

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
PRESENTATION TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY
PERSONNEL

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATEMENT OF

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STRATEGIC PROGRAMS AND REQUIREMENTS
HQ AIR FORCE OFFICE OF SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS

SUBJECT: WHITE SUPREMACISTS IN THE MILITARY: HOW
DO THE SERVICES IDENTIFY A PROBLEM AND CHANGE
BEHAVIOR BEFORE THIS BECOMES A PERVASIVE ISSUE

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BY THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
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Pertaining to the topic of possible white supremacists within the ranks of the military, the Department of the Air Force and OSI are very concerned with early identification and timely resolution of matters involving possible extremist activity affecting good order and discipline within our Air and Space Forces. In fact, the Department of the Air Force has a written punitive policy pertaining specifically to participation in extremist activities. The policy specifically states military personnel must reject active participation in criminal gangs and other organizations that, among other things, advocate supremacist, extremist, or criminal gang doctrine, ideology, or causes. Military members who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action under Article 92 (Failure to Obey a Lawful Order) of the UCMJ, in addition to any other implicated articles of the UCMJ the member may have violated, such as Assault or Communicating a Threat.

Air Force policy defines active participation as, but not limited to, fundraising for or donating money to the organizations, demonstrating or rallying, recruiting, training, organizing, or leading members, distributing material including posting on-line, knowingly wearing gang colors or clothing, having tattoos or body markings associated to such organizations, and otherwise engaging in activities in furtherance of the objective of such organizations that are detrimental to good order, discipline, or mission accomplishment or are incompatible with military service. It is important to note that Air Force policy dictates mere membership in the organizations is not prohibited. OSI has investigative responsibility to investigate these matters where military members who are subject to the UCMJ are suspected of active participation in extremist/supremacist groups prohibited by Air Force Instruction(s).

Since 30 September 2019, OSI received about nine reported incidents involving possible supremacy activity on the part of Air Force members. These incidents came to our attention in

various ways; two were JTTF referrals, two resulted from dormitory inspections, two were witness call-ins, one was a tip-line submission, one was a supervisor referral, and one was the result of OSI's Insider Threat initiatives. Out of the nine reports, OSI opened eight investigations and referred one incident to Air Force Security Forces for investigation. Out of the eight OSI investigations, only one involved active participation by the member, one incident was disproven, and the remaining six involved inappropriate or racially insensitive verbal comments or on-line postings. For the one active participation incident, the accused's command administered administrative action and issued a Letter of Reprimand (LOR) and an administrative reduction in rank from E-7 to E-6. As an impartial and independent investigative agency, OSI does not make recommendations on potential punitive or administrative action.

It is also important to note, OSI conducted 2,500 criminal investigations in CY19, which included 1,363 sexual assault, 577 narcotics, 192 death, and 368 crimes against person, society, or property investigations. Most of these criminal investigations involved some form of data exploitation, such as extraction of information from cellular smartphones and other personal computer devices or reviews of social media applications. Our data exploitation activities over the past year of thousands of devices and social medial accounts have not resulted in identifying additional extremist activity within our Air and Space Forces. Even though the amount of extremist incidents for the Department of the Air Force remains small, OSI and its criminal investigative agents remain vigilant to identify and quickly resolve matters involving possible extremist activity affecting good order and discipline within our Air and Space Forces.

OSI thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide insight into some of the exceptional work our agents do every day to protect Department of the Air Force personnel and

resources, and we look forward to provide additional information as needed during future Committee hearings.