

**Written Testimony of Elizabeth Neumann,
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**Before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security
Hearing on “Examining the Domestic Terrorism Threat in the Wake of the Attack on the
U.S. Capitol”**

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Introduction

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Katko, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for holding today’s hearing “Examining the Domestic Terrorism Threat in the Wake of the Attack on the U.S. Capitol.”

Before addressing the hearing topic, I want to thank this Committee for their support in the last Congress, during my tenure at DHS and thereafter, for working on a bi-partisan basis to support the expansion of prevention capabilities across the country. Many of the members of the last session of Congress continue on this Committee today – and because of their willingness to work with us – we were able to increase DHS funding for prevention efforts by over 1,200% in two fiscal years. That is unheard of in federal budgeting. Thank you. While my remarks today will not go into the details of prevention – I wanted to note for the record that I believe the plan we laid out in 2019 in the Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence, and what we began implementing, are a critical part of the set of solutions needed to address domestic terrorism.

The January 6, 2021 Attack on the Capitol Was Domestic Terrorism

I have spent my career immersed in homeland security-related government reforms – stemming from government failures, like the attacks of September 11, 2001, or the Hurricane Katrina response, as well as emerging threats. The security failure of January 6, 2021 is nearly incomprehensible for me. I believe the failure was not one of intelligence, but a failure of imagination born of a lack of judgment and preparation. I believe the investigation should be thorough and must make recommendations that ensure we never see such a security failure again.

While we can debate the merits of whether to call those that stormed the capitol “terrorists,” the attack on January 6 meets the definition of domestic terrorism as laid out

in U.S. Code at 18 U.S.C. 2331(5)¹: “Involving acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State; Appearing to be intended to: 1) Intimidate or coerce a civilian population; 2) Influence the policy of government by intimidation or coercion; or 3) Affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and 4) Occurring primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States.”

- A police officer was killed and 140 officers were injured – thus it was “dangerous to human life”;
- We see from the indictments that there are multiple “violations of criminal laws”;
- Based on video testimonials prior to, during, and after the attack – the motivation for many was to interrupt a Constitutionally mandated activity and “intimidate or coerce” the US Congress to change the outcome of the election of our President; and
- There is evidence, though we should wait for the investigations to conclude, that some of the attackers had prepared for assassinating, or taking hostage, Members of Congress and the Vice President.

The attacks may also meet other criminal statutory definitions, such as seditious conspiracy and treason, but we will leave that to the investigators and prosecutors to determine.

Framing the Radicalization to Extremism and Mobilization to Violence Process

While the radicalization process is not necessarily linear, I find it helps to use a linear framework to identify the different places individuals might be on the pathway to violence. During my time at DHS, we asked the RAND Corporation to help us identify where to head with our prevention efforts. A graphic they produced in the resulting study lays out the different stages of radicalization. I have included the graphic as Appendix A to this testimony for the Committee’s reference.

¹<https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/fbi-dhs-domestic-terrorism-definitions-terminology-methodology.pdf/view>

As the RAND Study on Practical Terrorism Prevention² explains, they used a “basic model to anchor their work,” which divides “people involved in radicalization processes into three relevant populations:

- Vulnerable population – i.e., all the people who might radicalize to violence
- Individuals who are radical of thought but may or may not become violent
- Individuals actually involved in attempted attacks (planning or actual carrying out of attacks).³

RAND explained that “each successive population is much smaller than the population preceding it, with only a small percentage of any vulnerable population radicalizing and only a percentage of that population escalating to violence.”⁴

Traditional counterterrorism efforts have focused on the third category - criminal activity that requires a law enforcement response to disrupt, investigate and prosecute. The first two categories of individuals concern government and the people because of their potential for moving to violence. Since they have not moved into criminal conduct, the government’s activities towards these individuals need to be framed differently than those in the third category.

RAND also noted that, “the model is not specific to any given ideology or population.”⁵ This latter point is notable. Yes, we need to understand the ideologies of violent white supremacists and anti-government extremists. In part because they may help us understand where the next attack may occur or the method they may use, and it may help law enforcement better detect associations with or activities of a particular extremist group. But many extremism experts note that the motivation to join terrorist movements tend to be less about the ideology and more about filling unmet needs caused by trauma, exposure to violence, a sense of marginalization, grievance or humiliation.⁶ This means,

² Jackson, Brian A., Ashley L. Rhoades, Jordan R. Reimer, Natasha Lander, Katherine Costello, and Sina Beaghley, *Practical Terrorism Prevention: Reexamining U.S. National Approaches to Addressing the Threat of Ideologically Motivated Violence*. Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center operated by the RAND Corporation, 2019. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2647.html. Also available in print form.

³ *Ibid.*, xix.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ This is the assessment of many that research extremism. For example, see: Miller-Idriss, Cynthia. *Hate in the Homeland: The New Global Far Right* (pp. 3). (2020). Princeton, NJ. Princeton University Press.
Picciolini, Christian. *Breaking Hate: Confronting the New Culture of Extremism* (pp. xxi-xxiii). (2020). New York, NY: Hachette Books.
An interview with Jessica Stern:
<http://www.bu.edu/articles/2021/jessica-stern-on-why-january-6-attack-on-capitol-was-act-of-terrorism/>

arguing with a white supremacist about why their ideology is wrong and disgusting, is not an effective de-mobilization or de-radicalization technique.

Participants in the January 6 Attack Represent a Different Kind of Extremism

It was clear even as the attack unfurled, that several organized violent extremist groups were present, including Neo-Nazis, Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, and Three Percenters. There were also less organized Groypers and QAnon adherents, along with unaffiliated individuals there to support Trump. The investigations are still underway and while there are some signs of coordination among some organized extremist groups, a study released this week from the University of Chicago found startling distinctions between those who have been indicted thus far for actions on January 6 and “traditional” domestic extremists.⁷ The indicted January 6th attackers have significantly less ties to organized extremist groups; about 10% of those arrested had ties compared to almost 50% of domestic extremists in the 2015-2020 period. January 6 attackers were also, on average, older and 40% owned businesses or held white collar jobs.

As we examine the current state of the threat and discuss what to do, we need to keep in mind that the threat that manifested on January 6 was likely aided by organized extremist movements, but it appears that a large majority that participated in criminal acts were unaffiliated with an organized group and primarily motivated by grievances created and amplified by the former President.

The Challenges of Addressing Domestic Terrorism

When I appeared at my last hearing a year ago this month, the challenges I highlighted related to scaling up DHS’ prevention and protection capabilities to address the threat of domestic terrorism. We were concerned about a growth in violent white supremacist and anti-government extremist groups and what we often call the “quick-radicalization” problem – the speed at which an individual can be exposed to extremist content and mobilize to violence. And the government was challenged by lack of good prevalence data. While those challenges remain, I believe the environment in which we approach domestic terrorism has become more exponentially more complicated.

⁷<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/02/the-capitol-rioters-arent-like-other-extremists/617895/>

1. The global COVID-19 pandemic increased social isolation and other stress factors known to increase radicalization.

Last March, while at DHS, I asked my team to research how pandemic mitigation efforts might exacerbate violent extremism. For decades, the Secret Service, the FBI, and academic researchers have examined the backgrounds and pre-attack behaviors of mass-attack perpetrators. Some of the risk factors of violent extremism they identified are increasing nationwide: social isolation, financial stress, job loss, loss of loved ones, and significant changes or uncertainty in life. My team assessed that some groups would perceive public health measures as government overreach infringing on rights and liberties, which might encourage anti-government extremists. And we had already observed foreign actors and domestic violent extremists spreading disinformation about the pandemic to foment discord and encourage violence.⁸

While we were frustrated that our warnings and recommendations for building resilience were not heeded by the previous Administration's COVID-19 Taskforce, they were included in the recently released [2020 Homeland Threat Assessment](#), which concluded: "Domestic Violent Extremists [present] the most persistent and lethal threat...Violent extremists will continue to target individuals or institutions that represent symbols of their grievances, as well as grievances based on political affiliation or perceived policy positions...The domestic situation surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic creates an environment that could accelerate some individuals' mobilization to targeted violence or radicalization to terrorism."

Three examples of this challenge:

- In the first months of the pandemic, Moonshot CVE studied the impact of mitigation measures on engagement with violent extremist content online. They found a 21% average increase in engagement with white supremacist content online in states with local "stay at home" directives in place for 10 or more days, compared to a 1% average increase in engagement in states with local "stay at home" directives in place for less than 10 days.⁹

⁸ Note: This paragraph originally appeared in my opinion piece published in the Washington Post on October 16, 2020.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/10/16/threats-against-democratic-governors-prove-trumps-rhetoric-encourages-violence/>

⁹ <https://moonshotcve.com/social-distancing-white-supremacy/>

- The rapid rise, even quasi-mainstreaming, of QAnon conspiracy theories during the pandemic.¹⁰ While the conspiracies alone are not domestic terrorism – there are individuals who have attempted acts of terrorism in response to their conspiratorial beliefs – including the intentional derailing of a freight train near the hospital ship Mercy in Los Angeles and QAnon supporters that traveled to Philadelphia during the city’s ballot counting operations who were arrested with an AR-15 rifle and 160 rounds of ammunition.¹¹
 - The arrests in October of militia group members allegedly training for civil war, plotting to kidnap Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer and Virginia Governor Ralph Northam.
2. The underlying causes behind the January 6 attack has increased the number of “vulnerable individuals” – likely leading to increases in the other two categories (individuals with radicalized thought but may or may not become violent; and individuals actually intending, planning or attempting violence).

We are often asked about prevalence. How many people in the United States are domestic terrorists? This is a difficult question to answer due to lack of good data and the way in which government systems categorize data. In her recent book, Hate in the Homeland, Cynthia Miller Idriss offers a “best estimate – looking across all groups and organizations...of 75,000 to 100,000 people affiliated with white supremacist extremist groups in the United States, not including individuals who engage occasionally from the peripheries of far-right scenes or who are ideologically supportive but engaged either online or offline.”¹² Germany, which has better monitoring of domestic extremists, estimates they have approximately 24,000 – what they term, “right-wing extremists” – and about 50% of those are considered potentially violent.¹³ If we apply their ratio to our numbers, that would put us at 37,000-50,000 potentially violent white supremacists within the United States.

Because we lack monitoring and data collection capabilities, I caution how these numbers are used, but it certainly gives you a sense of the scope. When the FBI briefed Congress last year, they indicated they had about 1,000 open domestic terrorism investigations – but we may have significantly more potentially violent

¹⁰<https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/tech/2020/08/31/qanon-conspiracy-theories-trump-election-co-vid-19-pandemic-extremist-groups/5662374002/>

¹¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/oct/15/qanon-violence-crimes-timeline>

¹² Miller-Idriss. Pp 20.

¹³ Ibid.

individuals in just one type of domestic terrorism (White Supremacy). We are outmanned.

More chilling, those were estimates prior to the attack on January 6. According to an Economist / YouGov poll completed last week, 78% of Trump Voters believe the presidential election was “stolen”.¹⁴ That’s approximately 57 million Americans. The 2020 campaign was framed as an existential battle for the “soul of the country.” If one believes the election was “stolen” and that the “other side” poses an existential threat, one could be vulnerable to arguments that violence is justified. While it might be illegal and immoral, it is not illogical for one to conclude a revolution might be called for if you believe your government has broken its obligations to you under the Constitution.

To be clear, statistically speaking, it would be a relatively small percentage that might move to violence – but even if it is as low as 0.5-1% – that’s somewhere between 240,000-570,000 people. (For context, imagine how our nation would react if that was the number of international terrorists living among our citizens.) It is a number that far exceeds any law enforcement or security capability we have within the country. Accordingly, one of our primary goals in these next months needs to be debunking the lies about the stolen election, in order to shrink the number of individuals vulnerable to radicalization to violence.

We do not have much time. Online chatter collected by open-source groups like the SITE Intelligence Group indicates significant elevations of anti-state sentiment from QAnon and Trump supporters, as they feel they’ve been pushed out of the mainstream.

Further, we expect to see a networking effect from January 6 – having physical, in-person encounters during an emotional experience that many consider to be a “battle” is likely to form bonds among people that perhaps had never before met or had previously been limited to online contact. And what we are seeing online seems to align with that expectation - intermingling between traditional organized extremist groups and disaffected Trump supporters and QAnon adherents.

Certain violent extremist groups like the Neo-Nazi’s, are sharing tips on how to recruit disheartened QAnon and Trump supporters. The SITE Intelligence Group

¹⁴ YouGov surveyed 1,500 U.S. adults, including 1,245 registered voters, between January 24 and January 26 for its latest poll. Its overall margin of error stands at 3.4 percentage points.

assessed one such post as “notable for the confluence of far-right concepts and slogans, tied together with more mainstream conservative ideas in an effort to make them palatable to a broader audience.”¹⁵ And postings on both Neo-Nazi and Proud Boys channels, offered instructions on how to approach – including guidance to not “haze” but be a “shepherd” and “let them know there is an alternative to what the Beast System offered them”.¹⁶ Others were more direct, encouraging Trump supporters to “Abandon the GOP” and “embrace the ultranationalist 3rd position” fascism.¹⁷

Recruitment is easier for extremist groups now than ever before. Dr. Miller-Idriss explains that extremist ideas have been mainstreamed and normalized through “political speech, conspiracy theories, and...communication styles” that use “humor and memes...[to make] extreme ideas seem less dangerous than they really are.”¹⁸

The expanded pool of vulnerable individuals resulted in some mobilization to violence on January 6. Extremism experts believe we will likely see more. There is a high likelihood of violence in the coming months on a range of softer targets associated with their perception of the “Deep State” including infrastructure, mainstream media, law enforcement, “Big Tech”, and elected officials.

But beyond the short term, I believe we will be fighting domestic terrorism that has its roots or inspiration points in the events leading up to and on January 6 for the next 10-20 years.

3. We lack a shared understanding and unity of commitment to address the threat, and discussions about Domestic Terrorism are being manipulated and disinformation is further feeding the grievance cycle – which could cause more people to radicalize to violence.

There is a growing overlap between extremism and political discourse. Foundations have been laid for years by right-leaning media outlets that “mainstream media” is

¹⁵ SITE Intelligence Group Bulletin, January 12, 2021. “We Cannot Vote Our Way Out Of This”: Prominent Neo-Nazi Channel Addresses Trump Supporters.”
<https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Far-Right-/Far-Left-Threat/we-cannot-vote-our-way-out-of-this-prominent-neo-nazi-channel-addresses-trump-supporters.html>

¹⁶ SITE Intelligence Group Bulletin, January 23, 2021. “Prominent Neo-Nazi Venue Urges Trump Supporters to “Abandon GOP” and Embrace “Third Position” Fascism.”
<https://ent.siteintelgroup.com/Far-Right-/Far-Left-Threat/prominent-neo-nazi-venue-urges-trump-supporters-to-abandon-gop-and-embrace-third-position-fascism.html>

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Miller-Idriss. Pp 47.

misleading, biased, or presents “fake news.” In fact, during the 2016 election cycle and its aftermath, right-leaning media were heartened (and amused) that Trump would “fight back” and “push against” the “mainstream media.” This onslaught created an atmosphere of distrust of the “mainstream media,” and sent many into seeking news and information within “echo chambers” that provided feedback that substantiated opinions, but not facts.

To wit, there has also been significant conflation between news desks and opinion show formats – where the latter presents “breaking news” opinion as factual news. Already, certain voices on the right side of the political spectrum have used opinion media platforms to assert that “the mainstream media” have declared anyone who attended the rally on January 6 a “domestic terrorist.” Next right-leaning opinion commentary declared that “radical liberals” consider all 74 million that voted for Trump “domestic terrorists”.¹⁹

As an avid news consumer and commentator on this topic, I have not seen an example of a major news organization or “mainstream media” opinion commentator declaring everyone on the right a domestic terrorist. Nor, in reviewing the prominent commentators’ assertions, have I found right-leaning opinion shows to present actual facts and evidence to back-up those arguments. In other words, I believe they are, based on financial and marketing decisions, purposefully lying to their viewers. But that does not matter in our present moment when passions are inflamed, and those who are told they are being disenfranchised by the “radical left,” trust no one but your “side” to tell you “truth.”

Disinformation and lack of action by the Trump Administration also created an impression of equivalency between extremist groups that identify with the far right-side of the political spectrum and those that identify with the far-left. In particular, the former President’s obsession (fueled by right-leaning media outlets’ obsessions) with ANTIFA – a descriptor that stands for Anti-Fascist – led to a redirection of resources away from open domestic terrorism investigations²⁰ and led many to believe that they are just as dangerous as Neo-Nazis. The statistics do not support this belief.

¹⁹<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/01/28/tucker-carlson-is-telling-his-viewers-that-democrats-see-them-terrorists/>

²⁰<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/30/us/politics/trump-right-wing-domestic-terrorism.html?searchResultPosition=4>

While all violence should be treated equally under the law, the government should portion its resources to those threat actors posing the gravest threats to our national security. The government will need to repeatedly offer the facts about the number of arrests, attacks, and deaths caused by violent white supremacists and anti-government extremists versus those adhering to a far-left ideology. But as with the disinformation challenge noted above, it will be difficult for the government to communicate facts to an audience that is predisposed to believing the disinformation.

I agree with President Obama's assertion that we are facing "an epistemological crisis." "If we do not have the capacity to distinguish what is true from what is false, then by definition the marketplace of ideas does not work, and by definition our democracy does not work," he explained.²¹

It is not law enforcement or the counterterrorism community's responsibility to fix an epistemological crisis. But if our society does not fix it, it will increase the workload of the security community. And in addressing this challenge and the violent threat associated with it, we must be careful to not inadvertently ostracize and anger more people, which could then lead to more radicalization to violence.

4. Some in the counterterrorism, homeland security, and law enforcement communities underestimated the threat.

The narratives of "lone-wolf" attackers have dominated threat assessments for decades. While mostly true that Oklahoma City, Mother Emmanuel Church, Pittsburgh, Christchurch, El Paso, and other attacks were committed by one individual – they were not alone in getting to the point of committing acts of violence. Rather this is the preferred tactic by design of white supremacist movement.

Before we design tactics and strategies and consider changes in law, we need a deeper understanding of the history and intent behind these extremists movements. For example, Kathleen Belew, a historian of the white power and paramilitary movements in America, explains that in 1983 the White Power movement declared war on the federal government.²² Their goals were to destabilize the government, wage a revolutionary race war, and establish a white homeland. They also decided to

²¹ Goldberg, Jeffrey. "Why Obama Fears for Our Democracy". The Atlantic. November 16, 2020. <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/11/why-obama-fears-for-our-democracy/617087/>

²² Belew, Kathleen. *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* (pp. 104). (2018). Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press.

follow a leaderless resistance model and encouraged individual or small group attacks to reduce detection by law enforcement.

During my time in government, I asked intelligence analysts for assessments on the motivations and strategic aims of violent white supremacists, I was never briefed about their 1983 declaration of war on the government, or that some were pursuing the establishment of a “white homeland.” I was left with the impression that their primary efforts were to create fear among non-white populations – which of course is horrid – but not as sophisticated an intent as overthrowing the US Government.

Calling the attackers “lone wolves” left the impression for policy-makers and those crafting counterterrorism strategies, there is a randomness to attacks – that you can explain their actions away as individuals that are mentally unwell – and therefore we cannot track the threat the same way we track threats emanating from ISIS or al Qaeda. But that is inaccurate.

I believe January 6 may be a turning point for the law enforcement and counterterrorism community to see the movement behind the individuals. President Biden’s task to DNI Haines for a threat assessment was scoped wisely to include data and expertise from outside government. That’s the first step – understand the enemy.

What Should We Do?

In closing, some thoughts on where we go from here.

I believe as the pandemic ends, hopefully later this year, and people begin to return to some form of normal socializing we are likely to see both a decrease in vulnerability to radicalization – the comforts of our old lives will help ease anxieties, people will spend less time online indulging in conspiracy theories; but paradoxically, the increase in mass gatherings will provide the targets that violent extremists are waiting for. Therefore, we must be prepared for these attacks.

1. Define the Threat and Educate the American People About the Threat

The DNI-coordinated threat assessment will provide a baseline from which the government can begin to educate the American public about domestic terrorism.

Information will help inoculate some that might be in the “vulnerable” category on the radicalization spectrum. It will also help bystanders better understand what to look for if a loved one or colleague demonstrates a change of behavior that might be indicative of radicalization to violence.

DHS, FBI, and state and local law enforcement should recognize that they are not necessarily viewed as credible voices by some Americans, and as such, they should work with voices viewed as credible to educate the public about the intent of extremist groups, the ways they recruit, and that breaking the law will lead to prosecution and legal consequences. In particular, there appears to be significant misinformation about the legality of private militia groups in the United States. A concerted campaign to educate on what is and is not protected by the 2nd Amendment may reduce their numbers.

2. Encourage Potential Targets to Dust-Off Security Plans and Urge Public Vigilance and Bystander Reporting

I have confidence that the new leadership at DHS and current leadership at FBI will continue to encourage public vigilance, see something / say something; and encourage owners and operators of infrastructure, especially those hosting public spaces – including faith-based organizations – to review their protective security plans, consider running exercises and update security plans as necessary.

The recent National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) Bulletin²³ issued by DHS makes it easier for state and local governments to access overtime funding for security functions, which is helpful in a heightened threat environment. Congress could consider providing additional funds to assist faith-based and non-profit organizations which are often mentioned as potential targets by the white power movement. Such considerations should also factor in that many COVID-19 and QAnon related conspiracy theories promote anti-semitic beliefs and often list specific infrastructure targets such as 5G towers.

3. DHS should continue expanding locally based, multi-disciplinary prevention capabilities, and the Administration should encourage state and local governments to join the effort. The Congress should codify DHS’ Office of Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention to memorialize its support for these prevention efforts.

²³ https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/ntas/alerts/21_0127_ntas-bulletin.pdf

4. Federal Law Enforcement activity should appropriately demonstrate that any threat or acts of violence is treated the same regardless of the ideological motivation. In particular, the government needs to explain their rationale for acting, or not acting, on situations often raised by those on the conservative side of the political spectrum pertaining to “far-left violent extremism.” The government should also publicize data on the actual number of acts of violence and arrests associated with the protests last summer to help debunk the disinformation spread about ANTIFA-related attacks.
5. We must explore domestic terrorism-related statutory, policy and culture changes with diligence, wisdom, and care.

I believe equal justice under the law requires treating threats from ideologies that originated overseas and within the US the same. Of course the way we investigate US Citizens and those residing within the U.S. is different than how we investigate a foreigner overseas. But it makes no sense that the same plans to commit a crime within the U.S. in the name of ISIS can leverage more investigative tools and stiffer penalties than if it’s committed on behalf of a violent white supremacist ideology.

I believe that at a minimum, we should pass a law that makes domestic terrorism a crime, which would allow more flexibility in investigations and stronger sentences. It also may serve as a deterrent effect. I also believe the material support statute should be updated to reflect any new criminal domestic terrorism statute.

Finally, I believe we should *consider* and *robustly debate* expanding the current foreign terrorist designation capability to domestic terrorism. While this is usually looked at through the lens of the aide it provides FBI and DOJ – I would encourage those studying the pros and cons to examine the assistance a designation process may provide to other parts of the counterterrorism community. Tools such as watchlisting, screening and vetting would benefit from a designation process. Likewise, private industry can be better informed about whom they should not conduct business and the tech industry has guidance it can rely on for decisions related to content takedown and deplatforming for violations of their terms of service. This also allows for clear communication to the public about such groups and may have a deterrent effect.

As we have learned over the years, such efforts can also have unintended consequences and those should be examined. We may find domestic terrorist groups adapt to be even more decentralized or constantly rebranding (as Atomwaffen

Division has done). And of course, such changes need to be undertaken in a way to ensure constitutional rights and liberties are protected.

For these reasons, I renew the call I made last year before a sub-committee of this body – for a bi-partisan Commission to be established to explore the best ways to update our laws, policies, and cultures within the security community to ensure we address this threat appropriately. We must learn from both the successes and the failures of the past 20 years of counterterrorism. You responded to that call with a proposed Commission that nearly made it into law, but was cut from the NDAA at the last minute.

The attacks of January 6 demand not only an accounting of how they occurred, but a thorough review of options to better address this complex and rapidly changing threat. These are difficult issues and they would benefit from deep consideration by a bi-partisan set of legal, security, and civil liberties experts that can dedicate most of their attention to quickly examining options. These debates need to be removed from the political spotlight for reasonable and diligent deliberations to occur. And once the Commission Reports its findings and proposed solutions, those solutions should be debated by the public through their representatives in Congress.

Finally, a year ago, when I testified at a sub-committee of this Committee – I stated: “We need to make it harder to carry out an attack and reduce the potential loss of life, as well as prevent individuals from mobilization to violence in the first place. Achieving those objectives is beyond the Federal government’s capability and role alone.”

At the time, I was referencing the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to prevention. But where we sit now a year later, the threat requires more. We must call on other parts of our society to reflect on their contributions to our current moment. What can the technology community do better? What can educators do to help? How can the faith community better help their followers who chose a dark path?

Ultimately, repairing what is broken in our country will not happen inside the institutional halls of Washington, DC. Yes, the security community has a role and the Congress should debate what additional tools and resources to give them to carry out those roles. And yes, those who incited or committed the attacks on January 6 must be held accountable. But that alone will not fix the extremist threat we face.

The challenge ahead requires rediscovering we are Americans before we are a party affiliation or a political philosophy. It requires discipline among citizens, and exercising leadership among elected officials and the media, to not give into the monetized grievance cycle of our media and political system. It requires rebuilding civic society at a local level; choosing respectful civil discourse over cancel-culture; and rejecting political ideologies or identity politics that focus on grouping “them” into an “enemy” of the “tribe”. Where and how do we start? Locally. By remembering how to love our neighbor.

Appendix A: Graphic from the RAND Study produced for DHS - *Practical Terrorism Prevention: Reexamining U.S. National Approaches to Addressing the Threat of Ideologically Motivated Violence*, Page xx.

