

U.S. Domestic Terrorism

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Domestic Violent Extremists: Individuals operating/based primarily in the U.S. or its territories without direction or inspiration from a foreign terrorist group or foreign power who see to further political/social goals (wholly or in part) through unlawful acts of force or violence **dangerous to human life**



Typical Actions Associated with Domestic Terrorism:

- Bombings & the use of Weapons of Mass Destruction
- Assassinations/Target Killings
- Shooting Sprees
- Arsons/Fire-Bombing
- Kidnappings/Hostage Situations

Type of violence carried out depends on the type of extremism and the individual carrying out the attack → usually target government/military/police

Key Definitions

***Homegrown Violent Extremists**
(further objectives of a foreign terrorist group , but act independently of the organization)

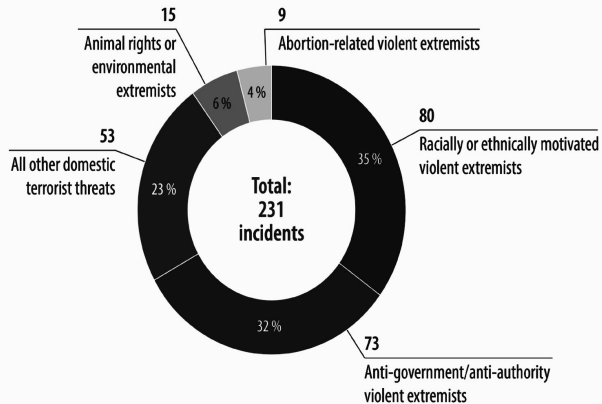
***Terrorism ≠ Hate Crimes (violence)**



Types of Extremism



Figure 1 – Proportion of domestic terrorism incidents by threat group (2010–2021)



Data source: Government Accountability Office (GAO), February 2023.

Classifications

1. Racial/Ethnic
2. Anti-Government/Anti-Authority
 - a. Militia
 - b. Anarchist
3. Animal-Rights/Environmental
4. Abortion Related
5. “All Other”
 - a. Salad bar/composite

Militia Violent Extremism

- *Paramilitary (hierarchy)
- *Mostly Local & Decentralized
- *Violence to Oppose Tyranny (changing)
- *Obsessions with: FTKs, guns, uniforms, 2nd Amendment

TIMELINE: MAJOR INCIDENTS

1963



16th Street Baptist Church Bombed

1968



MLK Assassinated

1992



Ruby Ridge Standoff

1993



Waco Siege

1995



Oklahoma City Bombing

2015



Charleston AME Church Shooting

2017



Charlottesville

Focusing Event: January 6th, 2021

Key Groups Involved : Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, Three Percenters (NOTE: most individuals had not affiliation with a group, but are easy recruitment targets)

Social Context : polarization, conspiracy in the mainstream, trust of online sources and imageboard/gaming platforms, TRUMP



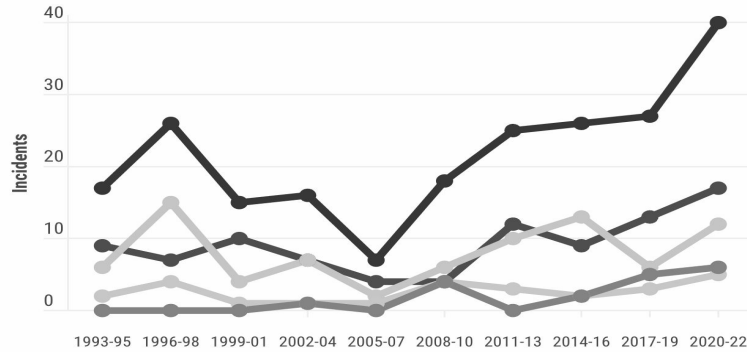
Implications

- 2021: terrorist attacks in 18 states & D.C.
 - Highest concentration of events in Portland, Oregon (18)
 - Followed by NYC (7)
- Reveals trend of decentralization & salad bar thinking
- Contributes to the rise of attacks occurring in demonstrations
 - 2019: 2%
 - 2020: 47%
 - 2021: 53%
- Over 800 domestic terror subjects arrested om FY2021



General DVE Trends

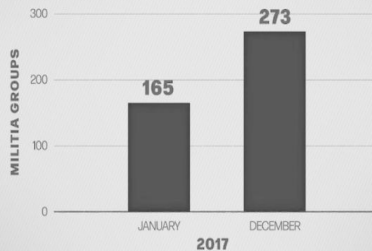
Right-Wing Domestic Terrorist Incidents in the United States, 1993-2022



ADL

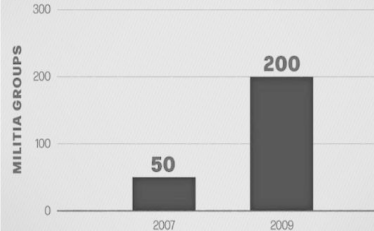
RISE IN MILITIA GROUPS

SOURCE: SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER



RISE IN MILITIA GROUPS

SOURCE: ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE



Militia Specific

- Early 2000s: significant decline in militia membership
- 2008: surge of militia groups
 - Obama election
 - Recession
 - Mortgage crisis
 - Rise of social media
- 2010-2015: slowing of militia activity and popularity
- 2016: spike in militia activity and membership (Trump Election)
 - Rose 65% in 2017
 - Militias begin to trust some authority
 - Police (BLM)
 - Border Security
 - “Law and Order”
 - Begin to earn credibility
- 2021 & 2022: highest rates of DVE incidents



Federal Laws & Regulations

Title 18 U.S. Code

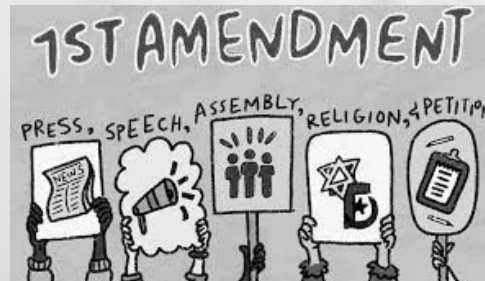
Domestic Terrorism:

- Acts dangerous to human life (that violate law)
- Acts intended to: intimidate/coerce civilian population and sway government policy, or affect government through destruction, assassination, or kidnapping

NOT CRIMINAL

1st Amendment

- Freedom of speech protected (to the extent that no one is injured or harmed)



4th Amendment

- Investigations into domestic terrorism require warrants (probable cause & unreasonable search and seizure)
- Does not have to be followed in international cases of terrorism

After January 6th, 2021

- Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act of 2022
- National Defense Authorization Act

Still dealing with the “security dilemma”

*Domestic extremist groups cannot be labeled as terrorists



National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism

- Understanding/sharing domestic terrorism-related information
- Prevention (recruitment and violence)
- Disrupt and deter activities
- Confront long-term consequences (gun violence/racism)
- Enhance measures in DOJ, DHS, and DOD to deal with emerging threats

Current Policy

Actors Involved

- FBI
- Police
- DHS
- GOA
- Citizens
- DOJ
- Social Media
- Conspiracy theorists
- Groups like Antifa & Boogaloo Bois



Sustainability

Environment

Environmental domestic extremists are individuals who promote their ideas about the environment by attacking people, groups, businesses, and institutions who are a threat to their beliefs.

Economic

Expensive: \$101.2 million FY22 (not mentioned specifically in FY24 Budget) to implement programs, and pay for damages

Equity

Security Grant Programs to help non-profits protect their members, and to invest in research to help affect communities. However, racial/ethnic extremism is still highly prevalent.



Policy Options

1. **Transparency of Data**
 - a. *Social*: concerns over privacy
 - b. *Political*: Easier option (not actually solving issue)
 - c. *Economic*: Costs a lot but creates jobs
2. **Prevention at state, local, and tribal enforcement agency levels (trainings and Nonprofit Security Grant Program)**
 - a. *Social*: already distrust in community
 - b. *Political*: too much polarization
 - c. *Economic*: costs a lot
3. **Social media management**
 - a. *Social*: habit that many won't give up
 - b. *Political*: feasible (Tik Tok)
 - c. *Economic*: people may lose jobs



Nonprofit Security Grant Program

Grant Programs Directorate

Federal Emergency Management Agency



FEMA

