



New DHS Domestic Terrorism Report Targets Millions of Americans

The report employs the word “rightwing” 50 times, and in nearly every instance (47 times) it is in the context of “rightwing extremism,” “rightwing extremist,” “rightwing terrorist,” or “rightwing terrorist and extremist.” Tellingly, the report doesn’t bother to define any of these politically charged terms, a major dereliction of due diligence in such an important matter. It is similarly shoddy in using terms favored by left-wing extremists to describe their opponents on the right, such as “antigovernment,” “hate-oriented,” “paranoid,” “dangerous,” and “violent.”



The closest the DHS report comes to offering a definition is this troubling description:

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.

Veterans, Democrats, Republicans Rip DHS Report

The federal report has drawn the ire of conservatives, the American Legion, and both Republican and Democratic members of Congress. “The fact the report singles out issues like abortion and immigration shows it was put together from a left-wing political perspective in order to vilify mainstream conservatism by lumping those values into the same category as neo-nazis and terrorists,” charged Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.). “This is a dangerous road to travel,” he continued. “The last time a liberal left administration tried to increase public apprehension about alleged right wing extremism, they ended up with tragedies like Waco while ignoring the increasing presence of radical Islamic terrorists on American soil that ended up with 9-11.”

Rep. Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, the Democratic chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, shares those concerns. In an April 14 letter ([pdf](#)) to Obama’s DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano, he wrote he was “dumbfounded” by the contents of the report. “I am disappointed and surprised that the department would allow this report to be disseminated” to law-enforcement agencies, he said.

“This report appears to raise significant issues involving the privacy and civil liberties of many Americans — including war veterans,” Thompson cautioned. “As I am certain you agree, freedom of association and freedom of speech are guaranteed to all Americans — whether a person’s beliefs, whatever their political orientation, are ‘extremist’ or not.”



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on April 16, 2009

David K. Rehbein, national commander of the American Legion, has also expressed the concern of his 2.6 million-member organization over the negative stereotype of veterans in the DHS “Rightwing Extremism” report. In a [letter](#) to Secretary Napolitano, Commander Rehbein wrote:

The American Legion is well aware and horrified at the pain inflicted during the Oklahoma City bombing, but Timothy McVeigh was only one of more than 42 million veterans who have worn this nation’s uniform during wartime. To continue to use McVeigh as an example of the stereotypical “disgruntled military veteran” is as unfair as using Osama bin Laden as the sole example of Islam.

The American Legion commander also took issue with the DHS report on other points. He wrote:

Your report states that “Rightwing extremists were concerned during the 1990s with the perception that illegal immigrants were taking away American jobs through their willingness to work at significantly lower wages.” Secretary Napolitano, this is more than a perception to those who have lost their job. Would you categorize union members as “Right Wing extremists”?

Secretary Napolitano responded to these and other concerns with a [statement](#) issued through the DHS press office on April 15. “We are on the lookout for criminal and terrorist activity but we do not — nor will we ever — monitor ideology or political beliefs,” Napolitano said. “We take seriously our responsibility to protect the civil rights and liberties of the American people, including subjecting our activities to rigorous oversight from numerous internal and external sources.”

Secretary Napolitano’s assurances will likely do little to ease concerns; the DHS report adds to a pattern of recently released documents that seem to show a concerted campaign, directed through federal-state-local “fusion centers,” to vilify and criminalize the Obama administration’s opposition.

Missouri Militia Report Continues to Cause Political Waves

Public outcry over a similarly controversial political profiling report by a federal-state “fusion center” under the aegis of the Missouri State Highway Patrol (MSHP) continues to reverberate through the Show Me State. The report, entitled “The Modern Militia Movement” ([pdf](#)), lists a number of violent activities attributed to “right wing” militia groups and then posits “mind set” links between them and legitimate, law-abiding groups, political parties, and political candidates. The report, which was disseminated to law enforcement, specifically names Congressman Ron Paul (R-Texas), who ran for president in the 2008 Republican Party primaries, and Bob Barr and Chuck Baldwin, presidential candidates, respectively, for the Libertarian and Constitution parties. (See “[Profiling and Criminalizing Political Dissent](#)”).

The report states: “Militia members most commonly associate with 3rd party political groups. It is not uncommon for militia members to display Constitutional Party, Campaign for Liberty, or Libertarian material.” On March 29, Campaign for Liberty staff member Steve Bierfeldt was stopped and subjected to harassing search and questioning by law enforcement at the St. Louis airport after the conclusion of the group’s conference, at which Rep. Ron Paul was the keynote speaker. The intimidation session was recorded on Bierfeldt’s iPhone and has subsequently become an Internet sensation.

Van Godsey, the director of the Missouri Information Analysis Center (MIAC), the fusion center that produced the report, [was replaced](#) on April 6. His superior, Department of Public Safety Director John Britt, has been placed on administrative leave pending an investigation of the report. However, Missouri State Rep. Jim Guest is planning his own investigation. He informed *The New American* on April 8 that he will be convening hearings into the matter in the Real ID and Personal Privacy Committee shortly after the Easter recess.



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See also: "[Do You Fit the Terrorist Profile?](#)"



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