



Bryan White <zebrafactcheck@gmail.com>

Correction request, June 22, 2020 "antifa" analysis

1 message

Bryan White <zebrafactcheck@gmail.com>
To: corrections@washpost.com

Fri, Jun 26, 2020 at 1:36 AM

Dear Washington Post,

The Post's fact check/analysis [story on antifa and the Black Lives Matter protests](#), published on June 22, 2020, contains a significant error.

The fact check states (bold emphasis added):

An intelligence bulletin issued by the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security and the National Counterterrorism Center that was [obtained by ABC News](#) warned that "anarchist extremists continue to pose the most significant threat of targeted assaults against police." The bulletin, which was distributed to police departments nationwide, **mentions antifa only in a footnote differentiating those who self-identify with the group from anarchists.**

The fact checker article does not link to the primary source document. Apparently that was not available to Meg Kelly and Elyse Samuels. Lacking the primary source, the link to the ABC News article apparently represents the source of the claim emphasized in bold.

But the Washington Post version does not jibe with [the ABC News version](#). The relevant part of the ABC News report reads (bold emphasis added):

"Based upon current information, we assess the greatest threat of lethal violence continues to emanate from lone offenders with racially or ethnically motivated violent extremist ideologies and [domestic violent extremists] with personalized ideologies," according to the bulletin, which was obtained by ABC News.

"Additionally," the document notes, **"anarchist extremists continue to pose the most significant threat of targeted assaults against police, as well as targeting government buildings and police vehicles for damage, sometimes with improvised incendiary devices."**

While experts [previously told ABC News](#) that the ideology of some antifa adherents includes anarchism -- along with socialism and communism -- mention of the movement itself in the bulletin is relegated to a footnote. It says, **"Some anarchist extremists self-identify as 'Antifa,' a moniker for anti-fascist that is also used by non-violent adherents. Identifying with 'Antifa' or using the term without engaging in violent extremism may also be constitutionally protected."**

If ABC News accurately represented the contents of the FBI report then the Washington Post's reporting was wrong. The footnote does not differentiate between self-identified antifa and anarchists. Instead, the FBI report identifies "anarchist extremists" as the primary danger for targeted assaults against police, etc., and notes that some of those "anarchist extremists" self-identify as antifa. The FBI does not divide "anarchist extremists" and antifa into two separate groups that do not overlap. To the contrary, it identifies "anarchist extremists" as the most dangerous group (among the protesters prone to violence) to the safety of police and notes that some of those extremists self-identify as antifa. The Post's reporting succeeds in completely obscuring the relationship described by ABC News.

The Post's story emphasizes that antifa counts as a broad umbrella, with twin unifying factors: "opposing anything that they think is racist or fascist." That leaves no apparent grounds for concluding that anarchist extremists self-identifying as antifa could not actually count as antifa. A belief in systemic government racism would appear to fit the antifa aim as described by the Post.

[No story is fair if it consciously or unconsciously misleads or even deceives the reader. Fairness includes honesty—leveling with the reader.](#)

Please issue a correction in keeping with the Post's policy on corrections.

Thanks for your attention to this matter.

6/29/2020

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Sincerely,

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