

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 23, 2021

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

I applaud the Biden Administration's decision to examine the threat of domestic violent extremism facing the United States. As you undertake this review, I urge you to consider whether the Proud Boys and other violent white supremacist extremist groups involved in the unprecedented attack on the U.S. Capitol merit designation as terrorist entities.

As you know, the Proud Boys is a violent extremist group whose members have been involved in the January 6, 2021 terrorist attack on the U.S. Capitol. The group has been classified as a hate group by civil rights organizations such as the Southern Poverty Law Center. According to the Anti-Defamation League, the Proud Boys is a group with a global presence, including several international chapters in Britain, Norway, and Australia.¹ Federal prosecutors have warned that Proud Boys members could plan further attacks on the federal government.²

In recent years, the United States has become increasingly committed to countering the growing threat of international white supremacist terrorism. The 2018 National Counterterrorism Strategy identified the transnational group the Nordic Resistance Movement and the neo-Nazi National Action Group -- a terrorist organization that was banned by the United Kingdom -- as potentially putting American lives at risk.³ Last April, the State Department designated the Russian Imperial Movement (RIM), along with three of its leaders, as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs). Earlier this month, Canada, one of our closest allies and intelligence partners, added RIM, as well as the Atomwaffen Division, the Base, and the Proud Boys to Canada's list of terrorist entities.⁴ As the United States undertakes the interagency process of evaluating these groups, I urge you to follow suit.

Today, U.S.-based extremists export their abhorrent ideology abroad, and international white supremacist groups seek to coordinate action here in the United States. American citizens have traveled abroad to train

¹ "Proud Boys," *Anti-Defamation League*, available at: <https://www.adl.org/proudboys>

² Judge halts Proud Boy's release in Capitol breach case," *Washington Post*, February 8, 2021, available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/doj-appeal-delays-proud-boys-release-in-capitol-breach-case/2021/02/08/b3dca42c-6a47-11eb-a66e-e27046e9e898_story.html

³ "National Strategy for Counterterrorism of the United States of America," *Office of the Director of National Intelligence*, October 2018, available at: https://www.dni.gov/files/NCTC/documents/news_documents/NSCT.pdf

⁴ "Canada designates the Proud Boys as a terrorist entity," *AP*, available at: <https://apnews.com/article/canada-proud-boys-terrorist-group-510b8cd8286f1207a726904f61e63e4d>

with international white supremacist extremist groups.⁵ I believe that a terrorist designation for qualifying entities would help provide additional tools to law enforcement and the intelligence community to prosecute, financially counter, and defeat these groups. There is also precedent for such a determination, as the United States has in the past designated international groups with American chapters and entities.⁶

Thank you for your attention to my request. I look forward to working with you to help protect the United States and our allies from the transnational threat of terrorism and violent extremism.

Sincerely,



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

⁵ “White Supremacy Extremism: The Transnational Rise of the Violent White Supremacist Movement,” *The Soufan Center*, September 2019, available at: <https://thesoufancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Report-by-The-Soufan-Center-White-Supremacy-Extremism-The-Transnational-Rise-of-The-Violent-White-Supremacist-Movement.pdf>

⁶ “Islamic American Relief Agency (IARA-USA) v. Alberto Gonzales, in his Official Capacity as Attorney General of the U.S., et al.,” No. 05-5447, *United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit*, 13 February 2007, available at: https://www.refworld.org/cases,USA_CA_DC,467fc5b12.html