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THESIS

GROUPTHINK: A SIGNIFICANT THREAT TO THE HOMELAND SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES

by

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The groupthink psychological phenomenon prevalent in the homeland security enterprise is a significant threat to the United States. Homeland security is vulnerable to groupthink because its leaders frequently share similar backgrounds, work histories, and world-views. This similarity minimizes the chance of outside perspectives being introduced to the decision-making process, which insulates leadership from external ideas. This research project asks, "Has groupthink influenced the homeland security enterprise and if so, what are the implications of this phenomenon?" It examines case studies of decisions made by government in-groups to determine if the antecedent conditions and symptoms of groupthink are present and if the resulting fiascos are caused by groupthink. Furthermore, it analyzes Irvin Janis's original remedies, which have successfully alleviated groupthink in the past, and it offers recommendations to mitigate this phenomenon. Leaders who wish to alleviate groupthink should promote a culture in which employees are encouraged to play the role of devil's advocate by offering alternatives to organizational decisions and commonly held assumptions. Homeland security can reduce groupthink by employing Janis's remedies and encouraging critical thinking, innovation, and imagination to bolster the national security of the United States.

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**GROUPTHINK: A SIGNIFICANT THREAT TO THE HOMELAND SECURITY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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ABSTRACT

The groupthink psychological phenomenon prevalent in the homeland security enterprise is a significant threat to the United States. Homeland security is vulnerable to groupthink because its leaders frequently share similar backgrounds, work histories, and world-views. This similarity minimizes the chance of outside perspectives being introduced to the decision-making process, which insulates leadership from external ideas. This research project asks, "Has groupthink influenced the homeland security enterprise and if so, what are the implications of this phenomenon?" It examines case studies of decisions made by government in-groups to determine if the antecedent conditions and symptoms of groupthink are present and if the resulting fiascos are caused by groupthink. Furthermore, it analyzes Irvin Janis's original remedies, which have successfully alleviated groupthink in the past, and it offers recommendations to mitigate this phenomenon. Leaders who wish to alleviate groupthink should promote a culture in which employees are encouraged to play the role of devil's advocate by offering alternatives to organizational decisions and commonly held assumptions. Homeland security can reduce groupthink by employing Janis's remedies and encouraging critical thinking, innovation, and imagination to bolster the national security of the United States.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BATF   Bureau of Alcohol, Firearms and Explosives

CIA   Central Intelligence Agency

DHS   Department of Homeland Security
DOJ   Department of Justice

EOD   explosive ordnance disposal

FAM   Federal Air Marshals
FAMS   Federal Air Marshal Service
FBI   Federal Bureau of Investigation
FEMA   Federal Emergency Management Agency

GAO   Government Accountability Office
GPS   global positioning system

HRT   hostage rescue team

IED   improvised explosive device
ISIS   Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

MBTA   Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority
MIT   Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MS-13   Mara Salvatrucha

NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organization

OMB   Office of Management and Budget

SES   Senior Executive Service

TSA   Transportation Security Administration

U.S.   United States
UFMCS   University of Foreign Military and Cultural studies
USSS   United States Secret Service

WMD   weapons of mass destruction

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The groupthink psychological phenomenon widespread throughout the homeland security enterprise is a significant threat to the national security of the United States. Nevertheless, the existence of groupthink and its influence on homeland security has not been thoroughly studied or evaluated. To counter the ever-evolving threats to the nation, the homeland security enterprise must employ imagination, innovation, critical thinking, and devil's advocacy that are the antithesis of groupthink.

This research project asks, "Has groupthink influenced the homeland security enterprise and if so, what are the implications of this phenomenon?" It also identifies the antecedent conditions and symptoms of groupthink in the homeland security enterprise, examines the patterns of evidence indicating the extent to which this psychological phenomenon is occurring, and it analyzes how groupthink is influencing the national security of the United States. This thesis project also offers recommendations on how to mitigate groupthink to homeland security leaders and reformers.

THE GROUPTHINK PHENOMENON

The term groupthink was first used in a 1952 *Fortune* magazine article by William H. Whyte, Jr. Whyte discussed "rationalized conformity" in government organizations and decision-making groups that he saw as a threat to individuality and innovation. The seminal work on groupthink theory was created in 1972, when psychologist Irving L. Janis published *Victims of Groupthink*. This essential work examined historic government policy decisions influenced by groupthink. It further examined decisions that were the antithesis of groupthink, on which leaders took steps to counter this phenomenon.

According to Janis's theory, groupthink occurs when the members of an in-group prize their membership in this faction more than the quality of the decision or the decision's consequences. Janis theorized that the in-group frequently sanctions a directive leader's preconceived agenda, and censors their own doubts, disagreements, or alternative courses of action. Groups that engage in groupthink reject outside opinions,

and even in the face of disastrous consequences, they often ardently defend the faulty decisions made by the group.

Janis identified certain antecedent conditions—really, structural faults in an organization—that may lead to groupthink. Such antecedent conditions as insulation of the decision-making in-group, a lack of impartial leadership and established methods and procedures, and the homogeneity of the decision-making in-group, are present in the modern homeland security enterprise.

This theory also identified eight symptoms of groupthink, many of which are also readily apparent in the home security enterprise including the "belief in inherent morality; stereotyped views of out-groups; self-appointed "mindguards"; illusion of unanimity; self-censorship; collective rationalization; direct pressure on dissenters; and the illusion of invulnerability." Janis's groupthink theory contends, "the more frequently a group displays the symptoms, the worse will be the quality of its decisions."

OVERVIEW OF GROUPTHINK IN HOMELAND SECURITY

The homeland security enterprise displays the symptoms and consequences of groupthink in the poor quality of the decisions made by many of its leadership in-groups and the continuous mismanagement and failures of the organizations. These failures can result in extremely low morale among career employees; the continuous succession of insulated senior leadership incarnations, and the lack of a clearly defined homeland security mission that each succession of leadership redefines.

The homeland security enterprise is vulnerable to groupthink because frequently leadership in-groups share similar backgrounds and belief systems. This homogeneity increases the insulation of leadership and it minimizes the introduction of outside perspectives, dissenting opinions, and alternative viewpoints from being introduced into the decision-making process. Career employees who are subject-matter experts are often viewed by leadership in-groups as inferiors or interchangeables who merely serve the leadership. Moreover, leadership in-groups commonly do not have an interest in actually reforming the status quo unless they are forced to act.

Homeland security leadership in the grips of groupthink endangers the national security of the United States when such officials ignore alternatives to their decisions. "Mindguards" within homeland security aggressively interdict the alternative views of employees who do not engage in the current cycle of groupthink and these employees are often punished, isolated, or deposed by the current leadership and its "prevailing wisdom."

FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Furthermore, to promote and manage homeland security effectively and to prevent groupthink, leadership should select the members of decisions-making groups from diverse social, ethnic, economic, political, and occupational backgrounds. Janis's recommendations for overcoming groupthink affirm that each group member has the obligation to act as a critical evaluator or devil's advocate that airs objections and doubts. Leaders should accept criticism and discourage the members from soft-pedaling their disagreements; each group member should seek input from "trusted associates" and outside "experts" to challenge the views of the core members. Members should be encouraged by leadership to engage in constructive criticism, deductive reasoning, and devil's advocacy when debating and questioning policies and decisions made by the group.

Leaders can mitigate groupthink on a case-by-case basis by fostering an organizational culture that encourages employees to play the vital role of devil's advocate, offering their varied perspectives pertaining to agency policies, programs, and commonly held assumptions. Leaders who wish to diminish groupthink should employ Janis's framework and remedies, and promote critical thinking, innovation, and imagination to strengthen national security.

Furthermore, history has demonstrated that significant change in the U.S. government typically occurs only following a tremendous crisis. Reform in homeland security occurred subsequent to the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building, the attacks on September 11, 2001, and Hurricane Katrina. These tragic incidents prompted homeland security reformers to enact change in the security posture of the nation.

Reformers must be ready for the period immediately following the next crisis to implement Janis's framework to mitigate the internal threat of groupthink that has made much of the homeland security enterprise infective.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The greatest threat to the homeland security of the United States (U.S.) is not a multinational terrorist organization or a large-scale natural disaster; it is the pervasive environment of groupthink, a psychological phenomenon endemic throughout the homeland security enterprise. The groupthink phenomenon has propelled the homeland security enterprise into an unfocused mission space continually redefined within the groupthink framework of the current political in-group. Each wave of political leadership claims to be reforming the dysfunctional homeland security environment while simply refocusing the groupthink atmosphere upon the next predetermined agenda. The homeland security mission must be fluid to counter new threats and to accomplish its mission of protecting the nation. Real and useful adaptation comes with fresh perspectives and new ideas. However, homeland security should not be susceptible to continuous change that is the byproduct of the momentary political environment.

Those charged with protecting the homeland can look to their own worst cases for examples of groupthink in action. The *Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* noted of the run-up to 9/11, "The most important failure was one of imagination." The commission found that the nation's leaders did not understand the threat that al Qaeda posed, and therefore, underestimated it. As a group, they never imagined that the 9/11 scenario could occur as the homeland security assets were focused on the threat outside of the nation and an attack occurring domestically was unforeseen. Just as U.S. military and government officials discounted the threat from the Empire of Japan leading up to the attack on Pearl Harbor, before 9/11, senior government officials fell victim to groupthink and ignored the warning signs because they assumed that al Qaeda and its leaders were not advanced enough to pose a legitimate threat to the U.S. homeland.[1] The homeland security enterprise was substantially reorganized—including the forming of the Department of Homeland

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[1] Thomas Kean, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011).

Security (DHS)—in part to eradicate groupthink. Homeland security officials thus should be particularly aware of the pernicious effects of groupthink.

A. RESEARCH QUESTION

This research project asks, "Has groupthink influenced the homeland security enterprise, and if so, what are the implications of this phenomenon?" It analyzes how groupthink can be the result of a groups' dichotomous, "us-versus-them" identity and how it affects the organizational structure of the homeland security enterprise, as well as the national security of the United States.[2] This research project employs a method of study known as process tracing, which uses qualitative case study research in the social sciences. It is defined as "the systematic examination of diagnostic evidence selected and analyzed in light of research questions and hypotheses posed by the investigator."[3]

Today's homeland security enterprise is especially vulnerable to the groupthink phenomenon because agency leadership often originates from similar backgrounds, including political insiders, former military, and law enforcement. This homogeneity minimizes the chance of any outside perspectives being introduced or seriously considered and tends to insulate the leadership from external ideas, dissenting opinions, and alternative viewpoints. Leadership affected by groupthink ignores alternatives to current agendas, and dehumanizes and discredits individuals or groups within and outside the organization that have different perspectives.[4] "Mindguards" within the organization aggressively interdict constructive criticism, innovative ideas, and devil's advocacy that further isolate leadership. Employees who do not engage in the current cycle of groupthink are often punished, isolated, or deposed by leadership.[5]

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[2] Seth J. Schwartz, Curtis S. Dunkel, and Alan S. Waterman, "Terrorism: An Identity Theory Perspective," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32, no. 6 (2009): 537–559, http://sethschwartz.info/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Identity-and-Terrorism1.pdf.

[3] David Collier, "Understanding Process Tracing," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44, no. 04 (2011): 823–830, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1856702.

[4] Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 2nd rev ed. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982).

[5] Ibid., 40–41.

B.   LITERATURE REVIEW

An enormous amount of literature explores groupthink, including books, journal articles, and laboratory reports from the scientific, medical, academic, private sector, and government communities. While these sources provide hypotheses and case studies, few mention homeland security specifically, although many are focused on political decisions, government fiascos, first responders, and the intelligence community. Much of this literature can be used in the process of identifying the antecedent conditions and the symptoms of groupthink in the homeland security enterprise. It can also be used to analyze the patterns of evidence as to the extent to which this psychological phenomenon is occurring, how it is affecting the national security of the United States, and how to mitigate the threat of groupthink in homeland security.

Research suggests that few quantitative models measure the effect of groupthink on homeland security. Therefore, in this thesis, the analysis is based on qualitative data collected and analyzed to assess the phenomena's impact. Literature provided by the scientific, medical, academic, private sector, and government communities assist in the research and analysis in this thesis project. The four categories chosen for this review are based on how groupthink affects organizational structures throughout society with a focus on government institutions. These categories include groupthink's origins and applications, groupthink in government, groupthink remedies, solutions and mitigating factors, and groupthink's relation to social identity theory.

1.   Groupthink's Origins and Applications

In 1972, social psychologist Irving L. Janis produced the seminal work on groupthink theory, *Victims of Groupthink*, which traced the phenomenon in foreign policy decisions and "fiascos," such as in Pearl Harbor, the Bay of Pigs, and the Korean and Vietnam wars. It also discussed government groups designed to avoid groupthink, such as in the Marshall Plan and the Kennedy Administration's management of the Cuban Missile Crisis.[6] A decade later, Janis expanded his hypothesis in the book,

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[6] Irving L. Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1972).

Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascos, in which he revised his original work and added content including a new case study of the Watergate cover-up.[7] The problem arose when foreign policymaking insiders, who prized their membership in this elite group more than the outcome of any particular decision, swallowed doubts or disagreements rather than disturbing the clubby air of prevailing wisdom.

Janis continued to publish about the perils of going along to get along, perhaps because groupthink did not abate in the intervening years. Janis believed that "the more frequently a group displays the symptoms of groupthink; the worse will be the quality of its decisions."[8] Indeed, groupthink has withstood the test of time. In his paper, "Alive and Well After 25 Years: A Review of Groupthink Research," James K. Esser presents an overview of groupthink theory research over the past quarter of a century. This survey includes analysis of case studies of groupthink including Janis's original historical cases studies of groupthink fiascos, such as Pearl Harbor and the Cuban Missile Crisis, and newer case studies, such as Esser's and J. L. Lindoerfer's examination of how groupthink influenced the space shuttle Challenger accident.[9] The author discusses the future of groupthink research and he asserts that it has "considerable heuristic value" because it continues to inspire research, hypothesis, and theoretical ideas.[10] This article's analysis of the historical case studies of groupthink offers a different and critical evaluation of these events. The resulting laboratory tests conducted supported Janis's original theories but also update them to make them relevant to the homeland security focus of this thesis project.

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[7] Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*.

[8] Ibid., 174–177.

[9] James K. Esser and Joanne S. Lindoerfer, "Groupthink and the Space Shuttle Challenger Accident: Toward a Quantitative Case Analysis," *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making*, 2, no. 3 (1989): 167–177, http://web.b.ebscohost.com.libproxy.nps.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&sid=4f624538-deaf-463e-bd3d-330e5a40a775%40sessionmgr114&hid=115.

[10] James K. Esser, "Alive and Well After 25 Years: A Review of Groupthink Research," *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 73, no. 2 (1998): 116–141, http://liquid briefing.com/twiki/pub/Dev/RefEsser1998/alive_and_well_after_25_years.pdf.

Ahlfinger and Esser, in their article, "Testing the Groupthink Model: Effects of Promotional Leadership and Conformity Predisposition," tested two hypotheses derived from groupthink theory in a laboratory setting. These tests included the full range of groupthink symptoms. It questioned why groups whose leaders promoted their own personal preconceived agendas would be more likely to fall victim to groupthink than groups with leaders who did not promote their own plans. Consequently, the study found that groups with leaders who pressed their own agendas "produced more symptoms of groupthink, discussed fewer facts, and reached a decision more quickly," than groups with leaders who did not engage in this practice.

Similarly, in many divisions of homeland security, the leadership has become autocratic in its management techniques. Senior leaders put forth their own agendas and dissent or opposing opinions is dealt with harshly. The study concluded that groupthink research is hampered by measurement problems, which, in turn, suggests why groupthink studies are often qualitative in nature rather than quantitative, and case studies are used to identify the symptoms of groupthink.[11] Moreover, considering the quantitative measurement difficulty outlined in this article, most groupthink research projects, as well as this thesis, undertake a qualitative paradigm utilizing case studies to investigate the existence of groupthink in the homeland security enterprise.

Many social scientists oppose Janis's work and they have made interesting counterarguments. These challenges to the groupthink theory include hypotheses, such as groupthink does not significantly affect the quality of the decision making, and that in certain circumstances, it can help rather than hinder the team-building process and performance. The article "A Comprehensive Empirical Investigation of the Relationships Among Variables of the Groupthink Model," asserts that although the groupthink theory was introduced over 25 years ago, no agreement exists on the legitimacy of the theory. This investigation into Janis's groupthink theory includes all the components of the original research. The study collected data from "64 four-person *ad hoc* groups," which

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[11] Noni Richardson Ahlfinger and James K. Esser, "Testing the Groupthink Model: Effects of Promotional Leadership and Conformity Predisposition," *Social Behavior and Personality* 29, no. 1 (2001): 31–41.

were videotaped and analyzed. The analysis of the experiments revealed Janis's predictions were confirmed in only two out of 23 cases.[12]

The *Journal of Applied Psychology*'s article, "The Organizational Application of Groupthink and its Limitations in Organizations," written by Jin Nam Choi and Myung Un Kim, details a study that examines groupthink's effect on 30 organizational teams faced with impending crises. The study reveals that the groupthink symptoms consist of two factors. The first is groupthink is not appreciably related to team performance and that it has an irrelevant effect on group performance. This study also reports that the symptoms of defective decision making are not predictors of team performance and team activities have a stronger impact on performance than groupthink. These studies are important because they demonstrate prospective positive implications of groupthink on organizational groups and they raise questions about veracity of the groupthink theory.[13]

Groupthink is regularly studied in the business world and much of this research can be applied to the homeland security enterprise. Roland Bénabou, in his paper for the National Bureau of Economic Research, "Groupthink: Collective Delusions in Organizations and Markets, "examines how collective beliefs and delusions arise and persist in "organizations such as teams, firms, bureaucracies and markets." The author describes a "mutually assured delusion" principle that often gives rise to false perceptions of reality. This term also refers to organizations in which the leader's reality or denial of reality trickles down to his underlings who without question mimic the leader's views. This situation perfectly describes the state of the homeland security enterprise and how each consecutive leadership in-group arrives with a "mutually assured delusion" to further its own political agendas. Furthermore, once this "mutually assured delusion" is outlined, many homeland security leaders abandon past missions and practices in a vain

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[12] Won-Woo Park, "A Comprehensive Empirical Investigation of the Relationships among Variables of the Groupthink Model," *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 21, no. 8 (December 2000): 873–887, http://web.b.ebscohost.com.libproxy.nps.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=17&sid=4f624538-deaf-463e-bd3d-330e5a40a775%40sessionmgr114&hid=115.

[13] Jin Nam Choi and Myung Un Kim, "The Organizational Application of Groupthink and its Limitations in Organizations," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 84, no. 2 (April 1999): 297–306, http://web.b.ebscohost.com.libproxy.nps.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=19&sid=4f624538-deaf-463e-bd3d-330e5a40a775%40sessionmgr114&hid=115.

pursuit of the new leadership in-group's agenda without question of what effect it may have on the security of the homeland.

The author also discusses contagious exuberance, which can take hold of the financial markets and lead to groupthink investment frenzies that result in crashes. Bénabou distinguishes between the positive aspects of group morale and the harmful results of groupthink. In the aftermath of corporate and public policy disasters, it often emerges that participants fell prey to a collective form of willful blindness. Warnings are frequently ignored or met with denial; evidence is avoided, cast aside, or selectively reinterpreted, and dissenters are discouraged and shunned.[14]

In the 1990s, al Qaeda was building its network and it was growing bolder with each successive attack. A progression of attacks in the early and mid-1990s led to the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, followed by the attack on the U.S.S. Cole in 2000. During this period, the U.S. government appeared to be in a mutually assured delusion that assumed these attacks were isolated and the homeland would not be affected.[15] Then, a new mindset abruptly replaced this rose-colored delusion. Following 9/11, the Bush administration engaged in a contagious exuberance that seized American society, and propelled the homeland security enterprise to the forefront of the War on Terror. This unprecedented frenzy of investment in U.S. homeland security during the early 2000s contributed to the serious financial problems of the U.S. government in the ensuing years.[16]

2. Groupthink in Government

Groupthink began as a theory about how the government works, or more specifically, how it does not work. Thus, much of the leading recognized research

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[14] Roland Bénabou, "Groupthink: Collective Delusions in Organizations and Markets," *The Review of Economic Studies* 80, no. 2 (2013): 429–462, http://www.nber.org.libproxy.nps.edu/papers/w14764.pdf.

[15] Robert Windrem, "Al–Qaida Timeline: Plots and Attacks," *NBCNews.com*, accessed August 5, 2014, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/4677978/ns/world_news–hunt_for_al_qaida/t/al–qaida–timeline–plots–attacks/#.U–E5Bqx0y00.

[16] Kurt Eichenwald, "The Deafness Before the Storm," *The New York Times*, September 10, 2012, http://fpparchive.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/The-Deafness-Before-the-Storm_Kurt-Eichenwald_Sept.-10-2012_The-New-York-Times.pdf.

concerns groupthink in the government. However, over the past five decades, groupthink and its consequences have been studied in many types of organizational structures besides the government.

Frequently, the homeland security enterprise displays the symptoms and consequences of groupthink in the poor quality of the decisions made by many of its leaders, the mismanagement of the organizations, the poor morale of the employees, and the ever fluctuating, ambiguous homeland security mission often characterized as a mile wide and an inch thick. The following research references discuss the phenomenon in government. Several investigate and analyze case studies of groupthink in government agencies, presidential administrations, and politics.

Mark Schafer's book, *Groupthink Versus High-Quality Decision-making in International Relations*, asks if the decision-making process is responsible for the success of the plan. Specifically, Schafer analyzes foreign-policy cases studies across several presidential administrations.[17] The author contends that many factors contribute to successful decision making, including decision-making techniques, leaders' personalities, and group structures and dynamics. This book finds that "staffing of key offices," the organization of decision-making groups, and the psychological composition of leaders determine the path of the decision-making process and decision-making agendas.

Similarly, Robert Jervis's book, *Why Intelligence Fails: Lessons from the Iranian Revolution and the Iraq War*, details how the U.S. government spends massive amounts on gathering and analyzing intelligence, yet still, intelligence remains a flawed and imperfect process that has resulted in significant failures. The author undertakes two case studies—the fall of the Shah in Iran in 1978 under the Carter administration and the Bush administration's claim that Iraq had a weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program in 2002. In both cases, the author finds that the intelligence was deeply flawed, and worse, that the analysts were influenced and corrupted by political influence, poor decision making, the stovepiping of information between government agencies, as well as groupthink.

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[17] Mark Schafer and Scott Crichlow, *Groupthink Versus High–Quality Decision Making in International Relations* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2013).

During the initial stages of the Iranian revolution, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) assured the White House that the Shah's government was stable and secure. The CIA engaged in groupthink and convinced itself that the Shah's government and its secret police were strong enough to allay the threat that the opposition posed. Moreover, the CIA and the intelligence community underestimated the religious and nationalistic commitment of the Iranian opposition, and it was not until very late in the revolution that the vulnerability of the American-backed Iranian imperial Shah government was actually perceived and reported to the president. In this case, the CIA did not engage in critical thinking in its analysis of the situation in Iran. According to this case study, the CIA did not actively engage in devil's advocacy and did not seek outside expert's opinions with which to compare and contrast its own analysis. Effectively, the CIA insulated itself from opposing opinions and dissent.[18]

In his book, *Groupthink in Government: A Study of Small Groups and Policy Failure*, Paul Hart examines the groupthink phenomenon and how it influenced decision making in high-level government policy groups. This book looks in depth at the causes of policy failures, errors in decision making and groupthink theory, including hurried consensus by group members. The author claims that the get-along-to-go-along decision-making process is a cause of major fiascoes in foreign policy, large projects, and strategic management in government. The author further reviews the original groupthink theory and introduces a new model for the phenomenon. He analyzes the case study of the Reagan administration's Iran Contra affair, which the author believes was a serious bout of groupthink that resulted in a series of poor decisions.[19] This book offers compelling and updated case studies of the symptoms and remedies of groupthink in the policy and decision-making process.

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[18] Robert Jervis, *Why Intelligence Fails: Lessons from the Iranian Revolution and the Iraq War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).

[19] Paul Hart, *Groupthink in Government: A Study of Small Groups and Policy Failure* (Lisse, Netherlands: Swets & Zeitlinger Publishers, 1990).

3.   Groupthink in Homeland Security

In terms of the influence of groupthink on homeland security, it is necessary to understand how groups engage in groupthink when reacting to a disaster or in an operational setting. The book *The Unthinkable: Who Survives when Disaster Strikes-and Why* discuses "how human beings react to danger–and what makes the difference between life and death." This book asserts that most Americans live and work in areas that have significant risks and many of those people will have to make hard decisions in the face of those threats. The author reviews case studies of disasters and how people have reacted in the face of those dangers, ranging from the explosion of the Mont Blanc munitions ship in 1917 and attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.[20] Similarly, the U.S. government reacted to the shock and horror of 9/11 by enacting unprecedented and arguably unnecessary (and certainly very expensive) security.[21]

To be sure, not all researchers find groupthink at the bottom of every questionable government or homeland security policy or practice. For example, Daniel Scheeringa's thesis, "Was the Decision to Invade Iraq and the Failure of Occupation Planning a Case of Groupthink?" uses Janis's groupthink framework and subsequent groupthink research and found that groupthink was not the primary cause for the flawed decision making proceeding the invasion and occupation of Iraq.[22] This paper provides alternative explanations for the questionable decision to invade and occupy Iraq, such as the Bush administration's ideological agenda setting, which is, in itself, a cause of groupthink. Ideological agenda setting by a leader in a decision-making group can significantly affect the outcome and quality of the decisions being made. When a leader promotes his ideas instead of remaining neutral, thereby influencing the group, this lack of neutrality is a key factor of groupthink.

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[20] Amanda Ripley, *The Unthinkable: Who Survives when Disaster Strikes–and Why* (New York, NY: Random House LLC, 2009).

[21] John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart, "Balancing the Risks, Benefits, and Costs of Homeland Security," *Homeland Security Affairs*, 2011, http://www.hsaj.org/?fullarticle=7.1.16.

[22] Daniel Scheeringa, "Was the Decision to Invade Iraq and the Failure of Occupation Planning a Case of Groupthink?" (master's thesis, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2012), http://scholar. lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-07292010-145020/unrestricted/Scheeringa_DJ_T-2010.pdf.

"Crimes of Obedience: 'Groupthink' at Abu Ghraib" questions the Bush administration's statements that the torture at Abu Ghraib was an unauthorized action by rogue soldiers. The author argues that Abu Ghraib was a byproduct of the Bush administration that was embroiled in "group mind" or groupthink. This groupthink scenario dehumanized the enemy or the out-group. The in-group was willing to do anything necessary to win the "war on terror" including torture, to obtain intelligence. The soldiers at Abu Ghraib demonstrated severe symptoms of groupthink including an "us-versus them in-group" that believed in their own inherent morality and they clearly stereotyped and dehumanized the "out-group." Both the administration and the solders collectively rationalized horrific acts and they hid behind their "illusion of invulnerability" and believed that they would not be held accountable for their actions.[23]

This article eloquently describes the 9/11 era in which the modern homeland security enterprise was created. At this time, the public was gripped by a fear of terrorism and all purported enemies of the United States were lumped into the "axis of evil" or the "war on terror." Homeland security was initiated by one of the greatest bouts of groupthink in American history in which the government was beleaguered by an "us-versus them" outlook that believed in its own inherent morality and that it clearly stereotyped and dehumanized the out-groups identified as enemies.

Some scholars have found that the homeland security enterprise's decision and policy-making process is flawed and deeply affected by groupthink. Benjamin H. Friedman's article, "Managing Fear: The Politics of Homeland Security" in the *Political Science Quarterly*, discusses how Americans have demanded much more homeland security then they need or can afford. The irrational fear of terrorism has spurred billions of dollars in funding to prevent unlikely acts of terrorism. The threat of terrorism that has been allegedly mitigated by the nation's enormous spending on "security theater" has been spurred on by politicians' motivations and the government's fear mongering to reinforce the fear of terrorism, and to further bolster the homeland security industrial

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[23] Jerald M. Post and Lara K. Panis, "Crimes of Obedience: 'Groupthink' at Abu Ghraib," *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy* 61, no. 1 (2011): 48–66, http://search.proquest.com/docview/848842810/DC5843EF5444445EPQ/1?accountid=12702.

complex. Friedman further discusses the fact that reformist policy makers who wish to expose this cycle of waste, fraud, and abuse should promote resilience to strengthen the nation's population. Reformers should also introduce the population to a cost-benefit analysis that evaluates the risks, threats, and countermeasures to make the cost of homeland security more transparent.[24] A cost-benefit analysis of homeland security would reveal that this spending was wasted, given the measurable threats that have been disrupted. The problem with a cost-benefit analysis of homeland security is that it is difficult to measure the deterrence aspect and how many attack plans have been abandoned or disrupted because of homeland security or the illusion of homeland security.

4. Groupthink Remedies and Solutions

The *Southern California Interdisciplinary Law Journal* article by Brandon Kennedy, "The Hijacking of Foreign Policy Decision Making: Groupthink and Presidential Power in the Post-9/11 World," illustrates how leadership's illusion of invulnerability, its dismissal of constructive criticism, and organizational groupthink, can minimize or dismiss opposing viewpoint, critical analysis, self-inspection, and constructive criticism in a decision-making process.[25] Kennedy asserts that following 9/11, the Bush administration mantra was that "freedom and justice will prevail." This mantra became a theme for the administration's homeland security and national security policies and nowhere was this sentiment more apparent than the administration's policy regarding Iraq.

This article recounts the September 15, 2001, meeting of the Bush national security team, including Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Rice, and Powell. Wolfowitz believed the United States could fight both the Taliban and Iraq successfully and his misplaced illusion of invulnerability was embraced by the administration. President Bush

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[24] Benjamin H. Friedman, "Managing Fear: The Politics of Homeland Security," *Political Science Quarterly* 126, no. 1 (April 2011): 77–106, http://blog.lib.umn.edu/burn0277/pa5012/readings/Friedman%202011%20-%20Managing%20Fear.pdf.

[25] Brandon Kennedy, "The Hijacking of Foreign Policy Decision Making: Groupthink and Presidential Power in the Post–9/11 World," *Southern California Interdisciplinary Law Journal* (Spring 2012), 633–727, http://lawgip.usc.edu/why/students/orgs/ilj/assets/docs/21-3%20Kennedy.pdf.

believed that the United States would prevail because it was on the side of what was right. Bush believed that because America was just in its war on terror, victory for the United States was certain. Even after the war in Iraq began, no WMDs were found, and the United States appeared to be caught in a costly quagmire. The administration remained in a state of willful blindness characterized by excessive optimism sustained by an illusion of invulnerability and minimizing failures.[26]

Kennedy asserts, in contrast, the Obama administration took steps to avoid groupthink. Kennedy further states that the Obama administration purposely chose persons for the Cabinet who came from different backgrounds to offer diverse perspectives. According to Kennedy, each member was assigned the task of critical evaluator for the decisions made by the team. With Iraq drawing down, the administration focused on Afghanistan. At the outset, President Obama said, "We have no good options here," and he did not inject his personal views into the decision-making process. The president requested a range of options that the team would analyze and debate while he reportedly remained impartial. When it came time to make an executive decision, the president did not put forth his own preferences and he critically analyzed all the options.

Even though the author describes how the administration took action to avoid this physiological phenomenon, it is debatable if it was enough to mitigate groupthink throughout the new Obama-led government. This article has merit but the author is politically biased toward the democratic Obama administration by recognizing its successes in coping with groupthink while omitting any of its failures. Conversely, this article omitted the Bush administration's successes and focused on the groupthink in the Bush in-group.[27]

One possible way to identify and overcome groupthink is through covert testing or "red teams." Red teams offer unbiased observations and candid constructive criticism of the organization. Although, they are effective and important tools, the quality of red

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[26] Kennedy, "The Hijacking of Foreign Policy Decision Making: Groupthink and Presidential Power in the Post–9/11 World," 646–668.

[27] Ibid., 668–673.

team programs can also be disrupted by the groupthink phenomenon if, for example, the results are taken as a threat by the leadership (even if the same leadership called for the testing) or if mindguards apply pressure on red team operatives to manipulate or stylize their findings. As the University of Foreign Military and Cultural studies (UFMCS) notes in its *Red Team Manual*, an effective covert-security testing program requires support from the senior leadership of an organization. If senior leadership is susceptible to groupthink, the support for covert testing wanes and often test results are altered, influenced, or ignored. If organizational opposition or groupthink is too powerful to overcome, the red team program will fail and the vulnerabilities engendered or exacerbated by groupthink remain.[28]

In the *Role and Status of DOD Red Teaming Activities*, the Defense Science Board finds that a successful red team program requires a forward-thinking organizational culture that rejects groupthink, values constructive criticism, provides support to the operatives, and acts on the team's findings and recommendations.[29] Scott Swanson's article in the *Small Wars Journal* describes how obstructions to professional and effective red teams often reflect the program's lack of organizational support or a culture willfully blind, does not embrace critical thinking, and is embroiled in the groupthink psychological phenomenon. Organizational obstructions can include groupthink bi-products, such as punishment of covert operatives by leadership, organizationally imposed constraints on the program, and an antagonistic reception of the team's observations and recommendations. These obstructions often result in the organization hiding behind an illusion of invulnerability and ignoring identified vulnerabilities of the security infrastructure that leaves the target susceptible to attack.[30]

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[28] University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies (UFMCS), *Red Team Handbook* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies, 2012), http://usacac.army. mil/cac2/UFMCS/.

[29] United States Defense Science Board (USDSB), *Defense Science Board Task Force on the Role and Status of DOD Red Teaming Activities* (Washington, DC*:* Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, 2003), http://fas.org/irp/agency/dod/dsb/redteam.pdf.

[30] Scott Swanson, "Enhancing Red Team Performance: Driving Measurable Value and Quality Outcomes with Process Improvement," *Small Wars Journal*, 2013, http://redteams.net/blog/2013/ enhancing-red-team-performance-driving-measurable-value-and-quality-outcomes-with-process-improvement-small-wars-journal.

The phenomenon of devil's advocacy is a key remedy outlined in Janis's original groupthink theory. It has been studied and employed in the decision-making process to challenge the groups' commonly held assumptions and to motivate critical thinking.[31] Chen, Lawson, Gordon, and McIntosh's article, "Groupthink: Deciding with the Leader and the Devil," investigates the impact directive leaders, participative leaders, and devil's advocacy tactics have upon the decision-making group process. This study measures decision quality and groupthink symptoms. The study divided 92 men and 56 women into 39 groups, "20 with 50 percent or more women, and 19 with 50 percent or more men." The groups completed a decision-making process with either a directive or participative leader and some of the groups also had a devil's advocate present. The study discovers that regardless of the gender composition of the groups, significantly lower quality decisions arise from groups with a directive rather than a participative leader.

The study also determines that a devil's advocate does not have a significant influence on the decision-making quality of the group. The study concludes that good leaders "encourage open inquiry to yield diverse alternatives for problem solutions."[32] The finding on leadership concurs with Janis; however, its assertion that a devil's advocate did not have a significant influence on the decision-making quality of a group is in conflict with Janis's theory.

Richard L. Epstein, in *The Pocket Guide to Critical Thinking*, instructs the reader in the art of reasoning in academia, as well as in everyday life.[33] Critical thinking is necessary to enable innovation. Devil's advocacy, red teaming, and the other remedies for groupthink, all encourage critical thinking. As this book asserts, the idea of critical thinking is the antithesis to groupthink and it is important to understand how to think critically to avoid groupthink and improve the decision-making process.

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[31] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*.

[32] Zenglo Chen et al., "Groupthink: Deciding with the Leader and the Devil," *The Psychological Record*, 1996, http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Groupthink%3a+deciding+with+the+leader+and+the+devil.-a018911798.

[33] Richard L. Epstein, *The Pocket Guide to Critical Thinking* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2000).

5.   Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory is a theory of group dynamics and is closely related to groupthink because both study in-group and out-group relations, as well as the decision-making process within groups. Social psychologists Henri Tajfel and John Turner studied and documented social identity theory in the "The Significance of the Social Identity Concept for Social Psychology with Reference to Individualism, Interactionism and Social Influence." In this groundbreaking article, the authors theorize that individuals have the tendency to self-categorize into groups for the purpose of socially constructing their own identities closely reflecting the beliefs systems of the affiliated group. Group membership offers the individual an in-group in which to identify that often grants a perceived sense of belonging and a positive self-image. Although it is a commonly held belief that a person's social identity is unique, social identity theory contends that it is developed and maintained by the interactive social-psychological process based upon social experiences, influences and groups unique to an individual's life experience.[34]

Henri Tajfel's book, *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, is a study of group dynamics. It analyzes conflicts within social groups, the role played by relationships within the groups, and the psychological processes responsible for the formation of groups. The author examines social psychology, social conflict, intergroup attitudes, and social reality.[35] This book attempts to teach the student how to conduct lab, field, and case study research on social identity and influence. It also discusses research on social influence tactics, groupthink, dissonance theory, conformity, and resistance to influence.[36]

Social identity theory is a concept closely related to groupthink. Both are studies of cognitive psychology that focus upon the individual and group identity, as well as the

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[34] John C. Turner and Penelope J. Oakes, "The Significance of the Social Identity Concept for Social Psychology with Reference to Individualism, Interactionism and Social Influence," *British Journal of Social Psychology* 25, no. 3 (1986): 237–252, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.2044-8309.1986.tb00732.x/pdf.

[35] Henri Tajfel, *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, vol. 7 (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[36] Anthony R. Pratkanis, *The Science of Social Influence: Advances and Future Progress* (Florence, KY: Psychology Press, 2007).

decision-making process and how it is influenced by the dynamics of the group. To comprehend groupthink, a person must understand the in-group and out-group dynamics established by social identity theory, which play a pivotal role in groupthink theory, as well as the study of homeland and national security issues.

Social identity theory hypothesizes that people's social identity plays a distinct role in their in-group behavior. Social identity theory also examines how groups and group members gain or lose status based upon the in-group and out-group dynamics, as well as the ability of the members to be socially mobile and moving from one group to another.[37]

Social identity theory has had a far-reaching impact on the world of social psychology, including the study of terrorism and terrorist organizations. It is theorized that if counter-terrorism professionals understand the hermeneutic of a terror group, then they can better cope with that organization. It is often said one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter; attempting to ascertain what motivates a terror organization requires the identification of options that are not always obvious. An important concept in social identity theory is that individuals strive to achieve a positive self-image and attempt to identity their roles in their chosen in-group. These roles are defined by their social identities, and it is further theorized in social identity theory that individuals constantly strive to achieve or to maintain positive social identity within this group.[38]

Brannan and Strindberg have extensively researched social identity theory in respect to terrorism and radicalization. They have concluded that very few self-purported terrorism experts or academics have had contact with a person or group that they would identify as a terrorist. This begs the question of how can a person be an expert on an individual or group without ever having had the personal contact required to ascertain their hermeneutic. Brannan and Strindberg also contend that many terrorism researchers approach the research subjects in a predisposed hostile mode instead of with a clinical

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[37] Tajfel, *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*.

[38] Marlene E. Turner et al., "Threat, Cohesion, and Group Effectiveness: Testing a Social Identity Maintenance Perspective on Groupthink," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 63, no. 5 (November 1992): 781–796, http://www.csub.edu/~mdulcich/documents/group_effectiveness.pdf.

impartial research manner. Moreover, most researchers receive their information from western counter-terrorism agencies and organizations that vilify these groups and influence the researcher by sharing information that has been thoroughly biased.[39]

A researcher who obtains information through a secondary source that has been influenced by another's bias does not gain the opportunity to evaluate first-hand the hermeneutic of the group. Brannan and Strindberg have identified that many in the terrorism-studies community have engaged in groupthink by allowing themselves and their research to be influenced by biased information that depicts their research subjects purely as terrorists and without obtaining and documenting the research subject's viewpoint. By not questioning the motivations and bias of their research sources and not seeking the alternative viewpoints, much of the terrorism-research community has acted as a mindguard for governments and counter-terrorism agencies. Instead of acting as devil's advocates and unbiased researchers, they have perpetuated the accepted worldview that dehumanizes these groups and paints all of these as a threat and enemies of west. The alternative method that Brannan and Strindberg support is modeled on a social identity theory framework that includes a constructive and open dialogue with all sides of the research with the intent to understand the out-group's hermeneutic. This approach may lead to a greater understanding of all parties that may result in a peaceful solution to the unending war on terror and attempts to denigrate the out-groups.[40]

C.   CONCLUSION

Subsequent chapters of this thesis analyze Janis's groupthink theory and historical case studies to develop and test the hypothesis that groupthink influences the homeland security enterprise to the detriment of national security. Studying historical groupthink case studies affords the researcher the opportunity to identify the causes, results, and outcomes of those incidents to draw parallels with groupthink episodes in the modern homeland security enterprise. This thesis also examines original case studies of decisions

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[39] David W. Brannan, Philip F. Esler, and NT Anders Strindberg, "Talking to 'Terrorists': Towards an Independent Analytical Framework for the Study of Violent Substate Activism," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24, no. 1 (2001): 3–24.

[40] Ibid.

made by modern homeland security leadership in-groups to determine if any antecedent conditions and symptoms of groupthink are present and if the resulting failures and fiascos are caused by the groupthink psychological phenomenon or another deficiency. Furthermore, this thesis analyzes remedies established by Janis that have successfully alleviated instances of the groupthink phenomenon in the past to provide a mechanism that will help identify, manage, and mitigate this psychological phenomenon in the homeland security enterprise.

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II.   THE GROUPTHINK THEORY

In his March 1952 *Fortune* magazine article, William H. Whyte, Jr. coined the phrase "groupthink" and he illustrated his groupthink theory with a cartoon image of a ship's crew, all facing forward and saluting smartly, while the vessel sinks deeper under water. Whyte took issue with "rationalized conformity" in such complex organizations as atomic-age government, a condition that he saw as detrimental to the individual, innovation, and personal independence.[41]

In 1972, psychologist Irving L. Janis produced the seminal work on this theory, *Victims of Groupthink*, which traced the phenomenon in foreign policy decisions and fiascos, as the volume's subtitle put it.[42] The problem arose when foreign-policymaking insiders, who prized their membership in this elite group more than the outcome of any particular decision, swallowed doubts or disagreements rather than disturbing the clubby air of prevailing wisdom. Janis continued to publish about the perils of going along to get along, perhaps because groupthink did not abate in the intervening years.[43]

When groupthink occurs, it often distorts the decision-making process, which results in incorrect conclusions. Groups that engage in the phenomenon habitually reject outside influences and discourage creativity, critical thinking, and alternative viewpoints. Janis believed that "the more frequently a group displays the symptoms; the worse will be the quality of its decisions."[44]

Janis contended that groupthink is most likely to occur when a group is highly cohesive, comprised of individuals from similar backgrounds and is managed by a directive, dominant, or authoritarian leader.[45] The group further descends into the groupthink trap if it does not consult with independent experts on the subject matter involved. It conducts limited research to prove or disprove its conclusions, and it

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[41] William H. Whyte, "Groupthink (Fortune 1952)," *Fortune Magazine*, July 22, 2012.

[42] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*.

[43] Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascos*, 245–248.

[44] Ibid., 174–175.

[45] Ibid., 234–238.

discourages devil's advocacy and critical thinking from within the group and from outside stakeholders. When a group is embroiled in the groupthink psychological phenomenon, its members are often pressured to conform and this stress influences members with low self-esteem to agree with the decision promoted by the forceful authoritarian group members or leader.[46]

A.   THE ANTECEDENT CONDITIONS OF GROUPTHINK

Janis outlined antecedent conditions that may be present in an organization or a group that will result in an environment that may cultivate groupthink. Janis's first antecedent conditions pertain to the structural faults of an in-group. These conditions include the homogeneity of group members' social backgrounds and ideology, the degree of insulation of the group, a lack of impartial leadership, and a lack of norms requiring methodical procedures. Janis also describes further antecedent conditions, including high stress from external threats with little hope of a better solution than the leader's chosen course of action, low group self-esteem temporarily induced by recent failures, and excessive difficulties on current decision-making moral dilemmas.[47]

Janis refers to a condition found in groups with high cohesiveness, wherein inclusion in the in-group is more important to the members than the quality of the decisions produced by the group. These groups are often composed of members who have a similar background or perspective. Groups, such as military or law enforcement that traditionally comprise the members of the homeland security enterprise, possess a high degree of *esprit de corps* and cohesiveness because they are often from similar social backgrounds and they generally have similar belief and value systems.[48]

To be sure, these attributes can be desirable in certain situations because they promote discipline but these highly cohesive groups also are more likely to suffer from the antecedent conditions of groupthink. However, cohesive groups do not always

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[46] Turner et al., "Threat, Cohesion, and Group Effectiveness: Testing a Social Identity Maintenance Perspective on Groupthink," 781–796.

[47] Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 176–177.

[48] Ibid., 197–202.

succumb to groupthink; and can engage in critical thinking, devil's advocacy, and dissent for the purpose of achieving a quality decision-making process. Therefore, group cohesion, or even the existence of an in-group is not, of itself, sufficient to cause groupthink.[49]

Structural faults within organizations may distort the decision-making process. One such fault is the insulation of the group members and leadership from criticism, opposing viewpoints, and information provided by independent subject matter experts.[50] Another is the lack of impartial leadership in which the directive leaders uses their authority and position to influence the group to make decisions that mirror the leader's preference.[51] This type of leadership diminishes or discourages critical thinking and open inquiry within the group, who perceive it to be disloyalty, or a challenge to the in-group cohesion.[52]

According to Janis, groupthink occurs when pressures lead to a deterioration of "mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment." Groups affected by groupthink ignore alternatives and tend to take irrational actions that dehumanize out-groups. A group is especially vulnerable to the groupthink phenomenon when no clear rules or methodical process for decision making exist because groups are expected to validate and not critically evaluate the leadership's chosen course of action.[53]

Janis further contended that environmental conditions are also a significant antecedent condition that can influence a cohesive in-group towards a groupthink environment. Highly stressful situations can create cohesiveness and influence a poor quality decision that the group members may have not made under different circumstances.[54]

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[49] Paul 't Hart, "From Analysis to Reform in Policy–Making Groups," *Beyond Groupthink: Political Group Dynamics and Foreign Policy–Making*, 1997, 247–278.

[50] Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascos*, 176, 248–250.

[51] Ibid., 248–249.

[52] Ibid., 248–250.

[53] Ibid., 249–250.

[54] Ibid., 258–259.

Janis's groupthink antecedent conditions feelings of inadequacy within these decision-making groups are often perpetuated by the belief that the organization's leadership will not support the decisions if they differ from the leader's own strategy.[55] Moreover, Janis asserts that decision-making groups influenced by groupthink are sometimes plagued by poor morale and low self-esteem due to past failures. Janis contends that in these situations, the members of the in-group search for acceptance and moral support from the leaders to heighten their collective self-esteem. Members of the group become motivated to please the leader, who in turn, provides them with positive validation of their decisions rather than critically analyzing the issue and making a difficult if not unpopular decision.[56]

B.   THE SYMPTOMS OF GROUPTHINK

Janis documented eight symptoms of groupthink, many of which have plagued the homeland security policy and decision-making process.[57]

- An illusion of invulnerability, shared by most or all the members, which creates excessive optimism and encourages taking extreme risks.

- An unquestioned belief in the group's inherent morality, which inclines the members to ignore the ethical or moral consequences of their decisions.[58]

- Collective efforts to rationalize to discount warnings or other information that might lead the members to reconsider their assumptions before they recommit themselves to their past policy decisions.

- Stereotyped views of enemy leaders (out-groups) as too evil to warrant genuine attempts to negotiate, or as too weak and stupid to counter whatever risky attempts are made to defeat their purposes.[59]

- Self-censorship of deviation from the apparent group consensus, which reflects each member's inclination to minimize the importance of doubts and counterarguments.

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[55] Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascos*, 257–259, 301–302.

[56] Ibid., 301–302.

[57] Ibid., 174–176, 194, 244, 256–259.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

- A shared illusion of unanimity concerning judgments conforming to the majority view (partly resulting from the self-censorship of deviations, augmented by the false assumption that silence means consent).

- Direct pressure on any member who expresses strong arguments against any of the group's stereotypes, illusions, or commitments, which makes clear that this type of dissent is contrary to what is expected of all loyal members.

- The emergence of self-appointed "mindguards"—members who protect the group from adverse information that might shatter their shared complacency about the effectiveness and morality of their decisions.[60]

Not all eight of these symptoms are necessary for groupthink; however, often when a group displays poor quality decision making, one or more of these symptoms have influenced the group and altered the decision-making process.[61]

C.   TRADITIONAL REMEDIES FOR GROUPTHINK

Janis recommended specific measures to prevent groupthink in the decision-making process. These measures stressed letting the group come to its own conclusions and not just promote the leader's predetermined biased agenda. These remedies also stressed the importance of critical thinking and questioning the decisions made by the group along with the potential objectives of the opposition.[62]

- The leader should assign the role of critical evaluator to each member to encourage the group to give high priority to airing objections and doubts. This practice must be reinforced by the leader's acceptance of criticism of any judgments to discourage the members from soft-pedaling their disagreements.[63]

- The leader in an organization's hierarchy, when assigning a policy-planning mission to a group, should be impartial instead of stating preferences and expectation at the outset. This practice requires each leader to limit his briefing to unbiased statements about the scope of the problem and the limitation of available resources, without advocating

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[60] Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascos*, 174–176, 194, 244, 256–259.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid., 207–224.

[63] Ibid., 209–212.

specific proposals would like to see adopted. This practice allows the conference the opportunity to develop an atmosphere of open inquiry and to explore impartially a wide range of policy alternatives.[64]

- The organization should routinely follow the administrative practice of setting up several independent policy planning and evaluation groups to work on the same policy question, with each executing its deliberations under a different leader.[65]

- Throughout the period when the feasibility and effectiveness of policy alternatives are being surveyed, the policy-making group should from time to time divide into two or more subgroups to meet separately, under different chairmen, and then come together to hammer out their differences.[66]

- Each member of the group should routinely discuss the group's deliberations with a trusted associate and report back to the group on the associate's reactions.[67]

- One or more experts or qualified colleagues within the organization who are not core members of the policy-making group should be invited to each meeting on a staggered basis. The outside experts should be encouraged to challenge views of the members.[68]

- At every meeting devoted to evaluating policy alternatives, at least one articulate and knowledgeable member should be assigned the role of devil's advocate.[69]

- Whenever the policy or issue involves relations with a rival nation or organizations, a sizable bloc of time should be spent surveying all warning signals from rivals and constructing alternative scenarios of the rival's intentions.[70]

- After reaching a preliminary consensus about what seems to be the best policy alternative, the policy making group should hold a "second chance" meeting at which every member is expected to express as vividly as

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[64] Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascos*, 209–212.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid., 212–214.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid., 214–219.

[70] Ibid.

possible, all residual doubts and to rethink the entire issue before making a definitive choice.[71]

D.   GROUPTHINK AND FIASCOS

Janis frequently used the word "fiasco" in his work on groupthink theory and this word has become synonymous with groupthink. A fiasco is defined as a complete and utter failure.[72] Janis admitted that groupthink is not the cause of all defective decision making and not all incidents of groupthink result in fiascos. Even defective decisions based on poor information and flawed judgment can have successful outcomes. Janis asserts in his case studies that even if lucky accidents occurred, groupthink may still exist. Janis suggests that the researcher ask the following key questions to determine if groupthink was the cause of the fiasco being examined.[73]

- Who made the policy decisions? Was it essentially the leader alone or did group members participate to a significant degree? If the members participated, were they a cohesive group?

- To what extent was the policy a result of defective decision-making procedures on the part of those who were responsible?

- Can symptoms of groupthink be discerned in the group's deliberations? (Do the prime symptoms pervade the planning discussions?)

- Were the conditions that foster the groupthink syndrome present?

If the answers for the previous questions are affirmative, then Janis proposed another question asking if any evidence can be detected that suggests new hypotheses concerning the conditions that promote groupthink.[74]

E.   JANIS'S HISTORIC CASE STUDIES OF GROUPTHINK

Groupthink "fiascoes" documented by Janis in his work include the U.S. government failures to foresee the Empire of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, the

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[71] Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascos*, 214–219.

[72] Oxford Dictionary, "Language Matters," *Oxford University Press*, 2014, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com /us/definition/american_english/fiasco. 193–197, 203–204.

.[73] Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascos*, 193–197, 203–204.

[74] Ibid., 194.

Kennedy Administration's Bay of Pigs invasion, the Johnson Administration's escalation of Vietnam war, and the Carter Administration's doomed hostage rescue of the American Embassy personnel being held in Iran. While Janis details several cases of groupthink, the Pearl Harbor and the Bay of Pigs are analogous to recent homeland and national security events. These two case studies were principal examples of fiascos in which groupthink was present and it influenced the quality of the decisions being made by the government in-group. Moreover, these failures altered the history of the nation.[75]

1.   The Pearl Harbor Groupthink Fiasco

Janis's case study discusses that political sentiment in the United States prior to Pearl Harbor, which believed the Empire of Japan did not possess the capability to attack the United States even though a clear pattern of aggression was present, as well as a series of evidence that the Empire of Japan was moving in that direction and an attack was imminent.[76]

The United States and its government had been lulled into state of complacency and isolationism. The Naval Command in the Pacific's decision-making process was based upon wishful thinking, an illusion of invulnerability, and rationalizing the warning signs that challenged the command in-group's misconceptions. Military officers in the Pacific believed that Japan would never attempt an attack on Pearl Harbor because it was too well defended and the United States was too powerful. The military command in-group believed Japan would only attack weaker targets, such as the Philippines or Guam, and they would never be foolish enough to attack the United States.[77]

According to Janis, the Naval Command at Pearl Harbor attended a dinner party at Admiral Halsey's home the evening of December 6, 1941. During this dinner, Mrs. Halsey expressed that she was certain that the Empire of Japan would attack Pearl Harbor in the near future. Captain Joel Bunkley recalled that everyone thought she was crazy

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[75] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 2–136.

[76] Ibid., 75–76.

[77] David Kahn, "The Intelligence Failure of Pearl Harbor," *Foreign Affairs*, 1991, 145–146.

because the prevailing groupthink among the command staff was that the defense was too strong, they would have early warning of any attack, and as Captain J.B. Earl later stated, "we always felt that *'it couldn't happen here'*…."[78]

Admiral Kimmel and his in-group were not completely to blame for missing the warning signs. Washington DC Naval Command also considered the probability for attack on Pearl Harbor extremely remote.[79] The Washington, DC, Naval Command's misconceptions were based on the same reasons as the Pearl Harbor command staff. Members of the President's War Council did not all share this optimistic view believing that an attack by Japan on U.S. interests in the Pacific was going to occur in the very near future. The wording of messages sent by the Washington DC Naval Command to the Naval forces in the Pacific were soft-peddled, which conveyed that the situation may not be as dire as predicted by certain members of the President's War Council.[80]

Admiral Stark, who was part of the Washington DC Naval Command and a close friend of Admiral Kimmel, acted as a mindguard and reinforced the illusion of invulnerability of the Pearl Harbor command in-group. Neither the Navy nor the War Counsel actually sent a clear alert to Pearl Harbor. Both these groups' messages were unclear and subdued to remain politically safe. A clear warning of the threat that Japan posed may have prompted the Pearl Harbor Command to act and it could have prevented the resulting historic catastrophe.[81]

Janis contends that this illusion of invulnerability of Kimmel's in-group command staff was not shared by the entire Pearl Harbor naval community. Officers not in Kimmel's in-group were deeply concerned about an impending attack. Many prepared their ships defenses against an attack, and on December 7th, these were prepared for the attack far better than the ships commanded by Kimmel's in-group. Even though dissenting opinions were expressed within the officer ranks at Pearl Harbor, Admiral

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[78] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 76.

[79] Kahn, "The Intelligence Failure of Pearl Harbor," 138–152.

[80] Steven M. Gillon, *Pearl Harbor: FDR Leads the Nation into War* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2011), accessed October 26, 2014, ProQuest ebrary.

[81] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 80–83.

Kimmel had isolated himself within his command staff in-group that laughingly dismissed the out-groups dire predictions.[82]

Despite warnings in late November and early December that negotiations had broken down and war with the Empire of Japan was expected, Admiral Kimmel did not increase reconnaissance flights or defenses, and still believed in Pearl Harbor's illusion of invulnerability. The entire Pearl Harbor command staff in-group agreed that Hawaii would not be the target but instead Guam would be where the Japanese would strike. The sector north of Hawaii was left unsecured, and it was not monitored by reconnaissance flights. The Japanese descended on Hawaii from the north.[83] The Japanese Command had the contingency plan that if they were knowingly observed by U.S. reconnaissance prior to December 7, they would have aborted the attack. Other overt warning signs that the Empire of Japan was planning to attack the United States included the Japanese consulates being ordered to destroy secret codes in U.S. and British territories.[84]

Janis asserts that Admiral Kimmel's surrounded himself with a cohesive in-group of advisors whom he conferred with daily and he regularly socialized with this group. They were like-minded men who were unquestionably loyal to their commander. Even when Kimmel doubted his own viewpoint on December 6, 1941, feeling that he may have erred and an attack somewhere in the pacific was imminent, this in-group acted as mindguards and assured him that Japan could not launch an effective attack against Pearl Harbor because Japan was too heavily engaged in other conflicts in Asia. Even after this catastrophic failure and fiasco, Kimmel's supporters rallied around him for years and defended his actions and decisions,[85] based upon their poor advice and the failure caused by their groupthink.[86]

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[82] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 93–95.

[83] Frederic L Borch, III, "Guilty As Charged?" *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History* 13, no. 2 (Winter 2001): 54, http://search.proquest.com/docview/223679585?accountid=12702.

[84] Ibid., 78–91.

[85] Associated Press, "Family of Pearl Harbor Admiral Blamed in Attack Wants His Exoneration," *Evansville Courier*, April 28, 1995.

[86] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 80–100.

2.   The Bay of Pigs Groupthink Failure

Janis considered the Bay of Pigs Invasion as one of the worst groupthink disasters in history that was perpetrated by an otherwise responsible government and highly educated and intelligent people who were members of the Kennedy in-group. The refusal of the exceptionally cohesive in-group to question President Kennedy's plan was in part due to the unquestioned loyalty and admiration that many of the in-group had for the new president. A belief existed among the in-group members that questioning the plan would foster doubt and disloyalty to the burgeoning administration. The group members believed that for the political good of the administration, and undoubtedly themselves, devil's advocacy and critical thinking in relation to the President's invasion plan would show disloyalty to the president. Kennedy's own personal charisma played a role that made members of the in-group who were otherwise critical thinkers, docile and unquestioning of the plan that he was supporting.[87]

This plan included the invasion of communist Cuba by 1,400 Cuban expatriates living in the United States who were being trained and supported by the CIA and the U.S. military. On April 17, 1961, the invasion commenced but the Cubans army was not taken unaware. A force of 20,000 Cuban solders met the invasion force and the invasion's reinforcing provisions were not delivered. Within three days, the survivors were captured and sent to prison camps. The United States attempted to deny involvement but the administration and the nation was humiliated by this poor plan and the resulting defeat. This invasion resulted in Castro forming an alliance with the Soviet Union, placing Soviet military assets 90 miles off the coast of the United States, and setting the stage for the Cuban Missile Crisis.[88]

In this case study, Janis emphasizes that this groupthink disaster was undeniably the fault of President Kennedy and his in-group of advisors. This in-group consisted of highly qualified, educated, and experienced individuals who had the capability to analyze plans critically and offer well-designed alternative courses of action. Each member of

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[87] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 14–49.

[88] Howard Jones, *Bay of Pigs* (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 2008), 95–130.

Kennedy's in-group was selected for their decision-making and critical thinking abilities yet they failed do so with the Bay of Pigs plan, and thus, submitted to groupthink. Janis asserted in this case study that the groupthink milieu was fueled by the excitement of their recent presidential victory, the celebrity status of President Kennedy, an illusion of invulnerability, illusions of unanimity, and the suppression of doubt among the in-group.[89]

Furthermore, the in-group made serious miscalculations, based on assumptions fueled by the administration's belief in its inherent morality and invulnerability. The in-group believed that the CIA would be able to secrete the fact that the United States was supporting the invasion.[90] The in-group also believed that the Cuban military and Air Force were ineffective, incompetent, and weak, and that they could be swiftly neutralized and overwhelmed by the American supported invasion force and in-country Cuban resistance. These assumptions were wholly inaccurate and the Cuban military swiftly and decisively defeated the U.S. supported exile forces.[91]

In his work, Janis discusses how groupthink led this talented group to make such poor decisions. He cites that that administration did not want to show political weakness. It also wanted to give the impression that it was leading the anti-communist efforts. The president's new cabinet was elated by the political victory but the members were not yet at the point where they felt comfortable with each other or speaking in a frank manner. As a result, objections and concerns regarding the President's plan were soft peddled and quickly dismissed by the in-group. The members of the in-group also did not want to been seen as disloyal to the president so they held back personal misgivings. Moreover, they allowed themselves to be overwhelmed by the CIA and the military officials who were left over from the Eisenhower administration and who supported the invasion. The need for secrecy was believed to be so great that the in-group of decision makers was

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[89] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 14–49.

[90] Ibid., 99–139.

[91] Howard, *Bay of Pigs*.

very small and all documents were collected after meetings, which made it difficult to analyze the plan effectively.[92]

These factors all lead to a groupthink catastrophe in which members of the in-group to maintain their cohesiveness and individual status within the group developed a shared illusion of invulnerability and unanimity. The high level of certainty within this group gave the members the mistaken belief that what they were doing was inherently correct and moral. Critical thinking and analysis was suppressed by the members of the in-group acting as mindguards to defend against any devil's advocacy from within or from outside the small circle. The in-group members adopted a get-along-to-go-along attitude and they did not want to been labeled as disloyal or dissenters in the new clubby administration in-group.[93]

3.   The Cuban Missile Crisis Groupthink Counterpoint

Janis conducted case studies of counterpoints in which the in-groups exercised critical thinking and creativity in their decision-making process, and thereby, mitigated groupthink, which created well-organized and successful conclusions. One of Janis's groupthink counterpoints was the Kennedy Administration's management of the Cuban Missile Crisis, when the world stood on the brink of nuclear war. Kennedy's in-group was still reeling from its failure in the Bay of Pigs invasion when it embraced critical thinking and devil's advocacy to bring a peaceful and successful conclusion to a brewing disaster that could have ended in a nuclear catastrophe.[94]

President John F. Kennedy and his in-group of advisors were capable of admitting their mistakes and learning how not to repeat them. Kennedy recognized his own failures and the fact that he desired so fervently to eliminate the communist threat in Cuba that he directly involved himself and his personal bias in the decision-making process. He also

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[92] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 31–35.

[93] Ibid., 33–49.

[94] Ibid., 138–166.

understood that he improperly influenced his in-group of advisors[95] to agree to his plan, which consequently, neutralized their independence, critical evaluation, and alternative plans.[96]

The Cuban Missile Crisis proved to be the Kennedy administration's finest hour and an interesting example of an antithesis to groupthink. In the year following the Bay of Pigs, Cuba allowed the Soviet Union to install missile installations seemingly armed with nuclear missiles and defended by an estimated 20,000 Russian soldiers. The administration realized that it had an immediate threat just off shore the American homeland and if the missiles were fired, they could eradicate up to 80 million American citizens with minimal warning. Russia claimed that these missiles were only capable of augmenting the Cuban air defense system and much of the Washington political establishment and the intelligence community believed this claim to be true.[97] On October 16, 1962, an American U2 plane captured photographs of a ballistic missile site that could only be used for offensive purposes.[98]

Janis detailed that President Kennedy quickly summoned his advisory in-group that was later called the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, and it was comprised of members of the administration's in-group, many of whom were involved in the Bay of Pigs. Janis further contended that President Kennedy removed himself from the decision-making process to avoid influencing the group with his preferred course of action as he had done in the previous failure.[99]

On the first day, Kennedy explained to the group that submission to Cuba or the Soviet Union was not an option nor was a diplomatic solution utilizing the United

[95] Sheldon Stern, *Stanford Nuclear Age: Cuban Missile Crisis in American Memory: Myths Versus Reality* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 18–21, accessed October 26, 2014, ProQuest ebrary.

[96] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 138–140.

[97] Stern, *Stanford Nuclear Age: Cuban Missile Crisis in American Memory: Myths Versus Reality*, 20–31.

[98] Amy B. Zegart, "The Cuban Missile Crisis as Intelligence Failure," *Policy Review*, no. 175 (October/November 2012): 23–39.

[99] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 140–144.

Nations. Kennedy pressed that his main concern was that under no circumstances could the Russian missiles remain in Cuba. The Kennedy in-group of decision makers, not wanting to fall prey to the same set of circumstances that lead to the Bay of Pigs fiasco, did several things differently than they had in the previous crisis. Attorney General Robert Kennedy was designated as the group's devil's advocate. In this role, he ardently examined and attempted to discredit the in-group's various decisions. His purpose was to promote discussion and debate as to the quality and the merits of the plan, as well as to anticipate disadvantages, opposition, and alternate courses of action. The in-group studied a wide range of alternative plans and courses of action, and carefully examined the positive and negative aspects of the various plans. They also examined dissenting opinions and expert opinions, especially those that recommended a different course of action from that currently being taken by the in-group. They developed contingency plans for the various courses of action in case the original plan failed and alternative plans needed to be employed.[100]

As a result, a highly probable nuclear showdown was avoided and based upon the sound decision making; Kennedy was able to dissuade the Russian Premier Nikita Khrushchev from the path of war.[101] Both Kennedy and Khrushchev made great advances in the relationship between the two countries by humanizing the opposition and breaking the stereotypes that both countries had of their opponent. The Kennedy in-group used the lessons learned from the Bay of Pigs fiasco. They employed critical thinking and self-evaluation to guide the world back from the brink of nuclear war.[102]

F.   CONCLUSION

Homeland security leaders must appreciate Janis's original case studies to learn from the mistakes made by the leaders in the past. Groupthink can cause the complete and utter failure of a plan or decision as demonstrated by these notable case studies.

[100] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 146–165.

[101] Stern, *Stanford Nuclear Age: Cuban Missile Crisis in American Memory: Myths Versus Reality*, 99–108.

[102] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 146–166.

Kennedy learned that if a leader surrounds himself with an intelligent, competent in-group, the leader should not influence the group with his own bias. High-quality leaders who wish to encourage their groups to come to quality decisions should support independent thought and devil's advocacy. They must persuade group members to speak their minds and offer alternative courses of action without fear of reprisal. Unfortunately, modern homeland security leaders often quell devil's advocacy and manipulate and micromanage the decision-making process to promote personal or political agendas to the detriment of both the homeland and national security of the United States.[103]

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[103] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 197–198.

III.   GROUPTHINK IN HOMELAND SECURITY

Before September 11, 2001, U.S. political and national security communities suffered the very same groupthink symptoms as the Pearl Harbor Naval command prior to December 7, 1941. Political sentiment believed that the homeland was beyond the reach of foreign terrorism even though a clear pattern of escalation of attacks on U.S. interests both in foreign theaters and domestically was apparent. In the 1990s, al Qaeda was building its network and it was growing bolder with each successive attack. A progression of attacks in the early and mid-1990s led to the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania followed by the bolder attack on the U.S.S. Cole in 2000.[104] The litany of escalating attacks targeting U.S. interests in foreign theaters clearly demonstrated a pattern of evidence that foreign terrorist groups were growing bolder and more sophisticated with each attack and they intended to continue the jihad.[105] Nevertheless, both the Clinton and Bush administrations appear to have been willfully blind to the escalating pattern of terrorism and this denial of reality trickled down and spread throughout society.[106]

Just as some of Kimmel's officers who were not in his immediate in-group foresaw the attack on Pearl Harbor, some in the counter-terrorism community identified the pattern of attacks leading up to 9/11.[107] However, in both cases, the invasive atmosphere of groupthink was overwhelming and stifled these out-group opinions. The dissenters were silenced by the political in-group's mindguards that chose to perpetuate the U.S.'s illusion of invulnerability and engage in wishful thinking in hopes that the impending attack on the homeland would never materialize. Both the Clinton and Bush administrations dismissed the experts who warned that the escalating pattern of attacks might be a prelude to a catastrophic attack on U.S. interests. The prevailing political in-

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[104] Windrem, "Al–Qaida Timeline: Plots and Attacks."

[105] Kean, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*, 71–197.

[106] Eichenwald, "The Deafness Before the Storm."

[107] Ibid.

group's groupthink, focused on an illusion of invulnerability, and mistakenly believed that the U.S. homeland would never be target of foreign terrorism. This wishful thinking was encouraged by advisors and other officials serving both presidents who formed an in-group that acted as mindguards, and shielded the presidents from reality and the increasing danger.[108]

The Bay of Pigs fiasco also draws parallels to what has occurred in the homeland security enterprise in the past two decades. In the years following the attack on September 11, 2001, the U.S. homeland security enterprise was driven not by political excitement from a recent election victory, as in the Bay of Pigs, but rather by the need to respond to this catastrophic attack perpetrated on the United States and the American people.[109] Following 9/11, the political establishment's in-group suffered from a particularly powerful case of groupthink. At that time, the U.S. government believed in its own inherent morality and it suffered from an illusion of invulnerability. It also believed that the power and authority granted to the government by the American people to counter the threat of terrorism was unquestionable and unlimited.[110] The Bush administration's slogan was that "freedom and justice will prevail," and this motto became a theme for its homeland security policies.[111]

A.   GROUPTHINK IN THE FOUNDATION OF HOMELAND SECURITY

The modern homeland security enterprise was the result of that attack on September 11, 2001. On that day, the U.S. government was awakened from the long period of groupthink, which assumed that terrorism was a foreign problem and would never affect the homeland. The national security enterprise employed a borders-out

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[108] Eichenwald, "The Deafness Before the Storm," 71–197.

[109] John Fass Morton, *Next–Generation Homeland Security: Network Federalism and the Course to National Preparedness* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2012), 14–49, 63–86.

[110] Terry D. Turchie and Kathleen M. Puckett, *Homeland Insecurity: How Washington Politicians Have Made America Less Safe* (Palisades, NY: History Pub. Co., 2008).

[111] Kennedy, "The Hijacking of Foreign Policy Decision Making: Groupthink and Presidential Power in the Post–9/11 World," 646–668.

policy that had not changed significantly since the beginning of the Cold War.[112] The existing national security and homeland security collective consciousness clung to an "illusion of invulnerability,"[113] if not willful blindness.[114] It discounted the string of terrorist incidents that occurred in the homeland before the attacks of 9/11, and thereby, miscalculated the threat that al Qaeda posed.[115] September 11 presented the U.S. government with the reality of the vulnerability of the U.S. homeland to acts of terrorism. Fear gripped the nation, seriously affecting the federal government, travel, trade, economic systems, and the psyche of the American people.[116]

The original mission of post-September 11 homeland security was to streamline and organize the U.S. domestic counter-terrorism efforts.[117] The government was propelled into a seemly worldwide war on terrorism. Leftover Clinton-era and brand new Bush administration officials were tasked with developing the framework for the homeland security strategy of the nation. Just as with the Kennedy Bay of Pigs in-group, they were a highly experienced and intelligent in-group of people but from the beginning, the authority and priorities of the homeland security enterprise seemed confused, disjointed, and politically motivated.[118]

During Secretary Ridge's swearing in ceremony, President Bush stated, "The best defense against terror is a global offensive against terror." He also stated, "I've given Tom and the Office of Homeland Security a mission: to design a comprehensive coordinated national security strategy to fight terrorism here at home." However, to fight

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[112] Morton, *Next–Generation Homeland Security: Network Federalism and the Course to National Preparedness*, 4, 93.

[113] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 197–198.

[114] Kennedy, "The Hijacking of Foreign Policy Decision Making: Groupthink and Presidential Power in the Post–9/11 World," 633–727.

[115] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 2–13.

[116] Friedman, "Managing Fear: The Politics of Homeland Security," 77–106.

[117] Morton, *Next–Generation Homeland Security: Network Federalism and the Course to National Preparedness*, 87–89.

[118] Dara Kay Cohen, Mariano–Florentino Cuéllar, and Barry R. Weingast, "Crisis Bureaucracy: Homeland Security and the Political Design of Legal Mandates," *Stanford Law Review* 59, no. 3 (December 2006): 676–677.

terrorism at home, an important piece of the puzzle was left out of the new Office of Homeland Security. The actual authority and jurisdiction to investigate terrorism domestically remained firmly in the Department of Justice (DOJ) and with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).[119] The architects of the Department of Homeland Security considered this flaw in the homeland security framework, and yet, it was not corrected, and the authority to investigate acts of terrorism in the homeland was left out of the new department's legal jurisdiction,[120] which rendered it ineffective as a counter-terrorism agency.[121]

Instead of focusing on the counter-terrorism mission, Secretary Ridge decided to form a border agency, and combined Customs, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Coast Guard, and the Agriculture Food Inspections Program into a single federal agency but he was met with staunch political opposition to this change. The agencies and political rivals mired in decades of bureaucracy and groupthink refused to entertain the consolidation recommended by the 9/11 Commission. Ridge's only ally was Colin Powell, the Secretary of State, who is widely remembered as the early Bush administration's critical thinker.[122]

In 2002, Whitehouse Chief of Staff Andy Card, and long time in-group Bush colleague, was given the authority to put together a working group to develop the newly proposed DHS. Card picked political allies and confidants who were not experts in homeland security subject matter.[123] Rather, the new members of Card's in-group could be trusted not to challenge him but rather to advance his agenda. This in-group was extremely secretive, and Card was considered the driving force behind the creation of the new department and the corresponding homeland security enterprise. Card's in-group

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[119] Morton, *Next–Generation Homeland Security: Network Federalism and the Course to National Preparedness*, 44–50, 68–69.

[120] Cohen, Cuéllar, and Weingast, "Crisis Bureaucracy: Homeland Security and the Political Design of Legal Mandates," *Stanford Law Review*, 681–683.

[121] Morton, *Next–Generation Homeland Security: Network Federalism and the Course to National Preparedness*, 44–50, 68–69.

[122] Ibid., 80.

[123] Donald P. Moynihan, "Homeland Security and the U.S. Public Management Policy Agenda," *Governance* 18, no. 2 (2005): 177–180.

acted as mindguards that fended off opposition or criticism of his plans. President Bush backed Card's plan, and on June 6, 2002, he announced in a press conference a permanent Cabinet level DHS.[124]

The DHS came to fruition in March 2003. Despite what administration planners had promised, it was far from the streamlined counter-terrorism organization that had been envisioned to prevent the stove piping of intelligence and protect the domestic security of the United States. The new DHS was composed of 22 separate legacy agencies, each with its own culture and continually vying for political dominance and funding.[125] Each culture was managed by its own agency leadership mired in its own environment of groupthink. Since then, the DHS has evolved into a lumbering behemoth that has been littered with political appointees and others in senior leadership with little to no expertise in homeland security and whose main objectives involve the perpetuation of the agenda of whatever administration placed them in power.

Secretary Ridge's goal, and the 9/11 Commission's recommendation calling for the smooth coordination of the agencies and missions within the new department, was an impossible task because of the competing agendas of the various actors who had surrounded themselves with in-groups and who each formed their own political kingdom. Each in-group was dominated by its own particular groupthink.[126]

Although a change has occurred in presidential administrations and multiple shufflings of and among the department's senior leadership, the DHS and the corresponding homeland security community, still remain a fractured, loose confederation of agencies and components that constantly struggle for mission relevance, funding, and dominance. Each in-group is mired in its own brand of groupthink aimed at furthering its own biased agenda. Each in-group collective rationalizes about its own invulnerability, morality, and unanimity while censoring itself through the use of

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[124] Morton, *Next–Generation Homeland Security: Network Federalism and the Course to National Preparedness*, 68–70.

[125] Cohen, Cuéllar, and Weingast, "Crisis Bureaucracy: Homeland Security and the Political Design of Legal Mandates," 676–677.

[126] Ibid., 84–86.

mindguards and pressure on dissenters. Creativity and critical thinking are discouraged in the DHS, particularly if it goes against the prevailing ever-shifting groupthink of the current dominant in-group.

B.   GROUPTHINK IN THE DHS

The DHS has had a succession of senior leaders, continuously coming and going.[127] Qualified homeland security leaders either do not accept management positions within the DHS or they quickly depart the agency when they comprehend how difficult and arduous is their position.[128] Many senior leaders view the DHS positions as a temporary avenue to a highly paid position in the private sector and they leave the agency as soon as they secure one of these positions.[129] The absence of competent, committed, and consistent leadership has lead to an organizational environment in which even simple governmental tasks have become arduous and the very mission of the DHS has become obscured and difficult to define. Each successive leadership in-group arrives with a preconceived agenda and often a thorough redefinition of the respective homeland security agency mission. Often these new agendas are to the detriment of established and crucial legacy homeland security agency missions.[130]

1.   The Revolving Door at the DHS

Organizational instability, poor quality leadership, and ambiguous missions have created a toxic working environment in many segments of the DHS that has led to a large number of career employees fleeing the agency. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is continuously loosing employees at all levels. Kenneth Kasprisin, a former TSA leader stated, "You cannot sustain a high level of security operations when

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[127] David C. Maurer, *DHS's Efforts to Improve Employee Morale and Fill Senior Leadership Vacancies* (GAO-14-228T) (Washington, DC: United States Government Accounting Office, 2013), http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/659642.pdf.

[128] Jerry Markon, Ellen Nakashima, and Alice Crites, "Top–level Turnover Makes It Harder for DHS to Stay on Top of Evolving Threats," *The Washington Post*, September 21, 2014, http://www.washington post.com/politics/top-level-turnover-makes-it-harder-for-dhs-to-stay-on-top-of-evolving-threats/2014/09/21/ca7919a6-39d7-11e4-9c9f-ebb47272e40e_story.html.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Cohen, Cuéllar, and Weingast, "Crisis Bureaucracy: Homeland Security and the Political Design of Legal Mandates," 740.

you have that kind of turnover.'' He attributed the losses to a toxic culture and terrible morale.[131] According to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) FedScope database for the period of 2010 and 2013, 31 percent of permanent employees departed the DHS, compared to 17 percent in the overall federal government.[132] FedScope also revealed that in 2013, the departure of DHS Senior Executive Service (SES) employees was up 56 percent from 2012, while the SES departures for the overall federal workforce remained constant and unchanged.[133]

This unstable leadership cadre continuously refocuses homeland security on new missions, and often excludes career personnel subject matter experts from the decision-making and leadership process.[134] The continuous stream of new DHS leadership incarnations perpetuate their own groupthink bias, and habitually bring in their own management teams composed of their former colleagues, and thus, further isolate themselves. Frequently, the new leaders and their management in-groups share similar backgrounds, work histories, and life experiences, which therefore, fulfils an antecedent condition of groupthink.[135] Members of these in-groups act as mindguards, who interdict constructive criticism, innovative ideas, and alternate outside viewpoints that further isolate the senior leadership while promoting their biased agenda at the expense of the established homeland security missions.[136] Additionally, these cohesive in-groups dehumanize and discredit individuals or groups within the organization that have

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[131] Markon, Nakashima, and Crites, "Top–level Turnover Makes It Harder for DHS to Stay on Top of Evolving Threats."

[132] Ibid.

[133] "Departures, Vacancies Continue to Hobble DHS," September 26, 2014, http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20140926-departures-vacancies-continue-to-hobble-dhs.

[134] Cohen, Cuéllar, and Weingast, "Crisis Bureaucracy: Homeland Security and the Political Design of Legal Mandates," 729.

[135] Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascos*, 250, 305.

[136] Kennedy, "The Hijacking of Foreign Policy Decision Making: Groupthink and Presidential Power in the Post–9/11 World," 9.

alternative perspectives.[137] Employees who do not engage in the current cycle of groupthink are often punished, isolated, or deposed by the leadership in-groups.[138]

2. "Brownie, You're Doing a Heckuva Job"

A well-known homeland security management failure occurred in late August and early September 2005, when Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast.[139] The failure of the DHS to respond properly to Hurricane Katrina resulted in criticism of homeland security leadership, which focused on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Director Michael Brown, who was a member of the republican administration's homogeneous in-group. Following Hurricane Katrina, President George Bush visited the Gulf Coast, and during a press conference, he made the infamous statement, "Brownie, you're doing a heckuva job," about Michael Brown's leadership of the federal response. Although Brown had performed adequately in past disaster response, DHS Secretary Chertoff believed that Brown had frozen under the pressure during Katrina, and he had become a subordinate and not a leader.[140]

President Bush was so isolated by his in-group and blinded by an environment of groupthink he did not recognize that the federal homeland security response with which Brown was charged was woefully slow to respond to devastated areas or that many response assets were waiting for days after the storm to be activated by the DHS. The administration's illusion of invulnerability, collective rationalization of the group's efforts or morality, and its shared illusion of unanimity thoroughly clouded the judgment

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[137] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 197–198.

[138] Ibid., 184–206.

[139] Morton, *Next–Generation Homeland Security: Network Federalism and the Course to National Preparedness*, 139–141.

[140] Carol D. Leonnig, "It Took Secret Service Five Days to Realize a Gunman Had Shot at the White House Residence," *Washington Post*, September 29, 2014, http://news.nationalpost.com/2014/09/29/it-took-secret-service-five-days-to-realize-a-gunman-had-shot-at-the-white-house-residence/.

of the administration's decision-making in-group with respect to Brown's leadership and the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of the federal response.[141]

Following the Hurricane Katrina fiasco, the Bush administration mitigated groupthink by supporting the 2006 White House report that reviewed the federal Hurricane Katrina response.[142] This report recognized that, "Ultimately, when a catastrophic incident occurs, regardless of whether the catastrophe has been a warned or is a surprise event, the Federal government should not rely on the traditional layered approach and instead should proactively provide, or 'push,' its capabilities and assistance directly to those in need."[143] It further discussed both the mistakes and successes of the response, including how federal capabilities were overwhelmed and the widespread dissatisfaction with the federal government's actions. It recognized that many of the failures were similar to those identified during the response to Hurricane Andrew in 1992.[144]

This report was endorsed by the Bush administration and the Bush in-group demonstrated that in this instance, it recognized failures had occurred and it took responsibility. The fact that the Bush administration supported and endorsed this report shows that in this instance, it did attempt to counter groupthink using Janis's established remedies by assigning a critical evaluator to review and analyze the management of the Hurricane Katrina response. The writers of this report played the role of devil's advocates, and exposed the defective decision-making process and poor leadership during the Hurricane Katrina disaster.[145]

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[141] Kenneth T. Walsh, "A Tale of Two Storms: Comparing Bush and Obama's Hurricane Response, How President Obama's Handling of Superstorm Sandy Compares to Bush's Mishandling of Hurricane Katrina," *U.S. News and World Reports*, October 31, 2012, http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/ken-walshs-washington/2012/10/31/a-tale-of-two-storms-comparing-bush-and-obamas-hurricane-response.

[142] Morton, *Next–Generation Homeland Security: Network Federalism and the Course to National Preparedness*, 146.

[143] Frances Fragos Townsend, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2006), 19, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/reports/katrina-lessons-learned/.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid.

3. The Reformation of the Federal Air Marshals Service

Nowhere has groupthink and the resulting poor decision-making process by senior homeland security officials been more perceptible then in the Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS). Before 9/11, the FAMS was a small elite group of highly trained undercover agents who were primarily deployed on international flights based on intelligence and threat information to counter air-piracy and terrorism. Following 9/11, as part of homeland security, the FAMS was aggressively promoted and grew exponentially, and hired thousands of new federal air marshals (FAMs). To manage this new agency and large influx of employees, the DHS retained a group of former retired United States Secret Service (USSS) managers for most of the senior leadership positions.[146] The homogeneity of this new in-group composed almost exclusively from the USSS fulfilled one of Janis's primary antecedent conditions, that of all members of the in-group have similar backgrounds, form a highly cohesiveness in-group, and inclusion in the in-group is more important to the members than the quality of the decisions produced by the group.[147]

In late 2001, former USSS Director John Magaw was appointed by the administration to help create the new TSA. Magaw retained the services of his former USSS colleagues, including Thomas Quinn as the Director of the Federal Air Marshal Service who replaced the pre-9/11 career Federal Air Marshal Director. This former USSS in-group hired Robert Byers another former USSS colleague as the Deputy Director of the Federal Air Marshal Service.[148] This in-group of senior leaders replaced the original cadre of career pre-9/11 FAMs in most senior leadership roles almost exclusively with retired USSS officials, and thus, firmly cemented their elite, cohesive in-

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[146] Robert J. MacLean and Anonymous Federal Air Marshal, "Air Marshals and the Secret Service Factor," Scribd.com, January 26, 2006, http://www.scribd.com/doc/122150590/Air–Marshals–and–The– Secret–Service–Factor–By–An–Anonymous–Federal–Air–Marshal.

.[147] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 176–177.

[148] MacLean and Anonymous Federal Air Marshal, "Air Marshals and the Secret Service Factor," 1– 2.

group. No pre-9/11 FAM was appointed to a senior leadership position while more than 80 retired and former USSS officials swelled the ranks of the FAM senior leadership.[149]

Career FAMs who were program area experts were alienated from the leadership in-group. This perception of "hostile take-over" of the FAMS by the former USSS created an environment of "toxic" morale within the agency. Career agents therefore felt that they were under constant and unfair scrutiny by the leadership.[150] In a survey conducted by the DHS, Office of Inspector General, 52 percent of career employees polled believed that FAM senior leaders would never be held accountable for their actions even if they were engaged in serious misconduct.[151] During the years following the post-9/11 reformation of the FAMS, USSS managers continued to swell the senior ranks and the leadership became further alienated from the career employees.

The culture and mission space of the FAMS and that of the USSS is vastly different. Yet, the former USSS senior leaders instituted many of the same policies from their legacy agency, even when these policies were woefully out of date or inappropriate for the FAMS's mission. The FAM leadership in-group did display several symptoms of groupthink in their management and in decision-making processes concerning the new agency. Evidence points to the fact that the groupthink environment generated by the core leadership in-group inspired many controversial decisions made by this group. The leaders understood the USSS protection mission but they did not adapt these techniques to address the new unique mission of the FAMS. Rather, they transplanted them intact to the FAMS. Many career FAMs believed that these managers did not understand the unique mission of the FAMS and the leadership in-group perpetuated this belief by

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[149] MacLean and Anonymous Federal Air Marshal, "Air Marshals and the Secret Service Factor," 1–3.

[150] CBS News Staff, "Toxic" Morale "Crippling" Air Marshals," *CBS News*, February 1, 2010, http://www.cbsnews.com/news/toxic-morale-crippling-air-marshals/.

[151] Department of Homeland Security, *Allegations of Misconduct and Illegal Discrimination and Retaliation in the Federal Air Marshal Service* (OIG–12–28) (Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, 2012), 50–63.

ardently supporting and enforcing policies even when they were inappropriate or dangerous.[152]

Director Quinn and his in-group had instituted a strict formal dress code requiring all FAMs on mission status to dress in business attire, including a jacket and tie. The *Washington Post* reported that in one instance, Director Quinn visited Reagan National Airport on Thanksgiving 2004 to "thank" the FAMs for taking time away from their families on the holiday to secure the homeland. According to the article, he was shocked to see his Marshals dressed in a casual manner during his visit.[153]

A *Washington Times* article alleged that this incident led the FAMS' leadership to ensure that all FAMs on mission status were adhering to the strict formal dress code or face removal from mission status, be administratively charged, and consequently, face possible suspension or termination. The article further states, "A memo from the Chicago office says men must wear a business suit with a collared dress shirt, tie and dress shoes. Female marshals must wear business suits with a blouse, knit top or dress shirt and dress shoes."[154]. Also, "Anyone found not to be in compliance with this policy will be placed in a leave status. Moreover, all dress violations will be considered misconduct and followed up with quick and firm disciplinary action."[155]

Viewing this episode through Janis's established groupthink framework, it appears that Director Quinn had been thoroughly isolated by his in-group of advisors. Quinn's in-group were acting as mindguards, and shielded him from the reality of what was occurring in the field and the enormous amount of opposition to the strict dress code and other policies.[156] The dress code standard was motivated by an outdated USSS dress code policy. It was based on the fact that the USSS often conducts its mission in a formal setting that requires formal business attire. Similarly, FAMs assigned to flights filled with

[152] Washington Times Staff, "Dress Code Wearing Thin on Air Marshals," *The Washington Times*, December 8, 2004, http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2004/dec/8/20041208-122555-6114r/?page=all.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Audrey Hudson, "Air Marshals' Secrecy Ruined by Dress Code," *The Washington Times*, July 9, 2004, http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1168013/posts?page=33.

[155] Ibid.

[156] Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascos*, 174–177.

travelers dressed in formal business attire dressed accordingly. However, the mandate called for business dress for FAMs on all missions, even when it was wholly inappropriate, such as when they were assigned to a flight filled with tourists headed to warm vacation locations.[157] This requirement was unrealistic and it was not sensible in most cases. Consequently, the public began to identify FAMs on flights based upon how they were dressed, which compromised their undercover status and safety. It also made the job more difficult for the FAMs, who were required to work long and rigorous mission schedules and maintain the formal business attire while on constant travel status.[158]

To the credit of FAM senior leadership, in 2006, the dress code was relaxed in response to objections from the law enforcement officers associations on behalf of the rank and file FAMs;[159] the Association of Flight Attendants that stated that FAMs "look like FBI or Secret Service agents straight out of central casting" and the Allied Pilots Association, which also said that changes are needed to protect the FAM's identities. The dress code was replaced with more casual dress attire consistent with the mission.[160]

The problems at the FAMS have continued. Career FAMs also have alleged that the former USSS leadership reportedly belittled them, because the leadership believed that they were not qualified for a federal law enforcement position and characterized them as amateurs. The leadership's alleged stereotyping of the career FAM out-group has significantly degraded the morale of the rank-and-file FAMs.[161] Senior leadership also requires the career FAMS to work a long and arduous schedule, to the point at which many were filing complaints that their quality of life was being significantly affected by their demanding mission travel schedules. In contrast, senior leaders work a set schedule in an office setting and are not held to the same standards in respect to training and

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[157] Washington Times Staff, "Dress Code Wearing Thin on Air Marshals."

[158] Ibid.

[159] Del Quentin Wilber, "Dress Code Relaxed for Air Marshals," *Washington Post*, August 25, 2006, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/08/24/AR2006082401264.html.

[160] Hudson, "Air Marshals' Secrecy Ruined by Dress Code."

[161] CBS News Staff, "Toxic" Morale "Crippling" Air Marshals."

mission schedules.[162] The career FAM employees' ideas, criticisms, and objections have been routinely dismissed by the leadership and those who did voice objections to the agency leadership's decisions were allegedly aggressively targeted for retribution by mindguards who applied direct pressure on dissenters. As a result of the history of retribution and retaliation, most complaints against the FAM leadership are conducted in an anonymous manner because the authors greatly fear reprisal by the leadership in-group.[163]

4.   The United States Secret Service

More recently, the USSS has been involved in several high profile scandals. The investigations into some of these failures are still occurring and all the facts of the failures in leadership have yet to surface. While it is too early to conduct a thorough groupthink case study, it can be discerned that Secret Service leadership is suffering from certain antecedent conditions and symptoms of groupthink. To be sure, groupthink is not the only cause of all of the Service's problems but it does appear to play a role.

One high-profile incident of the USSS leadership engaging in some of the conditions and symptoms of groupthink stands out in particular. On November 11, 2011, a man fired a rifle from his vehicle, so that bullets struck the White House. USSS leadership on site told the responding agents and officers to stand down, falsely believing that the sound of the gunshots were that of a vehicle backfiring.[164] When agents and officers protested and expressed that they believed these were actual gunshots, they were silenced by agency leadership, in effect acting as mindguards by refusing to entertain alternative perspectives. Some of the shots struck the White House just a few feet away from where officers were posted on the roof but leadership still dismissed their reports.

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[162] Jim Barnett and Mike M. Ahlers, "Report on Federal Air Marshal Service Paints an Unflattering Picture," *CNN*, February 3, 2012, http://www.cnn.com/2012/02/03/travel/air-marshal-service-probe/.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Leonnig, "It Took Secret Service Five Days to Realize a Gunman Had Shot at the White House residence."

Officers and agents did not challenge leadership[165] in this case because they were intimidated and did not want to be labeled as disloyal or dissenters, and feared reprisal.[166]

The USSS is an agency with a proud history. Over the past decade, the USSS has been asked to do more with far less,[167] and the number of agents and officers has shrunk dramatically, while the number of protectees has increased.[168] Funding for basic physical security has been cut and countermeasures, such as the placement of gunshot locators, have not been implemented.[169] The security deficiencies are in part due to the service's shrinking budget and in part to an illusion of invulnerability on the part of the leadership, which believes that the image of the service and security theater are enough to counter threats.

As with many senior executives in the DHS, some of the Service's leadership has submitted to a get-along-to-go-along groupthink posture. Senior leaders throughout the DHS have been accused of putting the agency mission second to appeasing their political benefactors. Furthermore, just as in every other component of the DHS, the USSS hierarchy has become a temporary stopover for much of this agency's senior leadership. DHS and USSS leaders have been criticized for being more focused on networking for their lucrative retirement careers than fighting for resources for the agency and preserving the extremely important homeland security mission.[170]

5.   The Vocabulary of Groupthink

Under the Bush administration, homeland security officials continually publicized the war on terror and the Axis of Evil to perpetuate the fight against what the political in-group perceived as a global jihad targeting the west. This environment of groupthink

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[165] Leonnig, "It Took Secret Service Five Days to Realize a Gunman Had Shot at the White House residence."

[166] Dan Bongino and Ron Kessler, "Chaos within the Secret Service," *The O'Reilly Factor*, October 2, 2014, http://www.foxnews.com/on–air/oreilly/index.html#/v/3818408564001

[167] Tim Mak, "Secret Service: Give Us More Money!" The Daily Beast, September 30, 2014, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/09/30/secret–service–give–us–more–money.html

[168] Ibid.

[169] Bongino and Kessler, "Chaos within the Secret Service."

[170] Ibid.

erroneously categorized all enemies of the United States as a single entity, even when these adversaries had no affiliation with one another and vastly different philosophies. One such incident occurred in 2005 when the *Boston Herald* reported that the El Salvadorian international criminal organization Mara Salvatrucha (MS)-13 was in league with al Qaeda, and was smuggling Islamic fundamentalist terrorists over the southwest border into the United States. This story was attributed to "intelligence officials" in Washington, who warned law enforcement agencies that al Qaeda terrorists have been spotted with members of MS-13 in El Salvador.[171]

Both these organizations did pose a legitimate threat to the United States, but one was a criminal organization whose purpose is to make money through illegal enterprises, while the other was a global jihadist organization bent on expelling the west from the Islamic world and establishing a global caliphate. These were two vastly different organizations with entirely dissimilar objectives and no common ties. Entwining both of these groups into one vast threat demonstrates an interesting illustration of the groupthink environment that occurred during this time period. The press, alleged intelligence officials, and the political in-group were coping with the stress of the aftermath of September 11 and the then-burgeoning war on terror. In this case, they collectively rationalized that all enemies of the United States were combined into the one overarching menace bent on the destruction of the nation, however dissimilar and unlikely this alliance may have been.

Despite the new Obama's administration,[172] the homeland security groupthink environment did not abate. The groupthink was refocused and redefined to reflect the new administration's agendas, which was shifting from a conservative-based platform to a liberal or progressive-based ideology. In 2009, in one of the more bizarre groupthink episodes, the administration engaged in its own Orwellian brand of groupthink when the new Secretary of Homeland Security used the term "man-caused disasters to replace

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[171] Michele McPhee, "Eastie Gang Linked to Al–Qaeda," *The Boston Herald*, January 5, 2005, http://news.bostonherald.com/localRegional/view.bg?articleid=61903.

[172] Kennedy, "The Hijacking of Foreign Policy Decision Making: Groupthink and Presidential Power in the Post–9/11 World."

"terrorism" as part of the new administration's "move away from the politics of fear toward a policy of being prepared for all risks that can occur."[173]

"Man-caused disasters" became part of the sanctioned homeland security vocabulary as part of the new administration's progressive-based groupthink ideology that attempted to make the war on terror more tolerable to its political base. This verbal retooling was a haphazardly designed response to the overuse of the Bush administration's axiomatic war on terror phrase.[174] Despite the attempt to force through the change in terminology, "man-caused disasters" never caught on in the homeland security lexicon because of the absurdity of this inelegant attempt to make the war on terror more politically correct and aligned with a more palatable and progressive agenda.

C. GROUPTHINK IN THE HOMELAND SECURITY ENTERPRISE

Groupthink in homeland security does not appear to be a problem only within the DHS. This psychological phenomenon is discernible throughout the homeland security enterprise, which is becoming a covenant issue that both sides of the political aisle can publically denounce. However, historically, when the parties demanding reform gain the political power necessary to make change, very little genuine reform actually occurs, which reinforces the dysfunctional homeland security status quo.

1. The Operation Fast and Furious Fiasco

Operation Fast and Furious is a significant homeland security enterprise groupthink fiasco that occurred under the purview of the Obama administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' (BATF) and DOJ. This doomed operation allowed gun traffickers to smuggle approximately 2,000 firearms across the

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[173] Cordula Meyer, "Interview with Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano: 'Away from the Politics of Fear,'" Spiegel Online, March 16, 2009, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/interview-with-homeland-security-secretary-janet-napolitano-away-from-the-politics-of-fear-a-613330.html.

[174] Richard Lowery, "Janet Napolitano's Man–Caused Disaster," *National Review on–Line*, December 29, 2009, http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/228873/janet-napolitanos-man-caused-disaster/rich-lowry.

U.S. Mexican border and into the interior of Mexico.[175] U.S. officials believed that they could track these smugglers and the weapons leading them to drug cartels and possibly significant arrests. This operation was undertaken to prove that the United States was serious about stopping firearms trafficking across the border.[176]

Unfortunately, this plan was ill conceived and the weapons were not effectively tracked once they entered Mexico. These weapons have been used repeatedly in cartel violence and narco-terrorism including the murders of numerous Mexican citizens and law enforcement officers, among them U.S. Border Patrol Agent Brian Terry.[177] This ill-fated operation also damaged U.S.-Mexican diplomatic relations because of the obvious fact that the U.S. government knowingly allowed dangerous high-powered weapons to be smuggled into Mexico and obtained by the murderous drug cartels that pose a significant threat to the Mexican people and government.[178]

Operation Fast and Furious has resulted in Congressional investigations, continuous media coverage, and a serious damage to the image and credibility of the U.S. and the Obama administration. The planning of this operation shows numerous groupthink antecedent conditions and symptoms, including the insulation and homogeneity of the operation's decision-making in-group, which was comprised of like-minded senior leaders from the DOJ and BATF.[179]

A BATF whistleblower stated that the BATF and DOJ leaders knew that the weapons were going to be used in crimes of violence in Mexico yet they allowed these weapons to be given to dangerous drug cartels that wreak havoc on both sides of the border. One investigative report of this fiasco states that Justice Department Official Joe

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[175] Louis Fisher, "The Law: Obama's Executive Privilege and Holder's Contempt:" Operation Fast and Furious,"" *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (2013): 167–185, http://www.loufisher.org/docs/ep/fast2.pdf.

[176] Patrik Jonsson, "How Mexican Killers Got U.S. Guns from 'Fast and Furious' Operation," *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 26, 2011, http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/2011/0726/How-Mexican-killers-got-US-guns-from-Fast-and-Furious-operation.

[177] Fisher, "The Law: Obama's Executive Privilege and Holder's Contempt:" Operation Fast and Furious,"" 168.

[178] Ibid., 169–170.

[179] Ibid., 167–185

Cooley said that the smuggling of approximately 2,000 firearms into Mexico was "an acceptable practice." This last statement thoroughly dehumanizes and devalues the lives of the people, who were likely to become victims of the violence perpetrated by the drug cartels using the weapons provided by the U.S. government.[180]

Furthermore, according to witnesses and whistleblowers from inside the organizations, the BATF and DOJ were deeply ensconced in an environment of groupthink because they did not adequately survey the possible negative consequences of this operation and apparently lacked sufficient contingency planning that would have enabled them to track the weapons beyond the border. The "groupthink" environment willfully blinded the U.S. officials. They appeared not to consider how they were violating their own agencies' primary mission of preventing the illegal trafficking of firearms, which they instead facilitated. Witnesses also stated that BATF employees who voiced criticism of the decision-making in-groups operational plans were set upon by agency mindguards, met with resentment and ostracized, while their ideas were ignored or discredited.[181]

2. Counterpoint: Appointment of a Rival to Counter the ISIS and Groupthink Threat

During 2013 and 2014, the most significant threat since 9/11 emerged. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has spread across the Middle East and it is now considered the world's richest and most powerful terrorist organization. It can be debated whether ISIS is a terrorist organization or a fledgling Islamic nation state, which has carved itself a large swath of territory out of pieces of Syria and Iraq. Whatever ISIS may be, it does pose a legitimate threat to the United States.[182]

Political pundits have focused on the public disagreements strategy between President Obama and some of his military leaders over the nation's ISIS strategy.

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[180] Fisher, "The Law: Obama's Executive Privilege and Holder's Contempt:" Operation Fast and Furious,"" 167–185.

[181] Jonsson, "How Mexican Killers Got U.S. Guns from 'Fast and Furious' Operation."

[182] "ISIS a Threat Worse than al Qaeda," September 16, 2014, http://aclj.org/radical–islam/isis–a–threat–worse–than–al–qaeda.

However, the selection of former United States Marine General John Allen, a well-known critic of the president's policies, as the leader of U.S. counter-ISIS effort typifies one of Janis's established remedies for avoiding groupthink.[183] General Allen is a 35-year veteran of the United States Marine Corps and has had a long and distinguished career, including command of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, from July 2011 to February 2013.[184]

General Allen is also considered a neo-conservative and many of his military views are vastly different from those of President Obama.[185] To the contrary of the administration's ISIS strategy, Allen has publically called for a vigorous U.S. war against ISIS. The president's political opposition may criticize him for the differences in opinions that the administration has with many of its top military officials but the president should be credited for identifying and appointing a political rival, whom is also a subject matter expert, to lead the U.S. effort in this emerging conflict. If allowed to do so, General Allen can play the vital role of devil's advocate in challenging the administration in-group's commonly held assumptions and possibly exposing flaws in the current ISIS strategy. The introduction of a political opponent and subject matter expert into the ISIS strategy-making in-group is in accordance with Janis's original groupthink remedies. This change promotes critical thinking and it offers alternative perspectives to the president. The administration can effectively minimize the groupthink physiological phenomenon in the nation's ISIS strategy, if it continues to follow this course of action.[186]

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[183] Eli Lake and Josh Rogan, "Can Obama Keep His Generals in Check in the War Against ISIS?," The Daily Beast, September 17, 2014, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/09/17/are–obama–and–his–generals–on–the–same–war–plan.html.

[184] "Biography of John R. Allen," accessed September 17, 2014, http://www.brookings.edu/experts/allenj?view=bio.

[185] Daniel Halper, "Gates: 'There Will Be Boots on the Ground If There's to Be Any Hope of Success in the Strategy', ISIS Strategy Unrealistic," The Weekly Standard, September 17, 2014, http://www.weekly standard.com/blogs/gates-there-will-be-boots-ground-if-theres-be-any-hope-success-strategy_805248.html.

[186] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 215–216.

D. CONCLUSION

It has been over a decade since the post-9/11 restructuring of the homeland security enterprise, yet many of its alleged troubles remain and the groupthink milieu of the political leadership in-group has not abated. The groupthink environment permeates throughout the DHS, and correspondingly affects the homeland security enterprise. While groupthink is not the cause of every problem in homeland security, in a great many instances, it appears to have negative influence. The environment of groupthink in homeland security is discernible by examining the poor quality of the decisions made by many of its leadership in-groups, the mismanagement of the organizations, the poor morale of the employees,[187] and the confused ever-fluctuating and ambiguous homeland security mission.

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[187] Josh Hicks, "Homeland Security Ranks Lowest Amid Declining Job Satisfaction Among Feds," *The Washington Post*, December 18, 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/federal_government/ homeland-security-ranks-lowest-amid-declining-job-satisfaction-among-feds/2013/12/18/9e87d7c4-6444- 11e3-a373-0f9f2d1c2b61_story.html.

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IV.   HOMELAND SECURITY GROUPTHINK CASE STUDIES

Groupthink does not occur exclusively in executive-level strategic homeland security senior leadership planning and decision-making groups. This psychological phenomenon has influenced operational planning and decision making throughout the homeland security enterprise. The distinction between strategic and operational failures is that in the homeland security sphere, operational failures are often studied and reexamined in after-action reports that develop best practices and lessons learned. Conversely, strategic failures of executive level senior leadership policy and decision-making in-groups are frequently overlooked because senior leaders do not often analyze and publicize their own failures. Moreover, homeland security strategic planning and decision-making failures are not as spectacular as operational fiascos and they do not draw as much media attention or political scrutiny as do homeland security operational failures.

Groupthink has affected the outcome of several homeland security operations, and turned them into significant failures that have had or nearly had disastrous consequences. This chapter includes case studies of homeland security episodes that were affected by groupthink. The homeland security enterprise's management of the assault on and the resulting siege of the Branch Davidians compound in Waco, Texas[188] and the manhunt for the Boston Marathon bombers in Watertown, Massachusetts,[189] were both influenced and hindered by the groupthink phenomenon. In the Branch Davidians case, groupthink led to a disaster and major loss of life.[190] In the Boston Marathon bombing manhunt, disaster was for the most part avoided, but significant failures and mistakes were made in the response and management of this incident.

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[188] Dick J. Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco: An Investigation* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1998).

[189] James Hooley et al., "Boston Strong Is No Accident," *Watermark, Center for Homeland Defense and Security*, Five, no. One (Spring 2014).

[190] James D. Tabor, *Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America* (Oakland, CA: University of California Pr, 1997).

The Brown standoff[191] that occurred in 2006 is offered as a case study and a counterpoint to homeland security groupthink. It involved Edward and Elaine Brown, who were influential leaders in the Constitutional Rangers militia movement. The Browns were tried and convicted of violations of the federal income tax code but prior to their conviction, they secluded themselves on their property in rural Plainfield, New Hampshire. The Browns publically challenged the government to assault their fortified residence; however, the U.S. Marshals Service used critical thinking, creativity, and the lessons learned from past operational fiascos to apprehend the Browns successfully and without a long-standing siege or bloodshed.[192]

A.   WACO: A HOMELAND SECURITY GROUPTHINK FIASCO

Former Black Panther and political activist Eldridge Cleaver referred to the tragedy at the Branch Davidians Waco complex as President Clinton's Bay of Pigs.[193] The events that occurred in Waco, Texas in 1993 and lead to the deaths of four BATF special agents and 74 Branch Davidians predated the popular use of the term "homeland security." Nevertheless, this event marked a watershed moment in the modern U.S. homeland security enterprise and was the convergence of conflicting social, political, and religious insular groups. This incident also had a direct correlation to major homeland security incidents over the past two decades including the U.S. militia movement and the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City.[194] The lessons learned by communicating with these radicalized communities and analyzing these types of incidents through the groupthink theory framework are useful in future interactions with extremists and radicalized communities.[195]

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[191] "Tax Fugitive Barricaded in House: 'Show Us the Law, and We'll Pay,'" January 28, 2007, http://www.foxnews.com/story/2007/01/21/tax-fugitive-barricaded-in-house-show-us-law-and-well-pay/.

[192] Anna Badkhen, "Marshals' Ploy Ended Standoff Peacefully, Acted Like Supporters to Lure Out Tax Evaders," *The Boston Globe*, October 6, 2007, http://www.wmur.com/Marshals-Posed-As-Supporters-To-Arrest-Browns/11910722#!bpUTcz.

[193] James R. Lewis, ed., *From the Ashes: Making Sense of Waco* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), 236.

[194] David C. Williams, "Militia Movement and Second Amendment Revolution: Conjuring with the People," *Cornell L. Rev*. 81 (1995).

[195] Brannan, Esler, and Strindberg, "Talking to 'Terrorists': Towards an Independent Analytic Framework for the Study of Violent Sub–state Activism."

The failure of the U.S. federal authorities to study, analyze, and understand the Branch Davidians caused catastrophic results.[196] The tactics used during this incident were the result of the government in-group having a poorly designed plan and the refusal by this in-group to deviate from the pre-established course of action as they barreled headlong into disaster, on not just one but two occasions during this terrible episode.[197]

1.   The Branch Davidians: An Unlikely Terrorist Group

The Branch Davidians cannot be neatly classified as a terrorist organization[198] but that is what they became in the perception of the public and how they were addressed by law enforcement. As Brannan, Esler, and Strindberg state, "One such error has been a tendency for Western politicians and writers to adopt an antagonistic and condescending view of terrorists—one that precludes a full understanding of their motives and goals. To deal effectively with the problem of terrorism, it is essential to attempt to understand the terrorists' actions from their perspective."[199] While popular public perception might classify the Branch Davidians as a domestic right-wing extremist group, they were an unlikely terrorist organization composed of a congregation of people from various races, nationalities, backgrounds, and ideologies.[200]

The Branch Davidians trace their origins back to William Miller, the forefather of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Miller and his followers were fascinated with the Christian Bible's Book of Revelations and the prophesized "End Time," when Jesus Christ will return and lead 144,000 true believers to salvation. When the dates of the Second Coming that Miller predicted came and went; he stepped down from public life and his group fractured. One of these groups became the Seventh-day Adventist church. In 1935, Victor Houteff challenged the church's in-group doctrine proclaiming that while the true believers would be saved, a "great crowd" from outside the Church also would be

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[196] Tabor, *Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America*, 105–106.

[197] Ibid.

[198] Ibid., 33–38.

[199] Brannan, Esler, and Strindberg, "Talking to 'Terrorists': Towards an Independent Analytic Framework for the Study of Violent Sub–state Activism," 3–24.

[200] Tabor, *Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America*, 23–26.

granted salvation.[201] The Adventist leaders responded to Houteff's challenge by expelling him from the church, as they found his teachings to be sacrilegious and disruptive.[202]

Houteff and his flock moved to Waco, Texas, where they became an out-group in the church. They named their group the Davidian Seventh Day Adventists. Houteff believed that the End Time was near, and prophesied that he was the Lamb sent to open, interpret, and execute the prophecies of the Book of Revelations. He sent his message to the international Adventist community by publishing religious literature and sending his disciples to preach the word and recruit followers.[203] Houteff issued a challenge to the patron church by proclaiming that his beliefs were in direct opposition to the in-group's doctrine. Through his efforts, Houteff hoped to break to the patron church's cycle of groupthink and its grip on the Adventist community to encourage the social mobility of converts from the in-group patron church to his out-group.[204]

In 1955, Houteff passed away and his wife Florence took control of the faction, and relocate to Mount Carmel in Waco, Texas. She established her leadership over the groupmind of the Branch Davidians by making a public proclamation that her husband would be resurrected to lead them to Israel to await the End Time.[205] Florence Houteff's public proclamation publically failed when Houteff did not arrive as predicted. One of Houteff's disciples, Benjamin Roden, saw an opportunity to seize control of the group and he made his own proclamation that he was the true sign from God, a prophet to lead the Davidian Seventh Day Adventists to salvation. Roden challenged Florence Houteff by declaring that he was the anointed "Branch," a "Davidic" figure who was to lead the true believers to prepare for the End Time. Roden quoted Jesus, stating, "I am the vine, and you are the branches;" thereafter, the group became the Branch Davidians.[206]

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[201] Anders Strindberg, "Social Identity Theory and the Study of Terrorism" (Working Paper, July 2011), 4–5.

[202] Ibid., 8–12.

[203] Tabor, *Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America*, 33–38.

[204] Strindberg, "Social Identity Theory and the Study of Terrorism," 6–7.

[205] Ibid., 9.

[206] Tabor, *Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America*, 38–42.

As with many groups with powerful, autocratic leaders, the Branch Davidians became embroiled in groupthink. Whether this development was the design of the leadership or a product of the community's isolation, the Branch Davidians developed a dichotomous us-versus-them world-view. The community espoused a theology that the End Time would occur within a generation and they were preparing for this cataclysm.[207] Each successive leader was a strong, controlling personality who would influence the in-group dynamic and the path of the community. When a leader passed away or was deposed, conflict ensued within the in-group, but always a dominating figure would emerge. The community members would conform to the new leader's in-groups beliefs, or they would be expelled. The core in-group was inclined to support each successive leader teachings that were continually based upon the original vision of Victor Houteff.

2.   The Seventh Angel

David Koresh was born Vernon Wayne Howell on August 17, 1959. He was an aimless young man without a formed cultural or social identity who came from a broken home.[208] Koresh embraced religion and lectured his friends on the Bible, but he was confused about what path to follow in life. He was a member of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, and like Houteff, he believed that the church had become corrupt, and had also strayed from its origins. Ultimately, he was expelled for his radical theories. He became a member of the church out-group, but this expulsion only strengthened his convictions about the corruption of the parent church. Koresh arrived at the Mount Carmel complex in 1981. Soon, Lois Roden took the 22-year-old Koresh under her wing both as her successor and her lover,[209] and made him part of the Branch Davidian in-group.[210]

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[207] Schwartz, Dunkel, and Waterman, "Terrorism: An Identity Theory Perspective," 542–544.

[208] Ibid., 545.

[209] Colin Wilson, *The Devil's Party: A History of Charlatan Messiahs* (New York, NY: Random House, 2011).

[210] Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco: An investigation*, 23–27.

This development provided him a cultural and social identity, sense of direction, and the stable familial unit[211] that he never had in his previously unguided life. Koresh was too strong a personality to be overwhelmed by the community's groupthink environment. Instead, he manipulated that environment; in 1983, Koresh became Roden's official successor.[212]

Koresh issued a challenge[213] to the other Branch Davidian would-be leaders when he legitimized his claim of leadership by proclaiming[214] that he was Houteff's direct successor and the "seventh angel" god's chosen prophet.[215] Koresh's bold proclamation that he was the prophet did not wholly influence every member of the community. Others waiting for Lois Roden to advocate the leadership of the organization were not subjugated by Koresh, and the atmosphere of groupthink he was establishing. While Koresh was on a pilgrimage to Israel, Roden's son George[216] seized control of the group through intimidation and threats[217] to Koresh and his followers, who were expelled by force from the Mount Carmel property in 1985.

In 1987, Koresh and his followers responded to George Roden's challenge[218] by attacking the Mount Carmel complex. Koresh and his followers were tried for attempted murder but the judge declared a mistrial. Later, Roden was arrested and incarcerated for an unrelated murder and Koresh returned to Mount Carmel as the Branch Davidians' undisputed leader.[219] Koresh engaged in social creativity to solidify his leadership and the groupthink environment further by again proclaiming that he was the Seventh Angel of the Book of Revelation, the last prophet, and he possessed the spirit of Jesus Christ

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[211] Schwartz, Dunkel, and Waterman, "Terrorism: An Identity Theory Perspective," 542.

[212] Ibid., 545.

[213] Strindberg, "Social Identity Theory and the Study of Terrorism," 8–12.

[214] Ibid., 9.

[215] Tabor, *Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America*, 41.

[216] George Roden was the son of Benjamin and Lois Roden and Koresh's main opposition for leadership of the Branch Davidians.

[217] Strindberg, "Social Identity Theory and the Study of Terrorism," 8–12.

[218] Ibid.

[219] Tabor, *Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America*, 43.

embedding himself in the spiritual mythology of the group.[220] The groupthink for the Koresh in-group was so pervasive that he began to preach that he had to take many wives to spread his holy seed while the other male members of his flock—even those who were married—had to remain celibate.[221] Koresh had at least five wives and multiple sex partners who were married to members of the organization. The cultural identity of the in-group that encouraged collectivism[222] was so powerful that Rachel, his first wife, and the members of his flock, accepted this behavior as God's will.

Koresh gained complete control of the group by eliminating his rivals. He needed a new adversary that the group could focus on, and thereby, reinforced its social identity and reaffirmed the group's us-versus-them world view. Koresh proclaimed that the U.S. government was the modern incantation of Babylon, and the forces of Babylon would assail the Branch Davidians during the End Time. Koresh proclaimed that he would be martyred; "The Lamb" would be slain in the battle but he and the faithful would rule in the Kingdom of Heaven with God.[223]

3. The BATF's Operation Showtime

At the time of the raid, approximately 130 Branch Davidians made their home in Mount Carmel. Many were women and children. Other than undercover BATF Agents, federal officials never approached the Branch Davidians prior to the raid. BATF Special Agents stormed the compound to serve a warrant issued regarding suspected illegal weapons. The Branch Davidians were licensed gun dealers who traveled the gun show circuit, with the proceeds from sales going to the support of the community.[224] Before the raid, the Branch Davidians had attempted to contact the BATF through their business partner who was a local gun store owner but their offer to communicate was ignored by

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[220] Strindberg, "Social Identity Theory and the Study of Terrorism," 6–7.

[221] Tabor, *Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America*, 41.

[222] Schwartz, Dunkel, and Waterman, "Terrorism: An Identity Theory Perspective," 540–542.

[223] Tabor, *Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America*, 51.

[224] Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco: An investigation*.

agents. Koresh was attempting social change when he tried to meet with the BATF. He presented the BATF with a positive motivated opportunity, which the BATF refused.[225]

On February 28, 1993, a convoy of 80 vehicles and two military Blackhawk helicopters carrying BATF Special Agents descended on Mount Carmel. The BATF requested support from the Texas National Guard counterdrug program based upon allegations of suspected drug related manufacturing and activity in the compound.[226] During this operation, the BATF and then the FBI used the military for logistical, support, and medical purposes.[227] Military assets also provided equipment and aircraft during the siege and assault. According to the General Accounting Office (GAO), Joint Task Force Six provided the BATF range practice and other training at Fort Hood, Texas.[228]

The use of the military during this operation was a matter of debate and controversy in the government and within the militia community. The GAO's report (GAO/NSIAD/OSI-99-133) found that the support that the military provided the BATF and the FBI was authorized under section 1004 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 1991 (P.L.101-510) and under 32 U.S.C. § 112. The support during the ensuing siege required no connection to drugs but the military expenses had to be reimbursed.[229]

Branch Davidian supporters and the American militia movement view the military support as a violation of the Posse Comitatus Act and an attempt of the U.S. government to use the military to disarm the citizenry. In the militia communities hermeneutic, the use of military support, equipment, and training by federal law enforcement agencies classifies them as an army rather than a conventional police force. According to John Grady of the Militia News, "Jack-booted, helmeted, armor-vested 'law enforcement'

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[225] Strindberg, "Social Identity Theory and the Study of Terrorism," 4–12.

[226] U.S. General Accounting Office, *Report to the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, and the Secretary of the Treasury Department of Defense: Military Assistance Provided at Branch Davidian Incident* (GAO/NSIAD/OSI–99–133) (Washington, DC: U.S. General Accounting Office, 2009), 1–35, http://usgovinfo.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http://www.gao.gov/new.items/99133.pdf.

[227] Ibid., 16.

[228] Ibid., 11.

[229] Ibid., 11–14.

S.W.A.T. teams now conduct KGB-type raids by kicking down doors in the middle of the night."[230] It is widely believed that the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building by Timothy McVeigh was retaliation against the BATF office at this location from which the raid on Waco was planned and launched. Also, the bombing occurred on April 19, 1995, two years following the final Waco assault and the death of the Branch Davidians.[231]

On the morning of the raid, the news media had been circling the area all morning because the BATF Public Information Agent tipped them off regarding the impending raid. The presence of the media, in turn, had alerted the Branch Davidians, specifically when a KWTX reporter asked for directions from a U.S. postal carrier who happened to be David Koresh's brother-in-law.

When "Operation Showtime," as the BATF had named it, swung into high gear and the raid team approached the complex David Koresh, or so he claimed, shouted out the front door "Get back, we have women and children in here let's talk!" It is unclear which side actually fired first; but either way, gunfire erupted and a major battle ensued.[232] Four BATF special agents were killed and 16 were wounded. Six Branch Davidians were killed and many were wounded. The Branch Davidians called 911, asking for the raid to cease. By noon, most of the fighting was over and the infamous 51-day standoff began.[233]

4.   The BATF and Groupthink

In the planning and operational phases of this event, the BATF leadership suffered from several of Janis's groupthink symptoms. In the face of exposure, failure, and certain bloodshed, the BATF leadership refused to abandon or alter its plan. This plan was so ill conceived, and it did not consider any of the Branch Davidians' End Time

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[230] John Grady, *U.S. Government Initiates Open Warfare Against American People*, Militia News, Collector's Edition 1994, at 2, reprinted in STERN, supra note 14, app. 104.

[231] Williams, "Militia Movement and Second Amendment Revolution: Conjuring with the People," 690–692.

[232] Tabor, *Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America*, 1–22.

[233] Ibid., 97–99.

theology. Prior to the raid, the BATF leadership was engaged in its environment of groupthink because it was entirely intent on initiating a spectacular raid to prove its value as a federal law enforcement agency. The lack of any type of contingency plans and the in-group's refusal to deviate from the ill-fated operation makes this raid one of the worst groupthink incidents in modern American homeland security.[234]

One of the most pronounced groupthink symptoms was that BATF leaders acted as mindguards, and discounted warning signs and failed to consider alternative strategies, such as aborting the raid or establishing communications with Koresh to offer him the chance to surrender peacefully. The operational leadership did not deviate from its doomed course of action even when BATF Special Agent Robert Rodriguez, who was undercover in the Mount Carmel complex, reported to BATF leaders on the morning of the raid that Koresh had told him that he knew the raid was imminent.[235]

According to BATF Special Agent Ken King, no alternative plan for peacefully serving the warrant was developed. The BATF was facing congressional hearings and massive budget cuts, and a possible consolidation into the FBI.[236] The BATF was intent on raiding the Mount Carmel Complex to create dramatic dynamic entry video footage to impress legislators.[237] The BATF decision-making in-group displayed several of the symptoms of groupthink, including the fact that the entire operation was based upon an illusion of invulnerability, in which the in-group did not recognize the serious faults in its plan.

5. We're the FBI and We're Here to Help

Within 24 hours of the initial assault, the FBI took over as the lead agency at the scene and the situation degraded into a standoff and siege of the Mount Carmel complex.

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[234] Terence M. Garrett, "The Waco, Texas, ATF Raid and Challenger Launch Decision Management, Judgment, and the Knowledge Analytic," *The American Review of Public Administration* 31, no. 1 (2001): 73–77, http://arp.sagepub.com/content/31/1/66.full.pdf+html.

[235] Ibid., 73–74.

[236] Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco: An Investigation*, 32.

[237] Clive Doyle, *A Journey to Waco: Autobiography of a Branch Davidian* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 1–2.

The FBI has primary jurisdiction in investigating the murder of federal officials, and due to the deaths of the BATF agents, the FBI was the primary federal agency on at the Mount Carmel scene.[238]

The federal agents again did not recognize that they were confronting a devout fundamentalist Christian group that had a distrust and fear of the government. The Branch Davidians' own groupthink beliefs told them that the forces of Babylon were at their gates ready to destroy them and only by god's word would they surrender.[239] The siege legitimized and reinforced the group's us-versus-them social identity, which entrenched them deeper in the righteousness of their cause.[240]

The government made little effort to understand the Branch Davidians or their theology. Often, when a law enforcement officer is murdered in the line of duty, a revenge groupthink mindset clouds the judgment of otherwise intelligent, well-meaning law enforcement professionals. The government's groupthink assumed that agents were faced with violent, well-armed religious extremists who had murdered multiple law enforcement officers. The officials believed in the inherent morality of their mission and not that the BATF may have been at least in partly to blame for this chaotic situation. The federal hostage negotiators would mentally shutoff Koresh when he began to preach his philosophies and they made little attempt to understand or put themselves in the place of the Branch Davidians.[241] If the officials had listened to Koresh and consulted outside expert theologians familiar with the Branch Davidians, instead of stereotyping them as unstable radicals, they may have been able to negotiate a peaceful conclusion to the siege.[242]

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[238] Katherine Ramsland, "David Koresh: Millennial Violence, Both Sides Prepare," accessed October 20, 2014. http://www.crimelibrary.com/notorious_murders/not_guilty/koresh/1.html.

[239] Tabor, *Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America*, 103–112.

[240] Strindberg, "Social Identity Theory and the Study of Terrorism," 7.

[241] Agne, "Reframing Practices in Moral Conflict: Interaction Problems in the Negotiation Standoff at Waco," 549–578.

[242] Brannan, Esler, and Strindberg, "Talking to 'Terrorists: Towards an Independent Analytic Framework for the Study of Violent Sub–state Activism," 3–24.

The FBI did consult metal health experts to give them a personality profile of Koresh. They supplied the doctors with information from anti-cult activist and disenchanted former members on which to base their assessment. In doing so, the FBI again acted as mindguards, and manipulated the assessments to further bolster and rationalize their own preconceived beliefs. The assessment stated that Koresh was a narcissistic, lying manipulative psychopath and rational methods would not work. The FBI based its strategy on this erroneous assessment.[243]

On March 12, FBI officials further aggravated the situation when they began a campaign of psychologically aggressive tactics. They cut off electricity to the compound and they began to play loud music, religious chants, audio of family members, and sounds of animals being slaughtered. Lights illuminated the windows and helicopters hovered over the compound.[244] The government rationalized these questionable tactics because it believed that it was inherently moral and righteous. The government in-group dehumanized the Branch Davidians and further alienated them by re-enforcing the Davidians us-versus-them social identity.[245]

On April 14, Koresh proclaimed that he had received word from God to begin his interpretation of the Book of Revelation and the Seven Seals, whereupon he would surrender to the authorities. On April 18, he finished the interpretation of the First of the Seals. The Branch Davidians were joyful and Koresh thought he would soon be able to enlighten the world with his religious vision.[246] Again, the government in-group refused to entertain this possibility for a peaceful conclusion—even though it was positive—and Koresh's promise that he would surrender after he finished his interpretations was ignored.[247] No alternatives or deviation to the government in-group's plan was considered. Koresh had to surrender, period, and on the FBI's timetable.

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[243] Tabor, *Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America*, 105–106.

[244] Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco: An Investigation*, 258–263.

[245] Schwartz, Dunkel, and Waterman, "Terrorism: An Identity Theory Perspective," 542–544.

[246] Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco: An Investigation*, 258–263.

[247] Strindberg, "Social Identity Theory and the Study of Terrorism," 8–12.

On April 19, the government launched its second assault, which resulted in the fulfillment of Koresh's doomsday prophecy. An FBI loud speaker issued another proclamation, which stated that Koresh's 15 minutes of fame were at an end and demanding surrender. The FBI, believing in its own inherent morality, also proclaimed, "This is not an assault, do not fire or we will attack."[248] Yet, it clearly was an assault on the complex in which the government was once more the aggressor.[249]

Government combat vehicles sprayed gas into the Mount Carmel Complex, and the Branch Davidians, fully engulfed in their own groupthink illusion, started firing at the armored vehicles, and launched gas rounds into the centers.[250] Eventually, the vehicles begin smashing holes in the building so the Branch Davidians could escape. Unfortunately, this measure had the opposite effect and debris trapped people inside the buildings. The wreckage trapped many Branch Davidians who were hiding in a storage room.[251] At noon, fires started in the complex. The FBI alleges that the Branch Davidians started the fires but these allegations are suspect because the Branch Davidians are fundamentalist Christians and to them suicide is a mortal sin. Survivors conversely claim that the burning teargas canisters started the fires. Very soon, the Mount Carmel complex

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[248] George J. Church and Michael Riley, "The End is Near," *Time Magazine* 141, no. 17, April 26, 1993, 32, http://web.a.ebscohost.com.libproxy.nps.edu/ehost/detail/detail?vid=21&sid=5b70eb6b–dc9c–4708–99ad–efc8d40f2574%40sessionmgr4005&hid=4106&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=bth&AN=9304190634.

[249] Strindberg, "Social Identity Theory and the Study of Terrorism," 8–12.

[250] Howard Chua–Eoan et al., "The Return to Waco," *Time International*, September 6, 1999, no. 36, 08180628, http://web.a.ebscohost.com.libproxy.nps.edu/ehost/detail/detail? vid=14&sid=5b70eb6b-dc9c-4708-99ad- efc8d40f2574%40sessionmgr4005&hid= 4106&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZW hvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29w ZT1zaXRl#db=bth&AN=2230469.

[251] International Business Times Staff, "Waco Siege 20th Anniversary: Was The FBI Standoff With David Koresh Preventable?, *International Business Times*, February 28, 2013, http://web.a.ebscohost.com. libproxy.nps.edu/ehost/detail/detail?vid=6&sid=5b70eb6b–dc9c–4708–99ad–efc8d40f2574%40sessionmgr 4005&hid=4106&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=bwh&AN=440637.201302 28.

was engulfed in flames and only nine people survived the terrible inferno.[252] Among them was Ruth Riddle, who had a computer disk with Koresh's interpretation of the First Seal. Seventy-four people perished in the fire, among them 21 children under the age of 14.[253]

6. Conclusion

This episode occurred and people perished because the government was negligent and ensconced in an environment of groupthink. On many occasions, government officials should have played the role of devil's advocate and proposed alternatives to the established plans destined to end in tragedy. The BATF should have engaged with Koresh through the gun store owner, as a mutual contact in an attempt to interview him or apprehend him in a less dangerous location. The BATF and FBI leadership's refusal to entertain peaceful solutions, as well as the refusal to abandon its flawed plans, demonstrates an overwhelming environment of groupthink, wherein the plan must be executed even in the face of immense and catastrophic failure. The Branch Davidians saw the siege and raids as the fulfillment of the Fifth Sign and the beginning of the Sixth Sign. It was also a fulfillment of their core social and cultural identity us-versus-them beliefs. Koresh prophesied that he was the Lamb who would be killed by the forces of Babylon, and through its negligent actions, the government fulfilled his prophesy.

B.   THE BOSTON MARATHON BOMBING MANHUNT

The results of the investment in homeland security were perceptible during the April 15, 2013, Boston Marathon bombing, which was the most noteworthy terrorist attack on American soil since September 11, 2001. The term "Boston Strong" has been

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[252] Eleven Branch Davidians were tried in Federal Court on various charges including conspiracy to murder federal agents. The government refused to recognize the Branch Davidians as a legitimate religious organization. It portrayed them as a dangerous fringe cult that engaged in child sexual abuse and depravity and who were obsessed with prophecies of death and the end of the world. The defense asserted that they were a loving religious community attacked by an over–zealous government, their actions were in self-defense, and the government bore the responsibility. On February 26, 1994, the jury acquitted two of the Branch Davidians on all charges, two others were acquitted but held for immigration violations, five were convicted of aiding voluntary manslaughter, one was convicted of possessing a grenade, and one of unlawful possession of machine guns.

[253] Tabor, *Why Waco? Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America*, 1–22.

used frequently but never has it been more apt than when the Boston community formed a large-scale in-group within a day as law enforcement and the public rallied to mitigate the damage caused by the bombing. In less than a week, the perpetrators had been identified, apprehended, or neutralized. The Massachusetts community and the nation recovered quickly, which demonstrated that the homeland had become far more resilient then it had been prior to 9/11. The fear of terrorism that held the country in its grip following 9/11 affected the national community far less after the Boston Marathon bombing. Fear was supplanted by community defiance, which demonstrated that the investment in homeland security had accomplished a goal of making the nation more resilient to acts of terrorism.[254]

It is not the intention of this case study to criticize the bravery of many of the emergency responders in this episode. Rather, it is to analyze the groupthink psychological phenomenon critically that played a role in the event. There were many victories for law enforcement were achieved during this period, and certainly, some were derived from critical thinking, as well as innovative law enforcement programs. Several less publicized failures also included self-deployment, tribalism, and mission creep between federal, state, and local emergency response agencies.

This case study focuses on the homeland security enterprise's response to the murder of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Police Officer Sean Collier, the Watertown manhunt, and the incidences of groupthink by the law enforcement tribal in-group, including its senior leadership. Following the murder of the MIT Police Officer Sean Collier, a sweeping groupthink dominated the mindset of the law enforcement tribal in-group in the Boston area. Groupthink is commonplace when a law enforcement officer is injured or murdered in the line of duty. Fellow law enforcement officers driven by moral outrage often engage aggressive tactics to avenge their fallen comrade. This

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[254] Darrel M. West and Marion Orr, "Managing Citizen Fears Public Attitudes Toward Urban Terrorism," *Urban Affairs Review* 41, no. 1 (2005): 93–105, http://www.insidepolitics.org/Homeland Security.pdf.

response is commonplace in a warrior culture. Almost all officers who have served have engaged to a degree in similar activity at some point in their career.[255]

Recently, both Harvard and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Police Executives Multi-Level Response Planning Committee issued after action reports that detailed both the successes and failures by the homeland security enterprise during the Boston Marathon bombing response, manhunt, and investigation.[256] Many of the primary failures identified by the recent after action reviews were in part due to leadership's inability to establish a unified command initially and the mismanagement of the volatile Watertown manhunt episode.[257] Subsequent to the initial Laurel Street, Watertown shootout, a unified command was established, yet it faced challenges, particularly in its attempts to rein in the large number of first responder assets who deployed to this community.[258] In Watertown, thousands of law enforcement officers descended upon the city, and many of these officers self-deployed or were deployed by their agencies without authorization from a unified command structure that turned the scene at times into chaos.[259]

The groupthink fervor rose to such a level at the Laurel Street shoot-out scene and later at the location at which the second bomber was apprehended that these scenes became extremely unsafe, and turned into real-life shooting galleries. Responding to these locations were dozens of agencies and hundreds of officers that acted without a

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[255] Hooley et al., "Boston Strong Is No Accident," 2–5.

[256] Herman B. Leonard et al., ""Why Was Boston Strong? Lessons from the Boston Marathon Bombing," Program on Crisis Leadership and Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management, Harvard Kennedy School, April 3, 2014. https://research.hks.harvard.edu/publications/citation.aspx?PubId=9402&type=AA&LookupCode=MLD; Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Police Executives' Multi–Level Response Planning Committee, *Recommended Protocol for Managing Initial Response to Critical Incidents* (Boston, MA: Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, 2014).

[257] Ibid., 33–40.

[258] Globe Staff, "102 Hours in Pursuit of Marathon Suspects," *The Boston Globe*, April 28, 2013, http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2013/04/28/bombreconstruct/VbSZhzHm35yR88EVmVdbDM/picture.html.

[259] John Van Maanen, "Working the Street; A Developmental View of Police Behavior," (Working Paper #681–73), *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*, 1973, 62–67.

common command structure, standard operating procedures, communications, or a use of force policy.[260]

While not a traditional form of groupthink, made by a decision-making body, it still is groupthink perpetrated by a highly cohesive group, the members of which have similar backgrounds and perspectives. When avenging a fallen comrade, the law enforcement tribal in-group often believes its actions to be morally righteous and collectively rationalizes their actions. Historically, leadership condones these actions amongst the in-group by vilifying the perpetrator. This is not to say that a person who assaults or murders a law enforcement officer is not a villain, but often in attempt to right the injustice, law enforcement succumbs to the groupthink to ensure the public views the perpetrator as such.

1.   The Murder of MIT Police Officer Sean Collier

By Thursday April 18, four days after the Boston Marathon bombing, the suspects had been tentatively identified and their images had been released to the media by law enforcement. Later that evening, at approximately 10:00pm, an armed robbery occurred at a Cambridge Massachusetts 7/11 convenience store located on Massachusetts Avenue in Central Square. Nearby, MIT Police Officer Sean Collier was patrolling the MIT campus when he heard a radio call for the reported robbery. Officer Collier tactically positioned his vehicle in an over watch position on the corner of Vassar Street and Main Street in the direction that he believed that the suspect may be fleeing.[261]

Area surveillance video later gathered by investigators in the ensuing investigation showed that at approximately 10:25pm, two suspects walked towards Officer Collier as he was sitting in his vehicle. The men approached from the rear of the vehicle and proceeded to fire five shots, and murdered Officer Collier. The two men quickly departed the area but soon returned and attempted to steal Officer Collier's service firearm.[262] They were unsuccessful in releasing Officer Collier's firearm because

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[260] Leonard et al., ""Why Was Boston Strong? Lessons from the Boston Marathon Bombing."

[261] Ibid.

[262] Ibid., 32 .

of the security retention holster and they fled prior to responding law enforcement's arrival.[263]

The Middlesex County District Attorney Office supported by the Massachusetts State Police investigates officer-involved shootings. However, given the high concentration of law enforcement personnel in Boston and Cambridge following the bombing, and the quickly circulating reports that an officer had been shot, law enforcement officers from a multitude of agencies responded to the murder scene and surrounding area. The groupthink characteristic of law enforcement in-group self-deploying and responding during an officer-down incident was magnified by the suspicion that the suspects in the shooting of Officer Collier were connected to the Marathon bombing.[264]

2.   The Manhunt Begins

The massive manhunt and resulting groupthink episode began around midnight on April 19, 2013. At that time, a man reported that he was carjacked and kidnapped by a Middle Eastern man with a handgun a short distance away from the shooting scene on Brighton Avenue in the Allston neighborhood of Boston.[265] The driver stated that the man had told him that he had had just shot a Cambridge police officer and that he had carried out the Boston Marathon bombing. The driver further stated that they had met a second man who was in an older vehicle. The driver claimed that he recognized him as one of the men in the photos of the Boston Marathon bombing suspects that had been released by the FBI earlier that day. The driver further reported that the two men moved several heavy items from the old car into his Mercedes SUV, and then drove back to Cambridge, where the two carjackers mentioned that they were leaving the area and they were traveling to New York. The driver said that they stopped at a gas station and he

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[263] Globe Staff, "102 Hours in Pursuit of Marathon Suspects."

[264] Leonard et al., ""Why Was Boston Strong? Lessons from the Boston Marathon Bombing," 19–20.

[265] Globe Staff, "102 Hours in Pursuit of Marathon Suspects."

managed to escape the vehicle when the suspect was distracted by a global positioning system (GPS).[266]

3.   The Laurel Street Shootout

Area police were notified through the common radio frequency to be on the lookout for the two vehicles driven by the suspects in the carjacking and the murder of Officer Collier. After 12:30pm, the stolen vehicle was tracked by the former driver's cell phone GPS to the city of Watertown, Massachusetts. Watertown officers located and began to follow the vehicle, which stopped on a pleasant and quiet but thickly settled residential neighborhood. One of the suspects exited the vehicle and began to fire his firearm at the officers. Officers from multiple jurisdictions began to respond as other Watertown officers arrived at the scene of the active gunfight. Many of the officers responding from neighboring cities and agencies were driven by the law enforcement groupthink that inspired their desire to avenge their fallen comrade. Moreover, driven by this vehemence, they were demonstrating, in effect, an illusion of invulnerability and moral superiority that enabled them to throw caution to the winds while engaging the suspect in an exchange of gunfire, even though so many residents of this bucolic suburban street were nearby in their homes.[267]

While the officers and suspects exchanged fire, the suspects began to throw improvised explosive devices at the officers. Some exploded while others failed to detonate. Amid the chaos, the Watertown officers, who were within their own jurisdiction, coordinated their actions through a common radio channel. However, numerous other law enforcement officers, caught up in the groupthink epidemic, had self-deployed and not coordinated with the local jurisdiction. These officers arrived en mass, which gave them a shared illusion of unanimity because they were a small part of the larger response.[268]

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[266] Leonard et al., ""Why Was Boston Strong? Lessons from the Boston Marathon Bombing," 19–21.

[267] Ibid., 20–22.

[268] Ibid., 20–21.

While a cohesive group can certainly succumb to groupthink, it is essential for modern domestic emergency management to establish a unified command structure to organize and manage the strategic and operational aspects of the critical incident. Homeland security professionals must recognize that the absence of coordination and massive self-deployment is a deadly combination that often makes a dangerous situation much worse. The lack of the initial unified command during the Watertown manhunt led to a confused situation in which basic law enforcement procedures were lost.[269]

Hundreds of rounds were fired during the Laurel Street shootout. Crossfire among officers occurred especially when the younger brother, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, fled the area by driving through the crowd of officers. Dzhokhar attempted to ram his vehicle into the two officers taking his wounded brother Tamerlan Tsarnaev into custody but the officers jumped out of its path.[270] Instead of hitting the officers, Dzhokhar ran over his own brother, and dragged him along the road and through another group of police.

Law enforcement's illusion of invulnerability was so ubiquitous that the crossfire was rampant. A round fired by an officer who was shooting at the fleeing Dzhokhar Tsarnaev seriously wounded Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) Police Officer Richard Donohue. The massive and chaotic law enforcement response also snarled the immediate pursuit of the fleeing suspect. Officers embroiled in groupthink and mired in the illusion of invulnerability, rationalization, and moral certainty inadvertently fired rounds into residences, vehicles, and yards. Thankfully, no serious civilian casualties occurred, which was miraculous given how many residents reside in this area.[271]

In the Laurel Street shootout, most officers desired only to help by responding quickly to an unfolding emergency situation. Officers also sought to avenge an injustice perpetrated against one of their own and the community but this desire took the form of

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[269] Christina Pazzanese, "Measuring the Marathon, Analysis Lauds, Questions Aspects of Last April's Response to Bombings, Coordination of Manhunt," *Harvard Gazette*, April 3, 2014, http://news.harvard. edu/gazette/story/2014/04/measuring-the-marathon/.

[270] Globe Staff, "102 Hours in Pursuit of Marathon Suspects."

[271] Leonard et al., ""Why Was Boston Strong? Lessons from the Boston Marathon Bombing," 20–21, 39.

an overarching environment of groupthink.[272] This groupthink made the in-group of law enforcement believe that it was morally correct and it rationalized dangerous and sometimes irresponsible actions during the episode. The comprehensive groupthink episode also made the law enforcement in-group incorrectly believe that it was invulnerable to criticism because since it was fighting an enemy who had perpetrated an evil act on the community, and that the community unanimously supported its actions.[273]

This type of self-deployment response in an emergency is a decentralized form of groupthink. It has been recently described as well in the Washington DC Naval Yard active shooter event and the Christopher Dorner manhunt in California.[274] While it is not a traditional groupthink under the direction and influence of a dominant leader, it is part of the general law enforcement tribal in-group psyche.[275] As part of this in-group, officers mistakenly believe that they have to play a decisive role in a historic incident. They believe that if they were not present or only held in reserve, they would not be fulfilling their social contract and duty to the in-group.

As the events unfolded, the surviving suspect fled a few blocks and then abandoned the SUV and fled on foot. The massive response and lack of a unified command at this time led to several erroneous radio calls and reports that caused officers to respond to false leads.[276] The glut of responding law enforcement vehicles prevented the initial pursuit of the fleeing suspect and also hindered the response of the Massachusetts State Police Bomb Squad to the Laurel Street shooting scene. Several undetonated improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were still in the area as officers congregated nearby. The EOD unit could not navigate its response vehicle down the

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[272] Phillip Martin, Hilary Sargent, and James Edwards," Self–Deployment' May Have Caused Confusion During Boston Marathon Bombing Manhunt," *WGBH*, October 16, 2013.

[273] Ibid., 20–21.

[274] Joe Nelson, "Christopher Dorner Manhunt Report: Communication Breakdowns, Problematic Officer Self–Deployment," *The Sun*, May 5, 2014, http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20140505/christopher-dorner-manhunt-report-communication-breakdowns-problematic-officer-self-deployment.

[275] Martin, Sargent, and Edwards, "Self–Deployment' May Have Caused Confusion During Boston Marathon Bombing Manhunt."

[276] Leonard et al., ""Why Was Boston Strong? Lessons from the Boston Marathon Bombing," 22–23.

streets blocked by the gridlock of emergency response vehicles and personnel, frustrating its efforts to arrive at the scene and render those items safe.[277]

Just as officers were drawn to the Laurel Street shooting scene, so too were senior leaders. Whether these senior leaders intended on providing mutual aid to Watertown or if they were drawn to the location by the same groupthink atmosphere that had motivated so many of their officers, they eventually recognized that they needed to establish a unified command and take control of the situation. To the credit of the senior leaders, they determined that the shooting scene was not the ideal area for a command post so they established the unified command at a nearby mall. The unified command recognized the self-deployment situation and realized it needed to establish an enormous perimeter to prevent the subject's escape. The unified command attempted to coordinate the mass response of officers into a somewhat orderly perimeter but it mistakenly was focused on the shooting scene, and not the area of at which the suspect abandoned his vehicle and fled on foot.[278]

4.   The Unified Command is Established

Once the unified command was established, the immediate situation was stabilized and many of the self-deployed officers were accounted for and coordinated into an organized response. While a cohesive unified command group can degrade into a groupthink decision-making process, it did not occur in this situation. The senior leadership used critical thinking and effective decision making to quell the chaos and brought it somewhat under the control. The command decided to use the large number responding tactical teams and other special units to begin a coordinated house-to-house search of the entire area in an attempt to locate the suspect. While the constitutionality of the searches has been debated, the decision by the leadership was courageous because it risked controversy. The searches of residences were generally conducted through

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[277] Leonard et al., ""Why Was Boston Strong? Lessons from the Boston Marathon Bombing," 22.

[278] Ibid., 22–23.

consent, although it can be debated if it was actually consent since it was armed officers asking for permission at the homeowner's front door.[279]

During this time, the unified command acted in an organized manner by employing critical thinking to make decisions on how to best locate the suspect, and how to use the flood of law enforcement officers who responded most efficiently. Leadership also examined the various scenarios of why the suspects had fled to Watertown, their motivations, and how officers might best apprehend the suspect who remained at large. The governor and area mayors supported the senior leadership. In an effort to prevent the suspect from slipping out of the perimeter during the busy morning commute, government leaders made the decision to ask local communities to shelter in place. Public transportation was suspended and the community widely adhered to this request.[280]

Throughout the day the search continued. By this time, dozens of agencies were present along with many of New England's specialized and tactical units.[281] The groupthink self-deployment that occurred raises an important question. If the bulk of resources immediately rush to a scene, will sufficient resources be left to relieve the original responders if the event becomes drawn-out? Furthermore, in the Watertown scenario, few resources remained to respond to everyday incidents, as well as suspicious activity reports from outside the area of the Watertown scene that nevertheless might be related. With such a large portion of the homeland security enterprises resources committed to the one scene, response to additional events was severely hampered.[282]

In a series done by WGBH Boston, Watertown Police Chief Ed Deveau was asked who was in charge that night. Chief Deveau answered, "Nobody. We literally just sat around a table and made all the decisions collectively. Whether it was 5 a.m. with [Boston Mayor Tom Menino and Gov. Deval Patrick] on the phone, and we tossed around the ideas of what we were going to do—shut down just Watertown, or are we going to make it a bigger area? And we really went around the table and came to a group

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[279] Leonard et al., ""Why Was Boston Strong? Lessons from the Boston Marathon Bombing," 22–26.

[280] Ibid.

[281] Globe Staff, "102 Hours in Pursuit of Marathon Suspects."

[282] Leonard et al., ""Why Was Boston Strong? Lessons from the Boston Marathon Bombing," 33–38.

decision, and that's what followed the whole day. So, there was no one that had any bigger voice than the person sitting beside him."[283] This response is interesting. It would appear the unified command structure did not have dominant leaders directing the group. Chief Deveau gives the impression that all participants' voices were equal and the various participants' alternative perspectives were considered. If this scenario did occur, the unified command group engaged in several of Janis's remedies to mitigate groupthink.

5. The One-Way Shoot Out and the Final Takedown

Leadership recognized that they could not ask the community to shelter for an indefinite period. Thus, at approximately 6:00pm, Governor Deval Patrick, in consultation with the unified command, lifted the order even though the remaining suspect had not been located. Many officers began to drift away from the area because with the order lifted, the urgency that propelled their self-deployment was dissipating.[284] Many of the self-deployed officers had been in the area for hours; therefore, fatigue began to take its toll and they began to depart.[285]

As the scene quieted, within a very short time after the shelter in place order was lifted, a resident several blocks from Laurel Street who had stepped out into his yard to get some air noticed that the shrink-wrap covering his boat, which had been stored in his yard, was disturbed. He looked further and found a man hiding inside the boat under the shrink-wrap cover. The resident called authorities and reported what he had seen. Quickly, a senior officer responded and then called on the radio for the assistance of a tactical team.[286]

A large number of officers descend upon the location from all sides, with poor coordination, putting themselves and the local residents again into a potentially

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[283] Martin, Sargent, and Edwards, "'Self-Deployment' May Have Caused Confusion During Boston Marathon Bombing Manhunt."

[284] Globe Staff, "102 Hours in Pursuit of Marathon Suspects."

[285] Leonard et al., ""Why Was Boston Strong? Lessons from the Boston Marathon Bombing," 26, 35–36.

[286] Ibid., 26.

dangerous situation that might have resulted in a crossfire. As numerous officers from several agencies made their initial approach to the boat, the suspect used a fishing gaff to raise the covering so he could peer out. Several officers mistook the gaff for a rifle so officers fired at the boat from all sides.[287]

This eruption of gunfire by the officers was inspired by a groupthink mindset. The officers fired hundreds of rounds at the boat for over 10 seconds even though the suspect did not possess a weapon or fire at police. However, the suspect had murdered one of the law enforcement in-group, as well as allegedly participated in the marathon bombing. By this time, the suspect had been thoroughly dehumanized in the minds of the responding law enforcement in-group, the members of which felt so morally correct that they did not immediately comprehend that a hail of gunfire in a densely populated neighborhood was inappropriate and dangerous. This large in-group of law enforcement officers felt invulnerable, anonymous, and unaccountable for their actions.[288]

When Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was discovered, many officers from different agencies responded to the area and a groupthink attitude of vigilantism, agency competition, and self-promotion emerged. Some officers refused to follow the orders of the unified command if not given directly by a supervisor in their own agency.[289] Significant in-group out-group conflict among competing law enforcement agencies over which agencies would take up what positions caused disagreement and confusion. The wrangling between agencies became so contentious that officers on scene were not adhering to the unified commands direction; rather, they were following their own course of action or an outside chain of commands orders. For example, a tactical officer from a jurisdiction outside of Watertown attempted to dismiss a Watertown officer who had been positioned at a pivotal location by the unified command. The tactical officer had been stationed there by his own independent command, without the knowledge of the unified command.[290] Thus, conflict occurred.

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[287] Leonard et al., ""Why Was Boston Strong? Lessons from the Boston Marathon Bombing," 26–27.

[288] Globe Staff, "102 Hours in Pursuit of Marathon Suspects."

[289] Leonard et al., ""Why Was Boston Strong? Lessons from the Boston Marathon Bombing," 26–27.

[290] Ibid.

The scene eventually came under control of the unified command and the situation around the boat containing the suspect became more stable. The unified command ensured that the perimeter was secured and officers were positioned so that they were not in each other's line of fire. The FBI Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) and the Massachusetts State Police working as part of the unified command took control of the scene, focused their experience, and combined resources on evaluating the situation. They clearly understood that Dzhokhar Tsarnaev had access to improvised explosive devices so they used multiple resources including the State Police helicopters video link to observe the subject inside the boat. They also employed an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) robot to cut away the shrink-wrap covering and concussion grenades to encourage the suspect to surrender.[291]

During the final takedown, multiple tactical teams jockeyed for relevance and positions. When the subject stood up and surrendered, several tactical teams, rather than one designated by leaders, abandoned their positions and rushed the boat to take the suspect into custody. The desire of the various tactical team in-groups to be in on the final takedown was so overwhelming they lost control. Influenced by an illusion of invulnerability and competition to take part in a historically significant events, caused tactical team in-groups to risk their own lives and jeopardize the operation. Be that as it may, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was taken into custody about 8.45pm and transported to a Boston trauma center for treatment of the wounds he had sustained during the firefight and manhunt.[292]

6.   The Boston Marathon Bombing Manhunt Lessons Learned

This thesis case study examines the failures on a sociological and psychological level that occurred during the Watertown manhunt and discusses the incidences of groupthink that resulted. The goal of the thesis is to make the homeland security enterprise aware of these mistakes and so that the lessons learned will not be repeated. Two significant failures that were the catalyst for all the other problems that occurred

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[291] Leonard et al., ""Why Was Boston Strong? Lessons from the Boston Marathon Bombing," 27.

[292] Ibid., 27, 37–40.

were the initial lack of a unified command structure and first responder self-deployment. Herman B. "Dutch" Leonard of the Harvard Kennedy School & Harvard Business School, and one of the co-contributors of the report, "Why Was Boston Strong? Lessons from the Boston Marathon Bombing," stated, "From the very beginning, as soon as the bombs went off, the instinct of a bunch of the senior commanders was, 'I have to find X.' But at the tactical level, people arrived and felt authorized to exercise individual initiative, their own commanders weren't there," so "they just mostly plunged in and did things individually. You can understand why that is, but that's a real issue."[293]

Another co-contributor, Christine M. Cole, executive director of the Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management at the Harvard Kennedy School & Harvard Business School, summarized the self-deployment issue eloquently when she stated, "At what point is one more person with a gun not very useful?" She continued by saying, "And that's what was happening … a tribe of people were showing up unconnected to each other and then were acting on their own authority without anybody saying, 'Whoa, what are we doing here?"[294]

Cole's statement perfectly summarizes the major issue of the self-deployment groupthink law enforcement mindset that encourages all officers to believe they must respond to the scene. These officers were motivated by the groupthink typical throughout the homeland security enterprise that is inspired by the desire to avenge wrongs against the United States and to avenge those perpetrated against a member of their own in-group. Some of the motivation is a desire to help but another motivation is based on the eagerness to take part in a significant or even historic event. This second-mentioned motivation is far less altruistic and selfish to a degree because by self-deploying officers are abandoning their primary mission or post to seek glory and self-fulfillment. Had other conspirators or groups been inspired by the bombing or involved in it, the region would

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[293] Pazzanese, "Measuring the Marathon, Analysis Lauds, Questions Aspects of Last April's Response to Bombings, Coordination of Manhunt."

[294] Ibid.

have been vulnerable to a second strike because so many law enforcement assets were concentrated in one location with very little left in reserve.[295]

7. Former Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis's Counter-Point

Ed Davis, the former Boston Police Commissioner and a senior leader during the marathon crisis, is currently a Spring Fellow at the Institute of Politics at Harvard Kennedy School & Harvard Business School. He was also a key co-contributor to the Harvard report and is credited with suggesting that the report detail not only the successes but also the failures that occurred in response.

In his counterpoint, Davis discusses that self-deployment maybe a reaction to autocratic law enforcement command. Davis offered the counterpoint to his co-authors opinions that generally asserted that self-deployment is a hindrance to a homeland security operation. Davis stated, "There's one group of police leaders who want to maintain complete control over everything that happens, and that's sort of an autocratic way of looking at it. There are other police leaders, and I would include myself in this group, [who say] that in the middle of a firefight like that, you're looking for all the help you can get, and you're looking for it quickly. Anybody that can pour fire onto a target when your officers are under attack like that, with bombs and guns, is welcome."[296] Davis may be correct in certain situations in which the command in-group is so focused upon its groupthink agenda that it refuses to deviate from a doomed course of action. However, in the Boston Marathon Bombing, self-deployment was caused by a mob groupthink mentality and it led to several serious problems during this episode.

In the report, Davis further states, "I personally don't see a problem with self-deployment in this situation, except that we don't train tactics around military encounters. We don't train police officers like that in the United States. We train them for the type of encounters that police most often get involved in with firearms, and that is a one-on-one

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[295] Pazzanese, "Measuring the Marathon, Analysis Lauds, Questions Aspects of Last April's Response to Bombings, Coordination of Manhunt," 35–38.

[296] Ibid.

encounter within 6 to 8 feet, where people pull guns out and fire at each other."[297] Davis's point is based on a tactical not strategic thought process and he contradicts himself when he admitted that local police officers do not train for these types of intense combat situations and recommends that to cope with these issues effectively, additional training would be needed.[298]

8.   Failure to Initially Establish a Unified Command

The Harvard report finds the failure to establish effective unified command during the Watertown Manhunt was "one of the most persistent and troubling weaknesses"[299] of the entire event. At the beginning, on late April 18th and early morning April 19th, much of the senior leadership was as caught up in the groupthink epidemic and it failed to predict the fluidity and volatility of the situation. Many of the senior leaders rushed to the Laurel Street shooting scene and congregated in that location. Whereas, they should have been establishing a unified command in a secure location, from which to make strategic decisions rather than making operational command decisions at the shooting scene that could be delegated to subordinates. The initial lack of strategic organization by senior leadership demonstrates that even senior leaders can be influenced by the groupthink, which says that they must be on scene and part of the tactical response instead of establishing a unified command center from which strategic decisions can be made.

Senior leaders should leave tactical decisions to lower ranking offices and need to focus on directing the strategic course of the operation, make contingency or alternative courses of action, and anticipate the opposition's next moves. Once command is established, it must maintain control. Even after the Watertown unified command was established, however, it failed to assert its authority completely over the law enforcement officers who were mired in groupthink and had self-deployed because they believed that they must be part of the important homeland security event. These officers acted in an independent and sometimes irresponsible fashion that jeopardized the operation and

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[297] Pazzanese, "Measuring the Marathon, Analysis Lauds, Questions Aspects of Last April's Response to Bombings, Coordination of Manhunt," 35–38.

[298] Ibid.

[299] Leonard et al., ""Why Was Boston Strong? Lessons from the Boston Marathon Bombing," 38.

officer safety because they were willfully blinded by the law enforcement in-group's collective groupthink.[300]

9. Recommended Protocol for Managing Critical Incidents

A year following this incident, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Police Executives' Multi-Level Response Planning Committee, has authored a policy based upon the lessons learned from the Boston Marathon bombing and the tactical, strategic, and sociological problems that were identified.[301]

This "Recommended Protocol for Managing Initial Response to Critical Incidents" report states,

> Uncontrolled deployments (sometimes referred to as self-deployment or self-dispatching), although initiated with good intentions, can create confusion, wreak havoc at crime and emergency scenes, and can lead to the destruction or inadmissibility of evidence, or injuries to self-dispatching individuals or assigned personnel. They are to be avoided. These and other forms of unauthorized and / or unreported presence at incidents / events, and unauthorized departures there from are inconsistent with ICS principals, and may not be eligible for compensation or reimbursement. The highest ranking supervisor responding from each agency is responsible for the control and coordination of all personnel from that agency and will coordinate that agency's response with the Incident Commander. The responding supervisor is responsible for deploying only the amount of personnel needed and requested by the Incident Commander.[302]

Once again, this report identified two of the principal problems with the marathon response as self-deployment and the establishment of a unified command. Homeland security partners must coordinate their responses with an established unified command to avoid uncontrolled deployment and must also be accountable for their personnel.

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[300] Leonard et al., ""Why Was Boston Strong? Lessons from the Boston Marathon Bombing," 33–39.

[301] Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Police Executives' Multi–Level Response Planning Committee, *Recommended Protocol for Managing Initial Response to Critical Incidents.*

[302] Ibid., 2.

10.   Conclusion

Both the Harvard report and Massachusetts State Police have engaged in critical thinking and analysis. They have made recommendations for improved crisis training to alleviate confusion, improve discipline and coordination of response, and to mitigate cross-fire situations. These reports also stress that all personnel regardless of rank or agency should be under the command and control of the Unified Incident Commander and senior leaders of each agency are responsible for ensuring their personnel adhere to the chain of command.[303]

C.   THE BROWN STANDOFF A GROUPTHINK COUNTERPOINT

The groupthink fiasco at the Mount Carmel Complex and the resulting series of mistakes that led to the deaths of dozens of people has been analyzed and evaluated by both academics, as well as law enforcement professionals, in an effort to avoid similar catastrophic failures. The Edward and Elaine Brown standoff that began in April 2006, was an example of how the lessons learned at Waco were applied to produce a positive outcome to a volatile and dangerous homeland security situation. Prior to the standoff, the Browns were indicted in the U.S. State's District Court for violations of the federal tax code, which were estimated to be $625,000 for Ed Brown and $1,310,706 for Elaine Brown. When the court proceedings appeared to be turning against them, they refused to leave their property and they were convicted in absentia for not claiming $1.9 million of taxable income. They were sentenced to serve 63 months in federal prison and to pay a $215,890 fine.[304]

1.   The Brown In-Group

The Browns were influential leaders in the Constitutional Rangers militia organization, one of the largest militia groups in North America. The Browns claimed that federal income tax was illegal and it was never properly ratified to the U.S.

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[303] Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Police Executives' Multi–Level Response Planning Committee, *Recommended Protocol for Managing Initial Response to Critical Incidents*, 1–8.

[304] Badkhen, "Marshals' Ploy Ended Standoff Peacefully, Acted Like Supporters to Lure Out Tax Evaders."

Constitution. Prior to their conviction, and before they could be taken into custody, the Browns secluded themselves on their property in rural Plainfield, New Hampshire. The Browns lived in a large fortified house that had a stockpile of weapons, supplies, and its own wind and solar power sources. The home was sheltered on 152-acre property, and it is constructed of thick concert walls, it also contained a large turret with a 360-degree firing position at its peak.[305]

Ed Brown publically proclaimed that he would never go to jail and he would aggressively defend himself against the government. Fellow Constitutional Rangers and other supporters steeped in an "us-versus-them" social identity rallied to the Browns, and became their personal in-group. Some took up residence on the Browns' property and swore to defend the Browns against the government. A high profile in-group militia movement figure Randy Weaver visited the Browns and made a public proclamation pledging his support. Weaver was the subject in the 1992 standoff with the federal government at Ruby Ridge, Idaho, where his wife, son, and Deputy U.S. Marshal William Degan, were killed.[306]

Edward Brown reputably made challenges bolstering his us-versus-them view threatening,

> I wouldn't want to be this U.S. attorney. I wouldn't want to be this judge or these other people. This James John or anybody else that decides to come down here. Their names are already out there… They are just as vulnerable as I am. And if they're so foolish and stupid to think that they're not, hey, doom on them." A "hit list" was circulated by radicals in the militia community that included the local, county, state and federal officials, some of whom received protection from the government.[307]

The Browns believed Freemasons, Zionists, and the secret Illuminati have perpetrated a vast global conspiracy on the American people. Brown and his supporters

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[305]Associated Press, "Ruby Ridge Figure Visits N.H. Tax Evaders, Advises Couple, Warns U.S. Agents," *The Boston Globe*, June 19, 2007, http://www.boston.com/news/local/new_hampshire/articles/2007/06/19/ruby_ridge_figure_visits_nh_tax_evaders/.

[306] Ibid.

[307] Margot Sanger–Katz, "Ed Brown Denies Making Threats, Recorded Statements Speak to the Contrary," *The Concord Monitor*, April 27, 2007, http://www.concordmonitor.com/article/browns-cache-one-of-the-biggest.

believed that they were morally righteous because they were defending the nation against this conspiracy. The Brown in-group dehumanized the government officials to make them into members of an evil, shadowy government conspiracy bent on subjugating society. Brown threatened that if law enforcement agents stormed his property, he and his in-group would defend themselves with deadly force to repel the incursion. He also said that if he or his wife were killed, then his in-group would murder the local Police Chief and the County Sheriff. Brown was convinced this encounter was the beginning of the people's war against the global conspiracy and he was waiting for the government to assault his compound to initiate this conflict.[308]

2.   The U.S. Marshal Service Exercises Critical Thinking

The U.S. Marshals Service was charged with executing the arrest warrant to take Ed and Elaine Brown into custody. The Marshals Service, along with its state and local partners, recognized that the Brown home was a well-fortified and defendable location, with numerous secure shooting positions, from which the defenders could fire on any law enforcement team that approached. It was a very dangerous situation for law enforcement officers and they realized how vulnerable they were in the event of a violent confrontation. The Marshals did not want to enable the Brown's agenda of martyrdom and understood that a full-scale siege of the property would attract media attention, sympathy, and support. It would also give the Browns the tactical advantage of time to plan for the impending assault and estimate law enforcement's capabilities and methods of attack. Taking into account the lessons learned at other standoffs with similar groups, such as those at Waco and Ruby Ridge, the Marshals Service recognized a large-scale siege or assault would most likely end in significant bloodshed, which would grant Ed Brown exactly what he desired, to be a martyr and rallying symbol for his envisioned people's war.[309]

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[308] Kristen Senz, "Brown: War Is Coming," *Manchester Union Leader*, August 10, 2007.

[309] Margot Sanger–Katz, "Browns on the Record," *Concord Monitor*, April 27, 2007, http://www. freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1879445/posts.

The Marshals Service exercised critical thinking, and used the lessons learned from the tragedy at Waco to formulate a low profile operation plan that was the opposite of traditional law enforcement raid or siege techniques. This standoff was never truly a standoff because government agents did not lay siege to the Brown residence and Brown supporters came and went of their own free will. The Chief Deputy Marshal responded to Ed Brown's challenges and proclamation by establishing regular telephonic contract with the Browns, and engaged them and humanized law enforcement in their minds through these personal conversations. The Marshals Service decided to defuse the situation by waiting approximately nine months for the Brown in-group to dwindle and to become complacent.[310]

On October 4, 2007, with winter approaching in western New Hampshire, undercover deputy marshals infiltrated the Browns' property by acting as supporters. Undercover deputies arrested the Browns, while they were alone and inside the residence that evening. The Browns were taken unaware. They were arrested without incident before they and their in-group of supporters could react and defend themselves.

U.S. Marshal Monier of the Concord New Hampshire office stated, "Ultimately, this open-door policy that they seemed to have which allowed the Browns to have some supporters bring them supplies, welcome followers and even host a picnic—this proved to be their undoing … They invited us in. We escorted them out."[311] Monier also commented, "The Browns may now begin serving their 63-month federal prison terms. High profile situations like this are always difficult, but they don't have to be tragic. I'm glad no one was injured, and that the community remained safe throughout the operation."[312]

Subsequent to the arrests, federal authorities reportedly discovered a bomb-making factory, 20 pipe bombs, nine destructive devices, booby traps, IEDs, smoke

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[310] WMUR Staff and the Associated Press, "Marshals Posed As Supporters to Arrest Browns, Couple Arrested After Lengthy Standoff in Plainfield Home," *WMUR*, last modified October 5, 2007, http://www.wmur.com/Marshals-Posed-As-Supporters-To-Arrest-Browns/11910722#!bpUTcz.

[311] Ibid.

[312] Associated Press, "U.S. Marshal: Convicted Tax Evaders Arrested," masscops.com, October 4, 2007, http://masscops.com/threads/u-s-marshal-convicted-tax-evaders-arrested.38999/.

grenades, and other bomb making components on the property. The authorities also discovered at least 20 firearms including two. 50-caliber rifles and more than 60,000 rounds of ammunition.[313] This arsenal of weapons could have been employed to create serious devastation had the Marshals conducted a traditional law enforcement raid. However, the Marshals Service engaged in critical thinking by using the lessons learned from Waco to avoid unnecessary conflict that is at times a byproduct of law enforcement groupthink. The Marshals Service developed contingency plans and used devil's advocacy to access the situation and continually reform the plan of action.

3.   Conclusion

The Browns were anticipating a Waco-style, dynamic assault on their residence and had a significant stockpile of arms to resist it. The Marshals Service assessed the situation and understood that the Browns' philosophy and motivation was aimed at forcing the government into a violent confrontation. The U.S. Marshals Service did not submit to the groupthink law enforcement mentality. Instead, it embraced critical thinking and creativity to solve the problem of taking the Browns into custody while minimizing risk to law enforcement, the community, the Browns, and their supporters.

The Marshals Service decision makers understood that they were in a vulnerable position and needed to consult with outside experts, including the Joint Terrorism Task Force, the New Hampshire State Police, and other entities to formulate their plan. Moreover, they did not allow the Browns to goad them into a no-win situation. Instead, they engaged the Browns in a regular verbal discourse to humanize the deputies who would eventually arrest the Browns. Through this contact, the Marshals Service also became educated about the Browns' beliefs, which challenged both parties' perceptions of the opposition.

The Marshals' patient, calculated, and surreptitious response negated the Browns' proclamations that they would violently resist. Due to the critical thinking, devil's advocacy, alternative planning, and refusal to engage in groupthink, the Marshals Service

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[313] Margot Sanger–Katz, "Browns' Cache One of the Biggest," *Concord Monitor*, October 31, 2007, http://www.concordmonitor.com/article/browns-cache-one-of-the-biggest.

limited the risk to both the subjects and law enforcement officers. It also negated the Browns' preconceived agenda by not responding in the anticipated way with a dynamic assault, which the Browns could make into a public spectacle that rallied sympathizers to their cause.

V. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The problem of groupthink is common in homeland security with an impact throughout the enterprise, although some areas are more significantly affected while others show little to no sign of this syndrome. The groupthink environment is part of the fabric of the post-9/11 government, in which partisan politics are paramount and important issues, such as the security of the nation have become secondary. Only through a concerted effort to change the culture of the homeland security enterprise can groupthink be mitigated. However, given the current political framework of the homeland security enterprise, it will be difficult to eliminate groupthink enterprise-wide. Nevertheless, the problem can be effectively alleviated if situations in which groupthink has been detected are isolated and examined.[314]

A. GROUPTHINK: THE GOOD AND BAD IN HOMELAND SECURITY

Based on the research described in this thesis, it is apparent that some areas of homeland security are significantly affected by the groupthink psychological phenomenon while others show little to no sign of this syndrome. By analyzing case studies that identify both of these outcomes, homeland security professionals can develop and establish a framework to effectively mitigate the groupthink psychological phenomenon.[315]

1. Homeland Security Leadership's Insulation

Several homeland security organizations and leadership elements visibly exhibit the antecedent conditions of groupthink. The former Secret Service hierarchy that took over the leadership of the FAMS following 9/11 was a cohesive group that shared similar backgrounds and belief systems. This cohesive senior leadership in-group insulated itself from external opinions and had little contact with the everyday reality of the agency

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[314] Albert R. Hunt, "The Overkill in Homeland Security," *The New York Times,* July 6, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/07/us/politics/the-overkill-in-homeland-security.html?_r=0.

[315] Headquarters, Department of the Army, *The Operations Process* (ADP 5–0, No. 5–0, FM 5–0) (Washington, DC: Army Doctrine Publication, 2012), 8, https://armypubs.us.army.mil/doctrine/index.html.

mission or the employees who fulfilled that mission. The detachment was evident when the former Secret Service in-group made faulty and inappropriate policy decisions in isolation without input from experienced agency employees who were subject-matter experts in the FAM mission. Opposing opinions were discredited or censored by this management in-group, which believed that its employees were inferior or unqualified to offer legitimate viewpoints.[316]

2. Homeland Security Leadership Bias

Often, the function of decision-making groups in homeland security is to promote and legitimize the predetermined biased decisions of the leadership.[317] Members censor their doubts about faulty plans and soft-pedal their disagreements, and thus, allow their objections to be overwhelmed or discredited. President Kennedy's in-group prior to the Bay of Pigs fiasco did not express its doubts or misgivings about the flawed plan or follow the "Recommended Protocol for Managing Initial Response to Critical Incidents," from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, because they feared that they would be expelled from the president's in-group.[318] Similarly, homeland security officials often censor their disagreement with leadership's faulty decisions because they value their personal membership and position within the in-group more than they value the success of the organization and the security of the nation.[319]

3. Homeland Security's Belief in its Own Inherent Morality

An intrinsic fault in the homeland security enterprise relates to Janis's groupthink symptoms pertaining to the overestimation of the power and morality of the in-group. Many homeland security officials are well meaning but too often believe in the absolute truth and morality of their mission, and therefore, discount its impact on society and the ethics of the homeland security policies and decisions.

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[316] CBS News Staff. "Toxic" Morale "Crippling" Air Marshals."

[317] Bongino and Kessler, "Chaos within the Secret Service."

[318] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 14–16.

[319] Leonnig, "It Took Secret Service Five Days to Realize a Gunman Had Shot at the White House Residence."

The government entities that participated in the assault and the resulting siege on the Branch Davidian Mount Carmel complex believed that they were acting for the greater good of society. The BATF perceived that it would assail the complex with such shock-and-awe force that the occupants would be overwhelmed. The BATF's illusion of invulnerability and excessive optimism was so great and misguided that leaders of these agencies did not develop contingency plans, did not see recognize faults in their plans, nor fully assess the organization and effectiveness of the Branch Davidian defensive capabilities. Instead of attempting to interview Koresh or take him into custody outside of the compound, the BATF desired to make a spectacular display of force, by taking an extreme risk by assaulting the fortified complex that cause the deaths of several BATF agents and Branch Davidians.[320]

4. Homeland Security Collective Rationalization

Collective rationalization and closed-mindedness are also symptoms of groupthink within homeland security. The establishment of modern homeland security evolved after government's failure to recognize the escalation of attacks by al Qaeda during the 1990s and early 2000s. A loose network of affiliated in-groups perpetrated many of the attacks with which al Qaeda has been credited, but still, the pattern of aggression directed toward the United States by these organizations was rationalized and downplayed by homeland security decision makers. At that time, the government's perception portrayed al Qaeda as an enemy that was too evil to engage, as well as too weak and dim-witted to pose a legitimate threat. To the contrary, the original al Qaeda leadership was a sophisticated, educated, and well-funded in-group that established a confederation of loosely affiliated groups that perpetrated attacks against the west in an escalating manner.

With each successive attack, al Qaeda became bolder and better at its craft.[321] Yet, the increasing threat against the U.S. homeland was downplayed by both the Clinton

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[320] Reavis, *The Ashes of Waco: An investigation*, 36–38.

[321] John Feffer, "Participatory Totalitarianism," *The Huffington Post*, June 5, 2014, http://timeli.info/item/1813848/Huff_Post_World/Participatory_Totalitarianism_____John_Feffer.

and Bush administrations. Both administrations submitted to the groupthink rationalization that these attacks would not occur in the homeland and the terrorist group's leadership was to evil to address or communicate with, and not sophisticated enough to mount a large-scale devastating attack against the United States.[322]

During the manhunt for the Boston Marathon Bombers in Watertown, a number of homeland security professionals collectively rationalized irresponsible and dangerous actions. While some of these actions were committed in self-defense, others were gratuitous, and jeopardized the safety of members of the community and fellow officers.[323]

5. Homeland Security's Pressure toward Uniformity and Conformity

Homeland security's groupthink habitually conforms to the current governing political leadership's in-groups agenda. For every wave of political leadership, a change in mission focus results.[324] The DHS's pressure toward uniformity on its employees is a disturbing aspect of its groupthink. Deviation from the leadership in-group consensus can result in censorship because critical thinking, constructive criticism, and dissent directed toward the leadership's biased agendas, are frequently dealt with harshly.[325]

Critical analysis and constructive criticism are often seen as opposition to leadership, which results in direct pressure on the dissenter and frequently expulsion of the dissenter to an out-group. When confronted with groupthink, homeland security officials who wish to advance in their careers must stifle, minimize, or soft-peddle their viewpoints or risk being censured.[326] The homeland security enterprise has countless

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[322] Eichenwald, "The Deafness Before the Storm."

[323] Leonard et al., ""Why Was Boston Strong? Lessons from the Boston Marathon Bombing," 26.

[324] Schafer and Crichlow, *Groupthink Versus High–Quality Decision Making in International Relations*.

[325] Barnett and Ahlers, *Report on Federal Air Marshal Service Paints an Unflattering Picture*.

[326] Swanson, "Enhancing Red Team Performance: Driving Measurable Value and Quality Outcomes with Process Improvement."

gifted employees who have been labeled as outliers and expelled from the political in-group, and their careers harmed because they challenged leadership in-groups.[327]

As with the former Secret Service officials who took over the FAMS, each successive wave of homeland security leadership instills its own cronies into leadership positions.[328] Some are swept away with the political tides but others survive and conform to the groupthink of the next leadership wave. Only those employees willing to compromise their integrity, as well as the nation's security, manage to ride the continuous series of political waves, survive, and thrive in the oppressive environment. These employees often act as the mindguards, to everyone's detriment.[329]

6.   Groupthink Counterpoints

Several homeland security decisions have been the antithesis of groupthink and offer a positive model on which to base future leadership and decision-making strategies. The U.S. Marshal's Service's planning of the clandestine apprehension of the Browns, which avoided an extended standoff and a dangerous assault on the Brown residence, is a prime example of a decision-making group using critical thinking and lessons learned from past fiascos to avoid groupthink and a potentially disastrous scenario.[330]

A model decision made by a homeland security leader attempting to mitigate groupthink is President Obama's employment of General Allen to lead the U.S. effort to build the international coalition against ISIS. General Allen has publically challenged and opposed many of the administration's policies. However, the president recognized that Allen is a subject matter expert who may also play the role of devil's advocate by offering alternative courses of action that the president and his in-group may not have considered.[331] Both the Brown apprehension and the appointment of a General Allen are

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327 Swanson, "Enhancing Red Team Performance: Driving Measurable Value and Quality Outcomes with Process Improvement."

328 MacLean and Anonymous Federal Air Marshal, "Air Marshals and the Secret Service Factor."

329 Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 41–43.

330 WMUR Staff and the Associated Press, "Marshals Posed As Supporters to Arrest Browns, Couple Arrested After Lengthy Standoff in Plainfield Home."

331 Lake and Rogan, "Can Obama Keep His Generals in Check in the War Against ISIS?."

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exceptional examples for homeland security leaders attempting to avoid groupthink and promote high-quality decision making. These cases should be studied and emulated by homeland security leadership that wishes to counter groupthink to prevent future groupthink fiascos.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS TO MITIGATE GROUPTHINK IN HOMELAND SECURITY

This research project has identified both Janis's groupthink antecedent conditions and symptoms in many homeland security organizations and has found that the groupthink physiological phenomenon does have a negative impact on the security of the United States. However, because of the sheer size and fragmented nature of the homeland security, it is impossible for groupthink to be uniformly spread across the entire enterprise, and it is also impossible to eradicate this psychological phenomenon thoroughly.

This research project recommends the homeland security enterprise use Janis's established techniques, which have successfully mitigated groupthink in the past, to offer solutions to help identify, manage, and diminish this syndrome in homeland security.

1. The Use of Janis's Groupthink Remedies to Mitigate Groupthink in Homeland Security

Homeland security employs highly experienced and intelligent professionals who are dedicated to the mission of protecting the homeland. Homeland security leaders must engage with the entire enterprise community including the employees, first responders, private industry innovators, academics, scientists, and the American people. These groups can offer innovative ideas and an alternative perspective that challenges the commonly held beliefs of the homeland security leadership. Through this engagement, homeland security leaders can refocus the mission of homeland security onto the protection of the nation rather than making it a repository for every political agenda being put forth by the current political in-group.[332]

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[332] Kennedy, "The Hijacking of Foreign Policy Decision Making: Groupthink and Presidential Power in the Post–9/11 World," 633–727.

Change to homeland security groupthink condition will require an organizational culture that values and encourages creativity, critical thinking, and critical self-analysis. Janis's recommendations for remedies to overcome groupthink should be the framework that homeland security professionals employ to create a resilient organizational structure and environment and discourage this perilous psychological phenomenon. One of Janis's key recommendations is that each group member should be encouraged to act as a "critical evaluator" or "devil's advocate" who airs objections and doubts. Leaders should accept criticism and discourage the members from "soft-pedaling their disagreements." President Kennedy employed this recommendation during his successful management of the Cuban Missile Crisis,[333] and as noted previously, this same recommendation that encourages critical evolution and devil's advocacy has been used by President Obama in his selection of former General John Allen, a conservative critic, as his lead in the U.S. led international counter-ISIS collation.[334]

As President Kennedy learned during the Bay of Pigs fiasco, homeland security leaders should avoid expressing their own personal preference or agendas to the decision-making group.[335] While the chain of command is important, the leader must not unduly influence the group so that members can offer various courses of action not biased toward the leader's preference. If the group is allowed to develop its own thought process and come to decisions free from influence, it will provide leadership with options that it might not have considered and that can be debated prior to making the final decision.

The decision-making group should be divided into subgroups that meet independently to debate the decisions and work on alternative plans. While it may be difficult in an emergency situation, it is a necessary step in the process for groups that have the luxury of time to develop their decisions. Subgroups should bring their observations, findings, and recommendations back to the main group to debate these and discuss changes to the original plan. This process should be repeated several times with

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[333] Janis, "Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes," 132–158.

[334] Lake and Rogan, "Can Obama Keep His Generals in Check in the War Against ISIS?."

[335] Ibid., 14–47.

different members composing the subgroups each time to ensure fresh viewpoints and challenges.[336] If the situation permits, the homeland security decision-making process should include several independent groups debating the same policy question, each under the direction of a different leader. This inclusion would be difficult to achieve in a time-sensitive or emergency situation, but in a policy-making group, it is a valuable tactic to promote varying courses of action and quality decision making free from bias and groupthink.[337]

To promote quality decision making and well-researched conclusions by homeland security decision-making groups, leaders should encourage each group member to interject objections, criticism, and doubts. It should be done without fear of reprisal if opinions differ from the group consensus. Leaders must encourage the group members to introduce and debate objections and doubt during all phases of the decision-making process to mitigate the plan's vulnerabilities and potential obstacles.[338]

Esprit de corps and group cohesiveness is an important attribute in the homeland security enterprise but it can discourage members of the group from voicing their own thoughts, concerns, and viewpoints. Organizations with a high *esprit de corps* can instill critical thinking and creativity into the organizational culture by promoting and encouraging this type of thinking as part of the *esprit de corps* culture. Homeland security decision-making groups should be cohesive, but at the same time, the participants should be dissimilar, as well as represent different social, ethnic, economic and occupational backgrounds. Methods, such as recruiting from a diverse pool of applicants with the ability to think critically, question the agency's policies, and offer solutions to potential vulnerabilities, would help mitigate groupthink and foster a cultural change within homeland security organizations struggling with the problem of groupthink.[339]

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[336] Lake and Rogan, "Can Obama Keep His Generals in Check in the War Against ISIS?," 211–213.

[337] Ibid., 210–211.

[338] Ibid., 209–210, 214–216.

[339] Ibid., 209–210.

Homeland security leaders and decision-making group members should seek outside expert's advice and discuss the group's deliberations, findings, and recommendations to obtain outside and alternative perspectives. Janis recommended that each group member should seek outside input from "trusted associates" and "experts" to challenge the views of the core members.[340] Outside experts should also be invited to meetings to observe the interaction and to offer critical assessment of the plans and decisions. Their participation will provide the group, and ultimately, the leadership with alternative viewpoints and may reveal issues that the group has not considered or dismissed. Outside experts may also reintegrate devil's advocacy and debate amongst the group, and thus, mitigate the groupthink that maybe setting in as members of the group becomes more comfortable with each other.[341]

Janis stated that whenever the policy or issue involves relations with a rival nation or organizations, a sizable bloc of time should be spent surveying all warning signals from rivals and constructing alternative scenarios of the rival's intentions.[342] The homeland security enterprise can accomplish this review through red teaming or war gaming.[343] In a 2003 study, the Defense Science Board stated, "We believe red teaming is especially important now…Aggressive red teams challenge emerging operational concepts in order to discover weaknesses before real adversaries do. Red teaming also tempers the complacency that often follows success."[344]

It is important for homeland security to realize that if the issue that the decision-making group is addressing involves an adversary, the group must continually assess the motives, intentions, tactical plans, and capabilities of the opponent. Moreover, the decision-making group should analyze the past actions of the enemy to predict future events to develop alternative plans to counteract the enemies' actions. These theoretical

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[340] Janis, "Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes," 207–224.

[341] Ibid., 213–214.

[342] Ibid., 214–219.

[343] The University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies (UFMCS), *Red Team Handbook*.

[344] U.S. Defense Science Board (USDSB), *Defense Science Board Task Force on the Role and Status of DOD Red Teaming Activities*, 1.

enemy plans should be tested against the decisions made by the group to identify and mitigate vulnerabilities that the opposition could exploit.[345]

The UFMCS Red Team Handbook states, "Red teams assist the commander and staff with critical and creative thinking and help them avoid groupthink, mirror imaging, cultural missteps, and tunnel vision throughout the conduct of operations."[346] Red teaming of policies, plans, and security infrastructures mitigates organizational vulnerabilities, including groupthink that makes the nation more resilient to exploitation by an adversary.[347]

Upon reaching a general consensus, the homeland security leader should encourage the group to hold a "second chance" meeting at which every member has a final chance to repeat the objections discussed during this process and determine if these were addressed and still legitimate.[348]

C.   A FINAL WORD ON GROUPTHINK IN HOMELAND SECURITY

Only through a thorough reorganization can homeland security ever fulfill its promise to the American people. Homeland security must be streamlined and its mission must be limited to hazards within the mission space of the agencies within homeland security to focus the efforts of the enterprise to counteract threats to this nation.[349]

Homeland security reformers must understand that historically the catalyst for major reform of the homeland security enterprise and its environment of groupthink has occurred only following an extraordinary homeland security crisis.[350] In the past, reform occurred following the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building, the attacks on

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[345] U.S. Defense Science Board (USDSB), *Defense Science Board Task Force on the Role and Status of DOD Red Teaming Activities*, 216–218.

[346] The University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies (UFMCS), *Red Team Handbook*.

[347] Swanson, "Enhancing Red Team Performance: Driving Measurable Value and Quality Outcomes with Process Improvement."

[348] Ibid., 218–219.

[349] Morton, *Next–Generation Homeland Security: Network Federalism and the Course to National Preparedness*, 14–49, 87–89.

[350] Christopher Bellavita, "Changing Homeland Security: A Strategic Logic of Special Event Security," *Homeland Security Affairs* 3, no. 3 (2007): 1–23.

September 11, 2001, and Hurricane Katrina. These tragic incidents enabled homeland security reformers to implement policy changes and reform.[351] However, since Hurricane Katrina, no homeland security event has been grave enough to prompt legitimate long standing reform. Had the Boston Marathon Bombing resulted in a greater devastation or had it spread to other locations, such as New York City, where the Tsarnaevs intended to travel, it may have prompted a restructuring and critical analysis of the homeland security enterprise, which has become so influenced by groupthink that at many levels, it has become ineffective at protecting the homeland.[352]

Janis's remedies and methods to counteract groupthink would be effective to diminish groupthink in homeland security but they will more than likely never be employed on a wide scale. Failure to do so stems from the fact that homeland security is a convenient repository for political groups in power to employ a great number of supporters, who may or may not have any relevant experience. If the homeland security enterprise or any of its parts sincerely intends to mitigate the groupthink threat, senior leaders need to recognize that the current state of cronyism and political nepotism has made the homeland security enterprise into a lumbering behemoth that has great difficulty protecting the people of the United States from an ever evolving and fluid global threat.[353]

Absent the opportunity to initiate significant change, homeland security reformers who wish to mitigate groupthink on a case-by-case basis must foster a culture in which individuals work together towards the common goal of protecting the homeland. Leaders should encourage their employees to play the vital role of devil's advocate by offering alternatives to policies, programs, ideas, and commonly held assumptions in an organizational structure that promotes constructive criticism. Homeland security leaders can diminish groupthink by initiating an active campaign that employs Janis's remedies, establishes a methodical process for decision-making groups, and encourages critical

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[351] Bellavita, "Changing Homeland Security: A Strategic Logic of Special Event Security," 4–7.

[352] Friedman, "Managing Fear: The Politics of Homeland Security," 77–106.

[353] Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign–Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 207–224.

thinking, innovation, and imagination to bolster the national security part of the homeland security culture. The internal threat of groupthink must be actively sought out and eliminated, while critical thinking and creativity must be embraced to counter the modern world's ever-fluctuating threat picture effectively.

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