

Committee on the Judiciary
The Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security
“The Rise of Domestic Terrorism in America”
February 24, 2021

Andy Ngo testimony

Thank you, Chairwoman Jackson Lee, ranking member Biggs, and members of the Committee.

Being a journalist from Portland, Ore., I know domestic terrorism well. Since 2016, I've witnessed how violent extremists from Antifa and others have made political violence on the streets of my home city banal. Local politicians turned a blind eye to the violence because they believed the extremism was a justified response to the surprise election win of Donald Trump. Local fellow journalists did the same in downplaying Antifa's violent extremism.

Today, I ask that you don't do the same.

From 2016 through 2019, Portland and the surrounding areas suffered dozens of violent protests, mass street brawls, and riots that resulted in serious bodily injuries, arson attacks and property destruction. By 2020, Antifa exploited the anger around the death of George Floyd and others to launch an unprecedented, attempted insurrection in Portland. For more than 120 recurring days, Antifa carried out nightly riots targeting federal, county, and private property. They developed a riot apparatus that included streams of funding for accommodation, travel, riot gear and weapons. This resulted in murder, hundreds of arson attacks, mass injuries, and mass property destruction. To put that into context for those here today, similar actions that occurred at the Capitol Hill riot on January 6, 2021, were repeated every night months on end in the Pacific Northwest. In Seattle, Antifa and far-left extremists seized six blocks of city territory that they said was "autonomous." It resulted in six shootings and two murders over a period of three weeks.

In July 2020, then-DHS Deputy Secretary Ken Cuccinelli reported to Congress at a senate hearing that at least 277 injuries had been inflicted on about 140 federal agents protecting the Mark O. Hatfield U.S. Courthouse in Portland.¹ With my own eyes, I witnessed black-clad, masked militants setting fires to buildings occupied by people. The Antifa came armed with homemade IEDs, guns, and knives. They blinded their targets with powerful lasers before throwing projectiles like rocks, glass and frozen water bottles. Some of them even brought electric power tools to cut apart the fencing that was set up to protect the courthouse. Andrew Faulkner, one of the few federal suspects indicted over rioting charges, allegedly possessed pipe bomb components and a machete at the time of his arrest.²

The following month, a self-described Antifa member hunted down a Trump supporter in downtown and shot him dead point blank before fleeing out of state and being killed by federal authorities the following week. He left behind a trail of posts on his social media indicating his desire for an armed conflict with the state, which he viewed as fascist.

¹ "Submitted Written Testimony of Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Deputy Secretary Ken Cuccinelli before the U.s. Senate Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution on August 4th."

² "Seven Arrested, Facing Federal Charges after Weekend Riots at Hatfield Federal Courthouse (photo)."

I'm encouraged today to see lawmakers discussing the important subject of domestic terrorism. But I'm concerned that our representatives are increasingly viewing this through a partisan lens. This puts all Americans at risk.

Those speaking before and after me can illuminate and educate us on far-right terrorism, a threat extremely well-tracked by government agencies, nonprofits and journalists. Much less understood is the terrorism threat from the far-left, particularly Antifa.

Far-left terrorism isn't new in the U.S. It has a long history in the second half of the 20th century where groups like the Weather Underground, the Black Liberation Army and the May 19 Communist Organization carried out bombings, robberies and jailbreaks in the name of "anti-racism." Antifa are continuing that legacy today and use the cloak of "anti-fascism" to shield themselves from criticism, and to fool well-meaning people into becoming allies.

In September 2020, FBI Director Chris Wray told lawmakers that Antifa is real and that the FBI investigates the threat coming from violent anarchist extremists who identify with Antifa. We should heed Wray's warnings.

Domestic terrorism is not partisan. Both the far-left and the far-right seek to delegitimize and destabilize the Republic.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

“Seven Arrested, Facing Federal Charges after Weekend Riots at Hatfield Federal Courthouse (photo),” July 7, 2020. <https://www.justice.gov/usao-or/pr/seven-arrested-facing-federal-charges-after-weekend-riots-hatfield-federal-courthouse>.

“Submitted Written Testimony of Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Deputy Secretary Ken Cuccinelli before the U.s. Senate Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution on August 4th,” August 4, 2020. <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2020/08/04/submitted-written-testimony-senior-official-performing-duties-deputy-secretary-ken>.

Andy Ngo is a journalist best known for reporting on American antifa. He has written reports for the New York Post, Newsweek and others. He drew national attention when he was beaten by antifa on the streets of Portland in the summer of 2019. His book, "Unmasked: Inside Antifa's Radical Plan to Destroy Democracy," is a New York Times bestseller.