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**FACT SHEET:**

**National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism**

On his first full day in office, President Biden directed his national security team to lead a 100-day comprehensive review of U.S. Government efforts to address domestic terrorism, which has evolved into the most urgent terrorism threat the United States faces today. As a result of that review, the Biden Administration is releasing the first-ever **National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism** to address this challenge to America's national security and improve the federal government's response.

Domestic terrorism is not a new threat in the United States, yet it is a threat Americans have endured too often in recent years. The comprehensive strategy provides a nationwide framework for the U.S. Government and partners to understand and share domestic terrorism-related information; prevent domestic terrorism recruitment and mobilization to violence; disrupt and deter domestic terrorism activity; and confront long term contributors to domestic terrorism. Our approach will protect both the nation and the civil liberties of its citizens.

Under Federal law, "**domestic terrorism**" is defined as "activities that involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State; appear to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or to affect the conduct of a government by

mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States.”

The review was **rooted in an expert assessment of the domestic terrorism threat** provided by the intelligence and law enforcement communities. An unclassified summary of that assessment was [released in March](#) so the public could see the key findings. [It found](#) that the two most lethal elements of today’s domestic terrorism threat are (1) racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists who advocate for the superiority of the white race and (2) anti-government or anti-authority violent extremists, such as militia violent extremists.

To develop a government-wide strategy to counter domestic terrorists, the Biden Administration consulted extensively with a wide array of experts across the U.S. Government as well as with leaders in Congress, state and local governments, academia, civil society, religious communities, and foreign governments. Throughout the process, **we embraced the protection of civil rights and civil liberties as a national security imperative**. The strategy we are releasing today is carefully tailored to address violence and reduce the factors that lead to violence, threaten public safety, and infringe on the free expression of ideas. It is organized around four pillars – the core elements of how the Biden Administration will improve the U.S. Government’s response to this persistent, evolving, and lethal threat to our people, our democracy, and our national security:

#### PILLAR 1: UNDERSTAND AND SHARE DOMESTIC TERRORISM-RELATED INFORMATION

**The U.S. Government will enhance domestic terrorism analysis and improve information sharing throughout law enforcement** at the federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial levels, and, where appropriate, private sector partners. The Department of Justice (DOJ) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) have implemented a robust system to methodically track domestic terrorism cases nationwide. The Department of State as well as the intelligence and law enforcement communities are learning more from foreign partners about the international dimensions of this threat.

The Department of State will continue to **assess whether additional foreign entities linked to domestic terrorism can be designated** as Foreign Terrorist Organizations or Specially Designated Global Terrorists under relevant statutory criteria. The Department of the Treasury, in coordination with law enforcement, is exploring ways to enhance the identification and analysis of financial activity of domestic terrorists. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is enhancing its analysis of open-source information to identify threats earlier and will create a structured mechanism for receiving and sharing within government credible non-governmental analysis.

## PILLAR 2: PREVENT DOMESTIC TERRORISM RECRUITMENT AND MOBILIZATION TO VIOLENCE

Drawing on the expertise of a variety of departments and agencies, **the U.S. Government has revamped support to community partners who can help to prevent individuals from ever reaching the point of committing terrorist violence.** The U.S. Government will **strengthen domestic terrorism prevention resources and services.** For the first time, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has designated “Domestic Violent Extremism” as a National Priority Area within the Department’s Homeland Security Grant Program, which means that over \$77 million will be allocated to state, local, tribal, and territorial partners to prevent, protect against, and respond to domestic violent extremism. DHS and FBI are working to strengthen local prevention, threat assessment, and threat management frameworks. The Department of Defense (DOD) is incorporating training for servicemembers separating or retiring from the military on potential targeting of those with military training by violent extremist actors. The U.S. Government will **improve public awareness** of federal resources to address concerning or threatening behavior before violence occurs.

The U.S. Government will augment its efforts to **address online terrorist recruitment and mobilization to violence by domestic terrorists** through increased information sharing with the technology sector and the creation of innovative ways to foster digital literacy and build resilience to recruitment and mobilization. **The United States also recently joined the *Christchurch Call to Action to Eliminate Terrorist and Violent Extremist Content Online*,** an international partnership between governments and

technology companies that works to develop new multilateral solutions to eliminating terrorist content online while safeguarding the freedom of online expression.

### PILLAR 3: DISRUPT AND DETER DOMESTIC TERRORISM ACTIVITY

The work of Federal law enforcement as well as our state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement partners is critical to countering domestic terrorism. The U.S. Government will increase **support to Federal, state, and local law enforcement in addressing domestic terrorism nationwide**. U.S. Attorney's Offices and FBI field offices across the country have formally made domestic terrorism a top priority and are tracking comprehensively domestic terrorism-related cases, reallocating or requesting appropriate funding and resources as needed to target the threat. That includes over \$100 million in additional resources for DOJ, FBI, and DHS included in the President's Fiscal Year 2022 Budget to ensure that the Federal Government has the analysts, investigators, prosecutors, and other personnel and resources it needs to thwart domestic terrorism and do justice when the law has been broken. State, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement will have access to increased intelligence sharing and training on domestic terrorism and associated threats. **DOJ is closely examining whether new legislative authorities that balance safety and the protection of civil liberties are necessary and appropriate.**

The U.S. Government is improving employee screening to enhance methods for **identifying domestic terrorists who might pose insider threats**. The Office of Personnel Management will consider updates to the forms used to apply for sensitive roles in the Federal Government that could assist investigators in identifying potential domestic terrorism threats. DOD, DOJ, and DHS are similarly pursuing efforts to **ensure domestic terrorists are not employed** within our military or law enforcement ranks and improve screening and vetting processes. Training and resources will be developed for state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement partners as well as sensitive private sector partners to enable them to enhance their own employee screening programs and prevent individuals who pose domestic terrorism threats from being placed in positions of trust.

#### PILLAR 4: CONFRONT LONG-TERM CONTRIBUTORS TO DOMESTIC TERRORISM

**Every component of the government has a role to play in rooting out racism and bigotry** and advancing equity for all Americans. The U.S. Government, in close partnership with civil society, will **address the long-term contributors that are responsible for much of today's domestic terrorism.** This includes reducing and protecting Americans from racial, ethnic, and religious hatred, and stemming the flow of firearms to individuals intending to commit acts of domestic terrorism. **We will work to ensure that law enforcement operates without bias** in countering domestic terrorism and provides for the public safety of all Americans. In a true democracy, **violence cannot be an acceptable mode of seeking political or social change.**

The U.S. Government is committed to **strengthening trust in** American democracy and its ability to deliver for the American people, including through relief and opportunity provided by the American Rescue Plan, the American Jobs Plan and the American Families Plan. The U.S. Government will also work to find ways to **counter the polarization often fueled by disinformation, misinformation, and dangerous conspiracy theories online,** supporting an information environment that fosters healthy democratic discourse.

In implementing this strategy, and at the direction of President Biden, we will remain focused on addressing violence and reducing the threat of violence while vigilantly safeguarding peaceful expression of a wide range of views and freedom of political association.

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