

Speaker 1: [00:00:21](#) [inaudible]. Okay,

Audience Member: [00:00:33](#) we're ready. Everyone.

Speaker 1: [00:00:40](#) [inaudible]

Audience Member: [00:00:40](#) welcome back. We're going to start our panel on extremism in America, which was made possible by the sudden appearance in Aspen of Jonathan Greenblatt. Thank you very much of the ADL. So just to introduce everyone, uh, just want to start with, um, thanks to nick and to the Aspen Forum for holding this conversation almost every year. We've discussed some form of terrorism and it hadn't really come up yet. So, um, to start next to me, Jonathan Greenblatt, director of the Anti Defamation League, far up [inaudible] author of how we win and former Obama and Bush administration official working on these issues. And Nick Rasmussen, who was the director of the NCTC as well as several other roles, um, in counter terrorism in both the Obama and the Trump administration. So the reason we're looking at this is that we've seen the headlines from Charlottesville, et Cetera, but more worrying than that this year we have seen the attack in New Zealand, arguably domestic extremism that had international extremist ramifications when a few weeks later in Easter attackers in Sri Lanka who allegedly, uh, Isis said they'd sent, um, attacked churches killing more than 200 Christians. So I want to start with the question. Are the terms international terrorism and domestic terrorism, is it, is it again in Yang or do those terms even apply anymore, nick?

Nick Rasmussen: [00:02:20](#) Well, um, I think for, for purposes of discussion and in policy making in Washington, we often ended up bucketing international and domestic terrorism into two separate buckets. And again, I hope one of the things I hope you leave here today with is maybe some sense that that may not be the right way to think about it. And that doesn't mean I have all the answers, but I know that putting those two things in vastly different categories really doesn't serve us all that well. And when I think about my time in government service working on terrorism issues, all of the hundreds of conversations we had in the situation room, all of the hundreds of conversations we had with foreign partners around the globe with whom we were working to counter, um, our terrorist adversaries. Not One of those conversations that I can recall ever centered on what this, this set of issues tied to domestic extremism, whether that's tied to a white supremacist ideology or antisemitic ideology, some other hate based ideology.

Nick Rasmussen: [00:03:15](#) And actually I feel a little bit sheepish and almost embarrassed about that because when you talk to Americans, um, that is what is much more likely these days to be at the front of their mind when they're thinking about extremism and terrorism. That set of concerns about, um, jihadism, isis or al Qaeda sponsored terrorism is still very much there and it should be, but actually more and more here in America, it is that, and Jonathan will, we'll share with you the statistics about this. American communities are more threatened by other forms of terrorism today, uh, than the kind of terrorism that I made my business for the last 17 years. So thinking about them in separate buckets just may not make sense anymore.

Farah Pandith: [00:03:52](#) Well, I was going to also underscore what nick is saying. This whole of government approach to solving a problem, uh, has not been deployed on this issue of the US versus them ideology. Um, we have made that mistake in other fields and we're making that mistake right now as well. The, the young people that are finding that ideology appealing are digital natives. And by that we already know that there is no defined region of a domestic battlespace and an international battlespace. A young person connecting an idea in New York connects with that person in New Delhi. It is not about a physical map. It is about an intellectual cohesion of ideas. And that's something we have to relate really remember and stand up a government in the 21st century to be able to respond to the kind of threat we have today by not doing this domestic versus international. Uh, reframing. So I want to put a pin in that did

Audience Member: [00:04:49](#) just called it us versus them ideology as a one size fits both Islamic extremism and right wing hate ideology and extremism

Farah Pandith: [00:05:00](#) at the baseline. For many of these groups, and I want to be clear, I don't want to make things simplified so that you don't see the distinctions and the genesis of some of these other groups because I think it's important to understand what these groups stand for, but at its most basic form, in order for someone to be moved into the direction of finding that ideology appealing, you are selling them something that is about us versus them.

Audience Member: [00:05:25](#) Jonathan said, well, what do you call them?

Jonathan G: [00:05:28](#) Well, I mean look, rather than dwell on the labels of it, I would just say like, here are the facts in the United States, we call this emergent movement the alt right, and it is a very digitized version, sanitized version of what we used to see parading down the streets in white sheets, but today they can hide

behind their screens and spew the same venom and in Europe it's called identity Tarion's. That's what they refer to themselves, but were European white supremacists marching in Charlottesville and there were American white supremacists marching in Poland two months later at the Poland Independence Day march, which for those you who don't attend, that is every year the largest gathering of white supremacists in Europe in 2017 there were 30,000 people somewhere in Khakis and loafers somewhere with skinheads and combat boots and look these, these groups, whether they're in Europe or in Australia and New Zealand or the United States, they share an ideology. They are anti immigrant, they are anti-democratic and they are antisemitic to the core and so they are using, as Farrah said, social media to spread ideas and to coordinate ways they simply could never do before but make no mistake, whatever you want to call it, white supremacy is a global terror threat and it needs to be treated as such.

Speaker 1: [00:07:02](#)

Is it,

Audience Member: [00:07:05](#)

is it the size and scale of the threat that Isis, Shabaab or Qaeda used to be? I mean, we have shootings. We don't have a nine 11 style attack yet staged by a white supremacist.

Jonathan G: [00:07:21](#)

We actually do 1995 the Oklahoma City bombing killed 168 federal employees and their children in the daycare center. And just so we understand each other. In 2018 there were 50 extremist related murders in the United States, about 80% were committed by white supremacists. That's the highest total we've seen since 1995 so let's not kid ourselves, they might not make the headline, but the fact of the matter is that white supremacy has been a persistent problem. And what we've seen at ADL, because we track this, is guess what, while they'd been percolating and planning and propagandizing on social media, they had a bit of a coming out party in 2016 when suddenly their ideas like open borders, like immigrants as invaders, like conspiracies by people like George Soros, these ideas that had been percolating in these white supremacist kind of thought groups for years suddenly found their way into the public conversation. Hmm. I wonder how that happened

Audience Member: [00:08:37](#)

and we will probably get to that later on. But before we do, I jump in on that absolutely global question though because I think on the one hand, as far pointed out, there are some very clear cemeteries, um, in the way in which an individual becomes radicalized regardless of ideology, the creation of the US versus them narrative, the sense of grievance

Nick Rasmussen: [00:08:56](#) that ultimately ends up pushing someone not just in the direction of extreme views but actually mobilizing to violence. Those pathways often look very similar. Whether you're mobile motivated by something like, um, Sunni Islamic jihadism or whether it's white supremacy or antisemitism or others, some other hate based ideology. What we have not seen, I think in that global movement of, of white supremacists or or right wing extremists is quite the degree of cohesion that you see across the globe with say Isis or al Qaeda where you have formerly affiliated groups. Cell structures in certain countries are very well developed. One that an archive, an archive, uh, an architecture that you can map in which we spend a lot of time and energy in the intelligence community mapping. But that doesn't mean that there aren't, as Jonathan says, clear international connections that we have to understand better. And that that came clear after Christchurch because then as the New Zealand authorities dug into the Christ church perpetrator and worked with their Australian colleagues to do so, they found that this individual had traveled overseas. He was in communication with, with likeminded individuals. Now is that plotting together? Well maybe not in this case, but there's not a long, a long distance to travel between the kind of connectivity that, that Jonathan's talking about and something much more nefarious.

Farah Pandith: [00:10:13](#) Good. Can I just say two things. One is, um, the playbook on how to do things really well has been written. It was written by Isis and it's being used around the world. We can watch on youtube and other places how bad things actually amplify. So if something happens in Norway, others can take lessons from that hellish event that happened and say, how can I deploy that for something that's happening here in the homeland? Um, I think what's very dangerous and I think that there are lessons. I, you know, the panel that just came before talking about Afghanistan and Pakistan, I couldn't help but think, my God, we've been having the same conversation for 20 years. And what, what I would say to us on this, I mean with Jonathan just said this anti semetic rise is, is not just sort of happening out of nowhere.

Farah Pandith: [00:10:58](#) It has been building and building. And the problem is that we have, not as government or as citizens said that this is something that we are taking seriously. So we keep measuring him. The measuring stick is, which of these extremisms is more serious? How many this and that can, and that's, that's what we do. We default to that posture. What I'd say today in terms of how we think about the future. If we know all the things we've just said, what are we going to do about it? So we're not in a

place where we're looking 10 years from now going, we saw the movement here and yet we did nothing. So my question to nick,

Nick Rasmussen: [00:11:34](#)

it's your most recent, um, most recently out government of this panel. Um, what kind of tools did you have at the NCTC to track this kind of terrorism? Well actually this actually did not fall into my job bucket at the National Counter Terrorism Center. Cause if you go to the, the, the, the founding legislation after nine 11 that created the director of National Intelligence and National Counter Terrorism Center. It said do all this terrorism stuff except for purely domestic terror, which would was largely left in the, in the hands of the FBI and our law enforcement community. So even as an intelligence community, other than the FBI, I don't mean to do anything to disparage the efforts of the FBI because I think they do a terrific job working these cases. Investigatively other than that, the government really as, as a whole and far referred to this earlier, is not an organized in a way to bring whole of government effort against this domestic terrorism set of problems.

Nick Rasmussen: [00:12:30](#)

And when you step back from a resourcing perspective and look at what are we spending, and that's ultimately where you end up with, with rubber meeting the road. I'm in the tail end of the Obama years, a relatively modestly sized interagency task force of officers from different agencies was set up at the Department of Homeland Security in order to oversee our, our countering extremism efforts across the country. That was relatively modestly sized and even at its, at its high watermark was in the, in the, in the low teens in terms of millions of dollars being spent and maybe a couple of dozen officers. Well that isn't even, that isn't even there anymore as a construct working, working to address these issues and I know Jonathan you have some strong views on this. We are organized in our government to tackle these problems and we've, we are largely leaving communities on their own to figure out their way through this mess and the government will never solve this problem from Washington, but we certainly should be a catalyst to community work in this area.

Farah Pandith: [00:13:28](#)

So if the f

Audience Member: [00:13:29](#)

Bi is right now the leading agency looking at this, how big is the problem? How many cases are they looking at versus the kind of terrorism that we're used to?

Nick Rasmussen: [00:13:37](#)

The only thing I would say is, you know, if you watch director Ray who in his public testimony in front of the Congress in recent months, um, has been asked this question by members

of Congress, he has I think cited the figure on a couple of occasions of around a thousand cases that the at his FBI staff or FBI agents around the country are pursuing. Um, he would call domestic terrorism and that's roughly on par with the case load that they have for the more kind of traditional international terrorism we're talking about. So that tells you in very crude but very interesting metric, uh, where we are size wise

Audience Member: [00:14:10](#)

and add the thousand cases that he had to deal with on the international side. He's got the whole resources of the inner agency that he can call on to help with those cases. Right, exactly. Uh, you were part of an effort for you too that at DHS to try to fix some of this. How's that? Why didn't it work? Is it still going

Farah Pandith: [00:14:33](#)

well? I didn't work with DHS. Sorry. Well, I, well, one, one thing I will say, okay, I'm in the effort to get to the place where at the end of the Obama administration, we were trying to figure things out. It took a lot of time, sweat and tears, uh, in the, in the Bush and Obama administration to get us to a place where we finally got some money from Congress to actually do this stuff. And when, I mean do this stuff, I mean at the community level, we know we cannot stop the US versus them ideology if it is not coming from local neighborhood, by neighborhood community, community, a credible programs that make sense for the community. We know that as government. So we had, there was a win at the end of the Obama administration where we were finally seeing some, some movement. What I also will say is under secretary Jay Johnson, he stood up a task force on countering violent extremism of all kinds and that passed course report in 2016 was bipartisan.

Farah Pandith: [00:15:29](#)

Um, and it said, what are we going to do? What's the plan? There is a 50 state plan right now ready and ripe to go just out of water. Here are all the things you need to do. And by the way, it isn't just about what DHS needs to do over at DOJ needs to do. It's to say that every element of this problem is a coordinated plan across government. So I would, I would say to you, we are. We would, we, we recommended that the Department of home, that of Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, other parts of government. Take a look at the crisis that we're facing with this rise of hate and let's, and let's actually deploy the kind of antibodies in the system that we know that can protect us, that we're not just looking for when the crisis has happened, that we are preventing young people from joining these kinds of groups. And Jonathan, you talked about working with government officials in the past on some of these [inaudible]

Jonathan G: [00:16:22](#) Oh, we certainly have. I mean at ADL we do anti bias education. We're in the leading providers in the United States of content in schools, anti bias, anti hate. We reach a million and a half kids a year and the end, we train police. We're the largest trainer of law enforcement in the United States. I'm extreme as in hate. Our biggest problem is not being able to meet the demand cause teachers and police officers and principals and sheriffs know they have a problem. But let me give you a little bit more data. So, because this problem, if you take away one thing from today, it is growing. So at the ADL we track these extremist groups. Let's start with campus. It might not be happening at, you know, Barnard or uh, some other campuses right at Hopkins. But last year in the academic year, we tracked 311 white supremacist activities on college campuses across the United States propaganda.

Jonathan G: [00:17:17](#) That was up 7% over the prior year, you know, where it had increased 77% year on year. So I'm talking about flyering, tabling, speakers and recruiting. These groups are actively recruiting at college campuses today. They're using the moniker of, you know, preserve your culture. They're using the kind of rhetoric around, you know, no more immigrants but they, these groups like identity Europa, like vanguard America, like the League of the south like Dixie identity. They are the same old tired rhetoric tropes. So we're seeing it on campus and we're seeing it off campus. So just to give you some stats, we checked last year, oh 868 868 propaganda events across the country. That was 182% increase over the prior year. I'm talking about flyering signs, flash mob type meetings this year to date, the first half of the year, 923 so something is definitely going on. It might not be happening in downtown Aspen. No really, you might not see it in the northwest, but even in the northwest, uh, I'm sorry, I'm talking about d c northwest DC at politics and prose and author was doing a book talk some, you may remember this, it got some attention, politics and prose, not exactly what you think of as a hotbed of white supremacy.

Jonathan G: [00:18:56](#) And his talk was d and it was about kind of the socioeconomic plight of white of the white male today. And his talk was disrupted by 12 sort of jackbooted, jackbooted people going in with the solutes and the signs and all that that was in, you know, the district of Columbia at politics and prose. So this issue is out there, maybe below the waterline, but we're deeply concerned about it.

Audience Member: [00:19:20](#) So was ugly as that propoganda and the message that they're sending is, when does it go from freedom of expression, which

is guaranteed by the constitution to something that threatens violence that is actionable for the FBI or law enforcement?

- Jonathan G: [00:19:37](#) Well, here's what I would say about that. So politics and prose is not a free speech zone. If you go into politics and prose in you yell died or DJ you, they will throw you out as they should. And if you stand in the lobby of the Aspen Meadows resort and you yell at the staff, go back to Mexico, they will throw you out as they should. And so this idea, you know, look the ADL, we are fierce advocates for the first amendment, but we can't allow extremists to exploit freedom of speech because the constitution may predict, may protect the freedom of speech. It doesn't protect our feet into slander and it may protect the freedom of assembly but not your freedom to incite violence. So there were lines, we can draw it and we owe it to ourselves to do that
- Audience Member: [00:20:25](#) do. But do you think those lines are strong enough? I'm, I'm, I'm, it got defined more clearly in the hunt for Isis and al Qaeda. Um, but still I would talk to FBI agents who were frustrated at how much evidence they needed to have to act against someone and how many people they were having to follow. And now we're talking about this problem. When
- Nick Rasmussen: [00:20:47](#) you add this whole new category, there's certainly a wider array of tools available to the law enforcement community when you're talking about international terrorism. Because again, the kind of the statutes we have on the books that that criminalize material support for terrorist organizations means that if you take over it acts in the name of Isis or al Qaeda or, or Hezbollah or Hamas or some declared terrorist group, you are then potentially at risk of being charged with a federal crime. And all of the, all of the, the mechanisms kick in. It is a bigger challenge for law enforcement when you're dealing in this space because again, I think your questions are good wind cam because unless you, until you get start to creep up to the question of actual violence, it's much more difficult, much more challenging for the FBI to predicate a full investigation. But, but
- Farah Pandith: [00:21:32](#) we have had conversations about inspiration. What inspires somebody to do something? Where is it coming from? Um, and I would ask all of us to think about this horrifying situation. Can you imagine if there was an equivalent to a nine 11 that happened in another part of the world that was inspired by what's happening here in America? Does that mean that we are liable in some way for what happened? That we are the inspiration place, the way we looked at other countries for inspiring a cue or inspiring isis will other state actors look at us



and say, America is the source of inspiration for this. So we are, we aren't even having those kinds of conversations in our, in our, in our conversations, in government and our conversations outside of government, we aren't imagining what can happen if we just sit back and allow all this to continue to thrive.

Farah Pandith: [00:22:27](#)

And I'd say one other thing. Um, isn't it interesting that when nine 11 happened, uh, and we began to ask really difficult questions around what is inspiration, what will we allow on? How many hours can Sama bin Laden be on youtube before we decide to take him down? Uh, how long will we be willing to, to, uh, accommodate x, Y, or z? We were, we had very clear ideas about, about that. After a while, why aren't we having the conversation? Why is there some special thing that's happening with a, an isis inspired like group that doesn't, has not existed? When I was in government, in the Bush administration, we were seeing a rise of antisemitism in Europe. We were also seeing rise of Holocaust deniers at the very same time that people who had survived the Holocaust were dying because of their age. And we knew we could see the, the data that was beginning to grow. We were not seizing that opportunity to ask the difficult questions. And I would, I would say to you, if we don't ask those hard questions today, we aren't going to be ready for what is coming. And so, Kim, all of these authorities and these things that the FBI, it is a much bigger problem that you're, then you're even talking about. Well, that brings us to the question of the message that's coming from the top. And we have to bring up, um, uh, president Trump's comments after Charlottesville,

Audience Member: [00:23:47](#)

um, in which there was a clash between, uh, white supremacists and counter protesters and protests or Heather hire was killed, um, by one of the white supremacists. And the president talked about their being good people and find people on both sides. Um, all the way up to this past weekend when he tweeted that for a congress, women of color needed to go back to their countries and there's been all the controversies sits that, how much does that retard the conversation we need to have about the leap being made from these white supremacist groups to groups that would do violence?

Jonathan G: [00:24:29](#)

Well, what I would say about that is, I mean, so we know that when the president intentional or not, and by the way, when I'm about to say this is not political, I don't really care how you vote. I don't, I care what you value. And the things that are happening right now I think are so are such a departure from traditional Republican and democratic politics, the tone that's being set is, is blisteringly unfamiliar in terms of what we expect from the president, the United States. And I'm going back to

Obama and to Bush and to Clinton and to Bush and to Reagan and just keep going back. Now I say all this because we know that when, whether intentional or not, he's parroting the words of white supremacists like again, using phrases like an international conspiracy to to violate us [inaudible] when he talks about literally globalists.

Jonathan G: [00:25:31](#)

Okay. Or again, open borders or invaders. These are phrases that didn't just come from nowhere. They literally had been developed and curated and white supremacist circles. Why is that relevant? Well, because literally if you read and we at the ADL have the either good fortune or misfortune of paying attention to this stuff and I can tell you that the white supremacists feel emboldened right now because he is repeating the rhetoric as one of them whose name I won't dignify and mention here today wrote on Sunday, he wrote, this is the white nationalism we elected him for and we are tracking these people, not just what they're telling CNN, what they're saying. In Four Chan and eight Chan and gab in discord in minds, they're private chat rooms. The ADL is following them and they feel emboldened and they feel energized and they feel like they have their wind at their backs. That my friends is a brand new reality that we have not seen before. And I've only been at ADL for four years, but the people who've been there for decades, I listened to them and they say we've never seen anything like this.

Audience Member: [00:26:37](#)

And that's also something that u s adversaries in the gray zone can with maybe Russia has already been in the information space with bots trying to stir up, um, two sides of the race debate. Do you see that picking up?

Jonathan G: [00:26:54](#)

We definitely saw in 2016 and I, and I would love if you have thoughts on this, in 2016 we were tracking all the lunacy that was happening online and we were particularly on Twitter. We looked at antisemitic attacks on Jewish journalists on Twitter during 2016 because so many of them came to me and said that you've seen what's happening. And I really hadn't. So I wanted to try to understand. So we took a random sampling of Twitter data and we've found millions and millions and millions of antisemitic tweets directed at journalists. They would make your hair stand on end. What we didn't understand at the time was a number of them were location stamped like Russia, Ukraine, Belarus. We didn't get it at the time, but it is very clear in retrospect that Russian trolls were manipulating sentiment in order to foment the kind of discord that's playing out today.

Jonathan G: [00:27:44](#) So acting as the spoiler and again, I think our intelligence community has been pretty clear about describing this not just in the election context but it just in terms of the broader political context here in America as Jonathan is saying, we would have a problem all by ourselves even if the rest of the world had nothing to do with this. But our adversaries can, can use the tools of modern technology to add a little fire-starter to what is already, um, you know, burning embers and turning something into a much more of a flame and a, and a burning fire that, and it would be otherwise. And what's difficult to do with in the moment for people to identify what information is real, what information is being fed to them through some, um, channel from overseas. It's almost impossible for them, for the average individual to make that distinction or to, to reach those conclusions by themselves. But we know the impact it's having and the impact it's having is to accelerate this problem, um, far beyond where we would have expected to be otherwise. What

Audience Member: [00:28:38](#) would all three of you ask president Trump to say to make it clear he doesn't back this kind of violence? Who wants to go first, suddenly quiet?

Farah Pandith: [00:28:54](#) Well, Kim, look, I think one of the problems is that it isn't about a statement from the president, um, because unfortunately two years in the statements that are said, uh, in one hour or changed the next hour or minute to minute. So it's a, it's a question of credibility. So I, I push it farther. I don't know what is in the president's heart. Um, none of us do, but he is the president for all Americans, no matter where we came from, no matter what our heritage is. Um, I don't want to be in a country in which there are blood tests telling us how pure we are. Okay. And I find it interesting that at the time when Americans, interestingly enough, are finding interest in finding out their own heritage by getting DNA tests. I mean, this is on the rise. These companies are making a lot of money. Where did I come from?

Farah Pandith: [00:29:43](#) How much of this, I mean, at the same time that's happening is the very same time we're having a rise of how pure we must be. I'd love the president, but to be able to show us, not just say, but show us in his actions that he doesn't mean to separate Americans by blood. Is there a story that I missed about a blood test for purity? The rhetoric that is being used about purity is, is what I'm referring to. It's not a story. It's how they perceive it's, it's their response when they get a DNA test, say in a not believing what they see and making excuses for the fact that their blood isn't, oh, you didn't like her present president Trump's attacks on Elizabeth Warren. I'm just joking. I'm not

getting political. I'm staying very neutral. Um, but I'm, I'm simply saying that, that, that in, in all of this, you're asking for something, the president to say, I want him to, to do something, not just say something, Jonathan.

Jonathan G: [00:30:40](#) Well, look, um, so the ADL is mission as written as well as laid out in 1913 is to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and secure justice and fair treatment to all. So when this organization was founded 106 years ago, the founders believed in America the best way to defend the Jewish people was to stand up for all people. [inaudible]

Jonathan G: [00:31:04](#) and so I will tell you, in an environment where antisemitism is on, the rise is on the rise. Literally last year, mid last three years, after a 15 year decline, it's spike 34% in 2016 57% in 2017 the largest single year increase we've seen at ADL in 40 years. And then last year it dipped 5%. And yet we saw more than a doubling of antisemitic assaults, more than triple the number of victims. And of course Pittsburgh punctuated the year. Um, so I think I talked to Jews across the country and while many of them, like some of the things that the president is doing, whether it's on taxes or on China or on Israel, more often than not, the Jews I talked to are terrified. Not because of something he said, but because of the tone he's setting and the things he's saying about the things that are being said about immigrants, about Muslims, about people who are different alarms, you alarms Jews. Cause we've heard, we've seen this movie before and by the way, the anger and the nativism and the rhetorical violence, we know how this story ends. And like look at Ambassador Albright's book. Like this is scary stuff. So what I would say to him is just stop talking.

Farah Pandith: [00:32:36](#) Well, knock it out. Yeah.

Nick Rasmussen: [00:32:41](#) It's pretty hard to give up the habits of a career civil servant. When I was a career civil servant, I wouldn't have presumed to tell the president what to do or say. Um, but what I'd like to see going forward as much as anything else is, would the Trump administration step up and fund and support the kind of programming, largely centered at DHS, but also at the Department of Justice and in a host of other federal agencies that would actually begin to make a dent in this homegrown extremism problem that we have [inaudible] solutions by any chance. There's the book that has solutions to, for those of you haven't read far as books, she brings a lot of, of, of creative energy and ideas to the table. You could actually act upon it. Um, but actually again, I, this is where I get a little bit wonky. You know, there are people in government who are trained to

do this work and there are fewer of them today than there were two years ago.

Nick Rasmussen:

[00:33:25](#)

And that is inexcusable. And again, I remember testifying a number of times in front of Congress alongside FBI directors, Ray and an FDA FBI director called me before that. And they were always consistent in saying, if the FBI is involved in one of these matters, we are past the point of no return. We're now at a point where someone has probably committed a crime and needs to go to jail. The hard work of this is the other side of this, this diversion work, this off ramping work where you get to people before they become that extreme, before they reach for the the tools of violence. And we aren't doing that on scale in our government at all and that is something, again, I agree with Jonathan completely rhetoric contributes to this, but again, at the end of the day, we've got within our reach to actually do more programmatically to address these problems and not something that's going to cost hundreds of millions of dollars either we're talking about tens of millions of dollars rather than hundreds of millions of dollars and yet wasn't one of the DHS agencies or task forces didn't its name get changed to make it harder to go after this kind of thing again? Yup. Again, I'm going to focus on the, in some ways on the positive, the Trump administration's declared counterterrorism strategy actually speaks to domestic terrorism as a challenge that must be addressed and risen to the, the question is, will they back those words up with the program's dollars and support that are needed to actually execute on that objective?

Farah Pandith:

[00:34:49](#)

That's what I said about action. You know, it's not about just the words, but the other thing is, and this is a win for the Trump administration. If they don't spend another dollar on designing brand new programs, all they need to do is scale what the u s taxpayer has already invested in, in the almost 20 years, since nine 11. And those programs exist. They have been market tested, they are right there at our fingertips. So he doesn't have to redesign anything. They just need to be committed to actually giving an congress, by the way, giving the money to both DHS and state to be able to do these programs. And on the domestic side as well. One other thing. Um, I think it is, um, it is, it is really important to remember something. The way in which we are always framed this as it is, is so hard to get communities that get sentiment change.

Farah Pandith:

[00:35:37](#)

And I know that that is not true. All of us know that that's not true. Corporations every day of the week get you to do things and buy things that you may or may not want to do because of the way they understand us. And so I would say the Trump

administration does need to do all of that. But I would also say too many of us who are looking at other ways to think about this, government has one role to play. Corporates have another role to play. And in talking with um, tech companies during my, my book tour, Kim, I was listening to them trying to figure out how they can actually think about this problem in a different way. We need to help and support action outside of government so that we can do this at scale.

Jonathan G: [00:36:20](#)

So I'll just build on that because as far as I know, there is incredibly important. It is easy in these environments, in this conference to personify everything in the president. But social media, if white supremacy is a global terror threat, it is being spread and sustained by social media. So the ADL, we literally opened a center in Silicon valley in 2017 because the problem is so profound. I used to work in silicon valley. I know many of these people, they are good people at the googles, at the Facebooks and the twitters and whatnot. And yet it is unmistakable. Extremists have exploited those platforms to terrifying with terrifying results. And we need those companies to step up and to do more to make sure those platforms are not abused, to spread prejudice, you know, and to coordinate the kind of terror we're talking about here today. And they've done it. They've done it with al Qaeda and Isis. They can do it with white supremacists.

Farah Pandith: [00:37:19](#)

Yes. So what,

Audience Member: [00:37:23](#)

what we haven't quite touched on yet though is what is driving this sense of disenfranchisement on both sides that leads them to go to social media, to four Chan to find their group, whether they re an isis sympathizer or a white supremacist supremacist of some sort.

Farah Pandith: [00:37:42](#)

Kim, one of the important ways, we talked a little bit about millennials earlier in the conversation, but I just want to bring it back home. We're talking about millennials and generation z who are navigating through their identity, trying to figure out who they are. Okay. Into the work that I've done in the kind of extremism that I have worked on. Um, that identity crisis is central to how we know the bad guys are recruiting. And when we are looking at other kinds of extremism, um, uh, from the white supremacist, the neonazis and the identitarian, it also comes back to belonging and identity, which is why it's critical that all of us understand that there is a role for every touch point in your community to make. It isn't just the mayor, it isn't just the governor. It is not just your senator. And it's not just the president, it's about what you do inside of your home, how you

teach your children. It's what's happening in schools and pts. It's how it feels to be in America. That identity is, and if that identity is, there's only a special pure way of being an American. We have lost the fight.

Nick Rasmussen: [00:38:43](#) Nick had, did you see a program that worked overseas on militancy that could work here? You know, actually there are obviously around the world a number of countries that have dealt with extremist challenges and various among them have um, either deradicalization programs or other forms of, of, of intervention or involvement or engagement designed to kind of turn people around. I don't actually ever look to those to provide lessons for the United States cause I'm just not, I'm just not sure those translate in the way that you would think they might. Um, you can learn more and more about how extremism and radicalization proceed. How the phenomenon, as I talked about earlier, the, the common, the common pathway that an individual travels, whether they're motivated by an isis ideology or a white supremacist ideology. And it's often, it's tied to history. Often it's tied to personal stressors.

Nick Rasmussen: [00:39:36](#) Often it's tied to a particular sense that this individual owns a responsibility to actually do something to, to shake up or alter the status quo or the reality that they're living in and, and so those are the things that should give us indicators. If you're in a, if you're a com a member of the community, you will be the first responder in many cases because it's not the FBI, it's not the CIA, it's not the national counter terrorism center that is going to be witnessed to this kind of behavior. It's more often than not going to be someone who's actually living with or near or around that individual. A few years ago when I was still in the national counterterrorism center, we studied a recent chunk of, of the, of the extremism arrests in United States and an over 80% of them. There was somebody in the aftermath who labeled themselves in a sense as a bystander who should have done something. I'm somebody who in retrospect said, oh, I knew something was off, or I was worried that they were on the way to something and they hadn't done anything about it. And that's where I think that the federal government can come in because we, that's where the federal government can help equip communities with the tools they need to recognize that behavior. What do you watch for [inaudible]?

Speaker 6: [00:40:43](#) Um, [inaudible]

Nick Rasmussen: [00:40:45](#) self isolating behavior,

Speaker 6: [00:40:47](#) um,

- Nick Rasmussen: [00:40:49](#) engagement with people on the other side of the globe. Uh, hooch, you know, with a likeminded, with a like-minded view. I'm just anti social behavior, whether it's a Nazi or isis. Exactly. And, and I, and again, this, the other conclusion from this study that I referenced was that there's no single thing that you can look for. And that's why, you know, if everybody wore a red shirt, that'd be easier. Uh, it doesn't work that way. And that's why the bystander phenomenon is, is the, is the, is the takeaway because it's the bystander who will notice the change in behavior and who will say it's different today than it was six weeks ago or a month ago. And now that's, that's something we've got to act on.
- Farah Pandith: [00:41:27](#) Sorry. Really quickly. There are two programs that we know are two lines of effort that we know definitely work. One is a former extremist who says I was part of that group. I'm now not part of that group and I want to have a story to tell you to make sure that you're not an extremist. There are nonprofit organizations in America today that how former white supremacist who in fact we can mind their content, we can put them in a place that another millennial will see in a way that is pure friendly, uh, and is authentic and real. And so scaling up those kinds of former extremists is really important. The second and, and is, uh, uh, an obvious thing as well is a mother is a child's first teacher. Okay. And we have seen around the world, um, programs in which mothers are actually playing a bigger role in their community and identifying what nick was saying, changes in their child's behavior that is moving that child in a different direction. Those kinds of programs that have already been market tested are at our fingertips and should be used here in the United States.
- Audience Member: [00:42:24](#) So before I move to audience questions, it's a wording. Um, get your questions ready. What do you do in terms of what does this do to international terrorism? Isis, uh, has claimed violence in 25 different countries since uh, their Capitol Rocca fell. Um, yes, they've lost their territorial caliphate but they're still acting, still recruiting. And you have a president at the top who's made political hay by dividing people, um, who tweets things that are widely perceived as anti anyone foreign all the way down to the proliferation of white supremacist, um, propaganda on social media to out in out violence. What, what is that doing?
- Nick Rasmussen: [00:43:19](#) Well, what isis or al Qaeda or like those who share that ideology can do is point to what they perceive as anti-muslim rhetoric. And use that to say see you or not, you are other, you are not part of that society. You will never be part of that society. You have no hope of being an assimilated and successful contributor in that society. And therefore our narrative is the one that



should land with you. Yeah. And again, that, that, that message isn't very hard to deliver. Um, in my last press engagement before I left government service, um, Jim Shooto who's here today, I think from CNN, my friend from CNN asked me, uh, in front of the bunch of other reporters, gee, does the president's rhetoric on Muslims make your job at the National Counter Terrorism Center harder? And I thought, well, how do I answer that with two days to go in government service? Um, so I said, anything that makes communities at odds with each other makes our job harder in preventing terrorism and extremism. So it's not just the president. I think Jonathan's words on this are wise. It's not only the president's words, it's the way in which words are allowed to traffic in our society. You know, said by, you know, thousands and thousands of people. But it was clear to me that our terrorist adversaries of the sort you're most familiar with Kim, from your reporting overseas, Isis and al Qaeda, they see what's happening here and they capitalize on it,

Audience Member: [00:44:40](#)

whether it's Russia or Isis or al Qaeda. Exactly. Um, so I'd like to open to audience. Oh Wow. Um, I'm gonna start with the lady in the green and white and then go, we'll just take two questions, the person right behind her afterwards and please, um, introduce yourself and as I always, Laurie Tisch, longtime and proud supporter of ADL. And thank you for, um, great panel. Um, so Jonathan, yesterday when we spoke, we also spoke about, um, the attack, especially antisemitic coming from the left. Yeah. Um, and you know, it's, it's totally different reasons, um, but can you or anybody else talk about that at all about, we'll, we'll, we just want to take two questions in a row. Okay, sure. So to, can you hand it to the gentleman behind you and can you also introduce yourself? Uh, Kevin Klein am the Homeland Security Advisor for Colorado and we run a preventing targeted violence program. So I'd like to get you guys to talk a little bit about the role of the states and what they're doing. Uh, we're taking a whole community approach, public health, behavioral health education, um, not the typical law enforcement thing that we'd usually do. And I'd like to hear what you have to say about that. So you're doing some of the stuff. Yeah,

Nick Rasmussen: [00:46:02](#)

I think Nick NICU wrote an article that was on, let me just institute sec, let me just jump in ahead on that question. Because if we had 50 states doing what is going on in Colorado, we would not be out of the woods on this problem yet, but we'd be much better equipped. And so I say that with respect and admiration for what's going on in Colorado where, but again, the takeaway from that is in each of the places around

the country where this is a problem, it's a different ecosystem. And so figuring out who are the key nodes in your own community, who have the tools that can contribute to a solution. That answer isn't the same in Colorado as it might be in some other state or some other large, major us city. But I, I'm tremendously encouraged by what I've seen, you know, growing out both federal and state level cooperation in Colorado.

Nick Rasmussen:

[00:46:45](#)

So every one wants to know the solution, uh, see him afterwards. And Jonathan left. We've talked beforehand about like left and right with, yeah, so I'll respond. Just say, I know like after I was in Poway after the shooting a few months ago, and I can tell you that governor Newsome and Agee Bissera are doing something very similar in light of the fact that they're not getting leadership in Washington. They organized the state level task force. How do we deal with white supremacy against a holistic approach? And can you remember what Russell about Poway oh, Palo was the shooting in the synagogue. Six months to the day of the Pittsburgh shooting where a man who by the way went in a young man, he went in and shot and killed one person, injured three. Uh, he was inspired by the Pittsburgh shooter. Right. And then, um, I mean we've all these links

Jonathan G:

[00:47:30](#)

from Norway to Charlottesville to a mother manual church to Pittsburgh to Poway, to Christchurch. Look, these aren't outliers on a scatter plot. These are data points on a trend line. Yup. And we need to take it that seriously with back to Lori's question, I think, look, neither side of the political spectrum is exempt from intolerance.

Jonathan G:

[00:47:55](#)

Just because you vote one way doesn't mean that your side doesn't have its own share of issues. And we certainly see a kind of intolerance on the hard left, which is also very troubling. But as we talk about violent extremism as in the people who are actually committing murders overwhelmingly in the United States, that's coming from a white supremacist crowd. And I guess what I would say about that is I do believe there's a political spectrum. White supremacy is over here. Okay. It is not, it doesn't hue to the way we traditionally think about politics. And again, go back to Reagan and Bush and Bush and just our recent years, we've had republican presidents who were absolute and John McCain and you know, Nick's at the McCain Institute who were fundamentally unambiguously opposed to this. So we've got to resist the temptation to see this as some political frame. It's something much more profound. And I would say scary.

Audience Member: [00:48:50](#) Uh, so I would like to take two more, um, the gentleman there and then, um, the lady right here. A lot of questions. Thank you. Stuart Bernstein, former American ambassador Denmark,

Jonathan G: [00:49:05](#) uh, could,

Audience Member: [00:49:07](#) I mean, why can't we have a war on hate? Like we've had a war on terrorism or war on cancer and go to the think tanks who provide all the policy, state things. What, what is your thoughts on that and can we just pass that up, um, over here to the lady in the striped shirt?

Audience Member: [00:49:33](#) Hi. I really appreciate your, uh, excellent discussion here. Uh, you mentioned about, uh, the fact that, uh, people assembling together, uh, where there is a possibility when fighting violence is, uh, not acceptable and Oh, our Ortho slandering is not acceptable. So we do have, I hate to put it like this, a definite elephant in the room in more ways than one because at these political rallies, uh, there's all this thing going on with Trump. He in there is in, uh, in citation going on in terms of the hate and that's, uh, our leadership is very important to, with, of course everything else and we have to do our park, but it's our

Farah Pandith: [00:50:28](#) leadership to why isn't he cut off when these people start to say, ah, then then back or put her in jail. What at? That's an insightful, uh, assembly. Thank you. So we've got basically a couple of questions along the theme of providing leadership from the top of an administration against this scourge. Mr. Ambassador, you ask a really important question and I want to just bring it back home to the, the baseline. You heard my colleagues and friends talk about nuanced, community-based solutions. What's happening here in this state is a very particular thing to this particular state. So too are the solutions in every part of our country. Um, the frontline workers who do this are not government people, government partners with nongovernment organizations of all kinds who are doing the work that government can do. And NGO goes, in order to do that work, have to spend time.

Farah Pandith: [00:51:25](#) ADL does it. They have whole teams of people who look and do the research and think tanks, have people who have to unfortunately watch beheading videos and other vile things online to learn what the bad guys are doing. These are people in their twenties and in their thirties who are getting paid very little because are NGOs who don't have a support system for their mental health every day. They don't have a security system. So when they're doxed, and by the way, they are, um, that they are protected. Th these are our frontline workers.

These are the people that the United States government and other governments around the world ask to do the work that we need to get done. So why haven't we scaled this? Because our armies aren't big enough. The we hate, hate, hate army isn't big enough. And the only way it will get big enough is if we help these NGOs scale.

Farah Pandith: [00:52:15](#)

And if we demand from Congress that they give the kind of money to our government to do what it is we need to do. I will give you one status, a static point. When we were fighting the so-called Islamic state, you know, we spent a lot of money in the kinetic war and the hard power war, we spent 0.0138% of that money in making sure young people don't join the group Isis. So there is an imbalance here in government and there's an imbalance in the cognition of Americans to understand who actually are the frontline workers. I'd love for us to take on high fighting hate, but it will require each one of us to help these NGOs do the job that needs to be done. Jonathan, if you could craft a law to put on the books, what would you say? Like you can't shout fire in a crowded movie theater. So what would you add to help fight extremism?

Jonathan G: [00:53:14](#)

So I'm not a lawyer and I don't play one on TV so I'm not going to get into the nuances right now. The First Amendment, I would simply say there's a whole body of case law out there that says when you're directly inciting violence against a person that is not protected by the first amendment. Just like if you cry fire in a crowded theater that is not protected by the first amendment. Does that give you slander someone and say something untrue about them that is not protected by the First Amendment? And so I think there are things that could happen right now. Like for example with the social media companies, they could stop this tomorrow, by the way, for what it's worth. Twitter announced last week a new set of policies to protect people against lander based on their faith or their religion and some other things they said they are going to make the tweet such tweets that relate to its content opt in. So you'll see it as gray at the click to see it. It doesn't automatically show up. They didn't apply it this weekend to the presidents.

Audience Member: [00:54:08](#)

So a couple more questions. Um, uh, the gentleman in the pink shirt, um, and Laura Rosenberg,

Audience Member: [00:54:17](#)

Huh?

Audience Member: [00:54:19](#)

Oh, just a second. Oh, can you introduce yourself? And the microphone is coming.

Audience Member: [00:54:23](#) Oh, the last answer by Jonathan touched. I'm Donald Criollo, just a private citizen. Uh, and I'd like to ask a question about the conjunction between the first amendment and hate messages. Uh, let's assume you have, uh, Jonathan had spoken about the spreading on college campuses of, of hate messages, antisemitism, racist sentiment. Uh, let's assume that you have such sentiment and let's take it both ways first that it incites violence, although it doesn't cause it directly that you can prove. And secondly that it's antisemitic, racist, something we all will hate but doesn't specifically incite violence. Okay,

Audience Member: [00:55:28](#) well I'll, I'll check their con law, um, skills in a moment. So can we get done? Okay. Can we get Laura's question to Laura Rosenberger from the German Marshall Fund? I want to follow up on Jonathan's really important points on silicon valley and the tech companies doing more. But in particular, I'd like to ask you about the role and how we actually get at the smaller platforms, the chance to eat chains, the gaps, the discords where many times there's actually nobody there to even answer the phone. I'm from Pittsburgh. I've worshiped in tree of life. Yeah. Um, the, the terrorist that, um, attacked my community was posting on Gab. Yeah. Um, so, so we're having such a hard time with the large platforms, but the smaller platforms where a lot of them are really the focus of this white nationalist activity, um, is really, I think one of the toughest nuts. And I'd love to hear your take on it.

Jonathan G: [00:56:18](#) So I'll tell you briefly, I mean, so since we understand, so there's the public web, Facebook and Twitter, which you can open up on your phone right now. Then there's what we might call the private web. Okay. And that is password protected sites that you can't just go into. So Gab and discord and fortune and h Shannon and parts of Reddit and mines and all these other places. And then there's actually the dark web, which is a whole part of the Internet, which is very difficult for you to access, but where a lot of the really credit card numbers and social crude numbers get traded really bad stuff. With respect to the smaller platforms, they're typically a part of the private web. We have. We have pushed and pushed. Part of that. I think what we could do is expose them, but part of it can also do is try to break up the value chain.

Jonathan G: [00:57:02](#) Who's hosting these services, right? Who's providing other support for these services and try to bring cases where we can to demonstrate that they may have a liability. When Robert, I don't want to say the names, but when the shooter goes to the site it says, I'm going to go in, says, what did he say? He said something like, I can't stand by when my people get

slaughtered. Screw the optics. I'm going in. When we can identify a pattern of behavior saying the Jews are the children of Satan, as he wrote, saying that diversity means chasing down the last white man as he wrote, saying other violent things as he wrote. Then saying he's going in. One might think maybe I'll go to you sir to determine whether or not there's real causality there and a case to be brought against Gab for hosting that and not taking action. So there's work we have to do. You're totally right Laura, to break up those value chains.

Audience Member: [00:57:53](#)

And Nick too, the example that he brought up of, you know, you've got a case where somebody incites violence but it, but

Nick Rasmussen: [00:58:01](#)

does well. Again, this gets to the point I made earlier where it, this is an easier problem for government or for law enforcement when you're tying it to an international terrorist, a, a designated terrorist organization. Because the very fact of speech on behalf of that organization is in fact a criminal activity or certainly could be construed as material support. It is much more difficult for law enforcement to, um, connect the dots and actually put this into a prosecutorial framework when the violence has occurred. When you're talking about these domestic terrorism ideologies. And that's frustrating and I think it's why you've seen some former justice department officials start to talk about maybe altering our legal framework. I gotta like Jonathan, I don't have a legal background, but there are former justice department officials who are talking about whether it's time to maybe consider a domestic terrorism statute that might help close some of these gaps and give, give federal law enforcement more tools.

Audience Member: [00:58:56](#)

So with that we have basically a minute left. What is the overall thing that each of you want to see happen in the next year to combat this?

Nick Rasmussen: [00:59:12](#)

Again, this is where I get kind of bureaucratic and wonky. I would love to see our government scale up the kind of efforts we've been talking about far I made an important point about the NGOs who do this work, the kind of the young men and women who are actually frontline working with these problems in communities around the country. When I was talking about scaling up federal government efforts, it was mostly in terms of budget dollars that would translate into grants to community organizations around the country. And that's hard for government to do sometimes because when you give grant money, you lose control and you take risks. And sometimes the money doesn't get spent as well as you would've liked, but, but this problem doesn't get solved from Washington or the w, you

know, the, the secretary of Homeland Security, so office in Washington. And so our government has to be a little more risk tolerant in terms of the way it spends its money in this way.

- Farah Pandith: [00:59:57](#) So within the next 365 days, I'd like to see every mayor in America and make hate a priority and do what they can to do, do in each city in America to push back against this kind of rise.
- Jonathan G: [01:00:09](#) I'm trying to think, uh, I guess I would say three things. So number one, I want the social media companies to step up once and for all. And again, they would throw you out at shake shack. They would throw out at Aspen meadows. I want Facebook and Twitter to throw out the antisemites in the racists period. That's long overdue.
- Speaker 1: [01:00:26](#) Okay.
- Jonathan G: [01:00:27](#) I think the second thing is I want leaders to lead and elected officials at all levels, no matter what party they affiliate from. Just step up and say, prejudice has no place in our public discourse. And then I think number three, I want the, I want the kind of war on hate that Ambassador Bernstein talked about where people of good faith, you know what? No matter where you're from, no matter how you vote, no matter who you love, all lock arms together and say, we're all Americans and our fate is wrapped up in one another. We're all gonna fight this together.
- Speaker 1: [01:00:56](#) With that, with that, I want to thank the panelists,
- Farah Pandith: [01:01:01](#) thank the institute and invite you all to enjoy a coffee break and be back here in about 15 minutes. Great. Nice Club.
- Speaker 1: [01:01:32](#) [inaudible].