

February 14, 2020

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

FROM: Allison Higgins
Analyst

SUBJECT: **Department of Homeland Security Strategy for Countering
Violent Extremism, 2016**

Purpose: This memo has been prepared to inform you of the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism. This is done with the goal of advising DHS's future efforts to develop policies and practices to counter domestic terrorist threats.

Timeliness: This memo comes as the federal government lacks the structures and expertise to combat the growing domestic terror threat, particularly the far right. Furthermore, it follows the release of the DHS's 2019 Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence which made combatting the far right a priority.

Content: This strategy presents a plan to fold countering violent extremism (CVE) into the US homeland security enterprise. It depends on multidisciplinary partnerships to create a proactive and community-based approach to identify and halt radicalization to violence. This will be done with grants that support research efforts and training development as well as supply direct DHS support for partners.

The strategy outlines four goals to implement CVE. In the first, DHS plans to support internal and external research that examines the current threat and share it with international partners. The second goal gives community partners the resources to recognize radicalization. Those resources include research that raises awareness about the threat and direct DHS support in communities vulnerable to radicalization. The third goal focuses on enhancing community efforts to prevent and intervene in radicalization. DHS will promote a national message of unity while actively challenging ideological-motivated propaganda and providing communities with tools to build their CVE abilities. Finally, DHS will coordinate all CVE efforts while also evaluating their effectiveness.

Background: This strategy was crafted in 2016 in the later years of the Obama Administration. It expanded Secretary Jeh Johnson's 2015 memorandum on using community partnerships to target extremism. The development of this strategy was led by DHS's Office of Community Partnerships and Office on Policy. The ideas of experts; the private sector; and local, state, tribal, and territorial government were crucial in preparing this document.