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Abstract

Podium

Major LEJA

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American Trucker Convoys: A Volatile Ticking Time Bomb

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In the post-Trump era, far-right extremism continues to grow and spread throughout the United States. According to the Terrorism Crime Index, far-right extremism increased 320% between the years of 2015 to 2019 (2019). From the 2018 Pittsburgh synagogue shooting to the 2019 El Paso Walmart attack, far-right extremism is still as dangerous as ever (Jackson, 2019).

Understandably so, conservative-aligned protests, no matter how mainstream they intend to be, remain desirable targets for dangerous far-right extremists who wish to weaponize them for their own agenda(s). Inspired by the 2022 Canadian "Freedom Convoy", mainstream conservatives in the U.S. decided to form their own trucker convoys (Robertson et al., 2022). These American trucker convoys, subsequently named the "People's Convoy", proceeded to Washington D.C. to demonstrate against COVID-19 mandates.

Earlier research has primarily been reactionary to the American trucker convoys. Additionally, recent global occurrences, such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine, have deterred much of the coverage of the American trucker convoys. Such reasons have resulted in little attention to this ticking time bomb.

This project conducted research into the American trucker convoys from a multi-faceted approach. This approach sought to identify if far-right extremists have infiltrated the primarily mainstream conservative American trucker convoys with the intentions of weaponizing them for future attacks. According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), far-right extremists have infiltrated this movement (2022). It is anticipated that far-right extremists are seeking to weaponize future trucker convoys to be used in violent attacks.