

RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC ANTI-ISRAEL EXTREMIST GROUPS IN SUPPORT OF NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATIONS

**Testimony Before
The Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence**

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My name is Dr. James Jay Carafano, Ph.D. I am the Senior Counselor to the President of the Heritage Foundation and the E.W. Richardson Fellow at The Heritage Foundation. The views I express in this testimony are my own and should not be construed as representing any official position of The Heritage Foundation.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today and address this vital topic. In my testimony, I would like to (1) argue that the most important step the U.S. Congress and this administration can take in addressing terrorist risks to the homeland related to the operations of domestic antizionist and antisemitic groups and influencers is to emphasize, expand, and fully empower national efforts to identify, disrupt, and prosecute those individuals, organizations, and networks conducting material support to terrorism; (2) make the case that action is important not just for counterterrorism but broadly to support American national security and foreign policy priorities; and (3) identify the programs and initiatives, based on risk-informed assessments, that best support these goals, as well those actions that are less efficacious and, in some cases, counterproductive.

Expertise and Experience

I have over 25 years of experience in homeland security and counterterrorism policies and related fields. In 2003, I established the homeland security research portfolio at the Heritage Foundation, and, for over a decade, oversaw all the foundation's research and public policy proposals related to national security and foreign policy. All our research, including extensive work in the fields of homeland security and counterterrorism is publicly available at www.heritage.org/. I also coauthored the first major textbook on the field of homeland security (McGraw-Hill 2005). I served on the Department of Homeland Security Advisory Council for three different secretaries of Homeland Security and was the head of the president elect's transition team for the Department of Homeland Security in 2017. I was also a member of the Advisory Panel on Department of Defense Capabilities for Support of Civil Authorities and the advisory board for the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review. In addition to the foundation's work and research efforts, over the years, the Heritage Foundation has partnered with a number of research institutions, both in the U.S. and globally, to better understand and offer constructive non-partisan analysis and policy recommendations. These organizations have included the Center for Strategic and International Studies, George Washington University, the Aspin Institute, the Hudson Institute, the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, the American Enterprise Institute, the U.S. Army War College, the Naval Post-Graduate School, and many others, including

research institutes in India, Israel, Hungary, Italy, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and several other countries.

Further, in the wake of the October 7, 2003 terrorist attacks on Israel, Heritage, in partnership with others, established the National Task Force To Combat Anti-Semitism (<https://www.combatantisemitismtf.org/>). The task force consists of volunteers including over one hundred organizations and individuals seeking to identify, highlight, and combat the malicious groups behind antisemitic activity while working to bolster Americans' physical safety, religious liberty, civil society, and vital interests abroad, particularly relations with the state of Israel. Together, we facilitate information-sharing and crisis response efforts between groups through collaborative working groups and strategies.

Finally, in 2024, the research team at the Heritage Foundation published Project Esther: A National Strategy to Combat Antisemitism (<https://www.heritage.org/progressivism/report/project-esther-national-strategy-combat-antisemitism>). Project Esther provides a blueprint to counter antisemitism in the United States and ensure the security and prosperity of all Americans.

The depth of research over the years and extensive network of associates working directly in the space of combatting antisemitism and antizionism deeply informed the recommendations that I have to offer today.

Call to Action

As with any aspect of national action, the activities of the U.S. government should advance the freedom, security, and prosperity of all Americans, not sacrificing one priority to advance the others. This inherent tension, articulated so well in the U.S. Constitution, challenges our executive, judicial, and legislative leadership to seek to maximize all three outcomes and not accept the compromising of any. In no area of public policy is this task more essential, and difficult, than in responding to domestic threats to the homeland where Americans rightly demand that neither their civil liberties, public safety, or entrepreneurial spirit are compromised and that national policies be suitable, feasible, and acceptable, producing the best outcomes.

Without question, one group of activities that is a clear and present danger to liberty, safety, and our economy is providing material support terrorism. In law, providing material support is a bright a redline as the act or threat of terrorist attacks. Material support directly threatens public safety—encouraging, empowering and enabling terrorist activity. Material support to terrorism is not protected civil activity. The disruptions caused by terrorist actions and extremist violence impinge by the life and labors of everyday Americans. On this matter, there can be no partisan debate or agendas.

Further, vigorously disrupting material support to terrorism is strategically crucial to national counterterrorism operations severing the most important, influential, and dangerous link between extremism ideologies, organizations, and networks, and those threatening or perpetuating violence against everyday Americans. Thus, focusing on material support is not only an efficacious activity, with the exception of the directly thwarting terrorist acts and extremist violence it is the key activity for disrupting the flow of ideas, resources, assets, and arms into the hands of would-be terrorists.

Targeting Groups Linked to Antisemitism and Antizionism

Identifying and prioritizing groups, networks, individuals, and activities as targets of suspected material support to terrorism is a significant challenge. Extremists' activities are always associated with political views. It is always tempting to focus on or ignore or dismiss extremist factions based on their politics. This is a grave threat to both public safety and undermining the legitimacy of government action.

At the “lights were blinking red,” about threats from al Qaeda to the U.S. homeland before 9/11. There are two significant reasons why extremist groups associated with antisemitic activities rise to the top of groups of concern.

First, there is demonstrable evidence they are affiliated with individuals who have threatened or conducted terrorist actions or other incidents of extremist violence. The recent incident in Washington, DC offers a case in point. As the research of my colleague Mike Gonzalez points out:

Terrorists like Elias Rodriguez, who murdered Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgram at the Jewish Museum in Washington DC in late May, are nurtured in their hate by a revolutionary ecosystem composed of different organisms: fiscal sponsors, funders, and organizers.

Rodriguez was associated with two leading institutions of the revolutionary ecosystem, the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), and one of its front groups, the ANSWER Coalition, an acronym for Act Now to Stop War and End Racism.

He [Rodriguez] attended several marches coordinated by both groups in 2018, and was identified as a member of the PSL. Now that Rodriguez has been caught committing a heinous crime, however, both groups are distancing themselves from him.

Black Lives Matter Chicago also admitted that Rodriguez was a supporter and took part in several marches. BLM Chicago was one of the groups that cruelly posted pictures of paragliders with Palestinian flags after the terrorist group Hamas massacred over 1,200 Israelis on Oct. 7, 2023, the New York Post reported at the time.

When we see that even “lone wolves” are not really acting isolated and disconnected from larger networks of support, sympathy, and encouragement, that kind of connectivity merits the attention of law enforcement and intelligence services.

Second, there is mounting evidence these groups are conducting activities that are material support to terrorists. The National Jewish Advocacy Center has identified several groups including Students for Justice in Palestine and the Palestine Youth Movement. According to news reports some have been reported to directly coordinating with Hamas (<https://nypost.com/2025/06/04/us-news/protestor-tarek-bazrouk-had-link-to-hamas-militants-doj/>). Dr. Jonathan Schanzer at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies has done extensive work demonstrating the financial linkages and networks supporting extremist activities (<https://gop-waysandmeans.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Schanzer-Testimony.pdf>), exactly the kinds of activities that precursors to radical violence and terrorism.

As Michael Gonzalez notes, the spectrum of activities is a framework for empowering and enabling violent activity. “This infrastructure, he points out:

can be best understood if broken down into four interrelated components: 1– the “activist organizations” that plan and carry out the protests; 2 – the “fiscal sponsors” that give these organizations legal coverage, and afford them opaqueness; 3 – the often deep-pocketed “donors” that fund the activist organizations through the fiscal sponsors; and 4 – “radical media” groups that amplify the protests and promote them on social media, and also routinely air propaganda for U.S. adversaries such as China, Russia, or Cuba.

Where there is smoke there isn’t always a fire, but effective law enforcement and counterterrorism start by looking where there is evidence of criminal activity. In this respect, there is ample information about activities in the antisemitism and antizionism operating space to warrant serious investigation.

A National Security Priority

Antisemitism is not just about Jew Hate or even hate crimes. Organizations and networks supporting these activities often espouse policies that undermine U.S. interests and foreign policies. They are often supported and linked to both foreign and domestic malicious actors. Thus, disrupting antisemitic and antizionist networks not only address material support to terrorism and supports counterterrorism operations, they can also be a gateway to combating efforts to undermine or counter other U.S. foreign policy and national security priorities.

The witch’s brew of actors that could be, and are likely involved, in promoting antisemitic and antizionist extremism in the U.S. include adversarial states like China, Russia, and Iran; extremist Islamist groups including the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas, and Hezbollah; terrorist networks including ISS-K and al Qaeda; and international organizations that embrace Jew Hate.

Efforts to promote violent extremism in the U.S. appear to be an organized campaign that transcends just attacking Jews or demonizing Israel. For instance, Elias Rodriguez was a member of PSL, a communist party closely associated with the ANSWER Coalition (shares leadership and some office space with them). ANSWER is financed with money from Neville Roy Singham, a billionaire who lives in Shanghai, has close ties to the Chinese Communist Party, and is married to CODE Pink founder Jody Evans. The ongoing LA riots against ICE enforcement of immigration laws appear to be organized and supported by PSL and other groups from the same revolutionary ecosystem that mobilized in support of the BLM riots of 2020 and the pro-terrorism riots of 2023 to the present.

If there is a structured and well-funded campaign to promote organized political violence in the U.S. on demand, it is difficult to conclude anything but that this represents a clear danger to public safety and national security.

What Works. What Doesn’t

The U.S. has decades of experience in combating activities related to domestic terrorist threats. In that period we have seen clear winners and losers. The recommendations offered here are based on an assessment of these activities and initiatives.

1. Federal Operations that that broadly survey social media and other public data to identify extremist threats or combat disinformation are inefficient; prone to political abuse; and undermine the trust and confidence of American citizens. Programs ought to follow models of intelligence-led policing and responsible investigatory guidelines that lead responsible criminal investigations. Further, the U.S. government loses credibility when it declares itself the regulator of political truth. The government has a responsibility to debunk false claims when it comes to U.S. government operations and activities, that is part of what responsible transparent governments, but that should be the limit of the scope its activities in combating extremist thought.
2. Federal, State, and Local shared situational awareness and coordination is valuable. The 287G program, for example, offers a flexible and effective tool for cooperation on matters of immigration enforcement which often serves as an important counterterrorism tool.
3. Robust Immigration Enforcement and Border Security is important. These are valuable instruments for thwarting terrorist travel. Terrorist travel is a key tool for enabling both terrorist attacks and material support activity. Lack enforcement in contrast not only provides more space and freedom of action for our adversaries it greatly expands the pool of potential threats that law enforcement and intelligence activities must survey.
4. Denial and Revocations of Visas is an important tool for disrupting material support activity. Not all extremists are engaged in terrorists acts or material support, but many that other require a visa to come to the United States. Students, workers, activists, and professionals should leave or be deported if they have broken the conditions of their status per U.S. immigration law. Citizens of nations that cannot properly vet or provide adequate information to the U.S. or represent a clear danger ought to be denied the right of travel to the United States.
5. Aggressive investigation of material support and prosecution of organizations and networks conducting or promoting antisemitic or antizionist activity. This is perhaps the most significant tool for undercutting serious potential terrorists threats in the U.S.

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