Bush administration terrorist list excludes right-wing groups

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25 April 2005

The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) does not include extreme right-wing groups, some of which have ties to the Republican Party, on its list of potential terrorist threats, according to a report last month by the *Congressional Quarterly*, a publication with high-level sources in Congress and the federal government.

CQ Homeland Security, an online publication of *Congressional Quarterly*, obtained a draft planning document which outlines the foreign and domestic terrorist groups the DHS expects to face. The threats originating from overseas are attributed primarily to Al Qaeda and other extreme Islamic groups. The threats originating from within the United States are attributed to radical environmental and animal rights groups, such as the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) and the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), which have attacked scientific laboratories using animals for experimentation, as well as construction sites.

According to *CQ Homeland Security*, the report "does not mention anti-government groups, white supremacists and other radical right-wing movements, which have staged numerous terrorist attacks that have killed scores of Americans."

The publication reports that the DHS document, entitled "Integrated Planning Guidance, Fiscal Years 2005-2011," is dated January 2005. Its pages are marked "Sensitive—Do Not Distribute Outside the Department of Homeland Security—Draft." Each paragraph in the document is marked "(U/FOUO)," which typically indicates it has been reviewed by a government censor and determined to be unclassified, but "for official use only."

Under a section marked "Threat and Vulnerability Assessment," the document asks and answers the question, "Who are the adversaries?" This includes Al Qaeda and its affiliates, both overseas and within the United States. The only other domestic threat specifically noted is from so-called "eco-terrorists," who "will continue to focus their attacks on property damage in an effort to change policy." The document claims that although "publicly ALF and ELF promote nonviolence toward human life . . . some members may escalate their attacks."

It is remarkable that there is no mention of the anti-abortion, militia, racist and homophobic groups that do not "publicly ... promote nonviolence," but rather openly advocate the killing of blacks, gays, abortion providers and government workers. Moreover, these groups have acted on their words.

Fascist, racist and anti-abortion groups are responsible for nearly all the terrorist attacks in the United States—with the exception of September 11, 2001—over the past two decades. These include the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, which killed 168 people, as well as bombings of abortion clinics and assassination of abortion providers, and multiple cases of individual rampages, like that of Benjamin Smith, who went on a killing spree directed at blacks, Jews and immigrants in 1999.

In several of the mass shootings at US high schools, including the two worst cases, at Columbine High School in 2000 and at Red Lake High School in rural Minnesota last month, the youth who carried out the murder-suicides were influenced by neo-Nazi propaganda which they accessed on the Internet.

The existence of a sizeable support network for right-wing terrorists is indicated by the ability of Eric Rudolph, who carried out bombings at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta and at abortion clinics in Atlanta and Birmingham, Alabama, to stay on the loose for more than five years. Captured in 2003 in rural North

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Carolina, Rudolph accepted a plea bargain last month which lifted the threat of execution and allowed him to remain silent on how and by whom he was sustained during his years on the run.

A right-wing terrorist is also believed responsible for the 2001 anthrax mailings which killed five people and terrorized the US capital for several months. No one has been arrested, but the choice of targets—several media outlets and two leading Senate Democrats—and the method of attack strongly suggest an ultra-rightist. Only a relative handful of biological warfare specialists, closely tied to military and intelligence circles, could have had both the skills and the access to anthrax required for those attacks.

Anthrax mailings—all of them spurious so far—have been used frequently as terror threats against abortion clinics. A Pennsylvania anti-abortion activist was convicted of making hundreds of such fake mailings in 2003.

Also in 2003, a Texas white supremacist, William J. Krar, was arrested and pleaded guilty to charges of possessing chemical weapons of mass destruction—sodium cyanide bombs, which could have killed hundreds—as well as a huge stockpile of conventional arms.

Just as significant as the DHS decision to minimize the threat of right-wing terrorism is the media reaction. *Congressional Quarterly* is one of the most widely read publications in official Washington. Yet its March 25 report drew no comment in the daily press until April 19, when the *Washington Post* made a passing reference to it in the course of an article on the tenth anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing.

The *Post* included in this article a comment by John Lewis, deputy chief of the FBI's counterintelligence division, who essentially conceded the truth of the CQ report, while defending the focus of domestic counter-terrorism on environmental groups. Other government officials were quoted, without direct attribution, claiming that "eco-terrorist" rather than right-wing groups had been more active in recent years, at least in the number of attacks, if not in the death toll.

If there has been a decline in the overall number of attacks by right-wing terrorists, at least compared to the peak period of the middle and late 1990s, that has a political explanation: the anti-abortion, racist and militia groups see at least a significant portion of their program being carried out by the Bush administration and the Republican Congress.

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