

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

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### Opening Statement Chairman Jamie Raskin Hearing on “Confronting Violent White Supremacy (Part III): The Transnational Terrorist Threat” Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties September 20, 2019

Good afternoon. Welcome to the third in a series of hearings the Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties has conducted on confronting violent white supremacy. I am delighted today that we are holding this as a joint hearing with the National Security Subcommittee. The question of how to reconcile political liberty and public safety is one our nation has dealt with for a long time, and I look forward to having that discussion with Mr. Lynch today.

**The problem of violent white supremacy in this nation is obviously not newly-minted. It is the nation’s original sin. Yet, in recent years we have seen the convergence of traditional violent racism with a global terror network that poses a clear and present threat to free societies around the world.**

White supremacy has been a deadly part of the American story since the nation’s founding. In our prior hearings on this subject, we have recited the list of U.S. cities and towns recently traumatized by white supremacist terror: Charleston, Charlottesville, Pittsburgh, and Poway. In August, a gunman motivated by hatred of Latinos murdered 22 people at an El Paso Walmart.

Over the past few years, we have seen a spike in deadly white supremacist attacks around the world, and a deepening of the relationship between those attacks and ones occurring in the U.S. The El Paso gunman’s manifesto exemplifies the intricate new web of global white supremacy. The manifesto celebrated another infamous white supremacist attack in Christchurch, New Zealand, where a gunman loaded up on hate assassinated 51 people at two mosques earlier this year.

The Christchurch killings inspired the murder in Poway. The Christchurch shooter himself took inspiration from racist mass murders in Charleston, London, Quebec City, and Sweden. Most recent perpetrators of white supremacist violence count among their inspiration a 2011 attack in

The manifestos and tactics of these attackers reveal that these are not isolated incidents. To the contrary, these episodes of spectacular violence are committed by embittered men who self-radicalize online and see themselves as participating in the launch of a global race war. These people believe the wrong side won in World War II, and are determined to resurrect Nazism and genocide.

The specific ideology unifying this transnational movement is known as the “great replacement.” Adherents to this poisonous philosophy claim that a so-called “white genocide” is being perpetrated by non-white people. This was the meaning of white supremacists in Charlottesville chanting “You will not replace us! Jews will not replace us!” This paranoia is the common thread uniting these attacks, motivated by hatred of immigrants, Muslims, Jews and other non-white, non-Christian people. The rise of the Internet has allowed this ideology to spread like wildfire, and as the ideology spreads, so does the bloodshed in its wake.

Another key philosophical link is that of “acceleration,” the notion that the quickest way to ensure the preservation of the so-called “white race” is to spark a war by committing mass murder. Manifestos from around the world, including the El Paso and Christchurch massacres, make clear that the concept of “acceleration” is inspiring white supremacists to kill.

**The Trump Administration has completely failed to recognize the threat violent white supremacists pose to public safety and national security, it must realign our counterterrorism strategy to confront this reality.**

After the savage attacks of September 11, 2001, our national security apparatus refashioned itself into a robust counterterror framework focused on Al-Qaeda. But as quick as we were to recognize the threat of violent Islamic extremism, we have been correspondingly slow to recognize the threat of global violent white supremacy. The results have been unsurprising. Testimony before this Subcommittee in May established that from September 11, 2001 until today, 71% of violent Islamist-inspired extremists in the United States were stopped in the terror planning phase, but with far-right extremists, the inverse is the case, and over 71% managed to successfully commit violent acts. Our failure to properly allocate resources to target racial terror is costing American lives.

Our prior hearings have called both the FBI and DHS to task for failing even to develop a plan to address white supremacy, and I worry that recent developments have demonstrated that neither agency has fully pivoted to face this threat. Furthermore, in August, we learned from leaked 2018 FBI documents that the FBI considered “black identity extremists” to be as high a priority as “white supremacy extremists.” There is no data to support the FBI’s baffling threat categorizations. Indeed, quite the opposite – FBI Director Wray testified earlier this year that the vast majority of racially-motivated violent attacks in this country are committed by white supremacists.

Furthermore, before this very Subcommittee, DHS vowed to have a strategic plan to address white supremacy by the summer's end. Late last night, after repeated inquiries and questions from our Committee, we learned that DHS is finally planning to release a strategy today. It is long past due, and I hope it reflects the seriousness and the scope of this threat.

In addition to the FBI and DHS, other national security agencies, such as the National Counterterrorism Center, must treat transnational white supremacy as a global national security threat. That is what it is.

**In rising to the challenge of this moment, we obviously must not trade our civil liberties for our security, and we must ensure that we are leveraging our current law enforcement tools before rushing to create new ones.** In the wake of the El Paso shooting, there has been a call for a domestic terror statute that would put domestic terror on the same legal footing as international terror. That debate is a complicated and important one, but it is not our focus here today. Instead, we are here to discuss whether *existing* counterterrorism tools can be effectively mobilized to the problem of white supremacy, and, if so, what civil liberties protections will limit the potential for any overreach.

I thank Mr. Lynch for his excellent partnership on this issue, and I look forward to a lively conversation on addressing the serious new terror threat of global violent white supremacy, and balancing our national security imperatives with the civil freedoms we hold dear.