



18 June 2020

## (U//LES) Militia Extremists Present Elevated Threat to Law Enforcement and Government Personnel

### (U) Scope

(U//LES) This *Joint Intelligence Bulletin (JIB)* is intended to highlight the elevated threat militia extremists<sup>a</sup> pose to state and local law enforcement, government personnel, and associated facilities due to a confluence of drivers which have built on long-held militia extremist grievances. These drivers include renewed concerns over gun control, calls for civil war or the "boogaloo," and perceived constitutional violations associated with state and local government responses to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The current atmosphere, to include the lawful protests due to the deaths of unarmed African-Americans, likely provides an environment to re-energize militia extremists. The FBI and NCTC advise federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government counterterrorism, and law enforcement officials could potentially be targeted for attacks by domestic violent extremists (DVEs)<sup>b</sup> or others driven to violence. This *JIB* is provided to assist federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial counterterrorism and law enforcement officials to effectively, detect, prevent, preempt, or respond to incidents and terrorist attacks in the United States.

<sup>a</sup> (U//FOUO) The FBI defines **militia extremists** as individuals who seek, wholly or in part through unlawful acts of force or violence, to further their belief that the US government is purposely exceeding its Constitutional authority and is attempting to establish a totalitarian regime. Consequently, these individuals oppose many federal and state laws and regulations, particularly those related to firearms ownership. Militia extremists take overt steps to violently resist or facilitate the overthrow of the US Government. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute extremism, and may be constitutionally protected.

<sup>b</sup> (U//FOUO) The FBI defines a **domestic violent extremists (DVE)** as an individual based and operating primarily within the United States or its territories without direction or inspiration from a foreign terrorist group or other foreign power who seeks to further political or social goals wholly or in part through unlawful acts of force or violence. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute extremism, and may be constitutionally protected.

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## (U//LES) Militia Extremists Pose Increased Threat to Law Enforcement and Government Personnel

(U//LES) Militia extremists likely pose an increased threat to state and local law enforcement, government personnel and associated facilities due to a perceived resurgence in recent months of activity surrounding state-level gun control legislation, as well as concerns specific to state and local government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. While various DVEs pose a significant threat during the pandemic, militia extremists in particular have expressed concerns about stay-at-home orders, which they believe could culminate in government-led mass firearm confiscation, the imposition of martial law, and other perceived violations of citizens' constitutional rights. These issues build on traditional militia extremist drivers, including concerns about gun control and perceived government overreach, which have previously manifested in threats against the federal government. The current atmosphere, to include the ongoing lawful protests due to the deaths of unarmed African-Americans, likely provides an environment for some militia extremists to renew communication, increase recruitment via shared persistent and pandemic-specific concerns, engage in tactical training, and form new groups, based on FBI and open source information.

### (U) Current Atmosphere Provides Drivers and Grievances That Likely Elevate the Threat from Militia Extremists

(U//LES) Between 2014 and early 2016, militia extremists were predominantly in conflict with the federal government over public land use issues, most notably in the Bunkerville, Nevada, and Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (MNWR) standoffs. From late 2016 to 2019, small cells of militia extremists primarily targeted US-based Muslims and undocumented immigrants due to concerns about the federal government's ability to protect US citizens from the perceived threat posed by both groups. The environment created by renewed concerns over gun control, the pandemic, and calls for civil war or the "boogaloo" online has likely served to broadly re-energize the militia extremist movement and shift militia targeting to state and local government entities. Additionally, anger about the fatal 12 March officer-involved shooting in Maryland of Duncan Lemp, who had ties with the militia movement and self-identified as a III%er,<sup>c</sup> will likely serve as a driver for current and future militia extremist activity.<sup>d</sup>

#### (U//FOUO) "Boogaloo"

(U//FOUO) "Boogaloo" is a term referencing a violent uprising or impending civil war. The term is sometimes used by militia extremists and racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists (RMVEs), who allude to it using shorthand such as "big igloo" or "big luau" and imagery such as igloos or Hawaiian shirts. The term has particularly resonated with militia extremists, who have adopted it to reference an impending politically-motivated civil war or uprising against the government following perceived incursions on Constitutional rights—including the Second Amendment—or other perceived government overreach. Some RMVEs have used the term to reference an impending race war—or other conflict that will lead to the collapse of the "system," to include the US government and society. The Boogaloo is not a single cohesive group, but rather a loose concept arising from internet platforms which has become a rallying point for some extremists.

<sup>c</sup> (U//FOUO) Militia extremists sometimes call themselves three percenters (III%ers) based on the myth that only three percent of American colonists took up arms against the British during the Revolutionary War. Some III%ers regard the present-day US Government as analogous to British authorities during the Revolution in terms of infringements on civil liberties. While many independent or multi-state militia groups incorporate III% in their unit names, the term is less indicative of membership in a single overarching group than it is representative of a common belief in the notion that a small force with a just cause can overthrow a tyrannical government if armed and prepared. Self-identification as a III%er or use of III% symbols should not independently be considered evidence of militia affiliation or illegal activity.

<sup>d</sup> (U//FOUO) See text box: **racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism (RMVE)** encompasses threats involving the potentially unlawful use or threat of force or violence, in furtherance of political and/or social agendas, which are deemed to derive from bias—often related to race or ethnicity—held by the actor against others, including a given population group.



- » (U//LES) According to a criminal complaint filed in the Western District of Oklahoma, on 4 June 2020 the FBI arrested a DVE for possession of a fully automatic machine gun. According to open source and FBI information, the subject likened law enforcement to terrorists, and in response to the officer-involved death of Lemp, stated, "I want blood." While protesting pandemic-related mask laws, the subject introduced himself as Duncan Lemp and said he would not surrender when local law enforcement approached and admonished him for not wearing a mask.
- » (U//LES) On 1 May 2020, the FBI arrested a militia extremist for possession of illegal destructive devices after a search of his residence yielded four pipe bombs, according to FBI information and open source reporting. Prior to the arrest, the subject expressed opposition to Colorado's red flag law and likely planned to attend a lawful open carry event at the Colorado State Capitol unrelated to protests of pandemic restrictions. The subject also indicated his likely willingness to carry out violence if challenged by law enforcement, as well as a willingness to die for his cause, according to FBI and open source information.
- » (U//LES) FBI and open source information indicated a Texas-based militia extremist, who made references to Lemp, was arrested following a 12 April 2020 pursuit in Texas after he allegedly live-streamed on social media that he wanted to ambush and kill a police officer.
- » (U//LES) Since April 2020, militia extremists in multiple states have increasingly made threats against, and encouraged violent opposition to, state and local law enforcement and government officials, and encouraged others to violate social distancing protocols while attending lawful protests to oppose stay-at-home orders and demand the reopening of their states, according to FBI information.

#### (U) Outlook

(U//LES) The FBI and NCTC remain concerned about violence from militia extremists in the near term as this confluence of drivers and grievances may lead to a galvanized threat. Militia extremist concerns related to pandemic restrictions likely will be further exacerbated due to online conspiracy theories related to perceived motivations behind stay-at-home orders and inconsistent enforcement of, and compliance with, local government orders. While the federal government will likely remain a target for militia extremists, many principally blame state and local governments for their pandemic-related grievances. Officer safety is also a concern, given some individuals' conditional threats to escalate law enforcement contact if approached or prohibited from accessing certain businesses, services, or events. Settings in which law enforcement efforts or contact could be potential flash points for violence include, capitol buildings, courthouses, police departments, or businesses operating in violation of COVID-19 restrictions.

(U//LES) The consensus among militia extremists that their rights are being infringed upon likely will persist as the pandemic continues. The FBI and NCTC assess pandemic-related concerns of militia extremists are likely to shift as the environment related to the pandemic changes, as some DVEs have expressed concerns over forced COVID-19 vaccinations. The shifting concerns may also merge with surrounding current events, such as the ongoing lawful protests in response to the recent deaths of unarmed African-Americans, or election outcomes.

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\* (U) Red flags laws or extreme risk protection orders (ERPO) allow courts to issue orders temporarily confiscating firearms from an individual deemed to be a risk to themselves or others, typically at the petition of law enforcement or family member(s) but sometimes other individuals such as educators or health professionals as well.



**(U) Related Products**

(U//FOUO) A recent product may provide additional context on the threats to the Homeland referenced in this JIB.

- » "(U//FOUO) Domestic Violent Extremists Could Exploit Current Events to Incite or Justify Attacks on Law Enforcement or Civilians Engaged in First Amendment-Protected Activities," *Joint Intelligence Bulletin*, published 8 June 2020
- » "(U//FOUO) Domestic Violent Extremists and Others Continue to Discuss Targeting Critical Infrastructure During the COVID 19 Pandemic, Arson Attacks in the United States and Europe Maybe Inspired by 5G Conspiracy Theories," *Joint Intelligence Bulletin*, published 14 May 2020
- » "(U//FOUO) Domestic Violent Extremist likely to continue exploiting COVID-19 Pandemic to Incite or Engage in Violence," *Joint Intelligence Bulletin*, published 7 April 2020

**(U) Report Suspicious Activity**

(U) To report suspicious activity, law enforcement, Fire-EMS, private security personnel, and emergency managers should follow established protocols; all other personnel should call 911 or contact local law enforcement. Suspicious activity reports (SARs) will be forwarded to the appropriate fusion center and FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force for further action. For more information on the Nationwide SAR Initiative, visit <http://nsi.ncirc.gov/resources.aspx>.

**(U) Administrative Note: Law Enforcement Response**

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