

U.S. Homeland Security Report: “False or Misleading Narratives and Conspiracy Theories” to be Categorized as “Terrorism”?

If this isn't a government effort to discourage lawful speech, I don't know what is.

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I am starting to think I need to file a First Amendment lawsuit over that insane bulletin from the Department of Homeland Security on Feb. 7.

In case you've forgotten, that report – a public declaration of the federal government's official view of terrorism – called the top terrorist threat to the United States:

false or misleading narratives, which sow discord or undermine public trust in U.S. government institutions.

Their words, not mine.

Trying to “undermine public trust in U.S. government institutions” is now a terrorist act?

Then I'm a terrorist.

Especially since the bulletin specifically mentions COVID-19: *there is widespread online proliferation of false or misleading narratives regarding unsubstantiated widespread election fraud and COVID-19.*

There's that word “misleading” again. As this White House has made clear, “misleading” facts are those that lead people to opinions or conclusions it doesn't like.



SUMMARY OF THE TERRORISM THREAT TO THE UNITED STATES

The United States remains in a heightened threat environment fueled by several factors, including an online environment filled with false or misleading narratives and conspiracy theories, and other forms of [mis-dis- and mal-information](#) (MDM) introduced and/or amplified by foreign and domestic threat actors. These threat actors seek to exacerbate societal friction to sow discord and undermine public trust in government institutions to encourage unrest, which could potentially inspire acts of violence. Mass casualty attacks and other acts of targeted violence conducted by lone offenders and small groups acting in furtherance of ideological beliefs and/or personal grievances pose an ongoing threat to the nation. While the conditions underlying the heightened threat landscape have not significantly changed over the last year, the convergence of the following factors has increased the volatility, unpredictability, and complexity of the threat environment: **(1)** the proliferation of false or misleading narratives, which sow discord or undermine public trust in U.S. government institutions; **(2)** continued calls for violence directed at U.S. critical infrastructure; soft targets and mass gatherings; faith-based institutions, such as churches, synagogues, and mosques; institutions of higher education; racial and religious minorities; government facilities and personnel, including law enforcement and the military; the media; and perceived ideological opponents; and **(3)** calls by foreign terrorist organizations for attacks on the United States based on recent events.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The primary terrorism-related threat to the United States continues to stem from lone offenders or small cells of individuals who are motivated by a range of foreign and/or domestic grievances often cultivated through the consumption of certain online content. The convergence of violent extremist ideologies, false or misleading narratives, and conspiracy theories have and will continue to contribute to a heightened threat of violence in the United States.

Key factors contributing to the current heightened threat environment include:

(1) The proliferation of false or misleading narratives, which sow discord or undermine public trust in U.S. government institutions:

- For example, there is widespread online proliferation of false or misleading narratives regarding unsubstantiated widespread election fraud and COVID-19. Grievances associated with these themes inspired violent extremist attacks during 2021.
- Malign foreign powers have and continue to amplify these false or misleading

RESOURCES TO STAY SAFE

Stay Informed and Prepared

- [Be prepared](#) for emergency situations and remain aware of circumstances that may place you at risk. Make note of your surroundings and the nearest security personnel.
- Keep yourself [safe online](#) and maintain [digital and media literacy](#) to recognize and build resilience to false or misleading narratives.
- Review DHS [resources](#) for how to better protect [businesses](#), [houses of worship](#), and [schools](#), and ensure the safety of public

SOURCE

No, no one has knocked on my door or threatened to arrest me.

But that does mean the government is not targeting me – along with other prominent Covid and vaccine skeptics. Per the bulletin, the Department of Homeland Security in 2021 *expanded its evaluation of online activity as part of its efforts to assess and prevent acts of violence.*

The government has other tools against people it classifies as terrorists too, including plenty of secret ones.

And remember, to be a terrorist under these terms, your speech simply has to “*potentially inspire acts of violence.*”

Potentially.

If this isn't a government effort to discourage lawful speech, I don't know what is. The question is whether it is so broad and dangerous that I can prove it will have a chilling and unconstitutional effect on me (and other people) even if I do not *know* I am being targeted. It feels like a form of prior restraint, all the worse for being so broad.

Will courts agree? There may be only one way to find out.

And quickly, if I do it. The Rocket Docket in the Eastern District of Virginia feels like the place.

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