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TEN YEARS ON: THE EVOLUTION OF THE TERRORIST THREAT SINCE 9/11

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD
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TEN YEARS ON: THE EVOLUTION OF THE TERRORIST THREAT SINCE 9/11

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES,
Washington, DC, Wednesday, June 22, 2011.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 1:04 p.m., in room 2212, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Mac Thornberry (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MAC THORNBERRY, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM TEXAS, CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

Mr. THORNBERRY. The hearing will come to order.

Tonight the President will announce a schedule for withdrawals of U.S. troops from Afghanistan, an engagement that started nearly 10 years ago. Ten years after the Twin Towers fell and the Pentagon was assaulted and heroes in the skies above Pennsylvania prevented the Capitol from being struck, Americans are still battling terrorists around the world, here at home, and in cyberspace, and we are still debating what we need to do to prevent further attacks.

With the approach of that 10-year mark and with the removal of Osama bin Laden, it seems to me to be appropriate to try to step back and look at the course of the last decade, analyze whether and how the threat to us and our interests have changed, and thereby try to gain some perspective on where we need to go from here.

The subcommittee has assembled a first-rate panel to help guide our inquiry today. Unfortunately, it is also a day in which Members and witnesses are being pulled in a variety of directions. And I appreciate very much everybody's flexibility to try to start a little earlier so that, hopefully, we can have as much opportunity as we can before votes.

I do recommend that all of the Members and guests read the written testimony submitted by each of the witnesses. But in due course, I am going to ask them to summarize their statements so we can get into questions and discussions in the course of the time we have before us today.

So, with that, let me yield to Mr. Johnson for the ranking member.

STATEMENT OF HON. HANK JOHNSON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM GEORGIA, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Chairman Thornberry, for hosting this very timely hearing.

And thanks to our panel for joining us. I am looking forward to your testimony.

And I will ask that we reserve the ability of Ranking Member Langevin to make comments when he arrives. And I would ask that his written statement be placed in the record, without objection.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Without objection, it is so ordered.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Langevin can be found in the Appendix on page 29.]

Mr. THORNBERRY. And I would also ask unanimous consent that other members of the committee be allowed to participate in today's hearing after all subcommittee members have had an opportunity to ask questions. And, without objection, they will be recognized at the appropriate time.

So, again, let me thank our witnesses for being here.

We are privileged to have Mr. Brian Michael Jenkins, senior advisor at RAND Corporation; Mr. Peter Bergen, who is director of national security studies at New America Foundation and also author of "The Longest War"; and Dr. Sebastian Gorka, assistant professor of irregular warfare, National Defense University.

So, if I could, let me turn to you all in that order for the summary of your statement.

STATEMENT OF BRIAN MICHAEL JENKINS, SENIOR ADVISOR, RAND CORPORATION

Mr. JENKINS. Chairman Thornberry, Mr. Johnson, members of the committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk to you about this important topic.

In my written testimony, I outline Al Qaeda's terrorist campaign since its inception. Let me here just summarize, to note that in the past 10 years we have seen Al Qaeda move from large-scale, centrally directed terrorist attacks to increasing emphasis on individual jihad and do-it-yourself terrorism.

Now, this is an indication that we have made considerable progress in the past 10 years. Al Qaeda's operational capabilities have clearly been degraded. But we haven't dented its determination one bit. Nor does the death of bin Laden end Al Qaeda's global terrorist campaign. Indeed, the reported elevation of Ayman al-Zawahiri as his successor suggests that bin Laden's focus on attacking the United States will continue after his death. But Al Qaeda today has less capability to mount another attack on the scale of 9/11, although caution is always in order. Small groups can still be lethal.

The Arab Spring, in my view, demonstrates the irrelevance of Al Qaeda's ideology. However, Al Qaeda benefits from the current chaos in these countries. And the latest news from Yemen is that there was just a major jailbreak in that country, which resulted in the escape of a number of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

[AQAP] members. And if these revolutions are crushed or produce no change, then Al Qaeda certainly will find new recruiting space.

As I mentioned, Al Qaeda has embraced individual jihadism and do-it-yourself terrorism. This is a change from its initial centralized strategy, and it reflects the organization's current realities. The threat now is much more decentralized, much more diffused. But their objective remains to bankrupt America's already weakened economy with continued at least low-level attacks. That is going to depend heavily on their ability to recruit homegrown terrorists, but thus far, fortunately, exhortations to join its violent jihad have yielded meager results among American Muslims.

I agree that a 10-year time period is an appropriate time for a review. As Al Qaeda has evolved, so must American strategy. Here are some just basic principles.

First, Al Qaeda and its affiliates remain the primary target of America's counterterrorist campaign. Although weakened, the jihadist movement still poses a threat. Left unmolested, it will pursue its campaign. War weariness, economic restraints, the death of bin Laden must not be allowed to erode the unprecedented worldwide cooperation among intelligence services and law enforcement organizations that has reduced Al Qaeda's capability to mount large-scale attacks.

How things turn out in Afghanistan remains critical to the future trajectory of the conflict, but creating a national army and a national police force in Afghanistan able to effectively secure the country will take longer than the United States is willing to sustain current troop levels.

But this is not just about numbers. We really should examine ways we can reconfigure our efforts. The challenge is how to deprive Al Qaeda and its allies of safe havens without the United States having to fix failed states. We may be chasing Al Qaeda for decades. Therefore, what we do at home and abroad must be sustainable.

We can't eliminate every vulnerability. Efforts should focus on developing less burdensome ways to maintain current security levels. We should also move toward risk-based security rather than pretending that we can prevent all attacks. And Americans, themselves, must be realistic about security and stop overreacting to even failed terrorist attempts.

The threat of homegrown terrorism is real, but it shouldn't be exaggerated. The tiny turnout of jihadist recruits suggests that America remains a country where immigrants successfully assimilate into the life of our communities. American Muslims are not America's enemies. But domestic intelligence collection and community policing are essential, especially as Al Qaeda places more emphasis on inspiring local volunteers to take action.

In sum, we have greatly reduced Al Qaeda's capacity for large-scale attacks, but at great expense. But the campaign led by Al Qaeda may go on for many years. It is time for a fundamental and thoughtful review of our effort. We have gone big; we need to go long.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Jenkins can be found in the Appendix on page 30.]

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.
Mr. Bergen.

STATEMENT OF PETER BERGEN, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES PROGRAM, NEW AMERICA FOUNDATION, AUTHOR OF "THE LONGEST WAR: THE ENDURING CONFLICT BETWEEN AMERICA AND AL QAEDA"

Mr. BERGEN. Thank you, Chairman Thornberry and Mr. Johnson and other members of the committee.

We were asked to look at today's threat and how the threat has changed and what to do about it. So, in the 5 minutes I have, I will try and summarize.

I, you know, concur with pretty much everything that Mr. Jenkins just said. The threat is much reduced. Al Qaeda's capability to do a 9/11-style attack on the United States is extremely constrained.

The Maxwell School at Syracuse University and New America Foundation looked at 183 jihadist terrorism cases since 9/11, as defined by individuals or groups motivated by anti-American beliefs who are in this country. Of those 186 cases, there was quite a lot of good news and some bad news.

The good news is, not one of those cases involved a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear plot, which is pretty surprising, in a sense, if you think about how concerned we were about that eventuality after 9/11.

Secondly, there was a real uptick in these cases in the 2009–2010 time period; there were 76 cases. However, there has been a sharp dip in 2011, with only eight cases. So the question before all of us is, in a sense, was 2009–2010 sort of an outlier or part of a larger pattern?

Mr. Jenkins referred to the relatively small threat of domestic jihadist terrorism, and I agree with that. But, clearly, there was something happening in 2009 and 2010 which was a little bit different. Part of the reason that you saw a big increase in plots was a large number of Somali Americans planning to go to Somalia, or actually going to Somalia, who were charged in cases relating to Al-Shabaab.

Another piece of good news in all of this is that, of these 186 individuals, only 4 actually carried out any attack, the most famous being, of course, the Fort Hood, Texas, attack, which I am sure is very familiar to members of this committee, which killed 13 people. There were three other attacks, which killed four people. So, since 9/11, only 17 Americans have been killed by jihadist terrorists in the past 10 years. Again, I think that would have been something that would not have been expected if we had had this conversation a couple of years after the 9/11 attacks.

So, much that has happened, both, you know, what the U.S. Government has done and Al Qaeda's own weaknesses, has made us relatively much safer.

How does the death of bin Laden play out in all this, and what effect does it have? And I would say that the effect—if everybody in this room collectively came together and came up with a better plan to sabotage Al Qaeda, it would be hard to come up with the Arab Spring and bin Laden's death happening within several

months of each other. Between these two events, Al Qaeda's ideology has taken a pretty massive, you know, blow. And Al Qaeda, the organization, which was founded and led by bin Laden, has also taken a pretty massive blow.

When you joined the Nazi party, you didn't swear an oath of allegiance to Nazism; you swore a personal oath of allegiance to Adolf Hitler. Similarly, when you joined Al Qaeda, you swore a personal oath of allegiance to bin Laden. Ayman al-Zawahiri, as Mr. Jenkins has pointed out, has officially taken over. But this is very good news, I think, for the United States. Ayman al-Zawahiri will drive what remains of Al Qaeda into the ground. He is neither charismatic nor an effective leader, whose leadership of even the Egyptian jihadist militant groups of which he was once part is contested. And just as the death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi dealt a pretty big blow to Al Qaeda in Iraq, the people who replaced Abu Musab al-Zarqawi were not as effective leaders. So the fact that Ayman al-Zawahiri has taken over is a good thing.

But even before the Arab Spring and the death of bin Laden, Al Qaeda was in very bad shape. It was losing the war of ideas in the Muslim world, not certainly because the United States was winning them, but because Al Qaeda was losing them, principally on the issue that Al Qaeda and its allies had killed so many Muslim civilians. For groups that position themselves as the defender of Islam, this was not impressive. And, you know, if you look at polling data in Indonesia, Morocco, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, pick your country, support for bin Laden and Al Qaeda suicide bombing has been dropping precipitously in the last several years.

That said, how is the threat changing, which is the second question that we were asked to address. I think one of the most problematic parts of the threat that is changing is Al Qaeda's ability to infect other groups that don't call themselves "Al Qaeda" with its ideology, particularly in South Asia.

To give you two obvious examples, the Pakistani Taliban, which was seen as a bunch of sort of provincial country bumpkins uninterested in anything other than Pakistan, sent suicide bombers to Barcelona in January of 2008, which should have been a canary in the mine, and then, of course, sent a suicide bomber to Times Square in May of 2010. So the Pakistani Taliban now are acting in a more Al Qaeda-like manner, a fairly large group of people.

Similarly, Lashkar-e-Taiba, the group that focused on India, sought out American and Jewish targets in Mumbai in November of 2008. Again, a rather large group with quasi-governmental support from the Pakistani Government. And I think that their change is concerning.

And then, of course, the regional affiliates: Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, with which you are all familiar; Al-Shabaab; Al Qaeda in Iraq; Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. The fortunes of these groups wax and wane.

But one final point I wanted to make before this committee, because it directly affects your interests, is, going back to that survey of the 183 cases, jihadist terrorism cases, we found that the target of a third of those individuals was U.S. military personnel serving overseas or U.S. military bases. So, clearly, for individuals motivated by this ideology, American soldiers and American servicemen

and servicewomen, involved in up to five wars in Muslim countries, are very tempting targets for these kinds of groups and individuals.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bergen can be found in the Appendix on page 43.]

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you. I appreciate it.

Doctor.

STATEMENT OF DR. SEBASTIAN GORKA, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF IRREGULAR WARFARE, NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

Dr. GORKA. Thank you, Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Johnson, and the members of the subcommittee, for providing me this honor to testify before you on the vital issue of the evolution of the terrorist threat to the United States.

I must start with the standard disclaimer that this testimony reflects my views and not necessarily those of the National Defense University, the Department of Defense, or any other organization or agency I am affiliated with.

As you have already noted, Mr. Chairman, we are approaching the 10th anniversary of the September the 11th attacks, which resulted in the longest military campaign the United States has been engaged in since 1776. Despite the mastermind of that attack having been killed by our forces, the war is not over.

In my testimony today, I have two core messages. The first is that, a decade after the events of September the 11th, America does still not fully understand the nature of the enemy. Secondly, that tactical successes do not necessarily lead to strategic victory.

If I may address the second point first, it is clear that the operation in Abbottabad that led to the death of Osama bin Laden will, in decades to come, represent the textbook example of such a covert action on foreign soil. Nevertheless, to quote the quintessential strategist Sun Tzu, tactics without strategy is simply the noise before defeat. This was a tactically supreme operation but does not necessarily mean that we have won a strategic victory.

To illustrate this point further, as you are all aware, one of the most popular official documents in the last 10 years was the Field Manual 3–24 on Counterinsurgency, reformed and rewritten under the aegis of General Petraeus. The fact that today, with the success of that counterinsurgency doctrine in Iraq and elsewhere, in Washington the phrase "counterinsurgency strategy" is used every day, reflects the paucity of understanding of what we are doing. In fact, a cursory Internet search with the phrase "counterinsurgency strategy" will give you 300,000 hits, despite the fact that counterinsurgency always has and always will be a doctrinal approach and never a strategic one.

Going on to the question of understanding the nature of the enemy, if I may share a personal anecdote with the members of the subcommittee. Several years into this war, I was asked with a colleague to address a group of assembled Special Operations officers on the war in hand and how things were going. This was a 3-day event at a relatively high level of 06.

On the third day, when I rose to give my remarks, I was forced to tear up my speaking points and inform the officers, who really were risking their lives in this fight against Al Qaeda, that for 2½

days I had witnessed them debate whether the enemy was an organization, a network, a network of networks, an ideology, or a movement. This lack of clarity amongst our operators, which I have seen amongst other agencies, not just the Special Forces, is akin to us debating in 1944 what Nazism actually represents and what the Third Reich is. We didn't do it then; why are we doing it now?

The plain matter of the fact, Mr. Chairman and Members, is that we have institutionally failed to meet our duty to become well-informed on the threat doctrine of our enemy. Without a clear understanding of the enemy threat doctrine, victory is likely impossible.

The reasons for this lack of understanding are many, but they are guided also by the belief that the religious character of the enemy's ideology should not be discussed. This is one of the reasons why today in official circles we use the phrase "violent extremism." The fact is, we are dealing with a hybrid totalitarianism that depends very much on religious ideology to justify its violence.

Secondly, there is the question of our institutional capacity to deal with the threat that we currently face. I would like to remind the subcommittee that the 9/11 congressional commission described for us how very different the threat environment is. Today, we no longer live in a Westphalian threat environment, where the nation-state is the primary enemy. As Philip Bobbitt has noted, groups such as Al Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, or the Muslim Brotherhood do not fit neatly into the national security apparatus we built over the last hundred years.

To paraphrase James Kiras of the Air University, we have denied Al Qaeda the capability to conduct complex, devastating attacks on the scale of September the 11th, but we now need to transition away from concentrating on dismantling and disrupting Al Qaeda's network to undermining its core strategy of ideological attack.

To conclude, in the last 10 years since September the 11th, we can summarize our actions as a vast collection of tactical and operational successes occurring in a vacuum of strategic understanding and strategic response. We have failed to understand the enemy at any more than an operational level and have instead, by default, addressed that enemy solely on that operational plane of engagement.

The 10th anniversary of the attacks here in Washington, in New York, and in Pennsylvania afford those of us in the U.S. Government who have sworn to uphold and defend the national interests of this greatest of nations a clear opportunity to recognize what we have accomplished and what needs to be reassessed.

My wish would be that this hearing marked the beginning of that process, whereby we draw a line under our past efforts and begin anew to recommit ourselves to attacking the deadliest of enemies at the level which it deserves to be, and that must be, of course, the strategic.

Osama bin Laden may be dead, but his ideology of global supremacy through religious war is more vibrant and sympathetic to audiences around the world than it was on September the 10th, 2011.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Gorka can be found in the Appendix on page 65.]

Mr. THORNBERRY. A little sobering, but thank you.

But let me pick up with that and ask Mr. Jenkins and Mr. Bergen to respond to the idea that tactical success does not—successes—does not necessarily translate into overall victory or strategic success.

And, you know, you think back, not only the Osama bin Laden operation, but the fact that we have not had, other than Fort Hood, a particularly successful attack here in the homeland for 10 years; a lot of success in various other places and efforts around the world. I think you mentioned that Al Qaeda is not necessarily well thought of, according to pollsters. Maybe that is a tactical success.

But so does all of that add up to strategic victory, or are we still fooling ourselves in some way?

Mr. Jenkins.

Mr. JENKINS. Let me try to address that.

There are two views about this. One is that if we can continue to disrupt Al Qaeda operations, if we can continue to protect the American homeland, that ultimately Al Qaeda will self-destruct. It will self-destruct in ways that Peter was outlining. That is, first of all, the biggest long-term threat to Al Qaeda is irrelevance. And as the world moves on, Al Qaeda, locked in its own little universe of extremist ideology, will become less and less relevant.

And that is what makes the Arab Spring so important, because those people demonstrating in Tunisia and Egypt and elsewhere were not demonstrating on behalf of unending warfare against infidels or the re-establishment of an 8th-century caliphate; they were demonstrating for greater democracy, they were demonstrating for less corruption, for more opportunity. And that Al Qaeda, with its sole methodology of violence, that simply it will fade, and we should try to contain them as long as possible.

Will that suffice in the long run to give us victory? First of all, the problem is, we have to put victory in quotes here, because what is victory here? This could go on for many, many, many years, and we are not going to have something that we can call a clearcut victory. But, nonetheless, it would be a success.

Others believe—and there is a shortcoming here—that while we have, as Dr. Gorka has pointed out, we have pounded on their operational capabilities with some measure of success, we haven't adequately addressed the front end of this—that is, what is the appeal of this ideology? How do they manage to continue to inspire angry young men around the world to join with this?

And one of the long-term dangers that we do face here is that the Al Qaeda ideology really transcends to simply becoming a conveyor for individual discontents. That is, anyone who is searching for meaning, unhappy with their condition, whatever, can find legitimization and direction within this ideology. Now, we could end up dealing with that kind of a diffused threat for many, many years.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Bergen.

Mr. BERGEN. You know, there are still Marxist-Leninists on campuses somewhere in the United States; there just aren't very many of them. And so, you know, Marxism-Leninism as an idea has

never fully died; there are just less takers. And that is where we are going to be with Al Qaeda.

Mr. Jenkins mentioned the word "irrelevance." I think that is a good word. The polling data is easily accessible. Gallup, Zogby, Pew have done, you know, massive polls around the Muslim world, and the numbers speak for themselves.

You know, the caveat here, of course, is the Baader-Meinhof Group in Germany had zero public support in the 1970s in Germany, and a very small group of people continued to inflict a lot of damage on the German state.

But, you know, I think that they, overall—the chairman mentioned no attacks in the United States. I think another point is, no successful attacks in the West since July 7th, 2005, in London by Al Qaeda proper. You know, attempts in places like Ramstein Air Force Base in 2007; you know, we had the Mumbai-style—possibility of Mumbai-style attacks in Europe in the fall of last year, which produced a Europe-wide terror alert by the State Department. But they haven't got one through. They may eventually. By the law of averages, they will. But not only is their ideology in decline, they are operationally not very successful.

And one final point, which I think, just to kind of underline about the Arab Spring, it is really striking to me that not a single picture of bin Laden has been waved by any of the protesters in Cairo, Benghazi, or anywhere else; not a single American flag burning; not a single Israeli flag burning. Al Qaeda's ideas, foot soldiers, and leaders are just simply not part of this conversation.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you. I want to come back to some of that, but let me yield to Mr. Johnson for some questions.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Bergen, what would happen if the U.S. allows the Taliban to take over Afghanistan?

Mr. BERGEN. We have already run a kind of controlled experiment on that question in Pakistan, and very recently. In 2009, the Taliban took over Swat, which was a premier tourist destination in Pakistan in the north. They beheaded a policeman, they burned down the girls' schools, and they inflicted a reign of terror on the population. They did exactly the same thing in Waziristan in 2005 and 2006 in the tribal regions of Pakistan.

So if the Taliban took over in Afghanistan, either partially or fully—they can't take over fully—but even partially, you know, they have had a long time to reject Al Qaeda and all its works, and they have never done that. And with the death of bin Laden—we are now 7 weeks after the death of bin Laden. This was a perfect opportunity for the Taliban to say, "Hey, you know, our deal was with bin Laden, not Al Qaeda. We reject Al Qaeda." They haven't done it. In fact, quite the reverse; they have said they are going to take revenge for bin Laden's death.

So I am quite skeptical of the notion that the Taliban is a bunch of Henry Kissingers in waiting who are just going to suddenly become rational actors and, you know—they have never said what kind of society they envisage for Afghanistan, their view on democracy, elections, or women working or girls in school. I think we know what their real views are, but they have been very silent on what they plan to do.

And it is very striking to me, in this country, liberals, who were very much up in arms about the kind of behavior of the Taliban before 9/11, have been strikingly silent on the issue of what the Taliban coming back to power in some shape or form in Afghanistan would mean for the women of Afghanistan and the girls.

Mr. JOHNSON. Is it likely that the Taliban would take over if the U.S. withdraws too quickly from Afghanistan?

Mr. BERGEN. I don't think they can take over, sir, but, certainly, if our withdrawal was too precipitous, they could take over large chunks of the south and the east, not because they are so strong, but because the Afghan Government and the Afghan National Army, which Mr. Jenkins referred to, are still relatively weak. And I——

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, if they did take over those sections, would those sections become a safe haven or a place where jihadists and other terrorists could find sanctuary?

Mr. BERGEN. In my view, yes, because, again, we have run a controlled experiment on this question. When Al Qaeda and other groups allied to it were fleeing Afghanistan, you know, where did they end up? In Taliban-controlled Pakistan.

Mr. JOHNSON. All right.

Do either one of you gentlemen want to add anything to what Dr. Bergen has said?

Mr. JENKINS. Let me just add that I do agree that a precipitous withdrawal or too rapid a withdrawal from Afghanistan could, in fact, lead not to a direct Taliban takeover, because they would still be vulnerable there, but it could give space to Al Qaeda, space to the jihadists.

Moreover, it would be—that combined with the very turbulent situation we already see in the adjacent areas of Pakistan, that would become an area of a source of trouble again for the rest of the world.

Dr. GORKA. If I may, on the point of the ideology behind Al Qaeda and whether or not bin Laden's death will effect the spread of it further, the fact is, what we see in the evolution of Al Qaeda is a paradoxical evolution. We really have made it impossible for it to execute large-scale, mass-casualty attacks on the soil of the United States. That is correct.

But while we have been successful in shrinking its capacity operationally, its influence ideologically has increased. This is something that is recognized across the intelligence community and elsewhere. The fact is, whether bin Laden is dead or not, whether or not Ayman al-Zawahiri is a charismatic individual, the brand of Salafi jihadism that they represented or propagated is still very popular. There is no alternative that is taking on this ideology.

Yes, the Arab Spring is to be welcomed, but we must remember one very, very daunting fact. Everybody that the Arab Spring targeted, whether it was Mubarak, whether it is Saleh, whether it is even the King of Jordan, who is being pressurized, all these individuals are inimical to Al Qaeda, are enemies to Salafi jihadists. So just because we have people who look to be interested in establishing democracies doesn't mean that the Salafi jihadists are actually very happy to see what they saw as secular dictators removed or puppets of the West removed.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you.

I yield back.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.

Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You have a great panel. I am sorry I just missed it. We are all doing about double and triple duty here today.

But I wanted to, I think, try and focus a little bit more on—we have this discussion, anti-insurgency, anti-terrorism—I don't think you addressed this already. In the light of terrorist threats, I mean, I have always thought that the two essentially worked hand-in-hand, you know, that it is difficult to separate them. Certainly, exactly, you can't separate them, but even as we talk about them and the need to get information and be able to do targeting.

Could you address that and how it is perceived, do you think, by Al Qaeda and where these efforts fit in? Does a threat of more drone attacks, for example, does that do anything different than the fact that you are actually working in villages and using persuasion, and more grassroots, if you will, work is a greater threat? Where do you see this?

Mr. JENKINS. I think we get wrapped around some of these doctrinal issues a bit too much and try to make these precise distinctions. I mean, if we were talking about, as Mr. Bergen mentioned, you know, the Red Army Faction in Germany, there, we are talking about a pure counterterrorist strategy, we are talking about law enforcement and things like that. If we were talking about, say, something in Central America or Latin America in the 1960s, we would be talking about a pure counterinsurgency strategy.

In the situation we face today, they are obviously mixed together. And, therefore, the means that we employ in dealing with this worldwide have to be tailored to the specific situations. In Afghanistan, we are dealing with an insurgency situation, but we are also going after the terrorists directly with the drone strikes. In other parts of the world, we are relying on intelligence and law enforcement and diplomacy to arrest and bring to justice individual members. Now, that is not counterinsurgency; that would be more counterterrorist.

So, depending on the situation and the terrain, we have mixtures of both, and we have to orchestrate all of those instruments—law enforcement, intelligence, diplomacy, counterinsurgency tactics, counterterrorist measures, military force, everything—as it is appropriate to the specific situation. And that is going to be different in Yemen from what it is in Somalia, from what it is in Algeria, from what it is in Afghanistan.

Dr. GORKA. Mr. Jenkins is absolutely right; both of these can have applicability. Counterterrorism [CT] is primarily a tool that is used to attack a network or an organization. Counterinsurgency [COIN] is a far deeper tool which actually ultimately has to address the conditions and the environment in which an insurgency grows and challenges the state.

The problem with today's approach is that both of these have applicability but neither of them answer the strategic question. These remain doctrinal tools. It is the hammer, it is the screwdriver, but

it isn't the manual of repair that tells us why we have to use these. So the problem remains the strategic question.

And the debate is a superficial one. The debate of CT, counterterrorism, versus COIN is I think in part a product of what we have seen in the last 10 years as classic mission creep. We went into Afghanistan to do what? To destroy the organization that had executed the attacks against citizens here in the United States. Well, yes, but 10 years later, what are we doing? Much more than attacking Al Qaeda, because Al Qaeda has left Afghanistan to a large extent. We are trying to make sure Afghan girls can go to school. So mission creep has created this largely artificial debate.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you.

Can I just follow up for a second with Mr. Bergen? Because I wanted to say I appreciate the fact that you raise that issue of the women and the extent to which we, I think, send some very strong messages about the fact that they should be essentially at the table, that they should have some meaningful participation as we work toward reintegration, and, I think, think about a time that they actually would be playing a role that is acknowledged in development of a civil society.

Now, a lot of people have discounted that, obviously, because they think that, again, that is part of mission creep, if you will, it is part of a greater effort that is generational, it is too difficult, it is too hard.

Could you comment, though, on whether or not you think that that is an important message and whether or not it—how do you think it should be articulated?

Mr. BERGEN. I would answer it this way, Representative Davis. Two things.

First of all, if you look at guide books to Afghanistan in the late 1960s or the early 1970s, you see pictures of women unveiled working in offices. And, you know, the idea that the Taliban represents the Afghan view of how women should be treated is nonsensical. It is a very minority view. And the idea that—in fact, you know, whether it is mission creep or not we can sort of debate, but something that I think is not well-processed sometimes in this country is the huge strides that have been made for girls in the last 10 years in Afghanistan. When the Taliban were in power, there were a million kids in school. About, you know, 0.1 percent of them were girls. Now there are 8 million kids in school; 37 percent of them are girls.

So, as we go forward with the Taliban and think about the kind of society they want, I think this has to be part of the discussion. Afghans want their kids to be educated, whether they are girls or boys. And the Taliban, who are going to be part of some discussion of the future of Afghanistan—I think that is a sort of nonnegotiable.

One of our demands is they accept the Afghan Constitution. Well, the Afghan Constitution mandates, for instance, that 25 percent of the people in the Afghan Parliament should be women, which I think is probably higher than it is in this body in this country.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.

Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am very conflicted about some of the statements that I have heard. And I am sorry I wasn't in here earlier. But, you know, you just mentioned that Afghan parents want their kids educated. Well, so do Americans. And one of the biggest problems we have is that money is being siphoned off halfway around the world for the wars that we are in.

And it is very difficult because we have no measurement of how we are doing, and, meanwhile, our own economy is collapsing. People can't go—in California, for example, our university system, our Cal State system, our community college system is all completely impacted. So we, as policymakers and as people who are entrusted with the fiscal soundness of the United States, have a big problem with what is going on.

You know, and I am worried about mission creep because I think we are in complete mission creep. I have been for getting out of Afghanistan for a while now. Nobody, not a general, even when they are before our committee, can tell me really why we are still in Afghanistan.

And I just relate it back to the fact that we are still in Iraq. And I know, for example—I voted against Iraq. And I have sat on this committee for 15 years, on the military committee. So it is not like I am afraid of the military, I am afraid of the power we have. We have incredible power. But, you know, we have the best-equipped, best-trained, best-educated military that the world has ever seen, but it is still a limited resource.

And, you know, with Iraq, first it was about WMD [weapons of mass destruction] and nuke terror. Then it was about the democratic transformation of the Middle East. Then it was about the freedom of the Iraqi people. Then it was about fighting Al Qaeda over there instead of over here. Then it was about preventing a regional war. Then it was about preventing a genocidal civil war. Then it was about the price of gas in the United States. It kept changing on us, and we are still there.

So I am looking at Afghanistan and I am wondering, why are we still there? And for someone to say this is about fighting Al Qaeda there—and this gentleman just said, you know, couldn't possibly be, because there are so few there, and there are other ways to take care of those people, other than having a conventional-size Army sitting there.

I still disagree, and I disagreed from the beginning, with our President about sending this surge over there, mostly because of the types of things I heard out of the parliamentarians and Karzai when I go and visit.

So my question to you guys is, with respect to Al Qaeda, why are we still in Afghanistan, in your opinion?

Dr. GORKA. I think exactly for the reasons you just mentioned. I think the fact is, if we wish to create a functioning federal country in Afghanistan, where everybody has civil rights comparable to a developed western nation and which has a market economy that functions well, we will not do it with 100,000 troops. NYPD [New York Police Department] has 40,000 officers—NYPD. And we think

we are going to turn Afghanistan into a close ally that functions as a federal state with human rights and civil rights for all?

The problem is, we haven't asked the difficult question you just raised. Why are we there if Al Qaeda's center of gravity is elsewhere and if we don't have the financial wherewithal to turn Afghanistan into Switzerland?

It will not happen. There probably will be a military presence there, but it will be of a very different tactical nature. And the bottom line is, the British and the Soviets failed. We will not be able to succeed where they failed because they used tactics that we are not allowed to use, and I am very glad we are not allowed to use them.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you.

Mr. BERGEN. I have been visiting Afghanistan since the civil war in the 1990s. I was there under the Taliban. But this is not really my opinion. Sixty-eight percent of Afghans have a favorable view of international forces. This is the BBC–ABC poll taken several months ago. That is an astonishing number. Can you think of a Muslim country that has a 68 percent favorable view of the U.S. military that is occupying their country over the past 10 years?

Why is that? Well, because they know that their lives are getting better. Now, the question, are we spending too much money there, $118 billion? Sure. But going to Representative Davis' question, you can't do an effective counterterrorism campaign without an effective counterinsurgency presence.

And the reason that we can say with some certainty what alternative scenarios look like is we have already tried them. In 1989, the United States closed its embassy to Afghanistan, and into the vacuum came the Taliban, then allied with Al Qaeda. In 2002, because of its ideological opposition to nation-building, the George W. Bush administration did an operation on the light in Afghanistan. We got what we paid for. The Taliban came back, again allied with Al Qaeda and with Al Qaeda-like ideas.

In 2003, there were 6,000 American soldiers in Afghanistan. That is the size of the police department in Houston in a country the size of Texas with 10 times the population. And so I think the President has been making the right set of decisions about resourcing this properly.

I completely understand what Representative Sanchez said about, you know, we have to make choices. But the fact is that we were attacked from Afghanistan on 9/11. We have a very strong interest in preventing it from being a safe haven, not only for Al Qaeda, but every jihadist terrorist and insurgent group in the world was headquartered or based in Afghanistan before 9/11. Groups that have attacked us, as well—Pakistan Taliban is now attacking us. The Islamic Jihad Union tried to attack us at Ramstein Air Force Base in 2007. So it is not just about Al Qaeda. It is about a lot of other jihadist groups which are now on the Pakistan side of the Afghan border.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Well, I would just say to that, there are a lot of other places that they can go and train, and there are a lot of ways to eliminate them from training that doesn't require us to have 140,000 people on the ground.

I don't know if the other gentleman had a comment to that question. And I am sorry, Mr. Chairman, if I am taking a little bit too long, but I think it is an important question to ask.

Mr. JENKINS. First, I tend to be ferociously focused on Al Qaeda and, therefore, will not argue against the fact that the invasion of Iraq and the subsequent insurgency there was a costly distraction and certainly won't defend that.

But the fact is, we went into Afghanistan for a purpose, we are there for a continued purpose: to prevent the return of Al Qaeda to that area, which I believe they would benefit from.

However, having said that, I don't think it is a matter of needing 140,000 troops. If we choose to do it that way, yes, we need 140,000 troops. I do think we have to lower our expectations of what we can achieve. We do want to keep a presence in the area. I think we can do more with local forces and Special Forces, which could significantly reduce the footprint of the Americans and the cost.

I hesitate—I mean, I am a veteran of Vietnam, and one is always hesitant about bringing up an historical example from Vietnam as anything positive. But in Vietnam, with 2,000 Special Forces, we fielded an army, not the South Vietnamese Army but something called the Civilian Irregular Defense Group, of 50,000 tribesmen—2,000 soldiers. Those tribesmen were extremely effective because they were local soldiers and knew the territory.

I think we have to move in the direction of greater reliance on local forces, tribal forces, Special Forces, and Special Operations, which will reduce the need for the presence of 100,000 American soldiers.

We are also going to have to lower our expectations somewhat. We are not going to win a war or, as Dr. Gorka says, turn Afghanistan into Switzerland. What we are talking about is managing a very turbulent situation to ensure it does not permit an Al Qaeda comeback. That doesn't take 100,000 American troops. That is doing something different.

So we shouldn't get wrapped around the number. We should think about how we configure our forces to achieve our long-term goals, doing something that is sustainable. What we have now is not sustainable.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Jenkins.

And thank you for the indulgence, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. THORNBERRY. I appreciate the gentlelady's questions.

Let me turn back to a couple of issues that have come up that I want to ask you all a little more about.

One is the Arab Spring. You have all spoken favorably of it. Other people write that—building on the idea that it has displaced people who were helping us fight Al Qaeda, and also, though, expressing the concern that it has built up expectations among the populations which cannot be achieved, and so, in that discontent, there will be an even bigger breeding ground for Al Qaeda and that sort of ideology. I think one of you said a while ago, you know, this sort of ideology becomes kind of like flypaper on whatever people's disappointments may be stuck on.

So my question is, is the Arab Spring and the changes that are going on there a uniformly good thing, or does it really present

some downsides when looking at it from a fight-against-terrorism perspective?

Mr. JENKINS. There are both upsides and downsides.

On the one hand, this is a positive development, certainly with regard to—I think all of us agree—with regard to the relevancy of Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda, as I mentioned before, can benefit from the short-term turmoil.

In the longer term, there are a number of things that can happen that are going to be potentially negative. One is that the expectations of the people are not going to be fulfilled. It is going to lead to frustration. And that could provide some opportunities for Al Qaeda.

It is also likely that, whatever new governments emerge in these countries, counterterrorism is not going to be at the top of their agenda. And, therefore, it can't be the single currency with which we interact. So our diplomacy in these places is going to have to be very adept at addressing the needs of these new governments—and, hopefully, more democratic governments, less autocratic than they have been—and, at the same time, not simply gauging them solely on their performance of where they put counterterrorism on their agenda. They are going to have other political and economic issues to address, and we ought to be able to help them address those.

Mr. BERGEN. You know, Czar Nicholas II in Russia in 1916, you know, certainly didn't know that, in 2 years, not only he would be dead but Lenin would be ruling in his place. So, I mean, revolutions—the whole point about revolutions is they are not predictable. So we don't know what is going to happen.

That said, going to the chairman's direct question, Al Qaeda was really incubated by these authoritarian regimes. I mean, it is not an accident that so many of them are Saudis, Yemenis, and Egyptians. It was these particular circumstances of authoritarian regimes in these countries that produced this ideology. Sayyid Qutb, their Lenin, came out of the Egyptian prison system. Ayman al-Zawahiri himself, bin Laden himself came out of Saudi Arabia. And so, the fact that there is a real ideological counternarrative to the authoritarian regimes in which Al Qaeda isn't playing a role is not to be discounted. No one is calling for a Taliban-style theocracy in any of these countries, which is what Al Qaeda really wants.

That said, there are opportunities. The most obvious one is in southern Yemen, which, if you were to think about a country which looks most like pre-9/11 Afghanistan, southern Yemen would be that place. And already Al Qaeda has taken control of a town. So they will obviously try to take control of places they can. But in the long term, this is very, very poor, bad for them.

And one final point on this. It was only posthumously that bin Laden ever commented on the Arab Spring, in a tape that we have now recovered. He commented on the most minor news developments in the Muslim world. We have, like, 35 statements from him since 9/11. And he didn't comment because it was very hard for him to know what to say about this thing which was happening without him, his foot soldiers, or his ideas as being part of the whole kind of event.

Dr. GORKA. Mr. Bergen is absolutely correct that revolutions can go either way. We can have the revolution in 1917 create the greatest threat to Western civilization for the next 70 years, or we can have the revolution of 1776 create the greatest tribute to liberty and democracy that there ever has been. So the evidence is out right now.

But the question is, what does the direction of a revolution depend upon? Two things. It depends upon the conditions and the building blocks in the country where the revolution occurs and, secondly, the ideology of that elite, which drives events after the violence has occurred.

Now, in the countries of North Africa and the Middle East, what we have is we have conditions which are not favorable to the establishment of well-functioning democracies because we don't have civil society there. It has to be built. I spent 15 years of my life in a post-dictatorial country, and I have seen that, no matter how nice the constitution, how many political parties there are, how many private media franchises exist, if the political culture of democracy isn't there, these are all window-dressing.

Secondly is the question of ideology. The problem with the events of the Arab Spring is that there may be a temporary, vast swell of rejection of dictatorial regimes or quasi-authoritarian regimes. But what is the alternative? Democracy is not a shake-and-bake effort. And, unfortunately, in countries such as Egypt, there is only one organized alternative to the dictatorship, and that is an organization that, since 1928, has a game plan, that has a playbook, and that is the Muslim Brotherhood.

And the Muslim Brotherhood has a very famous saying, "One man, one vote, once." If that is the only tangible, well-thought-out ideology in this country, then we may have problems in the future.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you all.

I would yield to Mr. Langevin.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank our panel for being here today and apologize that I wasn't here at the beginning of the hearing. I was with Director Panetta at his farewell meeting before the Intelligence Committee. So I appreciate your being here today, and if some of my questions have already been asked, again, I apologize in advance.

But if we could, just turning to the wave of revolution that is sweeping across the Middle East, considering the current and future transnational terrorist threats, is there a particular region that is more problematic than others? Indonesia, South America, the Middle East, Africa? What, basically, also, the effect of the Arab Spring had in our counterterrorism efforts?

Those two areas, those two questions.

Mr. JENKINS. If I understand the question correctly, Mr. Langevin, the areas that are of greatest concern, most problematic, is the focus.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Right. And then what effect has the Arab Spring had on our counterterrorism efforts, would be the——

Mr. JENKINS. I mean, clearly, I think there would be consensus that Yemen is the most chaotic situation and it is also the country where Al Qaeda is very well-situated. It is absolutely unclear how things will unfold in that particular country. That certainly could

be a center of future Al Qaeda activity. And we have already seen that Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has been very effective in its communications and its determination to attack U.S. targets. So, outside of Afghanistan/Pakistan area, which we already have addressed, I would put Yemen very high on the list.

I don't want to ignore Afghanistan or Pakistan. Pakistan—put aside Afghanistan for a moment—Pakistan is undergoing a slow radicalization process. Aside from the insurgent threat, aside from the terrorist threat, within Pakistan society, within the Pakistan military, there is evidence of growing radicalization. So that would be high on the list.

Among the countries of North Africa and the Middle East, Libya, again, chaotic situation there; hard to see what the outcome would be. The fighting there could persist for a long period of time. And it is not clear, in that case, whether or not Al Qaeda could find some type of foothold there.

The final one I would probably add to the mix would be Syria, where the government has thus far resorted to brutal repression. But there is a society where, if we again saw it descend into a civil war situation or sectarian conflict, where Al Qaeda could find, again, some ability to purchase space at the edge of that situation.

So there are a number of spots that relate to that which I think are very problematic.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Let me go back to Pakistan for a second and talk about the radicalization that you have seen there.

Some would suggest, obviously, that, initially, Al Qaeda enjoyed a great deal of support in Pakistan. And, over the years, for a variety of reasons, including the trouble that Al Qaeda, in a sense, has brought to Pakistan, that that support had dwindled. And now you seem to be saying that maybe radicalization, maybe support for Al Qaeda is increasing? Is that the case? And does that threaten the current—to what degree does it threaten the current government in Pakistan?

Mr. JENKINS. The radicalization is not specifically—it is more complex than Al Qaeda. So it is not that the population is moving toward a pro-Al Qaeda position, but simply that the society itself is becoming, or at least portions of it, are becoming more radical in their views, more hostile toward the United States, facing some very, very serious problems in terms of economic problems, demographic problems.

And what we have seen which I think is a cause for concern is, in some of these recent attacks that have occurred—for example, the most recent major attack at the Pakistan major naval base—and some of these others, is that it appears that there was some degree of inside assistance to those attacks.

And so it is not simply, where is Pakistan on the scale of pro- or anti-Al Qaeda, but, rather, for other more complex reasons, a radicalization that is taking place that could lead to some very serious problems in the country. So, even taking Al Qaeda out of the equation, Pakistan is problematic.

Mr. BERGEN. I just wanted to inject some good news into all this. I mean, the most populous Muslim country, of course, is Indonesia. And amongst a lot of bad news that we have heard, you know, the Al Qaeda affiliate there is basically on life support. Because it has

killed a lot of Indonesian civilians, the Indonesian Government has taken a very aggressive stance against it.

And just to pick up on the Pakistan issue, you know, the recent Pew poll shows the United States is at 12 percent favorable. Usually, we get about 15, 20 percent. Anti-Americanism in Pakistan, which I think is part of this radicalization picture—not just about Al Qaeda, I agree with Mr. Jenkins—is really a problem that we need to kind of confront and think about very seriously.

Obviously, there is no appetite in Congress for additional aid to Pakistan, and, in fact, there is no appetite in Pakistan for aid from the United States. Very little of it actually gets disbursed because of all the caveats and reporting requirements.

But I think a discussion in Congress about some kind of greater trade agreement with Pakistan—they really want access to our markets, not handouts. Sixty percent of Pakistani manufacturing is textiles. We have quite punitive tariffs on Pakistani textiles compared to other countries like France. And this is, of course, something that has been long discussed.

But if we are thinking about trying to have more of a strategic, real partnership with Pakistan, with Pakistan's people, not with its government or military, a more trade-based arrangement is the way to go, similar to things that we have discussed about Colombia, that we might have in place for Egypt in the future, and other countries.

Dr. GORKA. I would agree with Mr. Jenkins, that, despite whatever is happening in the Arab Spring events, that Pakistan remains of primary concern, for the reasons he noted.

But if we looked solely to the Middle East, then it is Egypt, I think, that perhaps is the most potentially deleterious to U.S. national interests. If the actions of the military council could still make moves for the Muslim Brotherhood easier, such an early election, such as amendments to the constitution, with the history that Egypt has for being, as Mr. Berger mentioned, the hotbed of Al Qaeda ideology in recent years, then that would be the country I would look at the most closely.

On a technical issue, when it comes to polling data, one has to be incredibly cautious with any polling data executed in Muslim or Arab nations. These are not as reliable as polling data in other countries. A lot depends upon who is asking the question, what nationality they are, what language they speak. So even Pew polls can be potentially misleading with regards to attitudes to America or the West.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you.

My time has expired. But if you could get back to us for the record on the second half of my question, what effect has the Arab Spring had on our counterterrorism efforts, I would appreciate that.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. THORNBERRY. And we had some other discussion on that, too, so I appreciate—altogether, I think it is an important question.

Mr. Johnson, do you have other questions?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, I would.

Quickly, if I could get into this issue of Pakistan. How important is Pakistan to our decision-making when it comes to withdrawal from Afghanistan, and why?

Mr. BERGEN. Do the thought experiment where Iranian nuclear scientists have met with bin Laden to discuss nuclear weapons and Al Qaeda was headquartered in Iran and the Taliban was headquartered in Iran, we would have gone to war with Iran after 9/11. Of course, it was Pakistan where his nuclear scientists were meeting with bin Laden, Pakistan where Al Qaeda and the Taliban are headquartered.

So Pakistan is just absolutely essential to this whole discussion. We can't invade Pakistan. They have nuclear weapons and 500,000 soldiers. But what they decide in their strategic calculus is key to our national security.

And I think it is important to just put yourselves in their shoes for a minute. They have lost 3,000 soldiers in the fight against the Taliban, which is more than the United States and NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] combined have done in Afghanistan. And so they feel that they have done quite a lot. And, certainly, they have done serious military operations in southern Waziristan and Swat. The question is, you know, what more are they going to do? They are quite tired of being told by us, "You need to do more."

And that is why I think, you know, this issue of anti-Americanism and strategic partnership with them, a real strategic partnership is important, because, you know, whether accepting Dr. Gorka's caveat about polling, the fact is that Pakistan is probably one of the most anti-American countries in the world. And that does not help us.

And if we can get Pakistan to be part of the post-2014 Afghanistan settlement in a way that acknowledges that they have real concerns about what the post-2014 settlement looks like and their role in it, and if we can make them more of a strategic partner through trade with us, I think that that will go a long way to kind of getting rid of some of the underlying issues that create the problems that we are trying to discuss today.

Dr. GORKA. Pakistan remains absolutely central to this, for all the reasons that have already been noted. But I think the most important one is that, at the moment, it is a country that simply has one functioning government element, and that is the military—a military which now is either seen to be incompetent or complicit with Al Qaeda. So the fact that Al Qaeda's center of gravity has shifted there also makes it a vital theater of operations.

But one thing we have to remember is—and this came out in an inference in an earlier discussion—it is not just Al Qaeda. Pakistan is now the breeding ground for general Salafi jihadist movements, be they ones connected to the government, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, or other organizations. So, as we look at ahead, Pakistan may indeed be much more important than Afghanistan in the fight against religiously fueled Islamic extremism.

Mr. JENKINS. If I can just add a note by way of a paradox here. While Pakistanis may be increasingly anti-American and while, certainly, the Pakistani Government is increasingly opposed to U.S. counterterrorist activity in Pakistan, at the same time the Pakistani leadership is concerned that we will walk away from Afghani-

stan, as we did before, leaving them with a huge mess on their frontier. And they are hedging their bets.

So, on the one hand, while they dislike our activities, on the other hand they worry about what will happen if we precipitously depart and leave them to deal with a chaotic situation in Afghanistan which certainly has already spilled over onto their borders.

And that is the problem we have with Pakistan, that we have a country that is driven by a number of existential fears. I mean, they fear the Indians. They fear our friendship with India. They worry that the United States is a threat to their national security. They worry that there will be a chaos in Afghanistan which will affect them. They worry about the internal dynamics that we have been discussing. They worry about insurgencies in Baluchistan.

This is a country that has been driven since its creation and increasingly in the last decade by overwhelming existential fears about their survival as a nation. And that makes them extremely difficult to deal with.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you.

I think we are down to a minute or two on the clock on the floor. But, Ms. Davis, if you would like to ask other questions? I may hang for a little longer, but I wanted to alert you on what the situation is.

Mrs. DAVIS. Maybe I will just make this easy.

Is there one lesson that you see that we have had great difficulty learning from these conflicts?

Mr. JENKINS. I will be very brief.

Americans typically undertake very ambitious efforts. And even efforts that we start out sometimes as being very precisely targeted have a way of becoming ambitious efforts. We believe that if we pour resources into a problem, we can get it done with, breathe a sigh of relief, go back to status quo antebellum.

We don't get that here. And, therefore, coming back to probably the essential point I would make is, what Americans have to learn how to do is to really learn how to last for the long haul. Because the long haul, in this particular situation, is a given. And we are going to have to adjust our resources and our objectives to something that we can sustain.

Mr. BERGEN. You know, I think there is a lot of good news in the last 10 years. The United States is a learning organization, sort of country. And the people in it, they learn from their mistakes. So we kind of made a set of mistakes in Iraq, which we then kind of—you know, a lot of good decisions were then made. Similarly in Afghanistan, we are kind of making the right set of decisions. You know, Winston Churchill's famous line, "The Americans will always do the right thing after they have exhausted every other possibility." And I think that is the case.

And the point is, the enemy is actually not like that, so Al Qaeda doesn't learn from its mistakes. You know, it made a huge strategic error of attacking us on 9/11, which didn't get its strategic aim of regime change in the Middle East to Taliban-style theocracies. It also destroyed Al Qaeda, the organization, more or less. "The Base," in Arabic, lost its base in Afghanistan. And they continue to regard us as the main enemy. And a rational actor would say, "Hey, attacking the United States is really, actually, a very bad

idea. Let's just go back to do things more doable," sort of trying to create a Taliban-style theocracy in Egypt or something like that. But they are not going to do that.

So the good news is that we have learned from our mistakes over time and the Al Qaeda hasn't. And that means that, inevitably, they are going to, you know, just—they are small men on the wrong side of history, as President Obama referred to them. And history has just really sped up for them, with the death of bin Laden and the Arab Spring.

Dr. GORKA. Thank you for your very pointed question.

As a foreigner working for the U.S. Government, I realized something very quickly as a problem in the last 10 years, and that is the focus on the kinetic. The United States national security establishment, for obvious reasons, focuses on the violent aspects of this war. Whether it is two towers of flame crashing to the ground, whether it is IEDs [improvised explosive devices] or snipers, it focuses on the obvious.

We need to understand the nonkinetic aspects of this war. We need to understand how a serving major in the United States Army can decide that his loyalty is with jihadi ideology and killing his fellow servicemen and their families as opposed to the constitution he swore to uphold. That is what I mean by the ideological, nonkinetic part of this war. And we are just beginning, after a decade, to understand or begin to address this question. So I think it is the focus on the kinetic we need to move away from.

But thank you for the question.

Mr. THORNBERRY. I thank the gentlelady.

And, again, time has expired, but I want to miss a vote, if necessary, because I want to follow up on actually that point.

I have been in several meetings the past couple weeks with Members where this idea of the ideological war, the extent to which what we call, some call, "strategic communications" makes a difference. And so I would like to get from each of you your thoughts on that aspect of this struggle against terrorism.

And not to go through it, but some people argue this has to be fought out within the Islamic faith, that we have no role in it. Other people say that, you know, we have a much greater role and we have diffuse messages coming out and nobody knows really—you know, so we are not doing anything very well.

But not just doing talking about broadcasts, the ideological part of this struggle I would appreciate your comments on.

Mr. BERGEN. Go ahead.

Mr. JENKINS. There are going to be two views on this. And this is really a bit of a difference of views on this.

One is the view that, look, terrorists themselves do have tactical successes. 9/11 was a tactical success. These other terrorists attacks were tactical successes, operational successes. But, as I think we all agree, that the attack of 9/11 backfired for Al Qaeda and created consequences that it didn't expect, and that Al Qaeda's wanton slaughter of fellow Muslims has backfired on it, and that, therefore, what terrorists cannot do is translate their tactical successes into strategic successes. And this is the inherent limitations of terrorism as a strategy.

And, therefore, the consequence for us is that, if we maintain our capability to blunt them operationally and, in the process, hold on to our values, that, ultimately, our institutions and our values will triumph over this. So it is not that we have to intervene directly to counter their message. Now, that doesn't negate tactical psychological operations and doing other things to create difficulties.

What it does require, however, is a continued adherence to and projection of American values. Now, we did this during the cold war, and we devoted a lot more resources to it than we do today. The issue there was—I mean, we had libraries where people could in quiet read about Thomas Jefferson and things of this sort, and it had a great impact. It was useful stuff.

The other view is that we have to intervene more actively to directly take on the jihadist ideology. I am not so certain about that.

First of all, the problem we have is that, with the massive amount of communications going on in the world and the United States being a media-drenched society and, indeed, a source of a huge export of various things in communications, good and bad, that to try to craft a specific counter-jihadist message in this is, first of all, going to be lost in the noise and, second of all, is intervening in an area where we don't really have the credentials to do so. And, therefore, we might instead take a very cautious approach and say, we are Americans, this is what we believe, we will stop terrorist attacks, and within the Muslim community they have to deal with Al Qaeda themselves.

Now, I realize limitations of polling, but I think Peter Bergen's polls will also show that, within the Muslim community worldwide and in the United States, even those who may be deeply resentful of certain aspects of U.S. foreign policy at the same time think Al Qaeda and its leaders are a bunch of crackpots.

So there isn't that kind of widespread support. They are not getting traction. And they place a great deal of emphasis on this Internet campaign to recruit a lot more retail outlets in the form of Web sites, American-born salesmen like Gadahn and Awlaki and Hammami, but they are not selling a lot of cars. And that is important.

Mr. BERGEN. And following up on what Mr. Jenkins said, yeah, the ideology is sort of imploding around the Muslim world. And for the United States to engage in the debate, there are two problems, really. One is the lack-of-knowledge problem. We are not Islamic scholars. Two, the kiss-of-death problem, which is, anything associated particularly with the United States Government is problematic.

Which is not to say that you can't say certain things. And I think there is one area where we can just hammer away in the kind of ideological struggle, which is on the issue of killing Muslim civilians. It is a tough one sometimes, because we are killing Muslim civilians in Afghanistan, although that number is going down pretty substantially. But this is really their Achilles' heel.

And I remember the first time the U.S. Government, as one, really reacted. It was during the Bush administration where, you may recall, two women, one with mental problems, went into the central market in Baghdad, killed a hundred people in a suicide attack.

Everybody in the U.S. Government, from Condoleezza Rice down, immediately said, you know, this is against Islam, a bad thing.

And so, if you can kind of hammer away on this issue of them killing a lot of Muslim civilians, that is pretty effective. To get into an arcane debate about Islamic theology won't work.

Dr. GORKA. The attacks of September 11th may have backfired for Al Qaeda but not for Al Qaeda's ideology. On the contrary, the events of September the 11th branded this ideology as something powerful because it could take violence to the heart of the United States.

With regard to the question of, are we allowed to be part of this discourse inside Islam, after September the 11th of course we do. We have a dog in this fight, and we have every right to be part of that discourse.

I think we have to remember that the cold war, for all its thousands of nuclear warheads and aircraft carriers and battle tanks across the German plain, was won in the ideational plane. It was won primarily on the grounds of ideology. And we need to do the same kinds of things we did then today.

I agree that we have to start with who we are, as Mr. Jenkins said. We have to be clear about what it is that these individuals threaten in this Nation, why it is constitutional values that are undermined by anybody who believes in this ideology. And that Congress also has some work to do on this, because not only do we have confusion in the executive, but we have very out-of-date acts, such as the Smith-Mundt Act, which makes informational campaigns in this Internet age almost impossible for members of the national security domain.

Lastly, on the issue of our current label for this part of the war, which is countering violent extremism, this is deleterious to the national security of the United States. We did not say when we were fighting the Ku Klux Klan that we are fighting violent extremism. We said that these were white supremacists and racists. You have to be clear about the ideology and what they say about themselves. This is an ideology of global jihad, not a grab bag of violent extremism.

So let's begin to be specific, and let's start to take the fight to the enemy on the ideological plane as well as the kinetic.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Well, thank you all. I think this is a good start for our inquiry as to 10 years after 9/11. I appreciate all your insights and your, again, flexibility on timing.

And we will have future hearings to explore these ideas further, but, again, thank you all.

With that, the hearing stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:27 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

JUNE 22, 2011

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

JUNE 22, 2011

Opening Remarks of
Ranking Member James R. Langevin
For the Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee Hearing
Ten Years On: The Evolution of the Terrorist Threat Since 9/11

June 22, 2011

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thanks to our witnesses for appearing before us today. I appreciate Mr. Thornberry calling this hearing. The threat of terrorism has drastically changed since Al Qaeda attacked our homeland on September 11th and those changes have global implications for our military in the coming future.

We have been focused on fighting Al Qaeda and its affiliates for the past decade, and with the recent killing of bin Laden, it's time to take stock of our efforts. As our battle with Al Qaeda developed, our awareness of the threat has developed too. We have become more aware of Al Qaeda spin-offs and affiliates which clearly span well beyond Afghanistan and Iraq, encompassing the whole globe. We see them in Yemen and Somalia, in the Magreb and the Pacific Rim, in cyberspace, and more and more, here at home. These are all groups who, in one form or another, advocate the violent imposition of their way of life on the rest of the globe.

That prospect is frightening and we must remain ever vigilant. The American people understand full well the damage a determined group of people can do to our country. Further, the threat of a terrorist in possession of a nuclear weapon is on the minds of all security professionals today. But, desire and capability are two different things. We would do well to maintain a sense of perspective, which I hope we broaden here today.

Clearly, the events of 9/11 were catastrophic, and although we have largely prevailed, Al Qaeda proved to be a formidable enemy in the early years in Iraq and Afghanistan. But what is the nature of the threat they pose now that bin Laden is gone? How do we think about Al Qaeda in the context of other terrorist groups, and, perhaps most importantly, how should we consider terrorism in the context of all our other national security challenges? It is these sorts of questions I hope we get into today.

It is no secret that our defense resources are finite and will become scarcer in the coming years as we strive to solve the larger national security issue of our national debt. We must find ways to allocate our funding and forces more efficiently. We cannot expect to have perfect solutions but we must focus on the real threats these terrorists present, and balance our priorities appropriately.

I look forward to hearing from our participants today and hope this hearing spurs some serious philosophical thought about where our nation is headed with respect to National Security issues.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

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TESTIMONY

Al Qaeda After Bin Laden

Implications for American Strategy

BRIAN MICHAEL JENKINS

CT-365

June 2011

Testimony presented before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities on June 22, 2011

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Brian Michael Jenkins[1]
The RAND Corporation

Al Qaeda After Bin Laden
Implications for American Strategy[2]

Before the Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities
United States House of Representatives

June 22, 2011

There is a remarkably little consensus among analysts about the threat now posed by al Qaeda. Some view al Qaeda as a spent force, its demise hastened by bin Laden's death. Others point to al Qaeda's still active field commands, in particular al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP); the spread of its ideology, especially on the Internet; its determination to acquire and employ weapons of mass destruction; and the still difficult situations in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Al Qaeda is many things. It is an ideology of violence. It is the inspiration for a global terrorist campaign. It is a tiny army in Afghanistan. It is a loose collection of autonomous field commands and allies in North Africa, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia. It is a communications network. Increasingly, it is the conveyer of individual discontents. A thorough assessment would have to examine each component and aspect of its activities.

THE FIVE PHASES OF AL QAEDA'S CAMPAIGN

We are currently in what might be called the fifth or "post–bin Laden phase" of al Qaeda's campaign.

Phase I – Preparing for war. The first phase began with al Qaeda's formation in 1988 and includes Saudi Arabia's rejection of bin Laden's offer to mobilize an army of mujahadeen instead of American forces to protect the kingdom, along with an angry bin Laden's subsequent efforts in the early 1990s to rebuild the Afghan network.

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Phase II – Escalating to 9/11. The second phase began in 1996 with Osama bin Laden's declaration of war on the United States and al Qaeda's escalating centrally directed terrorist operations, culminating in the 9/11 attacks.

Phase III – A counterproductive terrorist campaign. The third stage began with the American attack on Afghanistan, dispersing al Qaeda's training camps and putting its leaders on the run. Nevertheless, al Qaeda's international terrorist campaign continued, with spectacular attacks in Indonesia, Kenya, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Turkey, Spain, and the United Kingdom. These attacks, however, provoked crackdowns by local governments, which largely destroyed local jihadist networks.

Meanwhile, America's invasion of Iraq in 2003 opened up another front for al Qaeda, which it exploited with a brutal terrorist campaign aimed primarily at other Muslims in an effort to provoke civil war.

But al Qaeda's wanton violence against civilians and Muslims alienated Muslim communities. In Iraq, even Sunni Muslims turned on al Qaeda—a key turning point in the war. With American reinforcements and a crucial change in counterinsurgency strategy, the Iraqi insurgency began to subside.

Phase IV – Individual jihad and do-it-yourself terrorism. The fourth phase, which began in 2007, saw al Qaeda's recession. During this period, it failed to carry out any significant terrorist attacks outside of Iraq or Afghanistan. Its central command became increasingly dependent on affiliates, allies, and homegrown terrorists to continue its global campaign. Algerian terrorists declared themselves to be part of al Qaeda, while AQAP found new sanctuary in Yemen. AQAP launched several attacks which failed but were nonetheless alarming. Meanwhile, the Taliban, recovered from its defeat in 2001, returned to Afghanistan and expanded its influence throughout the country, compelling the United States to send additional troops.

The death of bin Laden—23 years after al Qaeda's official founding, 15 years after his declaration of war on America—marks the end of this fourth phase.

Phase V – Al Qaeda post-bin Laden. The trajectory of al Qaeda cannot be predicted. However, some general observations are possible.

AN APPRECIATION OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

We have made considerable progress in the past ten years. Al Qaeda's operational capabilities clearly have been degraded. Its leadership has been decimated, its tiny army scattered. It has not been able to launch a major terrorist operation in the West since 2005. But we have not dented its determination to continue its campaign.

The death of bin Laden does not end al Qaeda's global terrorist campaign. The reported elevation of Ayman al-Zawahiri as al Qaeda's leader suggests that bin Laden's focus on attacking the United States will continue after his death.

Al Qaeda after bin Laden is likely to be even more decentralized, its threat more diffuse. While he was alive, bin Laden was able to impose a unanimity of focus on his inherently fractious enterprise. No successor will speak with bin Laden's authority. Al Qaeda could become a collection of autonomous field commands, presided over by a central command, united only in its beliefs.

The devastating September 11 attacks were an exceptional event, unprecedented in the annals of terrorism, with far-reaching consequences. Al Qaeda expected its terrorist campaign to inspire jihadist groups worldwide to take up arms. It failed to do so. Instead, al Qaeda turned to indiscriminate slaughter of Muslims, which provoked widespread anger and rejection, although among some young Muslims in the West, brandishing al Qaeda sympathies is an act of defiance—like wearing a Che Guevara T-shirt.

Al Qaeda today has far less capability to mount another attack on the scale of 9/11, although caution is in order. Small groups can still be lethal. In 2006, terrorists inspired by al Qaeda's ideology plotted to bring down airliners flying across the Atlantic. Before that, in 1995, a small group of terrorists, then still outside of al Qaeda's orbit, plotted to bring down 12 airliners flying across the Pacific. Had the terrorists succeeded in either case, the numbers of casualties would have rivaled those of 9/11.

Al Qaeda survives by embedding itself in local insurgencies. It has joined such insurgencies in Afghanistan, Iraq, Algeria, Somalia, making itself part of a larger enterprise into which it can inject its ideology. However, these insurgencies have their own trajectory. Al Qaeda is the beneficiary, not the originator of political violence. Regardless of al Qaeda's fate, the insurgencies are likely to go on.

Decades of internal war and weak national institutions in Afghanistan, Yemen, and Somalia guarantee continued conflict. Pacifying these distant turbulent frontiers in order to preserve public safety at home will be an enduring mission.

The revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt and ongoing challenges to Arab autocracies demonstrate the irrelevance of al Qaeda's ideology and terrorist methods. However, al Qaeda benefits from the chaos and the distraction of government, and if these revolutions are crushed or produce no political change, al Qaeda will find new recruiting space. There are also fears that the ultimate beneficiaries of the upheavals will be well-organized Islamist parties, which, although not violent, hold views nearly as extreme as these of al Qaeda. This would not be good news for al Qaeda, but neither would it be good news for the United States.

Al Qaeda's communications have expanded and improved. The movement's leaders have always believed that communications are the most important aspect of its activities. The number of its websites has increased. The number of English language jihadist sites has increased. Al Qaeda publishes a slick online magazine that appeals to an audience of young males. Its American-born spokesmen understand and speak to their audience in easily understood terms.

Al Qaeda has embraced individual jihadism and do-it-yourself terrorism. Its communicators have argued that organization is not necessary: individual jihad is possible and preferable—it is cheap to wage and harder to thwart. This is a change from al Qaeda's initial centralized strategy, and it reflects current realities. Do-It-yourself terrorism goes a step further, accepting that even failed terrorist attempts cause alarm and force governments to devote disproportionate resources to security. The objective is to bankrupt America's already weakened economy. Ultimately, al Qaeda hopes to turn this audience of online jihadists into the real thing. Thus far, it hasn't worked. Al Qaeda's virtual army remains virtual.

Al Qaeda's exhortations to join its violent jihad have thus far yielded meager results among American Muslims. Between 9/11 and the end of 2010, 176 persons were identified as providing material support to jihadist terrorist groups, attempting to join terrorist fronts abroad, or plotting to carry out terrorist attacks in the United States. Authorities have found no terrorist undergrounds, no armies of sleeper cells. Many of those identified were Somalis, a special case that may be explained more by intense nationalism following Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia than by jihadist ideology. Overall, converts to Islam account for a disproportionate percentage of the homegrown terrorists, suggesting that radicalization and recruitment to terrorism is an individual rather than a community phenomenon.

Few American jihadists have been self-starters. Of the 32 plots to carry out terrorist attacks in the United States, only 10 had anything resembling an operational plan. Six of these were FBI stings. Provided with the means, these self-proclaimed jihadists were demonstrably willing to kill. On their own, only three plots got as far as carrying out an attack; authorities intercepted the fourth. Only two attacks, both carried out by lone gunmen, succeeded. This level of terrorist violence contrasts with the level in the 1970s, when there were 50 to 60 terrorist bombings a year in the United States.

IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNTERTERRORIST STRATEGY

This is an appropriate time for a review. Ten years of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency offer historical perspective and hard-earned knowledge of the threat we confront as a nation. As al Qaeda has evolved, so must American strategy. This cannot be a linear, sequential strategy. Instead, we should talk about strategic principles.

We must accept great uncertainty about what may happen in the next decade—there will be surprises. If on this date ten years ago, I, with far more prescience than I can claim, had accurately predicted the events of the following decade—the 9/11 attacks; the American invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq; America's longest war, with 100,000 American troops still in Afghanistan and another 40,000 still in Iraq; a wave of revolutions sweeping across North Africa and the Middle East; NATO aircraft bombing Libya—you would have dismissed me as an imaginative novelist.

Al Qaeda and its affiliates remain the primary target of America's counterterrorist campaign; efforts to destroy it must be relentless. Although weakened, the jihadist movement still poses a threat. Historically, al Qaeda has shown itself to be resilient, organizationally flexible, and opportunistic. It remains determined to bring down the United States. Left unmolested, it will find new sanctuaries from which to pursue its campaign. Its complete destruction is also a matter of justice that will serve as an object lesson for other groups that may contemplate attacking America.

International cooperation must be preserved. War-weariness, economic constraints, and the death of bin Laden may erode the unprecedented worldwide cooperation among intelligence services and law enforcement organizations that has succeeded in reducing al Qaeda's capability to mount large-scale attacks. It is crucial that this cooperation be preserved.

How things turn out in Afghanistan remains critical to the future trajectory of the conflict. Although some argue that America need not wage endless war in Afghanistan in order to destroy al Qaeda, it is hard to see how civil war in the country or a Taliban takeover would serve U.S. objectives. Al Qaeda would almost certainly find a less hostile environment there.

Creating a national army and police force in Afghanistan able to effectively secure the country will take longer than the United States is likely to be willing to sustain current troop levels. A drawdown of American forces is necessary, but arbitrary timetables that dictate the pace of withdrawal could encourage the Taliban to wait us out while discouraging our Afghan allies. Abandonment of Afghanistan would be dangerous. Guaranteeing a stable unified democratic Afghanistan, free of political violence is not achievable. We should examine ways we can reconfigure our effort. The development of local and tribal Afghan defense forces can be accelerated to help fill the gap. These are within Afghan tradition, but require supervision to ensure their effectiveness and prevent abuses. An overall peace settlement with the Taliban seems unrealistic. Instead, talks can encourage local accommodations and reconciliation. Talking does not end the fighting. It is a component of the contest.

Large commitments of American ground forces should be avoided. The American armed forces have gained tremendous experience in combating insurgencies, but Americans have also learned that counterinsurgency and nation-building can be costly and require open-ended commitments. The challenge is how **to deprive al Qaeda and its allies of safe havens without the United States having to fix failed states.**

Counterterrorism has framed much of U.S. foreign policy for nearly a decade. Whatever new governments emerge in the Middle East, the issue of terrorism will not likely be at the top of their agenda. **Counterterrorism cannot be the single note of America's diplomacy.**

We cannot seek or invent an artificial end to the war on terrorism. This is not a finite wartime effort followed by demobilization. We may be chasing al Qaeda for decades. While rejecting the idea of permanent warfare, we must accept the notion of eternal vigilance.

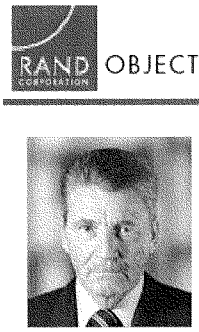
What we do at home and abroad must be sustainable. It is premature to dismantle the structure we have constructed for security, but the government should be very cautious about adding new security measures. Extraordinary security measures almost invariably become permanent features of the landscape. Efforts should focus on developing less burdensome and more efficient ways to maintain current security levels. We should also move toward risk-based security rather than pretending that we can prevent all attacks.

Public expectations of security must be realistic. The nine years and nine months since 9/11 represent the longest passage of time without a major terrorist attack on an American target abroad or at home since the late 1960s with exception of the tragic shooting at Fort Hood. Americans have come to expect that authorities will prevent all terrorist attacks and react with outrage and anger when even a failed attempt occurs. This is not realistic. Even unsuccessful al Qaeda attacks could succeed in undermining our economy if we respond to each with self-injurious security investments and protocols.

The threat of homegrown terrorism is real but should not be exaggerated. The paucity of jihadist recruits suggests that America remains a tolerant nation where immigrants successfully assimilate into the everyday life of our communities and the nation as a whole. America's Muslims are not America's enemies.

Domestic intelligence collection is essential, especially as al Qaeda places more emphasis on inspiring local volunteers to take action. Local police are frontline collectors. The Muslim community is not being picked on. This is not indiscriminate surveillance simply because people are Muslims. The nature of the threat determines the social geography of the collection effort. In response to criminal and terrorist threats in the past, immigrant diasporas and domestic ethnic groups have been the targets of intelligence efforts. Ku Klux Klan violence in the 1960s focused intelligence efforts on certain southern white communities. Anti-Mafia investigations focused on the Italian community. No apologies are necessary. At the same time, community policing to build trust and open lines of communication are critical to reducing radicalization and preventing terrorist attacks.

In sum, we have greatly reduced al Qaeda's capacity for large-scale attacks, but the terrorist campaign led by al Qaeda may go on for many years. It is fair to call it a war, without implying that, like America's past wars, it must have a finite ending. But it is time for a fundamental and thoughtful review of our effort. America's current troop commitments abroad cannot be sustained, nor can we eliminate every vulnerability at home. We have gone big. We need to go long.



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Brian Michael Jenkins, senior adviser to the president at the RAND Corporation, is the author of *Will Terrorists Go Nuclear* (2008, Prometheus Books) and of several RAND monographs, including *Unconquerable Nation: Knowing Our Enemy, Strengthening Ourselves* (2006) and two 2002 reports on al Qaeda. He formerly served as chair of the Political Science Department at RAND.

Commissioned in the infantry, Jenkins became a paratrooper and a captain in the Green Berets. He is a decorated combat veteran, having served in the Seventh Special Forces Group in the Dominican Republic and with the Fifth Special Forces Group in Vietnam. He returned to Vietnam as a member of the Long Range Planning Task Group and received the Department of the Army's highest award for his service.

In 1996, President Clinton appointed Jenkins to the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security. From 1999 to 2000, he served as adviser to the National Commission on Terrorism and in 2000 was appointed to the U.S. Comptroller General's Advisory Board. He is a research associate at the Mineta Transportation Institute, where he directs the continuing research on protecting surface transportation against terrorist attacks.

Jenkins has a B.A. in fine arts and an M.A. in history, both from the University of California, Los Angeles. He studied at the University of Guanajuato in Mexico and in the Department of Humanities at the University of San Carlos in Guatemala, where he was a Fulbright Fellow and recipient of a second fellowship from the Organization of American States.

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federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
1	DoD	$21,200,000	NDRI

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1	DoD	$49,600,000	NDRI

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TESTIMONY

Ten Years on: The Evolution of the Terrorist Threat Since 9/11

Peter Bergen
Director of the National Security Studies Program
New America Foundation

June 23, 2011

Testimony presented before the House Armed Services Committee
Subcommittee on Emerging Threats

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Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Langevin and other members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My testimony will attempt to answer three questions:

What does today's threat look like? How has the threat changed? And, what do we do about it?

1. Today's threat

The death of Osama bin Laden is devastating to "core" al-Qaeda, but arguably just as important to undermining the terrorist organization is the large amount of information that was recovered at the compound where he was killed in northern Pakistan on May 2, 2011. That information is already being exploited for leads. Between the "Arab Spring" and the death of bin Laden, both al-Qaeda's ideology and organization are under assault. That said, jihadist terrorism isn't going away. Regional affiliates such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula remain threatening and there is a continued low-level threat posed by "homegrown" jihadist militants inspired by bin Laden's ideas.

Such militants might successfully carry out bombings against symbolic targets that would kill dozens, such as subways in Manhattan, as was the plan in September 2009 of Najibullah Zazi, an Afghan-American al-Qaeda recruit, or they might blow up an American passenger jet, as was the intention three months later of the Nigerian Umar Farouq Abdulmutallab, who had been recruited by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Had that bombing attempt succeeded, it would have killed hundreds. This level of threat is likely to persist for years to come. However, al-Qaeda no longer poses a national security threat to the American homeland of the type that could result in a mass-casualty attack anywhere close to the scale of 9/11.

Indeed, a survey of the 183 individuals indicted or convicted in Islamist terrorism cases in the United States since the 9/11 attacks by the Maxwell School at Syracuse University and the New America Foundation found that none of the cases involved the use of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons, while only four of the homegrown plots since 9/11 progressed to an actual attack in the United States, attacks that resulted in a total of seventeen deaths. The most notable was the 2009 shootings at Ft. Hood, Texas by Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan, who killed thirteen. By way of comparison, according to the FBI, between 2001 and 2009, 73 people were killed in hate crimes in the United States.

The number of jihadist terrorism cases involving U.S. citizens or residents has markedly spiked in the past two years. In 2009 and 2010 there were 76, almost half of the total since 9/11, but in the first half of 2011 the number of such cases has subsided rather dramatically. This year there have been a total of just eight jihadist terrorism cases by the date of this hearing.

American officials and the wider public should realize that by the law of averages al-

Qaeda or an affiliate will succeed in getting some kind of attack through in the next years, and the best response to that would be to demonstrate that we as a society are resilient and are not be intimidated by such actions because our overreactions can play into the hands of the jihadist groups. When al-Qaeda or affiliated groups can provoke overwrought media coverage based on attacks that don't even succeed -- such as the near-miss on Christmas Day 2009 when Abdulmutallab tried to blow up Northwest Flight 253 over Detroit -- we are doing their work for them. The person who best understood the benefits of American overreaction was bin Laden himself, who in 2004 said on a tape that aired on Al Jazeera: "All that we have to do is to send two mujahedeen to the furthest point east to raise a piece of cloth on which is written al-Qaeda, in order to make generals race there to cause America to suffer human, economic and political losses."[1] Let us not give bin Laden any more such victories now that he is dead.

This testimony focuses on the threat from al-Qaeda, its affiliates, and those motivated by its ideas, while recognizing that these are not the only sources of terrorism directed against the United States.

What effect will the killing of Osama bin Laden have on U.S. security interests, and on core al-Qaeda's goals and capabilities? Bin Laden exercised near-total control over al-Qaeda, whose members had to swear a religious oath personally to bin Laden, so ensuring blind loyalty to him. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the operational commander of the 9/11 attacks, outlined the dictatorial powers that bin Laden exercised over his organization: "If the Shura council at al-Qaeda, the highest authority in the organization, had a majority of 98 percent on a resolution and it is opposed by bin Laden, he has the right to cancel the resolution."[2] Bin Laden's son Omar recalls that the men who worked for al-Qaeda had a habit of requesting permission before they spoke with their leader, saying, "Dear prince: May I speak?"[3]

Materials recovered from the Abbottabad compound in northern Pakistan where bin Laden was killed paint a picture of a leader deeply involved in tactical, operational and strategic planning for al-Qaeda, and in communication with other leaders of the group and even the organization's affiliates overseas.[4]

The death of bin Laden eliminates the founder of al-Qaeda, which has only enjoyed one leader since its founding in 1988, and it also eliminates the one man who provided broad, largely unquestioned strategic goals to the wider jihadist movement. Around the world, those who joined al-Qaeda in the past two decades have sworn *baya*, a religious oath of allegiance to bin Laden, rather than to the organization itself, in the same way that Nazi party members swore an oath of fealty to Hitler, rather than to Nazism. That *baya* must now be transferred to Ayman al Zawahiri, the just announced new leader of al-Qaeda.

Al-Qaeda the organization and the brand are in deep trouble, and Zawahiri is quite unlikely to become the leader who can turn things around. Al-Qaeda is peddling an ideology that has lost much of its purchase in the Muslim world, and it hasn't mounted a successful terrorist attack in the West since the July 7, 2005 bombings in London. The terrorist network's plots, for instance, to blow up seven American, British and Canadian

planes over the Atlantic in 2006, to set off bombs in Manhattan in 2009, and to mount Mumbai-style attacks in Europe a year later all came to nothing. Most notably, it hasn't carried out a successful attack in the United States since Sept. 11, 2001. This significant record of failure predates the momentous events of the Arab Spring— events in which al-Qaeda's leaders, foot soldiers and ideas played no role.

When bin Laden's followers have described their feelings for him, it has been with love. Abu Jandal, a Yemeni who became one of his bodyguards, described his first meeting with bin Laden in 1997 as "beautiful" and said he came to look on him "as a father." Shadi Abdalla, a Jordanian who was also one of bin Laden's bodyguards, explained his boss's attraction: "A very charismatic person who could persuade people simply by his way of talking. One could say that he 'seduced' many young men."

There is no evidence to suggest that Zawahiri inspires similar feelings. More often he comes off as a classic middle manager, such as when he complained in a pre-9/11 memo, later discovered in Afghanistan, that al-Qaeda members in Yemen had spent too much money on a fax machine. Zawahiri's persona makes a real difference to the future of al-Qaeda, whose members have sworn a personal religious oath of obedience to bin Laden.

It's far from clear how many of them will automatically transfer that oath to Zawahiri. Meanwhile, U.S. drone strikes have decimated the bench of al-Qaeda's commanders since the summer of 2008, when President George W. Bush authorized a ramped-up program of attacks in Pakistan's tribal regions. And in the two most populous Muslim nations — Indonesia and Pakistan — favorable views of bin Laden and support for suicide bombings dropped by at least half between 2003 and 2010.

The key force behind this decline has been the deaths of Muslim civilians at the hands of jihadist terrorists. The trail of dead civilians from Baghdad to Jakarta and from Amman to Islamabad over the past decade has largely been the work of al-Qaeda and its allies. Though jihadist groups position themselves as the defenders of the Islamic faith, it has become clear that their actions are quite damaging to Muslims themselves.

Despite all of Zawahiri's drawbacks and the serious institutional problems he inherits, there are some opportunities for him to help resuscitate al-Qaeda. As the Arab Spring turns into a long, hot and violent summer, Zawahiri will try to exploit the regional chaos to achieve his central goal: establishing a new haven for al-Qaeda.

The one place he might be able to pull this off is Yemen. Many of al-Qaeda's members, like bin Laden himself, have roots in Yemen, and U.S. counterterrorism officials have identified the al-Qaeda affiliate there as the most dangerous of the group's regional branches. And the civil war now engulfing the country has already provided an opportunity for jihadist militants to seize the southern town of Zinjibar. Surely al-Qaeda will want to build on this feat in a country that is the nearest analogue today to pre-9/11 Afghanistan: a largely tribal, heavily armed, dirt-poor nation scarred by years of war.[5]

Jihadist terrorism will not, of course, disappear because of the death of bin Laden. Indeed, the

Pakistan Taliban have already mounted attacks in Pakistan that they said were revenge for bin Laden's death,[6] but it is hard to imagine two more final endings to the "War on Terror" than the popular revolts against the authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and the death of bin Laden. No protestors in the streets of Cairo or Benghazi carried placards of bin Laden's face, and very few demanded the imposition of Taliban-like rule, al-Qaeda's preferred end state for the countries in the region. If the Arab Spring was a large nail in the coffin of al-Qaeda's ideology, the death of bin Laden was an equally large nail in the coffin of al-Qaeda the organization.

Media stories asserting that al-Qaeda has played no role in the revolts in the Middle East provoked a furious response from the Yemeni-American cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, a leader of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. In his group's *Inspire* magazine, a slick Web-based publication, heavy on photographs and graphics that, unusually for a jihadist organ, is written in colloquial English, Awlaki penned an essay titled "The Tsunami of Change." In the article, Awlaki made the uncontroversial point that the regimes based on fear were ending in the Arab world because of the revolutions and protests from Egypt to Bahrain. But he went on to assert that, contrary to commentators who had written that the Arab revolts represented a total repudiation of al-Qaeda's founding ideology, the world should "know very well that the opposite is the case."[7]

Awlaki also turned to this analyst, writing, "for a so-called 'terrorism expert' such as Peter Bergen, it is interesting to see how even he doesn't get it right this time. For him to think that because a Taliban-style regime is not going to take over following the revolutions, is a too short-term way of viewing the unfolding events." In other words: Just you wait — Taliban-type theocracies will be coming to the Middle East as the revolutions there unfold further. Awlaki also wrote that it was wrong to say that al-Qaeda viewed the revolutions in the Middle East with "despair." Instead, he claimed that "the Mujahedeen (holy warriors) around the world are going through a moment of elation and I wonder whether the West is aware of the upsurge in Mujahedeen activity in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, Arabia, Algeria and Morocco?"

We do not, of course, know the final outcome of the Arab revolutions, but there is very little chance that al-Qaeda or other extremist groups will be able to grab the reins of power as the authoritarian regimes of the Middle East crumble. But while al-Qaeda and its allies cannot take power anywhere in the Muslim world, these groups do thrive on chaos and civil war. And the whole point of revolutions is that they are inherently unpredictable even to the people who are leading them, so anything could happen in the coming years in Libya and Yemen, and much is unpredictable in Egypt, and even in Saudi Arabia.

2. How has the threat changed?

Threats emanating from Pakistan-based militant groups other than al-Qaeda.

One of bin Laden's most toxic legacies is that even terrorist groups that don't call themselves "Al-Qaeda" have adopted his ideology and a number of South Asian groups now threaten the West. According to Spanish prosecutors, the late leader of the Pakistani Taliban, Baitullah Mehsud sent a team of would-be suicide bombers to Barcelona to attack the subway system there in January 2008. A Pakistani Taliban spokesman confirmed this in a videotaped

interview in which he said that those suicide bombers "were under pledge to Baitullah Mehsud" and were sent because of the Spanish military presence in Afghanistan.[8]

In 2009 the Pakistani Taliban trained an American recruit for an attack in New York. Faisal Shahzad, who had once worked as a financial analyst in the accounting department at the Elizabeth Arden cosmetics company in Stamford, Connecticut, travelled to Pakistan where he received five days of bomb-making training from the Taliban in the tribal region of Waziristan. Armed with this training and $12,000 in cash, Shahzad returned to Connecticut where he purchased a Nissan Pathfinder. He placed a bomb in the SUV and detonated it in Times Square on May 1, 2010 around 6 p.m. when the sidewalks were thick with tourists and theatergoers. The bomb, which was designed to act as a fuel- air explosive, luckily was a dud and Shahzad was arrested two days later as he tried to leave JFK airport for Dubai.[9]

Also based in the Pakistani tribal regions are a number of other jihadist groups allied to both the Taliban and al-Qaeda such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Islamic Jihad Union that have trained dozens of Germans for attacks in Europe. Two Germans and a Turkish resident in Germany, for instance, trained in the tribal regions and then planned to bomb the massive US Ramstein airbase in Germany in 2007.[10] Before their arrests, the men had obtained 1,600 pounds of industrial strength hydrogen peroxide, enough to make a number of large bombs.[11]

The Mumbai attacks of 2008 showed that bin Laden's ideas about attacking Western and Jewish targets had also spread to Pakistani militant groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), which had previously focused only on Indian targets. Over a three-day period in late November 2008, LeT carried out multiple attacks in Mumbai targeting five-star hotels housing Westerners and a Jewish-American community center. The Pakistani-American David Headley played a key role in LeT's massacre in Mumbai, traveling to the Indian financial capital on five extended trips in the two years before the attacks. There, Headley made videotapes of the key locations attacked by the ten LeT gunmen, including the Taj Mahal and Oberoi hotels and Chabad House, the Jewish community center.[12]

Sometime in 2008, Headley hatched a plan to attack the Danish newspaper *Jyllands- Posten*, which three years earlier had published cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed that were deemed to be offensive by many Muslims. In January 2009, Headley traveled to Copenhagen, where he reconnoitered the *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper on the pretext that he ran an immigration business that was looking to place some advertising in the paper. Following his trip to Denmark, Headley met with Ilyas Kashmiri in the Pakistani tribal regions to brief him on his findings. Kashmiri ran a terrorist organization, Harakat-ul-Jihad Islami, closely tied to al-Qaeda. Headley returned to Chicago in mid-June 2009 and was arrested there three months later as he was preparing to leave for Pakistan again. He told investigators that he was planning to kill the *Jyllands-Posten*'s cultural editor who had first commissioned the cartoons as well as the cartoonist Kurt Westergaard who had drawn the cartoon he found most offensive; the Prophet Mohammed with a bomb concealed in his turban.[13]

The Pakistani Taliban, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Harakat-ul-Jihad Islami, the Islamic Jihad Union and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan are all based or have a significant presence in Pakistan's tribal regions and have track records of trying to attack Western and/or American targets and should therefore all be considered threats to American interests. The Pakistani Taliban, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Harakat-ul-Jihad Islami have also been able to attract

American recruits. Already the Pakistani Taliban has carried out attacks in response to bin Laden's death.[14]

Threats emanating from al-Qaeda's regional affiliates.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)

Anwar al-Awlaki, the American-born cleric living in Yemen has increasingly taken an operational role in "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula," (AQAP) which was responsible for attempting to bring down Northwest Flight 253 over Detroit on Christmas Day 2009 with a bomb secreted in the underwear of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, a Nigerian recruit. If Abdulmutallab had succeeded in bringing down the passenger jet, the bombing not only would have killed hundreds but would also have had a large effect on the U.S. economy already reeling from the effects of the worst recession since the Great Depression, and would have devastated the critical aviation and tourism businesses.

President Obama regards Awlaki as so dangerous that he has authorized, seemingly for the first time in American history, the assassination of a U.S. citizen. Awlaki's command of English and Internet savvy helped to radicalize militants such as Major Nidal Hasan who killed thirteen of his fellow soldiers at Ft. Hood, Texas in 2009. That attack happened after a series of email exchanges between Hasan and Awlaki in which the cleric said it was religiously sanctioned for Hasan to kill fellow soldiers.[15]

In October 2010, AQAP hid bombs in toner cartridges on planes bound for Chicago that were only discovered at the last moment at East Midlands Airport and in Dubai.[16] The skillful AQAP bomb-maker who made those bombs is still at large, according to U.S. officials and will continue to attempt to smuggle hard-to-detect bombs on to American or other Western planes.

While carrying out bin Laden's overall strategy of attacking the United States, AQAP was operating largely independent of him and so will not be much affected by bin Laden's death.

Al Shabab

In September 2009, the Somali Islamist insurgent group, *Al Shabab* ("the youth" in Arabic), formally pledged allegiance to bin Laden following a two-year period in which it had recruited Somali-Americans and other U.S. Muslims to fight in the war in Somalia.[17] Six months earlier bin Laden had given his imprimatur to the Somali jihad in an audiotape he released titled "Fight On, Champions of Somalia."[18] After it announced its fealty to bin Laden, Shabab was able to recruit larger numbers of foreign fighters; by one estimate up to 1,200 were working with the group by 2010. Today, Shabab controls much of southern Somalia.[19] Worrisomely, Shabab has shown an ability to send its operatives outside of Somalia, killing dozens in suicide attacks in Uganda last year,[20] and a man with close connections to the group tried to kill Kurt Westergaard, the Danish cartoonist who had drawn the cartoons of the Prophet Mohamed that were deemed to be offensive. Westergaard only survived the assault because he had taken the precaution of installing a safe room in his house.[21]

Shabab has managed to plant al-Qaeda-like ideas into the heads of even its American

recruits. Shirwa Ahmed, an ethnic Somali, graduated from high school in Minneapolis in 2003, and then worked pushing passengers in wheelchairs at Minneapolis Airport. In late 2007, Ahmed traveled to Somalia and a year later, on October 29, 2008, Ahmed drove a truck loaded with explosives towards a government compound in Puntland, northern Somalia, blowing himself up and killing about twenty people. The FBI matched Ahmed's finger, recovered at the scene of the bombing, to fingerprints already on file for him. Ahmed was the first American suicide attacker anywhere.[22] At least two Americans have acted as suicide bombers for al-Shabaab since Ahmed, including Farah Mohamed Beledi, whose death in an attack on African Union troops was confirmed by the FBI this month.[23]

Given the high death rate for the Americans fighting in Somalia, as well as the considerable attention this group has received from the FBI, it is unlikely that the couple of dozen American veterans of the Somali war pose much of a threat to the United States itself. It is however, plausible now that Shabab has declared itself to be an al-Qaeda affiliate, that U.S. citizens in the group might be recruited to engage in anti-American operations overseas. Shabab has operated independently of al-Qaeda "core" and so will not be much affected by bin Laden's death.

Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)

In 2008 there was a sense that Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) was on the verge of defeat. The American ambassador to Iraq, Ryan Crocker said, "You are not going to hear me say that al-Qaeda is defeated, but they've never been closer to defeat than they are now."[24] Certainly AQI has lost its ability to control large swaths of the country and a good chunk of the Sunni population as it did in 2006, but the group has proven surprisingly resilient, as demonstrated by the fact that it pulled off large-scale bombings in central Baghdad in 2010 and 2011. AQI has also shown some ability to carry out operations outside Iraq as well: it attacked three American hotels in Amman, Jordan in 2005,[25] and it had some sort of role in the attacks on Glasgow Airport two years later.[26] As U.S. forces pull down in Iraq, AQI may be tempted to mount other out-of-country attacks against American or Western targets.

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

In September 2006 the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat's leader Abu Musab Abdul Wadud, explained that al-Qaeda "is the only organization qualified to gather together the mujahideen." Subsequently taking the name "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb" (AQIM), the group, which had traditionally focused only on Algerian targets, conducted a range of operations: bombing the United Nations building in Algiers; attacking the Israeli embassy in Mauritania; and murdering French and British hostages. AQIM has hitherto not been able to carry out attacks in the West and is one of the weakest of al-Qaeda's affiliates, only having the capacity for infrequent attacks in North Africa.[27]

What threats emanate from domestic militants motivated by jihadist terrorist ideas?

The New America Foundation and Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Public Policy examined the 183 post-9/11 cases of Americans or U.S. residents convicted or charged of some form of jihadist terrorist activity directed against the United States, as well as the cases of those American citizens who have traveled overseas to join a jihadist terrorist group.[28]

None of the cases we investigated involved individuals plotting with chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons. Given all the post-9/11 concerns about terrorists armed with weapons of mass destruction this is one of our more positive findings.

The number of jihadist terrorism cases involving U.S. citizens or residents has spiked in the past two years.[29] In 2009 and 2010 there were 76, almost half of the total since 9/11. This increase was driven, in part, by plots that could have killed dozens, such as the Pakistani-American Faisal Shahzad's attempt to bomb Times Square in May 2010, but also by the at least 31 people who were charged with fundraising, recruiting or traveling abroad to fight for the Somali terrorist group, Al-Shabab.

In 2002 there were 16 jihadist terrorism cases, in 2003 there were 23, in 2004 there were 8, in 2005 there were 12, in 2006 there were 18, in 2007 there were 16, in 2008 there were 5, in 2009 there were a record 43, in 2010 there were 33, and in 2011 the number of such cases has subsided rather dramatically: There were 9 as of the day of this hearing.

The total number of deaths from jihadist-terrorist attacks in the United States after 9/11 totals 17. Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan is accused of opening fire at a readiness center at Fort Hood, Texas in 2009, killing 13; Hesham Mohamed Hadayat killed two people at the El Al counter at Los Angeles International Airport in 2002 before being shot dead by an El Al security guard; Naveed Haq was found guilty of killing one person at a Jewish center in Seattle in 2006; and Carlos Bledsoe (aka Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammed) is accused of killing one soldier and wounding another at a U.S. Army recruiting center in Arkansas in 2009.

Of particular interest to this committee, the U.S. military, fighting wars of various kinds in five Muslim countries, is firmly in the crosshairs of homegrown jihadist militants. Around one in three of the cases examined by the Maxwell School and New America involved a U.S. military target, ranging from Quantico Marine Base in Virginia to American soldiers serving overseas. We found 59 individuals who were targeting US military facilities or personnel both at home and abroad; 32% of the cases. Bryant Neal Vinas, for instance, a Long Island native, admitted in 2009 to taking part in a rocket attack on a U.S. base in Afghanistan, while in North Carolina, Daniel Boyd, a charismatic convert to Islam who had fought in the jihad in Afghanistan against the Soviets, had some kind of plan to attack American soldiers. Boyd obtained maps of Quantico Marine Base in Virginia, which he cased for a possible attack on June 12, 2009.[30]

Rather than being the uneducated, young Arab-American immigrants of popular imagination, the homegrown militants do not fit any particular socio-economic or ethnic profile. Their average age is thirty. Of the cases for which ethnicity could be determined, only a quarter are of Arab descent, while 9% are African-American, 12% are Caucasian, 18% are South Asian, 18% are of Somali descent, and the rest are either mixed race or of other ethnicities. About half the cases involved a U.S-born American citizen, while another third were naturalized citizens. And of the 94 cases where education could be ascertained, two thirds pursued at least some college courses, and one in ten had completed a Masters, PhD or doctoral equivalent.

A key shift in the threat to the homeland since around the time that Obama took office is the increasing Americanization of the leadership of al-Qaeda and aligned groups, and the

larger numbers of Americans attaching themselves to these groups. Anwar al-Awlaki, a Yemeni-American cleric who grew up in New Mexico, is today playing an important operational role in Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula,[31] while Adnan Shukrijumah, a Saudi-American who grew up in Brooklyn and Florida, is now al-Qaeda's director of external operations.[32] In 2009, Shukrijumah tasked Zazi and two other American residents to attack targets in the United States.[33] Omar Hammami, a Baptist convert to Islam from Alabama, is both a key propagandist and a military commander for Al Shabab, the Somali al-Qaeda affiliate, while Chicagoan David Headley played a central role in scoping the targets for the Lashkar-e-Taiba attacks on Mumbai in late 2008 that killed more than 160.[34] There is little precedent for the high-level operational roles that Americans are currently playing in al-Qaeda and affiliated groups, other than the case of Ali Mohamed, an Egyptian-American former U.S. army sergeant, who was a key military trainer for al-Qaeda during the 1990s, until his arrest after the bombings of the two American embassies in Africa in 1998.

It used to be that the United States was largely the target of Sunni militant terrorists, but now the country is also increasingly exporting American Sunni militants to do jihad overseas. Not only was David Headley responsible for much of the surveillance of the targets for the 2008 Mumbai attacks, he also traveled in 2009 to the Danish capital Copenhagen, where he reconnoitered the *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper for an attack. A year earlier, Osama bin Laden had denounced the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed in the Jyllands-Posten as a "catastrophe," for which retribution would soon be meted out. Following his trip to Denmark, Headley travelled to Pakistan to meet with Ilyas Kashmiri who runs Harakat-ul-Jihad Islami, a terrorist organization tied to al-Qaeda. Headley was arrested in Chicago in October 2009 as he was preparing to travel to Pakistan again. He told investigators that he was planning to kill the Jyllands-Posten's editor who had commissioned the cartoons, as well as the cartoonist Kurt Westergaard, who had drawn the cartoon he found most offensive; the Prophet Mohammed with a bomb concealed in his turban.[35] Similarly, Coleen R. Larose, a Caucasian-American 46-year-old high school dropout known in jihadist circles by her Internet handle "JihadJane," traveled to Europe in the summer of 2009 to scope out an alleged attack on Lars Vilks, a Swedish artist who had drawn a cartoon of the Prophet Mohammed's head on the body of a dog.[36]

Another development in the past couple of years is the increasing diversification of the types of US-based jihadist militants, and the groups with which they have affiliated. Militants engaged in jihadist terrorism in the past two years have ranged from pure "lone wolves" like Major Nidal Hasan who killed thirteen at Fort Hood, Texas in 2009 and Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad (aka Carlos Bledsoe) who killed a soldier the same year at a Little Rock recruiting station, to homegrown militants opting to fight in an overseas jihad with an al-Qaeda affiliate such as the twenty or so American recruits to Al Shabab, to militants like David Headley, who have played an instrumental role in planning for Lashkar-e-Taiba, to those with no previous militant affiliations such as the group of five friends from northern Virginia who travelled to Pakistan in 2009 in a quixotic quest to join the Taliban, and finally those American citizens such as Najibullah Zazi and Bryant Neal Vinas, who managed to plug directly into al-Qaeda Central in

Pakistan's tribal regions, or train with the Pakistani Taliban, as Faizal Shahzad did.

What kinds of future targets or tactics might jihadist groups attack or use?

Attacking commercial aviation–the central nervous system of the global economy---continues to preoccupy al-Qaeda. A cell of British Pakistanis, for instance, trained by al-Qaeda plotted to bring down seven passenger jets flying to the United States and Canada from Britain during the summer of 2006. During the trial of the men accused in the "planes plot" the prosecution argued that some 1,500 passengers would have died if all seven of the targeted planes had been brought down and most of the victims of the attacks would have been Americans, Britons and Canadians.[37] The UK-based planes plot did not stand alone: four years earlier an al-Qaeda affiliate in Kenya had almost succeeded in bringing down an Israeli passenger jet with a surface-to-air missile,[38] while in 2003 a plane belonging to the DHL courier service was struck by a missile as it took off from Baghdad airport.[39] The same year, militants cased Riyadh airport and were planning to attack British Airways flights flying into Saudi Arabia.[40] In 2007, two British doctors with possible ties to Al-Qaeda in Iraq tried unsuccessfully to ignite a car bomb at Glasgow Airport. And if the Nigerian Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab had brought down the Northwest Airlines flight over Detroit on Christmas Day of 2009, it would have been al-Qaeda's most successful attack on an American target since it had destroyed the World Trade Center towers and a wing of the Pentagon. According to several counterterrorism officials, the skilled Yemeni-based bomb-maker who built Abdulmutallab's bomb is believed to still be at large. He is likely to try to bring down another commercial jet with a concealed bomb that is not detectable by metal detectors. And al-Qaeda or an affiliate could also bring down a jet with a surface-to-air missile as was attempted in Kenya in 2002.

Armed with the belief that they can bleed Western economies, Al-Qaeda and affiliated terrorist groups also target companies with distinctive Western brand names, in particular American hotel chains. Since the 9/11 attacks, al-Qaeda and its affiliated groups have increasingly attacked economic and business targets. The shift in tactics is in part a response to the fact that the traditional pre-9/11 targets, such as American embassies, war ships, and military bases, are now better defended, while so-called "soft" economic targets are both ubiquitous and easier to hit. In 2002 a group of 11 French defense contractors were killed as they left a Sheraton hotel in Karachi, which was heavily damaged. In 2003, suicide attackers bombed the J.W. Marriott hotel in Jakarta and attacked it again six years later, simultaneously also attacking the Ritz Carlton hotel in the Indonesian capital. In October 2004, in Taba, Egyptian jihadists attacked a Hilton hotel. In Amman, Jordan in November 2005, al-Qaeda attacked three hotels with well-known American names-- the Grand Hyatt, Radisson, and Days Inn.[41] And five-star hotels that cater to Westerners in the Muslim world are a perennial target for jihadists: in 2008 the Taj and Oberoi in Mumbai; the Serena in Kabul and the Marriott in Islamabad, and in 2009 the Pearl Continental in Peshawar. Such attacks will continue as hotels are in the hospitality business and cannot turn themselves into fortresses.

The fact that American citizens have engaged in suicide operations in Somalia raises the

possibility that suicide operations could start taking place in the United States itself. To discount this possibility would be to ignore the lessons of the British experience. On April 30, 2003, two Britons of Pakistani descent launched a suicide attack in Tel Aviv, while the first British suicide bomber, Birmingham-born Mohammed Bilal, blew himself up outside an army barracks in Indian-held Kashmir in December 2000. [42]Despite those suicide attacks the British security services had concluded after 9/11 that suicide bombings would not be much of a concern in the United Kingdom itself.[43] Then came the four suicide attackers in London on July 7, 2005, which ended that complacent attitude. Major Nidal Malik Hasan, a Palestinian-American medical officer and a rigidly observant Muslim who made no secret to his fellow officers of his opposition to America's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, went on a shooting spree at the giant army base at Fort Hood, Texas, on November 5, 2009, killing thirteen and wounding many more. This attack seems to have been an attempted suicide operation in which Hasan planned a jihadist "death-by-cop." In the year before his killing spree, Major Hasan had made Web postings about suicide operations and the theological justification for the deaths of innocents and had sent more than a dozen emails to the radical cleric Anwar al Awlaki.[44] Awlaki said he first received an email from Major Hasan on Dec. 17, 2008, and in that initial communication he "was asking for an edict regarding the [possibility] of a Muslim soldier [killing] colleagues who serve with him in the American army."[45]

Because we rightly think of al-Qaeda and allied groups as preoccupied by inflicting mass casualty attacks we tend to ignore their long history of assassinating or attempting to assassinate key leaders and American officials. Two days before 9/11 al-Qaeda assassinated the storied Afghan military commander Ahmad Shah Massoud; two years later they tried to kill Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf on two occasions; in 2009 the top Saudi counterterrorism official Mohamed bin Nayef narrowly escaped being killed by an al-Qaeda assassin bearing a concealed bomb; Hamid Karzai has been the subject of multiple Taliban assassination attempts; the leading Pakistani politician, Benazir Bhutto, succumbed to a Taliban suicide bomber in 2007; in 2002 American diplomat Leonard Foley was murdered in Amman, Jordan by Al-Qaeda in Iraq; and six years later the Taliban killed American aid worker Stephen Vance in Peshawar who was working on a project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development. It is worth noting here that since 9/11 the US consulate in Karachi has been the subject of three serious attacks; the U.S. consulate in Jeddah the subject of one large-scale attack and the U.S. embassy in Sana, Yemen the subject of two such attacks. As we have seen, Scandinavian cartoonists and artists who have drawn cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed are now frequently targeted by jihadists. For al-Qaeda and allied groups, the Danish cartoon controversy has assumed some of the same importance that Salman Rushdie's fictional writings about the Prophet did for Khomeini's Iran two decades earlier.

The "success" of Lashkar-e-Taiba's 60-hour assault on Mumbai in late November 2008 that involved ten gunmen all willing to die is already producing other similar copycat operations. The long drawn out attacks in Mumbai produced round the clock coverage around the globe, something other terrorist groups want to emulate. Known as "Fedayeen" (self-sacrificer) attacks we have already seen in Afghanistan similar Fedayeen attacks on Afghan government buildings and in Pakistan a similar attack in

October 2009 against GHQ, the Pakistani military headquarters.[46]

A frequent question after the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon was why didn't al-Qaeda mount an attack on a mall in some Midwestern town, thus showing the American public its ability to attack in Anywheresville, USA? For the Muslims around the globe whom al-Qaeda is trying to influence, an attack on an obscure, unknown town in the Midwest would have little impact, which explains al-Qaeda's continuing fixation on attacks on cities and targets well- known in the Islamic world. That explains Zazi's travel to Manhattan from Colorado and al-Qaeda's many attempts to bring down American passenger jets in the past decade. That is not, of course, to say that someone influenced by bin Laden's ideas-- but not part of al-Qaeda or one of its affiliates-- might not attempt an attack in the future in some obscure American town, but the terrorist organization and its affiliates remains fixated on symbolic targets.

3. What is the most effective strategy to deal with the threat?

I will focus my remarks on Pakistan and Afghanistan. This past fall, U.S. military officials publicly asserted that many Taliban safe havens in Helmand and in Kandahar had been eliminated.[47] This is not only the assessment of the Pentagon, but the judgment of the International Council on Security and Development (ICOS), a think tank that has done field work in southern Afghanistan for many years and has long been critical of Western policies there. ICOS issued a report in February observing, "NATO and Afghan forces now control a greater number of districts in Helmand and Kandahar than before," including key Taliban strongholds such as Marjah in Helmand and Arghandab in Kandahar.[48]

General David Petraeus told the Senate Armed Services Committee in March that in one recent three-month period 360 insurgent leaders were killed or captured.[49] According to a wide range of observers, as a result the average age of Taliban commanders has dropped from 35 to 25 in the past year.[50] Some U.S. military officials believe this is a good thing, as the younger commanders are "less ideological," while Thomas Ruttig, one of the world's leading authorities on the Taliban, says that the reverse is the case: the younger Taliban are more rigid ideologically.[51]

The sharply stepped up military campaign against the Taliban has caused some hand-wringing that Petraeus isn't following counterinsurgency precepts, which have been grossly caricatured as winning "hearts and minds" (see Greg Mortensen's *Three Cups of Tea*), as if counterinsurgency is some kind of advertising campaign to win loyalties. In reality, counterinsurgency is a set of commonsense precepts about how to avoid the kind of ham-handed tactics and repressive measures that will turn the bulk of the population against you, while simultaneously also applying well-calibrated doses of violence to defeat insurgents.

Another common critique of the stepped-up campaign against Taliban commanders is that the U.S. should not be killing those commanders at the same time that it is saying we should talk with them. This critique bears little relation to the history of the last two

decades of Afghan warfare, in which all sides have constantly fought and talked with each other simultaneously. Indeed, the Karzai government has had substantive contacts with elements of the Taliban since as early as 2003, according to a former Afghan national security official familiar with those discussions.

An additional approach to putting pressure on the Taliban are what the U.S. military terms Village Stability Operations (VSO), in which small teams of American Special Forces live permanently "among the population" in remote areas of provinces such as Uruzgan and Zabul where the insurgents once had unfettered freedom of movement. There, the U.S. Special Forces are helping to train local community militiamen known as Afghan Local Police (ALP). The government of Afghanistan has technically authorized 10,000 of them, but American officers believe that the numbers will rise to something more like 24,000.[52] One says, "ALP is the development that the Taliban most fear, we see it in the intelligence."

When Petraeus first arrived as the commander in Afghanistan last summer, setting up the ALP was his first big fight with Karzai, who was concerned quite reasonably that arming tribal militias might replicate some of the "warlordism" that has plagued Afghanistan since the early 1990s. Karzai agreed to the program in July, and there are a number of measures in place that ensure it avoids some of the obvious pitfalls of setting up even more armed Afghan groups.[53] The program is not administered by the U.S. military, but by the Afghan Ministry of Interior, which keeps tabs on it through district police chiefs who are responsible for issuing guns to the community policemen. Candidates for the local police are selected by the local village shura (council), while everyone admitted to the program has to submit to biometric scans. The VSO and ALP programs are both very promising initiatives.

Petraeus also appears to be making progress in standing up an effective Afghan National Army. Currently, the army is the most well-regarded institution in the country, with approval ratings over 80 percent. While Tajiks are overrepresented in the officer corps, and Pashtuns from the south of the country are grossly underrepresented among the rank and file, overall, the army is ethnically balanced, retention rates (while hardly stellar) are rising, pay rates went up two years ago to $140 per month for a raw recruit (the average yearly income in Afghanistan is less than $400), and the army is on track to reach its November 2011 end-strength goal of 171,000.

The key element of a political solution in Afghanistan is to understand that the conflict there does not simply pit the government against the Taliban, but rather involves a multitude of other players, not only the leaders of the ethnic minorities that made up the Northern Alliance and who continue to play a key role in Afghan politics today, but also many millions of Pashtuns who are opposed to both the Taliban and to the central Karzai government. Bringing these disenfranchised Pashtuns into the political process in Afghanistan, in particular between now and the presidential election in 2014, is key to a stable Afghanistan and will be one of the central questions our research for South Asia 2020 will seek to address.

The United Sates has sent a conflicting set of messages to South Asia's regional players about its commitment to Afghanistan; first with the announcement by President Obama in December 2009 of the July 2011 military drawdown from Afghanistan, which was widely interpreted in the region as a real withdrawal date. That was followed a year later by the announcement that the U.S. will have combat troops in Afghanistan until December 2014, and then later by discussions of a possible US-Afghan Status of Forces Agreement that would keep American forces in Afghanistan into 2015 and beyond. These confusing signals of American intentions have meant that regional players, in particular Pakistan, have maintained hedging strategies that increase the risk of conflict in the region; for instance, Pakistan's continued acquiescence in letting the Taliban Haqqani Network have a large-scale presence on its territory. A clearer and more politically sustainable American commitment to Afghanistan is a necessary prerequisite for the politics to align in the region that would then allow a more stable South Asia to emerge.

A complicating factor in all this is the intense anti-Americanism that pervades Pakistan. One step toward a changed mentality would be a shift from an aid-based, transactional relationship to a trade- and investment-based relationship of mutual benefit. More American aid to Pakistan as it is presently conceived is not the way forward. There needs to be a more market-based approach, lowering penalizing tariffs on Pakistani textiles, which account for more than half of Pakistan's manufacturing and helping with Pakistan's chronic power shortage by working on large energy projects.

One way forward could be a free trade agreement with Pakistan similar to the one now being negotiated with Egypt. Negotiations on such an agreement, even if they were protracted, as is often the case with such agreements, would be a signaling device showing that the United States is serious about a new kind of relationship with Pakistan and would help to assuage the bruised Pakistani feelings surrounding the US-Indian civilian nuclear deal. Pakistanis do not want more American handouts, which in any event come so laden with caveats and reporting requirements that very little of the aid is actually spent, but rather access to American markets. This is not to suggest that the US should cease activities such as the aid that was given to the earthquake victims in Pakistan in 2005 and the flood victims in 2010—efficacious actions for which Pakistanis were grateful—but rather that the US-Pakistan relationship should be reconceived of as not simply a donor-recipient relationship but rather a real relationship through increasing trade.

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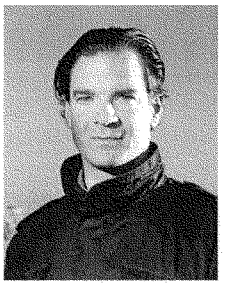

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Peter Bergen is a print and television journalist, and the author of *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden* (2001), which has been translated into 18 languages and *The Osama bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al Qaeda's Leader* (2006). Both books were named among the best non-fiction books of the year by *The Washington Post*, and documentaries based on the books were nominated for Emmys in 2002 and 2007. His most recent book is *The Longest War: The Enduring Conflict between America and Al-Qaeda* (2011). *New York Times* book reviewer Michiko Kakutani writes, "For readers interested in a highly informed, wide-angled, single-volume briefing on the war on terror so far, *'The Longest War'* is clearly that essential book." Tom Ricks, also writing in the *Times*, described the book as "stunning." *Holy War, Inc.* and *The Longest War* were both *New York Times* bestsellers.

Mr. Bergen is CNN's national security analyst and a fellow at New York University's Center on Law & Security. He has written for many publications including *The New York Times, The Washington Post, Vanity Fair, Los Angeles Times, The Wall Street Journal, International Herald Tribune, The Atlantic, Foreign Affairs, Rolling Stone, The National Interest, TIME, Newsweek, Washington Monthly, The Nation, Mother Jones, Washington Times, The Times (UK), The Daily Telegraph (UK), and The Guardian (UK)*. He is a contributing editor at *The New Republic* and has worked as a correspondent for National Geographic television, Discovery and CNN. In 2008 he was an adjunct lecturer at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and he worked as an adjunct professor at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University for several years. He has testified on Capitol Hill on a number of occasions. Mr. Bergen holds a M.A in modern history from New College, Oxford University.

As director of New America's National Security Studies Program, Mr. Bergen leads the Foundation's analysis of terrorism, counterinsurgency, South Asia's geopolitics and other national security concerns. Mr. Bergen's personal Web site can be accessed at: www.peterbergen.com.

DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRACT AND GRANT INFORMATION

INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES: Rule 11, clause 2(g)(5), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 112th Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants) received during the current and two previous fiscal years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. This form is intended to assist witnesses appearing before the House Armed Services Committee in complying with the House rule. Please note that a copy of these statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the witness's personal privacy (including home address and phone number) will be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness's appearance before the committee.

Witness name: PETER BERGEN

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

(•) Individual

( ) Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented: New America Foundation

FISCAL YEAR 2011

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant

FISCAL YEAR 2010

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
1	DHS	$300,000	Jihadist terrorists and biological weapons

FISCAL YEAR 2009

Federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant

Federal Contract Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010:_____;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

Federal Grant Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of grants (including subgrants) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010: 1 ;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010: DHS ;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

List of subjects of federal grants(s) (for example, materials research, sociological study, software design, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010: Sociological study ;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2011):_____;
Fiscal year 2010: $300,000 ;
Fiscal year 2009:_____.

Dr. Sebastian L. v. Gorka

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities

THE EVOLUTION OF THE TERRORIST THREAT

Thank you Chairman Thornberry, ranking-member Langevin and the members of the Subcommittee for honoring me with the opportunity to testify before you on the vital issue of the Evolution of the Terrorist Threat to the United States.

First, I need to make the standard disclaimer that this testimony reflects my views and not necessarily those of the National Defense University, or the Department of Defense, or any other organization I am affiliated with.

Within a matter of months, America will witness the 10th anniversary of the horrendous terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001.

Al Qaeda' s religiously-motivated murder of almost 3,000 people on that sunny Tuesday morning led directly to military operations in Afghanistan and then Iraq which together mark the longest ever military engagement by America since its founding 1776.

We are still fighting in a war that has already outlasted our combat in Korea, WWII and even Vietnam.

Whilst the mastermind behind the September 11th attacks is dead, thanks to the courage and audacity of the US military and intelligence community, the war is not over, the enemy not vanquished.

There are two core messages I would wish to leave you, Mr. Chairman, and the Subcommittee members with today, and I will provide them up-front.

- The second related point is that today, a decade after September 11th, America still does not fully understand the nature of the enemy that most threatens its citizens.
- The first is that stunning tactical successes in no way necessarily lead to strategic victory.

Dr. Sebastian L. v. Gorka

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities

If I may address the second issue first: the special forces raid against Osama bin Laden in Abottabad will clearly become the textbook example of how to perfectly execute high-risk military operations in the post-9/11 world. In locating and killing Osama bin Laden on foreign soil America has again demonstrated its peerless capacity at the tactical and operational level. Nevertheless, as the supreme military thinker Sun Tsu taught, "tactics without strategy is simply the noise before defeat," and it is my firm conviction that the last ten years of this conflict have lacked the strategic guidance that a threat of the magnitude of transnational terrorism demands.

Allow me to illustrate this with one simple observation. Since the escalation of the Iraqi insurgency in 2004, the subsequent rewriting and rapid application of the US Army/USMC Field Manual 3-24 on Counterinsurgency, and the release of General Stanley McChrystal's report on operations in Afghanistan, Washington has persisted in calling our approach to the threat in theater a "Counterinsurgency Strategy." (In fact, a basic internet search on the term "Counterinsurgency Strategy" yields over 300,000 results). This is despite the fact that counterinsurgency always has been, and always will be, a doctrinal approach to irregular warfare, never a strategic solution to any kind of threat.

Strategy explains how one matches resources and methods to ultimate objectives. Strategy explains the why of war, never the operational "how to" of war. The fact that even official bodies can repeatedly make this mistake so many years into this fight indicates that we are breaking cardinal rules of how to realize America's national security interests.

To the first point, allow me to share a personal experience with the members of the Subcommittee. Several years after September 11th, I was invited to address a senior group of Special Operations officers on the last day of a three-day event analyzing progress in the conflict. As I rose to speak on the final day, I told the assembled officers – all of whom had just returned from the theater of operations or who were about to deploy there – that I would have to discard my prepared comments. The reason was that for 2½ days I had witnessed brave men who were risking their lives debate with each other and us, the invited guests, who the enemy

was that they were fighting. Whether al Qaeda is an organization, whether is it a movement, a network or an ideology. This, I said, would be akin to US officers debating each other in 1944 over the question of what the Third Reich was, or what Nazism actually represented. Unfortunately, since that event, I have not seen greater clarity among similar audiences be it within the military, the law enforcement organizations I brief, or especially the members of the intelligence community I have spoken to.

Mr. Chairman, the plain fact of the matter is that we have institutionally failed to meet our duty to become well-informed on the Threat Doctrine of our enemy. And without a clear understanding of the Enemy Threat Doctrine, victory is likely impossible.

The reasons for our paucity in this area are many but they stem from two serious and connected obstacles. The first is a misguided belief that the religious character of the enemy's ideology should not be discussed, and that we need not address it, but should instead use the phrase "Violent Extremism" to describe our foe and thus avoid any unnecessary unpleasantness. The second is that even if we could demonstrate clear-headedness on the issue and recognize the religious ideology of al Qaeda and its associate movements for what it is: a form of hybrid totalitarianism, we still drastically lack the institutional ability to analyze and comprehend the worldview of the enemy and therefore its strategic mindset and ultimate objectives..

Here it is enlightening to look to the past to understand just how great a challenge is posed by the need for our national security establishment to understand its new enemy. It is now well recognized that it was only in 1946, with the authoring of George Kennan's classified 'Long Telegram' (later republished pseudonymously as *The Sources of Soviet Conduct*) that America began to understand the nature of the Soviet Union, why it acted the way it did, how the Kremlin thought, and why the USSR was an existential threat to America.[1] Consider now the fact that this document was written three decades after the Russian Revolution, and that despite all the scholarship and analysis available in the United States, it took more than a generation to penetrate the mind of the enemy and come to a point where a counter-strategy could be

[1] The declassified text of Kennan's original cable can be found at http://www.ntanet.net/KENNAN.html. The pseudonymous article he later wrote for a broader audience in *Foreign Affairs* is at http://www.historyguide.org/europe/kennan.html (both accessed 15 JUN 2011).

formulated. Now add to this the fact that today our enemy is not a European secular nation-state, as was the USSR, but a non-European, religiously-informed non-state terrorist group, and we see the magnitude of the challenge.

Whilst initiatives such as Fort Leavenworth's Human Terrain System (HTS) and the teams they provide to theater commanders are well meant efforts in the right direction of trying to understand the context of the enemy, they still miss the mark on more than one level.

To begin with, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to provide the contextual knowledge we need to understand and defeat our enemy if we rely solely upon anthropologists and social scientists, as the HTS does. Today our multi-disciplinary analysis of the enemy and his doctrine just as much requires – if not more so – the expertise of the regional historian and the theologian, the specialist who knows when and how Sunni Islam split from Shia Islam and what the difference is between the Meccan and Medinan verses of the Koran. We should ask ourselves honestly, how many national security practitioners know the answers to these questions, or at least have somewhere to turn to within government to provide them such essential expertise.

Secondly, we must, after seven years, take the counsel of the 9/11 congressional commission seriously in recognizing that the threat environment itself has radically changed beyond the capacity of our legacy national security structures to deal with it.

In the case of how two of the 9/11 hijackers (Nawaf al-Hamzi and Khalid al-Midhar) were flagged as threats and then still permitted to enter the United States legally, we see proof of how our national security structures do not live up to the threat our new enemies represent. This problem is not unique to the United States, but a product of what the academic world calls the Westphalian system of nation-states and how we are structured to protect ourselves.

For the 350 years since the Treaty of Westphalia that ended the religious wars of Europe, Western nations developed and perfected national security architectures that were predicated on an institutional division of labor and discrete categorization of threats. Internally we had to maintain constitutionality and law and order. Externally we had to deal with the threat of aggression by another state. As a result all our countries divided the national security task-set into separate conceptual and functional baskets: internal versus external, military versus non-

military. And this system worked very well for three and half centuries during which time states fought other nation-states, the age of so-called 'conventional warfare.' However, as Philip Bobbitt has so masterfully described in his book *The Shield of Achilles*, that age is behind us. Al Qaeda, Al Shabaab, or even the Muslim Brotherhood cannot be forced into analytic boxes which are military or non-military, or into internal or external threat categories.[2] We must recognize the hard truth that the threat environment is no longer primarily defined by the state-actor.

Take, for example, the case of the most successful al Qaeda attack on US soil since 9/11, the Fort Hood massacre. A serving Major in the US Army decided that his loyalty lay with his Muslim co-religionists and not his nation, or his branch of service. He was recruited, encouraged and finally blessed in his actions by Anwar al-Awlaki, a US citizen who is a Muslim cleric hiding out in Yemen. When MAJ Hasan was about to be deployed into theater in the service of our country, he instead chose the path of Holy War against the infidel and slew 13 and wounded 31 of his fellow servicemen and their family members and colleagues on the largest US Army base in the United States.

How Westphalian was this deadly attack by al Qaeda? What does it have to do with conventional warfare? Was this threat external or internal in nature? Was it a military attack or a non-military one? As you see, the conceptual frameworks and capabilities that served us so well through the last century fail us today in the 21st. As a result we must develop new methodologies to analyze the threats to our nation and new ways to bridge the conventional gaps between government and agency departments and their respective mindsets, gaps which are so deftly exploited by groups such al Qaeda.[3]

The paradox of al Qaeda is that whilst we have in the last 10 years been incredibly successful in militarily degrading its operational capacity to directly do us harm, al Qaeda has become even

[2] Philip Bobbitt: *The Shield of Achilles – War, Peace and the Course of History*, Random House, New York, N.Y., 2002. In "The Age of Irregular Warfare – So What?," in *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 58, 3rd Quarter, 2010, (p 32-38) I take the discussion further and discuss just how different this post-Westphalian threat environment is and how we need to reappraise key Clausewitzian aspects of the analysis of war.

[3] For a discussion of how to institutionally and conceptually bridge these gaps and so be able to defeat the new types of threat we face see the concept "Super-Purple" described in my chapter "International Cooperation as a Tool in Counterterrorism: Super-Purple as a Weapon to Defeat the Nonrational Terrorist," in *Toward a Grand Strategy Against Terrorism*, Eds. Christopher C. Harmon, Andrew N. Pratt and Sebastian Gorka, McGraw Hill, New York, N.Y., 2011, 71-83.

more powerful in the domain of ideological warfare and other indirect forms of attack. Whilst bin Laden may be dead, the narrative of religiously-motivated global revolution that he embodied is very much alive and growing in popularity.[4] Whilst we have crippled al Qaeda's capacity to execute mass casualty attacks with its own assets on the mainland of the United States, we see that its message has and holds traction with individuals prepared to take the fight to us individually, be it Major Hasan, Faisal Shahzad, the Times Square attacker, or Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the Christmas-Day bomber.

Although we have proven our capacity in the last 10 years to kinetically engage our enemy at the operational and tactical level with unsurpassed effectiveness, we have not even begun to take the war to al Qaeda at the strategic-level of counter-ideology. Again, there are several reasons for this, some connected to the obstacles that have prevented us from adequately analyzing the threat doctrine of our adversary mentioned above. But there are additional problems. The fact is that we have forgotten most of the lessons of the last ideological war we fought – the Cold War – and have also forgotten certain of the cardinal rules of effective information and psychological operations.

To paraphrase Dr. James Kiras of the Air University, and whose views I highly respect, we have denied al Qaeda the capability to conduct complex devastating attacks on the scale of 9/11, but we now need to transition away from concentrating on dismantling and disrupting al Qaeda's network, to undermining its core strategy of ideological attack. We need to employ much more the indirect approach made famous by our community of Special Forces operators of working "by, with and through" local allies and move beyond attacking the enemy directly at the operational and tactical level to attacking it indirectly at the strategic level.

We need to bankrupt transnational Jihadist terrorism at it most powerful point: its narrative of global religious war. For the majority of the last ten years the narrative of the conflict has been

[4] For the rise of Jihadi ideology and what should be done in response, see Sebastian L. v. Gorka: "The Surge that Could Defeat Al Qaeda," *ForeignPolicy.Com*, 10 AUG 2009, at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/08/10/the_one_surge_that_could_defeat_al_qaeda (accessed 15 JUN 2011)

controlled by our enemy.[5] Just as in the Cold War, the United States must take active measures to arrive at a position where it shapes the agenda and the story of the conflict, where we force our enemy onto the back foot to such an extent that Jihadism eventually loses all credibility and implodes as an ideology. For this to happen we must re-think from the ground up the way in which strategic communications and information operations are run across the US government. Additionally, Congress itself will have work to do to remove out-dated limitations on our national ability to fight the war of ideas, such as the Smith-Mundt Act, which were born of a by-gone age before the world of modern communications and especially the internet.

Our ability to fight al Qaeda and similar transnational terrorist actors will depend upon our capacity to communicate to our own citizens and to the world what it is we are fighting for and what it is that the ideology of Jihad threatens in terms of the universal values we hold so dear. To quote Sun Tsu again, in war it is not enough to know the enemy in order to win. One must first know oneself. During the Cold War this happened naturally. Given the nature of the Soviet Union and the nuclear threat it clearly posed to the West, from the first successful Soviet atom-bomb test to the collapse of the USSR in 1991, every day for four decades Americans knew what was at stake and why Communism could not be allowed to spread its totalitarian grip beyond the Iron Curtain.

However, with the end of the Cold War and the decade of peace dividends that was the 1990s, America and the West understandably lost clarity with regard to what it was about its way of life that was precious and worth fighting since the specter of WWIII had been vanquished and the (Cold) war had been won.

The shock of the September 11th attacks did not, however, automatically return us to a point of clarity. The reasons for this flow from several of the observations I have already made, but also from the fact that now our enemy is a religiously-colored one unlike the secular foe we faced during the Cold War.

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[5] For further details on the enemy narrative, our flawed response, and what needs to be done, see Sebastian L. v. Gorka and David Kilcullen: "Who's Winning the Battle for Narrative: Al-Qaida versus the United States and its Allies," in *Influence Warfare - How Terrorists and Governments Fight to Shape Perceptions in a War of Ideas*, Ed. James J. F. Forest, Praeger Security International, Westport, CT, 2009, pp. 229-240.

Due in part to a misinterpretation of what the Founding Fathers actually meant by "separation of church and state," today we have hobbled our capacity to understand and counter this enemy at the strategic level. Based upon my experience with military operators and also US law enforcement officers fighting terrorism at home, many in senior management positions in government have misconstrued the matter to such an extent that religion has become a taboo issue within national threat analysis. This is despite that fact that all those who have brought death to our shores as al Qaeda operatives have done so not out of purely political conviction but clearly as a result of the fact that they feel transcendentally justified, that they see their violent deeds as sanctioned by God. If we wish to combat the ideology that drives these murderers, we ignore the role of religion at our peril.

The official decision in recent years to use the term "Violent Extremism" to describe the threat is misleading and deleterious to our ability to understand the enemy and defeat it. America is not at war with all forms of violent extremism. The attacks of September 11th were the work not of a group of terrorists motivated by a generic form of extremism. We are not at war with communists, fascists or nationalists but religiously inspired mass-murderers who consistently cite the Koran to justify their actions. Denying this fact simply out of a misguided sensitivity will delay our ability to understand the nature of this conflict and to delegitimize our foe. By analogy, imagine if in the fight against the Ku Klux Klan federal law enforcement had been forbidden from describing the group they were trying to neutralize as white supremacists or racists, or if during WWII, for political reasons, we forbad our forces from understanding the enemy as a Nazi regime fueled and guided by a fascist ideology of racial hatred, but forced them to call them "violent extremists" instead. We did not do it then and we must not do it now. The safety of America's citizens and our chances of eventual victory depend upon our being able to call the enemy by its proper name: Global Jihadism.[6]

[6] For the best work on understanding the enemy we now face see Patrick Sookhdeo's *Global Jihad: The Future in the Face of militant Islam*, Isaac Publishing, McLean, VA, 2007 and the analytic work of Stephen Ulph, including: *Towards a Curriculum for Teaching Jihadist Ideology*, The Jamestown Foundation, available at http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=36999 (accessed 15 JUN 2011). For an overview of the key thinkers and strategists of Global Jihadi ideology see Sebastian L. v. Gorka: *Jihadist ideology: The Core Texts*, lecture to the Westminster institute. Audio and

To conclude, the last ten years since September 11th 2001 can be summarized as a vast collection of tactical and operational successes but a vacuum in terms of strategic understanding and strategic response. To paraphrase a former US Marine who knows the enemy very well and whom I greatly respect, we have failed to understand the enemy at any more than an operational level and have instead, by default, addressed the enemy solely on the operational plane of engagement. Operationally we have become most proficient at responding to the localized threats caused by al Qaeda, but those localized threats are simply tactical manifestations of what is happening at the strategic level and driven by the ideology of Global Jihad. As a result, by not responding to what al Qaeda has become at the strategic level, we continue to attempt to engage it on the wrong battlefield.

The tenth anniversary of the attacks here in Washington, in New York and in Pennsylvania, afford those of us in the US government who have sworn to uphold and defend the national interests of this greatest of nations a clear opportunity to recognize what we have accomplished and what needs to be reassessed. My wish would be that this hearing mark the beginning of that process, whereby we draw a line under our past efforts and begin anew to recommit ourselves to attacking this deadliest of enemies at the level which is deserves to be – and must be – which is, of course, the strategic.

Osama bin Laden may be dead, but his ideology of global supremacy through religious war is far more vibrant and sympathetic to audiences around the world than it was on the day before the attacks ten years ago. If I were in the position of the members who carry the heavy burden of overseeing our nation's response to the emerging threat that is transnational terrorism, I would begin that reassessment by encouraging an atmosphere within our government and the armed forces which is devoid of politically motivated sensitivities that obstruct our capacity to identify the enemy accurately. Then I would guarantee the conditions by which the executive branch would be able finally to produce a comprehensive understanding of the enemy threat doctrine that is Global Jihadism, a document akin to Kennan's foundational analysis that eventually led to

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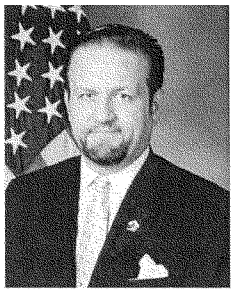
transcript available at http://www.westminster-institute.org/articles/jihadist-ideology-the-core-texts-3/#more-385 (accessed 15 JUN 2011).

the Truman Doctrine and its exquisite operationalization in Paul Nitze's plan for containment, NSC-68.[7]

In this way Congress will have made it possible once more for America to think and act strategically and to vouchsafe the blessed experiment in democracy and liberty that is the United States of America.

[7] The declassified NSC-68 which operationalized George Kennan's enemy threat doctrine analysis of the USSR is available at: http://www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/Documents/2004/December%202004/1204keeperfull.pdf (Accessed 15 JUN 2011).



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Dr. Gorka appears regularly as an analyst and commentator in the US and international media, to include the BBC, CNN, CBS, Fox, EuroNews, al Jazeera, VoA, and RFE/RL.

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Additionally, Dr. Gorka regularly lectures for local, state and federal law enforcement. He is a regular speaker for the FBI, including the FBI Academy and the Bureau's international terrorism response unit, the so-called 'Fly Team,' and has lectured also to the National Counter-Terrorism Center and the School of Advance Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, and USMA West Point.

Dr. Gorka served as an advisor to the Department of Defense in the recent renewal of its *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept* (IW JOC 2.0) and is contributing co-editor - with COL Nick Pratt (USMC ret.) and Dr. Christopher Harmon - of *Toward a Grand Strategy Against Terrorism*, McGraw Hill, 2011.

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DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

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Who's Winning the Battle for Narrative?

Al-Qaida versus the United States and its Allies

Sebastian Gorka and David Kilcullen

> *The confrontation that we are calling for with the apostate regimes does not know Socratic debates, Platonic ideals, nor Aristotelian diplomacy. But it knows the dialogue of bullets, the ideals of assassination, bombing, and destruction, and the diplomacy of the canon and machine-gun.*
>
> —Al-Qaida Training Manual[1]

THE MODERN MASTER of strategy, Carl von Clausewitz, is a notoriously difficult author to read and understand. The fact that his most famous work, *On War*, remained unfinished on his death and was published posthumously by his widow, only adds to the problems of interpretation. Even his most famous dictum, which sees war as the continuation of politics by others means, can be understood in several ways. Nevertheless, whatever the final interpretation, the saying clearly underscores the function of will within conflict. For von Clausewitz, politics was but one method for a nation to realize its will. He understood that at times one can only reach such goals through the use of force. In such cases, a government employs violence to impose its will on the enemy after other tools have proven inadequate. In the endeavor to force our will and our version of future reality on our foe, communication plays an absolutely vital role. On the one hand it helps our population and our forces maintain the will to fight and to win. Strategic communications can also be very effective in undermining the will to fight of our adversary.[2] Unfortunately, in the seven-year global conflict between the United States and al-Qaida, it is the enemy that is winning the war of strategic communications.

This chapter examines the message that al-Qaida has been broadcasting, what the message from the United States and its allies has been, and the contextual reality behind both. We also explore why al-Qaida has been much more successful in communicating its ideology and the justifications for its actions than the United States and its allies have been. And finally, based on this analysis we will recommend a simple format and preliminary content for a doctrine of strategic communication to undermine the current enemy and strengthen U.S. national interests.

AL-QAIDA'S MESSAGE

Although al-Qaida operates in secret and is very unlike the nation-state foes the United States and its allies have faced in the past, Osama bin Laden and his ideological adviser Ayman al-Zawahiri are not shy individuals who shun the limelight. Long before the attacks of September 11, 2001 (9/11), the leaders of this salafist terrorist organization openly telegraphed the justifications for the violence perpetrated by their operatives to the whole world and broadcast in detail what end-state they envisaged as a result of their global campaign of terror. In fact, three years before the attacks which killed nearly 3,000 innocent civilians in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania, bin Laden openly declared war against the United States and the West in his 1996 fatwa.[3] Today, numerous official and commercial publications are available which collect all similar al-Qaida pronouncements, interviews, and video and audio transcripts, and therefore it is relatively simple to summarize the content of bin Laden's strategic communications.

> The Al-Qaida Narrative
> The nations of the Arab and Muslim world have all fallen from the path of truth Islam. They exist in a state of pagan heresy or ignorance similar to that which existed on the Arabian Peninsula at the time of Islam's birth, a state of jahalia. The leaders of these nations either behave in ways that are not true to the example of Mohammad and the Khoran and/or maintain relations with the West that contravene the core tenets of the Muslim faith. As a result, just as the Salafi and Wahabi schools of Islam decree, true fidelity is to be found in following the example of the first generations of leaders that followed the Prophet, the age of the Four Righteous Caliphs. The true believer must return to a lifestyle that emulates the values and behavior of 7th century Islam. All those who do not do so are our enemies. Our enemies include therefore not only the apostate leaders of the Arab and Muslim world and all Christians and Jews but even all those who call themselves Muslims but who do not follow the fundamentalist ways of the Salafi and Wahabi creed. Following the doctrine of takfir, these people are not in fact Muslims but kafir and should be treated as enemies just as much as the Crusaders. Our goal is to return the ummah, the global community of true Islam, to its former glory and reinstate the Caliphate that was unjustly dissolved by Kemal Ataturk after World War I. We are not fighting for self-determination or national independence, for the nation-state is itself a heretical construct of the Christian Crusaders. In this global war True Islam is under attack by the West and subsequently we must all live the life of defensive Jihad. The current situation of American and Western dominance can only be reversed if Holy War is raised to be the sixth pillar of Islam. It is now the duty of all Muslims to fight the Near Enemy—the leaders of the apostate regimes in the Middle East—and the Far Enemy—America and its allies. In fact, it is the duty of all who seek the global establishment of Dar al-Islam to acquire Weapons of Mass Destruction and to deploy them against the infidel. The West is decadent and fundamentally weak morally. Its citizens love life as much as we love death, therefore we will win.

Note that bin Laden's narrative is coherent and comprehensive: join our jihad ("live the life of defensive Jihad . . . fight the Near Enemy"), for we are certain to win, and when we do justice will prevail.

AMERICA'S MESSAGE

As we finalized this chapter, the conflict is in its seventh year and the campaign globally dispersed from Central Asia to the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Africa, and beyond. And yet, the strategic communications aspect of the Global War on Terror (GWOT), or Long War as it has now been dubbed, has developed in a haphazard fashion without unitary direction or meaningful substance. The mere fact that several years into the conflict, the Department of Defense felt it was necessary to change the name of the campaign from GWOT to the Long War, speaks to a level of confusion at the very highest level.

As a nation America is not even clear as to whom it is at war with. At various times the U.S. government has stated that we are at war with the organization al-Qaida; other times, officials have stated that we are war with all terrorist groups with global reach; and then on still other occasions government leaders have stated that we are at war with terrorism and not with a distinct group that employs terrorism as a tactic.

On the other side of the communication effort, the government has stated that its post-9/11 campaign is about global liberty and democracy, that all the peoples of the world would rather live with political choice and that the creation of a democratic Iraq is the first step in the spread of representative government in the Middle East and across the Arab and Muslim world. Throughout all this, without much effect, the official communications strategy has attempted to stress that the United States (and the West) is not at war with the Muslim world and that the likes of bin Laden only represent a tiny fraction of extremists.

On the very first page of the *U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication* (NSPDSC),[4] President Bush is quoted: "We will lead the cause of freedom, justice, and hope, because both our values and our interests demand it." The quote continues: "We also know that nations with free, healthy, prosperous people will be sources of stability, not breeding grounds for extremists and hate and terror. By making the world more hopeful, we make the world more peaceful." According to the document, released in 2007, the national communications strategy must flow from the eight objectives articulated in the overarching *U.S. National Security Strategy*:

- Championing human dignity,
- Strengthening alliances against terrorism,
- Defusing regional conflicts,
- Preventing the threat of weapons of mass destruction,
- Encouraging global economic growth,
- Expanding the "circle of development,"
- Cooperating with other centers of global power,
- Transforming America's national security institutions to meet the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century.

Specifically, the NSPDSC states that all communications and public diplomacy activities should:

- Underscore America's commitment to freedom, human rights, and the dignity and equality of every human being;

- Reach out to those who share our ideals;
- Support those who struggle for freedom and democracy; and
- Counter those who espouse ideologies of hate and oppression.

Just as with bin Laden and al-Qaida, the U.S. government has also stated the justifications for its actions and the vision of the future its policies are there to serve. The NSPDSC calls these "core messages." These represent the U.S. narrative.

> The U.S.-GWOT Narrative
> As a diverse, multicultural nation founded by immigrants, America includes and respects peoples of different nations, cultures and faiths. America seeks to be a partner for progress, prosperity and peace. The American government wants to work in partnership with others nations and peoples of the world in ways that effect a better life "for all the world's citizens." We believe that all people wish to live in societies that are just, governed by the rule-of-law, and not corrupt. We do not expect every country to shape its government like that of the United States, but we believe that citizens should be able to participate in choosing their governments and that these governments should be accountable to their citizens. With its exclusive ideology of hatred and violence, al-Qaida represents the greatest current threat to global peace and prosperity. The likes of bin Laden cannot be reasoned with and must be stopped before there acquire Weapons of Mass Destruction. It is in the interest of all reasonable peoples and legitimate governments of the world to cooperate in the fight against global terrorism.

Note that this is the narrative as best depicted by the NSPDSC and other official statements, but the message is far less coherent across the departments of government than is al-Qaida's.

WHAT IS STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND WHY CAN'T WE DO IT?

According to the editor of the journal *Military Review*, Colonel William M. Darley—who happens to be the director of Strategic Communications at the Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth—although we may now have the NSPDSC, that does not mean that it works. According to Darley,

> Shockingly, almost 6 years after the attacks against the Twin Towers and Pentagon, a national-level process for organizing and conducting an effective, synchronized program aimed at countering enemy ideas is still not in place. Therefore, many observers both in and out of government are now expressing deep concern that the United States is losing both the global war of ideas against Islamic extremists and the war on terror itself.[5]

While we have become accustomed to members of the community of talking heads lambasting the administration for failing in its communications strategy, it is now clear

that even inside the U.S. government and the armed forces there is open recognition of the lack of both substance and effective process in communicating the whys and wherefores of the Long War. There are therefore two obvious questions which follow: what is strategic communications, and why does the United States seem incapable of doing it in the current threat environment?

From our perspective, "strategic communications" is a catch-all phrase that has been overused, is little understood, and has lost essential meaning. In this regard it is closely related to public diplomacy, information operations, and psychological warfare.[6] All of the above, to a lesser or greater extent, are phrases that were invented to circumvent the opprobrium that became associated with the word propaganda in twentieth century, especially after World War I. Today, it is hard to identify exactly what each term refers to, which agency has the lead responsibly to execute particularly functions, how they differ from one another and how these concepts all differ from the classic, nonpejorative sense of propaganda and the related Cold War concept of political warfare.

According to U.S. Army officer Melanie Reeder, "communication is the link between what an organization intends to do and the understanding and support needed from particular groups and the general public to ensure the ultimate achievement of its program goals."[7] Additionally, she notes, "A strategic communication plan is a long term comprehensive plan to successfully communicate themes, messages, goals, and objectives of an overarching vision. *It is the means by which the strategy is articulated.*"[8]

This would seem to be a reasonable definition. If a strategy is the plan by which a nation's goals are related to the means at its disposal to achieve those goals, then strategic communications are the tools we use to garner support for that plan and the vision behind it, and the tools used to undermine an enemy's ability to obstruct us in achieving that vision. Subsequently, in order for the United States to have a workable strategic communications plan, it must be able to:

1. Define the end-state it wishes to achieve,
2. Define the enemy it wishes to defeat,
3. Identify the audiences for its strategic communication,
4. Identify realistic tools to communicate its goals to those audiences, and
5. Undermine the enemy's own strategic communications.

Let us take these first two requirements in turn. What is the end-state which the United States wishes to achieve? The first question is the easiest one to answer. Clearly, America wishes to destroy al-Qaida, or at the very least make it irrelevant, no longer a threat to its national security. But the second is seemingly more problematic.

The U.S. government has yet to clearly tell the world who it is fighting. Initially, with post-9/11 operations being launched against al-Qaida in Afghanistan and the fundamentalist Taliban regime, the enemy was understood as being the organization that had perpetrated the 9/11 attacks and the government that had provided it with safe haven. But then came the Iraqi invasion and the removal of Saddam Hussein. With this step, America communicated that the enemy included not just al-Qaida and those that harbored it but also any nations inimical to the United States which possessed (or were

suspected of possessing) weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), and which could conceivably pass those weapons on to groups such as al-Qaida. Additionally, after the invasion resulted in sectarian violence within Iraq, America has identified Iraqi insurgents and foreign fighters as also part of the enemy kaleidoscope. On top of that, the administration has made it clear that any group which shares al-Qaida's extremist religiously fueled ideology is also to be counted with the enemy, as is any terrorist groups with global capabilities. Last, with its more recent joint activities in Africa, especially in the southern Sahel region, the government has targeted ungoverned areas which can be exploited by terrorist or insurgent groups.

Subsequently, through its actions and what it has said, the United States has defined its enemy as:

- al-Qaida,
- Groups that share al-Qaida's ideology,
- Insurgent groups and foreign fighters in Iraq,
- States that aid al-Qaida,
- States that could provide WMD capabilities to al-Qaida,
- Any terrorist group with a global network and capabilities,
- Ungoverned areas.

Sun Tzu, the ancient Asian strategist, advises that one must know one's enemy if one is to have a chance of defeating him. In this case the United States has described for itself a rather heterogeneous set of actors and conditions under the moniker of enemy. More problematic than the breadth of definition are the actors it omits, yet which by rights should be included given the original parameters.

It is now a matter of public record that Iran has been assisting insurgent fighters in Iraq. Saudi Arabia, founded as it was on the Wahhabi school of Islam, has been internationally propagating ideological materiel, especially in the form of the so-called Noble Qur'an that is used by fundamentalist imams the world over.[9] Similarly, the role of Pakistan in the further survival of al-Qaida, in particular with reference to the federally administered tribal areas bordering Afghanistan, cannot be dismissed. If the potential supply of WMD capability to al-Qaida and similar terror groups is part of the definition of the enemy, one cannot discount Pakistan, given the sentiments of certain members of its armed forces, intelligence services, and WMD scientists, nor can one exclude North Korea. Last, if extremist groups of global reach are all to be considered enemies, then one can reasonably ask when the United States will begin operations against Hizballah, Jemaah Islamiya, or even Hizb ut Tahrir, to name just three.

Even if one ignores all these secondary targets and stays purely with the top of the list, al-Qaida, then there remain definitional problems. Official guidance is confusing and often unclear. Is al-Qaida just an organization? Is it a network of like-minded groups? It is a franchise of unconnected but similar extremist organizations? Or has it become a global ideology, or even an insurgency on a global scale?[10]

It is clear that al-Qaida has been evolving over time. Started under another name, the Arab Service Bureau, a coordinating body and clearinghouse for Arab mujahideen

fighting in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan, only after the first Gulf War did it become the globally dispersed terror group that would be responsible for the first Twin Towers attack of 1993, the East African embassy bombings, the USS *Cole* attack, and eventually 9/11. Nevertheless, we must be able to understand more deeply how al-Qaida has developed and changed over time—especially after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan forced it into a new form of existence—if we are to stand a case of defeating it and in the process communicating to all observers why we are at war and what we wish to achieve.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to discuss at length what exactly post-9/11 al-Qaida is,[11] but it is important in relationship to the question of counter-strategies to know what al-Qaida is not. Al-Qaida is no longer a unitary organization; it is not—despite what the media would have us believe—a simple global network; and it is not an ideology in the sense of ideology that we are used to, since it is largely informed by religion; and last, it is misleading to portray it (as some commentators have) as some sort of franchise organization akin to a McDonalds (to truly be such a franchise it would need a functioning headquarters, a universally accepted end-state for all its members, and each unit would have to have exactly the same skill sets).

Al-Qaida proper is a tiny minority of a minority which has connected to it several groups around the world who self-associate with the image and rhetoric of al-Qaida but do so most often as a result of some local and far more limited goal they wish to achieve. This heterogeneous aspect of what we today misleadingly term al-Qaida is important.

The multifaceted nature of al-Qaida and its popularity can be illustrated with an anecdote. Several years into the GWOT, a colonel from Pakistani military counterintelligence commented to one of us that the most popular boys' name in his country in the previous 12 months was Osama. To this astonishing fact the author responded by asking, "Does this mean that bin Laden enjoys the popular support of most Pakistanis?" The colonel replied of course not, there is hardly anyone in his country who would in their right mind wish to live in a caliphate under the leadership of Osama bin Laden. Yet while the strategic aims that he espouses and the tools he uses are anathema to them, when bin Laden refers to issues such as the freedom of Palestine or the sanctity of Mecca and Medina, the colonel went on to say that many, many Pakistanis find these sentiments to be sympathetic. This is by far not an unusual attitude outside of Pakistan in other Muslim nations and communities. It is this form of cognitive dissonance that makes our understanding of al-Qaida so difficult and which differentiates it in a distinct fashion from the unified and centralized ideologies of the past such as Nazism, fascism, and communism.

What then is the model which will help us understand and then defeat al-Qaida? Fred Kagan of the American Enterprise Institute advises us to compare the al-Qaida of today with the Bolsheviks of the early 1900s prior to the Russian Revolution of 1917.[12] The analogy is a useful one given the fact that we can reasonably portray communism as a secular religion instigated by a tiny minority without the support of the millions of people the Bolsheviks said they were acting on behalf of. But instead of comparing al-Qaida with the prerevolutionary Bolsheviks, it may be more informative to understand our enemy as the equivalent of that tiny group of Bolshevik extremists at a point after 1917, after a failed attempt at revolution. In this way we can understand the original

Table 11.1 A Comparison of Messages and Reality

The Message of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida	The Reality Behind the Message
Only the Islam we follow is true	There are numerous schools of Islam
The caliphate must be reestablished under Shari'a law	The vast majority of Muslims/Arabs do not wish to live in a fundamentalist caliphate modeled on the Taliban regime
Islam is under attack	There is no concerted effort by the nations of the developed Judeo-Christian world to destroy Islam
The West must be destroyed. There are no innocents.	Al-Qaida cannot match the United States let alone destroy the West. There are no international norms or laws that permit the killing of unarmed civilians
Those who profess to be Muslim but disagree with us are kafir	Bin Laden has no political or clerical credentials to make fatwas or exercise takfir
The Message of the United States and its Allies	**The Reality Behind the Message**
Al-Qaida is the threat to global peace and stability	Very few nations agree with the U.S. threat assessments, even within NATO
We wish to cooperate will all nations that denounce terrorism	Following 9/11 and to this day, the United States has taken a deciding unilateral approach to its national security agenda
We stand for democracy and liberty	Several policy decisions and specific GWOT tactics have undermined rule of law, due process and international human rights norms
Regime change in Central Asia and Iraq will bring broader peace and stability	It is at least unclear at the moment whether Afghanistan and Iraq can survive as functioning democracies, let alone whether this model will spread further in the respective regions

members of al-Qaida as totalitarian merchants of political violence who are now in hiding, who enjoy the permissive yet uninformed support of many, and whose significance or apparent size seems to increase as more and more local actors and groups self-associate with some of their ideas or beliefs.

At this point it may be useful to summarize the strategic communications of both sides in this conflict and compare what is being communicated with actual reality (see Table 11.1).

In both cases there are discrepancies. We cannot allow the discrepancies to persist on our side of this confrontation. Every instance in which we communicate a stance that

is not reflected in reality represents a small victory for the enemy. Therefore we must rethink how our strategic communications are done and what their content should be.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE STRATEGICALLY (OR, IT'S HARD TO STRATEGICALLY COMMUNICATE WITHOUT A STRATEGY)

One of the more important reasons for the lack of an effective communications strategy on behalf of the United States is the lack of a clear and overarching strategy for the post-9/11 era. While we have been given first the GWOT and now the Long War, we are still looking for our generation's George Kennan who will write the new version of the Long Telegram, a document which can be used to formulate a doctrine on the strategic level of the Cold War's containment policy.[13] Without a strategic level doctrine it is very difficult to execute effective strategic communications.

At the same time we can learn much about how not to formulate a strategic communications plan by examining what has been provided already in the official documents despite the doctrinal vacuum. If we return to NSDPSC, we can see that a communications plan citing "America's commitment to freedom, human rights and the dignity and equality of every human being" is at odds with suspension of habeas corpus, extraordinary renditions, and the use of special detention facilities and interrogation techniques. Likewise stressing the fundamental need to "reach out to those who share our ideals" remains a useless core statement of communications policy if we cannot say what this means in real life. The same is true when we express our commitment to "counter those who espouse ideologies of hate and oppression." Do we mean this sincerely to apply to all people, even heads of state? And then, what does our intent to "support those who struggle for freedom and democracy" actually mean? Are we prepared to do this everywhere, from North Korea to Belarussia? If not, then we must either rephrase our strategic communications plan or risk it losing credibility immediately.

After World War II, our ability to effectively communicate what the stakes of the confrontation were, why America had to act and what we wished to achieve were much easier. This was due to several reasons. Communication is best when it clearly demonstrates values. After four years of engagement in a global war against a totalitarian enemy, America's values were clear. Likewise after 30 years of the Soviet Union, the values of the enemy were not obtuse or difficult to grasp. With the Berlin Blockade, the launch of *Sputnik*, and the first Soviet atomic test, it was clear that the game was one of survival, of Them or Us. The enemy was clearly an enemy; the United States knew what the enemy was capable of and what they wanted and, most important of all, the previous four years had shown the United Stateswho we were. September 11 was different.

In the hazy days of post–Cold War peace dividends, since our enemy had been vanquished (or rather had become our "friend"), it was hard to remember what America and the West stood for. The attack itself came as a huge surprise. Despite the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the USS *Cole*, attack and the embassy bombings, we did not appreciate the scale of the threat, the intention of the enemy or his true capabilities. Even after 9/11 we have been obstructed in our understanding of our foe by the fact that his

motivation is not simply political or rational but is religiously informed and has nothing to do with the logic of nation-state behavior. It is thanks to this confusion that today when you ask someone anywhere in the world whom they associate with the word *caliphate* they will more often as not give the name of Osama bin Laden. If you ask the same person which person or country they associate with the words *democracy* or *liberty*, it is unlikely to be the United States. Not so long ago, neither statement would have been true.

How then to proceed? According to the aforementioned study by Lieutenant Colonel Reeder, a strategic communication plan must be designed to:

- Define the threat,
- Inform and educate,
- Promote support for policies, programs, and actions,
- Counter myths, misconceptions, rumors, and misinformation,
- Persuade or call to action,
- Serve as a tool to identify and allocate resources,
- Provide personnel within the organization a reference guide of coherent and consistent messages.[14]

Above all, it must do this in a way that clearly demonstrates to the audience the positive values that are the foundation for our system of government and which inform and guide our actions both domestically and abroad. Our policies cannot contravene these core values.

To simplify matters, and given the urgency of the task, we can boil the above down into three fundamental questions the United States and its allies must answer if they are to have any chance of building a coherent strategic communications platform which can delegitimize al-Qaida. These are:

1. Who is the enemy? The answer to this question should be short and simple.
2. Who are we? What do we believe in and what do we stand for as a nation and what we require of others nations that hold themselves to be part of the community of peace-loving and freedom-loving countries?
3. What are the core values which inform our behavior and our policies and which are not negotiable?

Given the weakness of communications to date, we would suggest one additional twist. At the moment it would be a waste to spend significantly more money on trying to make the United States or the "West" look good in the eyes of non-Western audiences. This will most likely come when we are judged by our actions. Instead we should focus on making the enemy look bad. For example, how is it that a man without any clerical qualifications issues fatwas and why is it that since 9/11 al-Qaida has been responsible for the death of far more Muslims than Westerners? This is how one can delegitimize and marginalize bin Laden.

There is, however, one last point which all the discussion of strategic communications in the past seven years has omitted. While it is true that we were much better at

strategic communications (or rather propaganda and political warfare) during the Cold War, there is a very important reason for his. When America established tools such as Voice of America, Radio Liberty, and Radio Free Europe, it was targeting a completely different audience. For the most part, the citizens of the captive nations behind the Iron Curtain were not staunch communists who had to be converted through these broadcasts. The people of Hungary, Poland, East Germany, the Baltic states, and so on believed in democracy and longed to be free. They did not tune into our federally funded stations because they wanted to be converted to our value system. They were already on our side and simply wanted access to information denied them by their illegitimate masters. This is not the case today. Yesterday the audience was with us but captive. Today the audience may be suffering under a less than democratic regime or an authoritarian government, but that does not mean they are necessarily on our side. In the Cold War is may have been about winning "hearts and minds" but today we are in the era of having to win "hearts and souls."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The views expressed in the chapter are those of the authors and do not purpose to reflect the official policy or position of any department or agency of the U.S. government.

NOTES

1. *Military Studies in the Jihad Against the Tyrants/The Al-Qaeda Training Manual*, edited by Jerrold M. Post with a preface by Amb. Paul Bremer, USAF Counterproliferation Center, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, 2004, p. 13.

2. The early land campaign of the first Gulf War provides a perfect example of U.S. will exerted successfully on the enemy, as tens of thousands of Iraqi troops deserted and surrendered to Coalition Forces in the first 100 hours of battle.

3. Declaration of War against the American Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places.

4. *U.S. National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication, Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy*, Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC), June 2007, p. 1.

5. W. M. Darley, "The Missing Component of U.S. Strategic Communications," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 47, 4th quarter, 2007, National Defense University Press.

6. Please see the introduction to this volume for definitions of these and other related terms.

7. Lt. Col. Melanie Reeder, *The Strategic Communications Plan: Effective Communication for Strategic Leaders*, Strategy Research Project, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 1998, p. iii.

8. Ibid, p. 3; emphasis added. Compare this definition to definitions for "public diplomacy" and "psychological warfare." A phrase supposedly first coined by U.S. diplomat Edmund Gullion, according to the State Department, "Public Diplomacy seeks to promote the national interest of the United States through understanding, informing and influencing foreign audiences." While psychological warfare consists of "activities, other than physical combat, which communicate ideas and information intended to affect the mind, emotions, and actions of the enemy, for the purpose of disrupting his morale and his will to fight." Both quoted in N. J. Cull et al,. *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion, a Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the Present*, ABC-CLIO, Santa Barbara, 2003.

9. Officially distributed during the annual Hajj to English-speaking pilgrims visiting Mecca. The Noble Qur'an, aka the Hilali-Khan translation, King Fahd Publishers, Saudi Arabia.

10. For a discussion of the question of what al-Qaida is, see S. L. v. Gorka, "Al Qaeda and von Clausewitz—Rediscovering the Art of War," presentation to the First Annual Symposium: Countering Global Insurgency, US Joint Special Operations University, Hurlburt Field, Florida, May 5, 2006, available at http://www.itdis.org. For a discussion of al-Qaida as global insurgency, see David Kilcullen, "Countering Global Insurgency," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 28, no. 4, August 2005, and "Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency," remarks delivered at the U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Conference, September 28, 2006, Washington, http://www.usgcoin.org/docs1/3PillarsOfCounterinsurgency.pdf.

11. For more details, see S. L. v. Gorka, "Al Qaeda's Next Generation," Jamestown Foundation, *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. 2, Issue 15, June 29, 2004, http://chechnya.jamestown.org/images/pdf/tcr_002_015.pdf.

12. See Fred Kagan, *The New Bolsheviks: Understanding Al Qaeda, National Security Outlook*, American Enterprise Institute, November 16, 2005, www.aei.org/publications/pubID.23460/pub_detail.asp.

13. The Council for Emerging National Security Affairs recently compiled a survey of national security practitioners and academics judging the various potential doctrines that have already been penned but have not yet won universal adoption by the administration. For details see "The Search for Mr. X" at http://www.censa.net.

14. Reeder, *The Strategic Communications Plan*, pp. 5–6.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

JUNE 22, 2011

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. THORNBERRY

Mr. THORNBERRY. To mitigate the threat we are facing—what would an effective U.S. information operations and strategic communication strategy look like?

Dr. GORKA. In the war of ideas we need to fundamentally readjust our priorities. Our focus should be on making the enemy "look bad" as opposed to making the world "love America."

Those that hate America and wish to hurt us will not be affected by any information or communications campaign aimed directly at them. Likewise, those that already have an affinity for 'things American,' be it our music or durable goods, need not be targeted by USG information efforts. Instead, as is always the case, we must concentrate on the middle ground, those who do not lean decisively either way but who could provide a passive yet permissive environment for AQAM to operate within.

As a result our strategic communications and information operations should target the putative authenticity and credibility of AQAM and its leaders, such as Zawahiri and Awlaki.

We must not shy away from the religious nature of their ideology. We must take active measures to question:

- Their authority to represent Muslims
- Their credentials to speak on theological and religious matters
- Why the majority of all AQAM's victims are in fact Muslims.

For example, we should sponsor billboards across AFG and IRQ, (but also in the US) that simply portray the headshots of Muslim victims of al Qaeda with the name and date of death under each face.

To be even more effective, we should rediscover and deploy those information operations techniques that were so well utilized by the US during the Cold War. We should discretely invest in scholars, activists and organizations within the Muslim and Arab world that are already fighting the war of ideas against the Global Jihadists but whom we have not embraced due to our reluctance to engage in the religious debate. This reluctance is thanks to a political correctness that denies our right to engage in the religious debate despite that fact that those that murdered thousands of Americans on September 11th 2001 (and at Fort Hood) said they did so in the name of Allah.

One of the first such groups we should support are the Khoranists, such as Ibn Warraq and Christopher Luxembourg, who are risking their lives by working to spread the message that the violent sections of the Khoran, so powerfully used by the Global Jihadists, must be reinterpreted and understood as inadmissible in a modern world that respects human rights and freedom of conscience.

Mr. THORNBERRY. In your written testimony, you say that we have forgotten certain "cardinal rules of effective information and psychological operations." Please expand. How do we improve upon our ability to win the "battle of the narrative" and limit our enemies' ability to recruit?

Dr. GORKA. One cannot communicate strategically unless one has a strategy to communicate. This sounds obvious, but one of the reasons AQAM still dominates the information agenda is that they have a clear strategy: the establishment of a Global Caliphate under Sharia law, whilst we do not.

Take for example our actions in Central Asia and the Middle East in the last ten years. We first deployed to destroy al Qaeda. Then we stated that Afghanistan must be a democracy. Then we said Iraq has Weapons of Mass Destruction and Saddam Hussein must be deposed and Iraq made a democracy. Now we say that we must leave despite neither of those nations being stable democracies (and Afghanistan unlikely to ever be one).

Then in response to the Arab Spring we demonstrated greater confusion. First the administration was conspicuous by its absence, despite being nominally committed to democracy's spread in the region. Then we finally insist that Mubarak must step down despite America being his staunch ally for three decades. After he does so, the administration incredibly decides to open talks with the Muslim Brotherhood and thus formally recognize an organization that in its official charter is committed to the spread of Sharia law and the use of jihad. At the same time nothing is being

done to stop the massacre of Syrians by their own president. This confusion speaks to strategic confusion. When an administration, Republican or Democrat, is confused about what its strategic goals are, effective strategic communications and information operations will be impossible.

Therefore America must decide:

- Why do we care about the Middle East?
- Is democracy important to the region?
- If so, what are we prepared to do about organizations—and governments—committed to the establishment of repressive religious regimes?

These questions however cannot be answered if we do not first obtain clarity on the following questions:

I. Who exactly is the current enemy?
   What are it characteristics?
   What is its strategy?
II. What do we as a nation represent, what are our core values?
   Which are the norms we deem universal and non-negotiable and that we demand our allies adhere to?
III. What is our strategy to defeat the enemy?
   What is our definition of victory?

In the tenth year of the war on terror these questions should be—must be—answerable.

If these strategic level questions are answered and US policy is consistent with the answers so given, our information campaigns and psychological operations will have a solid foundation which will guide our specific actions. Additionally we must identify the particular weaknesses of the Global Jihadist movement and exploit them, just as we identified the weaknesses of the international Communist movement and exploited them to win the last ideological war, the Cold War.

(However, much of this is a moot point if Congress does not repeal or amend the Smith Mundt Act of 1948, specifically its prohibition on information designed for foreign audiences reaching US audiences, a restriction that in the age of the internet is completely unrealistic.)

For further details on how to proceed, please refer to the chapter I co-authored with David Kilcullen, entitled "Who's Winning the Battle for Narrative? Al Qaida versus the United States and its Allies," in the book Influence Warfare, edited by James J.F. Forest, (Westport: CT, Praeger Security International, 2009, 229–24) that I have attached, and the wonderful paper by Robert R. Reilly Ideas Matter: Restoring the Content of Public Diplomacy, Heritage Foundation Special Report No. 24, July 27th 2009, available at http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2009/07/Ideas-Matter-Restoring-the-Content-of-Public-Diplomacy and the chapter by Dr. John Lenczowski, formerly of the NSC, in the forthcoming book: Fighting the Ideological War: Strategies For Defeating Al Qaeda, from the Westminster Institute in McLean, VA.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 79.]

Mr. THORNBERRY. You work with and consult our Special Operations Forces. In your conversations with them, what are some of their larger concerns? Outside the major theaters of battle that are Iraq and Afghanistan, do they have the authorities they need to effectively counter terrorist threats? How can we improve?

Dr. GORKA. The major concern I hear repeatedly from the Special Operations Forces I have the privilege to meet and train is two-fold. It concerns the lack of strategic clarity and guidance provided to operators and the related issue of inadequate honesty and detailed information on the broader aspects and characteristics of the enemy.

Our military, SOF included, are without peer today. However, even the best fighting forces in the world can be squandered and misused. Less than a month ago I was briefing a large contingent of SOF operators prior to their deployment. During the Q and A session after my brief, one of them actually said in front of his colleagues that he still did not know why he was fighting this war, that no one had told him. This is inexcusable.

At the same time I have been routinely informed that the kinds of briefings I am asked to provide—understanding the enemy, penetrating his strategic culture and mind-set—are very few and far between.

Although the number of specialists able to summarize and discuss the religiously-driven ideology that is Global Jihad are few in number, they could be used more effectively, especially to 'train the trainers' and so provide deeper understanding of Salafi Jihadism to larger numbers of SOF (and General Purpose Forces).

The one message I try to leave with these brave men whenever I meet them is that today no-one has the luxury of being "just a shooter," or "just an analyst" or

strategist. The enemy is made up of multitasking operator/thinkers. We must be the same. However excellent our SOF are on the range and in tactical operations in theater, they must also be able to understand the enemy and how he thinks. This dual capacity is crucial to victory against any irregular enemy threat group.

As to Title Ten versus Title Fifty authorities, I am less concerned by the question of legal mandates than of doctrinal approaches. The United States will in the future be faced more often by irregular threats than conventional ones. The data of the last decades makes this incontrovertible. Nevertheless, we cannot become involved in CT/COIN operations all across the globe, at least not in the way we have executed them in IRQ and AFG.

An objective study of Irregular Warfare campaigns of the last century demonstrates that the odds are against large-scale foreign interventions. We have seen much greater success in theatres where we use a "small-footprint" approach to the employment of Special Operations Forces. El Salvador is the quintessential example. Despite, or rather because of, the congressionally mandated cap of 50 US advisers at any one time being deployed to that country, we truly stuck to the Special Operations mantra of "by, with and through," a guiding principle we have all too often ignored in the last 10 years (especially in Afghanistan).

Therefore, authorities are less of an issue than is our doctrinal (and strategic) approach.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. WITTMAN

Mr. WITTMAN. Former detainees are actively speaking out about their experiences at Guantanamo, airing grievances and allegations of mistreatment in an effort to promote the jihadist cause. Uthman al-Ghamdi's memoir in Inspire magazine is an example of al-Qai'da's latest propaganda strategy. Is this messaging campaign having a measurable impact, either on new recruits, or encouraging other former detainees to return to the fight?

Mr. BERGEN. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. WITTMAN. As we consider the question, "What does today's threat look like," I am interested in better understanding how GTMO detainees factor into this equation. For example, it is well known that two former detainees currently hold leadership positions in AQAP in Yemen. Can you address this issue and discuss how such detainees impact the threat we currently face from a global perspective?

Mr. BERGEN. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]