



**Written Statement of First Liberty Institute**

**Michael Berry  
General Counsel & Director of Military Affairs**

***EXTREMISM IN THE ARMED FORCES***

**Submitted to the House Armed Services Committee**

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To Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, and Committee Members:

On behalf of First Liberty Institute, thank you for the privilege of presenting testimony regarding Extremism in the Armed Forces.

As the nation's largest legal organization solely dedicated to defending religious liberty for all Americans, First Liberty represents clients of all faiths, and we speak for the majority of military chaplain faith groups. I am privileged to serve as General Counsel for First Liberty, and I am equally privileged to serve as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, although this testimony is offered only in my civilian capacity.

First Liberty urges this Committee to maintain a strong and diverse military while safeguarding the constitutional rights of service members. A truly diverse military means one that is open and welcoming to all who meet the standards for service. It also means a rejection of any attempt to weaponize anti-extremism in order to target a religious belief or worldview of which those in authority disapprove. Specifically, the prohibition against extremism should not be extended to thoughts or beliefs such that someone's religion, belief, or political persuasion is vilified and made criminal. Instead, we should focus on identifying and removing those who use, threaten, or advocate violence to accomplish their objectives.

Unless the Congress and the Department of Defense take adequate precautions to protect service member First Amendment rights, we risk politicizing the military and unnecessarily exposing the government to litigation.

Our service members are often thrust into complex, stressful environments in which they are surrounded by people who look, believe, and think nothing like them. This is a feature of military service, not a defect. When I deployed to Afghanistan, I served with many whose beliefs and lifestyles differ greatly from my own. And I would proudly do it again. I observed first-hand that diversity truly makes our military stronger and more capable. Put simply, protecting free speech and religious freedom in our military is a matter of national security.

Americans serve for many reasons. Some are motivated by patriotism, others by a sense of adventure, and others still by the promise of a rewarding career. But statistically speaking, one of the most common traits among service members is religious belief. According to available data, American males who identify as "highly religious" are among those most likely to join the military.<sup>1</sup>

The beauty of America's military is that, no matter one's background, those who serve are united by a cause much greater than oneself. America's service members personify the *e pluribus unum*—"out of many, one"—that adorns our currency and our nation's Great Seal.

My own motivation to join the Marine Corps was my love of country. I have traveled to and even lived in foreign lands, and I am convinced that there is no greater nation on earth than the United States.

As a first-generation Asian-American, however, I am also acutely aware that there was a time when those of my ethnicity were viewed with suspicion as disloyal and as posing a threat to the nation, even if we sought to prove our worth through military service. Recent, tragic events give me pause to question whether some might still question my Americanness purely because of my ethnicity.

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<sup>1</sup> Burdette, *et al*, *Serving God and Country? Religious Involvement and Military Service Among Young Adult Men*, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*.

Thankfully, those who advocate or incite violence against others because of their race, their ethnicity, or their religion are rare. First Liberty fully supports all efforts to remove such people from the military. Indeed, no one wants to see true extremists gone from the armed forces more than those who serve.

Nevertheless, we must warn against a significant danger associated with recent efforts to eradicate extremism from the ranks, no matter how well-intentioned they might be. Attempting to expand the definition of extremism to punish thoughts or beliefs is not only unconstitutional, but it will harm our military.

Historically, our nation has drawn a sharp distinction between belief and conduct. The Supreme Court has acknowledged that while protection of the former is “absolute,” protection of the latter “cannot be.”<sup>2</sup> This is also true within the military.

Since the founding of our nation, service members have been held to a higher standard of conduct than their civilian counterparts. There is no question that a service member who acts upon their extremist ideology can be punished. Both the Uniform Code of Military Justice and Department of Defense regulations prohibit extremist conduct within the military, and our military justice system routinely prosecutes violators. But we do not criminalize thought or belief. Quite the contrary, we have always sought to protect the right of service members to hold religious and political beliefs, whether or not we agree with those beliefs.

The nation’s highest military court agreed with this principle, stating “we must be sensitive to protection of the principle of free thought—not free thought for those who agree with us, but freedom for the thought we hate.”<sup>3</sup> And as General Douglas MacArthur famously stated in defense of Colonel William “Billy” Mitchell, a service member “should not be silenced for being at variance with his superiors in rank and with accepted doctrine.”<sup>4</sup>

There may, of course, be circumstances and occasions on which a service member does not act on his or her extremist ideology, but instead engages in speech or expression to advance their views. Confronting offensive speech is neither new nor novel.

More than a century ago, as the fear of socialist propaganda gripped the nation, Justice Holmes elucidated the “clear and present danger” standard to determine when speech may be criminalized.<sup>5</sup> A half century later, during the height of the Red Scare, the Supreme Court modified that standard to criminalize speech that is likely to produce or incite “imminent lawless action.”<sup>6</sup> Although a lower threshold for criminality exists for service members, speech must interfere with the military’s ability to accomplish its mission in order to be punishable.<sup>7</sup> Otherwise, it is protected speech.

In other words, the First Amendment counsels against prohibiting thoughts and speech that fall short of advocating or inciting violence or lawlessness, even if those thoughts or speech are abhorrent. Indeed, the First Amendment would be entirely unnecessary were we only concerned with protecting popular ideas and words.

There is also the risk that what is popular or acceptable today might become tomorrow’s thought-crime. This is especially true when the definition of extremism is broadened to encompass nearly anything with

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<sup>2</sup> *Cantwell v. Connecticut*, 310 U.S. 296, 303-04 (1940).

<sup>3</sup> *United States v. Priest*, 21 C.M.A. 564, 570 (C.M.A. 1972).

<sup>4</sup> MacArthur, Douglas (1964). *Reminiscences of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur*.

<sup>5</sup> *Schenck v. United States*, 249 U.S. 47 (1919).

<sup>6</sup> *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, 395 U.S. 444 (1969).

<sup>7</sup> *United States v. Wilcox*, 66 M.J. 442 (C.A.A.F. 2008).

which those in authority disagree. Recent and troubling incidents within the Department of Defense offer a cautionary tale.

As you are likely aware, Department of Defense equal opportunity officials are trained at the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI). First Liberty was shocked to discover that DEOMI instructors were taught to provide the following training to service members with respect to extremism in the military:

Nowadays, instead of dressing in sheets or publicly espousing hate messages, many extremists will talk of individual liberties, states' rights, and how to make the world a better place.

The tragic irony is that those who believe in “individual liberties” and “making the world a better place” are often motivated by those very beliefs to serve. In fact, if belief in individual liberties and federalism is now considered “extremist,” then we Americans should scrap the Constitution and the Bill of Rights—the very documents we pledge to defend and protect.

First Liberty also obtained a “screenshot” of an unclassified slide from a U.S. Army training presentation. The slide is entitled “Religious Extremism,” and it purports to identify religious extremist groups. Included among those listed are Al Qaeda, Hamas, and the Ku Klux Klan, groups that use or advocate violence to accomplish their objectives and are therefore rightly classified as extremists. But also included are Evangelical Christianity and Catholicism, who most assuredly do not advocate violence. Surely, the fact that Evangelical Christians and Catholics hold fast to millennia-old views on marriage and human sexuality does not make them extremists who are unfit to serve.

At a time of turmoil and instability, during which our nation faces many external threats, DEOMI's message is inappropriate and offensive to our service members and those they defend.

On February 5, 2021, Secretary of Defense Austin issued a Stand-Down to Address Extremism in the Ranks. Few, if any, will argue with Secretary Austin's stated goal of purging “supremacists” and “extremists” from the services. But to date, the Department of Defense has not defined those or other terms. Moreover, the Department has yet to provide any assurance that Evangelical Christians and Catholics will not, once again, be labeled and targeted as extremists.

Evangelical Christianity and Catholicism might not be popular within DEOMI or the Pentagon, but to label them as extremists is not only wrong, but it undermines our national security. Those two groups combined comprise a substantial majority of the force, and as stated above, they are among the most likely candidates to serve.

Labeling service members of faith as “extremists” is to declare them unwelcome, which will only hurt our recruiting and retention efforts. It also creates a de facto hostile work environment that deters service members and dependents from adoption or support of the religious values that contribute in positive and direct ways to our mission. Instead, we should be seeking to identify, recruit, and retain those who are willing and able to serve, regardless of their religious beliefs.

The threat of radical extremists infiltrating our ranks is far outweighed by the threat to our Constitution if we allow partisanship or popularity to dictate policy.

In conclusion, First Liberty encourages the Congress to hold the Department of Defense accountable to the Constitutional requirements of free speech and religious freedom. We must ensure that these bedrock principals of American virtue are not only protected, but cherished.



**EOAC - 3150**

**EXTREMISM**

**FOR TRAINING PURPOSES ONLY**

**DO NOT USE ON THE JOB**

**LESSON EMPHASIS**

This lesson will focus on awareness and current issues requiring the attention of future Equal Opportunity Advisors. It will also provide information that describes sources of extremism information, definitions, recruitment of DoD personnel, common themes in extremist ideologies, common characteristics of extremist organizations, DoD policies, and command functions regarding extremist activities.

**RECOMMENDED READING**

Seven Stage Hate Model, FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin March

**OPTIONAL READING**

Secretary of the Army's Task Force on Extremist Activities Reports  
Threat of Extremist Groups in The Military  
Timothy McVeigh  
WSCA Map of Hate Groups

The following references are additional sources for current extremism information:

- Anti-Defamation League - [www.adl.org](http://www.adl.org)
- Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism - [www.hatemonitor.csusb.edu](http://www.hatemonitor.csusb.edu)
- Know Gangs - [www.knowgangs.com](http://www.knowgangs.com)
- Political Research Associates - [www.publiceye.org](http://www.publiceye.org)
- Southern Poverty Law Center - [www.splcenter.org](http://www.splcenter.org)
- Teaching Tolerance - [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)

**REFERENCES**

1. The American heritage dictionary of the English language (4th ed.). (2006). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
2. Atkins, S. E. (2002). *Encyclopedia of modern American extremists and extremist groups*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
3. George, J., & Wilcox, L. (1992). *Nazis, communists, Klansmen, and others on the fringe: Political extremism in America*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books.
4. Halle, L. J. (1972). *The ideological imagination*. Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books.
5. Hate group numbers up by 54% since 2000. (Feb. 2009). *Southern Poverty Law Center*. Retrieved from <http://www.splcenter.org/news/item.jsp?aid=366#>
6. Hate on display: A visual database of extremist symbols, logos, and tattoos. (n.d.). Retrieved from [http://www.adl.org/hate\\_symbols/default.asp](http://www.adl.org/hate_symbols/default.asp)
7. Mulloy, D. J. (2004). *American extremism: History, politics and the militia movement*. New York, NY: Routledge.
8. U.S. Department of Defense. (2009). *Guidelines for handling dissident and protest activities among members of the Armed Forces* (DoD Directive 1325.6). Retrieved from <http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA320448>

**LESSON SYLLABUS**

<b>Sample Behaviors</b>	<b>Level of Learning</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>
Define key terms associated with extremism	K	CRT
Identify the seven stages of hate	K	CRT
Describe the traits associated with extremism	K	CRT
Describe extremist ideologies	K	CRT
State extremist organizations' recruiting motives toward DoD personnel	K	CRT
Describe strategies to combat extremism in the military	K	CRT
Knowledge = K    Comprehension = C    Application = A    CRT = Criterion Referenced Test W = Written Assignment    SGE = Small Group Experience    PE = Presentation Evaluation		

## STUDENT GUIDE INTRODUCTION

As an EOA, it is important to understand and recognize extremism. While extremist groups may seek to join the military and to recruit military members to their causes, military members must reject participation in organizations that promote supremacist causes. Knowing about extremist groups will help an EOA combat extremism in the military.

The following topics will be covered in this lesson:

- Definition of the key terms associated with extremism.
- Identification of the seven stages of hate.
- How to recognize traits associated with extremism.
- Describe extremist ideologies.
- State extremist organizations' recruiting motives toward DoD personnel.
- Description of strategies to combat extremism in the military.

### A. Definitions

#### 1. Introduction

- All nations have an ideology, something in which they believe. When a political ideology falls outside the norms of a society, it is known as extremism. When extremists take their ideology to the next level and believe that it is the only right ideology to follow, it becomes supremacism.

2. **Ideology** – A set of political beliefs about the nature of people and society; an organized collection of ideas about the best and most appropriate way to live.

3. **Extremism** – A term used to describe the actions or ideologies of individuals or groups who take a political idea to its limits, regardless of unfortunate repercussions, and show intolerance toward all views other than their own.

4. **Extremist** – A person who advocates the use of force or violence; advocates supremacist causes based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or national origin; or otherwise engages to illegally deprive individuals or groups of their civil rights.

5. **Supremacism** – The belief that a particular race, religion, gender, species, belief system, or culture is superior to others and entitles those who identify with it to dominate, control, or rule those who do not. A person who believes that a certain group is or should be supreme is a **supremacist**.

## 6. Prohibited Activities

- a. Individuals who hold extremist views are in conflict with the standards expected of all military members, and participation in extremism is inconsistent with the duties of military service.
- b. According to DoD Directive 1325.6, military members are prohibited from any of the following activities:
  - Participating in organizations that espouse supremacist causes.
  - Attempting to create illegal discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, religion, or national origin.
  - Advocating the use of force or violence.
  - Engaging in efforts to deprive individuals of their civil rights.
- c. Active participation in any of the activities listed below **with regard to extremist organizations** is incompatible with military service and is, therefore, prohibited. This includes:
  - Publicly demonstrating or rallying.
  - Fundraising.
  - Recruiting and training members.
  - Organizing or leading such organizations.
- d. Furthering the objectives of extremist organizations is viewed as detrimental to the good order, discipline, or mission accomplishment of the unit and is, therefore, subject to appropriate disciplinary action. As an EOA, you should assist the unit commanders in being vigilant about the existence of such activities.
- e. While these activities are prohibited by members of the military, there are no such prohibitions on the general public. EOAs should become familiar with the various groups and organizations that are outside of the gate.

## B. Stages of Hate

### 1. Introduction

- As shown so far, the extremist groups are closely related to hate groups. Understanding the stages of how hate groups develop can help you, as an EOA, watch for the behaviors that may indicate a hate or extremist group within the military.

### 2. Hate Stages

- a. Schaffer and Navarro have identified seven stages that hate groups go through. If unimpeded, haters will pass through these seven successive stages without skipping a stage.

- b. In the first four stages, haters vocalize their beliefs. In the last three stages, haters act on their beliefs. As an EOA, being able to assess the stage of hate a person expresses can help you determine the best intervention strategy required to deter the development from continuing.
3. **Stage 1: Grouping** – Irrational haters seldom hate alone. They feel compelled, almost driven, to entreat others to hate as they do. Peer validation bolsters a sense of self-worth and, at the same time, prevents introspection, which reveals personal insecurities. Further, individuals who are otherwise ineffective become empowered when they join groups, which also provide anonymity and diminished accountability.
  4. **Stage 2: Defining** – Hate groups form identities through symbols, rituals, and mythologies, which enhance the members' status and, at the same time, degrade the object of their hate. For example, skinhead groups may adopt the swastika, the iron cross, the Confederate flag, and other supremacist symbols. Group-specific symbols or clothing often differentiate hate groups. Group rituals, such as hand signals and secret greetings, further fortify members. Hate groups, especially skinhead groups, usually incorporate some form of self-sacrifice, which allows haters to willingly jeopardize their well-being for the greater good of the cause. Giving one's life to a cause provides the ultimate sense of value and worth to life. Skinheads often see themselves as soldiers in a race war.
  5. **Stage 3: Disparaging** – Hate is the glue that binds haters to one another and to a common cause. By verbally debasing the object of their hate, haters enhance their self-image, as well as their group status. In skinhead groups, racist song lyrics and hate literature provide an environment where hate flourishes. In fact, researchers have found that the life span of aggressive impulses increases with ideation. In other words, the more often a person thinks about aggression, the greater the chance for aggressive behavior to occur. Thus, after constant verbal denigration, haters progress to the next, more openly hostile and bitter, stage.
  6. **Stage 4: Taunting** – Hate, by its nature, changes incrementally. Time cools the fire of hate, thus forcing the hater to look inward. To avoid introspection, haters use ever-increasing degrees of rhetoric and violence to maintain high levels of agitation. Taunts and offensive gestures serve this purpose. In this stage, skinheads typically shout racial slurs from moving cars or from afar. Nazi salutes and other hand signals often accompany racial epithets. Racist graffiti also begins to appear in areas where skinheads loiter. Most skinhead groups claim turf proximate to the neighborhoods in which they live. One study indicated that a majority of hate crimes occur when the hate target migrates through the hate group's turf.
  7. **Stage 5: Attacking without weapons** – This stage is critical because it differentiates vocally abusive haters from physically abusive ones. In this stage, hate groups become more aggressive, prowling their turf seeking vulnerable targets. Violence coalesces hate groups and further isolates them from mainstream society. Skinheads, almost without exception, attack in groups and target single victims. Research by the Southern Poverty

Law Center, the FBI, and the Anti-Defamation League has shown that bias crimes are twice as likely to cause injury and four times as likely to result in hospitalization as compared to non-bias crimes. In addition to physical violence, the element of thrill seeking is introduced in Stage 5. The adrenaline high intoxicates the attackers. The initial adrenaline surge lasts for several minutes; however, the effects of adrenaline keep the body in a state of heightened alert for up to several days. Each successive anger-provoking thought or action builds on residual adrenaline and triggers a more violent response than the one that originally initiated the sequence. Anger builds on anger. The adrenaline high combined with hate becomes a deadly combination. Hardcore skinheads keep themselves at a level where the slightest provocation triggers aggression.

8. **Stage 6: Attacking with weapons** – Some attackers use firearms to commit hate crimes, but skinheads prefer weapons such as broken bottles, baseball bats, blunt objects, screwdrivers, and belt buckles. These types of weapons require the attacker to be close to the victim, which further demonstrates the depth of personal anger. Attackers can discharge firearms at a distance, thus precluding personal contact. Close-in onslaughts require the assailants to see their victim eye-to-eye and to become bloodied during the assault. Hands-on violence allows skinheads to express their hate in a way a gun cannot. Personal contact empowers and fulfills a deep-seated need to have dominance over others.
9. **Stage 7: Destroying** – The ultimate goal of haters is to destroy the object of their hate. Mastery over life and death imbues the hater with godlike power and omnipotence, which, in turn, facilitate further acts of violence. With this power comes a great sense of self-worth and value, the very qualities haters lack. However, in reality, hate physically and psychologically destroys both the hater and the hated.

### C. Hate Groups and Hate Symbols

#### 1. Introduction

- While many extremist groups advocate violence, some extremists avoid violence at all costs. So, one cannot say that the terms extremist and hate are synonymous. However, while not all extremist groups are hate groups, all hate groups are extremist groups.
- According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), there were 932 hate groups active in the United States in 2009. Many of these groups follow the same ideologies, but do not necessarily work together or cooperate with each other. Extremists tend to be confrontational, so fights within a group are not uncommon. After an argument, *dissidents* may form another competing group or organization, or join a different one.
- As an EOA, it is impossible for you to be knowledgeable about each and every group. You can, however, familiarize yourself with the common extremist beliefs. Here are a few of these groups.

NOTE: The descriptions that follow are provided by the Southern Poverty Law Center and are given as generalizations only and may not apply to every group.

2. **Neo-Confederate** – Primarily celebrate Southern culture and the Civil War; some factions embrace racist attitudes toward Blacks, and some favor White separatism. The neo-Confederate movement includes a number of organizations that generally share the goals of preserving Confederate monuments, honoring the Confederate battle flag, and lauding what is judged to be Southern culture. Many have close ties to the White supremacist League of the South (LOS).
3. **Black Separatist** – Typically oppose integration and racial intermarriage; want separate institutions or even a separate nation for Blacks. Most forms of Black separatism are strongly anti-White and anti-Semitic, and a number of religious versions assert that Blacks are the Biblical “chosen people” of God. Other groups espousing the same beliefs would be considered racist. The same criteria should be applied to all groups, regardless of color.
4. **Ku Klux Klan** – Primarily against Black Americans, its members have also attacked Jews, immigrants, and Catholics. It typically sees itself as a Christian organization fighting for civil rights for Whites and is historically violent as a vigilante group. With its long history of violence, the KKK is the most infamous and oldest of American hate groups.
5. **Neo-Nazi** – Share a hatred for Jews and a love for Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany; also hate other minorities and homosexuals; believe in Christian White supremacy. While its roots are in Europe, the links with American neo-Nazi groups are strong and growing stronger.
  - a. **Racist Skinheads** – Typically form a violent element of the White supremacist movement and have often been referred to as the “shock troops” of the hoped-for revolution. The classic skinhead look is a shaved head, black Doc Martens boots, jeans with suspenders, and an array of typically racist tattoos. A prominent racist skinhead term is “14/88.” The 14 stands for the “14 words” slogan coined by David Lane, who is serving a 190-year sentence for his part in the assassination of a Jewish talk show host: “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children.” The 88 means “Heil Hitler,” as H is the eighth letter of the alphabet.
6. **White Nationalists** – Espouse White supremacist or White separatist ideologies, often focusing on the alleged inferiority of non-Whites. Groups listed in a variety of other categories (e.g., Ku Klux Klan, neo-Confederate, neo-Nazi, racist skinhead, etc.) could also be fairly described as White nationalists.
7. Hate Symbols
  - a. As an EOA, it is important that you are knowledgeable of and alert to the symbols, logos, and tattoos that extremist groups use to identify themselves and their group

affiliation. Being aware of these symbols and what they mean can assist you in combating extremism in the military.

- b. While some people may use or display extremist symbols in ignorance, extremists use these symbols to display a sense of power and belonging. Symbols are also a quick way of identifying others who share their beliefs.
- c. Additional information about hate groups and extremist symbols can be found in your student guide and on the Internet. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) maintains a database of hate group symbols. As an EOA, you should familiarize yourself with the symbols of hate; learn to recognize the symbols and what they mean so you are better prepared to support the military standards of conduct and eliminate extremism in the military.

#### **D. Extremists Traits**

1. What type of person belongs to an extremist group or follows an extremist ideology? The terms extremism or extremist are almost always applied by others to a group rather than by a group labeling itself. People within an extremist group will deny that they practice or advocate violence; instead they would more likely call themselves political radicals.
2. According to George and Wilcox, there are a number of specific traits or behaviors that tend to represent the extremist style. As a caution, we are all fallible human beings, and some of us may resort to these behaviors from time to time without bad intentions. With extremists, these lapses are not occasional; rather, they are habitual and a strongly established part of an extremist's character.
  - a. **Character assassination**  
Extremists often attack the character of an opponent rather than deal with the facts or issues raised. They will question motives, qualifications, past associations, alleged values, personality, looks, and mental health as a diversion from the issues under consideration.
  - b. **Name calling and labeling**  
Extremists are quick to resort to taunts (e.g., pervert, racist, crackpot) to label and condemn opponents and to divert others from listening to their arguments.
  - c. **Irresponsive sweeping generalizations**  
Extremists tend to make sweeping claims or judgments with little to no evidence, often confusing similarity with sameness. That is, they assume that because two or more things are alike in some respects that they are alike in all respects.
  - d. **Inadequate proof behind assertions**  
Extremists tend to be very fuzzy about what constitutes proof for their assertions and tend to get caught up in logical fallacies where they assume that a prior event explains

- a subsequent occurrence simply because of their before-and-after relationship. They tend to project wished-for conclusions and exaggerate the significance of information that confirms their prejudices and discredit or ignore information that contradicts them.
- e. **Tendency to view opponents and critics as essentially evil**  
Extremists feel that their opponents hold differing views because they are bad, immoral, dishonest, hateful, cruel, prejudiced, etc. and not merely because they simply disagree, see matters differently, or are mistaken.
  - f. **Dualism worldview**  
Extremists tend to see the world in terms of absolute good and evil, for them or against them, with no middle ground or intermediate position. All issues are ultimately moral issues of right and wrong, good or bad, with the right and good positions coinciding with their interests. Their slogan is often “Those who are not with me are against me.”
  - g. **Tendency to argue by intimidation**  
Extremists tend to frame their arguments in such a way as to intimidate others into accepting their premises and conclusions. To disagree with them is to ally oneself with the devil or to give aid and comfort to the enemy. They tend to be very judgmental and moralizing, allowing them to define the parameters of the debate by keeping their opponents on the defensive.
  - h. **Use of slogans, buzzwords, and thought-stopping clichés**  
For many extremists, shortcuts in thinking and in reasoning matters out seem necessary to avoid troublesome facts and compelling counterarguments. Simple slogans substitute for more complex abstractions.
  - i. **Assumption of moral superiority over others**  
The most obvious assumptions are claims of racial or ethnic superiority—a master race. Less obvious are claims of ennoblement because of alleged victimhood, a special relationship with God, or membership in a special or elite class and a kind of aloof high-minded snobbishness that accrues because of the weightiness of their preoccupations, their altruism, and their willingness to sacrifice themselves (and others) to their cause.
  - j. **Doomsday thinking**  
Extremists often predict dire or catastrophic consequences from a situation or from a failure to follow a specific course, and they tend to exhibit a kind of crisis-mindedness. It can be a Communist takeover, a Nazi revival, nuclear war, earthquakes, floods, or the wrath of God. Whatever it is, it is just around the corner unless we follow their program and listen to their special insight and wisdom, to which only the truly enlightened have access. For extremists, any setback or defeat is the beginning of the end.

- k. **Belief that it's okay to do bad things in the service of a "good" cause**  
Extremists may deliberately lie or otherwise distort, misquote, slander, defame, or libel their opponents and/or critics; engage in censorship or repression; or undertake violence in special cases. This is done with little or no remorse as long as it is in the service of defeating the Communists, Fascists, or whomever. Defeating an enemy becomes an all-encompassing goal to which other values are subordinate. With extremists, the end justifies the means.
- l. **Tendency to personalize hostility**  
Extremists often wish for the personal bad fortune of their enemies and celebrate when it occurs. When a critic or an adversary dies or has a serious illness, a bad accident, or personal legal problems, extremists often rejoice and chortle about how he or she deserved it. For example, right-wing extremists celebrated the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., and leftists agonized because George Wallace survived an assassination attempt. In each instance, their hatred was not only directed against ideas, but also against individual human beings.
- m. **Emphasis on emotional responses, less so on reasoning and logical analysis**  
Extremists have an unspoken reverence for propaganda, which they may call education or consciousness-raising. Symbolism plays an exaggerated role in their thinking, and they tend to think imprecisely and metaphorically. Effective extremists tend to be effective propagandists. Propaganda differs from education in that the former teaches one what to think, and the latter teaches one how to think clearly.
- n. **Hypersensitivity and vigilance**  
Extremists perceive hostile innuendo in even casual and innocuous comments, imagine rejection and antagonism concealed in honest disagreement and dissent, and see latent subversion, anti-Semitism, perversion, racism, disloyalty, and so on in innocent gestures and ambiguous behaviors. Although few extremists are actually clinically paranoid, many of them adopt a paranoid style with its attendant projective mechanisms, hostility, and distrust.
- o. **Use of supernatural rationales for beliefs and actions**  
Some extremists, particularly those involved in cults and religious movements, claim some kind of supernatural rationale for their beliefs and actions; their movement or cause, they believe, is ordained or looked upon favorably by God.
- p. **Advocacy of double standards**  
Extremists generally tend to judge themselves or their interest group in terms of their intentions, which they tend to view generously, and their critics and opponents by their acts, which they tend to view very critically. They would like you to accept their assertions on faith, but they demand proof for yours.

## E. Extremist Ideologies

### 1. Introduction

- As noted, an ideology is a set of political beliefs about the nature of people and society. People who are committed to an ideology seek not only to persuade but to recruit others to their belief. In U.S. history, there are many examples of extremist ideologies and movements. The colonists who sought to free themselves from British rule and the Confederate states who sought to secede from the Northern states are just two examples.
- While not all ideologists are violent in nature, it is characteristic of ideology to be action-oriented and to regard action in terms of a military analogy. How often have you heard words such as struggle, resist, march, victory, and overcome when reading about or talking to ideologists about their beliefs?

### 2. Ideologies

- a. **Nationalism** – The policy of asserting that the interests of one’s own nation are separate from the interests of other nations or the common interest of all nations. Many nationalist groups take it a step further and believe that their national culture and interests are superior to any other national group.
- b. **Supremacy** – The belief that one’s race or ethnicity is superior to all others and should dominate society. Supremacy, as with racial supremacies in general, has frequently resulted in anti-Black and anti-Semitic violence.
- c. **Separatism** – Setting oneself or others apart based on culture, ethnicity, race, or religion.
- d. **Anarchism** – A political ideology that considers the state to be unnecessary, harmful, or undesirable. National anarchists appeal to youths in part by avoiding the trappings of skinhead culture—light jackets, shaved heads, and combat boots—in favor of hooded sweatshirts and bandanas. They act the part of stereotypical anarchists as envisioned by most Americans outside of far-left circles: black-clad protesters wreaking havoc at political conventions and anti-globalization rallies.
- e. **Religion** – Extremist ideology based on intolerance toward other religions. Anti-Semitism is a prime example of this ideology.
- f. **Eco-Warriors** – Environmental activists who take action to fight against the exploitation of the environment or animals. An eco-warrior can be someone non-confrontational, such as a tree-sitter, or someone who engages in direct action.

## 3. Historical events

- a. ***Jewish Holocaust*** – In 1933, after years of struggle and repeatedly blaming Jews for Germany's defeat in World War I, Adolf Hitler and his Nazi followers came to power. The genocide of European Jews and others by the Nazis during World War II is one of the most radical examples of extremism. Concentration camps were built to house the Jews, who were incarcerated and forced into labor. Eventually, extermination camps were built for the sole purpose of killing the Jews, usually in gas chambers, although some were killed in mass shootings and by other means. The bodies were burned in crematoria and the ashes buried or scattered. Over 6 million Jews were killed in the Holocaust. This reign of anti-Semitism finally crashed with the suicide death of Adolf Hitler; 22 surviving top Nazis were charged with crimes against humanity. The extremist ideologies of supremacy, nationalism, and religion apply to this event.
- b. ***Cambodia Genocide*** – In April of 1975, Pol Pot, once leader of the Cambodian Communist Party, effectively seized control of Cambodia by marching into Phnom Penh. Once in power, Pol Pot expelled all foreigners and began a systematic effort to purify the country. Millions of Cambodians were forced to work in the fields, where they began dying from overwork, malnutrition, and disease. Individuals accused of treason, along with their families, were brought to S-21, a prison where they were photographed, tortured until they confessed, and executed. Of the 14,200 people imprisoned at S-21, only 7 are known to have survived. After Phnom Penh was liberated by the Vietnamese Army in 1979, S-21 was converted to the Tuol Sleng Museum of Genocide. The extremist ideologies of supremacy, separatism, and nationalism apply to this event.
- c. ***Sudan Holocaust*** – Since 1983, the Northern fundamentalist Muslim government of Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, has been waging war against the mostly Christian South. The northern government has been killing, displacing, and enslaving the African Christians. Over 1.9 million civilians have died, and over 4 million have been forced to flee their homes. The victims are Christians, moderate Muslims, and African traditionalists who refuse to accept the Sudan government's policies of Arab control and conformity to Islamic rules and laws. The extremist ideologies of supremacy, nationalism, and religion apply to this event.
- d. ***Oklahoma City Bombing*** – On April 19, 1995, a massive truck bomb exploded outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people, including 19 children, and injuring over 500 others. Timothy McVeigh was convicted for this crime, putting a spotlight on a militia movement seeking to retaliate against the U.S. government for its handling of the Seventh-Day Adventist cult near Waco, Texas. The extremist ideology of anarchism applies to this event.

- e. ***Tokyo Subway Gas Attacks*** – On March 20, 1995, the group Aum Shinrikyo (Supreme Truth) attacked Tokyo’s subways with sarin gas, killing 12 and injuring more than 5,000. This attack has the distinction of being the world’s first mass-scale chemical terrorist attack.
- f. ***9-11*** – On September 11, 2001, a series of coordinated attacks on America by al-Qaeda followers who hijacked planes and crashed them into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon left 2,974 people dead. A fourth plane destined for Washington D.C. was taken over by passengers and crew members who willingly sacrificed their lives in order to divert the attack.

## F. Recruiting Motives

### 1. Introduction

- The standard hate message has not changed, but it has been packaged differently. Modern extremist groups run the gamut from the politically astute and subtle to the openly violent.
- Nowadays, instead of dressing in sheets or publicly espousing hate messages, many extremists will talk of individual liberties, states’ rights, and how to make the world a better place.

### 2. Recruiting Motives

- a. Military personnel, public officials, and law enforcement officers are actively sought by extremist groups. Extremist leaders seek to recruit members with military experience to exploit their:
  - Discipline.
  - Knowledge of firearms and explosives.
  - Tactical skills.
  - Access to weapons and intelligence.
- b. In addition, members of extremist groups like the neo-Nazis are joining the military, not to serve their country, but to receive training—specifically with regards to discipline and tactical skills—and to learn how to better defend themselves and their ideals.
- c. Young extremists are encouraged by leaders to enlist in the military to gain access to weapons, training, and other military personnel. Some extremist groups even provide advice to their members on how to respond to questions from military recruiters.
- d. Military members are trained to be proficient with weapons, combat tactics, and explosives, to train others in their use, and to operate in a highly disciplined culture that is focused on the organized violence of war. This is why military extremists

present an elevated threat to public safety. Even the nonviolent activities of military personnel with extremist tendencies (e.g., possessing literature, researching information via computer) can have detrimental consequences for the good order, discipline, readiness, and cohesion of military units.

## **G. Strategies to Combat Extremism**

### 1. Introduction

- It is the responsibility of each and every military member to help combat extremism in the military.
- Each member should examine how his or her action or inaction can affect mission accomplishment. Just the presence of a member with extremist views can have an adverse impact on the performance of a unit. Other members who oppose or disagree with the extremist views may say or do nothing because they fear damaging the unit's cohesiveness.
- Extremists' views divide the unit into opposing factions, and the team concept required for mission accomplishment is lost.

### 2. Strategies

- a. Extremism is prohibited in the military in accordance with DoDD 1325.6. Combating extremism in the military begins with the individual. Each person should:
  - Examine personal viewpoints in light of military values and loyalty.
  - Reject affiliation with any extremist organizations.
  - Decline the distribution or circulation of extremist literature.
  - Encourage others to avoid extremist affiliations and views.
  - Report indicators of extremism to the appropriate command.
- b. As an EOA, you should be vigilant to the signs of extremism by paying attention to:
  - Surreptitious meetings.
  - Off-duty clothing (e.g., skinhead dress, extremist tattoos).
  - Music selections and reading materials.
  - Extremist graffiti or symbols in personal and common areas.
- c. In addition, you should assist the unit command to:
  - Educate and counsel unit members on the incompatibility of military service with extremist views.
  - Be aware of unit members' beliefs.
  - Be alert for indicators of extremist ties, views, or behaviors.

- Include questions on extremism in climate assessments.
- Enforce policy on participation in extremist group activities.
- Advise unit members of the consequences for participation in extremist activities.
- Monitor information available on extremists groups, activities, and philosophies.

**SUMMARY**

As an EOA, it is important to understand and recognize extremism. While extremist groups may seek to join the military and to recruit military members to their causes, military members must reject participation in organizations that promote supremacist causes. Knowing about extremist groups will help you combat extremism in the military.

This lesson was designed to increase the student's understanding of extremist groups and organizations, enhancing their knowledge, thus preparing them as EOAs to deal with extremist identification and issues.

The following topics were covered in this lesson:

- Definition of the key terms associated with extremism.
- Identification of the seven stages of hate.
- How to recognize traits associated with extremism.
- Describe extremist ideologies.
- State extremist organizations' recruiting motives toward DoD personnel.
- Description of strategies to combat extremism in the military.

**END OF LESSON**

# RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM

- ▶ EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY (U.S./CHRISTIAN)
- ▶ IKHWAN or MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD (EGYPT/MUSLIM)
- ▶ ULTRA-ORTHODOX (ISRAEL/JUDAISM)
- ▶ CHRISTIAN IDENTITY (U.S./CHRISTIAN)
- ▶ AL QUAEDA (TRANSNATIONAL/ISLAM)
- ▶ HAMAS (PALESTINIAN/ISLAMIST)
- ▶ ABU SAYYAH (PHILIPPINES/ISLAM)
- ▶ KU KLUX KLAN (U.S./CHRISTIAN)
- ▶ SRI RAM SENE (INDIA/HINDU)
- ▶ CATHOLICISM (U.S./CHRISTIAN)
- ▶ KAHANE MOVEMENT/KACH (ISRAEL/JEWISH)
- ▶ ARMY OF GOD (U.S./CHRISTIANITY)
- ▶ SUNNI MUSLIMS (IRAQ/ISLAM)
- ▶ NATION OF ISLAM (U.S./ISLAM)
- ▶ JEWISH DEFENSE LEAGUE (U.S./JUDAISM)
- ▶ FUNDAMENTALIST CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS (U.S./MORMAN)
- ▶ HUTAREE (U.S./CHRISTIAN)
- ◆ ISLAMOPHOBIA

