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VIOLENT ISLAMIST EXTREMISM—2009

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UNITED STATES SENATE

OF THE

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

MARCH 11, 2009
VIOLENT ISLAMIST EXTREMISM: AL-SHABAAB RECRUITMENT IN AMERICA

SEPTEMBER 30, 2009
EIGHT YEARS AFTER 9/11: CONFRONTING THE TERRORIST THREAT TO THE HOMELAND

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VIOLENT ISLAMIST EXTREMISM: AL-SHABAAB RECRUITMENT IN AMERICA

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2009

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:35 a.m., in room SD–342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Joseph I. Lieberman, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Lieberman, Burris, Bennet, Collins, and Voinovich.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN LIEBERMAN

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Good morning, and welcome to this morning's hearing, which we have called "Violent Islamist Extremism: Al-Shabaab Recruitment in America."

This hearing falls, coincidentally, on an important date. This is the fifth anniversary of the Madrid, Spain, train bombings that killed 191 people and wounded another 1,800. The Madrid train bombings were a turning point in Islamist terrorism, turning from a centrally controlled movement to one that had also begun to act through autonomous cells, in some cases with direct links to al-Qaeda or other international terrorist groups, but in some others cases with no or very slight contact. This expanded the reach of violent Islamist ideology and made terrorism that much harder to detect and prevent.

We have, for instance, seen the al-Qaeda franchise itself around the world, in the now effectively defeated al-Qaeda in Iraq—although there is some lingering elements still in a few of the cities—in al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb operating in North Africa, and in al-Shabaab fighting and training terrorists in Somalia, which is in part the subject of the hearing today. But the turn toward more diffuse international terrorism is the reason why the radicalization and recruitment of individuals in the United States by Islamist terrorist organizations has been a major focus of this Homeland Security Committee's work over the past 2½ years.

The Committee has held seven hearings to date, the most recent only last July that focused on Islamist ideology as the essential ingredient to Islamist terrorism. Last May, the Committee released a report titled "Violent Islamist Extremism: The Internet and the Homegrown Terrorist Threat" that described the influence of online content produced by al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab, and other Islamist ter-

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rorist groups on individuals like those who have now gone missing from the Somali-American community in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Today, we are going to focus on what appears to be the most significant case of homegrown American terrorism recruiting based on violent Islamist ideology. The facts, as we know them, tell us that over the last 2 years, individuals from the Somali-American community in the United States, including American citizens, have left for Somalia to support and in some cases fight on behalf of al-Shabaab, which, incidentally, was designated as a foreign terrorist organization by our government in February 2008.

There are ideological, tactical, financial, and also personnel links between al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda. Al-Shabaab was credited with sheltering some of those responsible for the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. Just last month, al-Qaeda released a video titled "From Kabul to Mogadishu" in which al-Qaeda's second in command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, praises al-Shabaab and calls on Muslims throughout the world to join their fight in Somalia.

Al-Shabaab, meanwhile, continues to release recruiting videos targeting Westerners, and those videos are surely being watched by some potential followers here in the United States.

In the most graphic and deadly example of a direct connection between the Somali-American community and international terrorism, Shirwa Ahmed, a naturalized U.S. citizen living in the Minneapolis area, returned to Somalia within the last 2 years and killed himself and many others in a suicide bombing last October. According to Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Robert Mueller, Shirwa Ahmed, who was radicalized in Minnesota, is probably the first U.S. citizen to carry out a terrorist suicide bombing.

One of the witnesses on our second panel, Abdi Mukhtar, who is the youth program manager at the Brian Coyle Center in Minneapolis, which is a gathering place for young Somalis, was friends and attended Roosevelt High School in Minneapolis with Shirwa Ahmed. In his testimony, which I find very compelling and important, Abdi Mukhtar will explain how he and Shirwa Ahmed had similar internal identity conflicts about being Somali and American, but in the end resolved those conflicts in very different ways. Abdi Mukhtar chose America, and Shirwa Ahmed chose Islamist terrorism.

This morning, we want to understand why, to the best of our ability, each made this choice and what we together can do to make sure that others, including succeeding generations of Somali-Americans and, more generally, Muslim-Americans make the right choice.

I do want to say here that there is no evidence of radicalization of the Somali-American community generally. In fact, in my own vision of this, the Somali-American community are victims of a small group of extremists who are essentially terrorizing their own community, who are recruiting and radicalizing young people within that community. And, of course, our hope here this morning is to figure out how we can work together with the Somali-American community, with the Muslim-American community, and with law enforcement, as represented on our first panel, to protect young Somali-Americans and perhaps other Muslim-Americans—though we

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have noted in our earlier hearings that the Muslim-American community, because it is more integrated seems to have been much less vulnerable than Muslim communities in Europe to recruitment and radicalization. Nonetheless, the hearing today and other evidence that this Committee has compiled shows that the problem, though it may be less severe here in America, is here. And that I think is what is jarring about the story that we are going to hear described today.

There obviously are people here in the United States recruiting young Somali-Americans to go over to Somalia to be trained to fight and, of course, as we will hear from our witnesses and this Committee will ask, perhaps—worrisome particularly to us—being trained to return to the United States to carry out terrorist attacks here.

The primary questions for this hearing, as I see them, are: Who influenced these young men, apparently at least 20 of them, maybe more, to return to Somalia and join al-Shabaab? Who financed their trips? What, if any, role did local mosque leadership play in recruiting the young men to join al-Shabaab? What role did the Internet play, both in the form of online content and e-mail communications from those who have already returned to Somalia, in recruiting and radicalizing the young men? What influence does Islamist ideology in Minneapolis play in creating a fertile ground for al-Shabaab recruiters? Will those who have disappeared use their American passports to return and then plan and execute terrorist attacks here in our homeland? And why does al-Shabaab want American and other recruits from the West, when there are presumably plenty of young men willing to fight in Somalia?

Those are important questions. They go directly to the mandate that this Committee has had to protect the homeland security of the American people. I thank all the witnesses who have come before us, particularly those who have come from the Somali-American community in Minneapolis. It takes some courage to do so. I think it is both love of their own ethnic community and dedication to America that brings them here, and for all of that, we are grateful and look forward to hearing them.

Senator Collins.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR COLLINS

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The most effective border security system cannot protect our Nation from "homegrown terrorists," individuals already living in our country who become radicalized and committed to a violent ideology. Three years ago, as the Chairman has mentioned, this Committee launched an investigation into homegrown terrorism and the process by which individuals within our country could become radicalized and commit terrorist attacks.

Our investigation has examined radicalization among prison populations, the efforts by Federal, State, and local law enforcement to counter the homegrown threat, as well as the role of the Internet in the radicalization process. This past October, however, the threat of homegrown terrorism took another disturbing turn when a young man from Minnesota carried out a suicide bombing in Somalia. As the Chairman has noted, FBI Director Mueller believes

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that this suicide bombing marked the first time that a U.S. citizen had carried out a terrorist suicide bombing. Although the bombing took place in Somalia, Director Mueller stated that it appears that the individual had been radicalized in his hometown of Minneapolis. Even more disturbing, this young man apparently was not the only American citizen to have traveled to Somalia to join the terrorist group known as al-Shabaab.

The danger brought to light by these revelations is clear. Radicalized individuals, trained in terrorist tactics and in possession of American passports, can clearly pose a threat to the security of our country.

Our discussion today is not just a consideration of the counterterrorism tactics and intelligence gathering needed to counter this growing threat, but also should serve to remind us that there is a personal side to this story. These young men left behind families who care deeply for them and who want to see them come home unharmed. They left behind a community which lived, worked, and worshipped with them and which now in some ways lives under a cloud of suspicion, worrying that perhaps tomorrow their own children might not come home.

Two of our witnesses have traveled from Minneapolis to talk about this side of the story with us today. Like so many Somali immigrants, these are patriotic American citizens who have bravely come forward to tell their story and to help us find the answers to the questions that trouble all of us, the questions that the Chairman has so eloquently outlined. Let me add a few more questions.

We need to better understand what drew these young men to adopt a violent extremist ideology with such fervor that they traveled thousands of miles to join a terrorist group. As the Chairman indicated, I am particularly interested in the question of why terrorist groups thousands of miles from our shores would recruit Americans when there are plenty of willing recruits in their own country.

Is there an individual or a network operating within the United States facilitating recruitment or providing financial support for al-Shabaab?

How can we better work with the Somali-American community—and with any other community where a violent extremist ideology might take root—to ensure that other young Americans do not stray down the same path?

These are among the important questions that we will explore as our Committee continues to examine the threat of homegrown terrorism.

Again, I want to thank the Chairman for his leadership in this area and our witnesses for appearing today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks very much, Senator Collins.

In fact, this Committee's investigation to answer the question of is there recruitment of Islamist terrorists and radicalization occurring in the United States began under Senator Collins' chairmanship and leadership, and it has been my pleasure to continue this important work in partnership with her.

Let's go right to the first panel. We have Philip Mudd, Associate Executive Assistant Director, National Security Branch, Federal

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Bureau of Investigation with us. Mr. Mudd, thanks for being here again, and we welcome your testimony now. Or are you going to yield to Mr. Liepman? Based on age or——

Mr. MUDD. Looks. [Laughter.]

Chairman LIEBERMAN [continuing]. Lack of hair? OK. On the top of his head, I meant. All right. Let me just introduce you. You can rebut if you would like, Mr. Liepman.

Andrew Liepman is the Deputy Director of Intelligence of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). For those who do not know, the NCTC was created as part of the post-September 11, 2001, reforms recommended by the 9/11 Commission. It is the central place, along with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, but this is really the place where all of America's intelligence and intelligence-related agencies are working together 24/7 to share information, to raise information, and to make sure that the dots are connected in a way that they were not before September 11, 2001, which meant we were not able to prevent that tragic event.

So, with that, Mr. Liepman, thank you.

TESTIMONY OF ANDREW M. LIEPMAN,[1] DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE, NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER, OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. LIEPMAN. Thank you, Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins. We welcome the opportunity to appear before you today to share our perspectives on the radicalization of Somali youth in America. And I do appreciate the opportunity to appear beside my longtime colleague Mr. Mudd from the Bureau. I will focus on what factors contribute to the radicalization and some of the particularly vulnerabilities of the Somali-American community. I will defer to Mr. Mudd to talk about the FBI activities. Let me start with a bit of context, a very brief history of events in Somalia.

The turmoil and instability in Somalia dates back to the collapse of the government there in 1991, which resulted in a descent into factional fighting and anarchy. In 2006, following multiple failed attempts to bring stability, a loose coalition of clerics, local leaders, and militias known as the Council of Islamic Courts took power in much of Somalia. The Somali Transitional Federal Government joined with Ethiopian forces and routed the Islamic Court militias in a 2-week war. It is an important milestone. It also represents an important rallying point for Somalis, both in Somalia and in the diaspora.

Since the end of 2006, al-Shabaab—the militant wing of the council—has led a collection of clan militias in a violent insurgency, using guerrilla warfare and terrorist tactics against the transitional government and the Ethiopian presence in the region.

Just to give you some sense of the Somali-American diaspora, they began arriving in the United States in significant numbers in 1992 following the U.S. intervention in Somalia's humanitarian crisis. The Somali-American population is distributed in clusters throughout the United States, with the heaviest concentrations in Minneapolis, Columbus, Seattle, and San Diego. There are a vari-

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Liepman appears in the Appendix on page 93.

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ety of estimates of the size of the Somali-American population. It is a fairly difficult number to give you with some precision. I think generally we accept the range from 70,000 to as many as 200,000.

Despite significant efforts to facilitate their settlement into American communities, many Somali immigrants face isolation. The adjustment to American society has reinforced their greater insularity compared to other, more integrated recent immigrant communities and has aggravated the challenges of assimilation for their children.

One of the main reasons that Mr. Mudd and I are here today, obviously, is the concern we have over the travel by some tens of Somali-American young men back to Somalia, some of whom have trained and fought with al-Shabaab. The involvement of this foreign terrorist organization, al-Shabaab, means we cannot simply categorize this as homegrown violence. We are concerned that if a few Somali-American youth can be motivated to engage in such activities overseas, fellow travelers could return to the United States and engage in terrorist activities here.

Let me stress we do not have a body of reporting that indicates U.S. persons who have traveled to Somalia are planning to execute attacks in the United States. We do not have that credible reporting. But we do worry that there is a potential that these individuals could be indoctrinated by al-Qaeda while they are in Somalia and then return to the United States with the intention to conduct attacks. They would, in fact, provide al-Qaeda with trained extremists inside the United States.

One of the main questions that we try and answer is: What causes the radicalization of a small but significant number of Somali-American youth? The answer is complex. It is the result of a number of factors that come together when a dynamic, influential, and extremist leader gains access to a despondent and disenfranchised group of young men. Sophisticated extremist recruiters target these individuals who lack structure and definition in their lives. The recruiters subject them to religiously inspired indoctrination to move them toward violent extremism. They target vulnerable young men—many of them refugees who came here as small children or who are the children of immigrants—torn between their parents' traditional ethnic, tribal, and clan identities and the new cultures and traditions offered by American society.

Among Somali-Americans, the refugee experience of fleeing a war-torn country, combined with isolation, perceived discrimination, marginalization, and frustrated expectations, as well as local criminal, familial, and clan dynamics, make some members of this community more susceptible to this sort of extremist influence.

And let me stress, just as you said, Mr. Chairman, we are not witnessing a community-wide radicalization among Somali-Americans. When I speak of the Somali-American community, I do not mean to generalize; rather, I am describing a problem limited to a small fraction of the community, most of which came to America to get away from violence, not to commit it. The overwhelming majority of Somali-Americans are or want to be contributing members of American society, trying to raise their families here and desperately wishing for stability in their ancestral homeland.

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But as I said, the Somali community is in some respects more susceptible to the influence of extremist elements. A number of factors that have mitigated radicalization among other ethnic religious American communities are less evident in the Somali community here. These include some level of faith in the American political system, access to resources to defense civil rights and civil liberties, and interaction with non-Muslims, and a greater focus on domestic rather than international events.

You asked about the role that the Internet plays in radicalizing Somali youth. It is not an easy metric for us to measure. It is clear, though that access to the Internet and to such material on the Internet alone is rarely enough to cause an individual to become radical himself. It is also clear, though, that the Somali-American youth who have traveled abroad to join in fighting for al-Shabaab were exposed to al-Shabaab's extremist ideology here in the United States, both in terms of face-to-face contact with extremist elements and on the Internet. And they tended to reinforce each other. The easy availability of extremist media on the Internet provides a range of themes that extremist recruiters can use to appeal to disenfranchise young men. As you mentioned, al-Qaeda senior leadership in recent months have weighed in with their own support for al-Shabaab, praising it and depicting Somalia as a local manifestation of the broader conflict between the West and Islam.

I should note that this al-Qaeda stamp of approval does not guarantee either greater success or enhanced impact. In fact, it could backfire. Many potential ethnic Somali recruits would prefer to join a group that is focused explicitly on Somali issues rather than signing up for the global jihad and joining an al-Qaeda affiliate.

Let me end with a couple of comments on NCTC's role in this process and address your reference to this being a turning point, the fifth year of the anniversary of the Madrid attack.

Indeed, it is a turning point in many respects. I think in 2004, if we remember back, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence did not yet exist. NCTC was in its infancy. It was then called the Terrorist Threat Integration Center. And I would like to think that the community has come a long way since then. In fact, Somalia represents a great example of the type of challenge that I think NCTC can assist in. It is the intersection between a foreign problem that parts of our community study in Somalia and a homegrown problem that our domestic organizations are focused on. And we, in NCTC, are trying to bridge those two communities and, I would like to think, helping in that effort.

With that, what I would like to do is turn the floor over to Mr. Mudd for some comments on what the FBI is doing.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Mr. Liepman. That was a good beginning.

Now to Phil Mudd of the FBI.

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TESTIMONY OF J. PHILIP MUDD,[1] ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SECURITY BRANCH, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr. MUDD. Thank you for having me here. I think in the interest of full disclosure, it is a great pleasure to be sitting at the table with Mr. Liepman. He and I have known each other for almost a quarter century, so having him refer to me as "Mr. Mudd" is going to be the source of great amusement later today, and I must appreciate that.

I do not really have an oral statement. Senator Collins talked about people telling stories. I wanted to tell a story of how this looks to someone who in the past has looked at terrorism overseas and who for the past 3½ years has been posted at the Bureau, to tell you the story of a complicated picture and, if I succeed, make it coherent in 9 minutes and 23 seconds, so I will give it a try.

Think of this as an example of globalization. If you wake up in the morning and want to know what is happening in the stock market, you look at the DAX in Germany, you look at what is happening in the European and Asian exchanges. This is an example of globalization on a different front.

I will talk about a couple of intersecting trends: The first Mr. Liepman talked about, in 1991, the fall of the Siad Barre government; the rise of warlordism in the 1990s; and the rise of the Islamic Courts in the 1990s and into this century. So the first trend, if you will, is "ungoverned space," as people refer to it, a place where somebody like al-Shabaab can develop training camps, a place that looks something like the tribal areas of Pakistan, for example, or the Sahel—Mali, Chad, and southern Algeria. So that is your first piece; places around the world that lack governance happen to correspond with places where you have problems. Yemen would be another example.

The second trend I would point to is, if you look at Bosnia or Kashmir or Afghanistan from the 1980s after the Soviet invasion, you have magnets of activity for Islamic extremists. Somalia is a bit different. For example, Somali-Americans and Somalis in general did not flock to jihads elsewhere but, nonetheless, al-Shabaab has linkages to this global Islamist movement. Its leadership has linkages to al-Qaeda leadership. So I think the second trend I would point to, again, in the context of globalization, this is another example. After examples in places like Bosnia or Chechnya, of Islamist activity serving as a magnet for international jihadists, I would point out that not only are Americans showing up; we have Western Europeans, Brits—we had a Brit blow himself up recently in Somalia. We have Nigerians, Chadians, and Malians.

And the third and perhaps the most significant—and I want to emphasize this because I think some will say, well, this is just another example of global jihad—is the nationalist aspect of this. We saw a change in the American community in 2006 when the Ethiopians invaded, and part of the draw for people in this country is to go fight for their country against a foreign invader. So global issues, issues in the Horn of Africa having an immediate impact,

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Mudd appears in the Appendix on page 100.

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a ripple effect on communities in Columbus, Ohio; in Cincinnati; in Seattle; in San Diego; and in Minnesota—it is a real example of what globalization means in the new information world. And I use the phrase "information world" advisedly. You have direct connectivity between Somalia and the United States. It does not have to be by the Internet. It can be Skype or e-mail, friends talking to each other. And this is a very tight community where that kind of information is getting around independent of any Internet websites.

Let me overlay some more micro issues onto that sort of macro witch's brew of these trends of ungoverned space and an Islamist magnet nationalism. You have a community that comes here, in contrast to some other immigrant stories—immigrant stories, for example, of Indian communities or Pakistani communities, communities with doctors and engineers. These are folks who come here because they are escaping great trauma in their home country. They are working here in meatpacking plants, poultry processing plants, there is often not a great command in the first generation of the English language among their parents.

If you look at many of the people we are talking about, they are coming from single-family homes, in particular, homes that are led by sisters or grandmothers or mothers, where there is not a father figure.

There are echoes of what we see overseas. Again, I want to emphasize that we are not alone in looking at this problem. I want to sign up to what Mr. Liepman said. This is not a community problem. In a sense, we do not have radicalized communities. We do have radicalized clusters of people, typically youths between, let us say, 17 and above, although we have seen efforts to radicalize kids as young as 12, 13, or 14 years old in this country.

Like what you would see in Europe, it is not necessarily an al-Shabaab person in Somalia radicalizing a youth in the United States. These are issues within the community where people from these kinds of families might see an older brother or father figure who starts to spot-assess and recruit—as we say in the spy business—someone who might be vulnerable and eventually sets them on a path to take a plane ticket to Somalia or Ethiopia or someplace else that is an avenue to get into Somalia.

This is important because this is the kind of thing you might see in Western Europe or Britain. And, in fact, in talking to my friends in even the Arabian Peninsula, we may think that we are much different from a place like Saudi Arabia, but you see that kind of cluster recruitment by friends, older brothers, or community figures elsewhere around the world.

I think there is a popular conception from people in this country reading books or watching movies that there are terrorist cells with an established leader and somebody to provide finance and communication. In fact, whether it is this problem of al-Shabaab activity or extremism in the United States or other Sunni extremism in the United States, more often you have clusters of people who are talking to each other. They do not have assigned roles. They do not know what they are going to do. They may never do anything, but they are talking about committing acts of violence. They may radicalize off each other, as kids do in environments across the

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United States. In schoolyards, when I was growing up, I went to throw rocks at cars because the kid next to me said let's go do it.

So you have clusters of youths who are talking to each other. There may be a center in the community of radicalization. There is not radicalization and then recruitment, typically. It is recruitment into this circle, and then kids are radicalized and spotted and maybe seen as someone who will go overseas.

The last thing I would tell you to put this in context is we are talking about a particular aspect of this issue, which is the Somali diaspora. We are here to work with communities. We are here to work with our State and local partners. We get terrific support on our Joint Terrorism Task Forces from the Minneapolis police, the police in Columbus, from county officials in Minneapolis, for example, who are working within the communities. But we are not talking about radicalization among an entire community.

We need help from the communities. We need them to talk to us. It is of concern to us that people like this are coming from areas where Federal authorities are suspicious people. We have to break that down. We are not here to look at a mosque. A mosque is a building, a church is a building, a synagogue is a building, and a temple is a building. We are here to look at people who might be thinking about or have committed acts of violence or are supporting those who do so. This is about individuals who are small segments of a community and who do not represent the beauty that this country brings to immigrants.

I come from an Italian-Irish-Dutch-British family, and I see these folks in the same context that my family might have been in this country 100 years ago.

And, last, context within the FBI. This is a priority for the FBI. It is one of a handful or more of priorities. We also have issues in this country about violent crime, expanding gang activity in this country—Mara Salvatrucha, for example, and other Latin American gangs. We have a major public corruption problem in this country. We have massive mortgage fraud we are looking at in this country. And we have other aspects of extremism—extremism that might be linked to one of our key concerns, that is, continued al-Qaeda core activity in Pakistan and Afghanistan. We have fundraising for Palestinian groups. So I want to emphasize that we are not looking at a community. We are looking at individuals who are sending kids in the wrong direction. We want to work with families who are as concerned or more concerned than we are. And I want to put this in the context of a lot of priorities we have. This is not one of a couple. This is one of many. And we will continue to focus on it, but in the context of other priorities we have.

Thanks again for having me here today, and I look forward to talking to you with my friend, Mr. Liepman.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Mr. Mudd.

Let me begin the round of questioning. We will do 7-minute rounds and keep going as long as Senators want to ask questions.

I heard you say this is a priority. It is one of several priorities, obviously. That is what we understand, the priority being not just the Somali-American community, but the prospect of recruitment and radicalization of Islamist terrorists from America. Am I correct in that?

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Mr. MUDD. That is right. I think if you look at one of the contrasts with the European experience, if you look at a country like Britain, for example—and people have drawn parallels—I think there are significant differences that make extremism a challenge in this country.

If you look at Britain, you have pockets of people on the extremist side, first, second, and sometimes third-generation folks, very dense, interconnected in places like Birmingham or Manchester.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. MUDD. In this country, we see more dispersed communities, more dispersed activity. Activity in Los Angeles might not have linkages or typically will not have linkages to what we see in New York, Arizona, Florida, or Georgia.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Let me pursue this, and I hear you. Am I correct in assuming that the FBI is on the ground, so to speak, in the Somali-American community, both in terms of outreach to the community, at which the Bureau has really done very well generally, but also investigating recruitment and radicalization?

Mr. MUDD. That is correct. I would point to outreach, first. The second is we do have partnerships with the local police in Minneapolis and Columbus. And third is we have a substantial amount of investigative resources looking not only at recruitment but also the issue of fundraising in this country.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. I take it there is no doubt that there have been some Somali-Americans recruited, radicalized here who have gone to Somalia. Correct?

Mr. MUDD. That is correct.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. And the number is a bit vague. I have heard some people say as many as 20, some people say maybe a lot more because families are hesitant to report people gone to Somalia for fear that they will not be able to come back. What is your best estimate of how significant this problem is?

Mr. MUDD. I would talk in terms of tens of people, which sounds small, but it is significant because every terrorist is somebody who can potentially throw a grenade into a shopping mall.

I would point out the reason this is fuzzy, as Mr. Liepman said, there are as many as a few hundred thousands just in this community of Somalis in the United States. There are thousands of people, thousands going to the Horn of Africa every month. You can go to Kenya to look at game parks, and it is hard for me to tell you somebody is going to a game park or going to al-Shabaab.

So I am sure that there are people out there we are missing. It is a country with 300 million people, with a lot of travel to this area. But I would put it in the range of tens of people.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Tens, OK. So accepting that as a baseline for purposes of discussion, assuming that tens of Somali-Americans have gone to train and presumably fight with al-Shabaab in Somalia, I assume from what you both said that, therefore, we can assume that there are recruiters or leaders in the Somali-American community who are responsible, at least in part, for that movement of people. Is that right?

Mr. MUDD. I think that is fair.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. OK. So now let me go to the question both Senator Collins and I asked, which is: Why would an Islamist ter-

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rorist organization like al-Shabaab want to recruit and radicalize Somalis in America when presumably they can and there are ample numbers to recruit and train for terrorism in Somalia?

Mr. LIEPMAN. I am not sure that it is to fill their ranks.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Really.

Mr. LIEPMAN. I do not think they are looking at America as a broad recruiting ground to collect hundreds or thousands of fighters that are the vanguard of their force.

I think they are looking—first of all, it is a two-way street. I think they are accepting non-Somali fighters from all over Africa, from the United States, and from Europe. In a way, I think it adds to their credibility. It raises their profile. It is a public relations bonanza for them to have a multinational force fighting the Ethiopians, for example. It makes it appear that it is not just Somalia versus Ethiopia, but a broader conflict, particularly on the continent of Africa.

And I do think that they are looking for small numbers, and it is not just the recruiters coming to America to try and bring people. They are reacting to a demand among the small fraction of the Somali community who have said they are interested in going. So there is a meeting of the minds there.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. From what we know about the way these groups operate, do you assume—I understand the difficulty of making a judgment about the motivation. Your answer is helpful to us. But seeing the recruitment that we see, do you assume that the local recruiting is being done at the request of al-Shabaab leadership in Somalia? Or is it self-generated here?

Mr. MUDD. I would think of it—I think Mr. Liepman is right—as more push than pull at this point. A couple quick points. This is a global jihad.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. MUDD. There are people from Chad, Mali, and Nigeria, and we should look at that in that context. But it is not like people in East Africa are saying, "I wish I had another five Americans."

The second point that is important, the first wave of people we saw from 2006 to 2007 roughly, were not Somali-Americans. The first wave of people we saw were Americans, people like Chris Paul—not in this circumstance, but somebody who was prosecuted earlier for fighting overseas.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Going to Somalia?

Mr. MUDD. That is correct.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. For training?

Mr. MUDD. That is correct, underscoring the point that this is a jihad issue that is not simply restricted to American Somalis.

Third and final point, it is important, when we try to put this in the context of terrorism, to understand what these kids are doing out there: Ambushes, convoys, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. MUDD. This is a paramilitary conflict and they are not necessarily getting training on how to develop a covert cell in Minneapolis.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. So the final question from me in this round, obviously some of these Somali-Americans are traveling

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with American passports or papers that would enable them more easily to get back into the United States. I understand, Mr. Liepman, you said we have no evidence now that any of this recruitment for training in Somalia is being done with the aim of sending them back here to carry out terrorist acts. But it would be easier for them to get back in, and my question is—and this really goes to the NCTC with all the cooperation among agencies you have: Are we putting up any special filters to watch out for the return of some of these Somali-Americans to America for fear of what they might be inclined to do here?

Mr. LIEPMAN. I would go back to something that Mr. Mudd said.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Yes.

Mr. LIEPMAN. I think the most important tool for us is the outreach to the Somali-American community to know who is going to the Horn of Africa, and for what purposes.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. LIEPMAN. And you are absolutely right. They are traveling under American passports, which enables them to travel rather freely.

In terms of looking at travelers who appear to have gone to Somalia, for example, I think that there is an effort to make sure that that is being scrutinized fairly closely, to understand what it is they did there. And just to reinforce a point I made earlier, the intentions of Somali kids who are going to Somalia may be very different than what happens once they get there and they are trained with al-Shabaab. And that is, I think, what we worry about.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. OK. My time is up. Senator Collins.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Let me pick up where the Chairman left off. Mr. Liepman, we know that in 2007 poor information sharing by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with the Department of Homeland Security prevented DHS from identifying an individual with drug-resistant TB who was traveling back and forth on international flights. And 2 weeks ago, ABC News reported that some of the individuals who had fought in Somalia had returned to the United States.

Now, regardless of the validity of that particular report, it raises the question of whether information sharing is sufficient within the Federal Government to ensure that immigration authorities at the U.S. border handle any returning Somali-Americans in an appropriate way. And this is complicated by the fact that they are Americans with American passports.

So what is being done to flag these individuals should they attempt to return if there is concern that they have been engaged in terrorist training overseas?

Mr. LIEPMAN. I would just make two quick points on that. The first is, Senator Collins, you are absolutely right, this is a problem that is complicated by our attention to civil liberties and our desire not to restrict the travel of Americans without pretty good reason.

I do think that the information-sharing system that we are operating under now is far superior to that of 3 or 5 years ago. We are not perfect. But we are much better, and we are much better in terms of knowing when an individual should be watchlisted, for ex-

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ample, understanding when we have a piece of information, that information is shared with the appropriate agencies.

What I think we are most concerned about is what we do not know about those travelers who are going to the Horn of Africa, who visit Kenya, and who we do not know went into Somalia. That makes it much more difficult to control their ability to travel back and forth if we are not aware of what their activities were.

Senator COLLINS. Mr. Mudd, when our Committee staff visited Minneapolis, the local police officials expressed concern that they were providing information to Federal officials but were getting little in return. Just yesterday, the Chairman and I were briefed by the Markle Foundation, which was particularly critical of information sharing across the levels of law enforcement, the FBI with State and local law enforcement in particular.

Could you comment on information sharing in this case with State and local officials? Because obviously this is very critical. There is no one who is more tuned in to what is going on in the Somali community in Minneapolis than the local police force. And it seems to me that a greater understanding could result if there were more information sharing.

Mr. MUDD. I think a couple things here. First, I want to thank again the police departments in places like Columbus and Minneapolis. They participate with task force officers who are on our Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs). They have visibility from these task force officers into our investigations against violent extremists in the United States. They should have visibility into every aspect of those investigations. We also have participation at fusion centers across the country.

In terms of cooperation with State and local law enforcement, I would point out, the Somali community in Minneapolis is probably 100,000 plus, and in many respects, in places like Hennepin County or Ramsey County, where you have Minneapolis-St. Paul, the police are going to have better insights into the community than we do—not just because they are looking at the extremist problem with us, but because you have gang and drug activity. There is more than a handful of Somali gangs in Minneapolis alone.

So I think there is visibility on the task force. There is visibility from the JTTF executives in those cities. I could not tell you how strong that is across an entire large police force. We have relatively small offices in these cities. But they are participating full-time on our Joint Terrorism Task Forces, and this is a priority for those JTTFs.

Senator COLLINS. Do you see Somali gangs as being a precursor to the kind of radicalization that we are talking about?

Mr. MUDD. I do not see a one-to-one correlation between gang activity and terrorist recruitment and radicalization.

Mr. LIEPMAN. In many cases, they are actually alternatives to each other. They will go down two different avenues.

Senator COLLINS. One or the other.

The New York City Police Department (NYPD) has done a lot of work on domestic terrorism, homegrown radicalization, and, in general, the police department has found that individuals generally begin the radicalization process on their own. But in each case that NYPD examined, there was what the department called "a spir-

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itual sanctioner" that provided the justification for jihad that is essential to a suicide terrorist. It is essential to the progression of the radicalization process.

Have you seen that in the case that we are discussing today, Mr. Liepman?

Mr. LIEPMAN. Senator Collins, I agree entirely with the New York study on radicalization. I think it was an excellent study, and we have actually worked very closely with NYPD with their perspective on the ground. And as I mentioned, it would be a mistake to look at either the Internet in a vacuum or at the influential leaders of the community in a vacuum. It is the interaction between the two.

And I think we found both domestically and overseas as well—and it is the experience of most of our partners in the United Kingdom and Canada—that perhaps the most important element of the radicalization process is that charismatic leader who intervenes and who, as Mr. Mudd said, spots and recruits a vulnerable young man and gets to him at the right point with the right message.

Senator COLLINS. Mr. Mudd.

Mr. MUDD. This is really important to understand because the suggestion earlier, I think there is a popular misconception about terrorism among people who sort of watch movies or read books, and that is that there are these cells of people who operate clandestinely. I used a word that I learned from NYPD, and they have some extremely talented analysts up there. That word is "clusters"—there are clusters of people who bounce off each other.

Internet content, in my experience, might help feed an emotional sense in a kid who is already bouncing off individuals. This is a people business. So I would see the Internet often as a tool that helps someone along a path, but not the proximate cause that leads someone to get a ticket to go to Mogadishu.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Senator Collins.

I appreciate that there are three other Senators here. We will call on them in order of arrival: Senator Bennet, Senator Voinovich, and Senator Burris.

Senator Bennet, thank you.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR BENNET

Senator BENNET. Mr. Chairman, thank you. I apologize for being late. This is fascinating testimony, and I do not have any questions yet.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Senator Bennet. Senator Voinovich.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR VOINOVICH

Senator VOINOVICH. I thank the witnesses for being here. Has there been any kind of a declaration by al-Shabaab as Osama bin Laden did in 1998 and declare war against the United States?

Mr. LIEPMAN. No, Senator. And I will take the opportunity to just emphasize, al-Shabaab is a very different organization than al-Qaeda. It is really an alignment of a variety of different groups. The individual fighters on the ground in Mogadishu and the rest of Somalia may not actually reflect the views of their top leader-

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ship. And the top leadership does have identified linkages to the leadership of al-Qaeda in Pakistan. But whether that trickles down to the average 17 or 20-year-old fighter on the streets of Somalia is really quite questionable.

They are devoted to the fight in Somalia. They are not yet, most of them, devoted to Osama bin Laden's global jihad.

Senator VOINOVICH. So the fact is that, to your knowledge, there may be some indirect linkages but no formal linkages. And in terms of someone's intent of having people come back from there and do something bad here in terms of some of the things that we are trying to defend against, terrorist attacks and so forth, is there any indication at all of anything like that?

Mr. LIEPMAN. Clearly, one of the reasons why we are looking so closely at this issue is the linkages between the al-Shabaab leadership with the al-Qaeda leadership and the possible influence on al-Shabaab agenda, which has to date been quite local, and then ultimately the trickle-down effect on the recruits that are being trained with al-Shabaab.

But, no, as I said in my testimony, we do not have a credible body of reporting right now to lead us to believe that these American recruits are being trained and instructed to come back to the United States for terrorist acts. Yet obviously we remain concerned about that, and watchful for it.

Senator VOINOVICH. Well, one of my concerns—and this is tough because we are concerned about things and we are in a dilemma, and the dilemma is the more we talk about it, does it become a self-fulfilling prophecy? It is like neighbors that do not talk to each other, and before you know it, they do not like each other. And I think more than anything else, I would be interested in what we are doing to make sure that we do not have something like that radicalized era here in the United States. And what is the community trying to do in terms of making sure that this does not happen? That is the big issue here.

It has, I think, more to do with it than intelligence to handle this, and we will be hearing from another panel, but I would be interested in your observations about where are we right now and what can we do to make sure that we have a better situation, including maybe improving our relationships with the Somalis overseas.

Mr. LIEPMAN. I think you have that exactly right. We really cannot solve the problem simply through outreach to the American Somali community. It is an essential ingredient of the solution. I think this is essentially a Horn of Africa problem, and without attention to that decades-long crisis, we cannot attend one or the other end of this. It is really both.

Mr. MUDD. I think that is right. From the Bureau's perspective, there are a lot of issues here that are well beyond our control, issues overseas that have to do with the motivation of these individuals. For example, what is the impact of the Ethiopian withdrawal on a community in the United States? I think the impact is probably substantial because a lot of these kids are going over—as I said, there are intersecting themes, not only for an international jihadist movement but also for nationalist purposes, to fight the Ethiopians.

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Domestically, there are issues here I talked about that put us in common with people and places like Europe, and that is, when you have families—this is a very traditional clan-based culture, a patrilineal culture, where there is no father figure there, and where somebody comes in and plays the father figure, where the mother does not speak English very well, where you are working at a meatpacking plant or have to work a couple jobs as a taxi driver. I mean, this is a classic immigrant experience in some ways, and it is a difficult social environment for these folks.

And so we can talk about looking at people after it is too late, those who are going overseas—but the underlying cause is motivations from the Ethiopian invasion or motivations from the environment of people who are escaping violence and difficult economic conditions. Those are things obviously that are well beyond our control.

Senator VOINOVICH. So a lot of it has basically to do with some concerns about people that have come here that are concerned about what is going on over there. It is like a lot of other nationality groups. The Armenians still want to do something about—go back to what the Turks did, and the Kosovars and the Serbs—we have a lot of ethnic groups in Ohio. You can try to deal with them, but there are still things that are really ringing bells in those communities, and people are upset about them. Where does that level go to some other kind of activity?

Mr. MUDD. That is right, and I should be blunt, there are other concerns about dealing with Federal officials, for example, in a community where many people have immigration problems. So we are trying to build bridges through outreach and working with police departments, for example, and having people like our Special Agent in Charge in Minneapolis meeting with community leaders.

I was just talking to one of the leaders behind me about traveling to Minneapolis soon, although I would like to wait until after the snow melts, as a native Floridian. But the issue has to do with, as I say, things within the community—it is a very closed community—and their concerns as well about dealing with us because they are worried about whether we are going to collar a kid if they come and tell us or whether there are other Federal issues like immigration fraud that might come up. And, again, we have to work through that with our partners in places like DHS.

Senator VOINOVICH. Thank you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Senator Voinovich. Senator Burris, good morning.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR BURRIS

Senator BURRIS. Good morning, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to welcome you to the Committee. This is a very complicated subject, and I want to commend you all for the work that you are doing. My questions may seem a little naive because of the difficulty of the subject, but generally what I am concerned about is we are talking about two separate situations, are we not? The Somalis that voluntarily or forcibly go back to get trained and, second, whether or not we are talking about normal American disgruntled citizens that are volunteering to go over there? Is that what we are looking at?

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Mr. LIEPMAN. To my knowledge, we are not aware of a situation where someone has been forcibly repatriated to Somalia. These are volunteers. And I do think there are two things going on. One is that you have a generational struggle in Somalia; and, on the other hand, you have an American Somali community that is in many ways different than other ethnic communities in the United States in that they tend to be a bit more isolated and more attached to their homeland than many others.

So the combination of isolation and a difficult process of integration into the United States and this linkage back to their homeland has resulted in a tendency to be more willing to volunteer to go back than in many other communities. But they are not being forced to return, as far as I can tell.

Mr. MUDD. It might interest you to know some of the experiences they are having when they get there to give you a sense of what they think going over.

First, some get there and believe this is a place where Sharia law—that is, the law of Islam—is being practiced and it is a great place to live. And some of these folks will never come back.

Some get there and become cannon fodder. We talked about the difference between terrorism and insurgency/counterinsurgency. These folks are not going over there to become part of terrorist cells. A lot of them are being put on the front line, and some of them from the United States. I think, have been killed on the front line.

And, last, some are going over there saying, "Whoa, this is a serious war, there is serious lead flying," and they sort of lie, cheat, and steal their way to get back because they are in an environment where they say, "I cannot take this." So they are coming home saying, "That is not what I signed up for."

So there is a range of responses when these kids actually get out there.

Senator BURRIS. So this question may have been asked, but you are saying that they are over there either for the war or to defend their homeland. What is the danger then of some of those really coming back here, having been trained or given indoctrination to come back and try to do some of the jihad or September 11, 2001, activities in America? And can we detect that type of person coming back or if he was not a part of it, how do you distinguish that Somali as a person who wants to come back and repatriate himself with America and not then be classified as a terrorist who would do danger to our homeland?

Mr. LIEPMAN. It is a tough problem. To set the groundwork, though, going to Somalia to fight with al-Shabaab, al-Shabaab is a designated terrorist organization. So the distinction between al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda is an important one, but those who volunteer to fight with al-Shabaab are also materially contributing to a terrorist organization.

That evolution from volunteering to fight against the Ethiopians in Somalia to embracing the global jihad and the al-Qaeda message that espouses attacking the West, that is a difficult thing to detect. It happens inside their heads, and it is very difficult for us to know unless they tell someone, and I think reinforces the importance of outreach and interaction with the community and with the families

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who likely will be the first people to detect this transition from Somali defense to the global jihad.

Mr. MUDD. I think this story will have a ways to play out. I had an interesting conversation last week with an acquaintance of mine who is a psychologist in Saudi Arabia who deals with their deradicalization program. And he made a distinction between disengagement—in other words, for example, somebody coming back here disengaged from al-Shabaab—and deradicalization. His view, from working with many people—in this case, in Saudi Arabia—was if you want long-term stability with people like this, you cannot have that stability if you do not deradicalize.

So what I am saying is if someone disengages from the fight but does not deradicalize, long term you have to think how psychologically is that going to play out in a year or 2 years. What if they find when they get back that the job environment is closed to them? What if there is another Ethiopian invasion? And as a security service, we cannot only be concerned about someone who has committed a Federal violation. If someone has gone overseas to fight and comes back in this month, seems like he has disengaged, should we assume that person is deradicalized after he has already committed an overt act to go fight a foreign enemy? Boy, that is a tough one long term. So I expect that we will have some echoes of this for a while.

Senator BURRIS. And another area in terms of the Somali community, which my briefing tells me that it is primarily in Minneapolis, Minnesota, there is a major community there, and that is where a lot of recruiting is going on. Has the community really stepped up to come forward from the Somali community to give information and say, look, we know that we have to work in conjunction with all the U.S. forces to try to prevent something of this magnitude, even the young person going over there?

Mr. MUDD. We have made progress, but we have a ways to go. The progress says you have communities with parents and grandparents and siblings who are concerned. We have FBI officers and people from police and our task forces who are watching people shed tears in our offices when they find out their kids have gone. Communities are concerned about recruitment from within, and I think that will become even greater with the Ethiopian withdrawal, because you cannot now say, "I am going to fight the foreign invader." You are going to fight more in clan fighting. Especially in the past few weeks or months, there have been some very positive political developments in Somalia that I would think would make it a bit harder to recruit.

That said, we have a ways to go. Again, you have communities that, first, for I think very defensible reasons, are concerned about interacting with Federal authorities. They are concerned about what we will do with their children. There is a lot of disinformation out there, and I should put this on the record. I hope some of the community folks in Minneapolis are watching. There are people out there saying that we will take their kids and put them in orange jumpsuits and send them to Guantanamo. This kind of propaganda from people who want to corrupt kids is hurting us.

So there are community concerns in additional areas, as I said earlier, about things like are we going to look at immigration prob-

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lems as part of this. So we have made progress. We have great relations with some of the community folks that you will see later today—a really great and heartening immigrant story—but we still need more community help to understand what is going on within communities. This is not simply a law enforcement or intelligence problem. This is a problem about integration of a community over decades.

Senator BURRIS. Mr. Chairman, my time is up, and if there is a second round, I might have some more questions. But I would like to thank the witnesses for their candid and forthright statements. I think we really have something we have got to deal with here.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks very much, Senator Burris.

I want to ask just one or two additional questions. If any other members wants to, we will do that in a quick second round, because I want to get to the next panel.

I do want to make clear first, Mr. Liepman, I think you answered a specific question from Senator Burris, and it may appear inconsistent, though I do not believe it is, when you said these young people are volunteering, that they are not being coerced. But this is not purely volunteering because, as both of you have said, they are being recruited, they are being affected by a spiritual sanctioner or leader. Right?

Mr. LIEPMAN. That is right, and I did not mean to suggest that—what I wanted to say was they were not being tied up and bundled into a plane.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Exactly. Understood.

Mr. LIEPMAN. But it is a process of mental coercion.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right, it was not a thought that they just had on their own to say, "I want to go over and fight with al-Shabaab."

Mr. LIEPMAN. Right.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Either they got it over the Internet or usually a combination of Internet and a spiritual sanctioner.

By total coincidence, yesterday the Senate Armed Services Committee had its annual hearing with the Director of National Intelligence, Admiral Dennis Blair, and with the Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), General Michael Maples. Senator Collins and I, both members of that Committee, were there.

General Maples actually testified that from information that he has received, DIA has received, he believes a formal merger between al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab is forthcoming soon. We have obviously seen an increasing connection between these two terrorist organizations over the last year, particularly in online content; the statement made by Ayman al-Zawahiri just a month ago in a video embracing al-Shabaab.

So here is my concern: If there is a former merger between al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda, doesn't that raise our concern about the potential that the recruiting going on of Somali-Americans here will result in people being sent back here—or perhaps to other countries—because people are traveling with American passports?

In other words, if we accept the premise that al-Qaeda has made clear that its intention is not primarily about the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia but really is about world jihad, isn't there a con-

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cern that if al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab merged, this is really a game changer, and that the possibility of these recruits from America being sent back here for purposes of attacking gets higher?

Mr. LIEPMAN. The conversations between al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda have been occurring now for quite some time. We have heard rumors of an imminent merger, and it has been imminent for a while.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. LIEPMAN. It could happen very soon. It could happen sometime down the road.

We have several precedents of organizations that have merged with al-Qaeda, and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb is the most recent example. It is a couple years old.

Two years ago, when they merged, I think we had the same concerns as you have just stated, that group would suddenly look beyond Algeria and North Africa, and start targeting Europe and the United States. And it has been much slower to happen than I think we feared.

I think that a merger certainly increases that danger, and as the global jihadist philosophy evolved into the organization, they will be mindful of additional targets outside Somalia. We see al-Shabaab really focused right now on the fight in the Horn of Africa. And I think it would take some time to develop the capabilities and really to change that mind-set.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Mr. Mudd

Mr. MUDD. Yes, I keep wanting to contradict Mr. Liepman, and I am looking for an opportunity to do so. But I think he is right here. I think the word "merger" can be a bit misleading because, I agree, I am not sure this will happen. But merger does not necessarily mean operational linkage to al-Qaeda. I think people who look at al-Qaeda through the lens of it being just a terrorist organization are mistaken. This is a revolutionary movement, and having someone on a beachhead of the Horn of Africa who, regardless of operational linkages, raises their hand and says, "I am part of the movement," as they have done in al-Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb, al-Qaeda of the Two Rivers of Sudan, and al-Qaeda in Iraq. These are representative of an effort by al-Qaeda to push out the movement, not necessarily always representative of direct operational linkages that might represent a clear increase in threats to the United States, although as Mr. Liepman says, we have got to watch out for this. This is long term.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. A final point, if I may, to you, Mr. Mudd, and then a question. I want to report to you that my staff, which has spent some time in Minneapolis on the ground in preparation for the hearing, has found some concern among the Minneapolis Police Department that they are not adequately involved in the FBI work there, and that they have more than they can bring to the table with regard to their own longer-term interactions in a positive way with the Somali community in Minneapolis. I know you are on the Joint Terrorism Task Force with them, but they feel that they can contribute more.

The second is just to wrap this part of the hearing up, in a sense, in a way of reassurance, because we may have said some things to alarm people here, but that the FBI is involved in an investigation

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which is aimed at—we understand you are involved in outreach, as I said, to the community. But you are involved in an investigation which may result in the arrest of some individuals who are involved in the recruiting and radicalization. Is that correct?

Mr. MUDD. There are ongoing investigations, and I think I will sort of defer any further comment on them. But it is a significant concern to us.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Good enough. Thank you. Senator Collins.

Senator COLLINS. Mr. Mudd, it is expensive to take someone from Minneapolis to Somalia. It is complicated to get a person there. The evidence we have is that the plane ticket for the young man in question cost around $2,000. That is money he clearly did not have personally.

Where is the money coming from?

Mr. MUDD. I do not think that the people who are going over there are all supplying all their own cash. I think it is worth understanding that, like other diaspora communities, there are informal ways—you are probably familiar with the hawala method, for example, which exists in this community to pass money that is very difficult to follow. The vast majority of this money is going for remittances, the same thing you would see, for example, in a Sri Lankan or a Bangladeshi community.

Some small portion of that money, I think, is probably going to help fund these folks going over. I am not sure I would buy your suggestion that this is really expensive. If you are talking about tens of people who are going over in pretty difficult environments over there, not for high-end terrorist training but to become in some cases cannon fodder, you have a ticket, you have somebody at the other end who will be a facilitator, and then somebody who is in a general training camp with other folks.

Given the extensive amount of money raised in large diaspora communities here, I personally would not think it would be that hard to skim off a little bit of that in various places and fund some plane tickets for tens of people. Terrorism is cheap.

Senator COLLINS. Well, I guess what I meant is compared to the income of the young men in question, it is not as if they have this funding.

Mr. MUDD. I am agreeing that I do not think they are self-funding all this.

Senator COLLINS. Right.

Mr. MUDD. This is part of the apparatus that we are talking about here.

Senator COLLINS. That is my point.

I want to end my questions on this round by going back to a fundamental question: Why recruit Americans? As Mr. Liepman said, it is not to fill up the ranks. There are plenty of people in-country who would perform this role.

It also does involve expenditures that would not otherwise be incurred. It is difficult. There is a risk of being caught. And that is why I am wondering if part of the reason is to sow seeds of fear within the Somali diaspora. I wonder if part of the reason is to create the kind of dissension within the community that we have seen in Minneapolis. I wonder if it is in part the terrorists wanting to

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cast a cloud of suspicion over the Somali-American community that might lead to further alienation of some of the young people.

Could you comment on this issue further?

Mr. MUDD. Sure. I think it is pretty straightforward. This is a push, not a pull. It is a pull in the sense that you have a jihadist environment where people from Somalia in this country, a few people, might say, "I want to go fight," as others from other communities might have said, "I want to fight in Afghanistan" in the 1980s. But by push, I mean people here who are saying, "I want to do this"—maybe because this is an example of a place where we have a foreign invader, or an example of a place where we can live in a country that is ruled by Sharia law. You mentioned recruitment. I do not see people out there saying, "Can we have another 10 Americans?"

So I think it is a simple story of people saying, "I either want to fight for my country" or "I want to go live in a different social kind of religious environment,"—and it is relatively inexpensive to get there—not people at the other end saying, "I wish I had more Americans." In fact, in some cases the Americans can be a security risk for them. Who are these folks who are traveling from outside, traveling from roots that might be vulnerable to exploitation? So it is not always a plus for the guys on the other end.

Senator COLLINS. Mr. Liepman.

Mr. LIEPMAN. I agree with that, and I think that is the case not just with Americans but the British recruits. There are communities around the world of Somalis who feel very attached to their homeland, some of whom have expressed a desire to go back and fight. And I think that desire is being facilitated.

Senator COLLINS. But that is the key to me. I agree with you that, based on our investigation, individuals generally begin the radicalization process on their own. But based on our intensive study, there is almost always a catalyst, a person, the "spiritual sanctioner," in the words of the NYPD; the operational leader in cases where the plot becomes operational.

Mr. MUDD. I see where you are going. If I could take another shot at this, sometimes we think of these organizations, whether it is al-Shabaab or al-Qaeda, as hierarchical, sort of pyramid-like, which is classic American concept. You might want to think of this as hub and spoke. These are first-generation folks, whether they are the small sliver who are involved in extremism or just people sending remittances back. All of them in independent communities across the United States have linkages back home. So they all would have an independent way to call somebody and say, "I am going to send a few folks over. Can you facilitate them when they get there, get to the right camp?" It is close linkages back home, close clan linkages, and those linkages have persisted since we have had the diaspora community starting probably in the early 1990s.

Mr. LIEPMAN. Just to reinforce, I said before that it would be a mistake to correlate al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab too closely. They are very different kinds of organizations. Al-Shabaab is more of a movement of young people with a wide variety of goals and clan affiliations. So as Mr. Mudd said, you can make connections with al-

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Shabaab much easier than you can with the leaders of al-Qaeda in Pakistan.

Senator COLLINS. But don't you think that there is also a public relations angle, for lack of a better word, to this, that if al-Shabaab can say, "See, we have Americans. America pretends it is the best country in the world, and yet we have Americans coming here to join in jihad?" Isn't that a play here, too?

Mr. LIEPMAN. Sure, I think that is a factor. And it would be easier for the folks back in Somalia to respond to the desire to come by saying, "You are actually more of a burden than you are a help in our fight." But they do, they welcome them, not just Americans but Brits, South Africans, and Nigerians.

So I do think there is an element of broadening the base of that opposition, first, to the invasion by the Ethiopians, and now to the Transitional Federal Government in Somalia. I do think they are doing propagandizing.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Mr. MUDD. If I could flip your optic, I would think of it instead, if you look at statements by people like Ayman al-Zawahiri, the second in charge of al-Qaeda, as an organization—and I talked about it as a revolutionary movement, saying if you want to join the movement, if you are Nigerian or Malian, whoever you are, one of the forefronts is Somalia. And some of that echo effect, ripple effect, reaches people in the United States who might be predisposed to join the movement already.

So their perception is al-Zawahiri in a sense might see himself as a statesman. He is the statesman responsible for the revolutionary message of al-Qaeda, and that message is there are beachheads in Pakistan, which is a difficult place to be as a foreign fighter now; Iraq, which, as you said, Senator Lieberman, a difficult place. There is another beachhead. So whether you are American, British, Danish, Nigerian, come on down, we have got a place for you.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks very much, Senator Collins.

Senator Voinovich, do you have any further questions.

Senator VOINOVICH. I would just follow up on the same thing. In other words, the recruitment or the encouragement is coming to Somalis all over the world. So it is not just concentrating on the United States.

Mr. LIEPMAN. That is right.

Senator VOINOVICH. This is come on in and help your country out, and incidental thereto may be that you are going to be helping al-Qaeda. But you said earlier that there was not, to your knowledge, any formal links between them but there may be some informal relationships there.

Mr. LIEPMAN. There is a formal link between the top leaders of al-Shabaab and the leaders of al-Qaeda, but not organizationally yet, no.

Senator VOINOVICH. In terms of al-Shabaab doing what al-Qaeda would like to do or something of that sort.

Mr. LIEPMAN. Right. We do not see that at this point.

Senator VOINOVICH. And that the young people that are leaving here, the motivation for them is that they see a cause of some sort,

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and to your knowledge, there is not some big organized effort here to go out and find as many people and send them over to Somalia, but that it is kind of a spontaneous—coming from groups of people around that have different little tribes or it is that they have moved here to the United States, and some are more involved than others.

I remember after the declaration of the Bosnian War that we had certain ethnic groups here in the United States that got involved, and they were not really trying to do anything to us. They were just trying to do something to the other people that were here in this country.

So I would like that to be very clear because I do not want anybody to think that somehow the Somalis—that it is an organized effort, they are sending them over here, they are sending them back here, and look out because they are going to get involved in some terrorist type of activity. And that is where it is at right now, and as I mentioned earlier, our goal right now is to look at some of the reasons why some of them maybe pop up and say, "I have to get out of here, and I have to go overseas and see if that can be responded to." And probably that has to be done right in the community among their own people to say, "Here is the deal."

Mr. LIEPMAN. Senator, I think you described it well. They are going to Somalia to fight for their homeland, not to join al-Qaeda's jihad against the United States—so far.

Senator VOINOVICH. Thank you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Senator Burris, do you have any further questions?

Senator BURRIS. Not this round.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks. Mr. Liepman and Mr. Mudd, thank you for your testimony. I am sure we will see you again before long. Or we will subpoena you if you will not come back voluntarily. [Laughter.]

We will call the second panel now: Ken Menkhaus, Professor of Political Science at Davidson College; Osman Ahmed, President of the Riverside Plaza Tenants Association; and Abdi Mukhtar, Youth Program Manager at the Brian Coyle Center.

Thanks very much, gentlemen, for your willingness to be here.

Dr. Menkhaus, we would like to begin with you. We appreciate it. You have spent some time, probably more than most, in developing expertise, doing research, and doing some writing in the general subject matter area that we are covering here today. We are grateful that you could come, and we welcome your testimony now.

TESTIMONY OF KEN MENKHAUS, PH.D.,[1] PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, DAVIDSON COLLEGE

Mr. MENKHAUS. Senator Lieberman, Senator Collins, I thank you both for the opportunity to speak here today. I would like to offer a few observations about the current Somali crisis, the role of the diaspora in Somalia, and the question of recruitment of diaspora youth into the extremist group al-Shabaab.

Somalia has been beset by one of the longest and most destructive crises in the post-Cold War era. The Somali people have en-

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Menkhaus appears in the Appendix on page 105.

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dured 19 years of complete state collapse, civil war, chronic insecurity, and recurring humanitarian crises. An estimated 1 million Somalis are today refugees scattered across the globe. This has been an exceptionally traumatic period for the Somali people.

Over the course of this long period of statelessness, Islamic institutions—charities, schools, sharia courts, and political movements—have helped to fill the vacuum left by the collapsed state. Somalis increasingly look to Islam as an answer to their plight. The ascendance of political Islam is an enduring trend in Somalia, and in general terms, this need not be viewed as a problem for or a threat to the United States.

The period since 2006 has been especially violent and destructive. In 2006, an Islamic administration briefly arose in Mogadishu and for 6 months provided very impressive levels of public order. The Islamic Courts Union (ICU), was very popular with Somalis as a result. Ultimately, hard-liners in the ICU, including political figures commanding a small committed militia, known as al-Shabaab, marginalized political moderates in the Islamic movement and took actions which threatened the security of neighboring Ethiopia. With U.S. support, Ethiopia launched an offensive in December 2006, routing the ICU and militarily occupying the Somali capital, Mogadishu.

Predictably, Somalis of all political persuasions deeply resented the Ethiopian occupation, and within weeks an armed insurgency arose. The counterinsurgency by Ethiopian forces and the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was very heavy-handed, and within months Mogadishu was the site of a catastrophe. Seven hundred thousand residents of the city were displaced by the violence. Much of the capital was damaged. Thousands died, and an epidemic of assassinations and assaults by all sides gripped the city. By 2008, the violence spread throughout the countryside. Three million Somalis are now in need of humanitarian aid, prompting the U.N. to declare Somalia the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

For our purposes, two important developments arose from this catastrophe. First, it generated an enormous amount of anger among Somalis, both at home and abroad. This has manifested itself in high levels of anti-Ethiopian, anti-American, anti-Western, and anti-U.N. sentiment. Second, one group—the hardline Islamist militia, al-Shabaab—emerged as the main source of armed resistance to the TFG and the Ethiopian occupation. Al-Shabaab successful conflated its radical Islamist ideology with Somali nationalism. In the eyes of most Somalis, al-Shabaab was a legitimate national resistance to a foreign occupation. Al-Shabaab was seen by many Somalis as freedom fighters, not terrorists, even by Somalis who found their radical policies appalling and their rumored links to al-Qaeda very worrisome.

In March 2008, the United States declared al-Shabaab a terrorist group. The many Somalis who had provided indirect or direct support to al-Shabaab were thereby immediately criminalized. In May 2008, the United States launched a Tomahawk missile attack which killed the top al-Shabaab leader, Aden Hashi Ayro. Thereafter, al-Shabaab announced an intent to attack U.S., Western, and U.N. targets, both inside and outside Somalia. Its principal focus

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remains the national struggle, but we are now formally a target of them as well.

Al-Shabaab is today the strongest single armed group in the country, controlling territory from the Kenyan border to the outskirts of Mogadishu. It has links to al-Qaeda. But recent developments are working against al-Shabaab. Ethiopia withdrew its forces in Somalia in December 2008. The unpopular TFG President, Abdullahi Yusuf, resigned in December 2008. A new U.S. Administration has taken office and is reviewing its policies on Somalia. And a peace accord, known as the Djibouti Process, has forged a new governing alliance of moderates from the TFG and Islamist opposition, now led by President Sheikh Sharif.

Al-Shabaab has been deprived from its main raison d'etre and now faces growing resistance from Somali militias allied with the new unity government. Al-Shabaab also faces internal divisions, including tensions between hard-core members and those who joined the cause mainly to rid their country of a foreign occupation.

Put another way, not all al-Shabaab members are committed jihadists, making it problematic to label the entire group "terrorists." Somalis who were willing to support al-Shabaab when it represented the main source of resistance to Ethiopian occupation appear uninterested in supporting al-Shabaab in its bid to grab power and impose its extremist policies on Somalia. Al-Shabaab may well have hit its high watermark in 2008 and now faces declining support and possible defections. If so, this is good news. It would mean that the threat of al-Shabaab recruitment among the diaspora will be less of a threat in the future.

An assessment of the threat of terrorist recruitment among the Somali diaspora must start with an understanding of the diaspora's role in Somalia today. The principal role the diaspora has played over the past 20 years has been an economic lifeline to Somalia. Its remittances are by far and away the most important source of income in Somalia, estimated at $1 billion remitted to Somalia each year.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Is that just from the U.S. or worldwide?

Mr. MENKHAUS. Worldwide. It is fair to say that the diaspora keeps much of Somalia alive. The diaspora is also pressured to contribute to communal fundraising, some of which is used for good causes like community projects. In other cases, the fundraising can support militias or even extremist groups like al-Shabaab. The diaspora does not always control how their money is used.

Somali business, political, and civic life is increasingly dominated by the diaspora. An estimated 70 percent of the new TFG cabinet, for instance, holds citizenship abroad, and the new Prime Minister himself is a Canadian Somali, who has resided for years in Virginia.

In sum, Somalia has become a diasporized nation. Many Somalis with citizenship abroad return to Somalia often to visit family, check on business investments, manage nonprofits, or pursue political ambitions. This makes it increasingly difficult to draw meaningful distinctions between the Somalis and the Somali diaspora. Virtually every Somali enterprise, whether the shareholder group of the Coca-Cola bottling plant in Mogadishu, which is still working, or the new TFG administration, or al-Shabaab itself, is likely

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to have a significant diaspora component. Extensive travel to Somalia and financial and other interactions by Somali-Americans with their home country should not constitute, therefore, a high-risk profile.

The Minneapolis case of Shirwa Ahmed and other youth who have been recruited into al-Shabaab raises a basic question that you have both asked this morning. Why would al-Shabaab actively recruit diaspora members? What can a diaspora recruit do that a local militia fighter cannot?

First, it is clear that the diaspora are not much value as rank-and-file militia for al-Shabaab or any other fighting force in Somalia. Somalia is already saturated with experienced teenage gunmen and has no need to import more. In fact, evidence from the ICU in 2006 suggests the Somali diaspora as well as foreign fighters were as much a liability as an asset. They were unfamiliar with the countryside, often spoke the Somali language poorly, were more likely to become sick, and required a fair amount of oversight.

But the diaspora are useful to other al-Shabaab and other armed groups in Somalia in other ways. Their familiarity with computers and the Internet is a valuable communications skill, and to come to the point of our hearing, a young diaspora recruit is, upon arrival in Somalia, entirely cut off socially and, therefore, in theory, easier to isolate, indoctrinate, and control for the purpose of executing suicide bombings. Were this not the case, it would be much less risky and expensive for al-Shabaab to simply recruit locals.

From this perspective, a young diaspora member who heeds the call by a recruiter to "join the cause" of fighting to protect his nation and religion is not so much a terrorist as a pawn, exploited by the real terrorists, those who are unwilling themselves to die for their cause but who are happy to manipulate a vulnerable and isolated youth to blow himself up.

In my assessment, a Somali diaspora member groomed to be a terrorist is of most utility to al-Shabaab for suicide operation either inside Somalia or in the region of the Horn of Africa—Kenya, Djibouti, and especially now Ethiopia. The reason for this is that these recruits would need "handlers" both to help them navigate through unfamiliar situations and to ensure that they go through with the attack. I am much less convinced that al-Shabaab would be willing to risk sending a trained and indoctrinated diaspora member back to the United States as a "sleeper" for a future terrorist attack in the United States. The risks to al-Shabaab would be enormous. They would not be in a position to easily manage and control their recruit. The recruit could even defect and provide damaging information on al-Shabaab to U.S. law enforcement. And even if al-Shabaab managed to send totally committed recruits back to the United States, a al-Shabaab-directed terrorist attack inside the United States would almost certainly have disastrous consequences for al-Shabaab, not only in terms of the U.S. response, but from Somali society as well. Recall that remittances from the diaspora are the economic lifeline of Somalia. Anything that jeopardizes the status of Somalis living abroad imperils the entire country, and al-Shabaab would face enormous blowback from within the Somali community.

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In sum, my sense is that the threat of an American of Somali descent joining al-Shabaab and then returning as a sleeper to the United States is quite low. The threat still requires careful law enforcement attention, but should not be overblown. There is one exception to this assessment. A Somali-American who joins al-Shabaab and who has then proceeded to Pakistan or Afghanistan and who becomes an al-Qaeda operative is of much greater concern. The reasoning for this is straightforward. Al-Shabaab's agenda is still essentially a nationalist one, while al-Qaeda's is global. Al-Qaeda would not weigh the costs of a terrorist attack in the United States on the Somali economy and the Somali diaspora, whereas al-Shabaab would. A Somali-American acting through the ideological prism of al-Qaeda would be more willing to serve as a sleeper than would a al-Shabaab member.

I would like to conclude with just a few thoughts on the Somali experience with and response to law enforcement authorities, much of which has already been alluded to this morning.

First, Somalis have a long and unhappy experience with the state and the police back in their country of origin. As a result, not all Somalis view the State, law enforcement, and the law as a source of protection and order; some view law enforcement with fear, as something to avoid. Behavior which appears to be evasive or untruthful can often be traced back to this generic fear of law enforcement and should not be misinterpreted. Sustained police programs to socialize Somali-American communities and reshape their perception of the state and the law are essential if this is to be overcome. They need to appreciate the difference between "rule of law" and "rule by law" and feel confident that the U.S. law enforcement system reflects the former and not the latter.

Some Somali households are likely to be nervous about any attention from law enforcement not because of links to terrorism, but because of the risk that U.S. law enforcement will in the process uncover other "irregularities," including illegal immigration, putting the community's interests at risk.

All communities have their "dominant narratives" and Somalis are no exception. Their dominant narrative is a story of victimization and persecution both at home and abroad. It is very easy for some in the Somali-American community to interpret current U.S. law enforcement attention as yet another instance of witch hunting and persecution, reflecting a combination of anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, anti-African sentiments. Some flatly deny there is a problem with al-Shabaab recruitment at all. The only way to produce better cooperation with this community is through routinized communication that builds trust with local law enforcement and which gives Somalis a clearer sense not only of their legal and social obligations as citizens but also of their legal rights.

The U.S. Government needs to provide much clearer guidelines to Somalis about what constitutes legal and illegal behavior with regard to political engagement in their country of origin. If not, we run the risk of criminalizing routine diaspora engagement in Somalia. The fact that al-Shabaab was not designated a terrorist organization before March 2008 but then was so designated is an example of the legal confusion facing Somalis. Something that was legal in February 2008 is now aiding and abetting terrorism. As you know,

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this is a question of relevance to many other immigrant communities in the United States whose country of origin is embroiled in war or whose charities have come under suspicion of serving as terrorist fronts. The U.S. Government cannot ask its citizens to abide by the law if the laws themselves are too opaque to be understood, and this is especially the case if legal charges can be made retroactively for affiliations with groups which were acceptable in the past but then designated terrorist.

Finally, it goes without saying that the main responsibility for policing Somali youth to ensure they do not become members of criminal gangs or terrorist groups falls squarely on the shoulders of Somali parents and community leaders. To the extent that Somali communities need additional outside support to provide for a safe and controlled environment for their children to grow up, we should try to provide it. Most importantly, we need to ensure that first-generation Somali-Americans are growing up with a strong sense of being American citizens with all the rights and responsibilities that entails. A Somali diaspora population that feels it belongs neither here nor in Somalia will be much more susceptible to radical movements promising their own sense of identity and belonging.

I hope these brief observations are of help as you exercise oversight on a topic with both important implications for national security and civil liberties. Like many U.S. citizens, I was greatly moved by President Obama's promise in his inaugural speech: "We reject as false the choice between our safety and our ideals." I am confident that we can address the security concerns raised by Somali-American recruitment into al-Shabaab without violating their civil rights and those of the community. Thank you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thank you. I agree. That was very helpful. I will have questions for you in the question and answer period, but let me just as a baseline ask you to give the Committee a sense of the size of the global Somali diaspora as compared to the population in Somalia.

Mr. MENKHAUS. Our estimates of the global Somali population are about 1 million out of a total Somali population—Somalis citizens, not the 4 million who are Ethiopian Somalis and 400,000 who are Kenyan Somalis—of about 9 to 10 million. So roughly one in 10 or more are abroad now.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. OK. Thanks very much.

The next witness has come to us from Minneapolis. We again thank you, as I did in my opening statement, for being here to make this personal, to help us to understand what is happening within the community. Obviously, as I said at the outset, we consider you our allies, our fellow Americans, and in a very direct sense the victims of those who are recruiting from among your families.

First, we are going to hear from Osman Ahmed, who is the President of the Riverside Plaza Tenants Association in Minneapolis. Thank you very much for being here.

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TESTIMONY OF OSMAN AHMED,[1] PRESIDENT, RIVERSIDE PLAZA TENANTS ASSOCIATION, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Mr. AHMED. Senators Lieberman and Collins, I would like to thank you on behalf of the family members of the children who were recruited to Somalia, members of the Somali community, and on my own behalf for inviting us to the congressional hearing committee. I would like to also thank Omar Jamal, who is the Director of Somali Justice Advocacy Center, who helped us, and worked a lot of time.

We would also like to thank the senatorial officials who came all the way to Minneapolis on February 28, 2009, to meet with the family members and the community. Also, I want to acknowledge the FBI office in Minneapolis and its agents who work day and night to locate our children. We do indeed feel grateful of their extreme efforts.

The first time we became suspicious was when we received a message from Roosevelt High School saying that our kid, Burhan, missed all school classes on November 4, 2008.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Excuse me, Mr. Ahmed. Say his name again so we get it clear.

Mr. AHMED. Burhan Hussan.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Was he a relative of yours?

Mr. AHMED. Yes, he was my nephew.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. OK.

Mr. AHMED. It was November 4, 2008. That to us sounded strange and we were stunned. We roamed around the metropolitan area and even beyond, nationwide. We went to Abubakar As-Saddique Mosque and Dawa Mosque, called our building security, called Hennepin County Medical Center, hospital emergency rooms, and the airport. After that, his mother looked into his room and found that his travel luggage was missing, his clothes were not there, and his passport was missing also. We immediately notified respective law enforcement agencies. We immediately contacted the local police office and the FBI office in Minneapolis.

We have been up on our heels since we have realized that one of our children was mentally and physically kidnapped on November 4, 2008, on Election Day.

Understanding challenges the Somali community in Minneapolis faces today—there are many challenges that the Somali community in Minnesota faces like other first-generation immigrants. These include limited language proficiency, limited skills, and the cultural barrier, as well as the Minnesota weather. Most of these Somali-American families are headed by single mothers.

The system is an alternative approach, but understanding it is also a barrier. The neighborhood, particularly the West Bank/Cedar/Riverside area, has limited resources that could be of value to the community members.

Perspective of family members of the recruited kids—the missing Somali-American children created anguish and fear to the immediate family members and in the general communities. No one can imagine the destruction this issue has caused for these mothers and grandmothers. They are going through the worst time in their

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Ahmed appears in the Appendix on page 119.

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lives. Imagine how these parents feel when their children are returned back to the country were they originally fled from the chaos, genocide, gang rape, and lawlessness.

There are five children among the many that were sent to Somalia: Burhan Hassan, 17 years old, senior at Roosevelt High School; Mohamud Hassan, 18 years old, studying engineering at the University of Minnesota; Abdisalam Ali, 19 years old, studying health at the University of Minnesota; Jamal Aweys, 19 years old, studying engineering at Minneapolis Community and Technical College, and later at Normandale College here in Minnesota; as well as Mustafa Ali, who is 18 years old, studying at Harding High School in St. Paul.

These Somali-American kids were not troubled kids or in gangs. They were the hope of the Somali-American community. They were the doctors, lawyers, engineers, scientists, and leaders of the future of our strong and prosperous nation. For instance, Burhan Hassan was a brilliant student with straight A's and on top of his class. He was taking college courses—calculus, advanced chemistry—as he was about to graduate from high school. These classes were sponsored by the University of Minnesota. He was an ambitious kid with the hope to go to Harvard University to study medicine or law and become a medical doctor or a lawyer.

All these youth shared common things. They all left Somalia in their infancy like my nephew, Burhan Hassan. He was 8 months old when they arrived in Kenya. He was less than 4 years old when he arrived in the United States, February 12, 1996. Like his peers, Burhan Hassan was never interested in Somali politics or understood Somali clan issues. Burhan grew up in a single-parent household. His immediate family members, including his mother and siblings, are educated. He studied Islam at a nearby Abubakar As-Saddique Mosque like the rest of the kids since 1998. Abubakar As-Saddique was opened a couple of years ago. Before then, it used to be called Shafi'e Mosque in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood area when Burhan started. He attended its youth group. These kids have no perception of Somalia except the one that was formed in their mind by their teachers at the Abubakar Center. We believe that these children did not travel to Somalia by themselves. There must be others who made them understand that going to Somalia and participating in the fighting is the right thing to do. To address the issue from a factual perspective, it is the dream of every Somali parent to have their children go to the mosque, but none of them expected to have their children's mind programmed in a manner that is in line with the extremist's ideologies. In the case of Burhan, he spent more than 10 years going to the mosque. This is evidenced by others who also attended the mosque.

One thing for sure is that the methods of indoctrination are highly sophisticated. The plan of al-Shabaab is basically to destroy the world peace, and they will turn every leaf to achieve that. Their mission is not isolated into Somalia but has far-reaching goals.

The Somali-American youth were isolated because they have been told that if they share their views with others, including their family members, they will not be understood and might as well be turned over to the infidel's hands. These children are victims on every side. They have been lied to. They were told that they will

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be shown the Islamic utopia that has been hidden from them by the infidels and the brainwashed parents. Our children had no clue they were being recruited to join al-Shabaab. We are getting a lot of information back home from Somalia. We also heard that when kids arrive, they are immediately shocked at what utopia is, and all their documents and belongings are confiscated. They are whisked to hidden military camps for trainings. They are also told if they flee and return home that they will end up in Guantanamo Bay. They do not know anyone in Somalia.

Why is al-Shabaab interested in American and Western kids? We believe the reason al-Shabaab is interested in American and Western kids is that these kids do not have any relatives in Somalia. They cannot go back to their countries for they will be reported to the authorities by local al-Shabaab recruiters. They are also very valuable in interpreting for al-Shabaab trainers of American and Western descent.

They could be used for anything they want. They could be trained or forced to become suicide bombers in Somalia, and they can do it out of desperation. For many of them, Burhan, for example, have no idea where to go for help in Somalia. This is the first time he has been to Somalia in his life. These are basically the main reasons why al-Shabaab is recruiting from the Western countries.

Another issue of paramount importance is the fact that we are the first family members who informed the law enforcement about the missing of these youth. Family members whose children sent to Somalia were scared to even talk to the law enforcement. We have been painted as bad people within the Somali community by the mosque management. We have been threatened for just speaking out. Some members of Abubakar As-Saddique Mosque told us that if we talk about the issue, the Muslim center will be destroyed, and Islamic communities will be wiped out. They tell parents that if they report their missing kid to the FBI, the FBI will send the parents to Guantanamo jail. And this message has been a very effective tool to silence parents and the community.

They do have a lot of cash to use for propaganda machine. They strike fear on a daily basis, here in Minneapolis, among Somali-speaking community in order to stop the community to cooperate with the law enforcement agencies. Public threats were issued to us at Abubakar As-Saddique Mosque for simply speaking with CNN, *Newsweek,* and other media. The other mystery is that they say one thing on Somali TVs and at their congregations, they say something contrary to that in English while speaking to the mainstream media or community.

They also told us not to talk to the media because that will also endanger the Muslim leaders. We have been projected as pariah within the community by these mosque leaders. We are tormented by the fact that our children are missing and imperiled. These members are scaring us so that we stop talking to law enforcement.

Perspective on al-Shabaab to attract young people to their cause—The most important factor on how al-Shabaab attracts the young Somali-Americans is the indoctrination of the children. They are programmed to understand that it is their duty to confront the infidels. There are youth programs that in some instances have

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some hidden agendas. These agendas include that whatever issues that might come across in life is twisted as being the work of the infidels. They have been told to understand that the Ethiopian troops in Somalia are an act of aggression against the Islamic religion. Al-Shabaab is not only interested in recruiting Somali-American youth but others in other Western countries, such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, and Australia. The main reason for al-Shabaab to recruit from these countries is that these youth have different views than a typical Somali in Somalia. They do not know much about Somali clan and have no political affiliation whatsoever.

There are some radical groups who were a minority in their thinking. However, when the Ethiopian troops came to Somalia, some Somali-American professors clearly declared the war against Ethiopian troops. This has been a scapegoat for their extremist political views. It encouraged radical Islamic groups in the United States who previously were not active in the political activities here and in Somalia.

In conclusion, we the families of the missing kids have been conducting an outreach campaign to reach out to those families that have not come forward. We believe this is the tip of the iceberg. In our outreach, we have been very successful to help some families to come forward and trust the law enforcement like we did.

Recommendations for preventing recruitment in the future: Educate members of the Somali community on the importance of cooperation between law enforcement and the community.

Empower the families of the missing kids to continue the outreach to those families who did not come forward.

Bring to justice those who are responsible.

Create special task forces to combat the al-Shabaab recruitment in Minnesota, Ohio, Seattle, Washington, and Boston.

Scrutinize the funding of suspicious nonprofit agencies that undertake youth activities possibly related to radical views.

Investigate if taxpayers' money was involved in the brainwashing of our kids because Abubakar Center is a nonprofit that might have been getting taxpayers' money for youth programs.

The mosque controls a large amount of money, which is raised in these mosques, quarterly or sometimes yearly fundraising which lacks transparency—huge amounts of cash—and portions of that money could have gone to al-Shabaab groups. Second, we are requesting more connection between our community and the FBI, so the FBI has to do more outreaching programs to the community.

We need a protection for our children so that they can escape enemy hands.

We need our U.S. Government to forgive these youth to enable us to find ways and means to bring them back to their homes. And this will give confidence to many more families to come out of darkness.

Warning: Al-Shabaab recruiters have the agility and ability to change form. They usually are well represented not only in certain mosques but wherever Somali children and young adults are concentrated, such as community centers, charter schools operated by Somalis. They could sometimes pose as Somali community leaders and advise politicians and other agencies that are outreaching to

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the Somali community. Al-shabaab recruiters can be active and target the youth at where ever Somalis are. Definitely, we don't know who is exactly behind this crazy venture. Nonetheless, we need to be vigilant at all times. Again, I want to thank you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Mr. Ahmed, I want to thank you for your courage in standing up in a dangerous situation, including against some in the community, and the U.S. Government really owes you exactly the kind of support and outreach that you ask for. I will say this—I will have questions for you, but the picture you paint is clearly not a situation—the word "volunteer" was used before, and I know the witness on a previous panel said he meant to say that they were not coerced. But you are describing a situation—and we will get back to it—where these were not just young people who stood up, woke up, and after a period of time talking to their families and said, "I want to go back to Somalia." They were clearly, by your telling, radicalized, recruited, and then if I heard you correctly, in the case of your nephew, Burhan Hassan, he just disappeared. He did not tell anybody he was going, correct?

Mr. AHMED. Yes. He did not tell anybody.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. OK. We will come back to that.

Our final witness today is Abdi Mukhtar, Youth Program Manager from the Brian Coyle Community Center, which I gather is a community center at which a lot of young Somali-Americans in Minneapolis congregate. Thanks for being here, sir.

TESTIMONY OF ABDIRAHMAN MUKHTAR,[1] YOUTH PROGRAM MANAGER, BRIAN COYLE CENTER, PILLSBURY UNITED COMMUNITIES, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Mr. MUKHTAR. Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins, and Members of the Committee, thank you. Before I start my statement, also as a parent who has children, I emphasize, and I send my sympathy with the family members who are missing their kids, and the majority of the Somali-American community, sends their sympathy for the families.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thank you.

Mr. MUKHTAR. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. The Somali youth issue is very important for me personally and professionally, and I am honored to have a chance to share my experience and expertise about this issue as a Somali youth issue expert.

My name is Abdirahman Mukhtar. I was born in Somalia. I fled Mogadishu, the capital city of Somalia, when the civil war started early January 1991. I went to a refugee camp in Liboa, Kenya. I stayed 7 years in refugee camps and the capital city of Nairobi in Kenya. I moved to the United States in August 1998. After moving to the United States, I attended and graduated from Roosevelt High School in Minneapolis, and I went on to pursue higher education from the University of Minnesota with a degree in kinesiology. I am planning to go back to graduate school for doctorate of physical therapy in the near future.

I have been working with youth for over 8 years—first with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Department, then with the Con-

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Mukhtar appears in the Appendix on page 125.

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federation of Somali Community in Minnesota as a Youth Diversion Coordinator, and currently as the Youth Program Manager at the Brian Coyle Center.

The Brian Coyle Center serves as a central hub for resettlement assistance, social services, adult education, employment counseling, youth programming, recreation, and civic engagement for the Somali community in the Minneapolis metropolitan area. The center includes a gymnasium, community room, commercial kitchen, numerous classrooms, a food shelf, and a computer lab. Along with Pillsbury United Communities, the organization that I work for, there are other organizations that have their offices in the building, which includes the Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota; the Oromo Community, which is an ethnic Serbian community; Emerge Community Development (EMERGE); Somali Youth Network Council; Cedar Riverside Neighborhood Revitalization Program; the West Bank Community Coalition; Somali Education and Social Advocacy Services; East African Economic Development Center; *Haboon* Magazine; and the Somalia Family Advocacy Group. All are nonprofit organizations.

Assimilation to the Minneapolis Community—The main difficulty I had assimilating to the mainstream community was the language barrier, because I did not speak in English and at times people had difficulty understanding me. Second, I experienced racial and cultural misunderstandings; many people in the American society were not well educated and did not know about my culture, religion, and other differences. Many of the Somali youth and their parents have similar experiences such as limited formal education caused by the Somali civil war and settlement in different refugee camps. Somali students like me were enrolled into classrooms in the United States based on age rather than academic level, making it very difficult to succeed. When classes are challenging beyond a person's current capability, it often leads to students skipping school and dropping out.

Since parents have to support their families and provide food and shelter, but can only get lower-wage jobs—such as assembly work, cleaning, temporary jobs, and some of them struggle with small businesses that barely make a sustainable income—they do not have the time to be involved in their children's academic and recreational activities. Not only are families working hard to meet the basic needs to support their children in the United States, they also are responsible for sending money to extended families back in Africa. The expectation of the school system on parents for parent involvement adds to the challenges for Somali families and students. Somali parents and the Somali community value education.

When I started high school, I was fortunate enough to have bilingual teachers to assist me in my education and adaptation to the education system in America. Now, due to the cutbacks and policies, Somali students don't have culturally appropriate programs and the support of bilingual teachers in their schools.

It was not easy for me to attend high school because my family back home expected me to support them, even though I was in my teens. I was encouraged to get a GED instead of finishing high school, so I could get a full-time job. Instead, I started working 20

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hours a week at the Mall of America and continued to work towards my high school diploma.

During the summer, I worked full time while also attending summer school to pass the basic standards tests in math and English. In my senior year, I took a commanding English class at the University of Minnesota in order to improve and be ready for college. I was able to take this class through the post-secondary options program. Because of my GPA, leadership, and extracurricular activities, I was accepted to attend the General College of the University of Minnesota, which no longer exists.

Somali youth today experience the same barriers I faced as a new immigrant in the United States; however, they do so with even fewer resources than what was available for me. Language is still a barrier as young Somalis try to achieve success. Identity crisis and cultural conflict are a reality for Somali youth—for example, Somali culture at home versus American culture at school. Parents expect you to keep your culture, while the American education system and way of life forces you to assimilate. Many have difficulties adjusting to the new way of life while facing cultural barriers that seem hard to overcome. As a result of identity crisis and frequent challenges, many youth lose hope and start making poor choices. The current economic situation also adds to the problem since jobs are not available for youth. They become truant, getting involved in gangs and using drugs like their peers. However, there are many successful Somali youths who overcame these obstacles.

Somali families tend to be large, mostly with single parents who are working to make ends meet. Many Somali parents also provide for relatives, thus reducing their income status and livelihood. Even though parents care deeply for their children, this continues to be a strain on the support provided to Somali youth.

Somali families for the most part live in high-density housing in the lowest-income neighborhoods in the city. The Cedar Riverside neighborhood where I live and work has a median household income of just $14,367 a year. Let me say that again. It is a median household income which is $14,367 a year. The unemployment rate is 17 percent—that is according to the 2000 census—so it is much worse, especially in the economic crisis we are facing now. Across the street from the Brian Coyle Center, in one apartment complex there are 3,500 residents, of which 92 percent are immigrants and 1,190 are under the age of 18.

This is the highest concentration of low-income children in Minnesota, some people say in the Midwest, and most of them are Somalis. Many opportunities and resources are not available in neighborhoods that Somalis reside compared to other areas in the city. Services are often inaccessible due to lack of appropriate local, city, and State agencies offering culturally competent services to Somalis. We operate our programs in a city-owned building for which the park department doesn't even cover the expenses they are required to by contract, so we manage with minimal resources.

When youth don't have access to healthy options to fill their free time, they fall into the typical trappings associated with youth culture, for example, the Internet—peer pressure and cyber predators. Many Somali youth are nowadays involved with drug use and gang violence. This seems to be the biggest distraction because resources

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and many important opportunities are not available for these youth.

People without college degrees are limited with regard to employment. They are reduced to manual labor and factory work. Moreover, racism and employment discrimination still exist in many blue-collar establishments. This leads to problems such as high divorce rates and child neglect because they are unable to provide for their families and other family members.

Somali youth report a high level of discrimination across the board. This includes schools, colleges, the media, in the community. and by law enforcement. Discrimination is based on ethnicity, culture, and religion. When I asked a group of youth ranging in ages 10 to 20 what were their greatest challenges, 50 percent answered harassment by the police. Because of how young Somali-Americans dress, even some of their own community members stereotype them.

Second-generation immigrants are different than first-generation. Like many immigrant communities, there is a stark difference between first and second-generation Somali immigrants. Parents maintain a lifestyle that essentially is like living from a suitcase; they hope to return. They experience language barriers and have difficulty interacting with the larger society. Second-generation Somalis are more settled and hope to build their lives here; they are more immersed in American culture and they are fully engaged.

Somali immigrants experience frustration with the education system, and new sets of barriers occur for second-generation immigrants. Institutions often are not empowering, for example, keeping students in English language learner (ELL) even if they don't need such courses. Second-generation Somali youth often speak English well, but are stereotyped and wrongly assigned to low-level classes. Inner city schools still have a graduation rate for Somali students well below their white American peers. Second-generation Somalis consider themselves Somali-Americans, but they experience stereotyping by the broader society who sees only their ethnicity and religious affiliation.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Mr. Mukhtar, excuse me for interrupting. You are considerably over the time we normally allow the witnesses. I do not want to cut you off. Let me suggestion two things.

First, you are getting to the Shirwa Ahmed story. I would like to ask you to tell us that story. We will then print your entire statement in the record, and then we will draw out some of your recommendations for solutions in the questions and answers. So why don't you proceed and see if you can tell us about Shirwa Ahmed.

Mr. MUKHTAR. Shirwa Ahmed and I went to Roosevelt High School together, and we are both from Somalia. Recently, it was reported, as we said earlier today, that Shirwa was the first American citizen known to be a suicide bomber.

The Somali community is not a monolithic community; it is highly diverse. As a first-generation immigrant, I faced many challenges in my life, and I had many responsibilities with regard to supporting my life. I made decisions that reflect my history and experiences. It is difficult to map out the lives of people. Many of my classmates took different paths in life and ended up in different

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roles. Some are highly trained professionals, some are in jail, some are in the workforce earning low wages, and some are in the U.S. Army.

When learning about Shirwa's role as a suicide bomber, people were shocked and angry because it goes against the Somali culture and it is also inherently anti-Islamic. Many Somalis are not convinced that it happened because the idea seems too far out of people's comprehension. Throughout Somalia's history, particularly in times of war, suicide bombings never occurred, and this is this case.

I have been asked, "Do Somali youth talk about Shirwa?" Somali youth talk more about March Madness, Kobe Bryant, the NFL draft, and basic things. They face different local challenges than what the topic of this hearing is today.

I will just stop there so I can answer the questions since I went over my time.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thank you very much, and we will include your full statement and those of the other witnesses in the record.

Let me begin my questioning, and let me begin it with you, Mr. Mukhtar. So you knew Shirwa Ahmed. He was your classmate, I gather, at Roosevelt High School in Minneapolis, correct?

Mr. MUKHTAR. Actually, he graduated a year ahead of me, but we went to the same high school.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right. And I gather a good student, serious student?

Mr. MUKHTAR. He was a very quiet guy, good student, but as I told you, he was a class ahead of me.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right. So am I correct, as in the case of Mr. Ahmed's nephew, that this was a surprise when he left for Somalia?

Mr. MUKHTAR. I only heard from the media about his suicide, and when the FBI Director mentioned it was the first American suicide bomber.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. OK, I understand. So your contact with him was not close. Based on your interaction with Somali-American youth in Minneapolis, how do you explain what happened to Mr. Ahmed?

Mr. MUKHTAR. You mean what happened to Shirwa Ahmed?

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Yes, Shirwa Ahmed. Yes, how did he end up going to Somalia? I mean, you assume he was recruited by somebody?

Mr. MUKHTAR. No. That is why I made my own personal choice, and there are a lot of my classmates who also are in jails or in gangs. So I don't know how he ended up in that situation.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Let me go now to Osman Ahmed, because in your testimony—let me ask about Mr. Hassan first, your nephew. Am I correct that he has called at times now from Somalia to talk to his family to tell him he is there?

Mr. AHMED. Yes.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. And I thought your testimony was very interesting. I think I have it right—well, here is what it said to me: That when they get there, basically their identity is taken away, their papers are taken away. So in some sense, they are trapped,

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and that may be one reason why the recruiting of Americans goes on because they are left with no way to get out, so they are much more controlled by al-Shabaab.

Mr. AHMED. Yes, that is the main reason they are recruited, because the local Somalis, if they desired to flee from their terrorist group, they have a place to return. They have a family, and also they have a protection.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right

Mr. AHMED. But these kids, they don't have a protection, they don't have their clan, they don't have any family members back home. So they have nowhere to go.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Yes. Mr. Ahmed, in your testimony, you used the word "they" several times, "they" when describing those who recruited and radicalized both your nephew and other young men in the Somali community in Minneapolis. And I wanted to ask you if you could say a little bit more about who you think "they" are?

Mr. AHMED. There are different minority groups who are spreading this ideology of extremism. And before, they never came up and shared their views to the community until the Ethiopian troops entered Somalia. So at that time, they got excused.

After 2006, those minority groups, they started spreading to two mosques in Minneapolis——

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Mostly through the mosques.

Mr. AHMED. Two mosques, even though we also suspect at some other mosques around the United States.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. AHMED. They changed the management of those two mosques to have influence to the community, and that is how we believe after 2006 they started recruiting the kids, and also spreading their ideology of extremist.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. So you are convinced that it is people within the mosque who are having this effect on some of the young men in the Somali community in Minneapolis.

Mr. AHMED. Of course, let me give you an example. These kids, especially my nephew, he was well connected to the mosque. He does not have any friends outside. He used to go to school, home, and the mosque.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. AHMED. And there is no way he could get that ideology from the school or home.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Yes, and that is a very important point. So his family does not believe in this Islamist extremist ideology.

Mr. AHMED. No way.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Obviously, he was not getting it in school.

Mr. AHMED. Nothing.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Also, again, to point this out—and it seems to be a pattern as you described some of the young men who had gone, these were, generally speaking, young men who were doing pretty well at school, correct?

Mr. AHMED. Yes. All of them, they were A students.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Yes. And were all of them regular attenders at one or more of the mosques?

Mr. AHMED. As far as we heard from their families, yes.

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Chairman LIEBERMAN. You also advocated in your testimony for more transparency with regard to the funding for the Abubakar mosque because, as you suggest, you are worried that some of the money may have been sent to al-Shabaab. Why do you think that that is so?

Mr. AHMED. Actually, that money, it is not only for the Abubakar Mosque. There is another mosque which is Da'wan, in St. Paul.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. In St. Paul?

Mr. AHMED. Yes. They are collecting quarterly, sometimes monthly, sometimes yearly, and they are telling the community that they are spending the money for expenses of the mosque and the salaries. But the community have questions about where that money really is going. And there is no transparency at all.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Yes. So your concern, obviously, is that some of the money being contributed to the mosque is going to al-Shabaab.

Mr. AHMED. Actually, we are cautious about that, because, one, there is no transparency. They can use that money wherever they want to use it.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right. I have a feeling Senator Collins is going to ask this question, so I will begin it. But as we trace this rather remarkable path that we believe from people who have followed it that Burhan Hassan, your nephew, took, he went with a group of other young men. They split up. Some went to Boston. Some went to Chicago. They had many stops along the way before they got to Somalia. And the estimate is that this was being coordinated as a way to perhaps deceive people who would be following them, but also it cost a fair amount of money, an estimated at least $2,000.

Is it fair to say that you would be surprised if Burhan Hassan himself had $2,000 to spend on the trip?

Mr. AHMED. No way, no way he could get it. He never worked, so definitely there is a group who are going to organize these kids, funding, arranging even the travel stuff. Even some of them, they cannot call the travel agents and get tickets because of their age.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thank you. I am now going to yield to Senator Collins. You have been very helpful to the Committee.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Mukhtar, let me pick up where the Chairman left off. You gave us some very compelling statistical information about the low level of income of the Somali households in your region. So would you agree that it is very unlikely that these young men were able to finance their own trips?

Mr. MUKHTAR. Actually, allow me to say that Abdisalam, who is one of the kids that left, I know him very well. He was in my youth program when I used to work at Elliott Park. So Abdisalam used to work. He had a job while he was a full-time student at the university of Minnesota. Some of the older youth, according to community members, had jobs. But I am not sure who—I don't exactly know who paid their trip and why, because I deal with the challenges that face the young people every day. And the mosques, the issue of the mosques, the mosques are the essential life of Muslims—not only the Somali community. Every Muslim, their essential life is the mosque because we pray five times a day.

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My kid goes to the mosque to learn his Islamic roots. So what happens is that these mosques, they are community built, not individuals. So we cannot blame the mosques. We can blame individuals. You can create friends and foes, as it happened on September 11, 2001.

So, please, I am encouraging you—I personally want to know who is recruiting these kids because every day that is what I do. I want to make sure that these young people make the right decisions and want these young people to be productive citizens. So I have the right to know who is recruiting them.

Senator COLLINS. You do believe that they are being recruited, though.

Mr. MUKHTAR. There are rumors within the community. The only recruitment that I know, I know gangs who are recruiting these kids.

Senator COLLINS. Right.

Mr. MUKHTAR. And that is the local challenge that I face as a youth manager.

Senator COLLINS. Mr. Ahmed, you made a really important point in your testimony that was different from the previous panel whom we heard earlier. You make the point that for these young people, America is their homeland, that your nephew was 8 months old when he came to America.

Mr. AHMED. Yes

Senator COLLINS. That he had never been to Somalia. Is that correct?

Mr. AHMED. Yes.

Senator COLLINS. So, in your judgment, this was not a case, as far as you know, of his feeling this connection to Somalia that would lead him to volunteer to go fight for his homeland, because America is his homeland. Is that correct?

Mr. AHMED. Yes.

Senator COLLINS. I think that is a very important point here, because it leads to your conclusion that there is indoctrination or radicalization going on. And I am not trying to put words in your mouth, but is that correct?

Mr. AHMED. Yes, that is correct.

Senator COLLINS. Obviously, the events of the last several months have clearly heightened the awareness of the Somali community in Minneapolis of the dangers of radicalization and the risk to the young people, your relatives, your friends, your family members.

A key to combating that radicalization is for individuals and communities, youth leaders, and local mosque leaders to be aware of the dangers before this radicalization process occurs. To your knowledge—I am going to ask both of you this question—was that awareness in existence prior to the disappearance of these young people? Mr. Mukhtar.

Mr. MUKHTAR. In this case, there was not much awareness, no, because we were focusing on the local violence issues. In the last year, while the Minneapolis mainstream violence went down by six points, the Somali youth violence went up six points. It is totally the opposite. We had six Somali young men who were killed by Somalis, gangs or other ways, last year alone. I personally lost a vol-

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unteer who was a work/study I recruited, Ahmed Nur Ahmed Ali, on his first day of his job in front of Brian Coyle Center.

So I focused on the local issues, but, on the other hand, we control our computer lab because Internet plays a role in this issue, as this Committee reported in May in your report. So we control our computer lab—you cannot go to YouTube. You cannot watch anything. We don't allow MySpace or other social things.

So we are aware youth are very vulnerable when it comes to the Internet, but as to this issue, I focus on the local issues which actually the community talked more about before this happened.

Senator COLLINS. Mr. Ahmed, in your judgment, was there an awareness of this risk to the Somali youth in Minneapolis prior to the disappearance of these young men?

Mr. AHMED. Before I answer that question, I want to clarify.

Senator COLLINS. Yes.

Mr. AHMED. We are not blaming the mosque.

Senator COLLINS. Right.

Mr. AHMED. Mosques are our places we worship. What we are blaming is the management. The mosque itself cannot indoctrinate for the kids.

Senator COLLINS. That is an important distinction.

Mr. AHMED. Yes. The answer to this question is we do not have to mix it, the gang activities going on in Minnesota and the missing kids. It is two separate issues. These kids, they can harm us in United States and our security. But the gangs, they can only harm us with the gang stuff. So we don't have to always mix it for those two issues, those kids who are traveling back home and the kids who are in gangs.

When it comes to the Internet, I do not believe that the Internet played a big percentage. First time we believe they get indoctrinated might be the end when they get brainwashed 10 percent or 15 percent a day, they could get somebody from the Internet. That is what we believe.

Senator COLLINS. When your nephew has called back home from Somalia, has he given any indication of why he left or what he is doing or whether he plans to return?

Mr. AHMED. He looks like somebody who was being instructed by another person who is in there. His mom tried to ask him a couple of questions, and he just keep returning, "Mom, I am safe. I am in Mogadishu, Somalia. I will call you back." So couple of times he has called his mom, she tried to ask couple of questions, and somebody maybe was instructing him what to say.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks very much, Senator Collins. Senator Burris.

Senator BURRIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Menkhaus, I want to thank you for your insightful information about that whole situation. It was really educational and informative. My questions probably will be directed at the other witnesses.

Either one of you, do you know if any adult Somalis have volunteered to go back for the war?

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Mr. AHMED. There is no way that somebody who has the best hospitals, best schools, and lives with best society, can go back and join a terrorist group.

Senator BURRIS. Do I understand, you do not know of any of your——

Mr. AHMED. There is no way a person who is in the United States that has the best schools in the world, best hospitals, live with best society in the world, can go back and join a terrorist group. There is no way.

Senator BURRIS. OK. Because at times you will see this has happened in America where the various ethnic groups are here as Americans, and they have gone back to their homeland voluntarily sometimes to assist. So you said you know of no Somali adults that have gone back to say that we now want to try to defend our homeland or join the services. Is that what you are saying?

Mr. AHMED. Yes, even though some people justify going back for fighting with Ethiopian troops. Let me give you example. Last year, October 29, 2008, there were two explosions in Somalia, and that area, it is a peace area; there is no Ethiopian troops. So what are they justifying those who are saying we want to go back and fight the Ethiopian troops? There is no Ethiopian troops in Somalia there.

Senator BURRIS. Do you two gentlemen feel any danger as a result of your coming here and testifying? You mentioned gangs and——

Mr. MUKHTAR. No, I personally—as a Somali community member and a Somali-American, I have the responsibility, and we all care about the safety of America. Let me be clear about that. The Somali community is very peaceful, and we care about—and that is why I decided to come for the sake of the American country and the Somali-American community who have been victimized because we have an issue of guilt by association, not only the people that left, but in Minnesota and everywhere, Somalis are being considered as homegrown terrorists. But that is not who we are. There are people like us, there are people like Osman, who are here to testify about this issue.

Senator BURRIS. That is admirable on your part. That is what we do as Americans, and the Somalis have adopted this as their country, and I see that you are saying that this is your country now, and you are going to speak up for your country of America. Is that what you are saying?

Mr. MUKHTAR. Not only me but the whole Somali community.

Senator BURRIS. Terrific.

Mr. MUKHTAR. Yes, and that is why maybe this small number of people that have different ideas, but the majority of the Somali-Americans and the Muslim community is very safe, and they consider this their homeland, and that is why some of them are even in the army, to protect this country.

Senator BURRIS. And that is what we call America, and I am so proud of the Somalis who are here and who have adopted this country because I am a descendant not of Somalia but somewhere out of Africa, which I do not even know where. And for you all to come to the country voluntarily and adopt this country as your own and to say you are going to make America even greater and make

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your family greater, that is what it is all about. I do not want to seem like I am lecturing to you, but you bring tears to my eyes when I see you are committed in that fashion.

So you do not feel any danger, and you are seeking to try to stop these young people from being recruited. Do you know who is really doing the recruiting to get them over there? If it is the managers of the mosque or somebody has been taking them out, who is doing it?

Mr. AHMED. First of all, I am comfortable coming here and testifying even though I was getting big pressure from the minority group who are leading some of the mosques. But I am not really in danger at all.

The other question, which is who is recruiting, it is definitely clear. These kids, they were American mainstream kids. They did not come up with their own idea to go back to Somalia and have a ticket. Definitely, there is a minority group who are working, recruiting, financing. And I hope the law enforcement agencies will bring them to justice soon.

Senator BURRIS. So you are saying that there are investigations going on as to who——

Mr. AHMED. That is what we believe, of course, yes.

Senator BURRIS. Thank you, gentlemen. No more questions, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Senator Burris. First, I want to say Senator Burris really was speaking for all of us. You are an inspiration. Each one of us is from ethnic communities that immigrated here, and I was raised in a family that said that in America, you did not have to be like everybody else to be a good American. Part of the strength of America was to be yourself, that from that diversity—cultural, religious, whatever—that you made America stronger. And the Somali-American community is contributed to that.

Incidentally, may I say to the two of you that you are setting a great role model for the young people coming up in the community after you. I appreciate what you said about the mosques, and just to clarify, from the Committee's point of view, the problem here is not the mosques. The problem is that, from what you have said, there may be some people—one or two or however many—inside the mosque who are using the mosque to recruit, essentially to take away some of your children. I mean, obviously, one of the great things about America is the First Amendment right to freedom of religion, and that is what the mosques are all about. So we approach the mosques with respect. If we have any concerns, it is about the people who are operating within them.

First off, we have good reason to believe that there is law enforcement work going on and that it is aimed at some of the people who are causing this problem and who obviously are a minority and do not reflect the interests or the opinions of the Somali-American community.

But, generally speaking, tell us what the community is doing to try to combat this—I will call it "an evil influence" aimed at your children and what, if anything, local or State government is doing to help you and what can anyone do to help you bring your children to the right path.

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Mr. AHMED. The reality, it is not an easy task to find out really those who are involved. But as a parents, we tried every angle that we can get information and working with the law enforcement agencies. We even contacted people back home in Somalia to get some information. And still we are working to the law enforcement agencies. We are trying to speak to families that do not come forward and explain they are not in danger and explain if they come forward and talk to the law enforcement agencies and register their kids, in the future, they may get protection from the American Government.

So it is not really an easy task, but we are trying to work and knock on every door. And I hope one day we will succeed that idea.

We did not get that much help from the authorities back home in Minnesota, what I am talking, from mayor or other officers.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Yes.

Mr. AHMED. We only have contact with the FBI and some of the local law enforcement agencies. And I hope we will try to go everywhere that you can get help.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Well, if there is a way we can help, I hope you will let us know. It is a remarkable story because we found that in previous hearings—you would not expect it, but the agency of the Federal Government that has the most outreach and, I would say, positive outreach to the Muslim-American community—in this case, the Somali-American community—is the FBI, surprisingly.

I want to ask you, Mr. Mukhtar, a final question. From the work you are doing at the community center, what is your judgment about the extent to which radical websites, Islamist websites, extremist websites are having some effect on children? Are the kids going to use them a lot?

Mr. MUKHTAR. I mean, kids are tech savvy nowadays, and they would rather use the Internet than listen to radio or watch TV.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. MUKHTAR. So the only thing I would say is also in my statement under the recommendations. But I would say is that extreme—you should be able, this Committee, the FBI, or the law enforcement should be able to control the Internet use. Last year alone in America, 6,000 cyber predators have been reported by families. So you can imagine that is the only people that are reporting that they know they cannot report this to the law enforcement.

My community, my parents, they do not speak English, so there is no way they can report such things like that. They do not know anything about computers. So it is very important that we protect our kids from the Internet, whether it is the Islamic extremists or other issues. But it is very important that we do that.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Very good. Incidentally, this Committee made some protests about YouTube—which is now owned by Google—and they created a process where, when we and any of you who want, you can do it through us, can identify a website, they will check it. And if they believe it is encouraging violence, they will take it down.

Mr. MUKHTAR. It is not only YouTube, but it is also local media. Each ethnic group has their own media that influence. So you can also add to that. You can filter that, too.

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Chairman LIEBERMAN. That is a good point.

Dr. Menkhaus, thank you for being here. Your testimony was very helpful. I want to clarify, because you have described a changing picture on the ground in Somalia, with al-Shabaab somewhat in—I would not say "retreat," but waning somewhat because of changes, and particularly because the Ethiopians are not there anymore.

Is al-Shabaab effectively in control of some parts of Somalia now still?

Mr. MENKHAUS. Absolutely. It controls, again, all the territory from the Kenyan border down to the outskirts of Mogadishu. It has some strongholds inside Mogadishu as well. There were fears that when the Ethiopians withdrew in December that al-Shabaab might overrun the capital. That has not happened. What we have seen is that there has been pushback, by clan militias affiliated with this new emerging unity government. And we suspect that is because Somali political, social, and business leaders in the country understand full well the severe consequences of an al-Shabaab takeover. They were willing to see al-Shabaab used to fight the Ethiopians, but are not interested in seeing them come into power.

It is going to take some time to deal with al-Shabaab. There is a process of both negotiation, to co-opt some of the members of al-Shabaab, and then marginalize the rest. But we do have some reason to believe that they are not as strong as they were and they are likely to get weaker.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. So let me suggest this to you. As I listened to you and think about what we heard, somewhat on the first panel, but particularly from General Maples, the head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, who coincidentally testified for the Senate Armed Services Committee yesterday. He testified about all the trouble spots in the world, but this idea that al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab have been growing closer together and there may well be an actual "merger," insofar as that is an accurate term—that is the term he used yesterday, I believe.

Having heard that from him yesterday and putting it in the context of what you have told us today makes me wonder whether this is essentially a marriage of convenience, not only ideology, and to the extent that these both have jihadist or revolutionary world elements in them, but that you have one group, al-Shabaab, which is now in some difficulty in Somalia, but still in control of part of the country. You have al-Qaeda now perhaps looking for a foothold, a sanctuary somewhere. It obviously does not have it anymore in Afghanistan, nor in Iraq. They are coming under great pressure in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), but still they are there. And I wonder whether they are thinking that this may be, to the great detriment to the people of Somalia, a kind of sanctuary for them.

Mr. MENKHAUS. I don't think that they will attempt to use Somalia as a base and a major safe haven.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Interesting.

Mr. MENKHAUS. They tried that earlier. In 1993–94, there was an attempt by the East African al-Qaeda cell to penetrate Somali-inhabited areas of the Eastern Horn, and it went badly for them, actually. It turned out to be as non-permissive an environment for

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them as it is for those of us who work in relief agencies and embassies.

As for al-Qaeda, I think you are exactly right. This is a marriage of convenience. This is a low-cost, high-yield region of the world in which to cause mischief for the United States. There are a lot of soft targets in places like Nairobi, Ethiopia, and Djibouti, that we have to worry about because of al-Qaeda's involvement there. But they have not demonstrated to date a level of commitment to, for instance, making Somalia into an equivalent part of Afghanistan or Pakistan. And I don't think they would want to. I think that there are other roles that Somalia can play for them—as a transshipment point, as a temporary base for a handful of operatives—but not a major base.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. MENKHAUS. For al-Shabaab, I think it makes sense that they would be looking to al-Qaeda now because their strength has always been their ability to project themselves as the Somalis fighting the foreigners—the Ethiopians, the West, whoever. And so for them, globalizing their struggle is really the only currency that they have got left.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. MENKHAUS. For instance, I worry now, as their fortunes decline inside Somalia, that they are going to be spending more time fighting in Somali-inhabited areas of Ethiopia, because there they can portray it as the Somalis versus the Christian highlander Ethiopian imperialists, etc.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Yes, it frankly makes it all the more heartbreaking said in that context, the story of these young Somali-Americans, good kids, good students, religious, getting swept up in this, ending up somewhere where they are basically trapped, and they become pawns in a game much larger than themselves, but in which their lives are either ruined or endangered, unless we can somehow get them out. Thank you.

Senator Collins.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank all of our witnesses today for deepening our understanding and for your willingness to come forward, and I am going to ask just one final question of each of you, and that is, if you had one recommendation to Federal, State, or local law enforcement how they could best work with the Somali-American community to combat this terrible problem that is robbing the community of some of its most promising young people, what would that recommendation be? Professor, we will start with you.

Mr. MENKHAUS. I will go back to a recommendation that I made at the conclusion of my written remarks, and that is, if we can provide clarity to the Somali community as to what is legal and what is illegal behavior, that would go a long way toward helping them understand how they can be constructively engaged in their home country and not risk crossing a line when they do not know where the line is. Somalis used al-Barakat, a remittance company, for years to remit money. And then in late 2001, we froze its assets and declared that it was an organization that was linked to al-Qaeda. That was an example of the problem: "Who do I work with in terms of remitting money?" Al-Shabaab poses the same problem

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for them. There is an enormous amount of confusion as to just what they can and cannot do.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you. Mr. Ahmed.

Mr. AHMED. All right. I think unless we involve the Somali community, the law enforcement agencies alone cannot achieve the goal. So what I would like to say is now we have a place to start. We have the parents that will come forward, those whose kids have been already exploited and are gone, recruited by a minority group. So I would say if we empower the parents, those who already have experiences, it is the truth that you can reach the community and also to work with the law enforcement agencies. Unless the community comes up and works with the law enforcement agencies, only the law enforcement agencies cannot reach these goals.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Mr. MUKHTAR. I also made those recommendations in my statement, but the first recommendation is the law enforcement itself to work together, whether it is local, Federal, that itself helps. And in terms of the Somali community, the Somali community has the experts and the capacity to work with the law enforcement and a Committee like you guys.

And, last, I will say Somali communities should be educated about their rights and responsibilities. And what we really need is a true partnership with a Committee like this and the law enforcement.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks very much, Senator Collins. I thank all of you for being here. I appreciate what you have said. We extend our hand to you in the partnership that you have suggested. We want you to keep in touch with our staff. We will keep in touch with you.

Bottom line, there is a problem here, and it is a problem that not only threatens American security, but it threatens something more fundamental, which is the American dream, the reality of the American dream for all the children who grow up here, including, of course, Somali-American children or Muslim-American children generally.

So this, as I say, is the most graphic and clear evidence that we have had thus far of a systematic campaign of recruitment of American youth, and in some ways, the most promising of American youth, to leave the country to go fight a war that really will bring them to no good, and potentially could threaten us here at home as well, but certainly will bring them to no good.

So we have learned a lot. We thank you for your courage. We thank you for your testimony. In the normal course of what we do here, we leave the Committee record open for 15 days if you want to add anything to what you said. Some Members of the Committee, either those who were here or those who were not here, may ask you questions in writing. We will ask you to respond to those. But I really thank you all for what you have contributed to our effort to protect the security and the freedom of the American people.

Thank you very much. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:29 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

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EIGHT YEARS AFTER 9/11: CONFRONTING THE TERRORIST THREAT TO THE HOMELAND

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2009

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m., in room SD–342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Joseph I. Lieberman, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Lieberman, Levin, Pryor, Tester, Burris, Kirk, Collins, and McCain.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN LIEBERMAN

Chairman LIEBERMAN. The hearing will come to order. Good morning to everyone.

Secretary Napolitano, if you can believe this, is stuck in traffic. [Laughter.]

This is probably not a major threat to our homeland security. She is totally plugged into all communication networks. She will be here in a couple of minutes. But I thought in the interest of time we will proceed and she will understand.

Before I give my opening statement, I want to welcome to this Committee the newest Member of the U.S. Senate, Senator Paul Kirk of Massachusetts. I have had the privilege of knowing Senator Kirk for a long time. He is an extraordinary, able, honorable individual with a great skill set. Obviously, he comes to the Senate for reasons that are sad for all of us, most particularly for him because he was such a dear, long-time friend, and confidant of Senator Ted Kennedy. But I do not think anybody would be happier or prouder than Teddy to know that Paul Kirk is here.

I just joked with him that Teddy is probably up there in heaven sort of laughing and saying, "OK, Kirk. Now let me see what you can do in the Senate." [Laughter.]

So, Senator Kirk, it is a great honor to welcome you here to this Committee.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR KIRK

Senator KIRK. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It is really my honor as well to be part of a body that is so important to our democracy and which Senator Kennedy obviously loved as an institution. And as you say, the circumstances of my being here provide me with an incredible honor as part of my own life, and I hope to be able to work closely with you and Senator Collins.

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I know this Committee enjoys a great record and has an important mission as we look out for our security here at home and protect our troops abroad. And if I can contribute in any way to what we are doing here as an important body of the Senate, I will be delighted.

So I thank you for your kind comments and look forward to working with you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Senator Kirk. I am sure you will contribute substantially, and I am delighted that you have chosen to be on this Committee.

Today's hearing, which is titled "Eight Years After 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland," was scheduled and planned more than a month ago as part of our Committee's responsibility to monitor the terrorist threat to our homeland and to oversee our government's defense of us from that threat.

In fact, for the last 3 years, our Committee, under Senator Collins' leadership and then mine, has had a particular focus on the threat of homegrown Islamist terrorism, that is, the threat of attacks planned against America by people living in our country, as opposed to the attackers of September 11, 2001, who, obviously, came from outside.

Then, quickly, in the last 2 weeks, we have had arrests in very serious cases of homegrown terrorism: Two lone wolves—Michael Curtis Finton and Hosam Maher Smadi—and one more ominous cell led by Najibullah Zazi.

These are certainly not the first such plots against our country that have been broken since September 11, 2001. In fact, we have been a Nation regularly under attack in this unconventional war with terrorists. Just in the last few months, going back to May, a group was arrested who were quartered around Newburgh, New York, who had planned to launch an attack against an Air National Guard base there, and then was caught in the act, they thought, of planting a bomb at a synagogue in the Riverdale section of the Bronx.

In June, another homegrown terrorist, who, in fact, had gone to Yemen for training, walked into a U.S. Army recruiting station center in Little Rock, Arkansas, shot and killed an Army recruiter, and wounded another.

And in July, there was an arrest of seven people in North Carolina who were planning an attack on our base at Quantico.

So in a way that is dispersed and, therefore, I think often not seen by the public, we have regularly been under attack since September 11, 2001. But these three cases in the last several days were significant and in some senses different and bring a sense of real-time urgency to our hearing today.

Mr. Finton, who is the gentleman from Illinois, was about to detonate a bomb against the Federal building in Springfield, Illinois, and Mr. Smadi was in the process of what was thought to be an attack with explosives against the Wells Fargo Motor Bank in Dallas, Texas.

These three cases realize both our worst fears about homegrown Islamist terrorist attacks against America and, I add, our best hopes for our government's capacity to defend us from them.

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The Zazi case is the scenario that many of us have worried about and watched out for: A legal permanent resident of America, free, therefore, to travel in and out of our country, going to Pakistan, connecting with al-Qaeda there, receiving training and perhaps directions, and returning to America to join with others here in an attack on New York City.

When Senator Collins and I were first briefed on the Zazi case, we each had the same reaction, which was a sense of gratitude that all the things that have been done by Congress, the Bush and Obama Administrations, and hundreds of thousands of U.S. Government employees since September 11, 2001, worked in the Zazi case.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), and a lot of others, such as the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the National Security Agency (NSA) and many others, worked smoothly with each other and, where relevant, with State and local law enforcement to stop Zazi and his cell before they could attack. Those working for us in the government brought a wide range of resources—technical and human—brilliantly to bear on this group of attackers and literally connected the dots in a way that I do not think they would have been connected before September 11, 2001, and in a way that led them from New York to al-Qaeda in South Asia and then back to New York.

The Finton and Smadi cases are less complicated but, from a law enforcement point of view and in the contemplation of our Committee that has been focused on homegrown terrorism, also quite daunting because they involve individuals operating, incidentally, outside of the major metropolitan areas that we have assumed were the priority targets for terrorists, such as New York, Washington, DC, Los Angeles, and Chicago—individuals operating alone who we call "lone wolves" because they apparently did act alone in these two cases and were, therefore, less likely to turn up on the many technological and human walls we have built since September 11, 2001, to protect our homeland and our people.

And yet their lonely terrorist plots were discovered by the people in the Federal Government working for us, and they were stopped. So as we convene this hearing, I hope these three cases will lead us to two conclusions.

The first is obvious, which is that, although we have won significant victories over al-Qaeda around the world since they attacked us on September 11, 2001, and we thereafter declared war against them, al-Qaeda is still out there, and, in fact, they are in here, and they maintain a patient and hateful desire to attack the people of the United States as well as every other segment of humanity that does not share their fanatical and violent theology, ideology, and ambition for conquests and suppression of freedom. This war, and its attendant threats to our homeland, is not over and will not be for a long time.

I think the second conclusion that we should take from these recent cases is that we have together made enormous progress in our ability to protect our people from terrorism. For this, I particularly, this morning want to thank the three leaders who are before us as

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witnesses and their organizations, those who preceded them, and all those who work with them, including the men and women of our intelligence community who necessarily are unseen.

In this war, however, in which our enemy requires only a small number of fanatics who do not care about their lives or, obviously, the lives of others, we require enormous numbers of people to defend our free and open country against those terrorists, we are only as good as our ability to have stopped the last terrorist plot against us.

Eternal and extensive vigilance is, in this war, truly the price of our liberty. So the work of homeland security goes on 365 days a year, but this morning, I want to pause as we begin this hearing to say thank you to Secretary Napolitano, Director Mueller, and Director Leiter, and all who work with you for all you do every day to protect the American people.

I look forward to your testimony and to hearing your evaluation of the current state of the terrorist threat to our country and what we are doing about it and ultimately what Congress can do to help you do your jobs for us. Thank you.

Senator Collins.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR COLLINS

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You have given an excellent overview of why we are here today. Let me start by welcoming our new colleague to the Committee. This Committee likes to have a minimum number of New Englanders on it. [Laughter.]

And with the addition of Senator Kirk, we have finally met the minimum allotment.

And I will now begin my formal remarks.

Deter, detect, disrupt, and defend—these four simple words form the core of our Nation's mission to prevent terrorist attacks.

Their simplicity, however, belies the complexity of the challenge. They fail to capture the dedication and perseverance that the men and women of our military, intelligence, law enforcement, and homeland security agencies must demonstrate constantly to stay ahead of the evolving terrorist threat.

Eight years removed from the attacks of September 11, 2001, our Nation must remain vigilant against the Islamist terrorist threat we face. Recent cases drive home the reality of this threat. Four separate terrorist plots have been uncovered in the past month alone.

The allegations against Mr. Zazi raise particular concerns because his level of planning reportedly was quite sophisticated. According to the FBI, Zazi received training in an al-Qaeda camp in Pakistan and had purchased bomb-making components. In his car, a computer that the FBI recovered contained images of handwritten notes that contained instructions for manufacturing explosives.

Investigations in Springfield, Illinois, and Dallas, Texas, have not only resulted in arrests, but may have prevented horrific casualties.

Details of a new plot in an ongoing case also came to light last week. Prosecutors filed a new indictment in the case against Daniel

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Boyd and Hysen Sherifi, alleging that they conspired to murder Marines at Quantico.

While these and other cases are cause for alarm, as the Chairman has pointed out, recent successes demonstrate that our vigilance, our strategies, and our hard work to date have paid off. Authorities identified suspects who intended to commit terrorist acts, they initiated sting operations, and they prevented the attacks.

Our antiterrorism work must be relentless. It requires effective coordination across the Federal Government and with our State and local partners. As the Chairman has noted, these recent successes demonstrate the considerable progress that we have made since 2001. By creating the Department of Homeland Security, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and in some ways most important of all, the National Counterterrorism Center, we have encouraged information sharing and collaboration across the Federal Government to ensure that the dots will indeed be connected. We have also strengthened the relationship with our partners in State and local governments. These successes represent significant strides in what will be a long war against terrorism.

Despite these successes, however, some of these recent domestic plots demonstrate that coordination among Federal agencies and State and local law enforcement may have been uneven.

For example, the perpetrator of the shootings that the Chairman mentioned at a military recruiting center in Little Rock was under investigation by the FBI. But it is less clear whether State and local law enforcement, who responded to the shooting, knew of this investigation.

We need to examine how we can build on the improved information sharing with State and local officials, including whether technology gaps hinder current efforts.

We must ask what further resources are necessary to allow us to be better prepared to respond to threats. And we must always remember that while our Nation has been hard at work realigning our defenses and strengthening our response systems, the terrorists have been busy, too.

Disturbingly, the perpetrators in these recent cases are mostly homegrown terrorists. We must work to better understand the path that leads to violent radicalization in this country and increase our efforts to interrupt this deadly cycle. Our intelligence and law enforcement officials must carefully analyze how the next generation of terrorists is being funded, trained, and supplied.

Outreach to communities affected by violent radicalization will have to continue to be a priority. These outreach efforts were evident when the Committee examined how more than 20 young Somali-American men from Minneapolis were recruited to travel to Somalia to join the militant Islamist group.

The FBI and State, and local law enforcement have engaged in outreach to the Somali community in this country, and recent events underscore the critical importance of such efforts. As we meet, the FBI is investigating reports that a Somali-American from Seattle carried out a suicide bombing in Mogadishu just a few weeks ago. Last October, a Somali-American from Minneapolis allegedly participated in a similar attack. And, of course, the fear is

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that if these Americans are traveling overseas for training, they may use this training to come back and attack our homeland.

For this reason, we must strengthen our efforts to work with community leaders to understand what factors caused these young men to travel halfway around the world to participate in terrorist attacks. Understanding is necessary to our hopes of breaking the cycle of violent radicalization.

Mr. Chairman, I share your pride in what has been accomplished. I had the same reaction that you did in the briefing. The kind of coordination that we heard in the Zazi case, the sharing of information, the connecting of the dots, simply did not occur 8 years ago. But I am also concerned that complacency, that our very success in thwarting these attacks, could cause us to back off on the effort. The absence of large-scale attacks in the United States and our success in thwarting terrorist plots should not lull us into a false sense of security.

We must not return to a pre-September 11, 2001, mentality.

I look forward to discussing these critical issues with our witnesses today, and I thank you for your leadership.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Collins, for that statement.

Secretary Napolitano, good morning. Thanks for being here, and we welcome your statement now.

TESTIMONY OF HON. JANET A. NAPOLITANO,[1] SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Secretary NAPOLITANO. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Collins, and Members of the Committee, for this opportunity to testify on the Department of Homeland Security and our actions to address these threats to our homeland.

As Senator Collins just said, the threat of terrorism is always with us, but recent weeks have reminded us of the importance of our continuing work—the New York plot, Colorado plot, the Illinois plot, the Texas plot, by way of example. And I would like to compliment not only my colleagues here, but also the many men and women, in the Federal, State, and local governments, who have been working tirelessly on these and other efforts.

These episodes have shown that the threat of terrorism can come from people in many different areas of the country with a broad range of backgrounds. And within this threat environment, the Department's role is to build up our overall national capacity to counter any threat that may arise.

Security from terrorism is a shared responsibility, and DHS is designed to strengthen our many layers of defense to address terrorism, to participate in and support Federal law enforcement action, but also to help build up the capacity of State, local, and tribal governments, particularly through information sharing. And, also, government cannot do it alone. We must engage communities. We must engage our international partners. We must have outreach as well as intelligence gathering in these efforts.

Now, in terms of Federal law enforcement, the law enforcement components engage in a number of aspects of counterterrorism.

[1] The prepared statement of Secretary Napolitano appears in the Appendix on page 144.

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These include the Secret Service, Immigration and Customs enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Coast Guard, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and the Federal Air Marshals Service. They are our boots on the ground in terms of securing the aviation and marine sectors and also in terms of collecting data that can be shared with our law enforcement partners.

We also are part of integrated Federal law enforcement approaches. For example, we participate in the Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF) that are led by the FBI.

Now, in terms of strengthening State and local law enforcement, we do this in a number of ways, but information sharing is particularly important in bridging the gap between the intelligence community here and law enforcement nationwide, helping law enforcement make sense of what they may see on the beat, and helping secure their communities against terrorist threats.

We are in the process of realigning our own intelligence and analysis function to focus on meeting the needs of State and local partners and to strengthen our role in Fusion Centers, where Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement can meet and share threat-related information.

We now have a Joint Fusion Center Program Management Office to help coordinate those efforts. And instead of keeping all of our intelligence and analysis function here in Washington, DC, we have deployed 70 analysts already to Fusion Centers. And all 72 Fusion Centers will have access to the Homeland Security Data Network by the end of fiscal year 2010.

We have just announced a partnership for select Fusion Center personnel to access classified terrorism-related information from the Department of Defense's (DOD) Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNet) program, and my goal is for all Fusion Centers to be centers of analytic excellence, focused on law enforcement needs throughout the country.

Now, in terms of working with communities and individuals, as I mentioned, communities share a responsibility to ensure that our country is not a place where violent extremism can take root. We have now a Violent Extremism Working Group to coordinate throughout the Department our actions on this issue, and particularly through our Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Section, we do important outreach work with communities such as Arab-Americans, Somali-Americans, and Muslim leaders. Within these communities, we are working to help preempt the alienation that many believe is the necessary precursor to violent extremism.

We have engagement teams now active in eight metropolitan areas, and we also are working to help improve our cultural awareness and competency throughout the Department.

Our Citizenship and Immigration Services Department is also providing assistance to organizations that aid immigrants. This is also part of increasing the capacity, the potential to reduce the alienation that so often can lead to violent extremism. And our Science and Technology Directorate is conducting research on that violent radicalization and informing partnerships with other countries in this regard. Indeed, I have had meetings with my col-

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leagues and many of our European allies who have also suffered from this same extremism.

So as you can see, our Department's actions are focused on building up all of the Nation's rings of defense against any terror threat that arises.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify. I will be happy, of course, to answer any questions that you have. I have a more complete statement that I ask be included in the record of this hearing.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Secretary Napolitano. Your statement and all the other witnesses' statements will be included in the record in full.

I just want to note in passing my appreciation for what you have done to strengthen and deepen the ties, the working relationship between your Department, the Federal Government, and State and local law enforcement. From September 11, 2001, we have all felt that we had a resource out there, hundreds of thousands of boots on the ground, if we brought them in and worked with them. And I think through the Fusion Centers and the deployment of your now 70 personnel from your intelligence unit, you have taken some very significant steps forward in that regard, so I thank you for that.

Director Mueller, before I call on you, it is very rare that reading an indictment of someone makes me smile. But you probably saw this part, but I just want to mention it for the record. In the indictment of Mr. Finton, who is the individual, the lone wolf, who was planning to blow up the bombs near the Federal building in Springfield, Illinois, there are statements recorded by him where he is telling his co-conspirator, who turns out to be an undercover agent, all his anger toward America and this bomb that he is going to set off will not be, as he says, "as big as those on 9/11, but will be up there with 9/11."

And then in Section 57 of the document, he says, "Finton said that he had wondered at first whether this was all a set-up, but he knew it was not because law enforcement authorities in America were not that smart."

You had the last laugh on our behalf.

Mr. MUELLER. Yes.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thank you, Director Mueller.

TESTIMONY OF HON. ROBERT S. MUELLER III,[1] DIRECTOR, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr. MUELLER. Thank you, Chairman Lieberman, and thank you, Ranking Member Collins and Members of the Committee, for having me here today. I am happy to be here with my colleagues Janet Napolitano and Mike Leiter to discuss the current terrorist threats to the homeland and our efforts to protect the United States from future terrorist attacks.

The 8 years since September 11, 2001, have seen significant changes at the Bureau. While we remain committed to the criminal programs, including violent crimes, gangs, and white-collar crime,

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Mueller appears in the Appendix on page 158.

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we have shifted our priorities with national security at the forefront of our mission. Today, the FBI is a stronger organization combining greater capabilities with a longstanding commitment to the security of the United States while upholding the Constitution and protecting civil liberties.

The nature of the terrorist threat facing the United States has also changed in the last 8 years. We still face threats from al-Qaeda and many of its affiliated groups and receive credible reports that they remain committed to attacking the United States and U.S. interests abroad. And while several factors have combined to diminish al-Qaeda's core operational capabilities, we and our partners continue to monitor, collect intelligence, and investigate their reach into the United States.

As both of you have pointed out, threats also come from self-directed groups not part of al-Qaeda's formal structure which have ties to terrorist organizations through money or training. An example is the case that was in the news last week where individuals in Denver and New York were plotting to undertake an attack, and one of the individuals, as has been pointed out in that indictment, apparently received training in Pakistan and brought that skill set back to the United States.

Since 2001, we also face a challenge in dealing with homegrown extremists in the United States. These individuals are not formally part of a terrorist organization, but they accept the ideology and wish to harm the United States. Often, that ideology is a result of their interest in what they see on the Internet.

While the intent and capability of homegrown extremists varies widely, several FBI terrorism subjects with no known nexus to overseas extremist networks or groups have taken steps to move from violent rhetoric to action. An example already pointed out is the May 2009 arrest of four individuals for plotting to detonate explosive near a Jewish community center and synagogue in New York. And as Senator Lieberman has pointed out, they also planned to attack military planes at the Stewart Air National Guard Base, also in New York.

And just last week, we arrested two individuals at various stages of planning activities to do harm within the United States, as you both pointed out, and a Dallas, Texas, individual was charged with attempting to bomb an office tower. A coordinated undercover law enforcement action thwarted this effort and ensured that no one was harmed.

And, separately, a 29-year-old Illinois man targeting a Federal building was charged after attempting to detonate a vehicle bomb without knowing it contained inactive explosives.

These cases illustrate not only the threats but the challenges presented by the self-radicalized homegrown extremists. They lack formal ties to recognized groups, making them particularly difficult to detect.

Our mission at the Bureau is not only to disrupt plots but to dismantle networks so that they no longer pose a threat. And targeted intelligence gathering takes time, requires patience, precision, and dedication. It is a labor-intensive process that often does not provide a complete picture quickly, but it is the core of understanding the threats to the homeland, and it is a picture that was put to-

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gether not only by us but with our Federal counterparts and without a doubt our State and local counterparts as well.

Indeed, our partnerships are critical to protecting our Nation and its citizens here at home through our Joint Terrorism Task Forces and abroad with our legal attaches and international partners. We share real-time intelligence to fight terrorists and their supporters.

We use eGuardian, a threat-tracking system, for State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies which provides a central location for law enforcement suspicious activity reporting in an unclassified environment. Our local community outreach program, along with the DHS outreach program, enhances our efforts. And working closely with DHS, whether it be through the Fusion Centers, working closely with NCTC, and working closely with other intelligence community partners, we are engaging communities to address concerns and to develop trust in the Federal law enforcement intelligence agencies and our efforts to protect the homeland.

In closing, the Bureau has long recognized that it is a national security service responsible not only for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating intelligence, but for taking timely action to neutralize threats within the homeland to prevent another terrorist attack.

In so doing, however, we also recognize that we must properly balance civil liberties with public safety in our efforts, and we will continually strive to do so.

Mr. Chairman, Senator Collins, Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today, and I also look forward to answering your questions.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thank you very much, Director Mueller.

Our final witness is Michael Leiter who is the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center. This is probably the least well known of the three organizations before us. Everybody knows about the FBI. Most people today probably know about the Department of Homeland Security. The National Counterterrorism Center is less well known, but plays a critically important role. It is a post-September 11, 2001, creation recommended by the 9/11 Commission and created by legislative enactment that I am proud to say came out of this Committee. It is really the place ultimately where the dots are connected.

Interestingly, just for the record and for those who are here and listening and watching, NCTC reports to the Director of National Intelligence in its intelligence analytical work but, in its role as a strategic counterterrorist operational planner, reports directly to the President of the United States.

Mr. Leiter, thanks for your work, and we will welcome your testimony now.

TESTIMONY OF HON. MICHAEL E. LEITER,[1] DIRECTOR, NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER, OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. LEITER. Thank you, Chairman Lieberman, Senator Collins, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for those very kind words about NCTC, and although I know that will do a great deal

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Leiter appears in the Appendix on page 165.

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to continue to bolster our already high morale, I will say none of us are ready to pat ourselves on the back for a job done. The job has, I think so far, been relatively well done with our very close partners, Janet Napolitano and Bob Mueller. But there is much work that remains.

From our perspective, al-Qaeda is under more pressure today and is facing more challenges and is more vulnerable than at any time since September 11, 2001. But that being said, they remain a robust enemy, and although I believe we have done much to deter attacks and defend against attacks, attacks in the United States remain quite possible. Most importantly, al-Qaeda's safe haven in Pakistan is shrinking and becoming less secure, complicating their ability to train and recruit people and move them within Pakistan.

Al-Qaeda and its allies have suffered significant leadership losses over the last 18 months, interrupting training and plotting and potentially disrupting plots. But again, despite that progress, al-Qaeda and its allies remain intent on attacking U.S. interests at home and abroad.

We assess that the al-Qaeda core is actively engaged in operational plotting and continues recruiting, training, and transporting operatives to include individuals from Western Europe and the United States.

Three years ago, the British, with U.S. help, disrupted a plot in the late stages that could have killed thousands of people flying across the Atlantic. Two years ago the United States, working with the Germans, helped disrupt a plot that was also near execution. And I think, as has already been made clear by your statements and the statements of Director Mueller and Secretary Napolitano, the case of Najibullah Zazi again highlights the threat that we continue to face.

Now, beyond what I refer to as "core al-Qaeda," the group's affiliates continue to develop and evolve, and many of these have now begun to pose an increased threat to the homeland. The affiliates have proven capable of attacking Western targets in their regions, and they aspire to expand operations further.

In Yemen, we have witnessed the reemergence of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and the possibility that it will become a base of operations for al-Qaeda.

In Somalia, as has been mentioned previously, the leaders of the Somalia-based insurgent and terrorist group al-Shabaab are working with a limited number of East Africa al-Qaeda operatives. Al-Shabaab has obviously engaged in terrorist attacks against Somali Government and its supporters, including troops from the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM). And although al-Shabaab's rank-and-file fighters remain focused on removing the current government of Somalia by pursuing al-Qaeda's agenda, we are particularly concerned with training programs run by al-Shabaab that have attracted violent extremists from throughout the globe, including the United States.

In North Africa, al-Qaeda has expanded its operational presence beyond Algeria and has conducted more than a dozen attacks against Western interests in the region.

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And in Iraq, although we assessed that al-Qaeda's ability to attack beyond its borders has been substantially diminished, it continues to pose a force in the region. And although we have focused on al-Qaeda today, I think it is worth noting that in Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Taiba, an al-Qaeda ally, continues to pose a threat to a variety of interests in South Asia. The group's attacks in Mumbai last year resulted in U.S. and Western casualties, and the group continues to plan attacks in India that could have major geopolitical consequences for the U.S. fight against terrorism.

Again, as has been noted, here in the United States, homegrown extremists have sought to strike within the homeland since September 11, 2001, and although they have lacked the necessary tradecraft and capability to effect significant attacks, the recent events, again, point to the very real danger that they pose.

It is this threat environment and the future threats that we discern that, as the Chairman noted, NCTC seeks to counter through our coordination responsibilities to the President. Our responsibility to all elements of national power, including diplomatic, financial, military, intelligence, homeland security, and law enforcement activities, goes to that responsibility to make sure that we have a synchronized effort against all of these threats.

Now, there is a baseline strategy which covers four basic areas: Protecting and defending the homeland, attacking terrorist capabilities overseas, undermining the spread of violent extremism, and preventing the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

But rather than going through that plan, I would simply like to briefly highlight a few of the more focused efforts that we have undertaken, again, working with partners such as DHS and the FBI, to ensure these efforts are synchronized.

In July 2007, at the White House's request, NCTC, with our partners, created an interagency task force that looks at current threats and ensures that current defensive measures, domestically and overseas, are well synchronized. At the same time, this interagency group, including members of DHS and the FBI, looks at threats as they come into the center and determines whether or not new elevated measures are required.

In response to last year's attack in Mumbai, again, working with DHS and the FBI, NCTC formulated and facilitated exercises for State and local officials to respond to evolving terrorist tactics to ensure that they could, in fact, respond if a similar event occurred in their locality.

On the front of combating violent extremism, we have attempted to coordinate efforts both domestically and abroad. In particular, in dealing with Somali-Americans, we have worked closely with DHS and the FBI to help take best practices from throughout the country and export those to other communities.

And, finally, near and dear to budgetary hearts, we work closely with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to ensure that programs, current programs and future programs are well aligned to these threats.

In conclusion, and as I had opened, although I think the past months and years and the fantastic work of the FBI and DHS show that we have indeed, made progress, many of these efforts must continue and accelerate.

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I do very much thank both you, Senator Collins and Chairman Lieberman, who we know affectionately as "the parents of NCTC," for all you have done to enable some of the progress that we have made.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Director Leiter. I appreciate that very much. We will start the questioning and have 7-minute rounds.

I want to ask a few questions coming off of the Zazi case. I understand that there is a limit to how much you can say about an ongoing investigation. Perhaps I should ask that question first. Is the Zazi case, Director Mueller, an ongoing investigation at this time?

Mr. MUELLER. It is.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks. And just to clarify, there has been some discussion in the media as to whether there remains an imminent threat related to the Zazi plot.

Mr. MUELLER. We do not believe there is an imminent threat.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thank you. And, Secretary Napolitano, I think it would be interesting if you take a moment to just tell us, to the extent you can, about the role or roles that various components of the Department of Homeland Security played in the investigation of the Zazi case.

Secretary NAPOLITANO. Well, again, it is an ongoing investigation, and my comments will be limited by that.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right.

Secretary NAPOLITANO. But different components of the Department did play different roles.

For example, CBP and TSA, now because they are in the same Department, are able to facilitate checking things like travel records, immigration records, and the names that are developed during the course of any investigation, and those names spill out to us, and we are able to very quickly pursue those names at that level.

One of the most important roles was to provide State and local law enforcement, particularly through the Fusion Centers, with contextual information about even an ongoing investigation, and so I think we have now delivered or sent out at least 11 different products related to the Zazi investigation, to State and local law enforcement.

The whole goal, of course, is creating this web between State, local, and Federal law enforcement, not just for this investigation but for other matters involving any type of terrorist activity.

So those give you some sense of the dimension of DHS's involvement, and literally dozens of our employees were involved.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. I appreciate that.

Director Mueller, I have tremendous regard for the FBI and the New York Police Department (NYPD). There were some news media reports about some disagreements between the FBI and the NYPD in the investigation of Zazi. I have had the occasion to talk to both you and NYPD Commissioner Ray Kelly about these, and I wanted, to the extent you are comfortable, just to ask you to respond briefly for the public record on that. How are your relations with the New York Police Department?

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Mr. MUELLER. I believe our relations are exceptionally good, as good as they have been in a long time. I do believe the news media exaggerates issues that come up in any investigation. We talk ourselves, through our New York office, with NYPD. It is not just daily, but because we are embedded in each other's shops, we are working closely together day in and day out.

The New York Police Department has done a remarkable job in understanding the domain and allocating resources to address threats. And the relationship, I think, is as good as it has ever been at this juncture, and the exchange of information through the Joint Terrorism Task Force has been fulsome and enabled us to take the steps that we have taken to disrupt this latest threat.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. I appreciate hearing that. As I said to you when we talked about this, I had occasion to be with Commissioner Ray Kelly of the New York Police Department. I asked him the same question, and he gave exactly the same answer. You are just two national treasures in terms of law enforcement and counterterrorism, and I am reassured to hear that you are working well together.

Following the investigation and arrest of Zazi, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security issued a bulletin warning transit systems and railroads to be on the lookout for improvised explosive devices. That bulletin included recommendations such as increasing random sweeps and patrols for heightening security measures.

I wonder, Director Mueller and Secretary Napolitano, how you at this moment today would assess the current threat to transit agencies, either specifically in New York or more generally around the country.

Mr. MUELLER. I will speak with regard to the timing of this bulletin going out and say that there was no direct threat information in the course of this investigation as to a particular threat, or to the transit systems, in general.

However, when you have an investigation and an activity that has gone as far as this, I believed it important that we identify vulnerabilities, and I will turn it over to the Secretary to follow up on that.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. OK.

Secretary NAPOLITANO. That is right. Because we did not have specifics about location, time, or target of any potential attack, what we were doing was providing a situational awareness, to use the Senator's term, on an area that we know has been from other intelligence raised as a possibility for attack. And so it is all about leaning forward. It is all about thinking ahead. It is all about using the hundreds of thousands of eyes and ears we have out there in law enforcement, particularly in an environment such as this one where we did not have specifics.

Mr. MUELLER. Could I add one other thing, Senator?

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Sure.

Mr. MUELLER. And it goes to a certain extent, in the course of the investigation, you identify certain explosives, and as you identify those explosives and see how those explosives may have been used in the past on a subway system, that raises a red flag in terms of the possible use of the explosives that were being devel-

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oped in this particular case, which then results in the generation of that warning.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right. Obviously, we have seen some evidence of a trend which is of al-Qaeda, and perhaps other international terrorist groups, attempting to recruit Westerners or people who live in Western countries, not just Zazi but the arrest and indictment 2 months ago of Bryant Neal Vinas from Long Island who traveled to Pakistan also and trained in an al-Qaeda camp and participated in an attack against the U.S. military in Afghanistan before his capture.

I want to ask you, how concerned are you, any or all of the three of you, with this dimension of the al-Qaeda threat? And what, if anything, can we do to try to disrupt their use of Westerners to carry out attacks?

Mr. MUELLER. I think it fair to say that all of us are concerned by it. For the last several years, we have picked up intelligence that al-Qaeda has made a concerted effort to recruit Europeans and Westerners, understanding that they can fly under the radar in terms of passing through border controls. And, on the other hand, the Internet, as I alluded to, is also a recruiting tool that initiates persons not contacted by anybody in Pakistan, Yemen, or Somalia, but radicalizes people to the point where they reach out to get the training and fall into exactly what core al-Qaeda wants, which is additional operatives.

Mr. LEITER. Mr. Chairman, I would say, over the past several years, travel of Westerners, particularly U.S. citizens, to either Pakistan or Somalia has been our single biggest concern. They obviously bring with them an understanding of our society which enables them to operate more easily here. They obviously do not have to go through the border controls that non-Westerners and non-U.S. citizens have to go through. And, clearly, simply the ability to go and travel provides them with a potential level of sophistication of training that they might not otherwise be able to obtain. So it is the issue at which we look closest.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thank you. Senator Collins.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Leiter, let me start with you. Our Committee has focused a great deal recently on the threat of a terrorist group obtaining access to a biological agent that could be used in an attack, and we have introduced a bill to tighten the regulation of labs that may contain such pathogens as the Ebola virus, smallpox, or anthrax.

The Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction has projected that it is more likely than not that somewhere in this world within the next 5 years we will experience a biological attack.

What is your assessment of that threat?

Mr. LEITER. Senator, I think the threat is very real, although, frankly, I am loathe to assign some sort of percentage as to the likelihood.

I think with the spread of biological technology for good, it can also be used for nefarious means, and the sophistication of biological understanding is increasing exponentially across the world. So I think some of the elements of your bill, in fact, provide some very valuable measures to protect against some of those risks domestically. I think now that the Director of National Intelligence is pro-

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viding some support with that bill, some technical assistance, and I think that is quite valuable.

We have yet to see a sophisticated effort beyond core al-Qaeda on most of these biological weapons, and, happily, since September 11, 2001, some of the work that has gone on in Afghanistan and Pakistan we believe has disrupted some of their most advanced efforts.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Director Mueller, in assessing the threat of homegrown terrorists in this country, we have always taken comfort in our tradition of integrating new populations—new immigrants—into our broader population. And we have contrasted the American experience with that in Western Europe, where immigrant groups tend to be more isolated and not assimilated.

Two years ago, the NYPD testified before this Committee that this longstanding tradition of absorbing the diaspora population of other countries has protected the United States and retarded the radicalization process at home.

Do we need to rethink that theory in light of what we have seen in the Somali community in Minnesota and perhaps in Seattle as well?

Mr. MUELLER. I think much of what is said in terms of the fact that we are a Nation of immigrants, we are a part of the diaspora, puts us in a different place than, say, the United Kingdom and some other countries where there are more insular communities than you have in the United States.

That being said, we do have some communities—you pointed out the Somali community that has been perhaps more insular than some others—that warrant greater outreach, efforts at assimilation, understanding, and education. But, for the most part, I think we do stand somewhat differently than other countries. But, again, we cannot be complacent, as you pointed out at the outset.

I will also say that some 2 or 3 years ago—I think it was 2006—where in Canada they arrested approximately 15 or 16 individuals who were going to undertake an attack against the parliament, and that plot was well along. And so the extent that one thinks that it is individuals from insular communities that can undertake such attacks, that is not altogether true, believing that Canada is much like us, is a Nation of immigrants with the same type of combination of immigrant groups that generally seek to assimilate.

So that was a warning that you cannot be complacent and rely on the fact that we have very few, I would say, groups that are insulated.

Senator COLLINS. Some of the cases that we have referred to this morning involve individuals who appear to have been radicalized in prison, and the very first hearing that we did to look at homegrown terrorism examined violent radicalization within the prison communities.

What is the FBI doing to try to identify radicalized prisoners and to prevent radicalization within prison?

Mr. MUELLER. Well, we work very closely in the Federal prison system to identify pockets of radicalization. The Federal prison system has a fairly substantial intelligence operation in the sense that it is not just radicalization but gang violence and the like. And so

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utilizing those same capabilities to identify gang members and potential places of violence, we work with the Federal system, and then each of our Joint Terrorism Task Forces has as one of its responsibilities outreach to the State and local places of incarceration and to develop liaison and to keep track and to alert and educate those who are responsible for the State and local prison systems to be alert to this possibility and to let us know when there is that eventuality.

Senator COLLINS. Let me switch to a different issue. We want to make sure that the FBI has the tools that it needs to be effective. In 2007, however, the Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General (IG) revealed that there were problems in how the FBI had used one of its intelligence-gathering tools, the one known as National Security Letters (NSLs). And the IG found that in some cases the FBI agents did not understand or follow the required legal procedures when using the NSLs.

What steps have you taken to ensure that there is better compliance? This is so important because, otherwise, Congress is likely to act to restrict the use of what may be an invaluable tool.

Mr. MUELLER. As was pointed out in previous IG reports, we did not have a management system in place to assure that we were following the law or our own internal protocols—reports that began, I believe, in 2006.

There is another class of NSL called an "exigent letter" that I will talk about in a second, but generally, in handling NSLs, what we have done is put in a completely different software package that leads agents through the process to assure that all the i's are dotted and the t's are crossed.

Every one of our NSLs, as they are prepared in the field offices, are reviewed by the division counsel. Most importantly for us, we established a compliance department office. It would have been something recommended by outside attorneys to corporations that get into problems, but it was one that we needed where we identify those vulnerabilities in other areas and move to fix them before they are found by somebody else. And so those are three of the steps we have taken.

There is still a report to come out which addresses the issue of exigent letters. The statute allowed us back then—still does—in an emergency to request from a communications carrier specific information. We, at that time, had issued those letters indicating that either a grand jury subpoena or other paper would follow. It did not follow our protocol.

We have put an end to those letters as of 2006, but my expectation is there is another report that will say that particular individuals who are involved in this were not following appropriate management procedures. I will tell you it is my responsibility to put into place those procedures, and those procedures have been put into place.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Senator Collins.

In this Committee, we call Members in order of their arrival without regard to seniority. By this calculus, Senator Kirk would be next, but he has asked to go last among the Senators. And I

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would simply say that this respect for seniority will carry you far rapidly here in the Senate. [Laughter.]

So we go to Senator Burris, then to Senator Tester, and then to Senator Kirk.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR BURRIS

Senator BURRIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I did have an opening statement. I would like unanimous consent that it be submitted for the record and then go into my questions.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Without objection.

[The prepared statement of Senator Burris follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR BURRIS

Thank you Chairman Lieberman and Ranking Member Collins.

Violent extremism does not threaten one nation, one race, or one religion—it threatens the entire world order. Combating this evolving threat therefore requires close collaboration between all levels of government, law enforcement agencies, and everyday citizens.

I am eager to learn more about the anti-terror efforts being made at the highest level of government, but I am also looking forward to hearing about the efforts being taken at the ground level. We must continue to encourage our local governments and law enforcement agencies to work with communities to address potential threats and develop working relationships based on trust. After all, we are all working toward the same goal, and that is to secure our communities and make sure our homeland is safe.

Today's terrorists are not always easily identifiable and are utilizing more innovative means to carry out their destructive missions. This is no more evident than in the case of Michael Finton, a man from my home State, who was recently arrested after trying to set off explosives in a van outside a Federal courthouse in Springfield, Illinois. The case of Mr. Finton, who exhibited the typical "lone offender" characteristics, illustrates how far reaching the ideals of al-Qaeda and similar terrorist organizations have spread.

It is my hope that we will be able to curb this type of activity in our homeland. I look forward to learning more about our progress from today's expert witnesses, and I will have a few questions.

Thank you.

Senator BURRIS. My question would be directed to Secretary Napolitano initially in terms of your comment where you say that we want all the communities to be vigilant and try to help us identify some of this local domestic terrorism that is coming up.

Madam Secretary, I just wonder, in terms of this young man that the FBI just caught in my State capital trying to blow up an Illinois Federal building, how do we reassure our communities that you all are doing what you can to catch these people and that fear does not set in that? It would cause just total chaos, especially in smaller communities. We take care of New York and we take care of Chicago. But I come from a small town of 14,000 people, Centralia, Illinois, and if they had a homegrown terrorist there, and they strike there, I think that would send panic throughout the entire country.

So are we dealing with the first responders to train—how are we handling this, Madam Secretary? Can you help me out?

Secretary NAPOLITANO. Yes, Senator Burris, and the point you make is so vital. We cannot limit our efforts to a few urban areas, and so the Department's responsibilities extend nationwide, urban and rural, throughout the country. And it is the Fusion Centers where we collocate Federal, State, and local law enforcement. It is

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training that includes officers from departments large and small. It is exercises that cover both urban scenarios, and also rural scenarios and scenarios where you may have several events happen simultaneously, both in urban and rural areas. And it is also communicating that our security is a shared responsibility. No one Federal department can do it, no matter how good it is; that we need State, local, tribal, and territorial partners, and we need the citizenry to be involved as well.

And when you do that, and when everybody recognizes it is a shared responsibility and that training, preparation, exercising, collocation, Fusion Centers, and all the rest are all happening, then they can address this issue out of a sense of preparation and not out of a sense of fear. And that is the way the Department operates.

Senator BURRIS. Now, are we possibly having a resource problem when it comes to this? Because I am just trying to anticipate the magnitude that would be involved, and some taxpayers may say, this is a waste of money, this is a waste of time. But all it takes is one incident, one thing to happen. Oklahoma City really woke us up, but now we almost had another Oklahoma City in Springfield, Illinois, in my State capital. And thank God, I do not know how all of it was coordinated, but Mr. Mueller says that the FBI antiterrorist force was the one that set this thing up. So—yes, go ahead.

Secretary NAPOLITANO. I am sorry to interrupt. But, Senator, yes, and Oklahoma City is such a powerful reference to me because I was the U.S. Attorney in Arizona at the time, and we were heavily involved in the investigation of Oklahoma City since a lot of the planning was done in our State.

But to your point, it is really a sense of everybody leaning forward and not being complacent and recognizing that these events can happen anywhere in our country at any time; that there are those who ascribe to al-Qaeda who are in our country and have operational training, as Mr. Leiter just said; but there are others as well.

And so every law enforcement department is vested in this and invested in this. Our job is to make sure that those investments are sound, efficient, and coordinated.

Senator BURRIS. Which follows up on the other question, because we have to have so many agencies involved. Homeland Security has to let the FBI know something, or we have to let the local law enforcement officers know something. Is the coordination really there? Or are there other barriers that you all are running into that may seem to be and could be challenged or that Congress can help out with in order to try to clear the path with bureaucracy?

Secretary NAPOLITANO. I will let my colleagues answer that question as well, because coordination is an easy word to say. It is a difficult thing to achieve.

Senator BURRIS. Absolutely.

Secretary NAPOLITANO. But it is something that I think is much better than it was prior to 1995, when the Oklahoma City bombing happened; it is much better than it was prior to September 11, 2001. And, indeed, things have happened even in the last 8 or 9

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months that I think have even improved coordination. But it is something that we are always working on.

Senator BURRIS. Director Mueller.

Mr. MUELLER. If you look at the disruptions in the last 2 weeks—Denver, New York, Springfield, Illinois, Dallas, North Carolina—every one of those cases was handled by the Joint Terrorism Task Force which has a number of Federal agencies represented and, most particularly and most importantly, in every one of those communities it has State and local agencies as participants in it.

Senator BURRIS. Can you say whether or not it was originated with local or was it originated from the top?

Mr. MUELLER. Some of the cases have been originated from the local and then brought to the Joint Terrorism Task Force.

Senator BURRIS. OK.

Mr. MUELLER. Others come from the community directly into the Joint Terrorism Task Force. There are a number of ways we get the cases.

But one point you did make in terms of resources is important, and that is, with the budget woes that many communities have now, and police departments, there is a squeeze on in terms of manpower. We think it is tremendously important that we continue to have the participation of State and local law enforcement in the Joint Terrorism Task Forces, but it is becoming increasingly more difficult for a police chief to assign that officer.

Senator BURRIS. Some of them are cutting back. They are laying off local law enforcement——

Mr. MUELLER. Well, and if there is one thing that I do think would be helpful, it is as monies are allocated from Congress through the Department of Justice that would be allocated to encourage State and local law enforcement to participate in Federal task forces, despite the budget concerns that the individual department might have.

Mr. LEITER. Senator, if I may on the coordination point.

Senator BURRIS. Yes.

Mr. LEITER. I think both the Secretary and Director Mueller are exactly right, that the coordination over the past month or 2 months is markedly improved over just 3 years ago.

The second point I would make is in terms of sharing information with State and local officials so they know what they should be looking for, although the press just picked up over the past 2 or 3 weeks some of the information that was passed to State and local officials about some of the improvised explosives that might be involved in current threats, roughly those same products for State and local officials were provided more than a year ago—not based on what we are seeing here now today, but based on the integration of foreign intelligence, seeing what terrorists were doing overseas, taking those lessons learned, and providing them to State and local officials here.

Senator BURRIS. That is terrific. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I see my time has expired. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thank you, Senator Burris. It just makes the point that we have talked about in this Committee—and the Springfield case does—that when you are dealing with lone wolves

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and homegrown terrorism, every part of America is vulnerable. Naturally, we know that there is a higher probability that great metropolitan centers like New York, Washington, Los Angeles, and Chicago may be higher-priority targets for the terrorists, but, here you go in these cases, Springfield, Illinois, and Dallas, Texas. Now, Dallas, Texas, is a big city, but it would not probably be on anybody's list of the top 10 targets for terrorism.

So this speaks to the great importance of the national coverage that the Joint Terrorism Task Forces and the Fusion Centers and all the work that you are doing gives us.

Senator Tester.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR TESTER

Senator TESTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not mean to disagree with your analysis of Senator Kirk's deference, but being the most junior Senator not too long ago, my recommendation would be if you get a chance to jump ahead, do it. [Laughter.]

I want to thank Secretary Napolitano and Director Mueller and Director Leiter for being here today. I was over at the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and so I apologize for being late. I very much appreciate the work you do in helping make this country more secure and as secure as I think it possibly can be. So thank you for that.

Madam Secretary, good to see you again. I want to get at something you said in your written testimony. You stated that DHS is reinvigorating collaboration with the State, local, and tribal law enforcement. I think to be bluntly honest, I do not know if we are where we need to be yet. At least in Montana, I think that there is a ways to go.

There is no doubt that in many Northern border areas our law enforcement up there are first responders because the reality is the Border Patrol cannot be everywhere, even though they try to be.

Last year, the sheriff of Toole County, which is right up on the northern Canada border—right at the port of Sweet Grass, in fact—told the Committee that on any given week deputies from his agency assist Federal authorities in apprehending port runners, border jumpers, and locating undocumented foreign nationals. So the role of local law enforcement is critical. I think you know that.

But that means that our local folks need to know what to look for. They need to know about drug smuggling. They need to know if the folks in Director Leiter's office issue an advisory that relates to the Northern border. My understanding is that that information is not well shared between CBP and local communities.

There is a Fusion Center in Montana. Unfortunately, it is 200 miles away from the border in Helena, so it is difficult for local law enforcement folks to go to a 1-hour meeting at a Fusion Center when it is a 4 to 6-hour drive round trip, and sometimes longer. If you lose an officer in some of these small counties, like Phillips County, for an entire day, that takes a chunk out of your law enforcement duties. The Operation Stonegarden grants help alleviate equipment and overtime needs. We like those. But how can we actually improve intelligence sharing among local law enforcement areas when they are, frankly, in my opinion, as much a part of border security, or could be, as the Border Patrol itself?

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Secretary NAPOLITANO. Thank you, Senator, and I totally agree with you that this is an evolving issue, and we do not rest on where we are, but we continue to work.

Sparsely populated rural areas are some of the most difficult to cover because of long distances. And you are right. Sparsely populated areas typically have small economic bases, they have small law enforcement departments. They do not have a plethora of Federal agents there, so everybody has to work together.

First, there is the increasing use of technology is going to help us bridge these gaps. For example, a secure video teleconferencing capacity so that people do not have to drive to meetings is something that we are improving and enlarging.

Second, making sure that our own agents, as they are deployed in these border areas, have their own training and understanding this culture of sharing that we must have and are having their own outreach to local law enforcement.

The third thing is to recognize—and I think it is good to explain the difference between a JTTF and a Fusion Center. A JTTF is really focused on terrorism and terrorism-related investigations. Fusion Centers are almost everything else. And some Fusion Centers are very good, very mature, others are not, but the whole concept of a Fusion Center is still a relatively new concept.

Our plan is over the next years to really work with those Fusion Centers, concentrate funding on those Fusion Centers, recognizing the differences between one that is in a rural area and one that is in an urban area, and how it makes outreach to small towns.

Senator TESTER. Thank you for that. I want to get to port modernization, which I am sure you knew we were going to talk about.

Eight years ago in Montana, before September 11, 2001, those ports were secured, in the most loosest term, by putting down an orange cone. That was on September 10, 2001. Since that time, we have got gates. We are somewhat better off. But those have their holes also, as you well know.

A lot of folks, including myself, have been asking for port modernization and how much that is going to cost. Frankly, we are looking forward to the answers to those questions on how that money is to be used by the CBP. And, quite frankly, we still have questions on some of the legitimate oversight. You know that. We still have questions that have to be answered.

On this border it is critically important. There have been a lot of reports and there are a lot of folks up there that know that we need to spend some money on these ports. They are not doing a suitable job today under the threats we have—asbestos-contaminated wells. At one of the ports, you probably know, they detain the bad guys by locking them up in a bathroom. It does not meet 21st Century threats.

So I guess the question is that we are in the middle of a 30-day reassessment of those dollars. I have been told that those costs are going to come back lower than they were first as in April. I just think that it is important that we spend the money to match the threat. Let us just put it that way. Spend the money to match the threat. I do not think a cookie-cutter approach can be used at all. I think you have the people in your office who can determine what that threat is and how to deal with it.

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I just want to know how that assessment is really changing the CBP ports and what you anticipate will be coming out of that 30-day assessment.

Secretary NAPOLITANO. Thank you, Senator. Yes, because questions were raised, we put a 30-day assessment in there. And to give the taxpayers confidence that these monies were not being wasted, the press was characterizing these as $15 million for five-car-a-day ports, and that was not a correct characterization. These are not cookie-cutter ports, and they do have threats that they have to match.

What I hope comes out of this is a fair and objective look at the planning that has already been done and the contracts that already have been let. If changes need to be made, obviously, to the extent we can, we will make them. But I will share with you, Senator, I have been through those northern ports now with a fine pencil and feel very confident that this review will overall show that these ports match the threats for the areas for which they are designed.

Senator TESTER. OK. Well, I look forward to those reports, and hopefully we can get detail as far as how the money is to be spent, what it is to be utilized for, and, quite frankly, hope it will not be classified information and we know what those threats are.

Just one last question, if I might, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Sure.

Senator TESTER. And I apologize. When I first got here, the input that we got, Director Mueller, was that the threats on the Northern border dealt with drugs and terrorism, mainly. The threats on the Southern border revolve around immigration. I think when you look at Canada, where 90 percent of their population lives within 100 miles of the border, and the fact that you just talked about, I think 16 terrorists were going to do some damage to their parliament, I guess the question I have: Has that assessment changed at all over the last 3 years or 2½ years as far as what the threats are and what we really need to focus on as far as those two borders?

Mr. MUELLER. In my mind, that threat has always been there, and look back to when Ahmed Ressam, who came down from Montreal, was caught on the border coming in to Washington on his way to blow up the Los Angeles airport. And with the breathing of new life into al-Qaeda in the Maghreb and some of the communities not only in Europe but also represented in Canada, and the experience before with Ressam, that means in my mind that we have to be aware of the threats from the Northern border. As people tend to concentrate on the Southern border, we have to be equally aware of the threats on the Northern border.

Senator TESTER. Thank you, and I appreciate that. I have always said that the border is only as strong as its weakest link, and we need to make sure that we secure it in a way that makes sense, not only to this country's national security but also to the taxpayers of this country. So I appreciate that very much. I appreciate you guys being here.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the flexibility.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thank you, Senator Tester. Senator Kirk, it is an honor to call on you for questions for the first time.

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Senator KIRK. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I want to associate myself with other Members of the Committee who have given well-deserved salutes to the panel here this morning for all the work they have been doing improving this process of vigilance going forward.

One of the questions that came up in the Zazi case, at least as I understand it, there was some speculation about Zazi and his associates having in mind densely populated, non-governmental entities like fashion week or sports stadiums and so forth—I was just wondering, as we head into the baseball league championship series and the National Football League is underway, is there some coordination, conversation with the league officers or their individual franchises with hints of difficulty; or even if there are not, that secure measures are taken in those densely populated venues?

Mr. MUELLER. Whenever we get information relating to a possible threat to—it can be a State—collegiate football, National Football League, or other venues, baseball—that is passed on to the security directors of the various leagues, and it is coordinated.

As I said, there is no imminent threat that we see at this juncture, but, again, as I stated before, we do not want to become complacent. But there is coordination with the league offices when we do get a threat.

Senator KIRK. Thank you very much.

A question on the Fusion Centers. In the testimony there are references to the densely populated urban areas, like Boston, or State of Massachusetts offices and so forth and a reference to sometimes the Federal judicial districts.

Is the Fusion Center just a coordination of those various levels in sort of a task force? Or are we envisioning some sort of a new regional office when we talk about Fusion Centers?

Secretary NAPOLITANO. Senator Kirk, Fusion Centers take many different appearances. The classic form of a Fusion Center is a collocated Federal, State, local, tribal—or territorial, if that is relevant—facility where not only do you have officers collocated, but you have access to databases and you have a certain number of State and locals who are cleared to receive some types of classified information. Some Fusion Centers meet that; others are, quite frankly, very small and very isolated, and, as Senator Tester indicated, perhaps not as able of receiving and getting the kind of information that we need.

So as we now have decided—and this is a fairly recent decision—that the Fusion Centers will be the focus and a major portal through which we share information, particularly non-terrorist-related information, now we will work through the grant process and otherwise to make sure all of them reach a certain basic standard.

Senator KIRK. Good. Thank you very much. The other question that I had is in terms of the outreach to communities in Boston. We have a significant Somali-American community, and without getting into any information that should not be disclosed—I understand it is sort of a proactive outreach. Is it more to encourage the members of those communities to fully understand their rights and responsibilities as American citizens? Is it that kind of affirmative outreach? Or is it basically intelligence gathering or a combination of the two?

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Mr. MUELLER. When we talk about outreach, we talk about our special agents in charge. We have 56 of them around the country. They are not co-extensive with the 93 judicial districts, unfortunately—or fortunately. But there are 56 field offices, and each of our special agents in charge has a mandate to educate, meet, learn about, become friends with the members of the Muslim-American community, Arab-American community, and Sikh-American community so that the communities understand what we do and why we do it, and the efforts we spend protecting civil liberties and civil rights.

We have a class that is a citizens academy in each of our offices where we will bring members of the community for a several-weeks course where one night a week we will explain various aspects of the Bureau.

In the wake of learning about the travel of Somali youth to Somalia to participate in the actions there, we would make a specific concentrated outreach to that community through specialists, and that is far different than developing sources. This is an effort to educate, explain, and to have them understand our concerns in a way that makes them a partner with us in addressing the threat.

Mr. LEITER. And, Senator, if I may, I think it really is worth noting, of the more than 100,000 Americans of Somali descent here in the United States, we are talking about literally minute percentages that have been drawn to the fight in Somalia and al-Qaeda's messages—in the dozens at most, 20 or so. So I think it is particularly important. This outreach is very much designed not to develop sources, but instead to explain to them the rights of American citizens, ensure that they understand the immigration system, and ensure that they understand the dangers of their sons being associated with groups like al-Shabaab and what can happen to them.

So it is really not meant to develop intelligence. It is much more to ensure that they do not become a group like some of the South Asian communities in the United Kingdom, isolated from the larger U.S. society.

Senator KIRK. Thank you. Very helpful. I appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thank you very much, Senator Kirk.

Senator Levin, welcome.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR LEVIN

Senator LEVIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Welcome to Senator Kirk. We are delighted to see him here, and we will welcome him on the Armed Services Committee, more appropriately, since I am Chairman there. I am sure our Chairman here has already done the honors.

Senator KIRK. Thank you very much.

Senator LEVIN. Secretary Napolitano, first let me raise questions with you about the Fusion Centers. You have already testified about them. We have, I think, two of them now in Michigan, and the question is the funding. And you have indicated, I think in your last testimony, that we are going to make sure that we reach a basic standard through the grant process in terms of financial support for these centers. And the problem is that the grant proc-

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ess does not guarantee a steady stream of funding for the Fusion Centers because there is a lot of competition for those grants.

And so there is a real stress on the Fusion Center that we have. The one I am most familiar with is the Michigan Intelligence Operations Center, which is Michigan's Fusion Center. We have State, local, and Federal agencies all represented there. But in terms of funding, there are some real problems in terms of future funding.

How are you going to assure through a grant process that Fusion Centers are going to be adequately funded given the competition for dollars?

Secretary NAPOLITANO. Senator, obviously we cannot provide a guarantee, but what we can do and are doing is steering the dollars that we have discretion over in the grant process to fund the things that we think should receive priority.

Now, with respect to Fusion Centers, let me put on my former governor's hat for a moment. Of course, every budget is under stress, and Michigan's is under more stress than perhaps any other State. But they are a good deal from a law enforcement expenditure perspective in terms of basically the yield per officer, in terms of what you get particularly from a prevention standpoint.

So we will have a very active outreach program with governors and mayors, and part of that is making sure they know what the Fusion Centers do and how they, really from a budgetary standpoint, are a very good expenditure of the limited dollars they have.

Senator LEVIN. I hope you will really take a look at that. It should be a priority. Coordination is what has been so lacking over the years. I know everyone is making an effort to improve coordination, integration of information, and that is where it is done in terms of these assessments at a State and local level. So I hope that you will really pay some attention to that issue.

On the operational side, where are operations coordinated? And here I will look to Mr. Mueller on this. We have task forces. Is that where operations are coordinated?

Mr. MUELLER. Yes. We have now, I think, 106 Joint Terrorism Task Forces. Represented on those task forces are the other Federal agencies in that area and the State and local law enforcement. Any threat information comes in, it is immediately investigated. And so it is a combination of intelligence gathering and then the immediate investigation to follow whatever leads there are about a potential threat. And that is where it is coordinated.

Senator LEVIN. All right. Now, looking at the information side of this, is there one place where all information about potential threats is centralized now? Can a law enforcement person call one number and say, "Hey, there is a guy here at the border" or "We have just arrested somebody. What do we have on him?" Is there one place in this country with people from Customs, the Treasury, the FBI, Homeland Security, State police, and you name it, where all the information goes?

Mr. MUELLER. Yes, I would say that my friend to the left from the National Counterterrorism Center, who has access to all of our databases——

Senator LEVIN. No, not access to. Is there one database where somebody can make a phone call, a cop at a local level calls up and says, "Hey, we have got a guy"?

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Mr. LEITER. The answer is yes, Senator. A cop at a local level in Michigan or Connecticut or Maine or Massachusetts, a consular official checking a visa in Islamabad, a Customs and Border Protection agent, they type into their own computer and they will get information about that person, whether or not they are associated with terrorists. And if they have a question, they are going to pick up the phone——

Senator LEVIN. And that information comes to the NCTC?

Mr. LEITER. That comes to the NCTC and is supported by the Terrorist Screening Center of the FBI. So, yes, there is one place that it all comes together at NCTC.

Senator LEVIN. OK. With one phone number, that person gets all the information about that individual from all sources.

Mr. LEITER. Correct.

Senator LEVIN. Are there any missing pieces? Are there any sources that are not inputting their information into that single computer?

Mr. MUELLER. There are no sources of information that the U.S. Government holds about known or suspected terrorists that are not there.

Senator LEVIN. Secretary, did you want to add something?

Secretary NAPOLITANO. No. I would echo what Mr. Mueller said.

Senator LEVIN. Now, going back to the Zazi case, I know, Director, you have commented on this, saying that it was overblown that there was any kind of disconnect between, I guess, the local police in that case and the FBI. Is that correct?

Mr. MUELLER. I believe so.

Senator LEVIN. Putting aside whether it was overblown or not, was there a problem?

Mr. MUELLER. Well, in every investigation, and particularly a fast-moving investigation, there are steps that are taken that may or may not work out. This is no different than any other investigation, and——

Senator LEVIN. Is there any procedural or structural failure at all here?

Mr. MUELLER. I do not believe that there is a procedural or structural failure. There is one thing that happens in an investigation—an investigation never goes the way you want it to, and——

Senator LEVIN. I understand that, and I know you understand it better than I will ever understand it. Is there something that somebody should have done or not done?

Mr. MUELLER. In retrospect, there will always be things that you would do differently, but——

Senator LEVIN. Is there a lesson to be learned——

Mr. MUELLER [continuing]. It does no good to——

Senator LEVIN. I understand.

Mr. MUELLER [continuing]. Go and dissect——

Senator LEVIN. No. It does do good. We want to learn lessons. I am just asking. I know things are overblown. That does not mean there is nothing there.

Mr. MUELLER. Yes.

Senator LEVIN. Is there a lesson to be learned?

Mr. MUELLER. On this one, I do not think so.

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Senator LEVIN. Good. That is responsive to my question, and that is all I needed to hear. Thank you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Senator Levin.

If you can put up with it, we will do one more round, which will be quick because there are fewer of us here.

Let me go back to the question of infiltration of terrorists from abroad who come from the United States, and I want to deal with the al-Shabaab case. This is the most unusual case of the Somali-American community in Minneapolis and elsewhere. We have had testimony here. Mr. Leiter, you are right, this is a very small fraction of that community. In fact, the community is feeling a combination of outrage, anger, and fear that this has happened.

But this is an unusual case because they also seemed to be recruited to be part of the conflict over in Somalia. But, naturally, we are concerned that once they are there and involved in a terrorist group—which al-Shabaab does have ties, we had testimony here, to al-Qaeda and others—because they are American citizens and they have legal status here, they will be able to return to carry out attacks against us.

Do you share that concern, Director Mueller?

Mr. MUELLER. Absolutely. And not just with those who travel to Somalia but those who travel, say, to Yemen to maybe train, those who travel to the western part of Pakistan, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. We had the example of an individual by the name of Vinas from New York who was trained in the camps, and——

Chairman LIEBERMAN. In Pakistan?

Mr. MUELLER. In Pakistan, but then participated in an operation, as I think you or others pointed out, in Afghanistan.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. I mentioned it, right.

Mr. MUELLER. And then returned to the United States—well, actually was returned to the United States. But our concern would be the same.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Yes. So is there any evidence that there is any intention by al-Shabaab to send these recruits back to the United States for this purpose?

Mr. MUELLER. I think at this juncture—I would defer to Mr. Leiter on this, but I think that we have seen some information that the leaders would like to undertake operations outside of Somalia, but no hard information or evidence that has been effectively pursued. And I would defer to him on whether he——

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Do you want to add anything, Mr. Leiter?

Mr. LEITER. I think Mr. Mueller is exactly right. There is al-Shabaab, and the leadership of al-Shabaab is clearly associated with al-Qaeda elements in Somalia.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. LEITER. And it is those al-Qaeda elements that we fear will push al-Shabaab members——

Chairman LIEBERMAN. To send people back.

Mr. LEITER [continuing]. To change their focus.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. And we are obviously watching that to the best of our ability.

Mr. MUELLER. Yes, sir.

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Chairman LIEBERMAN. Let me ask a different kind of question, Secretary Napolitano, related to the Zazi case. The Homeland Security Advisory Council, as you well know, recently completed its review of the color-coded threat level system, and I guess I would ask you what your reaction to their recommendations is or where you are in the process of deciding what to do with that. But in regard to the Zazi case, I am interested in knowing whether at any point you considered raising the threat level in response to what we are learning about the Zazi plot, even perhaps for a particular region or sector—well, of course, once it became public, it was essentially raising the threat level.

So I am interested in the extent to which the color-coded system was in your mind as you were learning about this really significant, and in some sense unprecedented since September 11, 2001, plot to attack the United States.

Secretary NAPOLITANO. Two parts to your question. One is, yes, I did appoint a task force to review the color-coded system. It has been in place a number of years now, and it is time to take a fresh look. They have given me their recommendations. I am in the process of reviewing those. Then I will submit those into the interagency process and ultimately to the President. So that review is ongoing.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. OK.

Secretary NAPOLITANO. And that is where it is right now.

In terms of Zazi, we thought about it and rejected it, because we did not have in the Zazi investigation any kind of a specific location, time, threat that in our view would justify actually raising the color code. So it was contemplated and rejected, given the nature of the investigation and the nature of the intelligence that we had.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. OK. Good enough.

Let me ask a final series of questions about how some of the people in these cases become radicalized, because obviously, to the extent that we are able, if we could figure that out, we try to stop it from happening or counteract it.

Am I right that in Zazi's case there is no evidence that he was radicalized when he came here 10 years ago or that he was sent here on a mission 10 years ago?

Mr. MUELLER. I do not believe there is any evidence of that.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. So that he became radicalized here.

Mr. MUELLER. Well, much of his family resides in Pakistan, and he visited Pakistan, so I think it is——

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Good point. So I guess I would say he became radicalized after he came here in 1999, but it may well not have happened here. It may have happened over there.

Mr. MUELLER. Yes, I think that is fair to say.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. So that may be a somewhat unique case because he was traveling—we do not have any particular information now, I gather, about whether he became radicalized in a mosque, over the Internet, here, or wherever.

Mr. MUELLER. Well, at this point, because of a continuing investigation, I am hesitant to go into any more detail on it.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. OK, understood. And in the case of Finton in Illinois, as was discussed with Senator Collins, there was a case where, to the best of our knowledge, we know he converted in pris-

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on. Is there evidence yet that he was radicalized in prison, or did that come later?

Mr. MUELLER. I think, again, it is in the stages of litigation, but I do believe that the conversion and radicalization is principally attributable to that time that he was in jail.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Incarcerated.

Mr. MUELLER. But there were probably other factors afterwards that continued to contribute to it.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right. Obviously, that raises exactly the questions that you answered that Senator Collins raised about what prison authorities should be doing to try to deter that from happening.

Mr. MUELLER. Yes.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. And in the case of Smadi in Texas, I gather he is a Jordanian citizen who came here on a student visa.

Mr. MUELLER. I believe that he was in the United States on a B2 temporary Visitor Visa.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. And then he overstayed. Is that right?

Mr. MUELLER. Yes, that is right. It expired in September 2007.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. But do we have any knowledge of what turned him into a bomber?

Mr. MUELLER. I think with Finton and Smadi, as you say, the Internet played somewhat of a role, particularly with the one in Dallas.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right. I know this is tough stuff, but what kinds of lessons can we draw about what possibly we can do to deter—I mean, we are talking about large communities here in which there are a very small number of people who become radicalized. How do we fight it? And do, for instance, the engagement teams that you are sending out fight it.

Now, incidentally, as I told you the other day, Director Mueller, we had a hearing here earlier in the year with leaders of the Muslim American community, and I was interested and, I will tell you, surprised to hear that the Federal agency that they had the most extensive and, they thought, constructive relations with was the FBI, which is a tribute to your special agents around the country. But tell me about the engagement teams and whether you think they are having any effect on deterring the radicalization process.

Secretary NAPOLITANO. Well, Senator, these are teams that are sent out to have outreach in a way, as described by Senator Kirk, to talk to people about America, the rights, the liberties that people have here, the responsibilities that people have here, get to know them, get them to know us.

One of the things we have learned from the United Kingdom, for example, is that alienation is a factor or an element that is present oftentimes when someone is in the process of becoming radicalized. And so to the extent that we can engage undercuts at least that feature of the radicalization process.

We are really working with some of our partners such as the United Kingdom, who have had more experience with this kind of domestic radicalization than we have, to see what other practices that they have begun or started that we could profitably employ here.

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Chairman LIEBERMAN. Good. Thank you. My time is up. Senator Collins.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We have had a great deal of discussion this morning about the importance of coordination and information sharing. Obviously, a great deal of progress has been made, but there are some areas that are still rough and not perfect, and, Director Mueller, I want to ask you about one of those. The Justice Department's Inspector General recently released a report on the FBI's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) coordinator program, and the report found that even though the WMD coordinators are supposed to serve as the Bureau's WMD experts in the field, many of them were unable to even identify the top WMD threats and had not received adequate training. According to the report, there was little interaction between the WMD coordinators and the intelligence analysts who compiled the WMD assessments.

What is your reaction to the findings in that report and the recommendations?

Mr. MUELLER. Well, I think there are 13 recommendations, if I am not mistaken, in that report, and we have followed up on each of those recommendations.

It must be 2 or 3 years ago that we established with the consent and approval of Congress a WMD Division and have stood that up from scratch, pulling the personnel from a variety of other divisions to focus on weapons of mass destruction. This is in part as a result of the anthrax attacks in 2001.

And so it has some birthing pains as it grew, and what we now have throughout the country in each of our 56 field offices, I believe, is not only interested but educated and have professional persons who can address these particular issues.

Whenever there is—and we still get a ton of them—an envelope with white powder, there is a response that brings in not only our experts but experts from DHS and other experts to find its way in response to that particular threat. Key to that are our personnel on the ground, but also key to it is being able to get back on a coordinated call with the experts in this field to decide what you are going to do in each step.

So we have grown the division, the WMD Division. The recommendations that the IG made we have followed up on, and I think we still have a ways to go, but are doing much better in terms of response to any threat in the WMD arena.

Mr. LEITER. And, Senator, if I may.

Senator COLLINS. Yes.

Mr. LEITER. Just to give you an anecdote of something that would have been, I think, unheard of before September 11, 2001, the FBI's WMD operational component at headquarters is actually collocated with NCTC's WMD analysts, who are collocated with the foreign operators and intelligence analysts who work on WMD. So they are literally side by side sharing that information.

Senator COLLINS. That is terrific to hear.

Mr. Leiter, you mentioned earlier the creation of the NCTC, which I always thought was the most important part of the 2004 reforms in addition to the creation of the Director of National Intel-

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ligence. And I really commend you and everyone who is working there for bringing our concept to life in such an effective way.

I do want to ask you, because there was so much controversy at the time, how the authority to engage in strategic operational planning is working. There is no doubt that the other side of the shop, the sharing of information and having the analysts sit side by side, is working very well. But are you engaged in strategic operational planning?

Mr. LEITER. Senator, we are, but I would agree with you, it is not nearly as advanced as the intelligence sharing that in many ways was an evolutionary responsibility; whereas, the strategic planning responsibilities are really revolutionary since they cut across all departments and agencies and are a direct report to the President.

What it requires, because of the way in which the law is written, without a command authority—which I think is quite appropriate—is a true partnership. And what I have seen over the last 8 months with the change of the Administration is a new set of eyes and new approaches from people who may have not been as wedded to doing things the old way and an appreciation that there must be slightly stronger synchronization of activities across the worlds of law enforcement, homeland security, but also diplomacy, military, and so on.

So the planning is going on at a high level strategically. It is going on at a more granular level, as I said, in helping to ensure that our outreach efforts both domestically and overseas are speaking to the challenges we see in some of our Somali population, and then all the way down to the budget level to make sure those programs are well aligned.

Senator COLLINS. I hope that you will keep in close touch with this Committee on that issue.

Let me just ask one final question of all of our panelists, and it is a variation of the "What keeps you up at night?" question, which the Chairman is very fond of asking our witnesses. But let me make it more precise.

What gaps in our knowledge or our capabilities concern you the most? We will start with you, Madam Secretary.

Secretary NAPOLITANO. Well, thank you. I was going to say what keeps me up at night is preparing for hearings. [Laughter.]

But I think I want to go back to Senator Levin's question about is there one number you call where you can get all relevant information. Our ability to do that I still think is in the developmental stage. I think that for any well-trained law enforcement official, he knows several places to call which will get him to the right answers. But in some instances there may be classified information that cannot be shared. In some instances the information may be spread among different departments still.

So our ability to really not only collect information but to fuse it is really part and parcel of where the Department is moving so you have that direct connectivity with an officer on the street.

Right now I think officers on the street or State police officers may know to call the JTTF, they may call a Fusion Center; they may call the Department of Homeland Security in Washington, DC. They know to call somewhere, that somewhere someone can get

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them to the right information. But the whole business of fusing consolidation and making sure that we have streamlined this as much as possible given that some information will have to remain classified is, in my view, still a work in progress.

Senator COLLINS. Mr. Mueller, gaps in capabilities or knowledge?

Mr. MUELLER. Well, my greatest concern still is the ability of al-Qaeda to use western Pakistan and Afghanistan as a sanctuary. To the extent that I worry, and do, about a weapon of mass destruction in the hands of a terrorist, it is that orchestrated out of that sanctuary there will be the capability of either developing or obtaining a weapon of mass destruction.

If you look at the most serious case we have had recently, which is the Zazi case, it was training in Pakistan that gave him the capability of undertaking the attack. And the ability to obtain intelligence, to reduce the threat from that area is, in my mind, absolutely key to protecting the homeland.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you. Mr. Leiter.

Mr. LEITER. Senator, I think what keeps me up at night, the capability that is a challenge, is that in a country of more than 300 million people, where the overwhelmingly vast majority finds terrorism abhorrent, how do we as a team locate those one, two, 10, or 20 who feel differently? And how do we do that in a way that is not invasive of those other 300 million plus? And how do we ensure that you as a Congress and those 300 million plus people have sufficient trust in our organizations that we can do this with a level of secrecy so it is not played out in the press but individuals like yourself and others in the Congress and the public believe that we are not inappropriately invading their privacy and their civil liberties in a way that should not be done.

Ensuring that we can strike that right balance remains a challenge, and I think even 8 years after September 11, 2001, remains a very significant one.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you for that very thoughtful response.

I think the issue of the lone wolf, the individual who has been radicalized perhaps using the Internet, is so difficult for us to deal with, and I commend all of your efforts and the progress that you have made. Thank you.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Senator Collins. Senator Levin.

Senator LEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What is going to keep me up tonight is a number of things, but one of them will be the difference in the answers that I received to my question from you, Secretary Napolitano, and you, Director Leiter, as to whether or not there is a place where all information concerning potential terrorists or people who might threaten us is accumulated and can be given promptly to, immediately to somebody who is in law enforcement who has arrested somebody. We all know the story of what happened before September 11, 2001, where the CIA had information it would not share with the FBI. I know we are way beyond that. I hope we are way beyond that.

But talking about fusion, now there is some confusion because——

Mr. LEITER. And if given an opportunity, I would be happy to clarify.

Senator LEVIN. Yes, let me give you that opportunity.

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Mr. LEITER. Senator, I tried to phrase my answer quite precisely, which is there is one place in the U.S. Government where all information about known and suspected terrorists comes, which is the National Counterterrorism Center, which is subsequently shared with the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center. So if any one of those screeners come across someone and they have a question, they should know to call the Terrorist Screening Center, and, in fact, that data will be held at NCTC, and they will be able to provide information to that police officer or consular official.

What I think Secretary Napolitano said, and which I would agree with wholeheartedly, is really two challenges. One, ensuring that the police officer on the beat understands that system and knows to whom to turn, which is different from asking whether or not there is a place within the U.S. Government where all that information resides. It is reaching that last tactical mile to ensure there is an understanding and a streamlined way in which it can be done, and that police officer or that port official understands that.

The second piece that I think is equally important, Senator, is that my organization holds statutorily that responsibility to hold information about known and suspected terrorists. The U.S. Government, ranging from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to the Department of Homeland Security and every other acronym that we have here in Washington, DC, holds other data. What we do not hold is all of that data together. Is there a piece of data out there at DHS or at the IRS, for that matter, that might in some way be a bit of data that relates to someone that we do not yet know is a terrorist? Absolutely.

Senator LEVIN. Well, obviously, there is.

Mr. LEITER. And that is a challenge.

Senator LEVIN. I can see that, but as soon as it does relate to an individual, presumably it is sent to your Fusion Center.

Mr. LEITER. That is correct.

Senator LEVIN. I do not understand, then, your answer as to how that answer is the same as Secretary Napolitano's answer, which is that—we better get to Secretary Napolitano.

Secretary NAPOLITANO. Well, Director Leiter and I spend a lot of time together, so I think our answers are very consistent.

Senator LEVIN. Good. Try your answer again. What is missing?

Secretary NAPOLITANO. What I am saying, Senator, is the process of training and attuning all law enforcement, no matter what level or where located, about where to call or where to go is still ongoing and is one of the functions, I think, or one of the great things that will happen when, as the Fusion Center concept develops, whatever it is, you will have something right there that everybody knows at least to call there.

But I will share with you that the hypothetical you raise, someone at the border who comes in, those screeners are going to know.

Senator LEVIN. I said the cop on the street. I said, Is there a number he can call where all the information that is known about a particular information has been centralized? That was my question, and the answer I thought was yes coming from Director Leiter, and I thought that you said we have got quite a ways to go in that regard. I understand that maybe there are some law en-

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forcement officers out there who are not aware that they could call that number. That is just a matter of educating every——

Mr. LEITER. The beauty of the system, Senator, is it is transparent to that cop on the street. When that cop——

Senator LEVIN. That was not my question, whether it is transparent. My question is: Is it complete? Is all the information that all the agencies have about individuals who might constituent a threat to this country filtered or supposed to be filtered into that one number? That was my question.

Mr. LEITER. All of the information about known and suspected terrorists is held by the National Counterterrorism Center.

Senator LEVIN. And it is supposed to all go there and all the agencies know it.

Mr. LEITER. Correct.

Senator LEVIN. Maybe every police officer does not know to call that number, but every agency—State, local, Federal—knows all information about potential threats to the United States is supposed to go to that central place.

Mr. LEITER. Correct.

Senator LEVIN. Now, is that true?

Secretary NAPOLITANO. That is true. The National Counterterrorism Center holds the raw data, and so a trained police officer ought to know either to call there or to call his local Fusion Center to get connectivity there.

Senator LEVIN. That is fine. That is what you said, too, Director Leiter. He may not know to call there, but if he knows to call there, it will all be there.

Mr. LEITER. Yes.

Secretary NAPOLITANO. Yes.

Senator LEVIN. OK. Well, I think I have a minute left, so let me just ask a question about these demonstration projects.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. A minute and a half.

Senator LEVIN. These international interoperable demonstration projects, Secretary. I have forgotten how many, like four or six we have funded. Do you know the status of those cross-border projects between us and Canada and us and Mexico? We have these demonstration projects which apparently are somewhere in the works. Do you know what the status is of that? And if not, would you give us that for the record?

Secretary NAPOLITANO. Yes, we will.

Senator LEVIN. And, also, if you would, Madam Secretary, for the record—you indicated that there are some discretionary funds that you could steer to the Fusion Centers, and if you could for the record identify what those sources are.

Secretary NAPOLITANO. I would be pleased to do so.[1]

Senator LEVIN. Thank you all.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thanks, Senator Levin.

Since Senator Collins asked a variation of my "What keeps you up at night?" question, I want to exercise the prerogative of the Chair and ask you a quick question, which is in terms of what we can do to help you further.

[1] The information submitted for the record from Secretary Napolitano in responses to questions from Senator Levin appears in the Appendix on page 189.

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Is there one thing that we can do that you need, either by way of additional statutory authority or resources for a particular program that we are not supporting now that would assist you in the work of counterterrorism that you do? Mr. Mueller.

Mr. MUELLER. I will leap into the fray and say, yes, the PATRIOT Act is going to be debated. I know it has been—those provisions have been very essential to us, particularly the first two which relate to the business records provision.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Right.

Mr. MUELLER. And, second, the roving wiretaps. And a third, while it has not been used on lone wolf, it will be and is important if we get the similar situation that we had with Moussaoui in 2001. So I would urge the reenactment of those provisions.

I also would make a point in terms of National Security Letters. Our success and our information is in large part attributable to the information we can gather not of substantive conversations but of the telephone toll data that we obtain by reason of National Security Letters. And so it is really retaining these capabilities that is important.

The other point that I did make, tried to make, and that is, in terms of continuing the vigilance and the participation of State and local law enforcement on the Joint Terrorism Task Forces in a time where their budgets are being hit, I would encourage as Congress and the Administration allocate monies to State and local law enforcement, that it is done as an incentive to participate in that which is very important to the national well-being but not so important when the police chief is more concerned about violent crime on the streets.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Sure. That is very helpful. To me it is very significant that your first answer was about the PATRIOT Act reauthorization and then the National Security Letters. I hope our colleagues will keep that in mind.

Secretary Napolitano.

Secretary Napolitano. Well, I would add to Director Mueller that supporting funding that assists not just the JTTFs but the Fusion Centers as well.

And then to build on something that was mentioned earlier, we call it homeland security, but homeland security begins in many instances abroad. And particularly what happens in Pakistan and Afghanistan is a source for many of the threat streams ultimately that we are expending resources on, there is an impact here in the homeland.

So really commending that understanding, that homeland security does not actually start at the borders of the United States.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Well said. Mr. Leiter.

Mr. LEITER. Mr. Chairman, two quick areas I would say. First, continuing to enable the softer elements of national power domestically and overseas, so we have the diplomatic corps and the foreign aid, so you can get to these areas and try to undermine the spread of violent extremism before it occurs.

Second, more theoretical and less tangible, something you cannot put into a law, but continue to urge, as you always do on this Committee, to approach counterterrorism with a truly bipartisan spirit. Really, the fact that Mr. Mueller and I served in the Bush Admin-

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istration and serve now today I believe is testament to the fact that it matters not what party you are. Certainly Zazi or any of these other fellows we have been talking about would not have cared whether or not they were Democrats or Republicans in charge. And what we do is in almost every instance nonpartisan anyway.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. That is a very important statement. A perfect one to end on. We try our best to reflect that attitude of national interest first on this Committee, and generally speaking on these matters, I think that is reflected throughout the Congress.

I thank you for the time you have given us. I come back to my thanks to you at the beginning for the extraordinary progress I think we have made in the 8 years since September 11, 2001, but we know that we have a patient and persistent and fanatical enemy out there, and it is going to be a long time before we can really declare victory here against this particular enemy.

Senator Collins, would you like to say anything?

Senator COLLINS. Thank you. You said it well.

Chairman LIEBERMAN. Thank you very much.

The hearing record will be kept open for 15 days for additional statements or questions. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:08 p.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

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APPENDIX

Opening Statement of Chairman Joseph Lieberman
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
"Violent Islamist Extremism: Al-Shabaab Recruitment in America."
March 11, 2009
Washington, DC

Good morning. Today's hearing – "Violent Islamist Extremism: Al-Shabaab Recruitment in America" – falls on an auspicious date – the fifth anniversary of the Madrid train bombings that killed 191 people and wounded another 1,800.

The Madrid train bombings were a turning point in Islamist terrorism, from a centrally-controlled movement to one that also began to act through autonomous cells that may or may not have links to al-Qaeda leadership – expanding the reach of violent Islamist ideology and making terrorism that much harder to detect and prevent.

We have seen al-Qaeda franchise itself around the world, whether in the now defeated al-Qaeda in Iraq, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb operating in North Africa, or al-Shabaab fighting and training terrorists in Somalia.

Today we are seeing an evolution of Islamist terrorism as organizations like al Qaeda's affiliate in Somalia, al-Shabaab, expand their recruiting base to diaspora populations around the world, including those living here in the United States.

Over the past two years, al-Shabaab has radicalized and recruited young Somali men away from their homes in Minneapolis to return to Somalia for training and fighting. Perhaps as many as 20 Somali-American teenagers and young men have vanished from their homes in Minneapolis and turned up in Somalia.

And the number could be much higher, since many Somali parents now living in Minnesota – who fled to the United States so their children could escape the violence of that war-torn nation – are afraid to go to the authorities for fear their sons will be branded as terrorists and never allowed to return to the United States.

Through our Committee work on this issue, we know that the Internet alone is usually not enough to recruit an individual to an Islamist terrorist organization. There has to be someone doing the recruiting, and in the case of these young Somali men, paying for their return trips to Somalia.

Our hearing today will look for answers to that critical question. We will also ask: "What can we expect next?" Does al-Shabaab train these young men and send them back to the United States to execute terrorist attacks here?

We know for sure of Shirwa Ahmed, 27, a naturalized Somali-American who went to Somalia in 2007 and became a suicide bomber, joining with a terrorist team that last October exploded five car bombs in two Somali cities, killing at least 30 people, including U.N. aid workers.

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The FBI identified his remains through DNA testing and returned them to his parents for burial.

We know that videos readily available on the Internet play a critical role in introducing recruits like Shirwa to violent Islamist ideology.

And we know those videos –some produced by al-Shabaab – are being watched in the Somali community in Minneapolis.

Or take the more recent case of Burhan Hassan, whose cousin is testifying on our second panel today, as an illustration of the threat we face.

In November of last year, on Election Day, Hassan, a 17-year-old "A" student at Roosevelt High School in Minneapolis – who had planned to become a doctor or a lawyer – suddenly left home with five of his friends – without a word to his parents or relatives – and began a strange trip from Minneapolis to Somalia.

The young men split up, with some flying to Boston and some to Chicago. From those destinations, they flew to Amsterdam, where they boarded a plane for Nairobi. From there they caught a flight to the Kenyan port of Malindi on the Indian Ocean. There they boarded boats that took them to the Somali port of Kismayo, which is under the control of Al Shabaab.

None of these young men had the $2,000 that this trip cost – Hassan was unemployed – or the skills to arrange for the visas, complicated travel connections and the local support they would have needed to line up along the route.

Someone recruited them, radicalized them and then sent them out to terrorist training camps.

Hassan and his friends have called their parents to let them know they are in Somalia but the conversations have always been brief and the young men would not say who paid for their trips or helped plan them.

Many of the missing young men attended services and youth outreach programs at the Abubakar As-Saddique mosque, in Minneapolis.

The Imam there has denied any involvement in terrorism and said his mosque has never been used as a platform for jihadist lectures, sermons or recruitment.

But as the anguished parents have said, someone must have recruited them. These young men raised in America – many who haven't seen their homeland since they were toddlers – didn't just wake up one day and decide to return to Somalia as terrorists.

Besides the personal tragedy for these families, these mysterious journeys to that backward, lawless land pose a national security threat to America's homeland.

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Many of these young men are travelling on United States' passports. And since we don't know the identities of all of them, they could return to the U.S. at any time – fully radicalized and trained in the tactics of terror – to launch attacks here – bringing to our cities the suicide bombings and car bombings we have so far escaped.

Beyond the questions of who is doing this recruiting and why, we need to know if we are witnessing the further evolution of Islamist terror right here on our shores.

We will explore these questions with our two panels today made up of law enforcement and intelligence professionals, an expert on Somalia and the history of Al Shabaab, and two panelists who will give us an up-close and intimate look at Minnesota's Somali community:

- Abdirahman Mukhtar, a youth program manager at the Brian Coyle Center – the epicenter of Somali youth and community activities in Minneapolis – and a schoolmate of suicide bomber, Shirwa Ahmed;
- and Osman Ahmed, a cousin of Burhan Hassan.

As the attack in Madrid showed, the threat from al-Qaeda and other Islamist terrorist organizations around the world continues to evolve. We must continue to stay ahead of that threat – particularly when it may threaten our homeland security. Senator Collins.

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Opening Statement of Senator Susan M. Collins

'Violent Islamist Extremism: al-Shabaab Recruitment in America'

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
March 11, 2009

The most effective border security system cannot protect our nation from "homegrown terrorists," individuals already living in our country who become radicalized and committed to a violent ideology. Three years ago, this Committee launched an investigation into homegrown terrorism and the process by which individuals within the United States could become radicalized and commit terrorist attacks.

Our investigation has examined radicalization among prison populations, as well as the efforts by federal, state, and local law enforcement to counter the homegrown threat and the role of the Internet in the radicalization process. This past October, however, the threat of homegrown terrorism took another disturbing turn when a young man from Minnesota carried out a suicide bombing in Somalia.

FBI Director Mueller believes that this suicide bombing marked the first time that a U.S. citizen had carried out a terrorist suicide bombing. Although the bombing took place in Somalia, Director Mueller stated that it appears that the individual had been radicalized in his hometown of Minneapolis. Even more disturbing, this young man may not be the only American citizen to have traveled to Somalia to join the terrorist group known as al-Shabaab.

The danger brought to light by these revelations is clear. Radicalized individuals, trained in terrorist tactics and in possession of American passports, can pose a threat to the security of the United States.

Our discussion today is not just a consideration of the counterterrorism tactics and intelligence gathering needed to counter this threat, but also should serve to remind us that there is a personal side to this story. These young men left behind families who care deeply for them and want to see them come home unharmed. They left behind a community which lived, worked, and worshipped with them and which now lives under a cloud of suspicion, worrying that perhaps tomorrow their own children might not come home.

Two of our witnesses have traveled from Minneapolis to talk about this side of the story with us today. Like so many Somali immigrants, these are patriotic American citizens who have bravely come forward to tell their story and to help us find the answers to questions that trouble all of us:

What drew these young men to adopt a violent extremist ideology with such fervor that they traveled thousands of miles to join a terrorist group?

Is there an individual or network operating within the United States facilitating recruitment or providing financial support for al-Shabaab?

How can we work with the American Somali community – and any other community where a violent extremist ideology might take root – to ensure that other young Americans do not stray down the same path?

These are among the questions we will explore as our Committee continues to examine the threat of homegrown terrorism.

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11 March 2009

Hearing before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

Violent Islamist Extremism: Al-Shabaab Recruitment in America

Andrew Liepman
Deputy Director of Intelligence
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Introduction

Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today to share the National Counterterrorism Center ("NCTC's") perspective on the radicalization of Somali youth in America. I appreciate the opportunity to appear alongside my colleague Phil Mudd. I will be discussing the widely reported disappearances of young Somali-Americans from the US; why we believe these individuals were vulnerable to extremist influences; the role of the Internet in radicalization; and what NCTC is doing about this phenomenon with its partners in Federal, State, and local government.

Overview of Somalia

Somalia has a history of turmoil and instability dating back to the collapse of the Siad Barre regime in 1991, which resulted in a descent into factional fighting and anarchy, especially in Southern Somalia. Following multiple failed attempts to bring stability in 2006, a loose coalition of clerics, local leaders, and militias known as the Council of Islamic Courts took power in much of Southern Somalia. In December 2006 and January 2007, the Somali Transitional Federal Government joined with Ethiopian forces and routed the Islamic Court militias in a two-week war. Since the end of 2006, al-Shabaab—the militant wing of the Council of Islamic Courts—has led a collection of disparate clan militias in a violent insurgency, using guerrilla warfare and terrorist tactics against the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia and the Ethiopian presence in the country.

Al-Shabaab uses intimidation and violence to undermine the Somali government and kills activists who have been working to bring peace through political dialogue and reconciliation. The group has claimed responsibility for several high-profile bombings and shootings in Mogadishu targeting Ethiopian troops and Somali government officials. It has been responsible for assassinating civil society figures, government officials, and journalists. Al-Shabaab fighters or assailants who have claimed allegiance to the group have also conducted violent attacks and targeted assassinations against international aid workers and nongovernmental aid organizations.

Overview of the Somali-American Diaspora

Somali refugees began arriving in the US in significant numbers in 1992, following US intervention in Somalia's humanitarian crisis and clan warfare. The Somali-

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American population is distributed in small clusters throughout the US, with the heaviest concentrations in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota; Columbus, Ohio; Seattle, Washington; and San Diego, California. Estimates of the size of the Somali-American population range from 70,000 to 200,000 due mostly to the length of time since the 2000 census but also secondary migration, illegal immigration, and births and deaths, which taken together make it difficult to determine the exact size of the diaspora within the US today.

Compared to most Muslim immigrants to the US, many Somalis—seeking refuge from a war-torn country—received less language and cultural training and education prior to migration. Despite the efforts of Federal, State and local government and non-governmental organizations to facilitate their settlement into American communities, their relative linguistic isolation and the sudden adjustment to American society many refugees faced has reinforced, in some areas, their greater insularity compared to other, more integrated Muslim immigrant communities, and has aggravated the challenges of assimilation for their children.

According to data from the most recent census, the Somali-American population suffers the highest unemployment rate among East African diaspora communities in the United States, and experience significantly high poverty rates and the lowest rate of college graduation. These data also suggest that Somali-Americans are far more likely to be linguistically isolated than other East African immigrants.

Somali-American Youth Disappearances

In the last few years, a number of Somali-American young men have traveled to Somalia, possibly to train and fight with al-Shabaab. One of these travelers—Minneapolis-resident Shirwa Ahmed—perpetrated a suicide bombing late last October. Ahmed's **travel overseas** to fight and his association with a **foreign terrorist organization** has reinforced our reluctance to categorize such activity simply as "homegrown extremism." However, we are concerned that if Somali-American youth can be motivated to engage in such activities overseas, Ahmed's fellow travelers could return to the US and engage in terrorist activities here. I want to emphasize that we do not have credible reporting to indicate that US persons who have traveled to Somalia are planning to execute attacks in the US, but we cannot rule out that potential given the indoctrination and training they might have received in East Africa.

The exact number of young Somali-American men who traveled to Somalia to support al-Shabaab or other Somali factions is unclear, and it is possible that others remain undetected. Since 2006, a number of US citizens who are Muslim converts have also traveled to Somalia, possibly to train in extremist training camps.

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Radicalization among Somali-Americans

I also want to emphasize that we do not believe that we are witnessing any form of community-wide radicalization among Somali-Americans. Many Somali-Americans came to the US to get away from the type of anarchy, chaos, and heartbreak that violence breeds. The overwhelming majority of Somali-Americans are or want to be contributing members of American society, trying to raise their families here and desperately wishing for stability in their ancestral homeland.

We have assessed that characteristics common to a number of Muslim -American communities appeared to have helped mitigate the potential threat of radicalization in the US, including faith in the American political system, access to resources to defend civil rights and civil liberties, interaction with non-Muslims, and a greater focus on domestic issues than international events. We do not believe that these factors have changed for the overall Muslim-American community; however, these mitigating factors are not as apparent in the Somali-American community, largely because of their relatively recent arrival in the US.

So, what causes the radicalization of a small but significant number of Somali-American youth? The answer is complex—it is the result of a number of factors, as I mentioned previously—that come together occasionally when dynamic, influential leaders gain access to despondent, disenfranchised young men. Sophisticated extremist recruiters target vulnerable individuals who lack structure and definition in their lives, by offering what parents and outsiders often view as a seemingly innocuous alternative to more common violent subcultures associated with gangs and criminality. These recruiters subject individuals to religiously inspired indoctrination to move them toward violent extremism. They target vulnerable young men—many of them refugees who came here as small children or who are children of immigrants—torn between their parents' traditional ethnic, tribal, and clan identities and the new cultures and traditions offered by American society. Caught between two worlds, and lacking structure and definition in their lives at home, **some** youth become susceptible to the draw of gangs and criminality, and in some cases religious or nationalistic extremism. The new group identities that these leaders provide to their followers can expose them to forces that may move them toward violent extremism against people and institutions they have learned to regard as enemies.

Among Somali-Americans, the refugee experience of fleeing a war-torn country, combined with perceived discrimination, marginalization, and frustrated expectations, as well as local criminal, familial, and clan dynamics may heighten the susceptibility of some members of these communities to criminal or extremist influences.

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The crisis in the Horn of Africa, which included the invasion of Somalia by Ethiopia, has attracted the rapt attention of Somali diaspora communities and heightened their nationalistic sentiments. Extremist recruiters play upon these nationalistic sentiments to rally elements of the diaspora with well-produced videos of heroic Somalis engaged in combat against historic rivals, tactics that enhance their fundraising and recruitment efforts. These themes of heroism and becoming part of something larger resonate especially among adventure-seeking young men.

The Somali-American youth who have traveled abroad to join and fight for al-Shabaab were likely exposed to al-Shabaab's extremist ideology in the United States, most likely through sustained interaction with extremists—in person and via the Internet—and exposure to jihadist literature and videos circulated on the Internet.

Role of the Internet in Radicalizing Somali Youth

The easy availability of extremist media on the Internet provides a repertoire of tools and themes that extremist recruiters can use to appeal to youthful notions of battles, heroics, shame, and obligation, but this is seldom enough to cause an individual to become radical. Al-Shabaab's official website regularly provides links to al-Qa`ida's al-Sahab media that endorse violent jihad in Somalia. Measuring the impact al-Qa`ida propaganda has had in motivating Somali-Americans to fight in Somalia is imprecise at best, nor can we reliably weight the individual effects of clan, ethnic identity, anti-Ethiopian sentiment, or jihadist ideology that influenced recent travelers to Somalia.

Al-Qa`ida's senior leadership in recent months has praised al-Shabaab and depicted Somalia as a local manifestation of a broader conflict between the West and Islam, a stimulus that could reinforce the commitment of individuals already predisposed to embracing violence. We note the possibility, however, that potential ethnic Somali recruits would prefer to join a group that is focused on Somali-centric issues rather than signing up for the global Jihad and joining an al-Qa`ida affiliate.

Readers of jihadist websites are mostly Muslims who may sympathize with but are unaffiliated with al-Qa`ida or al-Shabaab. Thus, such sites draw little attention from the mainstream Muslim population, which markedly limits the reach and effect of jihadist propaganda. Nonetheless, recent statements on Somalia by al-Qa`ida leaders and al-Qa`ida affiliates in East Africa reveal an emphasis on communicating to international and notably English-speaking audiences. Al-Qa`ida's second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri, appeared in a video posted online in February that featured the most extensive public commentary on Somalia yet given by such a senior al-Qa`ida leader. Zawahiri condemned Somalia's internationally recognized government, endorsed the expulsion of African Union peacekeepers from Somalia,

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and praised al-Shabaab's successes. The video was released with English subtitles, a clear indication that al-Qa`ida was targeting its message to an international audience. Further, East African-based Al-Qa`ida figure Saleh Nabhan in a video posted online in August declared that training camps in Somalia and elsewhere were open and called for Muslims everywhere to assist the Somali jihad. The video was distributed on behalf of al-Shabaab and also had English subtitles.

NCTC's Coordinating Role

NCTC's analytic cadre is examining the issue of Somali-American radicalization in the US. Their analysis is informed by strong collaborative relationships they maintain with analytic counterparts throughout the Intelligence Community and our international partners. Over the past two years, NCTC, in contact with the ODNI Civil Liberties and Privacy Office, has dramatically increased its programs to study Islamic radicalization and counter-radicalization as well as al-Qa`ida's media programs and potential means of effectively countering extremist messaging. The transnational influences affecting the Somali-American diaspora necessitates analysis that extends beyond Somalia and the United States, to other nations with Somali diasporas, particularly Canada and the United Kingdom.

To coordinate Federal, State, and local engagement efforts within Somali-American communities, the NCTC Global Engagement Group chairs the Somali Community Outreach Forum. This working group includes representatives from the FBI Community Relations Unit; the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties; the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis; the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service; Immigration and Customs Enforcement; the Department of Justice Civil Rights and National Security Divisions; and the Department of the Treasury. This working group provides a forum to coordinate community outreach meetings in Columbus, Ohio and Minneapolis, Minnesota and other venues, and serves as a central point for collaboration that is designed to increase the effectiveness and coordination of activities, while respecting the civil liberties and privacy rights of US Persons.

One important initiative I would like to mention is the ongoing expansion to Minneapolis and Columbus of roundtable discussions sponsored by the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties as an outgrowth of their engagement efforts with Arab, Muslim, Sikh, South Asian, and Middle Eastern Americans. These discussions bring together a network of US Government officials and community members from the non-profit, religious, and Somali-American communities. Equally important, FBI outreach offices have been engaged in discussions with their Somali-American contacts throughout the United States and are planning future efforts to expand into other areas. Furthermore, the Ohio Department of Public Safety has compiled a brochure on Somali culture that aims at informing state and local officials about

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cultural sensitivity issues within the Somali-American community, and plans are underway to translate the document into the Somali language.

NCTC's Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning has convened an East Africa Senior Working Group to discuss engagement options in East Africa that are feeding the growth of al-Shabaab. This interagency effort is critical to a holistic approach to the problem of radicalization of Somali-Americans at home and Somalis abroad by using actions as well as our words. We will not solve the domestic Islamic radicalization problem unless we also address the crisis in the Horn of Africa that recruiters exploit to rally Somali diaspora communities worldwide.

Creation of Best Practices

Providing coordinated lessons learned regarding cultural sensitivities and other issues that Somali-American communities deem important will enhance the engagement efforts of Federal, State, and local officials nationwide. NCTC last year produced a "best practices primer" for state and local law enforcement officials that addresses cultural sensitivity issues and lessons learned in government outreach to American Muslim communities. This year we plan to create another primer that catalogues "best practices" in outreach to Somali-American communities, which will incorporate the feedback and expertise of Federal, State, and local organizations involved in areas heavily populated by Somali-Americans.

Today I have been able to give you our appreciation of a nascent problem for Homeland Security and report what NCTC and its partners are doing about it. I will be happy to enlarge upon anything that may have been left unclear.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

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STATEMENT OF PHILIP MUDD
ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
NATIONAL SECURITY BRANCH
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
MARCH 11, 2009

Good morning Chairman Lieberman, Senator Collins, and members of the Committee. I am pleased to be here today. Thank you for the opportunity to provide the FBI's perspective on the issue of threats from Somalia and their effect on the security of the United States. I will also discuss our assessment of why a number of individuals have left the United States to train or fight in Somalia, and how the FBI is working with our law enforcement and intelligence partners to respond to the threat.

Somalia Overview

Somalia continues to be wracked by instability and, despite efforts to bring some measure of peace and stability to that country, is still plagued by conflict among various competing factions. The rise of violent extremist Islamist elements-like the al-Shabaab militia, which has made significant gains in the aftermath of the Ethiopian invasion in late 2006-has made the security environment there even more unsettled. Al-Shabaab is one of the most significant forces on the ground in Somalia and has conducted a range of operations against a number of different targets inside the country. While the Ethiopian government withdrew all combat forces in mid-January, al-Shabaab has conducted follow-on attacks against African Union peacekeeping troops, as well as international aide workers. Al-Shabaab's use of tactics such as suicide bombings, kidnappings, beheadings, and murders only serves to burnish its reputation for violence.

Beyond the threat al-Shabaab poses in Somalia, its connections to other extremists in the region and beyond add to concern over its activities. Al-Shabaab has links to the al-Qa'ida in East Africa network—including individuals responsible for the 1998 embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania—and maintains ties with al-Qa'ida leaders in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Al-Qa'ida's focus on Somalia is in part reflected in its propaganda: top al-Qa'ida advisor Ayman al-Zawahiri, for example, proclaimed in a February 2009 statement that gains made by al-Shabaab in Somalia were "a step on the path of victory of Islam." Such propaganda suggests al-Qa'ida leaders see Somalia as a potential recruiting, training, or staging ground for anti-U.S. or Western operations in the region, or even more disturbing, around the globe.

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Dynamics in the United States

An estimated two million to three million Somalis live outside of Somalia or the Horn of Africa, and the ethnic Somali community in the United States is estimated to range from 150,000 to 200,000. However, high rates of illegal immigration, widespread identity and documentation fraud, and a cultural reluctance to share personal information with census takers has prevented an accurate count of the ethnic Somali population inside the United States. Ethnic Somalis began arriving in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the mid-1990s on the heels of a broader resettlement program and the area is now home to the single largest population of ethnic Somalis in the United States. Other cities with reported large concentrations of ethnic Somalis include Columbus, Ohio; Seattle, Washington; Washington, DC; San Diego, California; and Atlanta, Georgia.

Since late 2006, we have seen several individuals from the United States—many with ethnic ties to Somalia and some without such connections—travel to Somalia to train or fight on behalf of al-Shabaab. The number of individuals we believe have departed for Somalia is comparatively larger than the number of individuals who have left the United States for other conflict zones around the world over the past few years. And we have seen more individuals leave from the Minneapolis area than from any other part of the country.

In Minneapolis, we believe there has been an active and deliberate attempt to recruit individuals—all of whom are young men, some only in their late teens—to travel to Somalia to fight or train on behalf of al-Shabaab. We assess that for the majority of these individuals, the primary motivation for such travel was to defend their place of birth from the Ethiopian invasion, although an appeal was also made based on their shared Islamic identity. A range of socio-economic conditions—such as violent youth crime and gang subcultures, and tensions over cultural integration—may have also played some role in the recruitment process. We also note that several of the travelers from Minneapolis came from single-parent households, potentially making them more susceptible to recruitment from charismatic male authority figures.

While there are no current indicators that any of the individuals who traveled to Somalia have been selected, trained, or tasked by al-Shabaab or other extremists to conduct attacks inside the United States, we remain concerned about this possibility and that it might be exploited in the future if other U.S. persons travel to Somalia for similar purposes. The fact that one of the Minneapolis youths participated in a suicide attack in northern Somalia in late October 2008—which we believe is the first instance of a U.S. citizen participating in a suicide attack anywhere—has only added to concern over the possibility that individuals may engage in terrorist activity upon their return to the United States.

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Comparison to the United Kingdom

Much has been written about the circumstances of many South Asians in the United Kingdom, and how a variety of factors has contributed to an environment in which hundreds of individuals became involved in extremist activity there and in South Asia. Among the factors having some impact on South Asian communities in the United Kingdom are social and cultural alienation, demographic patterns, underemployment or unemployment, youth and gang-related violence, the existence of active extremist recruitment and facilitation networks, and natural access to an active conflict zone based on family or ethnic connections.

For the overwhelming majority of immigrant Muslim-American communities inside the United States, this U.K. environment stands in sharp contrast. As recent public opinion polls—such as the May 2007 Pew Poll and recent Gallup Poll—have shown, Muslim-Americans are for the most part well-integrated, and they achieve statistically higher levels of economic and educational achievement than most other minority groups within the United States. While poll results show that grievances do exist for Muslim-Americans, the vast majority do not condone the use of violence to provide any redress.

Despite the events in Minneapolis and examples of U.S. persons from other parts of the country who have traveled to Somalia for training or fighting, we do not believe that Somali communities here face the same challenges as similar South Asian communities in the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, some of the same factors that have contributed to the high level of extremist activity in the South Asian U.K. environment are evident in some Somali communities inside the United States, which indicates the need for heightened outreach and engagement in order to prevent these from manifesting into direct threats to the Homeland.

Outreach and Engagement

Since the 9/11 attacks, the FBI has developed an extensive outreach program to Muslim, South Asian, and Sikh communities to develop trust, address concerns, and dispel myths in those communities about the FBI and the U.S. Government. In the wake of developments in Minneapolis, the FBI initiated a pilot program focused on enhancing outreach and engagement activities with select field offices that were dealing with some aspect of the Somalia traveler issue. This program is still in the proof-of-concept phase, but is expected to provide multiple benefits for the FBI and the Somali communities within the purview of the select field offices.

Partnership with State and Local Government

The FBI has long partnered with state and local law enforcement. In the counterterrorism domain, that partnership has been sustained through more than 25 years of involvement in the Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs) throughout the country. While the FBI is the lead federal agency for terrorism investigations inside the United States, we recognize the vast resources, experience, and insight our state and local law enforcement partners have

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within the areas in which our field offices and satellite offices reside. One such example includes a partnership among our Minneapolis Field Office and local law enforcement, educators, and social service agency representatives to discuss issues of interest and concern regarding the Somali community there.

We are leveraging our relationships with state and local law enforcement in various field offices beyond the traditional JTTF structure to enhance our understanding or insight into the Somalia issue and its possible impact on the United States, including fostering new initiatives with units involved in traditional criminal or gang programs.

Intelligence Community Collaboration

The FBI continues to work with other members of the U.S. Intelligence Community to assess, evaluate, monitor, and—if required—disrupt, any potential threats based on activity related to extremism in Somalia. FBI analysts work closely with their counterparts at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) to evaluate events in Somalia and how they might affect the United States. Operationally, FBI agents work with a range of counterparts to develop programs to collect intelligence and disrupt any possible threats relating to individuals who have traveled to Somalia for extremist activity, or wish to travel in the future. Information regarding analysis and operations is shared routinely and continuously, and up to the highest levels of decisionmakers in various agencies.

Threat to the Homeland

On balance, we are concerned about the recruitment of individuals from the United States to Somalia and their involvement in training or fighting there. While there are likely a variety of motivations affecting such individuals, it remains unclear whether the allure of Somalia as an active conflict zone has diminished in the wake of Ethiopia's withdrawal—thereby removing a primary grievance based on nationalism—or whether it will continue to attract individuals from the West who see Somalia as a permissive environment given ongoing instability.

While al-Shabaab's foothold in Somalia remains tenuous, it has secured a number of gains in recent months, and its proclivity for extreme violence remains a hallmark. Most worrisome are links between al-Shabaab and al-Qa'ida associates in the region and elsewhere, and the degree to which Somalia will become another safehaven from which to train, recruit, and then deploy Westerners already there for attacks against their home countries is an open question. Currently, there are no clear indicators that this is occurring, but there are several gaps in our understanding of events there that preclude a more robust understanding of the nature and severity of the threat to the West or United States.

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Conclusion

Today, the FBI continues to collect intelligence and assess any potential threats to the United States based on activity related to extremism in Somalia. We are working closely with our U.S. Intelligence Community and law enforcement counterparts to analyze the vulnerability of the United States to such an attack. We will build on these relationships as we continue efforts to stay ahead of the threats and protect our Homeland.

We thank the Committee for its continued support of the FBI and its national security mission. And we look forward to continuing to work with you to protect our nation and its citizens.

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"Violent Islamic Extremism: Al-Shabaab Recruitment in America"

Hearing before the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
March 11, 2009

Testimony by Ken Menkhaus
Professor, Political Science
Davidson College
Davidson, North Carolina

Introduction

Senator Lieberman, committee chairman, and Senator Collins, ranking member, I thank you both for the opportunity to share my assessment of recruitment efforts by shabaab among the Somali diaspora in America.

I speak to you today in my capacity as an academic researcher who has followed political developments in Somalia since the mid-1980s. I hope to place the question before us in context by providing you with a brief assessment of

- the current crisis in Somalia;
- the source and nature of radicalization, anti-Americanism, and violent extremism inside Somalia;
- the central role of the diaspora in Somali affairs;
- the threat posed by shabaab recruitment of Somali Americans; and
- factors which may shape Somali diaspora response toward attention from US law enforcement.

As a point of clarification, there are a number of different armed hardline Islamist movements in Somalia besides shabaab; they recently created an umbrella movement called Hisb al Islamiyya, or Islamic Party. Shabaab is, however, the largest and most important of these groups, and for purposes of simplicity this testimony refers only to shabaab.

The Somali Context and the Current Crisis

Somalia has been beset by one of the longest and most destructive crises in the post Cold War era. The estimated nine million people of Somalia, almost all of whom are Muslims, have endured nineteen years of complete state collapse, periods of civil war, chronic insecurity, lawlessness and warlordism, massive displacement, the destruction of major cities, disruption of already fragile livelihoods, and recurring humanitarian crises,

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including the 1991-92 famine in which 250,000 people died. An estimated one million Somalis are today refugees scattered across the globe. This has been an exceptionally traumatic period for the Somali nation as a whole and for the many families that have been uprooted by the crisis.

For years, Somalia was impervious to both national and external efforts to promote reconciliation and a revived central government, including the ambitious and failed UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) in 1993-94. Warlords and other spoilers blocked efforts to promote state-revival, and successfully exploited clan divisions and tensions to poison reconciliation initiatives. Even so, communities forged informal systems of governance at the local level. Many of these local systems of governance relied on clan-based sharia courts, which provided improved law and order. In addition to the sharia courts, Islamic charities, sometimes with generous funding from sources in the Gulf states, came to play an important role as the only source of essential social services in the country. These sharia courts and the Islamic charities earned a great deal of "performance legitimacy" in the eyes of many Somalis, and, along with a number of other factors, gradually helped to create a sense that some form of Islamic governance was the solution to Somalia's crisis. Indeed, one of the long-term trends in Somalia is the ascendance of political Islam, and I would argue that for the most part this need not be viewed as a problem for or a threat to the United States.

Economically, the post-UNOSOM period saw parts of the country experience recovery and growth fueled primarily by remittances from the diaspora. Remittances were critical sources of income to meet the basic needs of extended families, but also became a vital source of investment capital in Somalia's fast-growing business sector. As the private sector grew, the business community became an increasingly important group in Somali politics. Many of the leading Somali business figures were based in Dubai, where some forged partnerships with Gulf Arab businessmen.

In 2006, Somalia's long nightmare of state collapse appeared to be over, when a loose coalition of Islamists and local sharia courts in Mogadishu (eventually known as the Islamic Courts Union, or ICU) defeated a coalition of US-backed militia leaders. This coalition included both moderate and hardline elements. One militia wing was especially important in the ICU victory. It was known as the shabaab, ("youth" in Arabic) and was a well-trained, well-armed, committed group of about 400 militia answering to a commander, Adan Hashi 'Ayro, who had served as a mujahadiin fighter in Afghanistan. 'Ayro in turn answered to a leading hardline political figure in the ICU, Hassan Dahir Aweys, one of only a few Somalis designated as a terror suspect by the US government for his past leadership role in the group Al-Ittihad al-Islamiyya (AIAI).

From June to December 2006, the ICU expanded their control to most of south-central Somalia, and provided levels of public order and governance that Somalis had not seen in a generation. Most Somalis, from all clans and across all political persuasions, were very enthusiastic about the ICU's success, and most businesspeople threw their support behind the ICU as well. Tens of thousands of diaspora members flew back to Somalia, some just to visit, others to offer their services to the ICU. For many, the impulse to support and

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join the ICU was driven as much by a sense of renewed nationalist pride than by a commitment to political Islam of any sort. The ICU saw the diaspora as a valuable source of fund-raising and technical expertise and actively courts Somalis abroad. In fact, some of the top figures in the ICU were themselves diaspora members with citizenship in Canada, Sweden, and elsewhere.

Unfortunately, Islamist hardliners in the ICU coalition succeeded in marginalizing moderate elements of the movement and began pushing the ICU into radical policies. Two policies were of special concern – first, their blithe dismissal of US requests to identify and expel a small number of foreign Al Qai'da figures the US believed was in hiding in Mogadishu, and second, their repeated provocations of neighboring Ethiopia, against which they declared jihad. The hardliners in the ICU seemed intent on provoking a war with Ethiopia. This doomed what might otherwise have been an legitimate Islamist solution to the long-running Somali crisis, and instead ushered in a period of extraordinary violence.

In December 2006, Ethiopia launched a major military offensive and routed the ICU. The ICU leadership disbanded the organization and fled the country; surviving shabaab fighters dissolved into the countryside. Ethiopian forces occupied the capital Mogadishu without a shot. Though the Ethiopian offensive was not, as has sometimes been falsely portrayed, an instance of the US subcontracting the war of terror to a regional ally (Ethiopia pursued its own interests and would have acted with or without US approval), the US did provide diplomatic, intelligence, and possibly other support to the Ethiopian government in this operation, and even launched an aerial attack on a Somali convoy that the US military believed was carrying high value foreign al Qa'ida operatives. This reinforced a universally held belief among Somalis that the Ethiopian military occupation was a US-conceived and US-backed operation. Rightly or wrongly, the US was subsequently held responsible for the devastation which ensued.

Ethiopian-Somali relations have historically been rancorous; the two countries fought a bloody war in 1977-78 and Somalia has never recognized its border with Ethiopia. This animosity is mainly over the status of Somali-inhabited eastern Ethiopia, but it has a much longer history, and has a religious dimension as well, as the Ethiopian government is dominated by Christian highlanders, while Somalia is an Islamic society. The Ethiopian military occupation of Mogadishu was thus incendiary from both a Somali nationalist and an Islamist perspective. Hopes to replace the Ethiopian forces with a less provocative African Union mission failed; only 2,000 of the expected 8,000 African Union forces (AMISOM) eventually were deployed. So Ethiopia stayed.

Within weeks, a "complex insurgency" of clan militias and regrouped shabaab force began attacking the Ethiopian forces and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), a weak Somali government widely perceived at the time to be a puppet of Ethiopia. The insurgency and counter-insurgency that ensued over the next two years devastated the capital. Heavy-handed counter-insurgency tactics by the TFG and Ethiopian forces led to the displacement of 700,000 residents out of a city of 1.3 million; parts of the capital were rendered a ghost town. Businesses were destroyed, and abuses of the local

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population were serious and widespread. Within a year, Somalia became the site of the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Today, 3.2 million of the population – about half of the total population of south-central Somalia – is currently in need of emergency aid. But an explosion of criminal and political violence in the country made it almost impossible for aid agencies to access those in need. In 2008, one third of all humanitarian casualties worldwide occurred in Somalia, making it the most dangerous place on Earth for aid workers. As of March 2009, only very limited food relief operations are possible.

In sum, the extraordinary levels of political violence, displacement, destruction, and humanitarian need associated with the Ethiopian occupation of Somalia was the exact opposite of what the US and others hoped would be produced by the occupation. In some respects it exceeded worst case scenarios imagined when the Ethiopia forces first entered the capital. And while radical Islamist sentiments and organization certainly existed in Somalia prior to December 2006, the Ethiopian occupation inadvertently fueled a dramatic rise in radicalism and violent extremism in the country and among the diaspora.

Radicalization, Anti-Americanism, Violent Extremism, and Shabaab

The enormous human costs of the two year Ethiopian military occupation of south Somalia produced rage among Somalis both at home and abroad. Many if not most Somalis were "radically angry" – that is, predisposed emotionally toward extreme interpretations of events and extreme proposed responses – without those sentiments necessarily be linked to a radical ideology. Though some Somalis were willing to concede that the hardliners in the ICU bore some responsibility for the calamity, the dominant Somali view was that Ethiopia and the US were to blame. US policies both during and after the Ethiopian offensive were seen as silent on the extraordinary human costs, and Somalis took the silence to imply consent. As a result, fierce levels of anti-Americanism took root among many Somalis at home and abroad. Even Somalis with close links to the US and many of those with US citizenship were scathing in their criticism of the US. In some quarters, conspiracy theories thrived. Some Somalis believed the US was punishing Somalia for the 1993 "Black Hawk Down" disaster in which 18 US soldiers died in Mogadishu, or were convinced that the US was simply unwilling to countenance any form of Islamic governance. Others came to view the harsh Ethiopian occupation as part of a Western campaign against the Islamic world, linking the occupation to the US military occupation of Iraq, which was deeply unpopular in Somali circles.

What emerged in Somalia, and in the Somali diaspora, was a complex cocktail of nationalist, Islamist, anti-Ethiopian, anti-American, anti-Western, anti-foreigner sentiments. This cocktail was an ideal recipe for shabaab, which emerged as main source of armed resistance to the Ethiopian occupation, shabaab. Shabaab was able to conflate its jihadist rhetoric with Somali nationalism and anti-Ethiopianism to win both passive and active support from many Somalis, including those who were personally appalled at the movement's extremist interpretations of Islam or its assassinations of civic leaders. And once shabaab broke away from the old ICU leadership and in 2007 announced itself

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as the leader of the armed struggle against Ethiopian occupation and the TFG, it had little political competition inside southern Somalia.

The result was that most Somalis, even those who opposed shabaab's radical Islamist ideology, believed that shabaab's use of armed resistance to the Ethiopian occupation was entirely justified, and tended to view the group first and foremost as a liberation movement. To the extent that it was a "jihad" it was understood as a defensive jihad, a variation on what Western scholars would call "just war."

This mixed set of motives and ideologies came to define shabaab as well. Its leaders appear to have divergent views on issues ranging from Islamist ideology to tactics. Some are by all accounts committed ideologues; others appear to be primarily power-seekers, hoping to parlay their positions in shabaab to bargain for a share of power. The motivations of the young fighters in shabaab's rank and file are even more varied. While some are committed jihadists, many of the young men who flocked to fight in the name of shabaab were by no means hard-line Islamist ideologues. Some fought to drive out the Ethiopians and topple the TFG; others came under heavy pressure from shabaab recruiters to join; still others were simply gunmen looking for paid employment and eager to serve on the winning side.

Shabaab has enjoyed considerable success in Somalia, and by mid-2008 controlled all of the territory from the Kenyan border to the outskirts of Mogadishu. It also has localized strongholds inside Mogadishu. It is without question the strongest militia force in southern Somalia. Most of its fighters are young men – in some instances boys – equipped with semi-automatic weapons. It has used mortars extensively to attack Ethiopian and TFG compounds as well. It has used political assassination and the threat of assassination against Somalis in the TFG and others suspected of collaborating with the US or Ethiopia. But shabaab has also introduced new military technologies into Somalia, especially the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). It has also introduced the use of suicide bombers, a tactic unheard of in the past. Suicide is taboo in Somali culture, and its introduction into the country by shabaab has come as a shock to Somalis.

Importantly, shabaab generally did not directly target the US in its operations in 2007 and the first part of 2008, focusing its violence against the TFG, Ethiopian occupying forces, and Somali "collaborators." It was not designated a terrorist organization until March 2008. This meant that Somali-Americans could provide financial support to the shabaab or even join the cause without having reason to believe they were in violation of US anti-terrorism laws.

The decision by the US Department of States to designate shabaab a terrorist group at that particular moment in the Somali drama, when diplomatic efforts to bring the ICU into talks with the TFG appeared to be gaining momentum, is a topic worth exploring at another time. While shabaab was without question a very worrisome, undesirable, violent movement with at least some links to al Qa'ida (a topic discussed below), it had not directly targeted the US, and was focused entirely on a national, not international

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struggle. At a time when US policy in other parts of the world appeared to be taking a nuanced and pragmatic approach toward engagement with radical Islamist insurgencies and movements (the Mahdi army in Iraq, portions of the Taliban in Afghanistan), the designation of shabaab as a terrorist organization seemed to be moving in the opposite direction. When in May of 2008 the US launched a tomahawk missile attack on a safe house in a remote town of central Somalia and killed the shabaab leader Aden Hashi 'Ayro, the shabaab announced that from that point it would target all US, Western, and UN personnel and interests, as well as Somalis working for the US or the UN, and any countries in the region collaborating with the US. Fears that the shabaab would make good on its pledge to widen its war into the broader region were realized when in late October 2008 shabaab executed five synchronized suicide bombing attacks against local government, Ethiopian, and UN compounds in the northern Somali polities of Puntland and Somaliland. This demonstrated a reach into areas beyond shabaab's core territory in the south of the country, an ability to recruit and indoctrinate suicide bombers, and a logistical capacity to pull off a sophisticated terrorist attack. Many feared that the October bombings were the first in a series of shabaab attacks beyond southern Somalia, and that the next attacks would hit soft targets in Kenya, Ethiopia, or Djibouti.

Al Qa'ida in Somalia

The principal reason for US concern about shabaab is not that it is a violent, extremist armed insurgency which employs tactics that could legitimately be described as "terrorist" in nature. The Horn of Africa is unfortunately home to dozens of unsavory and extremely violent armed movements matching this description, as well as several governments which sponsor paramilitaries using terror tactics on their own populations or against rival governments in the region. Shabaab stands out because of its ties to al Qa'ida. Shabaab spokesperson Sheikh Robow (aka Abu Mansur) publicly and defiantly underscored this link to al Qa'ida in 2008, and top al Qa'ida figures have made global appeals to help shabaab in a jihad against Ethiopia. Shabaab is believed to secure some financial support from al Qa'ida, and hosts an unknown number of al Qa'ida advisors in the areas it controls in southern Somalia. It also is alleged to receive funds and weapon from Eritrea, which – despite being an avowedly secular government that represses any manifestation of political Islam in its own borders -- is using shabaab in a proxy war against Ethiopia.

That shabaab has links to al Qa'ida is not in question. What is more difficult to assess is the extent and significance of those links. Here it is worth briefly reviewing the history of al Qaida in Somalia.

In the early to mid-1990s, at a time when Osama bin Laden was based in neighboring Sudan, an East African Al Qaida (EAAQ) cell was established in Nairobi Kenya, with the objective of forging ties to the Somali Islamist movement Al Itiihad al Islamiyya (AIAI) then operating in Somalia and in Somali-inhabited eastern Ethiopia. This EAAQ mission into Somali-inhabited territory was a failure; Somalia proved to be a difficult, non-permissive environment for foreign operatives, and Somalis were hostile to Al Qa'ida's call for jihad against the West. The EAAQ cell, which was composed mainly of non-

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natives of the Horn of Africa, instead found Kenya a more conducive base of operations, and from there planned and executed the terrorist bombings of US Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in August 1998. Neither Somalis nor Somalia played a role in those attacks.

Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 and the subsequent US-led offensive to remove the Taliban from power and prevent Al Qa'ida from using Afghanistan as a base, Somalia gained attention as a possible site for al Qa'ida to regroup. Somalia was viewed by the US government as "ungoverned space" easily exploited by terrorists. The US government specifically identified a small number of "high value" EAAQ operatives some of whom were responsible for the 1998 embassy bombings, and argued it had hard evidence that those figures – including the Comoran Fazul Mohammed -- were coming and going from Mogadishu. The group that the EAAQ cell was relying on for protection in Mogadishu was believed to be Somali jihadists linked to Hassan Dahir Aweys and the militia which later became known as shabaab.

This was a watershed moment, because up until 2002 Somalis were a surprisingly poor source of recruitment into al Qa'ida. AIAI relations with al Qa'ida were actually quite poor. And despite a profile that ought to have made the country a ripe source of recruits, Somalia never generated anything near the kind of involvement in al Qa'ida that occurred in the North African states of Morocco and Algeria, or in neighboring Yemen. There are several possible explanations for this. First, Somalis of all ideological persuasions were focused almost entirely on their own national problem, and were less attracted to the call for global jihad represented by al Qa'ida. Second, to the extent that al Qa'ida was seen as an Arab agenda, it was less attractive to most Somalis, whose relations with the Arab world are complex and not entirely amiable. Finally, for the diaspora, any involvement in al Qa'ida also carried huge risks to the entire Somali community and the remittances on which the home country depended (a point explored below).

Nonetheless, the rise of a small group of Somali jihadists working closely with the EAAQ was a genuine cause for concern. US security agencies responded by forging links with local militias leaders to monitor and apprehend al Qa'ida operatives and their Somali supporters. Those partnerships were generally unsuccessful, as the militia leaders had little reach into neighborhoods where al Qa'ida and were deeply unpopular with Somalis, viewed as "warlords" who were responsible for much of the lawlessness in the capital. When in 2006 the ICU soundly defeated these warlords, it was seen as an embarrassment to the US and a setback in its counter-terrorism policies inside Somalia.

The US government had other counter-terrorist concerns in Somalia. The vibrant Somali remittance (hawala) companies which arose in the 1990s were suspected of being used (knowingly or unwittingly) by al Qa'ida to move funds surreptitiously, and in a few instances were also suspected of having al Qa'ida business partners. The assets of the largest Somali remittance company, al-Barakat, were frozen in late 2001 by the US Treasury department. The US was also concerned about the use of Somalia as a transshipment site for men, money, and materiel into Kenya by al Qa'ida.

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What has always been unclear is the extent of al Qa'ida support to and interest in shabaab. Despite the inflammatory rhetoric from al Qa'ida – the calls for global jihad against Ethiopia and its portrayal of Somalis as embattled Muslims oppressed and occupied by a Christian regime – the actual level of al Qa'ida engagement in Somalia has, to date, been fairly modest. Rhetoric has not been matched by resources. At least for the moment, al Qa'ida seems to be dabbling in Somalia, using a modest level of resources to leverage a maximum amount of discomfort and insecurity for the US and its ally Ethiopia. Compared to a number of other theaters of operation in the world, al Qa'ida has not demonstrated an intent to make Somalia a major priority. There is, for instance, no evidence at all that shabaab-held territory is being planned or used as a major safe haven for al Qa'ida leaders long the lines of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border areas. The main security threat from al Qa'ida in the region continues to be the prospect of terrorist attacks on soft Western targets in Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia, or Somaliland. To launch those attacks, exploitation of Somali territory and operatives would be useful but not essential for al Qa'ida.

The biggest new development with regard to terrorist threats in the region is this – for almost two decades, the only jihadist terrorist threat in the Horn of Africa came from outsiders in the East Africa Al-Qa'ida cell. Now, the shabaab amounts to the first serious "home-grown" terrorist threat targeting US interests in the region. This has the potential to be quite dangerous, but only if shabaab itself can thrive. That. I argue below, is now in question.

Recent Changes in Somalia: Declining Fortunes for Shabaab?

Shabaab is today the strongest militia in south-central Somalia, controls the greatest stretch of territory, and enjoys better flows of foreign financial support than its rivals, there are signs that the movement is in trouble, and indications that shabaab may have hit its high-water mark of power in late 2008. Several major changes have altered the environment in Somalia in ways that work against shabaab and that offer some hope for an improved political situation in Somalia.

First, in December 2008 Ethiopia completed withdraw of its forces from Somalia. This deprives shabaab of its principal nemesis and rallying point. Second, the deeply unpopular TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf resigned under pressure in December 2008, depriving shabaab of yet another source of popular resistance. Third, a peace accord, known as the Djibouti Agreeement, was signed in late 2008 between a moderate wing of the TFG and moderates in the opposition movement, known as the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS). This has produced an expanded unity parliament and the selection of a new government, led by President Sheikh Sharif, a former moderate leader of the ICU. Collectively, these dramatic changes have deprived shabaab of much of its raison d'etre. It can no longer pose as the main source of resistance to Ethiopian occupation and its puppet government; shabaab must now explain what it is for, and its social and governance policies in area its controls are deeply unpopular with most Somalis. Shabaab and other hardline Islamist groups in the Hisb al Islamiyya reject the new TFG and have continued to fight against it, but are meeting with active resistance

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from clan-based militias allied to the new government. Shabaab gets little public support for calls to fight and kill fellow Somalis, especially since the new government is composed of moderate Islamists who promise to implement sharia law. While the new government of Sheikh Sharif is weak and imperfect, and unsatisfying to different Somali constituencies on a variety of levels, it appears to have the backing of a broad array of civic leaders, business leaders, cleric, and most of the diaspora, all of whom share a collective weariness of war. Moreover, shabaab is now seen by a growing number of Somalis as a tool of foreign extremists who are not interested in Somalia's well-being but who are playing out their external agenda at Somalia's expense. All this, one hopes, is bad news for shabaab, and is likely to make it harder for it to win local support.

Recent trends in Somalia are likely to make it harder for shabaab to recruit abroad. While it is too soon to tell, there are indications that shabaab is quickly losing its appeal to Somalis. If so, the concern about Somali-Americans being recruited into shabaab may become less urgent. In that case, the residual concern will be Somali-Americans who have already been recruited into shabaab and who may return to the US. That is a scenario I consider in more detail below.

The role of the Somali diaspora in Somalia

An estimated one million Somalis have fled the country since the late 1980s and today can be found in almost every country in the world, usually as legal immigrants or refugees, but sometimes as illegal immigrants who have been smuggled into countries. They are concentrated in Europe, Canada, the United States, the Gulf States, Kenya, Australia, and increasingly Malaysia and China. Another a quarter million Somalis are now living in overcrowded refugee camps Dabaab Kenya and another 300,000 estimated to live in Yemen. About 150,000 Somalis are believed to live in the United States, with Minneapolis and Columbus, Ohio serving as two of the largest concentrations of Somali communities.

The principal role that the diaspora has played over the past 20 years has been as an economic lifeline to Somalia. Remittances are by far and away the most important source of income in Somalia. It is estimated that about one billion dollars is remitted each year by the diaspora; this dwarfs the country's earnings from its main export, livestock (averaging about $100 million per year). It is fair to say that without remittances, Somalia's already horrific levels of poverty and malnutrition would plummet into catastrophic levels of need. The diaspora keeps much of Somalia – especially households in urban areas -- alive.

As a corollary, the Somali diaspora is under enormous pressure to remit as much money as it can to extended families members back home. The ethical obligation to assist the extended family is absolute; a diaspora member who rejects this obligation would be renounced by his or her clan. Extended families in Somalia tend to act as single corporate units, allowing the family to diversity economic activities as a way of managing risk. The diaspora member is a major part of that household survival strategy. The advent of cheap telephone and email services has only served to increase the pressure

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that diaspora members are under to send cash, even to relatives who are irresponsible with the money. It is not an easy position for the diaspora to be in. Adding to the tensions are the fact that first generation Somali-Americans often feel less obliged to assist relatives they have never might in a country they have never seen.

The diaspora has always been a prime target of political and social groupings for fund-raising. Factions, clans, Islamist movements, civic organizations, and others all call on diaspora to contribute money to a common pool. Some of this money is used for good causes, like community projects. In other cases, the fund-raising can support militias or even extremist groups like shabaab. Somalis in the diaspora are not coerced to contribute as is the case with some other diasporas in North America

The diaspora is also increasingly the main source of investment funds for business ventures in Somalia, and the main repository of skilled and educated professionals. While many diaspora members are poor and poorly educated, as a group the diaspora are a privileged class.

Not surprisingly, Somali political, business, and civic life is increasingly dominated by the diaspora. An estimated 70% of the new TFG cabinet, for instance, holds citizenship abroad, and the new Prime Minister himself is a Canadian Somali who has resided for years in Virginia. Most of the Islamists who formed the leadership of the ICU came from abroad as well, and many of the families of Somali political and economic leaders reside abroad. While most of the diaspora contributions to Somalia are positive, and in some instances heroic – such as the physicians who give up lucrative positions abroad to return and work in dangerous conditions for a few hundred dollars a month – there are others whose involvement is destructive and divisive. For instance, evidence suggests that some of the financial backers of the Somali pirate groups plaguing shipping lanes in the Gulf of Aden are diaspora members.

In sum, Somalia has become a "diasporized nation." Many Somalis with citizenship abroad return to Somalia often to visit family, check on business investments, manage non-profits, or pursue political ambitions. Even Somalis who live year-round in Somalia must secure residency rights or passports from another country just so they can travel abroad, where the Somali passport is not recognized. Having a foreign travel document or residency rights is an essential risk management strategy, an "exit option" in the event of deteriorating security.

All this makes it increasingly difficult to draw meaningful distinctions between the Somalis and the Somali diaspora, or to identity the point at which a Somali who has lived his or her entire life outside Somalia becomes, in effect, a "foreigner" in Somalia.

These observations remind us first that virtually every Somali enterprise - whether the shareholder group of the Coca-Cola bottling plant in Mogadishu, or the new TFG administration, or a women's self-help group, or shabaab – is likely to have a significant diaspora component. Second, extensive travel to Somalia and financial and other interactions by Somali-Americans with their home country should not constitute a risk-

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risk profile. Third, it suggests that political, social, and ideological trends and tensions inside Somalia are likely to parallel trends and divisions within the Somali diaspora as well.

The Threat Posed by Shabaab Recruitment of the Diaspora.

The Minneapolis case, in which a dozen or more Somali youth have gone missing – with some phoning to relatives from Somalia, and one, Shirwa Ahmed, known to have been a suicide bomber in the October 28 bombing in Hargeisa Somaliland – has raised concerns in US law enforcement. This concern is not entirely new; in December 2006, when the ICU was defeated by the Ethiopian military, a number of ICU fighters were found to have been holding European or North American passports. Then as know the concern was that some of these diaspora members could have acquired terrorist training, especially in explosives, and an ideological commitment to execute acts of terrorism back in their host country.

To determine the extent of the threat posed by diaspora trained and indoctrinated by shabaab, we must begin by asking a basic question – why would shabaab either actively recruit diaspora members, or agree to accept them as volunteers? What can a diaspora recuit into shabaab do that a local militia fighter cannot? Why would shabaab or its supporters be willing to run the risk of increased exposure to US law enforcement and intelligence by recruiting within the American-Somali community? The answer to this question sheds light on the threat assessment that US law enforcement, and this committee, are seeking to make.

First, it is clear that the diaspora are not of much value as rank and file militia for the shabaab or any other fighting force in Somalia. Somalia is already saturated with experienced teenage gunmen and has no need to import more. In fact, evidence from the ICU in 2006 suggests that Somali diaspora and as well as foreign fighters were as much a liability as an asset to the ICU. They were unfamiliar with the countryside, often spoke the Somali language poorly, were more likely to become sick, and required a fair amount of oversight.

But the diaspora are useful to shabaab and other armed groups in Somalia in other ways. Their familiarity with computers and the internet is a valuable communication skill. Their familiarity with the English language is helpful for translation. And, to come to the point of our hearing, a young diaspora recruit is, upon arrival in Somalia, entirely cut off socially and therefore in theory easier to isolate, indoctrinate, and control for the purpose of executing suicide bombings. Were this not the case, it would much less risky and less expensive for shabaab to simply recruit locals. From this perspective, a young diaspora member who heeds the call by a recruiter to "join the cause" of fighting to protect his nation and religion is not so much a terrorist as a pawn, exploited by the real terrorists, those who are unwilling themselves to die for their cause but who are happy to manipulate a vulnerable and isolated youth to blow himself up. What little evidence is available suggests that shabaab uses a combination of incentives (payment to recruits and

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their families), indoctrination, close control, and threats of retribution against the recruit's family members to induce them to follow through on a suicide bombing.

In my assessment, a Somali diaspora member groomed to be a suicide bomber is of most utility to shabaab for an operation inside Somalia or in the region of the Horn of Africa. The reason for this is that these recruits would need "handlers" both to help them navigate through unfamiliar situations and to ensure that they go through with the attack. I am much less convinced that shabaab would be willing to risk sending a trained and indoctrinated diaspora member back to the US as a "sleeper" for a future terrorist attack in the US. The risks to shabaab would be enormous. They would not be in a position to manage and control their recruit, who, upon return home, would be exposed to information and debates on Somali affairs that could lead him to question the cause. To protect himself and his family, the recruit could instead turn to US law authorities and provide damaging information on shabaab and its network. And even if shabaab managed to send totally committed recruits back to the US, a shabaab-directed terrorist attack inside the US would almost certainly have disastrous consequences for shabaab, not only in terms of the US response, but from Somali society as well. Recall that remittances from the diaspora are the economic lifeline of Somalia. Anything that jeopardizes the status of Somalis living abroad imperils the entire country, and shabaab would face enormous pressure from within the Somali community.

In sum, my sense is that the threat of an American of Somali descent joining shabaab and then returning as a sleeper in the US is quite low. The threat still requires careful law enforcement attention, but should not be overblown. But there is one exception to this assessment. I would argue that a Somali-American who joins shabaab and who has then proceeded to Pakistan or Afghanistan and who becomes an Al-Qa'ida operative is of much greater concern. The reasoning for this is straightforward. Shabaab's agenda is still essentially a nationalist one, while al Qa'ida's is global. Al Qa'ida would not weigh the costs of a terrorist attack in the US on the Somali economy and the Somali diaspora, whereas shabaab would. A Somali-American acting through the ideological prism of al Qa'ida would be more willing to serve as a sleeper than would a shabaab member.

Somali diaspora and US law enforcement

I would like to conclude with a few thoughts on the Somali experience with and response to law enforcement authorities. The case of the missing Minneapolis youth and their recruitment into shabaab is producing a much greater level of law enforcement attention to and engagement with the Somali-American community. Relations between American law enforcement agencies and the Somali-American community will be improved if a few points are kept in mind:

- Somalis have a long and unhappy experience with the state and the police back in their country of origin. The state under Siyad Barre in the 1970s and 1980s was a highly repressive, abusive government; state security forces were instruments of that repression; and the law was a tool used against anyone seen as an "enemy of the state." Security forces in some countries hosting Somali refugees were also very predatory. As a result, not all Somalis view the state, law enforcement, and

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the law as a source of protection and order; some view law enforcement with fear, as something to avoid. Behavior which appears to be evasive or untruthful can often be traced back to this generic fear of law enforcement, and should not be misinterpreted. Sustained police programs to socialize Somali-American communities and reshape their perception of the state and the law are essential if this is to be overcome. They need to appreciate the difference between "rule of law" and "rule by law" and feel confident the US law enforcement system reflects the former, not the latter.

- Most Somalis living in the US are here legally, but some are not. They either came on false pretenses or were smuggled in. There may also be some Somalis engaged in untaxed economic transactions or other illegal activities. This means that some Somali households are likely to be nervous about any attention from law enforcement not because of links to terrorism, but because of the risk that US law enforcement will in the process uncover other "irregularities" putting the community's interests at risk.
- Somalis have a strong tradition of customary law to handle most disputes and crimes. This "blood payment" or diya system is based on the principle of collective rather than individual culpability, and compensentory rather than punitive justice. This tradition, which remains alive in Somali communities in the US today, co-exists poorly with the US legal system. It makes Somali communities reluctant to see fellow Somalis tried in our courts. And a criminal charge against a single Somali tends to be viewed as a charge against the entire community.
- All communities have their "dominant narratives" and Somalis are no exception. Their dominant narrative is a story of victimization and persecution of the Somali people both at home and abroad. It is very easy for some in the Somali American community to interpret current US law enforcement attention to the question of shabaab recruitment as yet another instance of witch-hunting and persecution, reflecting a combination of anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, anti-African sentiments. Some flatly deny there is a problem with shabaab recruitment at all. The only way to produce better cooperation with this community is through routinized communication that both builds trust with local law enforcement and which gives Somalis a clearer sense not only of their legal and social obligations as citizens but also of their legal rights. The Department of Homeland Security's Office of Civil Rights AND Civil Liberties has outreach programs designed to do just this.
- The US government needs to provide much clearer guidelines to Somalis about what constitutes legal or illegal behavior with regard to political engagement in their country of origin. If not, we run the risk of criminalizing routine diaspora engagement in Somalia. The fact that shabaab was not designated a terrorist organization before March 2008 but then was so designated is an example of the legal confusion facing Somalis. Something that was legal in February 2008 is now aiding and abetting terrorism in March. As you know, this is a question of relevance to many other immigrant communities in the US whose country of origin is embroiled in war or whose charities have come under suspicion of serving as terrorist fronts. The US government cannot asked its citizens to abide by the law if the laws themselves are too opaque to be understood.

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- Finally, it goes without saying that the main responsibility for policing Somali youth to ensure they do not become members of criminal gangs of terrorist groups falls squarely on the shoulders of Somali parents and community leaders, as it does for every other section of American society. There is not enough time or space here to explain the many special challenges Somali households face in their new life in the United States, but their challenges are considerable. To the extent that Somali communities need additional outside support to provide for a safe and controlled environment for their children to grow up, we should try to provide it. Most importantly, we need to ensure that first-generation Somali-Americans are growing up with a strong sense of being American citizens with all the rights and responsibilities that that entails. A Somali diaspora population that feels it belongs neither here nor in Somalia will be much more susceptible to radical movements promising their own sense of identity and belonging.

I hope these brief observations are of help as you exercise oversight on a topic with both important implications for both national security and civil liberties. Like many US citizens, I was greatly moved by President Obama's promise in his inaugural speech: "we reject as false the choice between our safety and our ideals. Our founding fathers, faced with perils that we can scarcely imagine, drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man -- a charter expanded by the blood of generations. Those ideals still light the world, and we will not give them up for expedience sake." I am confident that we can address the security concerns raised by Somali American recruitment into shabaab without violating the civil rights of those individuals and their community.

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CONGRESSIONAL HEARING
TO TESTIFY AT A HEARING ENTITLED: VIOLENT ISLAMIST EXTREMISTS:
"Al SHABAAB RECRUITMENT IN AMERICA"

Statement of

Osman Ahmed

On Behalf of the

**Victim Families Whose Children Have been Recruited
And Kidnapped To Somalia**

**Before the United States Senate
Committee on
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs**

**March 8, 2009
Minneapolis, Minnesota**

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Committee on
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Washington, DC 20510-6250

Dear Senators Lieberman and Collins:

I would like to thank you on behalf of the family members of the children who were recruited to Somalia, members of the Somali community and on my own behalf for inviting us to the Congressional Hearing Committee.

We would also like to thank the senatorial officials who came all the way to Minneapolis on February 28, 2009 to meet with the family members and the community. Also I want to acknowledge FBI office in Minneapolis and its agents who work day and night to locate our children. We do indeed feel grateful of their extreme efforts.

The first time we became suspicious was when we received a message from Roosevelt High School saying that our kid, Burhan, missed all school classes that November 4th day of 2008. That, to us sounded strange and we were stunned. We roamed around the metropolitan area and even beyond, nationwide. We went to Abu-Bakar Al Saddique mosque and Dawa Mosque, called our building security, called Hennepin County medical Center, hospital emergencies, and the airport. After that, his mother looked into his room and found that his travel luggage was missing, his clothes were not there and his passport was missing. We immediately notified respective law enforcement agencies. We immediately contacted the local police office MPD and the FBI office in Minneapolis, MN.

We have been up on our heels since we have realized that our children were mentally and physically
kidnapped on November 4, 2008, on Election Day!!

Understanding Challenges the Somali community in Minneapolis faces today

There are many challenges that the Somali community in Minnesota faces likes other first generation immigrants. These include limited language proficiency, limited skills and cultural barrier as well as the Minnesota weather. Most of these Somali American families are headed by single mothers.

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The system is an alternative approach but understanding it is also a barrier. The neighborhood, particularly the West Bank/ Cedar/Riverside area, has limited resources that could be of value to the community members.

Perspective of Family Members of the Recruited Kids

The missing Somali American children created anguish and fear to the immediate family members and in the general communities. No one can imagine the destruction this issue has caused for these mothers and grandmothers. They are going through the worst time in their lives. Imagine, how these parents feel when their children are returned back to the country were they originally fled from the chaos, genocide, gang rape and lawlessness.

There are five children among the many that were sent to Somalia. Burhan Hassan (17 years old, senior at Roosevelt High), Mohamud Hassan (18 years old, studying Engineering at the University of Minnesota), Abdisalam Ali (19 years old, studying health at the University of Minnesota) and Jamal Aweys (19 years old, studying engineering at Minneapolis Community and Technical College – MCTC- and later at Normandale College here in Minnesota) as well as Mustafa Ali (18 years old, studying at Harding High School in St. Paul)

These Somali American kids were not troubled kids or gangs. They were the hope of the Somali American community. They were the doctors, lawyers, engineers, scientists and leaders of the future of our strong and prosperous nation. For instance, Burhan Hassan was a brilliant student with straight As and on top of his class. He was taking college course, i.e. Calculus, Advanced Chemistry etc, as he was about to graduate from high school. These classes were sponsored by the University of Minnesota. He was an ambitious kid with the hope to go to Harvard University to study medicine or law and become a medical doctor or a lawyer.

All these youth shared common things. They all left Somali in their infancy like my nephew Burhan Hassan. He was eight (8) months old when they arrived at the refugee camp in Kenya. He was less than four (4) years old (February 12, 1996) when they came to the USA. Like his peers, Burhan Hassan never interested in Somali politics, or understood Somali clan issues. Burhan grew up in a single parent household. His immediate family members including his mother and sibling are educated. He studied Islam at a nearby Abu-Bakar As-Saddique mosque like the rest of the kids since 1998. *(Abu-Bakar As- Saddique was opened couple of years ago. Before then, it used be called Shafi'e Mosque in Cedar Riverside Neighborhood when Burhan started.)* He attended its youth group. These kids have no perception of Somalia except the one that was formed in their mind by their teachers at the Abu-Bakar Center. We believe that these children did not travel to Somalia by

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themselves. There must be others who made them understand that going to Somalia and participating the fighting is the right thing to do. To address the issue from a factual perspective, it is the dream of every Somali parent to have their children go to the mosque but none of them expected to have their children's mind programmed in a manner that is in line with the extremist's ideologies. In the case of Burhan, he spent more than 10 years going to the mosque. This is evidenced by others who also attended the mosque.

One thing for sure is that the methods of indoctrination are highly sophisticated. The plan of Al-Shabaab is basically to destroy the world peace and they will turn every leaf to achieve that. Their mission is not isolated into Somalia but has far reaching goals.

The Somali American youth were isolated because they have been told that if they share their views with others including their family members, they will not be understood and might as well be turned over to the *infidel*'s hands. These children are victims in every side. They have been lied to. They were told that they will be shown the utopia that has been hidden from them by the infidels and the brain washed parents. Our children had no clue they were being recruited to join Al-Shabab. We are getting a lot of information back from in Somalia. We also heard that when kids arrive, they are immediately shocked at what utopia is and all their documents and belongings are confiscated. They are whisked to hidden military camps for trainings. They are also told if they flee and return home that they will end up in Guantanamo. They do not know anyone in Somalia.

Why Al-Shabab is interested in American and Western Kids.

We believe the reason Al- Shabab is interested in American and western kids is that these kids do not have any relatives in Somalia. They cannot go back to their countries for they will be told to the authorities by local Al-Shabab recruiters. They are also very valuable in interpreting for Al-Shabab trainers of American and western descent.

They could be used for anything they want. They could be trained or forced to become suicide bombers in Somalia and they can do it out of desperation. For many of them, Burhan for example, have no idea where he could go for help in Somalia. This the first time he has been to Somalia in his life. These are basically the main reasons of why Al-Shabaab is recruiting from Western countries.

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Another issue of paramount importance is the fact that we are the first family members who informed the law enforcement about the missing of these youth. Family members whose children sent to Somalia were scared to even talk to the law enforcement. We have been painted as bad people within the Somali community by the mosque management. We have been threatened for just speaking out. Some members of Abu-Bakr Al-Saddique mosque told us that if we talk about the issue, the Muslim center will be destroyed and Islamic communities will be wiped out. They tell parents that if they report their missing kid to the FBI that FBI will send the parents to Guantanamo Jail. And this message has been very effective tool to silence parents and the community. They do have a lot cash to use for propaganda machine. They strike fear on a daily basis, here in Minneapolis, among Somali speaking community in order to stop the community to cooperate with the law enforcement. Public threats were issued to us at Abu-Bakar Assidique for simply speaking with CNN and Newsweek. The other mystery is that they say something in Somali TVs, at their congregations and say something contrary to that in English while speaking to the mainstream media or community.

They also told us not to talk to media because that will also endanger the Muslim leaders. We have been projected as pariah within the community by these mosque leaders. We are tormented by the fact that our children are missing and imperil. These members are scaring us so that we stop talking to law enforcement.

Perspective on Al-Shabaab to Attract Young People to Their Cause

The most important factor on how Al- Shabaab attracts the young Somali Americans is the indoctrination of the children. They are programmed to understand that it is their duty to confront the infidels. There are youth programs that in some instances have some hidden agendas. These agendas include that whatever issues that might come across in life is twisted as being the work of the infidels. They have been told to understand that the Ethiopian troops in Somalia are casted as an act of aggression against the Islamic religion. Al-Shabab is not only interested in recruiting Somali American youth but others in other Western countries, such as UK, Germany, Canada and Australia. The main reason for Al-Shabaab to recruit from these countries is that these youth have different view than a typical Somali in Somalia. They do not know much about Somali clan and have no political affiliation whatsoever.

There are some radical groups who were a minority in their thinking. However, when the Ethiopian troops came to Somalia, some Somali American professors clearly declared the war against Ethiopian troops. This has been a

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escape goat for their extremist political views. It encouraged radical Islamic groups in the US who previously were not active in the political activities here and in Somalia.

In conclusion, we the families of the missing kids have been conducting an outreach campaign to reach out those families that has not come forward. We believe this is the tip of the iceberg. In our outreach, we have been very successful to help some families to come forward and trust the law enforcement like we did.

Recommendation for Preventing Recruitment in the Future

- Educating members of the Somali community on the importance of cooperation between law enforcement and the community.
- Empower the Families of the missing kids to continue the outreach to those families who did not come forward.
- Bring to justice those who are responsible.
- Create special task force to combat the Al-Shabab recruitment in MN,OH, Washington Seattle and Boston, MA
- Scrutinize the funding of suspicious non-profit agencies that undertake youth activities possibly related to radical views.
- To investigate if tax payer's money was involved in the brainwashing of our kids because Abu- Bakar Center is a non-profit that might have been getting taxpayer's money for youth programs.
- The mosque Controls large amount of money, which is raised in these mosques, quarterly or same times Yearly fundraising which lacks transparency (huge amount of cash) and portion of that money could have gone to Al-shabaab group, secondly we are requesting more connection between the our community and FBI, so FBI has to do more outreaching programs to the community.
- We need a protection for our children, so that they can escape enemy hands.
- We need that our US Government to forgive these youth to enable us to find ways and means to bring back to their homes. And this will give confidence to many more families to come out of darkness.

Warning:

Al-shabab recruiters have the agility and ability to change form. They usually are well represented not only in certain mosques but wherever Somali children and young adults are concentrated. Such as community centers, charter schools operated by Somalis. They could sometimes pose as Somali community leaders and advice politicians and other agencies that are outreaching to the Somali community. Al-shabaab recruiters can be active and target the youth at where ever Somalis are.

Definitely, we don't know who is exactly behind this crazy venture. Nonetheless, we need to be vigilant at all times.

Osman Ahmed
Somali Community Leader

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Testimony by Abdirahman Mukhtar,
Youth Program Manager, Brian Coyle Center of Pillsbury United Communities

U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
March 11, 2009

Mr. Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins, Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. The Somali youth issue is very important for me personally and professionally and I am honored to have a chance to share my experience and expertise about this issue.

My name is Abdirahman Mukhtar. I was born in Somalia. I fled Muqdisho, the capital city of Somalia, when the civil war started early January 1991 and went to a refugee camp in Liboa, Kenya. I stayed seven years in refugee camps and the capital city of Nairobi, Kenya. I moved to the United States in August of 1998. After moving to the United States, I attended and graduated from Roosevelt High School in Minneapolis and went on to pursue higher education from the University of Minnesota with a degree in Kinesiology. I am planning to go back to graduate school for doctorate of physical therapy in the near future. I have been working with youth for over eight years; first with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Department, then with the Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota as a Youth Diversion Coordinator, and currently as the Youth Program Manager at the Brian Coyle Center.

The Brian Coyle Center serves as a central hub for resettlement assistance, social services, adult education, employment counseling, youth programming, recreation, and civic engagement for the Somali Community in the Minneapolis Metropolitan Area. The Center includes a gymnasium, community room, commercial kitchen, numerous classrooms, and food shelf and computer lab. Along with Pillsbury United Communities, other organizations that have their offices in the building include the Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota, Oromo Community of Minnesota, EMERGE Community Development, Somali Youth Network Council, Cedar Riverside Neighborhood Revitalization Program, the West Bank Community Coalition, Somali Education and Social Advocacy Services, East African Economic Development Center,

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Haboon Magazine, and Somalia Family Advocacy Group. All are non-profit organizations.

ASSIMILATING TO THE MINNEAPOLIS COMMUNITY

The main difficulty I had assimilating to the mainstream community was the language barrier, because I did not speak fluently in English and at times people had difficulty understanding me. Second, I experienced racial and cultural misunderstandings; many people in society were not well educated and did not know much about my culture, religion and other differences. Many of the Somali youth and their parents have similar experiences such as limited formal education, caused by the Somali civil war and settlement in different refugee camps. Somali students like me were enrolled into classrooms in the United States based on age rather than academic level, making it very difficult to succeed. When classes are challenging beyond a person's current capability, it often leads to students skipping school and dropping out.

Since parents have to support their families and provide food and shelter, but can only get lower wage jobs (such as assembly work, cleaning, temporary jobs and some of them struggle with small businesses that barely make a sustainable income) they don't have the time to be involved in their children's academic and recreational activities. Not only are families working hard to meet the basic needs to support their children in the United States, they also are responsible for sending money to extended families back in Africa. The expectation of the school system on parents for parent involvement adds to the challenges for Somali families and students.

When I started high school, I was fortunate enough to have bilingual teachers to assist me in my education, and adaptation to the education system in America. Now, due to cutbacks and policies, Somali students don't have culturally appropriate programs and the support of bilingual teachers in their schools.

It was not easy for me to attend high school, because my family back home expected me to support them, even though I was in my teens. I was encouraged to get a GED instead

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of finishing high school, so I could get a full-time job. Instead, I started working 20 hours a week at the Mall of America and continued to work towards my high school diploma. During the summer, I worked full time while also attending summer school to pass the basic standards tests in Math and English. In my senior year, I took a commanding English class at the University of Minnesota in order to improve and be ready for college. I was able to take this class through the post-secondary options program. Because of my GPA, leadership and extracurricular activities, I was accepted to attend the General College of the University of Minnesota, which no longer exists.

SOMALI YOUTH TODAY

Somali youth today experience the same barriers I faced as a new immigrant in the United States, however they do so with even less resources than what was available for me. Language is still a barrier as young Somalis try to achieve success. Identity crisis and cultural conflict are a reality for Somali youth (For example: Somali culture at home vs. American system at school). Parents expect you to keep your culture, while the American education system and way of life forces you to assimilate. Many have difficulties adjusting to the new way of life while facing cultural barriers that seem hard to overcome. As a result of identity crisis and frequent challenges, many youth lose hope and start making poor choices. The current economic situation also adds to the problem, since jobs are not available for youth. They become truant; getting involved in gangs and using drugs like their peers. However, there are many successful Somali youth who over came these obstacles.

Somali families tend to be large, mostly with single parents who are working to make ends meet. Many Somali parents also provide for relatives thus reducing their income status and livelihood. Even though parents care deeply for their children, this continues to be a strain on the support provided to Somali youth.

Somali families for the most part live in high density housing in the lowest income neighborhoods in the City. The Cedar Riverside neighborhood where I live and work has a median household income of just $14,367 a year. The unemployment rate is 17 percent

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according to the 2000 census, so it is much worse especially the economic crisis we are facing. Across the street from the Brian Coyle Center in one apartment complex there are 3,500 residents, of which 92% are immigrants and 1,190 are under age 18.
This is the highest concentration of low-income children in Minnesota and most of them are Somalis. Many opportunities/resources are not available in neighborhoods that Somali's reside compared to other areas in the city. Services are often inaccessible due to lack of appropriate local, city and state agencies offering culturally competent services to Somalis. We operate our programs in a city-owned building for which the park department doesn't even cover the expenses they're required to by contract, so we manage with minimal resources.

When youth don't have access to healthy options to fill their free time, they fall into the typical trappings associated with youth culture, i.e. the internet (peer pressure and cyber predators). Many Somali youth are nowadays involved with drug use and gang violence-this seems to be the biggest distraction because resources and many important opportunities are not available.

People without college degrees are limited with regards to employment. They are reduced to manual labor and factory work. Moreover, racism and employment discrimination still exist in many blue-collar establishments. This leads to problems such as high divorce rates and child neglect, because they are unable to provide for their families and other family members.

Somali youth report a high level of discrimination and prejudice across the board. This includes schools, colleges, the media, in the community and by law enforcement. Discrimination is based on ethnicity, culture and religion. When I asked a group of youth ranging in ages 10 to 20 what were their greatest challenges, 50% answered harassment by the police. Because of how young Somali Americans dress, even some of their own community members stereotypes.

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Second generation immigrants differ. Like many immigrant communities, there is a stark difference between first and second-generation Somali immigrants. Parents maintain a lifestyle that essentially is like living from a suitcase, they hope to return. They experience language barriers and have difficulty interacting with the larger society. Second-generation Somalis are more settled and hope to build their lives here, they are more immersed in American culture and they are fully engaged.

Somali immigrants experience frustration with the education system, and new sets of barriers occur for second-generation immigrants. Institutions often aren't empowering, for example keeping students in ELL even if they don't need such courses. Second generation Somali youth often speak English well, but are stereotyped and wrongly assigned to low level classes. Inner city schools still have a graduation rate for Somali students well below their white American peers. Second generation Somalis consider themselves Somali Americans, but they experience stereotyping by the broader society who sees only their ethnicity and religious affiliation.

SHIRWA AHMED STORY

Shirwa Ahmed and I went to Roosevelt High School together and we are both from Somalia. Recently, it was reported that Shirwa was the first American citizen known to be a suicide bomber.

The Somali community is not a monolithic community, it's highly diverse. As a first-generation immigrant, I faced many challenges in my life, and I had many responsibilities with regards to supporting my life. I made decisions that reflect my history and experiences. It's difficult to map out the lives of people. Many of my classmates took different paths in life and ended up in different roles, some are highly trained professionals, some are in jail, and some are in the workforce earning low wages.

When learning about Shirwa's role as a suicide bomber, people were shocked and angry, because it goes against the Somali culture and it is also inherently anti-Islamic. Many

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Somalis are not convinced that it happened because the idea seems too far out of people's comprehension. Throughout Somali's history, particularly in times of war, suicide bombings never occurred.

I have been asked; do Somali youth talk about Shirwa? Somali youth talk more about March Madness, Kobe Bryant, and the NFL draft more than they do about Shirwa…many do not know much about him and are not interested in the whole issue, because they believe that it is not a good thing and they deal with greater local challenges that they face in their daily life's.

Adults have expressed concern about the potential threat of terrorist recruiters working in Minneapolis. To my knowledge, I have not come across any recruiters, but rumors exist whether they are true or false. The only recruiters I heard of in my line of work are gang recruiters. Somali youth are more susceptible to gangs than anything else, given the fact they are promoted by mainstream hip-hop culture and are known for recruiting at-risk or vulnerable youth.

Role of You-tube and other online sites: Youth are very tech savvy these days and the Internet is where young people of a wide range of interests come together. Young people are inclined to participate in Internet activities. Hollywood and contemporary American pop culture glorify violence. So when al shabaab's video of an execution surfaced, people began comparing this act to images perpetuated by Hollywood. Young people often refer to outrageous acts of violence as "gangster," regardless of whether or not they condone that type of behavior. More needs to be done about the access youth have to violence on the internet and on television and more conversations with youth need to occur in order help them process what they are seeing.

SOLUTIONS TO THE ISSUES

Problems that Somalis face are similar to other marginalized community experiences. Somalis need better schools, access to adequate housing, access to adequate health, and a slew of other social solutions. Somalis face unique challenges, like language barriers that

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may prevent these services from getting to the right people; but they are no different than many other underserved populations. Greater outreach and engagement with the mosques to address a wide range of community issues is essential. Islam is the common denominator among Somalis, and this is important since our community is torn by tribalism. Mosques are considered a safe venue, and they have been able to help at-risk youth more effectively than any other civil or state organizations. Also, the Brian Coyle Center as a hub for the Somali community and interaction with the broader community is an essential partner in any efforts to reduce youth violence. It's important to empower disenfranchised youth and provide an alternative to violent routes. This requires creating a platform so that schools, families and community centers can work together.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A local coordinating committee could oversee the full design and implementation of a comprehensive plan to prevent violent extremism, including nonprofit leaders, Mosque leaders and law enforcement.

In order to decrease the barriers and isolation experienced by Somali immigrants, we need to improve community engagement and acculturation. This includes paying more attention to identifying and mitigating issues experienced by Somalis in American culture, such as race and religious discrimination, identity crisis, barriers to economic and family stability, barriers to school success, mental and physical health needs, and social isolation. We can expand community and civic participation. We can bridge cultural knowledge and understanding between Muslim and Non-Muslim communities through open dialogue. Partnering with Mosques in creating anti-violence messages and education that can be incorporated into programs working with Somali youth and students is important.

Second, a proactive strategy to lessen the use of the Internet in promoting violent acts is needed. Tracking and seriously responding to violent extremism available on web sites is a priority. An example would be Al Shabaab's online video of an execution – should be taken off line. We can diversify information available on the web to include counter-

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violent extremism messages and information. At the Brian Coyle Center, we closely monitor and block access to websites when we see they are being used by youth for harmful purposes, even if it's You Tube and My Space. Any locations where youth are the primary users of computers should be strictly monitored.

Last, prevention of violent radicalization is the highest priority. We can create curriculum and tools to educate people to detect risks and signals of radicalization. Education can be provided to parents, social services, and school staff, students, mosques and law enforcement. Use of the Somali community media networks will be more productive than using mainstream media. We also need to educate law enforcement, including the FBI, about tactics that create more misunderstanding rather than help prevent, respond to, or solve problems. We can provide a central location where the community feels safe in confidentially reporting any concerns they have about specific people or safety related issues that need follow up. We can develop a skilled team of interveners to assist at-risk individuals in rejecting violent methods, and coordinate with law enforcement. This includes youth diversion programming and the use of culturally specific restorative justice circles.

CONCLUSION

To successfully implement a comprehensive plan, the Somali American community encourages federal, state and local government, including law enforcement personnel, to work in partnership with community stakeholders. Progress is difficult when a mentality of "guilt by association" is the overriding factor in communication with Somali Americans. The Somali American community should be educated about their rights and responsibilities. The local community has the expertise and capacity to carry out a comprehensive plan and what we need most from all levels of government is true partnership and resources to make it happen.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today, I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

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"Violent Islamic Extremism: Al-Shabaab Recruitment in America"
Hearing before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

March 11, 2009

Statement Testimony Congressman Keith Ellison

I want to thank Chairman Joseph Lieberman and Ranking Member Susan Collins for allowing me to share my perspective on the possible recruitment of Somali youth in Minneapolis, Minnesota by members of extremist groups. I represent the 5th Congressional District of Minnesota, home to the largest Somali community in the country.

The Somali community is an integral part of the City of Minneapolis and the State of Minnesota. Somali Americans are important neighbors and friends and I am proud to represent them in United States Congress.

As your committee examines news media reports of Somali youth being recruited in Minneapolis to join extremist organizations, I urge the committee to begin its deliberations with sensitivity and care.

Somali youth face similar challenges to low-income urban youth in our country and around the world. Many of the Somali youth in Minneapolis experience language barriers and difficulties getting a job in a bad economy. While the youth can feel disaffected, they are part of a tight-knit community, with caring extended families and local organizations that serve youth. We all share the same goal to keep the youth in the Somali community safe from indoctrination into dangerous groups--by keeping them safe, we keep everyone safe. This is especially true for the leaders of the American Somali community.

Let me be clear that I believe the FBI and other appropriate law enforcement authorities should thoroughly investigate the charges of this possible recruitment of Somali youth by extremist groups.

I am confident the Somali community will cooperate fully with investigations. In order to accomplish our goals we should strengthen existing relationships between the Somali community and law enforcement organizations, and keep the lines of communication open. These relationships can help to combat rumors and misinformation.

If there is an individual or a group recruiting young men to fight in Somalia, we should locate this individual or group and take proper action. However, it is not clear that this recruitment activity is, in fact, going on in Minneapolis. These messages could be coming from a chat-room,

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over the Internet, or from friends or relatives calling from Somalia urging a return to their ancestral homeland. I support efforts to get the facts, take corrective action if necessary, and keep the Somali youth and families safe.

Finally, the Somali community is deeply divided by tribal clans. Most are cooperative; however they can also be competitive. Law enforcement organizations should understand the dynamics of the Somali community so they can assess information they receive about an individual in light of clan differences and disagreements. It is possible that information is given about a particular group or mosque because of grudges against a rival clan. Unfortunately, some Somalis see the war on terror as an opportunity to invigorate their own tribal standing and undermine another. I have witnessed this on numerous occasions. I urge investigators to double and triple check their sources and to understand the complexities of the Somali Diaspora.

The type of activity under discussion at this hearing is often found in failed states, such as Somalia or Afghanistan. When we ignore the Somalia's of the world, we do so at our own risk. Failed states can be havens for terrorist activities because they offer few opportunities for their citizens and no resistance to lawlessness. Our national security policy should include counter-terrorism investigations *and* pro-active efforts to bring stability and development to failed states.

Thank you again for your attention to this important topic. I look forward to working in partnership with you to address these issues.

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Abubakar As-Sadique Islamic Center

Website: www.abuubakar.org E-Mail: aaic@abuubakar.org

March 12, 2009

Honorable Joseph Lieberman
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Lieberman:

Abubakar As-Saddique Islamic Center (AAIC) appreciates the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee's highlighting of the serious nature of the issue of the missing Somali men. We respectfully request that the following facts be submitted into the record of the Senate Committee Hearing.

AAIC has consistently and repetitively condemned all acts of terrorism, emphasizing not only the illegality of traveling to Somalia to join terrorists groups or becoming suicide bombers, but that these acts are against the teachings of the religion of Islam.

It is our strong belief that our Islamic Center's good reputation and message of active citizenship was stained during testimony at the *"Violent Islamist Extremism: Al-Shabaab Recruitment in America"* hearing on March 11, 2009.

Since no representative of our Center was present to balance the testimony, AAIC asks for the opportunity to share with you four main areas of inaccuracy in what was presented to the committee:

1. Community Engagement Activities of AAIC;
2. Financial Transparency;
3. Engagement of Federal Officials; and
4. Known Adults Traveling to Fight in Somalia.

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1. Community Engagement Activities of AAIC

Since our incorporation in 1998, the leadership and members of the Abubakar As-Saddique Islamic Center have engaged and served our neighbors in the Twin Cities. We are the largest and just one out of 10 Somali Islamic Centers in the area.

- In 2001, we started the Annual AAIC Convention, held at the Minneapolis Convention Center, which every year attracts over 5,000 people. The Mayor of Minneapolis, local city council members, Minnesota state and federal legislators, and the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) are invited annually and some have participated regularly.
- We have an ongoing relationship with the Minneapolis Police Department. They have presented to the AAIC community on how to report crimes. We have worked extensively together on combating Somali youth gang violence which continues to riddle our community. An active member of our AAIC community was awarded the Theresa S. Ruhland Youth Award from the MPD because of her extensive work with youth.

- We are an active participant of neighborhood associations, and we partake in the annual Greenway Coalition to beautify our neighborhood. We operate a community-wide food shelf through our Center in partnership with local organizations.
- The Mall of America partners with AAIC, where we provide volunteers to serve as security guards during Muslim holiday events.

Our youth are our biggest investment and most of our resources go to educating and engaging them to be active American Muslim citizens.

- We organize seasonal youth activities so that they have a safe space to interact and as an alternative to associating with gangs who are rampant in our area.
- We have created mentorship programs which encourage high school youth to pursue and attend colleges and universities. We take pride in the success of this program--the majority of our youth are college graduates.

In addition to providing youth activities, we serve the Muslim community through dispute resolution services for families, visiting the sick, and hosting weddings at our Center almost every weekend.

Many of our press releases, press conferences, annual conference lectures, Friday sermons and workshop lectures can be found online at the following websites: www.abuubakar.org, www.somalitalk.com, and www.halgan.net. Our speeches are given in Somali because that is the common native language of our community. We are, of course, willing to assist in translation if needed.

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2. Financial Transparency

AAIC maintains accounting system in accordance with General Accepted Accounting Principles, and AAIC conducts annual audits from external auditors. The findings of these are available for review by request. We raise money from our community members throughout the United States and Canada only. We have not raised any money outside of North America. Raising funds through individual donors is how our Center is sustained.

3. Engagement of Federal Officials

Before the recent events regarding the missing Somali men, the FBI had visited the Somali community in the Twin Cities sporadically, but never individually with AAIC executive board members. AAIC recently hosted a Community Dinner and Open House where over 200 guests from the surrounding neighborhoods attended not only to see what a mosque looks like, but to meet the people who attend on a daily basis. The FBI and DHS were invited but both declined to attend. We understand that DHS, FBI, ICE, the Joint Terrorism Task Force (including law enforcement from throughout the country), and Senator Lieberman's representatives have come to the Twin Cities to gather information. Sen. Lieberman's representatives have been the only officials to meet with AAIC leadership to this day. We reached out to the FBI to meet on February 19, 2009 but no meeting has yet been scheduled.

4. Adults Traveling to Somalia to Fight

Senator Roland Burris asked if any adults have been traveling to Somalia to fight, and our answer is yes. Shirwa Ahmed, the man who FBI Director Robert Mueller said was a suicide bomber in Somalia (and the only example given of a person carrying out an attack) was nearing 30 years of age. Based on information from the community, we understand that Shirwa Ahmed grew up in the Twin Cities, but it should be noted that Mr. Ahmed left the area about 18 months ago. He had not been in Minneapolis or for that matter the United States, for well over a year.

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you what we believe has been wrongfully communicated to you.

Sincerely,

Omar Hurre

Omar Hurre
Executive Director

Cc: Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

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"Eight Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland"
Chairman Joseph Lieberman
September 30, 2009

Good morning. Today's hearing was scheduled and planned more than a month ago as part of our Committee's responsibility to monitor the terrorist threat to our homeland and to oversee our government's defense of us from that threat. For the last three years, our Committee has had a particular focus on homegrown, Islamist terrorism, that is, attacks planned against America by people living in our country, as opposed to the attackers of 9/11, who came from outside our country.

Then, suddenly in the last two weeks, we have had arrests in three very serious cases of homegrown terrorism: Two lone wolves – Michael Finton and Hosam Maher Smadi – and one more ominous cell led by Najibullah Zazi.

These are certainly not the first such plots against our country that have been broken since 9/11. In fact we have been a nation regularly under attack, but these cases were significant and bring a sense of real time urgency to our hearing today.

Finton was about to detonate a bomb against the federal building in Springfield, Ill., and Smadi was in the process of an attack against the Wells Fargo Motor Bank in Dallas, Texas.

Those three cases realize both our worst fears about homegrown Islamist terrorist attacks against American and our best hopes for our government's capability to defend us from them.

The Zazi case is the scenario we have worried about and watched: A legal permanent resident of America, free, therefore, to travel in and out of our country, going to Pakistan, connecting with al Qaeda there, receiving training and perhaps direction, and returning to join with others here in an attack on New York.

When Senator Collins and I were first briefed on the Zazi case, we each had the same sense of gratitude that all the things that have been done by Congress, the Bush and Obama Administrations, and hundreds of thousands of U.S. government employees since 9/11 worked.

The DHS, FBI, NCTC, DNI, CIA, NSA and many others worked smoothly with each other and state and local law enforcement to stop Zazi before he attacked. They brought a wide range of resources – technical and human – brilliantly to bear on this case and connected the dots that lead from New York to al Qaeda in south Asia and back to New York.

The Finton and Smadi cases are less complicated but they were also daunting for law enforcement because they involve individuals outside of the cities we have thought were priority targets – New York, D.C. and Los Angeles – who we call lone wolves because they apparently acted alone and were, therefore, less likely to turn up on the many technological and human walls we have built since 9/11 to protect our homeland.

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And yet, their lonely terrorist plots were discovered and stopped. So, as we convene this hearing, these three cases should lead us to two conclusions.

First, although we have won significant victories over al Qaeda since they attacked us on 9/11/01, when war with them was effectively declared by our government, al Qaeda is still out there, and in here, and maintains a potent and hateful desire to attack the people of the U.S. as well as most every other segment of humanity that does not share their fanatical theology, ideology, and ambition for conquests and suppression of freedom. This war and its threats to our homeland are not over and will not be for a long time.

Second, we have together made enormous progress in our ability to protect our people from terrorists. For this I thank the three leaders who are with us as witnesses today and their organizations, those who preceded them, and all those who work with them, including the men and women of our intelligence community who necessarily are unseen.

In this war in which our enemy requires only a small number of fanatics who don't care about their lives or, obviously, the lives of others, and we require enormous numbers of people to defend our free and open society against them, we are all only as good as our ability to stop the last terrorist plot.

Eternal and extensive vigilance is, in this war, truly the price of our liberty. So, the work of homeland security goes on 365 days a year, but this morning, I want to pause to say "thank you" to you, Secretary Napolitano, Director Mueller, and Director Leiter, and all who work with you for all you do every day to protect the American people.

I look forward to your testimony and to hearing what more Congress can do to help you do your jobs for us.

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Opening Statement of
Senator Susan M. Collins

Eight Years After 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

September 30, 2009

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Deter, detect, disrupt, defend . . . these four simple words form the core of our nation's mission to prevent terrorist attacks.

Their simplicity belies the complexity of the challenge. They fail to capture the dedication and perseverance the men and women of our military, intelligence, law enforcement, and homeland security agencies must demonstrate constantly to stay ahead of the evolving terrorist threat.

Eight years removed from the attacks of September 11, 2001, our nation must remain vigilant against the Islamist terrorist threat we face. Recent cases drive home the reality of this threat. Four separate terrorist plots were uncovered in the past month alone.

The allegations against Najibullah Zazi raise particular concerns because his level of planning reportedly was quite sophisticated. According to the FBI, Zazi had received training in an al-Qaeda camp in Pakistan and had purchased bomb-making components. Also, a computer the FBI recovered from Zazi's car contained images of handwritten notes that contained instructions for manufacturing explosives.

Investigations in Springfield, Illinois, and Dallas, Texas, have not only resulted in arrests, but may have prevented horrific casualties.

Details of a new plot in an ongoing case also came to light last week. Prosecutors filed a new indictment in the case against Daniel Boyd and Hysen Sherifi, alleging that they conspired to murder Marines at Quantico.

While these and other cases are cause for alarm, recent successes demonstrate that our vigilance to date has paid off. Authorities identified suspects who intended to commit terrorist acts, initiated sting operations, and prevented the attacks.

Our antiterrorism work must be relentless and requires effective coordination across the federal government and with our state and local partners. As the Chairman has noted, these recent cases demonstrate the considerable progress since 2001. By creating the

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Department of Homeland Security, the Director of National Intelligence, and the National Counterterrorism Center, we have encouraged information sharing and collaboration across the federal government and with our partners in state and local governments. These successes represent significant strides in what will be a long war against terrorism.

Despite these successes, some of these recent domestic plots demonstrate that coordination among federal agencies and state and local law enforcement may have been uneven.

For example, the perpetrator of the shootings at a military recruiting center in Little Rock earlier this year was under investigation by the FBI. Less clear is whether state and local law enforcement, who responded to the shooting, knew of this investigation.

We need to examine how we can build on improved information sharing with state and local officials, including whether technology gaps hinder current efforts.

We also must ask what further resources are necessary for departments and agencies at all levels of government to be better prepared to respond to these threats. And, we must always remember, while our nation has been hard at work realigning our defenses and response systems, the terrorists have been busy, too.

Disturbingly, the perpetrators in these recent cases are mostly homegrown terrorists. We must work to better understand the path that leads to violent radicalization and increase our efforts to interrupt this deadly cycle. Our intelligence and law enforcement officials must carefully analyze how the next generation of terrorists are funded, trained, and supplied.

Outreach to communities affected by violent radicalization continues to be a priority. These outreach efforts were evident when the Committee examined how more than 20 young Somali-American men from Minneapolis were recruited to travel to Somalia to join the militant Islamist group, al-Shabaab.

The FBI and state and local law enforcement have engaged in outreach to the Somali community in Minneapolis and other Somali immigrant communities around the nation. Recent events underscore the importance of these efforts. As we meet, the FBI is investigating reports that a Somali-American from the Seattle area carried out a suicide bombing in Mogadishu just a few weeks ago. Last October, a Somali-American from Minneapolis allegedly participated in a similar attack.

Law enforcement must work hand-in-hand with community leaders to understand the factors that caused these young men to travel half-way around the world to participate in terrorist attacks. Without this understanding, we cannot hope to break the cycle of violent radicalization.

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Mr. Chairman, I share your concern that complacency could undermine our nation's fight against terrorism. The absence of large-scale attacks in the United States and our success in thwarting terrorist plots should not lull us into a false sense of security.

It is critical that we remain focused on the evolving and persistent threat of terrorism. We must not return to a pre-9/11 mentality.

I look forward to discussing these critical issues with our witnesses today.

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Prepared Statement of Senator Michael F. Bennet
September 30, 2009

Mr. Chairman and Senator Collins, thank you for holding this important hearing. Thank you also Secretary Napolitano and Director Mueller for joining the Committee this morning.

Our law enforcement efforts to disrupt a possible terrorist plot that involves both New York and my state of Colorado is a sobering reminder of the threats we face. We are all grateful to law enforcement for the Zazi arrest before anyone got hurt. Coloradans owe a debt of gratitude for the diligence of many law enforcement officials who disrupted this potential cell. And we must provide our federal and local law enforcement the tools and resources to continue to keep us safe. So I hope that each of you will help us understand what Congress can provide the Department and the FBI so you can do your jobs better.

While the FBI and local law enforcement should be applauded for being able to stop these recent threats early, I subscribe to the 9/11 Commission conclusion that we must improve, be able to anticipate, think ahead and train experts who can think imaginatively about what al-Qaida might be planning next. We are learning from what we didn't do as well before 9/11. That's a sign that government can work well. Part of this is about keeping our laws up-to-date too. Our laws must work for our current security needs.
I also hope that you will be able to address any resource shortfalls that states are experiencing. What is the status of counterterrorism resources in states that have been hit hardest by the recession? Are you worried about local law enforcement's ability to do its job? In cities and towns across the country, we see layoffs in law enforcement that will only increase the burdens on federal agents and local law enforcement to intercept and prevent extremist acts.

One thing Congress must do is work to fill holes in securing our critical infrastructure. Just last week, this Committee began to address the lack of perimeter security at our nation's BSL-4 laboratories. This is clearly unacceptable. We need to proactively address the security of our infrastructure whether it is our cyber networks, mass transit or military facilities. There is no excuse for delays in developing key technologies and preparedness programs.

We must also close culture and language gaps that still persist in our intelligence community. We need to continue to form key partnerships on the ground with local Arab and Muslim communities in order to build relationships of trust with law enforcement. It is these relationships of trust that will be critical to forestall recruitment by extremists and allow for information gathering essential to preventing another terrorist attack. We must ensure that we are training experts in key languages as well. The lack of language skills in particular was a huge vulnerability pre-9/11- we did not have sufficient personnel with Arabic, Farsi and Urdu language skills for instance.

We are 8 years removed from the attacks on September 11th and the threat of terrorism remains. We know that there are extremists abroad and right here in the United States that seek to harm our communities. While we see much evidence of improved intelligence and coordination, it is important that we remember that there is still much more work to be done. I look forward to working closely with each of you to make sure our law enforcement and intelligence communities can continue to get the job done.

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Statement for the Record
The Honorable Janet Napolitano
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Chairman Lieberman, Senator Collins, and members of the Committee: Thank you for this opportunity to testify on the range of actions the Department of Homeland Security is taking to confront the terrorist threat to the homeland.

Guarding against terrorism is the founding purpose of our Department. Addressing this threat will always remain our highest priority, and as a major part of this mission, we are continually bolstering our efforts against domestic threats.

The way to secure our country from this type of terrorism is the same way we must secure it from terrorism in general. This is a shared responsibility in which all Americans have a role to play. The federal government; law enforcement on the state, local, and tribal levels; and the American people are the lines of defense against terrorism, whether foreign-affiliated or homegrown. They complement each other, and they must work together.

DHS is pursuing a collaborative, layered, strategic approach, working with the public and all levels of government to build the Nation's overall capacity to prevent or respond to any threat that may arise. All of DHS' law enforcement components focus on counterterrorism as part of their mission. These DHS components collaborate extensively with each other and with federal partners – such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) – on important counterterrorism operations.

As a critical part of our efforts, DHS is reinvigorating its coordination and collaboration with our state, local, and tribal partners – the Nation's first preventers and first responders. The work of state, local, and tribal law enforcement at the local level puts them in the best position to notice when something is out of place and warrants a

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closer look – which is often the first step to thwarting a domestic terrorism plot. The Department facilitates information sharing with state, local, and tribal law enforcement to improve their understanding of domestic terrorist threat, in part by filling information gaps between the federal Intelligence Community (IC) and the Nation's thousands of law enforcement agencies. DHS is also strengthening the Department's intelligence enterprise by supporting the state and major urban area fusion centers where state, local, tribal, and federal law enforcement and other emergency response providers share information and intelligence.

The Department also works with a wide variety of communities, individuals and civic organizations to promote preparedness, community engagement and partnerships that constitute a strong defense against violent extremism. In all our work, we ensure that DHS and our partners act with the highest regard for the Constitution and the laws of the land. As President Obama has said, our security and our liberty are not mutually exclusive values – DHS aggressively protects both.

Combating terrorist threats within the United States poses a challenge in part because the threat is so diffuse. Terrorists inspired by international terrorist organizations can come from any age group, ethnicity, area, religious background, or claimed ideological affiliation. It is important to emphasize that no religious belief is a threat to our security. Indeed, DHS does not and will not police beliefs. But violent extremism is a very real threat, and DHS will combat any terrorist or terrorist group that threatens the American people with violence, no matter what belief lies behind that violence. Violent extremists operating in the United States have just one overarching characteristic in common: they pose a threat to the security of the American people. In turn, the American

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people are joined together by our common responsibility to secure ourselves from this threat.

Federal Law Enforcement Efforts to Combat Terrorism

Thousands of DHS personnel carry out our counterterrorism mission every day. Every law enforcement component within DHS has statutory responsibilities that are critical to combating the range of terrorist threats. DHS personnel within Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the U.S. Secret Service (USSS), the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and its Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS) perform critical counterterrorism law enforcement work whenever they are on the job. They count among their daily responsibilities tasks such as securing the aviation and marine sectors, securing our borders, and combating the smuggling of dangerous contraband such as illegal weapons – all of which are critical to countering domestic terror threats. These "boots on the ground" are the forward-facing part of DHS' expansive counterterrorism effort. These DHS personnel play an indispensible role in the overall mission of keeping the Nation safe.

DHS also plays a critical role in ensuring a more unified federal effort against terrorism – one of the key reasons the Department was founded. We work together with many federal departments and agencies to secure our Nation from attacks inspired by international terrorist organizations through information sharing, investigation, engagement and enforcement. DHS works closely at the interagency level – with the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the

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Department of Justice, the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the ODNI, among others – to combat violent extremism on many fronts. I am happy to be testifying today alongside representatives of two of our indispensible federal partners – Director Robert Mueller of the FBI and Director Mike Leiter of NCTC.

Among our partnerships, DHS offers robust support to Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs), led by the FBI, that include federal and local law enforcement officers and intelligence analysts. DHS personnel from our operational law enforcement components – including ICE, CBP, USSS, TSA, and FAMS – are hard at work in JTTFs across the country right now, conducting law enforcement work that is keeping Americans safe from criminal activity that has its roots in violent extremism. JTTFs have proven instrumental in securing the American people from a number of terrorist threats, and we view our ongoing participation in them as an indispensable part of DHS' overall counterterrorism work.

The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) within DHS strengthens the counterterrorism capabilities of law enforcement – on the federal level and other levels – through training in intelligence collection and information sharing, critical infrastructure and key resource protection, improvised explosive and weapons of mass destruction recognition, and critical incident response.

DHS coordination with federal partners strengthens the information sharing, investigations, and preparedness activities necessary to secure our country from the whole range of terrorist threats. But the Department also collaborates extensively outside the federal government – a critical part of DHS' role in strengthening the Nation's overall security from the threat of terrorism.

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State and Local Partnerships and Information Sharing

While federal efforts are critical and essential to the Nation's security from terrorism, let me be clear: The federal government can't do it alone. Law enforcement on the state, local, and tribal level represents a critical ring of defense against terrorism of all kinds. The Department of Homeland Security assists these so-called "first preventers" in addressing terrorist threats that manifest within the United States – helping them to make sense of the activities they are encountering on the beat that may represent the first steps in a terrorist plot.

DHS works with state, local, and tribal governments to facilitate information sharing – a particularly important tool in our efforts to combat terrorism, whether they are international or homegrown extremists. All the steps the Department is taking to strengthen our intelligence enterprise are centered upon an important objective: ensuring DHS provides law enforcement with useful information by intently focusing our intelligence and analysis on meeting the needs of our partners. Across DHS, there are multiple operational, technological, programmatic and policy-related activities underway that focus on both improving the sharing and analysis of information with these consumers and between departmental components. Despite significant resources being devoted to these efforts, there is always a need to ensure that they are efficient and have been integrated with government-wide initiatives to improve information sharing such as those associated with the efforts to establish the Information Sharing Environment (ISE).

Strong information sharing is essential to law enforcement's ability to assess data and analyze threats. As the primary information-sharing entity within the Department, DHS' Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) is taking the lead in meeting this need.

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I&A is currently undergoing an important realignment to strengthen to delivery of useful, actionable intelligence to state and local law enforcement, based on their particular needs. This focus on information sharing with our state, local and tribal partners has elevated the Department's role at the Nation's 72 state and major urban area fusion centers. These centers, established by state and local authorities themselves, are the primary way that DHS shares intelligence and analysis with our homeland security partners and are key tools for stakeholders at all levels of government to share information related to threats.

These centers allow DHS to bridge the information gap between the IC and state, local, and tribal authorities, but they are not simple extensions of the IC. Rather, they are analytic centers that ensure that law enforcement have the information necessary to protect America's local communities. My priority is for all of them to be centers of analytic excellence that provide the maximum possible benefit to the Nation's security.

DHS is in the process of taking a major step toward this goal by establishing a Joint Fusion Center Program Management Office (JFC-PMO) within I&A to ensure coordination across all DHS components toward the twin priorities of strengthening fusion centers and DHS intelligence products. This will be a Department-wide effort that will require the involvement of a range of DHS components. Fusion centers are a high priority, and all DHS components will have new or enhanced roles in providing coordinated support to them. The JFC-PMO will:

- Lead a unified Department-wide effort to develop and implement survey tools to ensure state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies have the opportunity to define and identify the types of homeland security-related information they need and the format in which they need it.

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- Develop mechanisms to assess regional and national threats and trends by gathering, analyzing and sharing locally generated as well as national information and intelligence through fusion centers.
- Coordinate with state, local, and tribal law enforcement leaders to ensure that DHS is providing the right personnel and resources to fusion centers.
- Promote a sense of common mission and purpose at fusion centers by offering training, exercises and other support that build the kind of peer-to peer-relationships across all disciplines – including terrorism analysis – that are the cornerstones of active and vibrant thinking, analysis, and information exchange.
- Develop, promote and sustain rigorous legal, privacy, civil rights and civil liberties-related training and support to law enforcement partners and DHS personnel.

I have directed the Acting Under Secretary for I&A to submit a plan that outlines the proposed organizational structure, functions, business processes, and specific action objectives of that office. Throughout this process, I&A is working with the ODNI and other federal partners on adopting best practices in production, planning, and customer service. Congress has identified the establishment of an office such as the JFC-PMO as a critical to improving information sharing, and we are moving forward with a sense of urgency on this issue.

The establishment of an office that coordinates all DHS efforts to strengthen fusion centers comes in addition to other actions we have already taken – and continue to take – in this regard. I&A has deployed 41 intelligence officers to fusion centers nationwide, with another 25 currently in the pipeline. I&A will deploy a total of 70

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officers by the end of fiscal year 2010. Furthermore, I&A will continue to install the Homeland Secure Data Network (HSDN), which allows the federal government to share Secret-level intelligence and information with state, local, and tribal partners, at all 72 fusion centers by the end of FY 2010. Currently, 30 fusion centers have access to HSDN.

Earlier this month, I announced an important partnership that will strengthen HSDN: a new arrangement with the Department of Defense (DOD) for select fusion center personnel to access terrorism-related information from DOD's classified network. This reflects DHS' extensive work with our federal partners to ensure the federal government as a whole collaborates successfully with state and local law enforcement to combat terrorism, and I want to thank DOD for its partnership. Under the new initiative, select fusion center personnel with a federal security clearance will be able to access specific terrorism-related information resident on the DOD Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNet) – a secure network used to send classified data. This agreement is an important step forward in ensuring that first preventers have a complete and accurate picture of terrorism threats.

Other interagency partnerships further contribute to the quality of terrorism-related information and analysis that DHS shares with state and local law enforcement. As part of its current realignment, I&A has considered its analysis role within the IC, and is focusing on strengthening its analysis in several areas where its expertise is most needed. Two of these areas are violent radicalization and domestic terrorism – areas where I&A cooperation with federal partners is vital to success. I&A is currently realigning to collaborate with NCTC and other federal agencies for substantive reporting on violent radicalization in order to provide law enforcement with an accurate and

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comprehensive view of the threat. Furthermore, I&A will work with the FBI and other federal law enforcement partners to identify analysis and other reporting that could be relevant to our state, local and tribal law enforcement partners, in order to improve information-sharing efforts.

These resources and strategies not only facilitate the day-to-day operations of fusion centers and DHS I&A, but also a number of other important programs:

- Fusion centers conduct support initiatives designed to familiarize state, local, and tribal law enforcement with violent radicalization, train them to recognize threats in their regions, and assist them in identifying, collecting, analyzing and sharing information on violent radicalization activities in their respective jurisdictions. This is the primary role of the Regional Threat Analysis (RTA) Branch of I&A.
- At the request of state, local, and tribal law enforcement partners, I&A continually produces Homeland Security Reference Aids (HSRAs). Each of these reports focuses on the threat posed by a specific violent domestic extremist or terrorist group. These products serve as primers on various violent extremist groups of concern; set forth the objectives, membership, presence, activities, and capabilities of these groups; and assess the threats they pose to law enforcement and the general public.
- I&A and fusion centers work together on joint analytical products on violent radicalization and violent extremist activity in the United States.

The realignment of the Office of Intelligence & Analysis will also strengthen our cooperation with fusion centers and aid I&A in combating violent extremism. First, I&A is reorganizing a number of functions previously dispersed throughout the Office under

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the leadership of the Deputy Under Secretary for Plans, Policy, and Performance Management (PPPM). PPPM's responsibilities include developing and unifying applicable strategies, plans and policies for I&A, using collaborative outreach, advocacy, and strategic futures analyses. These efforts, conducted in coordination with all DHS intelligence components, will lead to an integrated DHS intelligence enterprise focused on mission and consumers – namely, our state, local and tribal partners. Second, I&A is realigning its Operations element to integrate a number of previously scattered functions under it. The new I&A Operations element will maximize the effectiveness of I&A's knowledge management, counterintelligence, mission support and training, collection requirements, and external operations programs by coordinating them. It will also better align I&A's information technology capabilities with the needs of our analysts and our law enforcement partners. These changes will strengthen the efforts of the DHS intelligence enterprise, and fusion centers in particular, to provide timely and useful information and analysis to law enforcement regarding terrorist threats within the United States.

I want to emphasize that in all of our information-sharing programs, especially with regard to programs focused on violent extremism, DHS works to ensure the highest regard for our Constitutional rights, especially the First Amendment freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, and protest. The Department's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) works with I&A and other DHS components on policies and procedures to safeguard these rights, and provides training and reference materials for our law enforcement partners that help ensure their respect for these rights, as well. This is an

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important priority for us, as we work toward a Nation whose people *and* values are secure.

Engaging Communities, Individuals, and Others Outside of Government

Though the federal government and state, local, and tribal law enforcement continually work to secure the Nation from the threat of terrorism, government can't counter the threat alone – the American public has a key role to play in our security, particularly against the threat of violent extremism.

In many ways, the public's role in helping to secure the Nation from domestic terror is the same as securing our country from the broader threat of terrorism. The steps are simple – notify the authorities if something seems suspicious, and prepare for any incident that may occur. With regard to violent extremism, individuals have another important role: ensuring that our communities are not places where violent extremism can take root.

While only a tiny fraction of any American community ever embraces violent extremism, preventing and countering violence and other criminal activity is a shared responsibility. With this in mind, DHS is working with communities, individuals, and others outside of government in order to better understand the phenomenon of violent extremism and to develop strategies to counter its causes.

The Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 charges DHS with leadership on the issue of violent extremism and violent radicalization within the United States. DHS established its Counter Violent Extremism Working Group (CVEW) in January to coordinate counter-violent extremism efforts across the

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Department. In addition to and separate from the operational and intelligence activities I discussed earlier, these efforts also include comprehensive community outreach and engagement programs.

Many of DHS' outreach efforts are led by the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL), which promotes civic engagement with many different communities as a means of increasing communication, building trust, and fostering resilient communities. In addition to serving those primary goals, engaging key communities also helps to prevent the isolation and alienation that many believe are precursors for violent extremism. It is important to note that such engagement with the many key groups which with CRCL holds dialogues – such as Arab and Somali American communities, as well as Muslim and Sikh leaders – is important in and of itself as a matter of civil rights protection and smart, effective law enforcement. But by helping communities more fully engage with their government, DHS is also preempting alienation and creating buy-in to the broader shared responsibility of homeland security.

CRCL's Engagement Team works closely with these key communities and other members of the American public in order to provide information and respond to concerns. The Engagement Team is currently active in eight metropolitan areas[1], convening roundtable meetings and coordinating outreach events for community members and federal, state, and local government officials.

CRCL is also helping to increase the cultural competency of DHS employees, as well as federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement, on issues such as religious dress, misguided stereotypes of religious or minority groups, and cultural practices. This

[1] Washington, D.C.; Houston, Texas; Chicago, Illinois; Los Angeles, California; Boston, Massachusetts; Detroit, Michigan; Columbus, Ohio; and Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota.

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process helps to prevent the alienation of these communities from their public servants and helps to create a spirit of partnership. In turn, CRCL has worked with community leaders to encourage young people to seek jobs with the federal government, which has further improved the language skills and cultural competency – and thereby the effectiveness – of DHS. The DHS Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives also works with CRCL and other federal partners to encourage civic involvement at the grassroots level within religious communities in order to ensure that at-risk populations are afforded every opportunity to engage their community leaders and address concerns.

Through its own programs and outreach to community groups, another DHS component – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) – helps to foster successful immigrant integration and build a common civic identity among all Americans. USCIS offers educational and teaching resources to immigrants, both before they leave their country of origin and after they arrive in the United States, to promote America's civic identity and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The Office of Citizenship within USCIS provides training and technical assistance to educators, volunteers, public libraries, and immigrant-serving organizations in teaching immigrants three parts of America's common civic identity: communicating in English, embracing the principles of American democracy, and identifying with U.S. history.

DHS also engages academia and international partners in countering violent extremism. DHS' Science & Technology Directorate, the Department's research arm, conducts efforts to understand the phenomenon of violent radicalization by developing stronger links between national and international scholars, policymakers, and practitioners. S&T supports research on understanding how violent extremism develops

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within individuals, groups, and societies; measuring the level of violent extremism in the U.S.; understanding the roles that communities, governments, and civic organizations play in moving individuals toward and away from violent extremism; and documenting the impact of media on the spread of violent extremism. DHS has also formed the U.S.-U.K. Joint Contact Group (JCG) and the U.S.-Germany Security Contact Group (SCG) – formal bilateral relationships between DHS and the U.K. Home Office and German Interior Ministry, respectively – which in part focus on countering violent extremism. CRCL has worked through these groups to establish strong relationships with Muslim communities worldwide. In addition, I have met personally with several of my counterparts from European Union countries on the topic of violent radicalization, and how the United States can learn from European experiences.

Our security is a shared responsibility. So DHS and other federal government actions to engage individuals, communities, academia, and international partners – on preparedness, as well as on preventing violent extremism from taking root in America – are critical to this effort.

Conclusion

DHS was created to combat the threat of terrorism to the homeland. We are making important progress by coordinating, engaging and sustaining America's many rings of defense – federal agencies; state, local, and tribal law enforcement; civic organizations; international partners; and the American public – to ensure that violent extremism does not take root in our country. Working together, each of these rings of defense can bring about greater security from the range of terrorist threats.

Chairman Lieberman, Senator Collins, and members of the Committee: Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and thank you for your continuing support of DHS and its mission to combat terrorism. I am happy to answer your questions.

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STATEMENT OF
ROBERT S. MUELLER, III
DIRECTOR
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

AT A HEARING ENTITLED
"EIGHT YEARS AFTER 9/11: CONFRONTING THE TERRORIST THREAT TO THE HOMELAND"

BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE

SEPTEMBER 30, 2009

Good morning, Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins, and members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to discuss the terrorist threats facing our nation and the efforts of the FBI to protect the United States from future terrorist attacks.

After the attacks of September 11, 2001, the FBI's priorities shifted dramatically as we charted a new course, with national security at the forefront of our mission. The eight years since have seen significant changes at the FBI, and we have made progress. Today, the FBI is a stronger organization, combining greater capabilities with a longstanding commitment to the security of the United States, while at the same time upholding the Constitution and protecting civil liberties.

The nature of the terrorist threat facing the United States has also changed over these last eight years. A significant evolution in the problem of terrorism is the threat posed by those who believe in al-Qaeda's ideology, since it was in part created twenty years ago to spread a revolutionary idea. Today, while we still face threats from al-Qaeda, and many of its affiliated groups, we also face a challenge in dealing with homegrown extremists in the United States who while not formally part of these terrorist organizations, believe in their ideologies and wish to harm the United States in furtherance of it. This requires us to develop an understanding of a diffuse and evolving threat environment and to leverage our unique authorities as both a national security service and a law enforcement organization.

Al-Qaeda

Since the 2001 terrorist attacks, we have frequently received credible reports that al-Qaeda remains committed to attacking the United States and US interests abroad. Al-Qaeda's primary threat continues to come from the tribal areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan, but we are seeing persistent activity elsewhere, from Europe to the Horn of Africa and Yemen. Of

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particular concern to the FBI are individuals who can travel with fewer restrictions to these areas of extremist activity and then enter the United States under less scrutiny.

Fortunately, the success of US military and intelligence operations combined with the work of our allies around the world has diminished al-Qaeda's core external operational capabilities. The elimination of key al-Qaeda figures, decline in its capacity to train recruits safely, disruptions in travel routes, reduction of terrorist financing, and the dwindling of safehavens have all reduced the ability of al-Qaeda to attack the Homeland. The FBI continues to monitor, collect intelligence, and investigate al-Qaeda's reach into the United States.

Affiliated Groups

Some affiliated groups that traditionally had only local agendas have formally joined ranks with al-Qaeda and expanded their operational focus regionally, or even globally, which may include attacks inside the United States. Strong networks have formed that encompass the shifting desire of followers to engage more directly with al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda's vision of violent jihad.

Some of these militant groups have physically re-located closer to core al-Qaeda in Pakistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) with a refocused attack strategy against coalition troops in Afghanistan and Pakistan and against western interests in the region. Factions of militant groups have executed spectacular attacks within the borders of India to inflame tensions between Pakistan and India. Components more closely aligned with al-Qaeda demonstrated their intent and capability to attack western interests through the November 2008 Mumbai attacks and the September 2008 Marriott Hotel truck bombing in Islamabad. Other groups have formed in the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa, while affiliates in Somalia, Central Asia, and Iraq are also of concern for their potential to broaden their targeting focus.

The increased role of militant factions in al-Qaeda operational activities poses the FBI with two problems. First, al-Qaeda has a new pipeline of individuals to continue filling its ranks with recruits who may develop into operational leaders to conduct future attacks against the Homeland and western interests abroad. Second, the involvement of these militant groups presents us with greater difficulties in identifying the enemy. Motivated US persons who reach militant training camps in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and other conflict zones have a potential doorway to involvement in core al-Qaeda operational activities.

Homegrown Radicalization

Since 2001, the emergence of individuals and groups inspired by al-Qaeda rhetoric but sometimes lacking the capabilities to launch a spectacular, large-scale attack poses a growing Homeland challenge. The threat from homegrown violent extremists remains a top terrorism concern for the FBI, but quantifying the threat and assessing the capabilities of these individuals is difficult. While the intent and capability of homegrown extremists varies widely, several FBI

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terrorism subjects, with no known nexus to overseas extremist networks or groups, have taken steps to move from violent rhetoric to action.

I do not remember a time when these types of loose networks were not a part of my morning briefing. In May 2009, US citizen James Cromitie and three other individuals were arrested for plotting to detonate explosives near a Jewish community center and synagogue. As alleged in the indictment/complaint, they also planned to attack military planes at the New York Air National Guard Base with an anti-aircraft missile system. Cromitie had reportedly been upset about the war in Afghanistan and had expressed interest in doing "something to America." In December 2008, five individuals, inspired by al-Qaeda, were convicted on conspiracy and weapons charges for plotting to conduct a small arms attack against soldiers stationed at the Fort Dix Army Base in New Jersey. Members of the group conducted surveillance, obtained a map of the base, participated in firearms training, and acquired weapons in preparation for the attack.

Trends in Radicalization

Overseas Travel

The role of returning foreign fighters to the United States changes the nature of the threat to the Homeland. Individuals inside the United States with foreign fighter experience and a network of extremist contacts overseas can encounter and encourage other like-minded individuals with a strong desire to engage in violence but lack the skills and resources to do so. We have learned that it can take years before individuals with foreign fighter experience begin to develop a radicalization network.

In July 2009, the FBI disrupted a conspiracy by a US citizen and others in the Raleigh, North Carolina-area to recruit and help young men travel overseas in order to participate in extremist activities. As articulated in the indictment, Daniel Boyd received military-style training in terrorist camps during the 1989 through 1992 timeframe for the purpose of engaging in violent jihad. Following this training, he allegedly fought in Afghanistan and then returned to the United States. Part of the conspiracy involved radicalizing mostly young Muslims or converts to Islam to believe in the idea that violent jihad was a personal obligation on the part of every good Muslim. The conspiracy also consisted of training in weapons, financing, and assistance in arranging overseas travel and contacts so that others could participate in violence.

We know individuals have been recruited to travel to Somalia to fight or train on behalf of al-Shabaab. While there are no current indicators that any of the individuals who went to Somalia have been selected, trained, or tasked by al-Shabaab or other extremists to conduct attacks inside the United States, the FBI remains concerned about this possibility.

Individuals who attend overseas madrassas or religious institutions located in terrorist safe havens, such as in the northern regions of Yemen and Pakistan, are at risk of being radicalized or recruited by terrorist organizations. The growing number of individuals in the United States with connections to these types of institutions also provides an indirect means for

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those inspired by extremist rhetoric—but who lack the necessary contacts to increase their participation in violent actions—to become more engaged.

Role of the Internet and Social Networking

The Internet also remains a powerful conduit for radicalization efforts. Al-Qaeda effectively uses the Internet to spread its message through statements for consumption by anyone with access to an Internet connection. The ability to exert global influence through cyberspace further contributes to the amorphous nature of the threat facing the Homeland by affording individuals access and anonymity within a self-reinforcing extremist environment. Individuals can also find like-minded extremists using chat rooms and social networking sites, enhancing their ability to develop global networks of extremist contacts.

In August 2009, an Atlanta jury heard about a cluster of extremists who had formed a loose on-line network connecting individuals in North America, Europe, and South Asia. US citizen Ehsanual Sadequee was found guilty of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists after he and another American, Syed Ahmed, made contact in chat rooms with like-minded individuals and proceeded to plan attacks, conduct surveillance of potential target sites within the United States, and pursue overseas training.

Addressing the Threat

The FBI's national security mission is to lead and coordinate intelligence efforts that drive actions to protect the United States from the increasingly diffuse terrorism threat that has evolved since 2001. Our goals are to develop a comprehensive understanding of the threats and penetrate national and transnational networks that have a desire and capability to harm us. To be successful, we must understand the threat, continue to integrate our intelligence and law enforcement capabilities in every FBI operational program, and expand our contribution to the Intelligence Community knowledge base.

The FBI's plan is to understand the threats not only to disrupt plots but to dismantle networks so they no longer pose a threat. We want an intelligence picture of a network that is complete enough for us to avoid leaving any pieces of the network operating after we take action. Moving from simply understanding a case to mapping loose networks of associates can take months or years. Targeted intelligence-gathering takes time, and requires patience, precision, and dedication. The process is labor-intensive and often does not provide a clear picture quickly, but it is at the core of understanding the threats facing the Homeland. Yet even the best intelligence will not provide complete certainty, given the evolving nature of the threats facing the Homeland.

In January 2009, the FBI released a classified intelligence assessment on national security and criminal threats to the Homeland. This assessment provided the FBI's strategic perspective on national security and criminal threats related to core FBI priorities, trends, patterns, and themes. In addition to our work inside the FBI, we integrated our intelligence program with

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other agencies under the Director of National Intelligence, with appropriate protections for privacy and civil liberties. Operationally, FBI agents work with a range of counterparts across the Intelligence Community. Information regarding analysis and operations is shared routinely and continuously, and up to the highest levels of decision-makers in various agencies. Once we gain an understanding of the threats facing us through intelligence, the FBI's law enforcement authorities allow us to move against individuals and networks. We are not an intelligence service that collects, but does not act; nor are we a law enforcement service that acts without knowledge.

Today's FBI combines the capability to understand the breadth and scope of threats with the capability to dismantle those same threats. A significant step in this evolution is the Strategic Execution Team (SET), which we established in 2007 to help us assess our intelligence programs and standardize them throughout the FBI. The SET, made up of analysts and agents, developed a series of recommendations for accelerating the integration of our intelligence and investigative work. The SET improvements ensure that we capitalize on our intelligence collection capabilities and develop national collection plans to fill gaps in our knowledge base.

Our Field Intelligence Groups (FIGs) were also restructured in every field office across the country to ensure each is able to identify, assess, and attack emerging threats. Following SET's recommendations, the FIGs now conform to one model, based on best practices from the field, and adapted to the size and complexity of each office. Each FIG has well-defined requirements for intelligence gathering, analysis, use, and production. Managers are accountable for ensuring that intelligence production is of high quality, timely, and relevant not only to their communities, but to the larger intelligence and law enforcement communities. As a result of these changes, the analysts and agents in the FIGs collect intelligence more completely, analyze it more quickly, share it more widely with others who need the information, and take action on it more effectively. The FIGs can better coordinate with each other, Headquarters, law enforcement, and intelligence partners. With this integrated model, we can turn information and intelligence into knowledge and action.

As the FBI has evolved structurally to meet modern challenges, we have also advanced our technological and scientific ability to conduct investigations. To meet the global nature of the threat, a number of current initiatives allow us to capture and share actionable intelligence. The Terrorist Explosive Device Analytical Center (TEDAC) is addressing the threat of improvised explosive devices through technical and forensic exploitation. The information and intelligence derived from this analysis is used to provide intelligence for both military force protection and homeland security. The Next Generation Identification Biometric Database will allow modern biometric data, combined with traditional fingerprints, to assist in the identification of individuals. In 2006, the FBI established a Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Directorate which includes a strong forensic program for all aspects of WMD and traditional forensic expertise. The FBI Laboratory Division is central in our support to interagency efforts and members of the Intelligence Community in nuclear forensics and other scientific endeavors.

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Partnerships and Outreach

The role of our law enforcement partners is critical to protecting our nation and its citizens. Our Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs) are in more than 100 locations nationwide. These multi-agency task forces are comprised of local, state, and federal law enforcement and intelligence agencies that share information and conduct operations to prevent and dismantle terrorist plots. The FBI is also committed to participation in all leading statewide fusion centers, select Multi-Agency Intelligence Centers, and the Antiterrorism Advisory Councils in federal judicial districts.

In 2009, the FBI began operating a threat tracking system for state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to share information with a potential nexus to terrorism. This tracking system, called eGuardian, provides a central location for law enforcement suspicious activity reporting in an unclassified environment. By engaging in close partnerships with our state and local colleagues we are better positioned to share and receive intelligence, thus optimizing our ability to respond to emerging threats at the federal, state, and local levels.

In response to three ideologically-driven murders in the United States, in which the perpetrators demonstrated Lone Offender characteristics and had previous FBI contact, the FBI initiated the Lone Offender Task Force in 2009. In partnership with other government agencies and comprised of approximately 25 personnel from FBI Headquarters and field offices, this initiative takes an introspective and proactive approach: a comprehensive review of open investigations where lone offender behavioral traits potentially apply and the development of new intelligence related to previously closed subjects who may meet some of the Lone Offender characteristics. By developing measures to identify the Lone Offender, we hope to proactively disrupt future threats.

Intelligence-driven investigations also require a unity of effort with our partners overseas. Global cooperation is necessary to combat terrorism, and through more than 60 Legal Attache offices around the world, the FBI has strengthened relationships with our international partners and expanded our global reach. The FBI's assistance in investigating the November 2008 Mumbai attacks not only helped a key ally in the investigation and prosecution of a terror attack but also provided the FBI with greater insight and understanding of international terror networks that pose a threat to the United States.

Finally, the FBI understands that protecting America requires the cooperation and understanding of the public. The FBI has an extensive outreach program to Muslim, South Asian, and Sikh communities to address concerns and develop trust about the FBI and federal efforts to protect the Homeland. In December 2008, the FBI Office of Public Affairs deployed Specialized Community Outreach Teams to work with local FBI field offices, federal partners, municipal governments and non-profit organizations to engage the Somali diaspora. The FBI works closely with the Department of Homeland Security, the National Counterterrorism Center, and other Intelligence Community partners on community engagement efforts.

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Conclusion

Chairman Lieberman and Ranking Member Collins, I would like to conclude by thanking you and this Committee for your service and support. The FBI is in a better position to understand the threats facing the Homeland than we were even a year ago. We must never stop evolving, but we can say today our analysis is deeper, our operations more sophisticated, and our knowledge more three-dimensional, and we have eight years of experience to back us up. While the threat of terrorism has become more diffuse and will continue to evolve, the FBI has changed accordingly and will continue to change to defeat the threats of the future. On behalf of the men and women of the FBI, I look forward to working with you in the years to come as we work together to enhance the capabilities needed to protect the United States.

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Mike Leiter
Director
National Counterterrorism Center

Introduction

Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins, distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity today to discuss the current state of the terrorist threat to the Homeland and the U.S. Government's efforts to address the threat. I am pleased to join Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano and Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Robert Mueller—two of the National Counterterrorism Center's (NCTC) closest and most critical partners.

Nature of the Terrorist Threat

The Current Threat from Al-Qa'ida. Al-Qa'ida is under more pressure, is facing more challenges, and is a more vulnerable organization than at any time since the attacks on 11 September 2001. For eight years, the United States and its allies have mounted a robust and multi-front offensive against al-Qa'ida, as well as sustained an effective defensive program, making it more difficult—although still quite possible—for terrorists to attack the US Homeland and US interests abroad.

- Most importantly, al-Qa'ida's safehaven -- where they are hosted by Taliban and Pakistani militants -- in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) is shrinking and becoming less secure, complicating the group's ability to plan, train, and move within Pakistan's tribal areas.

- Al-Qa'ida has suffered significant leadership losses during the past 18 months, interrupting training and plotting, potentially disrupting plots that are under way, and leaving leadership vacuums that are increasingly difficult to fill.

Despite our counterterrorism (CT) progress, al-Qa'ida and its affiliates and allies remain resilient and adaptive enemies intent on attacking US and Western interests—with al-Qa'ida's core in Pakistan representing the most dangerous component of the larger al-Qa'ida network. We assess that this core is actively engaged in operational plotting and continues recruiting, training, and transporting operatives, to include individuals from Western Europe and North America.

- Three years ago the British, with United States help, disrupted a plot in its late stages that could have killed thousands of people flying from Europe to the US Homeland. Two years ago we helped disrupt a credible plot in Germany that was very near execution.

- The recent arrest and indictment of Najibullah Zazi on a charge of conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction (explosive bombs) against persons or property in the United States is an example of the strong teamwork needed between local police departments and federal departments and agencies that is critical to protecting our country from potential terrorist attacks. As stated in the indictment, Zazi is alleged to have knowingly and intentionally conspired with others to use explosive bombs and other similar devices against persons or property within the United States

- We assess that al-Qa'ida continues to pursue plans for Homeland attacks and is likely focusing on prominent political, economic, and infrastructure targets designed to produce

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mass casualties, visually dramatic destruction, significant economic aftershocks, and/or fear among the population. The group also likely remains interested in targeting mass transit systems, and other public venues, viewed as relatively soft targets as evidenced by past al-Qa'ida attacks in London.

Al-Qa'ida Affiliates. As al-Qa'ida's affiliates continue to develop and evolve, the threat posed by many of these groups to US interests abroad, and potentially to the Homeland, has grown. The affiliates possess local roots and autonomous command structures and represent a talent pool that al-Qa'ida core may tap to augment operational efforts. The affiliates have proven capable of attacking Western targets in their regions and they aspire to expand operations further.

Yemen. We have witnessed the reemergence of al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), with Yemen as a key battleground and potential regional base of operations from which al-Qa'ida can plan attacks, train recruits, and facilitate the movement of operatives. We are concerned that if AQAP strengthens, al-Qa'ida leaders could use the group and the growing presence of foreign fighters in the region to supplement its transnational operations capability.

Al-Qa'ida Operatives in Somalia and Al-Shabaab. East Africa is an important locale for al-Qa'ida. The leaders of the Somalia-based insurgent and terrorist group al-Shabaab are working with a limited number of East Africa-based al-Qa'ida operatives. Al-Shabaab has actively conducted terrorist style attacks in Somalia against the Somali Government and its perceived allies or supporters, including African Union peacekeepers. Al-Shabaab's rank and file fighters—who are predominantly interested in removing the current government of Somalia vice pursuing al-Qa'ida's global agenda—have gained control over specific locations in central and southern Somalia, in an effort to create an Islamic state throughout greater Somalia.

Training programs run by al-Shabaab in southern Somalia have attracted hundreds of violent extremists from across the globe, to include dozens of recruits from the United States. We assess that U.S. persons – the majority of whom are ethnic Somali -- who have traveled to Somalia to fight and train with al-Shabaab have been primarily motivated by nationalism and identification with the Somali cause, rather than by al-Qa'ida's global agenda. However, the potential for al-Qa'ida operatives in Somalia to commission Americans to return to the United States and launch attacks against the Homeland remains of significant concern. The recent death of East Africa-based senior al-Qa'ida operative Saleh Nabhan could disrupt for the time being al-Qa'ida's linkage with al-Shabaab and hinder external attack planning in the region.

- Although al-Shabaab has not yet conducted an attack outside of Somalia, we have identified several potential transnational terrorist plots involving individuals trained in Somalia. For example, Australian police in August arrested four men involved in plotting an attack against an Australian Army base, two of whom reportedly trained at camp in Somalia.

North Africa and the Trans-Sahara. AQIM has expanded its operational presence in North Africa beyond Algeria, using a safehaven in Northern Mali and increasing low-level operations in Mauritania and has conducted more than a dozen attacks against Western interests in the region. We have seen increased interest by the group to conduct attacks in Europe—to include public statements threatening France and other European powers—as well as the United States.

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AQIM's increased focus on kidnap-for ransom operations, particularly of Western hostages, has allowed for the group's expansion, helping fund recruitment, training, propaganda and terrorist attacks.

Iraq. Counterterrorism success in Iraq has lowered the external threat from al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI)—a key al-Qa'ida affiliate in the region—and has damaged the al-Qa'ida brand, with many donors reticent to support the kinds of gruesome attacks that became the hallmark of AQI. Although AQI's leaders continue to publicly threaten the West, to include the Homeland, we assess that their ability to do so has been substantially diminished by Coalition military and Iraqi security operations. However, the group remains the largest and most operationally active of al-Qa'ida's affiliates and continues to threaten Coalition forces in the region.

Lashkar-e-Tayyiba. Pakistan-based Sunni extremist group Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LT)—an al-Qa'ida ally—poses a threat to a range of interests in South Asia. Their attacks in Kashmir and India have had a destabilizing effect on the region, increasing tensions and brinkmanship between New Delhi and Islamabad. The group's attack last year in Mumbai, India, resulted in US and Western casualties, and the group continues to plan attacks in India that could harm US citizens and damage US interests. LT's involvement in attacks in Afghanistan against US and Coalition forces and provision of support to the Taliban and al-Qa'ida extremists there pose a threat to US and Coalition interests. We assess that LT—or LT-trained individuals—could pose a direct threat to the Homeland, especially should they collude with al-Qa'ida operatives.

Homegrown Violent Extremists. Homegrown Muslim extremists who have little if any connection to known terrorist organizations have not launched a successful attack in the United States. The handful of homegrown extremists who have sought to strike within the Homeland since 9/11 have lacked the necessary tradecraft and capability to conduct or facilitate sophisticated attacks.

Al-Qa'ida's Media Campaign. Al-Qa'ida propaganda statements this year have provided valuable insight into the group's strategic intentions and have reiterated their commitment to attacking US and Western interests worldwide. Public al-Qa'ida statements rarely contain a specific threat or telegraph attack planning.

- The recently released statement that threatens Germany with near-term attacks if the election fails to favor the candidate who will withdraw German troops from Afghanistan is an exception to standard al-Qa'ida practice as it features a specific threat timed to influence the German elections scheduled for 27 September.

- Al-Qa'ida statements have addressed three main themes this year—first, the group's continued desire to attack US interests; second, the group's claim that it has inspired or partnered with emerging and sometimes more successful fronts in Somalia, the Sahel, and the Arabian Peninsula, which it says serves the same purpose and achieves the same aims as past major operations; and third, al-Qa'ida's claim that its actions on and since 9/11 have caused significant damage to the US economy.

- Al-Qa'ida has also released a number of statements this year directed at Pakistan. We assess that this is in direct response to Pakistani military actions against their safehavens in the tribal areas and nearby settled areas such as the Swat Valley. Despite increasing

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pressure on their safehaven this year, al-Sahab, the al-Qa'ida media arm, is still rapidly producing propaganda and will probably outpace lasts year's production.

Violent Shia Extremists. While not aligned with al-Qa'ida, we assess that Lebanese Hizballah remains capable of conducting terrorist attacks on US and Western interests, particularly in the Middle East. It continues to train and sponsor terrorist groups in Iraq that threaten the lives of US and Coalition forces, and supports Palestinian terrorist groups' efforts to attack Israel and jeopardize the Middle East Peace Process. Although its primary focus is Israel, the group holds the United States responsible for Israeli policies in the region and would likely consider attacks on US interests, to include the Homeland, if it perceived a direct threat from the United States to itself or Iran. Hizballah's Secretary General, in justifying the group's use of violence against fellow Lebanese citizens last year, characterized any threat to Hizballah's armed status and its independent communications network as redlines.

WMD-Terrorism. The threat of WMD terrorism to the Homeland remains a grave concern. Documents recovered in Afghanistan indicated that al-Qa'ida was pursuing a sophisticated biological weapons program and testing chemical agents. Since 9/11, we have successfully disrupted these and other terrorist efforts to develop a WMD capability. However, al-Qa'ida and other groups continue to seek such a capability for use against the Homeland and US interests overseas. While terrorists face technical hurdles to developing and employing WMD, the consequences of a successful attack force us to consider every possible threat against the Homeland, even those considered low probability.

Coordination of Counterterrorism Efforts

US Government Strategy to Counter Terrorism. The 9/11 Commission, reflecting on the paucity of joint action and planning that characterized the US Government's approach to terrorism before the 2001 attacks, recommended the creation of a "a civilian-led unified joint command for CT," combining both strategic intelligence and joint operational planning. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA) brought this recommendation to life through legislation, creating NCTC and its strategic operational planning authorities. For the first time, an organization outside the Executive Office of the President was given the responsibility for government-wide coordination of planning and integration of department and agency actions involving "all elements of national power," including "diplomatic, financial, military, intelligence, Homeland security, and law enforcement activities within and among agencies."

Pursuant to this authority, the Director of NCTC is responsible for providing strategic CT plans and for effectively integrating CT intelligence and operations across agency boundaries, both inside and outside the US.

The baseline US Government strategy for countering terrorism is the NCTC-authored and Presidentially-approved National Implementation Plan for Counterterrorism (NIP). The NIP consists of four "pillars" that correspond to national policy: 1) protect and defend against terrorists; 2) attack their capacity to operate; 3) work diligently to undermine the spread of violent extremism and retard radicalization around the world; and 4) prevent terrorists from utilizing WMD.

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The NIP establishes a firm strategic foundation for action by requiring that each department and agency work collectively to achieve the endstates described in the objectives and sub-objectives of each pillar. However, without a sustained, focused effort to *implement* the NIP—a process that brings together lead and partner departments and agencies and the NSC to actively work to overcome the operational, legal, resource, and policy impediments to achieving the NIP's strategic objectives—the plan would be of limited value. Although I am unable to speak to all of our efforts or provide extensive detail in an unclassified setting, below I offer a few examples of the more granular synchronization efforts we are pursuing in conjunction with the White House and Departments and Agencies throughout the US Government.

Interagency Task Force (ITF). The ITF, established in June 2007, is charged with ensuring that US Government CT activities—and the resources to support them—are correlated rapidly with a constantly evolving threat picture and level of risk. The ITF may focus, as directed by the NSC, on an individual threat, but more typically it seeks to develop and coordinate overall strategic interagency action appropriate to the *aggregate* threat picture. Led by NCTC, the ITF comprises a core group of department and agency representatives who constantly examine current intelligence to ensure ongoing prevention efforts are synergistically executed. If additional, more alarming intelligence is obtained, the ITF formulates domestic and overseas options for senior policy makers to enable an appropriately tailored US Government response to any given threat.

Exercises. NCTC also develops and facilitates national and local exercises to improve domestic preparedness at all levels of the US Government, as well as that of our international partners. The most recent capabilities review exercise hosted by NCTC tested the federal response to a Mumbai-style attack in an urban environment. These exercise "lessons learned" have been shared, in coordination with DHS and FBI, with other federal, state and local authorities in an effort to bring our law enforcement and homeland security communities closer together.

Global Engagement. NCTC continues to play a large role in interagency efforts to counter violent extremism, both around the world and at home. For example, NCTC coordinated the development of a strategic communications strategy for the interagency to support efforts led by the President's Special Representative on Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP) and Central Command in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Working with these partners, plus others in the State Department, Department of Defense, and the Intelligence Community, NCTC produced a coordinated interagency plan that is now being used by, the State Department and commanders in the field.

NCTC has also developed an analytical tool that is providing, for the first time, a deep look at ongoing US Government programs that seek to build ties with the Afghan and Pakistani people. This tool is helping senior government leaders evaluate the efforts that have been made in the past and identify new types of programs that should be pursued.

On the domestic front, NCTC enables, informs and supports federal, state and local government efforts to engage with communities across our country. Central to this effort is NCTC's leadership of an interagency group to coordinate engagement projects and activities conducted by the FBI, DHS, State, Justice, Treasury and others. In particular, NCTC has worked diligently through this group with its partner agencies to enhance the level of engagement between the US

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Government and Somali Americans and build communities that are increasingly resistant to the threat posed by extremism.

Afghanistan/Pakistan. Working closely with SRAP, NCTC has coordinated CT-related planning efforts designed to support development and implementation of a broader US Government strategy in this key region. NCTC led an interagency effort to refine specific counterterrorism objectives and develop measures of performance, as well as to identify and synchronize associated department and agency actions and initiatives to achieve these strategic objectives. NCTC also assisted departments and agencies with identifying associated resource requirements and implementation timelines.

Region-specific efforts. Outside of South Asia, NCTC is working with our interagency partners—such as the Departments of Defense, State, Justice, and Treasury, and key members of the Intelligence Community—to develop and coordinate the implementation of plans designed to disrupt and diminish the capability of specific terrorist organizations and their networks, and to eliminate identified regional safehavens. Planning efforts include the development of whole-of-government strategic objectives; interagency synchronization of initiatives designed to achieve those objectives; the identification of necessary resources and key milestones; and development of potential foreign partner actions.

Budget. Working with our mission partners, we have helped develop a methodology for departments and agencies to use in aligning their resources for counterterrorism. As a result, we were able to align CT resources to the strategic objectives of the National Implementation Plan, as well as provide recommendations for new areas of emphasis in the FY11 budget build. Subsequently, OMB and the NSC issued budgetary guidance to the interagency to implement these recommendations.

Assessments. In order to successfully guide development of strategies and plans to counter an active and agile enemy, NCTC monitors and assesses overall NIP implementation as well as the impact of subordinate CT plans and guidance. NCTC's strategic impact assessments are designed to provide a tangible and well-understood "feedback loop" to CT planners and policy makers that takes a wide variety of vital factors into consideration, including strategic and operational outcomes arising from US Government and partner nation counterterrorism programs and activities; developments in enemy strategy and actions; and changes in the operating environment. The goal is to provide a useful tool that may be used to refine and guide the next generation of CT strategy and plans.

Conclusion

Chairman Lieberman and Ranking Member Collins, I want to conclude by recognizing this Committee for the role it played in the creation of the National Counterterrorism Center. Without your leadership the strides we have jointly made to counter the terrorist threat would not be possible. Your continued support is critical to the Center's mission to lead our nation's effort to combat terrorism at home and abroad by analyzing the threat, sharing that information with out partners, and integrating all instruments of national power to ensure unity of effort. I look forward to continuing our work together in the years to come.

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Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Andrew M. Liepman
From Senator Joseph I. Lieberman

"Violent Islamist Extremism: al-Shabaab Recruitment in America"
March 11, 2009

Question: (U) Last May, the Committee released a report titled "Violent Islamist Extremism, the Internet, and the Homegrown Terrorist Threat." Several weeks ago, Committee staff met with a number of leaders from the Somali community in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood of Minneapolis. Many of those leaders acknowledged that violent Islamist content is available online and was being viewed by members of the Somali community in Minneapolis. What was the role of online content and the use of the Internet in general, in terms of introducing young men like Shirwa Ahmed and Burhan Hassan to al-Shabaab and al-Shabaab's ideology, and then radicalizing those young men?

(U) Young Somali-Americans are likely to have been exposed to jihadist media, though the specific role of this content in "introducing" them to violent extremist ideology or to al-Shabaab probably is less significant than radicalization by peers or authority figures. Violent online content posted to the Internet by al-Shabaab, al-Qa'ida, and other extremist groups is one of several tools available to individuals seeking to recruit and radicalize new adherents.

a. **(U)** Social networking websites and chatrooms often support real-world social relationships and can be used to reinforce extremist beliefs through jihadist videos and contact between U.S.-groups and extremists overseas.
b. **(U)** Despite the portrayal of the Internet as a primary vehicle for radicalization influences, the indoctrination and social bonds that typically cement individuals' commitment to violent action appears to require face-to-face relationships.

(U) Al-Shabaab leaders maintain a sophisticated media department that weaves together national, religious, and cultural themes in both Arabic and English language videos, making their activities and agenda more accessible to a broad audience.

a. **(U)** In two videos released in April 2009, American al-Shabaab members publicly encouraged Westerners to join the group, suggesting that it continues to seek foreigners to bolster Somalia as a front in the global jihad. These videos marked the first instances that al-Shabaab used self-identified American members in its media directly to recruit Westerners.
b. **(U)** A review of al-Shabaab propaganda suggests the group tries to portray its efforts in Somalia as an opportunity to escape the alleged "crumbling" American economy, pursue martyrdom, find camaraderie with other Western Muslims, and—for Somali expatriates—defend their homeland from outside intervention.

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U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

August 26, 2010

The Honorable Joseph Lieberman
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Enclosed please find responses to questions for the record stemming from the appearance of Philip Mudd, Associate Executive Director, National Security Branch, Federal Bureau of Investigation, before the Committee on March 11, 2009, at a hearing entitled "Violent Islamist Extremism: al-Shabaab Recruitment in America." We apologize for our lengthy delay in responding to your letter and hope that this information is of assistance to the Committee.

Please do not hesitate to call upon us if we may provide additional assistance regarding this, or any other matter. The Office of Management and Budget has advised us that there is no objection to submission of this letter from the perspective of the Administration's program.

Sincerely,

Ronald Weich
Assistant Attorney General

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member

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Responses of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to Questions for the Record Arising from the March 11, 2009, Hearing Before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Regarding Violent Islamist Extremism: al-Shabaab Recruitment in America

Questions Posed by Senator Lieberman

1. There is no agreed upon public figure for the number of Somali-Americans who have been recruited by al-Shabaab and who have left for Somalia to fight for al-Shabaab. One of the reasons why there is not a number is that the families of those missing do not want to report their missing family members to law enforcement and other officials. What does this tell us about the isolation and lack of assimilation of the Somali-American community that they do not want to report missing family members to local officials or even the FBI? To that end, how many Somali-Americans have left the United States to return to Somalia and support al-Shabaab?

Response:

The FBI does not know how many Somali Americans have left the United States to join al-Shabaab. Some Somalis have reported to the government that their children have returned to Somalia and may be supporting al-Shabaab. Others, relying on the Somali clan infrastructure, have sought assistance from clan members in Somalia to find their children. Other families do not consider their children "missing" because they are generally aware of their activities and locations. Finally, because al-Shabaab is a designated terrorist organization in the U.S., some families may be reluctant to engage with the United States over this issue out of concern that such contact may lead to negative consequences for their children.

Additional information responsive to this inquiry is classified and is, therefore, provided separately.

2. We know that outreach and engagement to America's diverse Muslim-American communities is essential to preventing the influence of violent Islamist ideology here. We also know that the FBI has the most extensive outreach program of any federal agency primarily because the FBI has 56 field offices all around the country and each field office has a responsibility to liaison with the community.

a. In the case of the Somali community in Minneapolis, what is the scope and reach of the Minneapolis field office's engagement efforts there?

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Response:

Although the FBI's Minneapolis office was reaching out to the Somali community before the attacks of 9/11/01, those outreach efforts intensified following the attacks. The FBI has increased its engagement with the Somali community by attending meetings with elders, Imams, and other leaders of the local Somali community, participating in Town Hall meetings, and meeting with the families of the missing youth, when appropriate. The Minneapolis Division has also partnered with a local TV network to produce a news series on FBI-Somali relations, participated in the Minneapolis Civil Rights Advisory Group that meets quarterly and is regularly attended by Somali community leaders, offered Citizens' Academies, which have two prominent Somali leaders as active alumni, and contributed a series of articles to the *Warsan Times* that are aimed at educating the Somali-American community. The FBI's Minneapolis Division also actively participates in monthly counterterrorism working groups hosted by the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office in Minneapolis and the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office in St. Paul to promote information sharing and liaison with our investigative counterparts who focus on Somali gangs and other criminal activities.

During 2009 the Minneapolis Special Agent in Charge (SAC) has appeared on three separate live Somali-American radio and television interview programs that allowed listeners/viewers to call in with specific questions. These were informative sessions that prompted additional, effective dialogue with the community. In addition, the SAC has provided interviews to al-Jazeera and al-Hurrah network representatives in Washington, D.C., in an effort to promote positive outreach messages in the Middle East and Horn of Africa. The Minneapolis Division's media representative has also provided interviews to Voice of America and the Dubai-based newspaper *The National* in support of those efforts.

b. To what extent has the FBI been working with the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties in Minneapolis?

Response:

The FBI and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have worked closely to coordinate outreach efforts. The FBI, DHS, and other Federal agencies meet monthly to discuss each agency's responsibilities for engaging with Somali-American communities. The FBI also participated in a DHS round table discussion with representatives from the Somali community and other state and local representatives to discuss concerns and to develop new and innovative ways to better assist the Somali community. The outcomes of these meetings are communicated to the community outreach coordinators in all 56 FBI field offices

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through monthly conference calls, bi-monthly secure video conferences, and daily interactions with the field offices' Community Relations Units.

c. Did the FBI Minneapolis field office coordinate with the Minneapolis Police Department prior to the reports of missing youth?

Response:

Yes. The Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) is a strong partner with the FBI in the response to international and domestic terrorism. The MPD has several representatives on the local Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) and maintains a permanent presence on the Minneapolis JTTF Executive Board. Executive managers in the FBI's Minneapolis office communicate weekly, and sometimes daily, with the Chief and Deputy Chiefs of the MPD, maintaining an effective and open flow of information (in the forms of both intelligence and evidence) between the MPD and the FBI.

d. Does the lack of diversity in the FBI affect the understanding of the Somali American community as a whole? How will the FBI work to expand the diversity of the agency?

Response:

While the FBI works aggressively to increase the diversity of its workforce, participating in and coordinating numerous career fairs and advertising through radio, TV, and print media, the absence of a Somali-American in the FBI's Minneapolis Office has not hampered ongoing outreach and liaison efforts with the Somali community. We believe successful outreach can be accomplished by those knowledgeable of and sensitive to cultural differences, as well as by those of the same ethnicity. The FBI's Outreach Specialists, Special Agents, Task Force Officers, and Intelligence Analysts are sensitized to the concerns of the community and are continuously striving to improve relations. In recognition of the importance of cultural sensitivity, the SAC has invited two distinguished members of the Somali-American community to speak at the office's all-employee annual meetings.

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U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

– SECRET –

April 27, 2010

The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Please find enclosed responses to questions arising from the appearance of J. Philip Mudd before the Committee on March 11, 2009, at a hearing entitled "Violent Islamist Extremism: Al-Shabaab Recruitment in America." We hope that information is of assistance to the Committee. Please do not hesitate to call upon us if we may be of additional assistance. The Office of Management and Budget has advised us that, from the perspective of the Administration's program, there is no objection to submission of this letter.

Sincerely,

Ronald Weich
Assistant Attorney General

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable Susan M. Collins
Ranking Minority Member

– SECRET –

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U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the
Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

The classified document has
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Senate Security Office

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Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Dr. Ken Menkhaus
From Senator Joseph I. Lieberman

"Violent Islamist Extremism: al-Shabaab Recruitment in America"
March 11, 2009

1. The economy in Somalia is heavily dependent on remittance payments from the Diaspora communities. That powerful financial connection between Somalia and communities all over the world might very well have an impact on the failure of the Diaspora communities to integrate and assimilate in their new homes, which includes Minneapolis-St. Paul. Do you think that is accurate? That the unique financial dependency of Somalis in Somalia on family members around the world is a force that prevents those family members from putting down meaningful roots outside of Somalia?

The remittance obligation is a reflection of, not a driver of, the deep links between Somali diasporas and their communities back in Somalia. The obligation to remit money to the homeland does not prevent Somalis from putting down roots in the US – other immigrant communities, such as Ethiopians and Eritreans, also remit consider sums of money to the home country but are much better integrated into American society. Other factors, including culture, religion, language, low education levels, and family structure seems to be more important causes of the poor level of assimilation of Somalis into American life.

As first generation Somali-Americans (those born in the US) begin to reach adulthood, we will start to have a clearer idea of how they are or are not integrating in American society. Many of the original refugees from Somalia still hope to return to Somalia some day, and so have less incentive to integrate in the US.

2. How do clan relationships in Somalia translate to Diaspora communities, including the Diaspora communities here in the United States? Specifically, do younger Somalis in the Diaspora communities have the same allegiances to clans that older Somalis do?

The Somali diaspora tends to dismiss claims that clannism is an identity of importance to them, and often argue that outsiders are the ones emphasizing clannism. Yet clan still plays an enduring role in the affiliations and social obligations of Somali Americans, much as many Somali-Americans would like clannism to go away. Younger Somalis, or first generation Somalis, are not immune to social cleavages revolving around clan, though there is an expectation that it will matter les to them than it does to their parents.

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Question#:	1
Topic:	realignment
Hearing:	Eight Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Questions and Answers for the Record
Submitted to Secretary Janet Napolitano

Question: In your testimony, you note that the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) is "currently undergoing an important realignment to strengthen [the] delivery of useful, actionable intelligence to state and local law enforcement based on their particular needs."

(a) What are your key objectives for this realignment?

(b) How do you plan to measure whether I&A is achieving these goals as this realignment is implemented?

(c) What metrics will DHS use to determine whether it is making progress consistent with your objectives?

Response:

a) Through this realignment, I&A will improve its ability to execute the following activities:
   1. Analyze and share timely and relevant actionable intelligence and information with First Preventers, including our State, Local, Tribal, Territorial, and Private Sector (SLTTP) customers and stakeholders;
   2. Lead and coordinate the Department's interaction with the Intelligence Community; and
   3. Gather, adjudicate, and disseminate customer information requirements, as well as ensure robust and secure IT solutions for critical information-sharing.

   We believe this realignment will result in unified, streamlined, and effectively managed operations across I&A that will tangibly strengthen intelligence and information flow to State, local, and tribal law enforcement officials at fusion centers across the country.

b) The realignment within I&A coincides with the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review and the Department's Bottom-Up Review and will be part of that departmental strategic process. I&A also is completing a first-ever strategic framework to guide priority activities and resource allocations. One aspect of the realignment is the consolidation of I&A intelligence policy, performance management and resource allocation of the office. This will improve its internal alignment and ensure its activities are prioritized to broader strategic guidance. This

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Question#:	1
Topic:	realignment
Hearing:	Eight Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

system will link strategy to core activities and will execute specific, results-oriented performance measures. I&A recognizes that success requires a rigorous approach to performance management and is currently collecting data to validate all activities to strategy and to develop new measures and metrics to measure performance.

c) Successful metrics implementation depends on relevance, accuracy, repeatability, and acceptance by process owners. I&A is currently assessing its data-gathering ability to determine our current capacity, in addition to the review of current activities described above. We will validate specific target metrics across I&A and test them to ensure that they are reliable, relevant, and repeatable.

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Question#:	2
Topic:	JFC
Hearing:	Eight Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

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Question: In your testimony, you note that DHS is in the process of establishing a Joint Fusion Center Program Management Office (JFC PMO) within I&A.

(a) What is the rationale for establishing this office? What is its relationship to the existing State and Local Programs Office (SLPO) within I&A?

(b) Who is heading this office? How many staff does it have now, and how many is it planned to have at the end of FY 2010?

(c) What authorities, if any, does this office have to task or leverage Departmental assets outside of I&A?

Response:

a) The rationale for establishing the Joint Fusion Center Program Management Office (JFC-PMO) is to both enhance the capabilities of fusion centers and integrate them into a national information sharing enterprise. The Department will dramatically expand and better coordinate its efforts in this regard, an effort that requires the cooperation, dedication and engagement of every Department component and office that interacts with both State and major urban area fusion centers and State, local and tribal authorities working to protect the homeland. Specifically, the Department and its various components and elements shall align their initiatives, policies, programs and people to:
    - Ensure that State and major urban area fusion centers have the opportunity to develop the capability to gather information at the State, local and tribal levels and to analyze and convert it into useful intelligence and other information products that provide situational awareness of terrorist and other threats to homeland security;
    - Foster two-way sharing with the Department's fusion center partners that provides them with the information and tools they need to conduct meaningful analysis to inform a risk-based approach to prevention, preparedness and recovery strategies at the State, local and tribal levels and to provide the Department with situational awareness of threats to homeland security identified in the State and major urban area fusion center environment;

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Question#:	2
Topic:	JFC
Hearing:	Eight Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

- Provide the "right" personnel and resource support to State and major urban area fusion centers – as determined through close coordination with State, local and tribal leaders – to ensure that deployed Department personnel have the most appropriate skills to add value to the day-to-day operations of those centers;
- Promote collaboration and a sense of shared mission and purpose at fusion centers by offering training, exercises and other support that build the kind of peer to peer relationships across all disciplines – law enforcement, fire, public health, emergency management, and critical infrastructure protection – that are the cornerstones of analysis and information exchanges, relationship building and mutual trust among Federal, State, local and tribal authorities;
- Develop, promote and sustain rigorous legal, privacy, civil rights and civil liberties training and related support to State, local and tribal representatives as well as Department personnel deployed to State and major urban area fusion centers; and
- Encourage participation in the information sharing environment among and between Federal agencies and State and major urban area fusion centers in order to bolster our homeland security.

b) On December 7, the Secretary signed a Delegation of Authority which directed the "Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis to establish and manage a Joint Fusion Center Program Management Office." She also signed a Policy Statement which indicated the Chief Intelligence Officer "will assemble a team from across the Department to recommend the structure, staff, and resource requirements of a JFC-PMO."

To this end, the Department has established a Planning Team with the DHS Components leadership to facilitate development of the structure, staff and resources for the JFC-PMO. At the Secretary's direction, the team is to be comprised of personnel assigned or detailed, as appropriate, from I&A; Component intelligence and operational divisions; as well as other appropriate Department personnel.

Within 90 days, the Secretary has requested a detailed organizational plan for the JFC-PMO, to include staffing, budget, and support requirements.

c) Subject to Secretarial oversight, the Secretary will delegate to the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis, the authority to establish and manage a JFC-PMO to implement the Department's State, Local, and Regional Fusion Center Initiative under Title 6, United States Code, Section 124h. The JFC-PMO will ensure coordinated, DHS-wide support to State and major urban area fusion centers. In addition, the Department will be submitted a "New Start" notification to the Appropriations committees in accordance with Section 503 of the Department's Appropriations Act, and may request a reprogramming of funds in support of this initiative.

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49640.082

Question#:	3
Topic:	JTTF
Hearing:	Eight Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Question: At the hearing you and Director Mueller both spoke of the need to provide state and local law enforcement agencies with additional incentives for them to participate actively in Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs) and fusion centers, given the current budgetary challenges facing states and localities.

(a) What incentives currently exist for state and local law enforcement agencies to participate in fusion centers?

(b) Have you seen evidence of states or cities withdrawing personnel from fusion centers for budgetary reasons since the start of the recession in December 2007? If so, please provide data or other relevant evidence.

(c) What new or additional incentives for participation in fusion centers do you believe could address the budget challenges that states and localities are facing?

Response:

a) The primary incentive for state and local participation in fusion centers is the opportunity to leverage the strength of the national network of fusion centers both to facilitate two-way information sharing with the Federal government as well as information sharing across the network. Further, the Department and its interagency partners provide essential resources needed to make fusion centers successful. Some examples of these resources include: access to the Homeland Secure Data Network (HSDN); an array of analytical, technical, and privacy training courses; the granting and maintaining of security clearances; and information sharing relationships with Federal partners and within the nationwide network of fusion centers. These resources increase the fusion center's capability to protect their communities.

b) Thus far, the Department has not seen any states or cities withdrawing personnel from fusion centers due to budgetary reasons. Fusion center directors collectively identified sustainment funding as a key priority for the coming year at the recent Fusion Center Directors Meeting hosted October 14-15 in New Orleans.

c) While we have not yet seen the recession affect the existing staffing levels of fusion centers, we do understand that budget constraints are keeping state and local law enforcement agencies for allocating additional unbudgeted dollars to fusion center participation.

ph44585 on D330-44585-7600 with DISTILLER

49640.083

Question#:	4
Topic:	plan
Hearing:	Eight Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Question: The 2008 Annual Report of the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment, released in June 2008, noted that a "Federal Coordinated Support Plan is under development by DHS, FBI, and other Federal agencies" to support the establishment and sustainment of baseline capabilities at state and local fusion centers. As of September 30, 2009, that plan has not yet been approved and signed by DHS, the FBI and other involved agencies.

(a) What is the current status of this plan? What are the remaining impediments to its approval? When do you expect that it will be approved?

(b) In a presentation made at the National Fusion Center Conference in March 2009, DHS reported that the total annual spending on fusion centers was estimated at $221 million: $98 million from the federal government and $123 million from state and local governments. What is the Department's estimate for what total spending on fusion centers should be (in current dollars) at the point at which fusion centers have achieved the desired maturity level, consistent with the DHS/DOJ baseline capabilities for fusion centers?

Response:
(a) Efforts to develop a Federal Coordinated Support Plan for the state and local fusion centers began in 2006. At the same time, a number of concrete actions were undertaken for the purposes of ensuring that efforts by DHS and the FBI to deploy of personnel, information systems, training and other resources were well coordinated to include the establishment of an interagency fusion center coordination group. As a result, DOJ, FBI and DHS worked together to: deploy personnel to over 50 fusion centers across the nation; develop and provide technical assistance and training to state, local and tribal personnel; deploy of classified and unclassified information systems such as FBINet and HSDN; and implement the Reciprocal Security Construction Standard in November of 2008 which allows state and local fusion centers to build to one standard to house federal personnel and systems, with approval by the security personnel of either FBI or DHS recognized by the other. Coordination between those federal entities that either support or operationally work with fusion centers is now being handled by the recently established Fusion Center Management Group (FCMG). The FCMG is in the process of drafting a concept of operations for how federal support and interaction with state and major urban area fusion centers will be carried out.

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49640.084

Question#:	4
Topic:	plan
Hearing:	Eight Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

As it relates to funding, in the FY 2010 Homeland Security Grant Program Guidance (HSGP) encourages those State and Major Urban Area fusion centers to prioritize the allocation of HSGP grant funding to meet and maintain identified levels of analytic and other baseline capability, as outlined in the Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative's (Global) *Baseline Capabilities for State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers.*

Additionally, fusion centers are encouraged to assess their achievement of the baseline capabilities, so they may identify any resulting gaps. Requested HSGP grants funds should then be prioritized to target and address these gaps, and the results of this gap analysis should be included in investment justifications for any fusion center funding. All efforts should be made to address gaps that are identified by taking advantage of the service deliveries made available through the joint DHS and Department of Justice Fusion Center Training and Technical Assistance program. Furthermore, I have asked FEMA to work with officials from the Department of Justice examine long term funding needs for fusion centers and to begin developing a dedicated funding mechanism for fusion centers.

(b) In FY 2007 State and Urban Areas leveraged approximately $86 million of DHS grant funds (primarily HSGP) and in FY 2008 they leveraged approximately $54 million (data is still being reported on FY 2008 expenditures) in grant funding to support fusion center capabilities. These funds support designated State and major urban area fusion centers as they prioritized the allocation of grant funding to meet identified levels of baseline capabilities as outlined in Baseline Capabilities for State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers. These estimates represent the latest and most accurate data related to funding to support fusion centers based on a recent comprehensive review of the grant funding.

To better understand the levels of funding required to support state and urban area partners to achieve the Baseline Capabilities for State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers, the Office of the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment (PM-ISE), in collaboration with the Department and its interagency partners, recently piloted an assessment of fusion centers. The assessment measured progress and indentified gaps toward achievement of the baseline capabilities and will support fusion centers to identify where they may prioritize funds to address any identified gaps. The Department will leverage the methodology developed by the PM-ISE and plans to launch this assessment nationally in the coming months and based on this data, the Department will be better able to understand the levels of funding required to achieve and maintain the identified levels of baseline capabilities as outlined in *Baseline Capabilities for State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers.* While there is no current timeline to determine the total funding requirements, this will be one of the JFC-PMO's first considerations.

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Question#:	5
Topic:	NCTC
Hearing:	Eight Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Question: In your testimony you note that I&A is "focusing on strengthening its analysis in several areas where its expertise is most needed" and state that "(t)wo of these areas are violent radicalization and domestic terrorism."

With respect to analysis of violent radicalization, you go on to note that "I&A is realigning to collaborate with NCTC and other federal agencies for substantive reporting on violent radicalization in order to provide law enforcement with an accurate and comprehensive view of the threat."

(a) What does "realign" mean in this context? Is I&A increasing, decreasing, or holding steady its level of effort on analysis related to violent radicalization?

(b) Under such a realignment, what are the distinct analytic roles of NCTC and DHS? Is there a formal agreement between NCTC and DHS that clarifies these roles?

With respect to analysis of domestic terrorism, you state that "I&A will work with the FBI and other federal law enforcement partners to identify analysis and other reporting that could be relevant to our state, local and tribal law enforcement partners."

(c) Is I&A increasing, decreasing, or holding steady its level of effort on analysis related to domestic terrorism?

(d) Under this plan, will I&A no longer be creating its own analytic products on domestic terrorism?

(e) Previous unclassified I&A analysis of domestic terrorism was focused on "general analysis on domestic extremist groups and individuals and their radical ideologies, tactics, capabilities, activities, and emerging trends." Under this new plan, how will DHS ensure that analysis of domestic terrorism within the intelligence and law enforcement communities addresses these requirements?

Response:

a) I&A realigned the analytic element with chief responsibility for studying and reporting violent extremism from the Homeland Environment Threat Analysis Division (HETA) to the Domestic Threat Analysis Division (DTAD). The realignment did not change I&A's level of effort against this issue, but assigned analytic responsibilities to DTAD, the analytic division with primary

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49640.086

Question#:	5
Topic:	NCTC
Hearing:	Eight Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

responsibility within I&A to report potentially emergent threats to, State, local, and tribal government agencies and private sector authorities. DTAD studies and analyzes threats to critical infrastructure and key resources; the division also reviews reports to State, local, and tribal security partners regarding tactics and tradecraft used in overseas attacks. I&A has centralized management and improved coordination of our analytic efforts focused on domestic terrorism and related threats by consolidating these efforts under one division.

b) DHS/I&A analysts in conjunction with our NCTC and FBI colleagues study individual and organizational violent radicalization movements. While there is no formal agreement, its widely accepted among our IC colleagues that DHS I&A is responsible for preparing intelligence assessments—to include those which address violent extremist organizations—for our state, local, and tribal partners. We prepare these assessments in close coordination and consultation with our IC partners with many reports joint seal.

   DHS/I&A works closely with our state, local, and tribal partners and law enforcement counterparts to gain insights on extremism and violent radicalization in their jurisdictions and publish a variety of intelligence products that fuse national-level with state and local information to create a comprehensive picture of violent radicalization locally, regionally, and nationwide.

   DHS I&A also works closely at the interagency level—with the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of State, and Department of Justice—to examine violent radicalization pertaining to individual radical actors as well as groups

c) Same as above.

d) DHS/I&A analysts have and will continue to produce its own products such as the series of Homeland Security Reference Aids (HSRAs) which are intended for state and local partners and serve as primers on various violent extremist groups.

   DHS I&A also produces joint analytical products with State and Local Fusion Centers (SLFCs), which helps educate partners and fill information gaps at the federal, state and local levels, and in many cases, helps to drive further collection.

e) DHS I&A will produce where possible joint analytical products with State and Local Fusion Centers (SLFCs), which will fill their information gaps and requirements.

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Question#:	6
Topic:	domestic terrorism
Hearing:	Eight Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Question: You note in your testimony that the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis is "reorganizing a number of functions previously dispersed throughout the Office" and establishing a new Plans, Policy and Performance Management (PPPM) office, responsible for "developing and unifying applicable strategies, plans and policies for I&A."

(a) Which office or offices within I&A were responsible for these "dispersed" functions previously?

(b) Who is heading this office? How many staff does it have now, and how many is it planned to have at the end of FY 2010?

(c) Where does this office fit within the organization chart for the Office of Intelligence and Analysis?

Response:

a) This new structure will bring together functions previously resident in all three of the current office alignment: the Intelligence Directorate (futures planning); the Mission Integration Directorate (policy development and information sharing); and the Chief of Staff function (program development and performance management). It will also increase the level of effort directed at tasks such as performance management, strategic planning, operational planning, and management of the DHS Intelligence Enterprise (i.e. intelligence activities across all components).

b) This directorate will be headed by Mr. Todd Rosenblum. The new structure will bring together 50 government and 50 contractors from the existing functions. Through realignment of existing vacancies throughout I&A, and contractor conversion and reductions in FY 2010, we plan to have approximately 60 government and 45 contractors.

c) This organization will report directly to the Under Secretary.

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Question#:	7
Topic:	MIOC
Hearing:	Eight Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Carl Levin
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Question: The Michigan Intelligence Operations Center for Homeland Security (MIOC) was established in 2007. Currently there are approximately 50 personnel assigned to the MIOC from the Michigan State Police, Michigan National Guard, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Homeland Security, Michigan State University Police, Michigan Department of Corrections, Alcohol Tobacco Firearms, United States Coast Guard, and Transportation Security Administration. Currently, fusion centers such as the MIOC, are competing with many other state and local agencies for homeland security dollars. It does not appear that there is a dedicated funding source that goes directly from the Department of Homeland Security to the individual fusion centers. For example, long-term sustainability for the MIOC requires maintenance costs of $1 to $2 million a year. As it currently stands, due to a reduced tax revenue stream, Michigan will be unable to continue to pick up the cost of maintaining its fusion center.

In your testimony, you stated that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) can steer discretionary funding to the Fusion Centers.

(a) What specific funding source are you referring to?

(b) Would those funds go directly from the Department of Homeland Security to the individual fusion centers?

(c) Do you have authority to dedicate a certain amount of funding to the fusion centers?

(d) Do any federal intelligence agencies or law enforcement agencies outside of DHS contribute to the funding of these fusion centers? Has the Executive Branch considered drawing funds from more than one agency to fund the fusion centers?

Response:

a) Fusion centers are owned and operated by the States. To that end, the Department of Homeland Security does not provide direct funding to individual fusion centers. However, the Department has indentified fusion centers as a priority initiative in the HSGP grant guidance, which provides much funding leveraged by fusion centers. Additionally, it should be noted that HSGP funds are not distributed or provided directly to the fusion centers. Rather, they are distributed to respective State Administrative Agencies (SAAs) and Urban Area Working Groups (UAWGs), who – in accordance with their respective homeland security strategies and HSGP

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Question#:	7
Topic:	MIOC
Hearing:	Eight Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Carl Levin
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

investment justifications – may choose to allocate and distribute funds in support of fusion center initiatives. It would be appropriate to confer with the Department of Defense's Homeland Defense and America's Security Affairs (HD&ASA). DHS is unaware of National Guard personnel involvement in the Michigan Fusion Center's law enforcement or counterterrorism functions, and they do not operate under the boundaries of DoD.

b) As noted in response to (a), HSGP funds are not distributed or provided directly to the fusion centers. Rather, they are distributed to respective State Administrative Agencies (SAAs) and Urban Area Working Groups (UAWGs), who – in accordance with their respective homeland security strategies and HSGP investment justifications – may choose to allocate and distribute funds in support of fusion center initiatives.

c) As the fusion centers are owned and operated by the States, the Federal government does not currently dedicate specific funding directly to the fusion centers. Additionally, at the state level, the allocation of grant funds to support fusion center related initiatives is decided and directed by the respective State Administrative Agencies (SAAs) and Urban Area Working Groups (UAWGs) in accordance with their respective homeland security strategies and HSGP investment justifications.

d) Federal intelligence and law enforcement agencies indirectly contribute to the funding of fusion centers through detailing personnel, supporting infrastructure needs, and providing access to valuable intelligence and law enforcement resources. Additionally, DOJ BJA and COPS provide grant funds to support law enforcement activities, and in some cases these resource may be leveraged directly or indirectly by fusion centers.

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Question#:	8
Topic:	demonstration projects
Hearing:	Eight Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Carl Levin
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Question: Section 302 of the Improving America's Security Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-53) establishes at least six interoperability demonstration projects (3 on the northern border, and 3 on the southern border) to facilitate interoperable communications across national borders expeditiously and help ensure that emergency responders can communicate with each other in the event of a disaster.

What is the status of these demonstration projects at the Department of Homeland Security?

Response: The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) will administer the Border Interoperability Demonstration Project (BIDP) as a competitive grant program to facilitate emergency communications along and across the U.S. border. The program will identify innovative solutions to improve interoperable emergency communications and generate lessons learned.

The BIDP Funding Opportunity Announcement, the official project guidance and application kit for eligible applicants, is currently under internal Departmental review. Final approval is anticipated later this calendar year, after which the Funding Opportunity Announcement will be publicly released and applications may be submitted.

Prior to the BIDP Funding Opportunity Announcement release, OEC issued an announcement of the future funding opportunity on October 14, 2009, as part of targeted outreach to eligible border States and communities. The goal of the announcement is to raise awareness for BIDP and encourage eligible applicants to begin collaborating with partners and planning proposals.

As required by the legislation, DHS has coordinated with the Federal Communications Commission, Department of Commerce, and other appropriate entities.

Question: Have the sites been selected?

Response: Site selection will occur at the conclusion of the competitive application process. The House and Senate Appropriations Committee will receive three days' advance notification of final BIDP awards, pursuant to Section 507 of the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009 (Public Law 110-329).

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Question#:	8
Topic:	demonstration projects
Hearing:	Eight Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Carl Levin
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Question: What are the criteria used to select the sites?

Response: OEC will conduct a competitive application process to select and enter into cooperative agreements with a minimum of six border communities (at least three on the southern border and three on the northern border). Evaluators will consider the effectiveness of the solution, applicability to other communities, and use of existing resources, management plans, and budgets. OEC will prioritize proposals that demonstrate:

- Innovation;
- Alignment to Statewide Communication Interoperability Plans (SCIP);
- Impact on cross border interoperable communications;
- Stakeholder involvement across local, tribal, State, Federal, and international entities; and
- A comprehensive approach to emergency communications.

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U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

January 22, 2010

The Honorable Joseph I. Lieberman
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman,

Please find enclosed responses to questions arising from the September 30, 2009 appearance before the Committee of Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Robert S. Mueller, at a hearing entitled, "Eight Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland."

We hope that this information is helpful to the Committee. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we may be of further assistance. The Office of Management and Budget has advised us that, from the perspective of the Administration's Program, there is no objection to the submission of this letter.

Sincerely,

Ronald Weich
Assistant Attorney General

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Minority Member

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Responses of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to Questions for the Record Arising from the September 30, 2009, Hearing Before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Regarding "Eight Years After 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland"

Questions Posed by Chairman Lieberman

1. At the hearing you and Secretary Napolitano both spoke of the need to provide state and local law enforcement agencies with additional incentives for them to participate actively in Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs) and fusion centers, given the current budgetary challenges facing states and localities.

a. What incentives currently exist for state and local law enforcement agencies to participate in Joint Terrorism Task Forces?

Response:

The FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) base funding is approximately $23 million. This funds the operations of all JTTFs, nationwide, by providing state and local JTTF members with the resources and tools they need to participate in the JTTFs, including vehicles, communication equipment, computers, and office space, equipment, and furniture. This funding also allows the FBI to reimburse state and local law enforcement agencies for a certain amount of the overtime worked by full-time JTTF members. FBI appropriations for fiscal year 2010 permit the reimbursement of overtime up to an annual maximum of $16,903.25 per officer, which allows compensation for an average of two hours of overtime, per work day, for each officer.

b. Have you seen evidence of states or cities withdrawing personnel from Joint Terrorism Task Forces for budgetary reasons since the start of the recession in December 2007? If so, please provide data or other relevant evidence.

These responses are current as of 11/19/09

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Response:

While state and local governments had been increasing their participation in the JTTFs fairly steadily since 2001, this increase has leveled off since 2007, as indicated below.

Year	# of JTTFs	# of Task Force Officers
2001	35	138
2002	66	143
2003	84	600
2004	100	805
2005	101	900
2006	101	907
2007	102	963
2008	106	971
2009	106	989

While the FBI is not able to quantify the number of agencies or individual task force officers (TFOs) withdrawing from or declining to join JTTFs as a result of current budget shortfalls, we do have anecdotal evidence that some of the decline is a result of the current economic downturn. For example, in one case a TFO had been assigned to a JTTF in a medium-sized FBI field office since 2003, receiving FBI undercover certification in 2006. Although this TFO had been an extremely valuable asset in the FBI's counterterrorism effort, his police department recently recalled him due to budget shortfalls. The Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's field office personally requested that the TFO be allowed to remain on the JTTF, but was informed that the police department had a critical staffing need that required the TFO's return.

c. What new or additional incentives for participation in Joint Terrorism Task Forces do you believe could counter the budget challenges that states and localities are facing?

Response:

Given the persistent and growing threat posed by international terrorists, the Federal government's counterterrorism efforts require the continued and enhanced

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These responses are current as of 11/19/09

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presence of diverse law enforcement and intelligence skills and backgrounds on the JTTFs. Although the resources needed to maintain a vital JTTF program are substantial, this program has resulted in improvements in interagency coordination, cooperation, and intelligence sharing. The JTTFs act as excellent "force multipliers," but they do consume state and local resources that are particularly critical during this economic downturn.

2. The 2008 Annual Report of the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment, released in June 2008, noted that a "Federal Coordinated Support Plan is under development by DHS, FBI, and other Federal agencies" to support the establishment and sustainment of baseline capabilities at state and local fusion centers. As of September 30, 2009, that plan had not yet been approved and signed by DHS, the FBI and other involved agencies. What is the current status of this plan? What are the remaining impediments to its approval? When do you expect that it will be approved?

Response:

Efforts by the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to develop the Federal Coordinated Support Plan for state and local fusion centers began in 2006, with the latest draft approved by the FBI's Office of the General Counsel in the summer of 2009. While the FBI, DHS, and other Federal partners continue to engage on these issues, most of the topics that were originally to be addressed through the development of this broad support plan have since been addressed by other, more narrow guidelines and agreements. For instance, both the *Fusion Center Guidelines* and the *Baseline Capabilities for State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers* were developed and promulgated by the Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative, in collaboration with DOJ and DHS, providing guidance on the same general baseline capabilities proposed in the draft consolidated plan. These documents have been accepted and implemented by both the Criminal Intelligence Coordinating Council and the National Fusion Center Association, the primary associations providing guidance to the state and local fusion centers. In November 2008 the FBI and DHS also both approved and implemented a Reciprocal Security Construction Standard, which allows state and local fusion centers to build to one standard to house Federal personnel and systems with the approval of security personnel of either the FBI or DHS.

The general responsibility for developing and improving the fusion centers has been assumed by the recently established Fusion Center Management Group.

These responses are current as of 11/19/09

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Sustainment issues are best overseen and managed by DHS, which has primary responsibility for supporting state and local partners with grant funding through the Homeland Security Grant Program. While the FBI does serve as a link between the fusion centers and the U.S. Intelligence Community, direct FBI support to the individual fusion centers is limited primarily to the integration of the FBI's own personnel and information systems into the fusion centers.

3. In Secretary Napolitano's testimony, she discusses the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis's role with respect to analysis of domestic terrorism and notes that DHS "will work with the FBI and other federal law enforcement partners to identify analysis and other reporting that could be relevant to our state, local and tribal law enforcement partners." How does this shift affect the FBI's analytic role with respect to domestic terrorism, and the types of intelligence products that it develops on this issue?

Response:

This DHS role will not affect the FBI's analytic role with respect to terrorism or the development of intelligence products. Both as dictated by statute and as a consequence of our designated role as the lead investigative agency for terrorism investigations, the FBI shares relevant terrorism information with our Federal intelligence and law enforcement partners. The FBI and DHS collaborate to produce joint FBI-DHS intelligence bulletins, assessments, and other advisories and warnings, which are then shared with law enforcement agencies, the U.S. Intelligence Community, the private sector, the Congress, and the American people, as appropriate.

These responses are current as of 11/19/09

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Hearing Date: 30 September 2009
Committee: SHSGAC
Member: Senator Lieberman
Witness: Michael E. Leiter
Question: 1

Question 1: (U) In Secretary Napolitano's testimony she notes that "I&A is realigning to collaborate with NCTC and other federal agencies for substantive reporting on violent radicalization in order to provide law enforcement with an accurate and comprehensive view of the threat."

How does this realignment impact of affect NCTC's role with respect to analysis on violent radicalization? What are the distinct analytic roles of NCTC and DHS in this area, and is there a formal agreement between NCTC and DHS that clarifies these roles.

Answer: (U) NCTC Directorate of Intelligence (DI) performs all-source analysis and produces finished intelligence on the topic of violent radicalization. NCTC DI regularly collaborates with other IC organizations to provide comprehensive answers to policymakers on this topic. NCTC has no formal agreement with DHS I&A where NCTC would burden share any aspect of analysis. NCTC DI and DHS I&A continue to operate as independent analytic units. As a joint agency, NCTC analysts are required to coordinate on the drafts of their analysis with IC colleagues including DHS I&A. NCTC DI analysis is regularly shared with external counterparts--including DHS--for comment to ensure that the IC is in general agreement with the substance of the intelligence.

(U) Coordination is a critically important process for NCTC analysts. NCTC analysts are required to coordinate their NCTC Special Analysis Reports (NSARs) and NCTC Spotlights with relevant analysts in NCTC, and to coordinate their PDB and NTB pieces with relevant analysts across the community. The coordination process exists to ensure that analysts and agencies with equities or expertise bearing on a particular subject have an opportunity to review and comment on drafts. The coordination process is not designed to force agreement on all subjects, but to determine where NCTC and other agencies disagree on important issues. NCTC flags areas of debate within the community, and offers community analysts the opportunity to draft a dissent on important issues and publish those dissents in NCTC products.

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Hearing Date: 30 September 2009
Committee: SHSGAC
Member: Senator Lieberman
Witness: Michael E. Leiter
Question: 2

Question 2: (U) In your testimony you reference a recent exercise hosted by NCTC that "tested the federal response" to a Mumbai-style attack in an urban environment." As you may know, this Committee held two hearings in January of this year looking at lessons learned from the Mumbai attacks. What are the key "lessons learned" that were taken away from the exercise?

Answer: (U) In early 2009, the National Counterterrorism Center's Interagency Task Force hosted a Capabilities Review tabletop exercise to test the federal response to a Mumbai-style attack in a U.S. urban environment. In concert with the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, NCTC has promulgated the lessons learned to law enforcement and homeland security forums throughout the country in an effort to help inform their own response planning. Three key lessons were identified:

a. (U) **Highly specialized national response assets have limited capacity to sustain advanced deployment during a prolonged threat.** Select federal assets have limited availability due to the need to hold assets in reserve in the event of other geographically separate attacks. The FBI is currently increasing its internal response capacity; expanding logistical support; and streamlining interagency airlift coordination procedures.
b. (U) **Intelligence classification and handling restrictions remain a continuing challenge to federal information sharing efforts with state, local, tribal, and private sector authorities.** Actionable intelligence is an indispensable element to deter or disrupt a potential threat. The National Counterterrorism Center's Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group continuously reviews selected threat information for downgrading or declassification for dissemination to state and local authorities. This remains an emphasis item for all NCTC Interagency Task Force exercises.
c. (U) **Social media presents a problem of both operational security as well as the rapid dissemination of inaccurate or false information.** The 24-hour news cycle, as well as social media outlets such as YouTube and Twitter, can be easily exploited by attackers. This presents a persistent problem for law enforcement or other first responders because their movements may be either intentionally or inadvertently disclosed to the attackers via television, internet or other means. First responders should be mindful of, and whenever possible incorporate this potential vulnerability into their planning efforts, to minimize its impact. To prevent the spread of inaccurate or false information, the Department of Homeland Security has developed a domestic communications response plan to any incident.

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