



OFFICE of INTELLIGENCE and ANALYSIS

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TERRORISM

(U//FOUO) Some Domestic Violent Extremists Are Calling and Preparing for Civil War, Raising Risk of Anti-Government-Motivated Violence

*(U//FOUO) **Scope Note:** This assessment provides public safety partners with an increased understanding of how domestic violent extremists have leveraged the concept of a potential civil war to conduct or advocate for violence, and how this threat may evolve through January 2025. We are concerned that some individuals are now better equipped to evade law enforcement detection by using online concealment tactics, such as end-to-end encryption and closed-group messaging services. Generating, discussing, or otherwise interacting with potential impending civil war-related content without engaging in violence or other criminal activity is a constitutionally protected activity.*

*(U//FOUO) **Some domestic violent extremists (DVEs) are reacting to the 2024 election season and prominent policy issues by engaging in illegal preparatory or violent activity that they link to the narrative of an impending civil war, raising the risk of violence against government targets and ideological opponents.** Election-related and other sociopolitical developments are probably increasing online calls for civil war during the last several months, although violent incidents linked to the civil war narrative have remained sporadic. We have no indication that violent extremists are coalescing and we lack a complete threat picture due to the ability of some DVEs to evade law enforcement using advanced encryption. DVEs with different motivations interpret a potential US civil war differently and base their mobilization timelines and potential targets on individual factors, challenging our ability to develop indicators.*

- (U//FOUO) In recent years, high-profile events have led to a significant increase in calls for the necessity to illegally prepare for or violently act during a new civil war, although civil war narratives have existed for decades. Some individuals have called for violent action online or committed acts of real-world violence as retribution for events like the 6 January 2021 breach of the US Capitol Complex and the FBI's August 2022 execution of a court-authorized search warrant at the Florida residence of a former US President (FPOTUS), according to a large body of open-source reporting. In January, calls for civil war and violence against "fedcoats" increased upwards of 91 percent compared to the prior 6 months, following a high-profile legal dispute between a state and the federal government*

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about immigration policy and enforcement at the southern border, according to a nongovernmental organization.^a

- (U//FOUO) Our review of incidents tied to civil war narratives found five individuals who mobilized in the past eight months; three were arrested and are awaiting trial for charges relating to either preparation to commit or direct violent action, while two others were arrested for violent threats (*see chart*). Each of the three plotters had allegedly made explicit statements that they wanted to initiate, participate in, or further a potential mass conflict in the United States. Only one person has successfully committed an act of violence in an effort to initiate a broader conflict against the US government. In that January incident, the Pennsylvania individual allegedly murdered their father – a federal employee – and used the body as a prop in an online video calling for individuals to kill federal employees as an effort to overthrow the government.
- (U//FOUO) We have observed online users encouraging others to prepare for future violence against public officials and federal agents, who they view as responsible for inciting a forthcoming civil war. Violent discussions mostly take place in anonymous and largely unmoderated online forums created for discussing political topics and issues.^b Online calls for civil war increased following the attempted assassination of an FPOTUS on 13 July and declared this incident the first shot. An individual, who founded a prominent online group that promotes accelerationism, encouraged others to join part-time military organizations to gain tactical skills and gather intelligence, according to an organization that monitors violent extremism online.

^a (U//FOUO) “Fedcoats” is a term used in some DVE-linked online communities to refer to federal agents and authorities, meant to mirror the term “red coats,” which referred to British infantrymen during the Revolutionary War.

^b (U//FOUO) DVEs may be using encrypted channels and private groups to discuss any planned activity to evade law enforcement detection. As a result, we do not have full insight into whether they are planning to incite or take violent action.

OVERALL GRAPHIC CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

(U//FOUO) Arrests Related or Linked to the Civil War Narrative in 2024

DATE	CITY AND STATE	DESCRIPTION OF EVENT
22 June	White Sands, New Mexico	An individual was arrested on federal charges after allegedly posting online that, if the US government offers amnesty for “illegal immigrants,” they would declare war against the United States and kill federal employees “on sight.” The individual added that this was a direct threat to the federal government. The individual is currently awaiting trial.
11 June	Phoenix, Arizona	An individual was arrested on federal charges after discussing planned details of an attack in Atlanta with the intent to start a “Race War” before the 2024 general election. The individual believed that, following the election, the US government would declare martial law, and their attack would need to be carried out before that happens. The individual is currently awaiting trial.
17 May	Pekin, Illinois	A routine traffic violation led to the arrest of an individual who was allegedly illegally in possession of a firearm and several improvised explosive devices. The individual had posted to social media expressing that they were ready for the coming civil war, as well as numerous other sociopolitical issues and perceived election fraud. The individual is currently awaiting trial on both state and federal charges.
11 March	Waterville, Maine	An individual was arrested on federal charges for posting threats to the US President online. One of many posts allegedly stated, “if you don’t fight for your freedom it will be taken from you i cannot wait to fight the civil war and kill these democrat politicians.” The individual is currently awaiting trial.
30 January	Levittown, Pennsylvania	An individual, who is currently awaiting trial on state charges for murder, uploaded a 14-minute video in which they detailed their belief that beheading their father, who was a retired federal employee, would help “save America from traitors” in the ongoing alleged war between the federal government and “America’s citizens and the American states.” The individual was arrested after they drove to a Pennsylvania National Guard base, in a possible attempt to seize weapons to conduct mass violence and convince the National Guard to mobilize against the US government, according to local law enforcement.

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(U//FOUO) **Through at least early 2025, there is a heightened risk that DVEs may mobilize against ideological opponents, government officials, and law enforcement in an attempt to initiate a civil war.** Lone offenders or small cells will likely be responsible for most of the civil war-related threats or violence, as large group action is likely to be deterred by actual or perceived law enforcement pressure, infiltration of online communities, and high-profile convictions of DVEs who participated in the breach of the US Capitol Complex. Potential drivers of DVE mobilization to violence include significant election-related and political developments, or other events like mass immigration to the Homeland or domestic civil unrest.

- *(U//FOUO)* All DVE violence driven by perceptions of an upcoming civil war in the past three years has been committed by lone offenders or small cells. We expect that two factors will continue to serve as deterrents to group organization or large-scale violence: federal prosecutions of DVEs associated with specific groups following the 6 January breach of the US Capitol, and false flag allegations that an event is orchestrated by the government to entrap and arrest attendees.^c
- *(U//FOUO)* Significant election-related developments could trigger DVE mobilization linked to civil war narratives, including threats or acts of violence against prominent officials and perceptions of election fraud. The recent attempted assassination of an FPOTUS could prompt a copycat attack or acts of retaliatory violence against perceived ideological or political opponents. In addition, real or perceived mistakes or discrepancies in the electoral process could be used to further election fraud allegations, judging from many DVEs' violent reactions to perceived election fraud during the 2020 election.
- *(U//FOUO)* Widespread or high-profile civil unrest, mass immigration, or crimes by migrants or minorities perceived as threatening the United States may drive some DVEs to mobilize to violence to "save America" from perceived threats. For example, online users discussed the potential of a sweeping Executive Order that would have given some migrants citizenship, with one user stating, "Biden^{USPER} does that executive order, we shoot all democrat officials. And the supporting federal agents."

^c *(U)* Sixteen identified members of the Proud Boys^{USPER} and the Oath Keepers^{USPER} who played key roles during the breach of the US Capitol Complex on 6 January 2021 have been sentenced in federal courts for their actions, including convictions of seditious conspiracy.