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Command and Staff College  
Marine Corps University  
2076 South Street  
Marine Corps Combat Development Command  
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068

MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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**White Supremacy as a National Security Emergency**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

**AUTHOR:** Sean C. Washington, Civ, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency

AY 2020-21

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## Executive Summary

**Title:** White Supremacy as a National Security Emergency

**Author:** Sean C. Washington, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency

**Thesis:** The failure of the United States government to address the issue of white supremacy in America will lead to further erosion of all U.S. government institutions. The long-term effect of this continued erosion will leave the nation vulnerable to domestic threats.

**Discussion:** There are several sayings in the black community regarding white supremacy in America. One is that white supremacy is as American as apple pie. Another is that white supremacy is so American that when people protest white supremacy, white people think people are protesting America. The history of maltreatment of minorities in this country is indisputable and well documented in print and video. With the emergence of advances in communication from the Internet, social media, and every cell phone being a video recorder, the realities of this treatment are constantly in view for the entire world. With so much data on the topic of white supremacy from the internet, federal law enforcement, and the intelligence community, the threat of white supremacy continues to be problematic in American society. Additionally, the recruitment of law enforcement and military members, both active and veterans, into their ranks, contributes to the success of their operations. As these groups continue to grow in membership and support, they are a clear and present danger to the United States of America.

**Conclusion:** The credibility of United States government institutions on every level requires the white supremacist threat to be confronted and eliminated. Thus far, the United States government has failed to address this matter with any consistency on any level. Some in government continue to use white supremacy as a political weapon while others ignore the seriousness of the problem. Continuing on the current trajectory is likely to cause a continued lack of faith in government institutions by a divided citizenry. The lack of faith is capable of leading to substandard local, state, and federal law enforcement as well as substandard government officials and military organizations. The erosion of trust in institutions will create a critical vulnerability of the United States to domestic adversaries.

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**Figure 1. Anti-Defamation League Pyramid of Hate**

The *Pyramid* shows biased behaviors, growing in complexity from the bottom to the top. Although the behaviors at each level negatively impact individuals and groups, as one moves up the pyramid, the behaviors have more life-threatening consequences. Like a pyramid, the upper levels are supported by the lower levels. If people or institutions treat behaviors on the lower levels as being acceptable or "normal," it results in the behaviors at the next level becoming more accepted. In response to the questions of the world community about where the hate of genocide comes from, the *Pyramid of Hate* demonstrates that the hate of genocide is built upon the acceptance of behaviors described in the lower levels of the pyramid.



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## *Preface*

Many members of my family have served this country. These family members represent four generations of men that have participated in every military action since the Korean War. Many of the men in my family even married female military members whose family members have served just as much as mine if not more. I have two uncles who served in Vietnam that were never the same upon returning home. The horrors of war were bad enough for them; however, the horrors of their return to this country were equally disturbing to them. Despite their contributions to the war effort, they returned home to a nation that not only hated them but also blatantly used every institution meant to provide for the citizens of this nation against them to marginalize them.

Despite the stories of maltreatment by elders, I was still encouraged to do my part in service to my country along with my siblings. I along with my brother accepted the call and enlisted in the Army. My brother and I both served in multiple combat arms units throughout our careers and participated in multiple deployments to combat zones. These deployments included many direct-action units, small unit reconnaissance teams, and direct support to the highest levels of the special operations community. During the most difficult of times, no one was concerned about the race of the man fighting beside him. However, when in garrison, many minority soldiers including myself questioned the actions and attitudes of some of our white counterparts. Additionally, we often noticed that the higher we looked up the chain the command, we saw little to no representation.

Today I find myself asking more questions than ever before. I look at the repeated failure of institutions to live up to the ideals of the Constitution and wonder if it was worth fighting for. Over the years I would see signs of hope here and there. However, the events of the last few years have reminded me how big our government's failures have been at providing an equal standard for all Americans. I have no regrets regarding my decision to serve this nation. I am under no illusion that the nation will ever be perfect or that it has not come a long way. I am,

however, concerned that failing to address the matter will continue the nation on the path to appeasement as opposed to fairness, fear as opposed to reality, and ultimately: an increase of domestic terrorism.

### **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I wish to express my love and admiration for my mother. She is no longer with us; however, she raised me to be strong, shoot for the stars, and place all faith in God. She taught me the importance of decency, integrity, and personal courage. From the darkest nights in my personal life to those around the world in service to my country, I used her strength and faith in God as my rock. I could have never succeeded without you. To my family, friends, brothers and sisters in arms and professional mentors, SFC James Houston, MSG Sherman Green, MSG Franklin White, 1SG Keith Calloway, CSM Vincent Camacho, CSM David Jenkins, and MMS Mentors Dr. Jill Goldenziel and Lt Col John Nash, thank you for your guidance, patience, and encouragement.

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## Introduction

*We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.-The U.S. Constitution, Preamble*

The term white supremacy, as defined by the Anti-Defamation League, characterizes multiple belief systems central to one or more of the following key tenets: whites should have dominance over people of other backgrounds, especially where they may co-exist; whites should live by themselves in a whites-only society; white people have their own "culture" that is superior to other cultures; white people are genetically superior to other people.<sup>1</sup> The United States of America is a nation rooted in white supremacy to the point that the nation divided in two and fought a war over slavery. The Vice President of the Confederate States of America Alexander Stephens stated, "Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition."<sup>2</sup> Although the Confederacy was defeated, the participators were Americans and contributed to every American institution's development. Fast forward to recent years, and we still see examples of the mindset that America is not for everyone. Recently, self-proclaimed white nationalist Richard Spencer stated, "The idea of a white ethnostate, and it is an ideal, is something that I think we should think about in the sense of what could come after America. It's

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<sup>1</sup> "White Supremacy," Anti-Defamation League, accessed April 4, 2021, <https://www.adl.org/resources/glossary-terms/white-supremacy>. For the purpose of this paper the Anti-Defamation League definition of white supremacy will be used due to the full-fledged white supremacist ideology being more complex than simple racism and bigotry.

<sup>2</sup> "Confederate Constitution & Cornerstone Speech," accessed April 4, 2021, <http://sageamericanhistory.net/civilwar/docs/confedconstitution.htm>.

kind of like a grand goal.”<sup>3</sup> As recently as January 2021, the outgoing Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, posted these comments on his official Instagram account: “Woke-ism, multiculturalism, all the -isms — they’re not who America is. They distort our glorious founding and what this country is all about.” The post also said that “censorship, wokeness, political correctness, it all leads to authoritarianism, cloaked as moral righteousness.”<sup>4</sup> The reference to America’s glorious founding refers to when minorities were in bondage. These words coming from the Secretary of State are disturbing. Many in America continue to support and participate in the white supremacist agenda. This reality places the nation in a dangerous conflict.

This paper will address this conflict by identifying the cause, effect, and consequences of ignoring our nation’s history. First, the paper will provide an overview of the background of white supremacy in the U.S., including some of the most influential people and organizations that have promoted white supremacy. Next, the paper will discuss how unconscious bias attitudes and behaviors support white supremacy and how they aid white supremacist recruiting. Finally, the paper will demonstrate how these biased attitudes and behaviors have led to violence against innocent civilians and government institutions due to the government’s failure to address the white supremacist threat adequately. The failure of the United States government to address white supremacy in America will lead to further erosion of all U.S. government institutions. The long-term effect of this continued erosion will leave the nation vulnerable to domestic threats.

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<sup>3</sup> “A Frank Conversation with a White Nationalist | Reveal,” accessed April 4, 2021, <https://revealnews.org/podcast/a-frank-conversation-with-a-white-nationalist/>.

<sup>4</sup> “Mike Pompeo Insists Multiculturalism Is ‘Not Who America Is’ | HuffPost,” accessed April 4, 2021, [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/mike-pompeo-multiculturalism\\_n\\_600706d3c5b6df63a91a42d0](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/mike-pompeo-multiculturalism_n_600706d3c5b6df63a91a42d0).

## Background

At the time of the nation's founding, the entire American government was established and maintained by white men. Black slaves built the nation after the land was violently stolen from indigenous natives. A black person did not serve in the American government until 1870. Hiram Rhodes Revels was the first African American man elected to the Senate, representing Mississippi.<sup>5</sup> The first woman to hold office was not elected until 1917, when Jeannette Rankin represented Montana in the 65th Congress.<sup>6</sup> Diversity within the United States Government has increased over time. America elected Barack Obama as the nation's first African American president in 2008. Additionally, the first African American and female Vice President was elected in 2020. However, the makeup of Congress continues to be dominated by white Americans. As the nation is continuing to evolve, many fear the idea of racial equity and representation. For example, following massive voter turnout by minorities in the 2020 election, the state of Georgia recently passed new voting laws. Many believe these new laws increase difficulty for minorities to vote. One provision in the law makes providing food and water to voters a criminal act.<sup>7</sup> It has been long established that minorities in Georgia are the most affected by hours-long wait times to vote.<sup>8</sup> This is an example of how the tactics used by white supremacy that shaped and developed American institutions of the past are at a crossroads with the nation's evolution today.

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<sup>5</sup> "U.S. Senate: Hiram Revels: A Featured Biography," accessed April 4, 2021, [https://www.senate.gov/senators/FeaturedBios/Featured\\_Bio\\_Revels.htm](https://www.senate.gov/senators/FeaturedBios/Featured_Bio_Revels.htm).

<sup>6</sup> "The Swearing-In of the First Woman Elected to Congress, Representative Jeannette Rankin of Montana | US House of Representatives: History, Art & Archives," accessed April 4, 2021, <https://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1901-1950/The-swearing-in-of-the-first-woman-elected-to-Congress,-Representative-Jeannette-Rankin-of-Montana/>.

<sup>7</sup> "Georgia SB202 | 2021-2022 | Regular Session," LegiScan, accessed April 4, 2021, <https://legiscan.com/GA/text/SB202/id/2348602>. 70.

<sup>8</sup> "Why Do Nonwhite Georgia Voters Have to Wait in Line For Hours? Too Few Polling Places," NPR.org, accessed April 4, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2020/10/17/924527679/why-do-nonwhite-georgia-voters-have-to-wait-in-line-for-hours-too-few-polling-pl>.

The slavery that established the United States government eventually became unacceptable to some political leaders. However, some leaders fought vigorously to keep slaves for the sole purpose of free labor. As blacks attempted to fight for freedom, they were met with violence. Nat Turner's revolt of 1831 and the John Brown Raid of 1859 are examples.<sup>9</sup> Courts even made decisions that supported the white supremacy agenda, like the Dred Scott case of 1857.<sup>10</sup> This Supreme Court decision stated, "Congress had no constitutional power to deprive persons of their property rights when dealing with enslaved people in the territories."<sup>11</sup> A slave in a state where slavery was outlawed was still considered property, and therefore still had no legal rights. As the nation grew divided on slavery, the nation split, and the Civil War between the North and South started in 1861. After the Civil War ended in victory for the North and all slaves were made free in April 1865, Reconstruction began. Both Federal and State governments continued to pass laws like the Black codes, designed to restrict freed slaves. One of the most damaging rulings to adversely affect the fight for freedom was the Plessy v Ferguson decision delivered by the United States Supreme Court.<sup>12</sup> The Plessy vs. Ferguson case provided a combination of rulings passed by the U.S. and state Supreme Courts after Reconstruction that allowed and, in some cases required, Jim Crow segregation laws in Southern states.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, organizations were created to support the white supremacist agenda. The Ku Klux Klan (KKK), for example, was founded in December 1865 in Pulaski, Tennessee.<sup>14</sup> This

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<sup>9</sup> History.com Editors, "Black History in the United States: A Timeline," HISTORY, accessed April 4, 2021, <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-history-milestones>.

<sup>10</sup> Editors, "Black History in the United States."

<sup>11</sup> Editors, "Black History in the United States."

<sup>12</sup> Lisa Cozzens, "Plessy vs. Ferguson: Separate Isn't Equal - Other Jim Crow Information - Jim Crow Museum - Ferris State University," accessed April 4, 2021, <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/links/misclink/plessy.htm>.

<sup>13</sup> Lisa Cozzens, "Plessy vs. Ferguson: Separate Isn't Equal - Other Jim Crow Information - Jim Crow Museum - Ferris State University."

<sup>14</sup> "Ku Klux Klan," Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed April 4, 2021, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/ku-klux-klan>.

organization carried out voter suppression and domestic terrorism against minorities in the open for many years. The KKK had over 4 million members by 1925 and operated in the open until court cases targeted their financial system and government infiltration reduced the organization into small, less organized chapters in the 1980s.<sup>15</sup> Despite these efforts, the nation has become more accepting of diversity and inclusion. The nation has fully integrated in every private industry, public corporation, and government institution.

### **How White Supremacy continues to thrive**

Although the nation has improved regarding racism and equality, in recent years, a segment of the population is becoming more aggressive in promoting and carrying out actions in an attempt to expand the power of white supremacy.<sup>16</sup> For example, the number of white nationalist groups increased in America by 55% between 2017 and 2019.<sup>17</sup> These groups continue expanding based on the ability to groom those who may unwittingly support their cause through unconscious methods. An example of these methods includes total denial, knowing but ignoring the problem, and nonviolent active participation.<sup>18</sup> Supporting the surge of white Supremacy is not always something easily recognizable due to unconscious bias.<sup>19</sup> Many times, white supremacy is supported or condoned in ways that appear to be harmless.

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<sup>15</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, “Ku Klux Klan.”

<sup>16</sup> “The Year in Hate 2019: White Nationalist Groups Rise for a Second Year in a Row – Up 55% Since 2017,” Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed March 29, 2021, <https://www.splcenter.org/presscenter/year-hate-2019-white-nationalist-groups-rise-second-year-row-55-2017>.

<sup>17</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center “The Year in Hate 2019.”

<sup>18</sup> Andrea Gibbons, “The Five Refusals of White Supremacy,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 77, no. 3–4 (2018): 729–55, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajes.12231>.

<sup>19</sup> Hart Blanton and James Jaccard, “Unconscious Racism: A Concept in Pursuit of a Measure,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 34, no. 1 (2008): 277–97, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.33.040406.131632>.

## **The Denial of White Supremacy**

The denial of white supremacy by white Americans may be the most dangerous method of support. This denial creates a condition that allows the expansion of white supremacist ideology to remain unchallenged. Dr. Andrea Gibbons of Salford University defines five ways that people deny white supremacy. First, many people “refuse to acknowledge much less reckon with the depths of violence inflicted upon body, mind, and soul.”<sup>20</sup> Many Americans fail to understand the history of slavery and how its legacy of brutal violence and emotional abuse continue to have a negative impact on the current structure of society within minority communities. Second, many people “cling to the privileges emerging from a racialized hierarchy and block the voices that call into question those privileges, which are also defined by class and gender.”<sup>21</sup> Many Americans deny the difference in how minorities are approached and apprehended by law enforcement compared to whites. Many armed and violent white offenders have been taken into custody, while many unarmed and non-violent minorities have been beaten and killed. Third, many people “evade the weight of history instead of actively coming to terms with the different ways in which our past continues into the present.”<sup>22</sup> Many Americans fail to recognize the correlation of the current toxic political notions of racial superiority by promoting the fear of immigrants and minorities to the excepted and normalized behavior of the nations’ past. Fourth, many people “deny responsibility for white supremacy’s spatial consequences, where a refusal to share space and resources deepens inequalities and maintains both white ignorance and dominance.”<sup>23</sup> Many Americans will suggest that minorities have difficulties achieving success due to a lack of effort, when in reality, minority communities are usually not provided the same

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<sup>20</sup>Andrea Gibbons, “The Five Refusals of White Supremacy,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 77, no. 3–4 (2018): 729–55, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajes.12231>.

<sup>21</sup>Gibbons, “The Five Refusals of White Supremacy.”

<sup>22</sup>Gibbons, “The Five Refusals of White Supremacy.”

<sup>23</sup>Gibbons, “The Five Refusals of White Supremacy.”

resources as white communities. Fifth, many people “refuse to get down to roots—to acknowledge structure and grapple with capitalism’s exploitative nature and the centrality of racial logics in capitalist development that has ensured the longevity of both economic exploitation and racism.”<sup>24</sup> Capitalism in America requires classism to be sustainable and because many Americans benefit from the marginalization of people considered less desirable, there is minimal desire to change the system.

Dr. Gibbons concludes that, “These are points at which white ignorance must be actively maintained in order to preserve both a sense of the self and of the wider structures of white privilege and dominance.”<sup>25</sup> Gibbons’ research suggests that some white Americans may willingly or unknowingly contribute to the appearance that fairness and equality exist for most or all Americans. Additionally, the lack of self-awareness of many white people regarding broader structures of white privilege and dominance maintain an environment where white supremacist ideology can easily spread.

### **Ignoring White Supremacy**

The matter of Americans ignoring white supremacy is the second method of supporting its goals. This problem has been ignored in law enforcement for many years. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, The United States government has known since 2000 that law enforcement officials with alleged connections to white supremacist groups or far-right militant activities have existed in the following states: Alabama, California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and West

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<sup>24</sup> Gibbons, “The Five Refusals of White Supremacy.”

<sup>25</sup> Gibbons, “The Five Refusals of White Supremacy.”

Virginia.<sup>26</sup> Research conducted by Professor Vida Johnson of Georgetown University suggests that these activities have not been addressed over the years by the law enforcement community due to a lack of interest.<sup>27</sup>

Professor Johnson and other research organizations have discovered that hundreds of federal, state, and local law enforcement officials participated in racist, nativist, and sexist social media activities.<sup>28</sup> These officers' racist conduct is usually known and accepted due to the structural bias in law enforcement that promotes people to leadership positions who do not see white supremacy as a threat.<sup>29</sup> In 2006, the FBI reported on the threat of white nationalists and skinheads infiltrating law enforcement agencies to disrupt investigations against their members and as a recruiting tool.<sup>30</sup> Former FBI agent Michael German, known for infiltrating white supremacist groups in the nineties, suggests these warnings have not been taken seriously due to the majority of law enforcement leaders being white males.<sup>31</sup> As far back as 1988, a neo-Nazi gang named the Lynwood Vikings composed of deputies from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department who patrolled black and Latino communities with corrupt and violent police tactics.<sup>32</sup> Some of these deputies were eventually charged and convicted. Additionally, a federal

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<sup>26</sup> Michael German, "Hidden in Plain Sight: Racism, White Supremacy, and Far-Right Militancy in Law Enforcement | Brennan Center for Justice," accessed April 4, 2021, <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/hidden-plain-sight-racism-white-supremacy-and-far-right-militancy-law>.

<sup>27</sup> Vida B Johnson, "KKK IN THE PD: White Supremacist Police and What to do About it" Lewis and Clark Review [Vol. 23:1]: 57. <https://law.lclark.edu/live/files/28080-lcb231article2johnsonpdf>.

<sup>28</sup> Robinson, Rashad. (2019). "We Can't Trust Police to Protect Us from Racist Violence. They Contribute to It."

<sup>29</sup> 136 and 181, "Confronting Explicit Racism in Law Enforcement | Brennan Center for Justice," accessed March 29, 2021, <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/confronting-explicit-racism-law-enforcement>.

<sup>30</sup> Vida B Johnson, "KKK IN THE PD: White Supremacist Police and What to do About it" Lewis and Clark Review [Vol. 23:1]: 57. <https://law.lclark.edu/live/files/28080-lcb231article2johnsonpdf>

<sup>31</sup> Michael German, Mireya Navarro, "Confronting Explicit Racism in Law Enforcement | Brennan Center for Justice," accessed March 29, 2021, <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/confronting-explicit-racism-law-enforcement>.

<sup>32</sup> "Thomas v. County of Los Angeles | Civil Rights Litigation Clearinghouse." <https://www.clearinghouse.net/detail.php?id=1019>.

class-action lawsuit was filed against the departments Lynwood Vikings gang.<sup>33</sup> The court found that deputies had engaged in racially motivated hostility.<sup>34</sup> The lawsuit was settled in 1996 for \$9 million dollars in fines and training costs.<sup>35</sup> Law enforcement has continued to be plagued with officers with racist ideologies, even those not involved in white supremacist organizations. Professor Johnson discovered there have been scandals relating to racist conduct in more than 100 law enforcement agencies in 49 states since 2009.<sup>36</sup> According to Professor Johnson, “when an officer is identified as holding racist beliefs, police departments often claim that he or she was a “lone-wolf” and downplay any possibility that these beliefs are held by others in the department.”<sup>37</sup> This mindset creates the illusion before the public that racial bias does not exist within law enforcement agencies.<sup>38</sup>

Politics even plays a role in ignoring the threat of white violent extremism. In 2009, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano faced an extreme backlash from lawmakers, conservatives, and veterans’ groups after an unclassified intelligence report warning law enforcement that current political and social conditions could trigger “right-wing” extremism was leaked to the media.<sup>39</sup> The report’s findings stated that veterans returning from combat affected by challenges reintegrating in their communities might join militias and “lead to the potential emergence of terrorist groups.”<sup>40</sup> The report cited President Obama’s election, rumors of potential gun control legislation, and the economic downturn as recruiting tools for right-wing

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<sup>33</sup> Anne-Marie O’Conner, Tina Daunt, “The Secret Society Among Lawmen,” Los Angeles Times, March 24, 1999, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1999-mar-24-mn-20461-story.html>.

<sup>34</sup> Anne-Marie O’Conner, Tina Daunt, “The Secret Society Among Lawmen.”

<sup>35</sup> Anne-Marie O’Conner, Tina Daunt, “The Secret Society Among Lawmen.”

<sup>36</sup> Vida B Johnson, “KKK IN THE PD: White Supremacist Police and What to do About it” Lewis and Clark Review [Vol. 23:1]: 57. <https://law.lclark.edu/live/files/28080-lcb231article2johnsonpdf>.

<sup>37</sup> Vida B Johnson, “KKK IN THE PD: White Supremacist Police and What to do About it”

<sup>38</sup> Vida B Johnson, “KKK IN THE PD: White Supremacist Police and What to do About it”

<sup>39</sup> DHS, “(U//FOUO) Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment: (610232012-001)” (American Psychological Association, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.1037/e610232012-001>. 3.

<sup>40</sup> DHS, “(U//FOUO) Rightwing Extremism.” 2.

extremists. The leak of the report was met with criticism from both Democrats and Republicans. Leaders from both parties felt the characterization of returning service members as potential terrorists offensive and unacceptable. Government officials refused to accept the findings of the report and called for the termination of Secretary Napolitano.<sup>41</sup>

### **Non-violent participation in White Supremacy**

Finally, non-violent participation in white supremacy is the method that allows the continuation of systemic discrimination, as shown in the Anti-Defamation League pyramid of hate.<sup>42</sup> The pyramid of hate demonstrates how biased behaviors begin with biased attitudes and grow in complexity and can then lead to extreme violence.<sup>43</sup> Nonviolent participation is promoted by incorporating biased attitudes into action. Acts such as non-inclusive language, insensitive remarks, biased and belittling jokes, and name-calling usually come across as harmless banter. This accepted behavior leads to more extreme actions such as exclusion, bullying, slurs and epithets, and finally, dehumanization.<sup>44</sup> Nonviolent participation is achieved in many ways during normal daily activities. Below are findings conducted by multiple research groups that show examples of unconscious behaviors that directly relate to the lower levels of the Anti-Defamation League pyramid of hate.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Government Publishing Office. "Right-Wing Extremism." Congressional Record Volume 155

<sup>42</sup> Anti-Defamation League. "Pyramid of Hate." [pyramid-of-hate.pdf \(adl.org\)](#)

<sup>43</sup> Anti-Defamation League. "Pyramid of Hate."

<sup>44</sup> Anti-Defamation League. "Pyramid of Hate."

<sup>45</sup> Kali Holloway, "10 Insidious Ways White Supremacy Shows Up in Our Everyday Lives," Everyday Feminism, September 1, 2015, <https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/09/white-supremacy-everyday-life/>.

- College Professors are more likely to respond to students they believe are white men for mentorship opportunities.<sup>46</sup>
- White people (including children) are less moved by the physical pain of people of color due to the historical dehumanization of minorities.<sup>47</sup>
- White people are more likely to have done illegal drugs but are far less likely to go to jail.<sup>48</sup>
- Black men are sentenced to far lengthier prison sentences than white men convicted of the same crimes.<sup>49</sup>
- White people (including police) see black children as older and less innocent than white children.<sup>50</sup>
- Black children are more likely to be tried as adults than white children.<sup>51</sup>
- White people are more likely to support the criminal justice system when they think it is disproportionately punitive toward black people.<sup>52</sup>
- The more a black defendant fits negative stereotypes in a murder case, the higher the likelihood he will be sentenced to death when the victim is white.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Katherine L. Milkman, Modupe Akinola, and Dolly Chugh, “What Happens before? A Field Experiment Exploring How Pay and Representation Differentially Shape Bias on the Pathway into Organizations,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 100, no. 6 (2015): 1678–1712, <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000022>.

<sup>47</sup> Rebecca A. Dore et al., “Children’s Racial Bias in Perceptions of Others’ Pain,” *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* 32, no. 2 (June 2014): 218–31, <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjdp.12038>.

<sup>48</sup> Human Rights Watch (Organization), ed., *Decades of Disparity: Drug Arrests and Race in the United States* (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 2009). 16.

<sup>49</sup> “Demographic Differences in Sentencing,” United States Sentencing Commission, November 13, 2017, <https://www.ussc.gov/research/research-reports/demographic-differences-sentencing>. 19.

<sup>50</sup> Phillip Atiba Goff et al., “The Essence of Innocence: Consequences of Dehumanizing Black Children,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 106, no. 4 (2014): 526–45, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035663>. 530.

<sup>51</sup> Aneeta Rattan, Cynthia Levine, (2012) Race and the Fragility of the Legal Distinction between Juveniles and Adults. PLoS ONE 7(5): e36680. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0036680

<sup>52</sup> Rebecca C. Hetey and Jennifer L. Eberhardt, “Racial Disparities in Incarceration Increase Acceptance of Punitive Policies,” *Psychological Science* 25, no. 10 (October 1, 2014): 1949–54, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797614540307>.

- White people falsely recall black men they perceive as ‘smart’ as being lighter-skinned, suggesting that they associate intelligence with whiteness.<sup>54</sup>
- White people view lighter-skinned people of color as more intelligent, competent, trustworthy, and reliable.<sup>55</sup>

The listed examples demonstrate how unconscious bias supports white supremacy in everyday life in America. All of the examples fall into level three of the Anti-Defamation League pyramid of hate: discrimination.<sup>56</sup> These conditions contribute to education discrimination and criminal justice disparities. Additionally, lower levels of the pyramid of hate, dehumanization and stereotyping are present as well. This level of discrimination is systemic and contributes to the sustainability of white supremacist ideology.

### **Bias-Motivated Violence**

The fourth level of the pyramid of hate is bias-motivated violence.<sup>57</sup> This is an extreme form of prejudice where violence may be motivated by fear, ignorance, or anger.<sup>58</sup> Incidents of bias-motivated violence are recorded as hate crimes by the FBI. In 2019, 8,812 hate crimes were reported and 57.6% of the crimes were motivated by race or ethnicity.<sup>59</sup> Table 1 shows the 6,406 cases where the offender’s race was known, 3,365 were white. Table 2 shows out of the 4,930 victims by race, ethnicity, or ancestry, 2,391 were due to biases towards African Americans.

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<sup>53</sup> Jennifer L. Eberhardt et al., “Looking Deathworthy: Perceived Stereotypicality of Black Defendants Predicts Capital-Sentencing Outcomes,” *Psychological Science* 17, no. 5 (May 2006): 383–86, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01716.x>, 385.

<sup>54</sup> Ben-Zeev, Avi, Tara C. Dennehy, Robin I. Goodrich, Branden S. Kolarik, and Mark W. Geisler. (2014). “When an ‘Educated’ Black Man Becomes Lighter in the Mind’s Eye: Evidence for a Skin Tone Memory Bias.”

<sup>55</sup> Lance Hannon, “White Colorism,” *Social Currents* 2, no. 1 (March 1, 2015): 13–21, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2329496514558628>.

<sup>56</sup> Anti-Defamation League. “Pyramid of Hate.” [pyramid-of-hate.pdf \(adl.org\)](https://www.adl.org/files/Pyramid_of_Hate.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> Anti-Defamation League, “Pyramid of Hate.”

<sup>58</sup> “The Psychology of Hate Crimes,” <https://www.apa.org>, accessed April 4, 2021, <https://www.apa.org/advocacy/interpersonal-violence/hate-crimes>.

<sup>59</sup> “FBI Releases 2019 Hate Crime Statistics,” Press Release, Federal Bureau of Investigation, accessed April 4, 2021, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/fbi-releases-2019-hate-crime-statistics>.

Table 1. FBI Hate Crime known offender statistics 2019

<i>Race/Ethnicity/Age</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Race</b>	<b>6,406</b>
White	3,365
Black or African American	1,532
American Indian or Alaska Native	68
Asian	58
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	22
Group of Multiple Races <sup>2</sup>	425
Unknown Race	936
<b>Ethnicity<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>5,443</b>
Hispanic or Latino	547
Not Hispanic or Latino	1,801
Group of Multiple Ethnicities <sup>4</sup>	103
Unknown Ethnicity	2,992
<b>Age<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>5,599</b>
Total known offenders 18 and over	4,734
Total known offenders under 18	865

- <sup>1</sup> The term *known offender* does not imply the suspect's identity is known; rather, the term indicates some aspect of the suspect was identified, thus distinguishing the suspect from an unknown offender.
- <sup>2</sup> The term *group of multiple races* is used to describe a group of offenders of varying races.
- <sup>3</sup> The total number of known offenders by age and the total number of known offenders by ethnicity do not equal the total number of known offenders by race because not all law enforcement agencies report the age and/or ethnicity of the known offenders.
- <sup>4</sup> The term *group of multiple ethnicities* is used to describe a group of offenders of varying ethnicities.

**Source:** Criminal Justice Information Services Division. “2019 Hate Crime Statistics.” Federal Bureau of Investigations. 2020. <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2019/tables/table-9.xls>

Table 2. FBI Hate Crime Victims by Race/Ethnicity/Ancestry statistics 2019

<i>Bias motivation</i>	<i>Incidents</i>	<i>Offenses</i>	<i>Victims<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Known offenders<sup>2</sup></i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,314</b>	<b>8,559</b>	<b>8,812</b>	<b>6,406</b>
<b>Single-Bias Incidents</b>	<b>7,103</b>	<b>8,302</b>	<b>8,552</b>	<b>6,268</b>
<b>Race/Ethnicity/Ancestry:</b>	<b>3,963</b>	<b>4,784</b>	<b>4,930</b>	<b>3,550</b>
Anti-White	666	755	775	645
Anti-Black or African American	1,930	2,314	2,391	1,682
Anti-American Indian or Alaska Native	119	126	135	101
Anti-Asian	158	205	215	153
Anti-Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	21	25	26	26
Anti-Multiple Races, Group	134	171	173	82
Anti-Arab	95	122	126	86
Anti-Hispanic or Latino	527	676	693	547
Anti-Other Race/Ethnicity/Ancestry	313	390	396	228

- <sup>1</sup> The term *victim* may refer to an individual, business/financial institution, government entity, religious organization, or society/public as a whole.
- <sup>2</sup> The term *known offender* does not imply the suspect's identity is known; rather, the term indicates some aspect of the suspect was identified, thus distinguishing the suspect from an unknown offender.
- <sup>3</sup> A *multiple-bias incident* is an incident in which one or more offense types are motivated by two or more biases.

**Source:** Criminal Justice Information Services Division. “2019 Hate Crime Statistics.” Federal Bureau of Investigations. 2020. <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2019/tables/table-9.xls>

Planning for and conducting bias-motivated violence has been carried out by civilians, law enforcement, and military members. When the murderers are not convicted, and police rarely charged or convicted for their crimes, this reinforces the dehumanization of black Americans. These failures legitimize white supremacist ideology and therefore embolden others to conduct

acts of bias-motivated violence. These individuals and those who sympathize with them provide recruiting opportunities for white supremacist groups.

### **Bias-Motivated Violence by Civilians**

Bias-motivated violence by civilians has led to high-profile murders. On February 26, 2012, Trayvon Martin was visiting his father in Sanford, FL. While walking home from the store, Trayvon was confronted by George Zimmerman, who was captain of the neighborhood watch. Before the confrontation, Zimmerman called the Sanford police to report Martin as suspicious and then ignored the police dispatcher's advice not to follow him. An altercation ensued, and Zimmerman shot and killed Trayvon in the process.<sup>60</sup> Another high-profile case is the case of Michael David Dunn. Michael Dunn shot and killed Jordan Davis at a Jacksonville, Florida gas station on November 23, 2012. Dunn complained to a group of teenagers in a car parked next to his that the music was too loud and asked them to turn it down. An argument ensued between Dunn and the teens. After the verbal exchange, Dunn repeatedly fired into the vehicle, killing Jordan. Dunn's girlfriend, who was present, later told law enforcement before the incident, he told her, "I hate that thug music."<sup>61</sup> The afternoon of February 23, 2020, was the day Ahmaud Arbery was murdered. Ahmaud was out jogging in Brunswick, Georgia. As he entered the Satilla Shores neighborhood, residents Gregory McMichael and his son Travis armed themselves with a pistol and a shotgun and attempted to detain him, believing he fit a burglary suspect's description, though no burglaries had been reported. Ahmaud's murder was recorded

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<sup>60</sup> History com Editors, "Florida Teen Trayvon Martin Is Shot and Killed," HISTORY, accessed April 4, 2021, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/florida-teen-trayvon-martin-is-shot-and-killed>.

<sup>61</sup> "Florida Man Shoots and Kills 17-Year-Old Teen after Argument over Loud Music at Gas Station - New York Daily News," accessed April 4, 2021, <https://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/man-shoots-teen-loud-music-article-1.1209345>.

and released to the media.<sup>62</sup> The violent criminal actions of these men were problematic. However, the bigger problem, especially in the Ahmaud Arbery, case is the continuous effort made by some citizens and law enforcement to protect the men who committed the murder by suggesting the victim was somehow responsible for his own death.<sup>63</sup> The murderers of Ahmaud remained free for two months due to an alleged coverup.<sup>64</sup> The case was not investigated until an attorney leaked the video of the murder to the media.<sup>65</sup> The suspects in these cases committed acts of violence due to biases and ideologies that allowed them to believe they could take the life of a person of color and not be held accountable for their actions. Citizens who openly support or minimize the actions of anyone committing these sorts of crimes, especially members of law enforcement and government officials, lend credibility to white supremacist groups.

### **Bias-Motivated Violence by Law Enforcement**

Ignoring racial bias and white supremacy in law enforcement, as discussed earlier, has had a severe, negative impact on minorities in America. The data regarding bias-motivated violence by law enforcement officers is substantial.<sup>66</sup> Data shows people of color face a higher

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<sup>62</sup> Jon Jeter, “Killings of Arbery and Martin Tragically Similar -,” June 4, 2020, <https://spokesman-recorder.com/2020/06/04/killings-of-arbery-and-martin-tragically-similar/>.

<sup>63</sup> “Arbery Complaint,” accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/20490528-arbery-complaint>.

<sup>64</sup> “Arbery Complaint,” DocumentCloud.

<sup>65</sup> “Lawyer Who Leaked Video in Ahmaud Arbery Case Defends His Decision,” firstcoastnews.com, accessed April 10, 2021, <https://www.firstcoastnews.com/article/news/local/arbery-lawyer-defends-video-release/77-1191b57d-86eb-40cd-ad3c-b5776e3e57e2>.

<sup>66</sup> Gabriel L. Schwartz and Jaquelyn L. Jahn, “Mapping Fatal Police Violence across U.S. Metropolitan Areas: Overall Rates and Racial/Ethnic Inequities, 2013-2017,” *PLOS ONE* 15, no. 6 (June 24, 2020): e0229686, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0229686>; Joscha Legewie, “Racial Profiling and Use of Force in Police Stops: How Local Events Trigger Periods of Increased Discrimination,” *American Journal of Sociology* 122, no. 2 (September 1, 2016): 379–424, <https://doi.org/10.1086/687518>; Michael A. Robinson, “Black Bodies on the Ground: Policing Disparities in the African American Community—An Analysis of Newsprint From January 1, 2015, Through December 31, 2015,” *Journal of Black Studies* 48, no. 6 (September 1, 2017): 551–71, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934717702134>.

likelihood of being killed by police than white men and women.<sup>67</sup> That risk peaks in young adulthood. Men of color face a nontrivial lifetime risk of being killed by police, while black men and boys face the highest lifetime risk of being killed by police.<sup>68</sup> In a study published in the peer-reviewed scientific journal *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, data on police violence in America was examined. The findings suggest that police kill 1 in 1,000 black men and boys.<sup>69</sup> The majority of police victims are white (52%) which makes sense considering whites are a much larger population segment.<sup>70</sup> However, blacks are disproportionately represented (32%) with a 2.8 times higher fatality rate than whites.<sup>71</sup> Black victims are more likely to be unarmed (14.8%) than whites (9.4%).<sup>72</sup> Black victims have continued to be over-represented relative to the U.S. population, comprising 34% of victims but only 13% of the American population.<sup>73</sup> Further, although force was employed in fewer than 4% of contact between police and all racial/ethnic groups in 2008, blacks were nearly three times more likely than whites to experience any use of force during a law enforcement encounter.<sup>74</sup> Many of these violent interactions are captured on video and have multiple witnesses, but the officers are rarely charged for their crimes. Just as civilians provide a recruiting pool for white supremacist groups, law enforcement officers provide a pool of trained recruits with legal authority over the civilian population. Law enforcement officers involved with

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<sup>67</sup> Frank Edwards, Hedwig Lee, and Michael Esposito, "Risk of Being Killed by Police Use of Force in the United States by Age, Race–Ethnicity, and Sex," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 116, no. 34 (August 20, 2019): 16793–98, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1821204116>. 1

<sup>68</sup> Edwards, Lee, and Esposito, "Risk of Being Killed by Police Use of Force in the United States by Age, Race–Ethnicity, and Sex." 3.

<sup>69</sup> Edwards, Lee, and Esposito, "Risk of Being Killed by Police Use of Force in the United States by Age, Race–Ethnicity, and Sex." 3.

<sup>70</sup> Sarah DeGue, Katherine A. Fowler, and Cynthia Calkins, "Deaths Due to Use of Lethal Force by Law Enforcement," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 51, no. 5 Suppl 3 (November 2016): S173–87, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2016.08.027>.

<sup>71</sup> DeGue, Fowler, and Calkins, "Deaths Due to Use of Lethal Force by Law Enforcement."

<sup>72</sup> DeGue, Fowler, and Calkins, "Deaths Due to Use of Lethal Force by Law Enforcement."

<sup>73</sup> DeGue, Fowler, and Calkins, "Deaths Due to Use of Lethal Force by Law Enforcement."

<sup>74</sup> DeGue, Fowler, and Calkins, "Deaths Due to Use of Lethal Force by Law Enforcement."

white supremacist groups can compromise public safety plans and responses. According to retired Special Agents Donald Mihalek and Richard Frankel, government officials are assigned security details based on position, threats, and risk.<sup>75</sup> Law enforcement officers assigned to these details have access to safety and security protocols for their assigned elected official. This information in the hands of a white supremacist group could lead to a catastrophic security emergency.

### **Bias-Motivated Violence by Military Personnel**

The United States military is perhaps the favorite target population for white supremacist recruiters. All military members are trained on the basics of marksmanship, first aid, survival, and planning operations.<sup>76</sup> Military members in specialized units have advanced training in these areas.<sup>77</sup> Various members of the military have been arrested or removed from service for planning biased acts of violence or membership in white supremacist groups. To cite one recent, high-profile example, Ethan Melzer, 22, of Louisville, Kentucky, was arrested for allegedly planning an attack on his U.S. Army unit by sending sensitive details about the unit – including information about its location, movements, and security – to members of an extremist organization named Order of the Nine Angles (O9A), an occult-based neo-Nazi and white supremacist group.<sup>78</sup> Melzer was charged with conspiring and attempting to murder U.S. nationals, conspiring and attempting to murder military service members, providing and

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<sup>75</sup> A. B. C. News, “Protecting US Government Leaders: Who Gets Security and Why: ANALYSIS,” ABC News, accessed April 4, 2021, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/protecting-us-government-leaders-security-analysis/story?id=66258938>.

<sup>76</sup> Headquarters, Department of The Army. “Soldiers Manual of Common Tasks, Warrior skill level 1.” June 2009, <https://www.milsci.ucsb.edu/sites/secure.lsit.ucsb.edu.mili.d7/files/sitefiles/resources/STP%2021-1-SMCT,%20Warrior%20Skills,%20Level%201.pdf>

<sup>77</sup> “Special Forces Training,” goarmy.com, accessed March 29, 2021, <https://www.goarmy.com/special-forces/training.html>.

<sup>78</sup> Department of Justice. (2020). “U.S. Army Soldier Charged with Terrorism Offenses for Planning Deadly Ambush on Service Members in His Unit.” <https://www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/file/1287731/download>.

attempting to provide material support to terrorists, and conspiring to murder and maim in a foreign country.<sup>79</sup> The FBI and the U.S. Army prevented Melzer's plot in late-May 2020, and the FBI arrested him on June 10, 2020.

Another high-profile example of bias motivated violence by military personnel is the case of Chris Hasson. Christopher Paul Hasson, age 50, of Silver Spring, Maryland, a Lieutenant in the United States Coast Guard, was arrested on February 15, 2019. Christopher Hasson self-identified as a white nationalist for 30 years. He advocated for focused violence to establish a white homeland.<sup>80</sup> Law enforcement recovered the following items from Hassan's home: seven rifles; two shotguns; four pistols; two revolvers; an assembled firearm silencer; and a disassembled firearm silencer as well holsters, knives, magazines, ammunition, handguards, camping supplies, Meals-Ready-to-Eat, steel body armor plates, plate carriers, tactical vests and pouches, firearm repair kits, and smoke grenades, as well as hundreds of rounds of ammunition.<sup>81</sup> Due to the perceived threat to the public, Hasson remained in custody during his trial. Lieutenant Hassan was sentenced to thirteen years in federal prison, followed by four years of supervised release, on federal charges. The charges include unlawful possession of unregistered silencers, unlawful possession of firearm silencers unidentified by serial number, possession of firearms by an addict to and unlawful user of a controlled substance, and possession of a controlled substance.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Department of Justice. (2020). "U.S. Army Soldier Charged with Terrorism Offenses for Planning Deadly Ambush on Service Members in His Unit.

<sup>80</sup> "Christopher Hasson Sentenced to More Than 13 Years in Federal Prison on Federal Charges of Illegal Possession of Silencers, Possession of Firearms by an Addict to and Unlawful User of a Controlled Substance, and Possession of a Controlled Substance," January 31, 2020, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-md/pr/christopher-hasson-sentenced-more-13-years-federal-prison-federal-charges-illegal>.

<sup>81</sup> "Christopher Hasson Sentenced to More Than 13 Years in Federal Prison on Federal Charges of Illegal Possession of Silencers, Possession of Firearms by an Addict to and Unlawful User of a Controlled Substance, and Possession of a Controlled Substance."

<sup>82</sup> "Christopher Hasson Sentenced to More Than 13 Years in Federal Prison on Federal Charges of Illegal Possession of Silencers, Possession of Firearms by an Addict to and Unlawful User of a Controlled Substance, and Possession of a Controlled Substance."

Finally, the case of Vasilios Pistolis documents how young military members with no history of supporting white supremacist ideology can be influenced by white supremacist groups on the internet. In June 2018, a military court sentenced Pistolis to 28 days confinement, reduced rank to E-1, and forfeiture of two-thirds pay for one month.<sup>83</sup> Pistolis was removed from the Marine Corps in July 2018. Pistolis had a clean record when he enlisted in the Marine Corps and only required a minor medical exception. There was no paper trail or social media data that connected him to any radical group or extremist ideology. A ProPublica story published in 2018 exposed his online chat logs that revealed his participation in the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017.<sup>84</sup> The NCIS investigation of Pistolis’ included a search of his laptop. The evidence discovered included what NCIS considered alarming search terms such as; a mini 14 suppressor, balaclava, mini 14, mass shooter Anders Breivik, mini 14 folding stock, North Hollywood shooters equipment, North Hollywood shootout museum, and skull mask.<sup>85</sup>

The three cases mentioned above have elements that on their own should not cause anyone to be alarmed. Interest in firearms and tactical gear is very typical in the United States and even more so among military personnel who regularly train with and use these items. The element of concern is the tie to white supremacy groups. Additionally, the specific interest in violent action against civilians carried out by Anders Breivik, and those who participated in the North Hollywood shootout, is beyond problematic. Combining trained military professionals with white supremacist ideology is a clear and present danger. These individuals can have ties to militias with a similar mindset and goal. This combination has proven effective in organizing,

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<sup>83</sup> Shawn Snow, “The Neo-Nazi Boot: Inside One Marine’s Descent into Extremism,” Marine Corps Times, September 9, 2019, <https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/your-marine-corps/2019/09/04/the-neo-nazi-boot-inside-one-marines-descent-into-extremism/>.

<sup>84</sup> Snow, “The Neo-Nazi Boot.”

<sup>85</sup> Snow, “The Neo-Nazi Boot.”

planning, and executing threatening public demonstrations as well as violence.<sup>86</sup> Recruitment of military members provides white supremacist groups advanced training in tactics, intelligence, and effective planning while providing credibility to the legitimacy of their mission.<sup>87</sup> Military members are a force multiplier for white supremacist groups planning operations against the United States. Additionally, military members with higher pay grades have strategic intelligence in use by the government that can aid these groups in accomplishing their goals.

### **White Supremacist Attacks on United States Institutions**

White supremacist groups have become more aggressive in planning violence and demonstrating shows of force to the U.S. government, which threatens the security of the nation. Federal agents prevented a plot in Michigan to violently overthrow the government and kidnap and harm the Governor, Gretchen Whitmer.<sup>88</sup> Militia members conducted reconnaissance operations of her home and were training with firearms and explosive devices.<sup>89</sup> The plot involved six primary conspirators dissatisfied in part with Whitmer's decisions on coronavirus restrictions, considering them a form of tyranny. Additionally, the plot included joining forces with members of a Michigan militia known as the Wolverine Watchmen. Michigan officials have accused this organization of targeting police, making threats to instigate a civil war, and helping to plan Whitmer's kidnapping.<sup>90</sup> This group also considered kidnapping the governor of

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<sup>86</sup> "Capitol Attack Underscores White Supremacist Infiltration of Police, Military," Center for Public Integrity, accessed April 4, 2021, <https://publicintegrity.org/inside-publici/newsletters/watchdog-newsletter/capitol-attack-underscores-white-supremacist-infiltration/>.

<sup>87</sup> "(U) White Supremacist Recruitment of Military Personnel since 9/11." Federal Bureau of Investigations Counterterrorism Division. July 7, 2008. [https://documents.law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/FBI\\_WHITE\\_SUPREMACY-2008-ocr.pdf](https://documents.law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/FBI_WHITE_SUPREMACY-2008-ocr.pdf)

<sup>88</sup> "Feds Say They Thwarted Militia Plot to Kidnap Whitmer," accessed April 4, 2021, <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2020/10/08/feds-thwart-militia-plot-kidnap-michigan-gov-gretchen-whitmer/5922301002/>.

<sup>89</sup> "Feds Say They Thwarted Militia Plot to Kidnap Whitmer."

<sup>90</sup> "Feds Say They Thwarted Militia Plot to Kidnap Whitmer."

Virginia, Ralph Northam, due to similar policies regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>91</sup> These organizations have a white supremacist ideology as well as an anti-government agenda with the goal of starting a civil war.<sup>92</sup> Armed members of these groups stormed the Michigan state capital wearing tactical gear. These members confronted law enforcement and were not met with any resistance. Militia members walked throughout the Michigan state house in a show of force.<sup>93</sup> The ability of white power groups to infiltrate and occupy a government building lends credibility to the capability of that group to successfully conduct attacks on government institutions in the future.

The threat of white supremacy to national security was again realized during an assault on the federal government in Washington D.C. The combination of the various citizens and groups supportive of the white power agenda culminated on January 6<sup>th</sup> 2021. The assault on the United States Capitol was an attempt to overthrow the government through violent means. Some of the insurrectionists were current or former members of law enforcement and the military, many of whom were members of white supremacist groups.<sup>94</sup> The group breached police perimeters and stormed the building in an attempt to prevent the formalization of President-elect Joe Biden's victory. These insurrectionists occupied, vandalized, and looted parts of the building for several hours. The insurrection led to the evacuation and lockdown of the Capitol, numerous injuries, and five deaths. The combination of ordinary citizens and citizens with law enforcement

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<sup>91</sup> "FBI: Virginia Governor Also Target in Militia Kidnap Plot," accessed April 4, 2021, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2020/10/13/fbi-virginia-governor-kidnapping-plot/5977718002/>.

<sup>92</sup> "Armed Militias Are Taking Trump's Civil War Tweets Seriously - Lawfare," accessed April 4, 2021, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/armed-militias-are-taking-trumps-civil-war-tweets-seriously>.

<sup>93</sup> "Protesters, Some Armed, Spill into Michigan Capitol Building Demanding End to Stay-at-Home Order - ABC News," accessed April 4, 2021, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/michigan-rally-shelter-place-order-spills-capitol-building/story?id=70432928>.

<sup>94</sup> "Capitol Attack Underscores White Supremacist Infiltration of Police, Military," Center for Public Integrity, accessed April 4, 2021, <https://publicintegrity.org/inside-publici/newsletters/watchdog-newsletter/capitol-attack-underscores-white-supremacist-infiltration/>.

and military training proved effective and successful in conducting an attack on the federal government.

## **Conclusion**

The United States is a nation with a dark past regarding racism and white supremacy. As the nation has progressed, a segment of the population continues to hold on to that dark past. Some citizens openly embrace and directly contribute to the white supremacist agenda. Other citizens unknowingly support the movement due to unconscious biases. The credibility of United States government institutions has been compromised by individuals serving with these extremist views. Those with shared views of these organizations with specialized training, intelligence, and planning capabilities are highly sought after by these organizations. These individuals have the ability to compromise elected officials at the highest level of government. Due to politics, the United States government has failed to address this matter with any consistency. Some in government continue to use white supremacy as a political weapon to cause division (which plays into the hands of white supremacy groups), while others ignore the seriousness of the problem. The operations conducted in Michigan and Washington D.C. demonstrate the effective capabilities of these organizations. The success of the attack in D.C., though short-lived, showed the vulnerability of democracy in America. These groups were seconds away from reaching every elected member of Congress and the Vice President.<sup>95</sup> Had these insurrectionists been successful in completing their plan to execute government officials, the United States could have failed to have a democratic government. Continuing on the current trajectory of failing to address white supremacy is likely to cause a continued lack of faith in government institutions by a divided citizenry. The lack of faith is capable of leading to substandard local, state, and federal

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<sup>95</sup> Tommy Beer, "Report: Capitol Mob Came Within 100 Feet Of Pence," Forbes, accessed April 4, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tommybeer/2021/01/15/report-capitol-mob-came-within-100-feet-of-pence/>.

law enforcement as well as substandard government officials and military organizations by officials taking actions based on their beliefs instead of their sworn oath. The consequence of failing to acknowledge, address, and eradicate white supremacy in America will create a critical vulnerability of the United States to domestic adversaries.

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