden administration's botched withdrawal from Afghanistan has already cost the lives of 13 U.S. service members and has reinvigorated terrorist networks in the region and around the world. We must be clear-eyed about what is an evolving threat landscape.

There are two lessons we must learn from past experience. The first is, given safe haven, terrorist networks will, undoubtedly, utilize that time and space to plot attacks against the homeland. The second lesson is that we cannot ignore the signals foreign terrorist organizations are sending. Many of these warning signs are seen internationally, but many are also seen here at home.

Just two-and-a-half weeks ago British citizen Malik Faisal Akram barricaded himself, along with several hostages, inside the Congregation Beth Israel Synagogue in Colleyville, Texas. Akram demanded the release of Aafia Siddiqui, a terrorist who has been tried and convicted of attempting to kill U.S. officers in Afghanistan. As American citizens we are incredibly grateful to our brave Federal, State, and local

law enforcement agents for their actions during this incident—actions which ensured that there were no casualties. But we cannot take this outcome for granted. Having experienced the Naval Air Station Pensacola shooting just a couple years ago, we know that these attacks can be deadly.

I am, to say the least, concerned about how Akram was able to obtain clearance through the Visa Waiver Program. He clearly had a troubled past, including a criminal record. At a minimum this should have triggered a heightened level of screening and vetting. These are issues which I'm addressing with DHS and their agency partners, but which we all should be considering as we influence homeland security policy. Additionally, the troubling lack of clear communication, information sharing, and effectiveness displayed by DHS among its interagency partners and Congress during recent events such as the one in Colleyville gives me great cause for concern.

The terror threat is one that we face on many fronts. We cannot ignore the battlefields in the Middle East, Afghanistan, and Africa. We must be cognizant of the growth of extremism in the West and work with our international partners to identify and neutralize the threat there. We must arm our homeland security colleagues with the tools they need to recognize the threat at ports of entry and keep those actors from making it to the interior of the United States. And finally, we must combat the threat of terrorism—whether foreign-born, home-grown, or domestic—which exists within our borders. If we don't maintain a holistic approach to combatting this threat, we will face more acts of terror on American soil.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. The gentleman yields back. Other Members of the committee are reminded that under the committee rules, opening statements may be submitted for the record. Members are also reminded that the committee will operate according to the guidelines laid out by the Chairman and Ranking Member in our February 3 colloquy regarding remote procedures.

I welcome our panel of witnesses. Our first witness is Mr. Nicholas Rasmussen, executive director of the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, or GIFCT. Mr. Rasmussen had held senior counterterrorism positions at the White House and in the U.S. intelligence community over the course of his 27-year career, including his service as director of the National Counterterrorism Center.

Our second witness is Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO and national director of the ADL. Mr. Greenblatt brings extensive experience from the private sector and Government. Under Mr. Greenblatt, ADL has worked in new and innovative ways to counter and combat extremism in all forms.

Our third witness is Dr. Cynthia Miller-Idriss, professor at the American University. Dr. Miller-Idriss is a professor of both School of Public Affairs and the School of Education at AU and has studied the dynamics of violent extremism globally for over 20 years.

Our final witness is Mr. Bill Roggio. I hope I didn't do too much damage to you, Mr. Roggio. He is also a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, where his work focuses on the global war on terrorism.

Without objection, the witnesses' full statements will be inserted in the record. I now ask Mr. Rasmussen to summarize his statement for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF NICHOLAS J. RASMUSSEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GLOBAL INTERNET FORUM TO COUNTER TERRORISM**

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Thank you, Chairman Thompson. Thank you Ranking Member Katko and Members of the committee. It is, indeed, my privilege to join this important hearing this morning. As you said, Mr. Chairman, I am here today in my capacity as the executive director of GIFCT, the Global Internet Forum to Counter

Terrorism. In that current role, my focus is particularly on the on-line dimensions of the threat landscape that both you and Mr. Katko outlined in your opening statements, both here at home and around the world.

Of course, this is not my first appearance before this committee. During my tenure as the director of the National Counterterrorism Center, I had the honor to appear before you and the committee on many occasions. I had countless other informal conversations with Members during that time. I am grateful for the support of the committee during my time at NCTC.

GIFCT is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with the mission to prevent terrorists and violent extremists from exploiting digital platforms. We offer a unique multi-stakeholder setting to identify and solve the most complex problems that sit at the intersection of technology and terrorism. We were founded in 2016 by four major technology companies, but we are now a nonprofit organization with our own staff, professional staff, of terrorism and technology experts working with our 18-member companies in a much wider global stakeholder setting.

Before I highlight our key priorities and work streams, I will touch just very briefly on a few elements of the current landscape that both you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Katko, highlighted in our opening remarks. The on-line dimension of this landscape is a very dynamic environment. The community of violent extremist and terrorist voices is becoming ever more diverse and it represents an ever-wider array of violent extremist ideologies. Groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda continue to exploit the on-line environment as do White supremacist and neo-Nazi organizations around the globe, accelerationists, ethnonationalists of various forms, violent extremists of the incel movement and others who propagate conspiracy theories that lead to violence.

The extremists and terrorists that operate today in the on-line domain, are agile and adaptable. They migrate readily and easily from one platform to another depending on their purpose. Terrorists and violent extremists, as we know, have always adapted themselves to the tactics that intelligence and law enforcement services use to disrupt them. They, of course, do the same when it comes to their use of modern technology. This poses a challenge to those charged with enforcing platform policies for tech companies.

The diversity and variety of violent extremist actors operating on the internet is matched by an equally diverse and varied set of platforms on which they operate. None of us, Mr. Chairman, use just one platform or app on our phone today. Violent extremists are the same and most often they use several different services, including services that go well beyond social media platforms.

Responding to this environment, of course, requires a global and diverse response. For that reason, a top priority for me and our GIFCT team this year is to expand our membership to bring in a much wider and more diverse range of tech companies. It is not enough for GIFCT to be focused on social media or on Silicon Valley alone. The effort must extend globally and it must involve companies and technologies of all sort. In my written statement, I set forth in detail key initiatives we are pursuing to achieve our mission to include helping companies develop more useful definitional

frameworks that will help them respond to on-line terrorism and violent extremism.

Another critical effort of our work is to strengthen the capacity of member companies to respond in real time to a real-world terrorism crisis. By facilitating real-time situational awareness and information sharing among our member companies during an attack, we identify any on-line dimensions so that members can take swift action against content that a perpetrator might be looking to pose to the on-line environment.

The multistakeholder nature of our work is perhaps best highlighted by our GIFCT working groups where we bring together experts from very diverse stakeholder groups, geographies, and disciplines to focus on discreet and specific challenges we are facing. It is this attribute of multistakeholderism that makes GIFCT unique, and I would argue, in many ways, an experiment. It is a forum in which all of the relevant stakeholders who share in the problem set are invited to participate. We have certainly valued having participation from the U.S. Government and from Federal law enforcement.

Solving these terrorism problems requires a whole-of-society approach not just a whole-of-Government approach. As I left Government service a few years ago, it was clear to me that more of the work necessary to do this takes place outside Government than perhaps I appreciated. This means collaboration with the private sector, academia, and civil society. With the continued support of this committee, Mr. Chairman, and that of other critical stakeholders here in the United States, I am optimistic we can make the on-line environment safer and healthier for all of us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your attention this morning, for the invitation to appear, and I look forward to the conversation.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rasmussen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NICHOLAS J. RASMUSSEN

FEBRUARY 2, 2022

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Katko, Members of the committee. It is indeed a privilege for me to join you today for this important hearing. I am here today in my capacity as executive director of the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, known by its acronym of GIFCT. GIFCT is a 501(c)(3) organization with a membership of 18 technology companies and the mission to prevent terrorists and violent extremists from exploiting digital platforms.

But as some Members may recall, this is not my first appearance before this committee. During my tenure as director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), I had the honor to appear before you several times along with other senior Government officials as the committee addressed important issues of homeland security concern. It is a pleasure to be back here with you virtually and I especially want to thank former Chairman Mr. McCaul for the very positive and constructive relationship that the committee had with NCTC during my years of Government service, as well as the strong support he provided personally to me as the NCTC director.

I am also pleased and honored to share the panel this morning with other distinguished experts and voices who work on the complex and challenging landscape of terrorism and violent extremism, both here in the United States and around the world. I deeply admire their expertise and I am eager to share my perspective from GIFCT with them and with the Members of the committee.

In my prepared testimony, I will cover three things this morning:

First, I will offer a quick sketch of the on-line threat landscape, as seen from our perspective at GIFCT, working with scholars and technology companies around the world.

Second, I will share with the committee the various work streams that GIFCT is pursuing to counter what terrorists and violent extremists are doing in the on-line space and our ambition to generate even more impact in the years ahead; and

Third, and last, I will speak to the specific way in which GIFCT is pursuing our mission and our agenda, as a multistakeholder forum committed to transparency and inclusivity across all of our work streams.

GIFCT is a tech-led initiative offering a unique multi-stakeholder setting to identify and solve the most important and complex global challenges at the intersection of terrorism and technology. GIFCT's mission is to prevent terrorists and violent extremists from exploiting digital platforms. We also firmly believe that respect for universal and fundamental human rights must be central to how we work to fulfill this mission. Our vision is a world in which the technology sector marshals its collective creativity and capacity to render terrorists and violent extremists ineffective on-line.

It is with this mission and vision that we bring together key stakeholders—from industry, Government, civil society, and academia—to foster essential collaboration, deliver concrete progress, and facilitate information sharing to counter terrorist and violent extremist activity on-line. While multistakeholder work does not always move at the desired pace and satisfy every individual or stakeholder community on every occasion, this approach does mean that we can bring all the actors and sectors who share a piece of this problem set together and pursue well-informed, collaborative progress. It is clear to me that the threat landscape we face today requires this whole-of-society approach to effectively address its on-line and off-line dynamics.

This brings me to my first area of focus this morning, the threat landscape. On-line terrorism and violent extremism are cross-platform and transnational by nature. No individual has just one app on their phone or their computer, nor uses only one type of on-line service, and bad actors are no different. The current threat landscape is growing more dynamic every day with an increasingly diverse array of violent extremist ideologies circulating in the on-line environment. We are not in a place where we have the luxury to focus on only one set of ideological actors who are exploiting the internet to advance their violent agenda. ISIS or Daesh continues to find ways to exploit the on-line environment to their benefit, as do White supremacist and/or neo-Nazi organizations across the globe, accelerationists, ethno-nationalists of various forms, and others who propagate violence-inducing conspiracy theories. Even as our attention is drawn to particular variants of violent extremism that may seem novel or new to some, like those tied to the Incel movement, terrorist groups with long histories of activity on-line continue to pose new challenges to both companies and to law enforcement authorities.

The violent extremists and terrorists that operate today in the on-line domain are often agile, adaptative, and savvy. They increasingly understand where policy red lines have been drawn by mainstream platforms and at what point policy enforcement is likely to drive them off a particular platform or cause them to lose access. These extremist actors migrate readily from one platform to another depending on the purpose they are pursuing with on-line engagement. They know when to take particularly sensitive topics, such as operational coordination, off of more mainstream platforms and continue the engagement on more permissive platforms. In many cases, they prepare in advance for loss of access to a platform by having a bank of alternate accounts at the ready. None of this should surprise us, as terrorists and violent extremists have always adapted themselves to the tactics that intelligence and law enforcement professionals use to disrupt them. They operate in the same way when it comes to their use of modern technology and communication tools, and this poses a significant challenge to those charged with enforcing policies and terms of service.

Countering terrorism and violent extremism on-line requires a global and heterogeneous response, a response that recognizes that services developed and intended to be used by good actors seeking to operate productively are also susceptible to abuse and exploitation by bad actors seeking to cause harm. Indeed, even as digital platforms empower people through tools to communicate, share information, run businesses, and organize, the on-line environment that these platforms comprise inevitably provides those same empowering tools for use by terrorists and violent extremists. Technological innovation, over the course of history and through to today's discussion of digital platforms in 2022, unfortunately, can serve both as a force for good, and as a potential accelerant to radicalization and mobilization to violence. That is the unfortunate reality that we confront.

The second set of comments I wanted to offer today relates to what GIFCT is doing in response to this threat picture and landscape. It is with this understanding

of the challenges and threats we face today that GIFCT has set its strategic priorities, two of which I will highlight here this morning.

The first key priority for GIFCT this year is to recruit and welcome into GIFCT new member companies from around the world that represent different kinds of technologies. If the work of our organization is focused exclusively on social media platforms or on companies based in Silicon Valley, we will have failed to realize GIFCT's full potential and we will fall short of achieving the impact that we seek. The effort must extend globally and must involve companies and technologies of all sorts.

A second pressing priority guiding our work at GIFCT is to provide greater thought leadership on the issues and challenges associated with on-line terrorist and violent extremist activity. We do this in order to support our member companies as they develop their own solutions for content moderation and illicit user activity that fall within their own policies and terms of service. Focused on on-line content and behavior tied to off-line violence, we are taking steps this year to develop a more useful definitional framework for identifying terrorist and violent extremist activity on-line that GIFCT member companies can draw upon to inform their on-going efforts to monitor, assess, and take action against content and activity that violates their policies.

Both of these objectives—growing the scale and diversity of technology platforms committed to our mission and providing forward-looking thought leadership that our members can leverage to address the corpus of activity they confront on their platforms—reflect, in part, our role in addressing the on-line factors and behaviors that shape today's challenging threat landscape. But it is imperative that I emphasize that ignoring the off-line factors that contribute to that same landscape will not take us very far. It is neither strategically sound nor intellectually honest to view the on-line and off-line threat landscapes as separate and distinct entities. The on-line ecosystem can only play the role of facilitating greater communication, information sharing, and organizing for terrorism and violent extremism when other factors that contribute to this threat are present as well. On-line consumption and exchange of information can surely be pointed to as an accelerating factor to the process of radicalization. Yet it is also clear that information drawn from other sources, including broadcast news outlets and rhetoric employed by political leaders and public figures, also plays a role in that pathway to extremist behavior.

A pressing example of this interplay between the on-line and off-line space is the on-going COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic created a set of conditions that seems almost tailor-made for violent extremists seeking to advance their work. Between health restrictions, economic impacts, social isolation, and increased political polarization, it is clear that the pandemic has exacerbated existing cleavages and anxieties across society. While many throughout the pandemic and its lockdowns have found solace and positive community through on-line engagements, other groups, smaller in size or number but higher in terms of risk, also use on-line communities to perpetuate misinformation and coordinate hate-based violence.

One consequence of this environment is increasing engagement and interaction on-line among individuals who otherwise may adhere to distinct and separate ideologies. Experts in our GIFCT academic network, the Global Network on Extremism and Technology, continue to see such on-line behavior and their conclusions very much align with and reinforce the insights offered by my fellow witness Dr. Miller-Idriss and others who have pointed to a post-organizational transformation within the threat landscape and to new coalition building as a result of disparate individuals and groups finding unity in their understanding of major world events and in their preferred solutions to societal problems.

It is with this clear-eyed understanding of today's current counterterrorism challenges and threat landscape that I chose to accept my role as the inaugural executive director of the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism. Having served as long as I had inside Government, it was clear to me that Government alone could not solve those challenges and manage that threat landscape in a way that would keep us all safe from terrorists and violent extremists.

The current organization that is GIFCT, an independent non-profit organization, is less than 2 years old but has been able to take the early progress of its original establishment as a consortium of technology companies to make meaningful contributions to addressing the on-line threat landscape. GIFCT was originally founded in 2017 by Microsoft, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, who then announced at the United Nations General Assembly in 2019 that the consortium would evolve into an independent organization. During the 3 years as a consortium, in-house teams at GIFCT's member companies initially focused on developing cross-platform tools such as the hash-sharing database and establishing a forum where technology companies, governments, academia, and civil society could discuss the state of the on-line threat

landscape, share insights, and produce solutions. During this time, GIFCT's original membership criteria was established, our on-going mentorship program with Tech Against Terrorism was created, the first phase of a GIFCT-funded academic network was launched, and GIFCT's first counterspeech campaign toolkit for practitioners in partnership with the Institute for Strategic Dialogue was created. After this initial progress, the transition to an independent non-profit organization was pursued so that GIFCT could achieve more impact for its member companies and do more to support efforts to fulfill the nine-point action plan signed by technology companies in the Christchurch Call to Eliminate Terrorist and Violent Extremist Content Online.

Today, GIFCT is a young and growing non-profit organization run by its own team of counterterrorism and technology experts. Working with our 18 technology company members, we embrace the task of moving the industry forward on how to address threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism and arm our members with cross-platform tools, solutions, and resources to: Prevent further exploitation of their platforms; strengthen how companies respond to terrorist and mass violent attacks; and learn about new evolutions in the threat landscape and approaches to combating them.

We do this work with a full commitment to remain diligent in upholding the human rights and fundamental freedoms that terrorists so often seek to undermine. We believe that counterterrorism and human rights must be complementary and mutually-reinforcing goals. Preventing terrorists and violent extremists from exploiting digital platforms enhances the protection, fulfillment, and realization of human rights. But this requires on-going work to address and understand the human dimension and impacts of our efforts with a focus on both the victims of terrorism and violent extremism as well as those victims of efforts to address terrorism and violent extremism. Even in the short time GIFCT has been operating we have delivered real action to meet this commitment, commissioning a non-profit entity called BSR (Business for Social Responsibility) to conduct a human rights impact assessment of the organization that now serves as a guide for all aspects of our work from engaging stakeholders and technology companies across the globe, to the tools and resources we develop.

At GIFCT we continue to pursue development of cross-platform tools, such as the GIFCT hash-sharing database, so that a range of different digital platforms can take information on known terrorist and violent extremist content and activity and identify whether the same content exists and requires action on their respective platform. GIFCT's database is the safe and secure industry database of "perceptual hashes"—often understood as "a digital fingerprint"—of known terrorist content as defined by GIFCT's hash-sharing database taxonomy. Content found by a member company is "hashed" ensuring there is no link to any data from the original platform or user, including personally identifiable information. Hashes appear as digital signatures or numerical representations of the original content, which means they cannot be easily reverse engineered to recreate the content. Each company that is part of the hash-sharing database determines its use of and engagement with the database, depending on their own terms of service, how their platform operates, and how the threat of terrorist and violent extremist exploitation may manifest for them.

This work also requires refined parameters and a definitional framework for what constitutes terrorist and violent extremist content. With multistakeholder input, we provide members with thought leadership and resources as we continue to develop our taxonomy to address a more diverse range of terrorist narratives and ideologies while avoiding the use of overly broad definitions that pose risks of over-censorship. This is why hashes of terrorist and violent extremist content that qualify for the hash-sharing database must meet a taxonomy that recognizes the original producers of the content as well as the type of content and severity for harm.

Currently, our taxonomy addresses videos and images produced by individuals and entities on the United Nations Security Council's consolidated sanctions list as well as perpetrator-produced content captured or livestreamed during an off-line violent attack. Material that meets these criteria is subject to hashing and sharing within the GIFCT framework. In the coming months, the taxonomy will expand to include attacker manifestos in PDF form, terrorist and violent extremist publications in PDF form, and URLs identified by our partner Tech Against Terrorism and confirmed to link to terrorist content. Member companies are then able to see if any hash may match to content on their platform, thus providing a signal to identify where to focus and prioritize their policy enforcement efforts and combat potential terrorist and violent extremist activity on their platforms.

To give an example of how the hash-sharing database operates, when a member company may identify a video produced by an entity on the United Nations Security

Council's consolidated sanctions list that glorifies and celebrates a previous terrorist attack, that member can create a hash of the video—the digital fingerprint of the content that does not contain user data—and share it in GIFCT's database. This hash is now available to the other members of the GIFCT hash-sharing database who can then determine if the hash matches to content on their respective platforms, thus identifying if the video has been shared on their platform. If that is the case, the member can review the video and the context it was shared within to determine what actions to take in line with their policies and terms of service. Such a cross-platform tool enables our members to share and leverage each other's ongoing efforts and expertise and increase our collective impact to prevent the further exploitation of digital platforms when this video is shared. This is an important part of our work to support our member companies on an on-going basis, as well as during the especially urgent instances in which a digital platform is being exploited as part of an off-line violent attack.

A second critical mission for GIFCT is to improve the capacity of member companies to respond in a real-world terrorism crisis that may be playing out in the on-line environment. Through our Incident Response Framework, we facilitate situational awareness and information sharing across our members in real time during an off-line violent event in order to identify any on-line dimensions. In the event of a significant on-line dimension to the off-line attack, the framework serves to strengthen the ability for our members to take swift action against on-line content produced by the perpetrators as part of their violence.

Since initially establishing this framework in the Spring of 2019, we have continued to mature and develop it in partnership with our members. To date, GIFCT and its member companies have initiated communications in response to over 195 off-line violent events across the globe in as close to real time as possible sharing situational awareness and information in an effort to identify any on-line dimension. In that time, the highest level of our Incident Response Framework, the Content Incident Protocol (CIP), has been activated twice in response to the perpetrators livestreaming their attacks and the content being shared on a GIFCT member platform. When the Content Incident Protocol is activated, GIFCT members can contribute hashes of the perpetrator-produced content to the GIFCT hash-sharing database in order to support all members in identifying the content on their platforms and taking action in line with their respective policies and terms of service.

The multistakeholder nature of our work is best highlighted through the thematic GIFCT Working Groups we convene to focus on specific challenges we see in our efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism on-line. GIFCT Working Groups bring together experts from diverse stakeholder groups, geographies, and disciplines to collaborate and produce output with practical value and utility on an annual basis. This output is published on our website and is available to all. GIFCT Working Groups are refreshed each year with updated themes and focus areas with the opportunity for new participants to join and new problems to be addressed. GIFCT's 2021 Working Groups convened more than 200 experts and practitioners from across the world, holding more than 55 meetings with representatives from 10 technology companies, 13 governments and international governing bodies, 26 civil society organizations, and 41 research and academic institutions.

GIFCT's 2022 Working Groups are currently convening on a monthly basis with participants from 35 countries across 6 continents, with 57 percent drawn from civil society, academia, or practitioners, 26 percent representing governments, and 17 percent from industry. These groups have been meeting since August 2021 and are currently pursuing substantive projects on key challenges to countering terrorism and violent extremism on-line focused on: Technical approaches including tooling, algorithms, and artificial intelligence; best practices and implementation hurdles for transparency; crisis response protocols; positive interventions and strategic communications on-line to support disengagement and intervention campaigns; and assessing legal frameworks. Last year's outputs from GIFCT Working Groups provided proof of concept that through multistakeholderism, we can achieve substantive results that offer practical analysis and well-informed recommendations on where tech and other sectors, often including GIFCT itself, can improve and the direction to take next.

I hope this brief summary gives committee Members and staff some idea of the substantive work under way at GIFCT and the various initiatives we are pursuing to limit the ability of terrorists and violent extremists to operate successfully in the on-line environment. That is the "what" of GIFCT's work and I am extremely proud of that work. In my view, however, the manner in which our work is carried out is equally important. How we do our work matters as much as what we do. That is the third and final thought I want to leave with you today.



Several times in the course of this statement for the record, I have referred to GIFCT's work as being multistakeholder. I would argue that this attribute is in fact what makes GIFCT unique and in many ways, an experiment. There are very few venues or fora, if any, that offer the sort of multistakeholder platform for problem solving and information sharing that we are working to build. It is a forum in which the full set of relevant stakeholders is invited to participate. We have appreciated having representation from the United States Government and from Federal law enforcement within our Working Groups and on our Independent Advisory Committee.

As I left Government service a few years ago, it was clear to me that more and more of the work necessary to deal with our terrorism and extremism challenges needed to take place outside of Government, rather than within Government. That meant collaboration and cooperation with the private sector, including technology companies, engagement with academics who understand how information and technology are used to radicalize individuals, and dialog with civil society organizations that care deeply about the free and open circulation of information and ideas in a context of full respect for the rights of others. Solving our terrorism problems, and particularly our domestic terrorism problems, requires a whole-of-society approach—not just a whole-of-Government approach—and I was eager to join the effort from outside Government to try and make some real gains in this area. What was lacking was any sort of venue for helping organize and drive key work streams involving all of these different stakeholders.

GIFCT offers us that opportunity. The chance to bring together industry, Government, civil society, and academia in common cause to make the on-line environment safer and healthier. That is what my colleagues and I at GIFCT are working every day to do. I would be the first to tell you that a tremendous amount of work to achieve that objective lies ahead of us and that much more remains to be done for us to realize the potential embodied in multistakeholder engagement of this kind. We are not yet fully there. But there is real urgency to what we are all here talking about today, because the threat environment we are all confronting is only growing more challenging and more dynamic every day. With the continued support of this committee, and that of other critical stakeholders here in the United States and around the world, I am optimistic that we can continue to deliver genuine multistakeholder progress that makes the on-line environment a safer and healthier place. Thank you for your attention this morning and I look forward to your questions.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. Mr. Greenblatt, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF JONATHAN GREENBLATT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE**

Mr. GREENBLATT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Katko, Members of the committee, and my fellow panelists. Good morning. I am Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO and national director of the Anti-Defamation League, or ADL. ADL is the oldest anti-hate organization in America. It is an honor to appear before you this morning to address the threat of extremism and terror in the homeland.

Since 1913, ADL has worked to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all. We have a world-class team including analysts and experts and investigators who track extremist threats and have been doing so for decades, monitoring threats from all sides. But let's be clear, violent domestic extremism is on the rise and it threatens all of our communities. The Jewish community continues to be a primary target of extremists across the ideological spectrum. Just 2 weeks ago in Colleyville, Texas, an Islamist-inspired terrorist fueled by anti-Semitic conspiracy theories about Jewish power, traveled thousands of miles to take 4 people hostage at gunpoint in a synagogue during a Shabbat service in an attempt to free an al-Qaeda operative who herself espoused incredibly hateful views about Jews in her public trial.

The crisis in Colleyville was a painful reminder that the threat to the Jewish community in America remains significant and lethal. In fact, ADL has recorded a 115 percent increase in anti-Semitic incidents from 2015 to 2020. That is an alarming spike. But the data obscures the human toll. I am talking about thousands of acts of hateful anti-Jewish harassment, of ugly anti-Semitic vandalism on synagogues, on schools, on homes. Hundreds of acts, brutal acts of assault against Jewish people and at least 18 anti-Semitic murders that devastated families, shattered communities, and stunned the country from Pittsburgh to Poway to Orange County to Jersey City to Monsey, New York. The human toll is considerable.

In a country riven by political differences, I am sad to report that anti-Semitism knows no partisan bounds. As I have told this committee in previous hearings, neither side of the spectrum is exempt from intolerance, nor above anti-Semitism. Politicizing the oldest hatred is a tool that we regrettably see from politicians on both sides and it needs to stop. At ADL, we are particularly troubled by the rise of domestic violent extremism, including as Nick mentioned, White supremacists, armed militia groups, accelerationists, QAnon enthusiasts, sovereign citizens, and others who demonize the Jewish people. Some of these actors, they trumpet the replacement theory that posits that a cabal of Jews are seeking to commit White genocide. It is frightening to think that this concept has been mainstreamed in recent years, yet some prominent conservative voices continue to make outlandish, grotesque claims that suggest that Jewish philanthropists are seeking to flood America with migrants, not true, or other bewildering charges. From Charlottesville to Capitol Hill, there is a through line and it is played out with deadly results.

At ADL, we are also troubled by the rise of hateful anti-Israel forces that demonize the only Jewish State in the world. From pro-Iranian outlets spreading slanderous lies on social media to self-described activists groups targeting Jews in public places. To NGO's like Amnesty International issuing reports making wild incendiary accusations against the Jewish State accusing it of apartheid or genocide, deeming it illegitimate.

It is frightening to think that these concepts also have been mainstreamed in recent years. As some so-called progressive voices make outlandish grotesque claims that suggest that Zionists are seeking to enslave the Palestinian people, not true. Or other bewildering charges from Time Square to Colleyville, there is a through line and it is played out with terrifying results. So, we can and we must do more to prevent these kinds of tragedies from happening again.

When I had the honor of appearing before you last year, I called for an all-in Government approach and a whole-of-society strategy to combatting domestic extremism. We have made real progress since then but much more needs to be done to meet the moment. So, with that in mind, I again respectfully call on Congress to take meaningful action to combat extremism in a domestic context. This should start by adopting the principles of PROTECT, ADL's comprehensive seven-point plan to mitigate the threat posed by domestic terrorism while protecting civil liberties and staying true to

American freedoms and values. Our recommendations include passing the bipartisan Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act, ending the complicity of social media services in facilitating extremism and hate, creating an independent clearing house for on-line extremist content, and doubling the funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program.

You see, people should not be risking their lives when they choose to worship in a synagogue or shop in a kosher supermarket or simply live openly as Jews in America. So, yes, we need safety through security and DHS grants can help. But we also need safety through solidarity. We can never build walls that are high enough or secure our networks tightly enough to ward out all evil. This is why we need all of you and public figures to call out hate whenever it happens regardless of the source and while we help other communities, we will stand with the Jewish community as we have sought to rally by their side in the face of racism and intolerance leveled in their direction. I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Greenblatt follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JONATHAN GREENBLATT

FEBRUARY 2, 2022

INTRODUCTION TO ADL

Since 1913, the mission of ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) has been to “stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” For decades, one of the most important ways in which ADL has fought against bigotry and anti-Semitism has been by investigating extremist threats across the ideological spectrum, including White supremacists and other far-right violent extremists, producing research to inform the public of the scope of the threat, and working with law enforcement, educators, the tech industry, and elected leaders to promote best practices that can effectively address and counter these threats.

Domestic violent extremism has been on the rise in recent years. The Jewish community continues to be a primary target of extremists, regardless of ideology. Our hearts are with the Colleyville, Texas community that was recently shaken by the trauma of being targeted by a terrorist who took hostages at a local synagogue, one that thankfully had security-related equipment and training—resources that many faith-based communities Nation-wide do not have access to.

Without a doubt, right-wing extremist violence is currently the greatest domestic terrorism threat to everyone in this country. From Charleston to Charlottesville to Pittsburgh, to Poway and El Paso, we have seen the deadly consequences of White supremacist extremism play out all over this country. Moreover, at ADL we are tracking the mainstreaming, normalizing, and localizing of the hate, disinformation, and toxic conspiracy theories that animate this extremism. We cannot afford to minimize this threat. We need a bipartisan “whole-of-Government approach”—indeed, a “whole-of-society” approach—to counter it, and the work must start today.

CURRENT TRENDS

#### *Colleyville and Anti-Semitic Violence*

Anti-Semitism is an on-going threat to the American Jewish community. According to the FBI’s annual data on hate crimes, defined as criminal offenses which are motivated by bias, crimes targeting the Jewish community consistently constitute over half of all religion-based crimes. The number of hate crimes against Jews has ranged between 600 and 1,200 each year since the FBI began collecting data in the 1990’s. There were 683 hate crimes against Jews in 2020, 963 in 2019 and 847 in 2018. The FBI’s data is based on voluntary reporting by local law enforcement and appropriate characterization of crimes as also being hate crimes. For a variety of reasons, dozens of large cities either underreport or do not report hate crime data at all. For that reason, experts, including at ADL, know that the real figure for crimes targeting Jews, as well as other minorities, is even higher than the FBI reporting indicates.

A violent attack against the Jewish community occurred just recently, on January 15, when a gunman entered Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas, during services, taking 3 congregants and the rabbi as hostages. Though the stand-off ended with all hostages freed and physically unharmed, the violent act reinforced the need to forcefully address the threat of anti-Semitic violence—experienced by the Colleyville community and far too many others. The fact that the Colleyville attacker travelled from the United Kingdom underscores that there can be foreign influences on domestic terrorism, either through incitement, coordination, or direct participation.

#### *Rising Anti-Semitism*

ADL has recorded a 60 percent increase of anti-Semitic incidents over the past 5 years. While anti-Semitism has commonalities with racism, anti-Muslim bias, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, and other forms of hate and discrimination, it also has certain unique characteristics as a specific set of ideologies about Jews that has migrated across discourses—and across centuries. In almost every part of our society, this hatred has been conjured and adjusted to suit the values, beliefs, and fears of specific demographics and contexts. The underlying conspiracy theories employing Jew-hatred morph to fit the anxieties and upheavals of the time—for example, that Jews were responsible for the Black Death in medieval times and for “inventing,” spreading, or profiting from COVID in the 21st Century. Or that Jews exercise extraordinary power over governments, media, and finance—from the charges of a conspiracy to achieve world domination set forth in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and used by the Nazis, to thinly-veiled anti-Semitism blaming “globalism” and “cosmopolitan” elites for all the ills of the world and for planning a “new world order.”

We cannot fight anti-Semitism without understanding how it is both intertwined with other forms of prejudice and how it is unique.

Each year, ADL’s Center on Extremism tracks incidents of anti-Semitic harassment, vandalism, and assault in the United States. Since 1979, we have published this information in an annual Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents. In 2020, ADL tabulated 2,024 reported anti-Semitic incidents throughout the United States. This is a 4 percent decrease from the 2,107 incidents recorded in 2019 but is still the third-highest year on record since ADL began tracking anti-Semitic incidents in 1979.

Known extremist groups or individuals inspired by extremist ideology were responsible for 331 incidents in 2020, up from 270 incidents in 2019. This represents 16 percent of the total number of incidents in 2020.

More recently, analysis from ADL’s Center on Extremism reveals that anti-Semitic incidents in the United States more than doubled during the May 2021 military conflict between Israel and Hamas and its immediate aftermath compared to the same time period in 2020. After peaking during that period, incident levels gradually returned to a baseline level.

#### *Murder and Extremism: By the Numbers*

In 2021, based on ADL’s preliminary research, domestic extremists killed at least 29 people in the United States, in 19 separate incidents. This represents a modest increase from the 23 extremist-related murders documented in 2020 but is far lower than the number of murders committed in any of the 5 years prior (which ranged from 45 to 78). While this could be cause for optimism, more likely it is the result of COVID lockdowns reducing mass gatherings and the increased attention of law enforcement following the January 6, 2021 insurrection.

Most of the murders (26 of 29) were committed by right-wing extremists, which for more than a decade in this country has been the case.

#### *White Supremacist Propaganda*

ADL’s Center on Extremism (COE) tracked a near-doubling of White supremacist propaganda efforts in 2020, which included the distribution of racist, anti-Semitic and anti-LGBTQ+ fliers, stickers, banners, and posters. The 2020 data shows a huge increase of incidents from the previous year, with a total of 5,125 cases reported to ADL (averaging more than 14 incidents per day), compared to 2,724 in 2019. This is the highest number of White supremacist propaganda incidents ADL has ever recorded. The number of propaganda incidents on college campuses dropped by more than half, perhaps due to COVID restrictions.

Propaganda gives White supremacists the ability to maximize media and on-line attention, while limiting the risk of individual exposure, negative media coverage, arrests, and public backlash that often accompanies more public events. The barrage of propaganda, which overwhelmingly features veiled White supremacist language with a “patriotic” slant, is an effort to normalize White supremacists’ message and

bolster recruitment efforts while targeting marginalized communities including Jews, Black people, Muslims, non-White immigrants, and LGBTQ+ people.

#### *Modern White Supremacy*

Extremist White supremacist ideology is more than a collection of prejudices: It is a complete ideology or worldview that can be as deeply seated as strongly-held religious beliefs.

Different variations and versions of extremist White supremacist ideology have evolved and expanded over time to include an emphasis on anti-Semitism and nativism. These extremists themselves typically no longer use the term “White supremacist”, as they once proudly did, but tend instead to prefer various euphemisms, ranging from “White nationalist” to “White separatist” to “race realist” or “identitarian.” Even in the face of these complexities, it is still possible to arrive at a useful working definition of the concept of extremist White supremacy.

Through the Civil Rights era, White supremacist ideology focused on the perceived need to maintain the dominance of the White race in the United States. After the Civil Rights era, extremist White supremacists realized that their views had become increasingly unpopular in American society and their ideology adapted to this new reality.

Today, White supremacist ideology, no matter what version or variation, tends to focus on the notion that the White race itself is now threatened with imminent extinction, doomed—unless White people take action—due to a rising tide of people of color who are being controlled and manipulated by Jews. Extremist White supremacists promote the concept of on-going or future “White genocide” in their efforts to wake White people up to their supposedly dire racial future.

The popular White supremacist slogan known as the “Fourteen Words” reflects these beliefs and holds center stage: “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children.” Secure a future, as White supremacists see it, in the face of their enemies’ efforts to destroy it.

This twisted and conspiratorial ideology was on display in 2017 in Charlottesville as White supremacists marched with tiki torches chanting “Jews will not replace us,” a rally that ended in the death of counter-protester Heather Heyer. It was on display in 2019 during the horrific mass shooting in El Paso. When a White supremacist opened fire in a shopping center, killing 23 people, he was motivated by what he called “the Hispanic invasion of Texas.” And when the mass shooter at the Pittsburgh Tree of Life synagogue massacred 11 Jews on the Jewish Sabbath, he shouted not only “All Jews Must Die!” but claimed to be murdering Jews because they were helping to transport members of the large groups of undocumented immigrants making their way north toward the United States from Latin America.

#### *Anti-Government Militias*

The militia movement is a right-wing anti-Government extremist movement that formed in 1993–94, primarily in reaction to Federal gun control measures and to deadly stand-offs between civilians and Federal agents. Much of the movement focuses on paramilitary activities. Militia movement adherents have traditionally believed that the Federal Government is collaborating with a shadowy conspiracy (the “New World Order”) to strip Americans of their rights, starting with their right to keep and bear arms. Once rendered defenseless, Americans would be absorbed into the tyrannical New World Order’s one-world government. The movement grew rapidly in the 1990’s but suffered a serious decline in the early 2000’s. Beginning in 2008, however, the militia movement enjoyed a major resurgence that attracted thousands of new, often young, recruits. It has been quite active in the years since.

The 2016 election of Donald Trump changed the emphasis of the militia movement, which strongly supported Trump’s candidacy. After Trump’s election, the movement was less interested in opposing the Federal Government and spent much of its energy looking for other perceived enemies, such as Antifa and racial justice protesters associated with the Black Lives Matter movement—particularly in the wake of the May 2020 murder of George Floyd. In 2020, the militia movement focused on opposition to State-level gun control measures, State-level pandemic-related restrictions and Black Lives Matter protests.

The militia movement has a long history of serious criminal activity, including murders, armed stand-offs, terroristic threats against public officials, illegal weapons or explosives, and terrorist plots or acts. More information about various active militia groups—and their participation in the January 6, 2021, insurrection—is available below.

#### *Online Hate*

In recent years, extremists’ on-line presence has reverberated across a range of social media platforms. This extremist content is intertwined with hate, racism,

anti-Semitism, and misogyny—all also through lines of White supremacist ideology. Such content is enmeshed in conspiracy theories and explodes on platforms that are themselves tuned to spread disinformation. We can look no further than the deadly insurrection at our Capitol, which ADL has repeatedly called the most predictable terror attack in American history, because it was planned and promoted out in the open on mainstream platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, as well as fringe platforms such as Parler, Gab, 4Chan, and Telegram. There is little doubt that fringe platforms have helped radicalize users and normalize both on-line and off-line extremist actions.

#### *Fringe Social Media Platforms*

##### *Parler*

In the weeks following the 2020 Presidential election, the social media site Parler drew millions of new users—both ordinary users and extremists, allowing for worrisome commingling. These newcomers were frustrated with what they perceived to be “anti-conservative” bias exhibited by mainstream social media platforms. For example, these users thought that Twitter and Facebook were being “anti-conservative” when they limited posts by President Trump and other conservative influencers who violated terms of service prohibiting the spread of misinformation.

Shortly after the Capitol insurrection, Amazon Web Services (AWS) announced that Parler had violated AWS’s terms of service and removed the platform from its hosting service, taking it off-line. Apple and Google similarly suspended Parler’s app from their app stores. Parler returned on-line in February 2021, after securing an alternative hosting service. Proud Boys, QAnon adherents, anti-Government extremists (Oath Keepers, Three Percenters, and militia) and White supremacists (from members of the alt right to accelerationists) continue to openly promote their ideologies on Parler. Additionally, Holocaust denial, anti-Semitism, racism, and other forms of bigotry are easy to find. Today, Parler claims to have around 16 million active users.

##### *Gab*

Gab serves as a forum where White supremacists and extremists publish manifestos or gather to plan and organize hateful acts. In October 2018, White supremacist Robert Bowers killed 11 people at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh after posting anti-Semitic, anti-immigrant rants on Gab. Two years later, the social media site gained traction among right-wing extremists, including White supremacists. In fact, 60 percent of the 47 right-wing extremist groups ADL has identified on Gab were created in 2020.

In the wake of the Capitol insurrection, ADL called on the U.S. Department of Justice and the FBI to launch a criminal investigation into Gab and its CEO to determine whether the social media platform intentionally aided or abetted individuals who carried out the January 6 attack on the Nation’s Capitol.

##### *4Chan, 8Chan, and 8Kun*

4chan, one of the oldest and most popular imageboards, was launched in 2003 and introduced viral memes (many of which still circulate today). However, parts of 4chan—especially its Politically Incorrect board, known as pol or /pol/—developed a reputation for offensive and hateful posts and memes.

In March 2019, Brenton Tarrant, an Australian White supremacist, allegedly posted a manifesto to 8chan before murdering 51 people at two mosques in New Zealand. In April 2019, White supremacist John Earnest opened fire inside a Chabad synagogue in Poway, California, killing 1 person and wounding 3 more before he surrendered. He posted a manifesto to 8chan before his attack, which referred admiringly to Tarrant, and to Robert Bowers, the mass shooter who murdered 11 people at a Pittsburgh synagogue in October 2018 (referenced above).

8chan began as an offshoot of the imageboard 4chan. “Imageboards” are types of on-line discussion forums centered around posting images. After 8chan shut down in August 2019—as a result of being deplatformed by the web infrastructure and security company Cloudflare following the extremist mass murder in El Paso, Texas—many users migrated over to 8kun.

These users are typically anonymous, with no screen names. That anonymity allows people to post outrageous, disgusting, or hateful photos and messages, ranging from hate speech to posts about pedophilia.

##### *Telegram*

Telegram, an on-line social networking app with well over 200 million users, may not be a household name just yet, but it has a significant audience. And it is gaining popularity. Telegram has become a favored on-line gathering place for the inter-

national overtly White supremacist community and other extremist groups who have been displaced or banned from more popular platforms. The platform, which is a cloud-based chat and group messaging app, was created in 2013 by the same two Russian brothers who founded the Russian-based social networking site VKontakte, or VK. VK is also known for its lack of moderation of White supremacist content. At present, the various platforms' leadership teams appear to be uninterested in addressing this issue.

#### *Mainstream Social Media Platforms*

Fringe platforms, despite having relatively small user bases, leverage Big Tech platforms like Twitter and Facebook to increase their reach and influence. But Big Tech platforms are no longer unwitting accomplices. In the case of Big Tech, White supremacist propaganda has found its viral channel. It's a perfect storm. First, there is the well-researched human propensity to engage with the most incendiary, inciting, and hateful content. This in turn meets the business model of Big Tech, which depends on increasing engagement of users to surveil them and collect copious amounts of data about them—and their associates and activities—all to sell as many hyper-targeted advertisements as possible. The profit incentive demands engagement, hate, and extremism delivers it, and then algorithms amplify that hateful content to generate even more engagement. Toxic speech is thus given reach and impact unparalleled in human history. For example, in 2020, a single “Stop the Steal” Facebook group gained more than 300,000 members within 24 hours. Thousands of newcomers a minute joined this group and some of them openly advocated civil war.

#### *Facebook*

Facebook claims that it is addressing hate on its platforms. ADL and others, however, continue to expose egregious examples of on-line hate, misinformation, and extremism across the company's products. In June 2020, Facebook announced that it took down hundreds of groups and pages on its platform associated with the violent anti-Government Boogaloo movement. Despite efforts by the Boogaloo movement to camouflage itself to retain a Facebook foothold, the social media company's efforts were largely effective, and after the de-platforming, it became difficult to find large and active Boogaloo spaces on Facebook.

Concerningly, however, additional Boogaloo pages have since emerged on Facebook, hiding among libertarian groups and pages that also share memes advocating for violence. Perhaps most worrying, Facebook algorithms appear to be recommending these Boogaloo pages to like-minded users, despite the company's June 2020 assertion that it would no longer do so, followed by broader statements around not recommending groups tied to violence in September 2020 and an even broader statement in March 2021 stating that Facebook would be ending all recommendations for “civic and political groups, as well as newly created groups.”

#### *TikTok*

In less than 6 years, TikTok—the social media app that allows users to create and share short videos—has amassed hundreds of millions of users. It is particularly popular among young people. As ADL documented in August 2020 and May 2021, while much of the content on TikTok is lighthearted and fun, extremists have exploited the TikTok to share hateful messages and recruit new adherents. Anti-Semitism continues to percolate across the app, with posts perpetuating age-old anti-Jewish tropes and conspiracy theories. Recordings of Louis Farrakhan, Rick Wiles (of TruNews), and Stephen Anderson—all anti-Semitic individuals whose bigotry has been thoroughly documented by ADL—were readily available on TikTok in 2021. One such post, shared on May 23, 2021, showed a clip of a TruNews segment in which Rick Wiles states: “And our leaders are lowlife scum that screw little girls so the Jews can screw America . . . we've allowed Kabbalah practicing Jews to defile the Nation.” TruNews, a fundamentalist Christian streaming news and opinion platform that produces anti-Semitic, anti-Zionist, anti-LGBTQ+ and Islamophobic content, has been banned from YouTube and Facebook for violating the platforms' content rules.

#### *Twitter*

Twitter has taken significant steps to decrease extremist conspiracy theory content on its platform; however, policy enactment and enforcement remain inconsistent. In July 2020, for example, Twitter announced it would take further action on “QAnon” activity and permanently suspend QAnon-affiliated accounts. The company subsequently claimed that QAnon-related content dropped by more than 50 percent as a result. The platform also announced additions to its coordinated harmful activity policy. Unfortunately, there were many prominent Twitter accounts,

with significant reach, espousing QAnon content but left untouched. It is evident that Twitter did not regularly enforce its QAnon policy after the July 2020 announcement. Data collected before and after the attack on the Capitol shows that leading up to January 2021, Twitter's actions fell far short. By the time Twitter finally started removing QAnon-supporting accounts on January 8, 2021, the consequences of misinformation had already become frighteningly real.

#### *YouTube*

YouTube, has remained under the radar for its role in spreading disinformation and misinformation, compared to Facebook and Twitter. YouTube waited more than a month after the 2020 Presidential election to remove videos claiming electoral fraud—by then, millions of people had been exposed to false information that eroded trust in our democracy. Furthermore, ADL research shows YouTube continues to push people into extremist content despite the company's claim that it has overhauled its recommendation algorithms.

As our February 2021 Belfer Fellow report indicates, exposure to videos from extremist or White supremacist channels on YouTube remains disturbingly common. The report's authors conducted a study that measured the browsing habits of a diverse National sample of participants and found that approximately 1 in 10 participants viewed at least 1 video from an extremist channel (9.2 percent) and approximately 2 in 10 (22.1 percent) viewed at least one video from an alternative channel. Moreover, participants often received and sometimes followed YouTube recommendations for videos from alternative and extremist channels. Overall, consumption of alternative and extremist content was concentrated among highly engaged respondents, most frequently among those with negative racial views. In total, people with high racial resentment were responsible for more than 90 percent of views for videos from alternative and extremist channels.

#### *Extremism in 2021*

The January 6, 2021, siege on the Capitol was an assault on our country and our democracy, incited in broad daylight by the former President and many of his supporters. Many of those who were roused to violence that day did so as the result of weeks and months and years of similar incitement.

The ADL Center on Extremism (COE) has identified 544 of the roughly 800 individuals who are believed to have breached the U.S. Capitol. The emerging snapshot of the insurrectionists shows a range of right-wing extremists united by their fury with the perceived large-scale betrayal by "unprincipled" Republican legislators.

Of the 544 individuals identified by COE, at least 127 (or 23 percent) have ties to known right-wing extremist groups, including Oath Keepers (22 people), Proud Boys (42), Groypers and other White supremacists (12) and the QAnon conspiracy theory (31). A number of Proud Boys members and Oath Keepers have been charged with conspiracy in connection with the January 6 insurrection. More information on these extremist groups is provided below.

The remaining 77 percent of those identified by COE are considered part of the new pro-Trump extremist movement, a decentralized but enthusiastic faction made up of self-described "patriots" who continue to pledge their fidelity to the former President and his false assertions that he actually won the election and that it was stolen from him by, among other things, massive voter fraud. This new breed of extremist is foundationally animated by devotion to Trump, placing him over party or country. They are living inside an ecosphere of misinformation, disinformation, lies and conspiracy theories, one fertilized by Alex Jones, QAnon, the former President and his enablers, and many others.

#### *Oath Keepers*

The Oath Keepers are a large but loosely organized collection of right-wing anti-Government extremists who are part of the militia movement, which believes that the Federal Government has been co-opted by a shadowy conspiracy that is trying to strip American citizens of their rights. Though the Oath Keepers will accept anyone as members, what differentiates them from other anti-Government extremist groups is their explicit focus on recruiting current and former military, law enforcement, and first responder personnel. While there is a formal National leadership, on the local level many Oath Keepers are essentially self-organized and form official, semi-official, or informal groupings of Oath Keepers.

#### *The Proud Boys*

The Proud Boys represent an unconventional strain of American right-wing extremism. While the group can be described as violent, nationalistic, Islamophobic, transphobic, and misogynistic, its members represent a range of ethnic and racial backgrounds, and its leaders vehemently protest any allegations of racism. Their



founder, Gavin McInnes, went so far as to file a defamation lawsuit against the Southern Poverty Law Center when the SPLC designated the Proud Boys as a hate group.

In McInnes' own words, the Proud Boys are a "pro-Western fraternity," essentially a drinking club dedicated to male bonding, socializing, and the celebration of all things related to Western culture. In reality, the Proud Boys is an extremist group that bears many of the hallmarks of a gang, and its members have taken part in multiple acts of brutal violence and intimidation. While the Proud Boys insist that they only act in self-defense, several incidents—including one in which 2 members of the group were convicted of attempted gang assault, attempted assault, and riot—belie their self-professed peaceful nature. Indeed, many members have criminal records for violent behavior and the organization actively pursues violence against their perceived enemies. Ideologically, members subscribe to a scattershot array of libertarian and Nationalist tropes, referring to themselves as anti-communist and anti-political correctness, but in favor of free speech and free markets.

In recent years the Proud Boys have established themselves as a dominant force within what has been referred to as the alt lite. Often easily recognizable thanks to their black and yellow Fred Perry polo shirts and red Make America Great Again baseball caps, members are regulars at far-right demonstrations and Trump rallies. After several years of forging alliances with members of the Republican political establishment, the Proud Boys have carved out a niche for themselves as both a right-wing fight club and a volunteer security force for the GOP. Despite their associations with mainstream politicians, Proud Boys' actions and statements repeatedly land them in the company of White supremacists and right-wing extremists. Jason Kessler, the primary organizer of the deadly 2017 Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville, is a former Proud Boy. (Indeed, the Federal civil rights case brought against the neo-Nazis who organized that rally is entitled *Sines v. Kessler*. The case, for which ADL provided expert and financial support, was a historic win for the plaintiffs in November 2021.) Several members attended the violent August 12, 2017, demonstration that ended in the death of counter-protester Heather Heyer.

During an October 2018 brawl outside the Metropolitan Republican Club in Manhattan, for which 2 Proud Boys members were convicted and sentenced to substantial prison terms, and 7 others pled guilty, the Proud Boys were joined by 211 Bootboys, an ultra-nationalist and violent skinhead gang based in New York City. In October 2019, members of the Denver chapter of the Proud Boys marched with members of Patriot Front and former members of the now-defunct neo-Nazi group Traditionalist Worker Party. These relationships show the Proud Boys to be less a pro-Western drinking club and instead an extremist, right-wing gang.

In 2020, the Proud Boys solidified their status as the most visible and most active right-wing extremist group in the country. As the Nation grappled with the pandemic, members of the Proud Boys became a regular sight at anti-lockdown protests, using the demonstrations not only to raise their profile, but as recruitment opportunities. The group is not unique in this sense—Boogaloo bois and militia members were also frequent participants at these rallies. Another key factor in the Proud Boys 2020 activity was their embrace of the #Saveourchildren campaign, alongside QAnon adherents. The new links with QAnon allowed the Proud Boys access to untapped segments of the pro-Trump extremist movement.

Events held in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd allowed the Proud Boys to brand themselves as a "law and order" counterpoint to Black Lives Matter protesters, although the Proud Boys themselves generally precipitated the most egregious acts of violence and intimidation against protesters. This dynamic produced some of the most brutal clashes between Proud Boys and their adversaries, particularly in Portland, Oregon, which saw over 100 days of continuous unrest. There were violent and armed clashes on August 22, and a MAGA convoy on August 29 led to the death of Aaron "Jay" Danielson, a member of the right-wing group Patriot Prayer, a frequent ally of the Proud Boys.

The Proud Boys' profile was given an additional boost when President Trump, in his September 29, 2020 debate against Joe Biden, instructed the Proud Boys to "stand back, and stand by." Emboldened by the attention from the President, the Proud Boys rallied for Trump twice in Washington, DC following his election loss. The first rally took place on November 14, 2020 and the second on December 12, 2020, with the second rally ending with 4 members of the Proud Boys suffering stab wounds from a brawl.

During that same rally, Proud Boys members allegedly set fire to a BLM banner they stole from Asbury United Methodist Church, a historically Black church. Proud Boys leader, Enrique Tarrío, took responsibility for the incident and was later charged with destruction of property. He was arrested, carrying 2 extended gun magazines, on the eve of the January 6, 2021, rally that led to the storming of the

U.S. Capitol. As a condition of his release, a judge barred Tarrío from attending the January 6 protest. Tarrío ultimately pleaded guilty to destruction of property and attempting to possess a high-capacity gun magazine, both misdemeanors. A civil case brought by the Church against the Proud Boys and Tarrío last April resulted in a default judgment against the Proud Boys.

In December 2021, ADL joined District Attorney General Karl Racine and other pro bono counsel in bringing a civil lawsuit arising out of the January 6 insurrection on behalf of the District against the Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, and individuals associated with both groups. The case, which brings allegations under the Reconstruction Era KKK Act, among other laws, seeks to hold accountable the groups and affiliated individuals for their role in planning and executing the attack on the Capitol in an attempt to overturn a lawful Presidential election.

#### *Groyper / Groyper Army*

The so-called “Groyper army” (the term “Groyper” is explained below) is a White supremacist group, led by Nick Fuentes, that presents its ideology as more nuanced than that of other groups in the White supremacist sphere. While the group and its leadership’s views align with those held by the White supremacist alt right, Groypers attempt to normalize their ideology by aligning themselves with “Christianity” and “traditional values” ostensibly championed by the church, including marriage and family.

Like the alt right and other White supremacists, Groypers believe they are working to defend against demographic and cultural changes that are destroying the “true America”—a White, Christian nation. However, Groypers differ in a number of ways from the alt right. They identify themselves as “American nationalists” who are part of the “America First” movement. To the Groypers, “America First” means that the United States should close its borders, bar immigrants, oppose globalism and promote “traditional” values like Christianity and oppose “liberal” values such as feminism and LGBTQ+ rights. They claim not to be racist or anti-Semitic and see their bigoted views as “normal” and necessary to preserve White, European-American identity and culture. However, some members have expressed racist and anti-Semitic views on multiple occasions. They believe their views are shared by the majority of White people.

#### *QAnon and Other Conspiracy Theories*

QAnon is a global, wide-reaching, and remarkably elaborate conspiracy theory that has taken root within some parts of the pro-Trump movement. It is an amalgam of both novel and well-established theories, with marked undertones of anti-Semitism and xenophobia. Fundamentally, the theory claims that almost every President in recent U.S. history up until Donald Trump has been a puppet put in place by a global elite of power brokers hell-bent on enriching themselves and maintaining their Satanic child-murdering sex cult. Q is a reference to “Q clearance” or “Q access authorization,” terms used to describe a top-secret clearance level within the Department of Energy.

According to QAnon lore, this global elite, known as “The Deep State” or “The Cabal,” control not just world governments, but the banking system, the Catholic church, the agricultural and pharmaceutical industries, the media, and entertainment industry—all working around the clock to keep the people of the world poor, ignorant, and enslaved.

Conspiracy theories, rampant in the United States, have an unusual power to motivate people to action. Some conspiracy theories are associated with various right-wing or left-wing ideologies, while others transcend ideology, like those surrounding the 9/11 attacks or the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Under the right circumstances, such theories can motivate people to violence, especially if the conspiracy theories single out specific people or organizations as the villains.

Most extremist movements develop or depend on conspiracy theories to some degree. In the United States, extreme right-wing movements have a particularly close relationship to conspiracy theories. Anti-Muslim extremists promote “Sharia law” conspiracy theories, for example, to increase anti-Muslim animus, while anti-immigrant border vigilantes justify their patrols with conspiracy theories about Mexican drug cartels waging a secret invasion of the United States.

For some right-wing extremist movements, conspiracy theories lie at the heart of their extreme worldviews. The modern White supremacist movement, for example, centers its beliefs on the notion that the White race is in danger of extinction from growing numbers of people of color who are controlled and manipulated by a nefarious Jewish conspiracy. Anti-Government extremist movements, such as the militia movement and the sovereign citizen movement, are based on conspiracy theories that focus on the Federal Government.

As a result, much of the violence stemming from extremist White supremacists and anti-Government extremists can be attributed, directly or indirectly, to such conspiracy theories. Conspiracy theories often sharpen anger that extremists already feel to the point where they become willing to take violent action.

In 2021, disparate groups of QAnon adherents, election fraud promoters, and anti-vaccine activists organized events around the country to promote their causes. This phenomenon underscores the extent to which the line separating the mainstream from the extreme has blurred, and how mainstream efforts to undermine our democratic institutions are bolstered by extremist and conspiratorial narratives and their supporters.

These narratives include:

- That the 2020 Presidential election was stolen by the Democrats (touted at the Health and Freedom events organized by right-wing entrepreneur Clay Clark);
- That a global cabal of pedophiles (including Democrats) who are kidnapping children for their blood will be executed when Donald Trump is reinstated as President (popular at The Patriot Voice: For God and Country conference, organized by QAnon influencer John Sabal, a/k/a “QAnon John,” and at the We the People Patriots Day event and the OKC Freedom conference);
- That the coronavirus was co-created in a lab by director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Dr. Anthony Fauci and Microsoft founder Bill Gates;
- That the coronavirus vaccine contains dangerous ingredients that change your DNA and make vaccinated people “shed” dangerous toxins;
- That Satanic socialists are attempting to take over the country; and
- That if Democrats and “the left” remain in power, a confrontation, potentially violent, will be necessary to “reclaim” the country.

These narratives go well beyond the mainstream into extreme territory.

#### *Long-Term Trends: The Growing Threat of Domestic Terrorism*

While it is impossible to say with absolute certainty what lies ahead, we know that White supremacists and some other extremists, including anti-Muslim extremists, anti-immigrant extremists, and anti-Semites, are driven by conspiracy theories as well as manufactured fears around demographic change, which some extremists fear will only accelerate as the Biden administration is perceived by them to enact more humane policies toward immigrants and refugees who are people of color. Extremists equate those policies to “White genocide.”

Militia and other anti-Government groups may also be very active in the next few years. The militia movement has historically derived much of its energy and vitality from its rage toward the Federal Government. However, the movement’s support of President Trump during his administration dulled that anger. As it progresses, the Biden administration’s existence may give militias an excuse to return to their foundational grievances: the belief that a tyrannical government in league with a globalist conspiracy is coming to enslave them by taking first their guns and then the remainder of their rights.

Finally, anti-Semitism will likely continue to be a central part of the conspiratorial views that fuel right-wing violence, as it has been for so long. It is crucial to recognize not only the threat to Jews and Jewish institutions this poses, but also both the foundational and animating impetus it gives violent White extremism, whatever its targets. It is also vitally important to understand the role that anti-Semitic conspiracies play in the wider threat to our democracy. Anti-Semitism isn’t just bigotry directed toward Jews; it uses that hatred and bigotry against the Jewish community to undermine democratic practices by framing democracy as a conspiracy, as Eric Ward of the Western States Center notes, “rather than as a tool of empowerment or a functional tool of governance. In other words, the more people buy into anti-Semitism and its understanding of the world, the more they lose faith in democracy.”

#### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

We need a whole-of-Government approach to address the threat. ADL strongly recommends urgent action to prevent and counter domestic violent extremism. The framework that ADL has created—the PROTECT plan—is a comprehensive, 7-part plan to mitigate the threat posed by domestic extremism and domestic terrorism while protecting civil rights and civil liberties. Together, focusing on these 7 categories can have an immediate and deeply significant impact in preventing and countering domestic terrorism—more so than any one action, policy, or law—and can do so while protecting civil rights and liberties and ensuring that Government overreach does not harm the same vulnerable people and communities that these extremists target. Our suggestions come under these 7 areas:

P—Prioritize Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism  
 R—Resource According to the Threat  
 O—Oppose Extremists in Government Service  
 T—Take Public Health and Other Domestic Terrorism Prevention Measures  
 E—End the Complicity of Social Media in Facilitating Extremism  
 C—Create an Independent Clearinghouse for On-line Extremist Content  
 T—Target Foreign White Supremacist Terrorist Groups for Sanctions

*Prioritize Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism*

First, we urge Congress to adopt a whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approach to preventing and countering domestic terrorism.

- In mid-June 2021, the Biden-Harris administration released the first-ever National Strategy to Counter Domestic Terrorism. The strategy is laudable, and a step in the right direction. However, many critical details were left unaddressed. Congress must press for further details into how the plan will be implemented, and the steps that will be taken to ensure protection for civil rights and civil liberties. Further, Departments and agencies must create their own implementation plans for the Strategy.
- The Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol must be allowed to operate in good faith, absent politicization of its important work. The American public needs a careful review of the brazen and lethal attack on the very seat of our democracy. We urge Congress to search for answers, publicly release information whenever possible, and to issue bipartisan recommendations to ensure that no attack like that on January 6, 2021, can take place again.
- As Congress considers appropriations bills, resources to prevent and counter domestic terrorism are critical to mitigating the threat. ADL urges committee Members to consider supporting significant increases for these necessary resources across the Government in the Commerce, Justice, and Science; Homeland Security; Defense; State and Foreign Operations; Interior; and Labor, Health, and Human Services appropriations processes. As one example, the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) is woefully under-funded and should be doubled to \$360 million total.

*Resource According to the Threat*

We must ensure that the authorities and resources the Government uses to address violent threats are proportionate to the risk of the lethality of those threats. In other words, allocation of resources must never be politicized but rather based on transparent and objective security concerns.

- Congress should immediately pass the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act (DTPA) to enhance the Federal Government's efforts to prevent domestic terrorism by formally authorizing offices to address domestic terrorism and requiring law enforcement agencies to regularly report on domestic terrorist threats. Congress must ensure that those offices have the resources they need and can deploy those resources in a manner proportionate to existing threats. Further, the transparency that comes with regular reporting is crucial for civil society, Congress, and the public writ large to help oversee the National security process and hold leaders accountable.
- Congress must exercise careful oversight to ensure that no resources are expended on counterterrorism efforts targeting protected political speech or association. Investigations and other efforts to mitigate the threat should be data-driven and proportionate to the violent threat posed by violent extremist movements.

*Oppose Extremists in Government Service*

It is essential that we recognize the potential for harm when extremists gain positions of power, including in Government, law enforcement, and the military.

- To the extent permitted by law and consistent with Constitutional protections, take steps to ensure that individuals engaged in violent extremist activity or associated with violent extremist movements, including violent White supremacist and unlawful militia movements, are deemed unsuitable for employment at the Federal, State, and local levels—including in law enforcement. Appropriate steps must be taken to address any current employees, who, upon review, match these criteria.
- To the extent permitted by law and consistent with Constitutional protections, take steps to ensure that individuals engaged in violent extremist activity or associated with violent extremist movements, including violent White supremacist and unlawful militia movements, are not given security clearances or other sensitive law enforcement credentials. Appropriate steps must be taken to ad-

dress any current employees, who, upon review, match these criteria. Law enforcement agencies Nation-wide should explore options for preventing extremists from being among their ranks.

- The Department of Defense (DoD) released its internal extremist threat review on December 20, 2021. While the review represents significant progress, we need more information to truly determine the threat posed by extremists within the ranks. DoD should provide further detail on how it will evaluate White supremacists and related threats, as well as how commanders' ability to adjudicate extremism-related guidelines will be overseen.
- Similarly, DHS announced that it will be vetting employees for extremist sympathies. ADL applauds this effort and welcomes any details on how the implementation of this vetting will take place, as well as any findings from the review.
- ADL has worked with law enforcement experts to provide tools for identifying and weeding out extremists in the recruitment process as well as within law enforcement ranks. While there is no evidence that White supremacist extremists have large numbers in our law enforcement agencies, we have seen that even a few can undermine the effectiveness and trust that is so essential. We have provided resources to LE agencies with guidance on approaches that do not violate First Amendment concerns.

#### *Take Domestic Terrorism Prevention Measures*

We must not wait until after someone has become an extremist or a terrorist attack has happened to act. Effective and promising prevention measures exist, which should be scaled.

- Congress can provide funding to civil society and academic programs that have expertise in addressing recruitment to extremist causes and radicalization, whether on-line or off-line. By providing funding for prevention activities, including education, counseling, and off-ramping, Congress can help empower public health and civil society actors to prevent and intervene in the radicalization process and undermine extremist narratives, particularly those that spread rapidly on the internet.
- These initiatives must be accompanied by an assurance of careful oversight with civil rights and civil liberties safeguards. They must also meaningfully engage the communities that have been targeted by domestic terrorism and the civil society organizations already existing within them, and those communities which have been unfairly targeted when prior anti-terrorism authorities have been misused and/or abused. These initiatives must be transparent, responsive to community concerns, publicly demonstrate careful oversight, and ensure that they do not stigmatize communities. Further, DHS should not be the only agency working on prevention; ADL urges the Department to partner with Health and Human Services and other non-security departments whenever possible.
- While Congress has funded a small grant program for prevention measures domestically, the program is too small to have an impact at scale. Now that the administration has launched the Center for Prevention Programming and Partnerships within DHS, Congress should significantly scale its grant program; ADL has recommended a \$150 million annual grant level.

#### *End the Complicity of Social Media in Facilitating Extremism*

Congress must prioritize countering on-line extremism and ensuring that perpetrators who engage in unlawful activity on-line can be held accountable. On-line platforms often lack adequate policies to mitigate extremism and hate equitably and at scale. Federal and State laws and policies require significant updating to hold on-line platforms and individual perpetrators accountable for enabling hate, racism, and extremist violence across the internet. In March 2021, ADL announced the REPAIR Plan, which offers a comprehensive framework for platforms and policy makers to take meaningful action to decrease on-line hate and extremism. Like ADL's PROTECT Plan, REPAIR focuses on domestic extremism and terrorism but goes beyond these issues to address other manifestations and harms of on-line hate, including on-line harassment, anti-Semitism, racism, and disinformation.

- Congress has an important role in reducing on-line hate and extremism. Further, officials at all levels of Government can use their bully pulpits to call for better enforcement of technology companies' policies.
- Congress can work with independent extremism experts to protect vulnerable targets from becoming either victim of abuse or perpetrators of violence. Legislation from the 116th Congress like the National Commission on Online Platforms and Homeland Security Act, for example, would establish a commission

to investigate how on-line content implicates certain National security threats, such as targeted violence.

- We also need to provide better recourse for victims and targets of on-line hate and harassment. In the 115th Congress, Representative Katherine Clark (D-MA) introduced and led H.R. 3067, the Online Safety Modernization Act, which, among other things, would have provided Federal protections against doxing and swatting. It is time to pass laws that cover these types of harms. It is crucial that such legislation provide private rights of action.
- To adequately address the threat, the Government must direct its resources to understand and mitigate the consequences of hate on-line. To do so, all levels of Government should consider designating funding, to ensure that law enforcement personnel are trained to recognize and to effectively investigate criminal on-line incidents and have the necessary capacity to do that work.
- Beyond the Federal Government, businesses have a critical role to play. We need to compel the social media companies to enforce their own terms of service specifically around hate and misinformation—or face repercussions for failing to do so. The firms should go further and fix the algorithms that amplify this noxious content to drive clicks and increase engagement. There is no moral reason to lift up content that brings people down. The companies themselves should commit to ending algorithmic amplification of hate, full stop.
- Congress must carefully but considerably amend Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act to make tech companies legally accountable for their role when they enable stalking, facilitate violence and civil rights violations, or incite domestic terrorism. Self-regulation simply has failed on this score. The platforms have been far too laissez-faire for decades, hiding behind Section 230 which immunizes them from legal accountability for even egregious and otherwise unlawful content and actions. They have failed to abide by the basic behaviors that govern nearly all other businesses in every other sector of our economy. We need a drastic reconsideration of Section 230 that enables a free flow of user-generated content but disables the kind of extremism and hate that has festered across social media platforms.
- We urge lawmakers to seriously consider Section 230 reform proposals that prioritize equity and justice for users and bar immunity when platforms place profit over people. This could include enacting measures such as the Protecting Americans from Dangerous Algorithms Act, which would address the previously-mentioned issue of algorithmic amplification of discriminatory content or to aid and abet terrorism.

#### *Create an Independent Clearinghouse for On-line Extremist Content*

Congress should work with the Biden-Harris administration to create a publicly-funded, independent nonprofit center to track on-line extremist threat information in real time and make referrals to social media companies and law enforcement agencies when appropriate.

- This approach is needed because those empowered with law enforcement and intelligence capabilities must not be tasked with new investigative and other powers that could infringe upon civil liberties—for example, through broad internet surveillance. Scouring on-line sources through an independent organization will act as a buffer, but will not prevent the nonprofit center from assisting law enforcement in cases where criminal behavior is suspected. This wall of separation, modeled in part on the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), will help streamline National security tips and resources while preserving civil liberties.

#### *Target Foreign White Supremacist Terrorist Groups*

Congress must recognize that White supremacist extremism is a major global threat of our era and mobilize with that mindset.

- To date, no White supremacist organization operating overseas has been designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. Only one has been designated as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT). Congress should review how these designation decisions are made, whether any additional racially- or ethnically-motivated extremist groups outside the United States, particularly White supremacist groups, have reached the threshold for either designation, and whether such designations would help advance U.S. National interests.
- The Department of State was required to develop a strategy to counter global White supremacist extremism and to add White supremacist terrorism to annual Country Reports on Terrorism. That State has implemented the Country Reports guidance is laudable, and State may have created the strategy. However, the strategy has not been released publicly, making it impossible to evalu-

ate. We urge more transparency from State in this process and for Congress to seek accountability for any gaps in the strategy, and to provide resources to implement it.

- The Department of State must mobilize a multilateral effort to address the threat of White supremacy globally. Multilateral best-practice institutions, such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum, the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, and the International Institute for Justice and Rule of Law, may be helpful mechanisms through which to channel some efforts. Moreover, the Global Engagement Center should be charged with undermining the propaganda of violent extremist groups—not just designated terrorist organizations, but overseas White supremacist violent extremists as well. DHS should participate in these efforts, supporting overseas exchanges, partnerships, and best practices sharing to engage in learning from other countries and sharing U.S. best practices, where applicable.

#### CONCLUSION

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before this august body and for calling a hearing on this urgent topic. ADL data clearly and decisively illustrate that the impact of hate is rising across the United States, and that domestic extremism and terrorism will continue to pose a grave threat. It is long past time to acknowledge that these threats overwhelmingly come from right-wing extremists, especially White supremacists, and allocate our resources to address the threat accordingly. We must also address these threats holistically rather than piecemeal. This is precisely what ADL's PROTECT plan does, applying a whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approach to the fight against hate and extremism. On behalf of ADL, we look forward to working with you as you continue to devote your attention to this critical issue.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. I now ask Dr. Miller-Idriss to summarize her statement for 5 minutes.

#### **STATEMENT OF CYNTHIA MILLER-IDRISS, PH.D, PROFESSOR, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY**

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. Thank you, Chairman. Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Katko, and Members of the committee, I would like to thank you for calling attention to the critical issue of changing trends in global and domestic terrorism. I am honored to be here with you and with my fellow esteemed panelists as well. I am a researcher and an academic, but I am also an applied scholar who directs a research lab at American University called the Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab, or PERIL, which designs and tests early interventions and preventative tools to disrupt and prevent violent extremism across the ideological spectrum.

Domestic violent extremism and terrorism has escalated rapidly across the West and now significantly outpaces other forms of terrorism in the United States, including terrorism from far-left movements and from individuals inspired by the Islamic State and al-Qaeda, with right-wing attacks and plots accounting for the majority of all terrorist incidents in the United States since 1994, according to data from the Center for Strategic and International Studies. This does not mean that the threat from Jihadi terrorism has abated either in the United States or abroad. But it does mean that we are seeing growth across the West at 250 percent over the last 5 years in the domestic violent and far-right terrorist spectrum in ways that pose an escalating and serious threat.

Historically, counterterrorism officials across the world have organized their work around clearly identifiable groups and movements, which were considered ideologically distinct from one another. But today, as the Chairman pointed out earlier, there is

growing blurriness across previously distinct ideologies in on-line extremist networks. A new report issued just last week from the U.K.-based International Center for the Study of Radicalization traces convergence between neo-fascist accelerationists and Salafi-Jihadists that includes shared support for anti-Semitism, belief in a natural hierarchy, racial and cultural supremacism, anti-modernism, heteronormativity and support for traditional family structures, and anti-Government sentiment.

Both domestic and international terrorist groups and movements, in other words, are united by an overlapping set of beliefs involving supremacist hierarchies and anti-Government beliefs. These extremist ideologies often also share fantastical ideas about restoration, whether it is the Caliphate or a White ethnostate, and desire a post-apocalyptic, post-race-war civilization, in which violence is a solution to accelerate the end times.

The muddling of ideological rationales, what some call salad bar terrorism, is partly a result of the way that people encounter extremist content and propaganda on-line, largely outside the boundaries of organized groups, not just in manifestos, but also in memes across a large and broad ecosystem of video, audio, and text-based platforms. Recommendation algorithms and hyperlinks mean that everyone is just a few clicks away from an ever-expanding series of rabbit holes that offer up entire worlds of disinformation, propaganda, and hate that they increasingly piece together in fragmented ways.

Counterextremism tools designed to address threats from bounded fringe groups, as they currently exist, cannot meaningfully confront the evolved threats that we face today without a broader multisectoral, whole-of-society, and community-based commitment to prevention and early intervention that can reduce the fertile ground in which anti-democratic and violent extremist ideologies thrive. To do this, Congress should take immediate steps to invest in a public health approach to preventing violent extremism. This includes investments in digital and media literacy and other scalable interventions to reduce people's vulnerability to on-line propaganda and conspiracy theories. It includes broadening tested inoculation interventions to make people less likely to be persuaded by extremist content and manipulative tactics from extremist groups. It calls for a reinvestment in civic education and other efforts to strengthen democratic norms and values that could reduce high rates of polarization and the kinds of moral disengagement and dehumanization that are demonstrated precursors to political violence.

These kinds of interventions are not an immediate fix to the growing problem of extremist violence in terrorism, rather they reflect a need for investments across the short, medium, and long terms. It is important to note that these are not options that involve censorship or teaching ideological beliefs in any way. After all, no one wants the Federal Government to be involved in policing people's beliefs. But the narrow definition of prevention of violence and our conventional counterterrorism tools are unable to address the unchecked spread of disinformation and conspiracy theories and other precursors to violence. We need to broaden our efforts and adapt counterterrorism frameworks to address these evolving



threats with preventative approaches that can address radicalization while still protecting freedoms of speech and expression. Understanding the nature of the evolving threat is a central first step toward these goals and to reducing these persistent and changing threats to our Nation's democracy and stability. I look forward to your questions. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Miller-Idriss follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CYNTHIA MILLER-IDRISS

FEBRUARY 2, 2022

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Katko, and Members of the committee: I would like to thank you for your service to our country and for calling attention to the critical issue of changing trends in global terrorism. I am honored to be here. My name is Cynthia Miller-Idriss, and I am a professor in the School of Public Affairs and the School of Education at the American University in Washington, DC, where I also direct the Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab (PERIL). I have been studying the dynamics of violent extremism globally for over 20 years. I am the author of *Hate in the Homeland: The New Global Far Right*, along with two books focused on extremism in Germany (*Blood and Culture* and *The Extreme Gone Mainstream*). I want to acknowledge the support of my research team at PERIL, whose assistance was invaluable in preparing my testimony today.<sup>1</sup>

SCOPE AND SCALE

Today's terrorism landscape includes a diverse ideological range of international and domestic movements and groups. There is no agreement—even across agencies within the U.S. Government, but also internationally—on terms or definitions across the terrorism and extremism spectrum. Violent extremist movements that use terrorism (the use of violence in order to intimidate or coerce civilians or influence the policy of a government) as a tactic are motivated by a range of supremacist, anti-government, anti-establishment, and anti-democratic ideologies that take a variety of organizational forms both within the United States and globally.<sup>2</sup> This includes groups advocating for attacking Western governments and societies, overthrowing the U.S. Government, calling for race wars or a White ethnostate, and seeking to collapse economic and social systems. In the domestic violent extremism (DVE) spectrum, the organizational forms of these movements include unlawful militias, violent anarchists, sovereign citizens, White supremacist extremists such as neo-Nazis, violent environmental and animal rights extremists, some single-issue extremist groups like violent anti-abortion groups, as well as violent male supremacists and violent involuntary celibates (incels). In this testimony, I follow the terminology from research and reports being cited, though it is important to note that these terms are not fully interchangeable. Domestic violent extremism (DVE), for example, includes extremism from across the ideological spectrum. I use the terms “far left” or “far right” to refer to parts of the DVE spectrum when citing sources that use those terms, like the Global Terrorism Index (GTI). I also use terms like racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism (REMVE), right-wing extremism, and White supremacist extremism (WSE) when citing reports or studies from U.S. and global agencies and experts that use those terms.

Trends in the U.S. terrorism landscape have changed rapidly over the past several years. While Islamist terror has been the historical focus of U.S. and global counterterrorism efforts in the post-9/11 era, and continues to have the greatest lethality globally,<sup>3</sup> far-right terrorism has escalated rapidly across the West. Far-right terrorism now significantly outpaces other forms of terrorism in the United States, including terrorism from far-left movements and from individuals inspired by the Is-

<sup>1</sup>With gratitude to researchers and staff at American University's Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab (PERIL) who helped prepare this written testimony: Sarah Bartholomew, Emily Caldwell, Meili Criezis, Pasha Dashtgard, Brian Hughes, Jacqueline Belletomasini Kosz, Emily Pressman, Wyatt Russell, Katie Spann, Sarah Ruth Thorne, JJ West, and Kesa White.

<sup>2</sup>See the U.S. definitions of international and domestic terrorism at <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title18/part1/chapter113B&edition=prelim>.

<sup>3</sup>Institute for Economics & Peace. “Global terrorism index 2020: Measuring the impact of terrorism” (November, 2020). National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Available at: <https://visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GTI-2020-web-1.pdf>.

lamic State and al-Qaeda, according to a recent report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). That report notes that “right-wing attacks and plots account for the majority of all terrorist incidents in the United States since 1994.”<sup>4</sup> Within the DVE landscape, the most pressing threats to civilians and elected officials—in terms of lethality, plots foiled, recruitment, and the circulation of propaganda, as documented in multiple threat assessments issued by the U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) over the past 2 years<sup>5</sup>—comes from White supremacist extremism and anti-Government extremism movements and groups, which sometimes overlap and mutually reinforce one another.<sup>6</sup> These trends are reflected in law enforcement investigations. As of September 2021, the FBI reported it had 2,700 open investigations into domestic violent extremism, which is more than double the number open in the summer of 2017.<sup>7</sup> Also in 2020, authorities Nation-wide arrested nearly 3 times as many White supremacists as they did in 2017.

This does not mean the threat from jihadi terrorism has fully abated, either in the United States or abroad. In Europe, jihadi terrorism still outpaces far-right terror as the most critical threat,<sup>8</sup> but far-right terrorism and extremism are growing rapidly there as well. The top British counterterrorism official, Neil Basu, recently described right-wing extremism as the United Kingdom’s “fastest-growing threat,” and in Germany, violent crimes motivated by right-wing extremism rose by 10 percent from 2019 to 2020.<sup>9</sup> Across the West (Australia, New Zealand, Western Europe, and North America), far-right terrorist incidents have increased globally by 250 percent over the past 5 years and were responsible for 82 percent of deaths from terror in 2019, according to the most recent Global Terrorism Index report.<sup>10</sup>

The United States has witnessed increases in the pace, scope, and scale of far-right violence and the normalization of the extremist ideas that drive it. 2019 was the most lethal year for domestic terrorism in the United States since 1995—48 people were killed in attacks carried out by domestic violent extremists, 39 of which were carried out by White supremacists. In 2020, the number of domestic terrorist plots and attacks in the United States reached its highest level since 1994; two-thirds of those were attributable to White supremacists and other far-right extremists. And last year, reports to the Anti-Defamation League of White supremacist propaganda—in the form of fliers, posters, banners, and stickers posted in locations such as parks or college campuses—hit an all-time high of more than 5,000, nearly twice the number reported in the previous year. Traditional counterterrorism tools in the United States foiled only 21 of the 110 known domestic terrorist attacks and plots<sup>11</sup> in 2020, according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

#### TRENDS AND IDEOLOGICAL CONVERGENCE

Historically, counterterrorism officials across the world have organized their work around clearly identifiable groups and movements, which were considered ideologically distinct from one another. Today, however, there is growing convergence across

<sup>4</sup>Jones, Seth and Catrina Doxsee. “The escalating terrorism problem in the United States.” June 17, 2020. Center for Strategic and International Studies. Available at: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/escalating-terrorism-problem-united-states>.

<sup>5</sup>Office of the Director of National Intelligence. “Annual threat assessment of the US intelligence community” (April, 2021). Available at: <https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/ATA-2021-Unclassified-Report.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup>Department of Homeland Security. “Homeland threat assessment” (August, 2020). Available at: [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2020\\_10\\_06\\_homeland-threat-assessment.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2020_10_06_homeland-threat-assessment.pdf).

<sup>7</sup>Wolfe, J. “U.S. domestic terrorism investigations have more than doubled-FBI director.” *Reuters* (September 21, 2021). Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/us-domestic-terrorism-investigations-have-more-than-doubled-fbi-director-2021-09-21/>; Also see Miller, M. (2021). September 21). *Wray says FBI Domestic Terrorism Caseload has ‘exploded’ since last year. The Hill.* Available at: <https://thehill.com/policy/technology/573285-wray-says-fbi-domestic-terrorism-caseload-has-exploded-since-last-year>.

<sup>8</sup>Europol. “European Union terrorism situation and trend report 2021” (2021). Available at: [https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/tesat\\_2021\\_0.pdf](https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/tesat_2021_0.pdf).

<sup>9</sup>Miller-Idriss, C. “From 9/11 to 1/6: The War on Terror Supercharged the Far Right.” *Foreign Affairs* (September/October, 2021). Available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-08-24/war-on-terror-911-jan6>.

<sup>10</sup>Institute for Economics & Peace. “Global terrorism index 2020: Measuring the impact of terrorism” (November, 2020).

<sup>11</sup>Jones, S.G. et al. “The military, police, and the rise of terrorism in the United States” Center for Strategic and International Studies (April, 2021). Available at: [The Military, Police, and the Rise of Terrorism in the United States/Center for Strategic and International Studies \(csis.org\)](https://www.csis.org/analysis/the-military-police-and-the-rise-of-terrorism-in-the-united-states).

previously disparate ideologies in on-line extremist networks,<sup>12</sup> including across far-right accelerationist and Salafi-Jihadi extremist groups.<sup>13</sup> A new report from the UK-based International Center for the Study of Radicalization (ICSR) traces convergence in common beliefs and frameworks between neo-fascist accelerationists and Salafi-Jihadists that includes shared support for anti-Semitism, belief in a natural hierarchy, racial and cultural supremacism, anti-modernism, heteronormativity and traditional family structures, and anti-Government sentiment. There is cross-movement admiration, especially from far-right accelerationists toward Salafi-Jihadists, whose “militant successes” they see as clear evidence for the possibility of the success of committed traditional goals and violent tactics against Western governments.

Both DVE and international terrorist groups, in other words, are united by an overlapping set of beliefs involving supremacist hierarchies that falsely claim inferiority and superiority between groups of people and promote anti-democratic beliefs that support authoritarianism, refuse to protect minority rights, or reject other core tenets of democracy (like freedoms of speech and press or the rule of law). They share commitments to misogyny and male supremacism, anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, xenophobia, and anti-Government beliefs. These extremist ideologies are also often rooted in conspiratorial and fantastical beliefs about calls for restoration (of the Caliphate or a White ethnostate) and a desire for a post-apocalyptic, post-race-war civilization. This vision includes an obligation to use violence as a solution to accelerate the end times through the collapse of social, political, and economic systems that will precede the Phoenix-like rebirth of a new civilization.

The increasing blurriness of divisions across previously separate ideological movements—as well as actual coalitions that are emerging in spontaneous and planned ways across distinct groups and movements—challenge traditional counterterrorism approaches that that rely on distinct groups that can be infiltrated, surveilled, and monitored over time.<sup>14</sup> Ideologically, this kind of hybridization and blurriness is being revealed in many ways. For example, recently far-right extremists have simultaneously valorized the Unabomber<sup>15</sup> and praised the Taliban.<sup>16</sup> A re-launched White supremacist group announced a new “Bolshevik focus”<sup>17</sup> calling for the liquidation of the capitalist class. A burgeoning ecofascist youth subculture—spread largely through social media imageboard accounts and commercial merchandise—celebrates nature worship and rootedness within a physical homeland while calling for a White ethnostate. Some anti-Government “Boogaloo” (code for civil war) adherents who advocate a new civil war marched alongside 2020 racial injustice protesters because of shared anger at law enforcement.<sup>18</sup>

In many ways, the phenomenon is nothing new. Extremist scenes and movements have experienced internal fissures, infighting and fragmentation for years due to differences in beliefs about tactics (such as the use of violence), conflicting views on parts of their ideology (such as about Jews and Whiteness) or restrictions on who can be members (such as women). Increasingly, this conflict is occurring not just across relatively bounded groups but among a broad muddling of ideological beliefs within domestic and international extremist scenes, movements, and individuals.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Criezis, M. and Hughes, B. “Erstwhile allies and community convergence: a preliminary study of online interactions between Salafi-Jihadists and white supremacists” *Global Network on Extremism & Technology* (August 31, 2021). Available at: <https://gnet-research.org/2021/08/31/erstwhile-allies-and-community-convergence-a-preliminary-study-of-online-interactions-between-salafi-jihadists-and-white-supremacists/>.

<sup>13</sup> International Center for the Study of Radicalization. “‘One struggle’: examining narrative syncretism between Salafi-Jihadists” (January 26, 2022). Available at: <https://icsr.info/2022/01/26/one-struggle-examining-narrative-syncretism-between-accelerationists-and-salafi%E2%80%99jihadists/>.

<sup>14</sup> This section of testimony adapts recent work covered in Miller-Idriss, C. and Hughes, B. “Blurry ideologies and strange coalitions: the landscape of domestic extremism” *Lawfare* (December 19, 2021) Available at: <https://www.lawfareblog.com/blurry-ideologies-and-strange-coalitions-evolving-landscape-domestic-extremism>.

<sup>15</sup> Christ, K. “Why right-wing extremists love the Unabomber” *Lawfare* (October 17, 2021). Available at: <https://www.lawfareblog.com/why-right-wing-extremists-love-unabomber>.

<sup>16</sup> Sands, G. “White supremacist praise of the Taliban takeover concerns US officials,” *CNN* (September 1, 2022). Available at: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/01/politics/far-right-groups-praise-taliban-takeover/index.html>.

<sup>17</sup> The Soufan Center “IntelBrief: salad bar redux: is Heimbach’s extremism emblematic of the current threat landscape?” (July 29, 2021). Available at: <https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2021-july-29/>.

<sup>18</sup> Bellingcat “The Boogaloo movement is not what you think” (May 27, 2020) Available at: <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2020/05/27/the-boogaloo-movement-is-not-what-you-think/>.

<sup>19</sup> Hughes, B. “A long wolf in the hypertext: radicalization online” University of California: Santa Barbara *global-e* (August 10, 2017) Available at: <https://globalejournal.org/global-e/august-2017/lone-wolf-hypertext-radicalization-online>.

These trends are different from previous iterations of extremist fracture and reformation. We are seeing a fragmentation and reassembling of groups and movements that are willing to unite for specific reasons even when their overall objectives do not align. The transformation is taking place both organizationally and in ad hoc, or “post-organizational” forms.<sup>20</sup> On the organizational side, political violence is emerging from a loose new coalition that spans the extremist spectrum in ways that confuse the ideological basis typically understood to be at the root of terrorist and extremist violence. On the post-organizational side, exposure to extremist content on-line and radicalization to ideologies and violence outside the boundaries of organized groups is increasing.<sup>21</sup> Through on-line encounters with propaganda, disinformation and extremist ideas, individuals are increasingly able to access extremist content and become radicalized without needing group membership or interaction.

There are at least 4 reasons for the increased muddling of ideological rationales:

- the increasing ability of cross-ideological concepts to mobilize violence
- rising event-driven violence
- tactical convergence and cross-group learning around accelerationism, and transformations in communication infrastructure (e.g. on-line ecosystems).

Mobilizing concepts refer to ideas that have a simultaneous call to action.<sup>22</sup> They are different from traditional ideological frameworks, which are rooted in more clearly articulated beliefs or theories about how political or economic systems should work, such as anarchism, communism, or fascism. Mobilizing concepts, on the contrary, can be applied to a wide range of ideological frames or justifications. They include the notion of the “Boogaloo” (a code word for a second civil war), the concept of the “three percenters” (based on the false claim that it took only 3 percent of colonists to rise up against the British), and the idea of a threat to “Western values.” All three justifications have the potential to mobilize significant cross-ideological support around a concept, rather than an ideology. These kinds of concepts can draw people together into violent action even when they do not agree on specific ideological beliefs.

Event-driven political violence and extremism refers to relatively spontaneous coalitions across ideological groups and movements that emerge around a common protest or demonstration. State and National protests related to coronavirus mandates or second Amendment protests are examples, as is the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. Event-driven ideological coalitions emerge based on opportunities to assemble larger groups of people by focusing on the lowest common denominator that unites them, thereby creating a temporary convergence across different extremist ideologies and groups.

It’s not only concepts and events that lead to cross-ideological muddiness and coalition building. There has also been increasing strategic and tactical convergence across ideologies, especially around the idea of accelerationism.<sup>23</sup> Accelerationism is a goal and a tactic drawn on by a variety of movements that are united around the objective of overthrowing the country’s prevailing political and social order.<sup>24</sup> Anarchists may promote the tactic to accelerate violence against capitalism or law enforcement, while anti-Government extremists may use it to target elected officials or Government buildings. Accelerationist objectives converge around the idea of inspiration; their promoters see their goals not as mere terrorist retaliation or intimidation but, rather, as focused on inspiring others to undertake similar violence and accelerate the collapse of systems that extremists believe must be demolished and reconstructed. As a strategic orientation, the tactic has been growing across the political and ideological spectrum.

Fourth and finally, the new information infrastructure has also helped muddle ideological rationales. Today, extremist content is readily available on-line, in the form of manifestos, memes, videos, and audio that anyone can produce and share. Everyone is just a few clicks away from an ever-expanding series of rabbit holes

<sup>20</sup> Ghul, J. and Davey, J. “A safe space to hate: white supremacist mobilisation on Telegram” Institute for Strategic Dialogue (February 16, 2021) Available at: <https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/A-Safe-Space-to-Hate.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> Comerford, M. “Confronting the challenge of ‘post-organisational’ extremism” Observer Research Foundation (August 19, 2020) available at: <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/confronting-the-challenge-of-post-organisational-extremism/>.

<sup>22</sup> Miller-Idriss, C. and Hughes, B. *Lawfare* (December 19, 2021)

<sup>23</sup> Miller-Idriss, C. and Hughes, B. “Uniting for total collapse: the January 6 boost to accelerationism” *CTC Sentinel* 14(4) (April/May, 2021). Available at: <https://ctc.usma.edu/uniting-for-total-collapse-the-january-6-boost-to-accelerationism/>.

<sup>24</sup> Hughes, B. “Pine tree Twitter’ and the shifting ideological foundations of eco-extremism” *Interventionen* (14) (2019) Available at: [Interventionen—14-2019.pdf](https://www.interventionen.de/Interventionen-14-2019.pdf) (violence-prevention-network.de).

that offer up whole worlds of disinformation and hate. Digital media shapes how people encounter and share ideological content, propaganda, and disinformation that can mobilize to violence.<sup>25</sup> For example, the broad use of hyperlinks, algorithmic recommendation systems, and other features of on-line technology make it much easier for someone with a grievance to leapfrog from left-wing environmental extremism to conspiracy theories to anti-civilizational deep ecology<sup>26</sup> to far-right “National anarchism”<sup>27</sup> to the “Boogaloo movement” and beyond. Increasingly, ideological motivations for terrorist and extremist violence follow a ‘choose-your-own-adventure’ approach in which individuals accumulate an ever-evolving set of fragmented ideological commitments, extremist identities, and conspiracy beliefs.

In addition to these overarching trends, it is worth noting that global conflicts—as always—also play a role in these kinds of spontaneous and evolving mobilizations. The escalating conflict between Ukraine and Russia, for example, is being actively discussed in encrypted White supremacist extremist channels on-line in ways that raise concerns. Like other global geopolitical conflicts, the Ukraine-Russia situation creates an opportunity for extremists to leverage momentum to recruit White supremacist foreign fighters who seek training to use “back home.” These foreign fighters want to meet one another and network, to mobilize and recruit others, and otherwise intensify their engagement to the cause. The looming conflict has created an opportunity for extremists to spread anti-Semitic conspiracies about a so-called Jewish plot against Russia or a “Jewish war” that pits Whites against Whites. We should be alert to other potential ripple effects for extremist groups, particularly given the transnational nature of on-line communication across White supremacist extremist groups.

#### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The rapid transformations in on-line extremist communications and the on-going fragmentation and blurriness across various ideologies challenge current counter-extremism approaches. As violence becomes more spontaneous, less organized, and more tied to on-line radicalization, terrorist acts become harder to prevent with strategies that rely on countering organized plots and identifying formal group hierarchies. Counterextremism tools designed to address threats from fringe groups—as they currently exist—cannot meaningfully confront the evolved threats we face today without a broader, multisectoral, whole-of-society commitment to prevention and early intervention.

Our country requires serious investment in strategies to reduce the fertile ground in which anti-democratic and violent extremist ideologies thrive—through what are known as public health approaches to preventing violent extremism.<sup>28</sup> In the medical world, experts have learned that it is not sufficient to only treat the symptoms of diseases like diabetes or cardiac disease once they appear—rather, communities work to educate everyone through public health classes and campaigns that teach the behavioral and attitudinal choices people can make about diet and exercise that can reduce their vulnerability to diseases. The same is true for prevention of terrorism. We can build more resilient communities that recognize and reject disinformation, propaganda, and reduce the fertile ground in which violent extremism thrives. To do this, Congress must take immediate steps to build multi-agency and multi-sectoral initiatives that work to prevent radicalization to violence and intervene by creating early off-ramps in radicalization processes. This includes investments in proven inoculation strategies that reduce people’s vulnerability to both the ideologies and the persuasive tactics of extremist groups and movements. We need scalable interventions to reduce people’s vulnerability to on-line propaganda, anti-Semitic and other conspiracy theories, and other forms of on-line manipulation, including through digital and media literacy training. We also need to work to reduce high rates of polarization and the kinds of moral disengagement and dehumanization that are demonstrated precursors to political violence. Federal, State, and local governments should be funding serious and sustained educational and community

<sup>25</sup> Hughes, B. “The storm and the web: communication technology and the ecumenical far right” University of Oslo C-REX—Center for Research on Extremism (January 26, 2021) Available at: <https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/news-and-events/right-now/2020/the-storm-and-the-web.html>.

<sup>26</sup> Institute for Social Ecology “Theses on social ecology and deep ecology” (August 1, 1995) Available at: <https://social-ecology.org/wp/1995/08/theses-on-social-ecology-and-deep-ecology/>.

<sup>27</sup> Macklin, G. “Co-opting the counter culture: Troy Southgate and the National Revolutionary Faction” *Patterns of Prejudice* 39(3) (September, 2005).

<sup>28</sup> Miller-Idriss, C. “America’s most urgent threat now comes from within” *New York Times* (January 5, 2022) Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/05/opinion/jan-6-domestic-extremism.html>.

prevention and intervention programming, along with a reinvestment in civic education and other efforts to strengthen democratic norms and values. We also need to commit to trans-Atlantic and global collaboration and mutual learning on these shared challenges, by regularly communicating not only about law enforcement and intelligence strategies, but also about prevention and intervention approaches. There are good lessons from the multi-agency, multi-sectoral, whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approaches that our allies have taken, especially in New Zealand, Germany, and Norway, from which we can learn as we create and adapt strategies of our own.

These kinds of interventions are not an immediate fix to the growing problem of extremist violence and terrorism—rather, they reflect a need for investments across the short, medium, and longer terms. And it is important to note that these are not options that involve censorship or teaching ideological beliefs in any way—after all, no one wants the Federal Government to be engaged in policing people’s beliefs. But the U.S. Government’s focus on using conventional counterterrorism tools alone fails to account for the current, unchecked spread of disinformation and conspiracy theories, propaganda targeting racial and religious minorities and the increasing dehumanization of those with whom one disagrees.<sup>29</sup> Such precursors to violence need to be addressed by modernized counterterrorism tools and frameworks created specifically to address the threats to this Nation laid out in this testimony.

#### CONCLUSION

In sum, there is clear convergence across the extremist and terrorist spectrum in supremacist and anti-Government beliefs, along with cross-ideological commitments to anti-Semitism, misogyny, and xenophobia. These areas of convergence are part of what fuel increasingly blurry ideologies and the emergence of strange coalitions across previously distinct groups, as more and more people encounter fragmented bits of ideologies on-line and mobilize around common grievances and events where spontaneous and planned violence can occur.

Policy makers will not be able to solve today—or tomorrow’s—extremism with the surveillance and securitized tools honed in yesterday’s battles. We must refocus those tools and broaden our efforts to include early prevention of—and intervention in—pressing extremist threats, with direct investments that work to reduce such threats to democracy in the first place. Understanding the nature of the evolving problem is an essential first step toward those goals.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. I now ask Mr. Roggio to summarize his statement for 5 minutes. I hope I didn’t do you too much harm in my pronunciation.

#### **STATEMENT OF BILL ROGGIO, SENIOR FELLOW, FOUNDATION FOR DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACIES**

Mr. ROGGIO. Thank you, sir. No, it is just fine. It is Roggio. Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Katko, and distinguished Members of this committee, and my fellow panel members, thank you for this invitation to speak on this very important issue. In addition to being a senior fellow at Foundation for Defense of Democracies, I also edit the FDD’s *Long War Journal*. This is where we document and track the war on terror, not just Jihadist groups and their operations, but what state sponsors and terrorists are doing.

One of the things you all are probably very familiar with my work even though you don’t know it. If you were watching Afghanistan over the summer and all of the news outlets were running a map, that was something I created beginning in 2014, because I saw the flawed U.S. counterinsurgency strategy and Afghan counterinsurgency strategy. They were ceding ground to the Taliban, which allowed them to build their insurgency. So, when our leadership stands up and they tell this to Congress and they have said,

<sup>29</sup> Miller-Idriss, C. “White supremacist extremism and the far right in the U.S.” Gale (2021). Available at: <https://www.gale.com/intl/essays/cynthia-miller-idriss-white-supremacist-extremism-far-right-us>.

we couldn't have foreseen the failure in Afghanistan, no one knew it was happening. That is untrue. That is false. My colleague Thomas Jocelyn and I, we understood exactly what was happening. We predicted the failure in negotiations. We documented the ties between the Taliban and al-Qaeda, and the support for Pakistan and Iran in the Taliban's operations. You know, we did this over the course of time. So, this is where I base a lot of my work from.

The threat posed by international terrorist organizations has increased over the past year as the U.S. continues to disengage from multiple theatres. Nowhere is this more visible than in Afghanistan, where the United States precipitously pulled out. Afghanistan is now a terrorist safe haven. The withdrawal from Afghanistan was disastrous on many levels. The United States now has virtually no capabilities. I will call it very limited capabilities to strike our enemies there, as well as enemies that were in Pakistan. We should all remember the U.S.-inserted drone campaign under the Bush and Obama administrations that targeted top al-Qaeda leaders. Al-Qaeda is still in Pakistan and it has never left Afghanistan and we have virtually no ability to strike them there.

Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaeda's emir, who was the deputy emir on 9/11, 20 years after 9/11, he is still alive and he is somewhere between Afghanistan and Pakistan and we have limited ability to target him. The Taliban and al-Qaeda they have withstood 20 years of war against the superpower and they have come out on top. The withdrawal has given al-Qaeda and its allies a massive propaganda victory. The Islamic-Emirate of Afghanistan, that is the name the Taliban call—that is what the Taliban called itself up to the day of 9/11 until the United States rejected it, it has been restored. That was the goal of the Taliban all the time and we refused to recognize this.

The Taliban are not our "partners", and I use partners in quotes, as CENTCOM Commander General Frank McKenzie has referred to them. The Taliban remain closely allied with al-Qaeda. Sirajuddin Haqqani, the deputy emir of the Taliban and its current interior minister, he was described by the United Nations early to mid-last year as an al-Qaeda leader. This is the deputy emir of the Taliban and it is the head of its interior ministry. He is an al-Qaeda leader as the United Nations calls him. The links between the Taliban and al-Qaeda run deep. Those links aren't just with the Haqqanis. There are other key Taliban subgroups that have close ties to al-Qaeda.

The Islamic State, it appears to be making a comeback in Iraq and Syria. We all witnessed this over the last 2 weeks with the al-Sina'a prison break. This should open our eyes to the rising threat. Al-Qaeda prior to the Islamic State, it was part of al-Qaeda and in Iraq, and it replenished its ranks using very similar operations after the U.S. surge ended in 2011. So, after the United States exited Iraq, the Islamic State or al-Qaeda, the Islamic State, began targeting prisons inside of Iraq. They have been conducting operations just like we saw in al-Sina'a. They replenished the ranks and within 3 years they were in control of a territory in Iraq and Syria the size of Britain.

Iran and Pakistan, the world's two largest state sponsors of terrorism, even though Pakistan isn't officially called that, they

should be. It should be. They have won in Afghanistan. Pakistan support through the Taliban is well-known. Iran is less so. I recently testified in Federal court in a trial where U.S. service members who were wounded or family members of those killed sued Iran for its support for the Taliban. I can tell you that support is significant. Iran provided the Taliban safe havens, weapons, finances, and training. Both countries remain the world's premier state sponsor of terrorism. This is something we ignore at our own peril.

I have a graphic that shows Iran how it shelters top al-Qaeda leaders. This graphic is from U.S. designations that began during the Obama administration and continued under the Trump administration. These leaders have been designated by State and Treasury Department. Also, I believe it was the Treasury Department detailed a—this is a direct quote: “A secret deal” between Iran and the Taliban that allowed—I’m sorry—Iran and al-Qaeda that allowed al-Qaeda to operate inside of Iran in exchange for al-Qaeda not targeting Iranian interests.

This agreement remains in effect to today. It is mentioned in the 2021 State Department's country reports on terrorism. Again, this isn't something that just came from the Trump administration or the Bush administration. It was detailed under the Obama administration and that report was issued by the Biden administration.

Somalia and Mali are in danger of becoming the next Afghanistan. Jihad in the Western Sub-Saharan Africa is blossoming. Meanwhile, we are rudderless and devoid of leadership in this war. The desire to end these so-called endless wars has spanned three administrations. When your No. 1 goal is to disengage, your enemy has the initiative. We have lost the initiative for years. We have pretended our enemies aren't our enemies, such as the Taliban. We have refused to recognize links between our enemies because it was politically expedient to do so. Twenty years after 9/11, we still can't properly define our enemies or recognize our enemies' goals and objectives. Afghanistan is case in point here. We wanted to leave Afghanistan. The desired policy was to leave. We pretended the Taliban wasn't our enemy. We pretended that the Taliban wasn't linked to al-Qaeda, and then we witnessed that horrific withdrawal over the summer. The Taliban is now back in control. Al-Qaeda now has safe haven.

We must have accountability especially from our military and intelligence leadership. Again, Afghanistan case in point. There is numerous incidences where the U.S. military has failed and not a single commander has paid a price for this. Until we have accountability, we will not be able to succeed in this war. If you think that what happened in Afghanistan remains in Afghanistan, you haven't been paying attention. Our military leadership, our intelligence leadership, they are going to have to deal with threats such as China and Russia and the lessons they have learned over the last 2 decades is that accountability is not an issue for them. These are the people that may have to deal with crisis in the Ukraine or China. We should all be worried about that. Thank you for your time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Roggio follows:]



## PREPARED STATEMENT OF BILL ROGGIO

## INTRODUCTION

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Katko, and other Members of the committee, thank you for inviting me here today to speak about the dynamic terrorism landscape and what it means for America.

As the American foreign policy establishment has shifted its focus from international terror organizations to great power competition with China and Russia, the terrorism threat has not receded. In some cases, it has intensified. To be clear, the challenges created by America's enemies and adversaries such as China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea must be addressed. However, we turn our back on the dangers posed by Islamic terror groups at our peril.

Make no mistake, withdrawing from conflicts against terrorist groups has not ended what has been wrongly called the "endless wars." Disengaging from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, and other countries has strengthened our enemies. Our withdrawal has given our enemies new life. Our enemies are waging an endless jihad, one where they seek to overthrow existing Muslim governments and establish emirates, with the ultimate goal of imposing a reborn Islamic caliphate. These emirates would be extremely hostile to America and would give terror groups safe haven, which the 9/11 Commission identified as a key element that allowed al-Qaeda to execute its deadly attack against the American homeland. Today, al-Qaeda has safe havens in several countries, including Afghanistan, Somalia, and Mali. And al-Qaeda continues to benefit from state sponsorship of terrorism, with Iran and Pakistan topping the list.

As wrong and counterproductive as the "endless war" narrative is, the desire to end the conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, and elsewhere is understandable, as America has spent an enormous amount of blood, treasure, and political capital since al-Qaeda attacked us on September 11, 2001, and killed nearly 3,000 of our countrymen. Poor political, military, and intelligence leadership, compounded by bad strategy and weak allies and partners, has led to exhaustion amongst our political class. Since 2009, the primary impulse among three successive administrations was to disengage from these so-called endless wars. Victory, they believed, or even holding the line against our jihadist enemies, is no longer feasible.

We can argue the merits of overthrowing Saddam Hussein, ousting the Taliban and standing up a now-defunct Afghan government, or supporting the weak Somali government. But once engaged in these conflicts, it was in America's interests to see them through and not to abandon partners, as imperfect as they are, to satisfy political expediency.

## NEGOTIATING WITH THE TALIBAN AND THE WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

The Trump's administration's decision to negotiate with the Taliban, and the Biden administration's decision to quickly withdraw U.S. forces without giving the Afghan government ample time to prepare, was disastrous. Both decisions directly led to the collapse of the Afghan government and military and the loss of a key partner in the region.

President Trump's negotiations with the Taliban, which excluded the Afghan government, legitimized the Taliban in the international community. The negotiations also delegitimized the Afghan government both at home and abroad. These negotiations were predicated on the ideas that the Taliban would negotiate in good faith and join an Afghan government, respect its constitution, and preserve women's rights, all while acting as a reliable counterterrorism partner against al-Qaeda and other international terror groups. As we all witnessed last summer, these assumptions were false. The Taliban always sought to regain full control of Afghanistan and re-establish its emirate. It achieved these goals with the help of al-Qaeda and allied terror groups, all who played a key role in the Taliban's summer offensive.

President Biden doubled down on President Trump's misguided deal with the Taliban by following through on it. Biden hastily withdrew U.S. forces as the Taliban launched its offensive to seize the country. The Afghan government was not prepared—it just did not believe America would abandon it after 20 years of commitment—and was routed within 4 months from the day Biden announced the withdrawal. An unknown number of American citizens and residents—hundreds, if not thousands—and tens of thousands of Afghans who helped America's efforts to establish a democracy remain trapped in Afghanistan, at the mercy of the Taliban. They are essentially hostages.

The United States withdrawal from Afghanistan led to the immediate collapse of the Afghan government and military and the swift return to power of the Taliban, which calls its government the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. This is the same

name the Taliban used for its previous regime, under which al-Qaeda plotted and executed the 9/11 attacks from Afghan soil. The Taliban's alliance with al-Qaeda has not been broken, but in fact has strengthened as it was forged in 20 years of war against the United States and its allies. Afghanistan is again a safe haven for al-Qaeda.

Setting aside the very serious issues of Taliban control of Afghanistan and al-Qaeda's safe haven there, America's abandonment of Afghanistan has had second- and third-order effects on America's allies, adversaries, and enemies. American's adversaries and enemies now sense weakness and are seeking to drive wedges between America and her allies. The desire to end the so-called endless war in Afghanistan has called into question America's commitment to its allies and its leadership on the global stage.

#### AL-QAEDA

More than 20 years after 9/11, al-Qaeda possesses a potent global network. It maintains branches in the Arabian Peninsula, the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia, and its network remains embedded in many other countries. Al-Qaeda continues to maintain effective insurgencies in multiple countries, while using these bases to plot attacks against our homeland and our allies. The Taliban's victory in Afghanistan has been a boon for al-Qaeda. The next generation of al-Qaeda leaders, military commanders, and operatives are taking the field while key elements of the old guard remain to guide them. Despite a concerted manhunt of over 20 years, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who was Osama bin Laden's deputy on September 11, 2001, and took control of al-Qaeda after bin Laden's death in May 2011, remains alive and in control of al-Qaeda's global network.

While much of the attention in the press and in counterterrorism circles remains focused on the Islamic State due to the group's exceptional brutality, al-Qaeda is ultimately the more dangerous enemy. The Islamic State's demand of absolute fealty to its emir and its organization, along with the group's unwillingness to work with State sponsors of terror, limits its ability to expand. Al-Qaeda's patient approach and willingness to compromise have allowed its top leaders to operate from Iran and facilitated the Taliban's victory in Afghanistan.

In addition to Afghanistan, al-Qaeda maintains safe havens in several countries. Syria's Idlib province hosts both Hurras al-Din, an al-Qaeda branch, and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, a jihadist faction allied with al-Qaeda. The U.S. military occasionally targets al-Qaeda leaders and commanders in Idlib province.

In Yemen, al-Qaeda's local branch, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, or AQAP, controls rural areas of the country. AQAP has plotted several attacks against the U.S. homeland over the past two decades. Most recently, it claimed credit for a December 6, 2019, shooting at Naval Air Station Pensacola that killed 3 people.

In Somalia, al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda's branch in East Africa, controls significant portions of southern and central Somalia. The U.S. Government withdrew its forces from Somalia in January 2021 and is conducting "over-the-horizon" operations to keep al-Shabaab at bay. Military operations by the United States, Kenya, and the African Union, the latter of which is losing its will to fight in Somalia, are all that is keeping al-Shabaab from controlling all of southern and central Somalia, as it did between 2008 and 2011. In Mali, the French are close to withdrawing their forces, putting the already fragile security situation in central Mali in peril.

These terrorist successes put our homeland at increased risk. With safe havens and the ability to draw on local resources to fund its operations, it is only a matter of time before al-Qaeda and the Islamic State use these advantages to attempt to execute another deadly attack against the U.S. homeland or American interests across the globe.

#### THE ISLAMIC STATE OF IRAQ AND SYRIA

In Iraq and Syria, the Islamic State, or ISIS, as it is more commonly known, is making a comeback after losing overt control of its last town in Syria in 2019. Insurgent attacks in both countries have increased over the past year as ISIS regenerates its strength. Lest this be dismissed, we have seen this happen before, between early 2012 after the United States withdrew from Iraq, and mid-2013, when ISIS, which was then still part of al-Qaeda, stepped up its operations following setbacks during the American "surge" in Iraq. To increase its combat power, the group attacked prisons to free thousands of its fighters. We just witnessed this happen at the al-Sina prison in northeastern Syria. Hundreds of ISIS fighters assaulted the prison, seized nearby neighborhoods, sprung an unknown number of prisoners, and fought the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces for over a week.

Outside of Iraq and Syria, the Islamic State maintains a robust network, particularly in Africa, where it has subsumed elements of al-Qaeda's network, such as in Nigeria, Mozambique, the Sahel, and Sub-Saharan Africa. One year ago, the Islamic State's branch in Mozambique took control of the city of Palma and held it for 10 days. In 2017, the Islamic State battled Filipino security forces for 5 months for control for the city of Mawari. The Islamic State also has a presence in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but it is dwarfed by the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban as well as by al-Qaeda and allied groups. America's focus on the Islamic State's network in Afghanistan as its primary enemy contributed to the Taliban's victory.

#### STATE SPONSORS OF TERRORISM

Like safe havens, state sponsorship of terrorism is a key factor that allows terror groups to survive and thrive. Iran and Pakistan are the world's two leading state sponsors of terrorism.

Iran's support for Islamist terrorists, both Sunni and Shiite, continues unabated. Iran continues to shelter top al-Qaeda leaders, including the group's deputy emir. Since 2011, the U.S. Government has highlighted the "secret deal" that has allowed Iran "to funnel funds and operatives [to al-Qaeda] through its territory." With this deal in effect, al-Qaeda continues to use Iran as a regional hub while being sheltered from U.S. reprisal. The agreement, according to the U.S. Treasury Department, specified that al-Qaeda

"must refrain from conducting any operations within Iranian territory and recruiting operatives inside Iran while keeping Iranian authorities informed of their activities. In return, the government of Iran gave the Iran-based al-Qa'ida network freedom of operation and uninhibited ability to travel for extremists and their families. Al-Qa'ida members who violate these terms run the risk of being detained by Iranian authorities."

Multiple al-Qaeda leaders who have operated or continue to operate from Iran have been designated as global terrorists. The U.S. State Department, in its 2021 Country Reports on Terrorism, noted that the Iran-al-Qaeda deal remains in effect to this day.

Direct evidence of the Iran-al-Qaeda deal was on full display on August 7, 2020, when Israeli operatives killed Abu Mohammad al-Masri in Tehran. Masri was wanted by the U.S. Government for the past 3 decades for his role in the 1998 Kenya and Tanzania embassy bombings. Masri was not an ordinary al-Qaeda leader: He was the terror group's second in command and likely successor to Ayman al-Zawahiri. While in Tehran, Masri "had been living freely in the Pasdaran district of Tehran, an upscale suburb, since at least 2015," according to *The New York Times*. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps provided him with security.

Iran also played a significant role in the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan. In October 2021, I was an expert witness in *Cabrera v. Iran* and detailed how Iran provided safe haven, weapons, financial support, and training to both the Taliban and al-Qaeda. In *Cabrera v. Iran*, the families of American soldiers and civilians who were killed or wounded by the Taliban sued the Iranian government for supporting Taliban and al-Qaeda violence in Afghanistan.

Iran also continues to support a bevy of Shiite militias and terror groups throughout the Middle East. Lebanese Hezbollah, which directly threatens Israel and U.S. interests throughout the Middle East, remains Iran's premier terror proxy. In Iraq, Tehran supports a multitude of militias, including the Hezbollah Brigades and Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, which are both listed by the U.S. Government as Foreign Terrorist Organizations and are collectively responsible for killing more than 600 U.S. soldiers. One day, these Iraqi militias will likely eclipse Hezbollah. The Houthis in Yemen control half of the country with the help of the Iranians and are responsible for one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

Pakistan, which has played a double game with the United States and was complicit in the killing of thousands of American and allied soldiers in Afghanistan, played a key role in the Taliban's takeover of the country. While Iran played a crucial role in aiding the Taliban, Pakistan's use of the Taliban as its proxy was decisive. Pakistan provided the Taliban with safe haven, weapons, financial support, training, and other key forms of aid. Taliban leaders and their families, as well as Taliban military commanders and fighters, lived in Pakistan with the knowledge and support of the Pakistani state. While political reasons have prevented the U.S. Government from listing the Pakistani government as a state sponsor of terrorism, Pakistan meets all of the requirements to be listed as such.

Pakistan myopically supports a host of terrorist groups on its own territory as well as in Afghanistan and India to further its goals in the region. Pakistan backs

these groups even though they are allied with and aid the very terrorist groups that fight the Pakistani state. In addition, many of the jihadist groups sponsored by Pakistan are allied with al-Qaeda. Groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, Harakat-ul-Mujahideen, and Jaish-e-Mohammed, which wage jihad in Afghanistan and India, continue to receive support from the Pakistani state.

Pakistan's victory in Afghanistan is worrying. The lesson that Pakistan has learned is that supporting terror groups to advance its foreign-policy goals pays well. The United States delivered to Pakistan more than \$30 billion in military and economic aid since 9/11 even as Pakistan sponsored our enemies. Pakistan used some of these funds to finance the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan.

#### U.S. EFFORTS TO DEFEAT TERROR GROUPS HAVE FAILED

After 2 decades of war, counterterrorism and counterinsurgency actions, sanctions, policing, and legal proceedings, America and her allies have failed to defeat al-Qaeda, the Islamic State, and other terror groups that threaten us. The threat posed by jihadist groups has expanded, not contracted. Al-Qaeda's geographic footprint across the globe has increased dramatically since 9/11, while its bastard child, the Islamic State, vies for leadership of the global jihad and expands into countries previously untouched by the fighting. Meanwhile, state sponsors of terrorism such as Iran and Pakistan have paid little to no price for their continuing support of jihadist groups.

Regime change, democracy promotion, counterinsurgency, and support of local partners, once hailed as the solution to our problems, have failed spectacularly. The Taliban regained control of Afghanistan less than 20 years after the U.S. invasion. Iraqi security forces collapsed under the weight of the al-Qaeda and Islamic State offensive, which opened the door for Iran to enter the war and regain significant influence in Iraq. In Syria, the United States had so few options that it was forced to back the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, a U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization. To hide this fact, the United States relabeled the group the "Syrian Democratic Forces." The Marxist PKK is anything but democratic. The U.S.-backed Somali government is in danger of falling to al-Qaeda's regional branch.

The United States has had limited tactical success in conducting counterterrorism operations. Occasionally, key leaders are killed in airstrikes or limited raids. However, counterterrorism operations are a tactic, not a strategy. As our enemies gain more ground and we pull back, our ability to conduct these operations is diminished, in some cases significantly. The U.S. military and the CIA were able to execute the raid to kill Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan, because they had a presence in Afghanistan. Numerous top al-Qaeda leaders were killed in drone strikes inside Pakistan and in raids in Afghanistan. With the United States no longer in Afghanistan, our ability to target al-Qaeda's leadership has dropped to nearly zero. Al-Qaeda emir Ayman al-Zawahiri is undoubtedly operating in Pakistan or Afghanistan. Other top al-Qaeda leaders also continue to operate from the region.

Perhaps more importantly, the United States has failed on two other fronts: We have failed to understand the nature of our enemies, and we have refused to wage an ideological war against them. Again, Afghanistan is case in point. Carter Malkasian, who served as a key adviser both to General Joseph Dunford when he was chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff and to General Austin Miller when he was commander of Operation Resolute Support and U.S. Forces Afghanistan, penned an article last summer wherein he admitted that he and the U.S. military leadership failed to understand the Taliban harbored deeply-held religious motivations that drove its strategy and objectives. It is no wonder the U.S. Government was keen to negotiate with the Taliban and trusted it to be an effective counterterrorism partner. It is no wonder why we lost Afghanistan.

This refusal to acknowledge our enemies' religious motivations has led us to neglect the ideological component of counterterrorism, leaving that playing field almost entirely to our adversaries. The U.S. Government and military are fearful of recognizing our enemies' religious motivations, lest they be branded as "Islamophobes." This has allowed al-Qaeda, the Islamic Front, and other terror groups to dominate the narrative and effectively recruit and indoctrinate fighters.

America has the lost will to prosecute the fight. Our leaders are no longer accountable for their failures. This has particularly disturbing repercussions for our military. Not a single general was held to account for the massive tactical and strategic failures that we witnessed last spring and summer in Afghanistan. Our current and next generations of military leaders have learned that failure will not be punished. This is toxic and will have negative implications in future fights, perhaps with more serious and dangerous enemies such as Russia or China.

## A PATH FORWARD

Without a major attack on the U.S. homeland to refocus our minds, I am highly pessimistic about our ability to correct course in what used to be known as the War on Terror. But if we are to regain our footing, we must, at the minimum, do the following:

- Place facts and objective assessments over desired policy outcomes. Unfortunately, in Washington, the desire to end the so-called endless wars has driven our policy, and the facts about our enemies were modified to achieve desired policy goals.
- Refocus our efforts to analyze and understand our enemies and their objectives, strategy, tactics, and relationships. This analysis must be based on facts, not on preferred narratives.
- Hold leaders in the military and intelligence services accountable. After 9/11, not a single intelligence official resigned or was fired. Instead, they were rewarded. Fast forward 20 years, and U.S. military and intelligence leaders got a pass for the obvious tactical and strategic failures in Afghanistan. This must change if we are to have a chance to succeed.

There are other issues that must be addressed if we are to regain the initiative in fighting global jihadists. We must develop a strategy that balances the demands of competition with China and potential conflict with Russia with the need to maintain the persistent fight against our jihadist enemies. We must learn to identify and more productively engage with regional partners in key battlefields in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. The military and intelligence services must be properly resourced to sustain the fight. And the military must re-evaluate and revamp its training programs for foreign forces. Despite billions of dollars spent to stand up the Afghan and Iraqi security forces, they wilted quickly when forced to stand on their own. But these issues are secondary to the 3 identified previously. If we are to have success, we must first be able to objectively analyze the threat, properly define our enemies, and hold our leaders accountable for their failures.

Our enemies continue to seek to hurt us. As they continue to rack up wins, it is only a matter of time before they muster the strength and capabilities to strike us here in the homeland. Our enemies are committed and resourceful, and they believe we are weak. We must refocus our efforts if we hope to avoid another devastating attack.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. I thank the witnesses for their testimony. I remind each Member that he or she will have 5 minutes to question the witnesses. I will now recognize myself for questions.

Mr. Greenblatt, the United States faces increasingly complex and dynamic threat landscape where misinformation like QAnon or anti-Semitic conspiracies have stoked violent acts and spread at lightning speed through social media. What obligations, if any, do you believe on-line platforms have to minimize the spread of disinformation and misinformation that has homeland or National security implications?

Mr. GREENBLATT. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the question. If we are trying to understand why is the threat environment so different today than in previous years or decades or even generations, I would posit that some of what the prior panelist was talking about, the exogenous environment has something to do with that. I would also get back to what Professor Idriss-Miller talked about in terms of the rise of these domestic extremists for various reasons.

But make no mistake, the social media services have been a superhighway for extremists and hateful organizations. They have allowed them to move, Mr. Chairman, with lightning speed from the margins to the mainstream. Literally, extremists promoting hateful ideas about African Americans, about American Jews, about Muslims, about immigrants, Latinos, LGBTQ, I could go on and on and on, have exploited the lack of any liability at these companies. Le-

veraged their platforms to push out the kind of hate that could never find its way on any mainstream media platforms.

The loophole in the law created by Section 230, and the lack of any moral leadership from these businesses, has helped to create this problem. Now, Mr. Chairman, it is both a matter that—is an issue that matters to Americans on an individual basis and on a systemic basis. On an individual basis, ADL tracks hate and harassment on-line every year. Every year, we see in our latest survey, which came out in 2021, roughly 41 percent of users of social media report being harassed on-line and 28 percent report being victimized by serial, sustained harassment.

Mr. Chairman, these are children who often find themselves deluged with White supremacist content. It is not just happening on the social media service, the gaming platforms are a problem. I got to tell you, as Facebook, which is the place where it happens the most, Mr. Chairman, moves into the metaverse, they seem to be unwilling to do the basics on their current platform, which means you can better believe the metaverse will be filled with even worse issues than what we see right now. Mr. Chairman, if you did one thing as a committee, one thing, focus on the social media companies. Hold them accountable for what they are doing. That will be a gamechanger to mitigate the rise of extremism in America and really, around the world.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. Speaking of platforms, Mr. Rasmussen, you talked a little bit about it and can you, in short order, and I know this is a challenge, tell us what these companies ought to be doing to help us identify this content.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Sure, Mr. Chairman. Again, in my role at GIFCT, I work with the companies to bring them together to try to develop cross-platform solutions. Because the environment that Jonathan described is one in which material or these hateful ideologies can migrate and spread across multiple platforms and create much greater impact and reach and it is just very difficult to contain once those kinds of toxic ideologies are spreading through that environment. So, one of the things we are trying to do at GIFCT is to find ways for the companies to cooperate with each other. To share information across their platforms so that when something appears on one of them that is of concern to others of them, that they can act on it more quickly, particularly in a crisis management or crisis response scenario such as we saw with Colleyville 2 weekends ago.

Each of the companies has their own platform rules, terms of service, policies if that they enforce. They should be engaged on those policies, rules, in terms of service on their terms as companies. We don't at GIFCT set those rules, policies, or terms of service. What we do try to do is together make us more effective as an industry in managing this on-line environment and to trying to better identify when it is that this on-line activity actually translates into real-world harm. Because at the end of the day this is, as your committee knows, about keeping Americans safe. So, we have got to find better ways to figure out when it is that this activity on-line actually goes further and takes the next step, which is actual violence.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. The Chair recognizes the Ranking Member for 5 minutes.

Mr. KATKO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was having technical difficulties unmuting myself and some of you probably would wish that I would stay muted. But I appreciate, Mr. Greenblatt, right off the bat, I got to tell you, your passion is exactly what your organization needs. I have worked with groups all my years as a prosecutor because of the anti-Semitic violence. I just want to make a quick observation that everything you said I agree with and what the testimony the Chairman elicited from you I agree with.

I also think one of the components that we have in this country now is absolutely irresponsible rhetoric from leaders in politics and leaders in communities and even people such as celebrities like we have now seen in the last couple of days. I think all that helps contribute to this ignorance and misinformation, which then fuels bad acts. So, I think it is incumbent upon us to have that holistic discussion at some point as well, you know?

But I do applaud what you are doing and the only thing I could tell you is keep going. Because when I was a prosecutor back in Syracuse, one of my best friends I went to law school with was of Jewish heritage was inspired to get involved in law enforcement because of a fire bombing of a mosque, I mean,—a mosque—excuse me—a temple in Syracuse. So, it is a long problem but my concern is it is on the rise and everything you said we got to think about. But we have got to really hammer people when they engage in irresponsible rhetoric because I think it is really important.

Mr. GREENBLATT. I would just respond, Mr. Katko, Mr. Congressman, by saying No. 1, how much we appreciate your service, your work as a prosecutor in up-State New York, and your service in Congress. I regret that you are retiring because you have been such an important moral voice in so many ways. I will also thank you for the kind words.

Look, I mean, we have to be passionate. I once had a social media executive say to me, why are you so emotional about this issue? My response was, why are you not more emotional about it this issue? Like and I just need to clarify something that my very good friend Nick said just a moment before me and I want all of you to hear this. There is a clear causal relationship, and I could show you the screenshots where we have seen White supremacists groups, you know, radical Islamists groups, organizing on these platforms, whether it is in public places like Facebook groups or private services like Telegram and Signal, or even in the dark web making threats and then it turns into real-world violence.

I could tell you about how the shooter in Pittsburgh posted a manifesto and he was communicating on, I think, it was Gab or Discord and said I am going in and then he shot and killed 11 people in a synagogue. Or the manifesto that the guy in Poway posted.

So, this is real and Mr. Chairman and Congressman Katko, please do not let the social media companies tell you they just can't get their arms around this. These are the most profitable, most innovative, most technologically capable companies in the United States or the world. Like Facebook has built the most sophisticated advertising platform in the history of capitalism. It is hard to build a business that generates \$100 billion a year. You know what is

not so hard, knocking off the Nazis. So, it like it literally is treating us like dummies to say that they don't have the means to deal with this.

Mr. KATKO. I agree with that. Thank you very much. I may be leaving but I am too much of a loudmouth to shut up the rest of my life. I will be in politics the rest of my life. That I promise you.

Mr. Roggio, I wanted to speak with you for a moment and I appreciate your testimony as well. I am vitally concerned about Afghanistan and the vacuum that has been back there. So, from an intel, surveillance, and reconnaissance standpoint, have there been significant shortfalls since we left Afghanistan? Talk about that and talk about the Over the Horizon, which I think is a, you know, failure to admit the lack of intel. You know, what is going on with respect to Afghanistan? What does it mean for the homeland?

Mr. ROGGIO. Yes, sir. Thank you. It is a pertinent question and it is one of the most important questions to be asked here today when on the international aspect, the Jihadist aspect of this. In mid-December, General McKenzie was quoted as saying that the U.S. capabilities, ISR, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities inside Afghanistan was reduced to 1 to 2 percent of its previous capabilities when the United States was in-country.

Keep in mind that when the military says something like this, they are giving the most optimistic perspective on this. So, what we are talking about here is that ISR capabilities have been reduced to nearly zero.

So, what that means in layman's terms is we can't find and observe terrorists who are operating in, not just in Afghanistan, this also applies to Pakistan as well. Keep in mind the raid to kill Osama bin Laden was launched from Afghanistan. Intelligence was gathered largely from units that were operating inside of Afghanistan across the border.

So, the idea that we can conduct Over the Horizon strikes and effectively target al-Qaeda and allied groups as well as the Islamic State, which really is a tertiary threat in the region. The Islamic State has been overhyped and al-Qaeda has been underrepresented when it comes to how the threat has metastasized in the region. The reason being is that al-Qaeda and the Taliban are in bed together. They are virtually indistinguishable in some regards. Al-Qaeda gives—or the Taliban gives al-Qaeda safe haven.

So, if we don't have the ability to observe what they are doing, it becomes increasingly difficult to conduct those so-called Over the Horizon strikes. The ability to carry out Over the Horizon strikes, I actually call it Over the Horizon's horizon. We don't have bases in any countries to conduct such strikes. The Stans, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, aren't going to base the United States. I mean, if you are them, why would you base U.S. forces in your country after the United States abandoned Afghanistan? Iran, obviously, isn't going to do it. Pakistan, they played that game and they don't want to do this any longer. So, the United States would have to launch these strikes from carriers or long-range bombers or drones that were flown from outside. So, you have poor intelligence, right? That takes time to gather. You can't keep eyes on your target. Then the platform that you are going to launch your strike from is coming from a long distance. It is a recipe for failure.



We saw failure of intelligence in Kabul on August 29 when the United States launched that strike against the purported Islamic State planner who had wound up being a civilian. That is what happened when we were in-country. These mistakes happen. Think of the mistakes that could happen when you have, at best, 1 to 2 percent visibility and the platforms you are using to launch the strikes are far outside the borders of Afghanistan.

Mr. KATKO. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Roggio. I appreciate it. I yield back, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for your indulgence.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Ranking Member. That was a professional courtesy you received.

Mr. KATKO. I know.

Chairman THOMPSON. It will not be extended to any other Member. We will adhere to the 5-minute time. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Texas, Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for this hearing along with the Ranking Member. Let me quickly go into my line of questioning by first of all saying to Mr. Rasmussen, that I have the passion and the Members of this committee and our Chairman and Ranking Member have the passion and we are very grateful for your testimony.

I want to emphasize where we are today by referring to the FBI's comment about the salad bowl. I want to offer my deepest sympathy, again, for my friends in Colleyville, that horrific terrorist act. I am glad that the FBI corrected its language. It was domestic terrorism. It was terrorism. Of course, January 6 and the big lie and the Boogaloo movement, along with the enormity of domestic terrorists or are growing every day. You are right, it is being fueled by social media. Although, I want to emphasize, as well, a First Amendment protection.

So, social media ran ads in the last 2 months, pretty ads introducing their content people and saying we want the Federal Government to give us our directions, our guidance, our laws. Can you be specific as it relates to these mega sites as to what you would like us to do, very quickly? Thank you.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Thank you, ma'am. Actually, I am not sure I can be specific because I don't speak for tech companies in terms of what they would want to see from a new legislative framework. Each of the companies will have their own view on the wisdom of particular pieces of legislation. We don't take an organizational view in that regard.

I will say, though, that when companies in the past have been dealing with issues like terrorism and violent extremism on-line, they benefit from clarity when it comes from definitional frameworks or prescribing of groups so that they know clearly and unambiguously what content can be deemed illegal by the Federal Government, for example. In the case of the GIFCT, we operate with our house-sharing database using a U.N. list of global terrorists and global terrorist organizations. That is a way for us to rely on a framework that is transparent, visible to all, and doesn't involve kind-of random decision making inside companies. So,—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you.

Mr. RASMUSSEN [continuing]. Ma'am, I am not sure I can give you more than that.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you. Mr. Greenblatt, let me ask you the same question in how we can be effective on helping to ensure that there is responsiveness. Let me comment on my desire as I sit on the Judiciary Committee and Homeland works very carefully overlapping on some of these issues, frankly, believe the FBI should become more intense. There should be more funding. There should be a larger section dealing with domestic terrorism. As well, having a component that deals with what is happening on these sites. Mr. Greenblatt, would you respond, please?

Mr. GREENBLATT. Well, thank you, Congresswoman, for the question. What the ADL has said time and time again, that the social media companies are fully aware of what is going on. So, I will—and they know. One of the outcomes or the insights from the whistleblower, her revelations last summer, Madam Congresswoman, was that we learned that Facebook was tracking everything. Frankly, Madam Congresswoman, they knew more. It was worse than we thought and they knew it all along. So, I would credit the Algorithmic Justice in Online Transparency Act that would prevent or at least prohibit harmful and discriminatory algorithms, among other measures. I mean, we need legislation like that and others to address on-line hate immediately. Because the big—we have to keep in mind, big tech’s business model optimizes for engagement and hateful, racist, anti-Semitic content is highly engaging. Therefore, it is, you know, amplified by the algorithms.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you.

Mr. GREENBLATT. While we deeply believe in freedom of speech, Congresswoman, let’s keep in mind, freedom of speech is not freedom of reach. So, the companies are making a decision when they privilege that information. They don’t have to publish it.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. You can’t cry fire in a crowded theatre. I am truly with you. I want to—

Mr. GREENBLATT. Exactly.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I will accept your challenge and will be working with you. Mr. Chairman, I want to add into the record an article from the *Washington Post* that indicates the heinous acts of bomb threats to historically Black colleges. I ask unanimous consent and I would like to read it into the record. Rust College, Tougaloo College, Jackson State, Alcorn, Mississippi Valley State, Fort Valley University, Spelman, Morgan State, Coppin State University, Harris-Stowe State University in Missouri, Kentucky State, Xavier, Philander Smith, Edward Waters, Howard University, which is having a bomb threat right now.

[The information follows:]

ARTICLE FROM THE WASHINGTON POST

FEAR, ANXIETY FOLLOW THIRD WAVE OF BOMB THREATS TARGETING HBCUS

By Lauren Lumpkin and Susan Svrluga, February 1, 2022 at 7:33 p.m. EST

For the third time in just a month, Howard University warned its campus on Tuesday of a bomb threat. Each time, a law enforcement search found no sign of the threatened explosives.

But as students spilled out of academic buildings and headed to their next classes, or lined up for burritos at a nearby Chipotle, the campus was still on edge.

“Most of us are feeling anxiety,” said Troix McClendon, a 19-year-old freshman. “There’s not really a lot of information.”

The bomb threats at Howard are part of a wave to hit historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) this year. On Jan. 4, at least eight HBCUs were threatened. On Monday, at least six were.

Tuesday's threats, most coming early in the morning on the first day of Black History Month, broadened and deepened the sense of unease: At least 16 universities closed or swept their campuses. In all, more than two dozen have faced similar threats this year.

No bombs were found, and law enforcement agencies did not identify possible motives. But the threats weigh heavily on many, particularly given the emotional attachment and deep loyalty many students, faculty, staff and alumni feel for the campuses—a haven, a calling, a family.

“February 1st, it’s a moment when we usually celebrate the innovation and the resilience of our people, and now to be faced with an issue of this kind at our HBCUs nationwide, we want our community to know that we’re standing together,” said Tashni-Ann Dubroy, Howard’s executive vice president and chief operating officer.

The university in the District has increased the police presence on campus, reminded students of the safety resources on campus and offered support, Dubroy said.

The FBI has said it is working with law enforcement partners to address potential threats, according to the agency, and it asked the public to report anything suspicious to law enforcement immediately.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives also is aware of bomb threats received by some HBCUs, Carolyn Gwathmey, a spokeswoman for the agency, said in a written statement. “We take all potential threats seriously and we regularly work with our law enforcement partners to determine the threat credibility.”

She said it could not comment on the specific details at this time because it is a fluid situation with ongoing investigations.

The threats in the past month have touched some of the country’s most iconic schools, such as Howard and Spelman College, as well as regional institutions all across the country, triggering cancellations, lockdowns and fear.

On Tuesday, the schools targeted included: Rust College, Tougaloo College, Jackson State University and Alcorn State University in Mississippi, as well as Mississippi Valley State University; Fort Valley State University and Spelman College in Georgia; Morgan State University and Coppin State University in Maryland; Harris-Stowe State University in Missouri; Kentucky State University; Xavier University of Louisiana; Philander Smith College in Arkansas; Edward Waters University in Florida; Howard University and the University of the District of Columbia.

“We stand in solidarity with our historically Black institutions,” Jay A. Perman, chancellor of the University System of Maryland—which includes Coppin State and Bowie State, another school targeted by a threat this week—said Tuesday in a written statement.

He added: “Knowing that their strength is our strength, and that their power—on display like never before—will not be diminished by cowardly acts meant to menace and harm and intimidate. If the intent of these threats was to restrict access to our historically Black institutions—to restrict access to higher education itself—it will fail. If it was meant to sow division, it will fail. If it was meant to terrorize students and communities of color, it will fail.”

At the University of the District of Columbia on Tuesday, officials cleared a threat placed about 3:20 a.m. and opened the campus.

Xavier University of Louisiana evacuated the area of the threat and issued a shelter-in-place order for students living on campus, according to Patrice Bell, the school’s vice president and chief of staff, until it was cleared to reopen by law-enforcement officials.

Tougaloo College, one of several HBCUs threatened Tuesday in Mississippi, received a call about 4:20 a.m. that brought FBI and other law enforcement to sweep campuses. Even after the threat was found to be unsubstantiated, the campus remained in virtual mode for students, faculty and staff on Tuesday, with college officials pledging to remain vigilant. Mississippi Valley State University locked down after a threat was received through its guardhouse.

Philander Smith College, in Arkansas, lifted its lockdown and resumed classes and operations at noon Tuesday. Kentucky State University issued an all-clear Tuesday and planned to resume normal operations and classes Wednesday.

Morgan State University was also targeted. Leaders received the threat around 4:50 a.m. and issued a shelter-in-place order. Classes went virtual and employees were told to work from home.

“My main concern is my students’ mental health. As college students, we already have so much mentally to deal with,” said Jamera Forbes, a senior at Morgan State

and student body president. “We’ve tried to push through and overcome so much with covid over the years, and we’re just trying to get back to a norm.”

At Howard, freshman Jalen McKinney, 18, said the threats are making him worried, but some on campus seem less concerned.

“People are kind of brushing it off because it didn’t happen,” McKinney said. D.C. and university police performed a sweep after the threat was made about 2:55 a.m. “But at the same time, it could happen.”

An expert in campus security was reassuring about the potential danger.

“I’ve always subscribed to the theory that bombers bomb and threateners threaten,” said Robert Mueck, director of public safety at St. John’s College and a member of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators’ Domestic Preparedness Committee. Calling in a bomb threat is “more of a nuisance crime,” he said, “like back in high school, kids pulling a fire alarm to get out of an exam.”

Of course, he said, officials cannot ignore it—they must ensure there is no explosive.

But Mueck cautioned against overreactions by college officials, because the warnings, building closures and lockdowns are disruptive and alarming.

These particular threats are troubling, though, he said, because they appear to be targeting HBCUs, and might be motivated by bias. The menace is there: “It’s almost like reaching out and saying, ‘We can get you,’” he said.

While law enforcement have not identified suspects or named their motives, the recent threats evoked the long history of intimidation and violence against Black schools, said Greg E. Carr, chair of Howard’s Afro-American studies department and associate professor of Africana studies.

“There is this deep-seated racial insecurity that has historically come from segments of White populations that feel that somehow the self-improvement of Black folks will cost them something, either in prestige or social position,” Carr said. “Whether any of these threats would manifest into anything tangible or not, it’s just the idea that ‘Ya’ll are a little too big for your britches.’”

As officials continue to monitor the situation, students and faculty are hoping to get back to business.

“Our response has been, historically, to simply redouble our efforts,” Carr said. “The intimidation never works.”

Ms. JACKSON LEE. This is a crisis and I want to join with my colleagues for legislation dealing with our social media, but as well, I am going to ask that the officials from Homeland Security in collaboration with the FBI develop a deeper dive, a much more intense area of focus on domestic terrorism. We have to stop it. Lives are being lost. It is absolutely untenable for this to continue. Thank you so very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentlelady’s time has expired. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. Higgins, for 5 minutes.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Ranking Member as well for holding this hearing. Mr. Chairman, I am going to abandon my planned line of questioning because I have been quite startled by some of the testimony here today. Dr. Cynthia Miller-Idriss. Am I pronouncing your last name properly, ma’am, Idriss?

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. It is Idriss, but it is fine either way.

Mr. HIGGINS. Idriss.

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. Yes.

Mr. HIGGINS. Yes, ma’am. Well, the right way is the right way. So, Dr. Idriss, respectfully, I listened to your testimony. I felt that you painted quite a dystopian image of America’s future. It seems like you were promoting positions that are quite contrary to the fundamental values that have made America great. I say this respectfully. I am sincerely curious as to your response. Do you believe that Americans should live free of Government oppression?

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. Of course I believe. I mean, I believe very much in the—thank you for the question, of course, Mr. Higgins. I do believe that, you know, our fundamental rights and protections, including freedom of speech and assembly. I mean, what I am talking about is equipping people with skills to make decisions that lead them to be less manipulated by bad actors.

Mr. HIGGINS. OK. Let's engage a little bit about this.

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. Sure.

Mr. HIGGINS. Because to me you presented a future of America with a great deal of big brother-type Government surveillance. You used the term that I had to look up. You called heteronormativity. Do you believe heteronormativity is a threat?

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. That term is—

Mr. HIGGINS. It is a legitimate question.

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS [continuing]. From a research report that is talking about the beliefs of Salafi-Jihadists and accelerationists, neo-Nazis and neo-fascists, so—

Mr. HIGGINS. Well, as it—

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS [continuing]. It is a—

Mr. HIGGINS [continuing]. As it—

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS [continuing]. It is a research.

Mr. HIGGINS [continuing]. Relates—as it relates to American Government interaction in the lives of the citizenry that we serve that Americans we intend to live free. We intend to communicate freely. We intend to communicate freely across any platforms. We intend to travel the land freely.

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. Of course. Of course.

Mr. HIGGINS. Some of us believe in American exceptionalism and America first policy. Do you believe, doctor, that American exceptionalism as a core belief, do you think that is a threat?

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. No, I—

Mr. HIGGINS. Do you find it threatening?

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS [continuing]. Think that when I was talking about those components of the salad bar or the blurred ideologies, what I am talking about are ideas that are inspiring hateful and terrorist acts interact.

Mr. HIGGINS. Hateful as determined by—

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. But not from the Government.

Mr. HIGGINS [continuing]. By whom?

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. By Salafi-Jihadists and neo-fascists. That is what that research was referring to by extremists and terrorists groups. This is not about—those terms were not referring to any components of legitimate mainstream governments or policies. Those are referring to—

Mr. HIGGINS. OK.

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS [continuing]. The ideologies—

Mr. HIGGINS. So, you—

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS [continuing]. Of extremists groups, not—so, just to be clear, sorry, citing that prior research.

Mr. HIGGINS. Well, yes, but extremists groups, Americans are being identified as members of extremists groups on this committee that is being openly discussed here today. Americans expressing free thought are being categorized as hateful Americans. It is incredible to me that language describing international terrorists

who have identified themselves as contrary to the best interests of American citizens and America's future, have sworn to bring us down and to either convert us or destroy us. It is incredible to me that Americans expressing free thought across any platforms could be associated or equivocated with foreign national terrorists—

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. Well, I think what—

Mr. HIGGINS [continuing]. That work to destroy—

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS [continuing]. We are talking about though—

Mr. HIGGINS [continuing]. Our country.

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. Sure, please.

Mr. HIGGINS. You also mentioned, I just wanted to ask you this before my time is—

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. Sure.

Mr. HIGGINS [continuing]. Up. You mentioned early interventions. Should the Government intervene in the life of children being raised by parents in households that have particular principles, religious principles, including Christian principles?

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. I do not believe the Government should be involved in any of the ideological—

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you.

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS [continuing]. Beliefs of Americans.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, ma'am. I appreciate you clarifying some of your statement. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, thank you very much. I yield.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island for 5 minutes, Mr. Langevin.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank our witnesses today for their very sobering testimony on a very troubling, troubling issue. Anti-Semitism is something to be taken extremely seriously. Today's testimony has really underscored the alarming degree to which individuals can be radicalized by misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation, and motivated to commit extremist acts. I am concerned that this burgeoning digital extremism along with the increasing availability of hacking tools and malware as a service, business models could together increase the motivations and lower the technical threshold required for acts of cyber-enabled terrorism and sabotage against U.S. infrastructure.

I am also concerned about the prospects of organized terrorist groups specifically recruiting to increase their capacity for malicious cyber activity targeting U.S. persons, communities, institutions, and infrastructure. So, if I can start with Mr. Rasmussen, what capabilities in your opinion exist for the Government and multistakeholder community to analyze and share information about cyber-specific terrorist threats to the United States? I also wanted to ask, have observers identified pervasive on-line narratives or coordinated misinformation campaigns intended to encourage cyber attacks against U.S. persons, institutions, or infrastructure?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Thank you for the question, Mr. Langevin. I mean, we have long known that—this goes back actually more to my time in Government service more than my current role. But we

have long known that terrorist organizations, including some of the ones we have talked about in this hearing today, have the aspiration to carry out aggressive cyber operations against Western countries to include the United States. They have often not matched that aspiration with genuine capability. So, I think that is something our intelligence community who watches and monitors very carefully to see when that intention might translate into a real capability.

From the technology company perspective, the companies that I work with, we work very closely with them to try to understand adversarial shifts. When particular terrorist organizations are moving in a particular direction so that companies can be aware and then be on the front foot to act against that activity. We lean into the academic world to help us do that. Because, again, so much of this conversation among extremists and terrorists takes place in the open-source world. Why don't I stop there.

Mr. LANGEVIN. OK, good, thank you. I wanted to ask, what about efforts among established or burgeoning extremist groups to recruit cyber talent to commit malicious cyber acts? Have you seen anything at that degree which is of concern to the committee?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Again, I draw more on my Government experience, when I was in the Classified world where that was a real phenomenon, Mr. Langevin. Obviously, as the cadre of violent extremists and terrorists becomes younger, they are, of course, more digitally literate and more digitally savvy. So, that kind of pool of recruits or adherence to those extremist ideologies who are available for that kind of work on behalf of a terrorist organization, is a bigger pool than perhaps we saw in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, for example. So, I would imagine that is a growing concern for my colleagues in Government.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Before my time expires, let me ask maybe we can answer this for all of our witnesses. How can Congress support ongoing multistakeholder efforts to better understand and analyze the spread of radicalizing mis- and disinformation and extremist ideologies? Likewise, what opportunities are there for Congress to support on-going proposed initiatives to promote societal resilience against mis- and disinformation? We can start with one of our other witnesses and go until the time runs out.

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. I can weigh in—

Mr. GREENBLATT. Well, I—

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. Oh, go ahead, I'm sorry.

Mr. GREENBLATT. No, please.

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. I can weigh in very quickly just to say—thank you for the question, Mr. Langevin. I think that when we are talking about a multistakeholder needs, what we see in other countries is often on these issues we have 9 to 12 agencies involved. We really need at the very minimum, some sort of commission that brings in not just security and intelligence experts, but also educational, social work, health and human services, youth experts, people who really understand what makes for this kind of vulnerability and how people become susceptible to and can be dissuaded from those types of beliefs in addition to tech experts, et cetera. I don't think we can solve this just with the very important lens of law enforcement and security.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Very good. Thank you. I see my time's expired. So, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Bishop.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Greenblatt, your policy recommendations in your testimony go under the rubric PROTECT, an acronym for a number of suggestions. Included among them is to oppose extremists in Government service. Then there is detail on this point on page 14 that says the ban should be extended to individuals engaged in violent extremist activity. I would be surprised if anybody would disagree with that. Some might want to be careful to limit that though to those who have engaged in serious violence and not inadvertently extend it to, for example, Scott Smith, arrested at the Loudon County School Board meeting after officials denied from the podium that his ninth-grade daughter had been raped and sodomized in a bathroom at school. But first, do you say that someone like that, like that example I just gave, should be barred from Federal, State, or local public service?

Mr. GREENBLATT. Well, Mr. Congressman, thank you for the question. I might just say to start this off, how much I appreciate Dr. Miller-Idriss for her leadership and her research on all of these issues. So, thank you, Dr. Miller-Idriss. So, Mr. Congressman, I don't know the specifics of this gentleman at the school board, but I absolutely think—I absolutely think if you are involved in a White supremacist group, if you are involved in a group that threatens to overthrow the U.S. Government, you should not—

Mr. BISHOP. I just asked you about that one incident.

Mr. GREENBLATT [continuing]. You shouldn't serve in law enforcement.

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Greenblatt, what about that? The one I just gave the example of? Someone who was arrested for resisting because he had something like that happen from a dais at a public meeting.

Mr. GREENBLATT. I just know—I don't know anything about this person, Mr. Congressman, and his background.

Mr. BISHOP. I understand. So, you are too—

Mr. GREENBLATT. If your information—

Mr. BISHOP [continuing]. Confident here to say that person should not be barred from Federal, State, or local service?

Mr. GREENBLATT. Yes, I really don't know enough to say. But the situation—

Mr. BISHOP. OK.

Mr. GREENBLATT [continuing]. With his daughter sounds horrible.

Mr. BISHOP. Beyond that, you recommend that those associated with violent extremist movements should be barred. You applaud the DHS announcement that it will vet employees for "extremist sympathies."

Mr. GREENBLATT. Yes.

Mr. BISHOP. So, you recommend barring not only the violent or even those who sympathize with the violent, but those who sympathize with movements that are associated with violence. Is that right?



Mr. GREENBLATT. Sure, if you have Nazi tattoos, or if you have KKK tattoos, I think that should be a disqualifier. Yes, I do believe that.

Mr. BISHOP. OK. How do you propose it be decided what it means for a movement to be associated with violence? Or whether a person sympathizes with the violent acts of a movement as opposed to its nonviolent views?

Mr. GREENBLATT. Well, Mr. Congressman, I would ask you if you had an intern who showed up with Nazi tattoos on his neck, would you think that person was qualified to represent you and your office in the United States Congress?

Mr. BISHOP. OK. Let me ask you something that maybe we can find to make it a little bit tougher than that obvious example.

Mr. GREENBLATT. OK.

Mr. BISHOP. You take extremism, on your website it says it is a concept used to describe religious, social, or political belief systems that exist substantially outside of belief systems more broadly accepted in society, i.e., mainstream beliefs. So, it is something out of the mainstream. It goes on beyond that. Then it comes to this sentence, which is interesting. Not every extremist movement is bad. The abolitionist movement is one example of an extreme movement that had admirable goals. But most extremists movements exist outside of the mainstream because many of their views or tactics are objectionable.

All right, and here is another example, Mr. Greenblatt. Women's suffrage too was an extremist movement at one time, correct?

Mr. GREENBLATT. I don't know if I would characterize it that way, but it is certainly out of the mainstream in the—

Mr. BISHOP. OK. Out of the mainstream. There were proponents of it who used violence. Are you aware of that?

Mr. GREENBLATT. No, I am not aware of that.

Mr. BISHOP. OK. So, I was reading a book on Winston Churchill. They threw bricks at him. There was a bombing or two. This was in Europe. I don't know all the details of it here. So, how would you—would you then say that anybody who is associated with women's suffrage would be then barred from—or sympathize with it, would be barred from Government service?

Mr. GREENBLATT. Well, I certainly think if you believe it is appropriate to bomb Government buildings or to assault prime ministers, you shouldn't be in Government service, yes. I don't think—

Mr. BISHOP. But I am asking you for something a little more refined than that.

Mr. GREENBLATT. OK.

Mr. BISHOP. Someone who sympathizes with the women's suffrage movement and then some people who are advocates of women's suffrage or activists for it engaged in some violence. Does that mean the person who sympathizes with the movement should be barred from Government service?

Mr. GREENBLATT. Well, I most certainly think if you are unable to disassociate yourself with movements that espouse violence or supremacy of any group, yes, you should be barred from Government service. You can support women's—

Mr. BISHOP. I am not asking you to—

Mr. GREENBLATT [continuing]. Suffrage and not support harming Government officials.

Mr. BISHOP. Sure. I think what you are posing is easy. What is hard is how do you say that or who judges and by what standard whether they have adequately disassociated themselves with the violent acts of some extremists associated with the movement, but not the broader goals of the movement?

Mr. GREENBLATT. It is a fair question. So, again, I am—like if we talk about al-Qaeda, we talk about ISIS, we talk about some of the horrific anti-Israel people out there who say the Jewish State is committing genocide. You know, Mr. Congressman, I don't think they belong as interns in your office or any public office for that matter. That is just I feel very strongly about that. That kind of extremism should have no place.

Mr. BISHOP. I join you, sir. I think the problem is that the margins, you have raised a lot of very difficult questions, and you pose the possibility of imposing very significantly on fundamental Constitutional freedoms. Your recommendation does not include much of a road map in terms of how to separate that out. My time has expired. Mr. Chairman, thank you. I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Correa, for 5 minutes.

Mr. CORREA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can you help me, OK? Can you hear me?

Chairman THOMPSON. Yes, we can.

Mr. CORREA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and our Ranking Member. In 2017, White nationalists marched in the United the Right rally and flooded our television screens with images of neo-Nazism and Klan paraphernalia. The result, one person killed and 35 injured. Following the attack in Charlottesville, I was the first Member of Congress to call for action, to demand action. Any American lost whether here or overseas is a tragedy. It is a crime. We have to act as Congress and as a Nation.

We continue to have these issues over and over again in our country. Today, this is an important issue because as much as we want things to get better, I just don't feel in my heart and my gut that this country is coming together. I know that we continue to have hate speech, hate ideology, and social media continues to be the breeding ground for this kind of thought. So, my question to all the panelists today, when it comes to social media, Section 230, immunity, responsibility, liability, what are your thoughts? Mr. Roggio.

Chairman THOMPSON. Unmute yourself. You need to unmute yourself.

Mr. ROGGIO. My apologies. It is a very good question. You know, the question, we all know what the easy answer to hate speech is. But what is the difference, what happens when political speech that you disagree with becomes defined as hate speech? Who defines what is hate speech? This is where I have very grave concerns. I realize this is a little bit out of the area of my expertise here. But I certainly have a very strong opinion on this. I know this from looking at what Jihadist groups are doing. You know, it is a fine line to say, you know, I mean, here is an idea that I dis-

agree with and this is actually hate speech. Who gets to be the gatekeeper to define what is and isn't hate speech?

Mr. CORREA. But at the same time, we do need to make some value judgments. Mr. Greenblatt, thoughts?

Mr. GREENBLATT. Thank you for asking me the question. So, publishers make these decisions every day, Mr. Congressman. From the *New York Times* to *Newsweek* to NBC to every which way because they have liability concerns. I am going to credit Congresswoman Malinowski who I believe is on this committee and Congresswoman Eshoo. Their Protecting Americans from Dangerous Algorithms Act removes immunity from liability when the algorithms amplify recommended content, OK?

So, there is just no question that you can say there has always a lunatic fringe, Mr. Congressman. We just need to keep them on the fringe. I think the Eshoo-Malinowski Act would go a long way to removing liability when algorithms bring it out of the fringe. Just make the companies play by the same rules that every other media company in America plays by and that will take care of the issue before this would occur.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Greenblatt, let me focus right now on that specific question.

Mr. GREENBLATT. Mm-hmm.

Mr. CORREA. Separation, definition, at what point does that freedom of speech essentially translate into yelling fire in a crowded theatre? What point do you cross that line? How do you see that?

Mr. GREENBLATT. The way I see it is the companies have to make decisions about what voices they choose to privilege and publish, just like, you know, you are in Anaheim, I think. The *Anaheim Bee* has to decide what articles it puts or what essay they put in op-ed page. The decisions on what letters they publish. They make those decisions every day, Mr. Congressman, with great effectiveness. If you can't get your letter published in the *Anaheim Bee*, then you can go do it somewhere else. So, the same rules should apply here.

Mr. CORREA. Let me say that I concur with you because you know hate speech when you see it, so to speak. When you read an op-ed, when you read something, write something that is clearly designed to incite hate, anger, violence, you know it's wrong. I am hoping we, as a legislative body, are able to come up with some rules and a strong message to social media saying this cannot be tolerated, respecting the First Amendment, but this kind of hateful division that speaks and divides our Nation cannot be tolerated.

Mr. GREENBLATT. Just make them liable, Mr. Congressman. Just make them liable and it will change overnight.

Mr. CORREA. Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I am out of time. I yield.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Van Drew, for 5 minutes.

Mr. VAN DREW. Thank you, Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Katko. Thank you to the witnesses for testifying today. Dr. Miller-Idriss, in your report, you go into great detail about how far-right terrorism and violent extremism are escalating rapidly across the United States and how they pose a severe threat to our coun-

try's democracy. I read through your entire 13-page testimony and could not help but notice that not once, not one single time, did you mention Antifa, Black Lives Matters, or any other leftist extremist organization or movement and their contributions to political violence and political unrest.

Your own definition of terrorism included in your written testimony is, "the use of violence in order to intimidate or coerce civilians or influence the policies of Government." You did not discuss these organizations. Coordinated efforts, which led to the Federal courthouse damage in Portland, Oregon during the summer of 2020, during which 18 rioters were arrested. Or the \$50 million worth of damage that left rioters cost to the city of Kenosha, Wisconsin in the year 2020.

You also did not address the fact that the cofounder of Black Lives Matters who is a self-proclaimed Marxist has publicly called for the destruction of the nuclear family and the structure of the nuclear family and the National defunding of police. And has used the organization to promote its policies using violence on multiple occasions. Can you please help me understand what part of these groups' actions have been unworthy of your attention? Can you explain to me and this committee whether you think any of these examples constitute or contribute to violent extremism?

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. Thank you, Mr. Van Drew, for the question. I do think that we have to be concerned about rising far-right—sorry—rising violence from the far left as well as from the far right. I believe the FBI's testimony earlier last year indicated that there were 800 investigations into criminal activity related to the summer of 2020 protests and that there have been 250 arrests. I think that those figures are important. I think the CSIS data has also shown trending upward violence coming from the far left that we should be pay attention to given the history in which in the 1970's, of course, far-right terrorism was the predominant form of terrorism. We know that because of evolving trends, these things can change at any time.

I focus on the far right in my testimony or these terms or one of the terminology issues, I think, that Mr. Bishop raised is that we don't really have a good universal definition of extremism even across our own agencies. But one of the reasons why I focus on the far right here is because both under the Trump administration and the Department of Homeland Security and then the Office of the Director of National Intelligence after the January 6 events, declared that unlawful militia movements and White supremacist extremists pose the most lethal and pressing threat to the Nation from within the domestic violent extremism spectrum. So, to the extent—

Mr. VAN DREW. I understand you had—

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS [continuing]. That as long as that data is there, that is where we have to focus our efforts on the domestic side, of course.

Mr. VAN DREW. I thank you for that. I would just maintain that in general, that we be fair and even-handed at how we look at this because there are problems on both sides. I am not saying there aren't problems, but those problems exist on both sides. I think we should deal with that in a fair and even-handed way.

Mr. Greenblatt, something that comes to mind with me because whenever Government steps in and takes a people's rights away, it is a very tender and sensitive issue. It is really difficult. It is not easy. Because our rights are so very important. No, I wouldn't hire somebody with Nazi symbols going down their neck or anything of that nature and either would you. I think either would anybody on this panel. But the real quick question I have for you is how about somebody who really believes in Black Lives Matters or even in what Antifa did, but otherwise has a good record, what would you do with them?

Mr. GREENBLATT. Well, look, I got to be honest, you are entirely correct, Mr. Congressman. Violence is not the sole domain of any one extremist movement. It is an issue across the spectrum. The people who would burn down stores and the people who would deface Government buildings, the people who would commit these acts, they need to be identified, arrested, and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. No, I wouldn't hire any Antifa, you know, enthusiast as an intern or as an employee at ADL, to be perfectly honest with you. I don't know that any have ever applied. But I certainly would not want anyone espousing violence in my organization, period, end of story.

Mr. VAN DREW. OK. Thank you. I am glad to see that it seems that hopefully maybe we are on a close to a same page on that. I just would like equal attention given to both. Thank you.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. VAN DREW. I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Michigan, Ms. Slotkin, for 5 minutes.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and for our witnesses joining us. You know, I have been listening to the conversation and as someone who is a former CIA analyst and Pentagon official, I spent my time, you know, focusing on foreign terrorist organizations, particularly from the Middle East, including al-Qaeda. It just seems like when we are talking about foreign terrorist organizations and the use of violence against American citizens abroad or threatening our homeland, there is significant agreement on the need to prevent that and on, frankly, on the extreme work that continues to go on, largely below the headline level by our intelligence community, by our military, by a whole bunch of folks who have never taken their eye off the ball. I am conscious that we haven't had another major attack after 9/11, which still is kind-of amazing to me.

But the minute we start talking about threats to American citizens inside our own borders, it becomes deeply political. I think the thing that, I guess, affects me as a CIA officer is that we have to go by the data. While folks like Mr. Van Drew are talking about an even-handed approach, I have no problem if a group on the left is using violence, go after them. But the data reflects, the data from like the director of the FBI, not some group that is political, that the vast majority of those cases of domestic terrorism are coming from the far right. They are mixing, many of them, not all, many of them are mixing their ideology with anti-Semitism and White supremacy.

So, I guess, I am concerned that it feels like such a hard thing to talk about threats to American citizens because they are Americans perpetrating the attacks. It is still a threat to safety. According to the head of the FBI, it is a bigger threat than foreign domestic terrorism right now. So, I just felt like I needed to say that.

That said, the similarities between extremists and this ladder of escalation that they climb from being kind-of regular old Joe to feeling like they need to commit violence against another group or another person is strikingly similar between foreign terrorists and domestic terrorists, that ladder of escalation. Social media like you said, I think, Jonathan, is rocket fuel on that climb up that ladder.

My question is this, as someone who comes from a State with a lot of militia problems, extremism problems, many who were arrested participating in January 6. Has anyone seen anything that works that deprograms people and takes someone who threatens violence against another person or another group and gets them from that to back to healthy American citizen in a multiethnic place? I never saw it successfully done on the foreign terrorism side. So, starting maybe with Mr. Rasmussen and then going to Cynthia and Jonathan, please tell me is there a model that works? Because this is like affecting our communities at the grassroots level.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Thanks, Congresswoman Slotkin, thank you. It is great to see you and I am happy to try to contribute to this conversation. When dealing with social media companies or technology platforms, we always tend to focus on what they should be stopping or taking down or preventing on their platforms. Of course, that makes sense for all the reasons we have been talking about. But some of the work we are doing at GIFCT brings those same companies together to talk about how to better structure positive interventions on-line to try to intervene in that cycle, that radicalization process that you just described. That needs to be to your point, a data-driven effort because you can wing it and not necessarily know that you are achieving results. So, one of the things we are trying to do is bring companies together, bring the academic community into that conversation, and begin with a research-driven agenda that tells us, OK, what works? How can you redirect someone? What kind of platform intervention? Is it an ad placed off the side that says, if you need help call this number. Or if you feel disenfranchised or at odds with the society you live in, you know, reach out for help in this way. The prevention architecture might be what we need to think about here.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Yes, and I am going—I know I went long, so, I am going to ask that Mr. Greenblatt and Ms. Miller address, just send me, if you have good data to send me because I am, frankly, very interested in that. I just would say on the social media companies, is it true that the more extreme the article on the right or the left, the more clicks it gets? Therefore, these companies do not want to take this content down because it gets them more clicks and more engagement.

Mr. GREENBLATT. It is——

Ms. SLOTKIN. Is that——

Mr. GREENBLATT. I will volunteer. It is true. If it bleeds, it leads, we learn from social media, right? So, the clicks are driven, Con-

gresswoman Slotkin, by the most sensationalist, scary, terrifying content. It travels far and wide. Change the business model, you would change the behavior. Make them liable for what they promote, you would change the behavior.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Thank you. I know my time has expired. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The gentlelady's time has expired. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi for 5 minutes, Mr. Guest. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Iowa, Mrs. Miller-MEEKS. Unmute yourself.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. I did. It just didn't unmute or clicked too much and it remuted. But thank you very much, Chair Thompson. Mr. Roggio, during the Biden administration's incompetent disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan, as a 24-year military member, I don't know what else to call that, they described the Taliban as a partner in its retreat. It came to light that U.S. officials gave the Taliban a list of names of American citizens, green card holders, and Afghan allies to grant entry into the militant-controlled outer perimeter of Kabul's airport, naively putting our allies and friends at the mercy of a terrorist organization if they did not get into the perimeter and get evacuated. What impact did this have on Afghans who were left behind?

Mr. ROGGIO. Yes, this was a horrific decision amongst the many horrific decisions. Yes, as a former military person and every person in the military I have spoken to who was not involved with the withdrawal, it was, indeed, has been characterized a debacle. We can see it as the Taliban immediately took control of the country and was taking control of the country as we were drawing down. It was a direct causation. We leave, the Taliban take control.

The decision to hand over names was horrific. I was involved with helping American citizens get out of Afghanistan, as well as Afghans who had helped us in-country. So, people who were vetted who had the special immigration visa and things of that nature, as it was happening. As a matter of fact, the day after the withdrawal, I was helping an American family of 5 with 3 small children. They tried to get to the airport 4 times. It was on the fourth try that they were able to get out. Think about dragging your 3 small children through the chaotic streets of Kabul with the Taliban prowling the streets and having to turn back from your own embassy.

But the people who were there, the people who had been left, those names, the names of their family members, are out there. The Taliban is currently hunting members of the military and members of the government who supported the coalition, who supported us. They are hunting our allies.

The United Nations recently issued a report saying about 100 former Afghan soldiers and officials have been killed. That number is—that is the number they can confirm. I hear stories, and hear, you know, from very credible sources that these numbers is very likely in the thousands. So, when we gave the names of Afghans who were working with us who we wanted to slip past to the Taliban, the Taliban gets a registry. If they didn't already know that there were individuals who were being hunted, they have that information. These people are living in fear 4+ months after the

U.S. withdrawal. They will live in fear of the Taliban coming and taking them away until either it happens or they are able to leave the country.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Yes, and I think that underscores the point you made about trying to conduct Over the Horizon counterterrorism, what this does to our ability to do intelligence gathering, or to do counterterrorist measures with no eyes on Iran, Russia, or the Chinese Communist Party, and then betraying our allies as well as our military and American citizens and their families in Afghanistan by this botched withdrawal and whether or not they can trust the United States again and their word to be able to remove all of its citizens and help our partners.

Myself and many other military members in a bipartisan way had been pushing the administration since earlier in the year in April to, you know, process SIVs, to begin that process of trying to get Americans, their spouses, and family members and our Afghan interpreter allies out of Afghanistan. So, I think it very much underscores how we have hampered ourself going forward in order to conduct counterterrorism, especially in the Middle East. Mr. Rasmussen—

Mr. ROGGIO. If I may,—oh, I'm sorry.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. If I have time, Chair. Mr. Rasmussen, we have seen unprecedented increases in migrant travel patterns at the United States Southwest Border including migrants from all over the world and known or suspected terrorists at a level we have never seen before, quoting former border patrol chief. CBP has encountered over 2 million migrants at the border in fiscal year 2021, which is another record-breaking number for the Biden administration. Courageous members of our Border Patrol are stretched thin and criminals are taking advantage of the situation to partake in human trafficking and drug smuggling and we know and has been documented that also terrorist organizations and transnational organizations are taking advantage of the lax border efforts. Has GIFCT noticed any correlation to digital activities by transnational criminal organizations? When we make trips to the border, we have been notified that criminal organizations are using TikTok and other social media in order to recruit.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Thank you for the question. I am not sure I can point to any clear trends that we have seen in the use of on-line engagement by individuals or groups trying to cross the Southern Border for nefarious purposes. But it is something we can take up with our academic network, which tracks this very closely, or tracks world-wide activity very closely. Again, often the effort is to try to figure out platforms they are operating on because, again, they know they are risk of scrutiny from U.S. law enforcement when they operate on mainstream platforms.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Green, for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Am I audible?

Chairman THOMPSON. You are.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you very much. Mr. Greenblatt, I thought of you this morning. I was reading an article on how the Holocaust



moved from concentration camps to Jewish victims. I credit it was some time ago, but still relevant. But today, I want to visit with you about this phenomenon known as the salad bar. This salad bar concept has persons who have different ideologies that would ordinarily be antithetical to each other, they can find a way to put aside their differences and ideology and work together for a common cause, a common evil cause, I might add. This was expressed by the supremacists in the adherence to some of these ideologies related to persons who are about the country as they talked about what happened to Jewish people. I am concerned about it and would like to get your opinion as to how concerned are you with reference to this and what is the impact of this? If you would, please.

Mr. GREENBLATT. Well, look, I think when FBI Director Wray talked about the salad bar concept in his testimony, he was describing this very real phenomenon, Mr. Congressman, where in the past people were, you know, curated in a specific movement over a long period of time. But now, thanks to social media, thanks to these different services, they can go and grab like walking through a grocery store and take all these crazy ideas. But there are some ideas, Mr. Congressman, that seem to be permanent in these views.

No. 1, there is an anti-Semitism at the beating heart of White supremacy, QAnon, accelerationism. All these other kind of movements, believe that there is a cabal of Jews running the world or they have overtaken the Government. No. 2, that African Americans, Black Americans, are inferior to the White race and a driver of White genocide. This is a widely-held view amongst people on the far right. So, it may be that al-Qaeda and the White supremacists share this hateful view of Jews, but the racism of the White supremacists, Mr. Congressman, is something that is diabolical and deeply frightening. These ideas just boomerang off of one another. The third idea is that migrants, immigrants from abroad, are coming here to somehow change the country. Mexicans, Muslims, people from Asia, it goes on and on.

So, these different ideas create a very toxic and explosive mix that we have seen lead to the murder of people. You know, again, I think about Texas. I think about El Paso. I think about what almost happened in Colleyville. I think about what you have had to endure in your community. You know what I am talking about.

Mr. GREEN. Yes, sir, I do. It would seem to me that given this phenomenon, that we have to make sure that we are together. That we don't allow lines of division to exist among people who have common enemies.

Mr. GREENBLATT. Yes.

Mr. GREEN. I think that we can't silo. I can't decide that I am just going to fight racism because that is what impacts me. At some point, there has to be this reality, this realization that the common enemy has to be addressed by people who are being impacted with a common message. We all have to have a similar message to deal with this enemy that we confront.

Mr. GREENBLATT. Absolutely, racism is not your problem as a Black man. It is my problem too as a White man. Like anti-Semi-

tism isn't just my problem as a Jew. It is your problem too as a non-Jew. So, you are right, we are all in this together.

Mr. GREEN. Well, I do thank you. If you get a chance, check the article out, *How the Holocaust Moved from Concentration Camps to Jewish Victims' Homes*.

Mr. GREENBLATT. I will.

Mr. GREEN. Very powerful in the *Washington Post*. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi for 5 minutes, Mr. Guest.

Mr. GUEST. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Roggio, I want to visit with you just a few moments on something that I heard you mention in your opening statement. Something that was also addressed a few moments ago by Dr. Meeks, which is the withdrawal from Afghanistan. In your opening statement, I believe you said that it was a major propaganda victory. I know in the written testimony that you prepared you refer to it as being disastrous. You go on to say that the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan led to the immediate collapse of the Afghan government and military and the swift return of power to the Taliban. You then go on to say later that the Taliban alliance with al-Qaeda has not been broken but, in fact, has been strengthened as it forged in 20 years of war against the United States and its allies. Afghanistan is again a safe haven for al-Qaeda.

Then the following paragraph you talk about America's abandonment of Afghanistan has created what you refer to as second- and third-order effects on our allies, our adversaries, and our enemies. You say America's adversaries and enemies now sense weakness and they are seeking to divide to drive wedges between America and her allies. The desire to end the so-called endless war in Afghanistan has called into question America's commitments to its allies and its leadership on the global stage.

So, what I would like to ask you and give you a few minutes to expand upon is first, the short- and the long-term impacts that the Afghanistan withdrawal will have on threats to our homeland. Then more in a broader stage, the impact that this will have on America's leadership on the international stage.

Mr. ROGGIO. Sure. I am going to take the second question first, the impact on the international stage. American allies were deeply shaken by the U.S. withdrawal. We have, you know, look, there has been news report after news report about how our allies were upset and felt left in the dark by the United States. It was a unilateral decision to withdraw. The reality is that President Biden made the decision to leave Afghanistan and NATO allies and other allies and partners who were in Afghanistan they were not able to maintain a presence without the United States. So, the United States made the decision and they had no choice but to follow through. NATO and other countries could not stay in Afghanistan without a U.S. presence because we provided the bulk of the forces, the security, the maintaining of the large air bases, things of that nature.

So, yes, this is an issue and we are seeing it develop in the Ukraine issue. We are having allies speak to Russia sidebar without the United States. In negotiations with Iran, the European countries are talking to Iran directly and the United States is side-

lined. This is all a direct result of countries being concerned about U.S. leadership.

As far as our adversaries and enemies go, immediately after the withdrawal from Afghanistan, this was reported in the press as well, they were—Russia and China were issuing whisper campaigns to countries like North Korea and the Ukraine and other allies and partners of the United States. Can you count on the United States to be there for you? Look what they did to their so-called partner in Afghanistan. This could be you next. So, this is the second- and third-order effects that I was referring to in my written testimony.

As far as the short- and medium- and long-term impact of the Afghanistan being under control of the Taliban, again, the key issue to me here is safe haven. Al-Qaeda was able to carry out and execute 9/11 because of its safe haven in Afghanistan. It was plotted, financed, and recruits were gathered. Many of the recruits from 9/11, they were people who fought on battlefields in Afghanistan alongside the Taliban who attended al-Qaeda training camps. The 9/11 Commission Report is very clear that safe haven is a key function. So, the greater the safe haven that Jihadist groups have, the greater their ability to plot and execute attacks against the U.S. homeland.

Afghanistan isn't just partially controlled by the Taliban as it was pre-9/11. Remember you had the Northern Alliance contesting about or controlling about 10 to 15 percent of the country and in battle with the Taliban. So, the Taliban and al-Qaeda had to devote resources to fighting the Northern Alliance. That doesn't exist anymore. Now, al-Qaeda can devote its resources to launch what is called external operations. These operations may not just be directed at the U.S. homeland. These can be directed at U.S. military bases overseas, U.S. businesses overseas, or just civilians overseas. But ultimately, al-Qaeda wants to establish a caliphate. Afghanistan is the first of many emirates or States within its caliphate. It is a massive blow to the United States in short-term. You know, I think what we are seeing is al-Qaeda is organizing and sort-of reaping the benefits. It is sort-of the mid- and long-term that I really am concerned about the Taliban's control of Afghanistan and al-Qaeda's role in that.

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

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Swalwell, for 5 minutes.

Mr. SWALWELL. Thank you, Chairman. I actually agree with Mr. Roggio that Afghanistan was an absolute disaster. If this committee has time, we should have hearings on why Donald Trump, the twice-impeached former President, released 5,000 Taliban troops and set such a public withdrawal date. So, he and I are aligned there, Chairman.

But today we are here to talk about the evolving realities of terrorist threats to the United States. I wanted to draw the committee's attention and some of the witnesses to an article that I published last year in the *Harvard Journal on Legislation*, titled, "Homeland Security 20 Years after September 11 Addressing Evolving Threats." I laid out and proposed that domestic terrorism has become a more complex, more diverse, and more disbursed

threat. I would ask Dr. Cynthia Miller-Idriss, if you agree with the premise that domestic terrorism is now the largest threat to the homeland?

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. Yes, I believe the data on that is very clear, thank you.

Mr. SWALWELL. I would also like your expertise in tracking global terrorism on the internet and its overall effect on the United States. Do you agree that we must adapt our National security focus to address anti-Government extremism and White supremacy violent groups?

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. Yes, I think that it is imperative that we do so.

Mr. SWALWELL. Mr. Rasmussen.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Any ideologically-driven movement that would result in violence or terrorist activity directed at innocent populations is, of course, worthy of that level of scrutiny and policy attention.

Mr. SWALWELL. Dr. Miller-Idriss, given what is happening in Ukraine and as Russia is amassing both cyber efforts and ground troops for a potential invasion there, what can you share about how this geopolitical conflict is being characterized by far-right violent extremist groups?

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. Thank you for the question. I think like any other geopolitical conflict, we see that there are potential ripple effects for terrorist actors and extremist actors. In this case, on the White supremacist extremist side, we have already been seeing quite a bit of chatter on-line including dedicated chat rooms talking, spewing really, anti-Semitic conspiracy theories about the conflict and about Ukraine's leadership being Jewish. I think we can see the ways in which it is fueling both recruitment efforts, invitations to come train for White supremacists foreign fighters, and the potential for further instability, in fact, in other parts of the region.

So, it is very early. We don't know how that will all pan out. I don't want to sound overly alarmist. But I think that it is something that should be watched closely.

Mr. SWALWELL. Mr. Greenblatt, is there value in America's leaders in condemning violent rhetoric among different groups in America that try and associate with one political party or another?

Mr. GREENBLATT. There is no question, Mr. Congressman, that we need elected officials, policy makers, and public figures of all sorts to call out extremism whenever it happens. In particular, I will just say we need, you know, conservative voices to call it out when it comes from the right. We need progressive voices to call it out when it comes from the left. We need Jewish voices to call it out when you hear Jewish extremism. Muslim voices when we hear Islamist extremism. All of us have a responsibility to do this.

Mr. SWALWELL. I agree. It was suggested earlier that, you know, there is not a condemnation of Antifa. Let make it clear that I absolutely denounce Antifa. I denounce any violence used in the name of any political movement that associates with democratic politics. I would hope that my Republican colleagues could denounce the Proud Boys and could denounce the Oath Keepers and could denounce the whatever percenters group that is out there. Also, could denounce this crazy idea that the former President would give par-

dons to people who were at the Capitol on January 6 carrying a confederate flag or were part of group or mob that killed a police officer.

So, I do agree with you, Mr. Greenblatt, that it takes both sides. I will make sure that you and others hold me accountable when there are groups on the left who engage in violence or violent rhetoric and make sure that we loudly condemn it. I would just invite my colleagues across the aisle to do the same because I think we will be safer as a country when that happens. I will give you the last word.

Mr. GREENBLATT. Mr. Congressman, I will just give you a data point. You know, at ADL we track extremist-related murders. In the past decade we found one Antifa adherent was involved in murder. That happened in 2020. Whereas right-wing extremists have been involved in 75 percent of the 429, you know, domestic extremist-related murders in the United States. OK. Domestic Islamists extremists, 20 percent. So, just to put it in perspective, like Antifa, sure is it a problem in theory, but in practice the White nationalists, the armed militia enthusiasts, the QAnon adherence, the accelerationists, et cetera, these literally are a threat to the homeland in a way that dwarfs anything else.

Mr. SWALWELL. Well said. I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Tennessee, Mrs. Harshbarger, for 5 minutes.

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the witnesses for being here today. I want to start with Mr. Roggio. Throughout this Afghanistan evacuation and relocation efforts, there has been major concerns that terrorists would exploit this chaotic environment. Of course, they did. On August 26, an ISIS-K affiliated suicide bomber, who was released from a high security prison, killed 13 of our servicemen and -women. I have a question. I do want to preface that by telling you that the question is this: Do you have a sense of where those individuals disbursed to? How many have resumed their participation in terrorist plots around the world? That question comes to you because in a recent hearing, I asked Secretary Mayorkas whether or not he believed these prisoners posed a threat at the Southern Border by illegally crossing. He absolutely said, no, Congresswoman, I do not. So, what are your thoughts of where these men have ended up?

Mr. ROGGIO. So, the answer to your question is we really don't know where they have ended up. Again, our visibility in Afghanistan has dropped to near zero. We have very little information about where the prisoners who have escaped those prisons have left.

I have seen things like Osama bin Laden's former security chief who was not detained. He was hiding in Pakistan, return to his home in a parade that was held by the Taliban. Now, Osama bin Laden's security chief who defended him at the Battle of Tora Bora. That is a very significant individual who is out there now. Is he back involved in al-Qaeda's global operations? We don't know the answer to that.

That is what is most frightening to me is that we don't know what is happening in Afghanistan today. But we do know that his-

torically al-Qaeda has committed to—it said that it—it is a very patient organization. I go back to Congressman Katko in his opening statement, he talked about Ramzi bin al-Shibh and after the attack, the first attack on the World Trade Center, he was helicoptered past the World Trade Center. An FBI agent, the story goes, the FBI agent said to him, look, those towers are still standing. He said, yes, but we will try again. They will be coming down. That happened what 7, 8 years later. Al-Qaeda members don't retire. The Islamic State they fight and rage Jihad until they are either killed or they are infirmed. This is it. We know they are not going to stop plotting against us.

What I believe has happened now is in the short term, they are operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Taliban is consolidating its gains. Al-Qaeda is helping the Taliban with that. Al-Qaeda is patient. It doesn't need to attack us today, tomorrow, or next week, or even next year to be that threat. That is what we—that was the lesson of 9/11. They tried to take down the World Trade Center 8 years before it actually happened. This is a patient organization. Our lack of visibility into the situation inside of Afghanistan is a direct threat to the U.S. homeland.

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Well, you know, I am looking at this briefing. It says, just a few weeks ago CNN reported that 5 detainees who had been held at Guantanamo for more than a decade have been cleared for release. With these, 18 out of the currently 39 detainees have been cleared for transfer and are eligible for release pending diplomatic arrangements. The diplomatic process is under way to work a transfer or repatriate them as appropriate, said John Kirby, the DOD spokesman. So, where is the accountability? How do we track those individuals that will now be sent or repatriated? What should we be looking for?

Mr. ROGGIO. There never have been accountability on this issue. At one point in time, the Department of Defense put the recidivism rate of Guantanamo detainee release back into the wild at somewhere around 30 to 40 percent. Again, that is an optimistic assessment that you are going to get from the Department of Defense. The number is very much likely, is much likely very higher. Former Gitmo detainees who were released, members of the Taliban, immediately joined the group. They became part of the negotiating team. Historically, the recidivism rate among Guantanamo Bay detainees is quite high. So, unless they are arrested into the countries that they are released to, which very often does not happen, they will return to wage Jihad at some point or another.

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Yes.

Mr. ROGGIO. Again, this is a part of the lack of visibility on this. Many of these detainees are released and we don't know what is happening. I have personal experience with one Guantanamo detainee when I was embedded with the U.S. military as a reporter in Iraq. A Guantanamo detainee who we released to Kuwait became a suicide bomber at a base that I was at just 2 days prior. I was on scene there. It was one of the largest suicide attacks in Iraq in its history. It left a massive crater. It looked like the Kansas City bombings. That is what happens to these Gitmo detainees in one way or another, they wind up rejoining the fight.

Mrs. HARSHBARGER. Yes, they never retire. I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentlelady's time has expired. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from New Jersey, Mrs. Watson Coleman, for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Hi. Can you hear me, Chairman? Thank you. First of all, I want to thank you for this hearing. It has been very illuminating. I want to thank all of the witnesses. Mr. Roggio, I do want to agree with you about how we mishandled the Afghanistan move. But I want us to get beyond that in this discussion today because I think primarily we are concerned about this convergence of extremism that seems to target people, the same kind of people, the same anti-authority issues, even if they don't share the same ideology. It is very concerning to someone like me, a Black woman in America. I see it from the school boards now. Whoever thought you would see that kind of just abuse and potential violence at school boards all the way up to the Capitol and beyond.

I am very concerned that since the January 5 to today, which is the second day of celebrating Black History Month, that there have been bomb threats at 15 HBCUs. I have no HBCU in my district or in the State of New Jersey, but I have a lot of students that go there because the majority of our Black students that get educated from doctors, lawyers, to undergrads go to the HBCUs.

Clearly, I am disappointed that I am not seeing enough coverage of it. That it doesn't seem to take on the kind of media interest that other situations have. That is very disappointing. But Dr. Miller, I am certain that you all find this very alarming. Mr. Rasmussen, I am sure that you all find this very alarming and that you are paying attention to what is happening on the various platforms of sharing information.

So, I would like to know to what extent we know anything about sort-of any coordination, any similarities in who is involved, and are we significantly recognizing this as the terrorist threat it is the way we recognize, rightfully so, anti-Semitic terrorist threats, terrorist threats against Asians, terrorist threats against Muslims, terrorists threats against African Americans. It is particularly disturbing and disgusting that it is happening at the same month that we stand apart and take note of all the contributions of African Americans in making this country the great country it is. So, I would love for you to respond, Dr. Miller and you, Mr. Rasmussen.

Ms. MILLER-İDRİSS. Thank you for the question, Congresswoman. It is especially abhorrent to see these bomb threats coming in during Black History Month. I would say that although right now we don't know and our definition of terrorism in the country relies on intent. We don't know the intent because of the accountability issue. Investigations are still on-going.

But we know the impact is to terrorize people. We know that the impact is to terrorize students and communities across the country much like the Jewish community is terrorized every time that there is an attack. Any Asian-American or any minority community is terrorized by on-going attacks. So, I think we have to focus not just on these accountability and investigations and that part of it but look at how are we—what are we doing to invest to prevent more of this rising what appears to be coordinated. At least those phone calls came in within minutes of each other either from the same person or from some sort of coordinated attack. As we find

out more about the investigations, we will know more about the motive. But I think it is really important to understand the impact and how horrifying that is and how disruptive that is to the equitable learning experiences of any young person at a Black college or university.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Thank you. Mr. Rasmussen, I know that you all monitor sort-of internet platforms and internet companies and what is happening there. What are you seeing as it relates to these threats against the HBCUs and the threats against just sort-of the Black communities wherever you find them in general? Are you all tracking anything as it relates to them?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. So, I will speak both generally and specifically, ma'am, because I think broadly speaking, this unfortunate set of threats this week to the HBCUs fits a pattern we have long seen, and that is just a steady expansion of the amount of racially and ethnically-motivated violent extremist language and engagement in the on-line world. That is why we are here in many ways today.

With respect to this specific case, Dr. Miller-Idriss pointed out exactly what I would have, which is we are early days in the investigation. I will be very curious to see what law enforcement turns up by way of connections between the individuals making these calls. Was there prior on-line engagement? Were they gathering in communities of, you know, fellow travelers sharing these ideological leanings, you know, on the internet? We will learn more in the weeks ahead. But unfortunately, I think it fits a pattern we have seen for quite a while now growing in both size and scale.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. So, thank you. Mr. Greenblatt, I know you—

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Oh, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. For those on the call, in a briefing with the FBI yesterday, they indicated that these threats that are being made to historically Black colleges has risen to the top of their list in terms of priority. They will give it whatever resource needed to come to some definition and ultimate capture of the individual or individuals who have started that. So, we look forward to hearing from them.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, because my concern was going to be questioning about do we need additional resources and what they might be. I thank you and I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Gimenez, for 5 minutes. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Clyde, for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLYDE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My gentleman colleague from California just a couple of Members ago seems to think that Donald Trump was President last summer during the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan. You know, personally, I would have preferred if Donald Trump were the President last summer. If he had been, if that had been the case, we would not have had the disastrous withdrawal that we saw. But it was Joe Biden who was the President. Joe Biden who is completely and totally responsible for the crisis on the world stage known as the Afghanistan disaster. President Biden showed weakness then and he continues to



show weakness and we all know that weakness promotes aggression. Unlike Ronald Reagan's policy of peace through strength, Joe Biden's weakness on the world stage has promoted the current Ukraine crisis and the real possibility that we may very soon see another war in Europe. Crisis after crisis is the legacy of our current President Joe Biden.

Mr. Roggio, you know, the world watched in horror as the Taliban's ragtag bunch of undisciplined fighters forced the American military into a self-made and self-chosen corner at Kabul airport last summer. Considering the optic of that disastrous withdrawal, what impact do you believe it had on foreign terrorist organizations?

Mr. ROGGIO. Thank you, sir. The foreign terrorist organizations were buoyed by what happened after the Taliban took control of the country. The United States was boxed into a corner in Kabul. The images of that withdrawal, the videos of this withdrawal were distributed widely by Jihadist—by individuals. Jihadist sympathizers, members of the Taliban, suspected Jihadists on social media platforms. I saw these myself. They were crowing over the fact that the United States which, you know, that they had beaten a superpower. We can't deny this. What happened in Afghanistan was a defeat for the United States. We wasted 20 years of blood and treasure, whatever number you want to put to that, whether it is a trillion, 2 trillion. I have seen all kinds of crazy estimates. But the reality is we spent 20 years trying to stand up an Afghan government and we failed. We failed because we left precipitously.

We never gave the Afghan government an opportunity to defend itself. The decision was we are leaving and we are leaving in a short amount of time. It took 2 months to execute, or 2½ months from the day that President Biden announced the withdrawal. We left a small force behind. So, after the United States left by July 4, within a month and a half, the Taliban were in control of Afghanistan. We are forced to leave.

The propaganda boon for al-Qaeda, for the Taliban, and other Jihadist groups that has come out of Afghanistan, Afghans falling out, clinging to the wheels of planes, and falling from the sky. The airport being overrun. U.S. soldiers holding weapons pointing at Afghans. This is recorded material that they are going to use both, you know, internationally to wage their local Jihads, as well as to sponsor attacks against the U.S. homeland.

Mr. CLYDE. Thank you. I think we will see this time and time again over your lifetime and my lifetime both. Thank you for confirming that, indeed, it was President Biden who announced the withdrawal from Afghanistan. It was not President Trump who was President at the time. He did not have the executive authority. He was not the commander in chief. It was President Joe Biden who was the commander in chief who gave the military the order and as a military officer myself, I fully understand how the military operates. It was Joe Biden's order. It was his directive that the military fulfill. Therefore, the responsibility falls 100 percent at the feet of President Joe Biden. It was a disaster then. It is a disaster now. It will continue to be a disaster for years and years and years to come because of how it will be exploited by terrorist organizations and they will buoy their ranks with it and it will be a

detriment to the United States. With that, thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman yields back. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President. We do have decorum and I encourage you to do so. The Chair recognizes the gentelady from Nevada, Ms. Titus, for 5 minutes. The gentelady from Nevada.

Ms. TITUS. Excuse me. I thought I had clicked it. Before I ask my question about something related to my district in Las Vegas, I would just point out that the deadline date for withdrawing was set by President Trump. That Pompeo met with the Taliban and when all of this was negotiated, it was negotiated with the Taliban by the Trump administration and the Afghan government was not even at the table. So, let's be sure we get all our facts out there if we are going to talk what happened with the withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Now, my question that is related to Las Vegas has to do with the fact that just about any time we see a terrorist attack, there is some connection to my district. That was true in Oklahoma City, some of the terrorists had been through Nevada. Same was true in 9/11. Now, the latest was the mass shooting on October 1, 2017, at a music concert when the largest number of people were killed in that one incident.

Now, following that we had a large volume of hoaxes, conspiracy theories, and misinformation that popped up all over the internet about the identity of the gunman, what was his religious affiliation. Some people even called this horrific event a false flag. We have seen the same thing happen in countless other tragedies of gun violence. So, I will ask all the panelists, how do you separate gun violence from terrorism? How do you respond to all the misinformation that comes out that is used to radicalize people and recruit people in the wake of some of these gun violent attacks?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Maybe I will jump in there first, ma'am. I think the distinguishing feature that we would look for in defining something as terrorism versus gun violence or criminal gun violence is the ideological motivation or the set of ideas, beliefs, or views that is driving the person to take action. As you know better than anybody from the case in Las Vegas, that was the huge conundrum there for Federal law enforcement was never able to put their hands around a specific set of reasons why that horrific act took place.

So, when thinking about it, you can't really, in our world, call that a terrorist attack in the same way that you might when you are talking about someone who is motivated by particularly hateful ideology. But I am sure Dr. Miller-Idriss has a lot to say on the definitional piece of this as well. This is her life's work in many ways.

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. Thank you for the question.

Ms. TITUS. Even if it is not a terrorist attack though it often motivates people the way a terrorist attack would.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. It can still inspire terror, no question.

Ms. TITUS. Right.

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. That is particularly true for accelerationists who sometimes have taken advantage of those types of mass shoot-

ing attacks to try to prompt additional violence because violence is part of their ultimate goal and not just a means to an end. I would just say that, you know, I think one of the reasons why DHS and others have sometimes used the words terrorism and targeted violence is because exactly of this slippery problem. But also, because our definitions evolve over time too.

So, we have come to recognize violent incel, involuntary celibate terror, as a form of domestic extremism and terrorist violence in some cases. But for many years, those attacks like on a sorority in California and a yoga studio in Florida and elsewhere, we have seen those as personality problems of the individual actors until there was a recognition that a male supremacist misogyny was at root of a targeted hateful violent act against a group of people.

So, this is also part of the problem is that these things, it is not just the salad bar and the blurring of the ideologies, but sometimes our own understanding has to catch up with the efforts as they happen on the part of violent actors.

Ms. TITUS. I see.

Mr. GREENBLATT. Congresswoman, I will just jump in and say that firearms are far and away the weapon of choice for violent extremists in this country. Regardless of your personal views on firearm ownership or the Second Amendment, there is simply no doubt based on the data that there are some common-sense measures that could be taken to make it much harder for those who seek to harm our communities with hateful extremist backgrounds to have easy access to lethal weapons. I mean, first and foremost we need to close the loophole that allows guns to be sold without a criminal background check. That doesn't make sense to me. The perpetrator in Colleyville never should have been able to buy a gun as a foreign visitor to this country. He was easily able to purchase the handgun used in the attack 2 days prior on a street corner with no paperwork, no questions asked. Adding insult to injury, the man who sold this gun to Akram, you know, who was, again, this al-Qaeda sympathizer, was himself prohibited from gun ownership because of his own criminal history. So, he shouldn't have had one.

I mean, all of this is absurd. Requiring a criminal background check prior to every gun sale is just common sense. I would think there would be bipartisan interest in that to make it harder for domestic terrorists, again, across the spectrum, to get their hands on these weapons. I must say, Congresswoman, like we have seen Boogaloo Bois, we had an incident in Las Vegas, I think it was in 2020, where 3 people—

Ms. TITUS. Yes.

Mr. GREENBLATT [continuing]. Getting back to your question, 3 members of the U.S. military were arrested because they were planning a plot and they were planning with the Boogaloo Bois. I think last weekend we had an incident by the Goyim Defense League with anti-Semitic flyering in Las Vegas and a bunch of other cities across the country. So, we have extremism right there in Nevada, right there in Las Vegas, like you said. Some simple, easy bipartisan measures like requiring the criminal background check would make all of our communities safer.

Ms. TITUS. I would like—

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Ms. TITUS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Pfluger, for 5 minutes.

Mr. PFLUGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Simple, easy, bipartisan measures I couldn't agree more. On the committee that was formed in the wake of 9/11, I have spent my entire career in a post-9/11 military fighting in so many different places. Mr. Greenblatt, do you know how many people voted for an amendment on this committee, my colleagues across the aisle? Not a single person voted on amendment to figure out the country of origin, the terror affiliation, and any sort of derogatory information in the Darwa detention facility at Pul-e-Charkhi prison in the Afghanistan withdrawal. Not a single person. So, these are, you know, what are we doing on a committee for homeland security if we are not figuring out where the terror threat is?

So, Mr. Roggio, as a FDD fellow myself, I will start with you. Are you worried about those 5,000-plus people that were released? Or did they just kind-of disappear back into their normal lives and have no terror ambitions at all from this point on?

Mr. ROGGIO. Oh, I am extremely worried. You know, one of the things I keep detecting from this committee is that, well, Afghanistan's Afghanistan and it is not a threat to the U.S. homeland. But we had the largest terrorist attack occur on U.S. soil because Afghanistan was a safe haven for terrorists. However many were killed—have been killed in domestic terror attacks, it is dwarfed by the 3,000 that have been killed by al-Qaeda on 9/11, and subsequent attacks by al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.

Yes, I am absolutely worried about those 5,000 prisoners who were released. We don't know where they are. Some of them were Islamic State and I am told, again, I can't confirm this, but I have no doubt because of information we know about the accounting network of the Islamic State. That some members of the Islamic State were absorbed by the Taliban. Some members of al-Qaeda have been returned, have gone back to their jobs. Some members of the Islamic State rejoined the Islamic State and that is the element that opposes the Taliban government.

None of that is good for security here on the U.S. homeland. We have armies of terrorists, not just in Afghanistan, but in Somalia, in Mali, in Sub-Saharan Africa, in Syria, in Pakistan. I am talking tens of thousands of fighters often in each place that can be recruited and pointed at the United States to conduct attacks against the U.S. homeland. This is one of their goals is to hit us here to make the price for fighting them overseas too costly.

So, we should be concerned about every single individual who left. Do we even know the names of all of them? I hope the U.S. Government, the U.S. military, and intelligence services was able to obtain that information of these individuals. With the Taliban controlling passports, these people can leave the country and enter other countries and possibly have access to the United States. All of these things should be deeply worrying to every Member of this committee. These are groups, terror organizations that are committed to hurting us here in the United States and to targeting U.S. interests overseas as well.

Mr. PFLUGER. So, what I am hearing is that they haven't taken their eye off their mission, which is their desire to attack Americans. We saw it with the 13 service members that were killed in the tragic, yet very predictable, way that we had in the botched withdrawal. I just think that, you know, we are kidding ourselves. I do think that these are easy bipartisan issues. For the life of me, I can't understand why there would be any sort of disagreement on these. Luckily, that amendment actually passed in the NDAA. But not a single person on this committee on the other side of the aisle voted for that amendment on this committee when presented.

Mr. Greenblatt, let me turn to you. Thanks, Mr. Roggio, for your answer to that. I couldn't agree more, I mean, we have to focus on terrorism. Any sort of extremism is wrong. Any extremism is wrong. Let's look at it for what it is. But, Mr. Greenblatt, you know, I live in Texas. My district is not a border district per se geographically. Is it safe to say and do you agree that there are people who want to enter this country by all means? We saw the Colleyville attacker that entered with a passport and we need to get to the bottom of that. But what do you say about known or suspected terrorists entering our country? Do they have a desire to enter our country? Should we be worried about the Southern Border?

Mr. GREENBLATT. Congressman Pfluger, first thing I want to do is thank you for your service. I know you are a military—

Mr. PFLUGER. Thank you.

Mr. GREENBLATT [continuing]. Veteran and I served in the air force. Second, I could not agree more with the fear of foreign terrorists trying to get into America. If I might just for a moment, I can't say the specifics about attempted entries from the Southern Border because I am not familiar with that, but we are very worried about the Islamic Republic of Iran. The largest state sponsor in the world, which continues to try to put people inside the United States. There was an FBI case last year where they identified an Iranian dissident, Masih Alinejad, who was being targeted for kidnapping and rendition to Tehran by the Islamic Republic. Mr. Congressman, I would implore you to look at the danger of Iran and their efforts to—they have surveilled Jewish institutions like synagogues, Chabad houses, JCCs. Their people have been arrested in Chicago, in New York, in Los Angeles. I am deeply worried about that and would be delighted to work with you to explore this issue because it is a threat to all of us.

Mr. PFLUGER. So, we should be worried any method of entry and the 2 million people that have enter illegally, you know, there is a chance that one or two of those might have terror ties. There is a chance that one or two of those might have popped on a known or suspected terror watch list. You know, our eye is so far off the ball, we have not had a single hearing yet on border security. So, I am kind-of wondering about that.

So, last question, Mr. Greenblatt. Do you believe that the Houthis should be on the foreign terrorist organization designated—should they be a designated terror organization?

Mr. GREENBLATT. The Houthis, absolutely should be a foreign designated terror organization. They have—they would—look, we know they are bombing, trying to fire allies on our missiles in Abu

Dhabi. We know they are agitating and militating against our ally Israel. We know they are anti-American propaganda is extensive. They are a proxy state like Hezbollah and Syria of the Iranian regime. They absolutely should be on the list. No questions asked.

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

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from New York, Miss Rice, for 5 minutes.

Ms. RICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to all the witnesses for coming here today to talk about this very important issue. A lot of what I have been hearing from the witnesses is, you know, steps that you think that we can take here as Members of Congress to address the issues of which we speak. Last June, the Biden administration released the first-ever National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism, which was a comprehensive framework for how the Federal Government can understand and respond to domestic terror threats and attempt to cut them down at their roots. Mr. Rasmussen, Mr. Greenblatt, you know, it has been more than 6 months since they announced this framework. What did the White House get right in this strategy? What did they not get right? What do we need to focus on to supplement what I think everyone would agree was a long-overdue National strategy? So, if I could start with you, Mr. Rasmussen, and then go to Mr. Greenblatt.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Sure, thank you Congresswoman Rise. I read that document very closely when it came out and took note of several features. One, I think was a clear recognition of the need to kind-of be in a sense threat-agnostic. That the domestic terrorism threat looks a lot of different ways. It crosses the ideological spectrum. As Dr. Miller-Idriss points out, the data suggests that there is far more to be worried about in terms of volume on the far extreme right than in other parts of the ideological spectrum.

I think the strategy also did well to make clear that this needs to be a lot of work done outside of Government with Government to get a better handle on this. That includes, of course, cooperation with industry, the technology sector, the group of colleagues I work with in that sector. That we aren't going to necessarily make progress on this if we simply look to Government programming alone.

Then the last piece I would point to is the call for greater investment in the prevention architecture. A lot of that work, of course, is done at the Department of Homeland Security working with communities around the country. I think there is a clear signal that the administration wants to lean into that set of programs. I think that is encouraging.

Ms. RICE. Mr. Greenblatt, can you unmute?

Mr. GREENBLATT. Madam Congresswoman, nice to see you. Thank you for the question. You know, I used to work in the West Wing, right? I used to develop strategies like this. So, I have some particular views on it. I do think it was a landmark. We have never seen a White House strategy on countering domestic terrorism. So, it deserves, they deserve, rightly deserve credit for that. I give them credit because it had a whole-of-Government approach. That really matters and it draws a lot from ADL's PROTECT plan,

which I mentioned before. It acknowledged systemic racism and these structural issues which are again, part of the problem.

But there were things that it missed. So, No. 1, it was a strategy. It is not an implementation plan. You should ask the White House. You should ask, you know, the folks there. You should ask the OMB. Like, so where are the budgets? So, what are the implementation plans for every agency to act on this? That should be No. 1, right?

No. 2, you should—I think it missed the big tech piece. So, again, as I said before, social media is a information superhighway for domestic extremists, for foreign agents from places like the Islamic Republic of Iran and others. Like big tech needs to be accountable on this, engaged and accountable. So, my friend, Nick, I really appreciate what he is doing, Congresswoman, at GICFT. Yet the companies need to do far more on their own platforms.

Then No. 3, I think ultimately we need a whole-of-society strategy. Not socially with the whole business community involved and we need civil society involved. So, I would want to see like a three-part process going forward so that we are all working together. Because this threat threatens all of us, Congresswoman. We all need to be engaged in it together.

Ms. RICE. Mr. Greenblatt, just along that note, I think, you know, you can have a strategy, but if you don't understand the trends and how they are—

Mr. GREENBLATT. Mm-hmm.

Ms. RICE [continuing]. Overlapping, intersecting. Can you just expound a little bit in the short time that we have left, on the trends, you know, pointing to the growing—you point out the growing connections between anti-Semitism and other violent extremist ideologies. Can you just talk a little bit more about that trend?

Mr. GREENBLATT. Well, there is no question that anti-Semitism is at the beating heart of White supremacy. So, from Charlottesville to Capitol Hill, it is not an accident that these men were wearing t-shirts that said 6MWE or yelling Jews will not replace us. Anti-semitism is at the beating heart of radical Islamism. It is not an accident that the guy in Colleyville was trying to get an al-Qaeda operative. An al-Qaeda operative who was arrested, Congresswoman, because she tried to kill American soldiers because she had—she was—had information in her possession that suggested she was surveilling American sites. She wanted to kill Americans. Yet at her trial, she said that the jurists, or the potential jurists should be DNA tested to see if they were Zionists. I mean, it is lunatic.

So, radical Islamism, violent White supremacy, they have this hatred of the Jews at their core. Even other groups that we may think are less frightening like QAnon, espouse lunatic theories about Jewish space lasers or other stuff. So, look, in this moment, and I know you represent Long Island, we have seen anti-Semitic flying and harassment right in your district in the broader New York area as well. When Jews are being attacked in broad daylight on our streets, that should be a problem for all of us.

Ms. RICE. Great, thank you. Thank you.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentlelady's time has expired. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas, Mr. LaTurner, for 5

minutes. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Florida, Ms. Demings, for 5 minutes.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Well, thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the Ranking Member and to all of our witnesses here today who are engaging in this very important discussion. This past weekend the day after we recognized International Holocaust Remembrance Day, neo-Nazis held rallies in central Florida. I represent Florida. They shouted anti-Semitic slurs, waived agnostic flags, and chanted a Jew is the devil.

I have to say as a career law enforcement officer, I am disappointed when homeland security has become such a political partisan issue. Because I think that we can all do better.

Now, make no mistake, as a former law enforcement officer, I am not unfamiliar with hate organizations. I have been in their presence on numerous occasions. But let me be clear of all the protections that our Constitution guarantees us in this great Nation, violence is not one of those protections. The group that broke the peace this weekend is not merely a half dozen malcontents as some have categorized them. The group leader was indicted in Arizona just days before for pointing a gun at a group of Black men outside a hotel.

Mr. Greenblatt, you have already talked about how important it is to really speak up and speak out against this type of behavior. So, I would really like to direct my question to the other witnesses. If you could also tell us how important it is for community leaders, faith-based, elected officials, to identify and condemn, have zero tolerance for these type of threats whether it is anti-Semitic, racist White nationalists, or otherwise. Ms. Idriss, we will start with you.

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. Thank you. I thank you for the question, Mrs. Demings. I think it is essential, as we have heard those words from Jonathan Greenblatt so clearly. One of the things we saw in Texas was the incredible solidarity from the interfaith community, Catholic priests, and an Imam, and a minister, evangelical minister sitting across the street in command center throughout the, you know, throughout the hostage crisis and really condemning that actively. We have seen some media coverage of that. It is so important to see those interfaith expressions condemning Islamophobia, condemning anti-Semitism, to have anyone from, you know, across the political spectrum condemn hate and violence when we see it to raise their voices against what is happening in HBCUs. To really be clear, what are the values that we all stand for as a community across political lines, across our differences. Because we have to start setting some of those norms and values in order for us to begin to heal and move forward.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Thank you so much. I am going to move on for the sake of time. Mr. Greenblatt, the Nation was horrified last month as we have already talked about with an armed gunman held congregants hostage at a Texas synagogue. As someone who has been a life-long supporter of nonprofit security grants, I was heartened that the Rabbi was able to put the security practices he learned from training funded by those grants into action to resolve this situation or at least without loss of life. How should Congress be looking at the program, given the dynamic threat landscape?



Mr. GREENBLATT. So, Congresswoman Demings, first and foremost, thank you for the question. Thank you for your leadership in law enforcement for so many years. You know, ADL partners with law enforcement in Orlando, in Florida, around the country. We couldn't do our work to fight hate without that cooperation. So, I am grateful for that.

To your question, and I would also say, we watched this rally by these Nazis in your area over the weekend. It was disgusting. To anyone who is confused about the threat of right-wing extremism, listen to what the Congresswoman said. Literally, please just listen. Google what happened.

It is shocking and stunning that anyone would not—would simply dismiss these people as jackasses. They are not jackasses. They are sinister, violent extremists with a lethal agenda. I am sorry, I just had to get that out. Because I don't think it is political to call out prejudice. I don't think it is nuanced to say we should get rid of the Nazis.

That being said, as it relates specifically to what should Congress do, double the funding for the nonprofit security grant program, the DHS dollars that help provide security and training for religious institutions. By the way, not just synagogues, but mosques, Black churches, you know, Hindu temples, Sikh Gurdwaras, et cetera. Last year, there were \$400 million in applications alone. Yet, we only have a \$180 million program. I think the Government should fund at 90 percent of that. So, if you could bring it from \$180- to \$360 million, as we like to say, dayenu.

Mrs. DEMINGS. To all of our witnesses, thank you so much. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from California, Ms. Barragán. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York, for 5 minutes, Mr. Torres.

Mr. TORRES. Thank you, Mr. Chair. More and more conspiracy theories are circulating than ever before caused by threats foreign and domestic. Foreign threats like Russian influence operations and domestic threats like social media algorithms that amplify disinformation. Those conspiracy theories are spreading faster and faster than ever before and escalating into more violence than ever before.

History tells us that a conspiracy theory can be a gateway drug to anti-Semitism because anti-Semitism is itself a conspiracy theory of its own. So, my first question is to Mr. Greenblatt, do you worry as I do that the increasingly conspiratorial politics of America has become a breeding ground for violent anti-Semitism?

Mr. GREENBLATT. Mr. Congressman, thank you for the question. I just want to thank you for your principled leadership on these issues, which I know all of us in the Jewish community so respect. Yes, I would suggest that conspiratorial minds whether you demonize the Jewish people or the Jewish State, it leads to violence. We saw that happen last May, Mr. Congressman, when wild unhinged claims about the state of Israel led to Jews being beaten up in broad daylight in Midtown Manhattan, in Los Angeles, all over the United States.

So, again, when you have conspiracies in your head about Jewish power or Jewish influence, it often leads to real-world violence. All of us should unequivocally and singularly call that out, right? Not qualify it with, well, there are complex issues in the Middle East. I am sorry. You might not light what happens in China, but that is no excuse to beat up Asian Americans. You might not like what happens in Mexico, that is no excuse to beat up Latinos. You might not like what happens in the Middle East, that is no excuse to attack Jews, full stop.

Mr. TORRES. As you pointed out during the conflict in May 2021, if I remember correctly, the #hitlerwasright was retweeted 18,000 times. Is that correct?

Mr. GREENBLATT. More than that. More than that. Scores of thousands of times. Which gets us back to why if big tech just did their job they could have helped to mitigate this right away.

Mr. TORRES. You know, your organization has recorded that since 2019, anti-Semitic incidents have risen to levels not seen in 4 decades. The Tree of Life synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh and the Congregation Beth Israel hostage crisis in Colleyville, these events did not happen in a vacuum. These events were part of a larger wave of violent anti-Semitism that has taken hold in America. But there was a journalist who wrote the following, which I found striking. She said, “Ten years ago, my synagogue and my kids’ Jewish school had no armed guards. Now, both have a near platoon of special forces guys. In the last 5 years, my kids’ Jewish camp and my kosher grocery have hired armed guards because of threats. This is how Jews live now. Americans should know.” Mr. Greenblatt, do these words reflect what you are observing on the ground?

Mr. GREENBLATT. These words exactly reflect what I am seeing on the ground, Mr. Congressman. Like Jews are concerned that shopping in a kosher supermarket puts them in harm’s way. They are concerned that showing up for a Shabbat service is putting your life at risk. They are concerned that like in Brooklyn walking with your children in a stroller, they might be spit at by someone who tells them they should have burned in Auschwitz. I mean, it is astonishing to see the level of animus that is out there.

Again, so we need—whether it is extremism from the right or illiberalism from the left, or again, anti-Semitism from Islamist radicals or whomever, I don’t know—we can’t afford any politicians to politicize this or to weaponize it. That is why I appreciate how you have spoken out again and again, Mr. Congressman. I wish others would do the same.

Mr. TORRES. I want to note for the record that I strongly support a doubling of funding for the nonprofit security grant program. It is a vital tool protecting vulnerable communities from violent extremism, which includes protecting the Jewish community from violent anti-Semitism.

My final question is for Mr. Rasmussen. If Russia invades Ukraine, and if the United States severely sanctions Russia in response, do you worry, as I do, that a Russian invasion of Ukraine could trigger a sequence of events that could raise the risk of cyberterrorism from Russia or from Russian state-sponsored cyber actors? Is that a reasonable fear?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Well, Mr. Torres, it certainly a reasonable fear that if Russia is able to use these tools in the context of aggression against Ukraine, it allows them to refine these tools and potentially learn what works and doesn't work and they can store that knowledge away for a future conflict, including conflict that might involve the United States. We already, of course, know the Russians are sophisticated actors in this space. The Ukraine theatre right now simply allows them to, in a sense, hone their tradecraft and hone their tactics in ways that will certainly add to their capability over time in ways that we are not going to find very comforting.

Mr. TORRES. My time has expired. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. I look forward to working with the Vice Chair on increasing the amount of the non-profit grant program from where it is now at \$180 million. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas, Mr. LaTurner, for 5 minutes.

Mr. LATURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Rasmussen, terrorist organizations like al-Qaeda and ISIS have historically harnessed modern technology to recruit and invigorate their members, as you know well. Did GIFCT or its partners notice any changes in on-line activity from terrorists and extremist groups either during the withdrawal from Afghanistan or in the months since?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. You are absolutely right, sir, that established terrorist groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS have long used the on-line domain as a way to generate recruits, you know, spread their message, engage in even operational planning and training. In response to the Afghanistan events, what we have seen is that the narrative generated out of that is, of course, being turned to advantage by terrorist groups. They are using this as, in a sense, their proof that they have defeated a superpower. That they have expelled the United States from South Asia. That they have, in a sense, won.

That narrative, of course, serves as a powerful recruiting tool for new adherence to their cause. Now, it is hard to kind-of draw a linear connection between using that narrative on-line and actually how does that manifest itself in real terrorist capability. But there is no question that the narrative serves their purpose.

Mr. LATURNER. Have you noticed, you talk about the narrative and, obviously, you are correct about the narrative being helpful. But do you have any way to quantify how helpful it has been in an uptick over the last several months?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I don't know that we do. It is maybe something I can consult with our research network to try to find a little more precision to put around that. Because what I am offering is I know a bit more impressionistic and, perhaps, not as data-driven as might be useful. So, let me take that one and come back to you, sir.

Mr. LATURNER. I would appreciate that information. Thank you. A follow-up for Mr. Roggio, could you please tell the committee about how foreign terrorist organizations traditionally recruit more members? How is their process likely implicated as a result of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan?

Mr. ROGGIO. Sure. Yes, thank you, sir. The traditional recruitment, it occurs, obviously on-line. That is a big place. That is where they try to reach, particularly try to reach Westerners to get people in their home countries to attempt to conduct attacks or join the organization. But a lot of the recruiting is done locally in individual countries where they have a presence. So, in Yemen, they will recruit from their Tribes or families in Yemen. Same thing, Somalia.

This is why, again, I keep going back to the issue of safe haven. When these groups are able to operate in the open, they are able to more easily recruit, train, and indoctrinate local fighters. Not all of them are going to be used to launch attacks against the West. But as we saw with 9/11, only a small fraction of—it is estimated that tens of thousands of al-Qaeda fighters went through camps prior to 9/11 and were trained through al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan. They selected I believe it was 17 of them were from Afghanistan camps. It may have been all 19. That is all they needed to execute 9/11.

So, again, I know I keep going back to the issue of safe haven. But that is the lifeblood for Jihadist groups to organize, train, and project their power in order to conduct attacks against the U.S. homeland or U.S. citizens, businesses, military installations overseas.

Mr. LATURNER. I appreciate that response and agree with it. Mr. Chairman, thank you, and I yield back the remainder of my time.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman yields back. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from California, Ms. Barragán.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to start by thanking you, Mr. Chairman, and Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman for bringing up the issue of the bomb threats against historically Black colleges and universities and other minority-serving institutions to this committee. These threats are disturbing. They should outrage us all. I believe we must talk about them in the context of domestic extremism and the potential for domestic terrorism. I know that several HBCUs in your district, Mr. Chairman, were impacted as well a school in my district, Charles Argue University, which is a historically Black graduate institute and minority-serving institution where the majority of medical and health care students are Black and Latino have received a bomb threat as well. They have been having to clear campuses, up late at night. This is just something that shouldn't be happening. So, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for immediately raising the seriousness of this threat with the FBI and DHS and know that I am here to work alongside you on this issue to address these acts on intimidation and domestic terrorism rooted in racism and bigotry.

I now want to turn my questions to the issue of misinformation for all the witnesses. If you could, given the short time, maybe respond with a yes or no. Does misinformation and disinformation play a role in the active or past recruitment of people into extremist groups or subcultures? Anybody want to start?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I would say, yes, it does, ma'am.

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. Absolutely, yes.

Mr. GREENBLATT. Yes, it does.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. OK. I don't think I hear anybody disagreeing. Have you seen the use of misinformation and disinformation in-

crease over the last several years? Would anybody say that it has not?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Absolutely.

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. It has, for sure.

Mr. GREENBLATT. There is no question that with social media it just continues to increase and expand.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Is there any evidence that any increase or in the misuse, the misinformation or disinformation fueled by on-line platforms, social media, and traditional media has led to an increase in domestic extremism and the potential for domestic terrorism?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Yes.

Ms. MILLER-IDRISS. That is also very clear, yes.

Mr. GREENBLATT. Yes.

Mr. ROGGIO. Yes.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. You know, I think this is just to highlight the misinformation and what is happening and the role that these on-line platforms have, I think, in addressing this. The Congressional Hispanic Caucus is going to be holding a hearing in conjunction with House admin in Miami upcoming on Monday to address the issue of misinformation and what is happening. So, this is something that we will continue to work on. I just wanted to kind-of highlight that issue.

Moving on to another topic, this is also to all the witnesses. In 2020 and early 2021, we saw violence at some State capitals stemming from protests focused on COVID-19-related restrictions. In the second half of 2021, school boards and city council meetings have been the site of violence and chaos related to COVID-19 restrictions and other local measures. Can you describe why this violence has become so localized? Is it wide-spread as it seems?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I will answer first and then just welcome comments from the other panelists. But I actually highlighted this, ma'am, in my written testimony, the longer version. The way in which during this COVID period, we have actually seen groups or individuals with radically different ideological takes on the world are uniting around issues related to COVID or grabbing onto pieces of the COVID story that we have all experienced over the last 2 years and using it to fuel their own progression toward extremism. So, it has made for some very strange bedfellows in that on-line environment who would otherwise have very little in common but for their grabbing on to a particular narrative about COVID, whether it is Government overreach or vaccination conspiracy theories, et cetera. So, it is an interesting phenomenon and one we are still trying very hard to understand.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Thank you. Mr. Greenblatt.

Mr. GREENBLATT. Look, from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, disinformation about the virus circulated widely on social media. We had elected officials, mainstream media outlets promoting lies including a theory that the vaccine was an effort by the Government to control the population. As a result of that you had conspiracy theorists, extremists, members of the public targeting physicians, nurses, hospital workers, public health officials, and scientists. Harassing them, threatening them, assaulting them.

In 2021, we had public schools and school board meetings where you saw extraordinary vitriol with outrage never seen before around masking mandates and vaccines. Conspiracy around CRT. Again, you can have strong feelings about what your kids learn, but to think there is some plot to take over the system, I don't agree with. We don't have the data at ADL that bears that out. I think it is the disinformation being like fed intravenously, Congresswoman, to communities today because of the 24/7 nature of social media that has warped the way they think. Turn these like localized extremism and turned, again, these like the local, political process into a battleground.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Well, thank you. I apologize to the rest of the witnesses as I am out of time. But I also want to also join with you, Mr. Greenblatt, in standing with you on anti-Semitism and what is happening to our American Jewish community. So, I will work closely with the committee on that issue as well. Thank you. With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Malinowski, for 5 minutes.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I didn't know we would be talking about Afghanistan today, but since we are, I just wanted to ask Mr. Roggio a couple of questions. Obviously, the release of those prisoners in early September by the Taliban was a very bad thing for all the reasons that have been stated. But I just want to make sure that we are clear that the United States did not ask for those prisoners to be released or order those prisoners to be released. That was done arguably as a consequence of our withdrawal, it was not something that we intended to happen. Is that a fair statement?

Mr. ROGGIO. That is correct. The release of the prisoners happened because the Taliban overran those prisons.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Right. Has the U.S. Government ever asked or ordered authorities in Afghanistan to release large numbers of militants to the battlefield?

Mr. ROGGIO. That is correct. The Trump administration, as part of its deal with the Taliban, requested that the Afghan government release 5,000 prisoners in exchange for 1,000. I want to be perfectly clear that the decision to negotiate with the Taliban and to cut that deal with the Taliban to withdraw was—I disagreed with that. I disagreed with the method of and the decision to withdraw from Afghanistan. Both were disastrous policy.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Good, well, we agree then. I just want to make sure we are fair that this was over two administrations.

Mr. ROGGIO. That is correct.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Back to the domestic threat. I think, you know, it is striking from the testimony of all of our witnesses that, you know, we are facing a very decentralized threat. I think it is a fair assessment of your testimony. The idea that most violent extremists are card-carrying members of a specific organization that they take orders from a particular boss that they have training camps, all these sort-of old images that we associate with terrorist groups is not really the reality in the United States today. Is that a fair statement? I put that maybe to you, Mr. Rasmussen?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Exactly right, Mr. Malinowski. The features you have described are what makes navigating that environment more challenging not only for law enforcement and intelligence services operating in that environment, but for companies trying to figure out, OK, how do we manage the on-line environment when you don't have group affiliation?

Mr. MALINOWSKI. So, back to the—I mean, I was heading toward the on-line environment problem. I mean, it seems to be that right now that the organizational structure of terrorism is a Facebook group. The training camp is a YouTube channel. I wanted to turn to you, Mr. Greenblatt, you covered a lot of this in your testimony. I wanted to ask you to talk to us a bit about the role that social media companies recommendation algorithms play in drawing people to these groups, to these ideas.

Mr. GREENBLATT. Mr. Congressman, there is no doubt. I mean, these technology platforms are wired to optimize for user engagement. They frequently amplify, you know, hate and bias-motivated violence as a strategy to generate revenue. I am not saying there are people doing it behind the scenes, but the algorithms are engineered to amplify and increase virality. As I said before, if it bleeds, it leads.

The tech community should not have blanket immunity from liability when their algorithms contribute to civil rights harms. When their algorithms promote violence. When their algorithms facilitate how if you like a White supremacist group or racist content, you will be recommended to Facebook groups where to your point, these individuals, these organizations are doing the kind of planning today they never could have done before.

I will say one other thing and, Mr. Congressman, I direct this to you, but particularly to the other Members on both sides. ADL has done the surveying in the data. Nearly 80 percent of Americans think the laws need to be changed to hold these companies responsible. That is not 80 percent Democrats. That is not 80 percent of Republicans. Eighty percent of Americans. So, there was never a better way that you could get something that all Americans would agree to. I daresay, Mr. Congressman, nothing you could do that would better secure our society than making these companies accountable once and for all.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Well, thank you. Of course, we have a bill that does just that, which we hope will move this year, Protecting Americans from Dangerous Algorithms Act, which would begin to hold them accountable not for the fact that there is bad content on their websites, which is probably an insoluble problem, but for the fact that their recommendation algorithms are designed to introduce that content to the very people in our society who are most susceptible to it. So, thank you so much for highlighting that.

Mr. GREENBLATT. Mr. Congressman, I just want to build, your bill and that with Congresswoman Eshoo is so important. Imagine if NBC news was programming content promoting suicide to depressed teenagers. Imagine if a newspaper was delivering content how to traffic human children to pedophiles. Like you wouldn't allow it if it happened in those places. There is no excuse. There is no world in which it is reasonable for companies like Facebook to promote violent Islamism or White supremacy to people who are

prone to violence. They should be responsible for that. Thank you for your legislation and hopefully we will make them responsible for that.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you, sir. I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair recognizes another gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Gottheimer.

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Thank you. It is good to have a Jersey Day here, Mr. Chairman. Thank you so much for this important hearing to discuss terrorist threats to our National security. Whether it is from terrorist groups abroad or lone-wolf terrorist attacks or domestic extremists, the threats to the homeland are more pressing than ever. I was very proud to lead a bipartisan effort in this committee to address lone-wolf terrorists using trucks and other vehicles as weapons. This legislation, which has passed the House and is now in the Senate, is named in memory of New Milford resident Darren Drake, a victim of the 2017 New York terror attack.

Mr. Roggio, if I can start with you. Many of the threats we are seeing today in the homeland look like the ones I described with Darren Drake, lone-wolf terrorist actors and senseless acts of violence. What recommendations do you have for this committee to best address the many Americans who are being inspired by ISIS and other extreme terrorist groups abroad? What more can be done to prevent this type of radicalization?

Mr. ROGGIO. Thank you, sir. As a fellow New Jerseyian, it is good to be bookended by New Jersey Congressmen. Thank you. Yes, to me the biggest component of this radicalization, particularly of individuals in the West is on social media. It is on Twitter. It is on, you know, Facebook. It is on all of the social media platforms. This is a very—YouTube, particularly. For instance, an American cleric, Anwar al-Awlaki, his teachings are still available. He was a very influential cleric, well-spoken, his family from Yemen. His teachings he inspired the attack at Fort Hood and others as well. His teachings are still on-line. I could follow the Taliban's spokesmen for years, years and years at a time, they are not taken off-line. It is obvious to everyone. We are not talking about these are individuals that are just putting out innocuous news like the Taliban spokesmen are promoting violence. Promoting violent videos and things. There is a host of Jihadists in a range of groups that have information that is readily available to all and everyone knows who they are and nothing is done about it.

I will say it makes my research a lot easier. But I would much rather not see this information on-line and these individuals out there who are able to reach people in the United States or Europe or any country and inspire them to join these terrorist groups. This is why a lot of Westerners traveled to Iraq and to Syria when that was under Islamic State control. They were seeing what was happening there via recruitment videos or just information. They were told the caliphate has been restored. As long as these individuals are able to post this information on social media, you will have individuals who are prone to being susceptible to this type of information being offered by Jihadist organizations.

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Thank you. As part of Mr. Malinowski's legislation and other legislation that I have been behind to help stop



that and to take on, frankly, a lot of our social media companies that continue to allow handles from terrorist organizations to be on-line. They take them down, they come back up. They are not policed properly or monitored. They are actually foreign terrorist organizations that are violating State Department law and rules and I think we need to be very aggressive against them.

I am going to turn now to Mr. Greenblatt. It is a great honor to have you here today as a witness. Thank you for your leadership and your thoughtfulness, especially in light of the horrible threats and attacks against the Jewish community. This month it is more important than ever to address anti-Semitism head-on. So, thank you for your work.

As you mentioned in your opening remarks, Amnesty International released a completely biased and wrong report calling Israel an apartheid state. We know that Amnesty International fails to recognize the Arab party and the governing coalition or Arab-Israelis serving in the military, amongst many other realities of civil society in Israel, and of the impact of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. In fact, this is the 208th report the group has issued about Israel since the 1970's. They had only 40 reports on North Korea and 61 on Venezuela. Can you please talk about how this report may lead to a rise in anti-Semitism and in increase in terror attacks against the Jewish people and what do you think is driving Amnesty International to take such an aggressive stance?

Mr. GREENBLATT. Well, first of all, let me just say, Mr. Congressman, I realize following Mr. Malinowski and my fellow panelists and you, like I am racing in the street in the badlands of this New Jersey moment. So, I am going to try. I think I am on fire here. But I am going to try to specifically keep my remarks focused on this Amnesty report. Look, I mean, I almost don't want to dignify it with time today. The problem is that when you make wild aspersions and groundless accusations against the Jewish State, it has an immediate knock-on effect against the Jewish people. To release this report 6 months, again, after Jews are being beaten and brutalized in broad daylight, not by people wearing MAGA hats, and not by people espousing White supremacy, but by people coming from anti-Israel rallies is shocking. A report which doesn't call into question, you know, other countries around the world which have Christian principles or Muslim principles. It is only the Jewish State that they seem to call out. It would be interesting, I didn't know it was the 280th report. But what I do know is I will be dealing with the cyberbullying targeting Jewish activists on-line. I will be dealing with the Jewish kids on colleges' campuses who are afraid to identify as being Israeli or having any real—even showing up at Hillels because of fear of being bullying and intimidation by anti-Israel types. I think it is frightening. You know, so, I think it is a terrible report. It is going to cause, I promise you, I predict it, I will be back on this committee talking about threats against Jews spawned by this kind of wild accusations.

Last, let me just say, I say this as someone, Representative Gottheimer, who believes in a two-state solution. Who believes we need dignity and equality for Palestinians. But if you think demonizing and delegitimizing the only Jewish State in the world is the way you are going to achieve it, like the folks from Amnesty are

as far from reality as you could imagine. It may be Amnesty International, but it is like reality somewhere else. Because I don't understand how to make sense of it.

But, look, there will be no surrender to these people. They may be in their glory days with all this hateful rhetoric, but I think the brilliant disguise of them showing up as human rights advocates will not work for the majority of, you know, the good-thinking Americans who realize what they are doing.

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Thank you, sir, and I yield back. Thank you.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman yields back. Let me thank our witnesses for today. We don't have any other person scheduled but, clearly, the length and involvement of Members shows the importance of this topic. So, I want to thank you for your testimony, as well as the Members for their questions. The Members of the committee may have additional questions for the witnesses and we ask that you respond expeditiously in writing to those questions.

The Chair reminds Members that the committee's record will remain open for 10 business days. Without objection, the committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:04 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

## APPENDIX

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### QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN BENNIE G. THOMPSON FOR CYNTHIA MILLER-IDRISS

*Question 1.* To what extent have you seen Islamist or Jihadist terrorist groups adopt the operational or aesthetic techniques or tactics of far right-wing violent extremists in the United States or elsewhere? What about the reciprocal direction?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

*Question 2.* The COVID States Project recently released a report that found nearly 1 in 4 Americans polled said that violence was either definitely or probably justifiable against the Government and nearly 1 in 10 said that it is justified right now. Normally this group researches questions related to COVID, but given the trends we have seen on the news, they also asked about violence related to COVID and mis- or disinformation. Based on your research, can you describe the trends you are seeing, and how mis- or disinformation related to COVID-19 can contribute to large swaths of the American public thinking that violence against the Government is justified?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

*Question 3.* A recent Global Network on Extremism and Technology, or GNET, report assessed misogyny as a “gateway drug” into the world of violent extremism. Does your research reflect the same trends? What, in your opinion, is the step that leads from misogynist thought to real-world violence?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

### QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN BENNIE G. THOMPSON FOR NICHOLAS J. RASMUSSEN

*Question 1.* The U.N.-backed group that monitors terrorist abuse of technology, TECH AGAINST TERRORISM, recently released a summary of their work over the past year in which they found 198 websites that they assessed to be operated by terrorist actors or other violent extremists that pose a threat to society. Of those 198, they found 101 to be linked to violent, far-right groups or actors. These sites are not on the dark web but are easily accessed through common search engines. Does GIFCT engage domain hosting providers for GIFCT membership to try to prevent these sites from spreading their terrorist or violent content?

Answer. GIFCT regularly engages with domain hosting providers, (notable members include Amazon and Microsoft). In addition to these members, GIFCT is working with the I2 coalition, industry groups, and other DNS providers to further support this part of the tech sector and would welcome additional members that meet our membership criteria to join our effort.

In addition to engaging with a range of digital platforms including domain hosting providers to join GIFCT as members, we also work with Tech Against Terrorism to provide information about such websites and specific pages operated by terrorists and violent extremists to our existing members. As we announced in July 2021, GIFCT is expanding the taxonomy of our hash-sharing database to include hashes of the URLs Tech Against Terrorism identifies. What this does is enable GIFCT member companies to identify whether these URLs have been shared on their own platforms and review that activity against their policies and terms of reference. This is an important effort to address the funneling and migration practices often seen by terrorists and violent extremists who attempt to direct others to a specific online page by sharing its URL with users on other digital platforms.

*Question 2.* A Jigsaw research team recently released a report about how harmful content traveled in clusters across different platforms. To what extent does GIFCT work to track threats across platforms and not just work with individual platforms to improve their content moderation policies and practices?

Answer. As part of GIFCT’s mission to prevent terrorists and violent extremists from exploiting digital platforms, we actively work alongside stakeholders from industry, Government, civil society, and academia to track threats of terrorist and vio-

lent extremist exploitation across the on-line ecosystem. While GIFCT does work with individual member companies to improve some of their internal policies and practices (i.e. content moderation, transparency, and human rights), GIFCT takes a whole-of-sector approach to preventing and mitigating harmful content on-line, across platforms. This includes recruiting and welcoming into GIFCT new member companies from around the world that represent different kinds of technologies.

Additional work GIFCT does to track and prevent terrorist and violent extremist exploitation of digital platforms includes:

- Funding action-oriented research from a global network of experts who study a range of factors and influences to the nexus of extremism and technology. For example, since 2019, GIFCT has brought forward research mapping how violent extremist groups migrate across platforms and for what purposes.
- Developing a more useful definitional framework for identifying terrorist and violent extremist activity on-line that GIFCT member companies can draw upon to inform their on-going efforts to monitor, assess, and take action against content and activity that violates their policies.
- Building cross-platform tools, such as the GIFCT hash-sharing database, so that a range of different digital platforms can take information on known terrorist and violent extremist content and activity and identify whether the same content exists and requires action on their respective platforms.

*Question 3.* Can you describe for us the rough composition of your hash-sharing database with specificity on how much of it relates to ISIS, al-Qaeda, and other Islamist terrorist groups and how much relates to far-right violent extremists linked to White supremacist movements?

Answer. Currently, the hash-sharing database taxonomy addresses videos and images produced by individuals and entities on the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) consolidated sanctions list as well as perpetrator-produced content captured or live-streamed during an off-line mass violent attack. Historically, there has been a greater composition of Islamist extremist entities on the United Nations Security Council's consolidated sanctions list versus far-right violent extremists; however, further expansions of our taxonomy have allowed us to address far-right violent extremist and terrorist content including the videos produced by the perpetrators of the Christchurch, NZ and Halle, DE attacks in 2019 and the Glendale, Arizona attack in 2020. In the coming months, the taxonomy will expand to include attacker manifestos in PDF form, terrorist and violent extremist publications in PDF form, and URLs identified by our partner Tech Against Terrorism and confirmed to link to terrorist content. Member companies will then be able to see if any hash may match to content on their platform, thus providing a signal to identify where to focus and prioritize their policy enforcement efforts and combat potential terrorist and violent extremist activity. These new categories to our taxonomy enable us to address a greater amount of content originating from far-right violent extremist and White supremacist ideologies by including URLs and publications from terrorist organizations on the Five Eyes government designation lists, which include White supremacist terrorist groups, and attacker manifestos, often from White supremacy-motivated terrorists not previously on Government-maintained designation lists.

*Question 4.* Can you describe the extent to which your hash-sharing database is applicable to content in the metaverse?

Answer. As technology has continued to change and advance, so too have the ways in which terrorists and violent extremists have adapted to exploiting on-line platforms. For that reason, GIFCT will continue to devote research and develop solutions to address where and how terrorists and violent extremists seek to exploit digital platforms. When it comes to GIFCT's hash-sharing database, if users have the ability to share user-generated content and or link to such content, terrorist and violent extremists will inevitably try to use those features and our hash-sharing database applies. That said, the exact form that the metaverse will take is still emerging and the activities that users will be able to engage in, and that terrorists seek to exploit, will continue to evolve. As such, GIFCT is always looking to support our members in their approach to safety by design when developing new tools and technologies, while also improving and developing new ways that we can enable cross-platform collaboration by member companies to prevent and mitigate new attempts at exploitation by terrorists and violent extremists.

*Question 5.* Have any other industries reached out to GIFCT in order to try and replicate their model to mitigate other on-line threats such as ransomware, child sexual exploitation on-line or financial crimes?

Answer. GIFCT routinely works alongside and expands engagements with other tech-related industries that either have a nexus to countering terrorist and violent extremist activity or who approach other on-line harm types with similar needs for cross-platforming tooling and information-sharing across technology companies. Ex-

amples of these growing collaborations include active dialogs with Tech Coalition, NCMEC, and cross harms groups like TSPA to further develop models and methodologies to respond to and prevent harmful content and activity on-line. In addition to these relationships, GIFCT is also working alongside All Tech is Human, ForHumanity, ADSA, ISOC, and W3C tech organizations and non-profits focused on building responsible technology and associated policies for developers and consumers alike. Relatedly, earlier this year, GIFCT in collaboration with IEEE conducted an event on mitigating societal harms in social media by bringing together policy makers and technologists to examine cutting-edge solutions built on promising technologies such as AI and machine learning. While GIFCT is open to working with new partners and other organizations trying to mitigate on-line threats it is important to note that harm types do significantly vary in their on-line manifestations and therefore replicating efficient models (like the hash-sharing database) to address one type of on-line harm does not always lead to success in addressing another.

