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American Counterterrorism
Targeting & Resilience Institute

Report

**A Discursive Analysis of Far-Right Justifications for Violence:
The Permeance of 'War on Terror' Discourses in Civilian Spaces**

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The American Counterterrorism Targeting & Resilience Institute (ACTRI) is a cross-disciplinary, nonprofit research organization focused on the broad spectrum of transnational extreme-right, extreme-left, and militant-jihadi political violence. We study the relationships between them and their effect on how ideologies emerge, spread, dominate, and influence countermeasures.

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to use Critical Discourse Analysis to examine the rhetorical devices and narrative appeals used to justify violence perpetrated by far-right extremist groups in the United States. The author argues that far-right movements utilize the same discursive techniques wielded by previous administrations to justify use of force in the 'War on Terror' but transpose them within domestic political grievances to sanction violence against citizens with conflicting political ideologies. Those who disagree with them are labeled as domestic terrorists, thus showing how the politics of insecurity used within the War on Terror have returned home and influenced the justifications of violence for domestic groups combatting one another. This has transformed American cities into new counterterrorism battlespaces as factionalized civilians who fashion one another as domestic terrorists openly clash in public spaces throughout the United States.

This argument will be illustrated by qualitatively assessing three themes – existential security concerns, being defenders of the state, and espousing eliminationist rhetoric towards terrorists – popularly used within presidential discourses in the War on Terror by the Bush, Obama, and Trump Administrations with the social media posts, written manifestos, statements, and other discursive acts by the perpetrators of far-right violence and those who support them. Discourses will be employed as communicative units of analysis that when dissected and modeled reveals the natural subjectivity of security.

The arguments raised in this article serve to bolster the practicality of discursive theory in understanding social and political perceptions, specifically in how they are manifested into the real world and precipitate political violence as stated by those who commit it.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to qualitatively dissect the discursive constructions precipitating far-right violence within the United States. Through a comparative assessment, the author will attempt to illustrate how the rhetorical devices used by previous administrations to justify action abroad within the War on Terror are in effect transposed into a domestic setting by factionalized civilians openly battling each other in public spaces. Increasing rates of political violence from both right and left-winged factions have pitted civilians against civilians based on political belief. Peering consequentially into the discursive justifications used by the government to justify counterterrorism policies abroad can explain how warring domestic groups likewise use these arguments to justify violence at home while also explaining how, in their own words, their opposition groups are conceived as enemies of the state, which makes them legitimate and acceptable recipients of violence. This central logic forms the basis of the following question:

How have far-right movements within the United States incorporated themes from the War on Terror in their communications, and how do these adoptions create 'regimes of truth' precipitating political violence?

These questions rest upon two assertions. First, extremist groups in the United States have incorporated into their discourse popular themes from the War on Terror, which are used as foundational legitimating devices to garner sympathy and support towards their objectives while also demonizing their opposition with treasonous, anti-American labels intertwined with domestic insecurities. Secondly, that these incorporations have transformed American cities into counterterrorism battlespaces as civilians use these justifications to sanction violence in domestic spaces against other civilians whose politics are deemed as existentially threatening to the nation. This argument presupposes that their reasons for violence is underpinned by a politically biased regime of truth, where far-right extremist groups construct themselves as the defenders of an America besieged by internal threats who are supported by malign actors on different domestic fronts.

This argument and research question will be explored as follows. The author will first explain the conceptual premises on the benefits of understanding conflict dynamics through Critical Discourse Analysis. Language, amongst other communicative practices, creates social reality which forms the basis of human understanding. When intertwined with politics, using discourses to understand political violence allows one to peer into the power competition over whose insecurities rank high within a specific constituency and underscore how these competitions contribute to violence as civilians fight to effectively ensure their insecurities are at the forefront. This posits that the current political turmoil is not random wanton violence, but rather spurned by ideological differences between groups with opposing ideologies who are fighting to ensure and advance their version of security. The natural subjectivity of security, as expressed through discursive actions creates a fascinating method to explore how conflict is conceptualized, expressed, manifested, and ultimately directed. Secondly, relying on a top-bottom approach, the author will attempt to show how government discourses on terrorism and national security have been constructed and diffused within public minds, particularly in how it has transformed how perceived enemies of the state are conceived by far-right groups.

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The author will first apply this method to illustrate how the War on Terror is understood vis-à-vis the security concerns of the United States, as made real through the discursive practices of the Bush, Obama, and Trump Administrations. Then, the author will attempt to illustrate how far-right discourses have utilized these arguments to support their form of violence. The author will relate their links with War on Terror discourses under the umbrella of three categories – *having existential security concerns, being defenders for the state, and having eliminationist rhetoric towards oppositional groups* – to illustrate how these thoughts diffuse under a multitude of discursive layers inciting violence.

Data collection methodology involved extracting and synthesizing prominent statements, justifications, and arguments – verbally and textually written – from a variety of primary sources. This included but was not limited to court documents, police interviews, manifestos, documentaries and recordings of violent events, archived websites home to violent groups, screenshots from social media platforms (e.g., Parler, Telegram, Gab, Facebook, and Reddit), and the personal writings of violent perpetrators, supported from secondary sources which have archived and analyzed far-right movements in the United States.

Lastly, the author will apply Reyes-Rodriguez's Model – *The Rhetorical Constructions of War*[I] – to demonstrate how discursive practices create 'regimes of truth.' Reyes-Rodriguez posited that this model creates a simple yet functional basis to perceive how a political reality can be made through discursive expressions, especially when expressed within the rhetoric of conflict.

Reyes-Rodriguez Model – Rhetorical Constructions of War
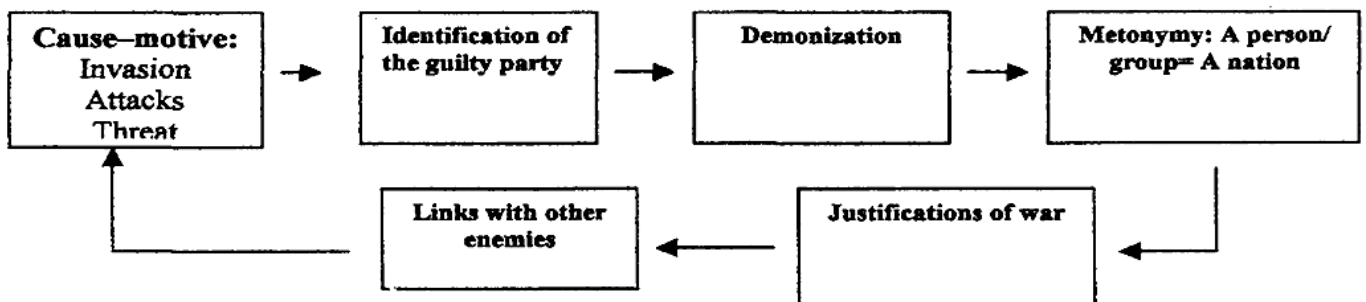
Source: Reyes Rodríguez, Antonio. "Speeches and declarations: a war of words." Revista alicantina de estudios ingleses, No. 19 (Nov. 2006); p. 366 (2006).[II]

This particular model is especially useful as it "intertwines a combination of analytical approaches, drawing on consideration of discourse, syntax, grammar, and culture in an attempt to contribute to the development of sociolinguistic theory."[III] To that end, this article will incorporate the aforementioned chart at the conclusion to illustrate how discourses prevalent across the far-right spectrum mirror the rhetorical devices used within the War on Terror. Furthermore, this model will illustrate how political realities are manifested and how utterances supporting violence are used to reinforce them. These regimes of truth do not manifest randomly but are discursively constructed and made real based upon the malleability of polarized political realities as they are built amid groups competing for security.

Ultimately, this article serves as an extension of the greater argument that the discursive framings used by a state to justify war and violence abroad can return home to justify violence and conflict among civilian groups; and the argument that security studies is underpinned by various regimes of truth produced by everchanging social and political realities that constantly changes answers to the questions of security for whom and security from what by what means.

Critical Discourse Analysis of Political Violence: Theoretical Framework

Foucauldian Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) asserts that "language, and language use, do not merely reflect or represent our social and mental realities, but they actually help construct or constitute these realities."[IV] Language is "inextricably linked with culture, works in the same way, as it may mask (or betray) hegemonic relations as relics of colonialism, racialization and othering in the context of societies that foster monoculture."[V] Studying discursive practices in this method means to analyze the recognizable patterns in oral and written discourse to identify their 'significs' and consequences to garner how language underpins sociocultural and political realities that reflect power relations and conflicting ideological perspectives.[VI] CDA further assesses the link between power and the creation of knowledge, as they interact with the construction of identity and societal self-understanding to understand how they fashion and authenticate reality. Discourses reveal how societal consensus and power relations are manufactured through language, underscore how these relations are constantly (re)produced via news forms of expressions, and illustrate how the narrative elements and rhetorical constructions unique to a society are used by competing groups arguing for whose truth to achieve. Discourses can serve as units of analysis which underpin the construction of reality and how individuals within an environment manufacture through communication a version of truth. Stated by Foucault himself:

"Each society has its regimes of truth, its general politics of truth – that is the types of discourse it accepts and makes functions as truth; the mechanism and instances that enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true."[VII]

Regimes of truth as created by language can be broken down into two elements. Discourses can be understood as systems of representations which construct a cognition nexus linking politics, sociology, and culture: "a formation of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with, a particular topic, social activity or institutional site in society."[VIII] Discourses are inherently socially constituted, meaning they are constructed, reproduced, reorganized and reinforced within various interactions; and, the multitude of social realities when mixed with contrasting political beliefs harbor animosity as groups with opposing power interests interact.[IX] This notion, "that actors/agents and systems/structures in the social realm undergo constant historical and social change,"[X] as Hayward argued, becomes heavily influenced by the political culture, laws, and norms of the dominant discourses propagated by those holding the reins to a society. Language is a social act, meaning that those with the most social influence will dictate how meaning is created. It is empirically observant that the greater an actor's power and ability to influence sociopolitical and structural environments, the likelier they are to impact the wider understanding in public spaces.

Iqbal Dawar stated that the coercive influence wielded by government officials, especially given the power provided by having access to classified information and the expressive nature inherent to their positions, has "an enormous effect in shaping political practices to constitute dominant discourse and re-produce identity for achieving certain goals."[XI] For cultures experiencing national emotional trauma such as 9/11, state discourses create coherent narratives that bestow meaning to the experience of trauma, creating a course for future understanding.[XII] When combined with mass media communications, how events are covered "tend to reinforce dominant sociocultural norms and values, confer status upon that which is covered (and thus relegate to nonevents that which is not)."[XIII]

In the case of the United States, counterterrorism efforts in the context of the War on Terror—at both domestic and international levels—propelled to a position of national policy primacy that was further amplified by extensive media coverage, sensational and polarized.[XIV] Answers to the questions of who the enemy is and how to securitize the nation from them, including how the public can best serve these causes, were not inherent to the aftermath of 9/11; rather, they were socially constructed and made acceptable by the rhetoric of conflict expressed by government officials. Their expressions gave truth by directing public consciousness in the War on Terror, creating a reality with socially uncontestable truths in the pursuit of security that determined who is expendable in its acquisition. The language of war in essence becomes a constitutive principle for political and social ordering in the relations and institutions of power; ergo, it determines whose version of security is legitimate, validated, and thus pursued. Rather than be restricted to the military or the space of battlefields as Spieck stated, war runs through and structures social and political relations.[XV]

Secondly, discursive practices are manifestations of the politics of representation which, in the context of this paper, is simply the conflict over meaning and understanding among groups competing for primacy and power in domestic spaces. Discourses create focal points for factions to represent their stances arguing how their understanding of security, culture, law, governance, and civil society is the best and should be achieved. As stated by Du Toit, conflict discourses are in fact 'legitimists' insofar as they incorporate criteria justifying legitimate use of force to support for the positions they argue but also incorporate rhetoric to make the opposition's argument illegitimate. Oppositional politics are often accompanied by "language that accompanies acts of violence, language that reports or reclaims acts of violence, language that leads to violence and violation, and language that is itself a violation." Oddo affirms with this, arguing that the struggles of legitimization amongst competing parties result in a polarizing Us/Them binary waged through sustained campaigns of positive portrayal of "Us" against the vilification of "Them". In other words, "Us" are the heroic protagonists who are in a just conflict with irredeemable aggressors, or "Them." This binary implies that violent action is indeed noble and justifiable as a course of action. To paraphrase Reyes, this binary when combined with the 'strategies of legitimization' that pair insecurity with a hypothetical better future only gained through action, especially as argued by societal actors with coercive power and political influence under altruistic and moral themes, solidified the justifications for the War on Terror. In effect, a call to arms is created. This type of language creates a reality where violence against "Them" becomes acceptable, and results in the "demarcation of political and subjective viability in the public sphere." This reality thus becomes an uncontestable truth. As Wenden stated, "inasmuch as linguistic representations determine the way in which we think about particular objects, events, situations and, as such, [discourses] function as a principle of action influencing actual social practice, there will be competition among groups over what is to be taken as the correct, appropriate, or preferred representation."[XXI]

Foucault argued in his thesis Society Must Be Defended that political truth is the output birthed by clashing understandings of identity, history, and society; how the truths created by this mixture disseminate and are expressed within warring groups can provide understanding of the subjectivity within a conflict as it is spoken into existence. Instead of a universalist understanding of conflict ¬– black and white binaries between right and left ideologies¬ – what instead emerges is "a certain decentering of truth: the basis for truth becomes partiality, partisanship, interest, race interests – the birth of this historical-political discourse serves as a truth-weapon, where truth turns on local interests."[XXII]

Discursive Strategies Underpinning the War on Terror

To understand how far-right groups have incorporated War on Terror discourses, first one must understand the inception, dissemination, and incorporation of its narratives and framing devices into 21st Century domestic security concerns. What political reality and security reconceptualizations did these discourses create for the American public? Jackson's below statement on the discursive practices within the War on Terror is an excellent primer:

> "The language of the 'War on Terrorism' is not a neutral or objective reflection of policy debates and the realities of terrorism and counter-terrorism. Rather, it is a very carefully and deliberately constructed - but ultimately, artificial - discourse that was specifically designed to make the war seem reasonable, responsible, and 'good,' as well as to silence any forms of knowledge or counter-argument that would challenge the exercise of state power."[XXIII]

This statement characterizes the War on Terrorism as a special political language of conflict and violence that does not speak for itself, insofar that it is constructed with its own assumptions carefully crafted with symbology, rhetorical devices and tropes, narratives, and privileged forms of knowledge. One, as Jackson stated, the events of 9/11, were assigned a particular set of meanings and importance that created a new regime of truth. Social understanding of the attacks against the United States were based on how the government imbued meaning to it, especially in how it was used as a primer to justify foreign policies and construct counterterrorism policies domestic and abroad. Jackson implied that 9/11 was imbued with meaning that portrayed the attack as an unprecedented calamity – a gash to the nation who was attacked, according to President Bush, "because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world."[XXIV] It has become a signifier immediately 'iconicised' as the foremost symbol of American suffering and fixed 9/11 as an exceptional ahistoricity. As Jackson stated, "group grievance, national suffering and a sense of communal victimhood provides one of the most potent means for legitimizing retaliatory counter-violence."[XXV] These discourses constructed and (re)affirmed new identifies for both the victims as innocent citizens and the villains as terrorists who are the embodiment of evil. These themes positioned conflict and retaliation as defensive and just against incompatible actors who must be destroyed to prevent them from destroying the United States. In other words, 9/11 became a call to arms that must be fought to preserve the integrity of America.[XXVI] Combatting terrorism in all areas of the world thus became the new calling of the United States.

The next two points are inextricably linked. The meaning given to 9/11 and subsequent arguments used to support the War on Terror created an Othering effect against designated terrorists, which essentially deprives opponents of rationality and political nuance. Reinforcing the Us/Them dynamic, the Othering effect - the philosophical term for describing the manner in which social group dichotomies are presented via language, especially in manners which those are demonized, caricatured, vilified, denigrated, oppress, dehumanized, and ultimately rejected as human beings – creates the justifications and the legitimacy for violence. Terrorists are 'unlawful combatants' while the United States citizens are the good soldiers in the right; thus, in this way do opposition forces become barred from degrees of rationality and nuance. Popular discussions of why al-Qaeda committed the attacks were deprived of politically nuanced answers and instead were eclipsed with simple arguments that the United States was attacked because 'they hate us for our freedoms.' A dangerous fallacy this creates as Chapekis and Moore posited is that the War on Terror results in a hawkish prosecution of the 'Other' which within the context of terrorism has largely been commonly associated with Islam, substate groups in the Global South, and geopolitical rivals. Prominent examples of this in the War on Terror includes the way certain literature, as Jackson argued, use controversial terms such as "Islamic terrorism" or "Islamist terrorists" and the appropriation of religious concepts such as jihad. The use of abstract, exotic labels serves to Other these groups and further differentiate how they are alien from "Us." Portrayals in this manner paints them as irrational and immoral persons who are not only "sub-human, but sub-animal...in dealing with a sub-human, sub-animal species, normal rules of combat simply do not apply."[XXVII] For instance, as stated by Edward Said:

"In newsreels or news-photos, the Arab is always shown in large numbers. No individuality, no personal characteristics, or experiences. Most of the pictures represent mass rage and misery, or irrational (hence hopelessly eccentric) gestures. Lurking behind all of these images is the menace of jihad. Consequence: a fear that the Muslims (or Arabs) will take over the world." [XXVIII]

This leads to Jackson's third point, namely that the War on Terror discourses centrally construct an infinite threat and danger of terrorists as an abstract, immanent, existential, and catastrophic threat to American ways of life, being equivocated to the degree of Nazi Germany and The Soviet Union. Essentially, there is a constant affirmation of who and what is bad for the public labeled under the term of terrorism. One this discourse has construed terrorism and those designated as 'terrorists' as the single greatest threat to the nation as an unprecedented form of danger, elevated to the status as the biggest adversaries in American history yet also construed in a way that makes it newer and more dangerous that any threat faced in the past. For instance, as former President Bush has stated, "[The War on Terror] this is a different kind of war that requires a different type of approach and different type of mentality"[XXIX] and "The attack took place on American soil, but it was an attack on the heart and soul of the civilized world. And the world has come together to fight a new and different war, the first, and we hope the only one."[XXX] Secondly, this rhetoric, as Patman posited, presents the world in binaries of good and evil linking where American policy in the War on Terror thus became spoken as a divine calling and fundamentally moral purpose. A purpose where Americans, having directly experienced a terrorist attack on their soil, considered to be the soul of the civilized world, must now lead the charge to stop terrorists both domestically and abroad. Those designated under the term of terrorists thus become the new ultimate enemy who must be defeated.

Lastly, Jackson stated that an important aspect of these discourse is that it attempts to legitimize and normalize a quintessentially necessary 'good war' which he calls a popular narrative device central in American society.xxxi Similar to how World War II and the Cold War are represented within a meta-narrative of American identity as good wars fought to preserve civilization, violence and force directed under the theme counterterrorism in the War on Terror fulfill the jus ad bellum criteria under the same framing devices. For instance, Former President Obama stated, "with the collapse of the Berlin Wall, a new dawn of democracy took hold abroad, and a decade of peace and prosperity arrived here at home.... And then, on September 11, 2001, we were shaken out of complacency."[XXXII] Likewise, former President Trump in a speech regarding terrorism stated that the War on Terror represents an ideological warfare against people who do not share our values, particularly stating that "events may require the use of military force – but it's also a philosophical struggle, like our long struggle in the Cold War."[XXXIII] In an ideological conflict deemed existing outside the 'conventional' boundaries of interstate warfare, the distinction between battlefield and civilian space becomes blurred as counterterrorism operations are executed in civilian spaces in a conflict construed as the new calling of the world's most powerful supernation. These discourses underpin how the War on Terror discourses from the government changed American understandings of security as the various actions and policies within it were justified under this umbrella. Precursory examples of this rhetoric persisting today stem from influential former President Bush statements, including comments such as the "Axis of Evil, you are either with us or against us, and they hate our freedoms; rhetorical discourses which contribute greatly to a sense of threat around an inevitable yet necessary confrontation."[XXIV] The War on Terror becomes a total war not only as an external war against covert groups, but also an internal war aimed at control, regulation, and surveillance of populations.[XXXV] As Jones stated, this war christens the enemy as an "Other" as interconnected threat no longer limited by geography who violently exists outside the parameters of modern civilization. [XXXVI] Examples of statements from former Presidents and Vice Presidents in previous administrations highlighting a combination of these aspects include:

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Speaker	Statement
President Bush	The war we fight today is more than a military conflict; it is the decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century. On one side are those who believe in the values of freedom and moderation – the right of all people to speak, and worship, and live-in liberty. And on the other side are those driven by the values of tyranny and extremism; the right of a self-appointed few to impose their fanatical views on all the rest. As veterans, you have seen this kind of enemy before. They're successors to Fascists, to Nazis, to Communists, and other totalitarians of the 20th century.[XXXVII]
Vice President Cheney	At the same time, we realize that wars are not won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy – and, where necessary, preempt serious threats to our country before they materialize. The only path to safety is the path of action.[XXXVIII]
President Obama	I have made it clear that we will hunt down terrorists who threaten our country, wherever they are…This is a core principle of my presidency: if you threaten America, you will find no safe haven.[XXXIX]
Vice President Biden	If the covert action doesn't work, we'd better be prepared to move forward with another action, an overt action, and it seems to me that we can't afford to miss.[XL]
President Trump	This is not a battle between different faiths, different sects, or different civilizations. This is a battle between barbaric criminals who seek to obliterate human life, and decent people of all religions who seek to protect it. This is a battle between good and evil.[XLI]
Vice President Pence	It is a virtual certainty that you will fight on a battlefield for America at some point in your life. You will lead soldiers in combat. It will happen… And some of you may even be called upon to serve in this hemisphere. And when that day comes, I know you will move to the sound of the guns and do your duty, and you will fight, and you will win. The American people expect nothing less.[XLII]

These discourses are constructed by political mythologies framing American Exceptionalism in a battle of Civilization vs Barbarism. As Esch stated, "these two myths have helped defined American national identity and have been prominent elements of war discourses" [XLIII] as they include the cultural tools creating the legitimizations for violence. Moreover, as inferred from Erjavec and Volcic', these discourses constructed a new order that control representations and communications in ways that are simplistic,

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moralizing, and absolutist insofar that opposition to the United States is inherently evil and must be destroyed, thus privileging violence as necessary.[XLIV] In addition, these discourses as put by Newman and Levine have become determining features of political life, not only legitimizing violence but also becoming central organizing principles in the pursuit of security.

These declarations create a zero-sum struggle against stopping perceived enemies, domestic and abroad, in a Manichean environment where their existence is counterintuitive to American principles. Fine illustrations of such discourses include former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld statement of "they [terrorists] will either succeed in changing our way of life, or we will succeed in changing theirs" [XLV] and former CIA Director John claim that "If we were not as engaged against the terrorists, I think we would be facing a horrendous, horrendous environment."[XLVI] The result is a rhetoric which enforces a legal and theoretical monopoly of legitimate, necessary violence against persons deemed harmful to society, explaining the constant emphasis on terrorism as an existential issue despite terrorist incidents declining in the West.[XLVII] Extrajudicial violence, premeptive attacks, occupations, drone strikes, and other participating measures are not only moral but necessary and made legitimate by its ostensible utility. The resulting national character – a good country in a just war fought by beseeched citizens against a dehumanized evil – is thus born out of insecurity that has been amplified since 9/11 within the mainstream discourses of the War on Terror.

Eliminationist Rhetoric: Creating A Prosecution Against Enemies Threatening the State

A discursive strategy important in the War on Terror is how it has contributed to a zero-tolerance stance with designated enemies where any effective solutions involve complete extermination physically and ideologically. The term War on Terror is not a metaphor; rather, it becomes an ordering war para¬digm which creates legal, noble, moral justifications to take preemptive, or defensive, action against enemies of the state. Discourses within this paradigm have created lasting impressions on what is legitimate in the fight against terrorism and underscore the necessity of taking certain action, even if controversial, to protect the security of the state. This mythos argues that security can only be achieved by taking aggressive and uncompromising stances against enemies whose complete elimination is deemed universally beneficial to civilization. This staple – emphasis on relenting military might and lethal force to achieve goals[XLVIII] – has long been a criticism of the War on Terror explaining controversial actions, such as the Invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan in the Bush Administration, the increasing use of drone warfare (targeted killings), massive surveillance and the disposition matrix in the Obama Administration, and the Assassination of Iranian General Soleimani by the Trump Administration. This eliminationist rhetoric is illustrated by the following quotes

- **President Bush:** "We will direct every resource at our command - every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence, and every necessary weapon of war—to the destruction and to the defeat of the global terror network… We will starve terrorists of funding, turn them one against another, drive them from place to place until there is no refuge or no rest.[XLIX]
- **President Obama:** "Groups like ISIL can't destroy us; they can't defeat us… And even as we are systematic and ruthless and focused in going after them - disrupting their networks, getting their leaders, rolling up their operations—it is very important for us to not respond with fear… we defeat them in part by saying, you are not strong; you are weak."[L]

• **President Trump:** "Terrorists who oppress and murder innocent people should never sleep soundly knowing that we will completely destroy them. These savage monsters will not escape their fate, and they will not escape the final judgment of God."[LI]

These discursive constructions necessitate faith in the ability to directly confront threats through force and understand its application through a stance that simultaneously defensive and offensive. The logic of war and the rhetorical appeals used to support the use force for security is further evident when they are specifically applied to designated terror organizations and individuals. President Bush stated, "Our War on Terror begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated" [LII] again reaffirming the need to eliminate terrorists, which is reinforced when discussing individuals like Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein where the price of indifference in taking action against them would be catastrophic. [LIII] Likewise, President Obama stated, "We will destroy ISIL and any other organization that tries to harm us.... Our military will continue to hunt down terrorist plotters in any country where it is necessary." [LIV] This militaristic logic was heavily reinforced in the Trump Administration, namely in the context of Soleimani's assassination, "Soleimani's hands were drenched in both American and Iranian blood. He should have been terminated long ago. By removing Soleimani, we have sent a powerful message to terrorists: If you value your own life, you will not threaten the lives of our people," [LV] and on former ISIL leader al-Baghdadi whose death according to President Trump served as a constant reminder of the United States' "relentless pursuit of terrorist leaders and our commitment to the enduring and total defeat of ISIS and other terrorist organizations." [LVI] Violence against designated threats is discussed for how it brings immediate positive benefits, insofar that it becomes a legitimizing device where the absolute extermination of enemies is always national security.

This same logic, prosecutions of an Other in the War on Terror, are manifested between competing groups on the domestic level, especially as it injects itself within debates on whose version of security to achieve - right vs left, Democrat vs Republican, conservative vs liberal, citizen vs immigrant, citizen vs government – all of which are understood where "Us" are framed as 'real' Americans are against "Them" who are fashioned as ill-informed persons with political beliefs bad for the country. These persecutions based on ethnocentrism, or as defined by Kam and Kinder as "the commonplace human tendency to partition the social world into virtuous ingroups and nefarious outgroup,"[LVII] have fundamentally underwritten rhetoric within the War on Terror, but now have returned home within domestic groups fighting each other. Within this conflict, the "portrayal of information can create a specific narrative for the consumer of the information, and how this narrative can affect the behaviour, beliefs, and perspectives of the consumer."[LVIII] Devolved of attempts to understand the argument in the ideological positioning of the opposing side, discourses instead express outrage and contempt towards their beliefs, and moreover, further frame them as being terrorists with treasonous and ill-informed views. Building the discourses is the narrative of a degenerative American; one that will take over the country with a dangerous agenda deliberately with their actions or indirectly through policy. Confrontational discourses with violent rhetoric from groups against their opposition helps to reinforce national unity among their supports, building a hegemonic identity contrasting against them and creating a consensus on how to 'secure' the United States from them. Evidence of this lies in a critical critique of the impact of right leaning coverage within the War on Terror.

The media is influential in conveying and spreading ideas, and this social power can influence how citizens perceive national issues. Neiwart delved deep into this point arguing that the mainstream conservative coverage from conservative and right-wing sources in the beginning of the War on Terror was hyper patriotic in their defense of domestic policies and military actions abroad; damningly, as he stated, these policies remained just as eliminationist domestically against left-wing factions as they did against designated terrorists abroad. Critics, especially from those considered as liberals, questioning the rationale of counterterrorism policies amid the war on were labeled as traitors with irrational hate towards the country.[LIX] Neiwart further characterized this as 'eliminationist rhetoric' which began with popular rightwing talk show hosts in the 1990s citing statements such Rush Limbaugh's "I tell people don't kill all the liberals. Leave enough so we can have two on every campus–living fossils– so we will never forget what these people stood for"[LX] and Bill O'Reilly's "So, all those clowns over at the liberal radio network, we could incarcerate them immediately. Will you have that done, please? Send over the FBI and just put them in chains, because they, you know, they're undermining everything and they don't care, couldn't care less"[LXI] as examples. The resulting dynamic created a prosecution of liberal ideologies going against right and conservative-leaning notions of security that are marketed as being good for the country. Specifically, within the War on Terror as Neiwart stated, which echoes the argument of Edward Said:

"The eliminationist rhetoric became commonplace in movement conservatives' attacks on liberals, embodied in the book titles that flooded the marketplace. Sean Hannity's bestselling screed, Deliver Us from Evil: Defeating Terrorism, Despotism, and Liberalism (2004), summed up in its title the general conservative view that liberals were not just wrong, but evil. Other iterations of this meme were Dinesh D'Souza's The Enemy at Home: The Cultural Left and Its Responsibility for 9/11 (2007); Michael Savage's The Enemy Within (2003), which claimed that the nation's real enemy was liberalism; Ann Coulter's Treason: Liberal Treachery from the Cold War to the War on Terrorism (2003), in which she argued that Senator Joe McCarthy was right about Communists infiltrating the government in the 1950s, and charged that today's liberals were actively undermining antiterrorism efforts."[LXII]

The demonization of left leaning factions in the War on Terror discourses as detrimental towards national security and how these influences exacerbate a decline in the United States' ability to defend itself is evident in this assessment. Despite the time difference, these same themes are evermore present within contemporary attitudes. Prominent conservative talk show hosts such as Sean Hannity accused Democrats of inciting violence towards Republicans and having double standards towards inflammatory violence; [LXIII] Tucker Carlson stated that Democrats see Republicans and their supporters as terrorists and accusing them of hating America whilst simultaneously plotting revenge against those who supported the Trump Administration;[LXIV] Michael Savage stated "today's leftist movement is made in much the same way as a sausage – a blend of racist, communist and socialist ideologies from 20th Century Europe with a pinch of Nazism all grounded together, yet retaining the flavor of its various parts," lxv and Glenn Beck stated "It is time to rip and claw and rake, it is time to go to war, as the left went to war four years ago."[LXVI]

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The same sentiments fashioning oppositional forces as terrorists, enemies of the state, or societal units bad for the country lie within conservative politicians amongst all levels of local, state, and federal government. For instance, on the federal level, Rep. Matt Gaetz tweeted "Now that we clearly see Antifa as terrorists, can we hunt them down like we do those in the Middle East;"[LXVII] Rep. Doug Collins stated "They [Democrats] are in love with terrorists"[LXVIII] responding in a follow-up about his statement that "I think their actions are betraying them at this point;"[LXIX] and similarly infamous tweets such as President Trump's retweeting of video in which New Mexico Otero County Commissioner Cuoy Griffin who remarked that "The only good Democrat is a dead Democrat."[LXX] Indeed, as Hoffman stated, "virtually any especially abhorrent act of violence that is perceived as directed against society—whether it involves the activities of anti-government dissidents or governments themselves, organized crime syndicates or common criminals, rioting mobs or persons engaged in militant protest, individual psychotics or lone extortionists—is often labelled terrorism."[LXXI]

Comparatively speaking, left-leaning factions also follow the same discursive framing towards conservative and right-wing factions, especially given recent polarization sparked by opposition to the Trump Administration. Articles mentioning that those with conservative politics can potentially be 'domestic terrorists' have since followed left-wing scrutiny of the right,[LXXII] including christening millions of Trump supporters as domestic terrorists,[LXXIII] even creating new vague terms such as stochastic terrorism to describe the words of President Trump they disagree with.[LXXIV] Even more daringly, Republicans have been labeled a party of thugs, terrorists, rapists, and dopes to the point where Republican politicians who do not abide by liberal ideology are considered to vote for terrorists and thus no longer fit to serve since they are in "violation of the oath they took to defend and uphold the Constitution."[LXXV] As noted by Shuster in his discussion on the Capitol Hill riot, right-wing groups and individuals are now discussed in ways similar to al-Qaeda and ISIL insofar that "some commentators have even begun to call for a new American War on Terror in response to the Capitol Riot, one aimed at President Trump's more radical supporters on the right. That has stirred a broader debate about how best to fight right-wing domestic terrorism: with criminal laws already on the books, with new powers modeled on those crafted to fight Islamic terrorism after 9/11, or with some mix of the two." [LXXVI]

The War on Terror discourses have permeated into domestic security concerns, creating separate, yet foundationally similar regimes of truth based on right and left political ideology. Jackson purported that in this construction "the terrorist is re-made as a dangerous organism that makes its host ill; they hide interiorly, drawing on the lifeblood of their unsuspecting hosts and spreading poison."[LXXVII] Violence and force in the streets are all actions remedying the spread of this poison and are effectively a patriotic endeavor for the benefit of the homeland. The War on Terror, as stated by the Global Policy Forum, results in an environment driven by an ideology of fear and repression that has too often become an excuse for combating groups to disregard law and civil liberties in the pursuit of security. [LXXVIII] From this lens, it becomes easy to understand how violence throughout locations such as Kenosha and Charlottesville, including the Capitol Hill; foiled attacks such as the Michigan and Virginia Governor Kidnapping Plots; and the increasing spectacles of left and right supporters clashing, rioting, and demonstrating against one another in public spaces have effectively turn American streets into domestic counterterrorism battlespaces pitting civilian against civilian. They are not abnormal incidents of violence; rather, intrastate battles between politically polarized citizens who fight against their fellow citizens they see as terrorists. Those killed, hurt, or injured are discursively constructed as enemies of the state who must be necessarily targeted in a war to preserve internal security.
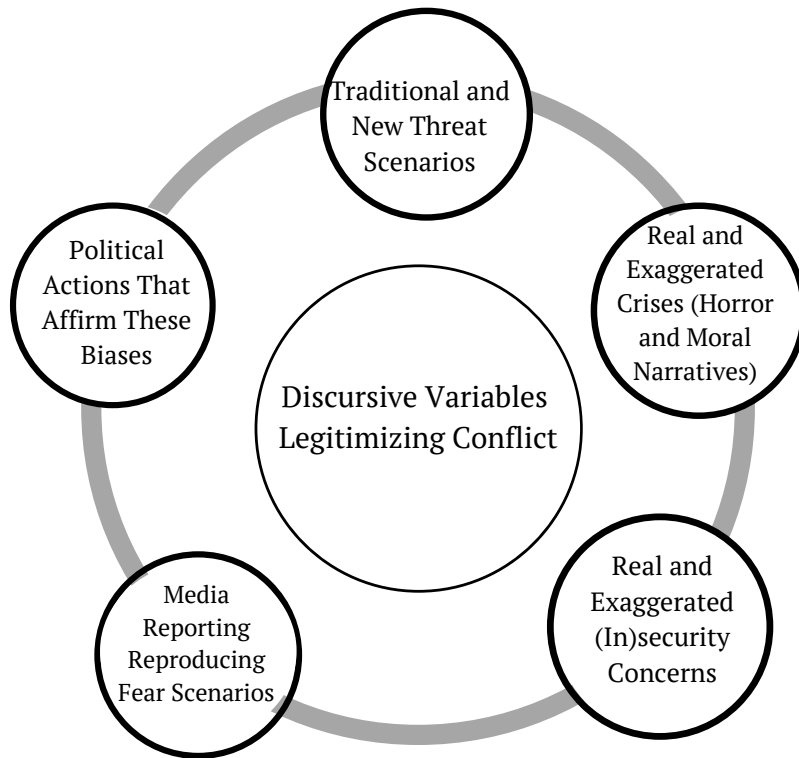
Defining Far-Right Discourses

With the War on Terror discourses explained and the regimes of truth it created described, this section will describe the specific ways far-right groups discursively express their violence under its lens. To begin, this article aligns with Chermak et al.'s definition of these as individuals, movements, groups, and other societal units who subscribe to the following ideals:

"They are fiercely nationalistic (as opposed to universal and international in orientation), anti-global, suspicious of centralized federal authority, reverent of individual liberty (especially their right to own guns, be free of taxes), believe in conspiracy theories that involve a grave threat to national sovereignty and/or personal liberty and a belief that one's personal and/or national 'way of life' is under attack and is either already lost or that the threat is imminent (sometimes such beliefs are amorphous and vague, but for some the threat is from a specific ethnic, racial, or religious group), and a belief in the need to be prepared for an attack either by participating in paramilitary preparations and training and survivalism."[LXXIX]

Though these notions do not prescribe one as being a 'terrorist,' 'extremist,' 'radical,' and other vilifying terms, this creates a starting point to discursively approach these ideological linchpins. That being said, comparatively assessing this definition to violent far-right statements reveal parallels with the previous discourses described. Some of these actors see themselves as frontline soldiers in a domestic War on Terror against an abstract civilian terrorist threat. This threat perception contributes to insecurity concerns that civilian groups with different politics can inflict self-harm and harm domestic life, similar to how War on Terror discourses are built upon the insecurities caused by international terrorists who can cause bodily harm to citizen and harm the sovereignty of the state. Wodak found that far- right populist rhetoric across European countries and the United States incorporates negative depictions of societal minorities, whose descriptions are contingent on historical, national, and sociopolitical factors as dangerous threats to "Us" (the homogenous nation) while also making 'Everyman' appeals. Wodak claimed these types of discourses gain power in the way they "instrumentalize some kind of ethnic/religious/linguistic/political minority as a scapegoat for most if not all current woes and subsequently construe the respective group as dangerous and a threat 'to us', to 'our' nation."[LXXX]

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Figure 1: Categorical Elements of Conflict Discourses

Traditional and New Threat Scenarios

Political Actions That Affirm These Biases

Real and Exaggerated Crises (Horror and Moral Narratives)

Discursive Variables Legitimizing Conflict

Media Reporting Reproducing Fear Scenarios

Real and Exaggerated (In)security Concerns

Source: Author demonstration (Wodak's findings)

Their discourses ultimately divide the state into one homogenous and one antagonistic group, similar to how you have the American people "Us" vs the terrorist "Them;" it is now the far-right American vs those s/he perceives as threatening internal security. Next, as Wodak asserted which has already been hinted at, these groups successfully legitimize their actions with an appeal to the necessities of security with their argument being influenced by whatever crisis or domestic security concern there is. Conflict discourses and the media amplifying them reduce issues to snap-shots which construct and trigger Manichean dichotomies of friends and foes, perpetrators and victims, and hero and villain. Wodak further explained that discourses are laden with a contingency of factors which creates these realities: "traditional and new threat scenarios [the War on Terror in the post 9/11 Era], real and exaggerated crisis as well as related horror and moral narratives [existential threats of terrorism from Othered actors], real and exaggerated security issues [the changing American culture towards terrorism and malleable constructions of American enemies], media reporting that reproduces fear scenarios [the aforementioned relationship between media and government in creating political realities], and lastly political actors which instrumentalize all these factors to legitimize exclusionary policies [as indicated in statements from previous administrations]."[LXXXI] As illustrated in Figure 1 based on Wodak's findings, the cyclic dynamic of these categorical.

factors speak into legitimacy the justifications for conflict. In this context, this creates a narrative where far-right groups see themselves as patriots and martyrs who are fighting for the country and these heroic renderings feed larger narratives of war by filling their proponents with the sense they are brave national defenders. Indeed, these groups built a political reality where the nation is in a wartime state against citizens characterized as being radical, unpatriotic, insurgents, and inciters of violence.

Discourse I: Violence as Justified and Self-Defensive

As stressed earlier, the War on Terror discourses fashioned the conflict to be a noble and just cause – a calling for the United States to lead the world against a new scourge of terrorism of which the world has never faced. The cause simply being to stop those labeled as terrorists from destroying America. [LXXXII] Incorporating this theme, far-right extremists see themselves as acting within the same just and noble prerogative through activism and violence where they are the ones battling against a legitimate threat – domestic opponents and those associated with them– whose views are deemed illegitimate, treasonous, and anti-American. One can assess the actions of mass casualty events within public and private venues as acts to protect the country against these groups, primarily those considered to be within the American left and secondarily those groups seem as having a demonstrative factor contributing to the degradation of the United States. Discursive expressions under these prerogatives include:

Speaker	Discourse
Paul Ciancia, 2013 Los Angeles Airport Gunman	"There wasn't a terrorist attack on Nov 1. There was a pissed off patriot trying to water the tree of liberty" and that he had to "stand up to these traitors... instill fear in their traitorous minds."[LXXXIII]
John Earnest, 2019 Poway Synagogue Gunman	"I'd rather die in glory or spend the rest of my life in prison than waste away knowing that I did nothing to stop this evil – It is not in my blood to be a coward."[LXXXIV]
Robert Bowers, 2018 Tree of Life Gunman	"The HIAS [Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society] bring invaders in that kill our people. I can't sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics, I'm going in."[LXXXV]
Eric Frein, 2014 Pennsylvania State Police Barracks Gunman	"Our nation is far from what it was and what it should be. I have seen so many depressing changes made in my time that I cannot imagine what it must be like for you. There is so much wrong and on so many levels only passing through the crucible of another revolution can get us back the liberties we once had."[LXXXVI]

As inferred from their words and portrayed above, all persons portrayed themselves as heroic defenders, making a patriotic sacrifice to protect the nation against evil. Their actions as conveyed in their words are noble and defensive and use the same patriotic, if not nationalistic, appeals to the hearts and mind of the community. These actions should not be considered as random acts of wanton violence, but violence politically enshrouded in the language of jus ad bellum – being a cause of utmost duty to protect the country similar to the rhetoric used in the War on Terror. Underpinning this assertion is that the language used socially identifies themselves as patriots [Us] loyal to the country, while the opposition [Them] is defined in demonizing terms such as traitors, invaders, and terrorists. These discourses, moreover, also underline a defensive, calculative war where they are hoping to bring attention to these injustices and actively strike back – under the cognition of fighting for liberty and freedom – with strong force against their designated enemies. For instance, Jim David Adkisson, the 2008 Knoxville Unitarian Universalist Shooting perpetrator, justified his actions along the following lines:

"Lately I've been feeling helpless in our War on Terrorism. But I realized I could engage the terrorists allies here in America. The best allies they've got – The Democrates [sic]! The democrats have done everything they can do to tie our hands in this War on Terror. They're all a bunch of traitors."[LXXXVII]

His manifesto is perhaps even more evidence of this mythos, listing reasons supporting his actions. First, as described, "there is a left-wing conspiracy attacking every decent and honorable institution in the nation trying to turn this country into a communist state"[LXXXVIII] and stating that liberals have attacked every major institution in the United States, similar to how President Bush stated that terrorists hate Americans for our freedoms and democracy. Second, he expressed his actions should be understood as a political protest against liberal supreme court justices, mainstream media news such as CNN and ABC as they are the propaganda arm of Democrats, christening them as dangerous traitors who must be stopped – similar to how former President Obama argued that a successful P/CVE approach involved targeting "the ideologies, the infrastructure of extremists – the propagandists, the recruiters, the funders who radicalize and recruit or incite people to violence."[LXXXIX] Finally, he wanted his actions to be known as symbolic killings against "chickenshit liberals that vote in these traitorous people"[XC] as it's the only way "we can get rid [sic] America of this cancer , this pestilence![XCI] " similar to how President Trump stated, "We cannot allow a beach of terrorist to form inside America. We cannot allow our nation to become a sanctuary for extremists."[XCII] Furthermore, as in the manifesto of Patrick Criusius, he stated his actions were a "response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas."[XCIII] He wrote, ironically, "They are the instigators, not me. I am simply defending my country from cultural and ethnic replacement brought on by an invasion"[XCIV] and coupled with other socioeconomic grievances that "In short, America is rotting from the inside out, and peaceful means to stop this seem to be nearly impossible"[XCV] and that "The Democrat Party will own America"[XCVI] turning it into a one party-state.[XCVII] His ultimate cause, as he wrote, is in fact "an act of preservation of America."[XCVIII] In his own words: "Many people that think that the fight for America is already lost. They couldn't be more wrong. This is just the beginning of the fight for America and Europe. I am honored to head the fight to reclaim my country from destruction."[XCIX] This echoes Jackson's statement that terrorists have now come to be seen as insider threats which are poisoning the nation.

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This thought is illustrated in the writings of Jerad Miller, who together alongside his wife Amanda, were the perpetrators of the 2014 Las Vegas Shootings. As expressed by Jerad:

"We can hope for peace. We must, however, prepare for war. We face an enemy that is not only well funded, but who believe they fight for freedom and justice...We, cannot with good conscience leave this fight to our children, because the longer we wait, our enemies become better equipped and recruit more mercenaries of death, willing to do a tyrant bidding without question."[C]

These speeches parallel the similar logic rallying a call to arms against terrorists for the benefit of future state security. This discourse calls for citizens to fight for a better future against a determined enemy, create a compelling urgent need to confront and defeat the enemy now, and fashioned his enemies as tyrants and dictators. This same rhetoric follows the logical premise and appeal of President Bush who stated:

"We face an enemy determined to bring death and suffering into our homes. America did not ask for this war, and every American wishes it were over. So, do I. But the war is not over, and it will not be over until either we or the extremists emerge victorious. If we do not defeat these enemies now, we will leave our children to face a Middle East overrun by terrorist states and radical dictators armed with nuclear weapons. We are in a war that will set the course for this new century and determine the destiny of millions across the world." [CI]

Former President Bush stated, "We put the terrorists and the nations in the world of notice: we will not rest until we stop all terrorists of global reach. And for every nation that harbors or supports terrorists, there will be a day of reckoning."[CII] Similar logic was echoed by right-wing extremists, as hinted through the words of Christopher Hassan: "Liberalist/globalist ideology is destroying traditional peoples esp. [sic] white. No way to counteract without violence...much blood will have to be spilled to get whitey off the couch. For some no amount of blood will be enough – they will die as will the traitors who actively work toward our demise."[CIII]

The far-right's War on Terror is evidently discursively constructed in the similar mythos mirroring that of the federal government's – one of retributive, justified, and targeted violence against persons who are designated as enemies of the state.

Discourse II: Preserving America Against Existential Threats

The War on Terror fashioned terrorism to be an existentially exceptional threat to the United States by the genre of war, similar to how the Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union are perceived in American culture. Similarly, far-right extremists use this language to portray themselves as soldiers fighting existential domestic threats who are on nationwide call to arms to combat those perceived as destroying the United States. Discourses such as these indicate strong warlike and revolutionary-esque mythos, urging action and violence against those they disagree with politically and socially. Underpinning this argument is the idea that direct. confrontation is essential to protect the domestic sphere; failure to do some exacerbates the insecurity of the domestic sphere and inaction becomes complicity in its decline.

Existential threats discussed as such are notions of foreigners and immigrants being understood as invaders who are threatening the United States. Discursively from the War on Terror, in his reasoning for his 2017 travel ban, former President Trump stated, "We have seen the devastation from 9/11 to Boston to San Bernardino; hundreds upon hundreds of people from outside our country have been convicted of terrorism-related offenses." [CIV] Similarly, former President Obama stated that "but today, our immigration system remains broken, and everyone knows it" [CV]in a speech assuaging security concerns pertaining to terrorist threats emanating from immigration. President Bush stated that terrorists "operate in the shadows of society. They send small teams of operatives to infiltrate free nations. They live quietly among their victims. They conspire in secret. And then they strike without warning" [CVI]   and profoundly that to win the War on Terror, "We must be able to detain, question and, when appropriate, prosecute terrorists captured here in America" [CVII] The influence these discourses have is apparent:

Speaker	Discourse
A radio host speaking on behalf of the United Constitutional Patriots.	"If these people make it to here, it's going to be a war in our own country and it's coming. We're going to have a war…They don't care about the American people. They're here because they want to kill American people."[CVIII]
Brigitte Gabriel, of ACT! For America.	"America has been infiltrated on all levels by radicals who wish to harm America. They have infiltrated us at the C.I.A., at the F.B.I., at the Pentagon, at the State Department. They are being radicalized in radical mosques in our cities and communities within the United States."[CVX]
Jeremy Joseph Christian, 2017 Portland Train Attacker	"Scare [Muslims] out of the country … because they push their beliefs on everyone else…. show them hey, you're not welcome here, get the fuck out."[CX]
Robert Ray of The Daily Stormer	"We are showing to this parasitic class of vermin that this our country… and at some point, we will have enough power that we will clear them from the streets forever."[CXI]
The American Patrol Group	"An invasion is spreading across America like wildfire, bringing gangs, drugs and an alien culture into the very heartland of America", and if "she [America] is to survive, America needs leaders who will fight her…who will put an end to the cultural cancer which is eating at the very heart of our nation."[CXII]

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Interestingly, these sentiments exist amongst racial lines. For instance, Kyle Chapman, who "formed the Fraternal Order of Alt-Knights, a paramilitary wing of the Proud Boys"[CXIII] , declared, "I am not afraid to speak out about the atrocities that whites and people of European descent face not only here in this country but in Western nations across the world. The war against whites, and Europeans and Western society is very real."[CXIV] The Council of Conservatives stated, "We believe the United States is a European country and that Americans are part of the European people. ... We therefore oppose the massive immigration of non-European and non-Western peoples into the United States that threatens to transform our nation into a non-European majority in our lifetime...if necessary, by military force."[CXV] Jeff Schoep, Leader of the National Socialist Neo Nazi Movement stated that "We are the front line of the fight for the white race. We are the shock troops for the white race."[CXVI]

Exceptionalist discourses also target 'deep state,' government officials, and leftist movements seen as destroying the country. Such discourses, similar to the aforementioned discussion on how citizens see other citizens as terrorist actors, are heavily seen in the statements within members on far-right, conservatists militia groups, and other sovereign movement that perceive themselves as watchguards against tyranny, which is similar to how President Bush stated, "The object of terrorism is to try force us to change our way of life, is to force us to retreat, is to force us to be what we're not...This is the time for us to act in a bold way, and we are doing just that."[CXVII] Comments such as those made by Former Police Chief Lang Holland, "Do not forget what these Marxist Democrats have tried to do. When you see one in public get in their face do not give them any peace. Never let them forget they are traitors and have no right to live in this Republic after what they have done,"[CXVIII] have been posted online calling for violence against Democrats and rejections of their ideology. Sentiments indicated by their discourses proficiently explain why their supporters or members have been implicated in causing violence through many cities. For example, the Three Percenters, an organization with record ranging from criminal activity to weapons violations to plots, see themselves as "the last defense to protect the citizens of the United States if there ever comes a day when our government takes up arms against the American people."[CXIX] Similarly, groups such as the Lightfoot Militia, Hutaree, the Missouri Militia, and the FEAR group are collectively described by the Southeastern Ohio Defense Force's Constitution that they are citizens of local communities who fight for the preservation of life, liberty to "Defend our nation, our state[s], and our community against lawlessness, anarchy, acts of violence, terrorism, and war."[CXX] The Oathkeepers, per their website, "pledged to fulfill the oath all military and police take to defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic;" the core of their statement being that they are the patriots who will defend Americans against a tyrannical government that wishes to limit all freedoms. Rhodes Stewart, founder of the group, stated:

"The Republic is on the verge of destruction precisely because Republicans have chosen the lesser of two evils (the lesser of two oath breakers) in each election. ... When you take a slightly reduced dose of poison, say 80% poison instead of 100%, you are still poisoning yourself, and you will still die. This Republic has been subjected to a reduced dose of poison over and over, for decades, and is now about to die."[CXXI]

Growing incidents across American cities can be understood as what happens when these thoughts manifest into violent political realities and can be better analyzed when framed as defensive actions against internal threats. Adam Fox, alleged ringleader of the 'Wolverine Watchdog' militia, alongside six other individuals, conspired to kidnap and try Michigan Governor (Democrat) Gretchen Whitmer for being a tyrant who violated the Constitution by abusing her powers.[CXXII] As Fox stated "We ain't going to let 'em burn our fuckin' state down. I don't give a fuck if there's only 20 or 30 of us, dude, we'll go out there and use deadly force."[CXXIII] The Kenosha Guard, who is associated with Kyle Rittenhouse, posted a call for arms, specifically calling for "any patriots willing to take up arms and defend our City tonight from evil thugs."[CXXIV] Supporting comments include discourses such as "Counter protest? Nah I fully plan to kill looters and rioters tonight"[CXXV] amongst others such as "Now it is time to switch to real bullets and put a stop to these impetuous children rioting" [CXXVI] were common throughout the unrest. Other sources come from the March to Save America and the Save The Republic Rally events, which preceded the assault on Capitol Hill to overturn election results, share the same rhetorical premises. Discourse illustrating these causes include "This isn't a fight for Donald Trump – this is fight of good vs evil, right vs wrong"[CXXVII] , "We need all the patriots of this country to rally up and fight our freedom or it's gone forever. Give me liberty or give me death;"[CXXVIII] "Hell yeah. The time for talk and peace is over. It's now time to do what we do best. Wage war against the [sic] those who violate and ignore our constitution. Call us what you want, we will bring true traitors to justice;"[CXXIX] "The fact that we had a bunch of our traitors in office hunker down, put on their gas masks and retreat into their underground bunker, I consider that a win."[CXXX] "We want our freedom back, we want our country back – sold out police can't stop us."[CXXXI] "We the people have spoken, and we are pissed. No antifa, no BLM…Democratic tyranny will not stand." [CXXXII]

As former President Obama stated, "I know that after so much war, many Americans are asking whether we are confronted by a cancer that has no immediate cure."[CXXXIII] Far-right groups indeed do see a cancer which are civilians they disagree with, leaders whose policies they contend, and political movements and campaigns contrasting their own ideology.

Discourse III: Eliminationist Prosecution of The Other

The pursuit of security through far-right violence is justified in the same manner as the War on Terror in that it makes designated enemies acceptable and expendable targets for state security, except now it has become fellow citizen. Eliminating them, already seen as just and noble, thus becomes a primary prerogative where force and violence supersedes cooperation and debate. The resulting picture forms an absolute combat environment where victory through conflict and subjugation of those with conflicting policies and ideology becomes a way to guarantee victory. The parallels in this are illustrated below:

Speaker	Discourse	Far-right Violent Parallels
President Bush	"After the 9/11 attacks, our coalition launched operations across the world to remove terrorist safehavens and capture	"We need to start systematically assassinating #liberal leaders, liberal activists, #blm leaders and supporters, members of the #nba #mlb #nhl

	or kill terrorist operatives and leaders…these enemy -- these are enemy combatants who are waging war on our nation."[CXXXIV]	#mainstreammedia anchors and correspondents and # antifa. I already have a newsworthy event planned. # blmterrorists #militia # civilwar #civilwar 2." [CXXXV] "If we don't fight back with armed force #Democrats will bring about the 4th Reich here in #USA. #DeathtoDemocrats".[CXXXVI]
President Obama	"We will destroy ISIL and any other organization that tries to harm us…. Our military will continue to hunt down terrorist plotters in any country where it is necessary." [CXXXVII]	"Prepare our weapons and then go get'em. Let's hunt these cowards down like the Traitors that each of them are. This includes RINOS, Dems, and Tech Execs. We now have the green light. [All] who resist Us are enemies of Our Constitution and must be treated as such."[CXXXVIII]
President Trump	"The other thing with the terrorists is you have to take out their families, when you get these terrorists, you have to take out their families. They care about their lives, don't kid yourself. When they say they don't care about their lives, you have to take out their families."[CXXXIX]	"The way to do it to teach the commie Marxist libs democrats a lesson is – butcher there [sic] children,grandkids,great grandkids, grandmas, aunts, nieces, wives last, Skin them all. Slowly. In front of the commie men."[CXL]

The language of the trio indicate there will be an unremitting total pursuit of terrorists. When injected with themes of patriotism, national security, identity politics, and Manichean struggles, the mythos created by this rhetoric of force creates a potent argument that can normalize and legitimize violence against the enemy. The ways far-right discourses inciting eliminationist rhetoric follows the same rhetorical structure yet is molded domestically towards how they see oppositional elements as elements to be eliminated.

These discourses serve as metaphorical answers to President Bush's rhetorical question of how "Americans are asking how we will fight and win this war"[CXLI]   with the answer being that Americans should expect not one battle "but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have seen. It may include dramatic strikes, visible on television, and covert operations, secret even in success."[CXLII] Thus, far-right instances of violence are in the same way counterterrorism policies serving as violent and demonstrative acts against their opponents in a comprehensive and sustained strategy as in the War on Terror to achieve their aims.

Discourses reaffirming far-right strategies include statements such as, "It's time to hunt down and violently execute most Democrats, news media, college professors and millennials. Kill them all. Problem solved. We do not negotiate with terrorist"[CXLIII]; "Remember all journalists are soft targets and fair game in the coming revolution. Don't be afraid to take reporters down by any means necessary"[CXLIV] ; and "The Democratic communist party will destroy whatever shred of lady liberty – it's time for war."[CXLV] If as former President Bush stated "The only way to defeat terrorism as a threat to our way of life is to stop it, eliminate it and destroy it where it grows"[CXLVI] then as a far-right violent posts would say "To me, the easiest fix is every conservative kill 2 liberals. We could literally turn earth, or at least the US into heaven by getting rid of the problem at the root." [CXLVII] It thus becomes easy to understand how this language given its domestic foundation has transgressed to a call for Civil War. Indeed, if Civil Wars are simply understood as intrastate conflicts against opposing domestics groups fighting for power, dominance, and legitimacy within a state, then the far-right provocations for war are easily identifiable. In fact, the demise of their opposition should be ultimately welcomed and publicly acceptable in the same manner that former President Obama stated that the demise of Osama bin Laden "should be welcomed by those who believe in peace and human dignity." [CXLVIII] Examples of such discourses include:

- "I am going to participate in the Civil War with patriots if communists try to count votes past the deadline. I'm not letting a single communist tyrant have the potential to do this fuckery again. Communists will water the tree of liberty with their traitorous treasonous blood."[CXLIX]

- "It's time these #Democrat enemies of #America start personally paying for what they are causing. I can't believe we're still even talking with these #marxist enemies who are literally at war against us. These enemies indict conservatives and white people instantly for anything...Why are we not fighting back and bringing a viciously brutal and deadly justice and revenge to these worthless enemies?"[CL]

- "Next stop Civil War. The entire swamp needs to be forcibly drained. We gave them the chance but #SCOTUS failed America. We have to organize and act."[CLI]

- "The Vile Democrats and Fake MSM and BLM and Antifa Criminals don't understand any [sic] of except for war and violence. They suck, at war and violence. Let's destroy them. Go straight after the criminal elites and politicians and terminate them."[CLII]

The implications of these violent statements alongside others such as "the darkness that is going to fall on all democrat voters will be worse than any,"[CLIII] including the thought that conflict is "what is needed to save America,"[CLIV] reaffirms the assertion that these are zero-sum non-negotiable stances. Additionally, this rhetoric fashions opposition groups as acceptable and expendable targets along socioeconomic lines associated with far-right grievances. As in the same constructions used to garner antipathy towards designated terrorists using words such as barbaric, unhuman, unnatural, thugs, criminals, and murderers, amongst other villainous labels, are applied to far-right enemies to further denigrate and effectively marginalize them. For instance, as an anonymous user stated,

"Put a target on this motherless trash [Antifa] they aren't human taking one out would be like stepping on a roach no different;"[CLV] and "I hate 'em all – negroes, wasps, spics, eskimos, jews, honkies, krauts, ruskies, ethiopians, pakis, hunkies, pollocks and Marxists; there are way too many of them. I'm all for trout, elephants, bacteria, whales, wolves, birds, parrot fish, deciduous foliage and mollusks. Time to rebalance the planet, bleeding heart liberals be damned."[CLVI]

The aforementioned, as Reyes-Rodriguez stated, "portrays the undesirable enemy as morally distant as possible from 'Us' in questions of conduct, behaviors, actions, etc."[CLVII] If former President Obama stated, "My top priority is to defeat ISIL and to eliminate the scourge of this barbaric terrorism…there's no more important item on my agenda than going after them and defeating them,"[CLVIII] and as President Trump stated "[Terrorists] are nothing but thugs and criminals and predators and - that's right - losers… we will break their will, dry up their recruitment, keep them from crossing our border and yes, we will defeat them;"[CLIX] then from a far-right perspective such rhetoric becomes reconceptualized as:

- "You liberals and dirty left democrats and blm and rhino politicians and Muslims who are against our country our president our constitution and burning down our jobs our businesses burning down our life destroying our children's lives and scaring them destroying our culture our freedoms and our rights our history our lord Jesus? You cry for free shit? I'll give you something free a damn bullet to your damn head……Enjoy your last few days you have."[CLX]

- "No way in Hell will the United States as we know, and love will survive 4 years…. because the traitors are going to start with locking everyone down, trying to take away our guns and turn more of their domestic terrorists loose on innocent American citizens."[CLXI]

- "The Democrat party and their multinational mega corporation criminals in big tech are an anti-human sinister international cabal that seek complete extermination of liberty-minded humans, they are the most evil sinister group that has ever gained power in the history of the planet earth. We must destroy their evil antihuman plans NOW."[CLXII]

- "Fry'em up. The whole fkn crew. #pelosi #aoc #thesquad #soros #gates #chuckshumer #hrc #obama #adamschiff #blm #antifa we are coming for you and you will know it."[CLXIII]

These discourses are intertwined with exceptionalist security concerns coming from a defender and justified warlike mythos. These incitements of violence, which effectively call for outright extermination of their enemies, become acceptable courses of action. Essentially, this language helps to "Other" Democrats, minorities, leftist groups, and their associates which serves to legitimize a constructed reality where they are incontestably incompatible with life in the domestic sphere.

Discourses in The Rhetorical Constructions of War Model

With the following discourses explained, they can now be applied to the *Reyes-Rodriguez Model – Rhetorical Constructions of War* to illustrate from a far-right perspective how discourses intertwine to create the justifications for conflict.

The **Cause-Motive** is due to increasing political polarization within domestic spaces, which is then exacerbated by issues of race, immigration, socioeconomic status, anti-government sentiments, changing societal norms and cultural attitudes, and ethnocentric attitudes towards who is a patriot and who is an enemy. These themes combined with conspiracy theories involving national (in)security and concerns that established ways of life are assaulted or under imminent threat from special groups gives cause to provocation. As discussed and explained earlier, the causes for violence are thematically constructed as an invasion, attack, and existential threat to far-right opinions on how the United States should be secured. Changes brought by those they oppose can be understood as being antithetical to their desired notion on how American governance, society, and culture should be. The consequences and ideas brought by their opposition are in essence an attack on the American core as egregious as 9/11 is understood within the War on Terror. Coupled with mass communications and media amplification sharing similar beliefs effectively creates an existential political reality that must be addressed through the auspices of war. Examples of such statements include:

- "We can hope for peace. We must, however, prepare for war. We face an enemy that is not only well funded, but who believe they fight for freedom and justice...We, cannot with good conscience leave this fight to our children, because the longer we wait, our enemies become better equipped and recruit more mercenaries of death, willing to do a tyrant bidding without question."[CLXIV]

- "We need all the patriots of this country to rally up and fight our freedom or it's gone forever. Give me liberty or give me death."[CLXV]

- "Our nation is far from what it was and what it should be. I have seen so many depressing changes made in my time that I cannot imagine what it must be like for you. There is so much wrong and on so many levels only passing through the crucible of another revolution can get us back the liberties we once had." [CLXVI]

- "We the people have spoken, and we are pissed. No antifa, no BLM...Democratic tyranny will not stand." [CLXVII]

- "We want our freedom back, we want our country back – sold out police can't stop us."[CLXVIII]

Left-wing associated groups, such as ANTIFA, BLM, members and associates of the Democrat Party, amongst organizations and movements perceived to be associated with them, are **identified as the guilty party** behind these causes and motives as summarized above. The discourses against them characteristically define their ideologies, initiatives, attitudes, and implementation as enacted out of malice for the country. They are against the Constitution, seek to undermine domestic liberties, destroy American culture, and effectively ruin their idea of statehood; they are on the same existential threat level as designated terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda and ISIL, and are thus understood in opposing, militaristic terms in the same manner. There is no room for cooperation against enemies like these; protecting "Us" against "Them" involves a necessary struggle. Examples of discourses include:

- "You liberals and dirty left democrats and blm and rhino politicians and Muslims who are against our country our president our constitution and burning down our jobs our businesses burning down our life destroying our children's lives and scaring them destroying our culture our freedoms and our rights." [CLXIX]

- "Do not forget what these Marxist Democrats have tried to do. When you see one in public get in their face do not give them any peace. Never let them forget they are traitors and have no right to live in this Republic after what they have done."[CLXX]

- "The Vile Democrats and Fake MSM and BLM and Antifa Criminals don't understand any [sic] of except for war and violence. They suck, at war and violence. Let's destroy them. Go straight after the criminal elites and politicians and terminate them."[CLXXI]

- "The way to do it to teach the commie Marxist libs democrats a lesson is – butcher there [sic] children, grandkids, great grandkids, grandmas, aunts, nieces, wives last, Skin them all. Slowly. In front of the commie men."[CLXXII]

- "There is a left-wing conspiracy attacking every decent and honorable institution in the nation trying to turn this country into a communist state."[CLXXIII]

Demonization comes from labeling the guilty parties under damning terms and politically provocative words used in the United States conflict lexicon such as "terrorists," "invaders," "traitors," "communists," and "tyrants" insofar that these words are often used in warlike manners. Also as explained, these words are often combined with racial epithets, stereotypes, and racial epithets to create bigger villainizations. This demonization creates a social reality where there is a present and menacing nationwide threat – abstract bogeymen and bogeywomen– operating under different disguises and institutions that have infiltrated American society and the platforms structuring internal governance. Examples include:

- "Put a target on these motherless trash [Antifa] they aren't human taking one out would be like stepping on a roach no different."[CLXXIV]

- "I hate 'em all – negroes, wasps, spics, eskimos, jews, honkies, krauts, ruskies, ethopians, pakis, hunkies, pollocks and Marxists; there are way too many of them. I'm all for trout, elephants, bacteria, whales, wolves, birds, parrot fish, deciduous foliage and mollusks. Time to rebalance the planet, bleeding heart liberals be damned."[CLXXV]

- "We are showing to this parasitic class of vermin that this our country... and at some point, we will have enough power that we will clear them from the streets forever."[CLXXVI]

- "To me, the easiest fix is every conservative kill 2 liberals. We could literally turn earth, or at least the US into heaven by getting rid of the problem at the root."[CLXXVII]

The Metonymy dichotomies become apparent as well – there is a clear battle of good vs evil, where the good is the far-right while the evil are those persons and movements counteracting ideologies. Far-right extremists in these discourses are narratively constructed, in essence, as the true patriots who are standing up against the evil Americans who are consequently traitors. Their groups are the one who have the best interests of the state and its people as demonstrated through their actions, and those who oppose them are in every way destructive for internal security. All resisting them are violators to the United States Constitution threatening the tree of liberty who want to impose authoritarian style types of governance. Such examples include:

- "Hell yeah. The time for talk and peace is over. It's now time to do what we do best. Wage war against the [sic] those who violate and ignore our constitution. Call us what you want, we will bring true traitors to justice."[CLXXVIII]

- "It's time these #Democrat enemies of #America start personally paying for what they are causing. I can't believe we're still even talking with these #marxist enemies who are literally at war against us. These enemies indict conservatives and white people instantly for anything...Why are we not fighting back and bringing a viciously brutal and deadly justice and revenge to these worthless enemies." [CLXXIX]

- "We need to start systematically assassinating #liberal leaders, liberal activists, #blm leaders and supporters, members of the #nba #mlb #nhl #mainstreammedia anchors and correspondents and #antifa."[CLXXX]

The **Justifications for War** thus become easily discernible. The selected discourses create narratives that the United States is under an assault or invasion by malign forces – supported by domestic citizens and external sources – and that they are operating under justified, defensive intentions meant to protect the nation. The various manifestos and motive by mass shooters become evident; consequently, defenses that their actions are brought from cultural and ethnic invasions supported by left leaning forces, wanting to spark revolutions to incite change within the country, Civil War style call to arms over facetious claims of election, and going to war to prevent change from left leaning policies. Combined with fears that left leaning groups are taking over and imposing their ways with force creates defensive posturing. Moreover, as often illustrated in their own words, actions are construed as being legally, morally, and patriotically justified as they are protecting us against traitors who defiled the Constitution and the Republic and are thus guilty of treason. If the United States has a right to lead a War on Terror to fight against those abroad perceived to be detrimental to its sovereignty and security, then under the same auspices do far-right extremists find violent provocations for action.

- "Prepare our weapons and then go get'em. Let's hunt these cowards down like the Traitors that each of them are. This includes RINOS, Dems, and Tech Execs. We now have the green light. [All] who resist Us are enemies of Our Constitution and must be treated as such."[CLXXXI]

- "I am going to participate in the Civil War with patriots if communists try to count votes past the deadline. I'm not letting a single communist tyrant have the potential to do this. fuckery again. Communists will water the tree of liberty with their traitorous treasonous blood."[CLXXXII]

- "An invasion is spreading across America like wildfire, bringing gangs, drugs and an alien culture into the very heartland of America", and if "she [America] is to survive, America needs leaders who will fight her...who will put an end to the cultural cancer which is eating at the very heart of our nation."[CLXXXIII]

- "Hispanics will take control of the local and state government of my beloved Texas, changing policy to better suit their needs. They will turn Texas into an instrument of a political coup which will hasten the destruction of our country...if you take nothing else from this document, remember this: inaction is a choice."[CLXXXIV]

- "I'd rather die in glory or spend the rest of my life in prison than waste away knowing that I did nothing to stop this evil – It is not in my blood to be a coward."[CLXXXV]

Lastly, these groups **create links with other enemies** by connecting and consolidating with far-right conflicts abroad. Similar to how the War on Terror was fashioned as a response to an attack in the core of the civilized world and included a range of enemies from an Axis of Evil to rogue states and from al-Qaeda (among a host of others) do far-right extremist see their actions. Far-right extremists follow this dynamic insofar that they are not only domestic pushback against internal politics they disagree with but are also connected with similar movements across the Western world which push back against liberal attitudes. When intertwined with issues of race and socioeconomics do you get transnational incitements for violence, including statements saying that terminating their opposition would turn Earth into heaven, that actions in America would be a beginning of the fight in Europe, and that liberalist or globalist attitudes are creating a war of atrocities that whites and people of European descent face across the Western world. The United States is one far-right battleground linked with many, specifically:

- "Many people that think that the fight for America is already lost. They couldn't be more wrong. This is just the beginning of the fight for America and Europe. I am honored to head the fight to reclaim my country from destruction."[CLXXXVI]

- "I am not afraid to speak out about the atrocities that whites and people of European descent face not only here in this country but in Western nations across the world. The war against whites, and Europeans and Western society is very real."[CLXXXVII]

- "We believe the United States is a European country and that Americans are part of the European people. ... We therefore oppose the massive immigration of non-European and non-Western peoples into the United States that threatens to transform our nation into a non-European majority in our lifetime...if necessary, by military force."[CLXXXVIII]

- "They are the instigators, not me. I am simply defending my country from cultural and ethnic replacement brought on by an invasion."[CLXXXIX]

Conclusion

Applying Critical Discourse Analysis towards conflict allows researchers to assess using the words of the perpetrators of violence, regardless of faction or belief, what political realities and regimes of truth precipitate their actions. Furthermore, using language as a unit of analysis underscores how conflict is understood based on the specific insecurities of the state and how these insecurities are parroted and molded from the top-down to legitimize factionalized beliefs based on political ideology. Far-right discourses, as explained through this report, follow similar discursive and rhetorical devices used by previous administrations to justify action and use of violence in the War on Terror. These narrative devices, as expressed through a variety of oral and textual mediums, underpin that their actions within American cities are perceived as being their own front against terror, with the terror being ideologically different opponents supporting left leaning attitudes and their influence within the political institutions of the state.

The regime of truth created by this type of language is evidently unveiled. One is that violence as understood through this lens is primarily motivated by political insecurities, from a right leaning perspective, molded within domestic issues as they exist within the United States. Insofar that violence ranging from mass shootings to clashes between protesters are indeed not random, targetless, and irrational but rather deliberate and methodical in their intended purpose. This regime truth creates a hegemonic constitution of social power where far-right perspectives are inherently true expressions of social-political reality while those coming from their opposition are false and consequentially illegitimate. Secondly, these discourses and the various techniques, as produced within a quagmire of intersubjectivity and power competition between domestic citizen groups of opposing political ideologies, are merely tools in building a foundation of truth. This truth helps to acquire and uphold a desired form of domestic security, by reaffirming whose security to achieve and who to secure them from. Far-right security is security against left leaning factions and government institutions perceived as opposing them are seen in the same existential manner as Nazism and Communism, using terms such as tyranny, liberty, and freedom in a variety of contexts to describe just how they see the actions of their enemy. Security is thus for Americans supporting right leaning ideology, policies, and initiatives, and security is from the policies and actions that could potentially be enacted by the groups they oppose. The means to achieve security is brought through violence amongst other means meant to effectively silence and eliminate their opposition. Ultimately, the enemies of far-right groups are effectively constructed through the lens of the War on Terror.

In this way are their discourses essentially legitimizing devices and discursive weapons used to achieve their objectives by condemning their opponents as the primary source of domestic insecurities. This is how these incorporations transform American cities into battlefields for far-right movements, as these discourses affirm that violence is sanctioned and justified in domestic spaces against enemy citizens who are the same as terrorists in the War on Terror.

Moreover, though this article used far-right movements as the primary object of study, the author further posits this method can be equally applied to left-wing calls of violence, and as already hinted that they follow a similar manner of exceptionalist, justified, defensive, and eliminationist rhetoric used to create their own regimes of truth, which call for violence against those with conservative and non-leftist attitudes. Both sides employ these tools in attempts to direct domestic consciousness towards creating their ideal version of an ideal America. There is a clear political and ideological power struggle over whose reality to achieve, whose form of power to uphold, whose social institutions to dismantle, whose social ideas to bleed for, and whose form of reality to maintain. This dynamic is a proficient way to understand the current battles between right and left groups in the United States.

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