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UNDERSTANDING THE THREAT TO THE HOMELAND FROM AQAP

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BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COUNTERTERRORISM AND INTELLIGENCE

OF THE

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UNDERSTANDING THE THREAT TO THE HOMELAND FROM AQAP

Wednesday, September 18, 2013

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COUNTERTERRORISM AND INTELLIGENCE,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:06 p.m., in Room 311, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Peter T. King [Chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives King, Higgins, and Keating.

Mr. KING. Good afternoon. The Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence will come to order.

The subcommittee is meeting today to hear testimony examining the threat to the homeland from al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, AQAP. I now recognize myself for an opening statement.

At the onset of today's hearing I want to express sincere sympathies to the families, friends, and coworkers of the 12 victims and 8 people who were wounded in the shooting at the Washington Navy Yard on Monday. Investigations are on-going into both the shooter and how he was able to gain access to a sensitive military facility, and I fully support those efforts.

On Dec. 7, 2011, I held a joint hearing with Senator Lieberman on the threat to military personnel and facilities within the United States. While there is no evidence currently or any reason to believe that the tragic events of Sept. 16 were inspired by ideology, the reality is that our military personnel are a target and more needs to be done to address security in its ranks and at military facilities.

Also this month we recognize the 12th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. In the past 12 years Islamist terrorists have carried out additional attacks, including the murder of two U.S. Army soldiers at a Little Rock recruiting center on June 1, 2009, the murder of 13 people and 42 others being injured at a deployment center at Fort Hood on November 5, 2009, and the attack during the Boston Marathon killing 3 people and injuring approximately 260 people on April 15, 2013.

We have been lucky that not all of these attempts resulted in the loss of innocent lives. There was the unsuccessful detonation of an explosive device on Flight 253 on Christmas day 2009, the attempt to detonate a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device in Times Square on May 1, 2010, the discovery of two bombs hidden in printer cartridges on U.S.-bound cargo planes on October 29, 2010, a

disrupted plot to smuggle an explosive device onto an airline in May 2012, and numerous other plots that have been disruptive.

AQAP, the Yemen-based al-Qaeda affiliate, has been linked to most of these either directly or indirectly through inspiring homegrown radicals. Most recently the U.S. Government closed 22 embassies, mainly in the Middle East and North Africa, for weeks due to security concerns relating to a threat from AQAP.

As a result, the U.S. embassy in Yemen remained closed for 2 weeks. The closure of any U.S. diplomatic facility for even 1 day, let alone 22, is a decision that is not made lightly. This incident should remind all of us what a danger AQAP poses.

Many reports reveal that intercepted electronic conversations between AQAP and al-Qaeda leaders disclose that the plans for a major attack during a specific time frame, but not details on targets and locations for the attack. While additional counterterrorism pressure seems to have disrupted the attack in the short term, the situation is a reminder that we must remain vigilant, and that al-Qaeda and its affiliates remain intent on carrying out an attack against U.S. interests and especially against the homeland.

In the past 12 years, under both the Bush and Obama administrations, we have made great efforts to track down and remove senior al-Qaeda leaders, including al-Awlaki, Samir Khan, and Said al-Shihiri within AQAP, and of course Osama bin Laden. Unfortunately, however, in many ways the al-Qaeda network is stronger today than it was before 9/11 because it has metastasized its footholds in so many locations.

As the White House and Congress continue to grapple over the situation in Syria, it is vital that we do not lose sight of the threat posed by AQAP and other al-Qaeda affiliates. That is why I look forward to today's hearing from the witnesses regarding the ongoing threat to the U.S. homeland from AQAP, including an evaluation of the current intent and capability. Also to review U.S. counterterrorism policy towards the group and the lessons learned from the August embassy closures.

With that I now yield to the distinguished Ranking Member of the subcommittee, Mr. Higgins from New York.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you for holding this hearing. I would also like to thank the witnesses for their testimony.

According to the director of national intelligence al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is the greatest immediate threat from a terrorist group in the United States. Even though the group has not been successful in recent years in its plots to attack the United States, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's reach and ability expose our country and our homeland to vulnerabilities that make it an extremely dangerous organization.

The United States has attempted to make strides to diminish al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's terror capabilities, but the threat from this organization remains.

In 2011 the United States through a drone strike killed Anwar al-Awlaki, who was once considered the most dangerous man in the world. Without al-Awlaki, the English-speaking American who recruited people to exploit Islam and perform terrorist acts, it was

thought al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's ability to strike the United States would be weakened.

However, many in the intelligence community do not believe that al-Awlaki's death had a significant impact and the National Counterterrorism Center Director Matthew Olsen has stated that al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has the ability to attack the United States with little or no warning. Aside from al-Awlaki, more than 35 senior leaders of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula have been killed by drone strikes. Yet the organization still continues to be a threat to the United States.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula moves fast and recognizes targets and opportunities for recruitment and exposure. For example, in the wake of the Boston Marathon bombing, the al-Qaeda recently dedicated an issue of its magazine *Inspire* to the Boston bombings. It praised the bombers and encouraged others to emulate the attack. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is also not afraid to attack the United States where it can, be it on the United States soil or our interests throughout the world.

We saw this summer when the intelligence community intercepted a credible threat that al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula was planning an attack on the United States facilities in the Middle East and North Africa. This threat was taken very seriously, was considered imminent. The threat prompted the United States and European countries to close their embassies in the Middle East and North Africa for days.

It is astonishing that even though the United States has eliminated much of their senior leadership and one of its most effective recruiters, the group can still have capability to conduct attacks against the United States. It also recognizes the economic devastation terrorist acts can bring.

A terrorist attack in the Buffalo/Niagara Region, which was the busiest passenger border crossing with Canada and the second-busiest for cargo crossing, would be devastating. However, the Department of Homeland Security does not recognize the Buffalo/Niagara Region as a high-risk area. Hence, local law enforcement in the Buffalo/Niagara Region are left without the resources that could possibly be needed if an attack from this dangerous organization were to occur.

As we saw with the Boston Marathon bombings, the role of first responders is invaluable to the response. With this terrorist group consistently adapting to and seemingly lying in wait for an exposure to our vulnerabilities, this Nation should be prepared to prevent attacks in all areas and on all fronts.

I thank the Chairman for holding this important hearing. I look forward to the testimony of our expert witnesses.

[The statement of Ranking Member Higgins follows:]

STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER BRIAN HIGGINS

SEPTEMBER 18, 2013

I would like to thank the Chairman for holding this important hearing this afternoon.

I would also like to thank the witnesses for their testimony.

According to the director of national intelligence, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is the greatest immediate threat from a terrorist group to the United States. Even though the group has not been successful in recent years at its plots to attack

the United States, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's reach and ability to expose U.S. homeland security vulnerabilities makes it an extremely dangerous organization. The United States has attempted to make strides to diminish al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's terror capabilities, but the threat from this organization remains.

In 2011, the United States, through a drone strike, killed Anwar al-Awlaki who was once considered the most dangerous man in the world. Without al-Awlaki, an English-speaking American who recruited people to exploit Islam and perform terrorist acts, it was thought al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's ability to strike the United States would be weakened. However, many in the intelligence community do not believe that al-Awlaki's death had a significant impact and National Counterterrorism Center Director Matthew Olsen has stated that al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula still has the ability to attack the United States with little or no warning. Aside from al-Awlaki, more than 35 senior leaders of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula have been killed by drone strikes, yet the organization still continues to be a threat to the United States.

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It is astonishing that even though the United States has eliminated much of their senior leadership and one of its most effective recruiters, the group can still have the capability to conduct attacks against the United States. It also recognizes the economic devastation terrorist acts can bring. A terrorist attack in the Buffalo/Niagara region, which has the busiest passenger border crossing with Canada and second-busiest cargo crossing would be devastating. However, the Department of Homeland Security does not recognize the Buffalo/Niagara region as a high-risk area. Hence, local law enforcement in the Buffalo/Niagara region are left without the resources that could possibly be needed if an attack from this dangerous organization were to occur.

As we saw with the Boston Marathon bombings, the role of first responders is invaluable to the response. With this terrorist group constantly adapting to and seemingly lying in wait for an exposure to our vulnerabilities, this Nation should be prepared to prevent attacks in all areas and on all fronts.

Thank you and thank you Mr. King for holding this important hearing.

Mr. KING. I thank the Ranking Member.

Just to get one bit of business out of the way, it is apparent for today's hearing we use information provided by additional security experts.

I ask unanimous consent to include in the hearing record one testimony for the record on the threat posed by AQAP written by Robin Simcox with the Henry Jackson Society, and excerpts on the threat from AQAP from September 2013 report released by the Bipartisan Policy Center. Additionally I ask unanimous consent to include a letter and report from the Jewish Federation of North America regarding the continued terrorist threats to the Jewish community.

Without objection these items will be included in the record.

[The information follows:]

STATEMENT OF ROBIN SIMCOX, RESEARCH FELLOW, THE HENRY JACKSON SOCIETY

The threat to the U.S. homeland from al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) is real, sustained, and likely to be enduring. AQAP is today the most aggressive branch of al-Qaeda, and a severe security threat within Yemen.

However, the threat from the group is not restricted to its own borders. It is also the al-Qaeda group most capable of carrying out an attack against not only the U.S. homeland, but the Western homeland more broadly.

AQAP's creation was announced in January 2009, following a merger between al-Qaeda's Yemeni and Saudi branches. Its leadership is largely made up of experienced and dedicated jihadist fighters whose connections to al-Qaeda predate 9/11.

The group's emir, Nasir al-Wahayshi, is a former secretary to Osama bin Laden who connected with al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in the 1990s. Earlier this year, he was promoted to the role of al-Qaeda's "general manager", a sign of his increased influence within the group. The group's former deputy emir—the recently deceased Said al-Shehri—also fought in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, AQAP's military chief, Qasim al-Raymi, attended al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan in the 1990s, as did Ibrahim al-Rubaish, a senior AQAP theologian.

The explosives expert within the group is a Saudi named Ibrahim al-Asiri, although he has now likely passed his expertise on to others. It was he who constructed the bomb that AQAP recruit Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab had concealed in his underwear and unsuccessfully attempted to detonate on a flight headed to Detroit, Michigan, on Christmas day of 2009.

Al-Asiri was also likely involved in the construction of bombs discovered in U.S.-bound cargo planes on 29 October 2010, that were discovered during stopovers in the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom; as well as the second underwear bomb plot, that was thwarted in April 2012 when an AQAP plan to bomb a flight headed to the United States was thwarted by a Saudi agent that infiltrated the group.

One man partially responsible for AQAP's focus on the West was the American-born cleric, Anwar al-Awlaki. For example, it was he who, while in Yemen, assessed Abdulmutallab's dedication to jihad; and his instructions or sermons have inspired a host of others to attempt terrorist attacks within the West itself.

One of these attacks led to a tragic loss of life, when Major Nidal Hasan, a U.S.-born army Major shot and killed 13 people in November 2009 at Fort Hood army base in Killeen, Texas. Hasan and al-Awlaki were in e-mail contact prior to the attack.

There are numerous other examples of al-Awlaki's influence. Rajib Karim, a British Bangladeshi, was in e-mail contact with al-Awlaki in January and February 2010. Karim worked for British Airways and discussed with al-Awlaki how his access to aviation information could facilitate a terrorist attack. Karim has since been jailed for 30 years.

Others were inspired to act by al-Awlaki's rhetoric, such as Faisal Shahzad, who planted a bomb in New York's Times Square on 1 May 2010. He has now been sentenced to life in jail.

Another who had been persuaded to act—in part because of al-Awlaki's on-line sermons—was Roshonara Choudhry, who was convicted for attempting to murder Labour Member of Parliament Stephen Timms at his constituency surgery in London on 14 May 2010.

Al-Awlaki was killed in a U.S. drone strike in al-Jawf, on 30 September 2011. However, the dissemination of his rhetoric—as well as the appeal to Western audiences that *Inspire,* AQAP's English-language magazine, has—means that the threat to the Western homeland by no means ends with his death.

However, the group's ambitions do not begin and end with attacks against the United States. AQAP regards itself as an alternative government to that in Sana'a. Therefore, it has attempted to gain, and then control, territory within Yemen.

Between March 2011 and June 2012, it controlled towns in the provinces of Abyan and Shabwa in southern Yemen, subsequently declaring them Islamic "emirates".

Aware of al-Qaeda's divisive reputation, AQAP introduced themselves to locals in Yemen as members of Ansar al-Sharia. They empowered local jihadists and rebranded their movement with a positive message that they could restore peace and justice to the area, while also providing key services. They achieved some success with this, providing food, water, and electricity. This only served to highlight the shortcomings of the government in Sana'a, who proved incapable of providing such basics for the population it purports to govern.

A June 2012 government offensive removed AQAP control from its southern "emirates". However, by mid-2013, AQAP had once again begun to control territory: This time, in Hadramout, eastern Yemen.

While the government is capable of expelling the group from these areas militarily, this has led to AQAP dispersing its presence even more widely throughout Yemen. It now largely focuses on "hit-and-run" attacks against the government's

military and counterterrorism officials, often employing tactics as crude as "drive-by" motorcycle shootings.

It is vital to understand that the threat to the West from AQAP is on-going. In August 2013, it was (in part) a response to intercepted communications between Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaeda's emir, and Nasir al-Wahayshi, that led to the U.S. Government shutting down its embassies across the Middle East and North Africa and issuing a global travel warning to its citizens. Al-Zawahiri and al-Wahayshi were believed to be discussing a large plot against Western targets and government infrastructure in Yemen.

The U.S. Government response must be an all-encompassing policy that can address both terrorism issues as well as problems specific to Yemen that may be facilitating the group's growth.

Attempts must be stepped up to aid the development of Yemen's economy and its basic infrastructure, as well as encourage the creation of a genuinely representative and democratic government. This should be backed up by a limited number of drone strikes against AQAP's key leaders. These strikes may be controversial within Yemen, but remain vital in disrupting AQAP's activities. The strikes should be carried out alongside the stepped-up counterterrorism training to Yemeni government forces.

While America may take the lead on these issues, the entire effort will require support from key partner nations across the Middle East, Africa, and Europe if it is to be successful.

Ultimately, the security of all those threatened by AQAP will be greatly enhanced if a cohesive, co-ordinated policy—that addresses both security and development issues—is formulated.

EXCERPT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY HON. PETER T. KING

JIHADIST TERRORISM: A THREAT ASSESSMENT

A Report From the Bipartisan Policy Center, September 2013

Chapter 3: The International Threat

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2. AL-QAEDA IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

Threat Assessment

Because AQAP remains interested in launching attacks against the West, and its chief bomb-maker, Ibrahim al-Asiri, remains at large, senior American counterterrorism and defense officials, including Director of National Intelligence James Clapper and former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, have assessed that al-Qaeda's affiliate in Yemen poses the greatest immediate threat from a jihadist group to the United States.[74] In testimony before the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in January, Clapper said that while AQAP is under attack in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, "the group continues to adjust its tactics, techniques and procedures for targeting the West."[75] However, AQAP has not attacked a U.S. target since its October 2010 attempt to plant bombs hidden in printer cartridges on cargo planes destined for the United States. And while the organization gained significant territory in Yemen as it exploited the popular uprising in the country in 2011, it also lost these gains within about a year.

Nonetheless, AQAP presents a lesson of how terrorist groups in the 21st century can become more lethal and shift their focus abroad more quickly than their 20th-century counterparts. It took core al-Qaeda a full decade from its founding to launch its first significant international terrorist attack—the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. By comparison, it took AQAP less than nine months from its from its emergence out of the remnants of decimated al-Qaeda cells in Saudi Arabia in 2009 to launch its first transnational attack, the near-miss assassination of the senior Saudi prince responsible for counterterrorism, and less than a year to launch its first attack against the United States, another near-miss, but one that, on Christmas Day 2009, shook American confidence that the terrorist

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[74] Schmitt, Eric. "Intelligence Report Lists Iran and Cyberattacks as Leading Concerns." *The New York Times.* January 31, 2012. *http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/01/world/intelligence-chief-sees-al-qaeda-likely-to-continue-fragmenting.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.*

[75] Garamone, Jim. "Terror Threat Potent, But Dispersed, Intelligence Chief Says." American Forces Press Service. March 13, 2013. *http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=119522.*

threat to commercial aviation had receded. Had the AQAP suicide terrorist, a young Nigerian man recruited into the group by al-Awlaki been successful, nearly a decade's worth of successes in the war on al-Qaeda and its allies could have been reversed in a matter of minutes.

AQAP Activities Since 2009

In the last few years, while core al-Qaeda declined in Pakistan, AQAP strengthened in Yemen.[76] AQAP's core membership grew from approximately 300 members in 2009 to around 1,000 in 2012, as hundreds of tribesmen joined AQAP in the fight against the U.S.-backed Yemeni government.[77] Then-National Security Council spokesman Tommy Vietor stated in May 2012 that, "while AQAP has grown in strength . . . many of its supporters are tribal militants or part-time supporters who collaborate with AQAP for self-serving, personal interests rather than affinity with al-Qaeda's global ideology. The portion of hard-core, committed AQAP members is relatively small."[78]

In the summer of 2010, AQAP increased its attacks in Yemen, assassinating dozens of Yemeni security officials while simultaneously plotting to place printer cartridges containing explosives on U.S.-bound flights. The packages were intercepted on October 29 while en route to the United States due to a tip from Saudi intelligence.[79] AQAP also launched *Inspire* magazine in July 2010 and established the Arabic-language al-Madad News Agency in 2011.[80]

In March 2011, when Yemen's then-President Ali Abdullah Saleh sanctioned the killing of Arab Spring—inspired protesters in the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, his allies turned against him and a substantial portion of his army deserted.[81] Soldiers in the south, who hadn't been paid in weeks, abandoned their posts, leaving the area open for AQAP to move in.[82] Other troops returned to Sana'a to support the government there. The United States was forced to pull some Special Operations Forces out of Yemen, and counterterrorism training there slowed dramatically.[83] Fighters from Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Somalia are believed to have joined the insurgency, and in the spring of 2011, AQAP gained control of two Yemeni provinces and increased their presence in ten more.[84]

In a sign that AQAP may have learned from some of the mistakes other al-Qaeda affiliates have made in the past, it has provided some services to Yemeni citizens. It has also, on occasion, operated without using the al-Qaeda name, a brand that even bin Laden understood to be deeply tarnished. For instance, AQAP operates under the name "Ansar al-Sharia" when reaching out to Yemeni locals and aims to demonstrate its adherence to Islamic law.[85] According to Christopher Swift, a Georgetown University researcher who has done field work in Yemen, economic factors, rather than religious extremism, provide AQAP with influence among locals. Insurgents offer local men "the promise of a rifle, a car and a salary of $400 a month—a veritable fortune in a country where nearly half the population lives on less than $2 a day."[86]

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[76] Schmitt, Eric. "As Al-Qaeda Loses a Leader, Its Power Shifts From Pakistan." *The New York Times.* June 7, 2012. *http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/08/world/asia/al-qaeda-power-shifting-away-from-pakistan.html?_r=1&.*

[77] Johnsen, Gregory D. *The Last Refuge: Yemen, al-Qaeda, and America's War in Arabia.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013.

[78] Raghavan, Sudarsan. "In Yemen, U.S. Airstrikes Breed Anger, and Sympathy for al-Qaeda." *The Washington Post.* May 29, 2012. *http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-05-29/world/35456187_1_aqap-drone-strikes-qaeda.*

[79] Shane, Scott. "Qaeda Branch Aimed for Broad Damage at Low Cost." *The New York Times.* November 20, 2010. *http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/21/world/middleeast/21parcel.html.*

[80] "Counterterrorism 2013 Calendar: Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)." National Counterterrorism Center. *http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/aqap.html.*

[81] Stier, Eric. "In Yemen, top military commanders defect from Saleh regime." *Christian Science Monitor.* March 21, 2011. *http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2011/0321/In-Yemen-top-military-commanders-defect-from-Saleh-regime.*

[82] Johnsen, Gregory D. *The Last Refuge: Yemen, al-Qaeda, and America's War in Arabia.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013.

[83] Schmitt, Eric. "U.S. Teaming With New Yemen Government on Strategy to Combat Al-Qaeda." *The New York Times.* February 26, 2012. *http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/27/world/middleeast/us-teaming-with-yemens-new-government-to-combat-al-qaeda.html?_r=0.*

[84] Swift, Christopher. "To Defeat Al-Qaeda, Win in Yemen." *Bloomberg View.* June 21, 2012. *http://christopher-swift.com/publications/to-defeat-al-qaeda-win-in-yemen.*

[85] Swift, Christopher. "Arc of Convergence: AQAP, Ansar al-Shari'a and the Struggle for Yemen." *CTC Sentinel.* June 21, 2012. *http://christopher-swift.com/publications/arc-of-convergence-aqap-ansar-al-sharia-and-the-struggle-for-yemen.*

[86] Swift, Christopher. "To Defeat Al-Qaeda, Win in Yemen." *Bloomberg View.* June 21, 2012. *http://christopher-swift.com/publications/to-defeat-al-qaeda-win-in-yemen.*

AQAP has also given towns new wells, water, and food in exchange for the tribal elders' help in recruiting. In areas of the country with the most chaotic security environments, AQAP has used a combination of armed militias to gain control of territory, gifts of money, and weapons to prop up local sheikhs, and sharia courts to prosecute criminals and provide some semblance of law and order. "In doing so, the movement exhibits a pragmatic approach that has more in common with the Taliban's operations in Afghanistan than it does with Osama bin Laden's globalized, decentralized jihad," Swift says.[87]

In mid-2011, as the fight between the Yemeni government and armed opposition groups escalated, AQAP moved to seize more territory in southern Yemen, and the Yemeni government launched aggressive counter-assaults.[88] The United States also resumed its campaign of air and drone strikes, which had been halted the previous year. In February 2012, under pressure from the Obama administration, President Saleh signed an agreement to step down. Abd Rabu Mansur Hadi took over as president and subsequently gave the U.S. drone program unfettered access to targets in Yemen.[89]

With the broad permission granted by Yemen's new president, the United States greatly expanded its drone campaign in 2012 and began to train and equip the Yemeni military to better combat AQAP.[90] Since 2010, U.S. drone strikes in Yemen have killed at least 31 high-level al-Qaeda operatives, including al-Awlaki and Samir Khan, the AQAP operative believed to have been the driving force behind *Inspire* magazine.[91]

Al-Awlaki's death likely reduced the organization's ability to plan transnational attacks because he was a key operational planner.[92] The group has not attempted an actual attack on the West since the failed 2010 cartridge-bomb plot. (A 2012 AQAP bombing plot was, in actuality, controlled by Saudi intelligence, which had inserted an informer into the group.)

With his native English-speaking ability, al-Awlaki was also AQAP's chief recruiter of foreigners, particularly those with Western connections; the group's foreign recruitment has dried up since his death. However, even in death, his voice continues to resonate with militants in the West. The surviving Boston bombing suspect, for example, admitted to watching al-Awlaki's sermons on-line, though there is no evidence that the Boston bombers ever communicated with him.[93]

On July 17, 2013, AQAP confirmed the death of Said al-Shihri, the group's deputy commander, in a video posted to jihadist websites. Shihri, a Saudi and 6-year resident of the U.S. detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, had long been reported dead from wounds he received from a drone strike in late 2012. The statement said Shihri had indeed died in a U.S. drone strike and that "lax security measures during his telephone contacts enabled the enemy to identify and kill him," though it did not confirm the date of his death.[94]

Shihri's death is another blow to the organization, which as of mid-2013 is battered, though not defeated. In the past three years, as outlined above, more than 30 al-Qaeda leaders and other senior operatives in Yemen have been killed by U.S. drone strikes, according to a count by the New America Foundation.[95] AQAP's only remaining leaders appear to be its chief bomb-maker, Asiri; AQAP's leader and founder, Nasser al-Wuhayshi; and the man who delivered Shihri's eulogy, Ibrahim al-Rubaish, another former Guantanamo detainee.

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[87] Ibid.

[88] Johnsen, Gregory D. *The Last Refuge: Yemen, al-Qaeda, and America's War in Arabia.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013.

[89] Schmitt, Eric. "U.S. Teaming With New Yemen Government on Strategy to Combat Al-Qaeda." *The New York Times.* February 26, 2012. *http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/27/world/middleeast/us-teaming-with-yemens-new-government-to-combat-al-qaeda.html?_r=0.*

[90] Ibid.

[91] New America Foundation, National Security Studies Program. "U.S. Covert War in Yemen." Last updated June 9, 2013. *http://yemendrones.newamerica.net/.*

[92] Schmitt, Eric. "Intelligence Report Lists Iran and Cyberattacks as Leading Concerns." *The New York Times.* January 31, 2012. *http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/01/world/intelligence-chief-sees-al-qaeda-likely-to-continue-fragmenting.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.*

[93] Schmitt, Eric, Mark Mazzetti, Michael S. Schmidt, and Scott Shane. "Boston Plotter Said to Initially Target July 4 for Attack." *The New York Times.* May 2, 2013. *http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/03/us/Boston-bombing-suspects-planned-july-fourth-attack.html?-pagewanted=all&_r=0.*

[94] "Al-Qaeda Confirms Death of Yemen Leader in American Drone Strike." *Al-Akhbar English.* July 17, 2013. *http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/al-qaeda-confirms-death-yemen-leader-american-drone-strike.*

[95] New America Foundation, National Security Studies Program. "U.S. Covert War in Yemen." Last updated June 9, 2013. *http://yemendrones.newamerica.net/.*

In June 2012, AQAP elements withdrew from their southern Yemen strongholds when Yemeni military forces—with the support of local tribesmen and U.S. airstrikes—regained control of cities and towns in Abyan and Shabwah provinces.[96] They have since been reduced to carrying out smaller-scale, hit-and-run attacks; nothing close to the massive attack in May 2012, when an AQAP suicide bomber blew himself up at a military parade rehearsal in Sana'a, killing upward of 100 people, mostly soldiers, and injuring more than 200.[97]

Western Recruitment

AQAP has led global online radicalization efforts and has made Western recruitment to its cause a priority in its propaganda. This "lone wolf" strategy is spearheaded by AQAP's al-Malahem Media Foundation. Written in eloquent English and formatted like a U.S. tabloid, al-Malahem's *Inspire* magazine incites Western youth to join the jihad and carry out attacks within their own communities. According to the spring 2013 issue of *Inspire,* "Lone-Jihad is impossible to counter and stop, except when basic cooking ingredients and building material become illegal!"[98]

STATEMENT OF THE JEWISH FEDERATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

SEPTEMBER 17, 2013.

The Honorable PETER T. KING,
Chairman, Counterterrorism and Intelligence Subcommittee, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.

The Honorable BRIAN M. HIGGINS,
Ranking Member, Counterterrorism and Intelligence Subcommittee, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.

DEAR CHAIRMAN KING AND RANKING MEMBER HIGGINS: I write today on behalf of The Jewish Federations of North America to applaud you for scheduling tomorrow's hearing on the "Al-Qaeda Threat."

As you know last week, in marking the twelfth anniversary of 9/11, the leader of al-Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, issued a message to followers and adherents to undertake "lone-wolf" attacks in the United States. Provocative statements such as this are not new from al-Zawahiri. On multiple occasions, he has called upon al-Qaeda followers and sympathizers to attack Jewish interests in the United States and worldwide.

This focus on "soft" Jewish civilian targets is deeply engrained in al-Qaeda's method of operation. In February 2002, the Associated Press published an English translation of an al-Qaeda training manual smuggled out of Afghanistan that directed followers to attack Jewish organizations and institutions in every country Jews exist and to carry out the attacks in a manner designed to cause mass causalities.

There have been several deadly attacks and potentially deadly attempts targeting the Jewish community in the United States and abroad in the intervening years, as set forth in the attached risk compilation—from al-Qaeda to extremists across the ideological spectrum. At a February 15, 2012 hearing of the Homeland Security Committee, Chairman King recognized the "almost imminent threat posed by Hezbollah quite possibly to Jewish houses of worship and religious institutions." For these reasons, we seek your consideration of the risks to Jewish communal security as you hear from and question tomorrow's panel of distinguished witnesses.

Sincerely,

ROBERT B. GOLDBERG,
Senior Director, Legislative Affairs.

APPENDIX.—SEPTEMBER 13, 2013

RISK OVERVIEW: THREATS, VULNERABILITIES, AND POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES

Existential Threats to Jewish Communal Institutions

Since 9/11, the FBI, Department of Homeland Security and other law enforcement entities have warned the U.S. Jewish community of a number of plots by inter-

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[96] "Counterterrorism 2013 Calendar: Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)." National Counterterrorism Center. *http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/aqap.html.*

[97] "Al-Qaeda Attack on Yemen Army Parade Causes Carnage." BBC News. May 21, 2012. *http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-18142695.*

[98] Almoravid, Abu Abdillah. "Who and Why?" *Inspire.* Spring 2013, Issue 11. *http://info.publicintelligence.net/InspireSpring2013.pdf.*

national terrorist organizations, white supremacists, prison Islamic radicals, and other home-grown violent individuals across the political spectrum. While a number of prominent plots have been averted, others became operationalized.

One regular thread among many terrorist occurrences is the symmetrical selection of targets that include both Government/military facilities/personnel, and Jewish communal institutions and civilians. One large distinction, however, is that the latter category comprises soft nonprofits with limited resources and capabilities with which to harden their facilities and to train their personnel.

Additionally, over the past decade, the FBI has reported that approximately 70% of religious-based hate crimes have been perpetrated against the Jewish community—well above the combined occurrences of all other faiths. (Source: Annual FBI Hate Crimes Statistics Reports; Link: *http://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2012/december/annual-hate-crimes-report-released/annual-hate-crimes-report-released).*

December 10, 2012.—Of the 1,480 victims of an anti-religious hate crime, 63.2 percent were victims of an offender's anti-Jewish bias—more than all other categories combined. (Source: FBI Hate Crime Statistics, 12/10/12; Link: *http://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/2012/december/annual-hate-crimes-report-released/annual-hate-crimes-report-released).*

July 20, 2012.—New York police believe Iranian Revolutionary Guards or their proxies have been involved so far this year in nine plots against Israeli or Jewish targets around the world. According to NYPD analysts, "through its own Revolutionary Guard and Hezbollah," Iran had "sharply increased its operational tempo and its willingness to conduct terrorist attacks targeting Israeli interests and the International Jewish community worldwide." (Source: Reuters, 07/20/12; Link: *http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/20/us-iran-hezbollah-plots-idUSBRE86-J0SW20120720).*

June 5, 2012.—According to Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, "Jews face special risks that require vigilance." She also stated that, during her tenure at DHS, threats to the Jewish community came from foreign entities, home-grown extremists, and domestic hate groups. (Source: The Forward, 06/05/12: Link: *http://forward.com/articles/157280/jews-face-special-risks-napolitano-says/?p=all).*

February 16, 2012.—With tensions between Iran and the West running high, law enforcement officials are concerned Iran or its surrogates could mount attacks against Jewish targets inside the United States. (Source: CNN, 02/16/12; Link: *http://www.cnn.com/2012/02/15/us/iran-fbi-warning/index.html?iref=allsearch).*

January 9, 2009.—Terrorist analysts report that throughout the world, Jewish communities will be specifically at risk from several "fatwas" disseminated through Arab media and jihadist websites, including one instructing that "any Jew is a legitimate target that can be struck by Muslims." (Source: European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center, 01/09/09).

March 24, 2008.—Al-Qaeda's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, released an audio tape on which called upon al-Qaeda followers and sympathizers to attack Jewish interests worldwide. The tape, part of a string of provocative statements by bin Laden and his senior cohorts, was regarded by counter terrorism experts as a new and bold escalation by al-Qaeda to link the Middle East conflict with immediate and urgent violence in the West, including against Jewish targets in the United States. (Source: Associated Press, 03/24/08).

November 24, 2002.—In a "Letter to America" Osama bin Laden released soon after the 9/11 attacks, to explain his reasoning and intent to justify the attacks, he wrote, "The creation and continuation of Israel is one of the greatest crimes, and you are the leaders of its criminals." "This is why the American people cannot be innocent of all the crimes committed by the Americans and Jews against us." The letter also made clear that, to bin Laden, civilian populations, as with governments, were acceptable (equivalent) targets for retaliation. (Source: Guardian (UK), 11/24/02; Full text of the letter: *http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/nov/24/theobserver).*

June 3, 2002.—Abdul Rahman Yasin, one of the terrorists in the first attack on the World Trade Center in 1993, revealed in a CBS 60 Minutes interview that the World Trade Center was not the terrorists' original target. Rather, they initially planned to blow up Jewish neighborhoods in Brooklyn. But after scouting Crown Heights and Williamsburg, they decided to target the World Trade Center, instead. The reasoning: Rather than undertaking multiple small explosions in Jewish neighborhoods, they figured that one big explosion in the World Trade Center would kill mostly Jews who they believed made up a majority of the workforce there, according to Yasin's statements. (Source: CBS News 06/02/02; Reuters, 06/03/02).

February 2, 2002.—Shortly after the 9/11 attacks, al-Qaeda's training manual was translated by the Associated Press, which included a directive to followers to attack Jewish communal organizations and institutions in every country Jews exist and to

carry out the attacks in a manner designed to cause the most causalities. It specified community centers, hospitals, places of worship, and wherever there are large gathering places of Jews. (Source: Associated Press, 02/02/02).

Recent Jewish Security Threats

May 16, 2013.—A 22-year-old Moroccan man has been convicted and sentenced to 5 years and 4 months in jail for plotting a terror attack against a Milan synagogue. The man was arrested in March 2012 after police noted that the suspect had used a Google maps application to case security at the synagogue. (Source: The Associated Press, 05/16/13).

May 7, 2013.—Israeli airstrikes on Syrian missile stockpiles suspected to be destined for Hezbollah raise concern for retaliation against Jewish civilians. According to the Washington Post, "U.S. and Middle Eastern officials say any retaliation would probably come in a familiar form: Attempted attacks by Hezbollah operatives on Israeli or Jewish civilian targets, perhaps far outside the Middle East." (Source: Washington Post, May 8, 2013; Link: *http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/western-officials-fear-retaliation-for-israeli-airstrikes-in-syria/2013/05/07/2989f1a4-b72f-11e2-92f3-f29180193 6b8_print.html)*.

May 1, 2013.—Bomb threats were phoned in to two different Houston synagogues (Congregation Beth Israel and Congregation Or Ami) causing their schools to cancel classes, so that the FBI and Houston Police Department could search the institutions for explosives. When the buildings reopen, it was reported that they will require extra security personnel and police presence.

April 8, 2013.—Ruben Ubiles, 35, who the police say has more than 50 prior arrests, on charges including robbery, assault, and weapons and drug possession, was arrested for the hate-crime burning of a dozen Jewish doorway adornments in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, on Holocaust Remembrance Day. The ornaments, known as mezuzot, contain scrolls with Old Testament verses that are intended to bless and protect the home. (Source: New York Times, 04/10/13).

March 18, 2013.—French President Francois Hollande on Sunday paid tribute to the 7 people who last year fell victim to terrorist Mohamed Merah, saying he remains committed to the fight against terrorism. A self-described al-Qaeda sympathizer, 23-year-old Merah murdered Rabbi Jonathan Sandler, his sons Aryeh and Gavriel and Miriam Monsonego at a Jewish school, Otzar HaTorah, in Toulouse. Before that, he murdered three paratroopers. (Source: Arutz Sheva, 03/18/13: Link: *http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/166321)*.

March 17, 2013.—Marked the 21st anniversary of the March 17, 1992 terrorist attack that left 28 people dead and 240 wounded at the Israel Embassy in Buenos Aires. Two years later (July 1994) 85 members of the Argentine Jewish community were killed in an attack on a community center. This was the deadliest terror attack in Argentina's history. In both cases, the attackers were never caught. (Source: Arutz Sheva, 03/17/13; Link: *http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/166301)*.

March 15, 2013.—An Algerian man convicted of plotting to bomb synagogues was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. According to New York City Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly, "Ferhani posed a real threat to New York's Jewish community, eagerly purchasing a hand grenade, two guns and 150 rounds of ammunition from an undercover officer as part of Ferhani's stated intention to attack and then blow up a synagogue in Manhattan, and take out the whole entire building." (Source: CNN, 03/15/13).

January 30, 2013.—A new policy paper from the Washington Institute for Near East Studies finds that Iran's elite Qods Force and Hezbollah militants pose a growing threat to the United States, fueling worries that they increasingly have the ability and willingness to attack the United States, and, in particular, Jewish targets. Among the most likely scenarios, stated the report, "an attack targeting a location affiliated with a Jewish community abroad", such as the report noted, the 1994 bombing of AMIA Jewish community center in Buenos Aires. (Source WINES, January 30, 2013; Link: *http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus123.pdf)*.

January 23, 2013.—The Congressional Research Service published a comprehensive analysis on the complex threat of American Jihadist Terrorism, including particular threats to Jewish communal security: (1) The 2005 plot by the group Jamiyyat Ul-Islam Is-Saheeh, to attack Jewish institutions, including synagogues, and military recruiting offices and military bases, which the report described as the "most prominent post-9/11 example of domestic violent jihadist activity inspired in prison;" (2) The 2009 Newburgh Four case, which involved a plot to trigger explosive in front of a synagogue and Jewish community center and to shoot down military aircraft; (3) The 2011 grenade plot by Ahmed Ferhani, an Algerian, and Mohamed

Mamdouth, a naturalized U.S. citizen from Morocco, who plotted to blow up prominent synagogues in New York City; and (4) The 2012 bombing plot by Amine El Khalifi, a Moroccan citizen living in the United States on an expired B2 tourist visa, who targeted the U.S. Capitol, a synagogue, and a restaurant that was frequented by U.S. military personnel. (Source: CRS, 01/23/13; Link: *http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41416.pdf).*

January 16, 2013.—The FBI warned the Detroit Jewish community of potential risks after discovering in the home of a known white supremacist and convicted murderer, Richard Schmidt, 18 firearms including assaults weapons, high-capacity magazines, and more than 40 thousand rounds of ammunition; Nazi paraphernalia; a "Jewish hit-list" of 500 Jewish-owned businesses; and detailed information on the leadership of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit and diagrams of the facility. (Source: U.S. Attorney, Ohio, 01/16/13; Link: *http://www.justice.gov/usao/ohn/news/2013/16janschmidt.html).*

Historic Record of Threats

December 4, 2012.—A man from Queens accused of plotting to blow up a synagogue in Manhattan ended on Tuesday when the man, Ahmed Ferhani, pleaded guilty to 10 charges, including conspiracy as a crime of terrorism and criminal possession of a weapon as a crime of terrorism. He was arrested immediately after making a downpayment in exchange for a hand grenade, three semiautomatic pistols and 150 rounds of ammunition. (Source: New York Times, 12/04/12; Link: *http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/05/nyregion/ahmed-ferhani-pleads-guilty-in-plot-to-blow-up-synagogue.html).*

July 20, 2012.—New York police believe Iranian Revolutionary Guards or their proxies have been involved so far this year in nine plots against Israeli or Jewish targets around the world. According to NYPD analysts, "through its own Revolutionary Guard and Hezbollah," Iran had "sharply increased its operational tempo and its willingness to conduct terrorist attacks targeting Israeli interests and the International Jewish community worldwide". (Source: Reuters, 07/20/12; Link: *http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/20/us-iran-hezbollah-plots-idUSBRE86-J0SW20120720).*

June 22, 2012.—The FBI announced the 11.5-year sentence for American Jess Curtis Morton, aka Younus Abdullah Muhammed, for running several internet sites in the United States to solicit attacks and future threat against Jewish organizations in the United States. His co-conspirator lived in Fairfax, VA (less than 20 miles from Capitol Hill). The websites Morton ran perpetuated al-Qaeda-produced propaganda and included hit lists. (Source: U.S. Attorney's Office/Eastern District of Virginia, 06/22/12; Link: *http://www.fbi.gov/washingtondc/press-releases/2012/leader-of-revolution-muslim-sentenced-to-138-months-for-using-internet-to-solicit-murder-encourage-violent-extremism?utm_campaign=email-Immediate&utm_-medium=email&utm_source=washington-press-releases&utm_content=108401).*

June 20, 2012.—This week, the New York Post described a new "Crime Wave" against Brooklyn's Jewish community when it reported several synagogue thefts and anti-Semitic vandalism targeting synagogues and Jewish neighborhoods. (Source: New York Post, 06/20/12; Link: *http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/brooklyn/anti_jewish_crime_wave_GNiQRau6jWlgBeqM7ugEBO;* Forward, 06/05/12; Link: *http://m.forward.com/articles/157280).*

June 5, 2012.—According to Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, "Jews face special risks that require vigilance." She also stated that, during her tenure at DHS, threats to the Jewish community came from foreign entities, homegrown extremists, and domestic hate groups. (Source: The Forward, 06/05/12: Link: *http://forward.com/articles/157280/jews-face-special-risks-napolitano-says/?p=all).*

May 3, 2012.—On the anniversary of the bin Laden raid, the U.S. Government released a sampling of documents. Only one pertained to approving funding for terrorism—the approval of a request by a militant group to purchase and manufacture weapons, and to support operations against the Jewish community. (Source: CNN, May 3, 2012; Link: *http://edition.cnn.com/2012/05/03/world/osama-bin-laden-documents/index.html).*

April 23, 2012.—Meanwhile, the United States just placed a $10 million bounty on Hafeez Saeed, the leader of Lashkar-i-Taiba, an al-Qaeda-affiliated militant group, and the mastermind behind the 2008 Mumbai, India massacre. A paramount objective of the massacre was an attack on that city's Jewish community center and the torture and murder of its Jewish civilians. Saeed remains at-large. (Source: Pro Publica, 04.03.12; Link: *http://www.propublica.org/article/10-million-bounty-for-alleged-mumbai-plotter-ups-pressure-on-pakistan).*

March 26, 2012.—The livery driver whose two-gun attack on a group of Hasidic students on the Brooklyn Bridge shocked the city 18 years ago has finally admitted

that he targeted them because they were Jewish, The Post has learned. Rashid Baz was convicted in 1995 of murdering Yeshiva student Ari Halberstam, 16, and trying to kill more than a dozen others in a van with a hail of bullets he fired on a Manhattan approach to the bridge on March 1, 1994. (Source: New York Post, 03/26/2012; Link: *http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/killer__Jews__my__target__gOgyDs9rPP92Z5irlUqK1H).*

March 26, 2012.—According to the Associated Press this morning, French authorities are defending criticism that their counterterrorism authorities and laws failed in preventing an Islamic terrorist attack that killed paratroopers, Jewish children, and a rabbi (teacher) in front of a Jewish school in Toulouse, France. The general reaction from Europol, and a growing chorus of other European terrorist authorities, is that home-grown extremists are hard to track and stop; combating individuals acting in isolation will be tough and problematic; and it will be hard for police to apprehend them before they attack. (Source: Associated Press, 03/26/12).

February 17, 2012.—The FBI announced the indictment of Amine El Khalifi, an illegal immigrant from Morocco, for attempting a suicide attack on the Capitol. According to the indictment, El Khalifi had first indicated his intention to blow up a Jewish civilian target—a synagogue. (Sources: FBI WFO; Link: *http://www.fbi.gov/washingtondc/press-releases/2012/virginia-man-accused-of-attempting-to-bomb-u.s.-capitol-in-suicide-attack?utm__campaign=email?Immediate&utm__medium=-email&utm__source=washington-press-releases&utm__content=72268;* Criminal Complaint Link: *http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/documents/amine-el-khalifi-criminal-complaint.html).*

February 16, 2012.—With tensions between Iran and the West running high, law enforcement officials are concerned Iran or its surrogates could mount attacks against Jewish targets inside the United States. (Source: CNN, 02/16/12; Link: *http://www.cnn.com/2012/02/15/us/iran-fbi-warning/index.html?iref=allsearch).*

February 15, 2012.—A statement by House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Peter King called attention to the "almost imminent threat posed by Hezbollah quite possibly to Jewish houses of worship and religious institutions." (Source: Hearing: An Examination of the President's Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Request for the Department of Homeland Security; Link: *http://homeland.house.gov/hearing/hearing-examination-presidents-fy-2013-budget-request-department-homeland-security).*

February 14, 2012.—With Iran allegedly striking out at Israeli citizens and Jewish targets around the world, Israeli and American security officials in the United States are on high alert. According to Frank Cilluffo, director of the Homeland Security Policy Institute at George Washington University in the District of Columbia, the recent incidents in India, Georgia, Thailand, and Azerbaijan have "all the hallmarks of a concerted campaign" that could extend to U.S. soil. As such, the NYPD has adjusted its counterterrorism posture to include increased presence in recent weeks at Israeli government facilities and synagogues. Furthermore, around the country, private security industry officials report numerous requests for Jewish institutional security. (Source: ABC News; Link: *http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/heightened-security-us-iran-threat/story?id=15592451).*

February 14, 2012.—In a lead story, the New York Times reported on the escalation of threats posed by Iran (and its proxies)—meaning violent actions taken against Jewish targets outside of the region. The article followed recent plots and attacks that have increased the concern of American Jewish leaders for the safety and security of Jewish community centers and synagogues within the United States, and the article reminds that an attack on the Mumbai Jewish community center led to the torture and death of a number of Jewish American civilians in 2008. (Source: New York Times, 02/14/12; Link: *http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/14/world/middleeast/israeli-embassy-officials-attacked-in-india-and-georgia.html?__r=2&ref=-world&pagewanted=print).*

February 14, 2012.—Convicted arsonist/bomber Omar Bulphred, 26, will serve his full 7-year prison term for hate crimes—including the firebombing of a Jewish school for children and attempted bombing of a Jewish community center—will remain behind bars for his entire sentence as he continues to pose a serious problem for Correctional Service Canada (CSC). While investigating the fires, police found letters in which Bulphred and an accomplice declared jihad and demanded the liberation of their "brothers"—a group of men arrested on terrorism charges in Toronto. (Source: The Gazette (Montreal); Link: *http://www.montrealgazette.com/news/todays-paper/Hate+crime+convict+refused+early+release/6148040/story.html).*

February 10, 2012.—Nine extremists who "were well advanced in their terrorist planning" were convicted. "The men possessed almost every famous jihadi publication, including copies of *Inspire,* an English language internet magazine produced by Yemen-based extremist cleric Anwar al-Awlaki's group al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula." According to the prosecution, "These men were motivated to act as they

did in large part by extreme jihadist propaganda circulated on the internet." Convicted for planning a "Mumbai"-style attack that included targeting the Jewish community, one of the group's leaders and his brother, "were bugged claiming that fewer than 100,000 Jews" died in the Holocaust and talking about how Hitler "had been on the same side as the Muslims" because he understood that "the Jews were dangerous". (Source: *http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/british-terror-gang-that-plotted-to-blow-680112).*

February 9, 2012.—The leader of "Revolution Muslim" pleaded guilty to using the internet to solicit murder and encourage violent extremism against Jews. (Source: The FBI; Link: *http://www.fbi.gov/washingtondc/press-releases/2012/leader-of-revolution-muslim-pleads-guilty-to-using-internet-to-solicit-murder-and-encourage-violent-extremism-utm_campaign=email-Immediate&utm_medium=email&utm-_source=washington-press-releases&utm_content=69655).*

February 1, 2012.—Four defendants inspired by al-Qaeda have admitted planning to detonate bombs—Mumbai-style—at five symbolic sites including the U.S. Embassy, the Palace of Westminster (both well-fortified institutions), and two prominent rabbis from separate synagogues. The men reportedly admitted to being inspired by the preachings of the radical al-Qaeda extremist Yemeni American imam Anwar al-Awlaki and to being in possession of two editions of al-Qaeda magazine *Inspire* for terrorist purposes. (Source: BBC News, link: *http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-16833032).*

January 25, 2012.—A joint attack by Iran and Hezbollah against Jewish targets in Bangkok, Thailand, had been stopped, where the operative in custody reportedly confessed to having intended to blow up a synagogue and the Israeli Embassy. Moreover, the New York Times story reported that Iran and Hezbollah have also planted some 40 terrorist sleeper cells around the world, ready to attack Jewish targets if Iran deems it necessary to retaliate against efforts to thwart its nuclear ambitions. (Source: The New York Times Magazine, 01/25/12; link: *http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/29/magazine/will-israel-attack-iran.html?scp=1&sq=-six%20key%20strikes%20thought%20to%20be%20made%20by%20the%20mossad-&st=cse).*

January 13, 2012.—Federal-elected officials from North Jersey and across the State pledged resources in the investigation into the firebombing of a Rutherford synagogue at a meeting convened to discuss safety at Jewish temples Thursday night. (Source: New Jersey On-line; Link: *http://www.nj.com/bergen/index.ssf/2012/01/officials_pledge_federal_resources_for_investigation_into_temple-_firebombing_bias_crimes.html).*

December 2, 2011.—Homeland Security Director Janet Napolitano and Attorney General Eric Holder met with their counterparts from Britain and other European partners to discuss issues of points of cooperation in fighting terrorism. In seeking this meeting to improve the U.S.-E.U. partnership to combat global terrorism, the Secretary pointed to the success of shared efforts in aiding the investigation and prosecution of American David Headley, the mastermind behind the deadly attack on the Mumbai Jewish Community Center just over 3 years ago—November 27, 2008. (Sources: Associated Press; Link: *http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-201_162-57336080/napolitano-lone-wolf-terror-threat-growing/).*

December 2, 2011.—Jubair Ahmad, 24, a native of Pakistan and resident of Woodbridge, VA, pleaded guilty of providing material support to Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), a designated foreign terrorist organization. "By preparing and posting a graphic video that glorified violent extremism, Mr. Ahmad directly supported the mission of a designated terrorist organization," said FBI Assistant Director in Charge McJunkin. "The FBI will track down and disrupt those who communicate with terrorist groups for the purpose of recruiting others to inflict harm on the U.S. and its interests overseas." Ahmad considered including images of the Mumbai attack to show the power of LeT. This is a reference to LeT's operation against the city of Mumbai, India, on Nov. 26, 2008, which resulted in the death of over 160 people, including a number of Jewish Americans killed at the targeted Jewish Community Center. (Source: U.S. Attorney, Eastern District of Virginia; Link: *http://www.fbi.gov/washingtondc/press-releases/2011/virginia-man-pleads-guilty-to-providing-material-support-to-terrorist-organization?utm_campaign=email-Immediate&utm_medium=email&utm_source=washington-press-releases&utm-_content=53207).*

November 14, 2011.—The FBI released hate crimes data for 2010. As has been the case since the FBI first began reporting incidents of hate crimes, approximately 70% of all religious bias crimes are committed against Jewish institutions and civilians in the United States. (Source: FBI Hate Crime Statistics: *http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/ciis/ucr/hate-crime/2010).*

November 9, 2011.—The Cold War's most notorious international terrorists, Ilich Ramirez Sanchez (aka "Carlos the Jackal"), went on trial in France, on charges of instigating four attacks in 1982 and 1983. Sanchez's first terrorist strike was an assassination attempt against major British philanthropist of Jewish charities, Joseph Sieff. Sanchez gained entrance into Sieff's home by gunpoint, and shot the past vice-president of the British Zionist Federation at point-blank range in the face. (Sources: Associated Press; Link: *http://m.ctv.ca/topstories/20111107/carlos-ilich-ramirez-sanchez-jackal-terror-trial-france-111107.html* and TruTV; Link: *http://www.trutv.com/library/crime/terroristsspies/terrorists/jackal/1.html)*.

January 17, 2011.—Five synagogues and a Jewish school in a Jewish enclave in Montreal were attacked in a single night. Condemning the attack, the Liberal Leader, Michael Ignatieff, remarked, "Our thoughts and prayers are with Jewish communities across Canada that once again have been made to feel that their congregations and the children in their schools have cause to fear for their safety." (Sources: The Globe and Mail (Canada), 01/17/11).

October 29, 2010.—Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula attempted to ship air cargo bombs addressed to Chicago-based synagogues. (Source: MSNBC, 10/29/10).

January 20, 2010.—FBI Director Robert Mueller testified before the Senate Committee on the Judiciary that al-Qaeda; self-directed groups linked to terror organizations; and self-radicalizing, self-executing homegrown terrorists remained determined to strike the country and the threat has not diminished. (Source: *http://judiciary.senate.gov/pdf/10-01-20Mueller'sTestimony.pdf,* 01/20/10).

December 28, 2009.—The FBI Year in Review chronicled the U.S. top terror cases, including: The arrest of David Coleman Headley, a U.S. citizen, for his role in planning the 2008 Mumbai attacks, where six Americans (4 Jewish) were killed; the arrest of four radicalized individuals for attempting to blow up a Riverdale, New York synagogue and Jewish community center; the deadly shooting at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC; and the attack on an Army recruiting center in Little Rock, Arkansas, by an assailant who was also found to be targeting Jewish sites in Little Rock, Philadelphia, Atlanta, New York, Louisville, and Memphis. (Source: FBI Release, 12/28/09; Link: *http://www.fbi.gov/page2/dec09/review122809.html)*.

December 15, 2009.—The House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk held a hearing on the emergence of violent extremism and domestic terrorism in the United States. In her opening remarks, Chairwomen Jane Harman (D–CA) focused on two infamous plots and attacks against Jewish communal interests at home and abroad: (1) The plot by Jami'yyat Ul-Islam Is-Shaheeh, a prison-founded radical Muslim group, to attack prominent synagogues and other Jewish iconic sites in the Los Angeles area; and (2) The massacre in Mumbai, India, where American David Headley is now accused by Federal law enforcement officials of having helped to identify and surveil for attack, among others, the Chabad House Jewish community center, whose director, Rabbi Gavriel Noach Holtzberg, his wife, unborn child, and four others were tortured and killed. (Source: House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk, 12/15/09; Link: *http://homeland.house.gov/Hearings/index.asp?ID=229)*.

September 13, 2009.—Osama bin Laden warned the American people over their Government's close ties with Israel. In the tape, bin Laden warned, "If you stop the war, then fine. Otherwise we will have no choice but to continue our war of attrition on every front." (Source: Washington Post, 09/13/09).

August 17, 2009.—A man was sentenced to 70 months in prison today for his role in a domestic terrorism plot to wage war on the United States by attacking Jewish synagogues and military bases. Hammad Riaz Samana is the fourth member of Jami'yyat Ul-Islam Is-Shaheeh, or JIS, a prison-founded radical Muslim group that wanted to make a political statement that also had plans to attack the Israeli consulate in Los Angeles and El Al Israel Airlines at the Los Angeles International Airport. (Source: The Orange County Register, 08/17/09).

June 16, 2009.—Critical aspects of the nonprofit sector are particularly vulnerable and regular targets of terrorist groups and radicalized home-grown individuals. A number of incidents make this point clear. In remarking on the June 10, 2009, attack at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum by a radical right-wing fanatic, Secretary Napolitano stated that the attack underscored the need for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, so that high-risk nonprofits can take their own security measures. (Sources: Remarks by Secretary Napolitano Announcing Fiscal Year 2009 FEMA Preparedness Grants, Release, 06/16/09).

June 3, 2009.—The Arkansas man convicted of killing an Army recruiter and wounding another had used the popular Google Maps application to investigate recruiting centers in at least five States, as well as Jewish institutions in Little Rock,

Philadelphia, Atlanta, New York, Louisville, and Memphis. (Source: ABC News, 06/03/09).

April 7, 2009.—Two accusatory tactics associated with the current rise in right-wing radicalization and the potential for violence are aimed at the Jewish community. The first is a belief in anti-Government conspiracy theories related to a Jewish-controlled "one world government."—The second is a prevalence of right-wing extremist chatter on the internet that focuses on the perceived loss of U.S. jobs in the manufacturing and construction sectors, and home foreclosures they attribute to a deliberate conspiracy conducted by a cabal of Jewish "financial elites." (Source: Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment, Office of Intelligence Assessment and Analysis, Department of Homeland Security, April 7, 2009.)

April 4, 2009.—The New York Police Department beefed up security at the city's synagogues and other Jewish sites amid escalating tensions between Israel and Iran. Concerns that Muslim extremist groups might retaliate against civilians in the city's Jewish community if Israel were to attack Iran's nuclear facilities prompted the NYPD to put together a response plan that includes deploying extra officers, including heavily armed "Hercules Teams," to synagogues, Jewish community centers, and Israeli diplomatic offices. (Source: Jerusalem Post, 04/04/09).

March 24, 2009.—A British terrorist cell with alleged links to al-Qaeda discussed bombing revelers at a large central London nightclub as well as targeting several synagogues in London and one in Manchester, according to prosecutors. One of the defendants, Salahuddin Amin, even discussed trying to buy a radio-isotope "dirty bomb" from the Russian mafia. (Fox News, 03/31/09; European Jewish Press, 03/24/09).

February 23, 2009.—FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III warned that extremists "with large agendas and little money can use rudimentary weapons" to sow terror, raising the specter that recent attacks in Mumbai that killed 170 people (including victims at the Chabad House Jewish community center) could embolden terrorists seeking to attack U.S. cities. Mueller said that the bureau is expanding its focus beyond al-Qaeda and into splinter groups, radicals (who come in through the visa waiver program) and "home-grown terrorists." He warned that "melting-pot" communities in Seattle, San Diego, Miami, or New York were of particular concern. (Source: Washington Post, 02/23/09).

February 2, 2009.—According to Michael J. Heimbach, assistant director of the FBI's Counterterrorism Division, al-Qaeda and like-minded individuals are still the country's No. 1 concern in 2009, and that there is significant intelligence out there that indicates their focus remains on the United States. Threats from Hamas and Hezbollah are quite concerning to the United States as well, he stated. In addition, he acknowledged that home-grown extremism is still a significant focus of the FBI, and that we can't lose sight of the domestic terrorism issues, such as White supremacists and neo-Nazi group, who need to remain on the FBI's radar. (Source: WTOP (New York), 02/02/09).

January 9, 2009.—Terrorist analysts report that throughout the world, Jewish communities will be specifically at risk—from several "fatwas" disseminated through Arab media and jihadist websites, including one instructing that "any Jew is a legitimate target that can be struck by Muslims." (Source: European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center, 01/09/09).

January 6, 2009.—Al-Qaeda's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, called on Muslims to strike at Jewish targets in the West and around the world. (Source: Reuters, 01/06/09).

January 5, 2009.—Hamas leader, Mahmoud Zahar, called on Palestinian sympathizers to target Jews abroad (including their children) in response to Israel's incursion into Gaza. (Source: Associated Press, 01/05/09).

May 21, 2009.—The Federal Bureau of Investigation and other cooperating law enforcement agencies arrested four Muslim men as they attempted to carry out a plot to bomb a synagogue and Jewish community center in Riverdale, New York. Law enforcement sources are calling it a home-grown terrorist plot. (Source: NBC News; Los Angeles Times, 05/21/09).

January 1, 2009.—For the third time in a year, a Jewish pre-school was defaced by swastikas and hate speech. Investigators are exploring whether they might be related to Israeli's conflict with Hamas militants in Gaza. (Source: Ventura County Star, 01/01/09).

January 1, 2009.—Jewish day schools in Chicago received a bomb threat in the mail. The letter was sent to the Chicago offices of the Associated Talmud Torahs and the Ida Crown Jewish Academy. (Source: WBBM newsradio 780; JTA World Report, 01/01/09).

September 15, 2008.—Top counterterrorism officials at the U.S. Department of State reiterated a growing refrain among American intelligence agencies that Hezbollah is emerging as an increased threat to the United States (Associated Press, September 15, 2008). The story followed reports in August 2008 that deepening ties between Iran and Venezuela may lead to the establishment of a new Hezbollah front in the Western Hemisphere to carry out abductions and attacks against Jewish targets (Source: Los Angeles Times, August 27, 2008). Similar reports in June 2008 pointed to warnings raised by intelligence agencies in the United States and Canada that Hezbollah sleeper cells are operating along the U.S. border with Canada, and are poised to mount terror attacks against Jewish targets in the West (Source: ABC News, June 19, 2008).

April 9, 2008.—The U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Intelligence held a hearing on "Assessing the Fight Against al Qaeda." On the subject of tactics and targeting al-Qaeda will use in the future, counterterrorism experts testified that since 9/11 al-Qaeda and its affiliated groups have directed an "intensified campaign" against Jewish targets. Moreover, since 2004, Osama bin Laden has moved the Israeli-American alliance to the center of his justification for al-Qaeda's attacks against the West. (Source: U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Intelligence, 04/09/08; Link: *http://intelligence.house.gov/Media/Word/Bergen040908.doc)*.

March 4, 2008.—Al-Qaeda's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, released an audio tape on March 24, 2008, which called upon al-Qaeda followers and sympathizers to attack Jewish interests world-wide. The tape, part of a string of provocative statements by bin Laden and his senior cohorts, was regarded by counter-terrorism experts as a new and bold escalation by al-Qaeda to link the Middle East conflict with immediate and urgent violence in the West, including against Jewish targets in the United States. (Source: Associated Press, 03/04/08).

February 16, 2008.—With known Hezbollah fundraisers and supporters in the United States, U.S. counterterrorism authorities have been particularly concerned about the threat of Hezbollah sleeper cells against synagogues and other potential Jewish targets in the United States. On February 14, 2008 the FBI put 101 Nationwide Joint Terrorism Task Forces on alert for potential threats against the Jewish community by Hezbollah operatives. (AP, February 14, 2008). A day later, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security sent out a rare joint bulletin to State and local law enforcement authorities advising them to watch for strikes by Hezbollah against Jewish targets, as well. (Source: Los Angeles Times, 02/16/08).

January 15, 2008.—The Wall Street Journal reported a policy shift within the White House (and among its allies) to place greater pressure on the Iranian regime through an investigation that centers on the 1994 bombing of the AIMA Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In an effort to redefine its Iran policy, the administration's focus on the JCC bombing, "Serves as a model for how Tehran has used its overseas embassies and relationships with foreign militant groups, in particular Hezbollah, to strike at its enemies." (Source: Wall Street Journal, 01/15/08).

May 1, 2007.—Convicted British home-grown Islamic terrorists with links to the 2005 London subway bombings were in advanced stages of planning, and were targeting synagogues for attack when they were arrested. (Source: CNN.com, 05/01/07).

February 13, 2007.—Osama bin Laden's last known personally-authorized terror attacks were made against two Jewish synagogues in Istanbul. The simultaneous attacks, in 2003, killed 27 people and injured more than 300. (Source: Washington Post, 02/13/07).

The FBI warned Jewish community leaders that Hezbollah operatives were conducting surveillance on numerous synagogues and Jewish community centers for possible terrorist attacks in the United States. (Source: New York Post, 07/19/06).

October 10, 2006.—Home-grown Islamic militants were convicted of plotting terrorist attacks against prominent synagogues and other Jewish iconic sites in Los Angeles. FBI Director Mueller reported that the group was ready to strike when they were brought down. The plot is considered by counterterrorism officials to be the closest to operationalization since 9/11. Of particular concern, the groups' clandestine terrorist activities were discovered serendipitously during a police investigation into a string of gas station robberies that only later were connected to the funding of the terrorist operation. (Source: Department of Justice Releases, 7/24/08; 12/14/07; International Herald Tribune 10/10/06).

July 28, 2006.—Naveed Haq was found guilty of murder and hate crimes in his second trial for a 2006 shooting spree at the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle. On July 28, 2006, Haq, a Muslim American, attacked the Federation, a center of Jewish communal life and supporter of social welfare, youth, and adult education programs. Of the 6 women he gunned down, one was 17 weeks pregnant and an-

other, Pamela Waechter, died of her wounds. At trial evidence was presented that "he railed against Jews and U.S.-Israeli policies as he opened fire in the Jewish Federation," and that in telephone calls recorded by the King County Jail, Haq told his mother he was "a soldier of Islam." (Source: Associated Press, 12/15/09; The Seattle Times, 12/15/09; Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 08/06/08; 2008; The Seattle Times, 02/21/08; 07/29/06).

May 31, 2005.—Department of Justice convicted an Iraqi-American who had obtained illegal machine guns and targeted Jewish communal sites in Nashville, Tennessee. (Source: Department of Justice Release, 10/08/04; Associated Press, 05/31/05).

April 13, 2004.—Terrorists responsible for the Madrid train bombings in March 2004 also were planning additional attacks on a Jewish community center outside of Madrid, home to the largest Jewish population in Spain, according to evidence gathered in the investigation. (Source: New York Times; CNN.com, 04/13/04).

November 24, 2002.—In a "Letter to America" Osama bin Laden released soon after the 9/11 attacks, to explain his reasoning and intent to justify the attacks, he wrote, "The creation and continuation of Israel is one of the greatest crimes, and you are the leaders of its criminals." "This is why the American people cannot be innocent of all the crimes committed by the Americans and Jews against us." The letter also made clear that, to bin Laden, civilian populations, as with governments, were acceptable (equivalent) targets for retaliation. (Source: Guardian (UK), 11/24/02; Full text of the letter: *http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/nov/24/theobserver.)*

June 3, 2002.—Abdul Rahman Yasin, one of the terrorists in the first attack on the World Trade Center in 1993, revealed in a CBS 60 Minutes interview that the World Trade Center was not the terrorists' original target. Rather, they initially planned to blow up Jewish neighborhoods in Brooklyn. But after scouting Crown Heights and Williamsburg, they decided to target the World Trade Center, instead. The reasoning: Rather than undertaking multiple small explosions in Jewish neighborhoods, they figured that one big explosion in the World Trade Center would kill mostly Jews who they believed made up a majority of the workforce there, according to Yasin's statements. (Source: CBS News 06/02/02; Reuters, 06/03/02).

January 2, 2002.—Al-Qaeda's training manual, translated by the Associated Press, directed followers to attack Jewish organizations and institutions in every country Jews exist and to carry out the attacks in a manner designed to cause mass causalities. (Source: Associated Press, 02/02/02).

Mr. KING. Other Members of the subcommittee may introduce opening statements for the record.

[The statement of Ranking Member Thompson follows:]

STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER BENNIE G. THOMPSON

SEPTEMBER 18, 2013

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for holding this hearing on AQAP, and I thank the witnesses for appearing today.

For the past 2½ years, democracy has been on the march in North Africa and the Middle East. Yemen, the poorest country in the Arab world, has seen a change in leadership as its former President Ali Abdallah Saleh was forced to transfer power to Abd Hadi. Yemen is one of the places that has seen its share of unrest—which continues to make it ripe for al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) to thrive.

However, strides made by the Obama administration have made life more difficult for AQAP. Through drone strikes, several high-profile AQAP senior leaders including Anwar al-Awlaki, have been killed. Even though these drone strikes have eliminated senior AQAP leadership, these targeted strikes have killed Americans. The administration knows this is a reality and the Department of Justice has issued a guidance for the use of targeted strikes against Americans abroad.

Once again, 12 years after 9/11, we fall on the side of security which is a vivid reality in the world in which we live. Even though AQAP's operations appear to have diminished, it has not prevented the organization from restrategizing and remaining a threat to the United States. The deaths of al-Awlaki and Khan have been detrimental to its publication *Inspire* magazine. The syntax and grammar is not as amenable to an American audience. But that does not prevent the magazine from celebrating the Boston bombing or sympathizing with lone wolves.

Targeted killings also did not prevent AQAP from issuing a threat considered credible by U.S. intelligence officials. This threat prompted the closure of several embassies in the Middle East and North Africa for several days in early August.

See with AQAP, the game is the same, yet the methods are different. AQAP's ability to incite panic and economic devastation still plagues the United States. Even though AQAP's large-scale plots—such as the Christmas day bombing of 2009—have been unsuccessful, they still impact the way we travel and at a significant economic cost. The economic cost of terrorism is something that cannot be overlooked. We cannot call attacks that do not yield a loss of life unsuccessful when we continue to go into debt as a country and when we change our lives due to close calls. AQAP knows this and since its capabilities have diminished, it can certainly use this as leverage.

I am not advocating ignoring credible threats and standing in the face of danger. These threats can not be ignored. But what also can not be ignored is the cost of terrorism and terrorist threats. The methods currently used to decrease AQAP's presence and reach to the United States still haven't prevented the organization from causing devastation to not only our lives but also our economy.

I look forward to hearing the witnesses' testimony about the strength and reach of this organization.

I yield back.

Mr. KING. We are pleased to have a distinguished panel of witnesses before us today on this vital topic: Mr. Frank Cilluffo and Ms. Katherine Zimmerman and Mr. Brian Katulis.

Beginning with Frank Cilluffo who is an old friend and testified before this committee a number of times. I say an old friend, old friend of the committee because he has always been available to any of us whenever we need assistance or information.

He is an associate vice president at the George Washington University where he is the director of the Homeland Security Policy Institute. The institute is a nonpartisan think tank that builds bridges between theory and practice to advance homeland security policy and focuses on counterterrorism and counter-radicalization efforts, cyber threats and deterrence, and the nexus between crime and terrorism.

Mr. Cilluffo joined the faculty at George Washington in 2003 from the White House where he served as special assistant to the President for homeland security, and prior to his White House appointment, Mr. Cilluffo spent 8 years in senior policy positions with the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Mr. Cilluffo, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF FRANK J. CILLUFFO, ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT, DIRECTOR, HOMELAND SECURITY POLICY INSTITUTE, THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Mr. CILLUFFO. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the kind introduction.

Ranking Member Higgins, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

I will be brief. There are a lot of issues to cover. But when you are looking at the terrorism threat today I think, Mr. Chairman, you hit it spot on that the threat has metastasized. It comes in various shapes, sizes, flavors, and form ranging from al-Qaeda senior leadership, which is still entrenched in federally-administered tribal areas led by Ayman al-Zawahiri to its many affiliates, including al-Qaeda in Iraq, which has been resurgent, to Boko Haram in Nigeria, Ansar al-Dine in Mali, al-Shabaab in Somalia, and of course the focus of today's hearing, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen.

If you have noticed, these are all in under-governed spaces, and you are talking about huge swaths of territory and land. So I think that anyone who thinks that since the death of Osama bin Laden, yes, he may be dead, but the witch lives on. Unfortunately it comes in various forms.

I also think it is important that now, when all eyes are fixed on Syria, that we not forget that we have other threats out there, including one that just a month ago had a very active threat stream. So I think it is important to keep our eye on the ball.

Firstly, why al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula? As was noted by Ranking Member Higgins, this is the group that has been perhaps the most active threat against the U.S. homeland.

This isn't could-have, should-have, would-have. This is a group that has actually been engaged in multiple attempts on not only U.S. targets overseas, but also the U.S. homeland. Many of those were discussed, with Abdulmutallab in 2009 along with a number of other active threat streams.

It is also home to the world's most dangerous and innovative bomb makers in Ibrahim al-Asiri. These guys don't grow on trees. They are very unique in terms of the value that they play, not only in terms of building out their own capabilities, but also to be able to train the next generation.

If you were to put, rack and stack, the most dangerous terrorists on a list I think he would be on the top of anybody's list. He has done so in such a way that he has devised and improvised explosive devices that can circumvent our security. This is absolutely critical, important, and something that we need to be very cognizant of.

I think also in addition to AQAP, I think their greatest hallmark has been *Inspire* magazine and the role that it plays in radicalizing and lone-wolf jihadists, especially in the West. There have now been 11 copies, 11 editions of *Inspire* magazine, and you can go back through dozens and dozens of cases where in Anwar al-Awlaki and Samir Khan and the original authors played a very significant role in inspiring people to act, not only in the United States but also in the United Kingdom and elsewhere.

You actually saw a dip after al-Awlaki and Khan's death in terms of the quality of the production. Unfortunately, post the terrorist attack in Boston you saw an increase again in the quality. I would argue it is definitely being driven by an English speaker who of course makes this significant. So they have reached out to the West and they have done so successfully.

It is also currently led by Nasir al-Wahishi, who is a long-time confidant of Osama bin Laden. That obviously gives him some potential additional resolve in terms of taking on the mantle of al-Qaeda in the broader scheme of things, but also very directly.

There was a lot of discussion after al-Awlaki's death. Is the group going to look local? Is it going to continue to focus global?

I think it is not an either-or proposition. It is both. Unfortunately, it is playing a more significant role in the broader tapestry that makes up the al-Qaeda environment.

In addition to Wahishi being named the No. 2 in al-Qaeda, you have also seen al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula coordinate their activities with numerous affiliates in the past, most notably al-

Shabaab in Somalia, but others as well. I think this is important because in addition to their own role they serve as—they can foster the intent in others to attack the U.S. homeland. I think you are starting to see that, the sharing of trade craft.

You are starting to see a conflation of these al-Qaeda organizations. So that is one thing to keep our eye on.

I am actually beyond my time. But I hope to get to some of the responses afterwards. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cilluffo follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FRANK J. CILLUFFO

Chairman King, Ranking Member Higgins, and distinguished Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. The decision to step back and take a hard look at al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) at a time when all eyes are fixed on Syria is a prudent one. It is far too easy to lose sight of key pieces of the big picture when the heat of a particular crisis draws our focus.

Yet to do so would be a real mistake. Notwithstanding the importance of Syria as a threat to (U.S.) National, regional, and international security—and as a situation that terrorists may seek to exploit, there is a broader range of forces and factors that pose serious and on-going threats to the United States. One critical example is the terrorist group AQAP which is currently the al-Qaeda affiliate that poses the greatest threat to the U.S. homeland.

WHY AQAP MATTERS

- AQAP is the most active of al-Qaeda's affiliate groups. AQAP has directly targeted the U.S. homeland as well as U.S. interests abroad on multiple occasions.
- AQAP (and Yemen) is home to one of the world's most dangerous and innovative bombmakers who has actively tried and shown himself to be able to circumvent U.S. countermeasures intended to thwart his improvised explosive devices.
- AQAP has invested significantly in encouraging radicalization and "lone wolf" home-grown attacks, including *Inspire* magazine. AQAP's efforts in this regard propagate the ideology that underpins al-Qaeda as a movement, and provide the "how-to" do-it-yourself in terrorist tactics, techniques, and procedures.
- AQAP is currently led by Nasser al-Wuhayshi, formerly a direct confidant of Osama bin Laden, who was recently named the No. 2 figure within al-Qaeda writ large. The No. 2 leadership slot is symbolically important but also operationally so, particularly as the boundaries between al-Qaeda components (core and affiliates) fade away and their activities converge.
- AQAP has for some time assumed a leadership role within al-Qaeda as a whole, and has cooperated with multiple al-Qaeda affiliates. AQAP's leadership position offers a conduit to foster intent in others to attack the U.S. homeland and U.S. interests.

AQAP was established in 2009 by the merger of Yemeni al-Qaeda with Saudi al-Qaeda elements that were driven out of the Kingdom. The influence of Yemeni al-Qaeda was felt long before, however, and pre-dated 9/11. Bear in mind that Yemen, the birthplace of Osama bin Laden, was the host country of the terrorist attack on the *U.S.S. Cole* in 2000, in which 17 U.S. sailors perished. Since its creation, AQAP has demonstrated ample evidence of intent to attack the U.S. homeland and U.S. interests, including the 2009 Christmas day airliner bomb attempt by "underwear bomber" Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab the 2010 cargo/plane bomb attempt in which explosives were concealed in printer cartridges; and the spring 2012 concealed explosives plot.[1] The first two of these attempted attacks were overseen by AQAP's former external operations leader Anwar al-Awlaki. AQAP has managed to attract Western recruits or others with the ability to travel, to facilitate such attacks. In addition to Abdulmutallab, examples include American Sharif Mobley, who is in the custody of the Yemeni government following his shooting of two Yemeni security guards, and British national Minh Qhang Pham, who was indicted on terrorism charges in New York in 2012.

[1] Reuters, "Foiled Plot Shows Militants Seek Detection-Proof Bombs," May 7, 2012. *http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/07/us-usa-security-plot-idUSBRE84612820120507*.

Most recently, this August (before all eyes turned to Syria and the regime's use of chemical weapons on its own people there), there was much discussion of a threat stream emanating from Yemen, where AQAP is based. A spate of articles appeared in the press reporting on a so-called "conference call" between al-Qaeda Senior Leadership (AQSL) figure Ayman al-Zawahiri and a dozen chiefs of al-Qaeda affiliates including AQAP's Nasser al-Wuhayshi.[2] The intelligence suggested that a major terrorist plot directed against Western targets was afoot and prompted a range of countermeasures including a U.S. decision to shut temporarily 19 embassies and consulates. The plot is said to have involved "a new generation of liquid explosive, currently undetectable," which U.S. officials described as "ingenious."[3]

In addition to these various demonstrations of intent to attack, AQAP has also evidenced a record of innovation in terror tradecraft. AQAP's lead bomb-maker Ibrahim al-Asiri personifies this, as the mastermind behind the devices used in the 2009 attempted assassination of the Saudi Interior Minister, the 2009 Christmas day attack, the 2010 cargo printer bomb, and plots that involve surgically implanted explosives.

Over and above his own considerable expertise, al-Asiri has been training the next generation of bomb-makers.[4] AQAP has also expressed an interest in attacks using biological warfare agents, including ricin.[5]

Encouraging radicalization and "lone wolf" home-grown attacks has been a further hallmark and focus of AQAP. Cases of this type inspired by AQAP—and Anwar al-Awlaki in particular—include the attack on Fort Hood in 2009 by Major Nidal Hasan, the attack on a military recruiting center in Arkansas in the same year by Carlos Bledsoe, the 2010 attack on a British parliamentarian by student Roshonara Choudhry, and the Boston marathon bombing earlier this year.

AQAP "bridge figure" Anwar al-Awlaki possessed an almost unmatched ability to recruit and inspire new and existing members to al-Qaeda's cause and ideology. Though killed in a drone strike in 2011, al-Awlaki's voice lives on including in the many radical and violent "sermons" that he recorded in multiple media formats—and continues to resonate.

Ideology is the lifeblood that sustains al-Qaeda, and instruments such as *Inspire* magazine are intended to fuel the fire, including the "home-grown" component. Although the original authors and publishers of *Inspire* (al-Awlaki and colleague Samir Khan) are now deceased, the magazine continues and its production values have improved recently. Immediately following the death of al-Awlaki and Khan, there was a highly noticeable degradation of *Inspire*; the more recent issues of *Inspire*, including the 11th issue released after the Boston marathon attack, once again demonstrate high production quality and appear to be written by a native English speaker.

The linkages between AQAP and other al-Qaeda affiliates and terrorist groups are another source of significant concern. As mentioned, current AQAP leader al-Wuhayshi is the overall No. 2 in al-Qaeda.[6] He is also directly connected to Osama bin Laden, having served as his secretary until 2001. For him, the battle may be personal; being a direct protégé of bin Laden may add an extra layer of resolve and determination to his actions. Other important links exist, however, beyond al-Wuhayshi's connection with AQSL. These include AQAP ties to al-Shabaab in Somalia, as discussed by convicted terrorist leader Ahmed Warsame in his guilty plea;[7] and a reported AQAP role in the attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi.[8]

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[2] Eli Lake, Josh Rogin, "Exclusive: Al Qaeda Conference Call Intercepted by U.S. Officials Sparked Alerts," The Daily Beast (August 7, 2013), *http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/08/07/al-qaeda-conference-call-intercepted-by-u-s-officials-sparked-alerts.html.*

[3] Rhonda Schwartz and James Gordon Meek, "Al Qaeda Threat: Officials Fear 'Ingenious' Liquid Explosive," ABC News (August 5, 2013) *http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/al-qaeda-threat-officials-fear-ingenious-liquid-explosive/story?id=19871892.*

[4] Andrew Scarpitta, "Terrorist Deck of Cards: Leaders of Al Qaeda affiliates are clubs, " The Washington Times—Communities (September 9, 2013) *http://communities.washingtontimes.com/neighborhood/simply-world/2013/sep/9/terrorist-deck-cards-clubs/*

[5] Eric Schmitt and Thom Shanker, "Qaeda Trying to Harness Toxin for Bombs, U.S. Officials Fear," New York Times (August 12, 2011) *http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/13/world/middleeast/13terror.html?pagewanted=all&__r=0.*

[6] Barbara Starr, "US official: Al Qaeda core chief picks number two from Yemeni affiliate," CNN (August 5, 2013) *http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2013/08/05/us-official-al-qaeda-core-chief-picks-number-two-from-yemeni-affiliate/.*

[7] See FBI press release on Warsame plea deal at *http://www.fbi.gov/newyork/press-releases/2013/guilty-plea-unsealed-in-new-york-involving-ahmed-warsame-a-senior-terrorist-leader-and-liaison-between-al-shabaab-and-al-qaeda-in-the-arabian-peninsula-for-providing-material-support-to-both-terrorist-organizations.*

[8] UPI, "AQAP Eyed for Benghazi Role," May 3, 2013. *http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2013/05/03/AQAP-eyed-for-Benghazi-role/UPI-39181367594594/.*

AQAP IN BROADER CONTEXT

Though AQAP occupies a vaunted place within the larger al-Qaeda hierarchy (which, as mentioned above, is itself something of a misnomer as the boundaries between core and affiliates of al-Qaeda are fading away and operational and ideological activities converge), the organization is by no means the only important threat that the United States faces at this time. As evidenced by the above reference to Ayman al-Zawahiri, even AQSL is now reinvigorated and reappearing. Indeed just last week, on the day after the twelfth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Zawahiri released an audio message calling for further attacks on the United States, intended to "bleed America economically by provoking it to continue in its massive expenditure on its security."[9]

Although the primary threat vector no longer emanates from AQSL alone, the threat streams coming from al-Qaeda affiliates and those inspired by al-Qaeda are many and varied. At the group level, these include: Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram in Nigeria,[10] and Ansar Dine in Mali.[11] In Africa and the Middle East alone, there are still multiple al-Qaeda affiliates that continue to thrive, most notably in the Sahel and in Somalia.[12] Indeed, there is an arc of Islamist extremism that stretches across Africa from east to west, through the Sahel and the Maghreb.[13]

The latest and most concerning hot spot to emerge is undoubtedly Syria. Outgoing CIA Deputy Director Michael Morell has identified Syria as "the greatest threat to U.S. national security."[14] Former FBI Director Robert Mueller echoed the point immediately prior to completing his term of service and leaving office; he "warned that an increasing flow of U.S. citizens heading to Syria and elsewhere to wage jihad against regional powers could end up in a new generation of home-grown terrorists."[15] Just one returning fighter with lethal intent and competence could cause serious harm. In Syria alone, there are thousands of foreign fighters—including from 14 European countries, Chechnya, China, North Africa, the Balkans, Australia, and North America.[16]

At the same time, a veritable witch's brew of jihadists exists in Pakistan including, for example: The Haqqani network, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (often dubbed the "Pakistani Taliban"), Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami (HuJI), Jaish-e-Mohammed, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. We have seen in the past and continue to see substantial evidence of cooperation and collaboration between these latter groups and al-Qaeda. Though some of these groups may be more regionally or locally focused, they increasingly ascribe and subscribe to al-Qaeda's

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[9] Reuters, "Al Qaeda calls for attacks inside United States" (September 13, 2013) *http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/13/us-qaeda-zawahri-idUSBRE98C05820130913*.

[10] Omar S. Mahmood, "Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria: No Easy Fix," HSPI Issue Brief (April 3, 2013) *http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/HSPI%20Issue%20Brief%2018%20-Boko%20Haram.pdf*.

[11] Rida Lyammouri, "Northern Mali: Armed Groups, State Failure, and Terrorism," HSPI Issue Brief (May 30, 2013) *http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/HSPI%20Issue%20Brief%20-20%20Northern%20Mali.pdf*.

[12] Navanti Group, "Somalia's Al-Shabaab: Down But Not Out," HSPI Issue Brief (August 27, 2013) *http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/HSPI%20Issue%20Brief%2022%20Somalia%20-Al%20Shabaab.pdf*.

[13] Frank J. Cilluffo, "The Future of Homeland Security: Evolving and Emerging Threats," Testimony Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs (July 11, 2012) *http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/Testimony%20-%20SHSGAC%20Hearing%20-%2011%20July%202012.pdf*. Frank Cilluffo, Joseph Clark, and Clinton Watts, "Pardon the Pivot: What about Africa?" HSPI Issue Brief (March 6, 2013) *http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/HSPI%20Issue%20Brief%2017%20-%20What%20About%20Africa.pdf*. Navanti Group, "Origins and Dimensions of Instability in Post-Qaddafi Libya," HSPI Issue Brief (July 30, 2013) *http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/HSPI%20Issue%20Brief%2021%20Instability%20Post-Qaddafi%20Libya.pdf*.

[14] "CIA Official Calls Syria Top Threat to U.S. Security," The Wall Street Journal (August 6, 2013) *http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323420604578652330222498920.html*.

[15] Carlo Munoz, "FBI's Mueller warns of new generation of homegrown terrorists," The Hill (August 23, 2013) *http://thehill.com/blogs/defcon-hill/operations/318539-fbis-mueller-warns-of-new-generation-of-homegrown-terrorists-*.

[16] Sharon L. Cardash, Frank J. Cilluffo, Jean-Luc Marret, "Foreign Fighters in Syria: Still Doing Battle, Still a Multidimensional Danger," Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique—Note no. 24/13 (August 2013) *http://www.frstrategie.org/barreFRS/publications/notes/2013/201324.pdf*. See also Frank J. Cilluffo, Jeffrey R. Cozzens, and Magnus Ranstorp, "Foreign Fighters: Trends, Trajectories & Conflict Zones," Joint Report of the George Washington University Homeland Security Policy Institute and the Swedish National Defence College (October 1, 2010) *http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/report_foreignfighters501.pdf*.

goals and the broader global jihad, with U.S. and Western targets increasingly in their crosshairs.[17]

Ungoverned and under-governed spaces such as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in Pakistan and Afghanistan, Yemen, the Sahel, and Somalia pose a potent challenge. Here, failed, failing, or weak states offer a propitious climate for jihadists to regroup, train, plan, plot, and execute attacks. Former head of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) General Carter Ham warned, while still in office last year, that AQIM (operating in southern Algeria, northern Mali, and eastern Mauritania; and spreading elsewhere in the Sahel), plus al-Shabaab in Somalia, and Boko Haram in Nigeria, "are seeking to coordinate and synchronize their efforts." General Ham characterized each of these groups as "by itself, a dangerous and worrisome threat"; but he was particularly concerned by the emerging trend of them sharing "funds, training, and explosive material."[18]

Compounding the challenges posed the ecosystem described above is the so-called "lone wolf" who self-radicalizes and prepares to commit violence without directly reaching out to al-Qaeda or others for support and guidance. The term lone wolf is a bit of a misnomer, however, since individuals in this category have at least been inspired, goaded, and in some cases facilitated by external forces—which in turn blurs the line between the foreign and domestic. In such cases, the mission of prevention is all the harder because there may be little for law enforcement or counterterrorism professionals to pick up on ahead of time, when we are still left of boom. The mission remains critical, though, as evidenced by the discovery of more than 60 "home-grown" jihadi terrorism plots since September 11, 2001.

In short, the system is still blinking red, and the United States would be extremely ill-advised to think or act otherwise. In a report released just last week, the Bipartisan Policy Center assessed that al-Qaeda and affiliates are in "some 16 different theaters of operation—compared with half as many as recently as five years ago." Among the "sites of revival and resuscitation" is Iraq.[19] Nor can we take our eye off the ball of state-sponsored terrorism, such as that perpetrated by the government of Iran and proxies such as Hezbollah. Although state-sponsored terrorism is beyond the scope of this hearing, it will undoubtedly demand significant attention.[20]

IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM POLICY VERSUS AQAP

The United States has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in support of counterterrorism measures directed against al-Qaeda in Yemen, but the need for direct U.S. counterterrorism engagement in the country persists. Below I address four elements that should be central to and included in U.S. counterterrorism efforts against AQAP; but the list is not meant to be comprehensive.

1. Drones and Special Operations

The bulwark of our strategy has been a sustained drone campaign informed by solid intelligence. As I have written with my colleague Clint Watts: "Light-footprint drone and special operations force (SOF) missions specifically focused on short-term tactical counterterrorism objectives can help avoid the long-term quagmire of Yem-

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[17] Cilluffo, "The Future of Homeland Security: Evolving and Emerging Threats" (July 11, 2012) *http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/Testimony%20-%20SHSGAC%20Hearing%20-%2011%20July%202012.pdf.*

[18] David Lerman, "African Terrorist Groups Starting to Cooperate, U.S. Says" Bloomberg (June 25, 2012) *http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-06-25/african-terrorist-groups-starting-to-cooperate-u-s-says.html.*

[19] Anna Mulrine, "9/11 Commission leaders push for changes in US terrorism fight," The Christian Science Monitor (September 11, 2013) *http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Military/2013/0911/9-11-Commission-leaders-push-for-changes-in-US-terrorism-fight-video.* Peter Bergen, Bruce Hoffman, Michael Hurley, and Erroll Southers, "Jihadist Terrorism: A Threat Assessment," Bipartisan Policy Center Report (September 2013) *http://bipartisanpolicy.org/sites/default/files/Jihadist%20Terrorism-A%20Threat%20Assesment_0.pdf.*

[20] Frank J. Cilluffo, "The Iranian Cyber Threat to the United States," Testimony Before the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence; and Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies (April 26, 2012) *http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/Iran%20Cyber%20Testimony%204.26.12%20Frank%20Cilluffo.pdf.* See also: Cilluffo, "A Line in the Sand: Assessing Dangerous Threat to Our Nation's Borders" (November 2012) *http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/testimony11.16.12.pdf;* and Frank J. Cilluffo, "Cyber Threats from China, Russia, and Iran: Protecting American Critical Infrastructure," Testimony Before the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies (March 20, 2013) *http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/Meehan_Cilluffo%20Testimony%20March%202013.pdf.*

eni insurgencies while immediately degrading AQAP's ability to strike the U.S."[21] While in itself insufficient and of itself not a perfect option (since the possibility of "blowback" or backlash effects cannot be entirely eliminated), the described tools have proven to be both powerful and effective.

As I have also stated elsewhere, "targeted attacks on AQ's leadership in Pakistan severely disrupted the terror group's ability to plan and execute terror attacks abroad." Applied to Yemen, this same tactic and strategy has yielded substantial counterterrorism advances from a U.S. perspective. The threat from AQAP has not disappeared, of course; but the terrorist group has been forced to look over its shoulder constantly—which diverts the adversary's limited amounts of energy and resources into self-preservation, and away from plots and planning against the United States and its allies. If there is an alternative policy course that could produce an equally favorable outcome, the critics have yet to specify it. Meantime, the specified course of action allows us "to lay the groundwork and move toward a long-term Yemen strategy . . . ".[22]

Although the balance of power between government and al-Qaeda forces in Yemen has vacillated over time, the "Arab Spring" of 2011 toppled Yemeni President Saleh and created a window of opportunity that al-Wuhayshi and associates exploited successfully. Yemeni government forces pushed back in 2012, reversing the territorial gains made by the Islamists the previous year. But the militants remain in-country, though now they are scattered and interspersed throughout Yemen rather than heavily concentrated in a few locations. In addition, the adversary has prioritized the building of anti-drone capabilities.[23] In some ways, therefore, the current situation is more dangerous and more difficult to address than in past.

2. Robust Intelligence Collection

Robust intelligence collection vis-à-vis terrorist threats must always be a priority, in part because the yield of such collection efforts informs both strategy and a wide-range tactics (including operations, counter-measures, etc.). In the wake of leaks, AQAP—which was already a difficult intelligence target—has become an even greater collection challenge for the United States. Post-leaks, AQAP has improved its operational security and changed its practices; think tradecraft, communications, and planning.

Whether AQAP remains poised to deliver on the plot that came to light this August is yet to be seen. However, the terrorist group has demonstrated and continues to demonstrate significant ability and intent to do harm to the United States and its interests. Some have even speculated that the August plot was simply a test of U.S. systems, meant to inform future attack. Whatever the case, AQAP has proven that it has the capacity to attain global reach, as the source of active threat to the United States on more than one occasion. Against this background and despite the level of challenge it entails, it is imperative to redouble U.S. efforts to obtain robust intelligence on this threat—with special emphasis accorded to AQAP's bomb-makers and others involved in external operations.

3. Aviation Security and Thwarting Terrorist Travel

AQAP has demonstrated a persistent interest in carrying out attacks against and using the global aviation system. With each successive plot, they have attempted to improve their tradecraft and develop new devices and techniques to bypass our security measures. Given this, it is imperative that TSA and its foreign partners remain nimble at anticipating new types of threats and rapidly developing the means to detect them.

Given AQAP's focus on finding Western operatives to carry out attacks, it is also important that intelligence information is used to inform the risk-based screening of travelers, both by expediting low-risk travelers through programs such as PreCheck and by providing extra scrutiny for higher-risk travelers. The Passenger Name Record (PNR) information that Customs and Border Protection (CBP) receives from travelers coming from Europe is vital in carrying out such risk-based screening. CBP and TSA have also been successful since the cargo planes plot of October

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[21] Frank J. Cilluffo and Clinton Watts, "Yemen & Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula: Exploiting a Window of Counterterrorism Opportunity," HSPI Issue Brief (June 24, 2011) *http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/issuebrief_yemenaqap.pdf*.

[22] Ibid. See also Frank Cilluffo and Clinton Watts, "Countering the Threat Posed by AQAP: Embrace, Don't Chase, Yemen's Chaos," Security Debrief (July 14, 2011) *http://securitydebrief.com/2011/07/14/countering-the-threat-posed-by-aqap-embrace-don%E2%80%99t-chase-yemen%E2%80%99s-chaos/*.

[23] Washington Post (September 3, 2013) *http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-09-03/world/41723879_1_u-s-drone-campaign-al-qaeda-commanders-unmanned-aircraft*.

2010 at improving risk-based screening of international air cargo, through their joint Air Cargo Advance Screening (ACAS) pilot project.

4. U.S.-Based Efforts to Combat Violent Islamist Extremism

As noted earlier, AQAP has been focused not only on carrying out its own attacks but also on radicalizing individuals and encouraging them to act on their own and carry out attacks in their home countries. The biggest element missing from U.S. statecraft on counterterrorism relates to our efforts—which have been lacking—to counter and defeat the jihadist ideology. The result is that the terrorist narrative lives on and continues to attract and inspire those who wish us harm.

The State Department's Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications is doing some good work overseas in this area in foreign languages. But it is not enough. A systemic strategic communications effort is needed, aimed at exposing the hypocrisy of our adversaries' words versus their deeds. Nor domestically have we figured out how to address the issue of on-line violent Islamist extremism. Although this challenge appeared on White House radar years ago and a strategy to address "on-line violent extremist radicalization" was promised by the White House in 2011, this significant and complex undertaking was instead treated in a cursory blog post earlier this year.[24]

CONCLUSION

The bottom line is that we must not take our foot off the gas pedal when it comes to U.S. counterterrorism efforts. Now is not the time to offer our adversaries time and space in which to expand and entrench, or further regroup and reconstitute.

This admonition is all the more important as the United States prepares to conclude the combat role of its military forces in Afghanistan in 2014. The decision on whether to retain or remove U.S. and allied forces from Afghanistan raises a host of strategic issues. Strictly from a tactical counterterrorism perspective however, U.S. withdrawal is a concern, just as it was in Iraq.[25]

Indeed, nature abhors a vacuum; and there is no shortage of actors hostile to the United States who presently seek to exploit a range of ungoverned and under-governed spaces worldwide (failed and failing states), as well as transitional circumstances such as those that prevail in Egypt.[26] Accordingly, along with our allies, we must continue to target the leaders of foreign terrorist organizations, and their military and operational planners.

AQAP is just one of many organizations that demand the attention of U.S. law enforcement and intelligence officials as well as our military forces. Al-Qaeda, its affiliates, and those inspired by al-Qaeda's ideology have by no means been defeated.[27] The United States must therefore meet the challenge posed by its adversaries with equal determination, patience, and resolve.

Thank you once more for the opportunity to testify before you today. I look forward to trying to answer any questions that you may have.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Mr. Cilluffo.

Our next witness, Katherine Zimmerman, is a senior analyst and the al-Qaeda movement's team lead for the American Enterprise Institute's Critical Threats Project. Her work is focused on al-Qaeda's affiliates in the Gulf of Asia region, and associated movements in West and in Northern Africa. She specializes in the al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and al-Qaeda's affiliate in Somalia, al-Shabaab.

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[24] Frank J. Cilluffo and Sharon L. Cardash, "It's the Ideology, Stupid," The National Interest (June 3, 2013) *http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/It%27s%20the%20ideology,%20stupid.pdf.* Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Working to Counter Online Radicalization to Violence in the United States," The White House Blog (February 5, 2013) *http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/02/05/working-counter-online-radicalization-violence-united-states.*

[25] Frank J. Cilluffo and Sharon L. Cardash, "Baghdad Surprise?" HSPI Commentary (August 20, 2010) *http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/commentary17_BaghdadSurprise.pdf.*

[26] Frank J. Cilluffo and Sharon L. Cardash, "Tumult in the Middle East: When and Where Will the Next Shoe Drop?" HSPI Commentary (February 17, 2011) *http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/commentary021_mideast.pdf.*

[27] Katherine Zimmerman, "The Al Qaeda Network: A New Framework for Defining the Enemy," A Report by AEI's Critical Threats Project (September 2013) *http://www.criticalthreats.org/sites/default/files/pdf_upload/analysis/Zimmerman_the_al_-Qaeda_Network_September_2013.pdf.*

Recently, Ms. Zimmerman released a new report entitled "The al-Qaeda Network: A New Framework for Defining the Enemy," which informs American policy and decision makers on the composition of the al-Qaeda network, and raises concerns with the lack of evolution in U.S. counterterrorism policy to target the whole network.

Ms. Zimmerman, thank you for being here today, and you are recognized. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF KATHERINE L. ZIMMERMAN, SENIOR ANALYST CRITICAL THREATS PROJECT, THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE

Ms. ZIMMERMAN. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Higgins, thank you for including me in this important hearing on the threat to the—about the United States homeland from AQAP. I would like to highlight my understanding of AQAP's role in the al-Qaeda network presented in my prepared testimony.

America's failure to understand the complexities of the al-Qaeda network as it has evolved over the years has led only to tactical successes on the battlefield. The strategy to disrupt the network by killing senior leaders in a core group is based on a faulty understanding that overemphasizes al-Qaeda core centrality to the network.

There is no single group at the heart of the al-Qaeda network today. Instead, the network strength now lies in interwoven connections between regional al-Qaeda groups, as well in the ties between those groups and the core. The al-Qaeda network has evolved and our strategy must change with it.

AQAP does pose the most direct threat to the U.S. homeland from al-Qaeda. But it must be examined in the context of the entire network. The most significant change occurred in 2009 when AQAP created a new model for the role of groups in the al-Qaeda network. It focused its efforts on the far war against the United States, and it began to foster relationships with other groups.

AQAP is the first known example of an affiliate or an associate directing an attack against the U.S. homeland, an effort the group has continued to prioritize. It also provides training to, and shares resources with al-Qaeda groups in a manner that is characteristic of Osama bin Laden's group in the 1990s and 2000s.

The previous model for the al-Qaeda network held that franchises were subordinated to a core, conventionally understood to be the al-Qaeda leadership in Pakistan. Al-Qaeda core maintains command and control over its regional affiliates and directed external operations. This model no longer holds true.

Al-Qaeda's expansion in 2011 and 2012 is explained as fallout from the weakening of the core group. But there is an alternative explanation.

The Arab Spring and bin Laden's death in 2011 served as a catalyst for change in the network. Other affiliates adapted to AQAP's model and cultivated intergroup connection spanning the region. These connections facilitate broader coordination and cooperation within the al-Qaeda network and it increases overall resiliency.

Today AQAP's prominence in the al-Qaeda network, or the appointment of its leader to the No. 2 position in al-Qaeda, should not

be interpreted to mean that AQAP has risen to replace the core group in Pakistan, or that it is directing the network. There are three main points to emphasize.

First, there is no group at the heart of the network. It is not centrally organized or directed. The senior leadership in Pakistan maintains an advisory role and provides strategic guidance, but it no longer issues directives.

Therefore, operations specifically targeting a single group, including AQAP, would have a limited overall effect. Such a strategy has allowed al-Qaeda's affiliates in Iraq, Syria, and West Africa to expand virtually unchecked, and has ignored the growth of associates across North Africa, especially in Libya.

Second, the lateral connections, relationships among al-Qaeda core, its affiliates and associates, create an interwoven structure. The structure is what gives the network its strength. Al-Qaeda groups are able to interact without running relations through a central node, creating a much more dispersed network.

Finally, the entire al-Qaeda network, including groups operating solely at the local level, must be considered when devising a strategy to counter it because of the existence of the interwoven structure. Any additional connections through added individuals or added groups strengthens the overall network.

Al-Qaeda today bears little resemblance to the network in 2001. Yet America's strategy to counter it remains largely unchanged. The network is global, and therefore the United States needs a comprehensive global strategy.

Al-Qaeda extends beyond the commonly-known affiliates, AQAP, al-Qaeda in Iraq, among others, to local groups that operate at the grassroots level. These local groups understand local grievances and respond to shifts in popular sentiment on the ground. Any strategy to counter the al-Qaeda network must recognize the role of these groups.

Including them as part of the network does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the United States must deploy forces or invest heavily in military assets where the al-Qaeda network is active. But it does require that policymakers invest in a substantial effort to develop a global strategy with local solutions.

Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Higgins, if I could leave you with one take-away from my testimony and research, the view that this is no longer George Bush's al-Qaeda, but we are still fighting with George Bush's tactics. The enemy has transformed, and if we want to win our strategy must transform with it. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Zimmerman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KATHERINE L. ZIMMERMAN

SEPTEMBER 18, 2013

The United States continues to face a threat from the al-Qaeda network 12 years after declaring war against it. America's failure to understand the complexities of the terrorist network as it has evolved over the years has led only to tactical successes on the battlefield. The strategy to disrupt the al-Qaeda network by killing senior leadership in a "core group" is based on a faulty understanding that overemphasizes that group's importance and the current intentions of affiliates to attack the United States. This strategy has been ineffective in dismantling the network overall. Al-Qaeda today bears little resemblance to the network in 2001, yet America's strategy to counter it remains largely unchanged.

The al-Qaeda network has moved away from a centrally organized network over the years. Al-Qaeda's strength and resilience now lies in the latticed interconnections between regional al-Qaeda groups, as well as in the ties between those groups and the center. The most significant inflection point occurred in 2009 when al-Qaeda's Yemen-based affiliate, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), established a new model for the role of groups in the al-Qaeda network. AQAP focused its efforts on the far war against the United States and began to foster relationships with other groups. The Arab Spring and Osama bin Laden's death in 2011 served as a catalyst for change in the network: Other affiliates, too, adapted to AQAP's model and cultivated inter-group connections spanning the region. These connections facilitate broader coordination and cooperation within the al-Qaeda network, and have increased its overall resiliency.

Targeting individuals or a specific group within the al-Qaeda network will not be effective alone. Such a strategy has allowed al-Qaeda's affiliates in Iraq, Syria, and West Africa to expand virtually unchecked and has ignored the growth of associated groups across North Africa, especially in Libya. The al-Qaeda network is global and operates on a global level. Many al-Qaeda groups operate solely on the local level, but they strengthen the broader network. The United States, therefore, needs a comprehensive global strategy to counter al-Qaeda that is tailored down to the local level.

Case Study: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

The most direct threat to the U.S. homeland today emanates from AQAP, which has attempted to attack the United States homeland at least three times since its establishment in January 2009. The affiliate is also behind the threat stream that prompted the unprecedented closure of over 20 American diplomatic posts across the Middle East and North Africa.

AQAP's prominence in the al-Qaeda network should not be interpreted to mean that AQAP has risen to replace the core group in Pakistan or that it is directing the network in some way. It must be interpreted within the broader context of the al-Qaeda network. AQAP is an extremely capable terrorist group that is a member of a network of other groups all operating in similar manners. Its prominence is a reflection of its capabilities and its prioritization of conducting attacks against the United States, not the subordination of other groups to AQAP.

BACKGROUND

A January 2009 video announced the establishment of AQAP as a merger between al-Qaeda's Yemeni and Saudi branches. The video identified four AQAP leaders: Two former Guantanamo detainees (Said al Shihri and Mohamed al Awfi) and two escaped Yemeni prisoners (Nasser al Wahayshi and Qasim al Raymi). Saudi al-Qaeda operatives, including at least five former Guantanamo detainees who had gone through Saudi Arabia's rehabilitation program, had fled to Yemen in the late 2000s to escape the crackdown on al-Qaeda in the Kingdom. They began operating with al-Qaeda in Yemen, which was on the path to being reconstituted after having been essentially neutralized in 2002–2004. The February 2006 escape of 23 al-Qaeda operatives from a Sana'a prison, including Wahayshi and Raymi, revitalized al-Qaeda in Yemen.

AQAP's rapid ascendancy in Yemen profited from the expertise of individuals who had been active in the al-Qaeda network for years and from the relatively free environment in which these individuals could operate. The senior echelon of AQAP's leadership structure had decades of combined experience. Many of the senior leaders had trained at al-Qaeda's al Farouq training camp or elsewhere in Afghanistan, some were members of Osama bin Laden's direct human network, and nearly all had been active in the al-Qaeda network before the 9/11 attacks. Yemen's weak central government, then headed by President Ali Abdullah Saleh, did not exert direct control over its territory and in August 2009 dedicated scarce security resources to fighting the sixth iteration of a rebellion in the north.[1] The Yemeni government also prioritized putting down a rising secessionist movement in the south over counterterrorism operations against AQAP. The permissive security environment along with the leadership's experience facilitated al-Qaeda's full reconstitution in Yemen in 2009.

The group continued the small-scale attacks that al-Qaeda in Yemen had been carrying out. But it also began to focus on external operations against Saudi and American targets. AQAP's first major external operation targeted the Saudi deputy

[1] For more on the al Houthi wars, see Christopher Boucek, "War in Saada: From Local Insurrection to National Challenge," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 2010, *http://carnegieendowment.org/files/war_in_saada.pdf*.

interior ministry in August 2009. Ibrahim al Asiri, the group's top bombmaker, designed an explosive device that was concealed as a suppository in his brother's body. The remotely-detonated bomb failed to kill the Saudi official. A second plot to hit Saudi targets failed in October when a firefight with Saudi border patrolmen killed Yousef al Shihri and Raed al Harbi, who were smuggling explosives in to Saudi Arabia.[2] AQAP became the first affiliate to target the U.S. homeland in December that year. Asiri modified the design for Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who conducted the December 2009 attack. Asiri concealed Abdulmutallab's bomb in his underwear. The device passed successfully through airport security, but failed to detonate.[3] The attack shone a spotlight on the al-Qaeda affiliate and within a month, the U.S. designated AQAP, Wahayshi, and Shihri under Executive Order 13224.[4]

The al-Qaeda affiliate was capable of maintaining two lines of operations by 2010. It continued to pursue attacks on American targets, evidenced by the October 2010 parcel plot. It also increased its focus on fighting the Saleh government, which, under U.S. and international pressure, had begun to intensify its operations against AQAP.[5] The retraction of the Yemeni central state into the capital, Sana'a, due to the political unrest in winter 2011 opened up space for AQAP. The group fielded an insurgent arm operating under the name "Ansar al Sharia" in spring 2011 that seized and held territory in south Yemen. AQAP briefly governed in certain areas, but more significantly, expanded its area of operations outside of its historical terrain. AQAP continues to have a presence in many of these regions, though it has not held territory since spring 2012. Its operatives have also regularly targeted Yemeni political and military officials for assassination, a strategy employed in 2010 and resumed as of 2012.

AQAP poses the most direct threat to the U.S. homeland out of the al-Qaeda network. It incorporated lessons learned from the experience of al-Qaeda in Iraq in building popular support when its insurgent arm, Ansar al Sharia, tried its hand at governance in 2011 and 2012 (though it ultimately failed). It has responded to shifting conditions on the ground and has attempted to appeal to Yemen's various anti-government groupings. It has innovated in the design of its explosive devices and repeatedly attempted, with success, to penetrate American National security defenses. Though the affiliate is extremely capable in its own right, it must be examined in the context of the entire al-Qaeda network.

*New Model for al-Qaeda Affiliates and Associates**

A major inflection point for the al-Qaeda network occurred with the establishment of AQAP. The Yemen-based affiliate created a new model for the role of groups in the al-Qaeda network by the end of 2009. The previous model held that groups in the network were subordinated to a "core" group. That core group, which was the al-Qaeda leadership in Pakistan, maintained command and control over its regional affiliates and directed external operations. AQAP is the first known example of an affiliate or an associate directing an attack against the U.S. homeland, an effort the group has continued to prioritize. It also provided training and shared resources with al-Qaeda associates in a manner characteristic of bin Laden's group in the 1990s and early 2000s. The new model indicates that the network is no longer centrally organized or directed, but continued relations between the "core" and AQAP indicate a continued advisory role for the central group.

The December 2009 attack on Detroit-bound Northwest Airlines Flight 253 was the first attack from the al-Qaeda network on the U.S. homeland directed by an affiliate, as previously mentioned. U.S. court documents related to the case against the underwear bomber, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, provide the details of the

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[2] "Killed Militants Planned 'Imminent' Attack: Saudi," *Agence-France Press,* October 19, 2009, *http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jPLO7NB9gaJCikLRqTXEklkdMAHQ.*

[3] For further analysis, see Chris Harnisch, "Christmas Day Attack: Manifestation of AQAP Shift Targeting America," AEI's Critical Threats Project, December 29, 2009, *http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/christmas-day-attack-manifestation-aqap-shift-targeting-america.*

[4] Philip Crowley, "Designations of Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Senior Leaders," U.S. Department of State Press Statement, January 19, 2010, *http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/01/135364.htm.*

[5] James Gallagher, "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula in 2010: The Intensification of the Near War," AEI's Critical Threats Project, March 8, 2011, *http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/aqap-2010-intensification-near-war-march-8-2011.*

* Al-Qaeda affiliates are groups that have publicly pledged allegiance to the al-Qaeda emir and have in turn received public recognition as part of al-Qaeda by the al-Qaeda emir. Al-Qaeda associates are groups that exhibit a sufficient number of characteristics common within the al-Qaeda network such as shared resources, overlapping fighter or leadership networks, a common signature, and ideological alignment with al-Qaeda.

plot.[6] Abdulmutallab sought out Yemeni-American cleric and AQAP senior operative Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen, and, after getting in touch through an intermediary and submitting a letter to al-Awlaki, spent 3 days with the cleric. Al-Awlaki connected him to the bombmaker, Ibrahim al Asiri, who explained the plan. Abdulmutallab received specialized training on the explosive device and basic military training at one of AQAP's training camps. He then received orders from al-Awlaki to detonate the bomb over U.S. airspace and Asiri provided him with the bomb itself. Osama bin Laden mentioned the AQAP-directed attack in a message directed at President Barack Obama, but did not claim credit for it.[7] AQAP's deputy leader, Said al Shihri, claimed credit for the attack in February 2010.

The Yemen-based affiliate has attempted to attack the U.S. homeland at least two more times since December 2009. It shipped two explosive devices disguised as printer cartridges in October 2010. The bombs were only discovered with the assistance of Saudi intelligence. AQAP tried again in May 2012 when it innovated on the underwear-bomb design. That plot was uncovered and thwarted by American and foreign intelligence agencies. It is likely that AQAP leadership still seeks to attack the U.S. homeland.

AQAP has fostered relations with other groups in the al-Qaeda network. (See figure 1.) It has an established relationship with al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda's affiliate in Somalia. It provided explosives and basic military training to at least one al-Shabaab operative in 2010 and 2011.[8] AQAP also facilitated al-Shabaab's communications with al-Qaeda "core," though al-Shabaab also appeared to have a line of communications that ran outside of Yemen as well.[9] Multiple sources document the movement of fighters across the Gulf of Aden.[10] The Arab Spring presented AQAP with the opportunity to develop additional relationships. It purportedly supported the establishment of an al-Qaeda-linked cell in Egypt under the leadership of Mohamed Jamal Abu Ahmed by sending him fighters and funding.[11] Mohamed Jamal, a former member of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, knew AQAP leaders Nasser al Wahayshi, Adil al Abab, and Qasim al Raymi.** The *Wall Street Journal* reported that Jamal's group was connected to the September 11, 2012 attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya.[12]

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[6] "Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab Government's Sentencing Memorandum," United States District Court, Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division, February 10, 2012, *http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/documents/umar-farouk-abdul-mutallab-sentence-brief.pdf*.

[7] The bin Laden statement, an audio statement that runs just over a minute, was released through al Jazeera on January 24, 2010 and then through the al Fajr forum on February 16, 2010. "Bin Laden Warns US of More Attacks," al Jazeera, January 24, 2010, *http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2010/01/201012415287209336.html;* "Al-Fajr Releases Bin Laden Message to Obama," SITE Intelligence Group, February 16, 2010. Available by subscription through *www.siteintelgroup.com*.

[8] "United States of America vs. Ahmed Abdulkadir Warsame," United States District Court, Southern District of New York, July 5, 2011, *http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/world/Warsame_Indictment.pdf*.

[9] Brian Bennett, "Al-Qaeda's Yemen Branch Has Aided Somalia Militants, U.S. Says," *Los Angeles Times,* July 18, 2011, *http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jul/18/world/la-fg-bin-laden-somalia-20110718*.

[10] Martin Plaut, "Somalia and Yemen Swapping Militants," *BBC,* January 17, 2010, *http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8463946.stm*, Casey Coombs, "African Militants Learn from al-Qaeda in Yemen," *Global Post,* September 10, 2012, *http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/war/conflict-zones/120907/al-qaeda-arabian-peninsula-yemen-somalia-al-shabaab-gulf-aden*.

[11] "State Security Prosecution Present Nasr City Cell File to Public Prosecutor for Transfer to the Criminal Court," Youm7, February 6, 2013 [Arabic], *http://www1.youm7.com/News.asp?NewsID=935561&*.

** Mohamed Jamal had been imprisoned under Hosni Mubarak's regime, but was released in 2011. He was arrested in 2012 and is incarcerated in Egypt.

[12] Siobhan Gorman and Matt Bradley, "Militant Link to Libya Attack," *Wall Street Journal,* October 1, 2012, *http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444549204578020373-444418316.html*.

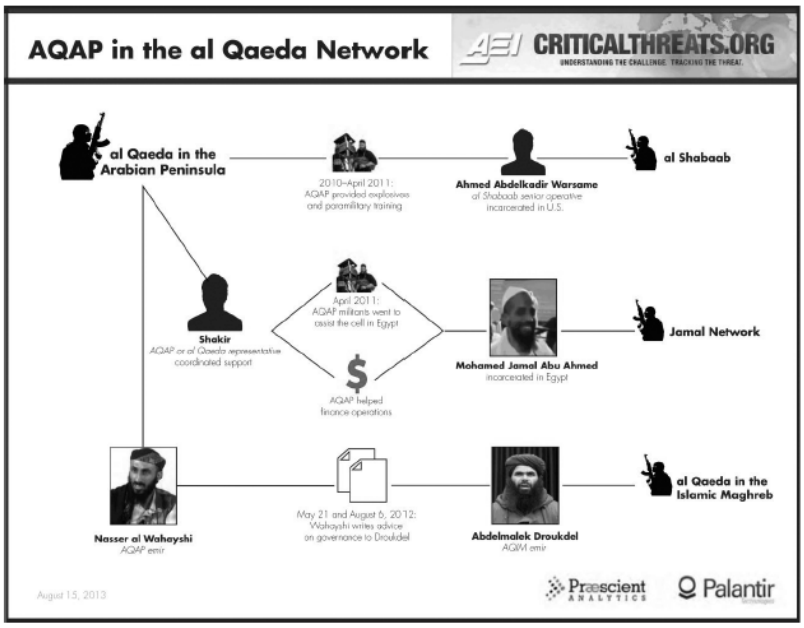

Figure 1: AQAP in the al Qaeda Network
Originally published in Katherine Zimmerman, "The al Qaeda Network: A New Framework for Defining the Enemy."

Nasser al Wahayshi, AQAP's emir, was also in direct contact with Abdelmalek Droukdel, AQIM's emir, and the al-Qaeda core leadership in Pakistan, in addition to al-Shabaab's leadership. Two separate letters recovered in a document cache in Timbuktu, Mali, reveal Wahayshi's counsel to Droukdel.[13] In his first letter, dated May 21, 2012, Wahayshi congratulated Droukdel on his progress in Mali and compared AQIM's relationship with Ansar al Din (an ethnically Tuareg militant Islamist group) with AQAP's Ansar al Sharia. He advised Droukdel that AQIM could generate support by providing basic services and fulfilling daily needs, like food and water. In his second letter, dated August 6, 2012, Wahayshi explained AQAP's loss in south Yemen against the Yemeni security forces and cautioned Droukdel against declaring an emirate when he would not be able to fulfill the role of a state.*** Wahayshi also mentioned he held communications from the core group for Droukdel.

Today, AQAP continues to seek to attack the United States and to nurture lateral connections with other groups in the al-Qaeda network. It is believed that a credible threat stream from the Arabian Peninsula, where AQAP operates, instigated the closure of diplomatic posts across North Africa and the Middle East. Like other groups in the al-Qaeda network, AQAP preferenced its local fight against the Yemeni government during the Arab Spring, but it was also able to sustain a second operational line devoted to attacking the United States. Other al-Qaeda groups follow the model established by AQAP today, though many have yet to develop the capabilities to conduct an attack against the United States and to support such efforts.

The implications for this new model for al-Qaeda groups are far-reaching when studying the al-Qaeda network. First, there is no group at the heart of the network. The core group in Pakistan maintains a mediatory or advisory role, but it no longer issues directives. Therefore, operations specifically targeting a single group, including AQAP, would have a limited overall effect on the network. Second, the lateral

[13] Rukmini Callimachi, "Yemen Terror Boss Left Blueprint for Waging Jihad," Associated Press, August 9, 2013, *http://bigstory.ap.org/article/yemen-terror-boss-left-blueprintwaging-jihad.* The letters are available here: *http://hosted.ap.org/specials/interactives/__international/__pdfs/al-qaida-papers-how-to-run-a-state.pdf.*

*** Osama bin Laden offered Wahayshi similar advice, but it appears to have been ignored in Yemen.

connections—relationships between al-Qaeda groups—create a latticed structure that adds to the resiliency of the network. This latticed structure is what gives the network its strength. And finally, the entire al-Qaeda network, including groups operating solely at the local level, must be considered when devising any strategy to counter the network because of the existence of the latticed structure.

COUNTERING THE AL-QAEDA NETWORK

The strategy in place to counter al-Qaeda today remains largely consistent with that adopted by the Bush administration in 2001. That strategy emphasizes the killing of senior leadership in the core group as the means by which to disrupt the network. Under this strategy, the United States also pursues localized train-and-assist programs to enable local militaries to counter the growth of al-Qaeda-linked groups. The network model around which this strategy was designed is one that holds there is a central group at the heart of the network. In 2001, this group was the one Osama bin Laden led directly, and it is often referred to as al-Qaeda core. The Obama administration grouped AQAP in with this central group after the December 2009 attack and began targeting both AQAP and al-Qaeda core senior leadership. The same occurred after the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan's (TTP) May 2010 Times Square bombing. The recent appointment of AQAP's emir Wahayshi to ma'sul al 'amm (general manager or al-Qaeda's No. 2 position), has even led to assertions that AQAP has replaced the core group.

The United States has been extremely successful at killing al-Qaeda, AQAP, and TTP senior leadership. The United States has killed four of the top five al-Qaeda leaders in Pakistan in the past 3 years, including Osama bin Laden, Sheikh Said al Masri, Atiyah Abd al Rahman, and Abu Yahya al Libi.[14] In Yemen, it has killed senior leader Anwar al-Awlaki, *USS Cole* bombers Abdul Munim al Fathani and Fahd al Quso, AQAP senior operative Mohamed Said al Umdah, spiritual leader Adil al Abab, and deputy leader Said al Shihri. The same is true for the TTP. AQAP and the TTP have both been able to regenerate leadership, limiting the long-term impact of U.S. operations. Al-Qaeda core is decimated, but such an effect required the dedication of significant U.S. military and intelligence assets and resources, and still, there are al-Qaeda senior operatives active today that are capable of leading the group. Partners' successes against al-Qaeda groups have been mixed, but overall, the network has expanded since the outbreak of the Arab Spring.

The strategy to counter AQAP relies on American direct action operations targeting AQAP leadership and on Yemeni counterterrorism operations to combat the group on the ground. As noted, U.S. targeted strikes have killed a number of AQAP's leaders. America's partner in Yemen has had limited success. Yemeni troops, partnered with local militias, re-captured territory under AQAP's control in the beginning of 2012. Yemen's security forces have not, however, been able fully clear the territory of AQAP's local network. They are also riven with low-level instances of insubordination, which may limit their overall effectiveness. Many of the conditions that created a permissive environment in Yemen remain in place, including grievances against the central government and local conflict over access to resources such as water. It is not clear that this strategy will be effective against AQAP.

America's tactical successes against al-Qaeda have not succeeded in weakening the overall network and probably will not have the desired effect. Instead, al-Qaeda is more expansive than it was at the beginning of 2011 and of 2001. Al-Qaeda's affiliate in Iraq has resurged and is conducting operations in both Iraq and Syria, for example.[15] It also supported the establishment of Jabhat al Nusra, al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate. The strengthening of these affiliates has strengthened the overall network. The targeting of a single group or select senior leadership has not disrupted the network, and only in Pakistan has it effectively weakened the al-Qaeda group. The failure to understand properly how the al-Qaeda network is operating today has confused U.S. strategy to counter it.

Al-Qaeda has evolved since 2001 and the network today is much more complex and resilient. The heart of the network is now its latticed structure, which is composed of the interconnections among al-Qaeda core, the affiliates, and the associ-

[14] Leon E. Panetta, "The Fight against al-Qaeda: Today and Tomorrow," (speech at the Center for New American Security, Washington, DC) November 20, 2012, *www.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=1737*.

[15] Jessica D. Lewis, "Al-Qaeda in Iraq Resurgent: The Breaking the Walls Campaign Part 1," The Institute for the Study of War, September 11, 2013, *http://www.understandingwar.org/report/al-qaeda-iraq-resurgent*.

ates.[16] The relationships among al-Qaeda groups facilitate inter-group cooperation and the sharing of resources. The network is global, and therefore the United States needs a comprehensive global strategy to counter it. Al-Qaeda groups operate on the local level, though, and have proven to be responsive to minute shifts in local conditions. America's strategy to counter al-Qaeda must not only be global, but it also must be tailored locally to respond directly to the local conditions. Only then will the United States be able to neutralize effectively the threat from the al-Qaeda network.

LOOKING FORWARD: THE AL-QAEDA NETWORK IN 2014

Afghanistan is extremely important to al-Qaeda and the global jihad movement because of its history. The mujahideen's fight against the Soviets was the birth of the global jihad movement and brought together the future senior leaders of what would come to be known as al-Qaeda. Osama bin Laden's first major alliance was with the Pashtun warlord Jalaluddin Haqqani, who offered sanctuary to bin Laden's forces and shared in bin Laden's vision. There, bin Laden founded al-Qaeda and he would return in 1996 to Haqqani's sanctuary with the Taliban's approval when he lost favor in Sudan.

President Barack Obama announced plans to draw down forces in Afghanistan and said that U.S. troop levels would be at 34,000 by February 2014. The American force posture in Afghanistan in the second half of 2014 and beyond remains unclear, and the bilateral security agreement discussions for a long-term American military presence in Afghanistan are formally suspended. Regardless of its shape, the reduced American military footprint will limit U.S. counterterrorism operations capabilities in the Afghanistan-Pakistan theater. Considerations extend beyond America's own military capabilities to those of the Afghan government: It must be able to sufficiently govern its territory to prevent civil war, the return of the Taliban, or significant power vacuums.[17] If not, there is the risk that progress made in Afghanistan will be reversed.

Retreat from Afghanistan in any form will be a victory for al-Qaeda and will feed into its propaganda. Al-Qaeda's objective in Afghanistan has been to defeat the American military the way that the mujahideen defeated the Soviet military in 1989. The Soviet-supported Afghan government, under Mohammed Najibullah, faced a continued insurgency and collapsed in 1992, opening the space for the eventual rise of the Taliban. It is probable that today's insurgency in Afghanistan would continue after the withdrawal of American and international troops and would challenge the survival of the Afghan government. Afghanistan's political elite is also increasingly consumed by the upcoming presidential elections in April 2014, the outcome of which will determine the longevity of the country's constitutional system.[18] These conditions set the stage for the possible return of al-Qaeda to Afghanistan.

Al-Qaeda's return to Afghanistan would have a resounding effect on the network. Al-Qaeda associates in Afghanistan such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, weakened by the American and international military presence, would probably resurge and destabilize the region. Jalaluddin Haqqani's son, Sirajuddin, who heads the Waziristan-based Haqqani network, would likely seek to regain territory in Khost, Paktika, and Paktia provinces in Afghanistan and would almost certainly maintain his group's partnership with the Afghan Taliban, possibly positioning the Haqqani network to extend beyond its previous territories. The Haqqani network would also probably maintain its ties with al-Qaeda given the Haqqanis' ideological sympathies and trajectory of supporting the group over the past 25 years.[19] Such a relationship may translate to support for al-Qaeda in Haqqani-controlled territory. The al-Qaeda-run training camps in Afghanistan in the 1990s churned out leaders of militant Islamist groups in Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya, among others. Today, these groups are members of the al-Qaeda network. Though freedom of movement for al-Qaeda operatives is more limited now than in the past, the resumption of mil-

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[16] See Katherine Zimmerman, "The al-Qaeda Network: A New Framework for Defining the Enemy," AEI's Critical Threats Project, September 10, 2013, *http://www.criticalthreats.org/al-qaeda/zimmerman-al-qaeda-network-new-framework-defining-enemy-september-10-2013*.

[17] "Why We Must Win in Afghanistan," American Enterprise Institute, October 17, 2012, *http://www.aei.org/issue/foreign-and-defense-policy/why-we-must-win-in-afghanistan/*.

[18] Mara Tchalakov, "The Northern Alliance Prepares for Afghan Elections in 2013," The Institute for the Study of War, August 23, 2013, *http://www.understandingwar.org/report/northern-alliance-prepares-afghan-elections-2014*.

[19] Vahid Brown and Don Rassler, *Fountainhead of Jihad: The Haqqani Nexus, 1973–2012* (London: C. Hurst and Co. Ltd., 2013) 243.

itant training and religious indoctrination in Afghanistan would be a significant boost to the overall al-Qaeda network.

CONCLUSION

The United States still faces a significant threat from the al-Qaeda network. One of the reasons for this is that American strategy to counter al-Qaeda did not change as the network evolved. Tactical successes in Yemen or Pakistan will not lead to victory, and may be reversed should pressure on groups be removed. Understanding the latticed structure that forms the heart of the al-Qaeda network will more fully develop a picture of how the entire network is operating. Locally focused al-Qaeda groups, currently dismissed and at times ignored, are extremely important to the al-Qaeda network because of how they support the efforts of such groups as AQAP. Any strategy to counter the al-Qaeda network must recognize the role of these local groups in strengthening the network. Including them as part of the network does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the United States must deploy forces or invest heavily in military assets where the al-Qaeda network is active. It does require that policymakers invest in a substantial effort to develop a global strategy with local solutions to counter the entire al-Qaeda network.

We must fully understand the al-Qaeda network, and then, and only then, will we be in the position to craft a strategy to defeat it.

Mr. KING. Thank you very much.

Our next witness, Mr. Brian Katulis is a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress where his work focuses on U.S. and National security policy in the Middle East and South Asia. Excuse me.

Mr. Katulis has served as a consultant with—no reflection on Mr. Katulis—served as a consultant to numerous Government agencies, private corporations, and non-Government organizations in more than 2,000 countries including Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Egypt, and Colombia. From 1995 to 1998 he worked in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Egypt for the National Democratic Institute of International Affairs.

We welcome your testimony. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF BRIAN KATULIS, SENIOR FELLOW, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS

Mr. KATULIS. Great. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think you will hear that the panel today is in violent agreement on most issues. So what I wanted to do was highlight four points from my written testimony.

First, at the outset I want to highlight that more than a decade after the 9/11 attacks it is my assessment that the United States still lacks the overall ability to assess strategically whether the Government is properly matching resources to meet the threats posed by these various terrorist networks.

This picks up from a point that Katherine just made in her testimony that despite the great work by our military personnel and people serving in our intelligence agencies, and despite the tremendous leaps and advances in technology and our ability to target financial networks and other things. It has been a stunning revolution.

The United States still lacks this overall strategy that anticipates the emergence of new threats and nimbly changes our approach to adapt to these new networks. These networks are very adaptive. I think Congress has a very important role in pressing the Executive branch in this area to help the Nation become even more secure.

In sum, I think the United States still lacks clear metrics that can help senior policymakers assess whether the current strategic focus of U.S. efforts to protect the homeland has the right priorities, objectives, and tactics.

The USCT efforts against al-Qaeda in Yemen is a prime example of a series of tactical efforts producing some successes, some failures. But all of these efforts are nested in an overall weak strategy lacking sufficient focus on the long-term investments needed to produce sustainable security. So that is the first point.

Second point is mostly to echo much of what Frank and Katherine said about AQAP, and then what you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Higgins said in your opening testimonies about AQAP. It is the most dangerous organization. It is a hybrid form in that it has both local goals and the goal of attacking the United States and international targets. It is very dangerous for the reasons that we have all mentioned here.

It maintains a very strong regional focus, particularly against the governments of Yemen and Saudi Arabia. In addition to the actions it has undertaken against Saudi Arabia and Yemen, AQAP, as Frank mentioned, has served as a key interlocutor with a number of all al-Qaeda terrorist branches like al-Shabaab and AQIM, al-Qaeda in the Maghreb.

So this is the second point, to agree that this assessment is correct. There is not much disagreement about where AQAP is.

I think the third point I want to stress is more of an assessment on U.S. efforts against AQAP. I think since 2009 the United States has been increasingly involved in an air campaign against AQAP using a range of measures, air strikes in Yemen that escalated in 2012 up to about 54 according to some Open Source information.

Again, this policy has had several tactical successes in eliminating key al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula leaders. In fact the recent shift towards regional plots by AQAP, as evidenced by the recent regional embassy closures this summer, suggest a possible degradation of AQAP's capabilities to mount plots outside of the Middle East. A possible degradation of that ability, but I think AQAP still remains dangerous.

The main point I want to stress here is that I think we have a series of tactics focused on kinetic measures. That our policy in Yemen needs to focus more on what we can do to help the Yemenis help themselves, in building institutions, in building a stronger government so that they themselves are carrying this fight much more effectively, and eliminating threats in the long run.

That is where I think over the last 12 years in Yemen, in Iraq, in Afghanistan the United States has fallen short. That is where I think we need a more holistic assessment.

In closure, and the final point, fourth point I want to make is more towards the future and what we are likely to see in the region. AQAP, as I mentioned, is a hybrid organization that has this dual focus on international targets and regional targets.

However, what we have seen in the last 2 years in the upheaval in the Middle East, the proliferation of jihadist militant groups, presents I think a potential recruitment problem for AQAP and core al-Qaeda. In particular, Syria's civil war has provided a mag-

net for both jihadist funding and recruitment. The lawlessness in the Sinai in Egypt should concern all of us.

There is a bigger picture going on here. AQAP, I think, is facing some stresses because of that. It is facing greater competition from other jihadist groups for potential recruits. This competition may both serve to harm and help American interests by drawing jihadi funding and recruitment away from AQAP and towards more regionally-focused targets. But it could also spin out in ways that continue to present a threat for the United States in the long run.

In sum, and I will close here, is that our discussion on counterterrorism needs to be nested also in this complicated discussion about the broader upheaval in the Middle East because it needs to be much more interlinked to how these societies build their governments and build a much more capable, functioning security system for themselves.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Katulis follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BRIAN KATULIS

SEPTEMBER 18, 2013

Mr. Chairman and Members of the subcommittee: More than 12 years after the September 11 attacks, and 2½ years into the Middle East uprisings, the United States continues to face dangerous threats on a daily basis from that region of the world. Complicated security and political dynamics present new challenges for U.S. National security in the Middle East, and new threats posed by a number of Islamist terrorist networks affiliated with al-Qaeda in transition have emerged across the region.

That is why it is important to take opportunities such as today's hearing to step back from the daily events, assess the security implications of the recent changes in the Middle East, and focus in on the overall status of the al-Qaeda network and the particular threats posed by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, or AQAP.

At the outset, it is worth noting that more than a decade after the September 11 attacks transformed the way we as a Nation view these threats, the United States still lacks the overall ability to assess strategically whether the Government is properly matching resources to meet the threats posed by these various terrorist networks.

The United States has invested in many new sophisticated means to collect intelligence against a range of terrorist networks, and it has substantially enhanced its capabilities to take action against these networks through various kinetic actions, targeting financial networks, and countering propaganda produced by terrorist groups. The use of new technologies and weapons systems by the United States has been a stunning revolution. The U.S. Government has become more capable in reacting and responding to new threats.

But the United States still lacks an overarching strategy that anticipates the emergence of new threats and adapts nimbly to fast changes within terrorist networks. America's ability to assess the overall strategy to counter terrorist networks around the world remains limited and hampered by bureaucratic challenges. In sum, the United States still lacks clear and discernible metrics that can help senior policymakers assess whether the current strategic focus of all U.S. Government efforts to protect the homeland from terrorist attacks has the right priorities, objectives, and tactics to reinforce the strategy. The U.S. counterterrorism efforts to respond to the threats posed by AQAP in Yemen is a prime example of a series of tactical efforts producing some successes and some failures, but all of these efforts are nested in a weak overarching strategy lacking sufficient focus on the long-term investments necessary to help produce sustainable security.

CURRENT STATE OF AL-QAEDA AND AL-QAEDA IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

Since 2008, al-Qaeda's core organization in Pakistan has suffered a series of severe losses, including the death of founder Osama bin Laden at the hands of U.S. forces in 2011. These continuing losses have sufficiently harmed the group such that, according to the U.S. director of national intelligence's March 2013 worldwide

threat assessment, core al-Qaeda "is probably unable to carry out complex, large-scale attacks in the West."[1] As a result, the major threats posed by al-Qaeda are increasingly less about the core organization that attacked the United States on September 11, 2001, and more related to a series of local and regional organizations sharing a common ideology.

The most dangerous of these more local organizations is AQAP, which represents a hybrid of the transnational core al-Qaeda organization on the one hand and largely regional groups like al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, or AQIM, or the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, or ISIS. Whereas core al-Qaeda remains focused on global strategic goals, groups such as AQIM and ISIS focus primarily on national or regional objectives. By contrast, AQAP pursues both local goals and attacks against the United States and other international targets.

One possible reason for this hybrid focus is a stronger organizational tie between AQAP and core al-Qaeda. Yemen served as a core al-Qaeda communications hub prior to the 9/11 attacks. Before 9/11, al-Qaeda elements attacked the *U.S.S. Cole* in Aden in October 2000. AQAP's leader, Nasir al-Wuhayshi, had served as bin Laden's personal secretary and was in Afghanistan prior to the fall of the Taliban in 2001. He was also part of the February 2006 jailbreak in Yemen that preceded the formation of AQAP, and was tapped this summer to serve as core al-Qaeda's "general manager" by Ayman al-Zawahiri.[2]

The 2006 jailbreak is a seminal moment that contributed to the eventual creation of AQAP. Along with Wuhayshi, 22 other jailed al-Qaeda members escaped. By September 2006, al-Qaeda in Yemen, or AQY, was conducting large-scale suicide terrorist attacks against Yemeni oil facilities. In 2008, AQY conducted a series of attacks against Western diplomatic and Yemeni government facilities, including an attack with multiple car bombs outside the U.S. embassy that killed 13 in September 2008.[3]

In January 2009, AQY merged with the remnants of the al-Qaeda organization in Saudi Arabia that had been conducting attacks in the Kingdom since 2003 to form AQAP. During the last 4 years, AQAP has come to form the most direct terrorist threat to the United States, as direct threats to U.S. homeland security from Pakistan reduced in part due to the aggressive counterterrorism efforts pursued since 2008 there.

In the past 4 years, AQAP has attempted multiple attacks against the United States, including the Christmas 2009 underwear bomb plot against a U.S.-bound airliner, the October 2010 parcel bomb plot, and most recently last summer's shutdown of U.S. diplomatic facilities across the Middle East. This threat has prompted the United States to become directly involved in Yemen, conducting an active campaign against AQAP in coordination with the Yemeni government and other governments in the region.

Moreover, AQAP has sought to foment "lone wolf" attacks in the West via propaganda such as the English-language *Inspire* on-line magazine. AQAP ideologues like Anwar al-Awlaki and *Inspire* have been implicated in several attacks, including the 2009 Fort Hood shooting and the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing.[4] Despite the elimination of al-Awlaki and *Inspire* editor-in-chief Samir Khan in a U.S. airstrike in September 2011, AQAP's desire to spread violence to the West by encouraging attacks by individuals heretofore unaffiliated with terrorist organizations remains. This approach has also been encouraged by core al-Qaeda leader Zawahiri in his latest tape recording.[5]

AQAP maintains a strong regional focus—particularly against the governments of Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Yemeni and Saudi officials have been the targets of AQAP attacks since the group's formation in 2009, most notably an attempt against Saudi Arabia's then-counterterrorism chief Prince Mohammed bin Nayef. Saudi intelligence also played a crucial role in disrupting a May 2012 AQAP plot to bomb a

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[1] James R. Clapper, "Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community," March 13, 2013, available at *http://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Intelligence%20Reports/2013%20ATA%20SFR%20for%20SSCI%2012%20Mar%202013.pdf.*

[2] Eric Schmitt and Mark Mazzetti, "Qaeda Leader's Edict to Yemen Affiliate Is Said to Prompt Alert," The New York Times, August 5, 2013, available at *http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/06/world/middleeast/qaeda-chiefs-order-to-yemen-affiliate-said-to-prompt-alert.html.*

[3] National Counterterrorism Center, "Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)," available at *http://www.nctc.gov/site/groups/aqap.html.*

[4] Caitlin Dewey, "Al-Qaeda's Inspire Magazine Celebrates Boston Bombings," The Washington Post, May 31, 2013, available at *http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2013/05/31/al-qaedas-inspire-magazine-celebrates-boston-bombings/.*

[5] James Gordon Meek, "al-Qaeda Leader Calls for Followers to Aim Lower in Attacks," ABC News, September 13, 2013, available at *http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/al-qaeda-leader-calls-followers-aim-lower-attacks/story?id=20250860.*

U.S.-bound airliner with an improved underwear explosive.[6] The threats posed by AQAP produced incentives for several countries in the region to work more closely with the United States on counterterrorism efforts, most notably Saudi Arabia, which hosts a drone base from which the United States conducts operations against AQAP in Yemen.[7]

Beyond direct action against the Saudi and Yemeni governments, AQAP has also served as a key interlocutor with other al-Qaeda-linked terrorist branches. For instance, AQAP has provided weapons and training to Somalia's al-Shabaab group according to the guilty plea of Ahmed Warsame.[8] AQAP leader Wuhayshi has also been in contact with the leaders of AQIM according to documents found in Mali following the French intervention against jihadist forces there in January 2013.[9]

Outside of its obvious role in Yemen, AQAP has played little role in the on-going political transitions in the region. A number of other jihadist groups have played more direct roles in North African states such as Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt. AQAP's influence there is likely limited to advice and possible support. In Yemen, AQAP has sought to take advantage of the chaos and uncertainty surrounding the transition from the Saleh regime to take and hold territory. However, this effort has been met with a U.S.-supported Yemeni government counteroffensive that has in part reversed AQAP's gains. AQAP's wider regional role has therefore been limited, which is somewhat expected given its previous focus on Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and the West.

ASSESSMENT OF U.S. EFFORTS AGAINST AQAP

The United States became directly involved in efforts against AQAP in December 2009, when the Obama administration launched a cruise missile strike against AQAP targets in order to prevent "an imminent attack against a U.S. asset."[10] (This strike is also believed to have unfortunately killed dozens of civilians.) The U.S. air campaign against AQAP began in earnest in May 2011, when the United States launched the first of 14 airstrikes in Yemen that year. Subsequently, the United States conducted 54 airstrikes in Yemen in 2012 and 23 thus far in 2013.[11]

This policy has scored several tactical successes in eliminating key AQAP leaders and helping the Yemeni government reverse AQAP's battlefield advances. In addition to al-Awlaki and Khan, U.S. airstrikes in Yemen have killed a number of AQAP leaders from Abdul Munim Salim al-Fatahani, Fahd al-Quso, and Muhammad Saeed al-Umda in 2012,[12] to Saeed al-Shehri, then AQAP's second-in-command, and Qaeed al-Dhahab in 2013.[13] In addition to their roles in AQAP, Fatahani and Quso

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[6] Sudarsan Raghavan, Peter Finn, and Greg Miller, "In Foiled Bomb Plot, AQAP Took Bait Dangled by Saudi Informant," The Washington Post, May 9, 2012, available at *http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-05-09/world/35456649_1_underwear-bomb-bomb-plot-al-qaeda.*

[7] Greg Miller and Karen DeYoung, "Brennan Nomination Exposes Criticism on Targeted Killings and Secret Saudi Base," The Washington Post, February 5, 2013, available at *http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/brennan-nomination-opens-obama-to-criticism-on-secret-targeted-killings/2013/02/05/8f3c94f0-6fb0-11e2-8b8d-e0b59a1b8e2a_story.html.*

[8] FBI, "Guilty Plea Unsealed in New York Involving Ahmed Warsame, a Senior Terrorist Leader and Liaison Between al-Shabaab and al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, for Providing Material Support to Both Terrorist Organizations," Press release, March 25, 2013, available at *http://www.fbi.gov/newyork/press-releases/2013/guilty-plea-unsealed-in-new-york-involving-ahmed-warsame-a-senior-terrorist-leader-and-liaison-between-al-shabaab-and-al-qaeda-in-the-arabian-peninsula-for-providing-material-support-to-both-terrorist-organizations.*

[9] Bill Roggio, "Wuhayshi Imparted Lessons of AQAP Operations in Yemen to AQIM," Long War Journal, August 12, 2013, available at *http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/08/wuhayshi_imparts_les.php.*

[10] Brian Ross and others, "Obama Ordered U.S. Military Strike on Yemen Terrorists," ABC News, December 18, 2009, available at *http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/cruise-missiles-strike-yemen/story?id=9375236.*

[11] New America Foundation, "U.S. Covert War in Yemen," New America Foundation, available at *http://yemendrones.newamerica.net/* (last accessed September 2013).

[12] Bill Roggio, "AQAP Operative Killed in Recent Drone Strike in Yemen," The Long War Journal, February 3, 2012, available at *http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/02/aqap_operative_kille.php;* Hakim Almasmari, "Senior al Qaeda Operative Killed By Airstrike in Yemen," CNN.com, May 7, 2012, available at *http://www.cnn.com/2012/05/06/world/africa/yemen-airstrikes;* Reuters, "FBI Chief in Yemen as Drone Kills AQAP Leader," April 24, 2012, available at *http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/24/us-yemen-idUSBRE83N0X-B20120424.*

[13] Alexander Marquardt, "al-Qaeda Leader Gets Lazy, Killed in Drone Strike, Terror Group Says," ABC News, July 17, 2013, available at *http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2013/07/al-qaeda-leader-gets-lazy-killed-in-drone-strike-terror-group-says/;* Al-Arabiya, "Al-Qaeda Confirms Death of Yemen Leader Qaeed al-Dhahab," September 15, 2013, available at *http://*

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were both believed to have been involved in the *Cole* bombing, and Quso likely was involved in supporting the 9/11 hijackers as well. Umda was believed to have been involved in the 2002 attack on the oil tanker Limburg.

The recent shift toward regional plots, as evidenced by the regional embassy closures this summer, suggests a possible degradation of AQAP's capability to mount plots outside the Middle East.

These tactical successes, however, are not reinforced by a broader, more coherent U.S. policy to promote Yemen's transition to democracy under President Abdo Rabu Mansour Hadi. There is an inherent tension between the long-term objective of supporting a transition to a stable democracy in Yemen and the short-term imperative of preventing terrorist attacks against the United States and our allies and partners in the region. This short-term imperative is being at a quicker speed than the more difficult problem of transitioning a developing country from authoritarianism to democracy. This transition cannot be accomplished at a pace that will solve the immediate and pressing security challenge presented by AQAP.

However, it is possible for the United States to try and better link these short- and long-term policies. Doing so will be difficult, but offers a chance to translate recent tactical success into long-term stability. President Hadi has recently outlined the progress made in Yemen's political transition,[14] and should be commended and supported as the transition continues. Encouraging Yemen's National Dialogue to be as inclusive as possible to include Southern Yemenis and those outside the capital, Sanaa, will be important, as will ensuring the Yemeni government meets its commitments on human rights and democratic reforms.

Of particular importance going forward will be support for security sector reform. Despite some progress in purging the security services of Saleh loyalists,[15] developing an effective and professional security sector capable of tackling AQAP with minimal U.S. support will likely take time.

In short, the United States should make every effort to sync up the imperatives of its short-term fight against AQAP with the long-term goal of a stable and developing Yemeni democracy that is able to provide for its own security. This effort will be difficult, but not impossible.

NEXT PHASE OF U.S. POLICY

The withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan next year is unlikely to have a major impact on either core al-Qaeda or AQAP. Assuming a bilateral security agreement between the United States and Afghanistan is concluded, U.S. forces will remain in Afghanistan to conduct operations against core al-Qaeda if and when necessary. However, core al-Qaeda is less important today than before its evisceration began in 2008. Branch al-Qaeda organizations such as AQIM and ISIS are likely to prove greater challenges to U.S. interests even if they do not directly target the U.S. homeland.

AQAP is a hybrid organization that maintains a dual focus on international targets such as the U.S. homeland and more local and regional goals such as fighting the Yemeni and Saudi governments. It will therefore rightly receive more attention from U.S. policymakers than AQIM, ISIS, or the myriad jihadist groups operating in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. While these groups operate in regions with equally good prospects for serving as a terrorist "safe haven," they do not as yet present the same direct threat to the U.S. homeland or regional interests as AQAP.

However, the proliferation of jihadist militant groups does present a potential recruitment problem for AQAP and core al-Qaeda. In particular, Syria's civil war has provided a magnet for both jihadi funding and recruitment. Increased lawlessness in the Sinai may prove a more attractive prospect for militants than fighting in Yemen, particularly in the wake of the Muslim Brotherhood's ouster from power in Egypt, and AQIM's activities in North Africa present another possible syphon of recruits and funding. In short, AQAP is facing greater competition from other jihadist groups for potential recruits. Paradoxically, this competition may both serve and harm American interests by drawing jihadi funding and recruitment away from AQAP, the only non-core al-Qaeda organization that directly targets the U.S. home-

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english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/09/15/Al-Qaeda-confirms-death-of-Yemen-leader.html.

[14] Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi, "Distancing the Past for a Brighter and Democratic Future," Yemen Times, September 15, 2013, available at *http://yementimes.com/en/1711/opinion/2887/Distancing-the-past-for-a-brighter-and-democratic-future.htm.*

[15] Holger Albrecht, "The Security Sector in Yemen" (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2013), available at *http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PB142-Security-Sector-in-Yemen.pdf.*

land, and toward various other groups that pose threats both to U.S. regional interests and the citizens of the region itself.

While it remains appropriate for U.S. policy to concentrate on the threat posed by AQAP, policymakers should begin re-evaluating the threat posed by al-Qaeda to take into account its evolution from the core organization that attacked the United States on 9/11. AQAP serves as an example of al-Qaeda's transition from a core organization based in Afghanistan and Pakistan with grandiose global objectives to a series of largely independent but mutually supportive branch offices with a more local and regional focus. These movements still pose a threat to the United States and its allies, but the nature of these threats are constantly changing.

These changes and transitions within terrorist networks such as AQAP require a more strategic and nimble policy approach by the United States. The Middle East has entered a difficult and complicated period of transitions, one that will likely be prolonged and will present new challenges for U.S. security. Syria's civil war, ongoing unrest in Egypt, Iran's role in supporting terrorist groups around the region, and the unsettled security situations in Yemen and Libya all present substantial challenges to U.S. security.

During the last 12 years, the United States has increased its capabilities to identify, target, and act against a range of terrorist networks operating in the Middle East. What it has not succeeded in doing is helping the countries and governments of the region develop their own institutions that possess sufficient capability and political legitimacy to produce the long-term gains necessary ultimately to defeat the threats posed by groups like al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Mr. Katulis. I thank all the witnesses for the testimony.

I think one thing that struck me is that the three of you come from such different perspectives yet all share the belief that AQAP and al-Qaeda and its affiliates and the whole al-Qaeda organization is so extremely dangerous to the United States. I agree with you. Probably many Members on this committee would agree with you. But I don't know if the American people share that knowledge at all.

Without getting into the whole Syria debate because I realize that is separate, but one of the reasons why I think people objected so much to Syria is that they are war-weary. They just somehow feel this is going on for so many years.

Quite frankly, without making this partisan, I wish the White House would talk more about what a real threat al-Qaeda is rather than saying bin Laden is dead and we are back to a pre-9/11 stage because in many ways I think it is more dangerous than it was before 9/11.

I guess I am asking for advice from you on how do we get that out to the public? Is the burden on us as elected officials, as people in the public eye? Without sounding like we are war-mongers and we just want a war never to end? I mean that is another expression that is used a lot, we can't have endless wars. This is almost as close to one as we are going to have, I think, certainly in our lifetimes and certainly over the next 5, 10 years.

Do you have any thoughts to that, as to how we can generate public intentions so we don't walk around and worry about being attacked every moment, but also realizing that we have an enemy that is 24/7 trying to find ways to kill us in many forms. I guess we will just go down the line.

Frank, Mr. Cilluffo.

Mr. CILLUFFO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think you raise a very significant set of issues that is playing out not only in respect to Syria, but on a whole host of different matters.

I think first and foremost it is being as transparent as we can be in terms of conveying the facts. Keep in mind, they are the ones who declared war, it is not the other way around. So as much as we can convey the information as clearly in a way that is not emotional but factually-based I think we have a responsibility, not just the Executive branch but the Legislative branch and those of us who study these issues. I think that is critically important as well.

Let me also suggest that I am very concerned that in a recent environment that the terrorists are learning from some of the leaks that continue to leak, like a sieve, from Washington. Most notably, they are going to alter their trade craft, whether it is their communications, whether it is their planning, and even their operations, I would argue, and I am probably in the minority on this panel here.

Think of suppressive fire. We can wait until the threat emanates and is in front of us or we can keep the adversary looking a little bit over their shoulder so they have less time to plot, train, and execute attacks. We need to continue to keep our foot, to one extent or another, on the gas pedal.

Let me also just underscore one thing that I think is the greatest missing dimension of our counterterrorism state craft since 9/11. This is to paraphrase a campaign manager for Bill Clinton. I am not suggesting I am talking to you guys, but in this case it is the ideology, that is stupid.

We have not gotten our arms around the ability to push back, expose, unpack the hypocrisy that al-Qaeda espouses. That is what makes AQAP unique. It is 11 editions of *Inspire,* and case after case after case after case will show that Anwar al-Awlaki played a role in some of the home-grown cases, as well as the foreign fighters.

I think Brian was spot-on. When you look at Syria you have got thousands of Western foreign fighters fighting along in Syria right now. What happens when they go home?

In the past you had seen AQAP was the first organization that truly went out of their way to try to recruit "cleanskins," as they would be referred to, those with the ability to travel freely. That is a big issue.

It is a very significant issue. Quite honestly we still have an awful lot to do. Part of that is just as much as we can without getting into emotion just laying out the facts and let the American people decide based on that.

Mr. KING. Ms. Zimmerman, don't worry about the time because there are only two of us so take whatever time you need to answer.

Mr. CILLUFFO. I have never had an unspoken thought.

Mr. KING. No, no.

Ms. ZIMMERMAN. Thank you.

I think that what I want to draw out is that, though we may be war-weary, al-Qaeda is still attempting to attack the United States, and that the strategy to counter it doesn't need to be solely based on a military strategy.

This draws on some of what Brian brought up in his testimony that al-Qaeda groups thrive in areas of lower, poor governance, and are able to take advantage of grievances against the Government

or local administrations, and are able to find traction where basic services are not being provided.

You can look at south Yemen in 2011, in the spring of 2011, as a very good example of how AQAP was able to be down on the ground at the local level and address basic grievances of the population and actually start taking control of territory. In the end it wasn't successful, but that example shows how al-Qaeda is attempting to take advantage of gaps in governance and gaps in basic services to build popular support.

I want to point you also to a letter from AQAP's leader to the leader of al-Qaeda's leader in Maghreb, which advised him and counseled him not to declare a state because then you have to provide all the goods and services of a state, but to be almost a state. That way the people would turn to you, but you are not to blame if you fail. I think that what we are seeing is al-Qaeda groups applying lessons learned, as Frank mentioned, and growing from there.

So we can start to counter al-Qaeda by countering issues in governance, in human rights and on the softer side where there is much broader appeal for the American people.

Mr. KING. How possible is that in Yemen, for instance, under the current government or the immediately previous government?

Ms. ZIMMERMAN. The current government is still very weak from its transition. But there is a lot of popular support still and hope for change. The National Dialogue, which is a process that has brought together opposition groups is actually wrapping up today, and final reports are due tomorrow from different various working groups that will move forward the transition process.

What Yemen needs, though, is a much longer-term investment from partners. It has long-term socioeconomic issues that are coming to the floor now and that are only going to grow worse. Unemployment rate, natural resources drawing down, these are issues that are going to come up in the next 5 to 10 years, and there doesn't seem to be a plan to address them.

So, some of the underlying challenges besides the terrorism problem in Yemen will come to the floor. As it has in the past, will likely distract the government from pursuing our interests in AQAP.

Mr. KING. Mr. Katulis.

Mr. KATULIS. On your initial question about this challenge, I share your concern. I think there is no substitute for Presidential leadership on this. I share your view on that as well.

But what I worry about in the last 6, 7 years, what I see up here is less of a bipartisan focus on how we can educate the American public about these threats. When you think about that decade post-9/11, and here it is both parties, different figures have been—you could blame them for this.

But I think often times Americans, ordinary Americans just see rancor, whether it is related to the budget negotiations or other things. Quite frankly, even the security issues. We have had a lot on that front.

I think Members of Congress, Senators and others, who are internationally-minded have a special responsibility to go out and educate the American public that these are long-term trends. Because if you look at both Republicans and Democrats, there are

strands within both parties that say who cares? Let's wash our hands of this and let's go home. There really needs to be a much more focused effort. Educating much in the same way I think we have all said here.

These are long-term challenges. If no one else will do this if the United States is not engaged in this.

One last point on that is in my travels in the Middle East, and I go once a month or so, and in my discussions with senior U.S. officials, including military officials, they make the point that what we do here at home as we address issues like our budget and problems here at home, or if we don't.

The perception of deadlock, the perception that we can't get anything done on those things that matter most to our own citizens here at home, it has an impact on our power, on our ability to actually shape those countries in the Middle East that we want to say we are a leader. It sends a very negative message.

Here again I am not assigning blame to anyone here. Here it is just the sense that there has been this rancor and it spills over overseas. It has this impact on if—our soft power, if you will.

If 10 or 15 years ago there was great admiration for our democracy and our ability to get things done in our economic system, when I go to Egypt, when I go to Yemen, when I go to these places, people have tuned out because they see a lot of division and they see the United States not leading anymore.

Yes, it comes back to our commander-in-chief and our President and how he talks about it in part. But it is also a broader point about our system and the special role that we all play in trying to foster a dialogue that I think keeps America engaged in these problems in the world.

Mr. KING. I wish there were some people here that were listening to you right now. I have a few of them in mind. But in any event—not Mr. Higgins.

With that I yield, sir. Blaming both parties. Yield to the Ranking Member.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Katulis, you had indicated that there is a competition, in essence, between al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and fighters that are gravitating toward both Iraq and Syria because of the instability there. So these are—but the other issue I—you know there has been a lot of talk the last couple of weeks about whether or not to strike militarily on Syria and what the consequence of that is.

You know if you look at the situation in Syria where you have—it is the last minority-led regime in the Middle East. First was Lebanon, then Iraq and now Syria. You tip that balance, Syria is probably 65 percent to 75 percent Sunni.

The opposition is really not that of a freedom and democracy movement. Its best fighters are al-Qaeda affiliates and Islamic extremists bent on creating an Islamist state in Syria.

I understand fundamentally that al-Qaeda thrives in failed states. Well, the whole region is failed, I mean it is a mess. So in—you know whatever we do anybody that tells you they know what the result of that is we should be skeptical of. Because you know whether it is in Afghanistan we helped the Mujahideen defeat the

Soviets in 1989. Then the Mujahideen basically facilitated the transfer of bin Laden from the Sudan in 1996 to Afghanistan, which created really the global jihadist movement. That is something that it could be said that we helped facilitate. Unknowingly, perhaps, but we did.

I was taken by your suggestions that America and our standing in the world is compromised when the rest of the world sees that America is not functioning well, or is in a state of dysfunction. I think that is particularly true today with social media.

You know none of these movements would be occurring in any of these places without the tools of collaboration and social media, Facebook, Twitter, and everything else. But those tools are used not only for organizational purposes, but they are also used for aspirational purposes as well.

The rest of the world can see how they are not living. If the United States is strong and prosperous and providing opportunities for all of its people, that, to me, is the most powerful influence in terms of people rising up and challenging the regimes that have kept them oppressed.

So I know I kind of said a lot there without a question, but I would like each of you to kind of comment on that.

Mr. KATULIS. Well, if I could just start out by saying almost 2 years ago, that 2½ years ago I testified before the subcommittee early in what some people called the Arab Spring. I never called it the Arab Spring, I called it the uprisings because we were uncertain about which way it would go.

Now it is more than 2 years into this. The uprisings have hit its terrible 2's or 3's. I have a 3-year-old, I can attest to that. It is very complicated. I wouldn't be completely negative.

One thing you said that struck me, and I will just respectfully disagree, is that the whole region is a mess. Yes, a good bit of it is. But in places like Tunisia and even in places like Yemen which are deeply complicated and there are lots of threats there, what Katherine said about the National Dialogue is spot-on. Those sorts of footholds are essential.

I think what I was trying to say in my first point we as a country have lacked an overarching strategy that actually defines what we would like to see in the long term in this region of the world. We have been hesitant to do that. George W. Bush didn't do it. Barack Obama has not done it.

We often define in the negative. We are going to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat terrorist networks. We need to continue to do that. But it doesn't actually tell the American public or tell ourselves what it is we actually need to help these societies create.

Now, we can't do it for them. That is the trickier part. But I think, I fear that we see complexity and see problems in places like Syria, and I completely agree with I think everything you said on Syria.

But I think we also still need to stay engaged and we need to actually figure out what is the long-term solution because what we are seeing in many of these places, especially in Syria, is the collapse of a state system potentially. Or at least it is creating these demographic, social, economic, and political pressures. All of these are linked together. That is one thing I wanted to stress is that the

terror threat is not dis-linked at all to the political situation in these countries.

In fact, places like Tunisia where you have an Islamist government, and many of these Islamists that are in power have common ideologies with some of these radical terrorist groups. But I do think that those non-radical groups that are in government now have some potential for marginalizing those radical groups, some potential.

But this is going to take decades. We ourselves can't shape and determine what will happen. But I think we can have a big influence if we actually work with others and work with countries in the region to figure out how to—what is our end-goal, which is what we are lacking right now.

Mr. CILLUFFO. Mr. Higgins, just to build on a couple of the points, because I think you raised a number of fundamental issues that go far beyond counterterrorism, but also touch on what is the U.S. role in the world. One thing I think we also need to acknowledge and recognize is U.S. credibility in the world once we start coming up with red lines and the like, not only with respect to Syria, but to others as well. So there are no very simple or easy questions here.

On the counterterrorism side, I think we really have to have the hard question of asking what is truly in the U.S. National interest. Here is where I am going to be a little hawkish.

I agree with everything that Brian and Katie raised and I am fans of their work. But at the end of the day we have got limited resources. We have got all sorts of problems brewing, including in our own country. We have got economic crises and challenges that we are going to have to get very focused in terms of what is in our greatest National interest.

So I still think that while I realize we will never kill and capture our way to victory, the kinetic instrument is still important. What we can't afford to do is get pulled into quagmires that are going to be long-term insurgencies that will actually foster what it is we are trying to prevent.

So short of that what are our limited options? I would argue we do have a responsibility, especially if you have got a threat directly facing the United States. Take some of the operational and military leadership of terrorist organizations.

I think that some of our soft, light-footprint-type special operations and light-footprint capabilities are critical to include drones which kind of get lost. Drones is a means to an end. It is a vehicle. It is not the end-state in itself. I will be the first to say that that is in itself insufficient. But at the end of the day, you also need to focus on the greatest National interest that is facing you at that time.

I would also argue sometimes short-term interests, if we move away after we address those could foster and pay us back in a very different kind-of way long-term if we don't continue to keep our eye on the ball.

So one thing on social media, keep in mind that many of these countries don't even have access given their regimes given that a, because they may not have access to smartphones and in other

cases where regimes are not permitting some of their citizens access to information. So that does cut both ways.

Clearly you have others co-opting and exploiting situations. Take Egypt, the intent may have been very different than what we see today. So who is in a position to seize and move in and take advantage of these vacuums? That is something we need to be thinking about and thinking about strategically.

On Syria there are no easy—there are no good solutions if you ask me. But this is not a hearing on Syria, so I will shut up.

Ms. ZIMMERMAN. I will be brief. I think that the point that I want to draw out here is the narrative that it doesn't matter what is happening in the rest of the world because we here at home are safe, and we need to deal with our own budget and economic issues.

No one can dismiss that the United States has its own domestic policy decisions to make. But I do want to push back on the idea that what is happening in Syria, what is happening in Egypt, some of the unrest that has started happening in Tunisia following the coup or the ousting of Morsi in July in Egypt, those do start to have an effect on the U.S. security because they set the long-term risk for Americans. Where they create conditions on the ground that let extremism thrive in a way that we haven't seen before.

That will, in the next few decades, come back to the United States in the same way that the ungoverned space that we saw in Afghanistan and Jahim permitted al-Qaeda to train. It was 10 years later that we saw al-Qaeda thrive at the beginning of 2001 and conduct the 9/11 attacks.

That is the message that I think has been missed in recent years is that for Americans we do very much depend on global security for our own National security and that the two are not entirely disconnected. Thank you.

Mr. KING. You mentioned earlier that *Inspire* magazine had been particularly effective in recruiting Americans. Samir Khan, who actually went to East Meadow High School right near my home, was American. He not just spoke English, he spoke American English, assumed to have a unique ability to impact young Americans, obviously young Muslim Americans.

I know that *Inspire* magazine has come back. But is it at the same level as it was in the Samir Khan, as far as being able to make that unique appeal to Americans as he seemed to have, and al-Awlaki, who was an American citizen, seemed to have?

Mr. CILLUFFO. I think that is a great question, Mr. Chairman. I would have said immediately following his death some of the editions that came out were grammatically wrong. They were very poor quality production. But what we saw post the Boston terrorist attack was at the same level, at least from a production standpoint.

I think what you are starting to see is in addition to the attempt to radicalize and recruit Westerners and Americans and others, they are getting much more focused on also terrorist tactics, techniques, and procedures. So the TTPs that basically are providing the how-to, do-it-yourself terrorism. That is a concern as well.

So it is teaching operational security. It is teaching how to not get pulled up by the law enforcement authorities, whether local or Federal. So I think you are starting to see a bit more focused on

TTPs. That does require—that is a concern, maybe of a different kind of level.

So I was thinking post al-Awlaki and Samir Khan that that would have been the end of *Inspire* as we saw it. Unfortunately, there is a very fluent English speaker, whether American, British, Australian, Canadian, I am not sure, but clearly someone who is fluent not only in the language but also culturally in our country. So it is a concern.

Again, I underscore almost every case of homegrown Islamist or jihadi-based terrorism had an al-Awlaki connection, at least from an inspirational perspective. You also see that in the United Kingdom. So it is a concern.

Mr. KING. Anybody else want to comment on this?

Mr. Cilluffo, in your testimony, and again, each of you can comment on this. You mentioned about the impact of leaks and the operational impact, the changes we have seen in al-Qaeda affiliates. Would you care to expand on that?

Mr. CILLUFFO. Mainly to underscore its significance. Think of it as having the playbooks of an offensive and defensive coordinator, if you are thinking football. That is pretty dangerous.

I was very concerned, not only in terms of how they can alter their operational security and trade craft from a communicating and planning perspective. But perhaps one of the most eye-opening documents was what al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and others in the broader al-Qaeda community are doing to try to protect themselves from drones.

The level of specificity that was in that document is quite damning. Obviously now the adversary knows what we know that they know, and that has big potential operational implications. I might underscore in that same document and in other reporting, all the principal foreign terrorist organizations also highlighted just how significant drones were. They were scared, very much so, about the efficacy of them.

Ms. ZIMMERMAN. I just want to echo that, but I wanted to add a little bit more. We have seen reporting from I believe it was *Washington Post* that specifically said that AQAP changed the way that it was communicating following the leaks this summer. That shows a reaction from the groups to our method, an adoptiveness that we have yet to actually overcome.

There is an idea that we will always have superior technology. But it will have to meet—be superior all the time if we are going to be able to glean the intelligence that we need. It needs to be unknown to the enemy, which means unknown to the public.

The other point is actually in *Inspire* magazine where initially the editors had sought questions and solicited articles using encryption software. At some point in the middle of the 11 issues there was a message in *Inspire* magazine saying that they were no longer asking because the encryption software was not working.

I have not been able to tie that to any specific information, but clearly the organization was very careful about seeing reflections of its own internal communications in the public sphere. So we need to be very aware of how the enemy is watching what we are doing as well.

Mr. KATULIS. Just real quick, these tools are essential for keeping America safe. When I mentioned the leaps in technology that we have seen in the last few years, that is what I was talking about. You talk to people who work in the intelligence community who work this day-in and day-out. These leaks are damaging beyond belief.

The one point I wanted to stress was in addition to those tools for collecting information, one place where I feel there is still a weakness after more than 12 years of being deeply engaged in the Middle East is our ability to actually collect human intelligence on these organizations.

We have become much more sophisticated in our technology, and that is a good thing. We should protect that as much as possible.

But it is still stunning to me the lack of depth of knowledge, the lack of Arabic speakers—and it takes a while, I speak Arabic myself—inside of the community. People that can embed themselves and understand not only the terrorist organizations, but also I think some of these Islamist groups that some of them are actually in power in some of these countries, and understanding the linkages, at least ideologically and in terms of heritage.

I am not saying that they are all linked together, but I think there was a bit of naivete about the Muslim Brotherhood and other things. Yes, they are separate and distinct from al-Qaeda. Yes, Ayman Zawahiri was arguing against the Muslim Brotherhood. But they do share a lineage, and there was a lack of depth, I think, inside of the U.S. Government of understanding just what the nature of these organizations were. I think it is something we should continue to press them on.

Mr. CILLUFFO. I hate to jump in because I already spoke too much. But to pick up on two very important points I think Brian raised, I mean human is critical in any counter. Only a human source is going to know when and where and why. So I think a human source, human enabled by technology, sure, but I think as much as we can invest there, critical.

But the bigger point being, think back to the Cold War. You had every war college. Everyone I knew was taking Russian in college. You had war colleges. You had whole institutions devoted to understanding the KGB, understanding the Soviets and understanding their mindset and what made them tick.

You don't see that today in the counterterrorism environment—either universities like ours and think tanks and institutions I think are feeling some of that. But not at the level of training that next generation, educating that next generation with the linguistic skills all the way through to understanding cultures, regions, and the like.

I just wanted to bring up one other point because I am very concerned about the leaks. But the flip side is, as both you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Higgins brought up, we also have a responsibility to have a dialogue with the American people.

So we need transparency, but we need to do it in a calibrated, smart kind of way. We have a responsibility to communicate with the American people on many of these issues.

But we also have to realize that it is not just the American people who are reading and learning. In fact, I would argue many

more non-Americans are learning from some of this information, and that includes obviously our enemies.

Mr. KING. Mr. Higgins.

Mr. HIGGINS. Yes. Just a couple things that have been said as well, U.S. credibility is on the line. You get yourself involved in a quagmire that really creates a long-term insurgency. I think Iraq is very instructive. We had a situation within 3 weeks we took out a bad guy, you know, without question a bad guy, Saddam Hussein.

We issued the death-if-ication order, and dissolved the Iraqi army and basically said to 100,000 Iraqis there is no place for you in Iraqi society anymore. They said, oh really? They created the Sunni insurgency. We are right in the middle of a situation that you know Iraq today is as violent as it was in the worst time of our American occupation there in 2006 and 2007.

I see Syria going in the exact same direction.

Now, Assad, obviously a brutal, murderous dictator, much like his father. You know you take him out and you again have an opposition whose dominant influences are al-Qaeda and Islamic extremists. What do they start to do? Ethnic cleansing. Then we are responsible for that stuff that is going on and we are supposed to stop that as well.

So let me just say this, you know generally speaking. You know I don't view America's credibility—I don't have an answer, and there are no black-and-whites. There is a lot—there are no straight lines. There is a lot of grey and a lot of confusion and a lot of other things there.

But you know, at what point does the Arab Muslim civilization take responsibility for their own future? Because you know this has been going on for 14 centuries between Shiite and Sunnis as to who the rightful successor to the Prophet Mohammad is. Okay.

What they are saying, there are 250 million people in the Arab Muslim world, half of which are under the age of 25. So the response to all those kids is there is no future for you. I think there are certain things that Americans clearly don't understand about that part of the world.

You know unlike our society we have a victim's mentality. We feel empathy and sympathy for victims. There it is survivor's mentality. They shouldn't have been there. They must have been doing something wrong.

You know I think these are obviously complicated situations. But our ability to help in places that want to be and can be helped is greatly undermined by having spent $2 trillion in Iraq and Afghanistan. Those places are no better than they were the day we entered those places. But they have seriously undermined the United States' ability to do other things domestically and internationally as well.

So I just—you know there are no—again, there are no black-and-whites here. I think, you know, comparisons to what was going on to Europe. I heard the Secretary of State's point that this is our Munich moment. That is insulting. That is insulting.

You know Hitler was an awful guy who was leading a very prosperous country with the largest army in the world, was about to conquer—wanted to conquer Europe and potentially the world.

Assad is clearly a bad guy presiding over one of the poorest countries in the world and having a hard time hanging on.

You know we can't—history is not always applicable to what is going on contemporarily in the Middle East and in the Arabian Peninsula, so.

Mr. KATULIS. If I could react here again, I actually agree with a lot of what you said there. I think the region more than 2 years ago it just started a phase that is going to go on for a long period of time, a struggle for political legitimacy, a fragmentation and fracturing of power, of a way of doing business, essentially, for the last century when the Ottoman Empire collapsed.

Yes, our ability to shape all of these things is quite limited. I think there should be a great deal of humility based on our experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, and lessons learned from all of that.

But it is my view that if the lesson is simply, don't get involved in any sort of way, or get involved in the way—take your example of Syria. Where I think we are at on Syria is that we simply lack a coherent strategy. That is why we have seen this sort of whipsaw the last couple of weeks.

We have had a series of tactics and tactical reactive measures bit-by-bit, dribs and drabs. Arm a little bit of the opposition here, engage a little bit diplomatic with the political opposition there.

I think if this, whatever has happened in the last couple of weeks, is offered a moment, it is an opportunity to further press the administration so that they are not jamming you up on the Hill for a quick vote on an authorization of use of force. But it is separate, as Frank said, from the topic of our hearing.

But it is essential to press them for what their strategy is. Going back to the point I was saying, what is your end-goal and what are those means that you are going to us to accomplish that?

You may end up hearing, Mr. Higgins, a lot of sympathetic voices to your view inside of the administration because I think there is that reticence there. But then, we should all ask ourselves is, what will this serve U.S. interests in the long run?

I think what we are trying to say is no more nation-building and going in with boots on the ground. You listen to Frank especially. All of us are saying that. But how can we get others to help them help themselves?

The picture you painted of the Syrian opposition is, I think, essentially correct. But there are others that Ambassador Ford and others have been trying to work with. So how do we get them to fight this fight for themselves that leads it to some sort of conclusion?

Last point I would want to make, and you had mentioned this on Iraq and Syria, very brief point, is that increasingly I think we need to look at those challenges at interlinked.

As the problem is either violence in Iraq and the uptick that you mentioned in your statement there I think is directly related to what is going on. You see the terrorist groups, al-Qaeda in Iraq and Asham in Syria. They are becoming much more cohesive and coordinated.

It is not a problem, in my view, for U.S. National security interests yet. They don't represent the threat that AQAP represents yet.

But we all, I think, have talked about the adaptive nature of these networks.

We should keep a close eye on it. We should make sure that whatever we are doing, how modest and marginal it is with the Syrian opposition, we are also collecting information on the morphing of these networks.

Mr. CILLUFFO. Underscoring your begging to touch a third rail, but in addition to what is going on in the Middle East, Sunni-Shia, you also have minority Christians that we need—we have a responsibility to protect their right to faith, as well as obviously Israel and Judaism and every other religion. So I just put that on the table.

One other thing that I think some of us sometimes forget, and that is with respect to Afghanistan. Keep in mind the likelihood that we would have seen other big acts after 9/11, I would argue, would have been quite high had we not taken certain actions.

So it is difficult to disprove double negatives. But at the end of the day, if we didn't degrade that capability, don't think that we would not have witnessed—there was a lot of blood, sweat, and tears and of course treasure as well. But at the end of the day, I think lives were saved. That doesn't mean I am not putting one cost of life over another, but it is just something to keep in mind.

One other factor with respect to Pakistan and Afghanistan today is there is another terrorist group that has just touched the homeland. We all said that they didn't, but Tehrik-i-Taliban, the Pakistani Taliban, that our Times Square bomber in the fine city of New York was a TTP actor.

So, it is not just AQAP. You do have a witch's brew of folks operating out of Pakistan, Lashkar-e-taiba, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. I mean it is a mess. So, at the end of the day let's not forget that that could change should we not have a presence.

Ms. ZIMMERMAN. I just want to add here and say that today the United States actually lacks options that it had 2 years ago in Syria because of its inaction. That the original opposition was secular, and that it was predicted by many individuals studying the region that should the United States fail to take action, Arab regimes would and that they would end up supporting religions networks, which is what happened.

So the secular opposition didn't receive the original support. That allowed Islamist movement to gain strength in a way that could have—may have been prevented. I am not saying that it would have been.

The other point is that though the fight against Assad, whichever side you fall on in the military strength, his continued presence in Syria means that the Free Syrian Army, which is the secular group fighting Assad, is continued—will be continued to be distracted in fighting him rather than in fighting Jabhat al-Nusra, al-Qaeda's affiliate in Syria.

So by removing Assad you advance at least the local grouping that you would expect to see fight the al-Qaeda affiliate on the ground there. I think that that idea is being missed in all of this dialogue about what to do.

So when you look at our option I do think that we need to think longer-term than we have been. The United States people tend to

think short-term. But we are now on our back foot in Syria in a way that we might not have been.

The same way that we are in Yemen when AQAP was announced in 2009, the group al-Qaeda in Yemen had already started to resurge in a way, but no serious counterterrorism operations were conducted against it until right after the Christmas day attack. So we have seen this happen again and again, and I do think that we need to be more prescient when we decide on policy.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you very much.

George Mitchell was appointed special envoy to Northern Ireland under previous administration. The chairman was a leading Congressional figure in the eventual Good Friday Accord. But he wrote a book called "Making Peace" about his experiences there. He practically lived there at the later stages of that negotiation.

But he made a very profound point saying that in all world conflict—and a lot of people thought that the situation between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland was intractable, that nobody was going to be able to resolve it.

They said exhaustion, exhaustion, is a huge variable in conflict-resolution. You know you think about what those parties had to do. You know the Protestants and the Catholics had you denounce violence, and they had you give up their arms. There was an international tribunal that witnessed the destruction of those arms.

That makes sense to me that other countries, the United States, Great Britain get involved in conflict resolution in that part of the world because you know what? Those people, both sides are invested in it. You know what they did? They were able to marginalize the extremists because there was a consensus that this is what we want to be prospectively.

I just think that in the Arab Muslim world, whether it is the Palestinians, they are so committed to the conflict. They are so committed to the struggle. There is no sense of what they want to be.

I think unless and until you have—I am not even looking for a constitution. I am looking for a preamble that basically is a unifying vision as to what these places want to become. Then and only then, whether it is Syria, Iraq, or anywhere else, can they expect international help to help them achieve something that is consistent with our American values.

So you know I just think that you know George Mitchell's admonishment that exhaustion is a huge variable in all this stuff, exhausting can't be imposed from the outside. It has to be experienced from within. That is it.

Mr. KING. AQAP was probably the most aggressive as far as going forward scientifically, whether it is doctors trying to enflame farms, whether it was the cylinder-type explosives that they placed on the airplane.

First of all, are they as aggressive today as they were then? Are they sharing any of that with anyone else in the al-Qaeda nexus?

Mr. CILLUFFO. Mr. Chairman, I think it would be very naive to think that he has not, Ibrahim al-Asiri shared that with others within al-Qaeda and the Arabian Peninsula and beyond al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, notably al-Shabaab. There have been some indictments that have identified some of that.

Again, when we talk about people with unique skills, he is at the very, very top of the list, and ruthless. I mean the first time he attempted to use this improvised explosive device he sent his own brother to try to kill Muhammad bin Nayef, the Saudi prince.

So I think that is a significant concern and it is a lot more sophisticated than what you see in *Inspire,* for example, of how to build an IED in your mother's kitchen. This is not that level. This is at a much higher level.

Again, has successfully circumvented some of the security countermeasures that are put in place, which again underscores just how important intelligence is, whether technical means, but especially I would argue human intelligence.

Mr. KING. How about AQAP's relationship with Boko Haram or AQIM or we are seeing in Libya the variation of groups in eastern Libya? How far are their tentacles spreading, AQAP's?

Ms. ZIMMERMAN. I think the first point is our information on that is limited because there hasn't been that much correspondence recovered. We had great insight into al-Qaeda in Iraq because of the U.S. military presence there. The insight that we have into AQAP's relationships abroad comes either from uncovered documents in Mali or from U.S. indictments.

I want to focus on the letters published by the Associated Press from AQAP's leader, Naser al-Wuhayshi, to the leader of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Abumallah Tricktel. Those two letters went to insight both into how the AQAP has envisioned its role in sharing counsel with other affiliates that actually mirrors the counsel that bin Laden shared with AQAP.

But also that that relationship is geographically very far—when you look at the distance between Algeria and Yemen, that is a long way for correspondents to travel. It is unclear whether it is electronic or—and whether these are printed or how they were moved across the region, but that it is certainly a connection there that shows the breadth of the al-Qaeda network.

There are allegations that AQAP has helped to fund some camps in Libya, and again these are allegations and cannot be proved in any way in the Open Source—or have been proved, to my knowledge. But what we do see is that AQAP has set itself up to start funding and financing and training and building up local groups who share maybe not al-Qaeda's global ideology, but the local idea of radical Islam, you know in order to further the message.

This is actually the same thing that bin Laden was doing in the 1990s. When you look at that it is very concerning to see a group pushing its message and pushing its capabilities abroad.

Mr. CILLUFFO. Mr. Chairman, just to underscore, I think Katie laid that out perfectly. But I also think fundamentally the way we need to think about al-Qaeda today is different than it was just a few years ago. There is a lot of swapping—a lot of utility infielders that are being swapped between, among, and across these various organizations.

They are fellow travelers. Whether it is both operationally and ideologically, clearly they are attempting to co-opt local grievances to achieve their broader global jihadi objectives. But I think just the way we think about al-Qaeda you have seen a conflation. You have actually seen many of these organizations that you couldn't

come up with an org chart in the same old hierarchical kind of way you could because many of them criss-cross.

Many of them are fighting in conflict zones in various places. They are meeting one another, whether it is Syria today or whether it was Iraq or whether it was Yemen or whether it was Somalia or whether it was Mali or whether it is you name the jihadi hotspot of the moment.

They are fellow travelers to one extent or another. The one thing I would underscore with AQAP and this is probably a very bad analogy, but they are kind of the Kevin Bacon of al-Qaeda. I mean they really are. They have connected with a lot of different organizations in the past.

So I think we have got to stop thinking about it in the traditional hierarchical approach. It is relatively flat. In the military they are achieving what we would in the United States refer to as commander's intent. So we got intentions coming from on high, but it is ultimately up to those closer to the pointy end of the spear to execute. That is what you are seeing now.

You have got the intent, the aspirational objectives. But when you are talking about operations it is local. They are fighting in similar conflict zones. They are getting to know one another. That is unfortunately where we are.

Mr. KATULIS. If I could just add one perspective connected to a point I was trying to make at the start of my testimony of this adaptive nature of AQAP and how it impacts our approach. When I said that we are not still properly matching resources to meet threats, I think we are constantly behind the curve. It is almost the nature of the threat that that would be the case.

But if you look at—and you mentioned Afghanistan, I think in 2010 we were spending $120 billion or $130 billion as a country in Afghanistan. By that time I think the assessment of most counterterrorism analysts is that the threats had migrated. The central threat to the homeland security had migrated to AQAP.

What I think we are all trying to say, and I think we largely agree here, is these threats migrate and adapt quite a lot. We are still in a transformative moment. I fear that U.S. Government policy is not nimble enough at adapting to these new threats in Syria, Sinai Peninsula again.

We are very good. I think we have done a very good job in the last 2 years in kinetic strikes against al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. It has had an impact.

We didn't talk much about the embassy closures a bit, but I do think it limited their ability. It didn't de-fang it completely. But the overarching point is it is almost perplexing to me as an American citizen, 12 years after 9/11 we still don't have a good read on the metrics of whether we are winning or losing this thing.

We don't have—and that, I think, contributes, Mr. Chairman, to your question about educating the American public. That contributes to the general confusion and disinterest because of the complexity of this. But the lack of overarching strategy and metrics is I think a big challenge here.

Mr. KING. Before we leave, any points that any of you want to make before we end the hearing? Anything that hasn't been

brought out that you want to bring out that you think is important?

Mr. CILLUFFO. If you can keep, Mr. Chairman, your leadership role in bringing these issues to the American people and to Government and assuming that role, I would appreciate that. So thank you.

Mr. KING. Thank you. Okay. I will end on that note. That is a great one.

Mr. CILLUFFO. Thank you.

Mr. KING. Brian, thank you.

With that, the hearing stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:24 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]