

LESSON NUMBER 8

TASK: IDENTIFY EXTREMISM AND EXTREMIST ORGANIZATIONS

CONDITION: In a small group discussion environment.

STANDARD:

- Define the army's policy on extremism.
- Explain the prohibitions with regard to extremism. Explain the restrictions on participation in extremist organizations.
- Describe the definitions of terms related to extremism.
- Explain the responsibilities of the soldier with regard to extremism.

TIME OF INSTRUCTION: 1 Hour

LEAD IN: The United States Army is comprised of soldiers from various cultures, ethnic groups, religions and races from around the world. These various groups contain ideologies that range from extremely tolerant to extremely intolerant. It is the policy of the Army that extremism is incompatible with the responsibilities of military service. By learning more about the ideologies, history and dynamics of extremism, you will have a better understanding of the influences that can affect your fellow soldiers and how their beliefs or actions can affect those of their peers. Keep in mind that any issue within society will likely find its way into the Army at some point. Extremism is no exception.

Discussion Question: Ask students if they have ever been approached, or do they know of anyone who has been approached to join an extremist group. If so, how did they handle the situation?

1. Policy. It is the policy of the U.S. Army to provide equal opportunity and fair treatment for all soldiers without regard to race, color, religion, gender, or national origin. Based on this philosophy, participation in extremist organizations or activities is inconsistent with the responsibilities of military service. Military personnel must reject extremism. Extremist organizations and activities are ones that advocate racial, gender, or ethnic hatred or intolerance; advocate, create, or engage in illegal discrimination based on race, color, gender, religion, or national origin; advocate the use of force or violence, or unlawful means to deprive individuals of their rights under the United States Constitution or the laws of the United States or any State; or advocate or seek to overthrow the Government of the United States, or any State by unlawful means.

2. Prohibitions. Soldiers are prohibited from the following actions in support of extremist organizations or activities. Penalties for violations of these prohibitions include the full range of statutory and regulatory sanctions, both criminal (UCMJ) and administrative.

- a. Participating in a public demonstration or rally;

- b. Attending a meeting or activity with knowledge that the meeting or activity involves an extremist cause when on duty, when in uniform, when in a foreign country (whether on or off duty or in uniform), when it constitutes a breach of law and order, when violence is likely to result, or when in violation of off-limits sanctions or a commander's order;
- c. Fund raising;
- d. Recruiting or training members (including encouraging other soldiers to join);
- e. Creating, organizing, or taking a visible leadership role in such an organization or activity; or
- f. Distributing literature on or off a military installation with the primary purpose and content of which concerns advocacy or support of extremist causes, organizations, or activities and it appears the literature presents a clear danger to the loyalty, discipline, or morale of military personnel, or if the distribution would materially interfere with the accomplishment of a military mission.

3. Impact on the unit and the mission. When individuals in the Armed Services are supportive of extremism there is an immediate impact on the unit. Even as the mission continues and work is accomplished, the overall command climate changes as it adjusts to the new element. The unit might divide into opposing factions. When this happens the unit is no longer efficient and the "team concept" of accomplishing the mission is gone. Time and effort are now required to deal with the extremist views in the unit. The following are examples of how the unit is affected.

- a. Command climate suffers. If there is a lack of trust and cohesiveness among unit members, morale will suffer, along with unit readiness.
- b. Polarization of groups is a logical by-product of extremism within a unit. Extremists are not likely to work closely with members of other groups.
- c. Undermines confidence among or between unit members.
- d. Productivity and mission accomplishment can be seriously affected. The unit may not work together in training or a mission environment.
- e. An enormous amount of time may be spent to retrain, counsel, investigate, and take corrective action.

4. Terms and definitions. In addition to the definition already presented for extremism and extremist organizations and activities, there are other terms you should be familiar with in order to discuss this issue with your soldiers. They include:

a. Supremacist. Any person(s) maintaining the ideology, quality, state of being, or position of being superior to all others in something.

b. Extremist. A person who advocates the use of force or violence; advocates supremacist causes based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or national origin; or otherwise engages to illegally deprive individuals or groups of their civil rights.

c. Extremist Organizations. Groups, which advocate the use of force or violence in support of supremacist causes; based on ethnicity, religion, gender, or national origin; or otherwise engages in efforts to illegally, deprive individuals or groups of their civil rights.

d. Ideology. A systematic body of concepts especially about human life or culture; a way of thinking used by a group or individual to express their beliefs and social values.

5. *Recruitment and Affiliation.* Instead of standing in streets dressed in sheets and shouting hate messages, extremists may sit in bars and break areas, wearing street clothes. The standard hateful message has not been replaced; just packaged differently. Recognizable hate symbols and paraphernalia are usually hidden until a recruit is hooked on the validity of the ideology. In some cases, individuals who subscribe to extremist ideology are not necessarily members of any group.

6. *Extremist groups and organizations.* The majority of extremist groups and organizations have one predominant theme of superiority of one race over another. This theme can also be applied to ethnicity and religious groups. Some of these groups and organizations proclaim violence as a means to achieve their goals. Most of these groups develop ideologies in an attempt to justify, legitimize and rationalize one particular version of reality. While the following groups are not representative of all extremist groups, a large portion fall into one of the three following categories:

a. White Supremacy Ideology. According to this ideology, the Caucasian race is directly descended from Adam:

- (1) Separatists (Nationalist).
- (2) Third Position (Aryan Socialism).
- (3) Neo-Nazi Skinheads.
- (4) Fifth Era.

b. Identity (or Christian Identity). Followers of this ideology tend to believe the Jews are the descendants of Satan, and white Anglo-Saxons are the true Israelites, "God's chosen people."

- (1) Ku Klux Klan.

- (2) Neo-Nazi.
- (3) Aryan Nation.
- (4) Identity Movement Churches.
- (5) New Jerusalem Fellowship.
- (6) Church of Jesus Christ Christian.
- (7) Church of the Creator.

c. **Black Supremacy Ideology.** Most black supremacist groups have been inactive for over 10 years and while they are not a threat today, they are always a potential threat in the future. The last major black extremist group that posed a threat was the Yahweh's who embarked on a killing campaign against Caucasians in the mid-1980's. Law enforcement authorities infiltrated this group and its members were imprisoned.

7. *Tattoos.* Tattoos are frequently associated with racist and/or gang activities. Skinheads frequently use tattoos and symbols of lightning bolts, skulls, Nazi swastikas, eagles, and Nordic warriors. Skinhead graphics also feature barbed wire, hobnailed boots, and hammers in their symbolism. This information being provided is general in nature and is provided as a guide only. No immediate assumptions should be made when strange or suspicious tattoos are observed. However, they may be considered a warning signal something might be worth checking into further. When in doubt, consult the Staff Judge Advocate for clarification and guidance.

8. *Command Authority.* Commanders have the authority to prohibit military personnel from engaging in or participating in any activities the commander determines will adversely effect good order and discipline or morale within the command. This includes, but is not limited to, the authority to order the removal of symbols, flags, posters, or other displays from barracks; to place areas or activities off-limits (see AR 190-24); or to order soldiers not to participate in those activities that are contrary to good order and discipline or morale of the unit or pose a threat to the health, safety, and security of a military installation.

9. *Command Options.* Commander's option for dealing with a soldier's violation of the prohibitions include:

a. Soldiers will be counseled by commanders of the inconsistency of Army goals, beliefs, and values concerning extremism. Leaders will take extremist activities into consideration when recommending soldiers for leadership positions or evaluating overall duty performance during evaluation reports.

b. UCMJ action. Possible violations include:

(1) Article 92 -- Riot or breach of peace.

(2) Article 117 -- Provoking speeches or gestures.

(3) Article 134 -- General article, specifically, conduct which is prejudicial to the good order and discipline or service discrediting.

c. Involuntary separation for unsatisfactory performance or misconduct or for conduct deemed prejudicial to good order and discipline or morale.

d. Reclassification actions or bar to reenlistment actions, as appropriate.

e. Other administrative or disciplinary action deemed appropriate by the commander, based on the specific facts and circumstances of the particular case.

10. *Individual Responsibilities:*

a. Reject affiliation with any extremist organizations, activities, and beliefs.

b. Encourage others (peers and subordinates) to avoid affiliation through leadership.

c. Report specific indicators to the chain of command so appropriate action can be taken before the situation gets worse.

d. Seek clarification from chain of command on "hot" topics, current issues, and current policies.

11. *Conduct a check on learning and summarize the learning activity.*

Discussion Question. What is expected of military members with regard to participation in extremist organizations or activities?

Discussion Question. What are some specific activities, which are prohibited?

Discussion Question. What is the one predominant theme found in most extremist organizations or activities?

Discussion Question. How do you define the term “ideology?”

12. CLOSING: Extremism in most any form can have a very serious and negative impact on unit cohesion and effectiveness. We must always try to be aware of any type activity trying to surface in our work areas and living areas. As the leaders in the Army, you are in the best position to know what the soldiers are doing. You are also in the best position to influence your soldiers. You should be always on the alert for signs of extremist activities within your organization. Encourage your soldiers to report anyone approaching them on the subject of extremism. If you see evidence of this type of behavior or activities, immediately report your concerns to the chain of command. Our soldiers have every right to expect the Army to keep this type of activity out of their living and working areas. You have the responsibility to do your absolute best to ensure it does not surface in your unit. Are there any questions?