

## The Great Divide

January 2021



We are a divided nation. Besieged by pandemic and civil unrest, assuring the safety and security of our nation's public venues, workplaces, and critical infrastructure has never been more challenging. Threats are numerous and diverse, unforeseen and previously unimaginable. Public safety has been threatened like never before by a pandemic that spread undetected until reaching devastating levels. The security of our information systems, cities, businesses, and even places of worship has been shattered by violent civil unrest and rogue acts of terrorism. Our government has failed to unify their efforts towards our common goal. Irrespective of political beliefs and blame games, we must bridge the great divide in support of improved safety and security for all.

The threats we face are too broad and complicated for us to tackle alone. Government must work with private industry to assemble the resources, expert knowledge, and practical guidance that helps

us succeed against any type of challenge. Private industry must foster integrity and compliance with known best practices.

So, what can security professionals expect in 2021? We can and should play a significant role in overcoming the challenges that continue into the new year. To-date we have learned a lot, and new safety and security best practices are rapidly becoming apparent.

For starters, a safe environment is a COVID-free environment. Access protocols and standards for personnel protection are rapidly becoming the norm but have not yet normalized across disconnected enterprises. We should expect more clearly defined operating procedures to evolve as America returns to the workplace. On the front line of every workplace, security professionals will be required to affirm compliance with new screening, testing, or potentially vaccination requirements. Over time, the virus will diminish; hopefully snuffed out by herd immunity attained through natural spread of the disease and the result of the largest vaccination operation in American history.

Stopping the virus will not mend the deep ideological divide that has progressively crushed American solidarity over the last decade. The violent protests of 2020 have now breached our most hallowed halls. The threat has evolved from radical foreign terrorists to domestic actors who appear to be just like you and me. Without obvious connections to foreign terrorism, how do security professionals detect and deter potential workplace violence? Our threat assessment strategies must evolve with the threats. We will place more emphasis on positively identifying employees, independent contractors, and 3<sup>rd</sup>-party vendors who access secure facilities and information networks. Additional scrutiny of employment affiliations, criminal history record checks, and counter-terrorism screening will be critical to personnel



assurance programs. For high-security environments, behavioral due-diligence will require access to social media accounts.

A simple access badge will no longer determine access rights. On-going compliance with safety and security best practices will be required to maintain privileges. As global outsourcing continues to shift America's workforce towards independent contracting, the challenge increases dramatically. Security professionals are losing the personal interaction they previously enjoyed with a relatively static, employed workforce, and must rely more heavily on effective screening of unknown, transient workforces.

The problem is, no organization can manage such large populations on their own. Government must work with private industry to cooperatively address today's challenges. Public-private partnerships will emerge to mitigate threats efficiently and effectively. Government guidance regarding health and security screening criteria will relieve burdensome deliberation in private industry. Compliance with best practices will provide vital liability protections. And cooperative oversight and audit controls will assure workers of critically important personal privacy protections.

Together we stand. Divided we fall. I believe we will stand.

**By: Daniel Krantz, Managing Partner**  
**Secure Worker Access Consortium, LLC**