

**ASSESSING THE THREAT FROM  
ACCELERATIONISTS AND MILITIA EXTREMISTS**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
INTELLIGENCE AND  
COUNTERTERRORISM**

OF THE

**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

JULY 16, 2020

**Serial No. 116-78**

Printed for the use of the Committee on Homeland Security



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.govinfo.gov>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

43-866 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2021

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## ASSESSING THE THREAT FROM ACCELERATIONISTS AND MILITIA EXTREMISTS

Thursday, July 16, 2020

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE  
AND COUNTERTERRORISM,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m., via Webex, Hon. Max Rose (Chairman of the subcommittee) presiding. Present: Representatives Rose, Jackson Lee, Slotkin, Thompson (ex officio), and Walker.

Mr. ROSE. The Subcommittee on Intelligence and Counterterrorism will come to order.

Thank you all for joining today for a hearing entitled “Assessing the Threat from Accelerationists and Militia Extremists.” This hearing will look at a range of violent, anti-Government actors, movements, and organizations, highlighting recent threats from militia extremists and accelerationists, including the Boogaloo movement, who seek to accelerate society toward violent collapse.

Let me also just say this. This ain’t about politics today. All right? If there is something happening on the left, it is happening on the left; if there is something happening on the right, if there is something happening anywhere on the political spectrum that involves violence, upending society, threatening institutions, we have to look at it. That is what we are doing today. So it is incredibly irrelevant to me which groups we look at, so long as we are looking at the principal ones that threaten people’s lives.

Some of these extremist movements stem from ideologies that are decades old. Others are relatively new. These threats range from decentralized and leaderless accelerationist networks to more structured militia groups.

Anti-Government extremism is one of the common threads, but we often see overlap with anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic, anti-Black, anti-Muslim ideologies, bringing these extremists into common cause with others who are extremist in nature.

Together, we have a collective opportunity to discuss the current threat landscape from these movements so we can develop an understanding of how they have flourished in our communities and in on-line spaces.

We have seen horrific acts of violence recently.

In April, a man in Texas was arrested after streaming himself on Facebook Live searching for a law enforcement officer to ambush.

In May and June, a man in California shot and killed a Department of Homeland Security Federal Protective Service officer and wounded one more and then went on to kill a Santa Cruz County Sheriff's deputy officer before being arrested. He wrote the word "Boog" in blood after carrying out the second murder.

In May, 3 men were arrested by the FBI in Nevada while reportedly on their way to inflict violence at a Black Lives Matter protest in Las Vegas.

June, a man in Oklahoma arrested, found in possession of illegally-modified machine guns, grenades, Molotov cocktails—all of whom appear to be connected to the Boogaloo movement. The list goes on and on and on.

So it is important today that we don't lose sight of the ways in which accelerationist movements like Boogaloo intersect and are popular with other extremist groups. The Base, the Atomwaffen come to mind, 2 groups that we have looked at, particularly during our discussions.

We are going to be asking some really critical questions today. Principally, though, No. 1 is, what the hell do we do about this? What does law enforcement do? What does the Federal Government do? What can and should social media do? What do we do in a collaborative way? What do we do in a mandatory way?

We have a shared responsibility across the public and private sectors. The lives of our law enforcement officials are on the line in so many of these instances. The lives of innocent citizens who are congregating in protest are on the line. I do believe, in so many ways, the future of this country and the sanctity of the Constitution is on the line.

[The statement of Chairman Rose follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MAX ROSE

JULY 16, 2020

This hearing will look at a range of violent anti-Government actors, movements, and organizations, highlighting recent threats from militia extremists and accelerationists, including the Boogaloo movement, who seek to accelerate society toward violent collapse. Some of these extremist movements stem from ideologies that are decades old. Others are relatively new. These threats range from decentralized and leaderless accelerationist networks to more structured militia groups.

Anti-Government extremism is one of the common threads—but we often see overlap with anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic, anti-Black, anti-Muslim ideologies as well, bringing these extremists into common cause with White supremacists. Today, we have an opportunity to discuss the current threat landscape from these movements so we can develop an understanding of how they have flourished in our communities and in on-line spaces.

The Boogaloo movement has been thrust into the spotlight in recent months as we have seen attack after attack, arrest after arrest, of men affiliated with the Boogaloo movement. Too often, our brave law enforcement officers have been the target of their violence.

In April, a man in Texas was arrested after streaming himself on Facebook Live searching for a law enforcement officer to ambush. In May and June, a man in California shot and killed a Department of Homeland Security Federal Protective Service officer and wounded one more, and then went on to kill a Santa Cruz County police officer before being apprehended. He wrote the word "Boog" in blood after carrying out the second murder.

Also in May, 3 men were arrested in Nevada, in possession of Molotov cocktails, while reportedly on their way to incite violence at a Black Lives Matter protest in Las Vegas. In June, a man in Oklahoma was arrested and found to be in possession of an illegally modified machine gun, homemade grenades, and Molotov cocktails. All of these men appear to be connected to the Boogaloo movement.

Even in my home State of New York, a man in Troy who had posted Boogaloo content on-line was arrested for carrying a loaded ghost gun—a gun without a serial number—in June. In Ranking Member Walker’s home State of North Carolina, Boogaloo bois came armed to protests in Greensboro and Asheboro at the beginning of June. Some of these incidents ended in lethal violence. Others were stopped before that point. All of these incidents underscore the danger of the movements in front of us today.

Experts, like the ones testifying today, have highlighted the fact that the Boogaloo movement is complex and changing. The terminology they use, the images they use, and their organizing tactics are in flux.

This unique challenge for policy makers and law enforcement alike will require thoughtful and innovative solutions—solutions that won’t, in turn, fan the flames of these extremists’ recruitment efforts. This challenge is also an opportunity: We must look hard at the roots of the problem, to identify ways to address the causes of this violence rather than just its symptoms.

It’s important that we don’t lose sight of the ways in which accelerationist movements, like Boogaloo, intersect and overlap with other extremist movements. Popular White supremacist groups like The Base and Atomwaffen are also accelerationist groups. These overlapping ideologies risk inspiring the next generation of extremist actors seeking to commit acts of violence in the United States and abroad. As law enforcement officers continue to be one of their top targets, it’s critical that the Department of Homeland Security and other Federal agencies dedicate resources and attention to informing and educating State and local law enforcement about these threats.

It’s also vital that we understand these movements are not evolving in a vacuum. Particularly in an election year, we can’t disregard the risk that anti-Government extremists—either wittingly or unwittingly—may latch on to narratives and conspiracies propagated by Russia and other adversaries who seek to further social divisions. It is important that when we examine these on-line and amorphous networks, we are aware of the dangers of malign foreign influence campaigns.

In this same vein, there is undoubtedly a shared responsibility between the private and public sectors to address these on-line threats. This means taking a hard look at whether social media companies follow their own policies and procedures about extremist content. This also includes taking down Boogaloo and other accelerationist content, like Facebook and Discord recently did.

However, more work needs to be done. Coalition groups like the new Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, which recently named Nick Rasmussen as its inaugural executive director, should be at the forefront of coordinating and responding to these threats so they don’t have a home anywhere on-line.

I look forward to a conversation from this distinguished panel of experts discussing how to best understand this threat and respond to it.

Mr. ROSE. So, with that, the Chair now recognizes the Ranking Member of the subcommittee, the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Walker.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

There is no doubt that across the globe there is an uptick in extremist ideology, particularly linked to violent, White supremacy anarchy.

As the committee was created after 9/11, we must stay focused on the continued jihadi threat. Within these various movements, we are seeing the adoption of accelerationist rhetoric, with calls to target Government institutions and law enforcement, for adherents to commit acts of violence as a means of creating further unrest.

We see this concept in White supremacist movements, anti-Government groups, and some violent environmental organizations. This convergence of violent ideologies results in the sharing of tactics and propaganda and the spreading of misinformation and conspiracies, as well as the celebration of violence.

I probably should start by expressing my sincere condolences to the families of David Underwood, a DHS protective security officer, and Damon Gutzwiller, a Santa Cruz County deputy that the Chairman just mentioned. They were both murdered in the line of

duty in late May and early June. I also want to express support and hope for the speedy recovery of their colleagues who were injured in these attacks.

The suspects believed to be responsible have been arrested, and the FBI is conducting a full investigation, including into the links on the possible support for the Boogaloo movement, which is an accelerationist term.

But we also must review others, as the Chairman just mentioned, and I appreciate that, that these attacks are on all Americans. Groups like Antifa. I know that seems to be, these days, kind of a conservative talking point, but it is not. The kind of damage that they are doing—a reporter sat in my office, could still see the injuries.

Over the past 3 months, there has been a consistent effort by Antifa supporters to infiltrate protests to lay siege to Government buildings and target law enforcement. In Portland alone, the police chief has stated that the violence has cost the city tens of millions of dollars, specifically in overtime security as well as the damage done.

These are the kinds of things that we must stand together, regardless of the politics. In Seattle, there is a coordinated effort to deny the Antifa movement—that we need to move forward. The reality is that Antifa is not an organization. We understand that. But it is a movement, an ideology, and a call for violent rioting. The people involved in the CHOP zones and in the continued violence around the city are certainly part of these movements.

We can agree that all these groups—Boogaloo, Antifa, and any other extremist movements that seek to terrorize—must be absolutely condemned. I think that is why this hearing is crucial today. These violent extremists on all sides are attempting to hijack legitimate protests and interrupt debate on needed institutional reforms. Some are targeting protesters, some are attacking police officers, many are vandalizing Government buildings, and others are seeking to create these so-called autonomous zones. We need a robust and coordinated effort to condemn the violence and restore order.

I want to thank the witnesses for appearing before the subcommittee today. I look forward to your testimony.

I yield back my time.

[The statement of Ranking Member Walker follows:]

STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER MARK WALKER

JULY 16, 2020

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

There is no doubt that across the globe, there is an uptick in extremist ideology, particularly linked to violent White supremacy and anarchy. As the committee created after 9/11, we must also stay focused on the continued jihadi threat.

Within these various movements, we are seeing the adoption of “accelerationist” rhetoric with calls to target Government institutions and law enforcement, and for adherents to commit acts of violence as a means of creating further unrest. We see this concept in White supremacist movements, anti-Government groups, and some violent environmental organizations. This convergence of violent ideologies results in the sharing of tactics and propaganda, and the spreading of misinformation and conspiracies, as well as the celebration of violence.

I want to express my sincere condolences to the families of David Patrick Underwood, a DHS Protective Security Officer, and Damon Gutzwiller, a Santa Cruz County Deputy. They were both murdered in the line of duty in late May and early



June. I also want to express support and hope for the speedy recovery of their colleagues who were injured in these attacks. The suspects believed to be responsible have been arrested and the FBI is conducting a full investigation, including into the possible support for the “Boogaloo” movement, which is an accelerationist term.

We must also review movements like Antifa. Over the past 3 months, there has been a consistent effort by Antifa supporters to infiltrate protests to lay siege to Government buildings and target law enforcement. In Portland, the police chief has stated that the violence has cost the city at least \$6.2 million in overtime to provide security. Violence in Seattle, which is largely linked to Antifa, has resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage to the Federal courthouse, which is now boarded up. All the first-floor windows are broken and rioters have made several attempts to set it on fire.

In Seattle, in particular, there is a coordinated effort to deny Antifa involvement, including by the Mayor. The reality is that Antifa is not an organization. But it is a movement, an ideology, and a call for violent rioting. The people involved in CHOP, and in the continued violence around the city, are certainly part of this movement.

We can agree that all of these groups—Boogaloo, Antifa, and any other extremist movements that seek to terrorize—must be absolutely condemned. These violent extremists on all sides are attempting to hijack legitimate protests and interrupt debate on needed institutional reforms. Some are targeting protestors, some are attacking police officers, many are vandalizing Government buildings, and others are seeking to create so-called “autonomous” zones. We need a robust and coordinated effort to condemn this violence and restore order.

I appreciate the concrete steps this administration has taken, especially within the Department of Homeland Security, to set up a framework to address terrorism and targeted violence. The release of the September 2019 strategy was a critical step in identifying programs and capabilities across DHS that can address these threats and gaps where new efforts are needed. Additional staff is being hired to expand programs and establish regional networks across the country. Funds from the 10 million grant program should be awarded this summer. I am encouraged by all of these activities. Mr. Chairman I urge you to schedule an in-person hearing or briefing so we can get an update on this important work.

I want to thank the witnesses for appearing before the subcommittee today. I look forward to your testimony and yield back my time.

Mr. ROSE. I thank the Ranking Member.

Members are reminded that the subcommittee will operate according to the guidelines laid out by Chairman Thompson and Ranking Member Rogers in the July 8 memo.

The Chair now recognizes the Chairman of the full committee, the gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. Thompson, for an opening statement.

OK. In Chairman Thompson’s absence, the Chair now recognizes the Ranking Member of the full committee, the gentleman from Alabama, Mr. Rogers, for an opening statement.

OK. Oh, there is Chairman Thompson.

Chairman Thompson, if you would so like, we will now recognize you for an opening statement.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Chairman Rose. I thank you for convening this timely hearing today and for your leadership on these issues.

This committee is known for following the threats wherever they may lead. Today that brings us here. This hearing provides us with an opportunity to examine the emerging threat from violent, anti-Government extremists.

I believe today’s hearing is the first Congressional hearing to focus specifically on the emerging threat from accelerationists, and I applaud Chairman Rose for examining this issue. It is important that members and the American public hear from these experts today to understand those emerging threats.

Recent attacks and arrests have showcased the threat from individuals affiliated with the Boogaloo movement. This loose coalition of extremists present an immediate danger to law enforcement and the American people.

As our experts have shared in their written testimony, this movement is complex and requires a nuanced understanding. The Boogaloo network, as a whole, appears to be largely anti-Government, constantly changing, and drawing followers from the fringes of many different extremist ideologies. The common thread is a desire to accelerate society toward a second civil war. That means that many of them are driven to commit violence.

It is imperative that Department of Homeland Security and other Federal agencies immediately devote resources toward understanding and confronting these emerging threats. I understand that this is a difficult issue, but it is not acceptable for DHS to remain in the dark. Law enforcement officials remain a top target of these individuals and extremists, which means that it is even more urgent for DHS to produce and disseminate information to State and local law enforcement so they can stay ahead of the threat.

Federal resources and attention must be appropriately allocated. We need to follow the threat. We shouldn't be swayed by political winds. It goes without saying that property damage and any and all violence linked to Antifa should be condemned. But public reporting, arrest records, the Government's own reporting all indicate that right-wing extremists pose a more urgent and lethal threat to Americans. We will hear today from those experts about the actual deadly threats facing Americans.

I look forward to the discussion on how the violent fringes of these movements have utilized on-line platforms to their advantage. This has been a major concern of mine over the last Congress and one of the reasons I introduced H.R. 4782, the National Commission on Online Platforms and Homeland Security Act. The commission would seek to understand how bad actors, including extremists, exploit on-line platforms in furtherance of violence.

This bipartisan piece of legislation was voted out of this committee in October 2019 and awaits action from our colleagues in the Energy and Commerce Committee. This committee will continue to shed light on how social media platforms are exploited and also hold the companies accountable when they fail to enforce the policies they have set forth to combat extremists.

I appreciate the witnesses joining us today and again thank Chairman Rose for convening this hearing. I yield back.

[The statement of Chairman Thompson follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BENNIE G. THOMPSON

JULY 16, 2020

This committee is known for following the threats, wherever they may lead. Today, that brings us here. This hearing provides us with an opportunity to examine the emerging threat from violent anti-Government extremists.

I believe today's hearing is the first Congressional hearing to focus specifically on the emerging threat from "accelerationists"—and I applaud Chairman Rose for examining this issue. It is important that Members and the American public hear from these experts today to understand these emerging threats.

Recent attacks and arrests have showcased the threat from individuals affiliated with the Boogaloo movement. This loose coalition of extremists present an imme-

diate danger to law enforcement and the American people. As our experts have shared in their written testimony, this movement is complex and requires a nuanced understanding.

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Law enforcement officials remain a top target of accelerationists and other extremists, which means that it is even more urgent for DHS to produce and disseminate information to State and local law enforcement so they can stay ahead of the threat. Federal resources and attention must also be appropriately allocated. We need to follow the threat. We shouldn't be swayed by political winds.

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I am also looking forward to a discussion on how the violent fringes of these movements have utilized on-line platforms to their advantage. This has been a major concern of mine over the last Congress, and one of the reasons I introduced H.R. 4782, the National Commission on Online Platforms and Homeland Security Act. The Commission would seek to understand how bad actors, including extremists, exploit on-line platforms in furtherance of violence. This bipartisan piece of legislation was voted out of this committee in October 2019 and awaits action from our colleagues in the Energy and Commerce Committee.

This committee will continue to shed light on how social media platforms are exploited—and also hold the companies accountable when they fail to enforce the policies they have set forth to combat extremists.

Mr. ROSE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Other Members may submit written statements for the record.

[The statement of Honorable Jackson Lee follows:]

STATEMENT OF HONORABLE SHEILA JACKSON LEE

JULY 16, 2020

Thank you, Chairman Rose for holding today's hearing "Assessing the Threat from Accelerationists and Militia Extremists," to our Nation's homeland security.

It is a well-known fact that before you can begin to address any problem, you must first recognize the symptoms.

I look forward to the testimony of today's witnesses:

- Ms. J.J. MacNab, fellow, Program on Extremism, George Washington University
- Dr. Heidi Beirich, co-founder and executive vice president, Global Project Against Hate and Extremism
- Mr. John "Jack" Donohue, fellow, Rutgers University Miller Center for Community Protection and Resiliency; former NYPD Chief of Strategic Initiatives
- The Minority did not request a witness.

Over the last month I have raised concerns over the role that Boogaloo and Proud Boys have played in bringing an element of violence into the otherwise peaceful protests following the death of George Floyd.

This hearing will provide an opportunity to address these concerns by:

- learning about the background and context of emerging threats from fringe violent extremists like the Boogaloo movement or accelerationists as well as traditional far-right militia extremist groups;
- developing a nuanced understanding of how extremist ecosystems like the Boogaloo movement develop and flourish on social media platforms; and
- identifying gaps in Government processes and recommending policies to more effectively and innovatively combat the unique threats posed by violent decentralized movements and militia groups.

The violence seen during the recent National movement to end the deaths of unarmed black men while in police custody is not the start of the events that have led to the Boogaloo movement or Proud Boys activity.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), in the immediate aftermath of Election Day, a wave of hate crimes and lesser hate incidents swept the country with 1,094 bias incidents recorded in the first 34 days following November 8, 2016.

Of these incidents the SPLC reports that anti-immigrant incidents (315) remain the most reported, followed by anti-black (221), anti-Muslim (112), and anti-LGBT (109).

Anti-Trump incidents numbered 26 (6 of which were also anti-White in nature, with 2 non-Trump related anti-White incidents reported).

This hearing will assess the threat posed by accelerationists and militia extremists—a range of violent anti-Government actors, movements, and organizations, some of which branch out of decades-old ideologies and others which are relatively new.

These varied threats range from decentralized and leaderless accelerationist networks using social media platforms, such as the Boogaloo movement, to more structured, far-right militia extremist groups.

The ideologies undergirding these movements or groups have some similarities to other anti-Government and White supremacist beliefs but are often not tied to a single, monolithic ideology.

In addition, in many cases, their adherents' decentralized and coded use of digital tools poses unique challenges for law enforcement and Government officials to identify and track their activity.

These developments in domestic terrorism, as reported in the media and Government intelligence reports—coupled with recent arrests and successful violent attacks carried out by “Boogaloo bois” and militia extremists—are troubling.

My concern is that as the Nation moves toward a historic National election, the activity of violence influencers like Boogaloo bois or Proud Boys will increase and lead to attacks becoming more frequent.

The domestic terrorism issues of greatest concern to me are:

- The number of incidents, although small in number, that have involved Government employees, contractors or military personnel;
- The targeting of places of worship;
- Politically motivated attacks or attempted attacks; and
- Use of social media for domestic and international hate groups to collaborate and stoke hate.

Proud Boys is designed by the Southern Poverty Law Center as a hate group.

The Proud Boys is a far-right neo-fascist organization that admits only men as members and promotes political violence.

The group believes men—especially White men—and Western culture are under siege; their views have elements of White genocide conspiracy theory.

While the group claims it does not support White supremacist views, its members often participate in racist rallies, events, and organizations.

The organization glorifies violence, and members engage in violence at events it attends; the Southern Poverty Law Center has called it an “alt-right fight club”.

They are often identified by their attire of Hawaiian shirts and military fatigues, and are heavily armed.

In May–June 2020, Facebook acted to limit the movement's activities and visibility across its social media platforms.

Members of Boogaloo groups typically believe in accelerationism and support any action that will speed impending civil war and eventually the collapse of society.

The movement consists of pro-gun, anti-Government groups.

The specific ideology of each group varies, and views on some topics such as race differ widely.

Some are White supremacist or neo-Nazi groups who specifically believe the impending unrest will be a race war; others condemn racism.

Wide-spread use of the term Boogaloo bois dates from late 2019, and adherents use the term (including variations, so as to avoid social media crackdowns) to refer to violent uprisings against the Federal Government or left-wing political opponents.

Believers in the movement can appear unexpectedly at events and protests initiated by others with apparently different affiliations, which was the case during the protest George Floyd's death.

They have been observed at pro-gun rights demonstrations, protests against COVID-19 lockdowns, and protests in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

The Boogaloo movement adopted its identity based on the anticipation of a second American Civil War, popularly known as “Civil War 2: Electric Boogaloo” among adherents.

Extremism researchers first took notice of the word “Boogaloo” being used in the context of the Boogaloo movement in 2019, when they observed it being used among

fringe groups including militias, gun rights movements, and White supremacist groups.

This usage of the term is believed to have originated on the fringe imageboard website 4chan, where it was often accompanied by references to “racewar” and “dotr” (day of the rope, a neo-Nazi reference to a fantasy involving murdering what the posters view to be “race traitors”).

The usage of the term “Boogaloo” increased by 50 percent on Facebook and Twitter in the last months of 2019 and into early 2020.

They attribute surges in popularity to a viral incident in November 2019, when a military veteran posted content mentioning the Boogaloo on Instagram during a standoff with police, and to the December 2019 impeachment of Donald Trump.

The Boogaloo movement experienced a further surge in popularity following the lockdowns that were implemented to try to slow the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States, and the Tech Transparency Project observed that the Boogaloo groups appeared to be encouraged by President Trump’s tweets about “liberating” States under lockdown.

The Tech Transparency Project also found that 60 percent of Boogaloo Facebook groups had emerged following the pandemic lockdowns, during which time they amassed tens of thousands of adherents.

#### THE ALT-RIGHT AND GOVERNMENT CONTRACTORS AND EMPLOYEES

The presence of the alt-right in instigating violence at peaceful protests is not new.

In 2018, I offered an amendment during full committee markup of H.R. 6374, the “Fitness Information Transparency Act of 2018” or the “FIT Act,” after it came to my attention that a National security clearance holder was part of a White supremacist group and had traveled to Charlottesville to participate in violent acts against others.

On July 6, 2018, by PBS Frontline about Michael Miselis, an active member of the California-based Rise Above Movement (RAM), a well-known violent White supremacist group.

Mr. Miselis has a security clearance and worked for Northrup Grumman, a major defense contractor, at the time he engaged in physical violence against persons protesting racism and White supremacy in Charlottesville, Virginia.

In May 2018, Northrup Grumman was informed of Mr. Miselis’ membership in RAM and the violent assaults he initiated while he was in Charlottesville participating in activities in support of White supremacy, which were captured on video and in photos.

Mr. Miselis worked for a Government contractor and held a security clearance authorizing him to work on projects that were of vital interest to our Nation and its defense.

Northrup Grumman did not dismiss him until the story broke that Mr. Miselis engaged in at the White supremacists’ rally held in Charlottesville, Virginia.

The violence of RAM members has been a hallmark of the group and its members.

The Anti-Defamation League describes RAM as a White supremacist group whose members believe they are fighting against a “modern world” corrupted by the “destructive cultural influences” of liberals, Jews, Muslims, and non-White immigrants.

For this reason, I offered a Jackson Lee Amendment establishing an “Exigent Circumstances Fitness Determination Review” process for this bill.

The stated that “The Chief Security Officer may conduct an immediate review of a contractor employee’s fitness determination when a contractor employee has engaged in violent acts against individuals, property, or public spaces based on the contractor employee’s association with persons or organizations that advocate, threaten, or use force or violence, or any other illegal or unconstitutional means, in an effort to prevent others from exercising their rights under the Constitution or laws of the United States or of any State, based on factors including, at a minimum, race, religion, National origin, or disability.”

The United States is a Nation of laws, which gives us the freedom to agree and most importantly disagree with not only each other, but with our Government.

But the limitations to the right to disagree can be best described by the ancient wisdom: “Your right to swing your arms ends just where the other person’s nose begins.”

There is a limit to the expression of free speech and the freedom to assemble and that limit is violence.

The awarding of security clearances to contractors must be better managed and the consequences for involvement in activities that would be cause for dismissal from the armed services or any Federal agency should not go unnoticed.

Most recently, a Coast Guard lieutenant was accused of stockpiling firearms and drafting a hit list of prominent Democrats and journalists.

#### AUSTIN BOMBINGS

On March 2, 2018, the first of 7 bombs were detonated in what became a terrorizing series of attacks that killed Anthony Stephan House, 39, and Draylen Mason, 17.

The video left by the bomber has never been released, but the committee should have had a briefing on the video to better understand the attacks that occurred.

In the last decade, domestic terrorism has become an increasing concern in the United States.

In 2019, domestic extremists killed 42 people in the United States making it the sixth most deadly year since 1970.

In 2018, domestic extremists killed at least 50 people in the United States, a sharp increase from the 37 extremist-related murders documented in 2017, though still lower than the totals for 2015 (70) and 2016 (72).

The 50 deaths made 2018 the fourth-deadliest year on record for domestic extremist-related killings since 1970.

According to an analysis by the *Washington Post*, between 2010 and 2017, right-wing terrorists committed a third of all acts of domestic terrorism in the United States (92 out of 263), more than Islamist terrorists (38 out of 263) and left-wing terrorists (34 out of 263) put together.

An unpublished FBI data leaked to the *Washington Post* in early March 2019 reveal that there were more domestic terrorism-related arrests than international terrorism-related arrests in both fiscal year 2017 and fiscal year 2018.

From 2009 to 2018 there were 427 extremist-related killings in the United States. Of those, 73.3 percent were committed by right-wing extremists, 23.4 percent by Islamist extremists, and 3.2 percent by left-wing extremists.

In short, 3 out of 4 killings committed by right-wing extremists in the United States were committed by White supremacists (313 from 2009 to 2018).

The culmination of the 2016 mid-term election was consumed by bombs placed in the mail addressed to Democrats.

As the Nation approaches the election this year—we must be mindful of the need to support local law enforcement efforts to stop terrorist acts before they occur.

I strongly believe that more can and should be done to limit the threat that Boogaloo and Proud Boys poses, which is why I am offering an amendment the the fiscal year 2021 NDAA.

The amendment directs that the drafting of report to Congress in not less than 180 days the results of its evaluation as to the extent, if any, of the threat to National security posed by domestic terrorist groups and organizations motivated by a belief system of White supremacy, such as the Proud Boys and Boogaloo.

I thank the Chairman, and I look forward to the testimony of today's witnesses. Thank you.

Mr. ROSE. I now welcome our panel of extraordinary and esteemed witnesses.

Our first witness is J.J. MacNab, a fellow at the Program on Extremism at The George Washington University. Ms. MacNab is one of the foremost experts on anti-Government extremism and militia groups in the whole country.

Our second witness is Dr. Heidi Beirich, co-founder and executive vice president of the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism. Dr. Beirich has more than 2 decades of experience studying and fighting extremism, including leading the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project.

Our third and final witness is Jack Donahue, a fellow at the Miller Center for Community Protection and Resilience at Rutgers University. Mr. Donahue is the former chief of strategic initiatives at the New York City Police Department and brings to this discussion a breadth of experience from his time as a leader in NYPD.

Mr. Donahue, thank you for, as well, your extraordinary service to New York City with the men in blue, the greatest police department not only in the history of the country but, I believe, the his-

tory of the world. So thank you for your extraordinary service to this country—

Mr. DONOHUE. Thank you.

Mr. ROSE [continuing]. And great city.

Without objection, the witnesses' full statements will be inserted in the record. I would now ask each witness to summarize his or her statement for 5 minutes, beginning with Ms. MacNab.

**STATEMENT OF J.J. MACNAB, FELLOW, PROGRAM ON  
EXTREMISM, THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

Ms. MACNAB. Thank you.

Chairman Rose, Ranking Member Walker, and the distinguished Members of the subcommittee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today.

I am a research fellow at George Washington University's Program on Extremism, but the remarks and opinions I am going to express are my own.

I am here to talk about the militant segment of the anti-Government extremist movement, people who want to change or topple the country by force or threat of force.

Like any large movement, this group goes through cycles. In the months following the 2016 election, alt-right and White supremacy groups experienced a meteoric rise, and militant extremists either joined these movements or went relatively quiet.

In general, they approve of the current administration, and so their anti-Government rage abated for a time. However, renewed conversations about gun control laws, stress from the COVID-19 pandemic, the mainstreaming of deep state and anti-vaccine conspiracy theories, high unemployment rates, civil unrest in major U.S. cities, and the extreme divisiveness plaguing the upcoming election have triggered a recent rebirth in the militant groups.

The movement is not monolithic. For example, the Oath Keepers, whose membership include police officers, active-duty military, and military veterans, has shifted from armed standoffs with Federal agents to providing arms support to small businesses violating stay-at-home pandemic orders and organizing armed guards to protect neighborhoods from "leftist violence."

The Three Percenters organization is a hybrid between a private paramilitary militia network and a gun club. This group believes that they only need 3 percent of Americans to band together to overthrow the current U.S. Government. Since each sub-group is independent of the others, there is no central leadership or structure. So, despite their large numbers, infighting has kept them from becoming a significant force.

The private paramilitary militias are a much smaller segment of the overall movement. Scattered throughout the country, these groups engage in armed training, have a relatively organized structure within each local chapter, and, even though many States prohibit their activities, they operate with impunity.

The newest segment, as people have mentioned, is the Boogaloo movement. The idea of a second American revolution, where armed patriots rise up and overthrow a tyrannical Government, has been the dream of militant extremists for decades. Most have called it the Second American Revolution, but denizens of the weapons

boards on 4Chan and Reddit renamed it the “Boogaloo,” which later turned into “big luau” and “big igloo.” Supporters started wearing Hawaiian shirts under their body armor and weapons, and the look went viral. Other militants started copying the shirts, patches, and jargon. For most, it was just an in-joke, a tribal aesthetic that separated those who were in the know from those who weren’t. Most Boogaloo members are libertarian anarchists who hate cops. The goal is to hasten the collapse of the Government through attacks on police.

These are the major players. How they react to current events and to each other raises many red flags. For example, I am worried that any attempt to pass gun-control legislation could trigger one or more significant violent events. This could include red-flag laws, bans of certain types of rifles, or any legislation that is viewed as a foot in the door leading to gun confiscation.

Another potential issue is the COVID-19 pandemic, which is placing significant stress on extremist groups. If States return to lockdown status, I am concerned that individuals and small groups will lash out violently against Government, law enforcement, medical professionals, essential workers, contact tracers, and medical infrastructure.

Some militants, driven by conspiracy theories, have already turned to armed resistance at re-open rallies and have taken up guns to protect business owners who want to violate stay-at-home orders. Michigan has been one hotspot for such activity, and, in May, the State had to cancel a legislative session because of the armed threat.

I am also concerned that the upcoming election will spark one or more violent events if the President loses his reelection bid.

The risk that worries me most right now, though: I am concerned that there will be a shootout at one or more of the Black Lives Matter protests. There are too many guns at these events held by too many groups with conflicting goals.

You could find the Oath Keepers taking to the streets to protect police or businesses from Antifa, while Boogaloo members join forces with Black Lives Matter against the police. Add in the National Guard and a sudden influx of Federal agents, alt-right agitators, and White supremacist groups, along with a growing number of left-wing militants and volunteer armed guards, there is a potential street war brewing.

There are militant groups and individuals willing to shoot at or bomb random police and protesters just to get that street war started so they can use the resulting chaos to accelerate their own plans for revolution. These groups know they need a catalyst, a big event. They need a Ruby Ridge or Waco so they can be the next McVeigh. Most are waiting for the big event, but there are some who will do what they have to to force its occurrence.

Thank you for your time.

[The prepared statement of Ms. MacNab follows:]



## PREPARED STATEMENT OF J.J. MACNAB

JULY 16, 2020

## INTRODUCTION

Anti-Government extremism is a loose-knit movement of right-wing groups including private paramilitary “militias,” Three Percenters, Oath Keepers, sovereign citizens, tax protesters, and “Constitutional sheriffs.” It is often referred to as the Patriot Movement, but that label has faded in recent months as different factions have moved toward libertarian anarchy while other subgroups have adopted fascist themes and beliefs.

Over the years, sovereign citizen schemes have taken root in some left-wing groups including the Moorish Science Temple and prepper communities, and in the last 2 months, there has been a noticeable rise in left-wing private paramilitary groups. The right-wing/left-wing labels may not be as clear as they once were, but the overwhelming majority of anti-Government extremists are still right-wing.

One of the most common misconceptions held by both the press and public is that anti-Government extremism and White supremacy are the same movement. While there is some overlap in geographic areas where White supremacy is more common in the general population, the intersection is small elsewhere.

The FBI divides their counterterrorism priorities into 4 distinct categories: Racially motivated violent extremism, anti-Government/anti-authority extremism, animal rights/environmental extremism, and single-issue extremism.<sup>1</sup> This distinction is important in understanding everything from choice of targets to which methods or techniques are used by those who chose to turn their beliefs into violent acts. For example, a racist who is primarily active in the White supremacy movement will likely chose victims who represent a threat to his White supremacist beliefs with the eventual goal of starting a race war. A person, even if he is a bigot or racist, whose primary extremist ideology is anti-Government or anti-authoritarian will likely target Government officials, law enforcement, Government buildings, and the press in hopes of starting a violent revolution. Both movements want to tear the Nation apart, to accelerate the downfall of society so that they can rebuild it to fit their idea of utopia, but they have different visions of what that utopia entails. Most of them think that war is inevitable; some of them are hoping to hasten its arrival by engaging in violence.<sup>2</sup>

This report will be limited to recent trends in the Anti-Government Extremist movement but will include information on the White Supremacy Movement when the 2 groups intersect.

## THE PARTICIPANTS

With the rise of the Alt-Right and the rapid growth of the White supremacy movement following the 2016 general election, many anti-Government groups and organizations faded into the background until recent months. Some, sovereign citizen and tax protesters, for example, have stayed in the background.

Renewed conversations about gun control laws and restrictions, the COVID-19 pandemic, the recent mainstreaming of “deep state” and anti-vaccine conspiracy theories, high unemployment rates, civil unrest in major U.S. cities, and the extreme divisiveness plaguing the upcoming general election have triggered a recent rebirth in the segment of the movement that focuses on firearms.

## OATH KEEPERS

Once a vibrant organization that boasted tens of thousands of active supporters, the Oath Keepers have a smaller base today and their activities range from providing armed support to small businesses violating stay-at-home COVID-19 pandemic orders to organizing armed guards to protect neighborhoods from “leftist violence.”

In the past, the Oath Keepers participated in armed stand-offs against Federal agents in Nevada, Oregon, and Montana. Recently, the Oath Keepers have been extremely active in building up the image of Antifa as a violent, organized, domestic terrorism group and their founder recently expressed frustration that President Trump did not retake the cordoned-off protest area in Seattle (CHAZ/CHOP) with force.

<sup>1</sup>“The Evolving and Persistent Terrorism Threat to the Homeland,” speech delivered by Matthew Alcoke, FBI Deputy Assistant Director, Counterterrorism Division, November 19, 2019.

<sup>2</sup>“Order from Chaos: Riots, White supremacy, and accelerationism,” by Daniel L. Byman, *Lawfare.com*, June 1, 2020.

Ironically, they are advocating the use of guns against law enforcement trying to enforce stay-at-home orders and Federal laws, but they consider themselves a pro-police organization. Their membership includes several police officers, active-duty military, and military veterans.

The group was recently de-platformed on Discord but they still have a very active Facebook presence with 551,000 followers on their main page.

#### THREE PERCENTERS

This group believes that only 3 percent of colonists fought in and won the Revolutionary War against the British; therefore, they only need 3 percent of Americans today to band together to overthrow the current U.S. Government. To become a participant, you only need to hold yourself out as one, usually by wearing a patch or a III percent tattoo, so their social media presence is very large, and they network primarily on Facebook. Since each subgroup is independent of the others, there is no central leadership or structure, and infighting has kept them from becoming a significant force.

Three Percent groups participated in several stand-offs against the Government between 2014 and 2016, were present at the Charlottesville “Unite the Right” rally in 2017 and have recently provided armed support at Re-Open rallies and Confederate monuments sites.

There is significant overlap with the Oath Keepers, the Militia Movement, and with Boogaloo adherents.

#### THE MILITIAS

Scattered throughout the country, these private paramilitary groups engage in armed training, have a relatively organized structure within each group, and even though many States prohibit their activities, they operate with impunity.

In recent years, they have engaged in armed stand-offs with Federal agents, kidnapped and held immigrants on the border with Mexico, provided armed support at the Charlottesville Unite The Right rally in 2017, and have guarded Confederate and other monuments in several States.

Militias vary in their attitude toward race. Some openly welcome men and women of all races while others are tightly focused on White supremacist beliefs and goals.

#### LEFT-WING MILITIAS AND GUN CLUBS

The newest entry to the militant world is the left-wing militia and gun clubs. This includes small groups such as the John Brown Gun Club/Redneck Revolt and the Socialist Rifle Club to the newly-formed Latino Rifle Association and the NFAC black militia that made its debut in Georgia on the 4th of July.

To date, armed left-wing militias and gun clubs have generally arisen in response to the perceived threat from armed right-wing militias, Three Percenters, and Oath Keepers, but some express strong anti-police and anti-Government beliefs.

- On July 13, 2019, an Antifa activist and member of the Puget Sound John Brown Gun Club and was shot and killed when he attempted to blow up an ICE detention facility in the State of Washington.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE BOOGALOO

The idea of a second American revolution, where armed patriots gather, rise up, and overthrow the tyrannical Government has been the dream of the anti-Government extremist movement for decades. Most called it the second American Revolution, others “Revolution 2.0,” but the denizens of the weapons forums on the 4Chan /k/ board and on reddit renamed it “Civil War 2: Electric Boogaloo.”

A few years ago, there was an on-going joke on social media to cast any mediocre sequel as an “electric boogaloo.” This was a hat tip to the 1980’s sequel “Breakin’ 2: Electric Boogaloo.” The “Civil War 2: Electric Boogaloo” theme was spread using humor and memes which were carried over to other social media platforms.

By the time the Boogaloo theme moved to Facebook and Instagram, it was picked up by other anti-Government militants.

By early 2020, “Boogaloo” had morphed into “Big Luau,” and supporters started wearing Hawaiian shirts under their body armor and weapons, and then “Big Igloo.” They called themselves Boogaloo Bois, Boog Bois, the Bojahideen, and dozens of other names.

<sup>3</sup>“Willem Van Spronsen aka Emma Durutti: 5 Fast Facts You Need to Know,” by Tom Cleary, *Heavy.com*, September 24, 2019.

When several militants wearing Hawaiian shirts and sporting Boogaloo patches were seen at the January 20, 2020 gun rally in Richmond, VA, word spread on Facebook among gun and anti-Government groups and pages. People started copying their look, patches, and jargon. For most, it was just an in-joke, an aesthetic that separated those in the know from those who weren't.

But when a movement is no deeper than a special look or a shared set of memes, anyone can join. White supremacist and Neo Nazi groups on Discord and Telegram started calling themselves Boog Bois, and on Facebook, anti-Government extremists from the Oath Keepers, Three Percent groups, and militias donned Hawaiian shirts and joined in on the joke, even though many of them didn't share the Boogaloo movement's extreme animosity toward law enforcement.

- On March 12, 2020, police raided a home in Potomac, MD, killing 21-year-old Duncan Lemp, a Boogaloo adherent who participated in "Boog" Facebook groups and on militia websites. The movement had found both a martyr and a plan; they would take up arms to protest in the name of people who had been killed by law enforcement.

While the White supremacy side of the movement was relatively small but active on Discord and Telegram, the non-racist, libertarian, anti-Government side grew rapidly on Facebook, seemingly unaware of that Neo-Nazi groups and hard-core racists were co-opting their look and jargon. When the racist side tried to post on the non-racist Facebook pages and groups, they were usually kicked out and mocked by the moderators.

Early press reports focused only on the White supremacy side of the movement, while ignoring the much larger, racially diverse libertarian side who had started to show up armed at protests and rallies, siding with Re-Open protesters and Black Lives Matter activists in cities around the country.

The primary motivation for this side of the movement is chaos; and their primary target is the police.

- On April 11, 2020, a 36-year old Texan started livestreaming on Facebook as he drove around town, looking for police officers to ambush and execute.

Since the majority of participants were radicalized elsewhere prior to donning a Hawaiian shirt—either in anti-Government militant groups such as the Three Percenters or the militias, or in White supremacy groups—the Boogaloo shouldn't be considered an independent movement at this time. This could change if they continue to recruit teenagers and young men for whom these Facebook pages and groups are their first taste of extremism.

Discord recently removed the largest Boogaloo server, reddit has closed down the main Boogaloo subreddit, and Facebook and Instagram both removed a sizable network of Boogaloo accounts, pages, and groups from their platform. This is likely a temporary fix, as these groups are very good at rebranding their efforts to avoid being banned, and some have moved to alternative social media such as MeWe, Parler, and Gab.

#### POTENTIAL CONCERNS

##### *1. Gun Control legislation could trigger one or more significant violent events.*

Last summer, a trio of high-profile shootings reinvigorated the National debate on gun control legislation.

- On July 28, 2019, a 19-year-California man shot and killed 3 people, injured 17 others at a festival before committing suicide. He left his final statement on Instagram, advising those who wanted to understand his motive to read a text used by both White Supremacist group and the Church of Satan. He left behind a list of potential targets which has not yet been made public.
- On August 3, 2019, a 21-year-old Texas man shot and killed 23 people at a Walmart, injuring 23 others. He posted a manifesto on the 8chan website citing White supremacist and anti-immigrant reasons for the mass killing. He is awaiting trial.
- On August 4, 2019, a 24-year-old man killed 9 and wounded 17 others at a bar in Ohio before police shot and killed him. His political leanings were left-wing and on Twitter he had expressed interest in the Texas shooting the night before. His motives are unknown.

As a result of these and earlier mass shootings, several States started discussing the introduction of red flag law legislation that would enable police and family members to remove firearms from dangerous people.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup>“What Are ‘Red Flag’ Gun Laws, and How Do They Work?” by Timothy Williams, *NY Times*, August 6, 2019.

At the Third Democratic Debate on September 12, 2019, then-Candidate Beto O'Rourke told moderator David Muir, "We're going to take your AR-15, your AK-47. We're not going to allow it to be used against our fellow Americans anymore."

Both the Red Flag discussions and the O'Rourke pledge enraged the militant side of the anti-Government movement, many of whom believe that any form of gun confiscation will be the triggering event for the next Revolution.

- On November 24, 2020, a 28-year-old military veteran began livestreaming a stand-off with police on his Instagram account. He claimed that he had been "red-flagged" by a coworker and that the police were there to confiscate his firearms. They had actually gone to his home to investigate a domestic violence claim, but that was not revealed until later. He told viewers that this was the beginning of the Boogaloo, the revolutionary war that they had all been anticipating. By the end of his 6-hour stand-off, 130,000 people were watching his feed, and rumors spread about militias and Three Percenters driving to his home to face the police by his side.

In the November 19, 2019 election, Virginia Democrats, running on a gun control platform, took control of the Virginia State Assembly and the State Senate. As soon as they were sworn into office, they introduced the legislation promised during their campaigns and gun activists held a rally on January 20, 2020 at the Virginia State Capitol to protest this legislation. While a typical, large protest or rally for the movement draws between 200 and 500 people, 22,000 firearm owners, many of them armed, showed up in Richmond for the event. A small number of left-wing gun groups showed up as well, but since they had a shared interest with the right-wing groups—protesting gun control measures—the event was peaceful. A handful of the rally participants wore Hawaiian shirts under their body armor which prompted significant interest in what had been relatively small Boogaloo groups on Facebook.

- Four days before rally, the FBI arrested 3 members of The Base, a Neo-Nazi paramilitary group, on their way to Richmond. Their plan was to shoot into the crowd to start a violent, chaotic melee.

*2. The COVID-19 pandemic is placing significant amount of strain on extremist groups. If States return to a lock-down status, I'm concerned that individuals and small groups will lash out violently against Government, law enforcement, medical professionals, essential workers, contact tracers, and our medical infrastructure.*

Most Americans are anxious about the spread of the virus. We're worried about our health, the health of our families and friends, the country's economy, and the stress being put on our health care systems.

Anti-Government groups, driven by anti-vaccine conspiracy theories and the belief that the virus is a hoax being used to exert control over Americans, have, in some cases, turned to armed resistance.

- On March 24, a Missouri man died in a shoot-out with police. He had been planning to use a car bomb to blow up a hospital treating coronavirus patients in hopes of triggering a violent revolution.
- In April and May, numerous "Re-Open" rallies took place at State capitols around the country. Three Percenters, Oath Keepers, and militia participants, some in Boogaloo attire, have provided armed support for these events. They demanded that their State Governors rescind any stay-at-home orders and allow businesses to reopen immediately. Michigan was a hot spot for such activity and on May 14, 2020, the State had to cancel a legislative session because of the armed threat.<sup>5</sup>
- Also in April and May, a handful of hair salons, bars, and tattoo parlors violated stay-at-home orders and were protected from the police by armed militants, Oath Keepers, and Boogaloo participants.
- On June 11, 2020, a New York man, angry that he wasn't allowed to enter a hospital to see his friend because of COVID-19 restrictions, left and returned to the hospital with a backpack filled with 3 explosive devices, a hatchet, handcuffs, a BB gun, and ammunition.

Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are filled with extremist threats against health care professionals who they believe are inflating COVID-19 numbers and hiding real cures. Contact tracers are another potential target as are essential workers who ask them to wear a mask before entering a store or restaurant. When a vaccine becomes available, a fairly large number of anti-Government extremists will likely refuse. Many believe that the vaccine is part of nefarious plot to track them with embedded microchips or to weed out undesirables.

<sup>5</sup>"Michigan Cancels Legislative Session to Avoid Armed Protesters," by David Welch, Bloomberg, May 14, 2020.

3. *The recent killing of George Floyd by police has brought together large groups of people protest police practices and abuses. A rapidly growing number of people at these events are armed.*

Guns are common denominator in most anti-Government extremist groups. Racism is not. For that reason, you could find the Oath Keepers taking to the streets to protect police from Antifa while Boogaloo members join forces with Black Lives Matter against the police. Add in the National Guard, miscellaneous Federal agencies, and White supremacist groups to the mix along with a growing number of left-wing activists and militant groups who have started carrying firearms, and there's a potential street war brewing.

Furthermore, there are groups and individuals willing to use the chaos inherent in civil unrest to accelerate their own plans for a revolution.

- On May 29, 2020, using the confusion of a Black Lives Matter protest as cover, 2 "Boogaloo" participants shot 2 Federal security officers in California, killing 1. A week later, one of the shooters, an active-duty Air Force Sergeant, ambushed and shot 2 Sheriff deputies, again killing 1. Before he was arrested, he scrawled a Boogaloo message in blood on the car he'd stolen to escape arrest. He is awaiting trial at this time.
- On May 30, 2020, 2 military veterans and 1 active-duty military man plotted to attack police at a Black Lives Matter protest using guns, explosives, fireworks, and gasoline. All 3 were Boogaloo adherents who had met at a Re-Open rally in Las Vegas. Their plan, thwarted by their arrest, was to incite chaos in the crowd.

#### 4. *Antifa as the Fictional Enemy*

Known for confronting racists and right-wing militant groups at protests, causing property damage, and engaging in street violence, the various subgroups that make up Antifa are not without fault. They are not however, the hyper-violent army that anti-Government extremists make them out to be.

Recently, there have been a number of hoaxes, fake social media accounts, that claim Antifa is plotting violence against average citizens. One such rumor claimed that there were "busloads of Antifa" heading to small towns and suburbs for the purpose of terrorizing those communities. Armed militants gathered to protect these towns and neighborhoods, unaware of that they had fallen for a hoax.

Such trolling is problematic because it heightens the anger of the anti-Government extremists at a time when they are already extremely stressed and eager for confrontation.

#### 5. *The upcoming Presidential Election could spark one or more violent events.*

In general, the anti-Government movement is right-wing and most support President Trump. The non-racist side of the Boogaloo proponents are the exception in that consider themselves Libertarian and therefore prefer Jo Jorgensen. There is already significant chatter about the possibility for a Civil War and armed civil unrest in the event Trump loses his reelection bid, but single actor and small cell violent acts would be more likely.

#### SUMMARY

Between gun control issues, civil unrest, the stresses placed on the country by a deadly pandemic, conspiracy theories, anti-press sentiments, and a highly divisive election cycle, the Nation is one large event away from violence.

In the past, the Ruby Ridge and Waco standoffs were the catalysts that drove Timothy McVeigh to terrorism. Such catalysts today could include heavy-handed use of the American military on civilians/protesters, a street war that turned lethal, or the Government using excessive force against what turned out to be an imaginary or exaggerated enemy.

Anti-Government extremists are aware that their plans for a revolution or "Civil War 2" require that catalyst. Most are waiting for that big event, but some will do what they have to force its occurrence.

Mr. ROSE. Thank you for your testimony, ma'am.

We will now recognize Mr. Donahue to summarize his statement for 5 minutes.

#### **STATEMENT OF JOHN K. DONOHUE, FELLOW, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY MILLER CENTER FOR COMMUNITY PROTECTION AND RESILIENCY, FORMER NYPD CHIEF OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

Mr. DONOHUE. Thanks. Thank you very much.

Good morning, Chair Rose, Ranking Member Walker, Members of the subcommittee, and Chair Thompson. I am John Donahue, a fellow at the Rutgers University Miller Center and recently retired 3-star chief from the New York City Police Department, with 32 years of assignments in patrol, intelligence, and strategy.

The opinions I am giving today are my own.

I am pleased to testify to discuss the serious public safety concerns and, specifically, challenges to law enforcement raised by the growing phenomenon of cyber-social militia extremism and the power of on-line movements to influence violent action domestically.

To begin, the use of social media for promoting ideas and opinions is well-documented. These platforms are mobile and near-ubiquitous. Here in the United States, we cherish the Constitutional right for freedom of speech and assembly, and social media has been embraced by many to share ideas and opinions on any topic at any time.

What is recently observable from social media data is that there is an exponential growth in participation in the cyber-social domain coalesced around revolutionary and extremist themes at either ends of the ideological spectrum. Those extremists have law enforcement squarely in their sights.

In the earliest stages of the ISIS caliphate, social media was used effectively to motivate some youth—impressionable, isolated, disaffected—to take up arms in support of ISIS. We know that recruitment started for those people on the surface web, social media platforms, and gradually moved to encrypted communications to shield criminal conversations from authorities. The same cycle is happening domestically with militia and accelerationist movements on the far right and the far left.

A report I co-authored in May of this year with the Rutgers Miller Center and the Network Contagion Research Institute shows how, on social media, memes become viral and evolve and plant hateful and revolutionary ideas in public eye, often disguised as inside jokes, using code words for those in the know.

The “Boogaloo” code word for second revolution is an example of that far-right militia movement. In protests over the pandemic lockdowns, followers played out their inside joke wearing Hawaiian shirts and carrying semiautomatic rifles in the center of a few major American cities. Memes shared on the Boogaloo message boards gamify assaults on law enforcement, encouraging violence through jargon known in the video-gaming community.

While it appears the on-line militia sphere is inhabited by far-right extremists, they are by no means alone. In a forthcoming report, we at Rutgers and NCRI show that on-line anti-police messaging on anarchist and other far-left social media spaces have seen exponential growth in the most recent period of unrest in America.

These anti-Government, anti-police messages have broken into mainstream media on Facebook and Twitter. Memes advocating the murder of law enforcement and slogans found on the internet used by the far-left were scrawled on defaced monuments and buildings all across America.

Memes instructing so-called peaceful protesters that can be used as tactical subterfuge for violent actions are now being widely circulated on social media.

What is apparent, regardless of ideology, is that assaults on, and the murder of, law enforcement that occurred during the recent civil unrest were motivated in part by the themes in the memes and those slogans.

Now, it is not unusual for police to be the subject of protest. There has always been an inherent tension between law enforcement policing protests. Why? Because police are the most visible representatives of Government, and, here, people are protesting against us.

Protest activity is a Constitutional right. We in law enforcement are sworn to protect that right, regardless of the content of the speech and no matter how controversial it may seem, with very limited exceptions.

Another Constitutional right is to bear arms. Some States permit open carry of lawfully-owned firearms, while others outlaw that practice. Both have withstood Constitutional scrutiny, with some exceptions.

I highlight these 2 rights because, in real life, on the streets, when tens or tens of thousands of people are assembled, explaining the finer points of Constitutional law or rationality just doesn't work. That is why police are generally at a disadvantage and specifically challenged when they become the targets of the protest, as is more recently observable on the right and on the left.

Intelligence gathering brings its own tension and limitations. Law enforcement needs information to prepare for the safety of all of these incidents. That is smart Government. There are safeguards in place to prevent overreach.

Frankly, what law enforcement needs and what is out there comes from open source, with one big exception. When people use encrypted communications, police have zero visibility into those channels. That is where tactics and opportunities for confrontations are shared.

Law enforcement has a tough task when policing protest events in the best of times, but when protesters arrive intent on violence or occupation and are carrying semiautomatic weapons, the stakes grow exponentially. Accelerationists and militia members know this and seize upon opportunities to amplify their message through direct confrontation with police.

What can be done? Despite social media efforts to minimize the availability of extremist messages, they persist. To be certain, social media companies are not in the position to identify those who will mobilize to violence. Law enforcement must remain vigilant and identify them before they act. But the time frame may be remarkably short. While law enforcement is the last line of defense against extremists who mobilize to violence, it may be their own lives that they save, because they have become the ultimate target.

The outcome for the militia and revolutionary extremist on-line movements are not predictable. The time for acknowledging this phenomenon and rapidly working to preserve civil society is upon us, and I thank you for having this hearing.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Donohue follows:]

## PREPARED STATEMENT OF JOHN K. DONOHUE

THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2020

Good morning Chair Rose, Ranking Member Walker, and Members of the subcommittee. I am John Donohue, a fellow at Rutgers University, Miller Center for Community Protection and Resilience and a recently retired chief of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) having spent 32 years in service of the people of New York in a variety of assignments, notably in patrol, policy, strategy, and intelligence. I am pleased to testify before your subcommittee today to discuss the significant public safety concerns and, specifically, challenges to law enforcement raised by the growing phenomenon of cyber-social militia extremism and the power of on-line movements to influence violent action domestically.

## OVERVIEW

The use of social media for promoting ideas is well-documented. These technology platforms, now mobile and near-ubiquitous, have usurped the traditional venues of the public square and printed newspapers for communicating the concerns, likes, and desires of hundreds of millions of people world-wide. Here in the United States, where we cherish the Constitutional right to speak freely, assemble, and protest, social media has been embraced by virtually everyone with access to the internet to share their opinions on any topic, at any time. The ability to garner an audience to any cause beyond mere affinity, however, considering the vast number of people on the vast number of social media platform, requires a few more powerful ingredients. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, these ingredients—social isolation, vast unemployment, fear of changing social order, and the most powerful ingredient, a perceived martyr for the cause—existed to a much lesser degree. During the pandemic, in contrast to any previous time in world history, those ingredients have dramatically come into alignment. What is observable and quantifiable from social media data is an exponential growth in participation in the cyber-social domain that has coalesced around revolutionary extremist themes at either end of the ideological spectrum. And those revolutionary extremists have Federal, State, and local law enforcement squarely in their sights. The outcomes are not predictable, and the time for acknowledging this phenomenon and rapidly working to preserve civil society is upon us.

## CYBER-SOCIAL DOMAIN FOR RECRUITMENT

In the internet, as in all media, content is king. Recent history is rife with the use of social media content to recruit people to a cause. In less than a generation, the hashtag “#” has become the easiest way of identifying—and identifying with—a message. Merely clicking like, commenting on, or sharing content serves to boost those messages. Add memes or brief videos to the content and the message will meet the desired audience, literally in the palm of their hand. In a few cases some messages “go viral” into the mainstream, where even casual users of social media will be exposed to the content. We’ve seen this in the #bringbackourgirls and #metoo movements. To accelerate a message, add issues with intense emotional attachment, such as religious or strongly-held political beliefs, and the content can become a tool of recruitment to further activity of the cause.

For example, we know that in early 2013 and 2014 in the earliest stages of the ISIS caliphate, the use of social media motivated some youth, impressionable, isolated, disaffected, and religiously influenced, to leave their homes, including here in the United States, and take up arms in support of Abu-bakkar Al Baghdadi and ISIS. Social media companies were slow to respond in blocking content that drew youth into that sphere. Some criminal cases showed once a person was drawn into the movement and became engaged in social media (liking, sharing, posting, creating content) they could be recruited into a much deeper level of involvement. That’s when conversations migrate from the surface web, to deep web forums and to encrypted communication platforms in which there is no visibility.

The same cycle is happening domestically with militia movements of the far-right and far-left. The report I co-authored in May of this year for the Rutgers University Miller Center and Network Contagion Research Institute (NCRI)<sup>1</sup> demonstrates how on social media sensational memes become viral and evolve, permitting extremists

<sup>1</sup>Finkelstein, Donohue, Goldenberg, Baumgartner, Farmer, Zannettou, & Blackburn (2020) COVID-19, Conspiracy and Contagious Sedition: A Case Study on the Militia-Sphere. The Network Contagion Research Institute. (on-line at [www.ncri.io/reports/covid-19-conspiracy-and-contagious-sedition-a-case-study-on-the-militia-sphere/](http://www.ncri.io/reports/covid-19-conspiracy-and-contagious-sedition-a-case-study-on-the-militia-sphere/)).



to plant hateful or revolutionary ideas in the public eye, often disguised as inside jokes or code words for those “in the know.” The Boogaloo, big igloo, or big luau, code for the second revolution, is an example of the far-right militia movement. In protest of the recent pandemic lockdowns, followers of the movement played out the inside joke by wearing Hawaiian shirts and carrying semi-automatic rifles in the center of a few major cities. The volume and intensity of posts with Boogaloo affinity on reddit doubled in 1 year through April 2020.<sup>2</sup> Among the Boogaloo meme contributors are those who “gamify” assaults on police and law enforcement, encouraging violence through jargon known in the video gaming community.

While it appears that the preponderance of the on-line militia sphere is inhabited by far-right extremists, they are by no means alone. In a forthcoming report, we at Rutgers and Network Contagion Research Institute will demonstrate that on-line anti-police messaging on anarchist and other far-left social media spaces, such as on sub-reddit forums saw exponential increases during the most recent period of civil unrest in America following the killing of George Floyd. These messages have broken into the mainstream including Facebook and Twitter. Memes advocating the murder of law enforcement, and slogans found on the internet such as ACAB, F12, 1312 used by the far-left appeared scrawled on the defaced monuments and buildings all over America. Assaults on and the murder of law enforcement that occurred during the recent civil unrest were motivated in part by the themes in these memes and slogans.<sup>3</sup>

#### INHERENT TENSION BETWEEN CONSTITUTIONALLY-PROTECTED ACTIVITIES AND POLICING

Among the many rights afforded to us in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution is that Congress cannot pass laws limiting freedom of speech and peaceful assembly. The Second Amendment protects Americans’ right to keep and bear arms. The Fourteenth Amendment ensures those rights are protected in every State. Those rights are not absolute, as the Supreme Court has interpreted from time to time. For example, we know that reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions can be applied to public assembly, and reasonable restrictions exist with regard to commercial speech. There are also some State-specific laws that permit open-carry of lawfully-owned firearms, and other States that have outlawed that practice—both have withstood Constitutional scrutiny. I use these 2 amendments for examples because in real life, on the street, when tens, or tens of thousands of people are assembled is where the tension exists. In those circumstances, explaining the finer points of Constitutional law to a crowd just doesn’t work, that’s why police are generally at a disadvantage, and specifically challenged when they are the target of the protests. The presence of armed militia members raises the complexity and volatility of those situations.

In New York City, as a police officer I wore a uniform and policed protests, taking care to ensure impartial treatment of those who wanted their message to be heard by local, State, Federal governments and even the United Nations. To be candid, the issue, cause, or message protestors share at a physical gathering, as well as a virtual one, is irrelevant to nearly everyone in law enforcement. That’s what impartiality demands. We teach it in our Nation’s police academies. And we need it in a Constitutional democracy. However, sometimes protestors want their message to be “more effective,” “louder” or “disruptive.” They use coded words and memes to train the movement to conduct “direct actions” and “wildcat actions.” Many carefully planned protests use encrypted communication platforms to direct and target unlawful actions of the participants.

Tension also exists in planning for public safety during these events. That’s because preoperational intelligence is needed for many reasons. For example: Will traffic need to be rerouted? Will medical responders need to be prepositioned? Will there be counter-protesters? Will protesters engage in unlawful activity and expect to be arrested? How many police will be needed to ensure the safety of all parties? As an intelligence officer we faced these questions routinely in preparation for an event. Intelligence also requires answering the questions about the unknowns: Are the intentions of the group or subgroups to engage in violence? If so, will weapons be involved?

<sup>2</sup> Id.

<sup>3</sup> For example: In May 29 and June 6, 2020 respectively, David Patrick Underwood a Federal Protective Service contract guard and Sheriff Sgt. Damon Gutzwiller were murdered by a Boogaloo movement adherent. See also: Urooj Rahman and Colinford Mattis who were arrested and charged by the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York for allegedly firebombing a NYPD vehicle.

In the past, unrestrained domestic intelligence gathering and activities led to lawsuits and settlements that curtailed egregious intelligence practices. In response, the Attorney General promulgated Guidelines for Domestic FBI Operations, and the FBI has the Domestic Intelligence Operations Guide (last updated in 2016). The New York City Police<sup>4</sup> Department (NYPD) was sued in the 1970's for investigative overreach.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the NYPD has operated intelligence capacities under a Federal judicial consent decree that was modified several times to ensure effectiveness and to balance civil liberties, most recently in 2016.

Law enforcement a tough task when policing protest events in the best of times; when protesters arrive intent on violence and occupation and are carrying semi-automatic weapons, the stakes grow exponentially. Accelerationists and Militia members know this and seize on those opportunities to amplify their message of revolution through direct confrontation with police.

#### COMPLEXITY OF MONITORING NETWORKS OF INDIVIDUALS AND IDENTIFYING THOSE WHO WILL MOBILIZE TO VIOLENCE

There are technology solutions that researchers use to quantify authentic growth of postings, unique events, and to discount those that are generated by bots. Those same technologies can help identify the frequency and intensity of social media postings. However, I'm not aware of any reliable technology that can determine true sentiment of social media postings beyond the stop-gap interventions employed by some surface web social media companies. Some companies use their terms of service and attempt to have users enforce community standards. The larger social media companies have hired people to review offensive posts. The tension between free sharing ideas, debate, community norms and corporate-message control slows social media companies' response. Some companies have taken action when pressured to act, with varying degrees of success. The results resemble a game of whack-a-mole, with content finding its way from one part of the net to another. Despite the companies' efforts to minimize the availability of extremist messages, those messages persist. Ultimately, social media companies are not in the position to identify those who will mobilize to violence.

Until someone can, law enforcement must remain vigilant to identify the radicalized before they mobilize. The time frame for intervention, however, can be remarkably short. Immediately before Robert Bowers attacked the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh in October 2018, he posted on a website, "I can't sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics, I'm going in."

While law enforcement is the last line of defense against extremists who mobilize to violence, it may be their own lives that they save because they have become the ultimate target.

#### PATH FORWARD

The problem we face is that social unrest is being effectively organized in the social-cyber domain, into potential insurgencies, on the basis of memes and short messages. This structure is both highly visible on the one hand and fundamentally invisible on the other because though it is ubiquitous, no single entity can contextualize the sheer scale of coded language and memes. Law enforcement certainly must not violate the Constitutional protections on citizens' free speech as it tries to distinguish imminent threats from jokes.

America is at a crossroads, the intersection of Constitutional rights and legitimate law enforcement has never been more at risk by domestic actors as it is now as seditionists actively promote a revolution. However, I remain confident that America remains strong to its founding principles and recommend the following as possible paths forward.

Social media companies were slow to act during the rise of ISIS message amplification and recruitment activities. These companies cannot be alone in combatting extremist ideologies and accelerationists, but they are part of the solution. And legislation is needed to ensure those companies work collaboratively with civic leaders across the spectrum for a civil society.

Just as the internet is diffuse, the solution cannot reside in singular entity. With regard to extremist actions there needs to be better coordination among law enforcement intelligence capacities, supported by appropriate Department of Justice entities and a social media companies to rapidly respond to hate-driven seditious rhet-

<sup>4</sup>See: Retrieved July 12, 2020. <https://vault.fbi.gov/FBI%20Domestic%20Investigations%20and%20Operations%20Guide%20%28DIOG%29/FBI%20Domestic%20Investigations%20and%20Operations%20Guide%20%28DIOG%29%202016%20Version>.

<sup>5</sup>*Handschu v. Special Services Div.*, 605 F. Supp. 1384 (S.D.N.Y. 1985).

oric where the content and context clearly demonstrates unlawful activity is about to occur, is occurring, or is being planned.

The challenges to law enforcement and investigations associated with encrypted communication platforms—the “going dark” issues—must be addressed both technologically and legislatively.

Just as we needed better air-traffic information after 9/11, what is needed is something fundamentally new, both technologically and socially. What is needed technologically is akin to a social media NORAD, a monitoring station that is technologically capable to generate finished intelligence rapidly and at a massive scale that can perceive imminent threats before they emerge, and detail them as the work at Rutgers and the Network Contagion Research Institute seeks to do with such tools.

Powerful technology such as I’m suggesting, must have controls. Socially, we have come to a moment where there is a need for a public trust or neutral third party that can use such technology with credibility to report on threats to democracy and imminent threats to public safety. Such a trust must be one run in partnership with civil society, whose purpose to further the American civic tradition.

Rather than merely catching the criminal before the next attack, the best use of this public trust would be to fight for our norms at a massive scale. To intercede before radicalization with information civil society led counter-messaging and civic engagement. In other words, we aren’t going to censor each other or our problems away on social platforms, and we aren’t going to censor one another out of existence through violent insurrection either. We are going to have to use our words. The best use of the solution I propose here is using technology to do that, because that is what furthers and protects democratic traditions.

These are fundamentally the traditions that now find themselves under direct attack by the extreme left and extreme right alike. How we ultimately move forward together as a country, as Americans, depends how we negotiate this moment in history. Thank you.

Mr. ROSE. Thank you for your testimony.

I now recognize Dr. Beirich to summarize her statement for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF HEIDI L. BEIRICH, CO-FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL PROJECT AGAINST HATE AND EXTREMISM**

Ms. BEIRICH. Chairman Rose, Ranking Member Walker, and esteemed Members of the subcommittee, thank you very much for inviting me to testify today. It is a great honor.

My name is Heidi Beirich. I am the co-founder of the newly-established Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, and I have been researching hate groups and extremists for more than 20 years.

Today’s hearing topic is of the utmost importance. We face, as we have already heard here, a global and increasingly violent extremist movement composed of an incendiary mix of White supremacists, neo-Nazis, and new groups like the “Boogaloo bois.” All are interested in bringing about the collapse of democracies through terrorist violence. This is what accelerationism is.

The accelerators, these extremists, are sharing their hateful ideologies, recruiting and growing and connecting internationally in a way that was never before possible. This growth can be laid primarily at the feet of the tech companies that refuse to adequately address the hate and extremist content that thrives on their platforms.

The FBI now considers the risk of violence from White supremacist groups as, “on the same footing of those of foreign terrorists like ISIS.” DHS, the State Department, NCTC, government agencies abroad, and independent experts all agree: Far-right extre-

mism, especially its accelerationist variant, is a metastasizing problem that this country and others will be dealing with for the long term.

The tragedies in Pittsburgh, El Paso, and Christchurch, New Zealand, are testaments to the devastation terrorists inspired by these movements have wrought.

Right now, the movements are taking advantage of the pandemic and racial-justice protests both to spread hate about those they wrongly blame for COVID-19 and to attack peaceful protesters and police officers. It is likely that the violence will intensify as we approach the November Presidential elections.

Descriptions of groups and the movement overall and the threat they pose are laid out in detail in my written testimony, so I would like to take the opportunity here to offer some recommendations.

Nothing is going to stop this movement's growth and violent activity if we don't accept that the on-line platforms are driving extremism. Much as Hitler used what was then the new technology of the radio to unleash his genocidal views into German families' homes, extremists today do the same with the web.

Starting in 2015, the number of perpetrators of terrorist incidents who were exposed to violent extreme ideologies almost entirely on-line rather than in the real world began to rise substantially. That was all forms of extremism—right, left, Islamic. On-line platforms are where recruitment occurs, money is raised, plans are hatched. The strategy is sophisticated, drawing in recruits through slick videos, event planning, inside jokes, and so on.

Yet there is a double standard in how on-line platforms treat content produced by White supremacists versus Islamic extremists. For the latter, de-platforming is the accepted strategy pushed by our Government, the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, and practiced by the tech companies. It would be inconceivable for social media platforms to allow ISIS propaganda to go unchecked or be monetized. But that is exactly what has happened with White supremacy.

It wasn't until 2017, after the Charlottesville riots, that tech companies began to take hate seriously and ramp up enforcement. But it hasn't been enough. Facebook's civil rights audit, released last week, found it rife with anti-Muslim sentiment and hate groups using the platform.

My new organization found dozens of YouTube videos that were posted by the international White nationalist network that inspired the Christchurch killer, and they were monetized, earning ad revenue both from businesses and, unbelievably, political campaign ads. Even after notifying YouTube, most of this is still up.

If we are to stop the spread of accelerationism and violence, the social and on-line platforms must design adequate policies, and they must enforce them. GIFCT needs to treat White supremacy as it does Islamic extremism.

The Raising the Bar Act proposed by Chairman Rose would help establish a baseline of data showing each platform's status in addressing extremist content. That could be used to push the platforms to do better. Model policies like those proposed by the civil rights coalition I co-founded, Change the Terms, could help if adopted.

We also need to address extremism in the military. There are way too many actively serving troops and veterans in these movements. We can't be training people to kill and then unleashing them on the public.

When it comes to law enforcement priorities, passage of the Domestic Terrorism Data Act, proposed by Chairman Thompson, would help us understand how officials are prioritizing combating these movements. Chairman Rose's Transnational White Supremacist Extremism Review Act would direct DHS to disseminate terrorist threat assessments of foreign violent extremist groups. That is a good step as well.

I would suggest, though, that we be very careful in providing more legal authorities to law enforcement before understanding what the impact might be. Too often, when we have increased the powers of Federal law enforcement, they weren't used as promised but, rather, against marginalized populations to violate civil rights.

Finally, sensible gun-control measures, like banning ghost guns, could be useful here.

In closing, I would like to say thank you for taking these issues seriously and for having me here today.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Beirich follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HEIDI L. BEIRICH

JULY 16, 2020

Chairman Rose, Ranking Member Walker, and esteemed Members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify. My name is Heidi Beirich. I hold a Ph.D. in political science from Purdue University and am the co-founder of the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism (GPAHE). For the 2 decades prior to founding my current organization this year, I served as the director of the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project, where I monitored, issued reports about, and trained law enforcement officials on far-right extremist activity in the United States. An important area of that work involved providing information about the threats these movements pose to law enforcement and intelligence officials in terms of both domestic and global terrorism.

I am an expert on White supremacist and other extremist movements in the United States and abroad, serving as an advisory board member of the International Network for Hate Studies, a co-founder and co-chair of the Change the Terms Coalition, which advances policy solutions to on-line extremism, and the author of numerous studies on extremism as well as co-editor of *Neo-Confederacy: A Critical Introduction*. My research has been cited in hundreds of academic pieces and news articles, including on the topic of accelerationist movements, and how they intertwine with other forms of extremism. I am honored to appear before you today.

FAR RIGHT TERRORISM IS ON THE RISE

The subject of this hearing is critical. All evidence, by Government agencies in the United States and abroad, and by other experts, points to far-right extremism as a metastasizing problem that this country and many others will be dealing with for the long term. In June, the bipartisan Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) analyzed a data set of terrorist attacks in the United States occurring between January 1994 and May 2020.<sup>1</sup> CSIS concluded that "far-right terrorism has significantly outpaced terrorism from other types of perpetrators, including from far-left networks and individuals inspired by the Islamic State and al-Qaeda. Right-wing extremists perpetrated two-thirds of the attacks and plots in 2019 and over 90 percent between January 1 and May 8, 2020."<sup>2</sup> Looking to the future, CSIS advises "terrorism in the United States will likely increase over the next year" in particular because of the November Presidential election.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.csis.org/analysis/escalating-terrorism-problem-united-states>.

<sup>2</sup><https://www.csis.org/analysis/escalating-terrorism-problem-united-states>.

American law enforcement and intelligence agencies agree with CSIS. In August 2019, the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) quietly added White supremacist violence to its mandate.<sup>3</sup> In September 2019, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) declared White supremacy as big a threat as ISIS or al-Qaeda.<sup>4</sup> DHS warned that “White supremacist violent extremists have adopted an increasingly transnational outlook” driven by connecting with “like-minded individuals on-line.”<sup>5</sup> DHS specified the sharing of the “ethnic replacement” idea, which motivated the Tree of Life synagogue, the El Paso Walmart, and the Christchurch, New Zealand, shooters among others, as particularly problematic. It is the favorite propaganda of accelerationist terrorist movements.

In February 2020, the FBI announced that it now considered the risk of violence from these groups as “on the same footing” as threats posed to the country by foreign terrorist organizations such as ISIS.<sup>6</sup> In June 2020, the U.S. State Department announced that White supremacist terrorism is “a serious challenge for the global community.”<sup>7</sup> In April, the State Department designated the Russian Imperial Movement (which offered training to American organizers of the Charlottesville, Va., riots) and members of its leadership as “Specially Designated Global Terrorists.”<sup>8</sup> This is the first time in history that the State Department labeled a White supremacist terrorist group in this manner.

Accelerationism has many variants and can be traced back to thinkers including Karl Marx, but when it comes to White supremacists and other far-right extremists, their accelerationist variant sees “modern society as irredeemable and believe it should be pushed to collapse so a fascist society built on ethnonationalism can take its place.”<sup>9</sup> They specifically believe that violence is the only way to change politics, and they want to “accelerate” that change through violent actions to destabilize political systems with the goal of establishing White supremacist states. The fact that “accelerationism” is spreading through White supremacist circles and other extremist movements such as the Boogaloo Bois, makes the topic of this hearing all the more important. As Cassie Miller of the SPLC has noted, “Accelerationists aren’t part of a new movement. They’re just an iteration more inclined toward terroristic violence.”<sup>10</sup>

The current pandemic and protests for racial justice have propelled this movement’s growth. In recent months, accelerationists have spread disinformation and conspiracy theories tying the pandemic to Jews and immigrants, whom they allege are responsible for COVID-19. In May, the FBI’s New York office warned that neo-Nazis and other racist extremists were encouraging their supporters who had contracted Covid-19 to infect cops and Jews.<sup>11</sup> In early June, the UK’s Commission for Countering Extremism warned that neo-Nazis and far-right activists were telling their followers to “deliberately infect” Jews and Muslims.<sup>12</sup> As Soufan Center’s Senior Fellow Colin P. Clarke recently argued, “Accelerationists believe that the social upheaval they promote, which is viewed as a necessary prelude that will usher in the rebuilding of society on the basis of White power, has been made plausible by the scenes of illness and death dominating mainstream news coverage.”<sup>13</sup>

#### THE AGE OF ACCELERATIONISM

Given the spread of accelerationism, we are now facing increasing terrorist threats inspired and motivated by a complex set of ideas. White supremacists are

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.realcleardefense.com/2019/08/09/nctc\\_now\\_going\\_after\\_domestic\\_terror\\_309384.html](https://www.realcleardefense.com/2019/08/09/nctc_now_going_after_domestic_terror_309384.html).

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/domestic-terror-particularly-white-supremacist-violence-as-big-a-threat-as-isis-al-qaeda-dhs-says/2019/09/20/dff8aa4e-dbad-11e9-bfb1-849887369476\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/domestic-terror-particularly-white-supremacist-violence-as-big-a-threat-as-isis-al-qaeda-dhs-says/2019/09/20/dff8aa4e-dbad-11e9-bfb1-849887369476_story.html).

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19\\_0920\\_plyc\\_strategic-framework-countering-terrorism-targeted-violence.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19_0920_plyc_strategic-framework-countering-terrorism-targeted-violence.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/racially-motivated-violent-extremism-isis-national-threat-priority-fbi-director-christopher-wray/>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/>.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.state.gov/united-states-designates-russian-imperial-movement-and-leaders-as-global-terrorists/>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2020/06/23/there-no-political-solution-accelerationism-white-power-movement>.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2020/06/23/there-no-political-solution-accelerationism-white-power-movement>.

<sup>11</sup> <https://abcnews.go.com/US/white-supremacists-encouraging-members-spread-coronavirus-cops-jews/story?id=69737522>.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/09/uk/extremism-deliberately-covid-19-intl-scli-gbr/index.html>.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.fpri.org/article/2020/04/the-growing-threat-posed-by-accelerationism-and-accelerationist-groups-worldwide/>.

taking up weapons in an attempt to create conditions that will stop the process of demographic change in the Western world. Accelerationists, some of whom are also concerned by changing demographics, are investigating, and some preparing, terrorist violence for a coming race war. Heavily-armed militias were active in the anti-lockdown movement and attended the protests for racial justice after George Floyd was killed by Minneapolis police in May. They supposedly went to protect property, but there were reports of violent incidents including shootings.<sup>14</sup> We face an incendiary mix of White supremacists, militia members, and new formations like the Boogaloo Bois, increasingly interested in bringing about the collapse of society through violence.

The true accelerant of these movements is the internet. It was nearly impossible for extremists in earlier eras to connect and recruit when their only tools were faxes and phones, and no one was monetizing or advertising their content. Much as Hitler used the new radio to push his views into German families' homes, thereby radicalizing an entire country into genocidal thinking, extremists who saw the potential of the internet in the 1990's have been able to successfully use mainstream on-line platforms in the same way. Given that the major platforms did not begin to enforce their anti-hate terms of service until after the Charlottesville, Va., riots in 2017, and still are muddling their responses to these issues today, there is no way to know how many millions were and still are radicalized on-line. But make no mistake, the dynamics that created today's growing accelerationist terrorist problem originate in cyber space.

#### MASS ATTACKS AND THE GREAT REPLACEMENT

In the last 2 years, we have seen mass terrorist attacks driven by White supremacy in the United States and around the world. They have been inspired in particular by the ideas of the Great Replacement, which argues that White people are being genocided in their home countries and replaced by non-White immigrants. This is now the leading propaganda point for White supremacists world-wide.

This concept is the bedrock idea propagated by the Identitarian movement, in particular Generation Identity (GI), a sprawling, multinational organization with chapters in at least 14 countries and allies in others, including the United States.<sup>15</sup> For example, Richard Spencer allied with Identitarian thinking years ago. The reach of Identitarian thinking is wide, with attendant think tanks, institutes, housing complexes, newspapers, clothing labels, and individual supporters. As fears of the Great Replacement have spread across the Western world, so too has violence by lone actors motivated to stop the supposedly impending White genocide. Since October 2018, there have been at least 6 mass attacks motivated by Great Replacement ideas. Besides Christchurch, attacks were staged at 2 American synagogues, an El Paso Walmart, a synagogue in Halle, Germany, and 2 shisha bars in Hanau, Germany, where the shooter is believed to have been targeting Muslim immigrants.

The White supremacist killers in these attacks did not pick up their ideas of White genocide and the Great Replacement randomly. The Identitarian movement uses its massive on-line presence to spread its abhorrent anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant messaging, and to warn of a coming civil war while assiduously recruiting young people into its ranks and ideology. Identitarians' real-world publicity stunts targeting Muslims and immigrants provide fuel for its on-line audience in the form of viral images, videos, music, and press coverage, all of which help draw more young people into its ranks.

It is particularly disturbing that a movement whose ideas are linked directly to terrorism and the building of an international White supremacist network conducts its on-line organizing in plain sight, on YouTube and others, and until mid-July on Twitter, when the accounts were taken down after GPAHE released a report on the dangers of this movement. These mainstream accounts are then used to drive traffic to darker corners of the internet, where messaging is even more explicit and offers no pretense of acceptance of Muslims, refugees, and immigrants.

#### VIOLENT NEO-NAZI FORMATIONS

Accelerationism gained attention with the rise of 2 neo-Nazi organizations, Atomwaffen Division (AWD), German for atomic weapons, and The Base, whose name is the English translation for al-Qaeda. Founded in 2015, AWD initially orga-

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.modbee.com/opinion/editorials/article243381126.html>; <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-protests-omak-ohio-militia-groups-george-floyd-blm-a9573576.html>.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.globalexremism.org/post/international-white-nationalist-movement-spreading-on-twitter-and-youtube>.

nized on the neo-fascist Iron March forum. A violent neo-Nazi network that celebrates Hitler and Charles Manson, AWD has been key to promoting the accelerationist ideas. AWD videos portray young men, wearing camouflage and scarves over their faces, firing rifles during military-style training. One video begins with group members shouting in unison, “Race War Now.”

AWD members were responsible for multiple murders by 2017. These included a gay student in California, a couple in Virginia, and the murder of a member’s 2 roommates in a Tampa apartment.<sup>16</sup> Besides the U.S. murders, AWD members planned terrorist attacks, created a hit list, and sent death threats to German politicians it targeted for assassination. AWD was international, with chapters in England, Canada, Germany, and the Baltic States.<sup>17</sup>

As has been the case for many of these new movements, arrests of AWD members revealed many had a military background or were in active service. In 2018, Marine Lance Corporal Vasilios G. Pistolis, was expelled from the Marine Corps for his ties to AWD and for participating in violent assaults during the Charlottesville riots in 2017. Pistolis later bragged about his involvement on-line with other members of AWD.

Pistololis’ expulsion was widely reported, but the details of the arrest of the leader of the group, Brandon Russell, are much less well-known, and paint a troubling picture of how the military handles White supremacists in its ranks. In 2017, Russell, who was serving in the Florida Army National Guard, was arrested after one of his roommates, Devon Arthurs, killed 2 of his other roommates in a Tampa apartment.<sup>18</sup> Investigators on the scene discovered a cache of weapons, detonators, volatile chemical compounds, including a cooler full of HMTD, a powerful explosive often used by bomb makers, and ammonium nitrate, the substance used by Timothy McVeigh in the Oklahoma City attack, and 2 radioactive isotopes, americium and thorium.

While Arthurs was arrested for homicide, police released Russell, who claimed that he used the explosives to power model rockets. Within hours, Russell acquired an AR-15-style assault rifle and a bolt-action hunting rifle. He loaded home-made body armor and more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition into his car and headed to the Florida Keys with another AWD member. Sheriff’s deputies in Monroe County ultimately arrested him.

In 2018, The Base, largely patterned off of AWD, was founded. That December, Rinaldo Nazzaro, the group’s leader who is now presumed to be living in Russia,<sup>19</sup> purchased 30 acres of remote land in Republic, Wash. His intent was to create a training compound for his recruits to prepare for a coming race war. The Base believe that, in the coming chaos, the Federal Government will grant them the power to construct an all-White homeland in the Northwest (long a dream of White supremacists often referred to as the Northwest Territorial Imperative). The Base planned to accelerate a full system collapse through acts of terrorism. In January 2020, the FBI arrested 3 men from the group. Importantly, 1 of the men arrested was in possession of a ghost gun, a weapon self-built from parts not purchased from a manufacturer.<sup>20</sup>

As with AWD, 2 of the men had previous military training: Brian Mark Lemley was an Army cavalry scout, and Patrik Jordan Mathews had been a combat engineer in the Canadian Army Reserve, indicating that the reach of these groups is a problem for foreign military services as well our own. According to court documents, these men discussed “recruitment, creating a White ethno-State, committing acts of violence against minority communities (including African-Americans and Jewish-Americans), the organization’s military-style training camps, and ways to make improvised explosive devices.”<sup>21</sup> Other members of the group were arrested for a plot to murder an anti-racist activist couple in north Georgia, and another was charged with vandalizing a synagogue in Racine, Wisc.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2018/03/06/590292705/5-killings-3-states-and-1-common-neo-nazi-link>.

<sup>17</sup> [https://1897edad-2ee4-4b59-a583-57ac06e2e6c7.usrfiles.com/ugd/1897ed\\_280aa90146-b040a1ba4416820519084f.pdf](https://1897edad-2ee4-4b59-a583-57ac06e2e6c7.usrfiles.com/ugd/1897ed_280aa90146-b040a1ba4416820519084f.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.propublica.org/article/an-atomwaffen-member-sketched-a-map-to-take-the-neo-nazis-down-what-path-officials-took-is-a-mystery>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/23/revealed-the-true-identity-of-the-leader-of-americas-neo-nazi-terror-group>.

<sup>20</sup> <https://everytown.org/press/ghost-guns-a-weapon-of-choice-for-white-supremacists-arrested-ahead-of-virginia-rally/>.

<sup>21</sup> <https://apps.npr.org/documents/document.html?id=6658688-The-Base-Lemley-Mathews-Bilbrough-Arrests>.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/crime/2020/01/17/alleged-member-neo-nazi-group-charged-racine-synagogue-vandalism/4505324002/>.



## BOOGALOO BOIS

With the global pandemic and the May racial justice protests, a new wave of attacks has targeted protestors and law enforcement. Many are connected to the Boogaloo Bois, a loosely-organized American far-right extremist movement. The movement first gained public attention when heavily-armed members in their signature Hawaiian shirts and leis were seen at anti-lockdown protests in April.<sup>23</sup> This movement is preparing for, or seeks to incite, a second American civil war, likely sparked by a Government confiscation of firearms. The movement is complex and includes pro-gun groups, militias, and racists, all with varying views on race.

The term Boogaloo emerged from the unregulated 4chan board in 2012, but did not come to wide-spread attention until late 2019.<sup>24</sup> The term itself is a reference to “Breakin’ 2: Electric Boogaloo,” a 1984 movie about breakdancing that extremists, from gun rights to militia movements to White supremacists, began using to refer to an impending civil war, the coming “Boogaloo.”<sup>25</sup> The word is intentionally ridiculous, used ironically to spread on-line memes, many of which include violent text and images.

On May 30, 3 men who identified as Boogaloo adherents were arrested on terrorism charges in Las Vegas.<sup>26</sup> They had been plotting since April to bomb an electrical substation but then shifted their focus to the racial justice protests. Air Force sergeant Steven Carrillo and Robert Justus were charged with the June 6, 2020 murder of a Santa Cruz County deputy and the May 29, 2020 murder of a Federal Protective Service officer in Oakland, Calif. Carrillo wrote “Boog” and the phrases “I became unreasonable,” a Boogaloo meme, in his own blood on the hood of a vehicle. The van allegedly used in the murders contained a patch with a Boogaloo symbol and a ballistic vest bearing the Boogaloo symbol of an American flag with an igloo instead of stars.<sup>27</sup> Carrillo was using an AR-15 ghost gun.<sup>28</sup> Carrillo was an active-duty member of an elite Air Force unit tasked with guarding American military personnel at unsecure foreign airfields.<sup>29</sup> His security clearance required the monitoring of all of his social media per a 2016 directive. Clearly the rule was not being enforced.<sup>30</sup>

According to authorities, the 2 men used recent demonstrations against racial injustice as a cover to attack law enforcement. The FBI agent in charge of the investigation said that the alleged perpetrators did not appear to intend to join the protests but “came to Oakland to kill cops.”<sup>31</sup> The internet connected these men. Carrillo and Justus met on Facebook, and just 2 days later, they perpetrated their first attack.<sup>32</sup>

## THE INTERNET DRIVES TERRORISM

At this point, it is well-accepted that White supremacy is as significant a threat for generating mass casualty terrorist acts domestically and internationally as other forms of extremism. Though good data does not exist on what inspires hate crimes perpetrators, it would be inconceivable that on-line hate propaganda didn’t play a role. The answer to slowing its spread and reducing its influence lies largely in containing the proliferation of these ideas on-line. For law enforcement, knowledge of the on-line ecosystem and the often bizarre language and memes, is key to infiltrating accelerationist networks as they work to stop future attacks.

All of the movements thrive on-line. That is where recruitment occurs, money is raised, and plans hatched. They have sophisticated strategies to draw in recruits, and they make their posts as appealing as possible through inside jokes, memes, slick videos, and references that only those on the inside understand. The groups are intentional about this work. In a manual produced by Generation Identity,

<sup>23</sup> [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/y3zmj5/the-boogaloo-bois-are-bringing-their-ar-15s-and-civil-war-ideology-to-the-lockdown-protests](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/y3zmj5/the-boogaloo-bois-are-bringing-their-ar-15s-and-civil-war-ideology-to-the-lockdown-protests).

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/social-media/what-boogaloo-how-online-calls-violent-uprising-are-getting-organized-n1138461>.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/social-media/what-boogaloo-how-online-calls-violent-uprising-are-getting-organized-n1138461>.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/boogaloo-boys-george-floyd-protests-black-lives-matter-1010117/>.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.mercurynews.com/2020/06/16/santa-cruz-deputys-alleged-killer-charged-with-assassinating-Federal-cop-in-oakland-ambush/>.

<sup>28</sup> <https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2020/06/16/steven-carrillo-david-underwood-murder-santa-cruz-deputy-fatal-shooting-fatal-oakland-federal-building-shooting/>.

<sup>29</sup> <https://apnews.com/9186215f571341b8e344a17402fa73e9>.

<sup>30</sup> [https://www.dni.gov/files/NCSC/documents/Regulations/SEAD\\_5.pdf](https://www.dni.gov/files/NCSC/documents/Regulations/SEAD_5.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> <https://apnews.com/9186215f571341b8e344a17402fa73e9>.

<sup>32</sup> <https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2020/06/17/steven-carrillo-david-underwood-boogaloo-facebook-posts-santa-cruz-shooting-damon-gutzwiller/>.

which pushes the Great Replacement narrative, called “The Art of Red-Pilling,” step-by-step instructions for radicalizing potential recruits are provided. “You sow the soft red pill seeds and then you water them constantly. An honest question to start with, a news piece here, an email there, and in the evening, an anecdote over beer,” reads the manual.<sup>33</sup> It recommends taking advantage first of grievances over free speech, political correctness, or gender equality, slowly drawing in young recruits before radicalizing them with racist ideas and driving them to darker, unregulated parts of the internet such as *Telegram*.

A July study by Type Investigations of recent domestic terrorist events found “that incidents involving people who were exposed to violent extremist ideologies almost entirely on-line—rather than through contact in real-world settings—rose substantially starting in 2015, amounting to nearly one in five incidents [since then] . . . nearly every case we catalogued in recent years involved some degree of on-line radicalization.”<sup>34</sup> This conclusion applied to all forms of extremism—right-wing, left-wing and Islamist.

Yet, there is a double standard when it comes to how on-line platforms treat content produced by White supremacists compared to content by Islamic extremist groups like ISIS or al-Qaeda. For the latter, deplatforming is the accepted, and actually, demanded strategy, one pushed by the American government, the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT), and the major technology platforms.

Not so for White supremacist groups. Enforcement of restrictions and bans on these groups and their acolytes is much more haphazard, despite their proliferation of propaganda such as accelerationism or the Great Replacement, which similarly inspires terrorism. Until a deplatforming that came in the wake of GPAHE’s report on Generation Identity released in early July, the group had dozens of chapter Twitter accounts. As of today, it continues to have monetized videos running on YouTube. Some of the ads are for political campaigns (not at the behest of the campaigns).

It would be inconceivable for social media platforms to allow ISIS propaganda to spread and grow unchecked, or to be monetized. Beginning around 2015, Twitter implemented a mass suspension of ISIS and similar accounts.<sup>35</sup> In 2016, major tech companies launched a shared database of “hashes,” or digital “fingerprints,” of extremist imagery so as to be able to identify and curb the spread of terrorist content on-line.<sup>36</sup> This work would ultimately become the joint tech company effort, GIFCT, which now has dozens of companies using its work to identify Islamic extremist material.

By 2018, Twitter had removed some 1 million Islamic extremist accounts.<sup>37</sup> YouTube took similar actions, and in 2017 began redirecting users searching for this material to Islamic clerics denouncing the group.<sup>38</sup> And it worked. A study by J.M. Berger and Jonathan Morgan, “The ISIS Twitter Census,” found that the deplatforming of ISIS accounts was successful. “The data we collected also suggests that the current rate of suspensions has also limited the ISIS network’s ability to grow and spread, a consideration almost universally ignored by critics of suspension tactics. The consequences of neglecting to weed a garden are obvious, even though weeds will always return.”<sup>39</sup> Graphic on-line images of beheadings and other violence were also greatly reduced, the study found.

This mass purge did not encounter a political backlash or calls that the take-downs violated free speech principles. The American government supported the deplatforming. Significantly, the same kind of success, particularly in terms of reducing the number of recruits into other kinds of movements such as White supremacy, comes with their deplatforming.<sup>40</sup> In September 2019, it was announced that GIFCT would become a stand-alone nonprofit institution that will counter all forms of extremist content regardless of its ideological underpinnings. It remains to be seen if GIFCT will take on White supremacy.

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/who-are-europe-far-right-identitarians-austria-generation-identity-martin-sellner/>.

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.typeinvestigations.org/investigation/2020/07/09/domestic-terror-in-the-age-of-trump/>.

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/06/technology/twitter-account-suspensions-terrorism.html>.

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/social-medias-stepped-up-crackdown-on-terrorists-still-falls-short/>.

<sup>37</sup> <https://fortune.com/2018/04/05/twitter-terrorist-account-suspensions/>.

<sup>38</sup> <https://techcrunch.com/2017/07/20/google-jigsaw-redirect-method-launch-youtube-isis/>.

<sup>39</sup> [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/isis\\_twitter\\_census\\_berger-morgan.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/isis_twitter_census_berger-morgan.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> <https://twitter.com/MeganSquire0/status/1281621941296738307>.

As to the other mainstream platforms, the question now is, with the United States and other foreign government agencies arguing that White supremacist and Boogaloo propaganda is inspiring terrorist violence, and with the rise of world-wide White supremacy as a terror-inducing ideology, will these social media platforms treat this and similar material as they have ISIS propaganda? Or will White supremacist groups continue to get a pass for inspiring terrorism on-line even though their propaganda does so in the same way ISIS propaganda does?

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMBATING NEW AND EMERGING THREATS

##### *On-line Hate*

There needs to be a shift in the mentality of most mainstream platforms about the dangers related to White supremacy and accelerationist movements. As someone who has worked for nearly a decade to convince the major technology companies of their role in fomenting White supremacy and its violence, I know how absolutely reluctant these companies are to address these issues. It wasn't until the Charlottesville riots that change came to Silicon Valley. Though better than a couple of years ago, enforcement is still erratic and piecemeal. Too often it takes anti-hate and civil rights activists to find problematic material and push for its removal. It is indefensible that these nonprofits and activists are spending precious resources running down on-line hate for multi-billion dollar corporations.

As a coalition member and co-founder of Change the Terms (CTT), I would advocate that all internet companies study and adopt CTT's model policies.<sup>41</sup> Enforcement of companies' terms of service and other actions are uneven, and they are often recalcitrant, so major education on the part of anti-racist groups and civil society are required. For example, Facebook did deplatform Boogaloo Bois content, but only after violence perpetrated by its acolytes and major education efforts by civil society.<sup>42</sup> And they deplatformed Generation Identity content, but only after the Christchurch killer live-streamed his murders on their system. They have also removed hundreds of White supremacist groups from their platform, but many can still use event-planning pages and other aspects of the platform to either finance or push their noxious ideas.

Facebook's recent civil rights audit concluded, "Facebook's approach to civil rights remains too reactive and piecemeal."<sup>43</sup> It found the platform to be rife with anti-Muslim sentiment. And this after the Christchurch attacks, and after Facebook was used by the Myanmar government to ethnically cleanse the Rohingya population.<sup>44</sup> These events would suggest that Facebook would take anti-Muslim activity very seriously, but there is still too much work to be done on anti-Muslim and other bigotry. The audit also found that the company's algorithms continue to push people toward self-reinforcing echo chambers that deepen polarization and further radicalization.

Many of the audit findings could easily apply to other tech companies. Despite claiming in 2019 to disallow White supremacists, it took until late June 2020 for YouTube to ban major hate figures such as David Duke. A report by GPAHE showed in mid-June that Presidential campaign ads were running on White supremacist videos as well as other types of advertising, in effect monetizing White supremacy. YouTube's response was that this was just a "glitch"<sup>45</sup> that had been fixed, but the ads continue to run this week.

In other cases, certain platforms have done quite a lot to rid their systems of these accounts. For example, PayPal in 2017 began to deplatform White supremacist materials, but accounts do continue to slip through their systems. GPAHE warned them of 2 major accounts just last week and they took action against 1.

This is a complex issue and the solutions will vary based on the type of platform under consideration. The legislation proposed by Chairman Rose, the Raising the Bar Act, could help establish a baseline of where each platform is in terms of dealing with this content and then hold the platforms accountable for doing better.<sup>46</sup> GPAHE is a partner to the International Coalition Against Cyber Hate (INACH), which works with the European Commission (EC) to monitor hate on-line and whose members conduct the monitoring exercises that the EC uses to determine how well each company is doing. This data has been invaluable in Europe for holding the major platforms accountable and has led to improved efforts to combat hate on-line.

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.changetheterms.org>.

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53244339>.

<sup>43</sup> <https://about.fb.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Civil-Rights-Audit-Final-Report.pdf>.

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/06/technology/myanmar-facebook.html>.

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/07/07/youtube-trump-biden-campaign-ads-russia-white-supremacist-350650>.

<sup>46</sup> <https://maxrose.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=2403>.

Not surprisingly, the technology companies seem to improve the enforcement of their terms of service after each round of monitoring. Chairman Rose's proposed legislation would do the same here in the United States.

In mid-June, the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism put forth a set of recommendations for White supremacist content on mainstream platforms. It includes that: Dangerous and terrorist-connected propaganda and groups must be deplatformed; policies against hate speech and posting by violent extremist groups need to be clearly defined to include White supremacist propaganda and groups; these policies must be rigorously enforced; deplatforming organized White supremacist groups must be prioritized, and White supremacy must be recognized as a driver of terrorism at the same level as Islamic extremism by GIFCT and the major technology companies; algorithms and search systems should never recommend White supremacist content; both AI systems and content reviewers must be trained to prioritize White supremacist material for removal; identifying White supremacist and other hate content should not be outsourced to civil society and anti-racist activists; and there should be no monetization of White supremacist material through ads, and payment processors should not allow their products to be used by extremists.

#### MILITARY EXTREMISM

There is no stemming the tide of these movements without getting a handle on extremism in the military. A thorough hearing was held on this topic this past February by the House's Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee.<sup>47</sup> I testified alongside other experts at the hearing and provided written testimony on the extent of this problem in the United States.<sup>48</sup> There have been dozens of terrorist and attempted terrorist acts committed by serving and former members of the Armed Forces. These have included acts of violence by adherents of the movements discussed here. And of course the largest domestic terrorist attack in the United States before 9/11, Timothy McVeigh's bombing of an Oklahoma City Federal building, was committed by a veteran who had both White supremacist and militia ties.

Active military personnel are well aware of this problem and polling by the Military Times in 2017,<sup>49</sup> 2018,<sup>50</sup> and 2019,<sup>51</sup> indicates that White nationalist views appeared wide-spread. In the 2019 poll released on February 6, 2020, the publication reported that more than one-third of all active-duty troops and more than half of minority service members say they have personally witnessed examples of "White nationalism or ideologically-driven racism within the ranks."

Congresswoman Jackie Spier has recently advanced legislation as part of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act that would significantly help with this issue.<sup>52</sup> My testimony last February also included extensive recommendations to address the problem. I would like to highlight one particular problem here. There is currently no ban on members of anti-Government groups serving in the armed forces in the same way that White supremacists are, at least theoretically, banned (though enforcement is lacking and highly uneven). Given that militias have picked up on accelerationist ideas and are mixing with other dangerous movements such as the Boogaloo Bois, legislative intervention is in order.

#### LAW ENFORCEMENT PRIORITIES

In just the last year, every Federal law enforcement agency is on record saying that White supremacy is the most significant threat the country faces in terms of domestic terrorism. That includes the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the FBI and the State Department. This is a huge advance given that for years, the Federal Government under both Democratic and Republican administrations, refused to admit that this threat was exploding.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.c-span.org/video/?469238-1/white-supremacy-military>.

<sup>48</sup> [https://1897edad-2ee4-4b59-a583-57ac06e2e6c7.usrfiles.com/ugd/1897ed\\_280aa90146b0-40a1ba4416820519084f.pdf](https://1897edad-2ee4-4b59-a583-57ac06e2e6c7.usrfiles.com/ugd/1897ed_280aa90146b0-40a1ba4416820519084f.pdf).

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2017/10/23/military-times-poll-one-in-four-troops-sees-white-nationalism-in-the-ranks/>.

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/02/28/white-nationalism-remains-a-problem-for-the-military-poll-shows/>.

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2020/02/06/signs-of-white-supremacy-extremism-up-again-in-poll-of-active-duty-troops/>.

<sup>52</sup> <https://speier.house.gov/2020/7/nda-markup-includes-chair-speier-s-provisions-to-address-military-racial-and-ethnic-disparities-and-promote-inclusion>.

<sup>53</sup> [https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/cohen.homeland\\_security-final.pdf](https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/cohen.homeland_security-final.pdf).

And this growing problem is not just happening in the United States. Governments in Germany,<sup>54</sup> the United Kingdom,<sup>55</sup> Australia,<sup>56</sup> and many other countries have come to the same conclusion. In April, the Counter Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) of the U.N. Security Council published, “Member States Concerned by the Growing and Increasingly Transnational Threat of Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism.”<sup>57</sup> CTED reported that 10 of its states have this concern and “although extreme right-wing terrorism is not a new phenomenon, there has been a recent increase in its frequency and lethality, with some individuals, groups, and movements pursuing transnational aims in a national context, drawing on international networks, ideas, and personalities, and seeking to mobilize others, often using the internet. This has led to multiple large-scale terrorist attacks targeting minorities.”

So what are the solutions to this problem in the law enforcement realm? There are some pieces of legislation already proposed that make sense in this realm. Chairman Rose’s Transnational White Supremacist Extremism Review Act, which would direct DHS to develop and disseminate a terrorist threat assessment of foreign violent White supremacist extremist groups, makes sense.<sup>58</sup> A significant problem in tracking these movements is a lack of useful data, which is the direct result of the lack of interest in these issues that has existed for so long in the Federal Government. Additionally, the bill proposed by House Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie Thompson, the Domestic Terrorism Documentation and Analysis of Threats in America Act, and which has been referred to the Senate, also makes sense.<sup>59</sup> The bill would in part require the FBI, DOJ, and DHS to produce an annual, unclassified joint report about this issue, providing a set of much-needed data.<sup>60</sup>

I do have deep concerns about the process that could be used to designate White supremacist groups as “foreign terrorist organizations” or any proposed legislation that would increase the powers of law enforcement agencies in terms of domestic terrorism. The most important concern is this country’s terrible history when it comes to increasing law enforcement powers that then end up being used against marginalized communities. Faiza Patel of the Brennan Center has said, “Throughout its history, the FBI has used its authorities to investigate and monitor political protesters and civil rights activists. Since 9/11, the FBI has used its counterterrorism authorities to target Muslims, Arabs, and people from the Middle East and Asia, as well as people who dissent from the status quo. In 2005, the FBI named ‘eco-terrorism,’ which hasn’t produced a single fatality in this country, the No. 1 domestic terrorism threat. In August 2017, the FBI concocted a ‘black identity extremist movement’<sup>61</sup> out of a handful of unrelated acts of violence and warned law enforcement agencies across the country that black activists protesting police violence posed a threat to them.”<sup>62</sup>

Additionally, I think it could be argued that Federal law enforcement already has substantial legal authorities to pursue the terrorism under discussion today, if they would only apply those powers. A domestic terrorism statute is not necessary. As former FBI agent Mike German has repeatedly pointed out, there are already “57 different Federal criminal statutes that the [Federal criminal] code calls ‘Federal crimes of terrorism.’ Fifty-one of them apply to cases the Federal Government designates ‘domestic terrorism.’”<sup>63</sup> These already broad authorities make it questionable that more are needed.

The issue appears not to be a lack of legal authorities but rather an unwillingness by law enforcement to use its authorities against right-wing extremism in the same way it does with other forms of extremism. A recent study by Type Investigations of multiple domestic terrorist attacks came to this conclusion about priorities when it comes to interrupting plots: “[L]aw enforcement priorities remain skewed. The

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/europe/germany-sees-right-wing-extremism-top-security-threat>.

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-49088293>.

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/law-crime/2020/03/21/right-wing-terrorism-the-rise-australia/15847092009572>.

<sup>57</sup> [https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CTED\\_Trends\\_Alert\\_Extreme\\_Right-Wing\\_Terrorism.pdf](https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CTED_Trends_Alert_Extreme_Right-Wing_Terrorism.pdf).

<sup>58</sup> <https://maxrose.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=2480>.

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.Congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/3106>.

<sup>60</sup> <https://homeland.house.gov/news/legislation/chairman-thompson-committee-democrats-introduce-legislation-to-bolster-domestic-terrorism-data-transparency-and-research>.

<sup>61</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/10/06/the-fbi-has-identified-a-new-domestic-terrorist-threat-and-its-black-identity-extremists/>.

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/new-domestic-terrorism-laws-are-unnecessary-fighting-white-nationalists>.

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.justsecurity.org/61876/laws-needed-domestic-terrorism/>.

database shows that during the first 3 years, 2017–2019, cases involving Islamist extremists were preempted 18 times, compared with 7 completed attacks, or 72 percent . . . In contrast, a minority of right-wing extremist cases were preempted—18, compared with 30 realized attacks, or 37.5 percent.”<sup>64</sup> The study further finds law enforcement still doesn’t see White supremacy and anti-Government extremism as the serious threat it is.

I would recommend extensive study of the potential unintended consequences to marginalized communities and civil and human rights violations before further employing that FTO label for White supremacy and before enhancing the powers of Federal law enforcement with a new domestic terrorism statute. We cannot solve the White supremacist terrorism problem by violating citizen’s rights.

Finally, sensible gun control measures would help keep guns out of extremists’ hands.

Mr. ROSE. I thank all the witnesses for their extraordinary testimony.

I will remind the subcommittee Members that they each have 5 minutes to question the panel.

I now recognize myself for questions.

So I want to try to move away all the noise and get a sense from you, where do you measure this threat against jihadist fundamentalism right now? What is the worst-case scenario? Where do you see this potentially going if we do not act?

Mr. Donahue, let’s start with you.

Mr. DONOHUE. So, clearly, from my testimony, I raised the comparisons between violent jihadi recruitment and the techniques that were used to motivate people to violence. That is certainly true here. What we have seen is the motivation to violence can happen in any moment.

The concern that we have is that that violence and triggering the events that have happened across the United States and, as Heidi had mentioned before, even in Christchurch go to show that the power of what is happening on-line and the power of the messages are so virulent that they make sense to certain people.

That is where we need to have the ability to have visibility into those networks and the people who are motivated to violence.

Mr. ROSE. Dr. Beirich.

Ms. BEIRICH. My biggest concerns are essentially two-fold: No. 1, what J.J. described, which is this kind-of incendiary situation that you find at the recent protests, where she rightly said people are heavily armed, easily triggered. We have already seen police officers shot dead and plots against protesters, as happened in Las Vegas.

But mass-casualty attacks, like we saw in El Paso and Pittsburgh and Poway—and the list could go on, and this is an international problem—is what I am most concerned about.

The White supremacists who have come to believe that they need to use terrorism, violence to bring down systems of Government—multicultural democracies, basically—to stop a White genocide, that has motivated most of the big mass-casualty attacks. That motivation is not going to go away, because demographics are shifting in much of the Western world, and that is what they view as a threat.

If we don’t intercept how this propaganda is spread on mainstream platforms, where it allows for recruiting, I am just afraid

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.typeinvestigations.org/investigation/2020/07/09/domestic-terror-in-the-age-of-trump/>.

that the next Christchurch could be around the corner anywhere, here or abroad.

Mr. ROSE. Thank you.

Ms. MacNab.

Ms. MACNAB. I think we are facing an uphill battle here. You have social media platforms where people can basically push propaganda, they recruit, they are actively recruiting younger male members. But then, from that point on, they move into private groups. Then, from there, they move into places like Discord. From there, they cherry-pick who they think are serious actors and they move into someplace like Signal.

Trying to police this I think would be impossible. If you got rid of, you know, the bigger groups, the bigger propaganda things on Facebook, you would put a dent in it.

I don't think there is a large risk of these groups ever coming together and forming a private army, but I am very concerned with small-cell terrorism. I think, as I put in my earlier testimony, that protesters are at risk, police officers are at risk, and possibly infrastructure. I know that, in Las Vegas, one of their plots was to take down the grid, the power grid, during a protest so that they could then fire on protesters, bomb protesters, and the chaos would be horrible because it would be pitch-dark.

So I think mass casualty is an issue. I don't think it is going to be large-scale. I don't think it will be coordinated too much into cities. But I think the possibility for someone to have learned, for example, from the Las Vegas shooter, getting up high and shooting down into a crowd, is a very big concern.

Mr. ROSE. Thank you.

Mr. Walker, you are up, my friend.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you, sir.

I want to start with Mr. Donahue, if I could, please.

With over 3 decades of NYPD experience, you are uniquely qualified to talk about why law enforcement is a common target of violent extremist groups.

Can you add to the testimony you have already provided about why this is the case, the impact it has on law enforcement, and how the current environment is impacting law enforcement and their families?

Mr. DONOHUE. Thank you very much, Ranking Member Walker.

So, in addition to what I had said in my prepared remarks and in my testimony, the effect and impact on law enforcement, obviously, is great. What we have seen are the attacks directly—to be sensational, to indicate—the true intention is to attack the most visible arm of Government, which is police. That impact on law enforcement, over the last month-and-a-half or so, has been dramatic.

There is always a concern both from a tiring out, from a—how can they continue to respond to repeated negative attacks on law enforcement, whether just the physical or the emotional toll that winds up taking place with police officers and sheriffs around the country due to those long hours and being exposed repeatedly to the negative media attention that is played on it.

The reason I said is because we—“we,” police officers, sheriffs, law enforcement—are the most visible representatives of the Gov-

ernment, and we always look to be as an arm of whomever is being protested against.

Mr. WALKER. Yes.

Mr. DONOHUE. Most importantly, it is against the police.

Mr. WALKER. Yes.

Mr. Donahue, you had mentioned upcoming research on left-wing groups and anarchists. Is there anything you can tell us about this work? Specifically, are you looking at violence and destruction linked to the various militia groups or militia extremists that have occurred over the past few months?

Mr. DONOHUE. So I don't want to tip my hand before the research is complete, but I said what I said in my written remarks and in my testimony, that there has been an exponential growth in both far-left and anarchist social media participation that is anti-police and anti-Government.

Mr. WALKER. All right.

My question—I want to go to, I believe it is Ms. MacNab. You warned or cautioned or worried about, I believe was your terminology, for gun legislation—if any gun legislation was passed or if the election did not reelect President Trump, you were concerned, I guess, of various different levels of civil unrest. You might have even used, like, a “war in the streets.”

Is that just something you are seeing from your research or just your concern? Can you unpack that for me a little bit?

Ms. MACNAB. Sure.

Those are two different issues, gun control and the reelection of President Trump.

Gun control has been a hot issue for anti-Government extremism for decades. That has always been a concern. It was one of the factors that pushed McVeigh to move forward, was a restriction on assault rifles. It is just a hot button. It is one of the very few things they can all agree on. It is one of the very few things that can bring them all together.

There was some proposed legislation in Virginia, at the beginning of the year, and a gun rally to protest it. Ordinarily, a rally with guns is going to draw 200 to 500 people. This particular rally brought in 22,000. It is a hot issue.

Most gun owners are not violent; most gun owners are not extremists. But there are a number in the anti-Government extremist world who talk about, if this is going to happen, I am going to unleash.

The election of President Trump is a second issue. You know, a lot of these guys have been very pleased with Trump. They support him. You can see the MAGA hats and the Trump signs. They want him to continue. They have talked about civil war now for years if he does not continue.

Mr. WALKER. Yes. Thank you for—I didn't know if there was anything recent that you had seen that would expedite some of this.

All of your testimony touched on the direct targeting of law enforcement by extremists. How can we, as a society and Government, best show support for law enforcement as they face the challenge? What, maybe, additional training tools and authorities do they need?



I would like to start with Ms. Beirich, if I could, please.

Ms. BEIRICH. Sure.

I mean, first of all, we should understand that these movements, the militias and so on, have for years been targeting law enforcement. They have killed dozens of law enforcement officials across the United States.

So that has to be understood, that law enforcement is viewed as the arm of the Government and it is, sort-of, the first-line level of attack. So cops are in a very precarious position when it comes to these movements. We should understand that, and we should support what the difficult work is that you have to do here and the threats that law enforcement face. After all, 2 law enforcement officers were killed out in California recently during the racial-justice protests and targeted by these “Boogaloo boi” folks.

So that is first off.

I think that, when it comes to law enforcement dealing with these threats, there needs to be a lot of study of enhancing authorities for them.

You know, there are a lot of people out there who are calling for a domestic terrorism statute, for example, proposals, including from the Chairman here, about applying the “foreign terrorist organization” designation to international White supremacist networks that would then allow law enforcement to use a whole lot of other tools than they do right now to combat this threat. I think these are avenues that should be investigated.

I do worry deeply about the civil rights implications if those tools aren’t used in the right way. That is why, in my written testimony, I talked about the need for study. But I think these things should be discussed and on the table.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to yield back since I am over the time. If we have time, I will come back and get the answers or responses from our other panelists. Thank you.

Mr. ROSE. Thank you, Mr. Walker.

I now recognize the Chairman of the full committee, Chairman Thompson.

Thank you for your extraordinary leadership on this issue.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Chairman Rose.

I thank the witnesses for their expert testimony also.

One of the challenges that we have been working with is, how do we get the various platforms to assume an enhanced responsibility for managing content, respecting civil rights and civil liberties.

But some of the things that we see being pushed out further enhances the militias and other extremists to carry forth their message. I guess I want each witness to kind-of—to what extent should we hold those companies responsible for the content that is pushed out on their various platforms?

Chief, if you want to start off with it, and then we will go to Ms. Beirich and then to Ms. MacNab.

Mr. DONOHUE. Thank you very much for the question.

Enhanced responsibility for social media companies, it is interesting when you link that up. Obviously, in my prepared testimony,

I speak about the value of the power of the social media platforms to serve as an opportunity to share ideas and free speech.

But they have dollarized it. The speech that is being shared on a number of social media platforms obviously goes to provoke the assaults that we are seeing taking place on law enforcement and jeopardizing others that are not involved in the protests.

I think the extent to which social media companies have been placed into positions to monitor that speech and to ask their communities, the social media community itself, to help police what is on the platforms has gone somewhat in the right direction. However, it is a game of whack-a-mole.

For each of those types of extremist speech and/or videos that you see being shown and memes being shown, altering the content of what other people are saying and amplifying negative messages really becomes a complication.

I think part of it is really empowering the communities that are on the platforms themselves, in coordination with the companies, to police them internally. It is not a question of whether police, law enforcement, can do that. That is not possible. As diffuse as the internet is and as diffuse as the number of people—as varied as the people are that are using it, it has to fall a little bit on them as well as the companies.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you.

Dr. Beirich.

Ms. BEIRICH. Yes, I should have mentioned in my oral testimony your plan for a commission to look into this. I apologize.

Look, you know, the process that has gone on here for too long now is civil rights organizations screaming and yelling and criticizing the tech companies in public and then having sort of incremental moves to improve the situation when it comes to White supremacy. I believe that it is going to take a lot more than that to really clean these companies up.

I mean, if Facebook can submit itself to a civil rights audit, which then finds that it still has major problems on this front as well as others, then this strategy, you know, as much as it has brought the companies along a little ways, isn't enough.

I would suggest that Congress call the tech companies to account for what is in their terms of service and how they are enforcing those terms of service. Because, at this point, most of them claim not to monetize hate content, not to host, you know, a lot of aspects of White supremacy, and yet we keep finding it and we keep finding it and we keep finding it, so much that Facebook was found to have dozens and dozens of neo-Nazi bands on the system recently.

So I would suggest that it is time for Congress to use its investigative powers in some way to call the companies to account, ask them about their procedures, what they are doing, how they do it.

The Raise the Bar Act is, as I understand it, you know, modeled very much on what the European Union has done here, which is create monitoring exercises where outside actors look at what is going on with hate content and reports are created by the European Commission that are then used to push the tech companies to do better. Something like that would be good.

Just one last note of caution. It really shouldn't be up to civil rights organizations that are small and underfunded to have to play this role in our society. It is just simply asking too much.

Thank you.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you.

Ms. MacNab.

Ms. MACNAB. I am going to second that.

One problem is, these organizations chase the news. So, if there is a sudden influx of news about the Boogaloos, then Facebook comes in and does a purge of some of the more violent Boogaloo groups. The problem is, the news doesn't often know what is going on in private groups, in direct messages, and even some of the public pages.

I have spent a lot of time developing, you know, contacts in this world so that I can get into their private groups. What they post is shockingly bad, but because the news is not in these private groups, they don't report it, so Facebook just lets it fester. And I am just using Facebook as an example; there are other social media groups.

But when there is a violent event, the first place I go is Facebook to see who is responding, who is claiming credit, who is laughing about it, who is saying, oh, they did that wrong, we can do better, you know, let's get the kill rate up. I am going to go to Facebook first and foremost.

The Boogaloo movement, for example, isn't really a movement. It is a dress code, it is a way of talking, it is jargon. The people who belong to it came from other extremist groups, usually on Facebook. They might have been militia, they might have been, you know, a White supremacy that—you know, they picked it up somewhere and donned that Hawaiian shirt, and yet they are treated as a separate movement. The problem is, you are ignoring the underlying areas that they came from.

You know, Oath Keepers has a page with 551,000 followers. They say some pretty violent things in the comments. I can report this to Facebook, and I have never had one deleted. I have had, you know, death threats on Facebook that were quite explicit. Again, I can report them, and nothing happens. Unless there is a lot of attention paid to the social media company, they don't really have any incentive to do anything at all.

So it is not really up to civil rights groups or even the news to be able to monitor all of these things. So there has to be some external group, some committee, some something that can keep an eye on it.

Mr. THOMPSON. Well, we are looking at that. Chairman Rose is kind-of taking the leadership on this.

It is real concerning on our part, because, as you said, Chief Donahue, and others, you know, as long as I am making money off this product, it is hard to pull it back.

Chairman Rose, if you remember, we asked a simple question about, how much of your revenue stream is devoted to managing content? It was almost like, I don't believe you asked that question. You know, it is like—and all we are trying to do is—if you are serious about it, then you speak with your resources.

So I think, without having Government come in and just run a private business, I think we have an obligation to the public to make sure that these companies just can't monetize hate and other things and claim free speech as the reason they are not doing anything.

So thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. You have been gracious with your time. I yield back.

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

We now recognize Ms. Slotkin of Michigan.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Great. Thanks for having this hearing. I appreciate it.

I am from mid-Michigan, and the issue of extremism and hate groups, instances and incidents with those hate groups has been on the rise. Just very recently, from the coronavirus lockdown, we have had significant, repeated protests in my district in Lansing, Michigan, protesting on, sort-of, all sides, both protesting the lockdown that our Governor has put in place but also protesting in response to the killing of George Floyd. We have seen a four-fold increase in the State of Michigan in the past year-and-a-half in instances of hate, whether it is graffiti, violence, et cetera, et cetera.

You know, one of the things that I am concerned about is, since the lockdown started, we have seen the presence of a number of groups—we have 27 hate groups that are present in the State of Michigan. One of them that has been, I think, on the rise is the Proud Boys.

I was wondering maybe, Chief Donahue, if you could speak to this group in any way. They are putting, sort-of, signs on top of their cars. They are wearing vests that indicate "Proud Boys." I think there is a discussion here in the district about whether they are a hate group, but could you just talk to us about that group and what you know about them?

Mr. DONOHUE. So I would have to defer. I do not know the Proud Boys group specifically, so perhaps one of my fellow panelists do.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Ms. Beirich.

Ms. BEIRICH. Sure. I would be happy to talk about the Proud Boys. While I was working at the Southern Poverty Law Center, we added that organization to our list of hate groups, largely on the basis of very ugly anti-Muslim thinking.

Look, the Proud Boys, in some ways, are a forerunner to the kind of activism we are seeing in the Boogaloo bois, right? It is a group, it is pretty militant, a lot of inside jokes, a certain particular kind of look. You are right, they are showing up at places like these protest movements, and they are something to be concerned about.

I will just say that the Canadian military, just this week, banned its members from being part of the Proud Boys. So that maybe gives you a sense of how seriously another Government views the organization.

But I will say—and see if J.J. agrees with me, but I really think that the problem right now for the violence seems to be from Boogaloo folks, people connected to that. I think there have been, like, 7 different plots involving them, 6 or 7—I might be a little off—involving Boogaloo bois that could have led to a pretty terrible situation, like what they might have pulled off in Las Vegas. So I would focus on them more.

Ms. SLOTKIN. So then, Ms. MacNab, I mean, very specifically, we had a March 31 protest in front of a Lansing Police location. It was in response to the George Floyd murder, but there was a number of armed men in Hawaiian shirts who showed up at that protest. We didn't have any incidents, but they were photographed at the scene.

Can you talk to unpack a little bit more about the Boogaloo bois and what we, kind-of, can expect, since we have seen what we think are folks on the ground here?

Ms. MACNAB. Sure.

The problem with the Boogaloo bois is they are not a cohesive movement. You could have Boogaloo bois that are White supremacists and want to harm the George Floyd protestors. You can also have Boogaloo bois—and this is actually the larger group—that are anti-police, not racist, and they are siding with the protesters at the George Floyd protests. You could actually, in a really bizarre world, have 2 Boogaloo groups shooting at each other.

So just being able to see the Hawaiian shirt, you can't really prejudge why that person is there and what they want to accomplish.

Ms. SLOTKIN. OK.

Then back to Chief Donahue, if you could just talk—you know, I held an event in my district with the local FBI and our attorney general because of the rise of incidents of hate in Michigan generally and in my district. They talked about this ladder of escalation, that you see these groups, sort-of, talking on-line, and then maybe there is graffiti and nonviolent incidents, and how we step up that ladder.

Can you talk about trends that we have seen, in the very little time that I have left, on that?

Mr. DONOHUE. Sure. Certainly.

So, in my prepared testimony, I talk a little bit about how people are recruited on-line. What we are talking about is the viral nature of memes that people on-line are creating and sharing but then when people modify and shift their dialog from what was something that may have been an inside joke or something that is funny and then start showing things that are more violent.

I can talk to specific instances more recently, in the more recent protests, where police were involved. There used to be some terms—"ACAB" is one of them. But then that turned into, on viral memes, about how do you turn that into something that shows even more violence. One of them was—the term itself means "all cops are bastards." But there were memes that were then turned into police cars on fire, and the term was morphed, in that meme, to "as crispy as bacon."

So you can see how the terminology, the visuals of the more recent unrest go toward modifying and amplifying a message of violence. That is how that happens.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I am out of time.

Mr. ROSE. Thank you, Ms. Slotkin.

We will now do a second round of questioning.

We will start off by recognizing Ms. Jackson Lee from the great State of Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I thank you so very much, Mr. Chairman. I am out in the field. I am sorry that—I hope you can hear me and see me. We are suffering from being in a epicenter now, something you have experienced, of COVID-19. But this is a very important hearing, and I thank you so very much for holding it with Mr. Thompson.

We have seen these kinds of intrusions in the opposition to the Vietnam War and a number of other incidents that we have indulged in.

So I am interested in asking all of the witnesses if they would tell me, what would be the ultimate results of not dealing with these fringe groups who can characterize important protests, where people are protesting from their heart and from their belief in this country, from their belief in democracy, from their belief in peaceful change—what would be the plight of the Nation without addressing these particular elements directly? When I say “directly,” legislative fixes, continuous oversight like this committee is doing.

I would ask each witness to provide me their response. I particularly speak about Boogaloo and Proud Boys and other groups that have been known to do this in other eras of the history of the United States.

Mr. Donohue, we will start with you.

Mr. DONOHUE. Certainly.

The end result is—we all believe in Constitutional democracy and our republic, and the ability to protest with righteous rage is important. But this is petitioning the Government. What we are seeing—and I believe my fellow panelists have been very candid in saying that what we are seeing is violence that is coming out of peaceful protests or being usurped at peaceful protests, where people are petitioning the Government for the right types of change, for accelerationist purposes.

That is what—you can have a fine discussion, as I said before, about your Constitutional rights when there are tens of thousands of people protesting. But we need to have that ability preserved. But civility is the thing that we need to have at protests. That is lacking in many instances when we have accelerationists show up with guns, intent on violence and intent on occupation, whereas the righteous rage that is shown so that we can have change in Government where it is appropriate, as opposed to violent revolution, is what we are talking about. That is where police become, you know, kind-of straight in the headlights.

You know, we need to learn from our past, we need to learn from our mistakes. We need to move beyond that. There is a path forward, but it is not through violent insurrection.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Ms. Beirich. Hello?

Ms. BEIRICH. Yes, thank you.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Dr. Beirich.

Ms. BEIRICH. Yes.

If we don't do something to address the spread of this material on-line, the rise of these movements, whether that is with law enforcement enhancements, research, oversight, et cetera, I think that what we are facing is essentially more mass terrorist attacks like we saw in El Paso at the Walmart, not just here in the United States but probably in other countries, because White supremacy

is flourishing abroad; we are going to see more rise in hate crimes, much like we have seen during this pandemic, as hate speech has been flown against Asians and Jews in relationship to COVID-19, and the number of attacks on these populations has risen; we are going to see more terrorists taking advantage of current conditions, whether that is directly targeting protesters, which has already happened. Also, cops have been killed by members of these extremist movements.

But there are other scary things happening, like neo-Nazis from groups like The Base or Atomwaffen who claim that they are going to use people who are infected with COVID to infect others. I mean, this is a really scary thing.

There is a huge amount of people, unfortunately, who do not accept multiracial, multicultural democracies and don't like these systems and don't like our changing demographics, and they are willing to use violence to stop it.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you.

Mr. Donohue.

Mr. DONOHUE. I went first.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I am sorry.

Ms. MacNab.

Ms. MACNAB. Not a problem.

My biggest fear is that there will be acts of terrorism at active protest places that will put a damper on people willing to go there. It will make people afraid to actually go into the streets and protest. That is terrible for our system of democracy.

I am also afraid that, as I mentioned in my oral testimony, that we are coming up on a street war. There are way too many guns at large protest events held by people with very differing views. There is a lot of paranoia. Some people bring it as a defensive mechanism; some people bring it as an aggressive one. You never know who is who until the shooting starts. I am terrified that there is going to be a shootout at one or more of these events, and that, too, will put a damper on future protests. That is a dreadful situation.

It is very difficult to stop the flow of these groups. It is very difficult to stop them from speaking, because they, too, have a voice. But there is no counter-voice. You know, we shouldn't be waiting to see if a Homeland Security research memo is leaked before we know what the Government's view is on these groups. I would like to see some sort of public papers put out talking about who the groups are, how they are dangerous, who they target. Right now, I just comb through the leaks as they come out, looking for information. That should be public record, that should be public information.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, just one quick question to Dr. Beirich very quickly.

This has been important information. What I got from this is that domestic intelligence is important, positively, to inform us to be able to protect our citizens.

Dr. Beirich, we have seen homeowners stand in front of their homes with guns, misinterpreting protesters. How deep should we begin to assess hate speech and attitudes legislatively?

We did a hate-crimes bill some many years ago. I think we need to modernize our perception of how we interact so that different groups are not demonized.

I am asking Dr. Beirich this question.

Ms. BEIRICH. Sure.

Well, I mean, obviously, you know, these people, whose views I find repugnant, have, you know, First Amendment rights. But I do think, as I said earlier, that Congress has oversight responsibility to find out what the heck is going on in the social media world on this front.

If companies are allowed to write their own terms of service, it seems to me that our Government has a right to find out whether they are being enforced, how they are enacted. Because we don't live in the same world where, if somebody said terrible things about Black people or Jews or Muslims, that voice only carried to a few other people. Now, millions of people are potentially the target.

We know that young White males have been sucked into the ranks of these movements, some of them eventually committing mass violence, because of the proliferation on-line. So that is where it has to start. Somebody needs to pressure the companies, because for all the [inaudible].

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, the Ranking Member, and the Chairman of the full committee. I yield back. Thank you for this courtesy, and thank you for this hearing. It is very important.

Mr. ROSE. Thank you, Ms. Jackson Lee, for your extraordinary leadership on this issue.

We will now recognize Mr. Walker for a second round of questions.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you, Mr. Rose, Chairman.

This is to all the panel, if we can have some quick responses here.

In various ways, each of you highlight the importance of tracking extremist content and imminent violence on social media. I know that is something that has been important to the Chairman as well. Mr. Donohue calls for the creation of a social media NORAD version of something.

Can you further explain what type of access and authorities you think the Government or individual law enforcement agencies should have to track certain social media posts? Do you think they have sufficient authority to do this now?

We will work left to right, no pun intended.

Ms. MacNab, can we start with you?

Ms. MACNAB. I hesitate to give police more authority to monitor and review, you know, the things said by citizens. It is just—it is a problem area. It can be abused.

Unfortunately, we are still on this left/right idea, whereas we should be looking at this as violent fringe. I think police have a little bit of a blind spot for right-wing that they don't have for left. I think they need to be looking at right-wing even more than left at this moment, because that is where the violence is.

Mr. WALKER. Can you unpack that for me just a little bit more, when you said they have a blind spot?



Ms. MACNAB. Look at any video of a street protest, for example, in Portland or in Seattle. You have a line of police officers separating left-wing protesters and right-wing protesters. If you watch, the police officers have their back to heavily-armed people standing behind them and they are facing left-wing, with the assumption that left-wing is what is going to harm them, whereas the people standing behind them have some pretty rabid anti-police ideas as well.

There are a number of police officers, for example, with Three Percent tattoos or wearing Oath Keepers patches. These are extremist groups. Police need to be aware that some of these extremist groups want to kill them. That is unfortunately not really coming through.

As I said, there needs to be a counter-voice on a lot of this. There needs to be information coming out of Homeland Security or FBI—I don't know what—that explains, these are the violent groups, these are what they are capable of, so that police have some ability to discern, you know, right-wing protesters from right-wing extremists.

Mr. WALKER. OK.

Ms. MACNAB. It is a problem.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you.

Ms. Beirich.

Ms. BEIRICH. Sure.

So I spent the better part of my 20 years in 2 different—you know, a Republican administration and then a Democratic administration trying to convince Federal law enforcement that the threat from right-wing extremists should not be abandoned.

Of course, after 9/11, people were horrifically concerned about al-Qaeda, now ISIS. That is still important. But looking at right-wing extremism was essentially dropped. In fact, there was a division at DHS of people who created intel on right-wing extremism that was shut down in the early years of the Obama administration.

So I think it would be very helpful to find out exactly what the Federal Government is doing and exactly what authorities they have when it comes to right-wing extremism.

Mr. WALKER. Yes, if I could interrupt just a second there, I didn't mention—I just said tracking extremist content and imminent violence on social media as a whole, whether it is from the left or the right, as far as what kind of tools or access authorities should have in doing so.

Do you have anything to speak to that?

Ms. BEIRICH. Yes. Well, the reason I am saying this is because the facts are right now that right-wing extremism is the bigger problem. If we were talking about the 1960's, I would not debate whether there was mass left-wing violence.

So I just think that the focus has to be there. That is where the deaths are coming from. It could change tomorrow, but right now that is the problem, and that is what needs to be battled, in terms of the on-line space.

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Donohue.

Mr. DONOHUE. Yes. I think no side—and I hate to use that as the example, but no one along the spectrum has a monopoly on hate and a monopoly on violence.

I think there are authorities that exist within the Federal Government. There are the Attorney General guidelines on domestic intelligence. There is the FBI's Domestic Intelligence Operations Guide. I believe, in my former position in the NYPD, we are under Federal court monitorship for the types of intelligence investigations, intelligence gathering that we have engaged in in the past and where, as I have said in my prepared testimony, there has been overreach.

Having been an intelligence officer, I understand the importance of it and how it can help prevent violence and injury and death. The fact is, as we have seen in more recent protests, Molotov cocktails being thrown at police officers and high-ranking police officials being beaten over the head, sustaining serious injuries, we know that there is no one side.

In fact, when you look at the events that happened in California, with the deaths that you mentioned earlier of the 2 Federal agents and sheriff's deputies, are incredibly painful for law enforcement to see.

We need to have the support through DHS and their intelligence training and authorities at the Regional Intelligence Center level. You mentioned from my written testimony about the NORAD-type trusted brokering that I was talking about. We should have more conversations about that. Because that is understanding that entire sphere of what is happening on the cyber-social domain, specifically when it comes to violence.

Mr. WALKER. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Donohue.

I know the DHS is expanding programs, hiring new people. I am encouraged by all these activities. Maybe, Mr. Chairman, at some point, we could do an in-person hearing to maybe get an update on some of that work.

But thank you again. I see my time has expired on one question, but they were strong answers. I appreciate it, and I will yield back.

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Walker, I completely agree that that is something that we should absolutely pursue.

It is clear that extremism is now threatening the lives of our law enforcement officials across the country. Notice I say "extremism." Again, you and I have made a commitment—and I respect you, Mr. Walker, for this—to not politicize our efforts. Extremism is also affecting people's Constitutional rights to congregate and be heard. This extremism is undeniably amplified and put on steroids by social media.

So my question is this, very simply, to our witnesses, and we will start with Ms. MacNab: If Congress does not do anything to crack down on what is happening across the spectrum, are we putting the lives of law enforcement officials and law-abiding Americans unnecessarily at risk?

Ms. MacNab, we will start with you.

Ms. MACNAB. The answer is yes. Whether it is long-term remains to be seen. It may just be the groups build and build and build and build without any dampening effect, and they engage in random acts of violence at protests or whatever, and then they may burn out. But the long term is unknown.

Short term, I think we are looking at mass casualties. It could be 3, it could be 50, it could be—who knows? It could be protesters,

it could be cops, it could be press, it could be medical workers. It could be anybody. As long as there is chaos, these groups will thrive, and so they will do what they have to do to bring chaos to the situation.

So, yes, I think if you do nothing, people will die.

Mr. ROSE. Dr. Beirich.

Ms. BEIRICH. I agree with J.J. I think if you do nothing to try to stop the trends that are leading to all this proliferating, especially in the on-line space, we are going to have exactly what J.J. described.

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Donohue.

Mr. DONOHUE. It is very clear that the tactics and the rhetoric is being turned up. As I said in my prepared remarks, we are watching, and we need to acknowledge, which this hearing is doing, that we need to preserve civil society, and I believe Congress needs to act.

Mr. ROSE. I think politicians often get lost in minutia. We have here a group of experts that have bipartisan support in terms of their stature and expertise, and they are unanimous in the fact that, if we do not act as Congress to address the rampant increase in extremism and militia activity in America and the ways in which their activity is amplified on social media, if we do not gather the courage to act, law enforcement officials and law-abiding Americans will die. So, now, when and if that happens, we have no excuse.

So I sincerely hope we can be able to put hyper-politics aside and act together to figure out how we can do something. I am not the sharpest tool in the shed, but if something is to be signed into law, Democrats and Republicans have to agree on something.

So, with that, we will go on to Ms. Slotkin for another round of questioning.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Thank you, Chairman.

Mr. Donohue, Chief Donohue, I just wanted to continue the line of questioning I had in my first question.

You, as a, you know, high-ranking police officer, a chief for many, many years, this ladder of escalation, you talked about it on the internet, right, and how something goes from, you know, maybe an inside joke to more extreme on the internet. But for the people of mid-Michigan, can you talk about that ladder of escalation when it hops off the internet and starts to become vandalism, harassment, and then potentially violence?

We know that some of these examples you all have talked about, of Poway, that there is a ladder, there is a road that people travel before they perpetrate real violence, and for any extremist. I was just hoping you could walk us through what that looks like, kind-of in a tick-tock way.

Mr. DONOHUE. I think it probably defies a logical order.

The NIJ, a couple years back, produced a report that identified the potential risk factors from radicalization to violent extremism. It was written in the context of the experiences from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada for people who were seeking to support violent extremism abroad.

I don't want to say that I am a social scientist. These are examples that other experts have weighed in on. But certainly, among

them, what you can see are people who have a desire for status or who want to belong, for people who desire action or adventure, people that have serious grievances, that feel under threat and have an us-versus-them attitude, those all are part of that toxic stew that can—can, can, not necessarily—

Ms. SLOTKIN. Of course.

Mr. DONOHUE [continuing]. But can contribute to radicalization and violence.

Where people—parents, community members, members of their faith, and potentially people on the on-line community—can help support identifying those who are moving from just mere radicalization of thoughts to motivation to extremism and violence.

As we have said before in our prepared testimony, that time frame, specifically, with what happened at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, that murderous rampage literally went from a web posting moments before entering, going in and conducting those murders. Posted on-line, “Screw your optics, I am going in,” and then proceeded to. So the time frame from left of action to right of action is very, very short. It requires observation from many.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Great. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. ROSE. Thank you, Ms. Slotkin.

We will now move on to Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I want to follow my line of questioning that I had previously.

Dr. Beirich, I believe it is important for the Government to have, as part of its actions, expanded resources and understanding to mitigate some of the intense dangers that have been evidenced in this hearing.

I take, for example, what Mr. Donohue just said about the email or the social media right before the synagogue heinous killing. I also know that Black Lives Matter and the movement is a civil rights movement. It is a generational movement that has drawn the attention of the Nation. Sixty-seven percent of the American public—not Black, not Latinx, not White, but all Americans—understand Black Lives Matter.

So, as we go into the election, social media, lack of understanding, and lack of presence in the Government looking at these accelerators can interfere with the election, can be dangerous for people going to vote, in order to provoke something catastrophic.

What is your response to the importance of the Government using resources, understanding, and being able to know where these accelerants are as we move into this very difficult time and very important time in democracy?

Ms. BEIRICH. Well, I think that is a very important point you are making. The racial-justice movements, the Black Lives Matter movement is a particular target of these organizations. Obviously, you know, if you are a White supremacist, you don't care for racial justice and these are people who you want to stop from expressing their views and reforming American democracy in a positive direction.

The Government needs to be paying attention to this. The fusion centers, law enforcement investigative agencies, and so on need to

be watching these movements very, very carefully, monitoring where they are getting into violence in the on-line space. They need to be working with academics and others who study these movements to keep on top of these trends.

I feel strongly that the Government needs to bring some oversight to the on-line space to sort-of pressure the companies to be better on this front. They claim to be taking this kind of material down, and yet it keeps popping up.

So I think those are all very important things. You are going to have to really be on it in the months leading up to the election. If you remember, in 2018, there were 4 terrorist attacks in a month, including the Tree of Life Synagogue attack, in just a few weeks. We could be facing something like this coming up as we approach November.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you.

Ms. MacNab, Dr. Beirich is right in terms of the actions in 2018, which allows certain candidates to really take advantage of the divide that is going on or attempting to be going on in this country.

The Second Amendment has been used as an instigator to divide people. No one has challenged the Second Amendment, in my knowledge, in the U.S. Congress since I have served, meaning to amend the Constitution.

Ms. MacNab, what role does guns have and the provoking of the Second Amendment, along with the potential of hate speech, have in potentially impacting the elections as we are going forward?

My question, again, to you: How important it is for the Government resources and understanding to be played into this, as well as a real response to gun-safety laws that have been promoted.

Ms. MacNab.

Ms. MACNAB. My apologies, but I have lost my connection for about the last 5 minutes, and I am just logging back in.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. What role would guns play in the approaching elections with accelerationists, the provoking of the Second Amendment, meaning using the Second Amendment as an excuse against people who really want just gun safety—all of these issues provoking what we would want to be peaceful elections in 2020, but accelerationists would use these components to disrupt elections?

What I said before is, there were terrorist acts during the 2018 election, obviously skewing people to believe you needed a gun-toting advocate, law and order, to win as opposed to someone who wants to bring the Nation together. But what does that do in adding to the accelerationist approach to disrupting peaceful demonstrations?

Ms. MACNAB. Guns bring power—power that an ordinary person would not otherwise have. Some people are abusing that power. They are using guns to intimidate, and, in the worst-case scenario, they will use their guns to kill.

It is not just guns. The Boogaloos who were arrested from Las Vegas also brought an accelerant. They were planning on bombing people. Another recent arrest was a car bomb. Another one was a man who wanted to blow up a hospital with a car bomb.

So it is not just guns; it is just guns are visible, and they are very intimidating. If anything is going to cause protesters to be afraid to go out, it is the presence of a large armed group.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you very much for that testimony.

Mr. Chairman, I think it is clear that this hearing is vital for actions that should be taken, in particular dealing with the actions by the Government. They can't sit idly by. They can't be leaning and giving indication of one group over the other, particularly groups like Boogaloo and Proud Boys, over peaceful protesters.

Then [inaudible] indicated we wanted to try and have a town hall meeting of sorts dealing with particularly the Jewish community. I know that we are in COVID-19, but I look forward to moving on some of these issues, particularly before the November election. We have to make a very strong stand against these actions and these accelerationists.

So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. ROSE. Thank you, Ms. Jackson Lee.

It is clear that there is a massive intersection here between protecting our law enforcement officials, protecting the sincere rights of millions of people to be heard as they call for racial justice in this country, and protecting the rights of our Constitution to be upheld. That will definitely require real action on our part.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you. Protecting all Americans. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. ROSE. With that, I thank the witnesses for their valuable testimony and the Members for their questions.

The Members of the subcommittee may have additional questions for the witnesses, and we ask that you respond expeditiously in writing to those questions.

Without objection, the committee record shall be kept open for 10 days.

Hearing no further business, the subcommittee stands adjourned. [Whereupon, at 11:28 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

