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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-4209**

August 15, 2017

The Honorable Elaine Duke  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Ave., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20528

The Honorable Jeff Sessions  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Acting Secretary Duke and Attorney General Sessions:

The recent violence in Charlottesville, Virginia is a chilling reminder of threats posed by white supremacists and other hate groups. According to Attorney General Sessions, the fatal car attack met the definition of domestic terrorism.<sup>1</sup>

The number of incidents involving domestic terrorism in recent years has far exceeded the number of incidents inspired by a violent interpretation of Islam. In 2015, the *New York Times* reported that since September 11, 2001, "nearly twice as many people have been killed by white supremacists, antigovernment fanatics and other non-Muslim extremists than by radical Muslims."<sup>2</sup> Other analyses have found similar results.<sup>3 4</sup>

Despite this, questions persist about the amount of resources that are being devoted to detect and disrupt domestic terrorist plots by white supremacists and other hate groups as compared to plots inspired by a violent interpretation of Islam. For example, following conservative pushback against its 2009 report on a rise of extremism, the Department of Homeland Security disbanded the Extremism and Radicalization Branch of the Homeland Environment Threat Analysis Division, and reduced the number of personnel studying domestic terrorism unrelated to Islam.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2017/08/14/was-the-charlottesville-car-attack-domestic-terrorism-a-hate-crime-or-both/?utm\\_term=.ff5d7f67cd4a](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2017/08/14/was-the-charlottesville-car-attack-domestic-terrorism-a-hate-crime-or-both/?utm_term=.ff5d7f67cd4a)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/25/us/tally-of-attacks-in-us-challenges-perceptions-of-top-terror-threat.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/25/us/tally-of-attacks-in-us-challenges-perceptions-of-top-terror-threat.html?_r=0)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/domestic-terrorism-white-supremacists-islamist-extremists\\_us\\_594c46e4e4b0da2c731a84df](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/domestic-terrorism-white-supremacists-islamist-extremists_us_594c46e4e4b0da2c731a84df)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/terrorism-right-wing-america-muslims-islam-white-supremacists-study-a7805831.html>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/homeland-security-department-curtails-home-grown-terror-analysis/2011/06/02/AGQEaDLH\\_story.html?tid=a\\_inl&utm\\_term=.3f2be74c6891](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/homeland-security-department-curtails-home-grown-terror-analysis/2011/06/02/AGQEaDLH_story.html?tid=a_inl&utm_term=.3f2be74c6891)

If anything, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice should be redoubling their efforts to address domestic terrorism.

I urge the Department of Homeland Security to reestablish the Extremism and Radicalization Branch of the Homeland Environment Threat Analysis Division, and in the meantime, I would appreciate an update from each of you as to how each of your Departments are apportioning resources to ensure that they are commensurate with the risk posed by white supremacists and other hate groups acting as domestic terrorists.

As always, I remain,

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve Cohen", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

Encl.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
HOMELAND SECURITY

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HEARING  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS  
FIRST SESSION

JULY 14, 2015

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| Question# | 2                              |
| Topic     | Homegrown Domestic Terrorism   |
| Hearings  | DHS Oversight                  |
| Primary   | The Honorable Stephen L. Cohen |
| Committee | JUDICIARY (HOUSE)              |

Question: \*Letters referenced below can be found on page 7.

As you know, in addition to threat of internationally influenced terrorism, our nation also faces serious threats from homegrown domestic terrorists. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the number of hate groups in this country has increased 30 percent since 2000.

We are also seeing more "lone wolf" episodes, like what took place recently in Charleston, SC, where someone becomes radicalized by merely surfing the internet. Before killing 9 innocent people, the suspect there actively engaged with white supremacist web sites. As horrible as this incident was, it would be naïve to assume that he is the only one out there looking to act in pursuit of this warped agenda.

I am interested to know what kind of resources the department is devoting to tracking down and thwarting these kind domestic terrorists. In particular, does the Department of Homeland Security monitor extremist internet activity that could lead to violence? Does the department mine chat rooms to find and thwart future domestic terrorist plots?

Relative to the amount of resources the department devotes to internationally-influenced terrorist threats, how much do you devote to these domestic, homegrown domestic terrorist? How many people does the department have devoted to this kind of domestic terrorism? How does this compare with the number of people the department has devoted to internationally influenced terrorism?

Response: Our efforts and resources dedicated to counterterrorism, including domestic terrorist threats, are robust. The Department is continually working to expand and improve our initiatives and resources related to countering domestic terrorism.

The Department's Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) has analysts dedicated to studying and analyzing all forms of terrorism. In 2015, I&A has delivered numerous threat briefings to federal, state, local, tribal, territorial (SLTT) and private sector customers to enhance their understanding of the domestic terrorist threat. These products and briefings addressed such topics as violent white supremacist extremist threats in Arizona; violent sovereign citizen extremist attempts to access military bases; and strategic implications of a violent animal rights extremist attack in Nevada.

The Department also supports state and major urban area fusion centers by sharing intelligence and information with its SLTT and private sector partners. I&A deploys

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intelligence personnel to fusion centers located in each state, as well as other strategic locations. These intelligence professionals work hand-in-hand with their state and local partners and the private sector to collect, report, analyze, and share information and intelligence, including information on domestic terrorism threats, with fusion centers.

Additionally, I have appointed a Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Coordinator who has expanded current CVE efforts by updating community briefings to add more information on domestic terrorist groups and movements; updating community exercises to further address requests raised by community members concerned about domestic terrorism; and promoting resources intended to help law enforcement and community members respond to a diverse array of terrorist threats. The Department will continue to work with its partners to identify and mitigate potential domestic terrorist threats.

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| Question#: | 3                              |
| Topic:     | Right-wing Extremism           |
| Hearings:  | DHS Oversight                  |
| Primary:   | The Honorable Stephen L. Cohen |
| Committee: | JUDICIARY (HOUSE)              |

**Question:** In 2009, the Department of Homeland Security released a study entitled, "Right-wing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment". Following public criticism of the study, the Department disbanded the Extremism and Radicalization Branch of the Homeland Environment Threat Analysis Division. On June 7, 2011, the Washington Post reported, "The department has cut the number of personnel studying domestic terrorism unrelated to Islam, canceled numerous state and local law enforcement briefings, and held up dissemination of nearly a dozen reports on extremist groups..." A copy of the article is attached for your convenience.

On June 24, 2015, the New York Times reported, "Since Sept. 11, 2001, nearly twice as many people have been killed by white supremacists, antigovernment fanatics and other non-Muslim extremists than by radical Muslims..." A copy of the article is attached for your convenience.

It would seem to me that reinstituting the Extremism and Radicalization Branch of the Homeland Environment Threat Analysis Division would be more important now than ever. Will the department be reinstituting this division? If not, why not?

**Response:** The Department currently devotes substantial efforts to the study and understanding of the threats posed by domestic terrorism. Intelligence analysts in the Department's Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) study and analyze various aspects of the domestic terrorism threat. Over the past year, I&A analysts have disseminated numerous analytic products and threat briefings to federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector customers to enhance their understanding of domestic terrorism. We also partner with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and its Domestic Terrorism Analysis Unit to further enhance the Department's understanding. Additionally, the Department's Office of Science and Technology (S&T) sponsors research on violent extremism across the spectrum of ideological motivation, including domestic terrorism. We will continue these and other efforts as we seek to further our understanding of the underpinnings of terrorist threats of all forms.