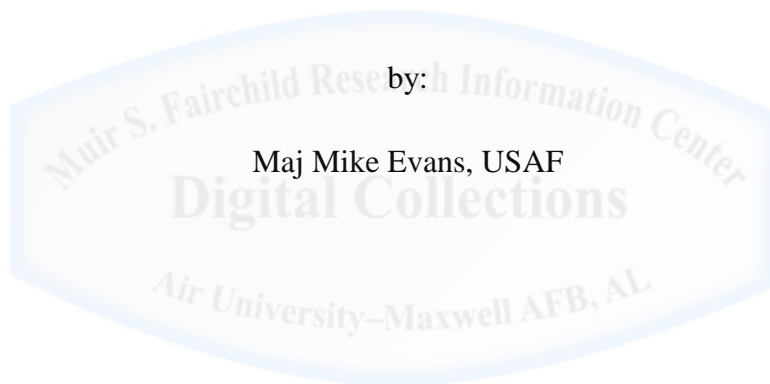


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AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

THE ARMY OF GOD AND MILITANT ISLAMISTS: POTENTIAL BFFS?



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## **DISCLAIMER**

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“As far as I’m concerned, nothing is off limits to stop abortion. Anything and everything goes. I have learned a lot from the Muslim terrorists and have no problem using their tactics.”<sup>1</sup>

## **Introduction**

The recent arrest and statements made in September 2010 of Justin Carl Moose, the self-professed “Christian counterpart to Osama bin Laden”, regarding the use of Muslim terror tactics to accomplish anti-abortion objectives opened the door for inquiry about the willingness of the Army of God (AOG) to potentially cooperate with militant Islamic groups.<sup>2</sup> While this could seem a mutually beneficial opportunity, it is highly unlikely that such a cooperative effort might be established, let alone sustained. This research largely focuses on the Army of God and examines the common ground which might support such a linkage, as well as explores the large degree of evidence preventing such a union to occur.

## **Army of God Background**

In order to effectively evaluate the likelihood of such a union of seemingly diametrically opposed entities, it is first necessary to clearly establish a solid understanding of the AOG’s ideology and basis on which it is constructed. The U.S. Supreme Court’s 1973 decision to legalize abortion in the case *Roe v. Wade*, launched a powerful movement across the nation to combat what some perceived as a murderous injustice and a direct violation of God’s will.<sup>3</sup> As a result of the decision, a ground swell of support developed on both the pro-choice and pro-life opinion fronts. However, much to the dismay of both sides, relatively peaceful efforts to picket abortion clinics and lobby law makers were joined by anti-abortion radical groups who sought to utilize violence to bring about political and legislative change.<sup>4</sup> Under this pretext, the Army of God (AOG) emerged as one such radical group.

The primary goal of the AOG is to utilize violence as a means to stop abortion. However, anti-government and anti-homosexual rhetoric produced by the group also indicates potential, additional goals. This utilization of violence, or threat thereof, is often directed at abortion clinic facilities and staffs, specifically the doctors who perform the abortion procedures, in an effort to instill fear and coerce those targeted to cease performing the procedures. Another potential residual effect is that women patients may be dissuaded from utilizing the services of these clinics due to the fear of being injured if an attack were to occur. According to Altum, these violent actions stem from AOG's perception that the value status of its members has been unwillingly violated.<sup>5</sup> Further, he believes this rests on the sociological theory that "when people see values central to their own self-concept challenged or threatened, they may join or support movements which promise to combat the attacks on their beliefs."<sup>6</sup> Such is the case with AOG members, who are not concerned with their own social or economic standing, but rather are moved to action based on their perception of legalized abortion as being in direct conflict with their personal value system and the will of God.<sup>7</sup> In the eyes of the AOG, killing of an abortion provider is a justifiable action and specifically the ultimate act of valor; this typically incites praise from within their extremist community and motivates other members to action.<sup>8</sup> In an attempt to stop abortion, anti-abortion extremists, such as the AOG, have chosen to take the law into their own hands, utilizing violence as a primary tool.<sup>9</sup>

The actual origin of the AOG is uncertain and its development is based on a hodgepodge of events transpiring over nearly thirty years.<sup>10</sup> Evidence of the group's existence, indicated by the letters "AOG" left at bombing sites and signed on threatening correspondence sent to Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun (who wrote the *Roe v. Wade* decision), initially made law enforcement authorities skeptical that an organized, violent movement of its type actually

existed.<sup>11</sup> However, it is believed that many of the characteristics of the AOG in existence today, may trace back to Atlanta prison cells in the early 1980s and time served in prison seems to be a common characteristic of many AOG members.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps the most significant and defining element of AOG maturation as an entity surfaced in 1988, when the “Army of God Manual” was drafted.<sup>13</sup> It is believed that this manual was developed by numerous anti-abortion extremists who were arrested (in that same year) and jailed together for several weeks for protests during the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta.<sup>14</sup> Further, it was during this time that many of the AOGs members were given aliases.<sup>15</sup>

The manual became somewhat of a living document, culminating into three separate editions over a period of three years.<sup>16</sup> Each edition increasingly encourages escalating acts of violence, ultimately reaching the point of advocating the murder of abortion providers.<sup>17</sup> The AOG Manual is basically a “how to” guide for conducting violence against abortion clinics, detailing methods for blockading facility entrances, conducting butyric acid attacks, arson, and bomb-making, as well as other illegal activities.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the manual contains strong anti-gay/lesbian and anti-government language.<sup>19</sup> Such language is consistent with letters following AOG attacks. For instance, a letter sent to the Reuters news agency regarding bombing of the gay night club and abortion clinic in Atlanta read “We will target sodomites, there organizations, and all those who push there agenda.”<sup>20</sup> Further, the letter went on to threaten the U.S. government and the United Nations by stating: “We declare and will wage total war on the ungodly communist regime in New York and your legislative-bureaucratic lackey’s in Washington. It is you who are responsible and preside over the murder of children and issue the policy of ungodly perversion thats destroying our people...Death to the New World Orer.”<sup>21</sup>

This clearly illuminates the AOG's rationale for spewing its anti-government rhetoric, because it views the government as condoning abortion and protecting those who conduct them.

The organizational structure of the AOG is not clearly understood, but is believed to be cell-like in nature, like that of a basic terrorist cell system.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, the AOG may also be structured similarly to an extremist militia group where followers buy in to an ideology created by a few key persons at the top and small groups or singly members conduct the actual operational attacks.<sup>23</sup> As such, the AOG has no officially designated leader, but a few key individuals take on leadership at necessary times.<sup>24</sup> Further, clearly identifying AOG members is difficult to determine, as the group has become somewhat of a catch-all for anyone involved in the radical wing of the pro-life movement.<sup>25</sup> While AOG members cannot be completely profiled, they are more likely to be white males, who have served time in prison.<sup>26</sup>

There are several individuals who are clearly linked as members to the AOG by means of their ties to previous attacks or overt omission. For instance, Don Benny Anderson is known for committing the first crime under AOG auspices; the kidnapping of an abortion provider and his wife in 1982.<sup>27</sup> Another member, Clayton Lee Waagner, currently imprisoned, admitted to distributing over 550 anthrax threat letters in 2001 to abortion clinics across the U.S.; many of the letters were signed by the Army of God.<sup>28</sup> Prior to his arrest, Waagner led authorities on a nearly year-long chase before being captured; during this time, he also posted on the AOG website a threat to kill anyone working at an abortion clinic and he claimed to have specific information targeting 42 clinic staff members.<sup>29</sup>

James C. Kopp, aliases "Clyde Swenson" and "Atomic Dog", is a most notable member of AOG and is specifically mentioned in the "special thanks" section in the opening pages of the AOG Manual.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, Kopp was convicted of the 1998 killing of Dr Barnett Slepian.

Kopp shot Slepian with a high powered rifle through the window of Slepian's home while he (Slepian) was standing in his kitchen with his family nearby.<sup>31</sup> Kopp, who studied to be a doctor before joining the anti-abortion movement, was sentenced to 25 years in prison.<sup>32</sup>

Michael Bray is a leader or "chaplain" of the AOG, who hosts the annual "White Rose Banquet", which honors those persons imprisoned for anti-abortion violence.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, he wrote the book "A Time to Kill," which provides a biblical justification for utilizing violence against abortion providers.<sup>34</sup> Further, Bray's daughter is named after the murderer of an abortion doctor.<sup>35</sup> He served time in confinement for his role in bombing multiple abortion clinics and his current location is unknown to authorities.<sup>36</sup>

Another AOG member, Neil Horsley, hosts an infamous website known as the "Nuremberg Files."<sup>37</sup> This website lists the names, personal information, photos of abortion providers, and functions as a hit list for the AOG.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, he hosts another website, which posts photographs and videos patients, staff and physicians transiting the clinics.<sup>39</sup> Further, Horsley is an advocate of secessionism and mentions the separatist group "Republic of Texas" on his internet sites.<sup>40</sup>

Eric Robert Rudolph, another member of note, eluded authorities for five years before being apprehended in 2003.<sup>41</sup> He pled guilty to the bombing and murder of an off-duty police officer at a Birmingham, AL abortion clinic.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, he was convicted of the Centennial Olympic Park bombing and the bombing of a gay night club in Atlanta, as well as the resultant murders.<sup>43</sup> He is currently serving life in prison.<sup>44</sup> Donald Spitz is another AOG "leader" and hosts the AOG website.<sup>45</sup> On the site, Spitz apparently mocked the murder of Dr Slepian and posted correspondence from Clayton Waagner, while he was being hunted by authorities.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, he has posted the post-conviction writings of Eric Rudolph and served as the

“spiritual advisor” to Paul Hill prior to Hill’s execution in 2003 for the murder of an abortion doctor.<sup>47</sup> Lastly, AOG member Shelly Shannon, alias “Shaggy West,” is currently imprisoned for arson and the attempted murder of abortion doctor George Tiller.<sup>48</sup> Following her arrest, police discovered the AOG Manual buried in her backyard; in the manual, she is listed in the “special thanks” section under her alias.<sup>49</sup>

The earliest known instances of the non-violent harassment culminated into violent action in 1976 when arson was conducted against an abortion clinic, followed by several clinic bombings in 1978.<sup>50</sup> Though it is not clear whether these instances were directly the work of AOG, it is plausible to suppose that each reinforced the potential of using violent means to achieve a desired end; a total of eleven instances of arson and four bombings were conducted between 1976 and 1982, the same year in which AOG officially entered the scene.<sup>51</sup> The earliest officially known activities of AOG are traced back to the 1982 kidnapping of an abortion provider, Dr Hector Zevallos and his wife, by a group of fundamental protesters who stormed an abortion clinic in Granite City, IL.<sup>52</sup> The men, who abducted the couple, identified themselves as the “Army of God”, held them captive for eight days in an abandoned ammunition bunker, and threatened them with death until they pledged to cease performing abortions.<sup>53</sup> The couple agreed and was later released, while the three men who conducted the kidnapping were eventually arrested and convicted.<sup>54</sup>

Following the Zevallos’ kidnappings of 1982, instances of arson and bombings continued against abortion clinics across the U.S. However, in March 1993, the AOG took their violent actions to new level when Dr. David Gunn was shot to death by Michael Griffin in Pensacola, FL, becoming the first abortion provider killed by this radical movement.<sup>55</sup> This seminal event signified a common trend of things to come from within the movement and evoked praise from

AOG members.<sup>56</sup> Having corresponded with Griffin after Gunn's murder, Rachelle Shannon was inspired to attempt the murder of Dr. George Tiller in Wichita, KS; in this case, Shannon shot Tiller through both arms outside of his abortion clinic, seriously wounding him.<sup>57</sup> On the heels of their 1993 success, the AOG continued its actions into 1994. Specifically, this entailed the murder of Dr. John Britton and his driver, as well as the shooting injury of his wife outside of their clinic in Pensacola, FL by Paul Hill.

In 1996, the AOG also claimed credit for the bombings of an abortion clinic and homosexual night club in Atlanta, GA injuring at least four people.<sup>58</sup> In January 1998, Eric Rudolph orchestrated the bombing of an abortion clinic in Birmingham, AL which resulted in the death of police officer Robert Sanderson and severely injuring a nurse.<sup>59</sup> Nine months later, abortion provider Dr. Barnett Slepian was shot and killed in his home in Amherst, NY by James Kopp.<sup>60</sup>

Between 1999 and 2008 the AOG seems to have shifted its tactics away from direct violence of fire, bombs, and bullets to a more indirect means. But, while the group continued sending hate mail and conducting harassing phone calls, following the terror attack of Sept 11, 2001, it specifically, began employing the terror tactic of anthrax threats via letters sent directly to abortion clinics.<sup>61</sup> However, in May 2009, Dr. George Tiller was again targeted by AOG operative Scott Roeder. In this case, Tiller was shot and killed while attending church in Wichita, KS.

Although they appear to lack the expertise, funding, or knowledge to carry-out large-scale attacks, the AOG has been a difficult organization for the U.S. government to eradicate; this is likely due to the very close knit nature of the communities from which many AOG members originate.<sup>62</sup> The plight of the U.S. government is similar to that of the ancient Romans

fighting the Zealots. Specifically, the religious fanaticism and willingness to sacrifice themselves for their greater cause makes it difficult to dissuade potential radicals from such behavior or eliminate this ideology at its root base. To date, the U.S. governments response (via the Federal Bureau of Investigation) seems largely reactive to this threat, typically focusing on apprehending violators after a criminal action has been committed. This view was reinforced by the relative lack of information about the AOG organization itself found among numerous terrorism databases searched.

While the AOG's attacks have been relatively small in scale, they have been ever-present since the early 1980s. As a low level terror group, the AOG has successfully evolved over time. This is made apparent by its use of the internet to communicate its lingering messages capable of inciting potential "operatives" into action. Further, the threat conveyed against abortion providers/clinics readily apparent based on the amount of information listed on the National Abortion Federation's website in an effort to showcase and discredit the terror group's motives. This alone provides evidence that the AOG is still regarded as a significant threat by its potential targets. Overall, the AOG's longevity and ability to actually execute successful terror actions indicate a relatively high degree of success. Reinforcing this is the eventual murder of Dr Tiller, which indicates the AOGs ability to "follow-up" on a target; for example, though Shelly Shannon failed to kill Tiller in 1993, Scott Roeder, successfully completed the task in 2009.<sup>63</sup> No doubt this "persistence" was aided by the AOG target list previously mentioned. Even after key AOG members are imprisoned, the group itself continues to survive. No doubt this is due in part that the group motivation seems based on an ideological extremist perspective of justifiable homicide, which is easily fueled by inflammatory rhetoric (and the capability to successfully propagate it), even without a designated leader calling the shots.

To date, the AOG activities appear to have peaked during the mid-1990s, but according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the militant crusade against abortion providers shows no signs of subsiding and the threat continues with unabated religious fervor.<sup>64</sup> However, abortion providers aren't the only potential targets of the AOG. Given the group's anti-government and anti-gay/lesbian rhetoric, as evidenced by links on its internet page, it seems probable that attacks on these may increase as well. Supporting this is the possible perception that the current administration is increasingly supportive of abortion and gay/lesbian rights. As such, the U.S. government and law enforcement agencies should not discount the intent or capabilities of this terror group and should consider increasing vigilance to further combat it.

### **Confirming the AOG as a Right-Wing Extremist Group**

In his book *The Enemy of My Enemy*, George Michael discusses the likelihood of extreme right groups in the U.S. converging with militant Islamists. In order to draw upon some of the precepts Michael lays out, it is necessary to delineate if and how the AOG meets the requirements to be considered a group of the extreme right. To begin, the extreme right movement within the United States is largely made up of a variety of groups and individuals, which often disagree on a number of issues, even their core ones.<sup>65</sup> However, while the contemporary extreme right within the U.S. may have varying orientations/goals, there typically exists a degree of overlap and migration among them.<sup>66</sup>

First, a significant component of the extreme right's ideology is based upon racial or ethnic considerations such as racism, anti-Semitism or xenophobia.<sup>67</sup> This concept of anti-Semitic beliefs is largely anchored in the belief that the Jewish cabal exercises considerable influence over the U.S. and other governments of the West.<sup>68</sup> Additionally, there are several religious aspects which motivate and inspire the extreme right. The most notable aspect attempts

to demonize the Jews by portraying them as descended from a long-vanished tribe which was fathered by Satan.<sup>69</sup> Based on extensive research, no evidence was discovered to indicate that the AOG bases any of its ideals or motivations, and does not propagate anti-Semitism as a means to accomplish its objectives. This finding is in large contrast to groups typically associated with the extreme right. However, within the AOG, there exists an undercurrent of racism, which can be derived by analyzing the demographics of known AOG members, specifically their race. Supporting this notion were the headlines appearing on the AOG website under the “Current News Stories for Christians” page during 2002 which clearly evidenced racism.<sup>70</sup> Example headlines include: “White woman carjacked, raped, and executed by African-Americans”, 83 Year old White Woman beaten to death by three African-Americans”, and White Rebekah Hanson marries African-American Kashard Brown, then White Rebekah Hanson murdered by her African-American husband Kashard Brown.”<sup>71</sup>

Another component identified by Michael is that of particularism. Specifically, extreme right groups typically adopt a rather parochial viewpoint and are more concerned with a smaller focus of identity such as a nation, republic, race, or ethnic group.<sup>72</sup> Further, these groups typically do not possess intentions to proselytize its beliefs and change the entire world.<sup>73</sup> This concept of particularism is very applicable to the AOG in the sense that it (AOG) seeks to focus its efforts solely on the U.S. in ways to achieve its specific objective...ceasing the legality of abortion.

A third characteristic of organizations of the extreme right lies in a low regard for democracy. Michael states that extreme right political organizations, people, and efforts largely adhere to the democratic rules of the game, but they are not enthusiastic about democracy as other main-stream political entities.<sup>74</sup> For the most part, the AOG fits this criterion, as it boasts

significant distain for the U.S. government, largely due to the fact that it views said government as creating the conditions (legalizing abortion) which allow abortion providers to conduct their practices. Further exacerbating this ‘rub’ is the AOG’s perception that the government provides security to abortion providers to conduct their practices.

The final characteristic denoting the potential inclusion of right-wing extremism is the existence of anti-statism within a group. This is often evidenced by a severe dislike of the government or at least the scope of the government.<sup>75</sup> While the AOG’s anti-government rhetoric appears largely due in part to the legalities and protections provided to abortion providers, there appears to be a degree of association through some of its members to an anti-government movement. The case of Scott Roeder highlights this possibility. Specifically, Roeder is known to have been involved in the “sovereign citizens movement as early as the 1990s.<sup>76</sup> Sovereign citizens generally believe that the government has no jurisdiction over them and, as such, often flood courts with falsified liens and other legal paperwork.<sup>77</sup> Roeder’s case was exemplified by the fact that he did not acknowledge the requirement to possess valid license plates on his vehicle, rather he placed self-manufactured ones, which declared him as a sovereign citizen who did not have to comply with the laws of the government. Ironically, it was this vehicle plate which caused a police officer to pull him over, which ultimately lead to his arrest.

According to Michael, not all the preceding components need to directly pertain to a group in order to qualify a group as right-wing extremist in nature, but at least enough should exist in order to reasonably classify a group as such.<sup>78</sup> However, the AOG seemingly meets all four components to a large degree and as such will be considered a right-wing extremist group for the purposes of this research effort.

### **Establishing Common Ground**

While the intent of this research is to prove the likelihood of a cooperative effort between the AOG and militant Islamists is unlikely, in all fairness to the argument, it is also necessary to discuss the aspects by such a cooperative effort might develop. Militant Islam is the only movement in the geopolitical landscape that is currently mounting a significant challenge against globalization and the seemingly inescapable assimilation into the new world order.<sup>79</sup> As such, other dissident movements, like the extreme right, may recognize the spirit, determination, strength and broad-based support possessed by factions of militant Islam.<sup>80</sup> As indicated by the letters left behind at attack sites, the AOG seeks to counter the establishment of a “new world order” and it is this shared aspect that might potentially compel the group to seek out a relationship with the militant Islamic movement.<sup>81</sup> According to Michael, the fall of the Soviet Union and the revolution in telecommunications environment have opened up significant opportunity for global communication, even to some factions that might have been previously unreachable.<sup>82</sup> Further, seeking out such a relationship might not be difficult to accomplish, as there are over 2,000 extremist sites presently located on the World Wide Web.<sup>83</sup>

A second area of potential commonality between the AOG and militant Islamists is the fact that both seek the downfall of the U.S. government. As previously discussed, the AOG seeks this specifically because it is disenfranchised with the government’s decision to legalize abortion and provide protections to those who actually perform those procedures. Militant Islamists may seek a similar end result, but likely for other reasons, such as the perception that the U.S. has no right to have its military forces in the Middle East (areas possibly viewed as sacred and holy to militant Islamists) and the perception that America has become an occupying nation seeking to impose its influence and enslave those Islamic nations to act in accordance with its national desires. Since it is unlikely that militant Islamists could forcibly eject U.S.

military forces from the Middle East, perhaps using the right-wing extremist groups like the AOG might be an effective method to conduct actions against the U.S. government using a domestic “surrogate partner” to execute the attacks.<sup>84</sup> In this way, the militant Islamists could effectively chose to maintain anonymity or overtly advertize its capability to strike the U.S. government (and its populace) with domestic means in an effort to affect significant terror upon it to alter its interests/actions in the Middle East.

A third potential commonality, though surprising, is religion-based. While cooperation based on this aspect alone might appear far-fetched, Michael reminds us that some right-wing organizations have already reached out to members of the Muslim faith.<sup>85</sup> Specifically, there appears to be a growing religious tolerance among some right-wing extremists for militant Islam within the Aryan Nation community, which has developed a “Ministry of Islamic Liaison”, featured on its website.<sup>86</sup> Additionally, the site seeks to reach in “solidarity, to the bona-fide adherents of Islam in the Arabic world and abroad” and specifically makes the point that the “Muslim’s God ‘is our father’.”<sup>87</sup> Moreover, there are numerous instances of neo-Nazis converting to Islam.<sup>88</sup> If a similar level of acceptance is internalized by the AOG, perhaps a similar cooperative effort might result.

The final potential “uniting” factor between AOG and militant Islamists is the shared aspect/appreciation of martyrdom. As often demonstrated in the past, militant Islamists have no issues conducting suicide attacks against a target.<sup>89</sup> While this aspect is largely not consistent with that of most right-wing extremist groups, in the pages of its manual, the AOG has voiced its willingness to trade its members’ lives in order to stop abortion providers.<sup>90</sup> While this has not yet resulted in an AOG member conducting a suicide attack, it is implied that AOG members understand they will likely be captured and prosecuted for their actions. Additionally, the

previously discussed White Rose Banquet effectively serves as an example of how AOG members are revered for their individual “success” of killing an abortion provider and resultant sacrifices for the greater cause.

### **An Unlikely Union**

While common ground between the extreme-right and militant Islamists potentially possesses a limited degrees of validity, overall it appears such a cooperative effort is unlikely to develop. Moreover, the specific ideology of the AOG makes this even less likely. This section examines numerous aspects and offers an explanation supporting the overall thesis of this research.

The first issue centers around the issue of anti-Zionist beliefs and motivations largely identified with the extreme-right and militant Islamist.<sup>91</sup> On the surface, this appears to be a potentially, strong bonding factor between the two movements, and perhaps it is. However, this linkage breaks down when attempting to apply it to the AOG which is not known to perpetuate animosity or negative objectives toward those of the Jewish faith. Also detracting from the possibility of a cooperative union is the lack of a shared religious view point between the AOG and militant Islam.<sup>92</sup> In fact, the core of both groups’ ideologies is heavily based on their respective extremist interpretations of fundamental religious beliefs and motivations. This creates a point of divergence which is unlikely to be over-looked by the AOG to allow for cooperative action.

The second factor preventing the joining of efforts between the AOG and militant Islamists is based on the lack of mutual benefits for both parties. Regarding this topic, Steven Barry, the former leader of the Special Forces Underground, provided a concise analysis which contends that the militant Islamists have practically nothing to gain by such an alliance, quite

simply because the extreme right has nothing to offer.<sup>93</sup> Further, Barry states militant Islam engenders all the qualities necessary of a successful movement, while the extreme right (AOG included) simply do not.<sup>94</sup> Specifically, he points out that militant Islamists possess such things as organization, hierarchy, authority, money and logistics, media, liaison between various like factions, popular support, and covert support of indigenous governments.<sup>95</sup> By contrast, groups like AOG of the extreme right are largely disorganized/chaotic, have no leader and are often fractionalized/defiant of subordination, anti-authoritarian, lack funds/logistics, lack popular support, lack media outlet/voiceless, and are typically uncooperative between like factions.<sup>96</sup> So, based on these conflicting characteristics, there seems little to entice militant Islamists to seek a union with the extreme right, let alone the AOG, which they have even less in common than other right-wing groups.

Additionally, an unacceptable level of risk is another factor to consider. Based on the above evidence, it seems a union between the AOG and militant Islamic factions might potentially pose an unacceptable level of risk to the latter. Specifically, failure of the AOG to effectively execute a “joint” effort might adversely affect the credibility of the militant Islamists, as well as their international standing in terms of terrorism-generated fear. Moreover, the fact that the AOG is a leaderless organization loosely comprised of individually motivated operatives, makes it difficult for militant Islamists to coordinate a cooperative effort. Put simply, it might be nearly impossible to identify “legitimate” organizational leadership with whom to collaborate and create the architecture of such an alliance.

The most prominent factor preventing a cooperative alliance between the AOG and militant Islamic factions is the lack of a common goal. While the AOG propagates both anti-government and anti-gay rhetoric, the large majority of its message consists of prompting the use

of violence to stop abortion. To this end, research performed yielded no ideological commonality between the AOG and militant Islam regarding abortion. Rather, another perspective might suggest that militant Islamists could potentially oppose the efforts of the AOG to stop abortion in a long-term effort to undermine the strength of the U.S. through attrition of its birthrate. The objective of such a strategy might be to stunt the U.S.' population growth, thus lessening its youthfulness, productivity (in terms of an age-to-population ratio), and ultimately weaken the nation as a whole. Additionally, accomplishment of this objective might set the stage for a growing Muslim extremist population within the U.S. to attempt to close the population margin relative to other ethnic groups within the U.S. and associated political representation; potentially establishing the militant Islamists a foothold of influence within the U.S.

### **Conclusion**

According to Michael, the extreme right is far from reaching a consensus regarding the pursuit of a cooperative effort with militant Islam.<sup>97</sup> Factors such as tactical, ideological, religious, cultural and racial/ethnic divides pose significant obstacles.<sup>98</sup> Based on that and the fact that the AOG's ideology diverges so drastically with militant Islam, there is little likelihood that these two movements will seek each other's cooperation in the near or long-term, unless a significant shift in said ideologies occurs. Given that the AOG has not changed its ideology since its inception nearly three decades ago, the probability appears extremely low this will occur in the future, thus eliminating any likelihood of a "BFF" relationship with militant Islamists.

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- <sup>1</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center. “Would-Be Clinic Bomber Saw Himself as ‘Christian Osama’.”
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup> Justin C. Altum, “Anti-Abortion Extremism: The Army of God.” *Chrestomathy: Annual Review of Undergraduate Research at the College of Charleston*, vol 2 (2003): 1.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid, 2.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid, 8.
- <sup>9</sup> National Abortion Federation. “Clinic Violence: Anti-Abortion Extremists.” [http://www.prochoice.org/about\\_abortion/violence/extremists.html](http://www.prochoice.org/about_abortion/violence/extremists.html).
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid, 2.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> National Abortion Federation. “Clinic Violence: Anti-Abortion Extremists.”
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> Olsen, “The Path to Terrorist Violence: A Threat Assessment Model for Radical Groups at Risk of Escalation to Acts of Terrorism,” 41.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>22</sup> T. Dugdale-Pointon, “The Army of God,” 1.
- <sup>23</sup> Altum, “Anti-Abortion Extremism: The Army of God”, 8.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid, 5.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid, 6-7.
- <sup>27</sup> University of Maryland. National Consortium For the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup> National Abortion Federation. “Clinic Violence: Anti-Abortion Extremists.”
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>32</sup> University of Maryland. National Consortium For the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>39</sup> National Abortion Federation. “Clinic Violence: Anti-Abortion Extremists.”
- <sup>40</sup> University of Maryland. National Consortium For the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup> National Abortion Federation. “Clinic Violence: Anti-Abortion Extremists.”
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid.

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- <sup>45</sup> University of Maryland. National Consortium For the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism.
- <sup>46</sup> National Abortion Federation. "Clinic Violence: Anti-Abortion Extremists."
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