

Threat Assessment Part II:  
Domestic Terrorism in the United States

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## Part II: Current Policies Dealing with Domestic Terrorism in the United States

The United States has faced the daunting task of combating domestic terrorism for decades now. This challenge necessitated various policies aimed at countering this threat. To gain a comprehensive understanding of current policy landscape we will analyze reputable sources such as peer reviewed articles, books, and Think Tank reports. Our analysis will provide valuable insights into how these policies have evolved over time.

### **Current US Policies**

In response to the growing threat posed by domestic terrorism in recent years, US policymakers have implemented a comprehensive plan known as The National Strategy for Counterterrorism. This framework provides an overarching approach towards combating all forms of extremist violence both domestically and globally while placing special emphasis on addressing homegrown threats specifically. The Think Tank CSIS states the issue as

*There has been a significant rise in the number of domestic terrorist attacks and plots at demonstrations in the United States, according to new CSIS data. The result is escalating violence in U.S. cities between extremists from opposing sides, a major break from historical trends. In 2021, over half of all domestic terrorist incidents occurred in the context of metropolitan demonstrations. In addition, the most frequent targets of attacks were government, military, and law enforcement agencies, who are increasingly at the center of domestic terrorism by extremists of all ideologies. (Doxsee, et al. 2022)*

As such it serves as an important tool in keeping Americans safe from harm caused by these dangerous groups or individuals who seek to cause chaos within our borders.

The National Strategy for Counterterrorism was first introduced in [year] and has since undergone several revisions to address changing threats. In particular, an important update took place during the [year of revision] that placed greater emphasis on combating domestic terrorism due to the increasing number of violent acts committed by homegrown extremists. This adaptation ensures that our counterterrorism efforts remain effective against all types of danger.

### **The Current Policy - Is It Effective?**

Assessing the National Strategy for Counterterrorism effectiveness in combating domestic terrorism is a complex task due to various factors such as decentralized threats and ever-changing extremist ideologies (The White House 2022). Although this policy has contributed positively by enhancing coordination among federal agencies while improving intelligence sharing mechanisms, it still faces challenges when preventing all acts of domestic terrorism completely.

After 9/11 the government's focus on international terrorism drew criticism for potentially overlooking domestic extremist threats. However recent revisions demonstrate a commitment to addressing this issue by recognizing its significance and taking action accordingly. This shows that they are dedicated towards ensuring safety within their borders as well as abroad. The government has demonstrated an understanding of how important it is to prioritize both types of threats equally in order to keep citizens safe from harm. With these changes made clear progress can be seen towards achieving greater security across all fronts.

### **Short and Long-term Implications of Current Policy**

The current policy's short-term impact involves intensified surveillance, intelligence gathering, and law enforcement efforts aimed at disrupting potential domestic terrorism plots (The White House 2022). However, these measures have raised concerns about privacy rights as critics argue that certain approaches may infringe upon individual liberties.

To effectively combat domestic terrorism in the long term requires addressing its root causes such as extremist ideologies, socio economic disparities, and online radicalization. This necessitates targeted community engagement programs that focus on education while also acknowledging underlying grievances to create lasting change within society itself. By taking these steps we can work towards a safer future for all citizens of our country (Doxsee, et al. 2022).

### **Policy Effectiveness - Reforms and Changes Needed**

To improve the effectiveness of our current policy in dealing with domestic terrorism several changes and reforms are necessary. A key component is allocating more resources towards analyzing and counteracting ideologies that fuel extremist behavior within our borders. This approach will help us better understand how these beliefs operate so we can develop targeted strategies for addressing them effectively. By doing this we'll be able to make significant progress against those who seek harm through violence or intimidation tactics on American soil (Doxsee, et al. 2022).

Partnerships between law enforcement agencies and local communities are crucial for proactive prevention. Community based initiatives such as community policing and trust building measures have demonstrated promise in identifying potential threats before they escalate into violence through radicalization. These approaches provide an opportunity to dissuade individuals from taking part in violent acts by addressing their underlying concerns or grievances early on. By working together with the community law enforcement can create a safer environment that fosters cooperation rather than fear.

To effectively address the role of online platforms in radicalization it is essential to collaborate with social media companies on curbing extremist content and recruitment efforts. This

should be accomplished while maintaining principles that protect free speech without censorship of legitimate political expression.

To effectively combat domestic terrorism policymakers must prioritize comprehensive research and evaluation of their policies. Continuous assessment allows for refinement based on empirical evidence and lessons learned, ultimately leading to more effective strategies in the fight against this dangerous threat.

### **The Allies and Adversaries of the Specific Policy**

The National Strategy for Counterterrorism has received backing from a diverse range of stakeholders including law enforcement agencies, intelligence communities, and local governments. These allies are critical to the policies implementation and enforcement efforts.

The policy has been met with opposition from civil liberties advocates who voice concerns about potential infringements on individual rights. The challenge of finding a balance between security measures and safeguarding civil liberties remains contentious, prompting some adversaries to call for revisions that prioritize protecting personal freedoms over all else. The basis for their claims can be found in a report from the Center for Strategic and International Studies titled “The War Comes Home: The Evolution of Domestic Terrorism in the United States”

*The number of fatalities from terrorist attacks in the U.S. homeland is still relatively small compared to some periods in U.S. history, making it important not to overstate the threat.<sup>7</sup> Roughly half of the years since 1994 had a greater number of fatalities from terrorism than 2020—at least between January 1 and August 31, 2020. There were also no mass-casualty terrorist attacks, a stark contrast from such incidents as the April 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, which killed 168 people; the September 2001 attacks, which killed nearly 3,000 people; and the June 2016*

*Orlando attack, which killed 49 people. Still, violence levels in the United States could rise over the next year depending on political polarization. (Jones, et al. 2020)*

These findings give major concerns for those opposing drastic policies due to the very possibility that the acclaimed growing threat is not what those making the policies is actually a growing threat that warrants the reduction of personal liberties.

## **Summary**

The National Strategy for Counterterrorism has evolved over time to address domestic terrorism as a significant concern. While this demonstrates the government's commitment towards tackling such threats there is still room for improvement in terms of effectiveness and long term impact. By focusing on root causes behind these acts while also strengthening community partnerships alongside engaging with online platforms; America can develop an approach that balances democratic principles along with civil liberties when countering domestic terrorism. This will ultimately lead us closer towards achieving our goal of keeping everyone safe from harm's way without compromising fundamental rights or freedoms enjoyed by all citizens under lawful authority.

In this report we will examine various academic and theoretical proposals aimed at addressing domestic terrorism in the United States. We'll explore potential strategies that could help mitigate threats while also promoting national security and social cohesion. Join us as we delve into these important topics!

## **Bibliography**

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