

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Director Gina Haspel
Central Intelligence Agency
2430 E St NW
Washington, DC 20037

Director Christopher Wray
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20535-0001

July 14, 2020

Dear Directors Haspel and Wray,

Over the past few months, localized misinformation about apparently nonexistent Antifa gatherings and “invasions” has proliferated in communities throughout the United States, sowing social and political division.¹ The undersigned are inquiring about any definitive evidence gathered, or ongoing investigations, by federal authorities regarding the identities or nationalities of individuals originating and promoting these falsely advertised Antifa gatherings.

To date, the misinformation about Antifa gatherings has spread through Facebook, Twitter, Craigslist, and NextDoor.² These posts usually cite text messages – which appear to be variations of template messages – claiming active duty military personnel or members of local police departments provided the information. State and local authorities in the majority of these communities deny any involvement on the part of their department.³

In most cases, no individuals identifying as Antifa arrive at the locations identified in social media posts or template text messages; however, heavily armed counter protestors have arrived on several occasions. The apparent similarities in the dissemination methods to previously identified disinformation campaigns from foreign nationals and designated hate groups merit further investigation.

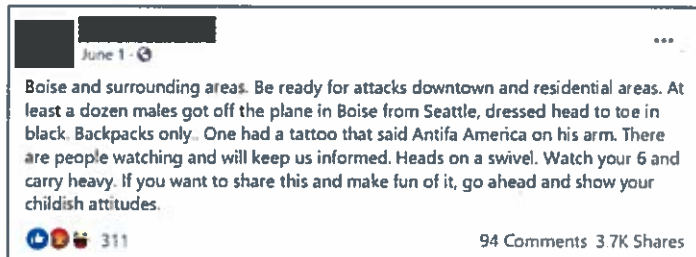
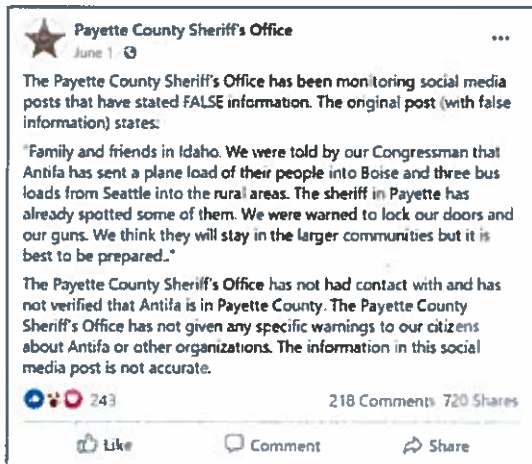
Below are exhibits of social media posts and template text messages regarding falsely advertised Antifa gatherings in Payette County, Idaho, and Fayetteville, North Carolina. In the instances of misinformation that spread through both Payette County and Fayetteville, the primary source of

¹ Seitz, Amanda. “False claims of antifa protesters plague small U.S. cities.” *AP News*, <https://apnews.com/583432c84feb1d26ea919c0e2f0de54a> (6/2/20)

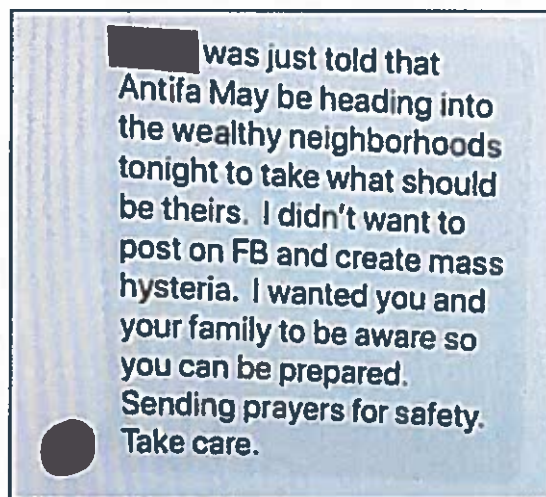
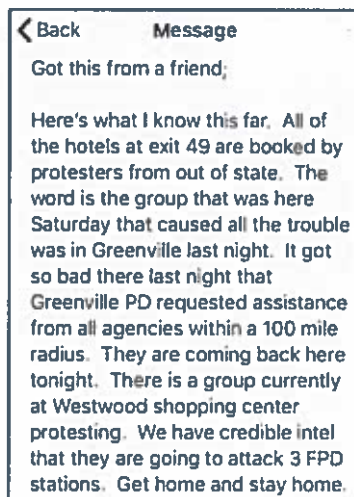
² Collins, Ben. Zdrozny, Brandy. “Antifa rumors spread on local social media with no evidence” *NBC News* <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/antifa-rumors-spread-local-social-media-no-evidence-n1222486> (6/2/20)

³ Seitz, Amanda. “False claims of antifa protesters plague small U.S. cities.” *AP News*, <https://apnews.com/583432c84feb1d26ea919c0e2f0de54a> (6/2/20)

the information is difficult to identify. The only identities of primary sourcing were supposed “friends” and “coworkers” with connections to police departments and the U.S. military.



Payette County, Idaho: The left image is from the Payette County Sheriff's Facebook page, containing a quoted template message about Antifa arriving in the Idaho by the “plane load.” This message was shared widely over social media and direct text messaging platforms. [Left Exhibit Index⁴] The right image is from a redacted individual user sharing a template message warning about “attacks” being imminent in Boise, Idaho. The template post is recommending individuals maintain the possession of firearms, and around 40 to 50 armed individuals subsequently arrived in downtown Boise on June 1, 2020. No individuals identifying as Antifa were on scene. [Right Exhibit Index⁵]



Fayetteville, North Carolina: The left image is a message sent on Facebook messenger containing falsified rumors about the Greenville Police Department requesting support from surrounding agencies to deal with an influx of

⁴ Blanchard, Nicole, & Brown, Ruth. “Police: No, antifa not sending ‘a plane load of their people’ to Idaho to incite riots.” *Idaho Statesman*. <https://www.idahostatesman.com/news/local/article243180241.html> (6/1/20)

⁵ [Redacted Individual]. Facebook. (June 1, 2020)

individuals identifying as Antifa. Greenville PD denied any such request.⁶ [Left Exhibit Index⁷] The right image is a text message falsely stating that individuals identifying as Antifa were heading to “wealthy neighborhoods” in Fayetteville, North Carolina. [Right Exhibit Index⁸]

Unlike the misinformation shared in Payette County and Fayetteville, a supposed Antifa gathering in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, that was set to occur on July 4, 2020, had an identifiable source on Facebook and Twitter. The social media accounts for “Left Behind USA,” purporting to be representative of Antifa, posted explicit details of a flag-burning event at Gettysburg National Cemetery. When the identity of the administrator for the “Left Behind USA” accounts was inquired on by a national media outlet, the name “Alan Jeffs” was provided. According to the media outlet, there no known public records for this individual in the United States.⁹

Antifa operatives did not show up on July 4, 2020, to Gettysburg National Cemetery, but hundreds of heavily armed counter protesters did arrive at the scene. At one point, the armed counter protestors surrounded and aggressively questioning a man in a “Black Lives Matter” shirt visiting an ancestor’s grave.¹⁰ On several occasions, falsely advertised Antifa gatherings have been strategically placed at the same time and location as Black Lives Matter protests. Documented instances of armed individuals counter protesting a falsely advertised Antifa gathering but then encountering individuals peacefully protesting at Black Lives Matter include occurrences in Michigan¹¹, Montana,¹² and Oregon¹³.

Below are exhibit images of the posts on the “Left Behind USA” Facebook and Twitter accounts.

⁶ Specht, Paul. “Fact check: Raleigh text messages say Antifa planned to raid rich neighborhoods.” *PolitiFact* <https://www.wral.com/fact-check-raleigh-text-messages-say-antifa-planned-to-raid-rich-neighborhoods/19131889/> (6/5/20)

⁷ Provided by Stand Up Republic [Sourcing Pending]

⁸ Specht, Paul. “Fact check: Raleigh text messages say Antifa planned to raid rich neighborhoods.” *PolitiFact* <https://www.wral.com/fact-check-raleigh-text-messages-say-antifa-planned-to-raid-rich-neighborhoods/19131889/> (6/5/20)

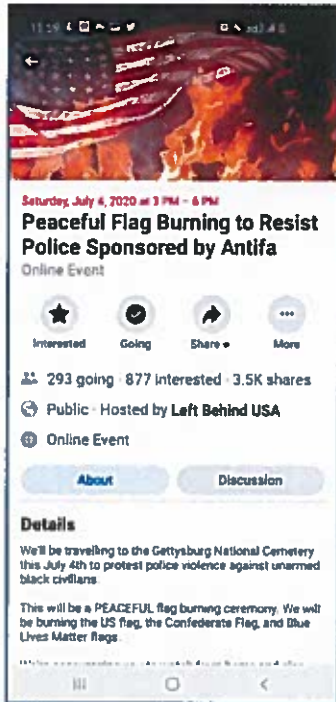
⁹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/hundreds-of-armed-men-went-to-gettysburg-to-defend-it-from-a-phantom-antifa-flag-burner-created-on-social-media/2020/07/04/206ee4da-bb05-11ea-86d5-3b9b3863273b_story.html

¹⁰ Bennett, Dalton. Boburg, Shawn. “Militias flocked to Gettysburg to foil a supposed antifa flag burning, an apparent hoax created on social media” *Washington Post* https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/hundreds-of-armed-men-went-to-gettysburg-to-defend-it-from-a-phantom-antifa-flag-burner-created-on-social-media/2020/07/04/206ee4da-bb05-11ea-86d5-3b9b3863273b_story.html (7/4/20)

¹¹ Agar, John. “Antifa ad on Craigslist for Fourth of July training in West Michigan likely hoax, police say.” *MLive*. <https://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/2020/07/antifa-ad-on-craigslist-for-fourth-of-july-training-in-west-michigan-likely-hoax-police-say.html> (7/1/20)

¹² Mabie, Nora, & Rispen, Skylar. “People want justice’: Great Falls residents rally against police brutality, racism.” *Great Falls Tribune*. <https://www.greatfallstribune.com/story/news/2020/06/05/montana-great-falls-black-lives-matter-protest-george-floyd-racism-police-brutality/3161094001/> (6/5/20)

¹³ Zandrozny, Brandy, & Collins, Ben. “In Klamath Falls, Oregon, victory declared over antifa, which never showed up.” *NBC News*. <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/social-media/klamath-falls-oregon-victory-declared-over-antifa-which-never-showed-n1226681> (6/6/20)



Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: The above images are Facebook and Twitter posts by the account “Left Behind USA” advertising a false Antifa sponsored flag burning event on July 4th, 2020. The account has been suspended on both platforms and the name of the individual supposedly administrating both accounts is not available in public records.¹⁴ [Left Exhibit Reference¹⁵] [Right Exhibit Reference¹⁶]

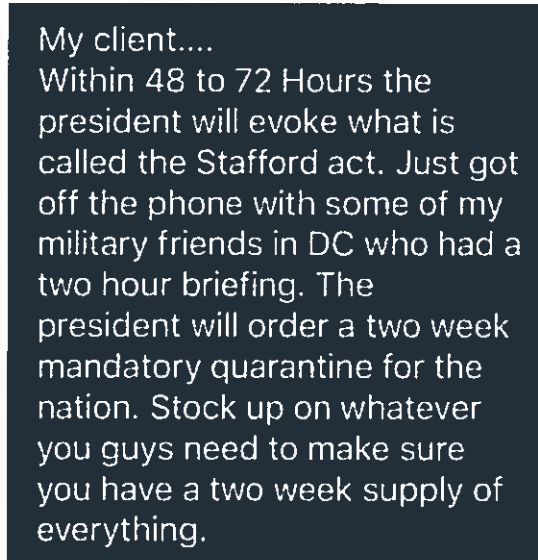
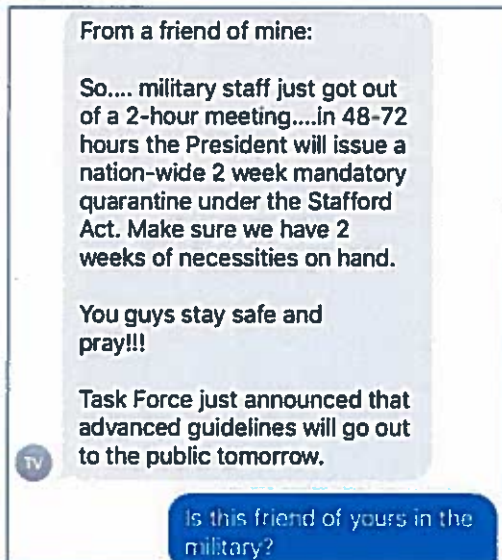
The proliferation methods of misinformation on Antifa activities in June and July of 2020 are similarly structured to the disinformation deployed in the United States during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. In both cases, template messages and social media posts were being sent under the false pretext of government, military, and local police authorities sharing this information with the sender or poster. In April 2020, several template messages and social media posts started to circulate regarding a false rumor that the federal government would invoke the Stafford Act in a given time frame, thus implementing a national “mandatory quarantine.”¹⁷ Below are exhibit template text messages that were shared widely in April 2020.

¹⁴ Bennett, Dalton. Boburg, Shawn. “Militias flocked to Gettysburg to foil a supposed antifa flag burning, an apparent hoax created on social media” *Washington Post* https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/hundreds-of-armed-men-went-to-gettysburg-to-defend-it-from-a-phantom-antifa-flag-burner-created-on-social-media/2020/07/04/206ee4da-bb05-11ea-86d5-3b9b3863273b_story.html (7/4/20)

¹⁵ Wise, Jenna. “Dozens, some armed, come to Gettysburg to guard against rumors of Antifa violence” *The Patriot-News* <https://www.pennlive.com/news/2020/07/dozens-some-armed-come-to-gettysburg-to-guard-against-rumors-of-antifa-violence.html> (7/4/20)

¹⁶ Gordon, James. “Right-wing militia descend on Gettysburg after falling for online hoax that Antifa was planning to burn American flags at the Civil War battleground” *The Daily Mail* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8493057/Militias-flocked-Gettysburg-foil-supposed-antifa-flag-burning-hoax.html> (7/6/20)

¹⁷ “Huge text message campaigns spread coronavirus fake news.” *Financial Times*. <https://www.ft.com/content/34b6df5a-ea4a-471f-8ac9-606580480049>



COVID-19 Stafford Act Hoaxes: The above images are examples of template text messages shared during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic and warn of a pending lockdown to be enforced by the federal government. Both cite a military source, state that the Stafford Act will be invoked, and give the 48 to 72 hours timeline. [Exhibit Left Index¹⁸] [Right Exhibit Index¹⁹]

Twitter Inc. has stated that white supremacist groups have contributing to some of the localized disinformation campaigns around Antifa gatherings²⁰; however, U.S. intelligence officials reportedly determined that Chinese operatives carried out the misinformation campaigns around COVID-19 lockdowns.²¹ The practice of foreign nationals falsely advertising events to stoke political and social division between different groups in the United States is a procedure identified by the Federal Bureau of Investigations²², the Office of Special Counsel Robert Mueller²³, the Senate Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence²⁴, and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence²⁵.

¹⁸ "Huge text message campaigns spread coronavirus fake news." *Financial Times*.

<https://www.ft.com/content/34b6df5a-ea4a-471f-8ac9-606580480049>

¹⁹ Puckett, Jason, Tregde, David, & Spry Jr., Terry. "VERIFY: Text messages about national quarantine and 'Stafford Act' are fake." *WUSA9* <https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/verify/verify-text-messages-about-the-stafford-act-and-a-national-quarantine-are-fake/507-efb21526-6fc0-4197-a566-f8ab3e5956b7> (3/16/20)

²⁰ Kates, Graham. "Twitter says fake "Antifa" account was run by white supremacists." *CBS News*. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/twitter-fake-antifa-account-white-supremacists-removal/> (6/2/20)

²¹ Wong, Edward, Rosenberg, Matthew, & Barnes, Julian. "Chinese Agents Helped Spread Messages That Sowed Virus Panic in U.S., Officials Say." *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/22/us/politics/coronavirus-china-disinformation.html> (4/22/20)

²² *Federal Bureau of Investigation*. <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/counterintelligence/foreign-influence>

²³ Mueller, Robert. "Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election." <https://www.justice.gov/storage/report.pdf>

²⁴ "RUSSIAN ACTIVE MEASURES CAMPAIGNS AND INTERFERENCE IN THE 2016 U.S. ELECTION' VOLUME 2: RUSSIA'S USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA WITH ADDITIONAL VIEWS." *Senate Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence*. https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report_Volume2.pdf

²⁵ "Exposing Russia's Effort to Sow Discord Online: The Internet Research Agency and Advertisements." *House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence*. <https://intelligence.house.gov/social-media-content/>

Congressional authorities are requesting the following information from the Federal Bureau of Investigations and the Central Intelligence Agency:

- 1.) Does the FBI or the CIA have any information regarding foreign nationals managing Antifa misinformation campaigns within the United States?
- 2.) Does the FBI or the CIA have knowledge of active duty military officials or state and local police officers that are sharing misinformation on falsely advertised Antifa events?
- 3.) Are federal authorities investigating the identity of the Facebook account "Left Behind USA" that promoted a flag burning event in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, where an armed militia arrived on July 4, 2020?
 - a. Are federal authorities investigating the veracity of the identity for the individual, Alan Jeffs, who claimed to be managing the "Left Behind USA" social media page but has no known publicly available records in the United States?
 - b. Are federal authorities investigating the sophisticated cross-posting by Left Behind USA on Twitter, Facebook, and Change.org?
- 4.) Are federal authorities investigating the actions of the white supremacist groups Identity Evropa and American Guard, that both Twitter and Facebook claim to include the creation of multiple social media accounts posing as part of the Antifa movement?
- 5.) Do federal authorities have the identities of the individuals, organizations, or groups that promoted the Antifa gatherings in the following locations:
 - a. Toms River, New Jersey.
 - b. Sioux Falls, South Dakota.
 - c. Payette County, Idaho.
 - d. Klamath, Oregon.
 - e. Milan, Michigan.
 - f. Yucaipa, California.
 - g. Locust, North Carolina.
 - h. Forks, Washington.
 - i. Snohomish, Washington.
 - j. Sparta, Illinois

Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi and Congressman Peter Welch, members of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, request answers to the above questions by July 22, 2020, and thank you both for your attention to this important matter.



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

Sincerely,



Peter Welch
Member of Congress