

Free Speech a Threat of Terrorism? To Biden's DHS, It Is

Since the Biden administration cannot impede upon the First Amendment, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has now published a terrorist advisory system bulletin warning of a "heightened threat environment" nationwide. The wording on the DHS publication is so broad that it appears to include constitutionally protected free speech, along with violent activity.

Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas stated the National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin was fueled by multiple factors, including "an online environment filled with false or misleading narratives and conspiracy theories, and other forms of mis- dis- and mal-information (MDM) introduced and/or amplified by foreign and domestic threat actors" who seek to "exacerbate societal friction to sow discord and undermine public trust in government institutions to encourage unrest, which could potentially inspire acts of violence."

The Summary of Terrorism Threat to the U.S. Homeland reads:

"The United States remains in a heightened threat environment fueled by several factors, including an online environment filled with false or misleading narratives and conspiracy theories, and other forms of mis- dis- and mal-information (MDM) introduced and/or amplified by foreign and domestic threat actors. These threat actors seek to exacerbate societal friction to sow discord and undermine public trust in government institutions to encourage unrest, which could potentially inspire acts of violence. Mass casualty attacks and other acts of targeted violence conducted by lone offenders and small groups acting in furtherance of

ideological beliefs and/or personal grievances pose an ongoing threat to the nation. While the conditions underlying the heightened threat landscape have not significantly changed over the last year, the convergence of the following factors has increased the volatility, unpredictability, and complexity of the threat environment: **(1) the proliferation of false or misleading narratives, which sow discord or undermine public trust in U.S. government institutions**; (2) continued calls for violence directed at U.S. critical infrastructure; soft targets and mass gatherings; faith-based institutions, such as churches, synagogues, and mosques; institutions of higher education; racial and religious minorities; government facilities and personnel, including law enforcement and the military; the media; and perceived ideological opponents; and (3) calls by foreign terrorist organizations for attacks on the United States based on recent events” (emphasis added).

According to the DHS, any information or opinions that are considered “anti-government” are considered a “threat” to America’s national security. However, anti-law enforcement ideologies such as those espoused by Antifa and Black Lives Matter are not even mentioned. The advisory also does not mention drug cartels currently operating at the open borders.

DHS specifies key factors contributing to the “current heightened threat environment” involving information regarding COVID-19, including the shot and mask mandates. DHS states, **“As COVID-19 restrictions continue to decrease nationwide, increased access to commercial and government facilities and the rising number of mass gatherings could provide increased opportunities for individuals looking to commit acts of violence to do so, often with little or no warning. Meanwhile, COVID-19 mitigation measures—particularly COVID-19 vaccine and mask mandates—have been used by domestic violent extremists to justify violence since 2020 and could continue to inspire these extremists to target government, healthcare, and academic institutions that they associate with those measures”**

(emphasis added).

DHS also lists people who discuss election integrity and voter fraud as threats. The advisory states, “Some domestic violent extremists have continued to advocate for violence in response to false or misleading narratives about unsubstantiated election fraud. The months preceding the upcoming 2022 midterm elections could provide additional opportunities for these extremists and other individuals to call for violence directed at democratic institutions, political candidates, party offices, election events, and election workers.”

Liberty Counsel founder and chairman Mat Staver said, “The National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin is the latest tactic by the Biden administration to trample on the First Amendment and bully law-abiding citizens. When did criticizing government institutions and policies regarding masking and shot mandates become a domestic terrorism threat? When did public assemblies alone become a threat? The First Amendment guarantees freedom of religion, expression, assembly, and the right to petition the government. Freedom of speech is a fundamental right of every dissenting voice to freely voice or express their opinions and ideas. The First Amendment does not have a truth meter that the government must pre-approve. The Founders considered free speech to be a natural right that was vital to the existence of a healthy republic. However, this administration apparently feels threatened by Americans who think for themselves and will not uncritically accept government propaganda and coercion.” {eo}

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