

Mounting evidence of White House collusion with neo-Nazis

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The rampage through Charlottesville, Virginia last weekend by hundreds of neo-Nazis did not come as a surprise to the Trump White House. On the contrary, both the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reported the mounting threat of violence by white supremacist groups more than three months ago.

According to a document obtained and made public by *Foreign Policy* magazine on its web site Monday, the FBI and DHS issued a joint warning that white supremacists had already carried out more violent attacks than any other US-based groups over the past 16 years and “likely will continue to pose a threat of lethal violence over the next year.”

The eight-page intelligence bulletin was issued on May 10, 2017. Its significance was underscored two weeks later when a white supremacist carried out a murderous assault on a Portland, Oregon commuter train, killing two men who tried to prevent him from harassing two Muslim women, one of them wearing traditional dress.

The report, titled “White Supremacist Extremism Poses Persistent Threat of Lethal Violence,” found that US neo-Nazis “were responsible for 49 homicides in 26 attacks from 2000 to 2016... more than any other domestic extremist movement,” including Islamists inspired by ISIS or Al Qaeda.

The targets of the white supremacist extremists (WSE in FBI jargon) in 2016 alone included blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Muslims and Jews. They were stabbed, shot, beaten and in one case attacked with a hatchet. There was one death, numerous injuries, and one attempted mass casualty attack that was detected and disrupted by local police.

The perpetrators “included members of racist skinhead groups, Klan members, and individuals who lacked group affiliations.” Racist prison gangs and

individuals recruited over the Internet were involved in some of the attacks.

The FBI-DHS bulletin explained that the targets were not selected exclusively on a racial basis: “A review of incidents since 2000 shows racial minorities have been the primary victims of WSE lethal violence. The second most common victims were other Caucasians, including the homeless, drug dealers, sex offenders and other white supremacists perceived as disloyal ...”

In language that is eerily predictive of the Charlottesville attack, the bulletin continues, “Although plot-derived mass-casualty violence remains possible, we judge it more likely that violence will continue to be spontaneous and involve targets of opportunity.”

The FBI-DHS bulletin makes nonsense of any suggestion that the deadly attack in Charlottesville could not have been foreseen. It was precisely as described in the report, involving a “target of opportunity” taking place on the outskirts of the largest assembly of neo-Nazis and white supremacists in recent US history.

There is no doubt that the FBI and DHS were heavily engaged in monitoring the actions of the fascist rioters in Charlottesville and had undercover agents active in their ranks. They would have been well aware of the danger of cars driven at high speed into crowds, not only because this has been a well-publicized technique of ISIS-linked terrorist attacks in Europe, but because an “All Lives Splatter” decal, threatening automobile attacks on demonstrators against police violence, has been widely circulated on right-wing and pro-police web sites.

The secretary of the Department of Homeland Security at the time the May 10 bulletin was issued warning of white supremacist violence was retired General John F. Kelly, who was recently chosen by

Trump to serve as White House chief of staff. Thus, an official with detailed, intimate knowledge of the imminence of ultra-right violence has been standing at Trump's side for the past three weeks.

If Kelly had been monitoring the activities of the fascist right from the "outside," so to speak, other top Trump aides, including chief political counselor Stephen Bannon, speechwriter and adviser Stephen Miller, and counterterrorism counselor Sebastian Gorka, had multiple contacts from the "inside."

It was Bannon who boasted he had made his Breitbart News web site the political home of the alt.right, the "respectable" label for white supremacist elements. Miller echoed the language of the Nazis when he branded critics of Trump's proposed 50 percent cut in legal immigration as "cosmopolitans." Gorka only a few days ago, in the course of a political rant against Muslims, declared that there was no such thing as a "lone wolf" terrorist and that white supremacists were not a threat to anyone.

According to the *New York Times*, Bannon and Miller were in meetings with Trump throughout Saturday, where they insisted that he issue an "even-handed" statement that would condemn supposed left-wing violence as well as the obvious right-wing violence.

This is the context in which one must evaluate Trump's grudging 600-word statement Monday, dragged out of him by political advisers and congressional Republicans, making perfunctory, stilted and obviously insincere criticisms of neo-Nazis, white supremacists and the KKK for the violence in Charlottesville.

It was widely noted that Trump required 48 hours of nonstop public shaming before he would distance himself even verbally from the neo-Nazis. Until then, he had equated the victims and the attackers in Charlottesville, condemning violence and intolerance "on many sides."

The substance of the actions announced was extremely limited. Trump said after meeting with FBI Director Christopher Wray and Attorney General Jeff Sessions that the Department of Justice "has opened a civil rights investigation into the deadly car attack that killed one innocent American and wounded 20 others." This suggests that the probe will be limited to James Alex Fields, the driver of the car, and that the

organizers of the fascist demonstration, which included the mobilization of dozens of heavily armed gunmen in militia dress, will go scot free.

Trump read the statement from a teleprompter and refused to take any questions. He again refused to take questions from reporters at a later White House event to announce anti-China trade measures.

No prominent Democrat has demanded that Trump shed his coterie of White House pro-fascists, even after the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, which includes a half dozen establishment civil rights organizations, issued a statement Sunday calling for the firing of Bannon, Miller and Gorka.

Meanwhile the Trump reelection campaign—already raising funds and conducting operations more than three years before the 2020 election—released its first campaign ad, a 30-second commercial that brands both Democrats and media figures as "the president's enemies." The tone and content of the ad demonstrate that the appeal to ultra-right and fascistic forces will be the axis of Trump's efforts to mobilize support now and in 2018 and 2020.



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