



JULY 10, 2013

# ASSESSING ATTACKS ON THE HOMELAND: FROM FORT HOOD TO BOSTON

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

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Committee on  
**HOMELAND SECURITY**  
Chairman Michael McCaul

*Opening Statement*

July 10, 2013

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**Statement of Chairman Michael McCaul (R-Texas)  
Committee on Homeland Security**

**“Assessing Attacks on the Homeland: From Fort Hood to Boston”**

**July 10, 2013  
Remarks as Prepared**

I want to thank the witnesses for appearing today. This is an open hearing and today we will vote on convening a closed session tomorrow to receive classified testimony from DHS and the National Counterterrorism Center. Unfortunately, the FBI has refused to appear, and continues to refuse this Committee’s appropriate requests for information and documents crucial to our investigation into what happened in Boston.

Three months ago, there was a terrorist attack in our country, and it is this committee’s responsibility to find out how we did not see it coming. What concerns me greatly is that the problem at the heart of preventing the Boston bombings – the failure to share information – is being witnessed now in this very room. The information requested by this Committee belongs to the American people. It does not belong solely to the FBI, and I sincerely hope they do not intend to stonewall our inquiry into how this happened. I said when I started this investigation that we were going to find out what happened, what went wrong and how to fix it, and I will not be satisfied until we get the answers that the American people deserve.

As Dzhokar arrives in court today, justice is just beginning. Today, we turn to making sure what he did, is prevented from ever happening again.

Just weeks ago, I walked the streets of Boston with my colleague Bill Keating, and while the city’s resilience and strength were obvious everywhere we went - how this attack could have occurred in spite of multiple warnings was still not clear.

In many ways, the Boston bombings serve as an assessment of our counterterror efforts over a decade after 9/11, and our investigation will look at how far we have come, and what must be changed to better protect our homeland. Today, by looking at other domestic terror attacks on our soil in addition to the Boston bombings, we seek to identify systemic vulnerabilities in our defenses which could have helped prevent these attacks, and future threats.

Since 9/11 the great challenge to our vast homeland security apparatus remains connecting the dots. While much information is available, we must ensure that we have the best system possible for sharing intelligence, particularly when information so clearly warrants additional scrutiny, as it did with Tamerlan Tsarnaev. In this case, while the FBI had investigated the older suspect, his case was not reopened after his travel overseas to a hotbed of jihadist terrorism. Ultimately, as we refine our post-9/11 counterterror policies, this type of failure to follow-up must not continue.

This is particularly important as the Administration seeks to return to a pre-9/11 approach to fighting terrorism on our soil – a policy perpetuated by its narrative that the conflict with radical Islamists is ending.

Unfortunately, the rhetoric perpetuated by the Administration that the threat of al Qaeda is diminishing, and that its franchises are less dangerous, is not the reality that the United States faces today. For evidence of this, look to the latest edition of al Qaeda's Inspire magazine which praised the Tsarnaev brothers and encouraged other extremists to conduct similar attacks.

Terrorists within the U.S., who are inspired by jihadist rhetoric present a new and dynamic threat and must not be looked at as any less deadly than those abroad. In light of Boston, it is more important than ever to find weaknesses in our counterterror efforts that can be fixed before another attack is attempted.

By reviewing the events leading to the last five attacks on the homeland since 9/11, we will find patterns that will shed light on what we must improve.

In June 2009, a terrorist targeted an Army-Navy Career Center in Little Rock, Arkansas, killing one soldier and wounding another. Carlos Bledsoe, an American citizen, converted to Islam and spent 16 months in Yemen at a jihadist training camp. Bledsoe had been interviewed by the FBI twice before the shooting, once in Yemen and then again in Nashville. While law enforcement agencies were concerned he may have ties to extremist groups, they did not pursue the matter.

The shooting at Fort Hood in November 2009, is another example of government officials either failing to recognize, or failing to pursue, a credible threat. There were signs Major Nidal Hasan had become radicalized, but his superiors failed to discipline or discharge him. The FBI was

aware Hasan was communicating with the terrorist Anwar al-Awlaki a year prior to his attack on Fort Hood, where he killed thirteen people and wounded 43 others, but ultimately this information was not shared with Fort Hood.

The 2009 attempted attack on a Detroit-bound plane Christmas Day is yet another example of agencies failing to connect the dots. Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab's father reported his son's extremism and hatred of the West to the US Embassy, but one agency failed to alert another.

The Times Square bomber, Faisal Shahzad, a naturalized US citizen born in Pakistan, was placed on the Traveler Enforcement Compliance, or "TECS" System between 1998 and 2008. However, this computer system does not share information effectively among databases and consequently Shahzad fell off the radar screen and only luck prevented the bomb from going off.

Finally, the Boston Marathon bombings show that when agencies fail to share critical information about terrorists, they fail to see the full picture – which could point to an eminent attack. We still do not know if the FBI was alerted to Tamerlan's travel overseas, but we do know that no action was taken after the fact, and the Deputy Director of the FBI said that even if they had been notified about the travel, the case was closed and would not have been reopened.

These events bring to light two areas that deserve scrutiny by this committee. The first being whether information is still being stove-piped between agencies, and the second being whether our agencies need to update their policies in order to be nimble enough to confront the current dynamic terror threat to this country.

It is easy to see why this absolutely must be done when you read the words of our enemy in the most recent issue of AQAP's Inspire Magazine, which praise the Tsarnaev brothers. In one segment, a poem written under the name "Tamerlan 2" declares:

"Brother residing in the West, grab your chance and walk steadfastly towards your goal. As for me here in Yemen, whenever I move around with explosive around my waist, I wish I am in America."

Those chilling words make it clear that our enemies applaud the actions of Tamerlan and Dzhokhar and they will try again.

We must be better prepared.

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Remarks of the Honorable Rudolph W. Giuliani  
Before The House Homeland Security Committee

GOOD MORNING, MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, AND THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME TO ADDRESS THE CRITICAL TOPIC OF ATTACKS ON OUR HOMELAND.

SINCE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, RARELY A DAY GOES BY THAT I AM NOT ASKED “ARE WE SAFER TODAY THAN WE WERE BEFORE THE 2001 ATTACKS?” THE ANSWER HAS NEVER BEEN A CLEAR “YES” OR “NO.” IT’S ALWAYS BEEN A QUESTION OF AREAS OF INCREASED SECURITY AND AREAS WHERE WE EITHER HAVE NOT GIVEN ENOUGH ATTENTION OR JUST NOT ANTICIPATED.

THE PREVAILING VIEW TODAY AMONG SECURITY EXPERTS IS THAT ALTHOUGH WE HAVE IMPROVED OUR SAFETY AND SECURITY WITH REGARD TO ATTACKS FROM THE IDENTIFIED AND ORGANIZED ISLAMIC EXTREMIST TERRORIST GROUPS, WE ARE VULNERABLE AGAINST ATTACK ON OUR HOMELAND BY A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL OR SMALL, PREVIOUSLY-UNIDENTIFIED GROUPS. THIS IS NOT A NEW PHENOMENON. IT HAPPENED AT LITTLE ROCK AND FORT HOOD. IT WAS STOPPED IN TIMES SQUARE AND FORT DIX, AND FOILED IN THE AIR OVER DETROIT. AND OF COURSE, MOST RECENTLY, WE SAW IT IN BOSTON. AT THE TIME OF THE FORT DIX PLOT, THEN-U.S. ATTORNEY CHRIS CHRISTIE, WHO DEVELOPED THAT CASE WITH THE FBI AND LOCAL POLICE, TOLD ME QUITE PROPHETICALLY THAT

HOME-GROWN TERRORISM WOULD BE AS GREAT A THREAT AS THE MORE ORGANIZED INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS.

THE INDIVIDUALS AND SMALL GROUPS THAT ORGANIZE THESE ATTACKS ACT LARGELY ON THEIR OWN, BUT USUALLY WITH SOME TRAINING OR ENCOURAGEMENT FROM MORE ORGANIZED OR ESTABLISHED FOREIGN TERRORIST GROUPS. THESE SMALLER PLOTTERS ADOPT, ON THEIR OWN, SOME OR ALL OF THE ISLAMIC EXTREMIST JIHADIST MESSAGE OF THE LARGER GROUPS, SOMETIMES WITH OUTSIDE ENCOURAGEMENT OR SUPPORT FROM THE LARGER GROUPS. INDEED, OSAMA BIN LADEN AND OTHERS URGED ON THESE SMALLER, LOCALLY-PLANNED ATTACKS AND THEY CONTINUE TO BE PROMOTED BY OTHER EXTREMISTS. AND EACH TIME THEY ACT THEY REVEAL JUST HOW VULNERABLE AN OPEN AND FREE SOCIETY CAN BE.

THESE SELF-GENERATED TERRORISTS OPERATE IN WAYS THAT MAKE THEM BOTH HARD TO DETECT AND, SOMETIMES, JUST AS DANGEROUS AS THE MORE HIGHLY-ORGANIZED AND ESTABLISHED GROUPS. THEY ARE MORE DIFFICULT TO DETECT BECAUSE THEY ENGAGE IN FEWER ELECTRONIC AND WIRE COMMUNICATIONS WITH PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS WHOM WE MAY HAVE UNDER PHYSICAL OR TECHNOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE OR THAT WE MAY HAVE INFILTRATED BY INFORMANTS OR UNDERCOVER AGENTS. IF A LARGER INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST ORGANIZATION SETS OUT TO LAUNCH AN ATTACK IN THE UNITED STATES, THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THAT THEY WILL TRIP A PROVERBIAL WIRE OR APPEAR ON A RADAR SCREEN THAT HAS BEEN SET UP TO DETECT THEM AND

PREVENT THEM FOR COMPLETING THEIR TWISTED GOAL. IT CAN HAPPEN BY HAVING CONTACT WITH AN INFORMANT OR UNDERCOVER AGENT OR BY MONITORING THEIR ELECTRONIC OR WIRE COMMUNICATIONS.

ON THE OTHER HAND, ONE OR TWO PEOPLE WHO ARE MOTIVATED ON THEIR OWN BY READING *INSPIRE MAGAZINE*, FOLLOWING JIHADIST WEBSITES, OR ATTENDING MOSQUES THAT ENCOURAGE VIOLENT JIHADISM, ARE *MUCH* HARDER TO DETECT. IT IS TRUE THAT THE SELF-STARTING, SELF-MOTIVATED JIHADISTS SOMETIMES MAKE CONTACT WITH ESTABLISHED GROUPS, BUT IT IS USUALLY INFREQUENT, AND THE CONTACTS CAN BE BURIED AND IMPOSSIBLE TO SINGLE OUT IN THE MASSIVE VOLUME OF DATA THAT WE COLLECT.

AND AS WE HAVE SEEN, THESE INDIVIDUALS, ACTING ALONE OR WITH ONE OR TWO OTHERS, CAN BE *EXTREMELY* DANGEROUS BECAUSE, ALTHOUGH THEY OPERATE INDEPENDENT OF ONE ANOTHER, THEY ARE UNITED BY A COMMON CAUSE – ISLAMIC EXTREMISM OR JIHADISM. EVEN IF NO SINGLE ACT OF THEIRS CAN DO ANYWHERE NEAR THE DAMAGE OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, THE SMALLER, MORE FREQUENT ATTACKS MOTIVATED BY THE SAME CAUSE – JIHADISM – CAN KILL AND CAN INDUCE THE KIND OF WIDESPREAD FEAR THAT IS THE GOAL OF A TERRORIST ATTACK IN THE FIRST PLACE.

SO HOW DO WE COMBAT THESE SPORADIC, DISORGANIZED, BUT HIGHLY DANGEROUS ATTACKS ON OUR HOMELAND? IN MY VIEW, WHAT IS REQUIRED IS *NOT* A CHANGE IN OUR PLAN TO PROTECT AGAINST TERRORISM, BUT *AN EXPANSION* OF IT.

AS A THRESHHOLD MATTER, THERE SHOULD BE NO REDUCTION IN THE EFFORT AGAINST THE ORGANIZED TERRORIST GROUPS LIKE AL QAEDA AND ITS BRANCHES AND AFFILIATES. THEY STILL POSE A MORTAL THREAT AND OFTEN PLAY A ROLE IN INFLUENCING OR ASSISTING THE SELF-GENERATED JIHADISTS. SURVEILLANCE OF THESE ORGANIZED AND ESTABLISHED TERRORIST GROUPS CAN HELP US IDENTIFY THE SELF-GENERATED JIHADISTS AND PREVENT ATTACKS, SO WE MUST KEEP THE PRESSURE ON THE LARGER GROUPS.

AT THE SAME TIME, WE MUST RECOGNIZE THE THREAT POSED BY SMALLER GROUPS AND IDENTIFY IT WITH PRECISION. VIOLENT JIHADISM IS AN IDEOLOGICAL SERIAL KILLER, AND THE WAY TO CATCH A SERIAL KILLER IS TO RECOGNIZE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MURDERS, FIND THE COMMON THREADS, AND THE SHARED MOTIVATIONS IN THE DEVIOUS ACTS. THE SAME IS TRUE OF THE SELF-GENERATED JIHADISTS WHO SEEK TO ATTACK US AT HOME. THEIRS ARE NOT THE ISOLATED, UNRELATED ACTS OF VIOLENT INDIVIDUALS. THEY ARE RELATED BY A COMMON CAUSE, A SIMILAR MOTIVATION, AND A SINGULAR PURPOSE: TO ADVANCE THE GOALS OF ISLAMIC EXTREMISM. ACKNOWLEDGING THE

CONNECTION MAKES IT EASIER TO IDENTIFY SUSPECTS AND STOP ATTACKS IN ADVANCE.

THE ATTACKS ON OUR HOMELAND, AND OTHERS SUCH AS THE 2005 LONDON BOMBING, HAVE BEEN CONNECTED BY A COMMON MOTIVATION AND A SINGULAR PURPOSE. THE UNDERWEAR BOMBER, THE TIMES SQUARE ATTEMPT, THE TSARNAEV BROTHERS, AND MAJOR HASAN - WHO ANNOUNCED AT FORT HOOD THAT HE WAS KILLING IN THE NAME OF "ALLAH" - WERE ALL ADHERENTS TO THE JIHADIST GOAL OF ISLAMIC DOMINATION AND THE MURDER OF FREE AND INNOCENT PEOPLE WHOM THEY REGARD AS INFIDELS. FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE THESE COMMON THREADS LEADS TO A GREAT DEAL OF WASTED EFFORT IN ANALYZING THE AVALANCHE OF DATA PRESENTED TO INTELLIGENCE ANALYSTS. EVERY DAY THEY ARE LOOKING FOR A NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK AND IT'S NOT JUST ANY NEEDLE, IT'S A NEEDLE WITH VERY CLEAR, IDENTIFIABLE CHARACTERISTICS.

SO, IN ORDER TO CONFRONT THIS THREAT EFFECTIVELY, WE MUST PURGE OURSELVES OF THE PRACTICE OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS WHEN IT INTERFERES WITH OUR RATIONAL AND INTELLECTUALLY HONEST ANALYSIS OF IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS THAT HELP US TO DISCOVER THESE KILLERS IN ADVANCE.

FOR EXAMPLE, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN A GREATER CHANCE OF PREVENTING FORT HOOD AND MAYBE THE BOSTON BOMBINGS IF

THE RELEVANT BUREAUCRACIES HAD BEEN LESS RELUCTANT TO IDENTIFY THE EVENTUAL KILLERS AS POTENTIAL ISLAMIC EXTREMIST TERRORISTS. BUREAUCRACIES RESPOND TO THE MESSAGE THEY ARE GETTING FROM THE TOP. LEADERSHIP IN GOVERNMENT REQUIRES UNDERSTANDING THAT THE SIGNALS SENT BY A CHIEF EXECUTIVE, A PRESIDENT, A GOVERNOR, OR A MAYOR AFFECT THE BEHAVIOR OF BUREAUCRACIES, EVEN ONES SUCH AS THE MILITARY AND THE FBI. IN THE PRESENT CLIMATE, THE MESSAGE BEING CONVEYED FROM THE TOP IS THAT IT IS INAPPROPRIATE TO LABEL SOMEONE AN “ISLAMIC EXTREMIST” NO MATTER HOW COMPELLING THE SUSPICIONS. *BUT YOU CAN’T FIGHT AN ENEMY YOU DON’T ACKNOWLEDGE.* IF THE PARTY LINE IS TO NEVER UTTER THE WORDS “ISLAMIC EXTREMIST TERRORIST,” IF THERE IS RELUCTANCE TO LABEL CLEAR ACTS OF TERROR MOTIVATED BY JIHADISM AS PART OF A RADICAL GLOBAL MOVEMENT, THEN THE RESULT IS A BUREAUCRACY PARALYZED BY THE FEAR OF INCORRECTLY IDENTIFYING SOMEONE AS AN ISLAMIC EXTREMIST TERRORIST.

THIS ELEVATION OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS OVER SOUND, INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT AND DATA COLLECTION CERTAINLY EXPLAINS THE FAILURE TO IDENTIFY MAJOR HASAN AS A TERRORIST DESPITE *REPEATED* INDICATIONS OF HIS JIHADIST VIEWS. NOT ONLY DID POLITICAL CORRECTNESS LEAD TO A FAILURE TO IDENTIFY HIM AS A SUSPECTED TERRORIST, BUT IT WENT SO FAR AS TO CAUSE HIS SUPERIORS TO PROMOTE HIM FROM CAPTAIN TO MAJOR. INDEED, THE TYRANNY OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS HAS

BEEN EXTENDED SO FAR THAT MAJOR HASAN'S ACTIONS HAVE BEEN LABELED AS "WORKPLACE VIOLENCE." THAT IS NOT JUST PREPOSTEROUS, IT IS DANGEROUS. EVEN AT THIS LATE DATE, IT WOULD SURELY SEND A MESSAGE IF THE FORT HOOD ATTACK WERE DESIGNATED AS AN ACT OF TERRORISM, WHICH IT WAS, AND THERE WAS A CLEAR STATEMENT FROM OUR LEADERS THAT INVESTIGATORS SHOULD WORRY MORE ABOUT PREVENTING TERRORIST ATTACKS THAN THE CONSEQUENCES OF BEING ACCUSED OF PROFILING.

THE APPLICATION OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS TO THE INVESTIGATION OF TAMERLAN TSARNAEV PRIOR TO THE BOSTON BOMBING IS NOT AS CLEAR, BUT ITS IMPACT MAY HAVE PLAYED A ROLE IN THE FAILURE TO IDENTIFY TSARNAEV AS A SUSPECTED TERRORIST EVEN AFTER WARNINGS BY THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT. IT IS CERTAINLY WORTH ASKING THE QUESTION WHETHER THE FEAR OF INCORRECTLY IDENTIFYING TSARNAEV AS A SUSPECTED MUSLIM EXTREMIST MIGHT HAVE PLAYED A ROLE IN NOT TAKING ALL THE STEPS THAT SEEMED PRUDENT GIVEN HIS SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR AND DETERMINING WHETHER THE RUSSIAN WARNINGS ABOUT HIM HAD ANY MERIT.

EXPANDING OUR DEFENSES ALSO MEANS MUCH GREATER INVOLVEMENT BY LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT. IF THE GENESIS OF THIS TERRORISM IS DOMESTIC, THEN OUR ONLY CHANCE TO DETECT IT IS IF THE FBI AND OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES USE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AS ITS "EYES AND EARS." THERE ARE ONLY ABOUT 12,000 AGENTS IN THE FBI RIGHT NOW – AND WE MAY LOSE SOME OF

THOSE MEN AND WOMEN IF SEQUESTRATION DOES NOT END. NEW YORK CITY ALONE HAS 35,000 POLICE OFFICERS. THERE ARE OVER 800,000 OTHER STATE AND LOCAL POLICE OFFICERS NATIONWIDE. LARGE NUMBERS OF THESE OFFICERS MUST BE TRAINED TO DETECT WHAT FORMER NEW YORK AND LOS ANGELES POLICE COMMISSIONER BILL BRATTON HAS DESCRIBED AS “THE PRECURSORS OF TERRORIST ACTS.”

OVER THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS, THE FBI HAS MADE GREAT STRIDES IN INVOLVING LOCAL POLICE THROUGH JOINT TERRORISM TASK FORCES AND OTHER COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS. BUT THIS PROCESS MUST CONTINUE IN ORDER TO BREAK DOWN ANY REMAINING RELUCTANCE TO SHARE AND INVOLVE THE “LOCALS.” WE GIVE OURSELVES A MUCH GREATER CHANCE OF IDENTIFYING FUTURE ATTACKS IF THE FBI AND OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES INCLUDE THE LOCAL POLICE AS AN EXTENSION OF THEIR INVESTIGATORY REACH.

SOME BELIEVE THAT THE THREAT OF SELF-INDUCED JIHADISM ON OUR SHORES REDUCES THE NEED FOR TECHNOLOGICAL SURVEILLANCE. ACTUALLY, JUST THE OPPOSITE IS TRUE. WE NEED EVERY TOOL AT OUR DISPOSAL. IT IS TRUE THAT THE SMALLER JIHADI GROUPS DO NOT COMMUNICATE INTERNATIONALLY WITH THE FREQUENCY OF THE ESTABLISHED TERRORIST GROUPS. NOR DO THEY LEAVE INTERNATIONAL MONEY TRAILS OR TRAVEL RECORDS. BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT THEY NEVER COMMUNICATE. MAJOR HASAN SOUGHT ADVICE FROM ANWAR AW-ALAKI. THE

OLDER TSARNAEV BROTHER MADE A VERY SUSPICIOUS TRIP TO RUSSIA. THESE ACTS SHOULD HAVE RAISED MAJOR CONCERNS. IN TSARNAEV'S CASE, HE AND HIS FAMILY WERE GRANTED POLITICAL ASYLUM IN THE UNITED STATES BY CONVINCING AMERICAN AUTHORITIES THAT IF THEY WERE RETURNED TO RUSSIA THEY WERE IN DANGER OF POLITICAL PERSECUTION. BUT ALL OF A SUDDEN, TAMERLAN TSARNAEV RETURNED TO THE PLACE HE CLAIMED WOULD PERSECUTE HIM. THIS SHOULD HAVE IMMEDIATELY RAISED A RED FLAG AND LED TO INCREASED SURVEILLANCE UPON HIS RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES.

NO MATTER HOW NEW, OR HOW DIFFERENT, THIS THREAT OF HOMELAND TERRORISM IS, THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR US TO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AT HOME AND ABROAD IS HUMAN INTELLIGENCE. ONE OF THE RISKS OF GATHERING SO MUCH INFORMATION THROUGH ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IS THAT IT TENDS TO GIVES US A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY. THE LARGE VOLUME OF ELECTRONIC DATA COLLECTED EVERY DAY IS OF NO USE IF THE FEW ITEMS OF RELEVANT INFORMATION CAN'T BE SEPARATED FROM THE MUCH LARGER VOLUME OF IRRELEVANT INFORMATION. THE MOST USEFUL SOURCE OF INFORMATION THAT ALLOWS OUR ANALYSTS TO DEVELOP THE KEY WORDS AND PHRASES AND NUMBERS TO HIGHLIGHT AND FOCUS ON IS THE INFORMATION GATHERED THROUGH HUMAN INTELLIGENCE – INFORMANTS AND UNDERCOVER AGENTS. WE MUST CONSTANTLY DEVELOP HUMAN INTELLIGENCE SOURCES.

IN ASSESSING OUR LEVEL OF DANGER FROM, AND OUR DEFENSES AGAINST, TERRORISM, BOTH PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH AND PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA HAVE CONTINUALLY WARNED US THAT NO MATTER HOW EFFECTIVE WE ARE, WE HAVE TO SUCCEED 100% OF THE TIME, AND THE TERRORISTS ONLY HAVE TO SUCCEED ONE TIME. BOTH PRESIDENTS ARE CORRECT, AND BECAUSE OF THAT, OUR RESPONSE TO TERRORISM IN AMERICA MUST BE SUBJECTED TO CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM AND EXCRUCIATING ANALYSIS, MUST BE FREE OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS, AND MUST BE CONSTANTLY RE-EVALUATED TO REDUCE OUR PERCENTAGE OF FAILURE AND THE TERRORISTS' PERCENTAGE OF SUCCESS, TO ZERO.

THANK YOU.

**He Honorable Michael E. Leiter  
Director, National Counterterrorism Center (2007-2011)**



**Testimony before the House Committee on Homeland Security  
*Assessing Attacks on the Homeland: From Fort Hood to Boston*  
July 10, 2013**

***Overview***

Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Thompson, and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify concerning past terror plots against the homeland. Although the membership on this Committee has changed over the years, this body has always been at the forefront of understanding threats and shaping our government's response to them. On behalf of those who continue to serve in homeland security and intelligence organizations, I want to thank the Committee for its continuing oversight and support.

For the men and women of the U.S. counterterrorism community, there is no priority higher than detecting, disrupting, and—if all else fails—minimizing the effects of a terrorist attack in the Homeland. Since 2001, our record obviously isn't perfect, but it is in my view truly impressive. Today I will offer my views on what has gone well and also what we can learn from the near misses—and tragic terrorist successes—over the past twelve years.

***The Successes***

Before reflecting on five instances where our defenses weren't perfect, I must begin with the successes—because they are in truth far more prevalent than their more tragic counterparts. One cannot judge the extent of our success merely by considering casualties, but it is at least a starting point.

In my view it is nothing short of remarkable that since the tragedy of 9/11, eighteen people have been killed in the United States by al Qaeda inspired terrorists: thirteen at Ft. Hood, one in Little Rock, Arkansas, and most recently four in Boston. Again, all of these deaths as well as those who were injured are tragic tales of loss to families and friends. Moreover, these attacks result in emotional and psychological scars for Americans far from the sites.

As just noted, however, I firmly believe this relatively small toll is not just noteworthy but almost astounding. Yes it is 18 too many, but had I polled this Committee's predecessors on September 12, 2001, as to what the toll of al Qaeda might be over the subsequent 12 years, I am confident that the answers would have been in the hundreds, thousands, or perhaps even tens of thousands. The reason this has not been the case is not because al Qaeda and its adherents have capitulated. Rather, it is solely because of counterterrorism offensive and defensive successes in the Homeland and around the world.

The roots of these successes come in many forms. Key amongst them:

- Offensive strikes overseas that have disrupted al Qa'ida's leadership in Pakistan and Yemen.
- Excellent human and technical intelligence—collected both unilaterally and in cooperation with our allies—to penetrate terrorist networks and disrupt plots.
- Improved screening of travelers and cargo traveling to the United States.
- Vastly accelerated and improved information sharing amongst organizations like the CIA, NSA, FBI, DHS, DOD, and National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC).
- Improved domestic counterterrorism intelligence and investigations, led by the FBI but supported by DHS and state and local authorities.
- First responder and community preparation to respond to attacks and mitigate their seriousness.
- Community engagement to reduce the attraction of al Qa'ida's message in the Muslim community.

The concrete result of this work is a long list of disrupted plots that must be remembered: the 2011 arrest of Khalid Ali-M Aldawsari in Texas as he plotted to attack power plants, military targets, and others; the 2010 attempt to take down two U.S. cargo planes with bombs made in Yemen; Najibullah Zazi's 2009 attempt to attack the New York City subway; the 2008 arrest of Bryant Neal Vinas who homeland attacks with al Qa'ida in Pakistan; a 2007 plot to attack soldiers at Ft. Dix, New Jersey; and the 2006 Operation Overt that disrupted a plot to bomb numerous transatlantic airliners.

Of course, these are but a sample of the much larger set of disrupted plots that have kept the American people and our allies far safer than they otherwise would have been. Regrettably, our defenses are not—nor can they ever be—perfect. And in this regard, the successful attacks and the nearer misses can illuminate how our efforts can be improved.

### ***Learning from Other Plots***

At the Committee's request, I will now address five plots that ended with less success than any counterterrorism professional or the public hoped. Specifically, the 2009 murder of an Army recruiter in Little Rock, Arkansas; the murder of thirteen in Ft. Hood, Texas that same year; the failed plot to down Northwest Airlines Flight 253 on Christmas Day 2009; the attempted car bomb in Times Square in 2010; and finally the recent tragic events surrounding the Boston Marathon that left four dead.

To begin, all of these certainly represent instances where we could have done much better. But it must be stressed—and I say this as an apolitical national security professional—we must accept that counterterrorism perfection is impossible. This is not to make excuses, and I take personal responsibility for my own contributions to instances where we didn't stop an attack before it happened, but rather to set realistic expectations so that we don't have partisan witch hunts after the fact.

In my view what the Congress and American people should expect is that their Government will continue to reduce the likelihood of a catastrophic attack. By this I mean that major

attacks like 9/11 should be extremely unlikely to occur thanks to our defenses, and even smaller-scale attacks like Boston will often—but not always—be thwarted. Moreover, whatever attacks do get through the gravity of the results should be mitigated by effective pre- and post-attack measures. This last point is critical, for the counterterrorism system has purposeful overlapping defenses because we know that no single countermeasure will always prove successful.

In several of the cases raised by the Committee, systematic defenses have been the backstop after we failed to identify specific plots or operatives before the fact. For example, in the case of Times Square the bomber was aware of FBI tripwire programs that resulted in his buying the wrong type of fertilizer to make an effective bomb. Similarly, in the case of the Christmas Day bomber, passenger screening led al Qaeda to use a less effective detonator than they otherwise might thus providing passengers and crew critical moments to disrupt the attack. Thus, although both of these attacks were far closer than we would have liked, the full panoply of defenses were critical in saving lives.

All of this being said, I believe there are several critical lessons to be learned from these five plots.

*Recognizing radicalization remains critical.* Through excellent analytic work in the Intelligence Community, we understand the radicalization process better today than ever before. Nonetheless as several of the cases illustrate, there is no radicalization formula nor has our understanding migrated fully to those operators who are on the frontlines. The FBI has improved training to agents and analysts, but we should ensure that all interagency, state, and local members of the Joint Terrorism Task Forces have high quality training on radicalization using the full resources of the U.S. Government, to include the NCTC. Without such training, we run a serious risk of agents or analysts not recognizing particularly troubling signs of radicalization that might warrant further investigation. This training should also be reviewed by outside experts to ensure that it is not providing misguided information or views that could lead to the inappropriate targeting of individuals.

Although there were a wide-variety of factors in the case of Ft. Hood (which were thoroughly documented in reports authored by former FBI Director Judge William Webster and the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee), I believe the issue of recognizing radicalization was a factor. Without trying to isolate the failure to a single cause, had certain agents and analysts appreciated some telltale signs of radicalization it is at least more possible that more aggressive investigative steps would have been taken.

*Al Qaeda-inspired Internet voices are here to stay.* The radicalizing influence of al Qaeda aligned Internet voices continue to be a significant factor in homegrown terror plots. The FBI, DHS, NCTC, and others have done much to keep up with what has been a trend since at least 2004. But the rapidly changing nature of technology, the ease with which plotters can adopt new methods of communicating, and a massive volume of data all make keeping up with homegrown extremists difficult.

The Boston Bombing investigation will, I hope, lead to greater consideration of how social media might help identify especially worrisome suspects. As has been widely reported, Tamerlan Tsarnaev posted videos on a YouTube channel in his true name—but of importance this occurred *after* the FBI threat assessment had already been closed. Although I do not believe there was anything remotely like a “smoking gun” in these videos, there may have been materials that indicated radical tendencies. Combined with information from Russian officials, it is at least possible that this would have interested investigators. But again, given that this open source material was only available after the Bureau closed its investigation, it is open to question if the FBI would have had any reason (or, potentially, authority) to monitor his Internet activity.

*The shift from radicalization to mobilization remains a significant challenge.* For homegrown terrorism, identifying individuals who are sympathetic to al Qaeda’s views is challenging but feasible. More difficult, however, is predicting which of those who have been radicalized will actually mobilize and pursue violence. Moreover, detecting mobilization poses significant legal, policy, and practical challenges. Specifically, there is limited legal justification for disrupting individuals who have not yet moved to plotting. And it is impossible—and of questionable wisdom—to maintain surveillance of every individual that falls into this category.

The case of Carlos Bledsoe, the Little Rock, Arkansas shooter, is instructive in this regard. In Bledsoe’s case, there were clear indicators of his at least suspicious activity in Yemen and potential radical leadings. Bledsoe did not, however, rise to the level of requiring constant surveillance because it was not clear that he was pursuing violence upon his return to the United States. Without such constant—and resource-intensive—surveillance Bledsoe was tragically able to target an Army recruiting center.

*Information sharing within the U.S. Government must be maintained.* Information sharing has been a mantra since 9/11, but the challenges we face today are not always the same as what we faced twelve years ago. That being said, pressures to roll back information sharing are ever-present and should be resisted while still adequately protecting civil liberties and privacy. As a general matter, sharing within the Executive Branch is good, although the sharing of more raw, less-processed data with organizations like NCTC is important to finding previously unknown connections. In addition, ensuring that relevant but not counterterrorism-specific information (*e.g.*, travel data) within the counterterrorism community must be maintained.

The case of Ft. Hood represents an obvious low point in information sharing but in my view much has been done to address some of the core weaknesses. More specifically, in that case we saw a serious breakdown in sharing between FBI and the Department of Defense, as well as sharing—due to legal and policy limitations—of certain Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA)-obtained material with the NCTC. Both of these failings have since been addressed.

*FBI-led Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF) are necessary and effective, but not sufficient.* In most cases, FBI-led JTTFs have performed exceedingly well. The JTTFs help ensure that all

U.S. Government and relevant state and local investigative resources are leveraged in a focused manner. But the nature of JTTFs (using all of the U.S. Government's resources to include classified information from the Intelligence Community) means that information is not automatically shared *outside* the Task Force—although any federal or local personnel detailed to the Task Force can seek supervisor permission to share information with non-federal partners. This limitation means that state and local officials cannot always play as full a role in counterterrorism efforts as we might want.

Many would point to state and local fusion centers as the solution to this challenge, but this mistakes the role that these centers generally play. Fusion centers are critical for sharing general threat information, as well as fusing information from state and local authorities, but the centers do not serve as a locus for *investigative* information sharing. And it is this area where we continue to bear risk. In my view there would be serious value in ensuring the fusion centers, working with JTTFs as well as FBI Field Intelligence Groups (FIGs), serve a prominent role in combing through investigative information that the FBI and JTTFs cannot or will not pursue.

The Boston Bombing is the most recent example of this challenge. It has been reported that the Boston and Cambridge Police Departments (as opposed to some officers from those departments on the JTTF) were unaware of reports of Tamerlan Tsarnaev's radicalization. This makes sense, as the report from Russian authorities would have been classified and thus at least initially confined to the JTTF. And once the FBI's threat assessment of Tsarnaev was legitimately closed, there would be even less reason—and possible policy prohibitions against—sharing the information with state and local authorities.

It is not the case, however, that state and local authorities are blind to many cases similar to Tsarnaev. In fact, the vast majority of unclassified Guardian leads (the type of lead in the Tsarnaev case) are already available to state and local authorities through Law Enforcement Online (LEO) and eGuardian. Thus we should ensure that fusion centers, local authorities, DHS, and FBI are working together to allocate effectively scarce resources to maximize our coverage of cases that do not rise levels of apparent seriousness that will guarantee intensive JTTF focus. And the advantage to doing so is that state and local organizations operate with very different—and in some cases broader—authorities than their federal counterparts.

Congress has an important role to play in such an arrangement by ensuring that law, policy, and resources enable rather than impede such information sharing. The advantage is obvious: although the FBI cannot and should not maintain investigations of individuals who have been cleared of wrongdoing, local officials have very different legal authorities and resources and might—in certain cases—be better positioned to continue coverage of individuals like Tsarnaev based on their well-established police powers. With appropriate oversight, fusion centers and their federal counterparts can ensure the allocation of scarce operational resources are used as effectively as possible.

I would be remiss, however, if I did not flag some of the obstacles to this approach. Specifically, passing lead information to local authorities after an FBI investigation has

been closed has real privacy and civil liberties consequences—and again may in some cases be in tension with the Privacy Act and other federal statutes. In addition, the desire to share information more broadly must always confront the risk to intelligence sources and methods—an especially challenging case like that of Tsarneav where information is from a foreign intelligence partner. Finally, in some cases even if information is passed local authorities will be ill-equipped to take meaningful action, thus also raising further privacy and civil liberty concerns.

### ***Conclusion***

We have had more than our share of successes in combatting terrorism—especially in the United States—over the past twelve years. That being said, we have not always been as successful as we would all hope for. We should continue to push for evolutionary change to our counterterrorism efforts. This requires truly cooperative work between the Executive and Legislative Branches, as well as rigorous oversight from all three branches to ensure public faith and trust. Combatting terrorism in the Homeland is challenging and simultaneously must be done meticulously as to not violate the Constitutional protections we all hold dear. I very much hope my reflections can play a small role in assisting this Committee in achieving our common goals.

1. **Name:** Michael Leiter
2. **Title:** Former Director, National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC)
3. **Organization you are representing:** Self
6. **Date of hearing:** 7/10/13

5. **Any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) which you, personally, have received since October 1, 2010, from Federal Agencies under the purview of the hearing, the source and the amount of each grant or contract: (attach additional pages as necessary).**

None

6. **Any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) which were received since October 1, 2010, from Federal Agencies under the purview of the hearing by the organization(s) which you represent at this hearing, including the source and amount of each grant or contract: (attach additional pages as necessary)**

None. I am, however, associated with several organizations that relate to this hearing:

1. Member, NCTC Director's Advisory Board
2. Member, NSA Advisory Board, Cyber Awareness and Preparedness Panel
3. Member, RAND Corporation Board of Trustees
4. Senior Counselor to the Chief Executive Officer, Palantir Technologies

Both the third and fourth organizations have contracts with the US Government, although I am not representing either organization at this hearing. More specifically, Palantir Technologies has contracts with several organizations mentioned in my testimony, to include the FBI and DHS.

**Signature of Witness:**

Your signature will NOT be posted to the Committee website.

**ASSESSING ATTACKS ON THE HOMELAND: FROM FORT HOOD TO BOSTON**

Professor Bruce Hoffman  
Director, Center for Security Studies  
Edmund A Walsh School of Foreign Service  
Georgetown University

Testimony Presented Before  
U.S. House of Representatives

Committee on Homeland Security

July 10, 2013

This testimony assesses the current state of the al Qaeda terrorist movement and its likely future trajectory. It considers the prevailing assumptions about al Qaeda and the threat that it poses; al Qaeda's current capacity for violence; and, its ability to plan strategically and implement terrorist operations. In this respect, even though the core al Qaeda group may be in decline, al Qaeda-ism, the movement's ideology, continues to resonate and attract new adherents. Al Qaeda thus remains an appealing brand in North and West Africa as well as in the Levant. The movement also retains its visceral hatred of the United States and the West along with the potential to inspire and motivate individuals to engage in deadly acts of homegrown terrorism, as we saw last April in Boston.

Today, the Core Al Qaeda organization is widely seen as on the verge of strategic collapse. The evidence supporting these claims is compelling. Osama bin Laden, the co-founder and leader of al Qaeda, is dead. The fourfold increase in targeted assassinations undertaken by the Obama Administration has thus far killed some three dozen key al Qaeda leaders, as well as nearly 250 of its fighters, thereby setting the core organization, in the words of a U.S. State Department analysis, "on a path of decline that will be difficult to reverse."

Although one cannot deny the vast inroads made against Core al Qaeda in recent years, the long-established nucleus of the al Qaeda organization has proven itself to be as resilient as it is formidable. For more than a decade, it has withstood arguably the greatest international onslaught directed against a terrorist organization in history. Further, it has consistently shown itself capable of adapting and adjusting to even the most consequential countermeasures directed against it, having, despite all odds, survived for a quarter century.

In this respect, the "Arab Spring," and especially the ongoing unrest and protracted civil war in Syria, have endowed the al Qaeda brand and, by extension, the core organization, with new relevance and status that, depending on the future course of events in both that country and the surrounding region, could potentially resuscitate Core al Qaeda's waning fortunes. The fact that the al Qaeda Core seems to enjoy an unmolested existence from authorities in Pakistan, coupled with the forthcoming withdrawal of U.S. forces and ISAF troops from Afghanistan, further suggests that Core al Qaeda may well regain the breathing space and cross-border physical sanctuary needed to ensure its continued longevity.

Throughout its history, the oxygen that al Qaeda depends upon has ineluctably been its possession of, or access to, physical sanctuary and safe haven. In the turbulent wake of the "Arab Spring" and the political upheavals and instability that have followed, al Qaeda has the potential to transform toeholds established in the Levant and perhaps in the Sinai and in both North and West Africa into footholds—thus complementing its existing outposts in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, and Somalia.

Hence, while bin Laden's death inflicted a crushing blow on al Qaeda, it is still not clear that it has necessarily been a fatal one. He left behind a resilient movement that, though seriously weakened, has nonetheless been expanding and consolidating its control in new and far-flung locales.

Today, al Qaeda is arguably situated in more places than it was on September 11, 2001. It maintains a presence in some fourteen different theatres of operation—compared to half as many as recently as five years ago. Although some of these operational environments are less amenable than others—such as Southeast Asia—others have been the sites of revival and resuscitation—such as in Iraq and North Africa—or of expansion—such as in Syria, Nigeria, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.

Al Qaeda has also been able to achieve the unthinkable: radicalizing persons who are citizens of or resident in the United States and Canada and inspiring and motivating them to engage in terrorist acts whether on their own, such as occurred at Fort Hood, Texas in 2009; or at the direction and behest of al Qaeda's senior leadership, such as the plot to stage suicide bomb attacks on the New York City subway system or the more recent plot to attack a Canadian train that was reportedly orchestrated by al Qaeda commanders based in Iran.

Bin Laden thus created a movement that, despite a decade of withering onslaught and attrition, continues to demonstrate its ability to:

- preserve a compelling brand;
- project a message that still finds an audience and adherents in disparate parts of the globe, however modest that audience may perhaps be;
- replenish its ranks (including those of its key leaders); and,
- pursue a strategy that continues to inform both the movement's and the core's operations and activities, and that today is effectively championed by Ayman al-Zawahiri.

In this respect, since 2002, al Qaeda has embraced a grand strategy for that was defined as much by al-Zawahiri as bin Laden. It is a plan that deliberately (and successfully) transformed it into a de-centralized, networked, transnational movement rather than the single monolithic entity that al Qaeda was on the eve of the September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 attacks.

Accordingly, despite Core al Qaeda's alleged abject decrepitude today, the movement has nonetheless pursued a strategy designed to ensure its survival. Continuing to attack the U.S. is only one step in this strategic plan, which is also focused on:

- Attriting and enervating America so that a weakened U.S. would be forced out of Muslim lands and therefore have neither the will nor the capability to intervene;
- Taking over and controlling territory, creating the physical sanctuaries and safe havens that are al Qaeda's lifeblood; and
- Declaring "emirates" in these liberated lands that would be safe from U.S. and Western intervention because of our alleged collective enfeeblement.

Although it may be tempting to dismiss this as equal parts bravado and wishful thinking, as Johns Hopkins University Professor Mary Habeck has cogently observed, "No al Qaeda affiliate or partner—including the Taliban, al Qaeda in Iraq, or the Shabaab—has been deposed from power

by an uprising of the local population alone. They have needed outside intervention in order to expel the insurgents, even when the people have hated al Qaeda's often brutal rule." France's intervention in Mali earlier this year being the most recent example substantiating Professor Habeck's important point.

One can therefore make a reasonable argument that Core al Qaeda has:

- a well-established sanctuary in Pakistan that it functions in without great hindrance and that it is poised to expand across the border into Afghanistan as the U.S. military and ISAF continue to withdraw from that country, until the complete drawdown set for 2014;
- a deeper bench than has often been posited (or at least has been shown to be deeper at various critical junctures in the past when the Core al Qaeda's demise had been proclaimed);
- a defined and articulated strategy for the future that it is pursuing;
- a highly capable leader in al-Zawahiri who, over the past two years—despite predictions to the contrary—has been able not only to keep the movement alive, but also to expand its brand and forge new alliances (particularly in West African countries); and,
- a well-honed, long-established dexterity that enables it to be as opportunistic as it has been instrumental—that is, having the capability to identify and exploit whatever new opportunities for expansion and consolidation present themselves.

It is often said that, much like bin Laden's killing, the "Arab Spring" has sounded al Qaeda's death knell. However, while the mostly non-violent, mass protests of the "Arab Spring" were successful in overturning hated despots and thus appeared to discredit al Qaeda's longstanding message that only violence and jihad could achieve the same ends, in the more than two years since these dramatic developments commenced, evidence has repeatedly come to light of al Qaeda's ability to take advantage of the instability and upheaval in some of these same countries to re-assert its relevance and attempt to reverse its decline.

Moreover, while the "Arab Spring" has transformed governance across North Africa and the Middle East, it has had little effect on the periphery of that geographic expanse. The continued antipathy in Pakistan toward the U.S., coupled with the increasing activity of militant groups there—most of whom are already closely affiliated with Core al Qaeda—has, for instance, largely undermined the progress achieved in recent years against terrorism in South Asia. Further, the effects of the "Arab Spring" in Yemen, for instance, have clearly benefitted AQAP at the expense of the chronically weak central government in that country. AQAP in fact has been able to expand its reach considerably, seizing and controlling more territory, gaining new adherents and supporters, and continuing to innovate tactically as it

labors to extend its attack capabilities beyond the Arabian Peninsula. Although al Shabaab has been weakened in Somalia as a result of its expulsion from the capital, Mogadishu, and the deaths of two key Core al Qaeda commanders who had both been embedded in the group and had enhanced appreciably its terrorist capabilities, al Shabaab nonetheless still maintains a stranglehold over the southern part of the country, where a terrible drought and famine threaten the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Al Shabaab has also expanded its ambit of operations beyond Somalia to Kenya where, over the past two years, a variety of civilian as well as governmental targets—including churches and foreign tourists—have been attacked in operations frequently employing suicide bombers.

Meanwhile, the instability and disorders generated by the "Arab Spring" have created new opportunities for al Qaeda and its allies in the region to regroup and reorganize. Indeed, the number of failed or failing states or ungoverned spaces now variously found in the Sahel, in the Sinai, in parts of Syria and elsewhere has in fact increased in the aftermath of the changes witnessed across North Africa and the Middle East since 2011. In no place is this clearer or more consequential than in Syria. It is there, that al Qaeda's future—its power and perhaps even its longevity—turns.

Given these developments, several conclusions based on the preceding discussion may be posited that will likely affect Core al Qaeda's future trajectory:

- *First, al Qaeda is still strongest at the geographical periphery of the dramatic events of the past two years in North Africa and the Middle East.* Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen, as noted above, still remain key al Qaeda operational environments and sanctuaries and, in Yemen's case, rather than depriving al Qaeda of political space, the "Arab Spring" has created new opportunities in that country for AQAP's expansion and consolidation of its recent gains. Core al Qaeda demonstrably benefits from, and feeds off, these developments—thus promoting its longevity, at least for the foreseeable future.

- *Second, the conflict in Syria—and the attendant opportunities it presents to al Qaeda at a critical time in its history—has potentially breathed new life into the al Qaeda brand and movement, exactly as Iraq did after 2003.* Because of its effective intervention in Syria, al Qaeda's prospects are today brighter than arguably at any other time in the past decade.

- *Third, al Qaeda's core demographic has always been disenfranchised, disillusioned and marginalized youth.* There is no evidence that the potential pool of young "hot heads" to which al Qaeda's message has always been directed will necessarily dissipate or constrict in light of the "Arab Spring." Moreover, it may likely grow in the future as impatience over the slow pace of democratisation and economic reform takes hold and many who took to the streets find themselves excluded from or deprived of the political and economic benefits that the upheavals in their countries promised. The recent events in Egypt, of course, being the most glaring and parlous case in point. The losers and disenchanted of the "Arab Spring" may thus provide a new reservoir of recruits for al Qaeda in the near future—especially in those countries across North Africa and the Middle East with proportionally high populations below the age of 20.

- *Fourth, the continued fragmentation of the jihadi movement as a result of bin Laden's killing and Core al Qaeda's weakening may paradoxically present new and daunting challenges to both regional and Western intelligence and security services.* The continual emergence of new, smaller, more dispersed terrorist entities with a more fluid membership that easily gravitates between and among groups that have little or no established modus operandi will raise difficulties in terms of identifying, tracking, anticipating and predicting threats. The authorities in Northern Ireland, for instance, encountered precisely this problem in the aftermath of the 1998 "Good Friday" accords, when the threat from a single, monolithic entity, the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), devolved into the atomized threats presented by the smaller, less structured, more amorphous dissident Republican groups. A similar process has been noted by authorities in Indonesia following the collapse of Jemaah Islamiya, a close al Qaeda ally, and its splintering into smaller, more numerous lashkars or militias that have proven difficult to identify and track.

- *Fifth, the progeny of seminal jihadi leaders either killed or imprisoned over the past decade as a result of the war on terrorism may emerge as heirs to the movement bequeathed to them by their elders.* For instance, until his death in 2009, Saad bin Laden, Osama's eldest son, was being groomed to succeed his father. The prospect of additional sons, nephews, cousins and more distant relations of deceased or imprisoned jihadi leaders forming a new generation of fighters and filling leadership roles in Core al Qaeda is unnerving: not least because successive generations of the same terrorist organisations have shown themselves to be more lethally violent than their predecessors.

- *Sixth, there is the problem of the "old made new": former leaders or senior level fighters who emerge from prison or exile to assume key positions of command of new or existing terrorist organisations, including Core al Qaeda, and thus revitalize and reinvigorate flagging or dormant terrorist groups.* This same development of course led to the formation of the AQAP in early 2009. Egyptian President Morsi's pardon of sixteen leading jihadi prisoners from the al Gama'a Islamiyya and al Jihad's groups and the amnesties granted to hundreds of others have the potential to infuse existing local and regional organizations with greater militancy and violence. In addition, at least a dozen or more key Core al Qaeda personnel are still sheltering in Iran, including Saif al-Adl. If allowed their freedom, they could easily strengthen the existing central leadership.

- *Finally, the continued absence of a successful, major al Qaeda attack in North America since 2001 may induce a period of quiet and calm that lulls us into a state of false complacency, lowering our guard and, in turn, provoking al Qaeda or one of its allies to chance a dramatically spectacular attack in the U.S.*

None of the above is pre-ordained, much less certain. At least three scenarios are possible. In the first, the Core al Qaeda organization continues to degenerate and eventually becomes a post-modern, desperate movement with a set of loose ideas and ideologies. This would be accompanied by the continued ascendance of affiliates and associated groups within a broad ideological and strategic framework bequeathed by the core organization.

A second scenario would see Core al Qaeda's continued weakening which produces an even more fragmented jihadi movement. These smaller,

less capable entities would continue to pose a terrorist threat, but a far weaker, more sporadic and perhaps less consequential one. However, as previously noted, they would likely be more difficult to track, identify, and counter.

A third scenario is dependent upon whether Syria re-vitalizes the al Qaeda Core and attendant movement. The big question is whether al Qaeda can avoid making the same mistakes that previously undermined its struggle in Iraq, for instance, and how successful Core al Qaeda continues to be at balancing relations with its local and regional affiliated and associated groups.

Regardless of which scenario materializes, the continuing challenge that the U.S. faces is that al Qaeda's core ideology remains attractive to a hard core of radicals and capable of drawing new adherents into ranks. Even in death, Anwar al-Awlaqi has proven to be an effective recruiting sergeant.

Indeed, the latest recruits to this struggle are the Tsarnaev brothers—products of centuries-long conflict between Russia and Chechnya. The violence inflicted on Muslims in general and Muslim women and children around the world have been cited by many other homegrown terrorists as a salient motivating factor in their politicization and radicalization. This may also explain why the American invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan were cited by Dzhogar Tsarev as the reasons behind his and his older brother's bombing of the Boston Marathon.

There is no one path to radicalization. The reasons why someone picks up a gun or blows themselves up are ineluctably personal, born variously of grievance and frustration; religious piety or the desire for systemic socio-economic change; irredentist conviction or commitment to revolution. And yet, though there is no universal terrorist personality, nor has a single, broadly applicable profile ever been produced, there are things we do know. Terrorists are generally motivated by a profound sense of—albeit, misguided—altruism; deep feelings of self-defense; and, if they are religiously observant or devout, an abiding, even unswerving, commitment to their faith and the conviction that their violence is not only theologically justified, but divinely commanded.

Theological arguments in this context are invoked both by the organizations responsible for the attacks and by the communities from which the terrorists are recruited. In the case of Muslims, although the Quran forbids both suicide and the infliction of wanton violence, pronouncements have been made by radical Muslim clerics, and in some instances have been promulgated as fatwas (Islamic religious edicts), affirming the legitimacy of violence in defense of defenseless peoples and to resist the invasion of Muslim lands. Among the most prominent was the declaration by the Ayatollah Khomeini who once declared (in the context of the Shi'a interpretation of Islam) that he knew of no command "more binding to the Muslim than the command to sacrifice life and property to defend and bolster Islam." Radical Islamist terrorist movements have thus created a recruitment and support mechanism of compelling theological incentives that sustain their violent campaigns and seeks vengeance—despite America's withdrawal from Iraq and impending departure from Afghanistan.

Individuals will always be attracted to violence in different ways. Just look at the people who have gravitated towards terrorism in the

U.S. in recent years. We have seen terrorists of South Asian and North as well as East African descent as well as those hailing both from the Middle East and Caribbean. We have seen life-long devout Muslims as well as recent converts—including one Philadelphia suburban housewife who touted her petite stature and blonde hair and blue eyes as being so atypical of the stereotypical terrorist so as to defy any efforts at profiling. Radicalized over the Internet, she sought to use her self-described ability to avoid detection to assassinate a Swedish artist who drew an offensive cartoon of the Prophet Muhammad.

These radicalized persons come from every walk of life, from marginalized people working in menial jobs, some with long criminal records or histories of juvenile delinquency, to persons from solidly middle and upper-middle class backgrounds with university and perhaps even graduate degrees and prior passions for cars, sports, rock music and other completely secular and material interests.

Relationships formed at work, at school, on sports teams, and other recreational and religious activities as well as over the Internet can prey upon the already susceptible. In some instances, first generation sons and daughters of immigrants embrace an interpretation of their religion and heritage that is more political, more extreme and more austere—and thereby demands greater personal sacrifices—than that practiced by their parents.

Indeed, the common element in the radicalization process reflects these individuals' deep commitment to their faith—often recently re-discovered; their admiration of terrorist movements or leading terrorist figures who they see as having struck a cathartic blow for their creed's enemies wherever they are and whomever they might be; hatred of their adopted homes, especially if in the U.S. and the West; and, a profoundly shared sense of alienation from their host countries.

At the start of the war on terrorism a dozen years ago the enemy was clear and plainly in sight. It was a large terrorist organization, situated mostly in one geographic location, and it was led by an identifiable leader. Today, when the borders between domestic and international terrorism have blurred, when our adversaries are not only identifiable organizations but enigmatic individuals, a complete re-thinking of our counterterrorism policies and architecture is needed. We built an effective defense against the previous threat. Our challenge today is to develop new defenses against this new more amorphous, diffuse and individualized threat while at the same time to continue to destroy and upend al Qaeda, its affiliates and associates, and most especially the ideology that fuels and sustains it.

1. Name: Bruce Hoffman
2. Title: Professor
3. Organization you are representing: center for security studies, Georgetown university
6. Date of hearing:

5. Any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) which you, personally, have received since October 1, 2010, from Federal Agencies under the purview of the hearing, the source and the amount of each grant or contract: (attach additional pages as necessary).

None.

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None.

Signature of Witness:



Your signature WILL NOT be posted to the Committee website.