

Chairman Schiff Opening Statement
Subcommittee on Counterterrorism, Counterintelligence,
and Counterproliferation
Hearing on Domestic Terrorism
November 3, 2021

Thank you, Chairman Carson, for convening this vital discussion. I am pleased to welcome the witnesses here today. As our President recently confirmed: domestic terrorism is one of the gravest risks to our values, our democracy, and our security.

It is imperative that this Committee and the American people understand the scope and complexity of the domestic terror threat, and ensure we equip our Intelligence Community with the resources needed to counter it.

Because this threat is complex, coordinated, and evolving, our response must be too. We must continue to improve our understanding and sharing of threat information, find ways to diffuse and de-escalate recruitment for and incitement of

violence, and confront the causes of and contributors to domestic terrorism, including the extreme and violent ideologies often fomented online through disinformation and false narratives.

We must also acknowledge the persistent role white supremacy and white nationalism have on the frequency and severity of these threats. It is an indisputable fact that a growing proportion of domestic terrorist threats arise from people driven by hatred and a stated desire to harm people because of the color of their skin or their religious belief.

This hatred-based violence is, heartbreakingly, not new in America. Our history has long been marred by racially motivated threats against communities of color and other marginalized groups. But we are seeing a sharpened edge to the threat – an increasingly persistent and coordinated effort to terrorize based on these repugnant views.

In short, it is imperative that we proactively identify these threats, break the online radicalization cycle, and bolster the resources necessary to keep America safe.

This is not an effort undertaken solely, or even primarily, by the Intelligence Community. It will require close coordination among federal, state, and local law enforcement, as well as collaboration with private sector partners particularly in the online space. I am encouraged by Mr. Cohen's public commitment to work with private sector on identifying patterns of violence amplified online.

While we must ensure the appropriate IC agencies are able to contribute to the mission of combating domestic terrorism, it is equally important that this Committee continues its sustained, rigorous oversight in any instance where those efforts could impact Americans' civil rights and civil liberties.

Last year, the Committee launched an investigation following serious allegations that the Department of Homeland Security's Intelligence and Analysis Office may have played a

role in violating Americans' first amendment rights during DHS' response to unrest in Portland, including by collecting intelligence on journalists. This Committee will continue to prioritize oversight, to ensure that appropriate reforms are instituted, and fundamental civil rights and civil liberties remain protected for all Americans.

I am grateful for the witnesses' testimony today and look forward to our discussion.