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## Extremism and Insider Threat in the DoD

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Adapted from:

DoD Insider Threat Management and Analysis Center. (2021). *Extremism and Insider Threat in the DoD*.

DoD Insider Threat Management and Analysis Center. (2021). *Home Grown Violent Extremism: An Introduction for DoD Personnel*.



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## Level Setting

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- There are members of the DoD who belong to extremist groups or actively participate in efforts to further extremist ideologies
- Extremist groups often target DoD members for recruitment
- Extremist ideologies, particularly those that undermine the oath we each took to obey the law and support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, have no place within the Department of Defense and service members and DoD civil servants must reject participation in such activities.
- Extremist ideologies and activities within the ranks of the DoD increase the risk to the DoD
- DoD members have a duty and responsibility to report extremist activity they observe within the DoD

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## Psychosocial Vulnerabilities Exploited by Extremist Groups

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- **Perceived Injustice**
  - When people believe they have been wronged, it is a natural tendency to seek someone or something to blame
  - Extremist groups provide simple explanations for injustice, identify wrongdoers and offer opportunities for redress
- **Search for Identity/Purpose**
  - Without a clear sense of identity or purpose people tend to become lost, depressed or angry
  - Extremist groups provide a structure around which to establish pride in self, where you have a guide for thought and behavior built on moral certainty
- **Need for Belonging**
  - People who feel isolated and marginalized often are desperate to be liked and wanted by others
  - Extremist groups provide full acceptance and a place within a community of like minded people who, like you, have the special ability to see the truth



## Domestic Extremist Ideologies Posing the Greatest Risk to the DoD

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- **“Patriot” Extremism**

*Core Belief:* This ideology holds that the US government has become corrupt, has overstepped its constitutional boundaries or is no longer capable of protecting the people against foreign threats. On these grounds they refuse to accept the government’s authority to tax or govern them. As such they do not believe they are subject to the laws of the US. Some elements have formed militias and openly advocate for the violent overthrow of the current US government.

- **Anarchist Extremism**

*Core Belief:* This ideology is opposed to government in all its forms. They reject elected officials, laws or police. This ideology has the ultimate goal of the total elimination of government. Additionally they are opposed to capitalism and corporations.

- **Ethnic/Racial Supremacy**

*Core Belief:* Any ideology that advocates for ethnic or racial purity through the separation, expulsion or elimination of other ethnic or racial groups. These ideologies frequently accuse the US government of forcing race mixing on the people, often with the goal of destroying the purity of the country or the way of life of certain races. While the vast majority of these groups hold white supremacist views, a wide array of ethnic and racial groups hold similar beliefs about the supremacy of their ethnicity or race.



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## Extremism: Observable Behaviors

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- Clear identification with or support for violent extremist or violent hate-based ideology through behavior or outward expression including, but not limited to verbal or online statements, or physical gestures.
- Making or attempting to make contact with violent extremist groups, or other individuals espousing violent extremist ideology (i.e. via email, social media, attending rallies, visiting compounds, etc.).
- The procurement, possession, or distribution of violent extremist literature or paraphernalia.
- Threatening, intimidating, harassing, or harming another individual consistent with violent extremist or violent hate-based ideology.
- Any indication of attack-related research, planning, preparation, or implementation.

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## Symbols of Extremism

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- Symbols stand for something else; can be used to build pride or create a positive emotional connection
- Can be used to fuel feelings of revenge, hatred, fear, or to control others
- Be aware of symbols of far right, far left, Islamist, or single issue ideologies



*Violent extremists often twist the meaning of symbols or choose symbolic targets to make attacks seem more important*

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## Risk Factors and How/Where to Report

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- Recognizing and reporting indicators such as the observable behaviors and symbols for violent extremism are essential to mitigating risk to the DoD
- Additional risk factors should be considered when examining reports of potential extremism as they may indicate increased risk; these risk factors may include but are not limited to:
  - Inability to cope with changes or perceived failures in relationships, school, or career
  - History of violence (e.g., domestic violence or violence toward animals) and unstable mental state
  - Social isolation or inability to join with or relate to others
  - Possession of, access to, or familiarity with weapons or explosives
- When observed, indicators and risk factors for violent extremism must be reported; appropriate avenues for reporting are:
  - Your Technical Office Leadership
  - Strategic Resources Office (SRO)
  - Security and Intelligence Directorate (SID)
    - Security Control Center (SCC) or Insider Threat Team
- If you witness a violent act, or believe you or others are risk of personal harm.
  - Call the SCC at x4660 or Dial 911.

*When DoD employees fail to report concerning behaviors, they remove an opportunity for the Department to help an employee, and place themselves, the Department, and others at risk.*



## Extremism: Mitigation Strategies

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- Requires a holistic approach encompassing individual risk factors, vulnerabilities, and indicators of potential violence
  - A range of perspectives and resources should be considered
    - Behavioral
    - Threat Management
    - Law Enforcement
- Research and structured professional guides/tools (i.e.: WAVR-21, RAGE-V, TRAP-18) may be employed
- Important to implement effective measures to mitigate risk early on
- Continued education and awareness training is critical to:
  - Recognizing indicators and risk factors
  - Timely reporting to the appropriate entity/resource
  - Implementing effective mitigation measures

*DARPA maintains an Countering Insider Threat Program with a multi-disciplinary threat management capability to conduct and integrate monitoring, analysis, reporting, and response to insider threats. If you observe behaviors of concern (including extremist activity or anomalous behavior out of character) report it through your Office Leadership, SRO, SID, NCIS or the DARPA Insider Threat team at: [insiderthreat@darpa.mil](mailto:insiderthreat@darpa.mil) or dial 571-218-4200.*

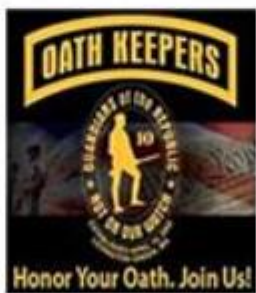




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## Home Grown Violent Extremism

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- The landscape of home grown extremist ideologies is constantly evolving
- The groups espousing these ideologies sometimes find themselves cooperating or competing with each other based on changing political and environmental circumstances
- While all of these ideologies espouse extremist views, the boundaries between them can be confusing
- Violent extremism is characterized by clear identification with or support for groups promoting violence and hate, or seeking to influence government policy and decisions through intimidation or coercion
- This briefing provides a construct for organizing some of the home grown violent ideologies based on core beliefs and likely targets



## "Patriot/Militia" Extremism

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- *Core Belief:* This ideology holds that the US government has become corrupt, has overstepped its constitutional boundaries or is no longer capable of protecting the people against foreign threats. On these grounds they refuse to accept the government's authority to tax or govern them. As such they do not believe they are subject to the laws of the US. Some elements have formed militias and openly advocate for the violent overthrow of the current US government.
- *Primary Target:* Government personnel (most notably tax officials); symbols and structures representing government authority; law enforcement; anyone they believe is threatening their constitutional rights such as law enforcement, judges, or politicians.
- *Example Groups:* Sovereign Citizens; The Oath Keepers; Boogaloo Bois; The Proud Boys



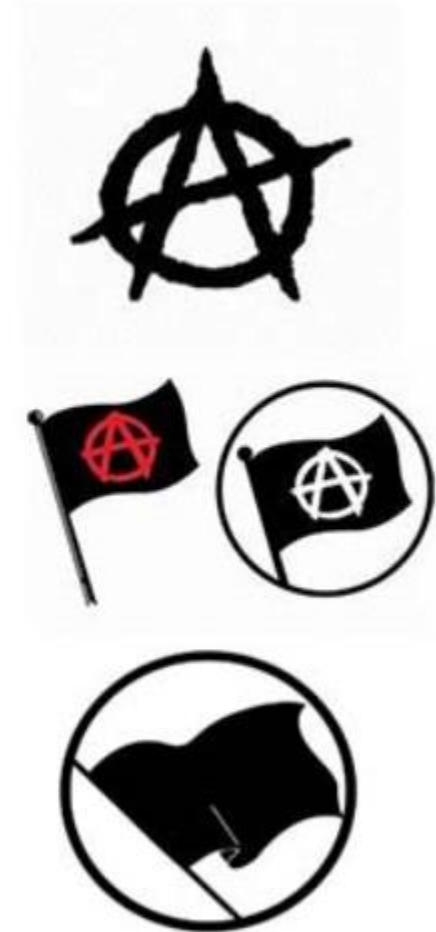
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## Anarchist Extremism

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- *Core Belief:* This ideology is opposed to government in all its forms. They do not believe that there should be elected officials, laws or police. This ideology has the ultimate goal of the total elimination of government. Additionally they are opposed to capitalism and corporations.
- *Primary Target:* Symbols, structures and personnel associated with government (federal, state or local); symbols of capitalism; corporations; very wealthy individuals.
- *Example Groups:* Antifa, The Occupy Movement, The Worker's Solidarity Alliance



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## Ethnic/Racial Supremacy

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- *Core Belief:* Any ideology that advocates for ethnic or racial purity through the separation, expulsion or elimination of other ethnic or racial groups. These ideologies frequently accuse the US government of forcing race mixing on the people, often with the goal of destroying the purity of the country or the way of life of certain races. While the vast majority of these groups hold white supremacist views, a wide array of ethnic and racial groups hold similar beliefs about the supremacy of their ethnicity or race.
- *Primary Target:* Members of other races, ethnicities (or religious groups associated with particular races or ethnicities); Federal government; law enforcement (especially at the federal level).
- *Example Groups:* Identity Evropa, Atomwaffen Division, Aryan Nations and Ku Klux Klan.



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## Extremist Ideologies Not Specifically Targeting USG/DoD

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- **Religious Extremism**

- *Core Belief:* Any ideology espousing the supremacy of a particular religion that advocates the establishment of religious purity through the subjugation, forced conversion, or elimination of other religions. Christian extremism is often conflated with white supremacy for a joint ideology focused on racial and religious purity which they believe to be God's intention
- *Primary Target:* Symbols, structures and people associated with other religions; people determined to be acting in opposition to the teachings of the religion (e.g. abortion, LGBTQ lifestyles).

- **Anti-feminism**

- *Core Belief:* An ideology that holds that modern men have been emasculated by feminism and they need to reestablish themselves as the dominant gender. Often referred to as Incels (for involuntarily celibates) they openly call for the attack, raping and killing of women
- *Primary Target:* Women, especially women they perceive as attractive (referred to as "Stacys") who sexually reject or would likely reject unattractive men; attractive men (referred to as "Chads") who are not sexually rejected by women; feminists; men who don't stand against feminism.

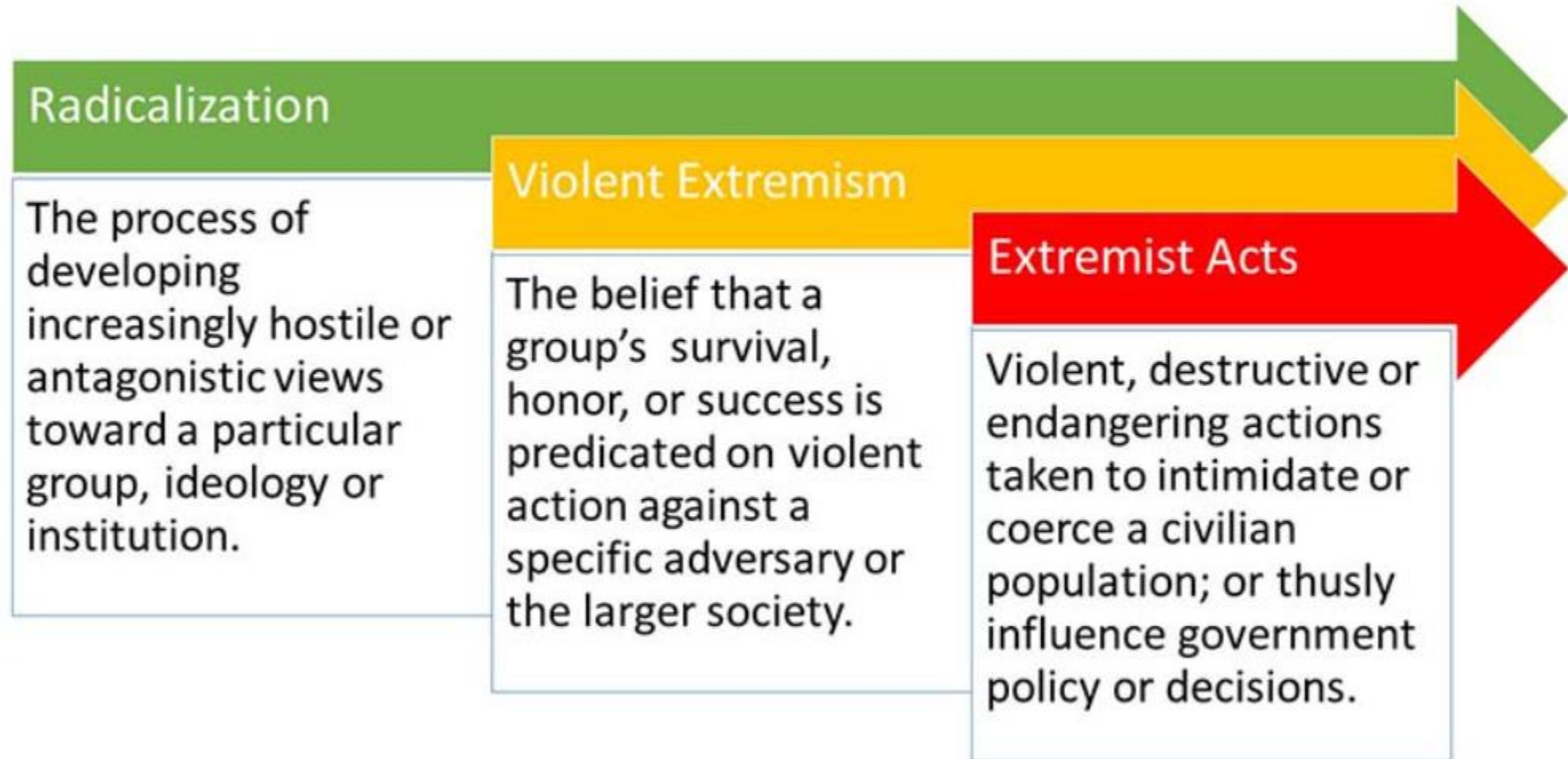
- **Environmental/Animal Rights**

- *Core Belief:* This ideology holds that all necessary means should be employed to protect animals and the environment. The goal would include the disruption or destruction of industries that exploit animals or pollute the environment. While they rarely intentionally seek to kill humans, they are accepting of the death of humans if it happens to occur in the defense of animals or the environment.
- *Primary Target:* People, corporations, systems, and facilities associated with animal exploitation, food processing, climate change or pollution.



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## Progression Toward Extremist Violence



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“We need your help. (I'm talking of course about) extremism and extremist ideology - views and conduct that run counter to everything that we believe in and which can actually tear at the fabric of who we are as an institution ... We can't afford actions and behavior that are at odds with our values and that undermine good order and discipline, that harm and harass and otherwise violate the oath that we share and the bonds of trust upon which we all rely.”

Lloyd J. Austin III  
Secretary of Defense

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## Concerns about violent extremism should be referred to:

Mark Boyd – Director, MSO-SID  
Mary Vander Linden – Director, SRO

### Further Resources:

- Berger, J.M. (2018). *Extremism*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2021, February 22). *Don't Be a Puppet: Pull Back the Curtain on Violent Extremism*. <https://www.fbi.gov/cve508>
- Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2020). *FBI Domestic Terrorism Reference Guide: Sovereign Citizen Violent Extremism*.
- Kriner, M. & Lewis, J. (2021). The Boogaloo Movement. *CTC Sentinel: Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*. 14(2), 22-30.
- OUSD(i) and DITMAC. (2021, January 15). *Be Aware Series: Violent Extremism*.