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CASA Investigates Potentially Frightening Assault on Civil Liberties

Washington, DC – The Center to Advance Security in America (CASA) today expresses grave concern over the potential for infringement on Americans’ rights from the Department of Homeland Security’s recent National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) Bulletin.

The highest duty of the federal government is to protect the rights of American citizens. The NTAS cites “the proliferation of false or misleading narratives, which sow discord or undermine public trust in U.S. government institutions” as one of three factors contributing to the increased “volatility, unpredictability, and complexity of the threat environment” that sparked the NTAS.

We live in an environment where social media censorship is becoming commonplace for those presenting contrarian viewpoints. Against this backdrop, the DHS has issued a memo prioritizing “false or misleading narratives” as a top domestic security threat. Any “narrative” that undermines public trust in U.S. institutions, such as reporting about officials’ misconduct, potential corruption within the First family or political leaders, or a variety of statements questioning the scientific basis for many COVID policies could potentially fall subject to the new Domestic Terrorism Branch’s intelligence gathering and dissemination. While this is concerning enough, it is made worse by the repeated reference to false or misleading “narratives” in the NTAS announcement, suggesting that DHS views true and accurate information as potentially threatening if citizens draw what DHS considers to be the “wrong” conclusions.

“This nation was founded on a healthy distrust of government institutions,” Adam Turner, Director of the Center to Advance Security in America, said. “In fact, distrust of government institutions was the driving force behind such fundamental American principles as separation of powers, a government of limited powers, and federalism. The NTAS represents a potentially frightening assault on the First Amendment and the expression of legitimate protest and dissent. CASA will be opening an inquiry into the use of the domestic security state to potentially target political opponents, squash free speech and deliver federal dollars to special interest allies.”

In response, CASA will be asking the hard questions:

- 1) How much money will be sent out to politically motivated non-profit organizations dedicated to promoting the current Administration’s policy agenda through the Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3)?



- 2) What is a “misleading narrative” and who will determine whether true information contributes to a “misleading narrative?”
- 3) Will this bulletin be the basis to fund groups that purport to “correct” misinformation or articulate the “approved narrative of events?”
- 4) Will the Nonprofit Security Grant Program be used to hand money to partisan organizations or those with close ties to public officials in an effort to bolster their public communications efforts?
- 5) Will any of the “collaboration with private sector partners” be used to work with social media companies (as White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki suggested at a recent press conference) to censor and identify peaceful but politically active opponents of the Administration?

CASA will be submitting requests to find out.

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