



(U) No Specific, Credible Threats during Memorial Day Weekend 2021

(U//FOUO) **SCOPE NOTE:** The Joint Regional Intelligence Center (JRIC) has prepared the following threat assessment for its public safety partners. This assessment examines any threat information that may have been received by the JRIC, but does not incorporate operational details, security deployment, or other tactical considerations. This information is current as of 1200 PT, 24 May 2021.

(U//FOUO) The JRIC is prohibited from monitoring or commenting on protests and activities protected by the First Amendment, absent evidence of a criminal or terrorist nexus.

(U) Key Findings

(U//FOUO) The JRIC has not identified any specific, credible criminal or violent threats related to Memorial Day or the weekend leading up to the US holiday--from 29-31 May--within its six-county AOR. While violence targeting Memorial Day gatherings is rare, the JRIC assesses a heightened threat environment due to a confluence of factors:

- (U//FOUO) **CONTINUING SOCIOPOLITICAL TENSIONS.** Domestic and foreign actors continue to exploit the polarized US political climate and negative socioeconomic impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Violent opportunists (VOs) may be mobilized into action by mis- and dis-information campaigns related to conspiracy theories promoting violence; potential civil unrest related to fatal officer-involved shootings across the United States, including the one-year anniversary of the murder of George Floyd^{USPER}; the 6 January 2021 US Capitol riots and subsequent riot-related investigations and arrests; and conflicts related to enforcement of COVID-related safeguards and COVID-19 vaccination efforts.
- (U//FOUO) **EXTREMIST THREATS.** Plots and attacks by small groups and lone actors can be difficult to detect and interdict; domestic violent extremists (DVEs), particularly racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists (RMVEs), homegrown violent extremists (HVEs), VOs, unaffiliated lone offenders (ULOs), and foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) remain intent on conducting attacks against small and large gatherings in the Homeland and overseas.
- (U//FOUO) **AMPLIFYING EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA.** Extremists continue to exploit social media and the Internet to broadcast their ideologies, spread misinformation, incite violence, and share tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). The pro-al-Qa'ida magazine *Wolves of Manhattan* encourages readers to target US government and law enforcement (LE) personnel and exploit legal protests to conduct attacks. The national symbolism and connection to the US military offered by Memorial Day observances may serve as attractive targets. Symbolic targets could include military, government, and LE facilities and personnel.
- (U//FOUO) **RESUMPTION OF MASS GATHERINGS.** Larger crowds and a greater number of gatherings are likely as the vaccinated population in the JRIC AOR increases and COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, increasing targets of opportunity. These may include beaches; concerts; critical infrastructure, such as utilities, transportation hubs, and medical facilities; and local sporting events--the Los Angeles Dodgers, LA Football Club, and LA Galaxy will host games during Memorial Day weekend, and are likely to acknowledge the holiday and host promotions. Soft targets, including small gatherings, retail, and dining establishments, remain a perennial focus of attacks, as evidenced by the recent May 2021 mass casualty attacks at a birthday party in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and the Oneida Casino Complex in Ashwaubenon, Wisconsin.



(U) Background

(U) Memorial Day, a federal holiday honoring military personnel killed while serving in the United States Armed Forces, occurs on the last Monday of May and will be observed this year on 31 May 2021. In addition to unofficial observances by individuals and businesses, community parades are common and will occur throughout the AOR. Some events will be canceled or remote due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. However, Memorial Day weekend, a long weekend for most Americans, is also known as the unofficial start of the summer season, which may prompt additional crowds to celebrate in public – especially with increasing vaccinations and decreasing infection rates.

(U) Potential Threats

(U//FOUO) DVEs, HVEs, VOs, and ULOs, driven by varying sociopolitical, ideological, or personal factors, may seek to target large gatherings; soft targets; and symbolic targets, including military, government, or LE personnel or facilities because of Memorial Day's military symbolism; mass gathering events and venues provide targets of opportunity. Due to the individualized nature of their radicalization and mobilization to violence, these actors are difficult to detect and interdict, and attacks can occur with little to no warning. FTO and violent extremist messaging routinely call for attacks against soft targets and LE. A recently released Office of the Director of National Intelligence [assessment](#) identified an elevated threat to the Homeland in 2021 from DVEs motivated by a range of ideologies, and galvanized by recent political and societal events in the United States.

- (U//FOUO) **Hate Crime Trends.** Hate crimes in the United States are at a 16-year high and have continued to rise, according to the FBI. The recent growing number of hate crimes against Asians nationwide may inspire additional racially motivated attacks against minority populations.
- (U//FOUO) **Extremist Messaging.** ISIS, al-Qa'ida, and terrorist sympathizers have published issues of their respective magazines encouraging attacks in the West and against Western targets, and providing detailed tactical advice for planning and carrying out attacks.

(U) DVE/HVE/RMVE Attacks

(U) Recent attacks in the United States illustrate the difficult nature of identifying and interdicting DVE/HVE/RMVE activities:

- (U) **Colorado.** On 22 March 2021, Ahmad Al Aliwi Alissa^{USPER} shot 10 at a grocery store in Boulder, Colorado.
- (U) **Georgia.** On 16 March 2021, Robert Aaron Long^{USPER} fatally shot eight, including six Asian women, at three spas in the Atlanta area.
- (U) **Florida.** On 29 May 2017, Horvin Samar Ruiz^{USPER} fired 108 rounds at motorists and police on the Palmetto Expressway in Florida. This rare Memorial Day incident did not have a terrorism nexus.

(U) FTO-Inspired or Directed Attacks

(U) Recent attacks, though not connected to Memorial Day, illustrate continued extremist efforts to promote and conduct violence. FTOs have used a variety of tactics overseas:

- (U) **France | Stabbing.** On 23 April 2021, a French-Tunisian attacker fatally stabbed a police administrator in Rambouillet, France. Law enforcement officers continue to be “attractive” targets for violent extremists.



- (U) **Pakistan | Vehicle Bombing.** On 21 April 2021, a Pakistani Taliban suicide bomber detonated an explosive-laden car in the Serena Hotel's garage, located in Balochistan Province, killing five and wounding 12. FTOs continue to use improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and vehicle-borne explosives (VBIEDs) for attacks.
- (U) **Iraq | Drone Bombing.** On 8 May 2021, militants, suspected to be Iranian-backed Kataib Hezbollah militia fighters, detonated an explosive-laden drone at a military base housing US troops, damaging a hangar. Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) are becoming more accessible and popular tools for attacks.
- (U) **France | Vehicle Ramming.** On 14 July 2016, Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel drove a large commercial truck into a crowd celebrating Bastille Day, killing 84 and wounding hundreds in Nice, France. FTOs target large gatherings, particularly on holidays, for attacks.

(U) Security Considerations for Public Safety

(U//FOUO) Perpetrators of recent attacks in the United States and abroad were self-motivated and inspired by like-minded individuals who leveraged social media platforms to broadcast manifestos, personal grievances, and ideological narratives. Though unaffiliated with FTOs, these lone offenders often adopted TTPs from other violent extremists.

(U//FOUO) Training on active shooters, suspicious packages, crowd management, and inter-agency emergency response operations helps mitigate impacts as hoaxes or events unfold. Community training emphasizing activity- or behavior-based suspicious activity reporting is vital to early detection and interdiction. Preventive considerations and possible pre-incident indicators for public safety personnel, based on identified behaviors indicative of preparation to commit violence, and extremist TTPs, are provided below. In most cases, families, friends, and close associates are best positioned to report behavioral, verbal, and written signals that an individual may be at risk and on a pathway to violence.

(U//FOUO) Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures Used by Suspects

(U//FOUO) Potential Mobilization Indicators

- (U//FOUO) Acquisition of weapons, equipment, or materials that could be used in targeted mass violence attacks, when combined with expressed endorsement of violence as an answer to grievances;
- (U//FOUO) Communication with known or suspected foreign-based or US-based violent extremists;
- (U//FOUO) Focused, deep research into previous targeted mass violence attacks;
- (U//FOUO) Increasing interaction, in-person or online, with individuals/communities that endorse extremist or violent ideologies;
- (U//FOUO) Engaging in overtly suspicious actions to provoke and observe responses by first responders;
- (U//FOUO) Unusual interest in or questions about security procedures; and/or
- (U//FOUO) Attempts to gain familiarity with the site, surroundings, and military or LE tactics.

(U//FOUO) Shooting and Edged Weapon Attacks

- (U//FOUO) Attempts to secure a concealed weapon on the body; and/or
- (U//FOUO) Wearing body armor or bulky, large clothing to conceal weapons.

(U//FOUO) Vehicle Ramming

- (U//FOUO) Theft of large or heavy-duty vehicles;
- (U//FOUO) Hasty purchase or rental of large commercial vehicles paid in cash, and suspicious reason(s) for purchase/rental provided;



- (U//FOUO) Buyer or renter of large commercial vehicle cannot produce required or appropriate documentation, licenses, or endorsements;
- (U//FOUO) Driver has difficulty operating a large or heavy-duty truck, indicating a lack of familiarity with the vehicle;
- (U//FOUO) Attempts to infiltrate crowded areas closed to vehicle traffic;
- (U//FOUO) Large commercial vehicles driven erratically at unusual hours, often near crowds; and/or
- (U//FOUO) Unusual modifications to a vehicle, such as a reinforced front bumper.

(U//FOUO) Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)

- (U//FOUO) Subject may be sweating, speaking quietly to self, or appear calm and detached; wearing visible wires or bulky garments;
- (U//FOUO) Subject may appear nervous, attempt to abandon vehicle, or attempt to move vehicle close to a possible target despite parking restrictions or orders to move;
- (U//FOUO) Unattended bags or packages in highly populous areas;
- (U//FOUO) Unusual chemical or fuel odors;
- (U//FOUO) Vehicle is overladen or appears to have weight unevenly distributed;
- (U//FOUO) A known IED tactic is to use distraction such as gunfire or small bombs to attract bystanders to a window, doorway, or outside area, and then detonate a second IED at the gathering point; and/or
- (U//FOUO) Threat actors may build IEDs to resemble commonplace objects and use materials found locally. This makes them inconspicuous and potentially difficult to detect. IEDs are popular with militants and terrorists overseas. Large quantities of explosives and other materials such as nails and metal pellets can be packed into IEDs to inflict additional casualties.

(U//FOUO) Chemical Weapons

- (U//FOUO) Multiple casualties exhibiting similar symptoms (coughing, dizziness, nausea, eye and skin irritation, shortness of breath, muscle weakness, loss of consciousness);
- (U//FOUO) Reports of a device that dispersed a mist, vapor, or powder;
- (U//FOUO) Reports of unusual odors, liquids, spray devices, cylinders, or oily film on surfaces; and/or
- (U//FOUO) Suspicious or unexplained packages, vehicles, or containers.

(U//FOUO) Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)/Drones

- (U//FOUO) Unauthorized UAS flights in restricted areas during special events or over crowded areas;
- (U//FOUO) Individuals operating UAS control equipment near sensitive sites or events, who cannot provide reasonable explanations for their activity; and/or
- (U//FOUO) Technology from easily accessible, "off-the-shelf" commercial UAS platforms continues to advance and become more affordable. UAS incidents abroad have featured actors employing UAS for nefarious purposes that could potentially inspire US-based individuals to employ such tactics. Unauthorized UAS operations can disrupt law enforcement operations or present a hazard to civilians during large, public events.

(U) Reporting, Questions, Feedback

(U) To report suspicious activity to the JRIC, visit www.jric.org, or call (562) 345-1100 or (888) 705-JRIC (5742). For comments or questions related to the content of this document, contact the JRIC by phone, or at jric@jric.org.