United States Government Accountability Office

Report to Congressional Requesters

April 2017

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Actions Needed to Define Strategy and Assess Progress of Federal Efforts

GAO-17-300

GAO Highlights

Highlights of GAO-17-300, a report to congressional requesters

April 2017

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Actions Needed to Define Strategy and Assess Progress of Federal Efforts

Why GAO Did This Study

Violent extremism—generally defined as ideologically, religious, or politically-motivated acts of violence—has been perpetrated in the United States by white supremacists, anti-government groups, and radical Islamist entities, among others. In 2011, the U.S. government developed a national strategy and SIP for CVE aimed at providing information and resources to communities. In 2016, an interagency CVE Task Force led by DHS and DOJ was created to coordinate CVE efforts.

GAO was asked to review domestic federal CVE efforts. This report addresses the extent to which (1) DHS, DOJ, and other key stakeholders tasked with CVE in the United States have implemented the 2011 SIP and (2) the federal government has developed a strategy to implement CVE activities, and the CVE Task Force has assessed progress. GAO assessed the status of activities in the 2011 SIP; interviewed officials from agencies leading CVE efforts and a non-generalizable group of community-based entities selected from cities with CVE frameworks; and compared Task Force activities to selected best practices for multi- agency efforts.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DHS and DOJ direct the CVE Task Force to (1) develop a cohesive strategy with measurable outcomes and (2) establish a process to assess the overall progress of CVE efforts. DHS and DOJ concurred with both recommendations and DHS described the CVE Task Force's planned actions for implementation.

View GAO-17-300. For more information, contact Diana Maurer at (202) 512-8777 or maurerd@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

As of December 2016, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of Justice (DOJ), Federal Bureau of Investigation, and National Counterterrorism Center had implemented 19 of the 44 domestically-focused tasks identified in the 2011 Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) for countering violent extremism (CVE) in the United States. Twenty-three tasks were in progress and no action had yet been taken on 2 tasks. The 44 tasks aim to address three core CVE objectives: community outreach, research and training, and capacity building. Implemented tasks include, for example, DOJ conducting CVE outreach meetings to communities targeted by violent extremism and DHS integrating CVE content into law enforcement counterterrorism training. Tasks in progress include, for example, DHS building relationships with the social media industry and increasing training available to communities to counter violent extremists online. Tasks that had not yet been addressed include, implementing CVE activities in prisons and learning from former violent extremists. Federal CVE efforts aim to educate and prevent radicalization before a crime or terrorist act transpires, and differ from counterterrorism efforts such as collecting evidence and making arrests before an event has occurred.

Figure: Countering Violent Extremism is Different from Counterterrorism

Source: GAO analysis of information from the White House, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS); FBI (adapted photographs); Art Explosion (clip art). | GAO-17-300

The federal government does not have a cohesive strategy or process for assessing the overall CVE effort. Although GAO was able to determine the status of the 44 CVE tasks, it was not able to determine if the United States is better off today than it was in 2011 as a result of these tasks. This is because no cohesive strategy with measurable outcomes has been established to guide the multi-agency CVE effort. Such a strategy could help ensure that the individual actions of stakeholder agencies are measureable and contributing to the overall goals of the federal government's CVE effort. The federal government also has not established a process by which to evaluate the effectiveness of the collective CVE effort. The CVE Task Force was established in part to evaluate and assess CVE efforts across the federal government, but has not established a process for doing so. Evaluating the progress and effectiveness of the overall federal CVE effort could better help identify successes, gaps, and resource needs across stakeholder agencies.

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Abbreviations

CAB	Community Awareness Briefings
CREX	Community Resilience Exercises
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DOD	Department of Defense
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOJ	Department of Justice
State	Department of State
ECDB	United States Extremist Crime Database
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FLETC	Federal Law Enforcement Training Center
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
NCTC	National Counterterrorism Center
OCP	Office of Community Partnerships
SLATT	State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training
SIP	Strategic Implementation Plan
START	Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism
WORDE	World Organization for Resource Development and Education

U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE
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April 6, 2017

Congressional Requesters

Violent extremism—generally defined as supporting or committing violent acts to achieve political, ideological, religious, or social goals—has been perpetrated and promoted by a broad range of groups in the United States for decades. Such groups include white supremacists, anti-government groups, and groups with extreme views on abortion, animal rights, the environment, and federal ownership of public lands; and radical Islamist entities, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), among others.[1] The September 11, 2001, attacks account for the largest number of fatalities in the United States resulting from violent extremism. According to the U.S. Extremist Crime Database (ECDB), since the September 11 attacks, 85 attacks in the United States by violent extremists—associated with both radical Islamist and far right ideologies—have resulted in 225 fatalities.[2]

In response to this threat, in 2011, the U.S. government developed a national strategy and a Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) for countering violent extremism (CVE).[3] Primarily led by the Departments of Homeland Security (DHS) and Justice (DOJ) through an interagency task force, the

[1]The organization referred to as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria is alternatively known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, the Islamic State, and occasionally, "Daesh.'' Radical Islamist entities incorporate a militant ideology aimed at creating a worldwide community, or caliphate, of Muslim believers by any means necessary, including violence. Radical Islamist extremist groups include al-Qa'ida and ISIS, among others.

[2]The U.S. ECDB is maintained by the University of Maryland National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). The ECDB is a database of the attacks committed by far rightists, radical Islamists and animal and environmental rights extremists in the United States since 1990. It includes the names of perpetrators and victims and the date and location of each incident, among other types of data. The 225 fatalities cited are victims and not perpetrators who may have died during the incident. START defines far right extremism as that which is motivated by a variety of far right ideologies and beliefs, generally favoring social hierarchy and seeking an idealized future favoring a particular group. Far right extremist groups include white supremacists and antigovernment militias, among others. START defines far left extremists as including those with extreme views on animal rights and the environment.

[3]In August 2011, The White House issued *The National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States* followed by *The National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States, Strategic Implementation Plan* in December 2011. The Strategic Implementation Plan was replaced by a new version in October 2016.

federal government's leadership in CVE is aimed at educating and providing resources to communities for preventing violent extremist acts.[4] Specifically, CVE activities outlined in the 2011 SIP and updated in the 2016 SIP are aimed at enhancing the ability of local police and community organizations—including religious, educational, and non-profit entities—to provide information and resources to communities targeted by violent extremists and individuals who may have started down a road to violent extremism. These activities generally aim to provide alternative messages and options to terrorist or violent extremist recruitment and radicalization efforts through civic engagement.

Given the broad scope of activities associated with CVE and the importance of effective programs to address domestic threats, you asked us to review the implementation and organization of CVE efforts. This report addresses the extent to which (1) DHS, DOJ, and other key stakeholders tasked with CVE in the United States implemented the 2011 SIP and (2) the federal government has developed a strategy to implement CVE activities, and the CVE Task Force has developed a process for assessing overall progress.

To assess the extent to which DHS, DOJ, and other key stakeholders tasked with CVE in the United States implemented the 2011 SIP, we collected information from each agency responsible for leading 44 domestically related tasks in the 2011 SIP. Specifically, we asked for information—including, for example, program descriptions, internal progress reports, and materials distributed to the public—from each agency on the status of actions taken to address their assigned activities between December 2011 and December 2016. We assessed the information to determine whether each task had been implemented, was still in progress, or had not yet been addressed.

To determine the extent to which the federal government has developed a strategy to implement CVE activities and the CVE Task Force has developed a process for assessing overall progress, we reviewed the 2011 *National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States* (National Strategy), the 2011 and 2016 Strategic Implementation Plans for the strategy, and other documents

[4]The following departments and agencies have responsibility for implementing the 2016 SIP: DHS, DOJ, the Departments of State (State), Defense (DOD), Education, Health and Human Services, and Labor, as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U.S. Agency for International Development, and National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC).

related to the creation and activities of the CVE Task Force. Specifically, we reviewed these documents to identify whether measurable outcomes and associated metrics had been defined, and compared this information against practices for creating effective interagency collaborative efforts and managing cross-cutting issues. We interviewed officials from the stakeholder agencies including DHS, DOJ, the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) to discuss their approaches to CVE and their roles and responsibilities as part of the federal CVE effort. A detailed description of our scope and methodology can be found in appendix I.

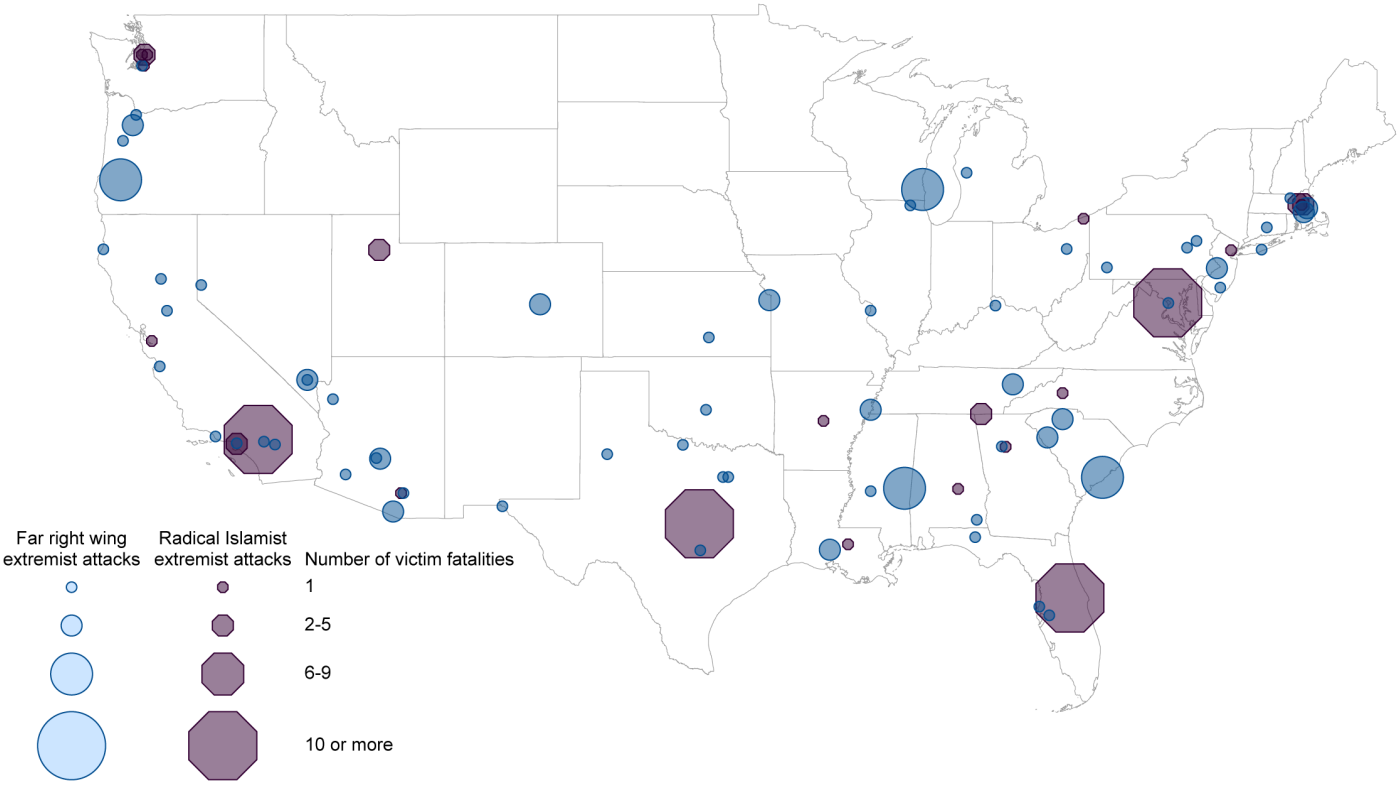
We conducted this performance audit from October 2015 to April 2017 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

Violent Extremists in the United States

White supremacists, anti-government extremists, radical Islamist extremists, and other ideologically inspired domestic violent extremists have been active in the United States for decades. Examples of attacks include the 1993 World Trade Center bombing by radical Islamists, in which 6 persons were killed; and the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah federal building by anti-government far right individuals, in which 168 lives were lost. The September 11, 2001, attacks account for the largest number of fatalities in the United States in a single or closely-related attack resulting from violent extremism in recent decades. While the September 11, 2001, attacks were perpetrated by foreign violent extremists, from September 12, 2001 through December 31, 2016, attacks by domestic or “homegrown” violent extremists in the United States resulted in 225 fatalities, according to the ECDB. Of these, 106 were killed by far right violent extremists in 62 separate incidents, and 119 were victims of radical Islamist violent extremists in 23 separate incidents. Figure 1 shows the locations and number of fatalities involved in these incidents. A detailed list of the incidents can be found in appendix II. According to the ECDB, activities of far left wing violent extremist groups did not result in any fatalities during this period.

Figure 1: Attacks in the United States by Domestic Violent Extremists from September 12, 2001 through December 31, 2016 that Resulted in Fatalities



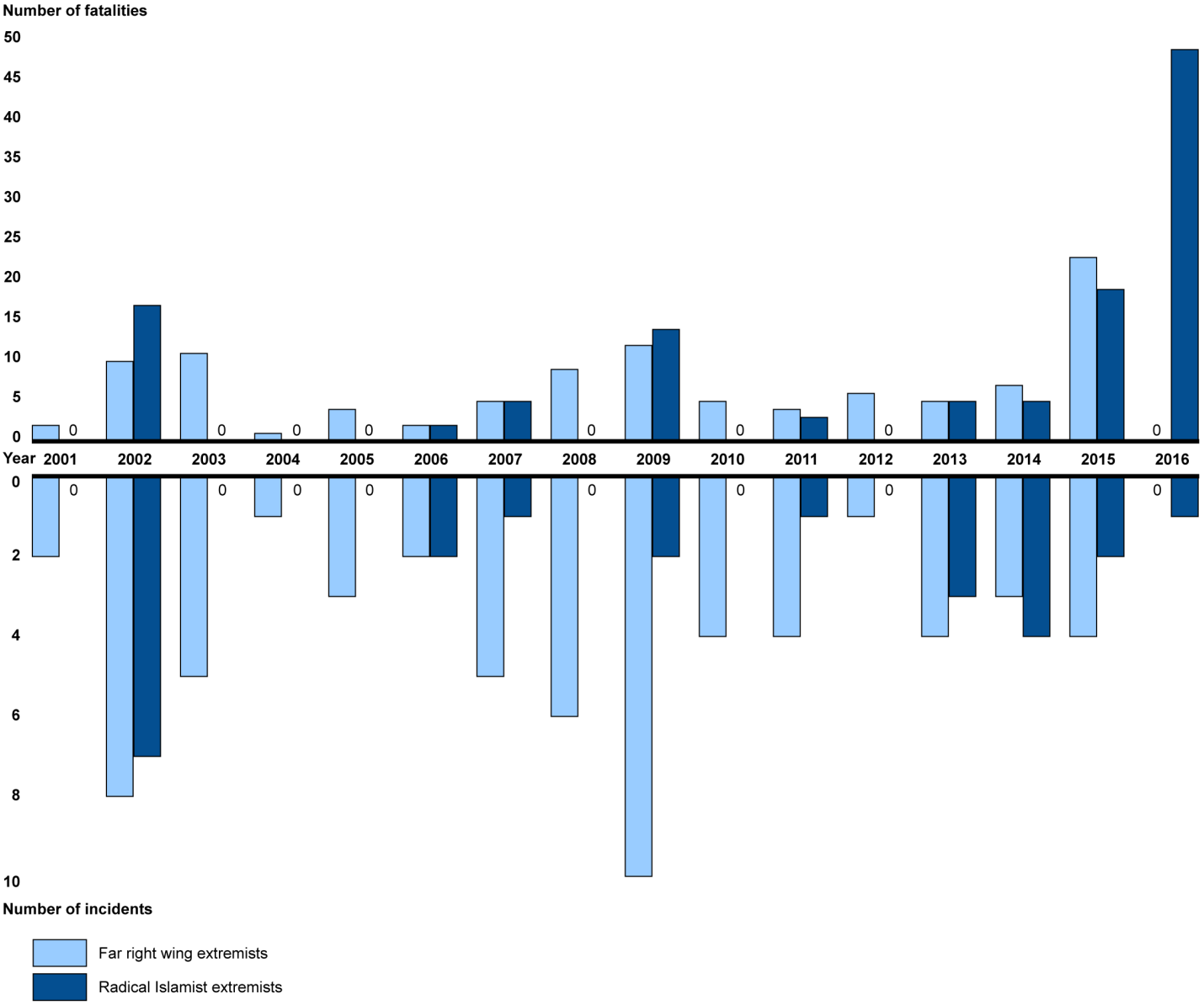
Source: U.S. Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) of the University of Maryland National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START); MapInfo (map). | GAO-17-300

Note: Each circle or octagon represents a single attack with the size measuring the number of fatalities. The ECDB is a database that includes information on publicly known violent crimes committed in the United States by radical Islamist violent extremists, the violent far right, and far left violent extremists from 1990 through 2015. For 2016, attacks resulting in homicides by ideological violent extremists in the United States were provided to us by email updates from ECDB researchers. The ECDB includes information on the incidents themselves, as well as their perpetrators, related organizations, and victims. There were no attacks since 1990 by persons associated with extreme leftist ideologies that resulted in fatalities to non-perpetrators.

Since September 12, 2001, the number of fatalities caused by domestic violent extremists has ranged from 1 to 49 in a given year. As shown in figure 2, fatalities resulting from attacks by far right wing violet extremists have exceeded those caused by radical Islamist violent extremists in 10 of the 15 years, and were the same in 3 of the years since September 12, 2001. Of the 85 violent extremist incidents that resulted in death since September 12, 2001, far right wing violent extremist groups were responsible for 62 (73 percent) while radical Islamist violent extremists were responsible for 23 (27 percent). The total number of fatalities is

about the same for far right wing violent extremists and radical Islamist violent extremists over the approximately 15-year period (106 and 119, respectively). However, 41 percent of the deaths attributable to radical Islamist violent extremists occurred in a single event—an attack at an Orlando, Florida night club in 2016 (see fig. 2). Details on the locations and dates of the attacks can be found in appendix II.

Figure 2: Number of Violent Extremist-linked Incidents and Resulting Fatalities in the United States from September 12, 2001 through December 31, 2016



Source: U.S. Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) of the University of Maryland National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). | GAO-17-300

The U.S. Approach to Countering Domestic Violent Extremism

In October 2016, the federal government defined the U.S. approach to countering violent extremism as proactive actions to counter efforts by extremists to recruit, radicalize, and mobilize followers to violence. The three parts of the U.S. approach to CVE efforts are: (1) empowering communities and civil society; (2) messaging and counter–messaging; and (3) addressing causes and driving factors. CVE activities are different from traditional counterterrorism efforts, such as collecting intelligence, gathering evidence, making arrests, and responding to incidents, in that they generally focus on preventing an individual from finding or acting out on a motive for committing a crime, as shown in figure 3. In February 2015, the White House released a fact sheet stating that CVE encompasses the preventative aspects of counterterrorism as well as interventions to undermine the attraction of violent extremist movements and ideologies that seek to promote violence.

Figure 3: Countering Violent Extremism is Different from Counterterrorism

Source: GAO analysis of information from the White House, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS); FBI (adapted photographs); Art Explosion (clip art). | GAO-17-300

According to the national strategy, CVE actions intend to address the conditions and reduce the factors that most likely contribute to recruitment and radicalization by violent extremists. CVE efforts, as defined by the White House, are not to include gathering intelligence or performing investigations for the purpose of criminal prosecution. CVE efforts aim to address the root causes of violent extremism through community engagement, including:

- Building awareness—through briefings on the drivers and indicators of radicalization and recruitment to violence. For example, U.S. Attorney's and DHS offices host community outreach meetings in which they provide information on identifying suspicious activity.
- Countering violent extremist narratives—directly addressing and countering violent extremist recruitment messages, such as encouraging alternative messages from community groups online. For example, DOJ partnered with the International Association of Chiefs of Police to produce awareness briefs on countering online radicalization.
- Emphasizing community led intervention—supporting community efforts to disrupt the radicalization process before an individual engages in criminal activity. For example, the FBI aims to provide tools and resources to communities to help them identify social workers and mental health professionals who can help support at-risk individuals and prevent them from becoming radicalized.

Recognizing that most CVE activities occur at the community level, DHS and DOJ officials leading the CVE Task Force describe the federal role in CVE as a combination of providing research funding and training materials, and educating the public through activities such as DHS or DOJ hosted community briefings in which specific threats and warning signs of violent extremism are shared. According to FBI officials, these outreach efforts also provide an opportunity to build relationships in the community and help clarify the FBI's role in engaging community organizations. According to DHS officials, DHS also conducts regular community engagement roundtables in multiple cities that provide a forum for communities to comment on and hear information about Department activities, including CVE. In addition to community meetings, education of the public is to occur through a multiplicity of outreach channels, including websites, social media, conferences, and communications to state and local governments, including law enforcement entities.

Organization of CVE Programs and Initiatives Have Undergone Recent Changes

Since 2010, federal agencies have initiated several steps towards countering violent extremism. In November 2010, a National Engagement Task Force, led by DHS and DOJ, was established to help coordinate community engagement efforts to counter violent extremism. The task force was to include all departments and agencies involved in relevant community engagement efforts and focus on compiling local, national, and international best practices and disseminating these out to the field, especially to U.S. Attorneys' Offices. The task force was also responsible for connecting field-based federal components involved in community

engagement to maximize partnerships, coordination, and resource-sharing. According to DHS officials, the National Engagement Task Force disbanded in 2013.

In September 2015, DHS recognized that its CVE efforts were scattered across a number of components and lacked specific goals and tangible measures of success. DHS created the Office of Community Partnerships (OCP) to consolidate its programs, foster greater involvement of the technology sector and philanthropic efforts to support private CVE efforts, and to enhance DHS grant-making in the area. At the same time, federal agencies involved in CVE recognized that the CVE landscape had changed since the issuance of the national strategy and SIP in late 2011. According to DHS and DOJ officials, ISIS had emerged as a threat, and an increase in internet recruiting by violent extremist groups since 2011 required an update to the SIP. In 2015, NCTC led a review to ensure that the federal government was optimally organized to carry out the CVE mission. According to DOJ and DHS officials leading CVE activities, the review validated the objectives of the 2011 strategy, but identified gaps in its implementation. Specifically, representatives from 10 departments and agencies contributing to CVE efforts identified four needs: infrastructure to coordinate and prioritize CVE activities across the federal government and with stakeholders; clear responsibility, accountability, and communication internally and with the public; broad participation of departments and agencies outside national security lanes; and a process to assess, prioritize, and allocate resources to maximize impact.

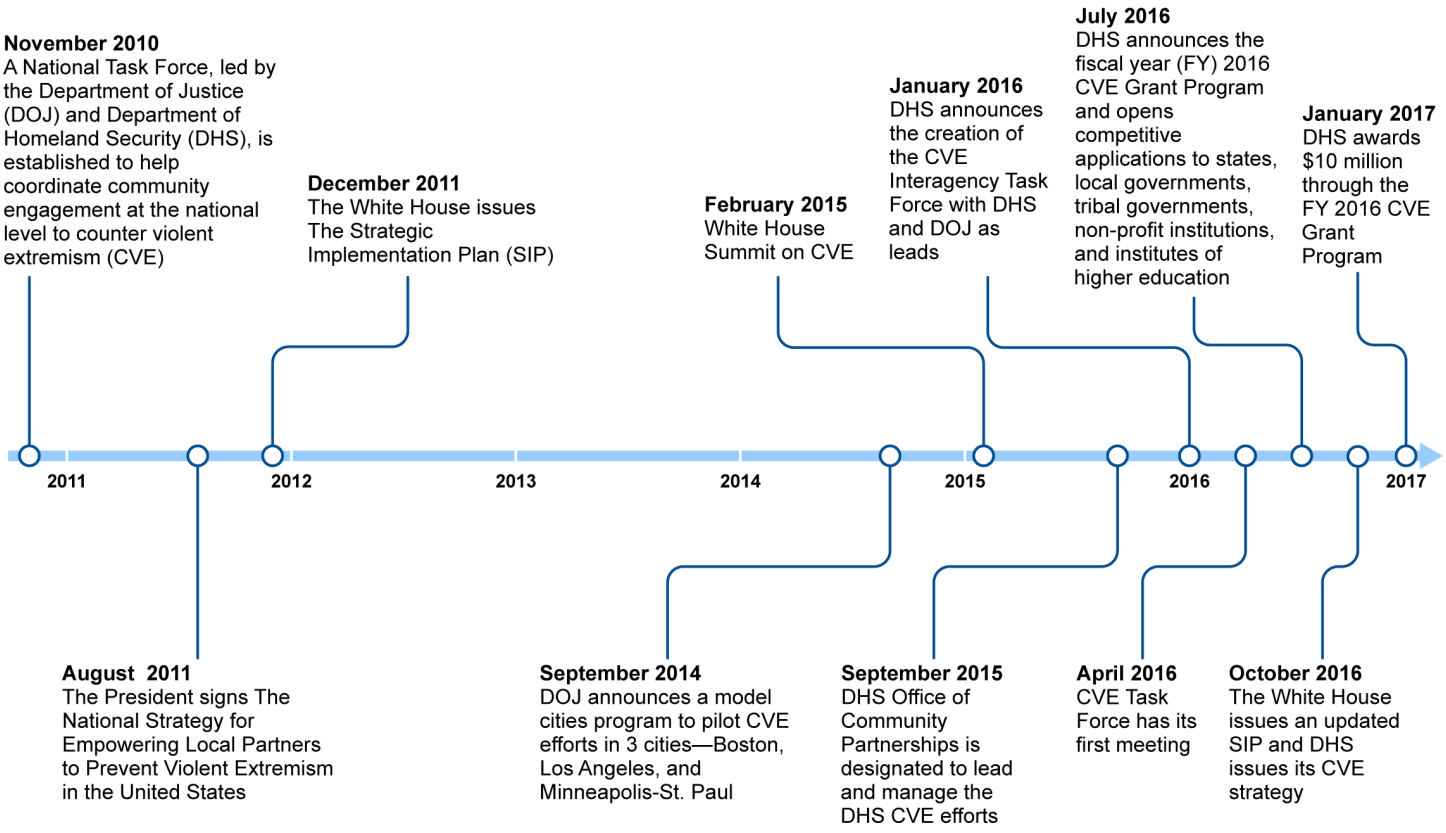
In response, in January 2016, a new CVE task force was created to coordinate government efforts and partnerships to prevent violent extremism in the United States. The CVE Task Force is a permanent interagency task force hosted by DHS with overall leadership provided by DHS and DOJ. Staffing is to be provided by representatives from DHS, DOJ, FBI, NCTC, and other supporting departments and agencies. The Task Force is administratively housed at DHS and is to rotate leadership between DHS and DOJ bi-annually. The interagency CVE Task Force was established to: (1) synchronize and integrate whole-of-government CVE programs and activities; (2) conduct ongoing strategic planning; and (3) assess and evaluate CVE efforts.

In October 2016, the Task Force, through the White House, issued an updated SIP for the 2011 national strategy. The 2016 SIP outlines the general lines of effort that partnering agencies will aim to undertake to guide their coordination of federal efforts and implement the national strategy. These lines of effort include:

- *Research and Analysis:* The Task Force is to coordinate federal support for ongoing and future CVE research. Since 2011, DHS has funded 98 CVE related research projects and DOJ has funded 25. Coordination through this line of effort aims to prevent overlap and duplication while identifying guidelines for future evaluations. This line of effort also aims to identify and share guidelines for designing, implementing, and evaluating CVE programs.
- *Engagements and Technical Assistance:* The Task Force is to coordinate federal outreach to and engagement with communities. DHS, FBI, U.S. Attorneys, and other departments regularly provide information to local community and law enforcement leaders. To date, much of the information provided has been from the individual perspective of each agency and its mission rather than a coordinated CVE mission. This line of effort aims to coordinate these outreach efforts to synchronize the messages that are reaching the communities.
- *Interventions:* This line of effort aims to develop intervention options to include alternative pathways or "off-ramps" for individuals who appear to be moving toward violent action but who have not yet engaged in criminal activity. Law enforcement officials are looking for ways to support community led programs, particularly when they focus on juveniles and others who have the potential to be redirected away from violence. The CVE Task Force, in coordination with DOJ and the FBI, aim to support local multidisciplinary intervention approaches.
- *Communications and Digital Strategy:* Recognizing that general CVE information and resources are not easily accessible by stakeholders, the CVE Task Force aims to create a new online platform, including a public website, to ensure stakeholders around the country are able to quickly and easily understand national CVE efforts. This platform aims to serve as the national digital CVE clearinghouse by centralizing and streamlining access to training; research, analysis, and lessons learned; financial resources and grant information; networks and communities of interest; and intervention resources.

According to the 2016 SIP, the lines of effort were developed to align with the three priority action areas outlined in the 2011 national strategy and SIP: (1) enhancing engagement with and support to local communities; (2) building government and law enforcement expertise for preventing violent extremism; and (3) countering violent extremist propaganda while promoting our ideals. Also in October 2016, DHS issued its own strategy outlining the specific actions it aims to take to meet its CVE mission. Figure 4 shows a timeline of federal CVE milestones and activities.

Figure 4: Timeline of Federal Countering Violent Extremism Milestones and Activities



Source: GAO analysis based on Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice, and White House documents. | GAO-17-300

CVE Funding

Consistent with direction in the 2011 National Strategy, federal CVE efforts have generally been initiated by leveraging existing programs and without a specific CVE budget. For example, activities that address violence in schools or hate crimes in communities may be relevant to constraining or averting violent extremism, but receive funding as part of a different program. In fiscal year 2016, the DHS Office of Community Partnerships operated with a $3.1 million budget and focused on raising awareness of violent extremists' threats in communities, building relationships with community organizations that are conducting CVE efforts, and coordinating CVE efforts within DHS. Additionally, DHS's fiscal year 2016 appropriation included $50 million to address emergent

threats from violent extremism and from complex, coordinated terrorist attacks.[5] Of the $50 million,

- DHS awarded $10 million through a competitive grant program specific to CVE;
- DHS designated $1 million for a Joint Counterterrorism Workshop; and
- DHS designated the remaining $39 million to be competitively awarded under the existing Homeland Security Grant Program.

Almost Half of Planned 2011 CVE Tasks Were Implemented, but Work Remains

Developed to help execute the 2011 National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States, the 2011 SIP detailed federal agency roles and responsibilities for current and future CVE efforts. The SIP outlined 44 tasks to address CVE domestically and called for the creation of an Assessment Working Group to measure CVE's progress and effectiveness.[6] From our analysis of agency documentation and other evidence as to whether tasks had been implemented, we determined that agencies implemented almost half of the 44 domestically-focused tasks identified in the 2011 SIP.[7] Specifically, from December 2011 through December 2016, federal agencies implemented 19 tasks, had 23 tasks in progress, and had not yet taken action on 2 tasks (see fig. 5 below and app. III for additional details).

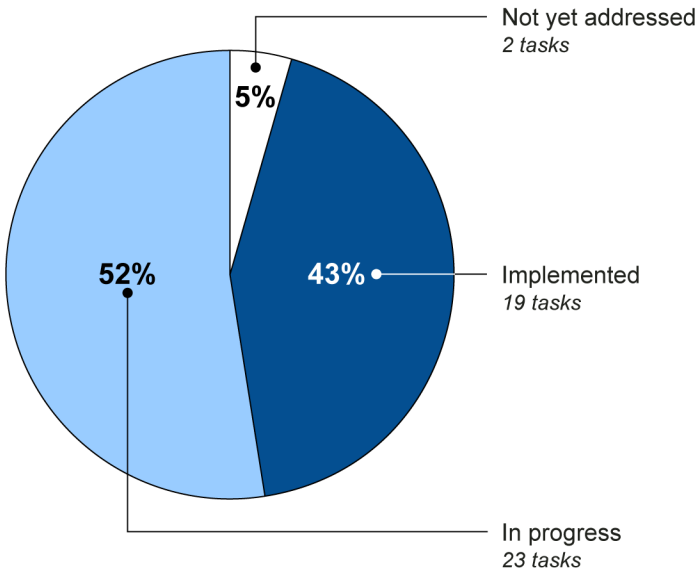
[5]See Pub. L. No. 114-113, div. F, § 543, 129 Stat. 2242, 2518-19 (2015) (providing further that the Secretary may transfer funds made available for emerging threats between appropriations for the same purpose, notwithstanding other enacted provisions that affect the Secretary's authority to transfer funds).

[6]The SIP included 47 tasks and designated federal agency lead(s) responsible for ensuring each task was implemented. We analyzed implementation of tasks that were led by DHS, DOJ, FBI, and NCTC. These four agencies are responsible for domestic CVE and were collectively responsible for implementing 44 of the 47 tasks in the SIP. We did not analyze the implementation of 3 of the 47 tasks because they were international in scope or led by an agency outside of the four agencies responsible for domestic CVE. Specifically, we did not analyze the Department of Treasury's efforts to address terrorism financing, the Department of Defense's effort to provide training to military personnel, and the State Department's international exchange program. We did not assess the quality of efforts taken related to the 44 tasks.

[7]For the 44 tasks identified in the SIP, DHS, DOJ, FBI and NCTC provided information on the status of actions taken on the tasks for which they were the lead agencies. Some tasks listed multiple agencies as co-leads responsible for completion. Some agency responses showed their actions substantially addressed the task, while others only took some action for the same task. DHS, DOJ, and FBI provided technical comments on our assessment which we incorporated as appropriate and officials from NCTC met with us to discuss the information it provided.

While progress was made in implementing the tasks, the Assessment Working Group was never formed according to DHS and DOJ officials responsible for implementing the SIP. Moreover, as of December 2016, there had been no comprehensive assessment of the federal government's CVE efforts' effectiveness.

Figure 5: Status of 2011 Strategic Implementation Plan's 44 Domestically-Focused Tasks



Source: GAO analysis of Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation and National Counterterrorism Center documents. | GAO-17-300

The 44 domestically-oriented tasks identified in the 2011 SIP were focused on addressing three core CVE objectives: community outreach, research and training, and capacity building. Below is a description of progress made and challenges remaining by core CVE objective.

Community Outreach

Community outreach aims to enhance federal engagement and support to local communities that may be targeted by violent extremism. For example, community outreach might include expanding relationships with local business and communities to identify or prevent violent extremism or integrating CVE activities into community-oriented policing efforts.

Of the 17 community outreach tasks in the SIP, we determined that agencies implemented 8 tasks and 9 remain in progress. In general, agencies implemented tasks focused on expanding CVE efforts in local communities and identifying ways to increase funding for CVE activities,

among other things. For example, DOJ expanded CVE activities to communities targeted by violent extremism through a series of outreach meetings led by the U.S. Attorney's offices. Further, both DHS and DOJ identified funding within existing appropriations to incorporate CVE into eligible public safety and community resilience grants.

However, community outreach tasks that remained in progress include tasks related to reaching communities in the digital environment. For example, DHS aims to build relationships with the high-tech and social media industry and continues to meet with officials to discuss how to address violent extremism online. In providing a status update on such activities, DHS recognized this as an area that continues to need attention.

Research and Training

Research and training relates to understanding the threat of violent extremism, sharing information, and leveraging it to train government and law enforcement officials. For example, activities under research and training might include funding or conducting analysis on CVE-related topics or developing training curriculums for CVE stakeholders.

Of the 19 research and training tasks we assessed in the SIP, we determined that agencies implemented 9 tasks, had 9 tasks in progress, and had not yet taken action on 1 task. Agencies implemented activities related to continuing research on CVE and integrating CVE training into federal law enforcement training, among other things. For example, DHS, through its Science and Technology Directorate, continued its research and reporting on violent extremist root causes and funded an open source database on terrorism as stated in the SIP. DHS also implemented a task related to integrating CVE content into counter-terrorism training conducted at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. Additionally, NCTC implemented tasks related to expanding awareness briefings to state and local law enforcement, and developing and reviewing guidance on CVE training, while the FBI implemented a task regarding the completion of a CVE coordination office.

Further, tasks related to training non-security federal partners to incorporate CVE training remain in progress. For example, DHS was given responsibility for collaborating with non-security federal partners to build CVE training modules that can be incorporated into existing programs related to public safety, violence prevention, and resilience. DHS acknowledged this task needs attention and noted that, while initial steps were taken, the interagency effort needs to better define roles and

opportunities for future collaborations. However, agencies have not yet taken action on implementing CVE in federal prisons.

Capacity Building

Capacity building tasks relate to investments of resources into communities to enhance the effectiveness and future sustainability of their CVE efforts. Capacity building might, for example, include expanding the use of informational briefings to a wider audience or outreach to former violent extremists to counter violent narratives.

Of the 8 capacity building tasks we assessed in the SIP, we determined that agencies implemented 2 tasks, 5 tasks were in progress, and action had not yet been taken on 1 task. For example, one of the implemented capacity building tasks included providing regular briefings on CVE to Congress and others. In implementing this task, DHS participated in over two dozen briefings and hearings for Congress.

Capacity building tasks that were in progress included brokering connections with the private sector and building a public website on community resilience and CVE, among others. DHS had, for example, taken steps to broker connections with the private sector. DHS officials also noted making initial progress with YouTube and the Los Angeles Police Department in developing campaigns against violent extremism, but recognized this as an area that continues to need attention. Despite progress in 7 of 8 capacity building tasks, action had not yet been taken on a task related to learning from former violent extremists to directly challenge violent extremist narratives. According to DHS officials, legal issues regarding access to former violent extremists are being explored and DOJ will lead this task moving forward.

The Federal CVE Effort Lacks a Cohesive Strategy with Measureable Outcomes and a Process for Assessing Progress

A Cohesive CVE Strategy with Measurable Outcomes Has Not Been Established

Although we were able to determine the status of the 44 domestically focused CVE tasks from the 2011 SIP, we could not determine the extent to which the United States is better off today as a result of its CVE effort than it was in 2011. That is because no cohesive strategy with measurable outcomes has been established to guide the multi-agency CVE effort towards its goals.[8]

Neither the 2011 SIP nor its 2016 update provides a cohesive strategy—one that sets forth a coordinated and collaborative effort among partner agencies—that includes measurable outcomes. For example, the 2016 SIP includes a task on strengthening collaboration with the private sector and academia to pursue CVE-relevant communications tools and capabilities. The task describes the benefits of such collaboration, but does not include any information on how the task will be implemented, timeframes for implementation, desired outcomes, or indicators for measuring progress towards those outcomes. Similarly, the 2016 SIP includes a task on identifying and supporting the development of disengagement and rehabilitation programs. While the SIP describes research conducted in partnership with one such program that provides pathways out of violent extremism, it does not include any information on how the federal government will identify other groups and what kind of

[8]The National Strategy identifies the goal of CVE as, "*preventing violent extremists and their supporters from inspiring, radicalizing, financing, or recruiting individuals or groups in the United States to commit acts of violence*." It also describes priority action areas for CVE activities under the categories of: (1) enhancing engagement with and support to local communities that may be targeted by violent extremists; (2) building government and law enforcement expertise for preventing violent extremism; and (3) countering violent extremist propaganda while promoting our ideals.

support they might provide. Absent defined measureable outcomes, it is unclear how these tasks will be implemented and how they will measurably contribute to achieving the federal CVE goals.

Consistent with the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, establishing a cohesive strategy that includes measurable outcomes can provide agencies with a clear direction for successful implementation of activities in multi-agency cross-cutting efforts.[9] Participants in multi-agency efforts each bring different views, organizational cultures, missions, and ways of operating. They may even disagree on the nature of the problem or issue being addressed. As such, developing a mutually agreed-upon cohesive strategy with measureable outcomes can strengthen agencies' commitment to working collaboratively and enhance the effectiveness of the CVE effort while keeping stakeholders engaged and invested.[10]

Absent a cohesive strategy with defined measureable outcomes, CVE partner agencies have been left to develop and take their own individual actions without a clear understanding of whether and to what extent their actions will reduce violent extremism in the United States. For example, agencies such as the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services are listed in the SIP as two of the agencies with responsibility for implementing the 2016 SIP.[11] However, the tasks for which they are listed as partners do not include measurable outcomes to guide implementation. As another example, in 2016 DHS issued its own CVE strategy for the department intended to align with the 2016 SIP.[12] It is specific to DHS components and programs, establishes goals, outcomes, and milestones, and states that DHS will assess progress. However, DHS's CVE strategy does not demonstrate how these activities will integrate with the overall federal CVE effort. Further, it establishes

[9]GAO, *Managing for Results: OMB Improved Implementation of Cross-Agency Priority Goals, But Could Be More Transparent About Measuring Progress,* GAO-16-509 (Washington, D.C.: May 20, 2016). The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-352, 124 Stat. 3866 (2011), updated the Government Performance and results Act of 1993 (GPRA), Pub. L. No. 103-62, 107 Stat. 285.

[10]GAO, *Managing for Results: Key Considerations for Implementing Interagency Collaborative Mechanisms,* GAO-12-1022 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 27, 2012).

[11]In April 2016, CVE Task Force leaders told us that they were working to establish a charter outlining specific roles of stakeholder agencies but, as of December 2016, had not completed it.

[12]*Department of Homeland Security Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism*, Oct. 28, 2016.

goals and outcomes for only one of the many departments responsible for CVE. DHS and DOJ officials speaking on behalf of the CVE Task Force stated that, as of November 2016, they had not determined if other stakeholder agencies, such as DOJ, the Department of Education, or the Department of Health and Human Services, would be developing similar strategies.

In January 2016, the CVE Task Force was established as the multi-agency body charged with coordinating government efforts and partnerships to prevent violent extremism in the United States.[13] As such, it is best positioned to work with federal stakeholders in developing a cohesive strategy with measureable outcomes. More details on the CVE Task Force are provided in the following section. Our previous work has shown that agencies across the federal government have benefited from applying such strategies to cross cutting programs.[14] By developing a cohesive strategy with measurable outcomes, CVE stakeholders will be better able to guide their efforts to ensure measurable progress is made in CVE.

No Process for Assessing Overall CVE Progress Is In Place

The CVE Task Force has not established a process for assessing whether the federal government's CVE efforts are working. Establishing a process for assessing progress is a consistent practice of successful multi-agency collaborative efforts we have previously reviewed.

[13]In 2015, NCTC led a multi-agency effort to identify gaps and needs remaining to be fulfilled in CVE. Specifically, the effort considered the 2011 CVE National Strategy and SIP, and agency-reported efforts at that time to address CVE concerns. The assessment identified four needs: infrastructure to coordinate and prioritize CVE activities across the federal government and with stakeholders; clear responsibility, accountability, and communication internally and with the public; broad participation of departments and agencies outside national security lanes; and a process to assess, prioritize, and allocate resources to maximize impact. Following the 2015 assessment, the CVE Task Force was created in January 2016 to coordinate federal agencies in fulfilling the CVE effort. The gaps and needs identified in the 2015 assessment have been an important basis for creating and defining the CVE Task Force's first steps as a multi-agency collaborative effort.

[14]GAO, *Managing for Results: Practices for Effective Agency Strategic Reviews*, GAO-15-602 (Washington, D.C.: July 29, 2015).

Moreover, such assessments can help identify successful implementation and gaps across agencies.[15]

Recognizing the need for assessing the effects of CVE activities, the 2011 SIP described a process in which departments and agencies were to be responsible for assessing their specific activities in coordination with an Assessment Working Group. Agencies were to develop a process for identifying gaps, areas of limited progress, resource needs, and any additional factors resulting from new information on the dynamics of radicalization to violence. Further, the progress of the participating agencies was to be evaluated and reported annually to the President. However, according to DHS and DOJ officials, the Assessment Working Group was never created and the process described in the SIP was not developed. As a result, no process or method for assessing the federal CVE effort's progress and holding stakeholders accountable was established.

Absent a mechanism for assessing the federal CVE effort, in 2015 NCTC, along with 10 federal agencies, including DHS and DOJ, undertook an effort to review progress agencies had made in implementing their CVE responsibilities. According to DHS and DOJ officials, the review, along with those of the supporting agencies, helped identify areas for continued focus and improvement in fulfilling the CVE effort. Specifically, the review team identified the need for clear responsibility and accountability across the government and with the public. It also identified the need for a process to assess, prioritize, and allocate resources to maximize impact, among other needs.

Informed by these efforts, in January 2016 the CVE Task Force was established as a permanent interagency task force with overall leadership provided by DHS and DOJ. As previously described, the task force was charged with coordinating government efforts and partnerships to prevent violent extremism in the United States. Moreover, the CVE Task Force was assigned responsibility for synchronizing and integrating CVE programs and activities and assessing and evaluating them. The CVE Task Force worked with its partner agencies to develop the 2016 SIP but did not identify a process or method for assessing whether the overall CVE effort is working. Instead, the SIP states that it will use prior

[15]See for example GAO, *Managing for Results: Implementation Approaches Used to Enhance Collaboration in Interagency Groups,* GAO-14-220 (Washington, D.C.: Feb 14, 2014). Also see GAO-06-15 and GAO-12-1022.

evaluations of individual programs to develop guidelines for departments and agencies to evaluate their own programs. Moreover, according to CVE Task Force officials, they do not believe that assessing the overall effectiveness of the federal CVE effort is their responsibility.

Moving forward with the approach identified in the 2016 SIP is likely to continue to limit the federal government's understanding of progress made in CVE efforts to that of individual activities rather than the entirety of the federal CVE effort. Agencies have conducted assessments of the effectiveness of some individual CVE programs. However, those assessments do not address the overarching effectiveness of the CVE effort. In addition, efforts to evaluate individual CVE initiatives alone will not provide an overall assessment of progress made in the federal CVE effort. For example, DOJ funded an evaluation of a community-based CVE programming effort led by the World Organization for Resource Development and Education (WORDE). The evaluation assessed WORDE's effectiveness in promoting positive social integration and encouraging public safety in Montgomery County, Maryland. The evaluation looked at community-based participation in CVE programs, community awareness of risk factors of radicalization to violent extremism, and the community's natural inclinations in response to these factors. The evaluation provides some insights into how WORDE's program worked in Montgomery County, Maryland, but not the overall federal CVE effort.

Absent a consistent process for assessing the federal CVE effort as a whole, the federal government lacks the information needed to truly assess the extent to which the WORDE effort and others have countered violent extremism. Further, stakeholders will be limited in their efforts to identify successes and gaps and allocate or leverage resources effectively. Given that the CVE Task Force, as a permanent interagency body, is charged with synchronizing and integrating CVE programs and activities and assessing and evaluating them, the CVE Task Force should establish a process for assessing overall progress in CVE, including its effectiveness.

Conclusions

Combatting violent extremism is of critical importance for the United States. Extremist attacks of all kinds can have perilous effects on the perceived safety of our nation. It is therefore imperative that the United States employ effective means for preventing and deterring violent extremism and related attacks. To help confront this critical need, in 2011 the President issued a CVE strategy and corresponding implementation

plan. However, over 5 years have passed and the federal government has not developed a cohesive strategy among stakeholder agencies that provides measurable outcomes to guide the collaborative implementation of CVE activities. While the CVE Task Force provided a forum for coordination and led the effort to develop a new SIP, the plan does not provide stakeholder agencies with specific direction and measures to identify successes and gaps in the implementation of their activities. In the absence of a cohesive strategy, DHS has developed its own strategy, while no such roadmap is in place for the collaborative implementation of activities by all stakeholder agencies. As the entity responsible for the synchronization and integration of CVE programs across the government, the CVE Task Force is well positioned to develop a cohesive strategy that provides all stakeholder agencies with a clear path forward in achieving the federal CVE effort's desired outcomes.

The CVE Task Force, established in part to assess and evaluate CVE programs, has also not established an approach for assessing overall progress. Without consistent measures and methodologies for evaluating CVE as a whole, the federal government lacks the necessary information needed to assess the extent to which stakeholder agencies are achieving their goals. Without this information, stakeholders will not be able to identify successes and gaps and allocate or leverage resources effectively. When dealing with programs and activities that are designed to keep Americans safe from the threat of violent extremism, agency leaders and policy makers need to be able to know how well the federal government is doing in implementing these activities. Establishing an approach for assessing progress of the overall CVE effort can help the CVE Task Force enhance understanding of progress made as a result of CVE.

Recommendations

To help identify what domestic CVE efforts are to achieve and the extent to which investments in CVE result in measureable success, the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Attorney General—as heads of the two lead agencies responsible for coordinating CVE efforts—should direct the CVE Task Force to:

1. Develop a cohesive strategy that includes measurable outcomes for CVE activities; and
2. Establish and implement a process to assess overall progress in CVE, including its effectiveness.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided a draft of this report to the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security (DHS), and Justice (DOJ) and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). In its written comments, reproduced in appendix IV, DHS concurred with both of our recommendations. In comments provided in an email from the DOJ Audit Liaison, DOJ also concurred with both recommendations. In addition, DHS, DOJ, and ODNI provided technical comments which we incorporated as appropriate. The Departments of Education and Health and Human Services did not comment on the report.

DHS, in its letter, concurred with our recommendation to develop a cohesive strategy that includes outcomes for CVE activities. DHS also recognized that additional strategic-level performance documentation will improve coordination and collaboration tasks among partner agencies, as well as define how cross-cutting tasks will be implemented and how they will measurably contribute to achieving federal CVE goals. DHS noted that the CVE Task Force is developing measurable outcomes to support and guide the development of performance, effectiveness, and benchmarks for federally sponsored CVE efforts. DHS stated that the CVE Task Force plans to report on the progress of implementing the 2016 Strategic Implementation Plan in January 2018. DOJ also concurred with the recommendation in comments received by email.

DHS also concurred with our recommendation to establish and implement a process to assess overall progress in CVE, including its effectiveness. DHS, in its comment letter, recognized that such a process will drive an understanding of the contributions of individual activities in the federal CVE effort. In DHS's response, the department maintained that the CVE Task Force will not be engaged in specific evaluations of its members or partners, but instead will develop resource guides on methodologies and measures that federal and non-government partners can use in evaluating their own CVE efforts. As noted in our report, the CVE Task Force's approach of providing guidance on evaluations might enhance the evaluation efforts of individual programs, but establishing a process that assesses progress and effectiveness across the federal CVE effort can provide better insight into the successes and gaps within this multi-agency collaborative effort. DOJ also concurred with the recommendation in comments received by email.

We are sending copies of this report to Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Attorney General, the Director of the Office of National Intelligence and appropriate congressional committees and members, and other interested parties. In addition, this report is available at no charge on GAO's website at http://www.gao.gov.

If you or your staff have any questions, please contact Diana Maurer at (202) 512-8777 or maurerd@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff that made significant contributions to this report are listed in appendix IV.

Diana Maurer
Director, Homeland Security and Justice Issues

List of Congressional Requesters

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
The Honorable Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security
House of Representatives

The Honorable Nanette Barragán
House of Representatives

The Honorable Jose Luis Correa
House of Representatives

The Honorable Valdez Demings
House of Representatives

The Honorable Brian Higgins
House of Representatives

The Honorable Sheila Jackson-Lee
House of Representatives

The Honorable Bill Keating
House of Representatives

The Honorable Jim Langevin
House of Representatives

The Honorable Donald M. Payne
House of Representatives

The Honorable Kathleen M. Rice
House of Representatives

The Honorable Cedric L. Richmond
House of Representatives

The Honorable Norma J. Torres
House of Representatives

The Honorable Filemon Vela
House of Representatives

The Honorable Bonnie Watson Coleman
House of Representatives

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

This report addresses the extent to which (1) the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Justice (DOJ), and other key stakeholders tasked with Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) in the United States have implemented the 2011 Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) and (2) the federal government has developed a strategy to implement CVE activities, and the CVE Task Force has developed a process for assessing overall progress.

To assess the extent to which DHS, DOJ, and other key stakeholders tasked with CVE in the United States implemented the 2011 SIP, we collected and analyzed information from each agency responsible for leading a task in the 2011 SIP, which included DHS, DOJ, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). The FBI was treated as a lead agency for reporting purposes because it was listed as a lead agency in the SIP. These four agencies were responsible for domestic CVE activities and were collectively responsible for implementing 44 out of the 47 tasks in the SIP. We did not analyze the implementation of 3 of the 47 tasks because they were international in scope and led by an agency outside of the four agencies responsible for domestic CVE. Specifically, we did not analyze the Department of Treasury's efforts to address terrorism financing, the Department of Defense's effort to provide training to military personnel, and the State Department's international exchange program. GAO asked for information from each lead agency on actions taken from December 2011 through December 2016 to address their assigned activities in the 2011 SIP. Based on information provided, one analyst analyzed each agency's action(s) to determine whether each task in the SIP had been implemented, was still in progress, or had not been addressed. A separate analyst independently reviewed each assessment and narrative. If there was disagreement on a rating, a third analyst reviewed that information and made a determination on the final rating. Upon preliminary completion of the appendix table, GAO sent the table to DHS, DOJ, FBI, and NCTC and incorporated technical comments as appropriate. The results of this assessment are shown in appendix III.

To determine the extent to which the federal government has developed a strategy to implement CVE activities and the CVE Task Force has developed a process for assessing overall progress, we reviewed the *National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*, the 2011 and 2016 Strategic Implementation Plans for the strategy, and other documents related to the creation and activities of the CVE Task Force. Specifically, we reviewed these documents to identify whether measurable outcomes and

associated metrics had been defined. We interviewed officials from the stakeholder agencies including DHS, DOJ, the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, FBI, and NCTC to discuss their approaches to CVE and their roles and responsibilities as part of the federal CVE effort. We compared the practices of the Task Force to selected leading practices of multi-agency collaborative efforts identified in prior GAO work as well as selected practices in the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010.[1] Practices were selected for comparison based on their applicability to the CVE Task Force. For context and perspectives on how CVE activities were implemented in local areas we interviewed a non-generalizable group of community organizations selected based on their location in the three pilot cities that have adopted CVE frameworks: Los Angeles, California; Boston, Massachusetts; and Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota.

We conducted this performance audit from October 2015 to April 2017 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

[1]The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-352, 124 Stat. 3866 (2011), updated the Government Performance and results Act of 1993 (GPRA), Pub. L. No. 103-62, 107 Stat. 285.

Appendix II: Violent Extremist Attacks in the United States that Resulted in Fatalities, September 12, 2001 through December 31, 2016

This appendix provides details on the violent extremist attacks in the United States based on the U.S. Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) data and as described in the background section of this report. Specifically, tables 1 and 2 show a description, date, location and number of victim fatalities for each far right and radical Islamist attack between September 12, 2001 and December 31, 2016. During this period, no persons in the United States were killed in attacks carried out by persons believed to be motivated by extremist environmental beliefs, extremist "animal liberation" beliefs, or extremist far left beliefs. The information on these attacks, including the motivations of the attackers, is from the ECDB, maintained by National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), at the University of Maryland. START is a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Center of Excellence. The ECDB tracks violent extremist incidents in the United States since 1990. For our analysis, we included the time period from September 12, 2001 through December 31, 2016, to show violent extremist attacks that have occurred since the September 11, 2001 attacks. We assessed the reliability of this data source through review of database documentation and interviews with the ECDB principle investigators. We discussed cases with the ECDB investigators to clarify details as needed. We determined that this data source was sufficiently reliable for providing background information on the problem of violent extremism in the United States, including the number of attacks and fatalities by ideological motivation (far right or radical Islamist), year and location.

Far right violent extremist attackers are characterized by ECDB as having beliefs that include some or all of the following:

- Fiercely nationalistic (as opposed to universal and international in orientation);
- Anti-global;
- Suspicious of centralized federal authority;
- Reverent of individual liberty (especially right to own guns; be free of taxes);
- Belief in conspiracy theories that involve a grave threat to national sovereignty and/or personal liberty;
- Belief that one's personal and/or national "way of life" is under attack and is either already lost or that the threat is imminent; and

- Belief in the need to be prepared for an attack either by participating in or supporting the need for paramilitary preparations and training or survivalism.

In addition, according to the ECDB, many persons having violent extreme far right views express support for some version of white supremacy, the Ku Klux Klan, and neo-Nazism.

According to the ECDB, attackers with violent radical Islamist beliefs were generally those who professed some form of belief in or allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), al-Qa'ida, or other (radical) Islamist-associated terrorist entities. ECDB's determination of these beliefs are based on statements made by attackers prior to, during, or after their attacks that showed a belief in violent extremist interpretations of Islam, or evidence gathered by police and other sources about the attackers.

According to the ECDB, all information in the database is collected from publicly available sources, including mass media reports. ECDB analyzes this information using a standardized and consistent methodology to characterize each attack in terms of the ideological motivation. In addition, ECDB rates the confidence in this assessment of ideological motivations using standard definitions of the factors that lead a confidence level on a scale from 0 to 4, where 0 is the lowest level of confidence and 4 is the highest level of confidence. During our reliability assessment, it was determined that the far right-motivated attacks included 12 incidents where there was unclear evidence about the motivation of the attacker; these 12 were excluded from our analysis.

Table 1: Far Right Violent Extremist-Motivated Attacks that Resulted in Fatalities, September 12, 2001 through December 31, 2016, as reported in the U.S. Extremist Crime Database (ECDB)

Summary of ECDB Incident Description	Date	City	State	Number of Victim Deaths
White Supremacist member of Aryan Brotherhood killed a man	9/15/2001	Mesquite	Texas	1
Same white supremacist as previous case but another victim a few weeks later	10/4/2001	Mesquite	Texas	1
White supremacist murdered an African American	3/21/2002	Portland	Oregon	1
White supremacist skinhead murdered a transgender person	4/10/2002	El Paso	Texas	1
Far right violent extremists murdered 3 fast food workers (one Native American and two Hispanic)	5/19/2002	Mesa	Arizona	3
Neo-Nazi murdered a gay man	6/12/2002	Tucson	Arizona	1

Summary of ECDB Incident Description	Date	City	State	Number of Victim Deaths
Anti-government "Sovereign Citizen" murdered an Ohio police officer	8/2/2002	Massillon	Ohio	1
Two white supremacist skinheads murdered a man	8/30/2002	Las Vegas	Nevada	1
White supremacist skinhead beat a man to death outside a diner	9/1/2002	St. Louis	Missouri	1
White supremacist murdered bisexual man	12/14/2002	Salinas	California	1
White supremacist gang murdered a homeless man as part of a gang initiation	3/23/2003	Tacoma	Washington	1
Anti-government militiaman shot and killed a Michigan state trooper	7/7/2003	Fremont	Michigan	1
White supremacist shot and killed 6 co-workers at Lockheed Martin Plant	7/8/2003	Meridian	Mississippi	6
Neo-Nazi killed sex-offender priest	8/23/2003	Shirley	Massachusetts	1
Anti-government "constitutionalist" killed 2 in standoff over land	12/8/2003	Abbeville	South Carolina	2
White supremacist killed a man while "hunting down Mexicans"	1/9/2004	Dateland	Arizona	1
White supremacists murdered two homeless men	4/15/2005	Hingham	Massachusetts	2
Six white supremacist inmates beat another prisoner to death	10/14/2005	Kingman	Arizona	1
White supremacist skinhead murdered an African American woman	12/16/2005	Mays Landing	New Jersey	1
Neo-Nazi murdered a gay man	3/23/2006	New Port Richey	Florida	1
White supremacist inmate killed his African American cellmate	11/13/2006	Chipley	Florida	1
White supremacist murders Hispanic man in convenience store after argument	7/2/2007	Lubbock	Texas	1
White supremacist murdered Lubbock, TX police officer	8/15/2007	Brandon	Florida	1
Two white supremacists murdered a homeless man	9/3/2007	Reno	Nevada	1
Two white supremacists murdered a gay man as gang initiation rite	10/26/2007	Goldsby	Oklahoma	1
Skinhead gang murdered an Hispanic man	12/4/2007	Yucaipa	California	1
Middle school skinhead student shot and killed gay peer	2/12/2008	Oxnard	California	1
White supremacist teens beat a Hispanic man to death	7/12/2008	Shenandoah	Pennsylvania	1
Anti-government violent extremist killed 2 at Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church	7/27/2008	Knoxville	Tennessee	2

Summary of ECDB Incident Description	Date	City	State	Number of Victim Deaths
White man obsessed with Nazism murdered an African American man and a Hispanic man	8/1/2008	Bristol	Pennsylvania	2
White supremacist teens murdered an Ecuadorian immigrant	11/8/2008	Patchogue	New York	1
Two anti-government violent extremists planted a bomb inside a bank, killing 2	12/12/2008	Woodburn	Oregon	2
Far rightist murdered a homeless man	1/19/2009	Woodstock	Illinois	1
White supremacist killed 2 immigrants	1/21/2009	Brockton	Massachusetts	1
Same perpetrator as previous case in Brockton, MA killed a homeless man later the same day	1/21/2009	Brockton	Massachusetts	1
Neo-Nazi murdered Wesleyan University Jewish student	5/6/2009	Middleton	Connecticut	1
White supremacists murdered 2 immigrants in home invasion	5/30/2009	Arivaca	Arizona	2
Anti-government Sovereign Citizen murdered abortion provider Dr. George Tiller	5/31/2009	Wichita	Kansas	1
White supremacist killed Holocaust museum guard	6/10/2009	Washington	District of Colombia	1
White supremacist and associate killed a child molester	6/30/2009	Carmichael	California	1
White supremacist murdered his stepfather to gain “street cred”	7/28/2009	Paradise	California	1
White supremacist murdered a convicted sex offender	8/28/2009	N. Palm Springs	California	1
Two white supremacist skinheads shoot at interracial couple and killed female	10/3/2009	Phoenix	Arizona	1
Anti-government violent extremist flew a small plane into an Austin, TX office building with U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) office in it to protest the IRS and the government	2/18/2010	Austin	Texas	1
Neo-Nazi killed an African American man	3/29/2010	South Huntington	Pennsylvania	1
White supremacist shot and wounded 4 women then killed a man	4/20/2010	Wichita Falls	Texas	1
Two Sovereign Citizen members killed two police officers	5/21/2010	West Memphis	Arkansas	2
Prison gang white supremacists murdered another inmate for not objecting to having an African American cellmate	3/1/2011	Atlanta	Georgia	1
White supremacist teenagers run over and kill an African American man in a motel parking lot	6/26/2011	Jackson	Mississippi	1
Two white supremacists murdered a 53-year old African American man	10/4/2011	Eureka	California	1

Summary of ECDB Incident Description	Date	City	State	Number of Victim Deaths
Same perpetrators as previous case in Eureka, CA; perpetrators killed a teenager they thought was Jewish	10/7/2011	Corvallis	Oregon	1
Neo-Nazi killed 6 at a Sikh temple in Wisconsin	8/5/2012	Oak Creek	Wisconsin	6
Two neo-Nazis and a third associate murdered a local drug-dealer	1/9/2013	Verona	Kentucky	1
Anti-government “survivalist” boarded a school bus with a gun and demanded a student be given to him; he then shot and killed the bus driver	1/29/2013	Midland City	Alabama	1
Two white supremacists killed a husband and wife because the husband was a sex offender	7/21/2013	Jonesville	South Carolina	2
Anti-government extremist kills Transportation Security Administration officer at Los Angeles International Airport	11/1/2013	Los Angeles	California	1
White supremacist shot and killed 2 at a Jewish Community Center	4/13/2014	Overland Park	Kansas	2
Same perpetrator as previous attack in Overland Park; perpetrator murdered another person at a Jewish retirement center later the same day	4/13/2014	Leawood	Kansas	1
Anti-government married couple killed 2 officers during shooting rampage on Las Vegas strip	6/8/2014	Las Vegas	Nevada	2
Same perpetrators as previous attack in Las Vegas; perpetrators murdered another person later the same day	6/8/2014	Las Vegas	Nevada	1
Anti-government extremist Eric Frein murdered a state trooper.	9/12/2014	White Haven	Pennsylvania	1
White supremacist Dylann Roof shot and killed 9 African Americans in a shooting at an African American church in Charleston, SC	6/17/2015	Charleston	South Carolina	9
Right-wing extremist opened fire and killed 2 young women among patrons during an Amy Schumer movie	7/23/2015	Lafayette	Louisiana	2
White supremacist shot and killed 9 at his community college	10/1/2015	Roseburg	Oregon	9
Anti-government survivalist extremist killed 3 at Planned Parenthood clinic including a responding police officer	11/27/2015	Colorado Springs	Colorado	3
Number of incidents: 62				**Total victims: 106**

Source: U.S. Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) maintained by START at the University of Maryland. | GAO-17-300

Note: Attacks committed by the same perpetrators on the same day and in proximate locations and time were counted as one attack.

Table 2: Radical Islamist Violent Extremist-Motivated Attacks that Resulted in Fatalities, September 12, 2001 through December 31, 2016, as reported in the U.S. Extremist Crime Database (ECDB)

Summary of ECDB Incident Description	Date	City	State	Number of Victim Deaths
Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack prior to D.C. attacks; shot and killed 1 person in state of Washington	2/16/2002	Tacoma	Washington	1
Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack prior to D.C. attacks; shot and killed 1 person in Arizona	3/19/2002	Tucson	Arizona	1
Radical Islamist violent extremist killed 2 at Los Angeles International Airport El Al ticket counter	7/4/2002	Los Angeles	California	2
Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack prior to D.C. attacks; shot and killed 1 person in Atlanta, GA	9/21/2002	Atlanta	Georgia	1
Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack prior to D.C. attacks; shot and killed 1 person in Montgomery, AL, 19 hours after attack in Atlanta, GA	9/21/2002	Montgomery	Alabama	1
Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack prior to D.C. attacks; shot and killed 1 person in Baton Rouge, LA	9/23/2002	Baton Rouge	Louisiana	1
Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack	10/2/2002	Wheaton	Maryland	1
Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack	10/3/2002	Rockville	Maryland	1
Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack	10/3/2002	Aspen Hill	Maryland	1
Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack	10/3/2002	Silver Spring	Maryland	1
Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack	10/3/2002	Kensington	Maryland	1
Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack	10/3/2002	Washington	District of Columbia	1
Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack	10/9/2002	Manassas	Virginia	1
Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack	10/11/2002	Spotsylvania County	Virginia	1
Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack	10/14/2002	Fairfax County	Virginia	1
Washington, D.C. Beltway sniper attack	10/22/2002	Aspen Hill	Maryland	1
Perpetrator kills 1 at the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle	7/28/2006	Seattle	Washington	1
Perpetrator kills 1 and injures 18 in hit-and-run driving spree in San Francisco and Fremont, CA	8/29/2006	Fremont	California	1
Salt Lake City, UT Trolley Square Shooting	2/12/2007	Salt Lake City	Utah	5
Perpetrator killed one army solider outside of a military recruiting center in Little Rock, AR	6/1/2009	Little Rock	Arkansas	1
Nidal Malik Hasan kills 12 soldiers and 1 civilian at Fort Hood, TX	11/5/2009	Fort Hood	Texas	13
Boston bomber Tamerlan Tsarnaev helped murder 3 persons four years before Boston bombing	9/11/2011	Waltham	Massachusetts	3

Summary of ECDB Incident Description	Date	City	State	Number of Victim Deaths
Reshad Riddle, a convert to Islam, murdered his father	3/24/2013	Ashtabula	Ohio	1
Boston bomber brothers Tamerlan Tsarnaev and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev planted two bombs at the Boston Marathon, killing 3	4/15/2013	Boston	Massachusetts	3
Tsarnaev brothers shot and killed a Massachusetts Institute of Technology security officer	4/18/2013	Cambridge	Massachusetts	1
Incident 1 in a series of related murders: perpetrator shot and killed a man in a drive by shooting	4/27/2014	Seattle	Washington	1
Incident 2 in a series of related murders: perpetrator shot and killed 2 men in Seattle leaving a gay club	6/1/2014	Seattle	Washington	2
Incident 3 in a series of related murders: perpetrator shot and killed a man in a drive by shooting and killed a college student	6/25/2014	West Orange	New Jersey	1
Justin Nojan Sullivan, a convert to Islam, murdered his neighbor	12/18/2014	Morganton	North Carolina	1
Perpetrator opened fire on two military installations in Chattanooga, TN, killing 5	7/16/2015	Chattanooga	Tennessee	5
San Bernardino, CA shooting spree: Syed Farook and Tashfeen Malik shoot up office party, killing 14 and injuring 22	12/2/2015	San Bernardino	California	14
Orlando Night Club shooting. Omar Mateen killed 49	6/12/2016	Orlando	Florida	49
Number of Incidents: 23				**Total Victims: 119**

Source: U.S. Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) maintained by START at the University of Maryland. | GAO-17-300

Note: All 10 attacks by the Washington, D.C. beltway sniper that occurred in the Washington, D.C. region are counted as 1 incident. All 5 attacks by the Washington, D.C. beltway sniper that occurred in the months before the Washington, D.C. attacks are counted as individual attacks.

Appendix III: Implementation of Tasks in the 2011 Strategic Implementation Plan

In August 2011, the White House issued the *National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States* followed by *The National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States, Strategic Implementation Plan* (SIP) in December 2011. The SIP designated the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) as leads or partners for the 44 domestically-focused tasks identified in the 2011 SIP.[1] From December 2011 through December 2016, federal agencies implemented 19 tasks, had 23 tasks in progress, and had not yet taken action on 2 tasks. The tasks fall under three categories: community outreach, research and training, and capacity building.

The SIP identified 18 community outreach tasks to be implemented by federal agencies. Community outreach aims to enhance federal engagement and support to local communities that may be targeted by violent extremism. For example, community outreach might include expanding relationships with local business and communities to identify or prevent violent extremism or integrating CVE activities into community-oriented policing efforts.

[1]For the 44 tasks identified in the SIP, DHS, DOJ, FBI and NCTC provided information on the status of actions taken on the tasks for which they were the lead agencies. Some tasks listed multiple agencies as co-leads responsible for implementation. Some agency responses showed their actions substantially addressed the task, while others only took some action for the same task. DHS, DOJ, and FBI provided technical comments on our assessment which we incorporated as appropriate and officials from NCTC met with us to discuss the information it provided.

Table 3: Assessment of Community Outreach Tasks in the 2011 Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) as of December 2016

✓	Implemented
➲	In Progress
✖	Not yet addressed
-	Not a lead agency

Tasks in SIP		Lead Agency	Task	DHS	DOJ	FBI	NCTC	Status Summary
1	The Department of Justice (DOJ) will incorporate more U.S. Attorney's Offices as engagement leads in the field building on the initial U.S. Attorney-led effort.	DOJ	✓	-	✓	-	-	DOJ officials stated that they increased the number of U.S. Attorney's Offices as engagement leads within their districts and their activities with respect to violent extremism.
2	The National Task Force will (1) disseminate regular reports on best practices in community engagement to local government officials, law enforcement, U.S. Attorneys, and fusion centers; (2) work with departments and agencies to increase support to U.S. Attorney-led engagement efforts in the field; and (3) closely coordinate federal engagement efforts with communities targeted by violent extremism radicalization.	DOJ & DHS	➲	➲	✓	-	-	While the National Task Force, led by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and DOJ, dissolved in 2013, agencies demonstrated that they worked with other federal partners to increase their support of U.S. Attorney-led engagement efforts and coordinated federal efforts with communities targeted by violent extremism as described in the task. The National Engagement Task Force drafted best practices for community engagement which was not disseminated.

Tasks in SIP		Lead Agency	Task	DHS	DOJ	FBI	NCTC	Status Summary
3	In consultation with federal and local partners, the National Task Force and U.S. Attorney's Offices will facilitate, where appropriate, the inclusion of communities that may be targeted by violent extremist radicalization into broader engagement forums and programs that involve other communities.	DOJ & DHS	➲	➲	✓	-	-	DHS stated without continued inter-agency support the National Task Force dissolved in 2013; however, individual agencies have continued their inclusion of communities that may be targeted by violent extremist radicalization efforts. For example, the DHS Civil Rights Civil Liberties Office expanded its engagement to other communities before the National Task Force dissolved. DOJ increased outreach and inclusion efforts by U.S. Attorney's Offices participation in cross-cultural events such as hosting an Interfaith Community Group and a Hate Crimes Outreach Summit, as well as a cooperative agreement with the World Organization for Resource Development and Education in Montgomery County Maryland.
4	U.S. Attorneys will coordinate closely with local government officials, law enforcement, communities, and civil society to enhance outreach events and initiatives.	DOJ	✓	-	✓	-	-	Through their participation in developing Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) frameworks in three pilot cities, DOJ coordinated with federal, state, local, and community partners to enhance outreach events and initiatives.
5	In fiscal year (FY) 2012, DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) CRCL plans on expanding its quarterly community engagement roundtables to a total of 16. CRCL is also in the process of implementing a campus youth community engagement plan, through which it will engage with young adults on the topic of violent extremism.	DHS	✓	✓	-	-	-	DHS's CRCL, expanded youth specific engagement programs and implemented Syrian and Somali American engagement plans.
6	Depending on local circumstances, and in consultation with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other agencies as appropriate, U.S. Attorneys will coordinate any expanded engagement specific to CVE with communities that may be targeted by violent extremist radicalization.	DOJ	✓	-	✓	-	-	U.S. Attorneys coordinated expanded CVE activities to communities that may be targeted by violent extremism. These efforts include hosting or coordinating events such as a town hall meeting with Muslim and Arab leaders, and hosting a roundtable with the Somali community.

Tasks in SIP		Lead Agency	Task	DHS	DOJ	FBI	NCTC	Status Summary
7	A FBI CVE Coordination Office will be established and, as part of its activities, will coordinate with the National Task Force on CVE-specific education and awareness modules. These modules will be developed and implemented, in part, by leveraging some of the FBI's existing programs and initiatives.	**FBI**	➲	-	-	➲	-	The FBI established and staffed the CVE office in 2012 and assigned the office to the Counterterrorism Division in 2013. FBI CVE products were jointly prepared with the National Task Force partner agencies or distributed for their comment.
8	DHS will oversee an online portal to support engagement by government officials and law enforcement with communities targeted by violent extremist radicalization, which will be used to share relevant information and build a community of interest. The portal will be accessible to government officials and law enforcement involved in overseas and domestic CVE and community engagement efforts to share best practices.	**DHS**	✓	✓	-	-	-	DHS launched a web portal in 2012 that has almost 4,900 users as of March 2016 and that is accessible to government and law enforcement officials involved in overseas and domestic CVE and community engagement efforts.
9	DOJ will expand the efforts of the Building Communities of Trust (BCOT) initiative to help facilitate trust between law enforcement and community leaders. This dialogue could include local issues, as well as CVE.	**DOJ**	✓	-	✖	-	-	DOJ deferred responsibility of this task to DHS. DHS expanded the BCOT initiative through 21 separate events nationwide from December 2011 through February 2016.
10	The United States Government will build a digital engagement capacity in order to expand, deepen, and intensify our engagement efforts. Where possible, virtual engagement will build on real world engagement activities and programs.	**DHS**	➲	➲	-	-	-	DHS is continuing to build relationships with the high-tech and social media industry including recent meetings with senior administration officials and support of a government sponsored university competition designed to counter violent extremist narratives, but recognized this as an area that needs attention.

Tasks in SIP		Lead Agency	Task	DHS	DOJ	FBI	NCTC	Status Summary
11	The federal government will help broker agreements on partnerships to counter violent extremism between communities and local government and law enforcement to help institutionalize this locally focused approach.	**DHS**	➔	➔	-	-	-	DHS collaborated with local stakeholders in three cities to develop frameworks that aim to address issues facing their communities. While not leads for this activity, DOJ, FBI, and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) helped partnerships through their participation in the three city pilot program.
12	DHS and DOJ will work to increase support for local, community-led programs and initiatives to counter violent extremism, predominantly by identifying opportunities within existing appropriations for incorporating CVE as an eligible area of work for public safety, violence prevention, and community resilience grants.	**DHS & DOJ**	✓	✓	✓	-	-	DHS updated its grant language to include CVE activities and has awarded training grants in FY13, FY14, and FY15. U.S. Attorney's Offices have researched ways to increase funding for CVE including funding for community summits and events, youth programs, research partners, and written materials or brochures. Additionally, DOJ has partnered with the Virginia Center for Policing Innovation to develop and deliver a national training program providing law enforcement officers with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively integrate community policing into their homeland security efforts.
13	DHS is working to increase funding available to integrate CVE into existing community-oriented policing efforts through FY12 grants.	**DHS**	✓	✓	-	-	-	DHS expanded its grant language to support law enforcement CVE efforts under Urban Area Security Initiative grants.
14	DHS is establishing a Homeland Security Advisory Committee Faith-Based Community Information Sharing Working Group to determine how the Department can: (1) better share information with faith communities; and (2) support the development of faith-based community information sharing networks.	**DHS**	➔	➔	-	-	-	DHS established a faith-based advisory committee in 2012, and is working with agencies within the department to determine new tasks.

Tasks in SIP		Lead Agency	Task	DHS	DOJ	FBI	NCTC	Status Summary
15	DHS is developing its Hometown Security webpage to include resources such as training guidance, workshop reports, and information on CVE for both the general public and law enforcement.	**DHS**	➔	➔	-	-	-	DHS created a webpage with information on training guidance, pilot city information and other relevant CVE information, however, this content is not housed on the Hometown Security Webpage as stated in the SIP.
16	The Treasury will expand its community outreach regarding terrorism financing issues.	**Treasury**	N/A	-	-	-	-	
17	Depending on local circumstances and in consultation with the FBI, U.S. Attorneys will coordinate, as appropriate, any efforts to expand connections and partnerships at the local level for CVE, supported by the National Task Force where needed.	**DOJ**	➔	-	➔	-	-	DOJ expanded partnerships with local stakeholders for CVE by expanding local U.S. Attorney's Office participation in the three city pilot program.
18	Departments and agencies will expand engagement with the business community by educating companies about the threat of violent extremism and by connecting them to community civic activists focused on developing CVE programs and initiatives.	**DHS**	➔	➔	-	-	-	DHS highlighted one successful partnership between YouTube and the City of Los Angeles, CA. They also stated efforts are ongoing to include the high-tech sector and philanthropic community.

Source: GAO analysis of information provided by the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the National Counterterrorism Center. | GAO-17-300

The SIP identified 20 research and training tasks to be implemented by federal agencies. Research and training relates to understanding the threat of violent extremism, sharing information, and leveraging it to train government and law enforcement officials. We analyzed implementation of 19 research and training tasks in the SIP to determine the extent they had been implemented by the responsible agency(s).

Table 4: Assessment of Research and Training Tasks in the 2011 Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) as of December 2016

✓	Implemented
➲	In Progress
✖	Not yet addressed
-	Not a lead agency

Tasks in SIP	Lead Agency	Task	DHS	DOJ	FBI	NCTC	Status Summary
1 Expand analysis in five priority areas 1. The role of the Internet in radicalization to violence and how virtual space can be leveraged to counter violent extremism. 2. Single-actor terrorism (so called "lone wolves"), including lessons learned from similar phenomena such as a school shooters. 3. Disengagement from terrorism and violent extremism. 4. Non-al-Qa'ida related radicalization to violence and anticipated future violent extremist threats. 5. Preoperational indicators and analysis of known case studies of extremist violence in the United States.	**DHS, FBI, NCTC, State**	➲	➲	-	➲	✓	The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) expanded analysis in most areas; and has a program in progress to address the role of the Internet in radicalization to violence and how virtual space can be leveraged to counter violent extremism. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) expanded analysis in some areas of this task, including the creation of behavioral indicator cards, which depict mobilization and disengagement however there is no information on how the FBI expanded analysis on single-actor terrorism. The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) expanded their analysis in all areas. While not a lead for this task, the Department of Justice (DOJ) supported these efforts through research funded by the National Institute of Justice. While the Department of State (State) was also a lead for this activity, we did not request a response from the department because it is outside the scope of this review.
2 Continue DHS Science & Technology Directorate's (S&T) support for research on countering the threat of extremist violence.	**DHS**	✓	✓	-	-	-	DHS has a research program on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) related topics and has released numerous reports on violent extremist root causes, and funded an open source databases on terrorism. For example DHS S&T funded the U.S. Extremist Crime Database (ECDB) which tracks extremist activity in the U.S. and released a report in 2012 regarding the hot spots of terrorism and other crimes.

Tasks in SIP		Lead Agency	Task	DHS	DOJ	FBI	NCTC	Status Summary
3	Continue DHS collaboration with the FBI, the Bureau of Prisons, and NCTC to: (1) improve awareness of the risk of violent extremism in correctional systems; (2) enhance screening of new inmates to detect individuals associated with violent extremist organizations; (3) improve detection of recruitment efforts within the correctional environment; and (4) increase information sharing, as appropriate, with federal, state, and local law enforcement about inmates who may have adopted violent extremist beliefs and are being released.	**DHS**	✖	✖	-	-	-	DHS piloted a course related to violent extremism in prisons with the Orange County Sheriff's Office; however no additional information was identified to determine if specific elements of this task were met. DHS recognized this task as an area that needs attention.
4	Complete the creation of the FBI CVE Coordination Office to help assess and leverage existing Bureau efforts to better understand and counter violent extremism.	**FBI**	✓	-	-	✓	-	The FBI established and staffed the CVE Office in 2012 and assigned the office to the Counterterrorism Division in 2013. In 2015 the FBI realigned the CVE Office and changed from an office to a Section which now resides directly under the Deputy Director to have a broader cross-programmatic impact within the FBI.
5	Build lines of research specifically to support non-security federal partners.	**DHS/ NCTC**	➲	➲	-	-	✓	DHS completed one report and one additional report is in progress. However, DHS did not provide information on how these efforts are supporting non-security partners as stated in the SIP. NCTC supports non-federal security partners by publishing CVE related material in a variety of formats including a magazine and weekly unclassified document that gets sent to non-federal security partners. While not a lead for this task, DOJ supported these efforts by research funded by the National Institute of Justice.

Tasks in SIP		Lead Agency	Task	DHS	DOJ	FBI	NCTC	Status Summary
6	Development of an analytic team focused on supporting local government and law enforcement CVE practitioners and increased production of analysis at appropriate classification levels.	**DHS**	✓	✓	-	-	-	DHS assembled a team and participates in multiple inter-agency efforts to share relevant CVE information. Additionally a team within DHS produces CVE information at all classification levels and provides briefings to non-traditional CVE stakeholders, state and local law enforcement, and DHS senior leadership.
7	Development of practitioner-friendly summaries of current research and literature reviews about the motivations and behaviors associated with single-actor terrorism and disengagement from violent extremism.	**DHS**	✓	✓	-	-	-	DHS S&T developed over 70 CVE projects including those related to single-actor terrorism.
8	Review of information-sharing protocols to identify ways of increasing dissemination of products to state, local, and tribal authorities.	**DHS, DOJ, FBI, NCTC**	➲	➲	➲	✓	✓	DHS reviewed its information sharing protocols and shares products and other reports with fusion centers and local officials. DOJ participated in a review of the State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training (SLATT) Program and the effectiveness of the SLATT website. While the SLATT website is an important mechanism to disseminate information, a review of the program found that a review of the website would be important to determine outreach and usage. The FBI reviewed information sharing practices and moved its CVE office to an office within the FBI whose primary mission is to improve the quality and timeliness of information to state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement. An office in NCTC focuses solely on dissemination of products at lower classification levels and produces a weekly article with relevant CVE information.

Tasks in SIP		Lead Agency	Task	DHS	DOJ	FBI	NCTC	Status Summary
9	Expansion of briefings and information sharing about violent extremism with state and local law enforcement and government.	**DHS/ FBI, NCTC**	➲	➲	-	✓	✓	DHS reported their efforts as "in progress" and have increased the number of unclassified products. Additionally they have coordinated and facilitated national-level communication and outreach efforts with state, local, tribal, and territorial partners. The FBI hosted local and federal officials to learn about CVE policy and hosted a CVE conference. They also briefed more than a dozen police departments and numerous police organizations including the Major County Sheriff's Association, Major City Chiefs Association, and the International Association of Chiefs of Police among others. NCTC participated in awareness briefings with government officials as well as educators and community members.
10	Departments and agencies are taking steps to identify training materials that may not meet internal standards and to improve processes for creating and reviewing such materials. Some departments are consulting with outside experts with established reputations to evaluate the content and training review process. Guidance on CVE-related training is being developed and will be issued, both across the organizations and to field components. Some departments may issue this as part of broader training guidance.	**ALL**	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Agencies took steps to develop and review guidance on CVE training. DHS completed an internal review and issued CVE training guidance in 2011. Additionally DHS hired two contractors to solicit feedback from internal and external stakeholders and to gather and create an hour training session. DOJ senior leadership sent information to U.S. Attorneys containing five overarching principles to guide DOJ's training efforts and to ensure that the communities DOJ serves are respected. The FBI reached out to prominent academics, researchers and others to solicit feedback on FBI goals and strategies. NCTC co-led an inter-agency working group on training which reviewed all CVE related training throughout the government.

Tasks in SIP		Lead Agency	Task	DHS	DOJ	FBI	NCTC	Status Summary
11	DHS, via the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, (FLETC) is in the process of developing a CVE curriculum to be integrated into existing training programs for federal law enforcement. The curriculum will give federal law enforcement a better understanding of CVE and how to more effectively leverage existing local partnerships.	**DHS**	✓	✓	-	-	-	DHS reported that FLETC integrated CVE content into their counter terrorism training
12	DHS is in the process of establishing an internal committee to review all directly funded and issued DHS training on cultural competency, engagement, CVE, and counterterrorism. The committee will be responsible for reviewing any new content, evaluating experts, and establishing quality control. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will incorporate the recently released Informational Bulletin and training guidance into FY12 grant guidance and will also leverage existing mechanisms to hold grantees and sub-grantees accountable.	**DHS**	✓	✓	-	-	-	DHS completed an internal review and issued CVE training development guidance in 2011. A sub-Interagency Policy Committee on CVE training was established. Members of the group coordinated, among other things, training guidance, events, and grants to ensure inter-agency cohesion and quality control.

Tasks in SIP		Lead Agency	Task	DHS	DOJ	FBI	NCTC	Status Summary
13	DHS, in partnership with the Los Angeles Police Department and the National Consortium for Advanced Policing, is developing a CVE curriculum that includes a 16-hour continuing education module for executive and frontline officers, as well as a 30-minute module that will be introduced at police academies. Both will be certified by the Police Officers Standards and Training Council. In October 2011 the Major Cities Chiefs Association passed a motion to adopt and implement the DHS CVE curriculum, which will be piloted with state and local law enforcement in San Diego by the end of 2011. By 2013, DHS seeks to: (1) implement the curriculum across the country on a regional basis; (2) develop a national network of trainers and subject matter experts who can administer the training and keep it current; and (3) build an online component for the curriculum.	**DHS**	➔	➔	-	-	-	DHS launched a CVE pilot program that aimed to develop CVE curriculum for local stakeholders in 2012 and shared curriculum via a DHS-FBI web portal. The program was not implemented across the country and a national network of trainers was not established.
14	DHS, via FLETC, will update current federal training programs to integrate the CVE curriculum for federal law enforcement in the coming year.	**DHS**	✓	✓	-	-	-	DHS updated its counter-terrorism training to include CVE specific modules.
15	DHS is working with European law enforcement partners to share best practices and case studies to improve training, community policing, and operational information sharing.	**DHS**	➔	➔	-	-	-	DHS states this task is ongoing and been reprioritized under the SIP. Additionally DHS developed joint products with international law-enforcement and collaborated with bilateral and multilateral efforts such as in the Global Counterterrorism Forum and eight international summits. Participation and findings were reported regularly to the DHS CVE Working group; however, DHS did not provide information on how these efforts improve training, community policing, and operational information sharing as stated in the SIP.

Tasks in SIP		Lead Agency	Task	DHS	DOJ	FBI	NCTC	Status Summary
16	DHS Civil Rights and Civil Liberties is expanding and institutionalizing its CVE and cultural competence training curricula to further enhance the material and its effectiveness.	**DHS**	✓	✓	-	-	-	DHS expanded training efforts utilizing tools such as the Community Awareness Briefings (CAB) and Community Resilience Exercises (CREX) which are tools designed to help communities build awareness and understanding of violent extremism and to catalyze community efforts to respond to them.
17	The Interagency Working Group on Training will facilitate a "train the trainer program" to increase the reach of CVE training.	**DHS, NCTC**	➲	➲	-	-	✓	As of February 2016, DHS has been working to develop train-the-trainers curricula to enable law enforcement partners to deliver Community Awareness Briefings to law enforcement audiences. DHS acknowledged this task was in progress. NCTC co-led the train-the trainer program.
18	The Interagency Working Group on Training will facilitate the development of an online training program that provides professional development credit for a broad range of professions, particularly those involved with public safety, violence prevention, and resilience. This will help build a basic understanding of CVE among a broad cross-section of stakeholders who have related mandates.	**DHS, NCTC**	➲	✖	-	-	✓	DHS has several online CVE training efforts under development as a result of the Interagency Working Group including a web-based awareness level training for state, local and tribal territory law enforcement line officers, supervisors, and training academy directors. These efforts are currently under development and outside the scope of our review. NCTC participated in the creation and review of this online training that occurred under the auspices of the interagency Working Group on Training, before the establishment of the Task Force.
19	The Interagency Working Group on Training will collaborate with non-security partners, such as the Department of Education, to build CVE training modules that can be incorporated, as appropriate, into existing programs related to public safety, violence prevention, and resilience. These modules will be crafted in a way that is relevant to the specific audiences and their missions. Only trainers who have undergone CVE-specific training will deliver training programs that include CVE modules.	**DHS**	➲	➲	-	-	-	DHS recognized this task as needing attention and that while initial steps were made in the 3-pilot cities the interagency effort needs to better define roles and opportunities for future collaborations. No additional action to address this activity was identified.

Tasks in SIP		Lead Agency	Task	DHS	DOJ	FBI	NCTC	Status Summary
20	The Department of Defense's (DOD) training programs and curricula will be informed by the work of the Interagency Working Group on Training, as appropriate. Additionally, DOD is conducting a review of CVE-related curricula and will make revisions and adjustments as necessary.	**DOD**	N/A	-	-	-	-	

Source: GAO analysis of information provided by the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the National Counterterrorism Center. | GAO-17-300

The SIP identified 9 capacity building tasks to be implemented by federal agencies. Capacity building might include outreach to former violent extremists to counter violent narratives. We analyzed the implementation of 8 capacity building tasks in the SIP to determine the extent to which they had been implemented by the responsible agency(s).

Table 5: Assessment of Capacity Building Tasks in the 2011 Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) as of December 2016

✓	Implemented
➲	In Progress
✖	Not yet addressed
-	Not a lead agency

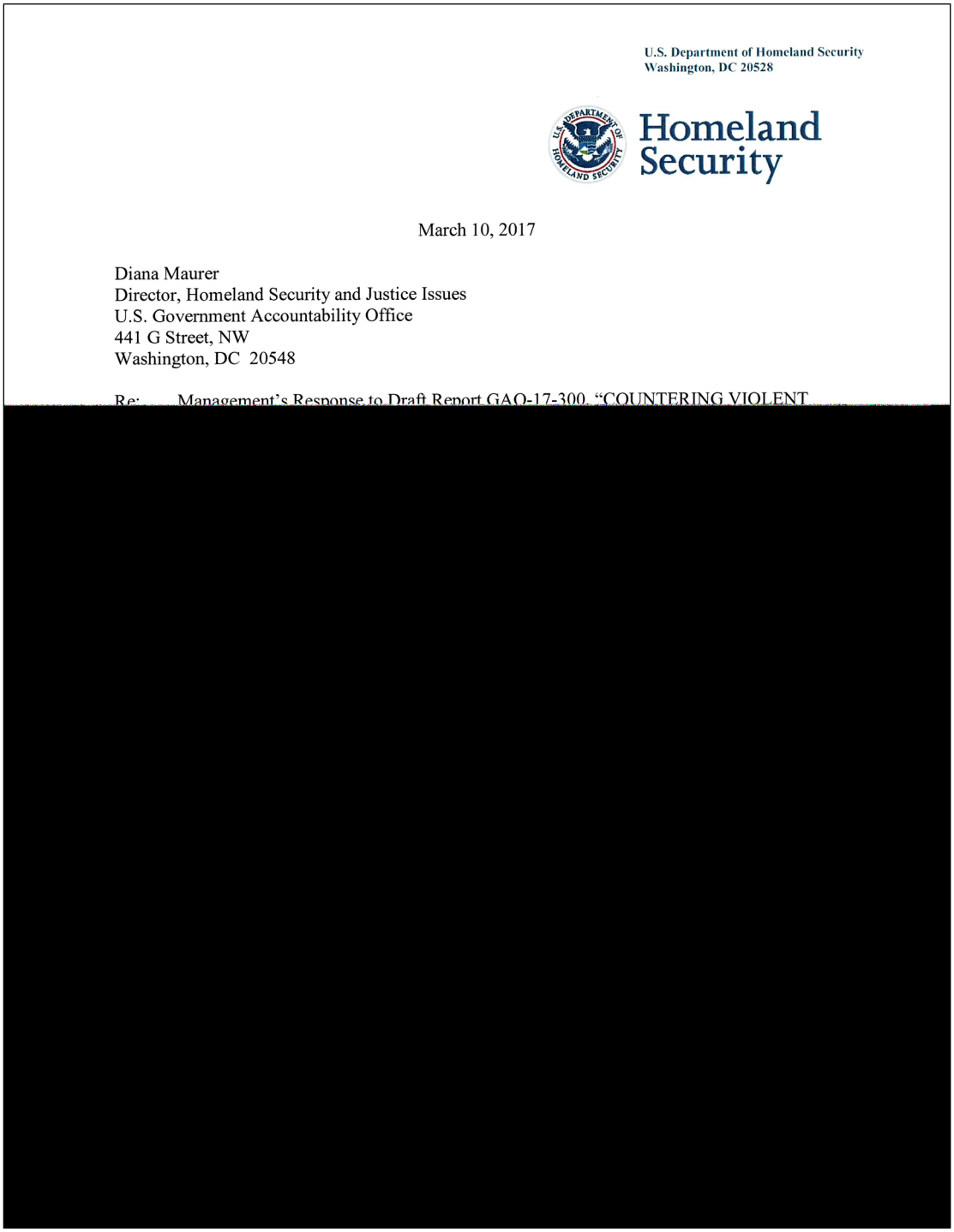
	Tasks in SIP	Lead Agency	Task	DHS	DOJ	FBI	NCTC	Status Summary
1	Expanding efforts to raise community awareness about the threat of radicalization to violence, building from the experience of the Community Awareness Briefing (CAB), and adapting those materials for different audiences where appropriate.	**DHS DOJ, FBI, NCTC**	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) updated the CAB and adapted the briefings to different audiences. Department of Justice (DOJ) officials stated that the U.S. Attorneys have hosted several briefings and two U.S. Attorneys have developed their own community awareness briefings over 2 years. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) met with more than 100 non-federal groups and briefed them on their proposed critical thinking tools and educational resources. The FBI incorporated feedback and launched Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) awareness tools for public use tailored to focus on foreign fighter recruitment and use of social media. The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) stated the CAB has been tailored to focus on foreign fighter recruitment and use of social media.
2	Learning from former violent extremists, specifically those who can speak credibly to counter violent narratives, provide insights to government, and potentially catalyze activities to directly challenge violent extremist narratives.	**DHS**	✖	✖	-	-	-	DHS stated this task needed attention and that DOJ is now responsible for the task. DOJ did not provide a response to this task at the time of our review. In March 2017, DOJ noted that it has worked with cooperating defendants, including those who have traveled to or attempted to travel to join ISIS, in order to learn from their experiences and is exploring whether there may be appropriate opportunities for these individuals to speak publicly, as well as circumstances in which such defendants may offer their assistance toward CVE efforts.

	Tasks in SIP	Lead Agency	Task	DHS	DOJ	FBI	NCTC	Status Summary
3	Providing grants to counter violent extremist narratives and ideologies, within authorities and relevant legal parameters, by reprioritizing or increasing the flexibility of existing funding.	DHS	➔	➔	-	-	-	DHS recognized this task needed attention and in 2016 DHS developed a grant program. As of December 2016, award notices for these grants had not been issued.
4	Brokering connections between private sector actors, civil society, and communities interested in countering violent extremist narratives.	DHS	➔	➔	-	-	-	DHS noted initial progress with YouTube and the Los Angeles Police Department sponsorship of a university challenge where students develop campaigns against violent extremism. DHS recognized this task needed attention and that these efforts can be expanded.
5	Promoting international exchange programs to build expertise for countering violent extremist narratives.	State	N/A	-	-	-	-	
6	Increasing technical training to empower communities to counter violent extremists online, including the development of training for bloggers.	DHS	➔	➔	-	-	-	DHS reported that it expanded a public-private partnership to establish a university student challenge to develop online campaigns. DHS recognized this task as needing attention and that these efforts can be expanded.
7	Providing regular briefings to Congress, think tanks, and members of the media.	DHS	✓	✓	-	-	-	DHS has expanded briefings and hearings and delivered over two dozen briefings and hearings to Congress.
8	Creating programs to directly engage the public on the issue.	ALL	➔	➔	➔	✓	✓	DHS reported that they have held dozens of events to discuss CVE, but a direct DHS-wide CVE public engagement campaign is needed. DHS recognized this task as needing attention and considered this to be an ongoing task. DOJ highlighted a CVE summit that brought members of the SIP Pilot sites to discuss CVE issues with members of the community. The FBI hosts forums that open dialogue, outline their mission and activities, and create awareness of threats that may impact the community. NCTC stated the CAB is presented to a wide range of audiences.

	Tasks in SIP	Lead Agency	Task	DHS	DOJ	FBI	NCTC	Status Summary
9	Building a public website on community resilience and CVE.	**DHS**	➔	➔	-	-	-	DHS stated the CVE website was launched in 2012 and updated in 2015 but recognized that an online platform that encourages stakeholder interaction is still needed. According to DHS, the CVE Task Force launched the CVE Task Force website (www.dhs.gov/cve) in 2017 to bring together publicly-available information on the U.S. Government's response to violent extremism.

Source: GAO analysis of information provided by the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the National Counterterrorism Center. | GAO-17-300

Appendix IV: Comments from the Department of Homeland Security



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Homeland Security

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U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Re: Management's Response to Draft Report GAO-17-300, "COUNTERING VIOLENT

resources, and tools to effectively counter radicalization and recruitment to violence, without regard to motivation; and will continue to partner with DOJ in leading non-security federal partners to build CVE programs across the nation.

The draft report contained two recommendations with which the Department concurs. Attached find our detailed response to each recommendation.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft report. Technical comments were provided under separate cover. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. We look forward to working with you again in the future.

Sincerely,

JIM H. CRUMPACKER, CIA, CFE
Director
Departmental GAO-OIG Liaison Office

Attachment

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Attachment: DHS Management Response to Recommendations Contained in GAO-17-300

GAO recommended that the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Attorney General – as heads of the two lead agencies responsible for coordinating CVE efforts – should direct the CVE Task Force to:

Recommendation 1: Develop a cohesive strategy that includes measurable outcomes for CVE activities.

Response: Concur. DHS, in partnership with the DOJ, leads domestic CVE efforts across the Federal Government through the CVE Task Force. In October 2016, the White House issued an updated SIP that responds to the current dynamics of violent extremism and reflects experiences and knowledge acquired since the 2011 release of the national strategy and corresponding SIP. The 2016 SIP provides specific objectives and the multi-tiered actions of Federal departments and agencies to synchronize and integrate whole-of-government CVE programs and activities. The CVE Task Force and DHS recognize that additional strategic-level performance documentation will improve coordination and collaboration tasks among partner agencies; define how cross-cutting tasks will be implemented, and how they will measurably contribute to achieving the federal CVE goals. The CVE Task Force is currently developing measurable outcomes to support and guide the development of performance, effectiveness, and benchmarks for federally sponsored CVE efforts.

The CVE Task Force plans to report on the implementation progress of the 2016 SIP to the White House Homeland Security Advisor in January 2018. Estimated Completion Date (ECD): January 31, 2018.

Recommendation 2: Establish and implement a process to assess overall progress in CVE, including its effectiveness.

Response: Concur. The CVE Task Force and DHS recognize that establishing a process for assessing overall strategy success will drive an understanding of the contributions of individual activities in the federal CVE effort. While the Task Force will not be engaged in specific evaluation projects of its members or partners, the Task Force will support and guide the development of measures of performance, effectiveness, and benchmarks for federally sponsored CVE efforts. To develop a set of standard guidelines for CVE measurement and evaluation, the Task Force will consult with departments and agencies that have already invested in CVE program assessment, namely the Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the DOJ National Institute of Justice, and the DHS Science and Technology Directorate. Some of the CVE evaluation efforts undertaken by these agencies are still underway, but interim findings have been shared with the CVE Task Force regarding methodology and general areas of measurement. Based on this information, the CVE Task Force Research and Analysis team will develop and distribute summaries and resource guides to our federal and non-government partners. Overall, the long-term goal of the Task Force's engagement on CVE metrics is to develop an evidence based system in order to provide a meta-

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assessment of CVE programs, similar to other rigorous federal efforts to evaluate gang prevention programs or community policing initiatives.

As the current agency lead for the CVE Task Force, DHS is working with DOJ to synchronize and integrate CVE programs and activities to ensure successful implementation of this multi-agency collaborative effort.

The CVE Task Force plans to report on the implementation progress of the 2016 SIP to the White House Homeland Security Advisor in January 2018. ECD: January 31, 2018.

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Appendix V: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

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Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the individual named above, Joseph Cruz (Assistant Director), Eric Hauswirth, Kevin Heinz, Tyler Kent, Thomas Lombardi, Jonathan Tumin, Amber Sinclair, and Adam Vogt made significant contributions to the report.