

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

**MR. JOE E. ETHRIDGE
CHIEF, INTELLIGENCE DIVISION, UNITED STATES ARMY CRIMINAL
INVESTIGATION COMMAND**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

SECOND SESSION, 116TH CONGRESS

**ALARMING INCIDENTS OF WHITE SUPREMACY IN THE MILITARY – HOW TO
STOP IT?**

FEBRUARY 11, 2020

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Kelly, and Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for the opportunity to address you on this topic. As the Chief, Criminal Intelligence Division, U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command (CID), I have a vested interest in crime prevention and readiness.

In early 2019, Army CID observed a small increase in criminal investigations initiated with Soldier participation in extremist activities as a component (seven investigations in 2019 in comparison to 2.4 per year in the FY 2014-2018 period). During the same time period, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) notified CID of an increase in domestic terrorism investigations with Soldiers or former Soldiers as suspects. In May 2019, the Provost Marshal General of the Army and I briefed the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army (VCSA) and members of the Army staff on the CID and FBI observations. The VCSA directed the formation of a working group to review current policies and procedures to prevent and address extremism in the ranks.

The working group recommended several adjustments to the Army policy for Soldier participation in extremist activities stated in Chapter 4-12, Army Regulation (AR) 600-20 (Army Command Policy). The revision of AR 600-20 is scheduled for release in the second quarter, FY2020 period. The policy places specific responsibilities on Commanders, to include:

1. Educating/training Soldiers on the Army's Military Equal Opportunity policy. Our Soldiers must know the standard.
2. Reporting of observed incidents of extremist activity to CID. The CID will identify extremist groups and assess those that are likely to resolve to violence. Additionally, CID will inform the FBI and other law enforcement partners when a Soldier is being separated due to extremist activities.
3. Advising Soldiers that participation in extremist activity will be taken into consideration when writing evaluation reports, may impact decisions on leadership assignments, may result in suspension or revocation of security clearances, will be reported to law enforcement authorities, and may result in administrative separation or criminal prosecution.
4. Counseling Soldiers when indicators of extremist activity are identified, in order to prevent violations of Army policy and/or criminal acts.

In order to implement the policy and protect our Soldiers, all the elements of the system must be present. Soldiers should know and clearly understand the Army's anti-discrimination policy to preserve good order and discipline in the unit. Counseling must be employed early, when indicators are present, to prevent extremist acts. Finally, the CID should be notified when extremist activities are observed and documented.

The CID identifies Soldiers suspected of participating in extremist activities in multiple ways, to include chain of command reporting, local police, the media, public-facing social media searches, tip-line reports, and FBI domestic terrorism investigative reporting. The CID greatly values the partnership and contributions of the FBI. The FBI welcomed CID to expand our partnership, traditionally centered on the National Joint Terrorism Task Force and the National Gang Intelligence Center. In 2019, CID added agent and analyst representation in the FBI's Domestic Terrorism Operations Unit. The FBI relationship ensures timely notification of Army personnel suspected of crimes related to domestic terrorism.

The majority of the Soldiers identified as participating in extremist activities are not subjects of criminal investigations. The more common scenario is participation in online forums or membership in an organization expressing extremist or supremacist views. In these instances, CID notifies commanders via information report for action in accordance with the Army policy described previously. The CID tracks the notifications for crime prevention purposes.

In summary, CID has increased collection efforts, informed Army leadership of our observations, participated in the review and changes to Army policy, expanded our relationship with law enforcement partners, and made notifications to Commanders. Additionally, CID has formulated a request to the Army Inspector General to add unit implementation of extremist activity policy (encapsulated in Army Regulation 600-20) as a focus area for the next inspection cycle. The Army is postured to identify extremist activity in the ranks and has both the policy and leadership tools to prevent emergence as a pervasive issue.