

I am an extremist

by *Oliver_North*

According to the U.S. government, I am an extremist. I am a Christian and meet regularly with other Christians to study God's word. My faith convinces me the prophecies in the Holy Bible are true. I believe in the sanctity of human life, oppose abortion, and want to preserve marriage as the union of a man and a woman. I am a veteran with skills and knowledge derived from military training and combat. I own several firearms, and I frequently shoot them, buy ammunition, and consider efforts to infringe on my Second Amendment rights to be wrong and unconstitutional. I fervently support the sovereignty of the United States, and I am deeply concerned about our economy, increasingly higher taxes, illegal immigration, soaring unemployment, and actions by our government that will bury my children beneath a mountain of debt.

Apparently, all this makes me a "rightwing extremist." At least, that's what it says in the April 7 "Assessment" issued by the Office of Intelligence and Analysis at the Department of Homeland Security. The nine-page report, titled "Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment," is full of warnings about American citizens who share any part of my background or subscribe to the beliefs above. It is one of the most alarming documents produced by our government that I ever have read.

Evidently, neither you nor I ever was supposed to read this "Assessment." At the bottom of the cover page is a warning that it is "not to be released to the public, the media, or other personnel who do not have a valid need-to-know." We're Americans. We have a need to know what's going on in our government, especially in an administration that promised to be "transparent." A full copy of the report is posted at <http://www.FreedomAlliance.org>.

The "Assessment" purports to alert law enforcement officials that "rightwing extremists" — the term is used more than 35 times — are intent on exploiting Americans who have strongly held beliefs on everything from Christian faith to rising unemployment, U.S. sovereignty and the Second Amendment. It vilifies those of us in these categories by references to neo-Nazis, racists, militias, white supremacists and other "hate groups." Notably, the report includes a warning that right-wing extremism "may include groups and individuals that are dedicated to a single issue, such as opposition to abortion or immigration."

Though the report proffers a passing reference to the First Amendment, it is replete with bias against conservative thought, writing and communications. On Page 3, law enforcement authorities are warned, "Rightwing extremist chatter on the Internet continues to focus on the economy, the perceived (emphasis added) loss of U.S. jobs in the manufacturing and construction sectors, and home foreclosures."

That is a frightening acknowledgment that political speech is being monitored in America. It is also wrong. It's not "perception." It is fact. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the manufacturing and construction sectors have lost 161,000 jobs and 126,000 jobs, respectively, last month alone.

In its "Key Findings," the DHS manuscript boldly charges that "rightwing extremists may be gaining new recruits by playing on their fears about several emergent issues" and offers this warning: "The possible passage of new restrictions on firearms and the return of military veterans facing significant challenges reintegrating into their communities could lead to the potential emergence of terrorist groups or lone wolf extremists capable of carrying out violent attacks."

Under the heading "Disgruntled Military Veterans," the report alleges: "Rightwing extremists will attempt to recruit and radicalize returning veterans in order to exploit their skills and knowledge derived from military training and combat. These skills and knowledge have the potential to boost the capabilities of extremists — including lone wolves or small terrorist cells — to carry out violence." These unsubstantiated claims are followed by reminders that Timothy McVeigh, who bombed the Oklahoma City federal building in 1995, was a military veteran. Omitted is any reference to the fact that McVeigh was simply one of more than 40 million veterans of the U.S. armed forces.

Thirteen lines after this egregious, unconscionable slander against those of us who are military combat veterans, DHS makes the stunning charge that "lone wolves and small terrorist cells embracing violent rightwing extremist ideology are the most dangerous domestic terrorism threat in the United States."

According to this DHS "Assessment," the most dangerous threat we face here at home isn't from radical imams preaching violence in U.S. mosques and madrassas, Islamists recruiting in our prisons, Somali terrorists enticing young immigrants to become suicide bombers, or Hamas, Hezbollah or al-Qaida operatives plotting mass murder. No, according to DHS, the real threat comes from what our government labels "rightwing extremist ideology."

Mr. Obama should disavow this report publicly and fire the officials responsible for issuing it. Those who prepare his remarks for the occasion should insert in the teleprompter former Sen. Barry Goldwater's words on the subject: "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice."

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