



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on January 23, 2013

West Point Terrorism Study Targets “Far Right” Conservatives

A West Point think tank responsible for training future U.S. Army officers has released an extensive report warning of a growing domestic threat from “far right” conservative groups it says are prone to violence. The study, authored by Arie Perliger of the U.S. Military Academy’s [Combating Terrorism Center](#), is entitled [Challenges From the Sidelines: Understanding America’s Violent Far-Right](#), and while much of its focus appears to center on white supremacist and Aryan/“Christian identity” groups, it also targets groups that value the personal liberties guaranteed in the Constitution and emphasize the need to limit the power of the federal government.



These “anti-federalist” groups, as Perliger labels those who embrace a limited, constitutionally defined role for government, “espouse strong convictions regarding the federal government, believing it to be corrupt and tyrannical, with a natural tendency to intrude on individuals’ civil and constitutional rights,” Perliger writes in his report. Additionally, they “support civil activism, individual freedoms, and self government.”

Perliger, whose report was first noted by the [Washington Times](#), makes a broad distinction between Americans who embrace conservative, Americanist values, and those committed to liberal-leftist ideologies, arguing that while “liberal worldviews are future- or progressive-oriented, conservative perspectives are more past-oriented, and in general, are interested in preserving the status quo.” He goes on to charge that the “far right represents a more extreme version of conservatism, as its political vision is usually justified by the aspiration to restore or preserve values and practices that are part of the idealized historical heritage of the nation or ethnic community.”

While the ideology of “far right” groups “is designed to exclude minorities and foreigners,” the report adds, “the liberal-democratic system is designed to emphasize civil rights, minority rights and the balance of power.”

Among the peculiar characteristics of the “anti-federalist” crowd is a strong belief in the sovereignty of the United States, along with the conviction that “the American political system and its proxies were hijacked by external forces interested in promoting a New World Order in which the United States will be absorbed into the United Nations or another version of global government.”

Perliger warns, “Extremists in the anti-federalist movement direct most [of] their violence against the federal government and its proxies in law enforcement.”

Framing this violence motif around the example of Timothy McVeigh and the 1995 Oklahoma City



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bombing, Perliger claims that such violence “derived from the modern anti-federalist movement appeared in full force only in the early to mid-1990s and is interested in undermining the influence, legitimacy and effective sovereignty of the federal government and its proxy organizations.” The report claims that there were a total of 350 “attacks initiated by far-right groups/individuals” in 2011 alone.

The report doesn’t specifically attack groups promoting pro-life values, but it does manage to take a broad swipe at shadowy “anti-abortionists,” which it claims have been “extremely productive during the last two decades, amassing 227 attacks, many of them perpetrated without the responsible perpetrators identified or caught.”

While thus far few conservative groups have weighed in on the report, those who have commented have noted the apparent political motivation at its foundation. Herb Titus, a constitutional law professor and former dean of the Regent University School of Law, told [WorldNetDaily](#) that it seemed Perliger “has adopted the strategy of many left-wing members of the professoriate, concentrating on the behavior of a few in order to discredit many who hold similar views but who do not engage in any form of violence.”

Titus said it is obvious that Perliger “disagrees with those who favor small government, cutting back of federal government encroachments upon the powers of the state, and to discredit this movement focuses on a few gun-toting militia.” He added that “like so many in the Obama administration, Perliger does not want to engage in any dialogue on the issues, but just discredit an entire political movement by *ad hominem* charged words. Perliger is not a serious scholar, but a propagandist for the existing regime.”

The *Washington Times* quoted an unnamed Republican congressional staffer as saying that if the Defense Department “is looking for places to cut spending, this junk study is ground zero. Shouldn’t the Combating Terrorism Center be combating radical Islam around the globe instead of perpetuating the left’s myth that right-wingers are terrorists?”

[National Review](#) noted that Perliger’s study is not the first time the federal government has employed “sloppy work and a broadbrush analysis” in an attempt to smear the conservative movement. “In 2009, liberals in the Department of Homeland Security prepared a report defining ‘rightwing extremism in the United States’ as including not just hate groups, but also groups that reject federal authority in favor of federalism or local control,” recalled *National Review*’s John Fund. He added that the DHS report, which was sent to hundreds of local police departments and officials, “bore the ominous title: ‘Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment’ and made the audacious claim that “right wing extremists have capitalized on the election of the first African-American president, and are focusing their efforts to recruit new members, mobilize existing supporters, and broaden their scope and appeal through propaganda, but they have not yet turned to attack planning.”

Fund observed that a “casual reader might have concluded that ‘attack planning’ by said groups is inevitable. But the report is silent on just how the groups will attack, and indeed since 2009 there has been precious little evidence any of them ever did.” He noted that following “much public ridicule, the DHS report vanished from public view as did a similar effort at the same time by the Missouri Highway Patrol, which had to retract its own report linking conservative groups with militia activity and mentioning 2008 presidential candidates Ron Paul and Bob Barr.”

In 2009, William F. Jasper reported in [The New American](#) on the eight-page Missouri Highway Patrol embarrassment entitled “[The Modern Militia Movement](#),” noting that it “specifically mentions by name



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Congressman Ron Paul (R-Texas), who ran for president in the 2008 Republican Party primaries, and third-party candidates Bob Barr and Chuck Baldwin. The clear implication is that people sporting bumper stickers or literature related to these candidates should be viewed as potential threats that view all law enforcement as ‘the enemy.’”

More recently, [The New American’s Alex Newman](#) reported on a Department of Justice-funded anti-terrorism presentation that equated widely circulated conservative materials — including a popular [bumper sticker advocating for a U.S. withdrawal from the United Nations](#) — with right-wing extremism.

That this latest attack on conservative values should come from one of the nation’s chief training centers for military leaders is particularly troubling. While the report “is outrageous in and of itself,” commented one conservative observer, writing in the *Washington Times*, “it speaks of a far worse scenario at the hallowed West Point: the rise of liberalism within the faculty there and their desire to shape the next generation of warrior/patriots into left-of-center thinkers.”



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