

REASSESSING THE THREAT: THE FUTURE OF AL  
QAEDA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR HOME-  
LAND SECURITY

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HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,  
INFORMATION  
SHARING, AND TERRORISM RISK  
ASSESSMENT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

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# CONTENTS

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	Page
STATEMENTS	
The Honorable Jane Harman, a Representative in Congress From the State of California, and Chair, Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk Assessment .....	1
The Honorable David G. Reichert, a Representative in Congress From the State of Washington, and Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk Assessment .....	2
WITNESSES	
Mr. Peter Bergen, Senior Fellow, New American Foundation:	
Oral Statement .....	4
Prepared Statement .....	6
Mr. Lawrence Wright, Fellow, NYU Center on Law and Security:	
Oral Statement .....	14
Prepared Statement .....	16



## REASSESSING THE THREAT: THE FUTURE OF AL QAEDA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR HOMELAND SECURITY

Wednesday, July 30, 2008

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE, INFORMATION SHARING,  
AND TERRORISM RISK ASSESSMENT,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:06 a.m., in Room 311, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Jane Harman [Chair of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Harman, Carney, Perlmutter, Reichert, Shays, Dent, and King.

Also present: Representatives Pascrell and McCaul.

Ms. HARMAN. The hearing will come to order.

Good morning. The subcommittee is meeting today to receive testimony on “Reassessing the Threat: The Future of Al Qaeda and its Implications for Homeland Security.”

Al Qaeda is, in many respects, a different organization than the one that attacked New York and Washington on September 11, 2001. It has been driven from its base in Afghanistan—although, to some extent, it may be returning—and many of its leaders are either dead or in custody.

Reports continue to surface, including those from the witnesses before us today, that al Qaeda may be suffering from internal discord and may no longer enjoy an effective top-down command structure. We are therefore left—and I believe this is the case—with a more disaggregated, horizontal organization, but one that may be more difficult, not less difficult, to fight than the top-down command-structured enemy we faced on 9/11.

The desire and intent of Islamic terrorists, especially al Qaeda, to attack us remains undiminished. Last year, the Director of National Intelligence released a National Intelligence Estimate regarding the threat of terrorism to our homeland. It argued that the capabilities of this loosely affiliated collection of groups continues to improve. Derivatives or copy-cat organizations are surging in places like North Africa, India and the United Kingdom.

Intelligence also tells us that al Qaeda uses Pakistan’s FATA, the federally administered tribal areas, as its new base of operations. Heck, everyone knows that, not just intelligence. Every year up to 400,000 British citizens of Pakistani descent travel to Pakistan for a month of vacation; a thousand return to the United

Kingdom every day. The sheer number of travelers makes counterterrorism efforts incredibly difficult. Though I have recently been briefed on what is up, and I do want to commend our intelligence officials and those in Britain and western Europe for the efforts that they make.

It is becoming incredibly difficult for us to define what “victory” means against this, the types of threats we face. We all know that there will be no formal signing of surrender, as took place on the deck of the battleship U.S.S. Missouri, and no one will be dancing on the Berlin Wall, and we may not see anything that resembles the liberation of Kabul either.

Preventing another major attack on U.S. soil is paramount, but the total eradication of all forms of terrorism may not be achievable. In fact, I would say it will not be achievable. The defeat of the short-term threats against us hopefully will happen, is happening, but to eradicate terrorism from the Earth is probably not something we will be able to do.

Our definition of the threat will drive our strategy or should drive our strategy and what U.S. counterterrorism policy will look like in the future. Our next President will have one tough job to get this as right as possible.

So our assessment of risk must be in tune with the latest threat developments. We must understand both the motivations and the capabilities of our enemies, which constantly evolve. We must never forget that al Qaeda is patient, willing to wait great lengths time of time before striking again.

Our witnesses today are, as we often say around here, the gold standard. Each of them has written and talked extensively about the nature of the threat, the evolving nature of the threat. I read each of their recent articles, one in the New Yorker and one in The New Republic, when they were published, and it occurred to me that it would extraordinarily interesting for our members and the public to hear from them personally about what they have written and what their views are on it, to ask them some questions.

Mr. Bergen also taught a course last semester at the Harvard Kennedy School. There is an article about it in the Christian Science Monitor today. Someone penetrated his class and has described the students and what they had to say for all of us to read.

I do want to thank you both, though, for your efforts at educating the public and us about how we should consider this and what we need to do going forward.

Let me just finally say—and I will introduce the witnesses with a little help in a few minutes—that if the threat is changing, and I believe it is, and if our understanding must change, and I believe it must, probably today’s hearing is the place where I think each Member who is here—and we have pretty good attendance today, even on a busy day—is going to start to change her or his mind about how we should think of this. So, to the extent that public hearings matter here—and I think they do—this one, in my personal lexicon, matters a great deal.

So I want to welcome you both and yield to the Ranking Member, Mr. Reichert, for his opening remarks.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for holding this hearing on the threat posed from al Qaeda. I will be brief.

You know, I think everyone is aware and knows we are living in a shrinking world, all becoming closer and closer together in a changing world, and an ever-changing, unpredictable, determined and deadly enemy. It is essential that this committee remain focused on the terrorist threat. Thanks to your leadership, Madam Chair, and this subcommittee, we have opportunities like this to do so.

Whether al Qaeda is a centralized organization or a loose affiliation bound only by ideology, the movement remains dangerous. While a loosely affiliated group may be less capable of attacking with weapons of mass destruction, properly targeted attacks can still be deadly, affecting our economy and our American way of life. The key to understanding how to defeat al Qaeda is to both understand their ideology and understand the key players, the networks and structure of their organization.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today on their view of al Qaeda and on their recommendations on the way ahead.

Thank you again, Madam Chair. I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you, Mr. Reichert.

A couple of comments before I introduce our witnesses.

First of all, without objection I hope, we are joined by two Members of the full committee, Mr. Pascrell and Mr. McCaul, who have asked to participate. I am asking unanimous consent that they be authorized to sit for the purpose of questioning witnesses during the hearing today.

Hearing no objection, so ordered.

Also, I would remind Members that all Members of the subcommittee, under committee rules, can submit opening statements for the record, should they so choose.

So now I welcome our witnesses this morning.

Our first witness, Peter Bergen, is a senior fellow with the New America Foundation in Washington, DC. He is an adjunct lecturer at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard—I just mentioned his rock-star status in my opening remarks—and a research fellow at New York University’s Center on Law and Security.

He is a security analyst for CNN and author of “Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Bin Laden,” a documentary based on the book which aired on National Geographic television and was nominated for an Emmy in 2002. He is also the co-author of “The Unraveling,” an article describing the jihadist revolt against bin Laden that appeared in last month’s issue of *The New Republic*. I recommend it as reading for all our Members and for anyone looking in or listening in to this hearing.

Mr. Bergen has traveled numerous times to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia to report on Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. He is one of the few western journalists to have interviewed bin Laden himself. Mr. Bergen’s most recent book, “The Osama Bin Laden I Know: An Oral History of Al Qaeda’s Leader,” on which CNN’s 2-hour documentary, “In the Footsteps of Bin Laden” was based, is, again, something we should all read. He has written for a variety of other publications and is on the editorial board of *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*.

Our second witness, Lawrence Wright, is a fellow with the NYU Center on Law and Security, as well as an author, screenwriter, playwright, and staff writer for The New Yorker magazine. He is the author of the June 2008 article, "The Rebellion Within: An Al Qaeda Mastermind Questions Terrorism." I think he has written the seminal book on understanding al Qaeda. It is called "The Looming Tower: Al Qaeda and the Road to 9/11." We have three copies in the Harman household: one to lose, one to travel with, and another one on the bookshelf. I think that also should be required reading.

Before going into any more detail on his resume, I would like to yield to the interloper on this panel, Mr. McCaul, who represents Mr. Wright in Texas.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just want to join in welcoming our distinguished panel. This is the gold standard.

I want to welcome specifically probably my most famous constituent, Larry Wright, to this committee. We look forward to the testimony. I appreciate all the expertise you have brought to this issue, as a distinguished author, a playwright, working for The New Yorker magazine, having taught in Cairo at the American University. He worked for Texas Monthly, Rolling Stone magazine. The resume goes on and on. I want to list a couple more things, though, that catch my eye.

I think most importantly is this book right here. This is the authority, in my view, on al Qaeda. I worked counterterrorism in the Justice Department before I ran for Congress, and I have not seen anything more authoritative on this subject than this piece of work.

I thank you for what you have done for the public to educate them on this issue.

In addition, I was honored to see your play, "My Trip to Al Qaeda," at the Kennedy Center recently, which he also did this at the New York festival and at Soho, really illuminating this topic so well.

Finally, he serves on the Council of Foreign Relations. A little-known fact: In Austin, Texas, which is the live music capital of the world, I like to think, he also is a keyboard player for the blues band, Who Do. He is a very diverse, sort of, renaissance man, brings so much to this topic.

Madam Chair, thank you so much for inviting him to testify here today.

Mr. SHAYS. Are we allowed to object to anything the Member said?

Ms. HARMAN. Reclaiming my time, without objection, the witnesses' full statements will be inserted in the record.

I would now ask Mr. Bergen to summarize in 5 minutes his written testimony.

Welcome, Mr. Bergen.

**STATEMENT OF PETER BERGEN, SENIOR FELLOW, NEW AMERICAN FOUNDATION**

Mr. BERGEN. Madam Chair, thank you very much for this invitation. Thank you to the committee for allowing me to come here to speak.



The subject is the future of al Qaeda. Both Lawrence Wright and I wrote pieces recently indicating that al Qaeda is internally split or there is an emerging jihadist critique of al Qaeda. Now, that emerging jihadist critique has actually been around for some period of time, but it has been amplified as of late.

Now, there are basically four strategic weaknesses that al Qaeda has.

First of all, it kills a lot of Muslim civilians. Muslims around the world are beginning to notice this, whether it is in Iraq or Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, anywhere where the bombs have gone off. You know, it is human nature to really look at a problem as being somebody else's problem when it is not on your own doorstep. It took 9/11, arguably, for the United States to wake up to this problem. When bombs started going off in Riyadh, when bombs started going off in Anbar province, when bombs started going off in Amman, Jordan, when bombs started going off in Jakarta, Muslim civilians started paying attention. So their first strategic weakness is killing a lot of Muslim civilians.

Second, they are not offering a positive vision of the future. We know what they are against, but what are they really for? If bin Laden was here and you asked him, if he was a witness, what are you trying to do, he would say the restoration of the Caliphate. Now, in practice, I don't think either Larry or I would be opposed to the restoration of the Caliphate as is understood by most Muslims, which is meaning something like the Ottoman Empire, a rather rational group of people that treated minorities fairly well. But what does bin Laden mean by restoration of the Caliphate? He means Taliban-style theocracies from Indonesia to Morocco, and most Muslims don't—they have already seen what the Taliban did in Afghanistan, they have seen Iran under the Ayatollah, they have Sudan under Turabi; they know what that looks like.

The third strategic weakness is that they have made a world of enemies. This is not really a winning strategy. I can't think of a category of institution, person or government that al Qaeda hasn't said they are against, whether it is westerners, Muslims who don't precisely share their views, Jews, the United Nations, the international media. The list goes on and on.

Finally, it is difficult, because of the ideological views, it is very hard for al Qaeda or its affiliates, almost impossible, for them to turn themselves into real political movements, because they can't make the kind of real-world political compromises that actually allows you to engage in the kind of compromises that, really, politics is all about.

So given these four strategic problems, which any one of these would be very, very difficult for any movement to deal with, the long-term prognosis for al Qaeda is incredibly poor.

However, Chair Harman mentioned the NIE. Now, how do we square the fact that there is a submerging jihadi critique, not from "moderate," Muslims, who, after all, aren't going to be very persuasive for the people who are tempted to join al Qaeda, but from within the ranks of the people who are the ideological godfathers of al Qaeda, from within the ranks of people who fought with bin Laden, they are the people who are publicly criticizing al Qaeda now.

How do you square the fact that they are losing this long-term ideological battle with the NIE that says al Qaeda is resurging on the Afghan-Pakistan border? I think both things are true. These are not either/or categories. They are losing the longer-term ideological battle, but along the Afghan-Pakistan border they are regrouping from a military point of view as a terrorist organization and also as an insurgent organization.

Just to give you some quick pieces of evidence for that in the 2 minutes I have left, the London attack of July 7, 2005, was an al Qaeda-directed operation. The planes followed in the summer of 2006, where 1,500 Americans, Canadians and Britons would have been blown up in seven planes was an al Qaeda-directed operation. What is going in Afghanistan is, to some degree, al Qaeda's responsibility because the Taliban at its higher levels has adopted al Qaeda's ideology and tactics wholesale.

Fourth, obviously, al Qaeda-in-Iraq is taking some hits, but it would be very, very premature to declare them dead as a terrorist organization. As an insurgent organization that holds territory, they are out of business. But as a terrorist organization, as we just saw yesterday with the three female suicide attackers, they can continue to be an important spoiler in Iraq for the foreseeable future.

Obviously, what is going on in Pakistan—Pakistan had more suicide attacks in 2007 than in its collective previous history. Then also we are seeing, obviously, the fact that bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri are still out there, are still able to produce tapes—and I will make one prediction: that bin Laden, unable to attack United States for at least in the short- or medium-term, will come out with a videotape in the run-up to this election in which he will say, "It doesn't matter if you elect McCain or Obama. You, the American people, need to change the American Government policies all around the Muslim world." I think we can almost guarantee that he will produce that kind of tape.

By the way, that produces a rather strong opportunity for the United States, because the tape is traceable, and, after all, there is a chain of custody of people who carry the tape out to an Internet web site, there are also people who film this.

But, anyway, that is a snapshot, I think, of al Qaeda's continued resurgence as a military and terrorist and insurgent organization. But in the long term, they are losing this ideological struggle. I think, parenthetically, I think their ability to attack the United States directly in the next 5 years is extremely low.

[The statement of Mr. Bergen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PETER BERGEN

JULY 30, 2008

I. LONG-TERM STRATEGIC WEAKNESSES OF AL QAEDA

*(With thanks to Paul Cruickshank of New York University's Center on Law & Security for his input in this section).*

After September 11, there was considerable fear in the West that we were headed for a clash of civilizations with the Muslim world led by Osama bin Laden, who would entice masses of young Muslims into his jihadist movement. But the religious leaders and former militants who are now critiquing al Qaeda's terrorist campaign—both in the Middle East and in Muslim enclaves in the West—make that less likely.

The potential repercussions for al Qaeda cannot be underestimated because, unlike most mainstream Muslim leaders, al Qaeda's new critics have the jihadist credentials to make their criticisms bite.

Why have clerics and militants once considered allies by al Qaeda's leaders turned against them? To a large extent, it is because al Qaeda and its affiliates have increasingly adopted the doctrine of taqfir, by which they claim the right to decide who is a "true" Muslim. Al Qaeda's Muslim critics know what results from this taqfiri view: First, the radicals deem some Muslims apostates; after that, the radicals start killing them. This fatal progression happened in both Algeria and Egypt in the 1990's. It is now taking place even more dramatically in Iraq, where al Qaeda's suicide bombers have killed more than 10,000 Iraqis, most of them targeted simply for being Shia. Recently, al Qaeda in Iraq has turned its fire on Sunnis who oppose its diktats, a fact not lost on the Islamic world's Sunni majority.

Additionally, al Qaeda and its affiliates have killed thousands of Muslim civilians elsewhere since September 11: hundreds of ordinary Afghans killed every year by the Taliban, dozens of Saudis killed by terrorists since 2003, scores of Jordanians massacred at a wedding at a U.S. hotel in Amman in November 2005. Even those sympathetic to al Qaeda have started to notice. "Excuse me Mr. Zawahiri but who is it who is killing with Your Excellency's blessing, the innocents in Baghdad, Morocco and Algeria?" one supporter asked in an online Q&A with al Qaeda's deputy leader in April that was posted widely on jihadist web sites. All this has created a dawning recognition among Muslims that the ideological virus that unleashed September 11 and the terrorist attacks in London and Madrid is the same virus now wreaking havoc in the Muslim world, a trend that Paul Cruickshank of NYU's Center on Law & Security and I detailed in a cover story in *The New Republic* called "The Unraveling" in June 2008.

Around the sixth anniversary of September 11, al Qaeda received a blow from one of bin Laden's erstwhile heroes, Sheikh Salman Al Oudah, a Saudi religious scholar. Al Oudah addressed al Qaeda's leader on MBC, a widely watched Middle East TV network: "My brother Osama, how much blood has been spilt? How many innocent people, children, elderly, and women have been killed . . . in the name of al Qaeda? Will you be happy to meet God Almighty carrying the burden of these hundreds of thousands or millions [of victims] on your back?"

What was noteworthy about Al Oudah's statement was that it was not simply a condemnation of terrorism, or even of September 11, but that it was a personal rebuke, which clerics in the Muslim world have shied away from. In Saudi Arabia in February, I met with Al Oudah, who rarely speaks to Western reporters. Dressed in the long black robe fringed with gold that is worn by those accorded respect in Saudi society, Al Oudah recalled meeting with bin Laden—a "simple man without scholarly religious credentials, an attractive personality who spoke well," he said—in the northern Saudi region of Qassim in 1990. Al Oudah explained that he had criticized al Qaeda for years but until now had not directed it at bin Laden himself: "Most religious scholars have directed criticism at acts of terrorism, not a particular person. . . . I don't expect a positive effect on bin Laden personally as a result of my statement. It's really a message to his followers."

Al Oudah's rebuke was also significant because he is considered one of the fathers of the Sahwa, the fundamentalist awakening movement that swept through Saudi Arabia in the 1980's. His sermons against the U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia following Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait helped turn bin Laden against the United States. And bin Laden told me in 1997 that Al Oudah's 1994 imprisonment by the Saudi regime was one of the reasons he was calling for attacks on U.S. targets. Al Oudah is also one of 26 Saudi clerics who, in 2004, handed down a religious ruling urging Iraqis to fight the U.S. occupation of their country. He is, in short, not someone al Qaeda can paint as an American sympathizer or a tool of the Saudi government.

Tellingly, al Qaeda has not responded to Al Oudah's critique, but the research organization Political Islam Online tracked postings on six Islamist web sites and the web sites of Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya TV networks in the week after Al Oudah's statements; it found that more than two-thirds of respondents reacted favorably.

More doubt about al Qaeda was planted in the Muslim world when Sayyid Imam Al Sharif, the ideological godfather of al Qaeda, sensationally withdrew his support in a book written last year from his prison cell in Cairo. Al Sharif, generally known as "Dr. Fadl," was an architect of the doctrine of taqfir, arguing that Muslims who did not support armed jihad or who participated in elections were kuffar, unbelievers.

So it was an unwelcome surprise for al Qaeda's leaders when Dr. Fadl's new book, *Rationalization of Jihad*, was serialized in an independent Egyptian newspaper in November. The incentive for writing the book, he explained, was that

“jihad . . . was blemished with grave Sharia violations during recent years. . . . [N]ow there are those who kill hundreds, including women and children, Muslims and non Muslims in the name of Jihad!” Dr. Fadl ruled that al Qaeda’s bombings in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere were illegitimate and that terrorism against civilians in Western countries was wrong. He also took on al Qaeda’s leaders directly in an interview with the *Al Hayat* newspaper. “[Ayman al] Zawahiri and his Emir bin Laden [are] extremely immoral,” he said. “I have spoken about this in order to warn the youth against them, youth who are seduced by them, and don’t know them.”

Dr. Fadl’s harsh words attracted attention throughout the Arabic-speaking world; even a majority of Zawahiri’s own Jihad group jailed in Egyptian prisons signed on and promised to end their armed struggle. In December, Zawahiri released an audiotape lambasting his former mentor, accusing him of being in league with the “bloodthirsty betrayer” Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak; and, in a 200-page book titled *The Exoneration*, published in March, he replied at greater length, portraying Dr. Fadl as a prisoner trying to curry favor with Egypt’s security services and the author of “a desperate attempt (under American sponsorship) to confront the high tide of the jihadist awakening.”

Is al Qaeda going to dissipate as a result of the criticism from its former mentors and allies? Despite the recent internal criticism, probably not in the short term. Last summer, U.S. intelligence agencies judged that al Qaeda had “regenerated its [U.S.] Homeland attack capability” in Pakistan’s tribal areas. Since then, al Qaeda and the Taliban have only entrenched their position further, launching a record number of suicide attacks in Pakistan in the past year. Afghanistan, Algeria, and Iraq also saw record numbers of suicide attacks in 2007 (though the group’s capabilities have deteriorated in Iraq of late). Meanwhile, al Qaeda is still able to find recruits in the West. In November, Jonathan Evans, the head of Britain’s domestic intelligence agency MI5, said that record numbers of U.K. residents are now supportive of al Qaeda, with around 2,000 posing a “direct threat to national security and public safety.” That means that al Qaeda will threaten the United States and its allies for many years to come.

However, encoded in the DNA of apocalyptic jihadist groups like al Qaeda are the seeds of their own long-term destruction: Their victims are often Muslim civilians; they don’t offer a positive vision of the future (but rather the prospect of Taliban-style regimes from Morocco to Indonesia); they keep expanding their list of enemies, including any Muslim who doesn’t precisely share their world view; and they seem incapable of becoming politically successful movements because their ideology prevents them from making the real-world compromises that would allow them to engage in genuine politics.

Which means that the repudiation of al Qaeda’s leaders by its former religious, military, and political guides will help hasten the implosion of the jihadist terrorist movement. As Churchill remarked after the battle of El Alamein in 1942, which he saw as turning the tide in World War II, “[T]his is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.”

These new critics, in concert with mainstream Muslim leaders, have created a powerful coalition countering al Qaeda’s ideology. According to Pew polls, support for al Qaeda has been dropping around the Muslim world in recent years. The numbers supporting suicide bombings in Indonesia, Lebanon, and Bangladesh, for instance, have dropped by half or more in the last 5 years. In Saudi Arabia, only 10 percent now have a favorable view of al Qaeda, according to a December poll by Terror Free Tomorrow, a Washington-based think tank. Following a wave of suicide attacks in Pakistan in the past year, support for suicide operations amongst Pakistanis has dropped to 9 percent (it was 33 percent 5 years ago).

Unsurprisingly, al Qaeda’s leaders have been thrown on the defensive. In December, bin Laden released a tape that stressed that “the Muslim victims who fall during the operations against the infidel Crusaders . . . are not the intended targets.” Bin Laden warned the former mujahedin now turning on al Qaeda that, whatever their track records as jihadists, they had now committed one of the “nullifiers of Islam,” which is helping the “infidels against the Muslims.”

## II. WHAT IS THE STATUS OF AL QAEDA THE ORGANIZATION TODAY?

*Despite the fact that al Qaeda, as described above, is losing the long-term ideological battle, the group has rebuilt its capacity as an insurgent/terrorist organization along the Afghan-Pakistan border and remains capable of launching large-scale terrorist attacks in the West.*

*Evidence for the resiliency of the al Qaeda organization.*

### *1. The London attacks of July 2005, and al Qaeda's alarming reach into the United Kingdom.*

The London bombings on July 7, 2005 were a classic al Qaeda plot. A British government report published in 2006 explains that the ringleader, Mohammed Siddique Khan, visited Afghanistan in the late 1990's and Pakistan on two occasions in 2003 and 2004, spending a total of several months in the country. The report goes on to note that Khan "had some contact with al Qaeda figures" in Pakistan, and is "believed to have had some relevant training in a remote part of Pakistan, close to the Afghan border" during his 2-week visit in 2003. According to the report, Khan was also in "suspicious" contact with individuals in Pakistan in the 4 months immediately before he led the London attacks.

Further, Khan appeared on a videotape that aired on Al Jazeera 2 months after the attacks. On that tape Khan says "I'm going to talk to you in a language that you understand. Our words are dead until we give them life with our blood." He goes on to describe Osama bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri as "today's heroes." Khan's statements were made on a videotape that bore the distinctive logo of As Sahab, "The Clouds," which is the television production arm of al Qaeda. Khan's appearance on the As Sahab videotape shows that he met up with members of al Qaeda's media team who are based on the Afghan-Pakistan border. In 2006 a similar videotape of another one of the London suicide bombers appeared also made by As Sahab, further evidence of al Qaeda's role in the bombings.

The grim lesson of the London attack is that al Qaeda was able to conduct simultaneous bombings in a major European capital thousands of miles from its base on the Afghan-Pakistan border. While far from a 9/11-style attack, the London bombings showed the kind of planning and ability to hit targets far from its home base seen in pre-9/11 al Qaeda attacks such as the one mounted on the U.S.S. Cole in Yemen in 2000. Al Qaeda has therefore recovered sufficient strength that it can now undertake multiple, successful bombings aimed at targets in the West.

Similarly, the plot that was foiled in the United Kingdom in August 2006 to bring down half a dozen American airliners with liquid explosives, an event that would have rivaled 9/11 in magnitude had it succeeded, was directed by al Qaeda from Pakistan, according to the January 2007 testimony of Lt. General Michael Maples, head of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency.

### *2. The vitality of al Qaeda's propaganda division, As Sahab.*

Bin Laden has observed that 90 percent of his battle is conducted in the media. Al Qaeda understands that what the Pentagon calls IO (Information Operations) are key to its successes. As Sahab's first major production debuted on the Internet in the summer of 2001 signaling a major anti-American attack was in the works. Since then, As Sahab has continued to release key statements from al Qaeda's leaders and has significantly increased its output in the last year or so. In 2007 As Sahab released more audio and videotapes than any year in its 6-year history; at least 80. These tapes are increasingly sophisticated productions with subtitles in languages such as English, animation effects and studio settings. As Sahab's increasingly sophisticated and regular output is evidence that al Qaeda has recovered to a degree that it is capable of managing a relatively advanced propaganda operation. That operation is unlikely to have a fixed studio location, but it does include a number of cameramen as well as editors using editing programs such as Final Cut Pro on laptops.

### *3. The continuing influence of bin Laden and Zawahiri.*

Bin Laden may no longer be calling people on a satellite phone to order attacks, but he remains in broad ideological and strategic control of al Qaeda around the world. An indicator of this is that in 2004, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the then-leader of foreign fighters in Iraq renamed his organization "al Qaeda in the Land of the Two Rivers" and publicly swore bayat, a religiously binding oath of allegiance, to bin Laden.

Moreover, the dozens of video and audiotapes that bin Laden and Zawahiri have released since 9/11 have reached hundreds of millions of people worldwide through television, newspapers and the Internet, making them among the most widely dis-

tributed political statements in history. Those tapes have not only had the effect of instructing al Qaeda's followers to kill Americans, Westerners and Jews, but some tapes have also carried specific instructions that militant cells have acted upon. For instance, on October 19, 2003 bin Laden called for action against Spain because of its troop presence in Iraq, the first time that al Qaeda's leader had singled out the country. Six months later, terrorists killed 191 commuters in Madrid. And in the spring of 2004, bin Laden offered a 3-month truce to European countries willing to pull out of the coalition in Iraq. Almost exactly a year after his truce offer expired, an al Qaeda-directed cell carried out bombings on London's public transportation system that killed 52 commuters. In December 2004, bin Laden called for attacks on Saudi oil facilities and in February 2006, al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia attacked the Abqaiq facility, arguably the most important oil production facility in the world. (That attack was a failure.)

#### *4. Al Qaeda's influence in Iraq.*

For the moment, al Qaeda in Iraq is a wounded organization. The number of foreign fighters coming in to Iraq has declined from 120 a month in 2007 to around 25 today. According to the U.S. military foreign fighters are now trying to leave the country.

However, future withdrawals of U.S. troops from Iraq will obviously help al Qaeda's ability to operate in the country. Al Qaeda also has a "paper tiger" narrative about the United States based on American pullouts from Vietnam during the 1970's, Lebanon in the 1980's and Somalia in the 1990's. American drawdowns from Iraq will be seen as confirming this narrative.

#### *5. Al Qaeda continues to attract other militant groups to its standard.*

In addition to al Qaeda in Iraq stating on several occasions over the past 3 years that it takes overall direction from al Qaeda central, in September 2006 the Algerian Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC) announced that it was putting itself under the al Qaeda umbrella, re-branding itself al Qaeda in the Islamic Mahgreb (AQIM). GSPC is considered the most significant terrorist movement in Algeria. Abu Musab Abdul Wadud, the leader of the GSPC explained that "the organization of al-Qaeda of Jihad is the only organization qualified to gather together the mujahideen."

#### *6. The rapidly deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan over the past year is, at least in part, the responsibility of al Qaeda.*

The use of suicide attacks, improvised explosive devices and the beheadings of hostages—all techniques that al Qaeda perfected in Iraq—are methods that the Taliban has increasingly adopted in Afghanistan, making much of the south of the country a no-go area. Hekmat Karzai, an Afghan terrorism researcher points out suicide bombings were virtually unknown in Afghanistan until 2005 when there were 21 such attacks. U.S. sources say there were 139 suicide attacks in 2007.

Mullah Dadullah, a key Taliban commander gave two interviews to Al Jazeera in 2006 before he was killed, in which he made some illuminating observations about the Taliban's links to al Qaeda. Dadullah said, "We have close ties. Our cooperation is ideal," adding that Osama bin Laden is issuing orders to the Taliban. Indeed, a senior U.S. military intelligence official says that "trying to separate Taliban and al Qaeda in Pakistan serves no purpose. It's like picking gray hairs out of your head." Dadullah also noted that "we have 'give and take' relations with the mujahideen in Iraq.

#### *7. Pakistan.*

To the extent that al Qaeda has a new base, it is in Pakistan. From there bin Laden and Zawahiri have released a stream of audio and videotapes. Evidence of al Qaeda's growing strength in Pakistan can also be seen in the advice and personnel it is offering the Taliban in its campaign of suicide attacks in Afghanistan. al Qaeda today clandestinely operates small training camps in Pakistan, "People want to see barracks. [In fact] the camps use dry riverbeds for shooting and are housed in compounds for 20 people where they are taught calisthenics and bomb making" says a senior U.S. military intelligence official.

The fact that Pakistan is the new training ground for al Qaeda recruits indicates that the organization will continue to be a significant threat. Terrorist plots have a much higher degree of success if some of the cell's members have received training in bomb-making and operational doctrine in person. For example, two of the London July 7, 2005 suicide bombers received al Qaeda training in Pakistan.

## III. THE FUTURE OF AL QAEDA OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

*1. The leadership.*

The single biggest variable about the future of al Qaeda is what happens to bin Laden. For 6 years he has already survived the most intense manhunt in history. It would be wishful thinking to believe that he won't survive another 5 years. However, if he were to be captured or killed that would have a devastating effect on al Qaeda.

On several occasions bin Laden has said that he's prepared to die in his holy war—statements that should be taken at face value. In the short-term, bin Laden's death would likely trigger violent anti-American attacks around the globe, while in the medium term, his death would deal a serious blow to al Qaeda as bin Laden's charisma and organizational skills have played a critical role in its success. However, bin Laden does have 11 sons, some of whom might choose to go into their father's line of work.

Should bin Laden be captured or killed, that would likely trigger a succession battle within al Qaeda. While Zawahiri is technically bin Laden's successor, he is not regarded as a natural leader. Indeed, even among the Egyptians within al Qaeda Zawahiri is seen as a divisive force. The loss of bin Laden would likely challenge the unity of the organization, a unity that al Qaeda's internal documents indicate has often been fragile.

*2. Haven on the Afghan-Pakistan border, and al Qaeda's ideology and tactics increasingly being adopted by the Taliban.*

The Pakistani military and its intelligence agency ISI have proven either unwilling, incapable, or both of destroying al Qaeda and its Taliban allies in their country.

Unless the Pakistani government takes real action the safe havens that Taliban and al Qaeda enjoy in Pakistan are unlikely to be extirpated unless there is a significant attack in the United States or United Kingdom that is traceable to the tribal areas, and subsequent intense political pressure from those countries results in the measures necessary to destroy the militant organizations and movements in Pakistan.

This has unfortunate implications for countries with large Pakistani diaspora populations such as the United Kingdom, whose citizens make 400,000 visits to Pakistan each year. A tiny minority of those visitors end up training with terrorist groups in Pakistan including al Qaeda. That problem is less pronounced in North America and Europe where Pakistanis make up a relatively small proportion of the Muslim population, but already in Spain and France, terrorism cases involving Pakistani immigrants are emerging.

In addition, the Taliban on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan border are increasingly identified as the true guardian of Pashtun rights, but at the same time they have also increasingly adopted both al Qaeda tactics and ideology. As the Taliban and al Qaeda merge both tactically and ideologically, this could give al Qaeda a political constituency of sorts. This is worrisome as the Pashtun tribal grouping—the largest such grouping in the world—numbers some 40 million people on both sides of the border.

Further, should Afghanistan slide into chaos—at this moment a real possibility—that would also benefit al Qaeda as it would increase the number of safe havens along the border regions.

*3. The influence of European militants in al Qaeda.*

The Islamist terrorist threat to the United States today largely emanates from Europe, not from domestic sleeper cells or—as is popularly imagined—the graduates of Middle Eastern madrassas who can do little more than read the Koran. Omar Sheikh, for instance, the kidnapper of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl, is a British citizen of Pakistani descent who studied at the academically rigorous London School of Economics. The 9/11 pilots became more militant while they were students in Hamburg. Indeed, Robert Leiken of the Nixon Center has found that of 373 Islamist terrorists arrested or killed in Europe and the United States from 1993 through 2004 an astonishing 41 percent were Western nationals, who were either naturalized or second generation Europeans or converts to Islam. Leiken found more terrorists who were French than the combined totals of Pakistani and Yemeni terrorists!

Future terrorist attacks that will be damaging to American national security are therefore likely to have a European connection. Citizens of the European Union, who adopt al Qaeda's ideology, can both easily move around Europe and also have easy entry into the United States because of the Visa Waiver Program that exists with European countries.

The most likely perpetrators of another major terrorist attack on American soil come from an unexpected quarter: Citizens of the United States' closest ally. Militant British citizens of Pakistani descent are the most significant terrorist threat facing the United States. Most of those arrested in the 2006 plot to bring down American airliners over the Atlantic, for instance, were young British Pakistanis.

4. *Tactics and Targeting al Qaeda will use in the future.*

a. *Attacking Western economic targets, particularly the oil industry.*

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.

Al Qaeda and its affiliated terrorist groups are also increasingly targeting companies that have distinctive Western brand names. In 2003, suicide attackers bombed the Marriott hotel in Jakarta. The same year in Karachi, a string of small explosions at 18 Shell stations wounded four, while in 2002 a group of a dozen French defense contractors were killed as they left a Sheraton hotel, which was heavily damaged. In October 2004 in Taba, Egyptian jihadists attacked a Hilton Hotel. In Amman, Jordan in November 2005, al Qaeda in Iraq attacked three American-owned hotels—the Grand Hyatt, Radisson and Days Inn—killing 60 people. Around the same time a Kentucky Fried Chicken was attacked in Karachi killing three.

Al Qaeda attacks on oil facilities accelerated sharply beginning in 2004. Suicide bombers struck Iraq's principal oil terminal in Basra on April 21, 2004. In Yanbu, Saudi Arabia, al Qaeda's Saudi Arabia affiliate attacked the offices of ABB Lummus Global, a contractor for Exxon/Mobil, on May 1, 2004 killing six Westerners. As noted above, in February 2006, al Qaeda in Saudi Arabia unsuccessfully attacked the Abqaiq facility, perhaps the most important oil production facility in the world. al Qaeda will continue its attacks on oil installations, pipelines, and oil workers for the foreseeable future in both Saudi Arabia and Iraq, the two countries that happen to sit on the largest oil reserves in the world.

b. *Attacking Israeli/Jewish targets*

Attacking Jewish and Israeli targets is an al Qaeda strategy that has only emerged strongly post-9/11. Despite bin Laden's declaration in February 1998 that he was creating the "World Islamic Front against the Crusaders and the Jews," al Qaeda only started attacking Israeli or Jewish targets in early 2002. Since then, al Qaeda and its affiliated groups have directed an intense campaign against Israeli and Jewish targets, killing journalist Daniel Pearl in Karachi, bombing synagogues in Tunisia and Turkey, and attacking an Israeli-owned hotel in Mombasa, Kenya, which killed 13. At the same time as the attack on the Kenyan hotel, al Qaeda also tried to bring down an Israeli passenger jet with rocket propelled grenades, an attempt that was unsuccessful. In the future, al Qaeda will likely intensify its campaign of attacking Jewish and Israeli targets.

5. *Tactics that al Qaeda is likely to deploy in the next 5 years that it has hitherto not used successfully.*

There are two tactics that al Qaeda might successfully deploy in the next 5 years that for differing reasons would have significant detrimental effects on American interests. Both tactics are well within the capabilities of the organization so they do not represent Chicken Little scenarios (such as the use of nuclear devices).

The first tactic is the use of RPGs (Rocket Propelled Grenades) or SAMs (Surface to Air Missiles) to bring down a commercial jetliner. As mentioned above, al Qaeda already attempted such an attack against an Israeli passenger jet in Kenya in 2002. That attempt almost succeeded. A successful effort by al Qaeda to bring down a commercial passenger jet anywhere in the world would have a devastating effect on both global aviation and tourism.

The second tactic would be the deployment of a radiological bomb attack, most likely in a European city. Such an attack would have a much greater ability to terrorize than the small-scale chemical and biological attacks that terrorists have mounted in the past, as it would seem to most observers that the terrorists had "gone nuclear" even though, of course, a radiological bomb is nothing like a nuclear device.

6. *Al Qaeda's strategy over the next 5 years.*

As al Qaeda's No. 2, Ayman al Zawahiri, explained shortly after 9/11 in his autobiographical *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner*, the most important strategic goal of al Qaeda is to seize control of a state, or part of a state, somewhere in the Muslim



world. He writes, “Confronting the enemies of Islam, and launching jihad against them require a Muslim authority, established on a Muslim land that raises the banner of jihad and rallies the Muslims around it. Without achieving this goal our actions will mean nothing.” Such a jihadist state would then become a launching pad for attacks on the American homeland. We have seen al Qaeda do this once before in Afghanistan. Now the goal is to establish a jihadist mini-state in Iraq, in the heart of the Middle East, rather than on the periphery of the Muslim world as al Qaeda was able to do under the Taliban. This will be al Qaeda’s main strategic goal for the next few years.

Another key goal will be to maintain their base on the Afghan-Pakistan border. Al Qaeda seeks a safe haven that replicates some of the features of its Afghan haven before the fall of the Taliban. The tribal areas along Pakistan’s western border are proving a congenial place for al Qaeda to regroup.

Al Qaeda’s aim in the next 5 years will also be to stay relevant and to stay in the news. The organization will be opportunistic in spinning hot-button issues for Muslims around the world for their purposes, as they did during the Danish cartoon controversy and the month-long conflict in Lebanon in 2006.

It’s possible that al Qaeda may also seek to aim more attacks at Christians in the coming years. Attacks on the Pope both verbal and literal should be expected.

The situation in Darfur is also likely to be a flashpoint. Al Qaeda seems to view western humanitarian interventions in Darfur in the same way as it viewed the humanitarian mission in Somalia in the early 1990’s—as a western attempt to colonize Muslim lands. Al Qaeda fighters are likely to become embroiled in the Darfur conflict in the next few years.

7. *Will al Qaeda (rather than “homegrown” terrorists) be able to attack the United States itself in the next 5 years?*

In my view it is a low-level probability that al Qaeda will be able to attack the United States in the next 5 years.

In the past, when al Qaeda terrorists have tried or succeeded to launch attacks in the United States they have done so only after arriving from somewhere else. Ahmed Ressaam for instance, who lived in Canada before he tried to blow up Los Angeles International airport in December 1999, was an Algerian who had trained with al Qaeda in Afghanistan. Similarly, the 19 9/11 hijackers hailed from countries around the Middle East. Ramzi Yousef, the mastermind of the first World Trade Center attack in 1993 that killed six, was a Pakistani who had also trained in an al Qaeda camp. None of these attackers relied on al Qaeda “ sleeper cells ” in the United States and there is no evidence that such cells exist today. Moreover, the United States is a much harder target than it was before 9/11, and the ability of an al Qaeda terrorist to enter the country and mount a successful operation has been greatly diminished by U.S. government actions, the heightened awareness of the American public, and the weaker state of al Qaeda itself. This is not, however, to imply that American homegrown terrorists inspired by al Qaeda might not carry out a small-bore terror attack inside the United States in the next 5 years.

Of course, al Qaeda itself remains quite capable of attacking a wide range of American economic interests overseas, killing U.S. soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, and targeting U.S. diplomatic facilities in Asia, the Indian subcontinent and the Middle East.

IV. STEPS THAT THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY AND HOMELAND SECURITY OFFICIALS CAN TAKE TO HELP ELIMINATE THE THREAT FROM AL QAEDA

*(With thanks to Laurence Footer of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies who helped with the formulation of these ideas.)*

1. *Without Fanfare Redouble Efforts to Find Bin Laden.*—Given the continued importance of bin Laden, the bin Laden unit at CIA should be reopened and be run by one person who reports to the Director of National Intelligence to coordinate all CIA activities related to capturing or killing bin Laden with the Department of Defense, Central Intelligence Agency, State Department, and foreign intelligence services. Similar units should be set up targeting Ayman Zawahiri and Mullah Omar. These steps should be taken without fanfare so as to avoid providing al Qaeda with a propaganda victory.

2. *Learn to Speak Their Language.*—As illustrated by the fact that only three dozen FBI agents speak any Arabic at all, a new emphasis must be placed on teaching Arabic, Farsi, Pashtu, Bengali, Indonesian, Urdu and Punjabi. The funding at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) should be adjusted to support an increase in the number of students annually from 2,000 to 5,000 with an emphasis on these targeted languages. As language skills are perishable, on-going investments in lan-

guage maintenance should be made for DLI graduates. DLI's activities should both be coordinated with colleges and universities to attract new students as well as web-enabled to facilitate remote learning through on-line training. In order to increase the number of teachers, a National Language Institute should be created to train tomorrow's language instructors. Tuition grants and other financing should also be increased to reward students for reaching fluency in desired languages.

3. *Streamline and "Smart-line" the Security Clearance Process.*—Certain hiring procedures which are relics of the Cold War have created obstacles to recruiting new talent. To make it easier for intelligence agencies to hire linguists and country experts, the President should mandate the streamlining of the hiring process, especially those background check policies that exclude new hires simply because they have lived in foreign countries. Right now, the process is too onerous and time-consuming, turning off potential recruits who are required to wait a year or more for clearances. The process needs to be "smart-lined."

4. *Report on Metrics.*—To monitor public opinion, democracy-promotion, nation-building and terrorism metrics, an Office of Metrics should be created at the Department of National Intelligence. To inform policy, this new office should provide regular briefings to the public and Congress. The United States will know it is gaining ground when the following results occur: Consistent declines in the number of attempted Jihadist attacks; fewer terrorist and insurgent safe havens in the Muslim world; a rise in the level of good governance and open societies in the Muslim world; a steady rise in the number of leading Muslim figures critiquing al Qaeda and its affiliates; a falling number of jihadi web sites and level of jihadi Internet activity; a continuing drop in support of suicide bombings in the Muslim world; a constant decrease in the level of support for militant jihad ideology; an improvement in world public opinion of the United States; and a decrease in the cost of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations.

5. *Hydrogen Peroxide Controls.*—The U.S. Government should increase the monitoring of sales of industrial strength hydrogen peroxide, as it was the weapon of choice for terrorists in the London 7/7 2005 bombings, the failed plot against American airliners in the summer of 2006 in the United Kingdom, and the failed attack directed at a U.S. base in Germany in 2007.

6. *Universal Database to Trace and Track Foreign Fighters, Insurgents and Terrorists.*—More than 6 years after the September 11 attacks, the U.S. Government still does not maintain an integrated database of jihadists (foreign fighters, insurgents and terrorists). The database needs, above all, to map the "facilitative nodes" that bring young men (and increasingly young women) into the jihad, such as web sites, operational planners, financiers, and jihadist underground networks. A building block of such a database should be identifying the suicide attackers in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq, a process that can be accomplished using DNA samples, accounts on jihadist web sites, good intelligence work, and media reports. We know from former CIA officer Marc Sageman's investigations of the histories of hundreds of jihadist terrorists that friends and family are the ways most terrorists join the global jihad, and so this investigatory work should include an effort to identify friends and/or family members who brought the suicide attackers into the jihad.

Mapping the social networks of the terrorists, as outlined above, must also include identification of the clerical mentors of the suicide attackers, as it seems likely that only a relatively small number have persuaded their followers of the religious necessity of martyrdom. Armed with that intelligence, the United States and NATO can turn to the government of Pakistan where most of the suicide attackers in Afghanistan originate, and insist that it reins in particularly egregious clerics. A similar process can happen with governments of Middle Eastern countries who are disproportionately the sources of suicide attackers in Iraq such as Saudi Arabia and Libya.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you very much for that interesting and very concise testimony.

Mr. Wright, you are recognized to summarize your testimony in 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF LAWRENCE WRIGHT, FELLOW, NYU CENTER  
ON LAW AND SECURITY**

Mr. WRIGHT. Thank you, Madam Chair and Members.

Al Qaeda's violent philosophy has proved to be a powerful lure to alienated young Muslims all over the world. Much of that philosophy was formulated by Sayyid Imam al Sherif, also known as Dr.

Fadl. He was the emir of the Egyptian terror organization created by Ayman al-Zawahiri called Al Jihad. In 1988, Zawahiri and Dr. Fadl joined with Osama bin Laden to create al Qaeda. Two of Dr. Fadl's books form the core of al Qaeda's ideology and were used to indoctrinate new recruits.

Dr. Fadl was arrested in Yemen shortly after 9/11 and eventually restored to Egyptian custody. In November of 2007, Dr. Fadl published a manifesto that dramatically reverses his previous views. Despite the fact that Dr. Fadl is writing from an Egyptian prison, his new work has created a philosophical earthquake inside radical Islam. Zawahiri has repeatedly addressed the challenge that Dr. Fadl poses in videos, in a question-and-answer session on the Internet with Muslims, and in a 200-page book directly addressing this particular controversy. It is clear that al Qaeda views this revisionist thinking with great alarm.

This August marks the 20th anniversary of al Qaeda's founding. That is a long time for a terror organization to exist. But al Qaeda shows no signs of disappearing any time soon. Most terror organizations end with the death of their charismatic leader, the elimination of their sanctuaries, or a change in the political, economic and social conditions that gave rise to it. Unfortunately, the leaders of al Qaeda continue to exist and to operate inside secure sanctuaries, and the socioeconomic conditions in the Muslim world show little signs of progress. The philosophical challenge to al Qaeda within its own ranks will have a limited but still important effect on the group's ability to recruit new members to its ranks.

American policymakers can take advantage of this period of uncertainty within radical Islam to wage a vigorous diplomatic campaign directed toward ending the polarization between the West and the Muslim world that al Qaeda has sought to create.

Nothing would do more to reduce anti-Americanism in the Middle East than fair and forceful diplomatic efforts to end the festering crises in Israel and Palestine and also in Kashmir, which is central to stabilizing Pakistan and getting its leaders fully committed to addressing the radical threat in their own country.

American intelligence continues to be handicapped by the security restrictions that obstruct the hiring of citizens who natively speak the languages needed to understand, much less penetrate or disrupt, al Qaeda. As an example, let's take the FBI, an organization that made its reputation fighting against the Mafia and, to some extent, the IRA. Who succeeded in doing that? Irish and Italian guys. It is not a joke that many people in our Intelligence Community can't pronounce the names of the people they are struggling to fight against. Until we have people who natively speak and understand the languages and cultures that we are fighting against, we will always be deaf and dumb in the struggle.

Al Qaeda has created a compelling narrative about America's role in the world and especially in the Middle East. Untold thousands of Muslims endorse that narrative whether they join al Qaeda or not. As al Qaeda's violent philosophy has become vulnerable to the reconsiderations within the radical Islamic movement, this is a propitious moment to change that narrative through creative, vigorous, assertive diplomacy and more informed intelligence gathering.

As Michael Leiter, the director of the National Counterterrorism Center, recently pointed out, it is al Qaeda, not the West, that is truly at war with Islam. If Muslims came to believe that, then the war on terror would quickly end.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

[The statement of Mr. Wright follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LAWRENCE WRIGHT<sup>1</sup>

THE REBELLION WITHIN: THE RADICAL CHALLENGE TO AL QAEDA'S IDEOLOGY

JULY 30, 2008

At the heart of al Qaeda's appeal to young, alienated Muslims is a coherent and persuasive ideology that provides a meaningful way of looking at history and a moral platform that justifies violent action. This worldview has been challenged by moderate Muslims, who say that al Qaeda's thinking distorts the true message of Islam and who emphasize the unity of the Abrahamic faiths.<sup>2</sup> Such statements do not seem to have had much affect on al Qaeda's ability to attract recruits and certainly hasn't caused the organization to change its behavior. Recently, however, al Qaeda has faced a philosophical challenge within its own ranks, one that may prove far more critical to the future of the organization than any critique by non-Muslims or even very authoritative Islamic clerics. It is important for American policymakers to understand the nature of the debate within al Qaeda in order to appreciate how the organization is changing and how the United States and its allies can take advantage of this ideological rift.

*Background of al Qaeda's Philosophy*

Many of the key concepts at the core of al Qaeda's doctrine are to be found in the work of Sayyid Qutb, an Egyptian writer, educator, and member of the Muslim Brotherhood. While imprisoned in Egypt, Qutb wrote the book that became the fountainhead of radical Islam, *Milestones*.<sup>3</sup> Qutb believed that true Islam no longer existed because of "false laws and teachings" that separated Muslims from the glory of their past.<sup>4</sup> He sought to create a theocratic government that strictly enforced Sharia, the Islamic legal code, and he called for a vanguard of young Muslims who would rise up and impose Islamic values on every aspect of life. Al Qaeda sees itself as the manifestation of Qutb's prophesy.

It was Qutb who resurrected an ancient heresy in Islam, that of taqfir. The word in Arabic means "excommunication." While Qutb was in prison, guards murdered 23 members of the Muslim Brotherhood in their cells. Qutb asked himself: What kind of Muslim could do this to another Muslim? His answer was: They are not Muslims. In his mind, he excommunicated the guards from the faith. The same logic extended to the leaders of the Egyptian government who refused to fully implement Sharia. They were apostates and deserved to be slaughtered.

The Egyptian government hanged Qutb in 1966, but by then his manifesto had made its way into the hands of many thousands of young Muslims all over the world, including Ayman al-Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden. The year that Qutb died, Zawahiri started an underground cell to overthrow the Egyptian government. He was 15 years old.

*Dr. Fadl: Al Qaeda's Philosopher-in-Chief*

Another young man strongly influenced by the work of Sayyid Qutb was Sayyid Imam al-Sherif, who would come to be known in the world of radical Islam as Dr. Fadl.<sup>5</sup> Zawahiri and Fadl met in medical school at Cairo University in 1968. They were both high-minded, pious young men, typical of the scientists, engineers, and

<sup>1</sup>The opinions expressed in this statement are the author's own and should not be interpreted to reflect the official views of the Center for Law and Security.

<sup>2</sup>For example, in the Amman Message (<http://www.ammanmessage.com/>), 200 senior religious scholars from more than 50 countries, drawn together in July 2005 by Jordanian King Abdullah II, asserted the unity of all branches of Islam and called for tolerance, mutual respect, and freedom of religion; also, in October 2007, 138 prominent Muslim clerics, jurists, scholars, journalists, diplomats and political figures endorsed a document titled "A Common Word Between Us and You," (<http://www.acommonword.com/index.php?lang=en&page=option1>), which emphasizes the commonalities of Islam and Christianity.

<sup>3</sup>Qutb, Sayyid. *Milestones*. Indianapolis, Ind.: American Trust Publications, 1990.

<sup>4</sup>Wright, Lawrence. *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*. New York, NY: Knopf, 2006.

<sup>5</sup>Wright, Lawrence. "The Rebellion Within," *The New Yorker*, June 2, 2008.

technocrats who would make up the first generation of al Qaeda. Fadl formally joined Zawahiri's secret organization, al-Jihad, in 1977. It was that group that would assassinate Anwar Sadat in 1981—the first modern victim of Qutb's doctrine of taqfir.

Zawahiri spent 3 years in prison for his minor role in Sadat's assassination. Fadl escaped Egypt and made his way to Pakistan, where Zawahiri joined him soon after his release. In Peshawar, the two men reconstituted al-Jihad, with Fadl designated as the emir, or leader, of the group. His main role, however, was to formulate the doctrine that would be used to entice young Muslims into their organization and steer them toward radical action. His book "The Essential Guide for Preparation" appeared in 1988, the same year that he and Zawahiri joined with Osama bin Laden to create al Qaeda. The "Guide" was immediately adopted as a textbook for jihad.

The premise that opens the "Guide" is that jihad is the natural state of Islam. Muslims, Fadl decreed, are involved in an eternal conflict with nonbelievers. Every able-bodied Muslim is obligated to engage in jihad, particularly in Islamic countries that are governed by "infidels"—a category that includes practically every Muslim leader. "The way to bring an end to the rulers' unbelief is armed rebellion," Fadl writes. It's no wonder that many Arab governments considered the book so dangerous that anyone caught with a copy was subject to arrest.

Six years later, when al Qaeda was centered in Khartoum, Sudan, Dr. Fadl produced a massive, two-volume work titled "The Compendium of the Pursuit of Divine Knowledge." Salvation, Fadl writes, is only available to the perfect Muslim. He asserts that the rulers of Egypt and other Arab countries are apostates and that any Muslim who fails to wage jihad against them is doomed. Moreover, anyone who works for the government is an infidel, as is anyone who supports democracy or labors for peaceful change rather than religious war. "I say to Muslims in all candor that secular, nationalist democracy opposes your religion and your doctrine, and in submitting to it you leave God's book behind," he writes.

Fadl also expands upon the doctrine of taqfir, which is central to understanding al Qaeda's actions. In Fadl's opinion, one must adhere to his extreme views in order to be a real Muslim; everyone else is a heretic. His book provided a warrant to the leaders of al Qaeda to kill anyone who stood in their way. Fadl's ideas form the core of al Qaeda's bloody doctrine. Zawahiri told Fadl, "This book is a victory from Almighty God."

#### *The Revisions*

Dr. Fadl moved to Yemen in 1994, and while he was there he learned that portions of what he considered to be his masterwork had been bowdlerized by Zawahiri. The dispute between the two men became so bitter that Zawahiri traveled to Yemen to beg forgiveness, but Fadl refused to see him.

Six weeks after 9/11, Yemeni authorities placed Fadl in jail, eventually transferring him to Egyptian custody. For 2 years, Fadl was held by the security forces in Egypt, which are notorious for their mistreatment of prisoners. Whether because of torture or the personal animosity he felt toward Zawahiri, Fadl experienced a radical shift in his thinking, which is reflected in his recent manifesto titled "Rationalizing Jihad in Egypt and the World." In the document, and in a subsequent interview with the pan-Arab daily al-Hayat, Fadl attempts to establish a new set of rules for jihad.

This time Fadl begins with the premise that "There is nothing that invokes the anger of God and His wrath like the unwarranted spilling of blood and wrecking of property." Fadl castigates those who resort to kidnapping or theft to finance jihad. "There is no such thing in Islam as ends justifying means," he writes. One must gain permission from one's parents and creditors, as well as the blessing of a qualified sheikh or imam. Jihad is not required when the enemy is twice as powerful as the Muslims; in such an unequal situation, Fadl writes, "God permitted peace treaties and cease-fires." Despite his repeated calls for jihad against the infidel rulers, Fadl now advises Muslims to be patient, quoting the Prophet Mohammed as saying, "Those who rebel against the Sultan shall die a pagan death." Fadl also asserts that it is forbidden to kill civilians, including Christians and Jews, unless they are actively attacking Muslims. Indiscriminate bombings are also taboo, as they will inevitably take innocent lives. Fadl condemns the 9/11 attacks because killing simply on the basis of one's nationality is a form of slaughter forbidden in Islam; moreover, the consequences have proved to be "a catastrophe for Muslims." He also says that the 9/11 hijackers "betrayed the enemy," because they had been provided visas, a contract of safe passage that the hijackers abused.

"People hate America," Fadl told al-Hayat, "and the Islamist movements feel their hatred and their impotence. Ramming America has become the shortest road to

fame and leadership among the Arabs and Muslims. But what good is it if you destroy one of your enemy's buildings, and he destroys one of your countries? What good is it if you kill one of his people, and he kills a thousand of yours? . . . That, in short, is my evaluation of 9/11."<sup>6</sup>

Fadl certainly does not condemn all jihad; he is careful to say that he supports the insurgency in Afghanistan, which he hopes will lead to the triumph of the Taliban. Iraq and Palestine are more problematic, he believes, because neither conflict is likely to lead to an Islamic state. He charges that the leaders of al Qaeda have used the Palestinian cause as "a grape leaf . . . to cover their own faults." On the subject of taqfir, Fadl now says that the matter is so complex that it should be left to Islamic jurists to decide. "It is not permissible for a Muslim to condemn another Muslim," Fadl writes, although he has been guilty of this himself on countless occasions.

This would be a sweeping critique by an al Qaeda insider under any circumstances, but it is all the more devastating because it is written by the organization's chief theorist and supported by his unquestioned scholarship.

#### *Zawahiri's Response*

Zawahiri immediately sought to discredit Dr. Fadl's about-face. When word of Fadl's forthcoming document first appeared, via a fax Fadl sent to an Arab daily from the Cairo prison where he is being held, Zawahiri wryly observed, "Do they now have fax machines in Egyptian jail cells? I wonder if they're connected to the same line as the electric-shock machines." But the attack clearly threatened Zawahiri, who has never had the religious authority Fadl enjoyed within the organization. In March of this year he responded with a 200-page letter published on the Internet. Zawahiri skirts around many of Fadl's most telling arguments. While conceding that "mistakes have been made," he warns the many Islamists and clerics who welcomed Fadl's document that "they are giving the government the knife with which to slaughter them."

Zawahiri disputes Fadl's assertion that Muslims have been harmed by 9/11; on the contrary, he claims that the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia are wearing America down and empowering the radical Islamic movement. He prods his readers to remember the mistreatment that Muslims have suffered in the West, pointing to the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed in Denmark and the celebrity of author Salman Rushdie as examples of Western countries exalting those who denigrate Islam. Zawahiri points out that the United States and some European countries forbid Muslims from donating money to certain Islamic charities, although money is freely raised for Israel; and he claims that some Western laws outlawing ant-Semitic remarks would prevent Muslims from reciting certain passages of the Koran.

Zawahiri defends the practice of kidnapping or killing tourists, even when Muslims are mistakenly included. "The majority of scholars say that it is permissible to strike at infidels, even if Muslims are among them," he writes. He derides the notion that the hijackers abused their visas, saying that al Qaeda is not bound by international agreements. America itself doesn't feel bound to protect Muslims, Zawahiri writes, citing torture in the military prisons and Guantanamo Bay as examples. "The U.S. gives itself the right to take any Muslim without respect to his visa," he writes. "If the U.S. and Westerners don't respect visas, why should we?" Zawahiri also complains that al Qaeda is being held to a moral standard that is not being required of the Palestinian resistance group, Hamas, whose missiles also kill innocent children and elderly in Israel, including Arabs.

In December last year, Zawahiri opened himself up to an on-line question-and-answer session in order to staunch al Qaeda's plummeting popularity in much of the Muslim world. Many of the often testy questions touched on issues raised by Dr. Fadl, such as the slaughter of innocent Muslims and the failure of al Qaeda, despite its rhetoric, to effectively attack America or Israel. Zawahiri was clearly on the defensive. One of his Saudi correspondents asked him why Muslims should continue to support al Qaeda, given its history of indiscriminate murder. "Are there other ways and means in which the objectives of jihad can be achieved without killing people?" he asked. "Please do not use as a pretext what the Americans or others are doing. Muslims are supposed to be an example to the world in tolerance and lofty goals, not to become a gang whose only concern is revenge." Zawahiri even had to defend al Qaeda against the charge that Israelis had actually carried out 9/11, a myth he attributed to Al Manar, a television station operated by Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shiite organization. "The objective behind this lie is to deny that the

<sup>6</sup>Al-Hayat, December 9, 2007.

Sunnis have heroes who harm America as no one has harmed it through its history," he responds indignantly.

*Importance of the Debate*

The dispute between bin Laden's chief lieutenant and his former emir provides a useful window into al Qaeda's thinking and exposes its many schisms and vulnerabilities. For the nihilists drawn to the action or the thrill or the prospect of revenge, the controversy is meaningless. But for those idealists who are responding to al Qaeda's moral argument, the fact that there is a debate at all may be decisive. Such men need certainty. They are staking their claim to Paradise on the truthfulness of al Qaeda's revelation.

A number of intelligence agencies in Islamic countries have allowed imprisoned radicals, who claim to have reformed, to open discussion with their colleagues in jail. Egypt has been among the most successful of these experiments. Some imprisoned leaders of the Islamic Group, a far larger organization than Zawahiri and Fadl's al-Jihad, with much more blood on its hands, began to rethink their violent philosophy in the 1990's. Their prison debates led to a deal with the Egyptian government that permitted thousands of Islamists, many who had never been charged with a crime, to return to society. In 1999, the Islamic Group called for an end to all armed action, not only in Egypt but also in America. The leaders continue to publish books and documents criticizing radical doctrine. Senior clerics at al-Azhar University oversee the revisions of the former terrorists. "Our experience with such people is that it is very difficult to move them two or three degrees from where they are," Sheikh Ali Gomaa, Egypt's Grand Mufti, told me. "It's easier to move from terrorism to extremism or extremism to rigidity. We have not come across the person who can be moved all the way from terrorism to a normal life."

Despite the obvious manipulation of this process by the Egyptian government, the revisionist movement has proved to be successful, both for the imprisoned radicals, who have gained their freedom, and for the government, which has seen very few of the released men return to violent actions once they have accepted the bargain and publicly renounced their previous thinking.

*The Larger Context*

The Muslim world has suffered appalling violence since the rise of radical Islam in Egypt in the 1960's. Many Muslims have begun to openly question the tactics of radical Islam and the bloodshed that has ravaged their societies, especially in Iraq, the West Bank and Gaza, Egypt, Lebanon, Algeria, Sudan, Somalia, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The failure of al Qaeda to achieve any meaningful progress in its campaign against the West, while killing tens of thousands of Muslims in the process, has created a popular philosophical backlash. One can see this not only in the barbed questions submitted to Zawahiri in his online question-and-answer sessions, but also in the declining popularity of al Qaeda in opinion polls and the increasingly aggressive rejoinders of Islamic clerics. In 2007, Sheikh Salman al-Oadah, a radical Saudi cleric that bin Laden had lauded in the past, went on television and read an open letter to bin Laden. "Brother Osama, how much blood has been spilled?" he asked. "How many innocent children, women, and old people have been killed, maimed, and expelled from their homes in the name of al Qaeda?" What makes these reconsiderations so potent is that they arise within the politically radical fringe of Islam, where al Qaeda is most likely to discover new recruits.

Al Qaeda is an adaptive, flexible, evolutionary organization, however, one that is a long way from extinction. Although the core of the group is much reduced from pre-9/11 days, it has found a secure base to operate within the tribal areas of Pakistan. American intelligence estimates the core membership of al Qaeda at less than 300 to more than 500 men; a source in Egyptian intelligence put that figure at less than 200. And yet al Qaeda has been able to form key alliances, notably with the Taliban and possibly with elements inside the Pakistani military and intelligence communities. Franchised al Qaeda branches—particularly in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and North Africa—have extended the brand name. Al Qaeda has been able to attract adherents among ethnic groups that previously had little or no affiliation with the organization. Future terrorist attacks will continue; the only real questions are those of scale.

And yet, al Qaeda is currently under great pressure to prove its relevance. In particular, al Qaeda would like to pull off major attacks in the United States and Israel, in order to silence its critics. As an aside, I note that the next 2 months offer resonant opportunities for an organization obsessed with dates and anniversaries. Exactly 20 years ago, on August 11, 1988, al Qaeda had its first organizing meeting, and it officially inducted new members the following month, on September 20. Two additional dates stand out: August 8—8/8/08, the date the Olympics open in Bei-

jing—and of course the seventh anniversary of 9/11. If al Qaeda is unable to strike during this period, it will reflect on its ability to remain operational.

*“Homegrown” Terror*

In the last few years, al Qaeda has successfully cultivated followers among the native-born Muslim population in Europe, a phenomenon that took place with little notice until the London bombings in 2005. Before then, there was little official belief that the Pakistani population in the United Kingdom was a fertile community for al Qaeda recruitment. Now, Pakistani British citizens have figured in several major plots. Last year, German intelligence authorities confided to me that they were increasingly concerned both about native-born converts to Islam and about their large Turkish population. Shortly afterwards, in September, authorities arrested three men, two converts and a Turkish resident, in a plot to attack the American military base at Ramstein and the U.S. and Uzbek consular offices. The men arrested in Germany had assembled 1,500 pounds of hydrogen peroxide, the same material used in the London subway bombings, but a far greater quantity.

America has been blessed with a Muslim population that is considerably more integrated and less alienated than is the case with European Muslims. That is the main reason that al Qaeda has not been able to carry off an attack within the U.S. Muslims in America mirror almost exactly the income distribution of the U.S. population in general; they are just as likely to be rich or poor, about as likely to go to college or graduate school, and far less likely to go to prison than the average American. Compare that to the situation in France, for instance: only about 12 percent of the French population is Muslim but 60 percent of the prisoners are. What a stark measure of alienation that statistic represents!

That doesn't mean that America is immune, however. The 2007 Pew Poll of Muslim Americans found that 58 percent of them strongly disapproved of al Qaeda, a far higher percentage than in Europe, but 5 percent had a favorable view. In a population of perhaps 2.5 million people, that is 125,000 self-identified radicals, certainly a large enough base for a homegrown movement, should it arise.

In recent speeches, both Zawahiri and bin Laden have been courting African-American Muslims, who are by far the most disaffected portion of the American Islamic community. Only 36 percent of them expressed an unfavorable view of al Qaeda.

*Implications for American Policy*

Al-Qaeda's violent philosophy, which continues to be a powerful source of appeal to young Muslims, has become vulnerable to the reconsiderations underway within the radical Islamic movement. As al Qaeda's many critics have pointed out, the main victims of terrorism are other Muslims. This is undermining al Qaeda's standing all over the Islamic world. It is a propitious moment for American policymakers to take steps that will further discredit radical Islam and help restore America's image in the Muslim world.

1. *Intelligence.* Until now, American intelligence has done a poor job of understanding, much less penetrating or disrupting al Qaeda. Since 9/11, the intelligence community has been reorganized. A new tier of bureaucracy—the Office of the Director of National Intelligence—has been added. A new department—Homeland Security—has been created. These have been valuable reforms in many respects, easing communication among agencies that have historically been reluctant to communicate with each other. But in themselves, the reforms add nothing to our store of vital intelligence. What would do that? Skilled people on the ground. People who natively speak Arabic, Pashtu, Dari, Urdu—the languages that al Qaeda and its affiliates speak. On 9/11, there were only eight agents in the entire FBI who spoke Arabic at a near native level. Now, nearly 7 years later, there are nine.

After 9/11, many Arab and Muslim American citizens came forward to join the intelligence community. They were spurned. Some of them went into the U.S. military, which welcomed them. Many of those served in Iraq as interpreters, the most dangerous imaginable assignment. I spoke to a former commander of the Army interpreter corps. He told me that after 4 years of serving their country, these American citizens still can't get a job in the intelligence community because they are considered a security risk.

What further declaration of loyalty do they need to make?

2. *Diplomacy.* The language issue is not confined to the intelligence community. The Iraq Study Group found that, out of 1,000 people working in our embassy in Baghdad, only eight were fluent Arabic speakers. How can you build a country if you can't read the newspaper?

Al Qaeda has long taken advantage of the rage and frustration the issue of Palestine generates among Muslims all over the world. Recently, many Muslims have



become more cynical about al Qaeda's ability to affect any real change in the conflict. A bold, fair-minded, determined American initiative to take this issue off the table once and for all would do more to diminish al Qaeda's appeal than any other policy the United States could initiate. Despite the weakness of the Palestinian and Israeli leadership, and the lame-duck status of the current administration, this is a propitious moment in the history of this long conflict. The Arab offer, initiated by Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah, to recognize Israel is a breakthrough that can't be allowed to dissipate. In my view, the chances for a two-state solution are rapidly diminishing, and future alternatives won't be nearly as appealing.

Similarly, the unresolved issue of Kashmir draws new recruits to al Qaeda and affords it a strategic alliance with key intelligence and military figures in Pakistan. Kashmir is rarely addressed by American policymakers, but it remains the primary reason Pakistan has been unwilling to fully commit to the battle against Islamic extremism. American policy seems to be content to let this issue fester. That is a mistake. Forceful and fair diplomacy on this matter would help diminish feelings of anti-Americanism in the region and help stabilize a country that is dangerously close to capsizing.

3. *Guantánamo Bay.* The continued detention of foreign nationals without charge, many of whom may have had little or nothing to do with al Qaeda, remains a black mark on America's record for human rights, not only for Muslims around the world but also for Americans who feel that the rule of law has been spurned. Al Qaeda loyalists frequently invoke Guantánamo because it reminds many Muslims of the oppressive conditions in their own countries. The Director of National Intelligence, Mike McConnell, told me that he is in favor of closing Guantánamo because of the damage it does to America's image, but he admits there is a problem about what to do with detainees who may be dangerous.

The success of the Egyptian government's dialog with its own radicals may provide a way for the United States to release some of the Guantánamo detainees. Allowing Islamic clerics to open discussion within the detention center could offer some of the men a chance to adjust their thinking and the United States a face-saving way of releasing prisoners whose continued detention is legally difficult to justify.

4. *Changing the Narrative.* It is vital to defuse the idea, so successfully planted by al Qaeda propagandists, that the West is at war with Islam. The best way the United States can respond to these reconsiderations is to open a dialog with non-violent Islamists who are seeking reconciliation. That means, among other things, welcoming prominent Muslim thinkers and activists, such as Tariq Ramadan, the Islamic theologian, and Kemal Helbawy, the former spokesperson for the Muslim Brotherhood, into the United States for teaching or speaking engagements, rather than shutting them out. It means emphasizing the bankruptcy of al Qaeda's politics while supporting democratic movements in the Muslim world—even when they produce disappointing results. The process is more important than the personalities it produces.

#### *How Terrorist Movements End*

Twenty years is a long time for a terror organization to exist. One can look back at history and see the critical moments that closed the door on some of al Qaeda's ancestors. Most terror groups disappear with the death of their charismatic leader. The Red Army Faction failed when the Berlin Wall fell and the organization lost its sanctuary in East Germany. The Irish Republican Army, which endured in various incarnations for nearly a century, came to an end when economic conditions in Ireland significantly improved and the leaders were eager to make a political accommodation.

These examples offer few hopeful parallels for al Qaeda. The organization has new sanctuaries, the social economic conditions that gave rise to it persist, and the leaders of al Qaeda, Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri, continue to elude capture. The main challenge to al Qaeda now is philosophical.

#### *Conclusion*

Radical Islam is at a defining moment. The movement has accomplished nothing practical for its adherents. There is philosophical ferment within its ranks. As the realists among them begin to sober up after the earthshaking events of 9/11 and its aftermath, the intransigence of the past has given way to a new mood of accommodation and coexistence. America has an unusual opportunity to begin a vigorous diplomatic campaign directed toward ending the polarization with the Islamic world that al Qaeda has sought to create. America can be seen, as it once was, as a model for change; indeed, nothing we have done since 9/11 has done more to improve our image in that part of the world than this magnificent Presidential election we are

currently engaged in. But a sudden and surprising attack by al Qaeda or an ill-advised political or military move on the part of the United States will foreclose this opportunity. We must do whatever we can to make sure that neither of these eventualities comes to pass, at the same time remembering that the status quo also terribly dangerous.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Wright.

Let me just mention to you that the House recently passed the intelligence authorization bill for the first time in some years. It was, I think, an important bipartisan victory. In that bill is a proposal for a multi-level clearance system for our intelligence agencies. The relevance of that is that we can hopefully now recruit and clear people who bring cultural understanding and native language skills to this problem. We have had trouble clearing people who have grandmas in Baghdad for reasons we are not going to discuss here. But, at any rate, it seems to me we are making a little progress against this problem you so correctly cite.

I yield myself 4½ minutes for questions since I have rambled on a bit here. I want to put two questions to both of you and stay within my 5 minutes, because we have a lot of people who want to ask questions.

Question No. 1: What impact would capturing or killing Osama bin Laden have, at this point, on this problem, if we were able to do this?

I would just point out, as a parallel, the Serbs have finally been able to round up the person perceived by most to be the mastermind behind the war crimes of a decade ago, Karadzic, and he has, last night or today, been rendered to The Hague for a trial for his conduct. This has gotten enormous world attention. That conflict was over a while back; this one is not. But I would like to ask you, how significant would this be?

My second question is about—I will put my bias on it—the damage done by the term “war on terror.” The RAND Corporation came out yesterday with a report that is in the papers today saying that that term has been harmful because it implies that we are at war with a tactic and that a military response is what will win the war. If I am wrong, please disabuse me.

So those are my questions. One is about capturing or killing UBL, and he second is about the term “war on terror.”

Mr. BERGEN. It is very hard to explain why the French were in Moscow in 1812 without reference to Napoleon. It is very hard to explain the Holocaust without reference to Hitler. It is impossible to explain the rise of al Qaeda and 9/11 itself without bin Laden, who continues to operate and continues to give broad strategic guidance to the jihadi network and to al Qaeda itself. Capturing or killing bin Laden obviously wouldn't end the global jihadi movement, but it would be a really good start.

The second, the “war on terror” I think is, you know, sort of a shorthand we all understand. It may not be ideal. We are not in a global police action. The people who we are talking about are at war with us. I think that is an important point to understand.

So this is some sort of war. But, as Kasowitz would say, what sort of war are we engaging in? We are not in an existential struggle with al Qaeda. This is not World War IV or anything like it. They are a national security problem. You asked, what is the definition of “victory”? The definition of “victory” is to turn al Qaeda

from a national security problem into a second-order threat. That is plausible in the next few decades. It is going to be a hard struggle.

So it is a war. The question is, what kind of war? Or, how do we calibrate that war?

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Wright.

Mr. WRIGHT. I have been stunned when I have talked to some members of the intelligence community that they have a belief that bin Laden is irrelevant now. He is not irrelevant. There is not anybody else in that organization that has the kind of standing and moral authority and the ability to recruit and inspire young Muslims to join al Qaeda. There is nobody else on the bench that remotely approximates the standing that bin Laden has. Removing him would be essential to bringing down al Qaeda.

I think that it was a mistake to eliminate the bin Laden group within the counterterrorism community. I know it represented a stain on their ability to capture him, but it would be, I think, a wise idea to redouble our efforts, as Peter has pointed out in his statement, to capture or kill bin Laden.

On the "war on terror," if you recall, Madam Chair, the administration actually went through a period where they decided not to call it the war on terrorism. What happened is that much of the legal basis for the detainees in Guantanamo and so on is premised on the fact that this is a war. So if you remove the term "war on terror," then you, to some extent, pull a trapdoor on those kinds of legal constructs.

So I am in favor of not calling it a war on terror, but I don't see the practical exit until we have resolved the Guantanamo problem.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you very much.

I now yield to the Ranking Member of the full committee, Mr. King, for 5 minutes of questions.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Madam Chair. I just arrived. I don't want to intervene. I will just sit and wait and listen and learn something. So I thank you. I yield.

Ms. HARMAN. Good manners from a New Yorker are always welcome.

[Laughter.]

Ms. HARMAN. The Chair now yields to the Ranking Member of the subcommittee, Mr. Reichert, for questions.

Mr. REICHERT. We should mention the wisdom of the Ranking Member of the subcommittee recognizing that we should go to the Ranking Member of the full committee first.

[Laughter.]

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Madam Chair and Ranking Member King.

I have a couple of thoughts. One of the comments that you made, Mr. Wright, regarding the compelling story about America that al Qaeda has, and, at this point, you see a vulnerability there. You did mention, I think, one or two things that you thought we might be able to take advantage of at this point in time regarding that vulnerability and changing that story to our advantage.

Can you just, kind of, give me a list of things that you think we should be doing right now to begin to change that message? Be-

cause I really think that is an important message that needs to be heard by the American people.

Mr. WRIGHT. Well, thank you for that opportunity.

To some extent, the best thing we can do is model our own good behavior. I think there is nothing that has made a change in attitudes in the Muslim world and all over the world more since 9/11 than this terrific election that we are having right now.

Recently, in Cairo, I was speaking in Cairo University, and all of the students were completely engaged with the election that was taking place in our country, which was such a contrast to the situation in their own country. That kind of modeling behavior is, I think, at the top of what we can do, is, you know, behaving ourselves, addressing political problems that are real problems publicly and openly, and trying to enlist all Americans in the dialog.

Second, I think that we have a real opportunity, especially in Israel and Palestine, right now when the Arab world is plainly suing for peace, looking for a way out of this dilemma. This is a propitious moment. The situation is unbelievably dangerous. As long as we let the situation stay on the table, we are going to suffer from the consequences of it. I don't think that we can afford to be lax and inattentive. We should be forceful, we should be much more aggressive in trying to put this situation off the table.

I think that I have already made my views clear about the Intelligence Community, but we have to—you know, we have young Muslims who came forward and offered their services to American intelligence who were spurned, and many of them went into the American military, and what happened to them? They became, many of them, translators in Iraq, the most dangerous imaginable assignment.

I talked to one of the commanders in the Army interpretation corps. He said that, after 4 years of serving their country in Iraq, they can't get a job in American intelligence because they are considered a security risk. Well, what other declaration of loyalty do you need to make?

Mr. REICHERT. Yes. Thank you.

That is, I guess, you kind of just ended with part of my follow-up to the first question, and that is, so, in regard to the Iraqis who have put their lives out there and now want to come here and work in our Intel Community—and also you made a comment about including Americans in the dialog, which I think really fits into that piece that you just explained.

Don't you believe that there is a huge educational piece that needs to take place here in this country, first recognizing there is a war on terror, and that we do have an opportunity, right now there is a vulnerability, to change the message to al Qaeda being at war with Islam and not the West? How do we accomplish that? Have either of you thought anything about how do we educate Americans to realize where we are actually at today?

Mr. WRIGHT. One thing that we made a mistake, in my opinion, is keeping moderate Muslims out of America, people like Hamal Habawi and Tariq Ramadan, who are not at all radical Muslims. We have kept the American people from the exposure to the dialog. We should be much more deeply engaged with moderate leaders of the Islamic community at home and abroad.

I think it was mentioned in my introduction earlier, I used to teach at the American University in Cairo. I don't think there is another institution in all of the Middle East that has done more good over a long term than our educational efforts in Egypt and elsewhere. That kind of thing can be amplified I think, exchanges among students.

You know, if you are like Peter and I, you travel a lot in that region, and you go to visit American embassies. They are like prisons. They are like minimum-security prisons. The prisoners are the diplomats, who never get a chance to get out into the country that they are supposedly representing. People don't see Americans in that part of the world, and we have to do something to change that. Our efforts for public diplomacy right now are at a real nadir.

Mr. REICHERT. I see my time has expired, Madam Chair.

Thank you for your answers.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you, Mr. Reichert.

Mr. Carney is now recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Bergen, is CNN covering this hearing?

[Laughter.]

Mr. CARNEY. Okay. No, just—not important.

This is a question, though, I really thought long and hard about it. I have a little bit of background on this topic, as well.

Has al Qaeda been manipulated by governments in the Middle East? This is for both of you, actually.

Mr. WRIGHT. In what sense?

Mr. CARNEY. Does al Qaeda fulfill some political goals of some of the regimes in the region?

Mr. BERGEN. Not really, because, after all, the main point of al Qaeda is regime change around the Middle East. I mean, the reason we are being attacked is it is a sort of sideshow to their main aim, which is regime change from Riyadh to Morocco to Jordan. You know, we are the foreign enemy; attack us. We will pull out of the Middle East, then these regimes will crumble, and they will get what they want, which is regime change in the Middle East.

So if these governments are manipulating al Qaeda, it is probably not the most ideal organization to be manipulating.

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Wright.

Mr. WRIGHT. I agree with Peter's observations on that. I think Saddam Hussein made overtures to al Qaeda, at one point, and were rejected. Al Qaeda has had interchange with governments in the past, but it is—and with Iran, for instance. But, you know, none of this has ever prospered the governments that have approached them.

Mr. CARNEY. What, from your perspective, what you have been able to hear on your travels recently about the level of sophistication of their ability to attack and with what sorts of weapons?

Mr. BERGEN. I think in the next 5 years al Qaeda will be able to do two things they have wanted to do. These are not "Chicken Little" scenarios; these are plausible scenarios.

One is to bring down a commercial jet somewhere in the world with a rocket-propelled grenade or surface-to-air missile or man-powered, something they tried to do in Mombasa, Kenya, in 2002 with an Israeli charter jet—very narrowly escaped, luckily. They

also tried that with a DHL plane in Baghdad. So this is within the realm of the possible. That would naturally have a very nasty effect on global tourism and aviation.

The second is detonating a radiological bomb in a major European city, again, something they have had a demonstrated interest in and not relatively easy to organize. As I mentioned earlier, I think their ability to attack the United States for the next 5 years is extremely low.

But those are the plausible scenarios that obviously would have an impact on us and might well kill large numbers of Americans overseas.

Mr. CARNEY. Would they be able to pull off something like a Bojinka again?

Mr. BERGEN. Well, the plane plot in the summer of 2006 would have been Bojinka on steroids, yes.

Mr. WRIGHT. I would point out that al Qaeda is an organization that loves dates and anniversaries. The next 2 months are replete with opportunities. 8/8/08 is the date that the Beijing Olympics open. Al Qaeda was founded, the first meeting was August 11, 1988, 20 years ago. The following month, on September 20, was its first organizational meeting. Then there is the seventh anniversary of 9/11 coming up.

So, August and September, I think al Qaeda will be under great pressure to perform. It will be interesting to see if it is able to pull anything off during that time.

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Bergen, how important was Hassan Turabi to bin Laden's start?

Mr. BERGEN. Hassan Turabi, who is the de facto leader of Sudan in the mid-1990's, obviously provided bin Laden shelter. Al Qaeda benefited from that.

Mr. CARNEY. Does it move forward to today?

Mr. BERGEN. The Sudanese connection I think is over. There is no love lost between these guys now.

Mr. CARNEY. No further questions this round, Madam Chair.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you, Mr. Carney.

Mr. Shays is recognized.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you, Madam Chair, for holding this hearing.

I chaired the National Security Subcommittee and transferred our focus from drugs to the threat of terrorism in 1998, and we had 20 hearings before September 11. This is *deja vu* for me, because I feel like we are in this lull, like we were then.

You have some said remarkable things, both of you—radioactive material, a conventional bomb with radioactive material, knocking down an airplane—and when it happens, you know, everybody is going to act like they are surprised.

The thing that I react to, first off, is I like that the 9/11 Commission didn't say we are confronting terrorism, as if it is some ethereal being. They we said we are confronting Islamist terrorists who would do a lot of harm, and we are not going to find them in Iceland. It just strikes me that we have to figure out how we describe the truth without offending the innocent overseas. I don't quite know how you do it.

But, first, I happen to believe that we should have an embassy in every country—Iran, North Korea, Cuba—because going into

Iraq, if we had had an embassy in Iraq, the intelligence would have been far better than what it turned out to be. I just reread the intelligence report for 2002, estimate, and it is unbelievable how strong it was that, you know, Saddam is going to do all these things and had nuclear, chemical and biological.

But, first, let me ask you, do you believe we are confronting Islamist terrorists?

Mr. BERGEN. Yes, I do.

Mr. SHAYS. Do you believe we should name it that, as opposed to terrorism, like it is some ethereal being? Both of you.

Mr. BERGEN. Yes. The national security threat the United States faces is from Islamist terrorists. It is not from radical vegetarians.

Mr. SHAYS. Okay.

[Laughter.]

Mr. SHAYS. 1993 was the first attack on the World Trade Center; 2001 was the second. I had 70 constituents who lost loved ones, and they were outraged that they weren't informed that this was a target, and we knew it was a target. They had reason to be outraged in one sense. But following that logic, 2001, that means 2009. Why should I take comfort that there hasn't been an attack in the United States, as if we have had some ability to prevent that, when they work on a time frame that is not, you know, tomorrow?

I would like both of you to answer this.

Mr. WRIGHT. I am not here to give you comfort. But I think there are several reasons why we haven't been attacked. The primary one is the American Muslim community doesn't give the kind of shelter to radical native-born American Muslims who might want to turn against this country.

As an example, a few years ago I was having Iftar with a group of radical Muslims in Birmingham, England. That is the meal you take to end the fast at the end of the day in Ramadan. One of my companions said he supported the kidnapping and beheading of aid workers in Iraq. I thought, "Well, you know, he is dangerous." We have people like him in this country. But I looked around the room, and I saw all these people nodding in agreement. I said to myself, "What is really dangerous are those nodding heads."

Mr. SHAYS. Interesting.

Mr. WRIGHT. That is what we don't have, as yet, in this country.

Mr. SHAYS. Let me ask you quickly, do you confront them when they say that, or are you just an observer? I don't mean "just" as a criticism. I mean, do you try to learn more about why they think that way?

Mr. WRIGHT. That particular conversation came not long after 9/11 when my own feelings were pretty raw, and the evening degenerated really quickly.

Mr. SHAYS. Okay. Let me ask Mr. Bergen to answer that question.

Mr. BERGEN. The three reasons, in my view, that we haven't been attacked in the United States is, as Larry says, the American Muslim community doesn't buy into the al Qaeda ideology. Second, no evidence of al Qaeda sleeper cells. I can't prove negatives to you, but if these sleeper cells exist, they are either comatose or dead. They have done nothing for 7 years. Third, it is very hard for ter-

rorists to get into the country now. So if you don't have people here, and if you don't have sympathizers here, and it is very hard to get in, how do you attack us?

Jihadi terrorists, when they have attacked or tried to attack—first Trade Center attack, second Trade Center attack, and then Ahmed Ressaam who tried to blow up LAX in 1999—all of them came from outside. No one was internal. Which is not to say there might not be some homegrown al Qaeda wannabes who are trying to do something, but there is a natural ceiling to their abilities. They are not going to be able to do anything very big.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you.

I look forward to the second round.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you, Mr. Shays.

Mr. Perlmutter, 5 minutes.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks for holding this hearing.

Gentlemen, thank you for your information. I am just trying to absorb all that you are saying to us. I think you have put it in terms that, for me, really are much more understandable than I have had in the past. So thank you for that.

Let's switch to a couple of things that both of you have touched on. I am looking, Mr. Wright, at a statement on page 6. "It is easier to move from terrorism to extremism or extremism to rigidity. We have not come across the person who can be moved all the way from terrorism to normal life." That was one of the—Sheikh Ali Gomaa, Egypt's Grand Mufti.

You mentioned the Mafia. Sort of, to break the Mafia, people had to really be from that community, in effect. But it also brought to mind, the Mafia, "The Godfather," in which Michael Corleone was trying to get out of the Mafia. He thinks he is out of the Mafia, and they pulled him back in.

So my questions to you are, do you think these leaders will, as Fadl has done, continue to move away from al Qaeda? Do you think—and I think you said no, but what can we do to have more people be conversant in this and being able to speak the language? Where should our efforts be?

Those are my questions to you two.

Mr. WRIGHT. Sheikh Ali Gomaa is the Grand Mufti in Cairo, and he has overseen what was a very remarkable series of conversions within the Egyptian prisons.

A much larger group than Zawahiri's Al Jihad is Gama Islamiyya, which is an Islamic group. It has much more blood on its hands; by a factor of 10, much larger than Al Jihad. In the 1990's, they waged a war on the Egyptian Government that killed more than 1,000 people.

The leaders in prison began to reconsider their views, and they went around to talk to some of their other members. In 1999, the entire organization renounced violence and made a deal with the government that allowed many of these people to get out of prison.

This is a really interesting development. I have talked to some of these people, some of the leaders that are now out of prison. They say they weren't tortured into making these changes. They continue, even out of prison, to write documents and manifestos addressing the errors of their thinking in previous lives.



I think this offers an interesting model for dealing with radicalism. As Sheikh Ali Gomaa remarked, you can't expect too much. You can't say that, because you have an extremist in prison who has committed violent actions, that he is then going to become a suburban homeowner. He may not. But he may move just enough away from violent action that he is no longer a threat to his community. That is maybe the most that you can hope for.

Mr. BERGEN. I mean, really, sort of a comment. It is not just the leaders who are doing this process. Support for suicide bombing in Pakistan has dropped from 33 percent to 8 percent in the last 5 years. Bin Laden's personal support has been cratering in the North-West Frontier Province, although it has had an uptick recently. So it is not happening just at the elite level; it is happening at the Muslim civilian level.

One of the most promising things I have heard in the hearing today is the phrase that al Qaeda is at war with Islam. That is an incredibly important kind of message, that you don't have to be an expert in Islam to say that. Because we have the kiss-of-death problem, which is that if it has an American imprint, it is obviously a problem at the moment. We also have a lack-of-knowledge problem. There are certain things we can say. When female suicide bombers kill 100 people in Baghdad, as they did yesterday, that is against Islam. You don't have to be an expert in that area. So that is the kind of things that we can say. But Muslim civilians are making their own decisions about this.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I yield back.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you, Mr. Perlmutter.

I would just add that what we have seen in Anbar province in Iraq is an illustration of this point, where Sunnis have pushed back against al Qaeda. Al Qaeda is at war or perceived to be at war with Sunni Islam there, and al Qaeda is losing.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. McCaul for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have two issues I want to raise and give as much time to the distinguished witnesses as possible.

Larry, you and I touched upon this in the airplane ride from Austin to here yesterday. One is the—I just got back from Pakistan and Afghanistan. I spent the 4th of July week with the troops in Afghanistan. It was clear the violence is going up there. The primary source for this violence and the extremism is coming out of what we call the tribal areas, or the FATA.

In my view, this is becoming an increasingly huge threat, not only to our troops but to the United States. They have reconstituted there since 9/11. If bin Laden is alive, that is probably where he is. So if you all could comment on that issue.

In addition, if you could comment on the role that the madrassas play, particularly in Pakistan. I know with the subway bombings in London, the London arrests, I know that Musharraf, we met with him, has talked about his educational reforms, in terms of keeping foreign nationals out of these madrassas.

So, with that, I will turn it over to our witnesses.

Mr. WRIGHT. Well, let me go first, Peter, because I know you can address the madrassa problem better than I.

We are in the easier spot, describing the problem. You have the unfortunate responsibility of trying to resolve or provide some sort of remedy for this.

The central problem with al Qaeda and Pakistan is that these are both very dangerous entities. If you talk to people in the Intelligence Community, basically they all say, as Director McConnell told me, we know where bin Laden is. He is in the tribal areas. It is about the size of the State of New Jersey.

So if you say to average Americans, well, bin Laden is in New Jersey, they will say, well, why can't you go find him? Well, because if you go in—Pakistan is a very unstable country with nuclear bombs and a bad history of spreading that kind of technology around. In the opinion of a lot of people in the American intelligence community, al Qaeda is a nuisance compared to the real danger posed by destabilizing Pakistan.

Now, in my opinion, we are just waiting for some political excuse, i.e. another major al Qaeda attack, for the political authority and will to go in and clean out those tribal areas, which will be very dangerous. But that is essentially the state that we are in.

Peter has done research on the madrassas, and I am sure that he can comment on that.

Mr. BERGEN. On madrassas, you know, madrassa graduates are functional idiots who can recite the Koran in a language they can't understand. So this doesn't get you through customs at JFK or Heathrow. So there is no evidence that madrassa graduates are successful in conducting anti-western terror attacks, because they are just not up to it. They are, however, the principal recruiting ground for suicide attackers in Afghanistan right now. So that is where the problem is.

In terms of the Afghan-Pakistan thing, the United States has to do a complete rethink about everything we are doing there. It is obviously going very poorly. You know, to McCain's credit, to Obama's credit, asking for more troops is part of the solution. To Senator Biden and Senator Lugar's credit, asking for \$7.5 billion in more military aid to demonstrate to the Pakistanis that we are not just subsidizing their army, this is also a good thing. But we need to rethink everything we are doing there, because it is going wrong.

Obviously, the fact that NATO has taken over strategic command in Afghanistan, by any stretch, by any kind of standard, has not been a success. In fact, it has been a failure. So one quick idea is the four-star general there, General McKiernan, should be in charge of all U.S. and all NATO operations in the country. At the moment, he isn't.

There are many other things we need to do. Our drug policy in Afghanistan completely crazy. We spend more on our anti-drug policy in Afghanistan than Afghan farmers make from growing poppies. At the same time, every year the crop goes up; 93 percent of the world's heroin supply comes from the country. It is funding the Taliban. We need to do a complete rethink of that. Obviously, if you eradicate poor farmers' poppy fields, that throws them into the arms of the Taliban.

So, unfortunately, in 36 seconds I can't tell you all of my ideas. But suffice it to say, we need, as we did in Iraq, a complete rethink of everything we are doing.

Mr. MCCAUL. Within the 20 seconds I have left, we know the threat is there, and we have been somewhat reactive, not proactive. Do we need to be more proactive, or do we just sit back and let it fester, as we have since 9/11?

Mr. BERGEN. It is a very hard dilemma, because 75 percent of Pakistanis, when polled, say any form of U.S. military activity on their territory for any purpose at all, they are against it. It is 170 million people with nuclear weapons.

So, unfortunately, we are going to have to prepare ourselves for the moment when there is an attack in London that kills 50 to 100 people traceable to FATA or an attack against American citizens somewhere in the world traceable to FATA, and that will provide the political impetus.

But, without that, I don't see it happening. It is going to be a very difficult thing to do anyway.

Ms. HARMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

We will have a second round of questions.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. Pascrell.

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for allowing me to sit on this prestigious committee.

Both of these gentlemen, I think, while speaking to the issue of intelligence, have provided intelligent suggestions to us, both of you. I read those books. I agree with my friend from Texas that they are on target.

I have recently returned from the border with Congressman Capuano and Congressman LoBiondo. We requested that we not go to Kabul, that we go to the border, where no other House Member or Senate Member had previously gone. We went to two firebases. The furthest to the border was Shockley, where our special forces are doing a magnificent job. It took us over an hour to helicopter there on the front lines.

I must say to my brothers and sisters on this committee that the only people whom I have met that understand what is going on concerning these infidels, I call them, these radical terrorists, are the soldiers that we have sent. They understand what is going on. They get it.

They realize that we are not going to win and defeat terrorists by killing more of them than they kill of us. They get it. We don't. They understand on the front lines, our special forces, that we need to provide education to help educate people. They educate us; this is a two-way street, as both of you have said time and time and time again.

They understand that this is not a war against Islam, nor is this a war on terror. To defend the homeland, we must win the war of ideas. They understand it. In fact, way out there on that border, here were some of our bravest soldiers putting comic books together so that people could understand what America is all about and the great country that we are.

When I came back to the States and got off at Andrews and kissed the ground, as I always do, this comic book that I had in my pocket fell out of my pocket on the ground. I was reminded of

this trip that was the most magnificent trip I have ever taken in my life since I have been in the Congress.

Then we went to Pakistan to convince the new leadership that the war is on the border, the fight is on the border—and not on the border with India, where most of the Pakistani troops are. That is not an easy task, to convince them.

I am confident that the intelligence of our soldiers will be someday inherited on the Hill, or someday genetically transformed, somehow, some way. They are, indeed—not a cliché—the bravest soldiers that we have.

How do we get Pakistan to help us, is critical at this point. It was critical 4 years ago. I don't want to provide a commercial of how we sent our troops to the wrong place in defeating those infidels who attacked us on 9/11 in 2001.

Am I using hyperbole here, Mr. Wright, Mr. Bergen? Am I on target? Should I go back and revisit my premise? Should I change my argument? Mr. Wright? Mr. Bergen?

Mr. WRIGHT. First of all, in my judgment, I agree with you, that I think the American military has done a better job of adapting than any other arm of our Government to the challenge that is being faced. It has been a transformation, a very expensive, bloody one. It has been impressive to have the opportunity to go talk to so many people in our military and see the changes they have made.

Now, Pakistan—since 9/11, we have given Pakistan nearly \$11 billion. The country of Pakistan is in the looking-for-bin-Laden business. If they found him, they would be out of business. That is the lack of incentive that they have. I think we do have to find a completely different way of making it clear to the Pakistanis that they have a genuine interest in bringing this to an end.

I don't think it is a quick fix. The Pakistanis are obsessed with the notion of strategic depth. By that, they mean that they are worried that India will leap-frog them in influence in Afghanistan. Therefore, they want to keep Afghanistan in an unstable situation.

The key to resolving that, in my opinion, is Kashmir. That is the festering wound that continues to agitate relations between Pakistan and India. We do very little to address that problem, and I think that would help.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Bergen.

Mr. BERGEN. I couldn't agree more about the military. Obviously, the fact that Petraeus has taken over CENTCOM in September is a good thing. I have been embedded multiple times in Afghanistan, and the military is doing, by and large, a very good job.

In terms of Pakistan, you know, the Pakistani Prime Minister has said both in Pakistan and the United States now that the war on terror is not an American-led war, it is also Pakistan's war. So we have a new civilian government in Pakistan, 60 suicide attacks in Pakistan last year, more than at any time in Pakistani history, most of them directed at the Pakistani state—police, military, et cetera. The Pakistani establishment is beginning to wake up that this is their own problem, not simply just America's problem.

Unfortunately, there is effectively two governments in Pakistan right now. We just saw that ISI was going to be brought under civilian control over the weekend, and then suddenly it wasn't. So,

until the point where the civilian government is truly in charge of what the ISI and other elements of the military does, this is going to be quite a long haul. But I am hopeful, given the fact that we now have a really democratically elected government in Pakistan, that that, in the long term, is going to happen.

By the way, on Kashmir, I completely agree with Larry, but only a democratically elected government can do it. Because Kashmir really is the thing that keeps the Pakistani military in business. You take that off the table, then their central position in the Pakistani state moves to the side, where it should be.

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you.

Ms. HARMAN. The gentleman's time has expired. I just observe that those answers shed some light on a question that Mr. Carney asked you, which is, is al Qaeda being used in this fight, and to some extent now that I hear you both what you did, I think the answer to that is yes in certain ways, especially by the Pakistanis.

Finally, the Ranking Member of the full committee, Mr. King, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Madam Chair. Let me thank the witnesses for the testimony today and for the tremendous work they have done on this entire issue for years. I regret I was not here for your opening statements, and I hope that the questions I ask were not covered by you then.

I would like to ask three questions and then ask the two of you to answer them for me. One, and this is strictly a hypothetical question, but if it should be confirmed that al-Masri was killed the other day, what significance would that have?

Second, the question, I guess Mr. Bergen, it is in your testimony about there is no fear of imminent attack over the next 5 years of a major level: In that regard—and I spent a lot of time with the NYPD, the New York counterterrorism people—what do you think the chances would be of them having nothing like the 9/11 attacks, but for instance, hitting major department stores or sporting events, which would not take the same level of sophistication?

One of the theories I have had as to why they have not done that either in New York or malls around the country is that al Qaeda has this belief they always have to do a greater attack than the one before. I was wondering if you consider that to be plausible.

Then also you have stated that the Muslim community in this country is not supportive of terrorism, which I concur in. For one thing, Mr. Pascrell and I have had a difference on this over the years, but in talking to various police officials their concern as expressed to me is that while the Muslim community does not support terrorism nor does it come forward and disclose what is going on in their ranks. I know, for instance, a mosque in my district which has well over 1,000 members for a number of years was still insisting that it was FBI and the CIA that attacked the World Trade Center. I am sure they didn't believe it, but it felt that or it seemed as if they were under pressure to say that. So it is not anywhere near what goes on in England or France, but I do think there is reluctance in large parts of the Muslim community in this country to come forward and speak with the police and tell them what is going on in the mosques.

With that, if you could answer those questions I would appreciate it.

Mr. BERGEN. On the death of al-Masri, if he really was killed, al-Masri, who went by the wonderful alias of Abu Khabab, is somebody who ran the WMD program for al Qaeda. Obviously if he is captured or killed, that is a good thing. The most dangerous job in the world is al Qaeda's No. 3. There seems to be a lot of people being al Qaeda's No. 3. So taking out one person, other than Osama bin Laden himself, is obviously not going to end this thing.

In terms of al Qaeda targets, al Qaeda is not interested in attacking a mall in Des Moines, because the people it is trying to influence haven't heard of Des Moines. They want to attack New York, the District of Columbia, or Los Angeles. They want to bring down commercial jets. Look at the planes plot in the summer of 2006. They selected the hardest target in the world, commercial aviation leaving Heathrow.

So these are the kinds of things they want to attack. So I am not concerned about the department stores. That is not the kind of thing they want to engage in.

I will leave the last question to Larry.

Mr. WRIGHT. Just on the question of department stores, and so on, a few years ago Zawahiri made a statement to his followers, essentially a fatwa, allowing them to go forth and kill whoever, Westerners, Jews, attack oil facilities and so on. But if you are going to attack the United States, if you plan to do that, you have to clear it with us. This was a proviso that within the fatwa that they wanted to hang on to this is the province of al Qaeda Central. In my opinion the United States is still Broadway for al Qaeda. They want not to diminish the impact of 9/11 with a series of easily imaginable and very disruptive attacks such as the one you pose. That in their opinion is not the real theater that they are engaged upon. In some respects we are protected by their ambition and their inability to accomplish that.

The reticence of the American Muslim community is regrettable. It is understandable to some extent because they have been spurned. They have had an antagonistic relationship sometimes with the intelligence community that is trying to penetrate them rather than meet with them. They have been turned away repeatedly when they have made offers.

It also is true that 40 percent of the American Muslim community does not believe that Arabs committed 9/11. So there is an element of denial on their part about the kind of responsibility. I think further engagement in trying to draw these people into our police and intelligence communities would change that.

Mr. KING. Thank you very much. I yield back.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you very much for that very helpful answer.

Mr. Dent is now recognized for 5 minutes, and I would say to Members that we will, if you can stick around, go to a second round of questions. I think this testimony is absolutely superb in terms of building a record for how we have to think about this going forward.

Mr. Dent.

Mr. DENT. Thank you, Madam Chair. I, too, recently was in Pakistan, and it was quite clear to me at the time that the feeling in

Pakistan was that India was their principal security threat. Although when I was there there was an attack on the police in Karachi, Benazir Bhutto had been assassinated a couple weeks earlier, there had been the Red Mosque incident as well as others. I am glad to hear, Mr. Bergen, that you are suggesting that they seem to be recognizing that threat to their states' rule is a real threat now, perhaps more than they had thought previously. That is what I understood you to say.

My question is this, al Qaeda had previously talked about killing millions of Americans, I think up to 4 million Americans. I believe they issued that statement not long after 9/11. Do you believe that this is still al Qaeda's goal or has this so-called unraveling of al Qaeda caused them to change their objectives in this regard?

Either one of you or both can address it.

Mr. BERGEN. Bin Laden is an intelligent guy, but his strategy has failed. His idea was to attack the United States on 9/11 and we will pull out of the Middle East. Well, quite the reverse, we are in Iraq, Afghanistan, et cetera. So he continues to conceive of us as the main enemy and he has, he and his people have said we are owed something like 4 million or 10 million deaths. So during the Cold War we had sort of a Kremlinology, because we don't know what the Kremlin wanted to do with all its power. Here we know exactly what these guys would want to do if they could. They would drop a nuclear weapon on Washington without thinking about it if they had one. The good thing is that the capabilities are low but their intentions remain very high.

Mr. WRIGHT. I completely agree with Peter.

Mr. DENT. So the intent is there but the capability is not?

Mr. BERGEN. Right.

Mr. DENT. There has been a lot of talk about the alienation of second generation Muslims and how these individuals are ripe for recruitment by al Qaeda in the United States and in Europe. If I understood you both correctly you seemed to think that this was a much more difficult issue getting homegrown terrorists in this country, unlike maybe in the United Kingdom, where we had some British boys of Pakistani descent or British young men of Pakistani descent who were engaged in all kinds of terrorist activities. Could you further elaborate on that point? How big a problem is the second generation Muslim for the United States versus Europe?

Mr. BERGEN. The United States has an American dream and it hasn't worked all the time but has worked very well for American Muslims who are disproportionately highly educated, compared to the average American. They have higher incomes, they don't live in ghettos.

Now take everything I have just said and reverse it and you have the picture in Europe. Having grown up in Britain, I can assure you there is no British dream. I am not aware of an E.U. dream or a French dream or a Spanish dream. Through a combination of alienation and homesickness, or whatever, you have this problem in Europe.

Obviously if we get attacked again, it is very likely we will be attacked by somebody with a European passport, probably a British passport. After all British citizens have engaged in suicide attacks in Tel Aviv in 2003, multiple suicide operations in London in

2005, an attempt to bring down American aviation with a suicide attack in 2001, and Richard Reid also in 2006.

So the problem is pronounced and it is a national security problem for us because of visa waiver program. I am not suggesting we change that in any great way, because obviously there are huge advantages to that program. But the fact is that is where the threat is coming from. It is not the madrassa graduates who cannot speak English. It is the Mohammed Attas of the world who studied in Hamburg.

Mr. WRIGHT. I would also add to just frame the difference between the situation in the United States, there are very few, comparatively few Muslims in the United States that go into American prisons, far less than the average prison population. In France you have about 12 percent of the population is Muslim, 50 percent of the prisoners are. It is a stark measure of the degree of alienation that is experienced there as opposed to here.

Now, that doesn't mean that we are immune from homegrown terror. The Pew poll found that about 5 percent of American Muslims had a favorable view of al Qaeda. In a population of about 2½ million people, that is 125,000 very radical people. Lately in al Qaeda's speeches, bin Laden and Zawahiri in particular have been courting a particular demographic within the American Muslim community, and that is African American Muslims, who have historically a very low relationship with the Middle East. But only 36 percent of them expressed an unfavorable view of al Qaeda. You see now repeated references to Malcolm X, even a music video that has been produced that pays a tribute to him. So I think this is a deliberate courtship of that community.

Mr. DENT. On the issue of prisons in Europe, this committee has held hearings on radicalization within American prisons and the Islamic movement. Have you gentlemen observed the American prison system and the radicalization, and do you have any thoughts on our prisons, and is that the breeding ground that some of us think it is or is it not as bad?

Mr. BERGEN. Just a small comment, in Chair Jane Harman's district the Torrance, California case, these guys got radicalized in prison and that was the most serious post-9/11 case.

Is that an exception that proves the rule or something more of a general trend? My intuition is that it is not particularly widespread. On the other hand, you don't need to have a large number of people who adopt that kind of etiology who have a criminal background who become a serious threat.

Mr. WRIGHT. I want to say I have had some experience in the past in prisons and found oftentimes that religion and the Islamic religion had been a powerful force for reform of individual prisoners, and so they were a force for good as well as possibly for ill.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you. We will now go to a second round of questions. Let me just observe that in the case that Peter Bergen mentioned there have been court trials. There were just two convictions. One of the fellows got 22 years in prison and the other 12½. It was a fairly serious, well-developed plot by a number of people. Many of the Members here know this, because we did have a hearing in Torrance, California, but the intention was to attack military



recruiting sites and Jewish synagogues. Fortunately, astute local law enforcement foiled the plot. Let me ask about two other things.

First, Larry Wright mentioned the significance of 8/8/08 as the opening day of the Olympics, the 20th anniversary of al Qaeda, and you said that there were other significant dates in September. This coincidence has not escaped, I think anyone. Everyone should know this, some who are focused on security at the Olympics. I just wanted to ask your thoughts about the capability of al Qaeda to do something spectacular in China in the middle of the Olympics. Do you think they would have that capability?

Mr. WRIGHT. Well, there have been some bombings in China recently and the Turkestan Islamic Party has made a number of threats. Zawahiri has been courting them again in recent speeches and making overtures to them, counting them as part of the al Qaeda alliance. So I am not familiar enough with Chinese security to see—but they have experienced a rise in this kind of terrorism and there is no question that the Olympics are a target.

Mr. BERGEN. I don't have anything to add.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you. Well, it is certainly on the mind of a number of us and conversations have been held, and I know that our intelligence services are cooperating closely with Chinese intelligence and precautions are being taken.

My second question is this: If President McBama calls you in on January 20 after his acceptance speech and said okay, you guys are real smart about the changing nature of the threat, the al Qaeda threat, advise me on the steps I should take in the immediate term and in what order I should take them, what would you say?

Mr. BERGEN. Well—do you want to go ahead?

Mr. WRIGHT. No, you go ahead.

Mr. BERGEN. There are big-picture things that Larry has already touched on, obviously the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Kashmir is much undervalued as a core grievance and training ground. None of these things are easy and we can blame the British for both of these problems, but both of them need to be ameliorated. We may not be able to solve them, but at least let's be the honest broker.

The second point is we need to gain the moral high ground. Coercion, torture, extorting rendition to countries that practice torture, Guantanamo, we need to reverse those policies; not easy to do, they are problems.

Those are the big picture, but in terms of the kind of interest of the committee, which is really focused on homeland security, one thing I think we need to be cognizant of, is that if we get attacked again the likely weapon is hydrogen peroxide, industrial strength hydrogen peroxide. This was the weapon of choice on July 7, 2005, in the train bombings in the summer of 2006, in the attempt to bomb Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany in 2007. This is not the stuff you buy in your local beauty parlor. It is industrial strength hydrogen peroxide, but this is something that controls need to be placed on.

Streamlining obviously the clearance process that you mentioned, Chair Harman, very important. Learning to speak their language, as Larry Wright has pointed out. One thing that I think we need to do better about is the universal database that looks at all insur-

gents, terrorists, foreign fighters across all theaters, and looks at the facilitative notes. This would be obviously very useful from an intelligence point of view. What are the web sites with the recruiting, who are the recruiters, what are the financiers? But a very key part of it is who are the key clerics, because my intuition is there is a very limited number of clerics who are producing a disproportionately large number of suicide bombers. This would be very useful from a policy point of view because armed with that information you could go to the Pakistanis and say, look, these five madrassas are producing, you know, 50 percent of the suicide attackers in Afghanistan; we are not saying that just because it is our problem but this is all going to blow back on you and you need to close down the clerics.

So those are just some ideas.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you. Mr. Wright.

Mr. WRIGHT. It is hard to follow Peter on these kind of things, but I will not talk so much about the diplomatic or political overtures as the kind of moral tone that I think this new administration, whichever it might be, has an opportunity to really change the narrative about America's role and addressing, strongly addressing such things as torture, Guantanamo, making sure that there is a clean slate and that that picture has gotten—and a second thing is establishing a sense of fairness that, especially in the Middle East, this profound conception about America that it is no longer a fair partner. We have to take steps to demonstrate our equanimity in that regard.

Finally, one thing that we haven't touched on is in terms of our dependence on oil, which is underlying all of this, the largest customer in the whole world for petroleum is the American military, and it is a little unseemly for it to be fighting a war for oil as the main customer. I think greening the American military is something that has not been discussed in the body politics very much, but it could do much to save American lives.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you very much. There is enormous food for thought. We could keep this hearing going all day, but we won't.

Mr. Reichert for 5 minutes.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to focus just on one thing. There was a comment made about gathering intel universal database from Mr. Bergen. You also mentioned that we need to change our strategy in Afghanistan. I wonder, too, how much we must change our strategy in the way that we collect intelligence, what intelligence we collect. Are either of you familiar with fusion centers that exist here and in their role in communicating with the Muslim community, and are we doing enough of that in helping to educate, rather than just being entirely focused on collecting the intel and disseminating intelligence? Are we doing within our own efforts here, within the United States, enough to help reach out to those communities?

Mr. WRIGHT. I think the fusion—the movement of intelligence into police work has been a dramatic shift in our ability to gather intelligence at the root. NYPD I think is the model for this. This is, I think, above any other intelligence organization in the whole country. I think they do the best job at what they do. I recently have been able to talk to the LAPD as well, and I can see there

is a tremendous amount of really intelligent police work going on at the grassroots level, which is where you are really going to find true intelligence.

As a friend of mine who is a former FBI agent who is one of the eight Arabic-speaking members of the FBI, agents in the FBI before 9/11, told me, if you are suspicious of your neighbor and you are an Arab in Detroit, who are you going to go to, the FBI, which may throw him in Guantanamo, or some guy you went to high school with who is on the police force, who understands the community, who speaks the language? It seems very clear to me that this is a movement that we should really encourage.

Mr. BERGEN. I completely agree with that, and as Chair Harman pointed out the Torrance, California case was broken by local cops, not the Feds. I think NCTC has been quite a success in terms of breaking down the walls. So I hate to be positive, but—thank you.

Mr. REICHERT. As far as the splintering of al Qaeda, does that change your intelligence operations and intelligence-gathering operations at all?

Mr. WRIGHT. It offers a tremendous opportunity. If we had the capacity, if we had the kind of skilled people who could actually penetrate their organizations, what a great moment, but we simply don't have those people.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Madam Chair. I yield.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you, Mr. Reichert.

I would just observe that your questions and the answers really reinforce the focus of this subcommittee for the last 2 years. Our view has been that it is the local cop, not some bureaucrat in Washington who will unravel the next plot. It is imperative that to the extent we have accurate, actionable, and timely intelligence we get it down to that person. In addition, obviously if folks in our community see something that they get it up to the Federal level, and just breaking down the old stovepipes and trying to stop them from being formed in the new Homeland Security Department has taken a lot of blood, sweat, and tears. We are not totally successful yet, but that is a key objective that we all have.

Mr. Carney.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you, Madam Chair. Once again, gentlemen, thank you for coming here today. I wish I could have my students get college credit for this; it is certainly worthwhile.

Ms. HARMAN. We will give you college credit for this, Mr. Carney.

Mr. CARNEY. Wow, only 2 more years, I get my degree then. Thanks, ma'am.

Continuing on with the train of thought with the domestic intelligence and how important it is to recruit into the community here in the country and abroad certainly, but thinking domestically, would it be a good idea or do you see a utility in creating sort of an MI5 organization in the United States?

Mr. WRIGHT. I am opposed to any further reorganization of the FBI. I think the community, the intelligence community, has been shaken by extensive reorganization. The last thing it needs is to have the boxes rearranged one more time.

Mr. BERGEN. I agree with that.

Mr. CARNEY. Yeah, as a committee that overlooks the Homeland Security Department I think we probably all agree to that.

I do want to kind of pursue a little further what my good friend Congressman Dent was talking about in the sort of radicalization of the U.S. prisons. We have an increasing shortage of guards now in prisons and, you know, frankly we have less oversight. I mean who is there, the guards that are there now are doing a tremendous job and God bless them, but the fact of the matter is we are not putting resources into kind of the guards in the prisons that we need to now. Is that a mistake? Is that going to bite us in terms of an environment for radicalization?

Mr. WRIGHT. This is outside my area.

Mr. BERGEN. It is really outside my area, sir.

Mr. CARNEY. Okay. All right, one final question, I was very fascinated to see Dr. Fadl's change of heart as well as his mind. So I guess what is the score now? I mean perfect Muslims what, taqfiris, what?

Mr. WRIGHT. Well, the taqfir heresy is at the root of al Qaeda, and it is the idea that one Muslim can say that another is not a Muslim and therefore I can kill you. Anwar Sadat was the first victim of that kind of thinking. It goes back to the early years of Islam, this ancient heresy. I think it is something that Islam is struggling against right now. I think it is also the Achilles heel for al Qaeda because Muslims are beginning to realize that the greatest danger imposed to their religion is the radical element inside its own theology that attacks other Muslims.

Mr. BERGEN. Yeah, encoded in the genes of the DNA of these al Qaeda groups is the self-destruction, precisely this taqfiri doctrine, because once you decide that—only God could decide who is a true Muslim. They abrogated to themselves this decision, and obviously most Muslims don't agree with this. So in terms of the score, I think the score of the taqfiris are doing pretty badly. It interesting going inside Saudi Arabia now, the Saudi government had a huge wakeup call May 2003 and has done a 180-degree turn on this question. They are referring to the al Qaeda groups as either deviants or taqfiris, because they understand that that is the way to explain this to their populations. So I think that they are losing this long-term etiological battle. But going back to Pakistan, clearly as a military or insurgent or terrorist organization, they remain viable, which is a threat to us.

Mr. CARNEY. Now how do we help facilitate this belief throughout the Muslim—is it better if it doesn't have our imprimatur on it actually?

Mr. BERGEN. I think that it is because of that problem.

Mr. CARNEY. So what is worse than imprimatur. Thank you, Madam Chair. No further questions.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you.

Mr. SHAYS is recognized.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. We had a hearing before September 11 and there was a number signed from the Nation and I asked what was the fear was. The fear was they were dedicated to create an ultra biological weapon to wipe out things as we know it. I looked around. There was no C-SPAN and no media that I saw. I have the same feelings today.

So one of my questions is how do you get the attention of the American people to what you are saying without people thinking you are being alarmist? That is one of the questions.

Before you answer though, I want to agree about language. My wife is a director of the critical languages department in the Department of Ed working with the State Department, Defense and the intelligence community. We have a huge way to go in our school systems. Forget our military, our State Department, our Government in general to reorient us as a country to begin to teach kids languages in schools and early on. But as a Peace Corps volunteer one of the values of understanding the language was you understood the culture. And that even eating their food, you understood the culture, you just learned a lot. I am struck by the fact that we don't work very hard at any of that.

My last point I would like a reaction to is this, as well as my first question: I am amazed that somehow we talk about Afghanistan as one major weekly magazine said, the good war. I don't know what the hell is good about the war in Afghanistan. From my view, not based on a lot of experience and I want to find this out, but my prejudice is you can't move troops protected in Afghanistan, you got to go—if you move them by land, you go on small pathways that are on the sides of mountains that are easy to hit. Our helicopters are sitting ducks. You can't land fixed aircraft into some sites. When you travel they know, even if it is other Afghans, they know who is part of their tribe and who isn't.

Tell me why this is the so-called good war. Tell me why we should be increasing our troops in this so-called good war. Tell me why that won't end up like Russia. Tell me why in the hell can't we get Europe to do at least 50 percent of the heavy lifting since they are 50 percent of the gross domestic product and 50 percent of the population of NATO.

Mr. BERGEN. The Soviets killed 1½ million Afghans and they made 5 or 6 million of them refugees. So comparing our efforts to anything the Soviets did I don't think is really accurate.

Look at the situation—

Mr. SHAYS. I don't understand that question. The question I am asking is: No government ever has subjugated the Afghan people. My question is when you bring more troops, don't they represent more of a target?

Mr. BERGEN. The BBC and ABC have done yearly polls for the last 3 years, and they have very interesting results. Eighty-percent-favorable views of the American-led invasion occupation, 70-percent-favorable views of international forces, et cetera. So the Afghans want us to be there. It is not like the same situation as it was under the Soviets.

Mr. SHAYS. Okay.

Mr. BERGEN. What is striking is there are 650,000 members of the Iraqi security service, police and army and 150,000 soldiers. Iraq is a third of a size smaller than Afghanistan, with a 6 million smaller population, and a much harder terrain to control. Yet the Afghan army and police is 150,000, and 60,000 U.S. and NATO troops there. We have four times more people in the security services in Iraq than Afghanistan, which is a much harder country to control. So we have an enormous security shortfall.

Mr. SHAYS. Why do you say a much harder country to control?

Mr. BERGEN. Because it is ideally designed for guerrilla warfare. Desert countries are easier to control than mountainous countries.

Mr. SHAYS. I don't understand. You are in plain sight in Afghanistan, people can hide in a lot of different places.

Mr. PASCRELL. That is his point.

Mr. SHAYS. Your enemies can hide in different places.

Mr. BERGEN. If we want to succeed in Afghanistan we will have to put more forces in. We need to succeed because that is where al Qaeda directed 9/11 from. If we don't succeed there, staying in Afghanistan is going to be dangerous and costly. Leaving Afghanistan is going to be much more dangerous and much more costly.

Mr. SHAYS. Tell me why NATO shouldn't be doing more?

Mr. BERGEN. I think NATO should be doing more, but they won't. For all sorts of historical reasons the Germans are reluctant to engage in warfighting. We can badger them, and persuade them. I think it has been a strategic failure to have NATO in Afghanistan. We need to just recognize it and say, we are going to take over the warfighting operations in the south and east of the country. I mean politically and financially it is very useful to have NATO in the frame but in terms of actual strategic facts it has not been a success.

Mr. SHAYS. Wow. This is one Member who will vote against doing it if NATO doesn't do its share.

Mr. WRIGHT. I would like to avert to the earlier portion of your questions about al Qaeda and trying to make people aware. I think al Qaeda is going to fade away one day, but what won't go away is a template that al Qaeda has created, a template of asymmetric warfare in which small groups of people, even individuals are super-empowered. I spoke to a member of the intelligence community who talked about the possibility that hackers in the future would be able to put together biological viruses the same way they put together computer viruses now. Imagine the danger that that would pose to our world.

When I think of dangerous groups, al Qaeda certainly is high on the risk but Aum Shinrikyo was a much more talented organization, a Japanese group formed by this guru that had been able to enlist, highly technological, varied in skills, personalities. If you had a group that was like that with al Qaeda's experience and template, then I think we would be in a much more dangerous situation than the one we are in.

One day we won't see al Qaeda, but we will not see the end of this kind of behavior.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you very much. Mr. Pascrell is now recognized.

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you very much. It has been a great hearing and both sides of the aisle. We can come together on a lot of these issues, Madam Chair, we really can.

Mr. Bergen, thank you, and thank you, Mr. Wright, for all of your testimony today. I have a question, Mr. Bergen. I am alarmed by the statistic in your testimony which states that 41 percent of Islamist terrorists arrested or killed in Europe and the United States from 1993 to 2004 were Western nationals. I had to read

that again. Furthermore, more terrorists were French than the combined totals of the Pakistani and Yemeni terrorists.

Am I right so far?

Mr. BERGEN. Yes.

Mr. PASCRELL. To me this highlights how we have to really engage because this is what you two gentlemen have been talking about this morning, engaging the Muslim population in the United States of America. They belong to different organizations, but they also call back home at least two or three times a week. We are losing the resource, we have not engaged them. So we want to have a real dialog, you suggest, and want to see them as an asset to building real homeland security as opposed to trying to push them to the margins of society and constantly looking at them as objects of suspicion as they seem to be doing in parts of Europe. So this is not just an African American Muslim question, which you pointed out before.

The question I want to ask you, Mr. Bergen, is can you comment on that and expand on the trend in Europe and explain why this is happening. In the United States of America—and Mr. King and I jest back and forth for many, many years. I have the deepest respect sincerely for him. We have been on many debates on how do we handle and protect our neighborhoods and our families.

I don't know if you have heard about the subway ads in New York City. Those ads present a different picture of Muslims in America, very different than it has been communicated before this. They take key words or phrases, these ads, about Islam on one side of the panel, such as head scarf? The Prophet Mohammed? Or words such as you deserve to know, along with the Web site address, where this was presented or created. Let me exaggerate and use hyperbole for a second here. We are a thousands miles away from engaging the Muslim communities as far as I am concerned. We missed the resource here.

I wrote to the President two times about this, never got an answer. I write to him about less important things, and I get great answers. Why don't we want to engage this? Why don't we want to have practical application of what you two guys are been talking about this morning? I will go back to the question, would you comment, Mr. Bergen, and explain why this is happening?

Mr. BERGEN. Well, the study that said that 41 percent of terrorists arrested in a certain time frame were Western nationals was conducted by Bob Lieken of the Nixon Center. In a way it is not that surprising because as I have indicated earlier, you know, Pakistani madrassa graduates are not going to turn into effective anti-Western terrorists. Anti-Western terrorists who are effective are going to be people who grew up in the West or studied in the West. After all, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the operational commander of 9/11, studied engineering in North Carolina. Mohammed Atta studied, of all things, urban preservation in Hamburg, Germany.

So that is just the reality. That is the threat we face. Lucky, the threat is much more small here in the United States than it is in Europe. But when you have 2,000 British citizens who are nationals, as the head of MI5 recently said publicly, who he regards as serious threats to national security, many of whom have links back to al Qaeda in Pakistan, that is a continuing, severe problem.

Mr. WRIGHT. The easiest way to draw the Muslim American community into this discussion is to hire them in police and intelligence positions and let them represent their communities within the tent rather than outside it. It would be an interface with the communities that you are speaking of.

I have talked to a lot of guys in the FBI, and there are many of them terrific people and they have spent a lot of time studying this problem, but they don't have the kind of background to deeply understand it. I am just picking on the FBI because they are open about who they actually hire. This is a problem all across the intelligence community.

Mr. PASCRELL. I think it is a serious one. In my community, which is the second-largest Muslim community in the country other than Dearborn, Michigan, up in the Eighth District in New Jersey many of the police forces are heavily recruiting Muslims. They turn out to be terrific police officers, which shouldn't be a surprise. Everything is a surprise to us. This is bottom-up in intel and this is exactly what you are talking about. The British have a better handle on that than we do, I think, but we should be heading in this direction.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. HARMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

By the way, the LAPD, among other police forces, have liaison relationships with groups from the Muslim community, diverse groups, which I think is a very productive activity, and the FBI does this as well. I think outreach to the law-abiding Muslim community, most of the community is law-abiding, as you have both pointed out, it can only do us good.

Mr. King is recognized for a second round of questions.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Madam Chair. In addition to everything else, you have to listen to the extended debate between myself and Mr. Pascrell.

Let me just say as far as reaching out to the Muslim community, I believe the NYPD has more Arabic speakers than the FBI. They do recruit into the Muslim community. Again, and my concern is that even with the active efforts they still aren't getting the level of cooperation they believe they should be getting. That is a debate we can have another time.

I think it is fair to say that unless something extraordinary happened the 9/11 method of attack would be hard to replicate. I mean, the international dialog we have now, the sharing of information within all the levels of our government, the exchange of intelligence with foreign governments would make it very difficult for them to hide in open sight really the way they did.

But what both of you have touched on in your testimony is the concern with visa waiver countries. I think it is on the open record right now that much of the training in the FATA has been given to Western Europeans, not people from Sudan or Somalia or Yemen but from Western Europeans.

I do support the concept of visa waiver. Do you think we should be doing more to address that concern, where people could be coming in, people can be trained in the FATA and come in with perfectly clean passports, with no indication at all that they received this training? Is there a better way of showing international data-



bases? Isn't there a way to get a better lead on who might be coming in and who is not?

The second question is, if I could ask it, I don't want to oversimplify an already oversimplified debate, but people I have spoken to in the intelligence community seem to be becoming divided between whether it is al Qaeda Central or homegrown terrorists between Simok Sadrin on one side and the al Qaeda Central people on the other. Is that debate healthy or is it just going to drive us into opposite camps or does it serve any real purpose other than I guess any academic debate, or some purpose?

So I guess two questions, visa waiver and the debate over centralized versus homegrown.

Mr. BERGEN. You know, I think you are right, any debate is healthy, but if the threat we really face right now is only from leaderless jihadis, I think you aren't going to have hearings like this in the future, because leaderless groups by definition don't produce very large outcomes. I mean a leaderless jihad operation, for instance, was the assassination of Theo Van Gogh, the Dutch film maker, the people involved in that had no connection to al Qaeda Central. Take the planes plot of the summer of 2006, which people were trained in the FATA, they did have connections to al Qaeda. If that had succeeded we would have had a very different conversation today, 1,500 people would be dead, American aviation, Canadian aviation, British aviation would have been the targets.

So al Qaeda Central is still the big problem. Of course leaderless jihadi people become a problem when they connect with al Qaeda Central. So the London attackers of July 7, 2005, got radicalized in Britain but they became operationalized once they got to FATA, and it is not an either/or question.

On the visa waiver issue, I mean there are so many advantages we derive from the visa waiver program. The planes plot demonstrates cooperation between United Kingdom and United States and Pakistani intelligence, will yield the kind of information we need to close things down. Substantially changing visa waiver I think would come fraught with so many other problems that it is probably not something we should interfere with.

Mr. WRIGHT. It was certainly important to get passenger manifests. That is crazy not to know who is coming in in advance to this country. We are not going to really know until we have our own intelligence inside these camps. We will never know who is actually there. That is where we are failing because we don't have the people who can do that.

Mr. KING. I think I have a minute left. You talk about getting passenger manifests. It is my anecdotal experience that European nations and European airlines are very reluctant to cooperate or they have to be sort of dragged along. Does that indicate a feeling in Europe that this is more of an American problem? It seems to me there are more homegrown terrorists in Europe, they have more of a threat than we do, and yet they seem very reluctant at times, not the British but some other countries, much more reluctant to go along with us as far as providing information, sharing information, certainly with passenger manifests.

Mr. WRIGHT. I don't understand this as an issue. It doesn't seem to rise to the privacy issues that would generate a real debate. We

should be able to have the passenger manifests for our own protection. It threatens the visa waiver program that we don't.

Mr. KING. Thank you.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Dent is recognized.

Mr. DENT. Thank you, Madam Chair. To follow up on Congressman King's comments on the manifests, it is my understanding currently that we do receive the manifests for planes heading into this country from Europe, for both planes and for people coming in by ship is my understanding that is currently the case.

Mr. KING. I just want to say it has been a long hard fight and it is a question of when they provided them and all sorts of privacy concerns. It has been a very difficult effort.

Mr. DENT. Understood. I have actually been advocating legislation here to require manifest data for individuals trying to enter this country by common carrier bus or train just as we do for the airlines. I am just interested to follow up more on that point that Congressman King raised.

Gentlemen, how does nationalism play, if at all, in the political development of al Qaeda? Is there a tension between the Saudis within the organization, like bin Laden, and the Egyptians, like al-Zawahiri? Do the goals of the Egyptian and Saudi al Qaeda members differ in any appreciable way, in your view?

Mr. WRIGHT. Yes, they do. Al Qaeda is essentially an umbrella organization with a number of different nationalist groups, such as Zawahiri's Al Jihad, came together with an internationalist agenda, but the fact is that those nationalist goals still remain inside the different nationalist groups. There has been a lot of resentment in al Qaeda against the Egyptian dominance of that organization. It is from the beginning until now essentially an Egyptian organization with a Saudi head.

So I think that in the event of the death or capture of bin Laden, I foresee al Qaeda fracturing once again into a group of essentially nationalist groups.

Mr. BERGEN. That is an incredibly important point, because capturing or killing bin Laden is not simply that he is producing all the major strategy for the jihadi movement and al Qaeda itself, but when he goes no one could hold this fractured coalition together. No one has the authority that he does. Ayman al-Zawahiri's leadership of even the Egyptian jihadis is contested within the group. So you take bin Laden out, the whole thing just falls apart. You take Ayman al-Zawahiri out, it continues to operate. It is more likely that we will find Ayman al-Zawahiri in the next 5 years than bin Laden because Zawahiri is taking more risks, issuing more tapes, being more public.

Mr. DENT. So I guess my question to both of you then is what are the political goals of al Qaeda at this juncture?

Mr. WRIGHT. Honestly, al Qaeda doesn't have a political agenda. If you look in what is called the Harmony documents, there are thousands and thousands—

Mr. DENT. I thought the agenda was the caliphate from Iraq—

Mr. WRIGHT. That is a fantasy. It is I think—imagine trying to bring all the Christian churches together into one organization. Islam itself is just as diverse as Christianity, with many different

branches and different legal understandings. It is not going to be reorganized into one single entity.

But there is no reason for America to try to stand against the establishment of a caliphate. It is not something that I think is achievable. Second, I don't think last Caliph was a pro-American. I don't think that there is any reason to think it threatens American interest.

But the real failure of al Qaeda is that it does not have any political agenda at all, and I think this is an area where we could really press al Qaeda because every time radical Islam has gotten into power it has been a catastrophe.

Like the crash test, some of the dummies survive, but the car is always wrecked. Its only interest is in purification. That is the goal of radical Islam, and you see it in the Taliban, you see it in Sudan. Wherever radical Islam gains power their main goal is to purify the Muslims who are there, not to govern.

Mr. DENT. So that in effect their political strategy is to purify and not to govern. The political strategy is purification, and there is no sense of governance or a political agenda to advance the cause of the people.

Mr. WRIGHT. Well, like al Qaeda takes advantage of things. Bin Laden on a couple of occasions has criticized the United States for not signing the Kyoto Protocol. Well, what is al Qaeda's environmental policy? Where does he stand on education, health, welfare?

They have never articulated these things and never will, because they don't have any idea about what they want if they really took power. The fundamental problems of the Muslim world, health, illiteracy, joblessness, gender, apartheid, these are questions that al Qaeda has no answers for.

Mr. BERGEN. I agree with all that. Their goal is Taliban-style theocracies from Indonesia to Morocco, and there is no al Qaeda minister for economics or health or social welfare. An al Qaeda hospital is kind of an oxymoronic concept. They just have no ability to engage in real world politics.

One interesting note because you have been in Pakistan recently, Congressman, in the North-West Frontier Province, which was run by the MMA, the group of Islamist parties, in a recent election those parties were defeated in sort of a massive loss of seats. So as Larry said, when they come to power it doesn't last very long usually.

Mr. DENT. Thank you. I yield back.

Ms. HARMAN. Thank you, Mr. Dent, and thanks to all our Members for staying a long time, asking excellent questions, and especially to our witnesses. Both of you were fascinating. We wanted you both here, we have had two fun-filled hours of questions. I would, just before closing the hearing, like to make a couple observations.

First of all, the fact, at least to me, that al Qaeda has no political agenda may not make it less dangerous. It may make it more dangerous. The fact that in the interest of so-called purification that people are willing to blow themselves up means that deterrence doesn't work, and it means that rational behavior is not to be anticipated. This is different or at least larger in scale, so far as I can tell, than any threat of this kind we have confronted in history. So

al Qaeda may not want to take over the U.S. Government, but al Qaeda, in the interest of purification and vanquishing a corrupt people with bad values, may end up seriously destabilizing this country, should it ever be able to get in here and make some of the Nation's terrorist cells operational. That is just one observation.

The second observation, you both said how critical it is to restore the moral authority of the United States. I couldn't agree more. I think both candidates for President have, to differing degrees, but both of them have begun to address this and want to close Guantanamo and change some of the other policies. I think that will be critically important.

It is true, as one of the Members said, that we have to win the argument here. I think without restoring our moral authority we give them, them the al Qaeda recruiters, the ability to say that America doesn't stand for something special, America in fact stands for things that are degrading. To recruit millions of mindless, I forget what your word was, Peter, functional illiterates who are willing to blow themselves up.

So I think if President McBama calls me on day 1 I am going to say that my highest priority is to restore the moral authority of the United States, and there are specific actions that can be taken by either person, should he be elected President, and I would hope both of them will proceed this way.

So this was fascinating. Your work I know continues, your writings will continue. We will read them with great interest, and we welcome you back here any time. You really add value to the work of this subcommittee.

The hearing stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:05 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

