

**Rise of Domestic Violent Extremism  
and  
Law Enforcement's Ability to Effectively Investigate  
Seminar Research Paper**

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## **Introduction**

### **Background**

In its most recent Homeland Threat Assessment report, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS, 2020) stated that the dominant domestic threat to the United States would come from lone-wolf or small groups of extremists. These extremists can be classified into two main categories: domestic violent extremists (DVE) and homegrown violent extremists (HVE).

Domestic Violent Extremists (DVE) are those individuals that pursue domestic ideological goals through violence. These goals are influenced by racial prejudices antigovernment convictions. In contrast, Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVE) are those individuals in the United States who have been inspired and radicalized by global jihad. These individuals, however, have no direct operational guidance from any FTO.

According to the assessment, 2020 data has not yet been fully analyzed; 2019 was the most violent year in domestic violence since 1995. From 2018-2019, there were five HVE attacks and 16 DVE attacks, of which white supremacist extremists (WSE) accounted for half of the attacks and 39 of 48 total violent extremist deaths.

This increase in terrorist activities in the United States has created significant challenges for law enforcement investigations, domestic and internationally, to recognize and disrupt terrorists' ability to achieve their goals. These difficulties include the autonomous advantage of the internet to allow for the self-radicalization to the violence of unknown extremists who have no direct link to known terrorists of FTO's. Thus, the ability for law enforcement to act timely to detect and stop an individual's attempt to carry out a violent act is significantly decreased.

The radicalization process online happens through the medium of social media where recruitment, distribution of propaganda, target identification, and provocation of violence occur.

Because of the internet, violent extremists worldwide have the ability to approach vulnerable and like-minded individuals in the community, bringing recruitment and messaging to a global scale. Thus, allowing violent extremists to connect without belonging to a known violence (Confronting the Rise in Domestic Terrorism in the Homeland, 2019).

Having spent the last 20 years in a counterterrorism role, it has become apparent that one of the greatest challenges facing law enforcement is its ability to transform itself from its post 9/11 focus on international terrorism, when it obtained broader surveillance powers, to domestic terrorism where there are fewer tools available to law enforcement. Ironically and historically, there have always been lone wolves or organized violent groups in this country, such as the assassination of President McKinley by the anarchist Leon, Czolgosz, the Klu Klux Klan, the Weathermen, Organized Crime Syndicates to today's Proud Boys.

In international investigations, law enforcement has the ability to apply for secret warrants in which monitor foreign communications. In addition, laws allow individuals to be charged with providing material support to the Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). Conversely, domestic investigations must rely on other statutes that pertain to hate crimes, weapons charges, and other crimes that do not carry the stigma of terrorism. Added to this convoluted criminal ecosystem are the restrictions placed on law enforcement through the First Amendment. Law enforcement cannot act solely on what someone has said or written on social media; there must be an overt criminal act. The time between what some have written and a violent is such a short period, law enforcement is unable to react. The laws, as written, are reactive as law responds to a crime which they then investigated.

At the start of the post 9/11 counterterrorism career, much of the focus was on identifying FTO's and individuals that fit the stereotype of a 25 - 45-year-old Muslim male. However, even

at that time, this did not sit well as there were already indications that these identifiers were not exclusive. Women and non-Muslims were becoming more active in terrorism. In addition, through experience in the Border Patrol and U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, individuals could immigrate or be born in the U.S. and radicalize through time to become a terrorist. In addition, in 2009, the Department of Homeland Security issued two assessments pertaining to left- and rightwing extremists, their radicalizations, and recruitment. There was criticism of these assessments with their mentioning of the possibility of recruiting members of the military. However, one only had to look to Timothy McVeigh and his like-minded colleagues to show this possibility. In addition, while working as a police officer in Park Forest, IL, we receive intelligence that street gangs were either placing members in the military or recruiting them due to their firearms skills. Thus, the curiosity began with questioning how we are approaching violent extremism and are we allowing political bias to blind us to reality?

Being predisposed to look at terrorism through the lens of good versus evil is very simple, if not lazy. It is easy to point to someone and say that they are evil but is it not also important to conduct a deep dive into the depth of terrorism? Terrorist acts should not be viewed in isolation, nor should they be viewed as all being one and the same. Nelson Mandela once said, "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." However, Ronald Reagan also stated, "A freedom fighter does not need to terrorize a population into submission." While in the U.S. Coast Guard stationed in Boston, calls would come in that individuals had jumped off the Tobin Bridge to commit suicide. One of the burning questions that arose when retrieving the body was, "what has happened in your life that it got so bad that you had to do this?" This same question can be applied to terrorist in that what causes them to feel that there was no other recourse than to

commit acts of violence or as to how they allowed themselves to be radicalized especially if the researcher is predisposed that individuals have free will.

It is easy to say that to prevent biases or personal opinion from creeping into research would be to simply keep an open mind. Reducing the influence that these obstacles have on research should not be viewed with a negative connotation but instead that it is a being of the journey. It can be difficult, but it is much more rewarding than regurgitating ideas that only reinforce one's opinion or biases. To remove these obstacles, it is important to understand that you know what you know and know what you do not because you are not the most intelligent person in the room. In addition, do not be quick and impulsive, slow down and reflect on what has been viewed and learned. Seek out multiple sources and perspectives to fight against one's inclinations and remove worthless information. Finally, reflect on one's past to see what is common and what is different. Then seek out why.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the rise of DVE and the continuing problem of the lack of viable law enforcement intelligence in which to detect, deter and stop violent acts from occurring.

Intelligence can be considered both the methods used to obtain information and the analytical process that ends with a finished product. The purpose of the intelligence product is to provide the cynosure on law enforcement's strategic and tactical levels.

Strategic intelligence is used for overall long-term planning strategies and understanding the operational capabilities of law enforcement and those driven toward violent extremism. Strategic intelligence is the indispensable and effective means to identify potential violent extremists and their targets. This ability to predict incorporates the capabilities of both law

enforcement and non-law enforcement entities. This process utilizes psychological, sociological, and economic factors as predictors.

Tactical intelligence is used for short-term functions on the operational level of law enforcement agencies. The sources for this type of intelligence are derived from the individual law enforcement officer and include HUMINT, observational and situational awareness, and open sources. Train officers to identify cultural and behavioral changes within the community. With the influx of technology and individuals moving toward more reliance on it, law enforcement must remain focused on the daily interaction in their community.

Intelligence can view viewed as a process that is designed to assist individual law enforcement officers or organizations. In the end, it is a product that is there for all levels of the organization, from decision-makers to street officers and other law enforcement organizations.

Utilizing the military's collection cycle, referred to as the TCPED (Tasking, Collection, Processing, Exploitation, and Dissemination) cycle, will provide law enforcement the tool needs to ensure accurate and actionable intelligence is disseminated. Tasking involves identifying the individual or agencies that require intelligence. The collection is the gathering of raw information from individuals or electronic sources, while processing involves converting that raw material into usable information. Exploitation is the analysis of the data to identify its significance, and dissemination is the final product delivered to the those in need. (Hughbbank & Githens, 2010).

Intelligence is not meant to stand alone. It is utilized the best when incorporated into existing community policing programs and other programs such as the United Kingdom's British Channel program and Australia's Living Safe Together program.

### **Method of Approach**

The majority of data collection will be from secondary data analysis and archival studies. data will include unclassified government documents, research from the Congressional Research Service, data from law enforcement agencies to include policies and best practices, literature from subject matter experts, and historical references. In addition, the paper will include a summative evaluation and comparative study of the British Channel Program, Australia's Living Safe Together Program, and the United States CVE programs. (Bilazian, 2016, Australian Government, 2020 & DHS, 2020).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The understanding of Homegrown Violent Extremism (HVE) and the best strategies for encompassing Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) can become a very complex undertaking. The focus of the discussion has revolved around the radicalization of individuals and has become the driving force in developing strategies, though remaining inadequately defined. The foundation of these strategies is based on concepts and analytical models rather than influenced by social control theories or another systemic research.

This paper will attempt to broaden the focus beyond ideological radicalization. Individuals' paths and methods of involvement in violent extremism can be unique and happen at different points in time and with different contextual factors.

The theoretical framework for this paper will involve an amalgamation of existing studies and reports concerning domestic terrorism and the roles of domestic intelligence agencies, law enforcement, and the public. This framework will consist of a force field analysis that will incorporate a SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats) Matrix. Force field analysis looks at the factors (forces) that influence a situation, in this case, violent extremism. In

this paper, the analysis will ascertain the strengths of the forces for change (driving forces). These forces will be measured against the blocking forces (forces that impede change). The results of this analysis will then be processed through a SWOT Matrix in which and the prevailing best practices are identified concerning the violent extremism threat in the U.S. and the proper policies needed to focus on that threat. Recommendations will be developed and identified to create a plan to be implemented to counter violent extremism. The information obtained for this framework will be retrieved through a literature review that identifies the various resources, reports, and studies that best describes the past and current state of domestic violent extremism.

The first section of the paper will overview basic concepts of violent extremism, radicalization, and social concepts. This section will attempt to define violent extremism and other concepts and terms associated with violent extremism. This will include the identifying and comparing domestic terrorists, homegrown violent extremism, lone wolf operatives, and active shooters. It will also focus on the theories and problems that these concepts present to understanding and establishing counter violent extremism strategies and policies. This section's primary learning principle is the difficulty in defining violent extremism, radicalization, and contextual social factors.

The second section will focus on identifying the strengths of each of the driving and blocking forces of violent extremism to include theories and discussions within the government, social science, and law enforcement entities. The significance of this section will be discussing approaches countering violent extremism that consider social, economic, political, and historical concepts and their applicability to strategies and policies. It is of note that research has indicated that root causes of violence and radicalization are not linear but ever-changing.

The third section will be devoted to attributing the previous section's results into the SWOT Matrix. Many resources identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the intelligence process with regard to the roles of law enforcement, domestic intelligence agencies, and the public. The SWOT analysis results should determine the level of response necessary to counter the rise in violent extremism.

The fourth and final section will be devoted to providing recommendations to improve the intelligence-gathering process. to include innovation and capacity building due to the new, complex, and dynamic evolution of violent extremism and radicalization. In addition, challenges to the recommendations will also be identified, such as the ability to keep the country safe from violent extremism while at the same time protecting individual freedom. Thus, strategies must be apolitical and comply with democratic principles that include a non-repressive investigatory security response with a non-discriminatory judicial process.

## **ASSESSMENT**

### **Current State of Knowledge.**

In its most recent Homeland Threat Assessment report, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS, 2020) stated that the new domestic threat to the United States will come from lone-wolf or small extremists groups. These extremists are classified as Domestic Violent Extremists (DVE) or Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVE) who are inspired by foreign terrorism. According to the assessment, 2020 data has not yet been fully analyzed. However, 2019 was identified as the most violent year in domestic violence since 1995. From 2018-2019, there were five HVE attacks and 16 DVE attacks, of which white extremists (WSE) accounted for half of the attacks and 39 of 48 total violent extremist deaths. Thus, according to the

assessment, motivation for majority attacks will be based on ethnicity and race, most specifically white supremacists. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI, 2020) concurred with this assessment; however, their report lacked the data to support this argument. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (Jones et al., 2020) attempted to analyze more recent data to draw a better picture of trends and the future of violent extremism. CSIS found that rightwing extremists accounted for 75% of the attacks in 2019 and 90% through May 2020. Though data is yet to be available, trends indicate that -wing left-wing violent extremism is rising. The DHS (2020) and CSIS (2020) both conclude that regardless of affiliation, violent extremism will continue to rise due to several risk factors. The outcome of the U.S. election, COVID-19 response, economic instability, social injustice, and social isolation provide the basis for radicalization and violent extremism.

Finally, researchers at the RAND Justice Policy Program (Brown et al., 2021) approached extremism through the lens of public health. The researchers found that this area to lacking in studies pertaining to radicalization. Researchers conducted 36 interviews that included 24 former extremists, 10 family members, and two friends that covered 32 cases of radicalization. The individuals covered white supremacists and Islamic extremists and included both males and females. This study was first broken down into four perspectives: individual, relational, institutional, and societal. Secondly, to understand suicide, the researchers took a psychological autopsy approach. The study found that negative life events were an important part but not the only cause of radicalization. In addition, extremist groups attended to the needs of individuals, their activities became addictive, and recruitment took advantage of personal vulnerabilities.

**Where is knowledge lacking?**

Violent extremism is an evolving and ongoing threat and has become a rapidly growing concern. An excellent source on radicalization is the PIRUS (Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States, 2020) database. This data base contains primary sources and information from interviews with former radicalized individuals, their families, and friends. However, there appear to be challenges to the research on the subject, which may inhibit policy development and law making which relies heavily on the research. It appears that many studies lack strong methodologies and empirical evidence (Neuman & Kleinman, 2013). Another challenge is that it appears that much of the research, using different hypotheses, relies on secondary and historical data. For instance, many of the studies reviewed contained the same case studies and same resources. In addition, many of the studies rely on secondhand knowledge, and that potentially contains biased data (Schuurman, 2018). In some studies, interviews were conducted as sources for reports. Interviews have an inherent bias, and information obtain should be viewed with an eye toward reliability by comparing to other sources and data.

**Knowledge Gained Researching Subject**

Violent extremism has been in existence for much of our history in one form or another. One of the newer areas of approach into the research on the subject has been with psychology. Research has shown that radical ideology and involvement in extremist activities can have an addictive effect. Participating in physical violence and trading insults through social media can have addictive characteristics that seem to be associated with the experiences of the combination of risk and struggle.

Heavy-handed attempts by the legal authorities to deradicalize seem to have not been as successful as hoped. The social factors, such as income inequality, segregation, and

unemployment, that push individuals toward radicalization should also be viewed through a public health lens. By using sole heavy-handedness without addressing other factors may very well push individuals toward and deeper into radicalization. In addition, by labeling or stigmatizing groups and individuals through disciplinary measures, banning speech and acrimonious public discussions can have also drive individuals and groups to greater radicalization.

Finally, media illiteracy plays a significant part in radicalization and deradicalization. Individuals who rely on single sources or that perpetuate like-minded beliefs and opinions only strengthen the individual's resolve. Research has found that exposing individuals to comprehensive and differing sources of information improves media literacy and accelerates the deradicalization process.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This literature review examines the documents that establish, support, or contradict the accretions made in the research questions and in response to the issues identified in the problem statement. The review includes books on violent extremism and intelligence; government documents, including Congressional testimony and reports; research reports and studies; and journal articles and non-print media concerning the rise in violent extremism, and the status of domestic intelligence efforts made by domestic intelligence agencies and law enforcement agencies. It has become apparent through the literature review that the focus on foreign terrorist threats, compared to domestic violent extremism, is very parochial in its approach. Recently, the emergence of individual attacks, i.e., lone wolves, has one of the most successful perpetrators of

violent extremism. Additionally, the recent rise in violence from anti-police and antigovernment groups has increased the danger faced by law enforcement government officials.

There has been an increase in the amount of literature pertaining to the evolving threats from violent extremism over the past few years. The literature has shown that there has been a rise in violence perpetrated by antigovernment groups and individuals, active shooters, and foreign-inspired terrorists. The literature also indicates that the domestic violent extremist threat can be from Americans who have United States-based extremist ideologies or those in the U.S. who are inspired by international terrorist organizations.

Intelligence gathering of violent extremism has been problematic when pertaining to individuals and groups other than those associated with Muslim extremism. Though the federal government and other local agencies have created extensive community policing and CVE programs, much of the emphasis has been placed on Muslim extremists. According to Schanzer et al. (2016) police departments they interviewed were aware of antigovernment, racism, and other forms of violent extremism. Seventy-four percent of the departments responded place other forms of extremism in their top three threats. This included almost half responding that other forms were more a threat than al-Qaeda. Though most departments had well-established programs directed toward Muslim communities, there was little attention paid to other programs. Many departments explained that this is because there is a lack of actionable intelligence and no clear strategy. This is due in part that once a violent extremist is encountered, they have already been radicalized. In addition, it is difficult to identify those that are extremists. Finally, because these individuals are antigovernment or lack a level of trust, it is difficult to establish relationships. Open-source and electronic intelligence gathering are easily established; however, it is the human intelligence (HUMINT) that the departments are having difficulty obtaining.

Human intelligence provides the context and fills the gaps of information that can inhibit understanding and develop a strategy to counter violent extremism. To effectively examine and research terrorism, it is necessary to define the appellation. Just as "Google" has become the all-encompassing argot relating to internet searches, terrorism has been used in broad and expansive terms leaving the individual only a vague idea of what the term truly means.

Hoffman (2006), professor at Georgetown University, defines terrorism as a pursuit for power using violence to create political change. However, Davies (2016) from Birmingham University found that due to the agglomeration of different types of extremism, there is no consensus on a definition.

On the federal level, terrorism is defined through the Code of Federal Regulations (28.CFR. 0.85), with domestic terrorism more precisely defined in the United States Code (18 USC. 2331[5]). These authoritarian sources focus solely on the unlawful acts of violence and force against persons or property to intimidate and influence political effect. To add to the lack of clarity, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2018) has established a definition for Homegrown Violent Extremists. HVEs are persons of any citizenship who live and/or a primarily in the United States who are motivated by ideological terrorist activities to effect social or political change. These changes are promoted by foreign terrorist organizations; however, these persons operate independently of the organizations. HVEs are different than domestic terrorists in that they operate without direction or influence from a foreign entity. Thus, domestic terrorists and HVEs are two separate and distinct classifications of terrorist actors.

Throughout the world, the threat from rightwing terrorism appears to be on the rise. In particular, in the United States, white supremacists and antigovernment are of grave concern due to the plots against the government, religious, racial, and political targets. The goals of such

organizations and individuals are to create racial, ethnic, or religious dominance and opposition to governmental authority. Their ultimate focus is the criticism of democratic governments that impose liberal social welfare policies that allow immigrants and religious minorities to rise in positions of influence and power. (Hoffman, 2006) Individuals identified as HVEs are most commonly associated with the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS), al-Qaeda, and to a lesser extent, other designated terrorist organizations. Many HVEs who actuate toward violence do so without obtaining direct strategic or tactical support from a foreign organization. However, they may receive empowerment to act due to social media contact with a terrorist group (Napoleoni, 2014).

Al-Qaeda and ISIS share the ultimate goal of establishing true Islamic governments in the Middle East. Al-Qaeda's approach is to attack the United States, believing this will cause an end of support for the Muslim regimes, thus weakening the governments and be vulnerable to replacement. ISIS, in contrast, has a regional strategy that targets the heretic Muslim governments directly. Due to ISIS's notable social media operation, individuals are thus drawn to their efforts and support the organization through attacks in the West (Napoleon, 2017).

In discussing these violent extremists, it is essential that their beliefs are not diminished to being trivial, paranoid, or delusional. Extreme overvalued beliefs have held sway with HVE's and other global terrorists. These beliefs are shared among an individual's religious and cultural groups. These beliefs are cherished, revered, and defended by the group. In time, extreme overvalued beliefs become monopolized and antagonistic to change. Thus, the individual becomes emotionally attached to the beliefs and more susceptible to carrying out violence in defense of the beliefs. For example, HVE's justify their behavior through social media, giving the individuals a sense of moral superiority. Jung referred to the collective unconscious as

shared experiences by race and culture. The taking of innocent lives elicits the collective unconscious of humanity; however, extreme overvalued beliefs dominate the collective unconscious of terrorist groups. (Rahman, 2018).

### **Individuals inspired to Domestic Terrorism.**

Though individuals may embrace the extremist belief system, the causatum is not assured. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) sponsored four studies that explored radicalization to terrorism. The four-research project took distinctly different approaches to the subject with minor overlapping results.

The research conducted by Brandeis University was interested in examining the framework of radicalization developed by the New York Police Department and if it was sustained by more comprehensive data collected on homegrown extremists with connections to al-Qaida (Smith, 2018). Specifically, the research provided the opportunity to observe behavior indicators as they progress and relate to each other through the radicalization process. The study was set to reflect the stages of radicalization: Pre-Radicalization, Detachment, Peer Immersion and Training, and Planning and Execution of Violent Action. The results of the Brandeis study found that much of the New York framework was sustained by the data collected on homegrown extremist offenders. Pre-Radicalization indicators of personal crisis and traumatic events were consistent with the offenders. Peer Immersion indicators of training and the seeking of likeminded extremists also showed similar consistency. This project provides the policy makers and law enforcement the ability to identify the radicalization process and individuals who may be in the process (Smith, 2018)

Indiana State University, in partnership with Victoria University, created a new model of radicalization based on the study of 98 lone wolf terrorist cases. The results indicate lone wolves

fuse personal grievances with political grievances that are accompanied by personal or political trigger events. In addition, the research illustrates lone wolves maintain an interest and ability to communicate online with other extremist's contrary to the belief they are detached from society. Also, as lone-wolves progress in their radicalization, they announce their intentions through social media, videos, written letters, and manifestos (Smith, 2018)

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), situated at the University of Maryland, conducted a quantitative and qualitative examination of the radicalization process. START began with creating the Profiles of Individual Radicalizations in the United States (PIRUS) database. Included is information on characteristics, experiences, behaviors of 900 terrorists and 600 nonviolent extremists, and personal narratives of a small sample of 15 individuals. The quantitative analysis of the database indicated similarities with other research in that grievances, social media, and small peer groups are all part of the radicalization process. The qualitative element of the study placed the 15 narratives in four radicalization pathways: trauma, identity-seeking, material reward, and recruitment. 13 of the 15 narratives indicated there are multiple pathways to radicalization (Smith, 2018).

In the final study, the University of Arkansas examined if the role identity theory and framing theory illustrate how individuals and groups become radicalized. The results indicate how an individual identifies themselves and how the issues are framed play a signification role in the radicalization of individuals and groups. In addition, the study found there were differences.

in the pathways taken by groups to commit violence. The environment that aided in the radicalization of groups varied among organizational and violent acts (Smith, 2018).

The interesting aspect of these four research projects is that they all had taken different approaches to the study of radicalization. However, most importantly, was the imbricative aspect of the findings. In the end, the studies independent of each other ultimately discovered the same eight facilitators found in the radicalization of individuals and groups.

The likely importance of a terrorist belief system in the radicalization process is supported by the START project. It found 74% of the studies subjects held genuinely strong beliefs in the terrorist ideology (Smith, 2018). Individuals who develop an identity conflict or are confused have lives laid bared to new ideas. When identities are conspicuous and suffuse across several aspects of their lives, the individual becomes more susceptible to terrorist recruitment. The studies also found that connections to terrorism not involving social media, friends, and family played a significant role in radicalization. In addition, relationships built on social media had an equivalently important influence on radicalization. The research also discovered that individuals who advertise their intent and participate in criminal behavior aids in their radicalization. Empirical evidence was also discovered that individuals in a tight group were more supportive of others in the group and accepting of their extremist views. Finally, evidence indicates that individuals who have experienced real or perceived personal or political grievances become more motivated as they progress through the radicalization process. To further fuel their extremist ambitions, triggering events were a catalyst in the vast majority of the subjects in the research (Smith, 2018).

### **Law Enforcement and Intelligence Operations Pertaining to Violent Extremism**

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the United States had to come to grips with the idea that they were ill-prepared for such an event. In response to the attacks and for self-evaluation, the U.S. Government established the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United

States (9/11 Commission) (2004). This commission prepared an exhaustive report that included several findings and recommendations for improving and reorganizing the intelligence community. One of the most glaring failures of the intelligence community was their inability to "connect the dots" concerning the potential for foreign terrorist attacks. It has become clear through the literature that the United States is also now suffering once again, the failure to "connect the dots" or fully understand the weight of homegrown violent extremism, most specifically with antigovernment groups and lone-wolf perpetrators.

A literature analysis illustrates much of the failure to understand the magnitude of HVE since 9/11 is due to the intelligence community focusing on recommendations from the 9/11 Commission, where emphasis has been placed on rectifying the failures of intelligence gathering and information sharing. However, the intelligence community has implemented these new strategies toward foreign terrorist threats from abroad and domestic Islamic extremism. The research has been limited with regards to non-Islamic violent extremism in the United States.

There are several books that provide a comprehensive look into the U.S. intelligence empire; however, few pertain to DVE. The *Intelligence and Policy-Making: A Bibliography* (Marlatt, 2011) found that of the over 500 sources, only a fraction focused on domestic intelligence. In *terrorism Since 9/11—The American Cases*, Mueller (2011) found that the vast majority of literature was focused more on foreign terrorism than on DVE. Richelson (2016), in his book, *The U.S. Intelligence Community*, discussed the organizations, operations, and management of the intelligence system. Richelson illustrated the vastness of the intelligence territory and, in doing so, confirms the continuing issues pertaining to intelligence collection and the sharing of information. In the book, *Intelligence: From Secrets to Policy*, these issues are further discussed to confirm that the domestic intelligence community is lacking coordinated

leadership amongst the federal agencies, state fusion centers, and other state and local law enforcement (Lowenthal, 2011).

Bjelopera, of the Congressional Research Service (CRS), has completed several comprehensive reports about the rise in violent extremism and the government efforts to counter or neutralize extremist groups and individuals. In his 2014 CRS report, *Federal Bureau of Investigation and Terrorism Investigation*, Bielopera (2011) found that the FBI has improved its efforts, since 9/11, to reform and improve its terrorism intelligence and investigation capabilities. These reforms included the FBI moving away from a reactive law enforcement organization to a more flexible, proactive, agile, and intelligence-drive agency. The FBI has increased the use of the Al Capone approach, which consists in arresting of lower-level participants to obtain further information on groups or individuals. Bielopera found though there are improvements, the reforms in the FBI are still a work in progress. In *the Terrorism Information Sharing and Nationwide Suspicious Activity Report Initiative: Background and Issues for Congress*, Bielopera (2011) discussed the establishment of the information-sharing environment and state fusion centers to collect disseminate information on a state and local level. The report further addressed the establishment of law enforcement information sharing systems. Law Enforcement Online (LEO) is a secure global communication portal managed by the FBI, where criminal justice professionals can share information. The Regional Information Sharing Systems Programs (RISS) provides a broad range of intelligence exchange capabilities. These two programs were established prior to 9/11. After 9/11, programs included the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) where sensitive but unclassified information is shared with state, local, private, and international partners. The Law Enforcement Information Sharing Program (LEISP) includes the Law Enforcement National Data Exchange (N-DEx),

which attempts to connect the dots by sharing information across jurisdictional boundaries that allows participants to identify relationships between crimes, people, things, and places. Finally, there was the establishment of the FBI Terrorist Threat Information Tracking System, Guardian. The Guardian program is a classified system designed to allow the collection and analysis of reports in an organized manner to allow for the identification of those reports that warrant follow-up investigations. As a companion to the two previous reports, Bielopera's (2013a) *Domestic Terrorist Threat: Background Issues for Congress* discusses how U.S. domestic extremist ideologies and movements have not received the necessary attention as their foreign counterparts such as ISIS. The Department of Justice does not keep a list of domestic terrorist organizations; however, they do compile domestic extremist threats. The report identifies difficulties, outside the lack of an identifying list, into countering domestic extremism due to inability to determine the difference between terrorism and DVE, the difference between other illegal activities and domestic violent extremism, counting cases DVE.

The RAND Corporation has created a series of comprehensive reports that focus on HVEs and DVEs. Some notable reports are 2021's *Interviews with Former Extremists Reveal Multiple Paths to Developing Extreme Ideologies; Rejection of Extremism Often Aided by Friends and Groups*, 2019's *Countering Violent Extremism Programs Australia and Abroad* and 2017's *Development of Program Evaluation Toolkit for Countering Violent* review the roles and responsibilities of domestic intelligence and law enforcement agencies in the fight against domestic terrorism. In addition, these reports identify paths to radicalization and possible measures to counter radicalizations. In addition, limitations to CVE are identified due to legal constraints and the slow shift from Foreign Counter-Terrorism (FCT) to CVE.

To further illustrate the hindrances to CVE, the previous Presidents' *Strategy for Counterterrorism* in 2011 and 2018 was reviewed. The 2011 report is a 19-page document almost exclusively focuses on al Qaeda and declares this as one of the president's top national security priorities. The document acknowledges that, since 9/11, the focus of the U.S.'s CT effort has been aimed at preventing the recurrence of an attack on the homeland directed by al-Qaeda. However, the document encourages the country to continue improving and increasing its counterterrorism capabilities, including information-sharing and intelligence analysis and integration. In addition, later that year, the White House released the follow-up document, *Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*. The document outlined locally focused, community-based actions to keep families, communities, and local organizations informed and engaged in the counterterrorism efforts. Similarly, the 2018 report contained a global approach, included the participation of all individuals in, sharing of information, and the protection of rights. However, neither did little to discuss countering HVE and CVE. The one major difference is that the 2018 report emphasized the importance of countering all terrorist threats, not just one organization, sharing of information, and protecting rights.

### **Counter Violent Extremism Strategies**

Due to the shifting priorities and views on CVE and HVE in the political realm between the current administration and previous administrations, the strategies promoted by the White House have not been fully implemented. However, other documents and studies have been published that provide more specific and feasible counter-radicalization strategies.

Crime has been viewed as best dealt with locally. Community policing is the result of this crime reduction strategy on the local level. This strategy focuses on problem-solving,

community interaction, and administrative changes. Studies have shown that the proper implantation of community policing can impact crime (Connell et al., 2008). However, is this an effective strategy to deal with violent extremism? Currently, this is the recommendation by the federal government to local authorities to counter violent extremism (DHS, 2011 & 2016). The first issue with community policing related to violent extremism is that its focus is dealing with the issue on a local basis. During the civil unrest in Kenosha in 2020, Sheriff David Beth stated that much of the destruction could be attributed to outside agitators (Tage-Rozell, 2020). In addition, community policing is focused on the linear trajectory of radicalization. However, the FBI (2015) admits that it is difficult to identify predictors for violent extremism. The increase in violent extremism has also created another security crisis that community policing cannot handle. This dilemma is reflected by both left- and rightwing extremism which is now intertwined by being foundationally antigovernment. These two sides of the same coin, or as Nelson Mandela posits, "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." makes it difficult to determine who is the aggressor and who is the defender. Finally, the community policing approach treats all violent extremism the same and emphasizes the strategy in such a way similar to dealing with such groups as Al Qaeda.

The United States Constitution's Sixth Amendment guarantees the right to a "speedy and public trial, "which means that an individual cannot be held for long periods without having a trial. However, an extension to this is the legal principle called preventive detention. This is the practice of detaining an individual before trial when it is considered to be in the best interest of society, i.e., the possibility of committing another crime (Sampsell-Jones, 2010). Ostensibly, this appears to conflict with a basic understanding of the Constitution and some criminal justice theorists. Many legal scholars prescribe the "just deserts theory" which posits that crime

prevention and violence is achieved through deterrence and the threat of punishment (Starweather, 1992). Nonetheless, there have been laws enacted and supported through a court decision that have established legally justifiable detention methods that are viewed as necessary to the benefit of society and the criminal justice process. These legally authorized preventive measures consist of pre-trial detention, immigration holds, mental health evaluations, public health quarantines, and sexual predators (Montague, 1999). Preventive detention has been extended to involve terrorist and violent extremist attacks. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2012 affirmed the authority to detain individuals suspected of terrorist or violent extremist acts on U.S. soil indefinitely. However, it is important to note that the Supreme Court has struck down preventive detention laws in which the only justification is the "dangerousness" of the individual. The Court also stated that preventive detention should only be implemented when the dangerous behavior cannot be resolved through the criminal justice system (Cole, 2009).

The dangerous offender principle is a constitutional approach that allows the detention of an individual after the completion of their imposed sentence has been completed if the courts believe the individual to be a danger (Smith v. Doe, 2003). This is presumably not indefinite as statutes have prescribed a minimum term to review to establish the individual's feasibility for release (Lear, 1986). There are legal scholars who have argued for the support of a more robust application of the dangerous offender doctrine regarding terrorists and other violent extremists after their release from prison. In the United Kingdom, terrorist offenders fall under the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements, subject to police and probation supervision (Disley et al., 2016).

In addition to the implanting exemptions to the Sixth Amendment, legal scholars have also advocated that the traditional view of the Fourth Amendment has limited application to violent extremism investigations through the "special needs" doctrine. In *Michigan Dept. of State Police v Sitz* (1990), the Supreme Court argued that drunk-driving checkpoints were a special needs exception due in part to the threat and the need to remove drunk drivers from the road. Ronald Gould (Circuit Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit) and Simon Stern (Law Professor, University of Toronto) (2010) argued that traditional view of the Fourth Amendment is not suited to dealing with such catastrophes as weapons of mass destruction or other forms of violent extremist attacks. They argue that the principles of a "fair probability" or a "substantial chance" of yielding evidence should solve the constitutionality of the exception due to the immediacy of such catastrophic events. In contrast, Ric Simmons (Ohio State University Law Professor) (2010) has argued that the "special needs" doctrine does not apply to CVE investigations. Simmons argues that suspicionless (special needs) searches are viewed as about non-law enforcement activities such as employment drug testing or school searches. In addition, border and airport security checkpoints are administrative suspicionless searches; however, the fruit of such inquiries and led to criminal prosecution. The problem that has arisen is the courts have continued to expand the scope of these administrative searches continues to expand unchecked through the courts to apply to CVE, however, these should be considered *sui generis* (unique) about suspicionless searches. Instead, Simmons that this is an opportunity for the courts to establish a separate doctrine that will eliminate artificial distinctions, inconsistency, unpredictability, and manipulating context to justify suspicionless searches.

The research is also beginning to look beyond the traditional law enforcement response surveilling, arresting, and prosecuting potential suspects of violent extremism. The Preventing

Violent Radicalization in America (Nuemann, 2011) report recommends that messaging should include identifying what role citizens should play, ideologies should be challenged, and identifying the difference between violent extremism and what is acceptable under Constitutional freedoms. Policies should require strong leadership and coordination in which CVE and counter-radicalization are treated separately. Information sharing should be standardized and processed through one designated agency. Outreach and engagement should be established on the local level where capacity building is most effective in identifying at-risk individuals and best practices for counter-radicalization. Training should not counteract counter-radicalization and should be focused on outreach and cultural understanding. Finally, local governments should realize the limitations of community policing and its effectiveness in counter-radicalization.

Building on the National Security Preparedness Group's report, the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism's (START), Silyan-Saba and Beutel (2016) have established four CVE field principles for local government agencies. Principle one reinforced the idea that individuals and community-based organizations (CBO) have the existing relational trust, rather than local governments, that is necessary for effective prevention and intervention of radicalization. However, many lack the cohesion, communication, and cooperation essential though they have the same common goal. The role of the local government would be to assist in the facilitation of the process for the CBOs to establish community-led programs. Principle two discussed the local government's role in providing structure for CBOs that lack the abilities on their own. Local government can assist in establishing relationships with the private business, civic and philanthropic and public organizations, and public institutions to secure resources and expand capacity, so they can implement CVE programs. In

addition, a multidisciplinary approach would be implemented that allowed for the establishment of policies that created the framework of referrals for individuals in need of assistance. In a sense, a one size fits all approach is ineffective. Principle three discussed how local governments should not focus on copycat programs but instead focus on the innovation and methodology that was used to create a successful program. Finally, principle 4 identifies the need for a framework in which to monitor and evaluate programs. The results should be transparent and made public which will allow for greater innovation and scalability. A program may be promising; however, this does not mean it is successful.

Though much of the literature has focused on government agencies and their success and failure. There has been little focus on Congress and its failure to move on DVE and HVE. In 2011, Congressman Peter King of New York and then the Chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee stated the purpose of the Committee and the Department of Homeland Security was to focus on foreign terrorist threats such as al-Qaeda. A review of the Homeland Security Digital Library revealed that much of Congress' focus still pertains to international terrorism while the domestic focus pertained to Muslim extremists. In 2019, The House Committee on Homeland Security held a hearing titled *Global Terrorism: Threats to the Homeland, Part I*. Peter Bergan, Vice President, Global Studies & Fellows, New America and Thomas Joscelyn, Senior Fellow, Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, focused their testimony on the threats from international terrorist organizations. Joscelyn even stated that though much of his work has involved ISIS and al-Qaeda he understood that many individuals wanted to move on to HVE and DVE; however, that foreign terrorism is a great threat. In contrast, Ali Soufan, Founder of the Soufan Center, and Brian Levin, Director of Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism, California State University, San Bernardino, attempted to direct

the discussion to HVE and DVE with particular emphasis on the rise of rightwing extremists. In 2015, Congress had an opportunity to pass the CVE Act, which would have established the Office of Countering Violent Extremism within DHS.

### **Challenges and Concerns**

The major challenge for law enforcement agencies concerning the implementation of initiatives to gather intelligence, investigate and prevent domestic terrorism is protecting privacy and civil liberties for U.S. citizens. One possible solution is to engage the public in an open and transparent dialogue and their involvement in the process. The public is an integral party to the CVE, and counter-radicalization process a crucial role in the process. However, measuring preventive counter violent extremism (P/CVE) and CVE has been challenging. According to the findings from a study by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) (2018), many factors prevent accurate evaluation of programs. USIP found no set or defined practices that are agreed upon to evaluate the impact of the programs. The failure to address this issue reveals two challenges: analytical and practical. The analytical challenges involve the lack of establishing causality and contextual variations. The practical challenges involved the ability to collect reliable, relevant data. In addition, the study found that the measuring tools to assess individual and group behaviors, attitudes, and relationships were problematic. There is an assumption that there is a relationship between extremist beliefs and violent action, which has not been fully verified. Finally, relationships, networks, and behavior changes take place online and are difficult to measure. This literature review of studies, reports, and stories on violent extremism over the past few years indicates much of the focus has been on the international threat from foreign actors. However, the threat posed by non-Islamic terrorist groups seen a rise lately given their increased violent behavior. The recommendations presented in the literature related to the

importance of federal, state, and local law enforcement in the intelligence collection process, continued participation in the CVE process by the public, identifying the increased violence from antigovernment groups in the U.S., and the dangerousness of lone wolves.

### **APPLICATION OF FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS REFINED THROUGH SWOT.**

#### **Assessment on the Present Situation on Domestic and Homegrown Violent Extremism on Foreign Actors**

In its most recent Homeland Threat Assessment report, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS, 2020) stated that the dominant domestic threat to the United States would come from lone-wolf or small groups of extremists. These extremists are classified as Domestic Violent Extremists (DVE) or Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVE) who are inspired by foreign terrorism. According to the assessment, 2020 data has not yet been fully analyzed. Yet, 2019 was identified as the most violent year in domestic violence since 1995. From 2018-2019, there were 5 HVE attacks and 16 DVE attacks, of which white extremists (WSE) accounted for half of the attacks and 39 of 48 total violent extremist deaths. Thus, according to the assessment, motivation for majority attacks will be based on ethnicity and race, most specifically white supremacists. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI, 2020) concurred with this assessment; however, their report lacked the data to support this argument.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (Jones et al., 2020) attempted to analyze more recent data to draw a better picture of trends and the future of violent extremism. CSIS found that rightwing extremists accounted for 75% of the attacks in 2019 and 90% through May 2020. CSIS' (Jones et al., 2021) most recent study indicates that rightwing

extremism has exceeded left-wing extremism. The data shows that more than 25% of the incidents involved those that support white supremacy. The attacks were perpetrated against government officials, law enforcement, minorities, non-Christians, immigrants, and LGBTQ individuals using multiple types of weapons to include vehicles, knives, guns, and fits. In addition, houses of worship and government build have also seen an increase in attacks and threats. This accounted for 73 total attacks perpetrated by -wing-associated individuals, while 25 incidents were attributed to leftwing-inspired individuals. Left-wing incidents were focused on environmental targets, law enforcement personnel, and their facilities. The CSIS database consists of one of the most public sources of information about domestic terrorism incidents. These incidents are defined as attacks or plots involving a deliberate use or threat of violence to achieve political goals, create a culture of fear and change government policy. There appears to be a weakness to the CSIS analysis in that it has excluded violent incidents where the motivation is unclear. The DHS (2020) and CSIS (2020, 2021) both conclude that regardless of affiliation, violent extremism will continue to rise due to several risk factors. The outcome of the U.S. election, COVID-19 response, economic instability, social injustice, and social isolation provide the basis for radicalization and violent extremism.

This study should not come as a surprise. A Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) report (2009). stated that left-wing extremism activities, particularly cybercrime, will increase over the next decade. In addition, another I&A report (2009) warned that domestic rightwing extremism recruitment and radicalization would also increase and emphasized that it is the most dangerous domestic terrorism threat in the United States. As far back as 2014, I&A (2014), I&A's Intelligence Assessment stated that rightwing extremists, more specifically militias.

**Militias**

The Patriot movement faction of the rightwing movement an increased threat to government officials and law enforcement. According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (2020), militias have moved away from total antigovernment ideology to aligning themselves with political candidates. These groups employ mixed tactics that include public relations, propaganda, and security operations (working with law enforcement) through social media to enlist those who are not part of the militia movement. Militias believe their acts are supported through Constitutional authority. This claim indicates that they are similar to legally authorized militias; however, they are not connected to the government. In fact, they believe it is their duty to overthrow a government, that in their view, has become tyrannical.

**Sovereign Citizen**

Another area of concern is the increase in Sovereign Citizens' membership and activity. Sovereign Citizen groups are developing throughout the country, and they strongly believe that federal, state, and local governments have too much authority, for which they do not have to answer (FBI). Sovereign Citizens refuse to pay taxes or carry an official license or car registration, and they use counterfeit money at government agencies. They further believe that they decide which laws to obey and which to ignore because judges, law enforcement, and elected officials have no authority. They acknowledged the sheriff as the highest level of government authority. Though their activity may not be illegal, they have committed violent acts against government officials known to commit violent and deadly acts, especially against government officials.

### **Foreign Terrorist Organization and Individuals**

Though it is clear that the greatest threat is from non-foreign extremists, the threat from abroad is still present. This includes foreign terrorist groups that are training and recruiting Americans to fight for their cause. The 2020 Homeland Security Assessment affirms this threat; it goes on to state, "Foreign terrorist organizations will continue to call for Homeland attacks but probably will remain constrained in their ability to direct such plots over the next year. Iran will maintain terrorist capabilities, including through proxies such as Lebanese Hizballah, as an option to deter the United States from taking action Tehran considers regime threatening. "Thus, it appears that foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs), including al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS), will attempt to take advantage of opportunities to attack the U.S., its main focus will remain overseas due to the U.S. counterterrorism strategy. It is of note that these groups can adapt and reemerge quickly. The threat will continue to come from FTOs ability to inspire extremist attacks in the U.S. through the use of social media and other internet capabilities. ISIS and other FTOs are fully capable of influencing susceptible individuals in the U.S. into joining their cause and inspiring them in committing terrorist attacks.

### **Active Shooters and Lone Wolf Actors**

Another area of concern is the rise in active shooters. These acts are often not viewed as terrorist related. This is partly because many of the characteristics of perpetrators and victims do not fall in line with traditional terrorist activities. Students perpetrate school shootings against fellow students, teachers, and administrators. Workplace shootings involve current or former employees, while in other cases, the shooting involves targeting family members. However, those active shootings in government facilities may be viewed as terrorist acts depending on the motivation. are often referred to as active shooters. In addition, terrorism could also be viewed

as a motivator regarding attacks on houses of worship and individuals of a particular religion. The success rate of all extremist acts is the greatest among the lone wolves. This is due to the difficulty in identifying these individuals where civil liberties and medical privacy protections can provide roadblocks to investigations (Blair & Schweit, 2014)

### **FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS**

With regards to violent extremism, a force field analysis is the ability to identify the driving forces that influence an individual toward violent extremism. The opposite, restraining force, hinders individual force toward violent extremism (Swanson et al., 2014).

Prior to identifying the drivers toward extremism, it is important that these drives be placed into the individual or group context. Drivers should also not be viewed in isolation in that it may be necessary to have a combination of drivers to push (conditions) or pull (motivation) and individuals toward violent extremism.

### **Drivers**

#### **Social and Economic Root Causes**

Lack of socio-economic opportunities may take different forms to include an economic imbalance in society, unemployment, and lack or limited economic opportunities (UNDP, 2017). This is illustrated by large numbers of highly educated individuals who feel disenfranchised due to lack of employment opportunities based on their level of education and training. It has been found that unemployment provides a favorable environment for recruitment into violent extremism. Violent extremism can be viewed as an opportunity to improve an individual's economic standing that may not be found in legitimate means. For example, several FTO offers financial incentives for recruits. This not only applies to the unemployed highly

educated but those on the lower end of the socio-economic status (Dixon, 2009 & UNDP, 2017).

### **Rise in Violent Extremism**

Southern Poverty Law Center's (SPLC) 2020 report, *The Year in Hate and Extremism*, has identified 838 active hate groups in the U.S. This is an overall decline of 11% from 2015, which saw the number increase 784 to 892, however, the numbers have remained above 800. The SPLC also found that white nationalist and neo-Nazis groups are dispersed difficult to track due to social media and encrypted communication.

### **Social Media**

Violent extremist groups worldwide used social media sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Flickr, to spread propaganda, raise funds, and recruit individuals for training and perpetrating lone wolf attacks. Social media and the internet provide a perception of normalization of views and ideology (Bjelopera, 2013b)

According to the National Consortium for The Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) (2017), between 2005 and 2016, social media played a primary or secondary role in the radicalization and/or mobilization processes of 55.3% of extremists in PIRUS database. Individuals used social media platforms to consume and spread extremist propaganda and/or communicate with like-minded individuals. Recently, rightwing extremists, who have been banned from mainstream social media, have found refuge in the Telegram, Gap, and MeWe apps.

### **Rise in Individual Extremists Not Associated with Groups**

SPLC (Janik & Hanks, 2020) found that extremists can collaborate and connect with other likeminded individuals with the proliferation of encrypted online platforms without having to

join a group. SPLC further states that January 6 Capital Insurrection is a clear example of individuals taking action with others holding the same beliefs while not being associated with any one group.

### **Marginalized Individuals**

Over the last few years, there have been many social changes that radical rightwing extremists feel have a direct impact on them. Historically, when the white, working-class populations suffer economically, they feel marginalized by the minority population. There is a sense of unfairness due to a perceived preferential treatment that causes resentment toward the minority population, white, working-class population. This rightwing extremist views minorities as threats, which causes a sense of fear (Vertigans, 2007).

### **Restraints**

#### **Relationships**

Social relationships play an important role in the decision to leave extremist groups. Disappointment in the behavior of group members whom the individual also considers friends often play a role when an individual leaves an extremist group. (Van der Valk & Wagenaar 2010). This also may include disappointment over leadership and loss of status in the group (Feddes et al., 2014). The research found that individuals wanted to maintain good relationships with family members, start their own family, or have friendships with members of out-groups who may have different political views or are different ethnically (Van der Valk & Wagenaar 2010).

#### **Personal Growth**

Interview studies have shown that many individuals enter extremist groups during adolescence (Feddes et al., 2014). During this period, individuals feel a strong need to belong to

social groups and unfamiliar situations. Under the influence of others, adolescents are less able to develop acumen than adults (Reyna & Farley 2006).

### **Outside Forces**

Individuals are not able to deal with the pressure of repression by law enforcement. As arrests mount within the groups and the strain of effort remain hidden or anonymous can be too great of strain to overcome. In addition, the stigmatizing of the group by society may cause individuals to reevaluate the benefits of remaining with the group or maintaining an ideology that society may reject. This may cause many to want to get back to a "normal life" (Bjorgo, 2009).

### **SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) Analysis**

With the passage of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) of 2004, the intelligence community was reorganized to include establishing the office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI). This position became the lead intelligence official responsible for advising the president, the National Security Council, and Homeland Security Council. The DNI is the only advisory position with no authority over the FBI or DHS, the main domestic intelligence apparatus.

The FBI is the main domestic intelligence agency in the U.S. The FBI uses a threat-based intelligence strategic method to collect information and intelligence to develop information sharing products that create an understanding of threats and responses. The FBI created Joint Terrorist Task Forces (JTTF) throughout the country to assist in the intelligence collection and dissemination of information. The JTTFs are staffed with law enforcement members from local,

state, and federal agencies with diverse expertise to investigate terrorism and create a unified counterterrorism effort.

The National Network of Fusion Centers is a DHS supported effort that draws on local and state expertise to augment counterterrorism. Fusion Centers have the capability to gather and receive classified and unclassified information, analyze the information through a risk assessment methodology, and disseminate the information to the appropriate partners.

The U.S. intelligence collection apparatus has improved over the years, however, with regards to domestic violent extremism. It is important to note that the collection of foreign intelligence is guided by different laws and regulations than domestic intelligence.

Domestically, the intelligence community is restricted and challenged by the need to balance national security while ensuring individuals' privacy and civil liberties are protected. The main concern is the amount of information that is collected, of which much of it is innocent activity that may violate the privacy of U.S. citizens. The system is only as good as the imputed information and the products produced from that information. The problem is much of the information is received from the general public, who may not have the capability to filter out bias and misunderstandings. This does not mean the public does not provide a valuable asset as the "eyes and ears" for law enforcement. A 2010 study found that 40% of 68 foiled plots were due to intelligence provided by civilians (Strom et al, 2010).

The public seemed to be unaware of the extent of the rise of domestic and homegrown violent extremism. This may be due to much of the focus being on foreign Muslim terrorists and organizations. It is also possibly the result of the media and its reporting, which may have led to profiling, prejudice, and attacks against members of foreign members of society.

## CONCLUSIONS

After 9/11, there was much consternation and finger-pointing within the context of "How could this have happened?" In the wake of intense investigations and self-evaluation, the counterintelligence community and law enforcement discovered a glaring problem of underestimating a dangerous foe that led to the inability to "connect the dots" to detect, deter and disrupt such catastrophic events. The intelligence and law enforcement, and military apparatus of the U.S. shifted priorities and began to focus on foreign terrorist groups under a simplistic strategy of "defeating them over there, so we do not have to do it here." This philosophy has seeped into the Homeland Security Assessments of the two previous presidents, where the majority of governmental attention was directed to Muslim terrorist organizations. In fact, it was not until recently the storming of the Capital on January 06, 2021, that government and populace have come to realize the danger the rise of violent extremism poses for the U.S. However, should the nation have been surprised with the rise in violence in 2020 that spilled into 2021? The answer should be an emphatic No! The violence in the streets across the U.S. clearly showed that left-wing extremists such as Antifa were bent on taking advantage of peaceful civil protests to bring about a swath of destruction to establish a confrontation with the government. Rightwing and white nationalists increased their activity in the past few years with marches to protect Confederate monuments and counter left-wing extremists. The rightwing extremist activity continue to rise even after the tragedy in Charlottesville and culminated in the attempted destruction of the U.S. Capital Building. These were signs of problems that have been brewing for decades. In the 1990's the seminal events of the Ruby Ridge and Waco standoffs along with the Oklahoma City bombing that the rightwing extremists were gaining momentum for their ideology. Lt Commander Steve Presley of the U.S. Navy wrote a paper in

1996 on the rise of rightwing extremism in the military. The paper discussed how rightwing extremists infiltrated the military to recruit new members and open avenues to obtain weapons and ammunition. However, local law enforcement at that time was also receiving reports that street gangs were also recruiting military members due to their training and access to firearms. In 2009, the Department of Homeland Security issued a threat assessment on the rise of rightwing extremism, however, the Secretary received strong political push back and had to defend and backtrack a bit in the assessment even though it also mentioned the rise of left-wing extremists.

The rise in violent extremism should not surprise anyone, most specifically the U.S. intelligence and law enforcement communities since they are charged with protecting the homeland from all foreign and domestic enemies. The problem is clearly that response to violent extremism has been reactionary and uncoordinated. While focusing on foreign adversaries, domestic threats began to rise. There should be a broad, concerted, and unified effort to address extremism. If one area becomes the focus, this will indelibly open opportunities for others to exploit so that resources continue to burn out, chasing the threat instead of being at the forefront of prevention.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

There is some dispute as to how to establish effective counter violent extremism (CVE) strategies and policies. According to the Brennan Center (2019), the current CVE programs and policies are ineffective. To start, CVE programs are based on the flawed theory that individuals who accept extremism start down a path that will indomitability lead to terrorism. The report contends that individuals may have extremist thoughts or share extremist ideology; however, they may not act upon those thoughts. Thus, innocent behavior or distrust of police, may red

flag innocent behavior and violate an individual's First Amendment rights. This, in turn, may push the individual further down the radicalization process instead of stopping it. The report states that the CVE programs ultimately do not suppress violence but suppress ideas. This does not mean that CVE programs should not be utilized; instead, agencies should learn from the past and prepare to reevaluate the programs for effectiveness continuously.

### **FBI and Law Enforcement Outreach Should Not Be a CVE program.**

Outreach programs are intended to provide an avenue where trust is established and fostered. It is intended to educate and provide awareness of violent extremism. However, programs such as the FBI's "Don't Be A Puppet" has actually sown distrust in communities where members feel that this program turns students, teachers, and parents into spies (Brennan, 2019). In addition, the outreach program is being used in Muslim communities, but there is no outreach with the white supremacist or rightwing extremists (Brookings, 2016). Instead, law enforcement should continue to foster relationships with at-risk communities without the context of CVE. This will reduce the strain on the relationship and provide the same opportunity to obtain the necessary information. In addition, this will emphasize prevention over intervention which could cause the whole community to feel that they are the target instead of individuals. Building resilience in the community against radicalization by being well informed will create an environment that the whole community is responsible for their security and safety.

### **Focus on Individuals Not Community**

The de-escalation of strain in the community will then provide the opportunity for the CVE program to focus on individuals who may have sympathies for violent extremism. The intervention of the individual will be based on the likelihood of committing a violent act by

reviewing social media usage, previous criminal activities, and where those crimes violent in nature.

### **Individual Intervention Should Utilize Health Department Resources**

Health care professionals are viewed as trustworthy where an individual may feel safe discussing their feelings of oppression, manipulation, and marginalization, to name a few. In addition, health professionals can guide individuals toward mental health professionals who can also assist vulnerable individuals. To maintain trust and balance between client privilege and safety concerns, health professionals should not be viewed as a workaround individuals' rights protections.

### **Monitor Social Media**

Federal, state, and local law enforcement and intelligence agencies need to continue to monitor social networking and Internet sights to be able to identify those that pose a threat. In addition, monitoring will also reveal possible strategies and tactics which can be countered factual information and the operational development plans to detect, deter and defeat violent extremist.

### **Continue to Build on Communication Infrastructure to Facilitate the Connecting of Dots Between Agencies.**

The National Intelligence Estimate has been utilized successfully in providing a current and long-term view of the threat situation. However, the NIE has been focused on foreign threats and the threat identifies the need for a separate NIE pertaining to domestic violent extremists. This will provide a baseline in which CVE doctrine and strategies can be developed along with proper evaluation matrix to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) to the program. Fusion centers and JTTF's should be the distribution hubs for this

information to ensure continuity and accuracy, which is need for the homeland security apparatus can coordinate and plan.

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