US Department of Homeland Security warns of terrorist violence linked to Trump election conspiracies

Jacob Crosse
15 August 2021

This past Friday, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a new National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin warning of a "heightened threat environment across the United States" lasting from August 13 through November 11. The bulletin explicitly cited fascistic conspiracy theories propagated by former President Donald Trump concerning "perceived election fraud and alleged reinstatement."

The intelligence bulletin noted the emergence of COVID-19 variants and, with it, the possible re-imposition of public health restrictions as a driver of potential violence by "anti-government" groups. The bulletin also cited the reopening of schools and the upcoming 20th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks as possible "targets of opportunity for violence." However, no specific threat was cited by the agency.

In an interview with CNN, John Cohen, the head of DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis, characterized the online threats as "very similar to the stuff we saw prior to January 6." Cohen paraphrased online comments seen by the agency as stating that "the system is broken," "take action into their own hands" and "bring out the gallows."

"Concern from a law enforcement perspective," Cohen said, "is at a certain point in time, all of the conspiracy theories that point to a change occurring through process are going to sort of wear out. And the question is going to be, are people going to try to resort to violence in or in furtherance of that false narrative?"

In an NBC News interview this past Wednesday, a DHS spokesman said: "We are currently in a heightened terrorism-related threat environment, and DHS is aware of previous instances of violence associated with the dissemination of disinformation, false narratives and conspiracy theories about the 2020 election."

A second DHS official told NBC News that conspiracy theories about the 2020 election propagated by Trump and virtually the entire Republican Party had migrated from obscure internet forums to more mainstream ones. "We are concerned about calls to violence," he said.

In the lead-up to the attempted coup of January 6, the DHS refused to release a threat bulletin or designate that day's certification of the Electoral College vote by a joint session of the US Congress as a National Special Security Event (NSSE). Instead, a January 5 intelligence product produced by the DHS' Office of Intelligence and Analysis, declared there was "nothing significant to report."

In so doing, DHS, then headed by Trump appointees, ignored thousands of tips pouring into the domestic intelligence and police agencies, including DHS, the FBI, the D.C. Metropolitan Police and US Capitol police, warning of a violent attack on Congress aimed at blocking the certification of Joe Biden's election victory.

Former DHS Acting Secretary Chad Wolf has yet to appear before any House or Senate committee to explain why this was the case, and the Democrats have failed to issue subpoenas to compel him to testify.

The past week, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued the first of three reports concerning the DHS' failure to designate January 6 as a National Special Security Event or issue a Special Event Assessment Rating (SEAR). The report fails to criticize the DHS for this astonishing omission and

© World Socialist Web Site

instead attributes it to “confusion” among the various federal agencies as to who can request such designations.

This ludicrous evasion is exposed by the fact that over the last four years, DHS has designated 13 events as National Special Security Events, of which eight occurred in the Washington D.C. area. Previous NSSE events include State of the Union addresses, Democratic and Republican conventions and presidential inaugurations.

Over that same time period, DHS received over 104,000 submissions for events to be given a SEAR rating, of which 1,717 occurred in the National Capital Region. Thousands of SEAR requests were submitted by federal and local agencies, including DHS, the Capitol Police and the National Park Service, from 2017 through 2021. These events included the Super Bowl in Tampa, Florida; the funeral of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and the National Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington D.C.

Rumors of Trump being reinstated some time in August have been driven by far-right Republican politicians and their allies, such as MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell. Lindell recently hosted dozens of Republican Party officials for a three-day “Cyber Symposium,” which promoted the lie that the Communist Party of China “switched” votes from Trump to Joe Biden via the internet.

An example of the symbiotic relationship between the Republican Party and fascist militias occurred in Los Angeles on Saturday. As the LA police looked on, hundreds of Trump supporters, including dozens of Proud Boys, rallied at City Hall against mask mandates and assaulted counter-demonstrators and reporters.

The far-right rally featured signs and shirts railing against vaccines, China, Governor Gavin Newsom, socialism, Antifa and masks, as well as Christian Bible verses and declarations that “Jesus is King” and “His Blood is my vaccine.” Fascistic speakers openly called for violence against their opponents.

At least one person was stabbed at the event, but the LAPD announced that no arrests were made. In an Instagram post, the LAPD omitted the presence of the dozens of Proud Boys. Instead, it wrote its officers were “on scene to maintain order after a fight broke out between Antifa and people gathered for the permitted event.”

A similar event took place last week in Portland, where police allowed pro-Trump far-right demonstrators to attack counter-demonstrators. Among the right-wing protesters were individuals who participated in the storming of the US Capitol on January 6.

One fascist identified at both the January 6 coup attempt and the LA protest, as well as the Proud Boy riot in front of the Wi Spa in Los Angeles last month, is Tony Moon. Moon has admitted to being on the US Capitol grounds on January 6 and multiple photographs have been posted showing him assaulting journalists this past Saturday, but he is yet to be arrested or charged.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site