



Assessment

(U//FOUO) Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment

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(U) Prepared by the Extremism and Radicalization Branch, Homeland Environment Threat Analysis Division. Coordinated with the FBI.

(U) Scope

(U//FOUO) This product is one of a series of intelligence assessments published by the Extremism and Radicalization Branch to facilitate a greater understanding of the phenomenon of violent radicalization in the United States. The information is provided to federal, state, local, and tribal counterterrorism and law enforcement officials so they may effectively deter, prevent, preempt, or respond to terrorist attacks against the United States. Federal efforts to influence domestic public opinion must be conducted in an overt and transparent manner, clearly identifying United States Government sponsorship.

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(U) Key Findings

(U//LES) The DHS/Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) has no specific information that domestic rightwing terrorists are currently planning acts of violence, but rightwing extremists may be gaining new recruits by playing on their fears about several emergent issues. The economic downturn and the election of the first African American president present unique drivers for rightwing radicalization and recruitment.

- *(U//LES) Threats from white supremacist and violent antigovernment groups during 2009 have been largely rhetorical and have not indicated plans to carry out violent acts. Nevertheless, the consequences of a prolonged economic downturn—including real estate foreclosures, unemployment, and an inability to obtain credit—could create a fertile recruiting environment for rightwing extremists and even result in confrontations between such groups and government authorities similar to those in the past.*
- *(U//LES) Rightwing extremists have capitalized on the election of the first African American president, and are focusing their efforts to recruit new members, mobilize existing supporters, and broaden their scope and appeal through propaganda, but they have not yet turned to attack planning.*

(U//FOUO) The current economic and political climate has some similarities to the 1990s when rightwing extremism experienced a resurgence fueled largely by an economic recession, criticism about the outsourcing of jobs, and the perceived threat to U.S. power and sovereignty by other foreign powers.

- *(U//FOUO) During the 1990s, these issues contributed to the growth in the number of domestic rightwing terrorist and extremist groups and an increase in violent acts targeting government facilities, law enforcement officers, banks, and infrastructure sectors.*
- *(U//FOUO) Growth of these groups subsided in reaction to increased government scrutiny as a result of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing and disrupted plots, improvements in the economy, and the continued U.S. standing as the preeminent world power.*

(U//FOUO) The possible passage of new restrictions on firearms and the return of military veterans facing significant challenges reintegrating into their communities could lead to the potential emergence of terrorist groups or lone wolf extremists capable of carrying out violent attacks.

* (U) Rightwing extremism in the United States can be broadly divided into those groups, movements, and adherents that are primarily hate-oriented (based on hatred of particular religious, racial or ethnic groups), and those that are mainly antigovernment, rejecting federal authority in favor of state or local authority, or rejecting government authority entirely. It may include groups and individuals that are dedicated to a single issue, such as opposition to abortion or immigration.

