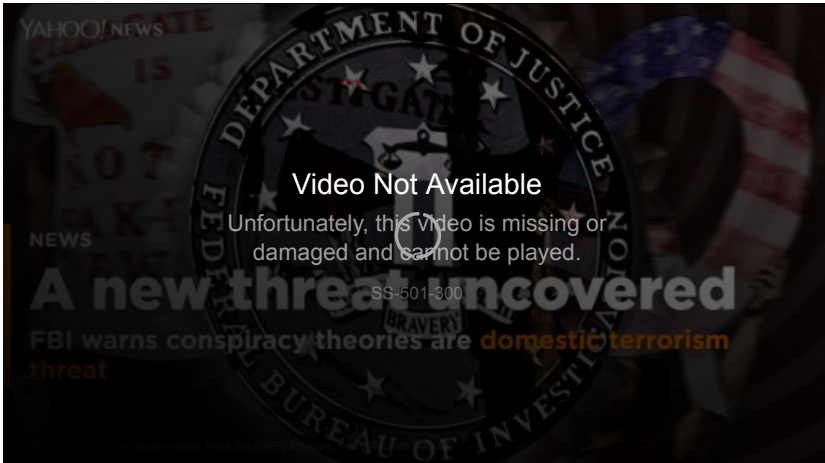




Exclusive: FBI document warns conspiracy theories are a new domestic terrorism threat



Jana Winter, Yahoo News • August 1, 2019



The FBI for the first time has identified fringe conspiracy theories as a domestic terrorist threat, according to a previously unpublicized document obtained by Yahoo News. (Read the document below.)

The FBI intelligence bulletin from the bureau's Phoenix field office, dated May 30, 2019, describes "conspiracy theory-driven domestic extremists," as a growing threat, and notes that it is the first such report to do so. It lists a number of arrests, including some that haven't been publicized, related to violent incidents motivated by fringe beliefs.

The document specifically mentions QAnon, a shadowy network that believes in a deep state conspiracy against President Trump, and Pizzagate, the theory that a pedophile ring including Clinton associates was being run out of the basement of a Washington, D.C., pizza restaurant (which didn't actually have a basement).

"The FBI assesses these conspiracy theories very likely will emerge, spread, and evolve in the modern information marketplace, occasionally driving both groups and individual extremists to carry out criminal or violent acts," the document states. It also goes on to say the FBI believes conspiracy theory-driven extremists are likely to increase during the 2020 presidential election cycle.



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FBI designates Pizzagate and QAnon conspiracy-based theories as domestic threats. (Photo illustration: Yahoo News; photos: Michael E. Miller/The Washington Post via Getty Images, Matt Rourke/AP, AP)

The FBI said another factor driving the intensity of this threat is “the uncovering of real conspiracies or cover-ups involving illegal, harmful, or unconstitutional activities by government officials or leading political figures.” The FBI does not specify which political leaders or which cover-ups it was referring to.

President Trump is mentioned by name briefly in the latest FBI document, which notes that the origins of QAnon is the conspiratorial belief that “Q,” allegedly a government official, “posts classified information online to reveal a covert effort, led by President Trump, to dismantle a conspiracy involving ‘deep state’ actors and global elites allegedly engaged in an international child sex trafficking ring.”

This recent intelligence bulletin comes as the FBI is facing pressure to explain who it considers an extremist, and how the government prosecutes domestic terrorists. In recent weeks the FBI director has addressed domestic terrorism multiple times but did not publicly mention this new conspiracy theorist threat.

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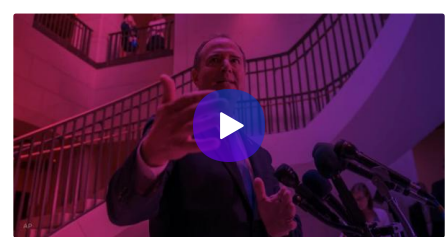
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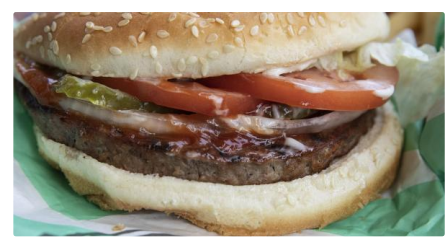
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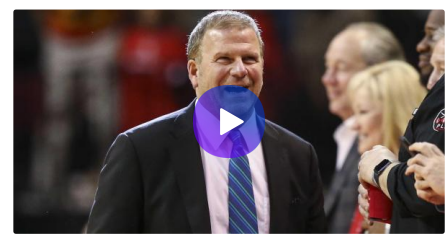
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