

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

**“Countering Domestic Terrorism:
Examining the Evolving Threat”**

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Opening Statements

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Peters, and esteemed members of the committee, I would like to thank you on behalf of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, known as START,¹ for inviting us to testify before you today.² I've been asked to draw upon our work at START to assess the domestic terrorism threat, as well as the status of data collection and threat tracking performed by the federal government.

START data from a number of relevant datasets demonstrate the following:

1. The ideological motivations behind terrorist behaviors in the United States are exceptionally diverse, constantly evolving, often overlapping, and difficult to assess in many instances. Clearly articulated manifestos are the exception, not the rule.³ The implication is that any government response to violent extremism in the United States should not be based on predetermined ideological categories or assumptions about the relative threat of ideological movements at any one time.

¹ START is a university research center based at the University of Maryland and is a U.S. Department of Homeland Security Emeritus Center of Excellence. START uses state-of-the-art theories, methods and data from the social and behavioral sciences to inform counterterrorism and terrorism prevention policy and practice. This testimony reflects the opinions of the author, and not those of the Department of Homeland Security or any other office of the United States Government that funds or has funded START research.

² I would like to thank Markus Binder, Steve Chermak, Josh Freilich, Jeff Gruenewald, Patrick James, Mike Jensen, Erin Miller, Amy Pate, Katie Ratcliff, Jessica Rivinius and Liz Yates for contributing data, analyses and portions of the text for this testimony.

³ Umbrella terms (e.g., domestic, international, far-right, far-left, religious) used by government entities, researchers and the media are necessary to aggregate and communicate information about these diverse motivations, but are not universally agreed upon, are imprecise, and are influenced by differing considerations such as bureaucratic considerations, legal considerations, political considerations and preferences for specificity or inclusiveness. Furthermore, terrorist ideologies morph over time, new terrorist ideologies emerge, and many individual terrorists are influenced by more than one ideology. Therefore, data and analysis emerging from one government entity or research project may be based on different definitions and inclusion criteria than data and analysis emerging from another, making direct comparisons difficult. Finally, many terrorist ideologies espouse the use of violence to advance the same or similar beliefs and world views that non-violent and/or law-abiding citizens and organizations espouse. As a result, ideological definitions may be misunderstood to mean that anyone subscribing to a specific set of beliefs is a terrorist, when in actuality it is an individual or organization's behavior that qualifies them as "terrorist" in nature. Ideological considerations are merely understood as motivation that helps to shape the perpetrators' violence for an intended political purpose.

2. In the United States over the last decade, domestic terrorists⁴ are more numerous, active and lethal than international terrorists⁵ in gross numbers, including what the U.S. government refers to as Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVE).^{6,7}
3. Despite the fact that more domestic terrorists are arrested than HVEs in gross numbers, 62% of far-right and 78% of far-left terrorists succeed in violent plots, compared with 22% of HVEs, for a host of reasons discussed below.
4. Among domestic terrorists, violent far-right terrorists⁸ are by far the most numerous, lethal and criminally active. Over the last several decades, they are responsible for more: failed plots; successful plots; pursuits of chemical or biological weapons; homicide events; and illicit financial schemes than international terrorists, including HVEs.
5. While domestic terrorism, and violent far-right terrorism specifically, is on the rise in the United States over the past several years, domestic terrorism and violent far-right terrorism have been a persistent threat in the United States, which has ebbed and flowed in intensity. This is especially true if one includes hate and bias crimes as part of the threat landscape, as the motivations for hate and bias crime often conform to ideological tenets of violent far-right extremism.

⁴ The FBI defines domestic terrorism as that “Perpetrated by individuals and/or groups inspired by or associated with primarily U.S.-based movements that espouse extremist ideologies of political, religious, social, racial or environmental nature.” See <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/terrorism>.

⁵ The FBI defines international terrorism as that “Perpetrated by individuals and/or groups inspired by or associated with designated foreign terrorist organizations or nations (state-sponsored).” See <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/terrorism>.

⁶ The FBI defines HVEs as “global-jihad-inspired individuals who are based in the U.S., have been radicalized primarily in the U.S., and are not directly collaborating with a foreign terrorist organization.” See <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/terrorism>.

⁷ Intellectually, the lines between domestic and international terrorism are blurry, bordering on arbitrary. Many domestic terrorist movements are inspired by organizations or movements that originated overseas (e.g., Neo-Nazis and the Nazi Party, the Animal Rights Liberation Front), and/or are participants of ongoing international movements. Not all foreign terrorist organizations are formally designated as foreign terrorist organizations, however, and so similar or identical behaviors conducted by an individual inspired by one foreign terrorist organization or movement may be treated differently, legally and analytically, as those behaviors inspired by a different foreign terrorist organization or movement.

⁸ START’s Global Terrorism Database defines “far-right extremism” as “Violence in support of the belief that personal and/or national way of life is under attack and is either already lost or that the threat is imminent. Characterized by anti-globalism, racial or ethnic supremacy or nationalism, suspicion of centralized federal authority, reverence for individual liberty, and/or belief in conspiracy theories that involve grave threat to national sovereignty and/or personal liberty.”

6. Recent years have seen more lethal far-right terrorist attacks than previous years, and the composition of far-right targets has changed, with anti-immigrant (including anti-Muslim) attacks increasing in frequency.

Data

START curates a suite of datasets that examine different facets of violent extremism. These datasets have different units of analysis, including individuals, incidents, and organizations. They also investigate different behaviors, including: radicalization and mobilization in support of hate and bias crime, and terrorism; deradicalization, disengagement and desistance from violent extremism; failed and foiled plots; attacks; ideologically motivated homicides; financial schemes; and pursuits of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons. These datasets therefore have different inclusion criteria, structure and utility. Some datasets are representative samples of their topic of inquiry, while others endeavor to be comprehensive. Given this, in addition to the challenges associated with ideological categorizations and definitions, the following analyses are presented by database, as opposed to in an integrated fashion. In sum, these different efforts examining different research questions point to similar trends regarding domestic terrorism, which strengthens their findings.

The Global Terrorism Database

The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) is an open-source database including information on terrorist events around the world from 1970 through the first quarter (Q1) of 2019⁹.

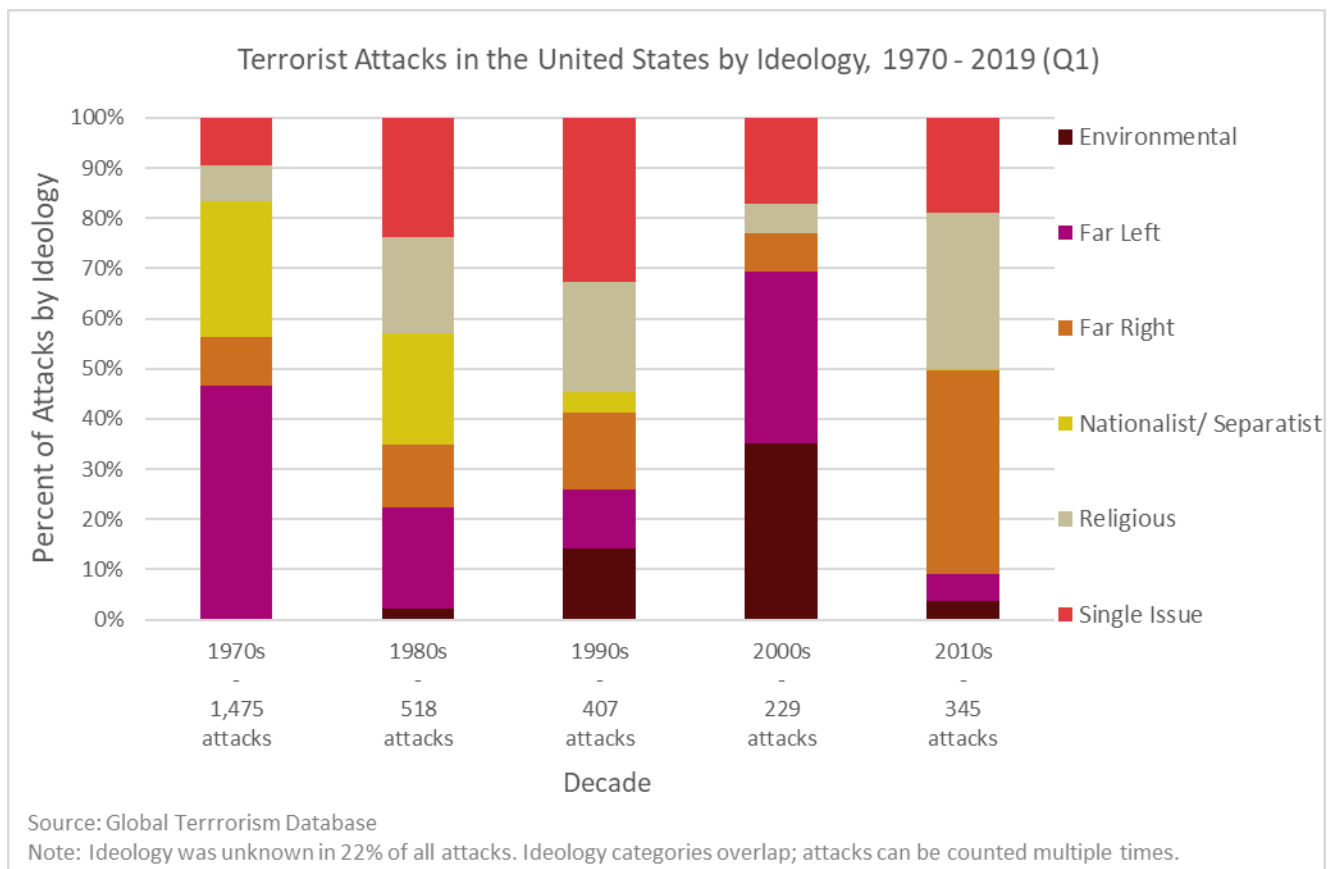
⁹ The Global Terrorism Database defines terrorism as: “the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.” Given the varying definitions of terrorism and to provide flexibility for those who use GTD for different analytical and operational purposes, an incident must meet five of six criteria to be included in the GTD. Specifically, START includes incidents that meet three mandatory criteria (the act was intentional, the act involved the use or threat of violence, and the perpetrator(s) of the act was a sub-national actor) and then two of the three following additional criteria:

1. The violent act was aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal;
2. The violent act included evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience (or audiences) other than the immediate victims; and
3. The violent act was outside the precepts of International Humanitarian Law insofar as it targeted non-combatants.

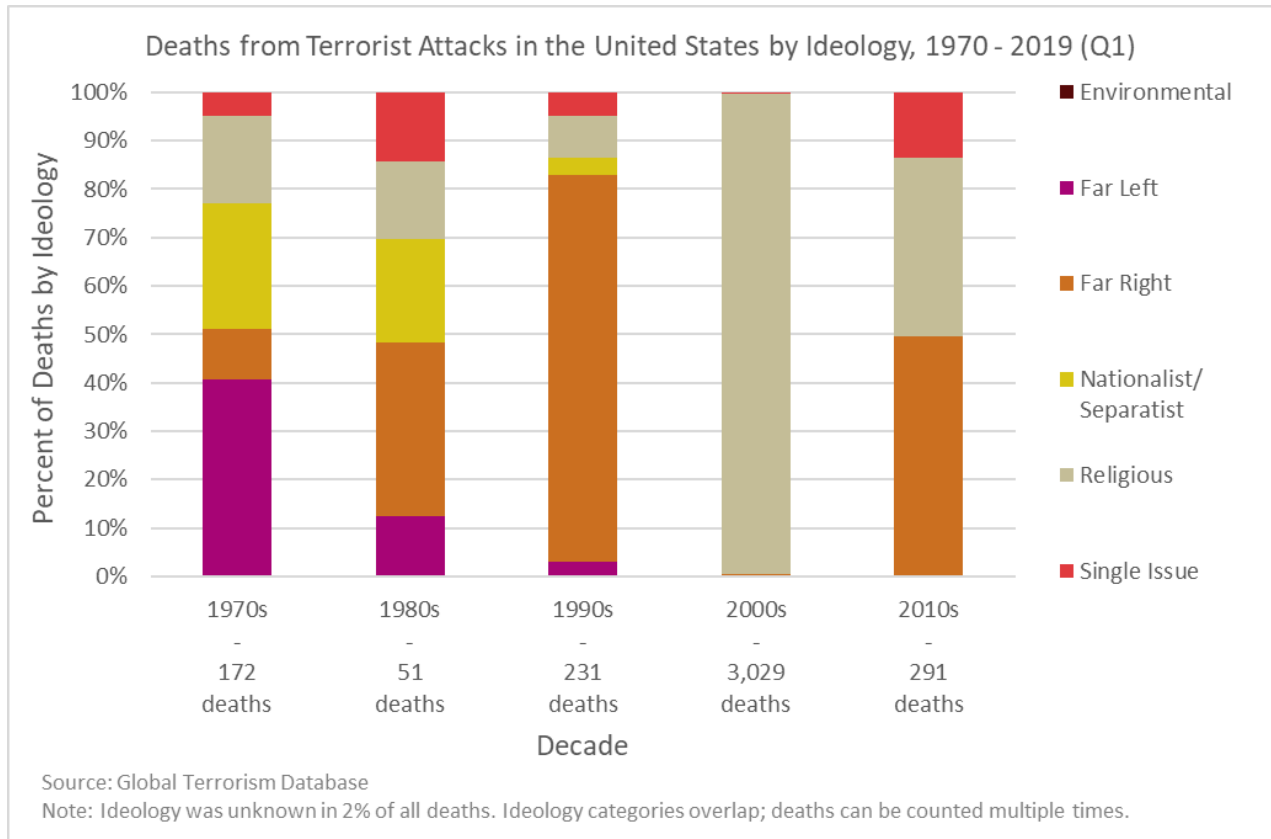
Unlike many other event databases, the GTD includes systematic data on domestic as well as transnational and international terrorist incidents that have occurred during this time period and now includes more than 193,500 cases, making it the most comprehensive terrorist incident database in the world. For each GTD incident, information is available on the date and location of the incident, the weapons used and nature of the target, the number of casualties, and—when identifiable—the group or individual responsible.

A longitudinal dataset with consistent definitions and inclusion criteria allow us to examine trends over time, such as the percentage of terrorist attacks and deaths occurring in a given decade attributed by ideology.

Terrorist Attacks in the United States by Ideology, 1970-2019 (Q1)

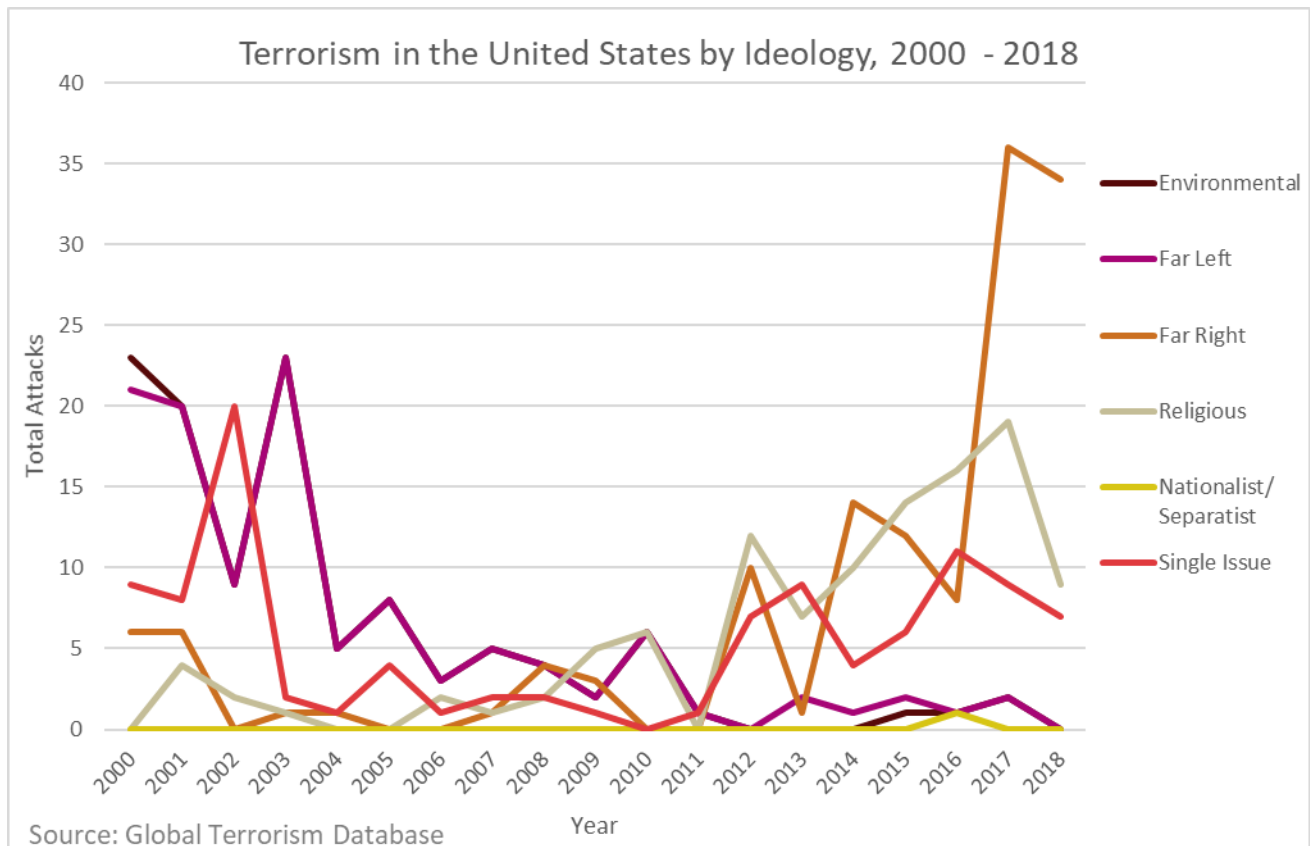


Deaths from Terrorist Attacks in the United States by Ideology, 1970-2019 (Q1)



The tables above demonstrate the fluidity of terrorism in the United States across decades regarding ideology. A closer look at the last decade demonstrates that fluidity from year to year. In the table below, attacks are attributed to multiple ideologies when more than one ideological motivation was present, and so the increase in the number of violent far-right attacks contributes to the rise in religiously motivated attacks. Forty-seven of the 110 religiously motivated attacks charted below were also coded as far right.

Terrorism in the United States by Ideology, 2000-2018



Furthermore, from last decade to this decade, the number of ideological motivations and perpetrator groups within each of these umbrella categories has increased from 29 to 54, as new ideologies have emerged, existing ideologies have evolved, and individuals or groups have merged ideological motivations in new ways. From 2000-2009, the GTD catalogues, nine different far-right motivations or perpetrator groups, seven religious, seven single-issue, and six far-left (including environmentalist) motivations or perpetrator groups. From 2010-2019 Q1, those numbers rise to 19 far-right motivations or perpetrator groups, 11 religious, 14 single-issue, and 10 far-left motivations or perpetrator groups (including environmentalist). Any government response to terrorism in the United States must account for the evolving nature of terrorist ideologies, to include the emergence of new categories of ideologically motivated perpetrators.

2018 was the third consecutive year in which there were more than 65 terrorist attacks in the United States, a figure not exceeded since 1982. There were 67 terrorist attacks in the United States in 2018, resulting in 45 deaths, including two perpetrator deaths.

There were six lethal terrorist attacks in the United States in 2018, excluding one attack in which only the perpetrator died, compared to 18 in 2017. Although terrorism in the United States is ideologically and geographically diverse, all six lethal attacks shared in common far-right ideological elements including primarily white supremacy and, in at least two cases, male supremacy. We observed this general pattern continue in 2019.

Two of the three deadliest attacks in the United States in 2018 were school shootings. In February, an assailant shot and killed 17 people and injured 17 others at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

In May, an assailant shot and killed 10 people and injured 13 others at Santa Fe High School in Santa Fe, Texas. The GTD does not include all school shooting attacks. These two school shooting attacks were designated “doubt terrorism proper” because there were indications of possible personal motivations (the victims were known to the assailants) and ideological motivations (in particular, neo-Nazi and white supremacist messaging).

In October, an assailant shot and killed 11 people and injured six others at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The assailant reportedly shouted “all Jews must die” and had a history of anti-Semitic rhetoric on social media.

In October, a white supremacist shot and killed two African American shoppers at a grocery store in Jeffersontown, Kentucky, after unsuccessfully attempting to enter a predominantly African-American church.

In November, an incel extremist shot six women, killing two, in a Tallahassee yoga studio.

In March, a teenager who held white supremacist and Islamist views stabbed his friends dozens of times in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, killing one, reportedly because they “made fun of his Muslim faith.”

The Extremist Crime Database¹⁰

The U.S. Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) is an open-source study that tracks violent, financial and material support crimes committed by far-right, HVE, far-left, and other extremists in the United States. It is a unique relational database that collects hundreds of attributes on the incident, offender, personal victim, non-human targets, networks, organizations, and the reliability of the uncovered open-source materials.

Ideologically motivated homicides: Ideologically motivated homicides provide another measure of the extremist threat, as not all ideologically motivated homicides fit the definition of terrorism, and therefore may not be included in terrorism data.¹¹ These ECDB data are valuable, in particular, as not all precincts report ideologically motivated homicides to the Federal Bureau of Investigations, and so the Uniform Crime Report may underreport these homicides.

The table on the next page lists the number of ideologically motivated far-right and international/HVE fatal incidents and victims by year from 1990 to 2018:

¹⁰ The ECDB has allowed researchers to make major theoretical and policy-relevant contributions, to train law enforcement officials, and to train both undergraduate and graduate students to conduct policy-relevant research. It is a collaborative effort between Professors Joshua D. Freilich (John Jay College of Criminal Justice) and Steven M. Chermak (Michigan State University).

¹¹ The Government Accountability Office (GAO) violent extremism report released in April 2017 used ECDB data to contextualize far-right and jihadist violence in the U.S: <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-300>,

Ideologically Motivated Fatal Incidents and Victims by Year, 1990-2018

Year	Far-right Homicide Events	Far-right Homicide Victims	HVE Homicide Events	HVE Homicide Victims
1990	7	7	2	2
1991	7	7	0	0
1992	8	9	0	0
1993	9	9	2	8
1994	14	15	1	1
1995	11	179 ^a	0	0
1996	7	7	0	0
1997	9	12	1	1
1998	11	12	0	0
1999	18	37	0	0
2000	6	7	1	1
2001	7	10	5	2998 ^b
2002	10	12	16	17
2003	6	12	0	0
2004	1	1	0	0
2005	5	7	0	0
2006	3	4	2	2
2007	5	5	1	5
2008	8	11	0	0
2009	16	32	2	14
2010	4	5	0	0
2011	4	4	1	3
2012	3	10	0	0
2013	4	5	3	5
2014	9	14	5	6
2015	5	24	2	19
2016	2	2	1	49
2017	10	12	4	16
2018	6	17	1	1
Total	215	488	50	3148

*Source: The United States Extremist Crime Database (ECDB)

^a Includes the 168 homicide victims of the Oklahoma City bombing

^b Includes the 2997 homicide victims of the [9/11](#) terrorist attacks

This table indicates that from 1990 to 2018 far-right extremists committed more ideologically motivated homicide incidents (n=215) than international/HVE extremists (n=50). Far-right lethal activity is consistent in that attacks occurred every year.

International/HVE ideologically motivated homicide incidents are more sporadic but on average more deadly. For example, the 50 international/HVE homicide events include 11 incidents that killed more than five persons and seven that killed more than 10 individuals, while the 215 far-right homicide incidents include nine events that killed more than five persons and three that killed more than 10 individuals.

Quantifying the relative severity of these attacks is complicated by the high number of fatalities due to the 9/11 attacks, and to a lesser extent the Oklahoma City bombing. Excluding 9/11, HVE attacks have resulted in 3.1 fatalities on average. Violent far-right attacks generated 2.3 fatalities on average, or 1.4 if you exclude Oklahoma City from the calculation. *These numbers do not include the 2019 El Paso violent far-right attack.*

The ECDB has not been funded to track far-left (e.g., Anarchists, Antifa, Black Nationalist, Marxists) ideologically motivated violence in the United States but our preliminary effort (guided by a doctoral student's ongoing dissertation) has uncovered more than 30 such ideologically motivated homicides since 1990.¹²

Failed and Foiled Plots: To understand the scale of the extremist threat, it is critical to examine failed and foiled plots in addition to those that succeed. The ECDB tracks failed and foiled plots and has found that since 1990, far-right extremists have been involved in plots of varying maturity that targeted over 800 targets, international/HVEs have been involved in plots of varying maturity that targeted over 350 targets, while far-left extremists appear to have targeted close to 100 targets, according to preliminary analysis.

Financial Schemes: The ECDB team has not had sufficient funding to collect data on financial schemes in recent years, but an earlier study examining far-right financial schemes from 1990-2013 demonstrates the utility of understanding this aspect of the threat, as these financial schemes help to sustain and grow extremist movements, provide material incentives for participating in violent extremist movements, and impose a significant cost on government and society. These illicit schemes have raised hundreds of millions of

¹² In addition, animal rights and eco rights extremists have committed close to 200 ideologically motivated arsons and bombings in the U.S. between 1995 and 2018, causing hundreds of millions of dollars in damages. In recent years the frequency of these attacks has declined.

dollars in illegal gains which has been used for both personal profit and to fund their ideological causes, and caused over \$1 billion in government losses. Some of these financial crimes have also been linked to violent ideologically motivated crimes in both the United States and abroad.

This project has identified 609 financial schemes involving at least one far-right extremist occurring in the United States from 1990 to 2013. These schemes involved 1,345 individual criminal suspects: 72% (n=969) were far-right extremists and 20% (n=264) were non-extremist collaborators. Specific information about the remaining 112 (8%) was not found.... Far-right extremists engaged mostly in tax avoidance schemes (59%) as a form of anti-government protest....

The far-right extremists involved in these schemes belong to a number of movements. While many individuals fit into multiple categories, only the primary affiliation is reported. The most prominent affiliation is with sovereign citizens (40%), who believe they are freemen not subject to governmental authority.... An additional 5% were affiliated with militia or patriot groups, and 4% affiliated with white supremacists (KKK, neo-Nazi, Christian Identity, etc.). The remaining 23% of extremist individuals are tax protesters.¹³

Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States

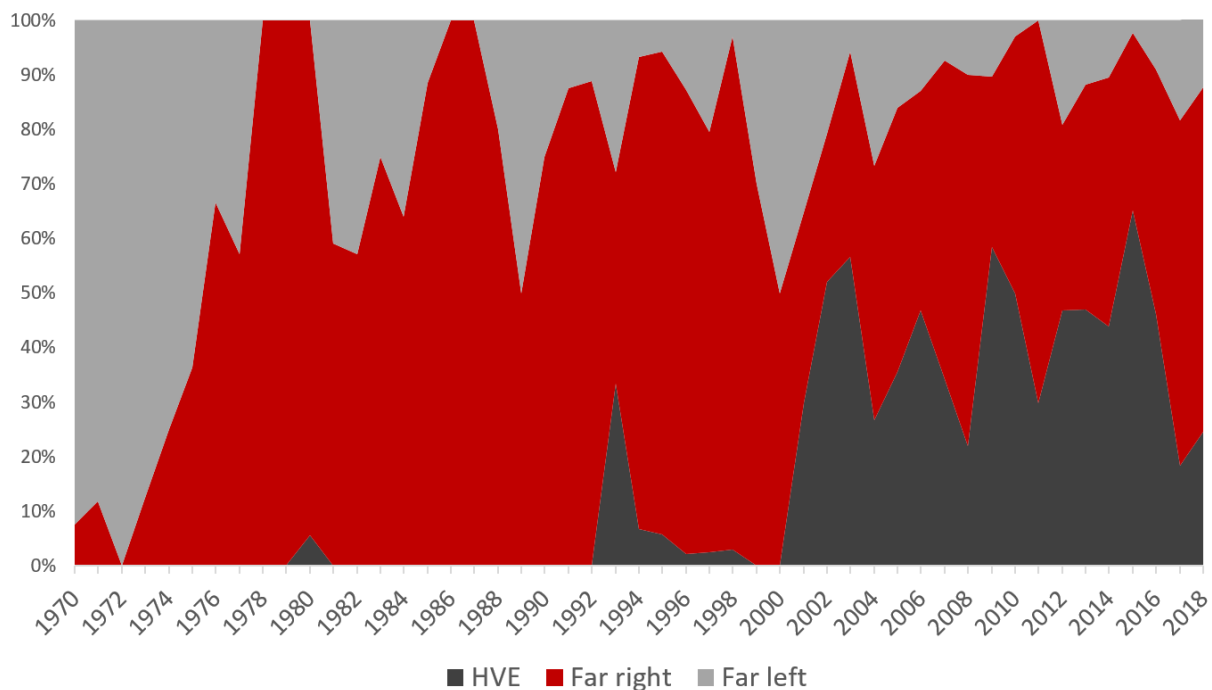
The Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS) dataset is a deidentified, cross-sectional, quantitative dataset of 2,214 individuals based in the United States who radicalized to the point of violent or non-violent ideologically motivated criminal activity, or ideologically motivated association with a foreign or domestic extremist organization from 1948 until 2018. PIRUS spans multiple ideological milieus,

¹³ Sullivan, Brandon A., and Joshua D. Freilich, Steven M. Chermak, William Parkin, Jeff Gruenewald. 2015. "Financial Crimes Perpetrated by Far-Right Extremists in the United States: 1990-2013." College Park, MD. June. http://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_ECDB_FinancialCrimesSchemesPerpetratedbyFarRightExtremists_June2015.pdf

broadly categorized as Islamist extremists, far-right extremists, far-left extremists, and single-issue extremists. The dataset contains detailed information on each individual's radicalization pathway, group affiliation, plot involvement, demographics, and personal background and history. The data were collected using entirely publicly available resources, such as news reports, unsealed court documents, unclassified government reports, and other media.

Far-right extremists make up the largest percentage of extremists in the United States over the past several decades, and after dipping in the 2000s to historical lows, that percentage has increased to approximately 60% in recent years.

Extremists in the United States by Ideology, 1970-2018 (%)



Target preferences among violent far-right extremists have shifted in this decade, and especially in the past four years, to include a greater focus on perceived foreigners. Over the last 10 years of data, (2009-2018), 21.85% of violent far-right offenders were

motivated at least partly by anti-immigrant or anti-Muslim sentiment compared to only 2.80% in the 10 years prior.¹⁴

Year	Number of violent anti-immigrant cases	Total violent far-right cases	Violent anti-immigrant cases as % of violent far-right
2009	1	12	8.33%
2010	4	22	18.18%
2011	1	35	2.86%
2012	1	9	11.11%
2013	1	10	10.00%
2014	2	19	10.53%
2015	7	30	23.33%
2016	13	35	37.14%
2017	16	42	38.10%
2018*	6*	24*	25.00%*
2009-2018	52	238	21.85%

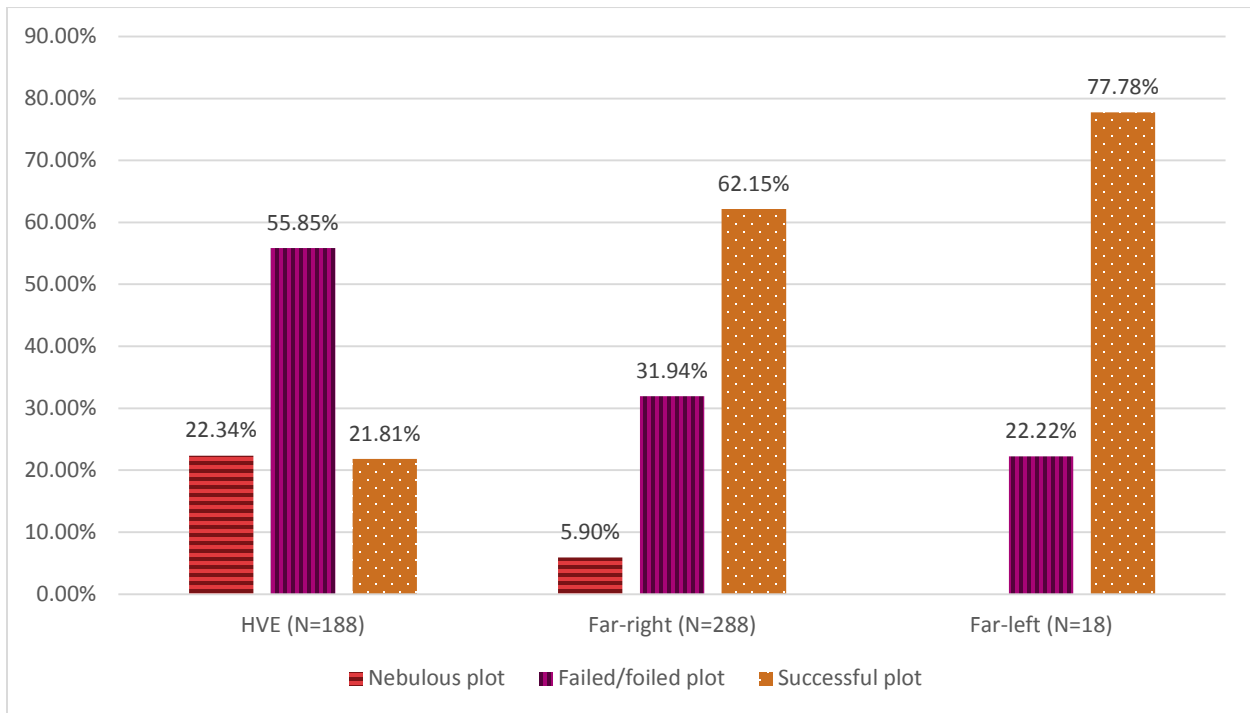
*2018 data is preliminary. Approximately 14 more far-right cases will be coded to complete 2018 data.

Despite the fact that more domestic terrorists are arrested than HVEs in gross numbers, domestic terrorists are more likely to succeed in carrying out violent plots than HVEs. Over 20% of violent HVE plots are disrupted at the earliest phase of their mobilization (“nebulous plot” in chart below) to violence, before the perpetrators have created a specific plan to engage in specific tactics against specific targets. Nearly 80% of violent HVE plots

¹⁴ This does not include anti-Semitic motivations, which PIRUS codes separately. PIRUS coding does not currently differentiate between anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim motivations, but this improvement can be made to the codebook.

fail or are foiled, compared to 40% of domestic terrorism plots, only 6% of which are disrupted at the earliest states of mobilization.

Extent of Violent Plots in the United States by Ideology, 2008-2018



This is likely due to a combination of pragmatic and political factors that collectively reduce resource allocation to domestic terrorism when compared to international terrorism and HVEs.

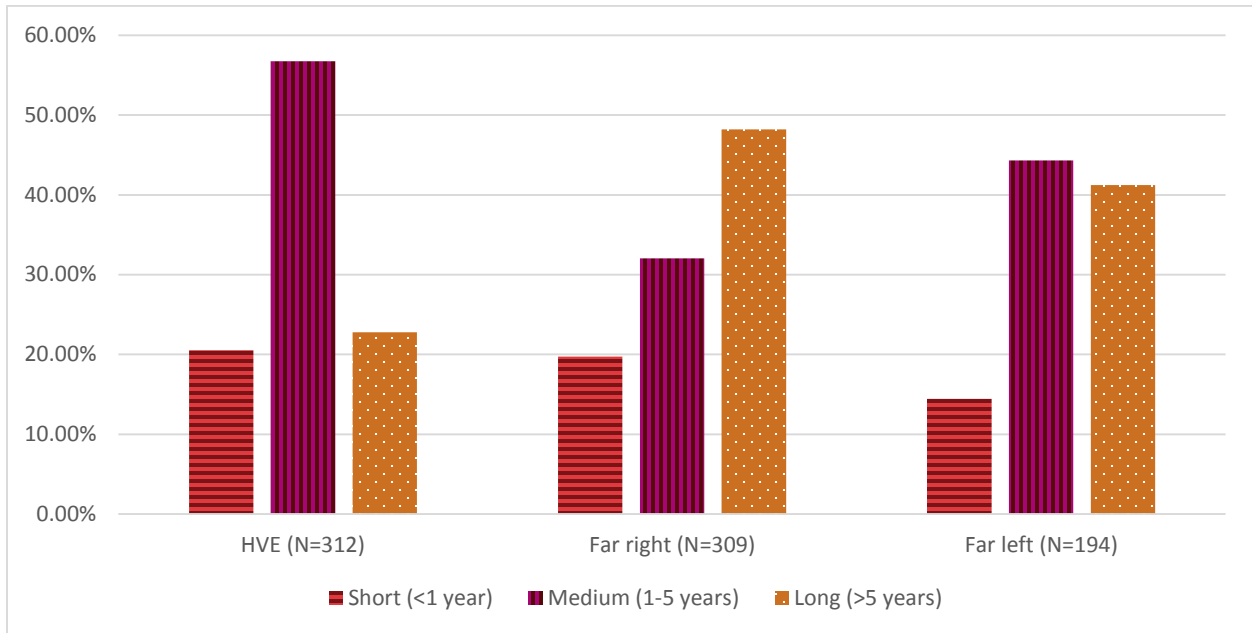
- The material support statutes in federal law provide criminal justice professionals with the criminal predicate necessary to open full investigations into HVEs inspired by foreign-designated terrorist organizations, but not domestic terrorists. Behaviors like propagandizing, recruiting, procuring weapons, and training are deemed as behaviors protected by the Constitution for domestic terrorists, but may be grounds for a criminal justice disruption if performed by an HVE. If the FBI cannot legally open an investigation into a potential domestic terrorist but can regarding an HVE, resource allocation decisions will follow.
- Domestic terrorists are embedded in much larger extremist communities than HVEs, creating a “signal to noise” challenge. There is a very large community of

individuals in the United States who espouse general support for ideologically motivated violence on social media platforms, making it difficult for law enforcement officials to identify the small percentage of those individuals who are likely to engage in violence.

- Domestic extremists often espouse the use of violence to advance a social or political agenda that is shared by a larger number of Americans who do not espouse the use of violence. This creates political pressure to handle domestic terrorism less aggressively than international terrorism, as aggressive investigations may be misperceived as attacks on the social or political agenda itself.
- Absent strong federal terrorism charges, domestic extremists are often charged with lesser crimes and therefore serve shorter sentences, increasing their opportunity for recidivism.
- The DoD and Intelligence Community dedicate considerable resources to international terrorism that generates leads and sometimes evidence regarding HVEs, but rarely domestic terrorists.

Perpetrators of extremist crimes in the United States radicalize to violence over differing time horizons on average, with the violent far-right offenders experiencing the longest duration. Additionally, violent far-right offenders are arrested or conduct their extremist crime at a relatively older median age. This provides an opportunity for a non-criminal justice intervention, or a criminal justice interdiction given a legal predicate and sufficient resources.

Duration of Radicalization for Extremist Offenders in the United States*



*measured as period of time between first evidence of radicalization (in beliefs or behaviors) and the individual's date of exposure (e.g., arrest/plot)

General characteristics about extremists in the United States demonstrate similarities and differences between ideological movements, which can inform both counterterrorism and terrorism prevention efforts. Relative to HVE and far-left extremists, far-right extremists tend to be older at the time of their arrest or involvement in extremist crime, are more likely than not to have a criminal history, have lower socio-economic standing and education levels, and a higher rate of military experience. Rates of known or suspected mental illness is low across all three ideological groups, and the presence of internet radicalization as a part of the radicalization process is high for all three groups.

Characteristics of Extremist Offenders in the United States by Ideology, 1948-2018 (n= 2215)

	Far-right (n=963)	Far-left (n=375)	HVE (n=512)
% Violent	60.9%	32.5%	71.9%
Age at Public Exposure (Median)*	35	25	26
% Female	5.8%	25.6%	6.4%
Low Education (no college experience)*	52.9%	21.2%	42.7%
Low Socioeconomic Status*	31.0%	23.7%	26.2%
Military Experience*	22.6%	9.7%	8.4%
Criminal History*	53.5%	29.9%	33.3%
Internet Radicalization (post 1999)*	81.5%	85.1%	86.2%
Evidence of Mental Illness	14.6%	6.1%	14.6%

*valid percentages only (individuals with missing data for these variables were not included for analysis)

Bias Incidents and Actors Study

The Bias Incidents and Actors Study dataset (BIAS) is a deidentified, cross-sectional, quantitative dataset that currently contains data on 687 U.S.-based individuals who committed a violent or non-violent crime between 1990-2018 that was at least partially motivated by some form of identity-based prejudice, including bias based on religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or age. Similar to the PIRUS dataset, these data contain detailed information on the personal background, group affiliation, demographics, and factors related to the development of bias-motivated beliefs, as well as in-depth information on the bias crimes in which they were involved. The data were collected using entirely publicly available resources, such as news reports, unsealed court documents, unclassified government reports, and other media.

START has recently compiled these data and has not yet generated analyses beyond summary statistics. Those statistics are included here, as ideologically motivated violence does harm whether it is categorized after-the-fact as an act of terrorism or hate, or both. As

of now, 309 of the 687 individuals in BIAS are also in the PIRUS dataset. Of those individuals, 81% are classified as far right, 13.6% as single issue, 4.5% as HVEs and 0.7% as far left. It is important for the U.S. Government and civil society to include hate and bias perpetrators as part of the threat landscape when thinking through responses to domestic extremism. Hate and bias offenders often engage in spontaneous acts of ideologically motivated violence, for example, that may require different responses.

Characteristics of Hate Crime Offenders in the United States, 1990-2018

	Spontaneous hate crime (n=279)	Planned hate crime (n=407)	All offenders (n=686)
% Violent	78.5%	63.4%	69.5%
Age (Median)	27	26	27
% Caucasian*	79.9%	84.6%	82.8%
% Female	5.4%	5.7%	5.5%
Low Education (no college)*	67.1%	60.1%	62.6%
Low Socioeconomic Status*	50.9%	59.5%	56.5%
% Married*	10.3%	15.9%	13.9%
Military Experience*	6.1%	15.9%	9.5%
Criminal History*	68.0%	61.5%	64.1%
Internet Radicalization (post 1999)*	57.1%	64.1%	62.4%
Evidence of Mental Illness	12.5%	21.6%	17.9%

*valid percentages only (individuals with missing data for these variables were not included for analysis)

Chemical and Biological Non-State Actor Database

START maintains various databases that look at non-state actor pursuit of chemical, biological, radiological and/or nuclear weapons capabilities around the world. While rare, and in most instances aspirational, the pursuit of weapons of mass destruction is essential for study because the potential for psychological impact and physical harm are high, and

because technological advances will continue to make it easier and cheaper for non-state actors to obtain capabilities akin to nation-states.

In the United States, START has identified seven non-state actors motivated by far-right ideologies who aspired or attempted to obtain chemical or biological weapons, one HVE who aspired to obtain a chemical or biological weapon, zero far-left extremists, and five individuals whose motivations were unknown, compared with 29 plotters with criminal motivations.

The Status of Data Collection and Threat Tracking Performed by the Government

There are several challenges to the U.S. Government's ability to maintain, share, analyze and make public data on U.S. persons involved in domestic extremism.

One challenge is in regard to the legal and bureaucratic handling of different kinds of ideologically motivated crimes. The FBI's Counterterrorism Division oversees domestic terrorism investigations, but the Criminal Division oversees hate crime investigations, prompting the creation of the Domestic Terrorism-Hate Crimes Fusion Cell in April 2019. Furthermore, domestic terrorism and international terrorism are typically handled separately within and between organizations, leading to bifurcated threat assessments and situational awareness. In addition to undermining risk assessment and rational resource allocation decisions, this bifurcation is also logically flawed, given that what the government refers to as domestic terrorism is often part of an international extremist movement, and vice versa. To reflect reality, violent extremism data has to be collected and analyzed globally.

A second set of challenges result from civil rights and civil liberties protections, and our individual-oriented (vs. collective) criminal justice system. The U.S. Government is limited in its ability to maintain data as it pertains to domestic extremist movements broadly and the large number of individuals within them (e.g., ideologues, propagandists, recruiters, supporters) who are not acting in violation of the law. Researchers outside of the government are often better able to examine domestic extremist movements. But even for

those extremists in violation of the law, there are structural limitations to the extent that our criminal justice system can adopt an intelligence-led domestic counterterrorism posture.

The Domestic Investigation Operations Guide produced by the Department of Justice protects against persistent government surveillance of U.S. citizens. It limits the duration and intrusiveness of assessments that the FBI-led Joint Terrorism Task Forces are allowed to conduct when following up on a terrorism-related lead. Failing a legal predicate to open up full investigations, assessments are closed.

For active investigations, the FBI Counterterrorism Division (CTD) maintains high quality data on individuals under investigation and uses that data to manage risk across their portfolio of international and domestic terrorism investigations. That information is highly granular, but narrowed by the needs of the investigation and also limited by resource constraints given the large number of on-going domestic and international terrorism investigations. It is also at the individual-level of analysis, which is appropriate for our criminal justice purposes, but only captures part of “the story.” There are limitations as to how broadly case information can be shared outside of the FBI, as individuals under investigation have not been charged or convicted of a crime.

The next challenge speaks to a criminal’s journey through the criminal justice lifecycle. The FBI and DOJ have recently conducted analyses on the outcomes of cases that go to trial regarding whether or not a federal terrorism charge, a non-terrorism-related federal charge, or a state-level charge in a state court were utilized. For convictions that occur in state courts or that utilize non-terrorism-related federal charges, which is more common with domestic terrorism cases, there has historically been a break down once these perpetrators enter the correctional system. The Executive Office of the U.S. Courts is working to improve its understanding of who in the prison system has a history of violent extremist crime, as that may not be obvious based on the individual’s prosecution. I am not well-informed on where they stand in those efforts, but I can attest that they understand how important it is to arm probation and pre-trial officers with that information, as well as training on how to foster violent extremist rehabilitation and reintegration into

communities. Given the relatively large number of domestic extremists, tracking incarcerated and formerly incarcerated extremists over time is a tremendous challenge, and terms of release for lesser crimes may not allow for extended probation periods.

The final challenge speaks to politics. Given the inherently political nature of terrorism, defining, tracking and reporting data on terrorism is subject to manipulation or more subtle pressures.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Given the nature of the threat as described here, it is clear that domestic terrorism, and specifically far-right extremism, require greater attention and resource allocation. This is not to say that the U.S. Government should respond to domestic terrorism in the same ways as it has responded to international terrorism and homegrown violent extremism.

- Congress should pass the Domestic Terrorism DATA Act or similar legislation, including the requirement for the continued funding of unclassified, objective and longitudinal data collection and dissemination on the various facets of domestic and international terrorism through the DHS Center of Excellence apparatus.
 - Universities can responsibly, transparently, affordably and objectively collect data both domestically and internationally, at different units of analysis, and on subjects beyond just violations of the law to make sense of these complex human phenomena.
 - American taxpayers and the Department of Homeland Security have already built this capability at START, and despite the efforts of many public servants at DHS and DOJ, funding for many of the datasets described here expires in December 2019.
- Resource allocations decisions, such as those driving the Urban Area Security Initiative and State Homeland Security Program grants, should incorporate these objective data.

- The U.S. Government should take a public-health approach to violent extremism and invest in programs that strengthen individual, family, and community resilience to violent extremism, programs that foster non-criminal justice interventions for at-risk individuals, and programs that foster rehabilitation and reintegration of domestic extremists. A parallel grants program to the Homeland Security Grants Program could be run out of an organization like Health and Human Services to support these public health programs. This is the most pragmatic course of action given that:
 - A much higher percentage of violent domestic terrorist attacks are not disrupted by law enforcement given the issues described above;
 - Even a federal criminal statute regarding domestic terrorism, should Congress choose to pass one, will likely continue to protect many behaviors that might allow for, and warrant, a non-punitive intervention by civil-society actors;
 - START data suggests that there is both a window of opportunity as well as indicators observable to friends and family regarding interest in violent extremism that could allow for interventions and off-ramping;
 - Criminal justice disruptions without rehabilitation or reintegration programs delay rather than reduce the risk to public safety, but we are currently incarcerating a relatively high number of domestic terrorists who serve relatively shorter sentences than HVEs, but who also do not have access to rehabilitation and reintegration programs. START research leveraging the PIRUS database highlights challenges to violent extremist deradicalization, disengagement and desistance that programs can address,¹⁵ although this is a field of research and practice in need of much greater attention.
 - Domestic terrorist movements are enduring despite competent law enforcement interdictions, and require social and political responses.

¹⁵ Jensen, Michael, and Patrick James, Elizabeth Yates. 2019. "Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States—Desistance, Disengagement, and Deradicalization (PIRUS-D3)." START, College Park, Maryland. July.
https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_PIRUS_DesistanceDisengagementDeradicalization_July2019.pdf

Traditional counterterrorism measures do not provide useful means for limiting the attractiveness of violent extremist ideologies, nor the psychological or political impact of acts of violence when they do happen. Civil society is necessary to accomplish this.

- Whereas counterterrorism efforts are by nature clandestine and difficult to study, civil society-led terrorism prevention programs can be rigorously studied, allowing us to improve these programs over time. Funding should be allocated to measure and evaluate specific programs over time, but also in the creation of an overarching dataset on the relevant characteristics of terrorist prevention programs across the country to advance the practice of terrorism prevention over time.

Appendix 1: Background information on START datasets

About the Global Terrorism Database

The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) is maintained by researchers at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), at the University of Maryland. It documents more than 180,000 international and domestic terrorist attacks that occurred worldwide since 1970. With details on various dimensions of each attack, the GTD familiarizes analysts, policymakers, scholars, and journalists with patterns of terrorism. The GTD systematically defines terrorist attacks as: “Acts by non-state actors involving the threatened or actual use of illegal force or violence to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.”

The database—sourced by unclassified media articles—contains information on multiple dimensions of each event. More than 100 structured variables characterize each attack’s:

- Location: Including region, country, province/state, city, coordinates of the city, village, or town where the attack took place
- Tactics and Weapons: Including attack types, weapon types and subtypes, use of suicide tactics, attack success
- Targets: Including target types and subtypes, target nationality, specific target entities
- Perpetrators: Including perpetrator groups/subgroups attributed responsibility, claims of responsibility, number of attackers
- Casualties and Consequences: Including deaths, injuries, hostages, hostage outcomes, property damage
- General Information: Including definitional criteria and ambiguity, source citations, links between coordinated attacks

The initial collection of GTD data was carried out by the Pinkerton Global Intelligence Services (PGIS) between 1970 and 1997 and was donated to Gary LaFree at the University of Maryland. Computerizing and validating the original GTD data from 1970 to 1997 was funded by a grant from the National Institute of Justice (PIs Gary LaFree and Laura Dugan;

grant no. NIJ2002-DT-CX-0001) and thereafter as part of the START Center of Excellence by the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate (DHS S&T), Office of University Programs (PI Gary LaFree; grant no. N00140510629 and award no. 2008-ST-061-ST0004). Data collection funding for GTD from 1998 to 2007 was supplied by the DHS S&T Human Factors Division (PIs Gary LaFree and Gary Ackerman; contract no. HSHQDC-05-X-00482). All information in the database on events through 2007 was collected and coded by database staff at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) and the Center for Terrorism and Intelligence Studies (CETIS).

Data on cases for 2008 through 2011 have been funded by a grant from the Office of University Programs, Science and Technology Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (PI Gary LaFree; award no. 2008-ST-061-ST0004). In addition, efforts to review and update information on terrorist incidents in the United States have been supported through funding from the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate's Resilient Systems Division (PI Gary LaFree, award no. 2009ST108LR0003). For GTD data collection from 2008 to November 2011, START partnered with the Institute for the Study of Violent Groups (ISVG), headquartered at New Haven University. Beginning in November 2011 the START Consortium headquartered at the University of Maryland began collecting the original data for the GTD. START's collection of GTD data from 2012 to 2017 was jointly funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (PI Gary LaFree; award no. 2012-ST-061-CS0001) and by the U.S. State Department (PIs Gary LaFree and Erin Miller; contract no. SAQMMA12M1292).

Since January 2019, GTD has been funded by the Combatting Terrorism Technical Support Office (PI Amy Pate; task order no. W911NF19F0014) and the German Federal Foreign Office (PI Erin Miller; award no. 19061669)

About the Extremist Crime Database

The Extremist Crime Database (ECDB), a collaborative effort between Joshua D. Freilich (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York) and Steven Chermak (Michigan State University), both domestic and international terrorism, ideological and

non-ideological crimes, violent and non-violent (e.g., financial) crimes, terrorist and non-terrorist acts, crimes committed by groups and lone wolves, and cases prosecuted federally and under state-jurisdictions. It includes information on the incidents themselves, as well as their perpetrators, related organizations and victims.

The ECDB includes more than 850 variables (incident, perpetrator, victim, target and group) on more than 1,500 terrorist/violent extremist events and an additional nearly 1,000 financial and material support schemes identified to date. The ECDB methodology uses validated open-source research strategies to identify all relevant events and capture all publicly available information on each event.

Although the ECDB focuses on domestic events, it also contains rich data related to international incidents, groups and events. These data include:

- All foreign fighters who went abroad to train/support/fight in jihadist conflicts as well as all perpetrators and schemes that funded jihadist movements or attacks abroad from the United States. The financial scheme data is rich with linkages to groups outside the United States.
- In addition to global jihadist groups (AQ and ISIS), the ECDB includes financial and material support data regarding Hamas and Hezbollah.
- Finally, the data includes all jihadist and far-right incidents both fatal and foiled where the perpetrators were funded from abroad and/or the perpetrators originated from or trained abroad.

ECDB has been funded by Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate (DHS S&T), Office of University Programs (PI Gary LaFree; award no. 2008-ST-061-ST000; award no. 2012-ST-061-CS0001); the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate's Resilient Systems Division (PI Gary LaFree; award no. 2009ST108LR0003). Additional funding to support data collection and analysis has come from the National Institute of Justice (PI Steven Chermak; award no. 2014-ZA-BX-0004; PI Gary LaFree; award no. 2015-ZA-BX-0004).

About the Profiles of Radicalization in the United States

The Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS) dataset contains deidentified individual-level information on the backgrounds, attributes, and radicalization processes of over 2,100 violent and non-violent extremists who adhere to far-right, far-left, Islamist, or single-issue ideologies in the United States covering 1948-2017. Coded using entirely public sources of information, the PIRUS dataset is among the first efforts to understand domestic radicalization from an empirical and scientifically rigorous perspective.

The original PIRUS data was funded by the National Institute of Justice (PI John Sawyer, award no. 2012-ZA-BX-0005). The Office of University Programs, Science and Technology Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (PI Gary LaFree, award no. 2012-ST-061-CS0001) provided additional funding to extend the original coding.

In 2015, the National Institute of Justice provided additional funding to collect additional data on desistance and disengagement pathways of extremists (PI Michael Jensen, award no. 2014-ZA-BX-0003), and to assess the similarities and differences between extremist offenders and members of criminal gangs (PI Gary LaFree, award no. 2014-ZA-BX-0002).

An additional subset of the PIRUS data focuses on foreign terrorist fighters, with initial funding provided by the Office of University Programs, Science and Technology Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (PI William Braniff; award no. 2012-ST-061-CS0001).

The National Institute of Justice (PI Gary LaFree, award no. 2017-ZA-CX-0001) is currently funding an effort to add social network data to the core PIRUS dataset, as well as integrate community-level data, in order to build risk assessment tools.

About the Bias Incidents and Actors Study

The Bias Incidents and Actors Study (BIAS) dataset builds on the methodology developed for PIRUS in order to build a dataset on bias crime offenders, including data on demographics, education levels, socioeconomic characteristics, personal histories, social

networks and bias motivations across multiple offender types and criminal acts (e.g., violent vs. nonviolent bias crimes). The BIAS dataset is funded by an award from the National Institute of Justice (PI Michael Jensen, award no. 2017-VF-GX-0003).

About the Profiles of Incidents involving CBRN and Non-State Actors

The Profiles of Incidents involving CBRN and Non-State Actors (POICN) database is an open-source relational database recording ideologically motivated CBRN incidents including attacks, failed agent-use attempts, plots and proto-plots. The dataset is currently comprised of 517 events covering the period 1990 to 2017. Each event collects more than 122 geospatial, temporal, motivational, operational, tactical and consequence variables.

Original POICN collection was funded by a subaward from University of Arizona (PI Gary Ackerman; award no. Y554530) with funding originating from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (prime award no. HDTRA1-10-1-0017). The Office of University Programs, Science and Technology Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (PI Gary LaFree; award no. 2012ST061CS0001) provided additional funding to extend the original coding.

Appendix 2: Perpetrators of Terrorism in the United States by Ideology

Perpetrators of Terrorism in the United States by Ideology, 2000 - 2009

Ideology/Perpetrator Group	Total Attacks	Total Killed
Environmentalists		
Animal Liberation Front (ALF)	31	0
Coalition to Save the Preserves (CSP)	8	0
Earth Liberation Front (ELF)	58	0
Environmentalists	2	0
Revenge of the Trees	1	0
Revolutionary Cells-Animal Liberation Brigade	2	0
Far Left		
Animal Liberation Front (ALF)	31	0
Coalition to Save the Preserves (CSP)	8	0
Earth Liberation Front (ELF)	58	0
Revenge of the Trees	1	0
Revolutionary Cells-Animal Liberation Brigade	2	0
Far Right		
Anti-Abortion extremists	1	0
Anti-Immigrant extremists	3	1
Anti-Liberal extremists	1	2
Anti-Semitic extremists	1	1
Incel extremists	1	4
Ku Klux Klan	1	0
Minutemen American Defense	1	2
Neo-Nazi extremists	2	0
White supremacists/nationalists	11	7
Religious		
Al-Qaida	4	3004
Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)	1	0
Anti-Abortion extremists	3	1
Anti-Semitic extremists	1	1
Jihadi-inspired extremists	5	15
Ku Klux Klan	1	0
Muslim extremists	2	0
Single Issue		
Anti-Abortion extremists	20	1
Anti-Government extremists	18	0
Anti-Immigrant extremists	3	1
Anti-Israeli extremists	1	3
Anti-Kim Jong-il extremists	1	0

Anti-White extremists	4	3
White supremacists/nationalists	3	2

Source: Global Terrorism Database

Perpetrators of Terrorism in the United States by Ideology, 2010 - 2019 (Q1)

Ideology/Perpetrator Group	Total Attacks	Total Killed
Environmentalists		
Animal Liberation Front (ALF)	6	0
Environmentalists	3	0
The Justice Department	1	0
Unknown	1	1
Far Left		
Anarchists	3	0
Animal Liberation Front (ALF)	6	0
Anti-Government extremists	2	3
Anti-Republican extremists	1	1
Anti-White extremists	1	0
Left-wing extremists	1	0
Students For Insurrection	1	0
Unknown	1	0
Far Right		
Anti-Arab extremists	1	0
Anti-Government extremists	9	69
Anti-LGBT extremists	4	0
Anti-Muslim extremists	30	5
Anti-Police extremists	1	2
Anti-Semitic extremists	5	11
Anti-Sikh extremists	1	0
Citizens for Constitutional Freedom	1	0
Incel extremists	4	20
Jihadi-inspired extremists	1	1
Ku Klux Klan	3	0
Neo-Nazi extremists	3	12
Pro-Trump extremists	16	0
Right-wing extremists	2	0
Sovereign Citizen	3	1
United Aryan Empire	1	0
Unknown	6	2

White Rabbit Three Percent Illinois Patriot Freedom Fighters Militia	2	0
White supremacists/nationalists	26	46
Nationalist/Separatist		
Anti-White extremists	1	0
Religious		
Anti-Abortion extremists	5	3
Anti-Government extremists	5	4
Anti-Muslim extremists	28	5
Anti-Semitic extremists	7	11
Black Hebrew Israelites	3	0
Citizens for Constitutional Freedom	1	0
Jihadi-inspired extremists	28	92
Ku Klux Klan	3	0
Muslim extremists	9	13
Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	1	0
Unknown	3	2
Single Issue		
Anti-Abortion extremists	13	3
Anti-Government extremists	3	1
Anti-Gun Control extremists	3	0
Anti-Police extremists	9	14
Anti-Trump extremists	3	0
Anti-White extremists	6	10
Conspiracy theory extremists	2	1
Court Reform extremists	1	0
Incel extremists	4	20
Male supremacists	3	0
Pro-choice extremists	2	0
Pro-LGBT Rights extremists	2	0
Unknown	3	1
Veterans United for Non-Religious Memorials	2	0

Source: Global Terrorism Database