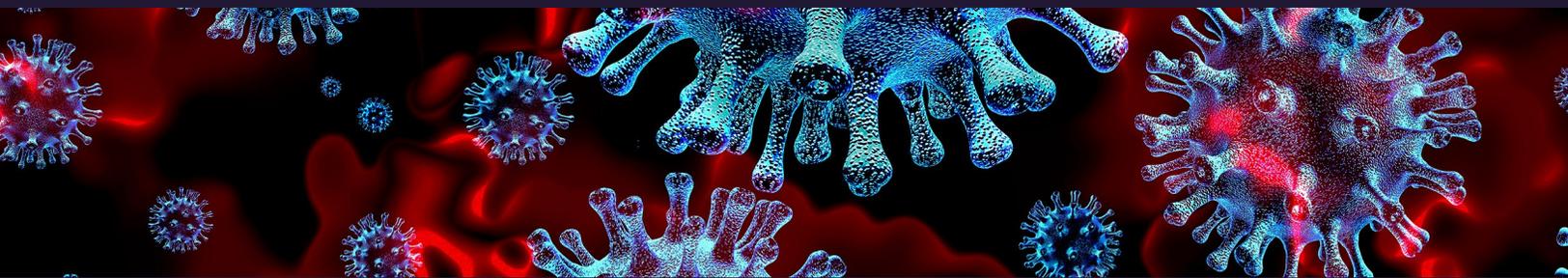




2020-2021

SUPPLEMENTAL THREAT ASSESSMENT

THE CONVERGENCE OF COVID-19, NATIONWIDE CIVIL UNREST, AND THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION



**FOREWORD**

For the remainder of 2020 and through 2021, national security threats evolving both at home and abroad will impact communities in New Jersey and across the United States. Numerous threats from domestic extremists and foreign adversaries have emerged due to the COVID-19 pandemic, anti-government sentiment, nationwide civil unrest, and various forms of disinformation. These threats will begin to converge with the Presidential election in November in a manner not previously experienced by our nation.

Disinformation has played a vital role in the spread of inaccurate information regarding COVID-19, along with ongoing riots and alleged police brutality that have contributed to the civil unrest. Since before the pandemic, the spread of falsehoods over the Internet has grown globally. Several near-peer competitor countries engage in these types of disinformation operations to undermine the United States' credibility on a global front, as well as to induce political contention. This includes nation-state actors such as China, Iran, and Russia, which are attempting to sow anti-US sentiments.

The sheer volume of content is one crucial factor enabling disinformation. In response, the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness has increased its efforts to combat these inaccuracies. Especially in the wake of events in 2020, providing up-to-date knowledge and guidance from trusted authorities is imperative to help navigate all these details and separate fact from fiction.

For that reason, my Office has forecasted and considered a variety of potential scenarios in this 2020-2021 Supplemental Threat Assessment that could impact the future of our nation based on the convergence of these threats this November.

Sincerely,

Jared M. Maples

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jared M. Maples".

Director, NJOHSP

September 2020





TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVID-19 TO REMAIN INFLUENCE ON NATIONAL LANDSCAPE IN 20214

DOMESTIC EXTREMISTS A HIGH THREAT IN 20215

NATION-STATE DISINFORMATION THREATS WILL INTENSIFY INTO 20216

FOREIGN TERRORISTS EXPLOIT US SOCIETAL TENSIONS7

COVID-19: POTENTIAL SCENARIOS9

CIVIL UNREST: POTENTIAL SCENARIOS.....10

2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: POTENTIAL SCENARIOS..... 11

NJOHSP RELATED PRODUCTS13





COVID-19 TO REMAIN INFLUENCE ON NATIONAL LANDSCAPE IN 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic and polarizing sentiments surrounding its impact will worsen the convergence of the 2020 Presidential election and mounting civil unrest across the nation. The New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness assesses that COVID-19 spread will remain a driving factor behind public health fears, economic instability, political dissent, and cultural turmoil impacting the country through 2021. Compounding these issues, domestic extremists, foreign terrorist organizations, and nation-state threat actors will hinder economic recovery and vaccination efforts with disinformation distributed via social media, as well as contribute to intensifying distrust in government, healthcare, and law enforcement.

- State infection rates will continue to fluctuate based on local response and adherence to health mandates. Regional restrictions will impact education, the economy, supply chains, and unemployment, requiring a recovery effort to recoup losses. Changes at educational institutions, such as shifts between remote and in-person learning, will impact communities. Parents may be unable to return to work with children at home, or high-risk populations may have an increased risk of exposure if they send children to school. Shortages in the supply chain will continue due to impacted labor forces, the permanent closure of companies, reduced stockpiles, and the slowing of imports as a result of sluggish economic recovery overseas. This will impact unemployment, which will remain uncertain for months to come. The devastation experienced domestically in industries such as hospitality, healthcare, and entertainment will fuel conspiracy theories and push political agendas by domestic extremists, foreign terrorist organizations, and nation-state threat actors.
- The threat of COVID-19 infection will alter the 2020 Presidential electoral process. Changes to voting procedures will lead to disputes or delayed election results, along with a general fear of spreading the virus. Nation-state threat actors will circulate propaganda to disparage the US response and interfere in the election by criticizing both candidates. Post-election unrest and political violence may occur in the wake of election results, regardless of the state of COVID-19 infections. Domestic extremists and foreign terrorist organizations will support protesters seeking to dismantle the electoral system by spreading theories about a rigged election, blame or attempt to recruit minorities, and inspire supporters to incite violence.
- Unrest stemming from COVID-19 mandates or election results will converge, necessitating law enforcement engagement. Relationships between law enforcement, protesters, activists, and communities will remain fragmented in certain regions of the country. Regional differences in response to anti-law enforcement sentiment will dominate the national landscape following the election and through 2021. The presence of COVID-19 infections will affect whether protesting continues in certain areas. Citizens unwilling to comply with health mandates may exacerbate tensions between communities and authorities as a result of shutdowns. In order to remain relevant, domestic extremists will continue to manipulate crises to validate their ideologies and incite potential attackers. Conspiracy theories and disinformation pertaining to the pandemic, the Presidential election, and alleged police brutality promote unrest and create dissension between protesters, law enforcement, and extremist groups. Knowledge gaps pertaining to COVID-19 testing, mortality rates, conspiracy theories, and vaccine development help drive the misinformation and disinformation the country has seen thus far this year into 2021.





DOMESTIC EXTREMISTS A HIGH THREAT IN 2021

Domestic extremists—primarily anarchist, anti-government, and racially motivated—will continue to manipulate national incidents such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Presidential election, and civil unrest to further their agendas and remain a threat. These extremists will use the confluence of those factors to promote propaganda, recruit new members, encourage supporters to commit attacks, spread disinformation, and create unrest in the United States. Disinformation has the potential to expend resources, incite fear, create distrust between the government and people, increase polarization in groups, influence governmental actions or law enforcement responses, or cause undue harm.

- Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic extremists have encouraged supporters to conduct attacks and routinely manipulated the crisis to validate their ideologies. Racially motivated extremists have advocated chaos to accelerate the collapse of society and cause racial segregation. During the pandemic, domestic extremists have spread falsehoods and conspiracy theories to fuel anti-government sentiments to increase online radicalization and heighten public fear. Potential false narratives to incite supporters may include vaccine disinformation, demonization of pharmaceutical companies, and conspiracies attempting to link vaccination efforts to minorities and immigrants. In March, Timothy Wilson, an anti-government and racially motivated extremist, plotted to attack a hospital in Kansas City, Missouri, that treated COVID-19 patients, claiming the pandemic is a Jewish plot to allow increased government control over the population.
- Supporters will use the Presidential election as an opportunity to spread extremist rhetoric online that promotes their ideologies, encourages election interference, and motivates followers to conduct violence regardless of which candidate is elected. Anarchist, anti-government, and racially motivated extremists will participate in election rallies and protests, borrowing from the disruptive tactics seen during recent unrest to target opposing protesters, spread propaganda, and recruit new members. Election result delays and recounts could result in protests and attempts to occupy election offices, similar to tactics used at state capitols during COVID-19 lockdowns.
- Anarchist and racially motivated extremists will use civil unrest to heighten their visibility, promote their viewpoints, and conduct attacks to further their stated goals. Racially motivated extremists and militia extremists will focus on publicly opposing Antifa-related groups and seeking confrontations resulting in street-level violence. Anarchist extremists will seek to injure law enforcement personnel, as well as conduct various forms of property damage, including arson, looting, and general vandalism. In the Pacific Northwest, specifically Portland and Seattle, various domestic extremist groups have contributed to protests and sporadic violence against law enforcement and the federal government since the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May. The sustained protests in these cities are being driven, in part, by strong anti-government and anti-law enforcement sentiment that makes up the local counterculture. This differs from protests and riots in other cities, such as in Chicago, where misinformation about a police shootout fueled large-scale looting in a downtown shopping district in August.
- While anarchist and racially motivated extremists will seek to co-opt or further agitate protests across the nation, the difference in motivations for civil unrest is regional and depends on factors such as events inciting a response, like the police-involved shooting in Kenosha, Wisconsin; community sentiment toward law enforcement; and misinformation circulated online. As a result, domestic extremists will take advantage of regional differences and continuing uncertainty stemming from the convergence of these national issues to plot and conduct attacks and encourage their supporters to do the same.





NATION-STATE DISINFORMATION THREATS WILL INTENSIFY INTO 2021

Nation-state threat actors' expanding disinformation campaigns that exploit COVID-19, election security, and civil unrest will persist into 2021 to exacerbate domestic tensions and challenge US global credibility. In August, the director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center reiterated that China, Iran, and Russia remain the primary counterintelligence threats to the 2020 elections due to their use of disinformation and other means to divide the country and undermine US democratic institutions and government agencies.

- China's COVID-19 global disinformation efforts targeting the United States and its allies will continue to employ new falsehoods. Previously, these included avoiding responsibility about the origins of the virus, taking credit for donating personal protective equipment later determined to be defective, and accusing the United States of creating the disease. Future narrative efforts by Chinese, Russian, and other state intelligence agencies could seek to cause mistrust in US healthcare providers by targeting the safety and reliability of COVID-19 vaccines, exaggerating side effects, and criticizing clinical trials and unfair distribution of inoculations. Due to China's aspirations to become the sole superpower, the country can also leverage its pharmaceutical sector to determine which countries gain access to vaccines.
- Similar tactics used in the 2016 elections to polarize political beliefs and divide the United States can be replicated during and after the 2020 elections by exploiting potential election result uncertainty. Efforts to delegitimize the elections and spread dissent among the electorate can include inventing and circulating conspiracy theories about voter fraud, post office failures, ballot errors, miscounting, and criticism or support of frivolous lawsuits challenging the election. Russia recently targeted the 2020 Democratic primaries, and Internet security researchers indicated that China-allied hackers engaged in spear-phishing attacks on American political targets ahead of the 2020 vote. Efforts to target the current or future administration could also attempt to further delegitimize the Presidential nominee's electoral victory.
- Ongoing riots exploiting peaceful protesters advocating political change will continue to provide China, Iran, and Russia the opportunity to exacerbate societal tensions. Russian disinformation strategies have exaggerated racial and political incidents to influence social discord, while Iran has publicly exploited US domestic tensions to criticize its foreign policy. Incidents of civil unrest resulting in riots, violent acts, and fatalities will converge with election uncertainty, producing confrontations between protesters and counter-demonstrators challenging election outcomes. As a result, nation-state threat actors will have additional opportunities to spread falsehoods that can be shared by overseas government officials, public and proxy media outlets, and facilitators of disinformation.





FOREIGN TERRORISTS EXPLOIT US SOCIETAL TENSIONS

Foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) will continue to exploit COVID-19, Presidential election dissonance, and civil unrest to create conflict, inspire extremists to radicalize, and provoke homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) to conduct attacks. While HVEs have conducted violent acts during recent social tensions, these incidents largely involved targeting law enforcement during patrols and ambushes.

- During the pandemic, al-Qa'ida and ISIS have praised the death and infection rates in the United States while conveying to their supporters that COVID-19 is God's retribution on their enemies. The pandemic will remain a propaganda tool to keep Islamist extremists committed to their violent ideology by highlighting an alleged decline in US power, identical to the collapse of the former Soviet Union. The tactic of praising the pandemic will also be combined with prolonged alleged grievances against the United States, including support for Israel and counterterrorism campaigns targeting their leaders.
- Foreign terrorists can use a disputed Presidential election to call for fragile overseas governments to dismantle democratic reforms advocated by the United States. While al-Qa'ida seeks to sympathize with protesters who are suspicious of electoral institutions, ISIS emboldens followers to target law enforcement that represents government authority upholding corrupt institutions. In May, 22-year-old Heba Momtaz Al-Azhari arrived at a Florida police station wielding a knife and lunged at an officer. Another officer shot her. A family spokesperson told a local news outlet that she was upset over her brother's arrest earlier in the week. Muhammed Momtaz Al-Azhari, 23, of Tampa, was arrested for attempting to provide material support or resources to ISIS to plan an attack in the city.
- Al-Qa'ida and ISIS will continue to vilify the United States in their English-language magazines, highlighting ongoing alleged police brutality, attacks against minorities, and protest images to portray America as a place of chaos. ISIS supporters responded to the racial tensions in the United States by comparing Black and Muslim families and insinuating oppression will spread to the Muslim community. At a protest for George Floyd in June, Dzenan Camovic of Brooklyn, New York, attacked a New York City police officer with a knife. Camovic was motivated by ISIS materials he viewed online and allegedly shouted, "Allahu Akbar," repeatedly during the attack. He also took the injured officer's gun and used it to shoot two other officers.
- As a result of the convergence of events carrying into 2021, FTOs will continue to urge lone offenders and HVEs to act locally and target law enforcement and mass gatherings through messaging that encourages small-scale attacks.



POTENTIAL SCENARIOS



COVID-19: POTENTIAL SCENARIOS

KEY ASSUMPTIONS

- COVID-19 infections and spread will not cease entirely for the foreseeable future.
- A vaccine will not be ready for mass public distribution nationally in 2020.
- Countries will continue to support allies in response to the pandemic, with relations remaining stable.

"WILDCARD" VARIABLES*

- A vaccine is produced and distributed on a global scale before the end of the year.
 - Strain on the US healthcare sector leads to a complete collapse and inability to handle growing needs from the pandemic.
 - Overall economic decline leads to another great depression.
- * *Wildcard variables are highly unlikely; however, they would impact the outcome of the analysis.*

WORSEN

COVID-19 INFECTIONS CAUSE SIMULTANEOUS GLOBAL OUTBREAKS, CULMINATING IN A SECOND WAVE

- Education institutions transition entirely to online learning for the next school year. Online learning presents unique challenges for parents, educational staff, and students as the transition yields differing schedules, costs, and technological difficulties.
- Domestic and international supply chains are interrupted, and the production of goods and services is severely disrupted or ceases. Unemployment and facility shutdowns on a global scale lead to shortages of food, currencies, personal protective equipment, and household goods.
- Narratives from nation-state threat actors such as China, Iran, and Russia fuel conspiracy theories and disinformation that severely impact the moral integrity of the United States. Anti-US sentiment increases, affecting relationships between the United States and allied countries.
- Conspiracy theories, perceived government overreach, and poor race relations fuel domestic extremists to attack institutions and civilians. Foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) undermine the United States and encourage supporters to attack. Both domestic extremists and FTOs attempt to capitalize on the United States' preoccupation with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Significant unemployment increases affect, in particular, the hospitality, healthcare, and entertainment industries. Strains cause permanent closures, devastated workforces, and a backlog of services.

STATUS QUO

COVID-19 INFECTIONS CONTINUE AS THEY HAVE IN THE FIRST HALF OF 2020

- Education institutions fluctuate between online and in-person learning. These institutions and districts will alter approaches, possibly shifting back to in-person or entirely online based on the spread of infection in their areas.
- Domestic and international supply chains in affected areas experience hindered production, leading to job loss, product shortages, and price increases. These shortages may continue in the short term as supply chains in certain affected areas struggle with infections, a reduced labor force, or an inability to produce products.
- Nation-state threat actors spread anti-US sentiment and propaganda. These countries push a false narrative about the origin of the spread of COVID-19 while also engaging in cyber attacks, both for the purpose of maligning the United States.
- Domestic extremists are vocal about spreading hateful rhetoric, and subsequent movements aim to recruit new members. FTOs mock US efforts to control the spread of the virus and push a narrative that the virus is retribution for injustices against them. Due to increased online use, radicalization of lone offenders and sporadic attacks are likely.
- Repeated opening and closing of domestic sectors create instability in the economy that harms workforces, businesses, and long-term recovery efforts. Certain sectors are slow to bounce back from shutdowns, and employment remains uncertain for many industries.

IMPROVE

COVID-19 INFECTIONS DECREASE, WITH SMALLER OUTBREAKS ACROSS THE GLOBE

- Education institutions shift back to in-person learning where appropriate. Online learning, primarily by higher education institutions, may continue due to the ability to reach more students.
- Supply chains gradually strengthen over time; however, the production and distribution of goods and services remain limited as labor forces are slowly restored and processing increases. Short-term shortages continue due to interrupted production because of the impacts of COVID-19.
- With COVID-19 cases decreasing and less global attention focused on the pandemic, nation-state threat actors spread false narratives concerning the origin of the virus and the United States' handling of its impacts. These countries use targeted hacking and disinformation to further malign the United States.
- Domestic extremists shift focus away from conspiracies about COVID-19 and onto civil unrest and current events in order to remain relevant. FTOs focus on strengthening recruitment efforts to continue fighting abroad and harm US interests. Both domestic extremists and FTOs spread violent rhetoric against the United States and its government.
- Domestic sectors open and serve communities in an altered capacity due to safety precautions. Long-term employment will take years to recoup losses due to the impacts of COVID-19.

OUTCOME

The global impact of COVID-19 is felt for an extended period of time. Various domestic and international industries are limited or cease operations entirely while the labor force is severely diminished. Domestic extremists fuel unrest and conspiracy theories, as well as commit attacks against the government and certain racial groups, to exploit increasing nationwide tension resulting from the pandemic. FTOs capitalize on the fear of the pandemic to push for supporter action and engage in direct attacks, while nation-state threat actors spread anti-US sentiment.

OUTCOME

The recovery process from the effects of COVID-19 is fragmented. Sectors and markets slowly rebound depending on state action. Precautionary measures remain in place to prevent further spread, which can antagonize domestic extremists and result in increased propaganda and recruitment efforts. The perceived success or failure to mitigate the effects/spread of COVID-19 is used by FTOs and nation-state threat actors to malign the United States and its policies, ideologies, and morals.

OUTCOME

Domestic growth in the job market, supply chain, and most impacted infrastructure sectors will increase slowly as markets also improve internationally. Conspiracy theories and rhetoric from domestic extremists and FTOs shift focus away from COVID-19 and onto current events or civil unrest resulting in the aftermath of the pandemic. US allies comment on the structure and stability of the US government and its handling of the pandemic, while nation-state threat actors continue to push a blame-shifting narrative.



CIVIL UNREST: POTENTIAL SCENARIOS

KEY ASSUMPTIONS

- Anti-law enforcement sentiment remains a driving force for civil unrest.
- Law enforcement continues to enforce state mandates pertaining to large-scale events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide civil unrest.
- Local governments enact changes in law enforcement policies and resources.

“WILDCARD” VARIABLES*

- Local governments disband law enforcement agencies in favor of alternative policing programs.
 - Law enforcement agencies go on strike and/or refuse to enforce government mandates.
 - A foreign terrorist organization (FTO) successfully conducts a mass casualty attack within the United States.
- * Wildcard variables are highly unlikely; however, they would impact the outcome of the analysis.*

WORSEN

CIVILIAN AND POLICE RELATIONS DETERIORATE, RESULTING IN VIOLENT INTERACTIONS

- Protest leaders lose their ability to encourage peaceful reform due to agitators co-opting the protest’s message, which results in violent interactions at rallies throughout the United States.
- Community leader and local law enforcement relations deteriorate to the point that violent interactions occur more often during routine policing activities.
- Anti-government and single-issue extremists mobilize on a regional or national scale, coordinating attacks against law enforcement.
- FTOs shift their propaganda to encourage followers to conduct direct attacks against law enforcement within the United States.
- Nation-state threat actors such as China, Iran, and Russia use social media to push intentionally manipulated narratives and articles of alleged police brutality on a national scale.

STATUS QUO

CIVILIAN AND POLICE RELATIONS REMAIN FRAGMENTED

- Protest leaders continue to encourage followers to remain peaceful; however, limited violent interactions occur regionally.
- Community leaders and local law enforcement attempt to work together to build trust; however, general anti-police sentiment remains.
- Anti-government and single-issue extremists continue to latch onto anti-law enforcement rallies and push for direct action against the police. Domestic extremists engage in minor altercations with law enforcement, while small cells or lone offenders conduct attacks.
- FTOs continue to publish anti-US propaganda, highlighting anti-law enforcement sentiment.
- Nation-state threat actors focus their social media disinformation campaigns on local or regional areas with higher reported violent interactions.

IMPROVE

CIVILIAN AND POLICE RELATIONS STABILIZE, ALLOWING FOR PEACEFUL REFORM

- Protest leaders encourage followers to remain non-violent and focus on petitioning legislators directly to enact reform, resulting in fewer violent interactions with police.
- Community leaders and local law enforcement successfully work together to build trust and positive relationships between communities and police departments.
- Anti-government and single-issue extremists’ platform to advocate direct action against law enforcement is limited due to improved relations between police and communities.
- FTOs shift the focus of their propaganda narratives back to US military intervention in the Middle East.
- Nation-state threat actors look for alternative means to manipulate and criticize the United States.

OUTCOME

As community and police relations deteriorate, violence increases. With the violent interactions happening on a national scale, police departments and communities are unable to focus their attention on making positive reforms and instead direct their efforts on protecting their own interests. Domestic extremists capitalize on the ongoing fear and violence to coordinate among each other and attack the police. FTOs focus their propaganda solely around the anti-law enforcement sentiment, leading homegrown violent extremists to plot attacks against police within the United States. Nation-state threat actors continue to use social media to escalate tensions between police and communities.

OUTCOME

As communities and local police departments attempt to stabilize their relationships and look for peaceful outcomes, a general distrust for the police and publicized violent interactions slow the process. Domestic extremists continue to leverage the ongoing public anti-law enforcement rallies to engage in violent interactions with police. FTOs continue to publish anti-law enforcement propaganda focused on alleged police brutality to inspire an attack on law enforcement in the United States. Nation-state threat actors continue to push localized violent interactions with the police to accelerate regional confrontations.

OUTCOME

As local law enforcement and communities begin to cultivate positive relationships and build trust, peaceful reform of policing techniques and procedures occurs. Communities and police departments work together to develop new policies and procedures that are beneficial for each side. As tensions continue to de-escalate, domestic extremists lose their public platforms to mobilize, and their ability to incite the general public is lessened. FTOs focus their propaganda back on US military intervention in the Middle East, hoping it will inspire attacks in the United States. Nation-state threat actors shift their focus to other high-profile events such as the COVID-19 pandemic to spread disinformation.



2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: POTENTIAL SCENARIOS



KEY ASSUMPTIONS

- Voting by mail encourages election conspiracies.
- Domestic extremists and foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) exploit the election to perpetuate their ideologies.
- Nation-state threat actors such as China, Iran, and Russia employ disinformation campaigns to influence the electorate.
- Cyber actors attempt to target vulnerable/isolated election-related networks to disrupt electoral processes.

"WILDCARD" VARIABLES*

- An electoral college deadlock requires Congress to elect the president.
- Deep fake technology results in confusion and fuels conspiracy theories.
- A Supreme Court justice becomes ill, passes away, or retires, swaying voter turnout or delaying election results if the justice's input is required.
- COVID-19 infections cause polling place closures and delays in certifying results.

* Wildcard variables are highly unlikely; however, they would impact the outcome of the analysis.

SCENARIO 1

ELECTION IS DECIDED ON OR NEAR NOVEMBER 3

- Limited nationwide protests provide fewer opportunities for lone offenders to attend organized demonstrations and conduct attacks between Election Day and Inauguration Day.
- Racially motivated extremists spread election result conspiracies to motivate supporters, recruit new members, and incite acts of violence.
- Anti-government and anarchist extremists attend election protests to promote their ideologies. Attacks and vandalism against government buildings and statues continue.
- FTO propaganda dismisses elections and democracy, claiming politicians will continue to support corrupt Middle Eastern governments.
- Nation-state threat actors continue disinformation campaigns attacking either the current or newly elected president. Efforts to weaken US cohesion domestically continue through social media engineering that targets societal and political differences.

SCENARIO 2

ELECTION RESULTS TAKE SEVERAL MONTHS TO CERTIFY

- Lone offenders inspired by election uncertainty conduct attacks targeting mass gatherings and law enforcement personnel.
- Racially motivated extremists scapegoat minorities and government officials for rigging the US elections. Supporters are emboldened to conduct more rallies and provide opportunities to create new online forums and groups.
- Anti-government and anarchist extremists attend election protests to conduct similar disruptive tactics used during racial justice gatherings. Violent encounters with counter-protesters and law enforcement officers result in loss of life and injuries.
- FTOs exploit election certification delays by supporting protesters seeking to dismantle the electoral system and instructing homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) to use previous tactics to target authority figures and government officials.
- Nation-state threat actors increase social media campaigns targeting segments of the population in order to sow discord and divide the US populace. State officials involved in certifying the election are targeted in attack ads to further discredit election results.

SCENARIO 3

ELECTION LAWSUITS NECESSITATE A SUPREME COURT DECISION

- Lone offenders incited by conspiracy theories threaten and target federally elected representatives, government institutions, the judicial system, and state judges they perceive as their enemies.
- Racially motivated extremists begin to target members of the judicial system they label as frauds, dictators, and unelected bureaucrats. Social media comments threatening federal judges and courthouse bomb threats increase.
- Anti-government and anarchist extremists protest, target, and vandalize judicial buildings, claiming the judicial system is run by authoritarians.
- FTOs suggest HVEs target large gatherings while Americans are preoccupied with election results. FTOs convey that democracy and elections are illegitimate and corrupt institutions in direct conflict with their ideologies.
- Nation-state threat actors employ disinformation campaigns targeting the judicial system to alienate voters and cause the electorate to distrust the election system, judges, and government institutions.

OUTCOME

A certified election still provokes protesters to assemble and challenge the results. Peaceful protests demanding states certify electoral college results are co-opted by domestic extremists. Violence, injuries, and clashes among protesters occur. Anti-government and anarchist extremists seek to exploit the election but continue to focus on conducting violent protests against perceived police brutality. Nation-state threat actors continue to utilize online platforms to interfere in US domestic politics after the election.

OUTCOME

Several states become a destination for various groups to converge and conduct violent protests. Deadly confrontations and civil unrest occur among protesters, requiring state and federal law enforcement to intervene. Law enforcement officers are targeted by domestic extremists and HVEs in ambush attacks, resulting in casualties and serious injuries. Ongoing election protests compel nation-state threat actors to increase disinformation campaigns to sow discord domestically and challenge US global credibility.

OUTCOME

Threats against the judicial system persist in 2021. Protesters remain committed to conducting rallies outside the Supreme Court, resulting in violence. Racially motivated extremists become emboldened to conduct more attacks, claiming a collapse of society will allow for the creation of a racially pure ethnostate. FTOs mock the US system to inspire HVEs to conduct attacks. Civil unrest ensures domestic extremists remain a higher threat in 2021 than FTOs.





NJOHSP RELATED PRODUCTS

DISINFORMATION

2020 US Election and Foreign Interference - <https://bit.ly/3boJhAI>

Disinformation FAQ - <https://bit.ly/2QNnMA6>

Disinformation Tactics - <https://bit.ly/2QT4CZQ>

Fake Antifa Twitter Accounts - <https://bit.ly/2GsnBIH>

False Text Messages Part of Larger COVID-19 Disinformation Campaign - <https://bit.ly/3hVxMTL>

COUNTERTERRORISM

Al-Qa'ida's Online Magazine Vilifies US Values - <https://bit.ly/2Z1nTg7>

Boogaloo Movement Gains Traction Amid Civil Unrest - <https://bit.ly/31SULt6>

HVEs to Continue Targeting Uniformed Officers - <https://bit.ly/31VfnBa>

Violent Islamist Extremists Promote US Social Tensions - <https://bit.ly/2GuliUt>

White Racially Motivated Extremists Remain Resilient - <https://bit.ly/31RkvWS>

