

**TERRORIST THREAT TO THE U.S. HOMELAND—  
AL-QAEDA IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA (AQAP)**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
COUNTERTERRORISM  
AND INTELLIGENCE**

OF THE

**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS**

FIRST SESSION

MARCH 2, 2011

**Serial No. 112-5**

Printed for the use of the Committee on Homeland Security



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

72-216 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2012

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## **TERRORIST THREAT TO THE U.S. HOMELAND—AL QAEDA IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA (AQAP)**

**Wednesday, March 2, 2011**

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

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:04 a.m., in Room 311, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Patrick Meehan [Chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Meehan, Cravaack, Walsh, Quayle, Rigell, Long, Thompson, Jackson Lee, Higgins, and Clarke.

Also present: Representative Long.

Mr. MEEHAN [presiding]. Good morning. The Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence is now going to come to order. The subcommittee is meeting today to hear testimony on the threat posed to the U.S. homeland by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

I would like to welcome everyone to what is the first hearing now of the Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence in this 112th Congress. I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses on the threat posed by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula to the United States homeland.

I also look forward to working with the Members of the subcommittee in a bipartisan fashion to ensure that we are doing our best to protect the homeland. One of the great, I think, legacies of this committee has been the bipartisan approach to looking at our shared interest in both assessing the nature of the threat as well as protecting our homeland.

Now, this may be the first committee hearing we have held from this subcommittee, but it is done in the context of some work that has already taken place just in the course of the last few weeks. In fact, on February 9 the full committee heard from Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano that the terrorist threat to the United States homeland was at its "most heightened state since 9/11."

At the same hearing, we heard Michael Leiter, who is the director of the National Counterterrorism Center, who told Members that he considered al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula to be "the most significant threat to the homeland."

So it is under these sort of very clear and sobering assessments that we convene today's hearing to examine this emerging and

multi-faceted threat that is posed by al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula. We have a panel of outside experts here to discuss this issue, and I look forward to hearing from their analysis.

Since 9/11, the threat from al-Qaeda has evolved. Today the enemy we face is more diverse, diffuse, and decentralized, yet in many ways more dangerous and more difficult for law enforcement and the intelligence community to detect. According to Attorney General Eric Holder, in the last 2 years there have been 126 people indicted just in the last 2 years on terrorism-related charges, including 50 United States citizens.

Among those charged include the Christmas day 2009 bomber, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab; the Fort Hood shooter, U.S. Army Major Nidal Hasan; the Times Square bomber, Faisal Shahzad; the Little Rock recruiting center shooter, Carlos Bledsoe; the Mumbai plotter, David Headley; Colleen LaRose, just recently dealt with in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, where I was the United States Attorney, aka Jihad Jane. I also had the opportunity at that point in time to work on the Fort Dix Six.

Now, these plots are just an example of some, and they differ. But a number of them emanated from Yemen, and they were inspired or planned by a radical cleric named Anwar al-Awlaki. They involved the use of the internet as a tool to recruit and to facilitate terroristic threats.

Al-Qaeda on the Arabian Peninsula has shown itself to be successful at recruiting westerners and allowing the enemy to reach deeply into the United States to inspire individuals to wage jihad. One of the tools, one of the mechanisms, has been not just the internet, but the whole use of this new-age media. One of the things we want to explore is the extent to which this is an actual or real facilitator and posing a real element to the emerging threat.

So this is a dangerous and incredibly challenging problem in any context. I will close my comments by saying, of course, all of this takes place in the context of what are currently rapidly changing events all throughout the Mid-East, but in Yemen among them.

The ramifications for counterterrorism and intelligence policy and operations for the United States in months to come are all going to be very real as we look at the changing nature of what is going on in Yemen, this place in which there is in many ways a protected stronghold for al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

So I want to thank our presenters here today. We look forward to the opportunity to learn from your observations.

At this point in time, I would like to turn it over to the Ranking Member of the Full Committee, the gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. Thompson, for any comments or statements that he may have.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. Congratulations on your new position.

I think it is clear that I am not Jane Harman. As you know, Ms. Harman recently resigned from Congress and has moved on to another position. So while we wish her well, her expertise in the subject matter area will sorely be missed.

However, I also want to join you in welcoming all of our witnesses, including Mr. Barfi, who just came back from witnessing history in Egypt and Bahrain. As I am sure he will tell us, democracy is on the march in North Africa and the Middle East. While

the risk of terrorists exploiting the instability is real, the possibilities for good are endless.

Yemen is one of the places that has seen its share of unrest, which continues to make it ripe for al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, AQAP, to strive. Within the last couple of years, AQAP has supported two major attempts on the homeland—the Christmas day bomber and the printer cartridge plot. Fortunately, these attacks did not materialize.

But AQAP has changed the name of the game, making a failure that causes us to panic just as good as a successful attack. As we know, AQAP leaders are trying to spread this message far beyond the borders of Yemen with flashy magazines aimed at Western audiences. These threats to the homeland cannot be ignored, just like the threats from other domestic extremist groups.

We should also remember that Yemen is an extremely fragile state, making it fertile ground for violent extremists. Faced with rebellion in the northern provinces and succession talks in the south, the Yemeni government has little time to focus directly on AQAP. The recent political unrest has only compounded the situation.

Moreover, Yemen's oil reserves, its largest source of revenue, are dwindling, as is the Nation's water supply, while the population continues to skyrocket. Extremist groups have flourished in Yemen by exploiting these weaknesses and the government's lack of control.

While there is no simple answer to address the problems that beset Yemen, many experts agree that we need a comprehensive strategy that addresses governments and development in addition to military and counterterrorism needs.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about how we can bring more stability to Yemen and tackle the threats of al-Qaeda. I yield back.

Mr. MEEHAN. Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

I want the other committee Members to be reminded that opening statements may be submitted for the record.

Now, we are pleased to have three distinguished witnesses before us today on this very, very important topic. Let me remind the witnesses that their entire written statement will appear in the record.

So what I would like to do is to first introduce our first witness, Dr. Christopher Boucek. Dr. Boucek is an associate in the Carnegie Middle East Program, where his research focuses on security challenges in the Arabian Gulf and Northern Africa. He is a recognized expert on terrorism, security, and stability issues in Saudi Arabia and in Yemen.

He frequently briefs the United States and European government and government agencies on terrorism, Islamist militancy, and security issues in the Arabian Peninsula and regularly provides expert analysis for domestic and international media on all of the top media outlets.

His current research project includes clerical politics in Saudi Arabia and the confluences of challenges to Yemeni stability, one of the issues that both myself and Mr. Thompson have already

identified. He has provided expert testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the House Armed Services Committee.

Before joining Carnegie, he was a post-doctoral researcher at Princeton University and a lecturer on politics at the Woodrow Wilson School. He served as a media analyst at the royal embassy in Saudi Arabia and Washington, DC, and for several years at the Royal United States Institute for Defense and Security Studies in London, where he still remains an associate fellow.

He has also been a security editor with Jane's Information Group and is a graduate of the Oriental and African Studies Program at the University of London and a BA from Drew University.

Dr. Boucek, you are recognized now to summarize your testimony for 5 minutes, please. Thank you.

**STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER BOUCEK, ASSOCIATE,  
CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE**

Mr. BOUCEK. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, Members of the subcommittee, thank you very much for the opportunity to be here today to discuss the challenges posed by Yemen's increasingly fragile situation in the rise of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. I think what I would like to do is just make a few very brief points.

First of all, I think it is good to follow on the points that were initially raised by stressing that Yemen is a country under enormous stress. Everything that could possibly be going wrong in the country is going wrong. They have a failing economy, rapidly growing population, endemic corruption. Soon the country will run out of both oil and water, as was mentioned. You have systemic problems with governance, unemployment, and rising grievances.

In addition to these systemic factors, you have an on-going civil war in Saada in the north of the country, a secessionist movement in the south, and a resurgent al-Qaeda organization, plus the new protest movement that we have seen emerge over the last several weeks.

It is this resurgent al-Qaeda organization that brings us here today. I would follow on the observations made in earlier testimony and say that al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, AQAP, represents the greatest threat to American security from any terrorist organization right now. I would say that AQAP is a bigger threat than the al-Qaeda senior leadership at the core al-Qaeda hiding out in Pakistan.

If you look at what happened on Christmas day, this was the first time that al-Qaeda successfully attacked a domestic American target, and the plot did not come out of South Asia. It came out of Yemen.

This was followed 2 months later by the package bomb case. Again, this was, you know, very worst in development, because neither of these plots came from South Asia, from Pakistan or bin Laden or Zawahiri. This is al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

I think it is useful to point out that what we have seen in this organization in the 2 years since it has been created, AQAP has become an increasingly agile, opportunistic, and lethal organization. They have an extremely fast learning curve, where they observe what happened. They are very savvy consumers of the media and

everything that we say and write about them, and it cycles back into their learning curve.

I think if you look at what is going on in Pakistan, you see that al-Qaeda's under sustained pressure, and that pressure does not exist in Yemen. There are two things that are needed to fight terrorism—the capacity to do so and the political will. Right now, the Yemeni government is short on both.

All the assets that the Yemeni government focuses on fighting the civil war or the southern secessionist movement or staying in power with the protest movement or to do with the economy or water or population growth are resources not focused on fighting al-Qaeda. This is a problem for not only the United States, but for the international community.

I think it would be very easy to look at the deteriorating security situation in Yemen and think of it as a foreign policy issue. While it is certainly a foreign policy issue, and a very important one, there is also a domestic security issue.

I think you can make the argument that you could look at the majority of plots and plans in this country for the past 18 or 24 months, and you would see the vast majority of them are tied to either Yemen al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula or Anwar Awlaki, the Yemeni American cleric who is hiding out in Yemen.

It is unfortunate that we do not have a very good understanding of AQAP. Westerners don't go to Yemen as they used to. It is an increasingly more difficult place to go do your research.

But from what we do see, we see the organization has a very sophisticated media apparatus, which my colleague will speak about, able to deliver their message in English and in Arabic. You no longer need to have, you know, Arabic language or know-how to use jihadi web forums to access this information. It is out there in English. AQAP has broadened the potential audience for their message.

I think a very important point is how Yemen has changed. Yemen used to be a place to train or rest between participating in jihad abroad. It has been transformed into a place where it is legitimate to engage in jihad. If you want to resist American aggression, if you want to fight an illegitimate government, you can do this in Yemen.

So now being transformed as a source of inspiration, you don't need to come to Yemen to do this. You can read what the organization writes, and it says very clearly you can do more damage staying at home. You can do more damage shooting up a restaurant in Washington, DC, at lunchtime than you can trying to come to Yemen to participate in jihad.

The final point I would make is that while this is a terrorism issue, and it is a terrorism issue for us, the answer is not all counterterrorism. We need to help the Yemeni government build the capacity to deal with these issues. If we focus only on counterterrorism, we run the risk of exacerbating these issues.

So we need to have a robust counterterrorism posture, and we need to support the Yemeni government. We can't do this to the exclusion of everything else. Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Boucek follows:]

## PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER BOUCEK

MARCH 2, 2011

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Members of the committee, thank you for inviting me here today.

Yemen is facing an unprecedented confluence of crises, the combination of which threatens to overwhelm the beleaguered Yemeni government. The country's problems include international terrorism, violent extremism, religious and tribal conflict, separatism, and transnational smuggling. Attempts to build effective national governance are frustrated by porous borders, a heavily armed population, and a historical absence of much central government control. More than 3 million barrels of oil pass the country's coast every day, through treacherous waters where Islamist terrorists and Somali pirates have staged several successful maritime attacks, threatening to disrupt international commerce and the flow of vital hydrocarbons. These challenges not only endanger Yemen's stability and regional security, but they also threaten American domestic security.

Interrelated economic, demographic, and domestic security challenges are converging to threaten the stability of Yemen. At the heart of the country's problems is a looming economic crisis. Yemen's oil reserves are fast running out, with few viable options for a sustainable post-oil economy. Yemen is the poorest country in the Arab world, with most people surviving on less than one dollar per day. Its population growth rate, which exceeds 3 percent per year, is among the world's highest. The government has been unable to provide adequate educational or other public services for the rapidly expanding population, more than two-thirds of which is under the age of 24, and illiteracy stands at over 50 percent (and close to 70 percent for women). The faltering economy and poorly prepared workforce have pushed unemployment to almost 40 percent. The country's dire economic circumstances will soon limit the government's ability to deliver the funds needed to hold the country together. The population is expected to double to 40 million over the next two decades, by which time Yemen will no longer be an oil producer, and its water resources will be severely diminished. This is currently the greatest source of violence in the country; an estimated 80 percent of violence in Yemen is about access to water. A rapidly expanding and increasingly poorer population places unbearable pressure on the government's ability to provide basic services. Domestic security is endangered by Islamist terrorism, magnified by a resurgent al-Qaeda organization, an armed insurrection in the North, and an increasingly active secessionist movement in the South.

The recent wave of unrest rocking the Middle East has not spared Yemen. Popular protests in Sana'a, Taiz, Aden, and other cities against the government of President Ali Abdullah Saleh have been on-going since January. This latest challenge has mobilized a segment of the population that has thus far not presented much challenge to the Yemeni government. In an attempt to short-circuit the protest movement, the government announced a series of economic concessions. It sought to maintain the allegiance of the military and security forces by announcing pay raises and even access to free food and gas. It addressed the concerns of civil servants by putting into immediate effect salary increases for the lowest paid employees originally scheduled for October 2011. It cut the national income tax by half and reportedly increased some subsidies and introduced new price controls. The government also waved university tuition fees for currently enrolled students and announced a scheme to help new university graduates find employment. Finally, it extended social welfare assistance to an additional half-million families.

When economic measures failed to quell the discontent, President Saleh turned to political concessions. In a speech to the parliament and shura council on February 2, he announced that he would not stand for re-election in 2013 and that his eldest son and presumed heir, General Ahmed Ali Abdullah Saleh, commander of the Republican Guard, would also not run for president. He "froze" the implementation of a controversial constitutional amendment eliminating term limits on the presidency. Saleh also stated that regional governors would now be directly elected rather than indirectly elected by local councils, a little noticed but important change. And finally, he called for the formation of a national unity government and the re-launching of the stalled national dialogue process, and postponed parliamentary elections scheduled for this April to allow time to properly prepare.

Although the regime nominally met almost all of its demands, the opposition promptly rejected the concessions, not trusting the president to keep his promises. Saleh has previously pledged not to seek re-election, but has gone back on his word numerous times in the past.

Yemen's challenges are compounded by corruption, severe governance deficiencies, and an absence of central government control in much of the country, as well as by the pending transition in political leadership. While Saleh announced last month that he would not stand for re-election, he has no obvious successor. The post-Saleh government will be severely strained by a combination of reduced revenue, diminished state capacity, and three on-going conflicts including the 7-year-old civil war in the North against the Houthi rebels, an increasingly violent secessionist movement in the South, and a resurgent al-Qaeda organization.

The deteriorating security situation in Yemen is not purely an international issue. Greater instability in Yemen is a domestic American security issue, as evidenced by the emergence of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

#### AL-QAEDA IN THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

Since its creation in January 2009, the Yemen-based al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) has eclipsed "core al-Qaeda" as the primary terrorist threat to U.S. National security. Since last year I have asserted that AQAP has emerged as the organization most likely to kill American Nationals and to attack U.S. interests. In an address at the Carnegie Endowment last December, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism John Brennan termed AQAP "the most operationally active node of the al-Qaeda network." In testimony last month, National Counterterrorism Center Director Michael Leiter referred to AQAP as the most significant risk to the U.S. homeland.

AQAP has rapidly evolved into an increasingly lethal and agile organization, with a proven track record of mounting operations within Yemen, regionally, and internationally. AQAP thrives on Yemen's internal disarray. The government's inability to control territory provides the space al-Qaeda craves, using poverty and legitimate grievances against a repressive domestic regime to win support.

AQAP learned the lessons of the failed al-Qaeda campaign in Saudi Arabia. It avoids targeting Yemeni civilians, has a highly sophisticated media apparatus, and is cautious not to repeat the same mistakes made in the kingdom. More worrisome, when initial operations have been unsuccessful, AQAP has re-attacked the same target, such as the U.S. Embassy in Sana'a (attacked twice in 2009), Saudi Prince Muhammad bin Nayef (who has survived four reported assassination attempts by AQAP), and British diplomatic targets in Sana'a (attacked twice in 2010). This should serve as a very dire warning when we consider AQAP's two attempted attacks so far against U.S. aviation targets.

The organization has a very fast learning curve, quickly adjusts and improvises, and is very adept at exploiting opportunities. AQAP has been clear in stating its planned objectives, and it has repeatedly delivered on its threats. These concerns are heightened by the presence of Yemeni-American cleric Anwar al-Awlaqi in Yemen and his alleged role in inciting English-speaking foreigners to engage in violence and militancy. Moreover, many of the recent alleged terrorist plots and plans in the United States appear to be linked to Yemen, AQAP, and Awlaqi.

The attempted bombing of Northwest Flight 235 over Detroit on Christmas day 2009 marked the first time since the September 11 attacks that al-Qaeda had successfully engaged a domestic American target. This attack was further noteworthy because the plot did not originate in South Asia with the al-Qaeda Senior Leadership—it came from Yemen. The Christmas day attack was followed some 10 months later when AQAP again targeted U.S. aviation assets with the attempted delivery of explosives concealed as cargo packages mailed from Yemen. The worst-case scenario was narrowly avoided in both these cases, but not by successful proactive counter-terrorism efforts. We cannot count on our luck continuing.

The 2009 Christmas day attack demonstrated an early desire to attack on American soil. The October 2010 parcel bomb plot is just the latest evidence that AQAP is now the greatest single terrorist threat to the security of the United States—a greater danger even than al-Qaeda's central leadership.

AQAP's growing ambitions and reach have also seen more successful operations in Yemen itself. In 2010 there were more than 50 AQAP attacks in Yemen. In the first 2 months of 2011 there have been over 10 attacks. AQAP has targeted energy infrastructure, foreigners, and domestic security forces. It has also successfully cast U.S. air strikes and military support—including cruise missile strikes in December 2009—as examples of American aggression.

We should be clear that there is much that we do not know about AQAP. While we may want to view AQAP as a formal organization with an established hierarchy, other analysts have also noted that it is doubtful that killing or capturing the group's top leaders will eliminate Yemen's al-Qaeda problem. It would likely de-

grade AQAP's ability to mount operations; however, the grievances that fuel militancy in Yemen would also likely remain.

I would suggest that there are likely several trends within AQAP. First, the Yemenis active in the organization seem to be focused primarily on a local agenda. Second, the Saudis active in the group are generally less focused on local Yemeni politics and more intent upon returning to the kingdom to strike at the Saudi government. The third trend is that foreign nationals—as well as some Yemenis and Saudis—are focusing primarily on international and Western targets. I would place within this last grouping the Westerners active with AQAP—including Americans—as well as Anwar al-Awlaqi. These distinctions are not hard and fast, and there is very likely movement and overlap between them.

#### MEDIA USAGE

The group is very skilled at amplifying its message, as seen by the debut of the AQAP-affiliated English-language magazine *Inspire* calling for attacks on the United States. Its powers of communication, along with growing military successes, have begun to attract increasing numbers of foreign terrorists into Yemen. The organization has developed a very sophisticated media operation, in both Arabic and English. Through the English-language magazine *Inspire*, now in its fourth issue, the organization is able to reach a much broader audience. In addition, just about the time that *Inspire* was first released in July 2010, a new YouTube channel appeared featuring many of AQAP's videos subtitled into English. While the channel is no longer available, the material remains on-line, reposted by other users. Both of these developments demonstrate how AQAP has dramatically increased the size of its potential audience. No longer does one need Arabic or particular know-how to navigate jihadi web forums. Non-Arabic speakers can now access this material using Google and YouTube.

#### YEMEN'S CHANGING ROLE

Over the years, Yemen had been a place to train and prepare for jihad or to rest between campaigns. It is now being transformed into an actual theater of jihad. As other observers have noted, Yemen is being portrayed by AQAP as a place where it is legitimate to engage in jihad. In this portrayal, aspiring militants can resist American aggression and fight an illegitimate government in Yemen. AQAP has gone on to further recast Yemen as a “source of inspiration” for potential extremists located overseas. The organization has noted in *Inspire* that volunteers can do greater damage at home, without needing to travel abroad.

In conclusion, AQAP has quickly eclipsed core al-Qaeda as the most immediate terrorist threat to U.S. persons and interests. While the al-Qaeda Senior Leadership may still have the ambition to launch spectacular attacks against the United States, AQAP has emerged as the more imminent threat. This is exacerbated by the concern that AQAP has had success in recruiting Westerners, including converts, who do not fit traditional terrorist profiles. It will be more difficult to identify and disrupt plots led by these individuals. Very clearly Yemen's problems are not staying in Yemen and AQAP poses a grave and growing threat to American domestic security.

Mr. MEEHAN. Well, thank you, Dr. Boucek. In addition to your very insightful observations, I note that you just got that right done with 3 seconds to go, so you are obviously a learned hand at this particular issue.

Let me ask our next witness, Dr. Jarret Brachman, the managing director of Cronus Global, to be ready to make some comments. But before he does so, let me introduce a bit about Dr. Brachman's background.

He is an internationally recognized counterterrorism specialist, author, and public lecturer. In 2003 while completing his doctorate from the University of Delaware, he served as a graduate fellow at the CIA's Counterterrorism Center. In 2004 Dr. Brachman joined the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. Dr. Brachman became the Counterterrorism Center's first director of research and oversaw a number of research projects about al-Qaeda ideology and strategy.

In 2008 Dr. Brachman resigned from the West Point CTC and returned to his hometown in North Dakota. He is now the managing director of Cronus Global, a security and strategy consulting group. Dr. Brachman published his first book, "Global Jihadism Theory and Practice," in 2008.

Dr. Brachman, thank you for being here. You are now recognized to summarize your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF JARRETT BRACHMAN, MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
CRONUS GLOBAL**

Mr. BRACHMAN. Thank you, sir.

Thank you, distinguished Members of the subcommittee.

You know, I think maybe the best way to understand the al-Qaeda media world is to think about it a little bit like football. So if you think about the actual operatives out there on the field like the NFL players, beyond that, though, you have the commentators, who do the play-by-play analysis, right? These are experts who may have been former players, but then they step back. Then you have got a broader set of commentators, who come on the roundtables.

But then you have got this whole on-line world of pundits, of fans—you have die-hard fans—who are both on-line. If you think about the role that, say, fantasy football has played in allowing guys, who don't really go to games but can wear the jerseys, to become obsessed, to throw themselves, to feel as if they are right there on the field with their favorite players, you know, that is kind of what has been going on with al-Qaeda in terms of their media outlet.

They have taken this ability for people who are—you know, it used to be very elitist. It was very difficult to get out there and do something, but now, thanks to the internet, anyone anywhere can feel empowered to play a part in this.

So if you look back to the way that al-Qaeda media has developed over the past 10 years, I think it helps to understand where AQAP fits. Around the time of 9/11, al-Qaeda was very operationally centric, right? The point was to go conduct operations and then cover it with the media in the aftermath.

At the time we went into Afghanistan and we marginalized their operational abilities, media started to take precedence. In the absence of doing real operations, you could issue media statements. Videos became the parallel of actually conducting attacks.

So by 2005 to 2007, as al-Qaeda started to get back on its legs, they realized, well, maybe there could be an interesting symbiosis here between the media and the real world. And al-Qaeda, I argue, started to shift its focus from being a terrorist organization that haphazardly used the media almost into a media organization that kind of haphazardly uses terrorism, right?

So most of this media was focused in Arabic, so there was a lot of excitement in the Arabic on-line world—again, this kind of fantasy football metaphor where people could log on. They could download these tactical manuals, download the strategic manuals.

But the English-language speakers always felt like second-class citizens in this world. You know, they tried to bring in some populist figures, some Americans, Adam Gadahn, for instance, who

Zawahiri and bin Laden hoped would be kind of an ambassador to the American, you know, al-Qaeda supporter world.

It just didn't work. They kept falling flat, because these guys, although they are Americans, they looked and smelled just like Zawahiri. They acted just like the Arabs did. So it wasn't really compelling.

You started to see this shift when—there are a couple of different individuals. One is Omar Hammami, who is an American who went over to Somalia and released a rap video on-line, right, a jihadi al-Qaeda rap video. This was all the rage for these kids, because it was someone who looked like them, acted like them, but who was out there doing it. It was again that fantasy football. It was, like, what if I could strap on pads for a day and go join, you know, my favorite team?

Another guy who became very compelling is Anwar Awlaki. Again, it is because they had been following him for years. He looked like them. He acted like them. But he was able to upgrade. I mean, I call it something like “al-Qaeda Idol,” right? These aren't superstars anymore. These are people who went through the process. They watched them go through the process. They were just like them, but then they could go do it.

So I think what AQAP is really focused on is making this movement more accessible not only with the flashy graphics, but providing not just objects, but experiences, a quest, an adventure that kids can be a part of. They can feel as if, you know, the more I learn, the more status in this world I will get.

It is like trading baseball cards. It is not really about the baseball card itself. It is about the process of going to buy them with your friends, talking about it, researching who has got the best cards, who can trade them. You know, it is the knowledge that you gain from being a part of this community.

So I think there is a little misplaced focus within the Government on, you know, how scary the tactics that are being promoted in these magazines are. These tactics have been around for a decade. They have been, you know, venerable.

It is that AQAP has managed to consolidate them in a very accessible, engaging, more importantly, fun and competitive way. They have turned al-Qaeda into an on-line game, into a fantasy football environment where, you know, you can join up at your own time at your own leisure and, you know, you can do this from the comfort of your own home. So thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Brachman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JARRET BRACHMAN

MARCH 2, 2011

Although there can be no disputing the success that al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's (AQAP) has reaped as of late by using the internet to inspire and mobilize on-line followers in the United States, the underlying reasons for that success remains poorly understood within the American counterterrorism community. This is largely due to the fact that most analytical attention is being paid to the tactical dimension of AQAP's media releases—stylistic elements, the Americans who are mentioned by name or specific threats made—while relatively little focus is given to the mechanics underlying AQAP's on-line mobilization strategy. It is as if the counterterrorism community has been so fixated on the latest bells and whistles of AQAP propaganda that few analysts have actually popped the hood.

My testimony today will concentrate on examining why AQAP's media products and personalities have found so much resonance with English-speaking individuals outside of the Gulf region of the Middle East, paying specific attention to the threat it poses to the U.S. homeland. From Texas to Virginia to New York and beyond, AQAP's American supporters seem to be finding self-actualization in consuming and reproducing AQAP's internet messaging, both in the virtual world and, increasingly, in the physical world.

I argue that AQAP's strategic approach to on-line media has allowed the organization to deliver more than just information to its on-line supporters. AQAP now provides its on-line community with a compelling, comic book experience, one that equips individuals with the tools they need while demystifying the path they must take, to become their own al-Qaeda superhero.

AQAP provides an arena for escapist fantasy and role-playing by empowering their audience with new knowledge, skill-sets, role models, and incentives for actualizing that knowledge. AQAP's role models, like any comic superhero, are portrayed as average men who discover that they have superhuman abilities. These "ordinary guys turned superheroes" who comprise AQAP's dominant media personalities must then wield their superpowers to triumph over evil (the Crusaders) and save damsels in distress (Islam).

Just as kids in the United States trade comic books and baseball cards, Tweets, and Facebook comments, American supporters of al-Qaeda now can trade AQAP media products and insights. They can play along on-line or try to replicate AQAP's adventures at home. AQAP is not just about an abstract fight against a faceless enemy for their American on-line cheerleaders. Thanks to its clever use of English-language media, AQAP has been able to put those American supporters on a noble quest to vanquish injustice and save the world from the invading evil.

#### THE AL-AWLAKI EFFECT

Shaykh Anwar Al-Awlaki, an American-born hardline Islamic cleric who now serves as a senior member of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), has managed to become the most likeable terrorist among Western al-Qaeda supporters. Although al-Awlaki has been focused on quietly desensitizing his audiences to a hardline reading of Islam through his prolific internet-based video and audio lectures for over a decade, al-Awlaki's recent shift to openly and directly calling for violence against the United States has meant new challenges for America's counter-terrorism professionals.

Al-Awlaki offers AQAP something that few al-Qaeda personalities have been able to do: Speak persuasively to an English-speaking audience without a deep knowledge of Islamic history or interest in complex theological arguments. To the contrary, al-Awlaki speaks as a populist about everyday challenges that Muslims face. This inclusive approach has helped to brand al-Awlaki as one of al-Qaeda's most user-friendly personalities—he has become an al-Qaeda gateway drug so to speak.

Now that he is formally aligned with AQAP, al-Awlaki has focused on using the internet to repackage al-Qaeda's often elitist, esoteric, and inhospitable message into something that more individuals in more geographical locations who hold a wider range of beliefs are able to both understand and, importantly, aspire to replicate on their own.

Al-Awlaki's accessibility is a function of his stylized persona: He is a caricature of previous generations of hard-line clerics. He has replicated all of their surface attributes: He carries himself like them, preaches like them, and addresses similar issues. But the difference between al-Awlaki and the legendary jihadist cleric, Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, for example, is that al-Awlaki lacks depth, both in knowledge and expertise. Ironically, however it is his lack of religious knowledge that he trades on. In other words, al-Awlaki is a replica of the real thing that sells precisely because he is perceived as being more authentic for not being an al-Maqdisi.

Seeing al-Awlaki in video form allows his fans to better comprehend the difference between who they are and who they want to be—embodied in him. Thanks to the internet, an army of young individuals who want to be the next al-Awlaki are now doing their own al-Awlaki impersonations. The more that they have seen al-Awlaki perform, and the easier that celebrities like al-Awlaki make it for anyone to act like them, speak like them, and preach like them, the more these individuals begin to identify as—and occasionally acting like—these al-Qaeda celebrities themselves. The line between their physical self that is performing and the virtual self that they have constructed in the image of their favorite caricatures begins to blur.

## INSPIRING ACTION

Perhaps no AQAP media product has been better for blurring the virtual and physical worlds than its English-language magazine, *Inspire*. Since releasing their first issue of *Inspire*, AQAP has continued to pioneer creative ways for empowering and motivating their on-line supporters. Although the magazine's kitschy tactical advice and slick graphical featurettes has made for compelling headlines, most public discussions about the magazine have yet to provide an adequate explanation for why *Inspire* actually matters.

Certainly the *Inspire* series has helped to make al-Qaeda's personalities and ideology more accessible to more people. But such intense focus about the magazine's engaging tone and stylistic attributes reflect the general low-level of theoretical sophistication in the counterterrorism field today. *Inspire* is far more than just another propaganda junket released by al-Qaeda: It is not just about getting kids to blindly follow *Inspire's* recipe for building "a bomb in the kitchen of your mom."

The real reason that *Inspire* should be considered such an achievement for al-Qaeda is that it lowers the proverbial wall that has deterred most on-line al-Qaeda supporters from actually going operational. Until recently, most of al-Qaeda's internet cheerleaders, or "jihobbyists" as I have referred to them previously, have confined their participation to the bounds of their on-line communities. It was the exception to the rule that an internet supporter would actually log off their computers and pick up a weapon to go kill in the physical world.

Before individuals like Zachary Chesser, Nidal Hasan—both of whom were in direct contact with al-Awlaki, there had been few "internet supporters turned real world terrorists" because the gulf between thought and action has been too great. The incentives for bridging that gulf were not compelling enough to entice a mass migration of on-line jihadists to the physical world. Political scientists might refer to this as a free-rider problem, where individuals benefit off of the work being done by others without paying their share.

With the barriers so high and the incentives for martyrdom so seemingly distant—most on-line supporters al-Qaeda kept running into a glass ceiling. No matter what they did, their global on-line supporters remained, by and large, part-time jihadists, logging on to their favorite websites after work or on weekends. These armchair enthusiasts who put on their al-Qaeda costumes when it is convenient for them do not get al-Qaeda to where they want to go. *Inspire*, al-Awlaki, and AQAP is trying to change all that.

Nobody understood that challenge of prodding jihadist supporters down radicalization road better than Anwar al-Awlaki. The American-Yemeni born cleric now spearheading AQAP's English-language outreach division and the *Inspire* initiative had been trying to incrementally radicalize his fan club for years. But since joining AQAP, al-Awlaki's approach shifted from sowing seeds of long-term jihadi radicalization—as he had been doing historically—to harvesting as many crops as possible.

Al-Awlaki's personal website, which went down in the aftermath of the 2009 Fort Hood shooting, served as the virtual home to hundreds of al-Awlaki's devotees. Many of their web postings reflected a desire to live up to themselves—to attain in the physical world the kind of power and influence that they had earned in the virtual world.

As these individuals read *Inspire* and watch AQAP videos, as they register on al-Qaeda web forums and build avatars on social networking sites, they become increasingly "real" within al-Qaeda's virtual space. For some users, these on-line personas, or avatars, are close mirrors of their physical lives. Individuals may use their own images on their profile pages or openly discuss things that happen in their physical lives. Others, however, create stylized personas that differ significantly from the physical lives they lead. These personas are generally bad replicas of stylized caricatures of their heroes, such as al-Awlaki.

Individuals begin interacting within certain on-line environments and try to replicate identities and attributes that they find ideal. In the process of registering, programming, uploading, and interacting with others by posting, tagging, and instant messaging, they gain a sense for the behavioral norms and expectations within that context. It is this communication of the kinds of social markers—attributes, accoutrements, and vernacular—that are common and acceptable among their peers that *Inspire* has been able to offer.

Whereas al-Qaeda supporters clamor for authentic experiences, they embrace what Randall L. Rose and Stacy L. Wood refer to as the "ironic mixture of factitious and the spontaneous." In other words, al-Qaeda on-line users have created a world premised on aspiring to the authentic but they do so in the most inauthentic of places: The internet. Achieving real-life authenticity on-line is, by definition, not au-

thentic at all. Rather, it is a fictionalized, stylized version of authenticity that on-line participants can believe is authentic because it is as close as most of them will ever come to living up to their virtual selves.

Through the process of “doing” on-line extremism, one gains a sense for the available cast of roles to perform. In the act of performing, individuals further entrench those roles within their social context, making the roles all the more real. It is this acceptance of the stylized, faux reality that allows AQAP to flourish. Virtually everything about their propaganda, most notably the *Inspire* magazine itself, is comic-book-like, cartoonish, or caricatured in nature. But that disdain for authenticity in its traditional understanding is what has allowed AQAP to snatch the proverbial megaphone away from Al-Qaeda’s Senior Leadership.

#### IMPLICATIONS

Since at least 2005, al-Qaeda’s global movement has tried to transform itself from an elitist, exclusive, hierarchical organization into an increasingly inclusive global movement. More populist figures like Abu Yahya al-Libi helped engage much of al-Qaeda’s Arab audience, but the Western, English-speaking part of the movement fell behind. Al-Qaeda’s English-language world needed a role model that it could call its own: Someone who instinctively understood the challenges of being Muslim in the West.

Anwar al-Awlaki, with his charismatic demeanor and simplified approach to the issues he discusses, has strategically and systematically made painted the notion of joining al-Qaeda a natural progression next step from becoming more religious. In other words, he has lowered the expectations of what it means to be a member of al-Qaeda. Today, anyone can be an al-Qaeda propagandist, and al-Awlaki’s job is to narrow the distance between non-violent propagandist and violent al-Qaeda activist. More people than ever are being called to al-Qaeda, not through the clenched fists of Ayman al-Zawahiri, but through the open arms of Anwar al-Awlaki.

Al-Awlaki has been so successful in winning the hearts and minds of Westerners because he made his path to al-Qaeda a step-by-step program that anyone could emulate. Western Muslims have listened to his audio recordings over and over. Many have heard him preach in person and some have even taken him out to lunch. His books have been read, his videos watched. When al-Awlaki joined al-Qaeda, he took the next step. Now his droves of supporters scramble to download the latest issue of *Inspire* to see how they can be al-Awlaki better.

The biggest challenge for governments given this new situation is that it means law enforcement will have a harder time distinguishing between legitimate security threats and those who may be doing legal activities in the name of al-Qaeda, such as making graphics or websites. If they over-police those individuals who may not be operationally supporting al-Qaeda, governments may actually be creating a self-fulfilling prophecy, where their search for terrorists is actually the catalyst for the emergence of operational terrorists, not just virtual fantasy ones.

Unfortunately, there remains no consensus about how far is too far when talking about using the internet to advocate on behalf of al-Qaeda. Is uploading a photo of AQAP’s Anwar al-Awlaki as one’s Facebook avatar a cause for concern? Or is this just a way to blow off steam? Could it actually be cathartic—and therefore good for us—in that it helps individuals release the frustration and anger they hold in the real world? Or is it a slippery slope: One day uploading al-Awlaki images, the next taking up arms against the United States?

That said, the al-Qaeda organization will face its own challenges in steering and guiding this movement of wannabes. By appealing to the lowest common denominator in making al-Qaeda so open and accessible, individuals operating in the name of al-Qaeda will invariably do things that are actually counterproductive to their strategic objectives.

Al-Qaeda has taken a gamble by flattening their movement. In the short term, thanks to charismatic personalities like al-Awlaki, it has created an influx of individuals who can now see themselves jumping across a lower fence over to al-Qaeda’s side. But in the long term it may actually be a dilution of that which made al-Qaeda so exclusive, and therefore alluring in the first place.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The U.S. Government is missing the boat on AQAP’s use of the media because it continues to view the problem through typically bureaucratic lenses and relying on outmoded ideas for how to combat this threat. What has the now decade-long Government conversation about empowering “alternative voices” and developing “positive counter-narratives” actually achieved? More Americans today have more opportunities to support al-Qaeda in more ways than ever before.

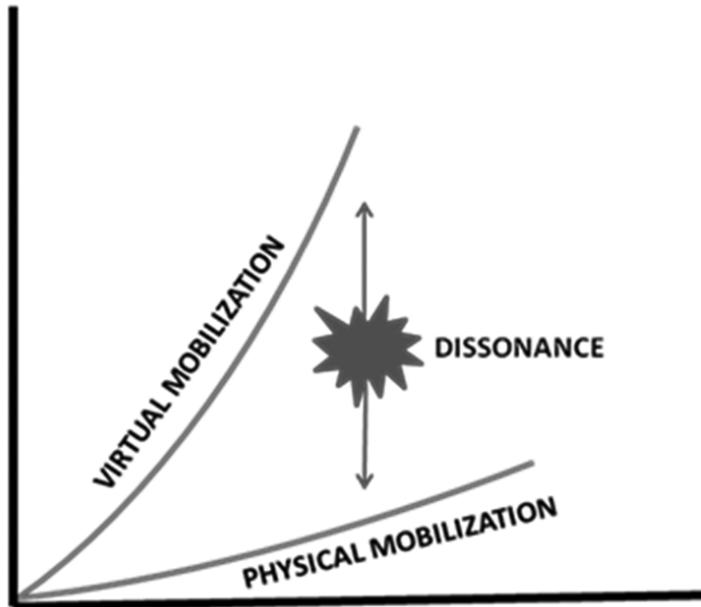
A breath of fresh air has long been needed in this field, one that approaches al-Qaeda's pioneering efforts to recruit, radicalize, mobilize, and operationalize Americans via internet propaganda through their eyes, not ours.

The U.S. Government ought to do two things immediately on the topic. First, the appropriate Government agency ought to sponsor a series of out-of-Government academic studies that examines the underlying mechanism of AQAP's English-language propaganda. To be effective, and depart from the conventional analysis being delivered on this topic, this series must reach into bodies of literature and subject matter experts who have not been previously engaged, most notably "gamification," social community development, on-line viral marketing, film, and literary theory on superheroes.

Second, once developed, the insights from these studies—which must interweave its theoretical concepts and frameworks with real-world examples of AQAP's recruitment, radicalization, mobilization, and operationalization in order to be effective—must be fed back into the Government. An effective vehicle for doing that would be to develop a series of training modules for State intelligence fusion centers to empower those professionals on the front-lines with an updated strategic level understanding of AQAP's efforts and familiarity with the kinds of tactics they are using and marketing.

#### APPENDIX 1.—WHY "INSPIRE" ACTUALLY MATTERS

##### Appendix 1 - Why *Inspire* Actually Matters



The innovative ways that al-Qaeda now uses the internet allows supporters to mobilize on-line far faster and easier than they could in the real world. Some of these ways include "gamifying" the on-line experience and offering more accessible role models to emulate. At some point, these al-Qaeda on-line supporters begin to understand that their physical world self is a far cry from the hero-like status of their on-line avatar. It is this cognitive dissonance that AQAP has sought to foment because it is in this feeling of instability that individuals are most susceptible to external influence.

Products like *Inspire* offer tangible, incremental, and accessible ways for American supporters to resolve that dissonance. It gives them sure-fire, do-it-yourself ad-

vice. It offers them cultural insights and road maps. *Inspire* helps make the process of living up to your virtual self that are less scary than it might seem at the outset.

Mr. MEEHAN. Thank you so much, Dr. Brachman, for your testimony.

Now we turn to our third expert. I would like to introduce Mr. Barfi.

I will recognize you for your testimony.

But first let me give again the background of Mr. Barfi. Mr. Barfi's a research fellow in the New American Foundation, where he specializes in Arab and Islamic affairs. Prior to joining New American, Mr. Barfi was a visiting fellow with the Brookings Institution. Before that, he worked as a producer with ABC News affiliates in the Middle East and in Europe.

He has lived in several Middle Eastern countries, which gives him a real actual sense of the world on the ground, including Egypt and Yemen. He recently returned from the Middle East, where he witnessed the Egyptian revolution first-hand and recently reported on the unrest in Bahrain.

Mr. Barfi, thank you for coming here today. You are recognized to summarize your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF BARAK BARFI, RESEARCH FELLOW, NEW AMERICA FOUNDATION**

Mr. BARFI. I want to begin by thanking Chairman Meehan and Ranking Member Thompson for inviting me to speak today.

As the Chairman said, I recently returned from a month-long journey in the Middle East, where I witnessed the events in the Egyptian revolution and the political unrest in Bahrain. The events in the region are challenging long-held views about the area, and Washington must be ready to respond.

Nor is this truer than in Yemen. In the wake of the 2009 Christmas day bombing, I wrote a policy paper on Yemen in which I argued against the prevailing wisdom that the country was a failed state on the verge of collapse. I maintained that the threats facing Yemen—a secession movement, a sectarian rebellion, a strong al-Qaeda presence and economic unrest—were not enough to topple a country, which has historically been marked by turmoil sometimes bordering on chaos.

Since then two Arab states have succumbed to a revolutionary fervor sweeping the Middle East. A third is on its knees, and a fourth called out the military to quell the protests. Yet while regimes were falling between December and February, Yemen hobbled along.

Today, however, the viability of President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his regime are in question. For the first time in Yemeni history, most of the tribes of the two large confederations publicly oppose the regime. The ruling party has suffered numerous defections, strikes are damaging the economy, and military units are mutinying against their superiors.

Among the challenges that the Saleh regime faces is a resilient al-Qaeda. The organization has a long presence in Yemen. The family of al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden hails from the eastern province of Hadramaut, and Yemen has always held a special place in his heart.

After he moved to Afghanistan in 1996, bin Laden recruited Yemenis to staff key positions in his inner circle. He also used Yemen as a clearinghouse, running phone calls through the country and sending people to safe houses there. But by the end of the decade, he decided to transform Yemen from a logistical hub into an operational theater. To this end, al-Qaeda targeted the U.S.S. Cole in October 2000.

After the 9/11 attacks, the Yemeni government allied itself with Washington and began cracking down on al-Qaeda. It arrested key operatives and allowed the United States to stage a missile strike against the organization's leader. By 2004 it appeared that al-Qaeda had been decimated.

A January 2000 prison break by mid-level cadres reinvigorated the organization, and by the end of the year, it was once again operational. Since then al-Qaeda has carried out dozens of attacks against regime targets, Western diplomats, tourists, and oil installations. In December 2009 it embarked on a new strategy when it dispatched a suicide bomber to attack the American homeland.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is shrewd, compact, and has shown remarkable resolve in implementing its strategy without getting distracted by superfluous conflict. The group is a formidable adversary, the likes of which Washington has not faced since bin Laden's organization was decimated in 2001.

AQAP has taken advantage of restless tribal regions to establish strongholds in areas far beyond the purview of the central government. Historically, Yemeni governments have been too weak to extend their authority to outlying provinces, giving the tribes there a substantial degree of independence.

At the same time, though, these clans have been frustrated by the modern state's inability to provide them with basic services. As a result they have often sold their loyalty to the highest bidder.

Today AQAP has exploited the tensions between the central regime and the tribal areas to carve out a sphere of influence. The organization is able to operate in these regions often without fear of government retribution. It recruits mid-level cadres and foot soldiers among the tribes that host it.

AQAP is firmly entrenched in Yemen. American air strikes against the group in December 2009 and January 2010 failed to neutralize the group. On the contrary, and emboldened AQAP was able to ratchet up its violence in 2010, carrying out more attacks last year than in any previous year.

The Yemeni military is ill-equipped to subdue AQAP. It is unable to operate efficiently in tribal areas that the organization calls home. Units dispatched to arrest AQAP-operated cells are often captured. American training has gone a long way to shore up the Yemeni military. Nevertheless, there still is much that needs to be done to bring up these forces to the combat levels necessary to confront AQAP.

The current unrest gripping the country is bound to benefit the organization in the short term. With the regime increasingly focused on survival, it is likely to shift military resources away from targeting AQAP, freeing the organization to plot attacks. In short, 2011 holds great promise for a group that historically thrived on political instability.

With that, I will turn it back over to you, Chairman.  
[The statement of Mr. Barfi follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BARAK BARFI

MARCH 2, 2011

I want to begin by thanking Chairman Meahan and the committee Members for inviting me to speak today. I would also like to thank my advisor Professor Richard Bulliet of Columbia University for teaching me the skills necessary to understand the Middle East. My prayers are with him and his family right now as they face a difficult time. I just returned from a month-long journey in the Middle East, where I witnessed the Egyptian revolution and political unrest in Bahrain. Events in the region are challenging long-held views about the region, and Washington must be ready to respond.

Nowhere is this truer than in Yemen. In the wake of the 2009 Christmas day bombing, I wrote a policy paper on Yemen in which I argued against the prevailing wisdom that the country was a failed state on the verge of collapse. I maintained that the threats facing Yemen—a secession movement, a sectarian rebellion, a strong al-Qaeda presence and economic turmoil—were not enough to topple a country historically marked by turmoil sometimes bordering on chaos. Since then, two Arab states have succumbed to the revolutionary fervor sweeping the Middle East, a third is on its knees, and a fourth has called out the military to quell protests.

Yet, while regimes were falling between December and February, Yemen hobbled along. Today, however, the viability of President Ali Abdallah Salih and his regime are in question. For the first time in Yemeni history, most of the tribes in the two largest confederations publicly oppose the regime. The ruling party has suffered numerous defections, strikes are damaging the economy, and military units are mutinying against their superiors. A wily survivor, President Salih will have to reach deep into his bag of tricks to survive the latest and most serious threat to his 32-year rule.

THE HISTORY OF AL-QAEDA IN YEMEN

Among the challenges the Salih regime faces is a resilient al-Qaeda. The organization has a long history in Yemen. The family of al-Qaeda founder Usama Bin Ladin heralds from the eastern province of Hadhramawt and Yemen has always occupied a special place in his heart. In the early 1990's he was active in Yemeni politics, working to combat the atheist Socialist party.

After he moved to Afghanistan in 1996, Bin Ladin recruited Yemenis to staff key positions in his inner circle. He also used Yemen as a clearinghouse, routing phone calls through the country and sending people to safe houses there. But by the end of the decade, he decided to transform Yemen from a logistical hub to an operational theater. To this end, al-Qaeda targeted the U.S.S. Cole in October 2000, leading to the death of 17 American sailors.

After the 9/11 attacks, the Yemeni government allied itself with Washington and began cracking down on al-Qaeda. It arrested key operatives and allowed the United States to stage a missile strike against the organization's leader. By 2004, al-Qaeda appeared decimated.

A January 2006 prison break by mid-level cadres reinvigorated the organization and by the end of the year, it was once again operational. Since then, al-Qaeda has carried out dozens of attacks against regime targets, Western diplomats, tourists, and oil installations. In December 2009, it embarked on a new strategy when it dispatched a suicide bomber to attack the American homeland. Though the attack failed, it sharply illuminated the threat al-Qaeda's Arabian affiliate poses to the United States.

In January 2009, the Saudi Arabian and Yemeni branches merged to create al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). The Saudi faction was compelled to seek the union after substantial losses brought the group to the brink of extinction. Though the Saudi regime was caught off guard when al-Qaeda began launching attacks in the kingdom in 2003, in subsequent years it was able to virtually eradicate the organization. The Saudi campaign led the remaining members to seek shelter in Yemen, where the regime has been less successful in stomping out the al-Qaeda branch there.

AQAP is shrewd, compact, and has shown a remarkable resolve in implementing its strategy without getting distracted by superfluous conflicts. The group is a formidable adversary, the likes of which Washington has not faced since Bin Ladin's organization was decimated in 2001.

## AQAP IN ITS YEMENI HABITAT

AQAP has taken advantage of restless tribal regions to establish strongholds in areas far beyond the purview of the central government. Historically, Yemeni governments have been too weak to extend their authority to outlying provinces, giving the tribes there a substantial degree of independence. At the same time though, these clans have been frustrated by the modern regime's inability to provide basic services. As a result, they have often sold their loyalty to the highest bidder. In the past, they relied on largesse from the Marxist regime in South Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

Today AQAP has exploited the tensions between the central regime and the tribal areas to carve out a sphere of influence. The organization is able to operate in these regions, often without fear of government retribution. It recruits mid-level cadres and foot soldiers among the tribes that host it.

The clans that shelter AQAP do not share the group's extremist views and puritan religious outlook. Rather, they support the organization for political reasons. They use AQAP as a tool to leverage their position vis-à-vis the central regime. Nevertheless, AQAP's attacks and vehement denunciation of the government has drawn the ire of some tribes, creating problems for the organization.

Despite its concentration on Yemen's tribal areas, AQAP has demonstrated its ability to operate far from its strongholds and it often drafts recruits outside these areas. To do so, it has developed a powerful propaganda machine that produces a bimonthly journal called *Sada al-Malahim* or *Echo of Battles*. It also reaches its audience through videos and internet statements. Recently, supporters of the organization began publishing an English magazine called *Inspire* that has proved to be widely popular among alienated Western Muslims who cannot understand the sometimes archaic Arabic used in *Echo of Battles*.

## YEMEN'S EXTREMIST ENVIRONMENT

AQAP's extremism is not a new phenomenon in Yemen. It is simply the latest in a long line of radical groups that have exploited the country's fertile extremist environment. Whereas Arab states such as Algeria and Egypt jailed and persecuted veterans returning from the Afghan campaign against the Soviets, Yemen not only welcomed back its fighters, it also embraced Arab combatants from other countries.

With the regime too weak to combat its adversaries, it has relied on jihadists to fight its battles. When a union between North and South Yemen broke down in 1994, leading to civil war, President Salih dispatched Arab Afghans to subdue the secessionists. After a sectarian rebellion erupted in northern Yemen in 2004, the regime invited Salafists to quell it. The regime's historical tolerance of extremism, coupled with its alliances with jihadists, produced a society ripe for the radicalism preached by AQAP.

## LOOKING AHEAD

AQAP is firmly entrenched in Yemen. American airstrikes against the group in December 2009 and January 2010 failed to neutralize the group. On the contrary, an emboldened AQAP was able to ratchet up its violence in 2010, carrying out more attacks last year than in any previous year. Its strikes were more daring and sophisticated. It began to confront military units and ambush checkpoints. And it once again sought to target the American homeland when it sent parcel bombs in November aboard freight planes.

The Yemeni military is ill-equipped to subdue AQAP. It is unable to operate efficiently in the tribal areas the organization calls home. Units dispatched to arrest AQAP cells are often captured. American training has gone a long way to shore up the Yemeni military, Coast Guard, and Navy. Nevertheless, there is still much that needs to be done to bring up these forces to the combat levels necessary to confront AQAP.

The Salih regime has never viewed AQAP as the dire threat Washington has. Instead, it has focused on quelling a 6-year sectarian rebellion in the country's northern provinces and suppressing a secession movement in the South. Salih has told American diplomats that these two conflicts pose a more serious danger to his rule than AQAP does. In shifting military resources to address these two conflicts, the regime has at times neglected the AQAP file.

The current unrest gripping the country is bound to benefit AQAP in the short term. With the regime increasingly focused on its survival, it is likely to shift military resources away from targeting AQAP, freeing the organization to plot attacks. In short, 2011 holds great promise for a group that has historically thrived on political instability.

## WHAT CAN THE UNITED STATES DO TO HELP YEMEN?

*Embrace a Regional Approach.*—The United States must understand that there is no made-in-Washington solution to Yemen's problems. It must work with regional powers, such as Saudi Arabia, to solve the challenges faced by Yemen. The Saudis provide hundreds of millions of dollars in aid annually, dwarfing Washington's contribution. But unlike Washington's aid, which seeks to strengthen Yemen, Riyadh's money is funneled to the tribes to weaken the central regime and keep it in line. Washington needs to encourage Riyadh to take a more constructive approach towards Yemen.

*Seek to Integrate Yemen into the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).*—Yemen has long sought to join this exclusive club. Member states have a more intimate understanding of the challenges Sana'a faces and can better pool their resources to effectively address development and security concerns. The GCC can also offer Yemen a seat on key economic committees that would allow the country to benefit from the organization's deep coffers.

*Conventional Aid Approaches Will Not Work.*—The United States has often believed that providing economic and technical aid can play a key role in solving their problems. But in Yemen, this approach will not work. The country simply does not have the technical capacity to absorb large amounts of aid. Examining past aid pledges to Yemen illustrates this dilemma. In 2006, international donors pledged \$5.7 billion to Yemen. But 3 years later, only about \$325 million of that had been disbursed.

*Focus on Making Government More Responsive to Citizens' Needs.*—Washington needs to concentrate on better governance programs that will restore Yemenis' faith in their government. To this end, Washington should invest in initiatives that improve financial transparency and alleviate bureaucratic inertia. Today, a number of the protests in Yemen are focused on accountability and corruption. Washington can address these issues by working with government ministries and non-governmental organizations.

*Support Apolitical Forms of Islam.*—Islam is not a monolithic religion whose primary goal is the destruction of the West. A number of Islamic currents are politically indifferent to America. In Yemen, Sufism has strong roots and its institutions are battling the same type of religious extremism that threatens the West. Washington needs to find a way to support Yemeni Sufism. Doing so will not only strengthen this moderate form of Islam, but also create a powerful counterweight to the radicalism Washington seeks to eradicate.

*Support Academic and Cultural Exchanges.*—American expertise on Yemen is lacking. There are only a dozen scholars who have an intimate knowledge of the country. The best Yemen researchers come from France which provides ample funding for students and academics to sharpen their skills in the country. The American Institute for Yemeni Studies is tasked to do the same for Americans. But since 2008, the State Department has prevented scholars who have received Federal funding from using it in Yemen for security reasons. As a result, between 15–19 scholars have been deprived of the opportunity to do research in Yemen. Academics who received grants in 2008 to do in-country research will see their funding expire later this year. In Pakistan where the security situation is precarious, the State Department has found a way to accommodate scholars. It needs to do the same for researchers in Yemen. At the same time, Washington should foster cultural exchanges by granting more visas to Yemenis who seek to study in America. Doing so will allow Yemenis to view the United States beyond the military-security prism.

Mr. MEEHAN. Well, thank you, Mr. Barfi.

Thanks to each of our panelists for your testimony, which I know has had to be narrowed in terms of what you have been able to state during your opening statements. But I encourage you to draw on the full spectrum of your experiences in response to what I know will be a broad variety of questions from our panel.

I am going to recognize myself for 5 minutes to begin my questioning, and I am also going to also say that I am going to have two parts. I want to just explore an opening question for you, Dr. Boucek, that will help us to frame this in a more general way in terms of the nature of this threat coming from al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Then I have a very specific line of questioning re-

garding the issue of the thousand cuts, which I will explain for each of the panelists.

So let me begin by stating that we began this hearing in the context of previous testimony, as I stated, that came from Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, who has said the threat to the U.S. homeland was at its most heightened state since 9/11. Then Director Leiter said it was al-Qaeda from the Arabian Peninsula who was deemed to be the most significant threat to the homeland.

I know that as we look back and we see some events that have actually taken place in the homeland most recently—Fort Hood with Nidal Hasan, the Christmas day attempted bombing in Detroit with Abdulmutallab, and most recently, the UPS cargo bomb, which landed in the airport in my district in Philadelphia.

So let me ask you, Dr. Boucek, just for a moment, do you agree with those assessments by those learned folks in our intelligence community? Is it a factor of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula which creates that threat uniquely, or is it a function of the fact that they come out of a very destabilized area now in Yemen, which makes them a threat? Or is it both?

Mr. BOUCEK. Thank you. I would absolutely agree, and I would say that in an address to the Carnegie Endowment last December, John Brennan called AQAP the most operationally active node of the AQ franchise.

I think what we see is this—you know, in AQAP there is the space and the ability to plot and plan and mount operations that the organization takes advantage of. All of the systemic challenges that I mentioned in my opening statement has the Yemeni government incredibly preoccupied.

I think what we see is the capacity and the presence of the Yemeni government is eroding, and the spaces in between are getting bigger and bigger, the spaces, the under-governed spaces in Yemen, where AQAP or other organizations we have not yet identified will take root and thrive in those environments.

I think if you look at the organization, it has said what it wants to do and then tries to do it. If it fails, it tries again. It is, I think, very instructive to look at, you know, the case of Saudi Arabia. So during the height of the violence in Saudi Arabia, al-Qaeda never struck outside the kingdom. That is not the case now. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has the entire world as a stage.

I think there are Yemenis, who are active in the organization, focused on Yemen, and they are Saudis who are interested in Saudi Arabia, but there is a third group that is focused on international targets. This is what is so scary to me.

I think the problem in Yemen looks much smaller than it actually is, because there is such a small number of targets, relatively speaking, inside Yemen. There is not a large American community. There isn't an American school, nor any American corporations, or their targets, I think, this looks very small. If this was taking place in another country, it would look, I think, much larger. I think that oftentimes confuses kind of the scale of the problem that we are facing.

Mr. MEEHAN. Well, thank you. You framed that well now, because you have talked about the nature of the threat that is coming

out of that there, but its ability to sort of reach into our homeland. One of those that reached in most recently was the attempt with the parcel with United Parcel Service.

I know also, Dr. Brachman, you talked about this aspect of the, you know, sort of the wannabes watching, you know, playing games, so to speak. But the fact of the matter is you can't get into the pro leagues unless you make it through competition. Here anybody can become a player. The question is the extent to which this is, you know, just actual play.

Let me refer to something very specifically. It is the most recent issue of "Inspire" magazine. I think many of you have seen this, and I take two pieces out of it. This was the cover, \$4,200 and a UPS plane. I read specifically from some language that was contained within. This was Awlaki's piece.

It said, "\$4,200—that is what the Operation Hemorrhage cost us. This supposedly foiled plot, as some of our enemies would like to call it, without a doubt cost America and other Western countries billions of dollars in new security measures. That is what we call leverage. The success of the operation was to be based on two factors. The first was to pass the package through the latest security equipment. The second was to spread fear that would cause the West to invest in billions of dollars in new security procedures. We have succeeded in the former. We are now witnessing the exception of the latter."

Let me say that after Christmas day, we have spent billions of dollars on airport screening technology to deter future underwear bombers. Now in response to our defenses to the UPS plot, the air cargo is changing the nature of what they do. Can you talk about this strategy of death by a thousand cuts, each of you, and what steps can the Government take to combat this kind of strategy? Thank you.

Mr. BRACHMAN. Thank you, sir. That is a good question. But you are exactly right in the sense that AQAP has re-conceptualized what success and failure means for al-Qaeda, right? So even in a tactical failure in the sense that the bomb didn't go off, it was still a success in that it caused basically all the same reactions, except the deaths. I think this is something that AQAP has really revolutionized.

But the strategy of death by a thousand cuts has been pervasive since the beginning. Bin Laden has discussed it ad nauseum. Other al-Qaeda strategists have referred to this as vexation and exhaustion operations. How do you keep us so blinded and so exhausted that we lurch from place to place, and we spend money against everything until the point where we pull back and just guard our key resources, which opens up the periphery to them, security vacuums that they can exploit?

I think they have really pioneered the way to use the media to advance their death by a thousand cuts strategy. One is that they have realized we are their best ally in terms of our overreactions, right? So even in this setting, the articles that come out of it will probably get fed back right into the next issue of "Inspire" to show that "Inspire" actually matters.

So any time we say anything, right, that is a talking point that they can use to affirm their own legitimacy within their constitu-

ency, but also demonstrate to us just how scared we are of them. So I think that is the one side.

The other side is that they have understood this concept that is pretty popular in terms of on-line social media called crowd sourcing, which is you have got thousands of kids who are out there doing random things on-line. They spend hours playing games, looking up articles. AQAP has figured out how do you put all these kids on the same path? How do you harness all of their collective energy to do something greater than the sum of just their energies?

I think this is a really important development. This is what Awlaki's been able to do is herd a bunch of these, you know, these on-line cats to do anything at any level. Just as long as you are doing something down this path, you are inflicting pain, even if it is just talking about them talking about them.

I think that is the challenge for us, because eventually Awlaki—the whole point of “Inspire” is to put downward pressure on that barrier from being an on-line legend to being a real-world legend, right? They make it easier to jump across and then try to do something in the real world. That is the brilliance of AQAP in terms of this propaganda. Thank you.

Mr. BARFI. Yes, just to build on what Jarret said, basically, what we are looking at from al-Qaeda's perspective is a war of attrition. They are trying to wear America down, the American homeland down. But the problem is if they continue with unsuccessful plots, that could help them in the short term. But once you move from unsuccessful plots to successful plots, as what happened in 9/11, it angers the American population, and they are willing to give up more and work with the security system to combat the threat.

So when al-Qaeda is unsuccessful, it gains more on this path than when it is successful. Unfortunately for al-Qaeda, it has success but failure in these failed plots. It is able to build up its media profile. It is able to gain respect and admiration from disillusioned Muslims in the short run, but in the long run, the problem is its plots have failed—great. These people say, “Great. You tried to attack the American homeland, but you failed. You didn't inflict any damage on the United States.”

So basically, there is a double-edged sword with these attacks here. You have the war of attrition on one hand, but you have success but failure on another.

Mr. BOUCEK. I would just add very briefly that I think this also builds on many of the arguments that get made about economic jihad, about the resources that are spent fighting terrorism. Our resources aren't spent on other issues. Ultimately, wearing down the Yemeni government and exposing the vulnerability of the Yemeni government is in AQAP's interests. Getting the Americans to overreact into Yemen is in AQAP's interests.

I think that the notion of this, you know, the low-cost, high-impact, demonstrates how opportunistic this organization is and how they are willing to experiment with all kinds of different things to see what happens. This gets filtered back into the learning process.

So while the core al-Qaeda still has the ambition to mount spectacular attacks, that is much less likely to happen than the immediate attacks that AQAP represent.

Mr. MEEHAN. Thank you.

I will now recognize other Members for questions that they may wish to ask the witnesses. In accordance with our committee rules and practice, I plan to recognize Members who were present at the start of the hearing by seniority on the subcommittee. Those coming in later will be recognized in the order of arrival.

Let me ask Mr. Thompson, turn it to Mr. Thompson for his questions. Thank you.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Barfi, with respect to unrest and terrorism in North Africa, are those protests in North Africa and the Middle East a good thing for al-Qaeda?

Mr. BARFI. When you have regime change in the Arab world, in the short term it is going to benefit al-Qaeda, because there is going to be political instability. There is going to be the creation of vacuums.

You look at a country like Yemen. If the regime falls, and there is a chance that that could happen today, the military will no longer be putting pressure on al-Qaeda. They are going to reinvent. It will allow al-Qaeda to spread, build its infrastructure, and create cells in other regions.

Al-Qaeda has been on the ball on this one to release a lot of statements. Everyone is talking about Ayman al-Zawahiri's statement. One statement that hasn't gotten a lot of publicity is one by Atiyeh Fal al-Libi, who is a senior al-Qaeda leader. He basically praised the revolutions in the Arab world, and he said that he encourages jihadists to build military presence in the Sinai Peninsula.

The Sinai Peninsula is a place where there have been clashes between the Bedouins and the military. There have been some attacks, suicide bombings in the past, and it is on Israel's border. So this is one of those prime places where if there is political instability, that al-Qaeda might be able to exploit it. So in the short term, this political instability is good for al-Qaeda.

When we move to the longer term, if we can transition these Arab autocracies into democracies which respond to the people's needs, that will really dent al-Qaeda's popularity and appeal in the Arab world.

But there is one thing I would like to say about the protests and what the people want. If you look at the squares in the Arab world, in Yemen or in Egypt, the people who are leading the protests and the people who are coming to the squares, they say they want democracy, and this is the most important thing to them. But they are the core group.

But if you move outside in the peripheral support that really helps to overthrow the regime, these people are focused on two things—jobs and an end to corruption. When I was in Egypt during the revolution, what I heard from this people was we want an accounting with the old regime. We want an end to corruption.

If America focuses too much on trying to build democracy in these areas without focusing on what the people want—to really have an accounting and really to end corruption and address the real problems in society—al-Qaeda will be able to thrive on that in the long term and try to increase its appeal and win.

Mr. THOMPSON. So you are saying we ought to put more emphasis on where the people are philosophically and work with them, rather than trying to promote a firmer democratization on them?

Mr. BARFI. Right.

Mr. THOMPSON. Explain a little bit.

Mr. BARFI. Well, democracy is very important. We are transitioning from authoritarian regimes to democratic regimes, and we are going to have to help these countries in this transitional process. That is very important.

But a lot of the people, their grievances aren't with lack of freedom. It is with lack of jobs and the corruption. This is their grievances that I heard a lot in Egypt. We need to address that. We need to work with NGOs to address corruption, to reform the ministries.

If you look at what is going on in Yemen right now, the regime is suffering defections by workers and students, because they want this director to resign because he is corrupt or this authority to be reformed because it is doling out ghost jobs. So those are the issues that the people on the ground are really concerned about.

Democracy is very important, but we can't take our eyes off the ball on that either, sir.

Mr. THOMPSON. Absolutely.

Dr. Boucek, one of the things kind of impacting us in this country is the price of oil. Do you see any connection where AQAP poses a threat to this whole energy sector going forward?

Mr. BOUCEK. Well, I think when you look at the targets that AQAP has gone after, they have been very consistent. They have been foreigners, the government, security services, ex-pats, foreign embassy, and the energy sector. There is a history of attacks against energy infrastructure not only in Yemen, but throughout the Arab world.

I think what you see is that these are great targets, because it generates instant attention. It has an immediate effect on global crisis. It grabs. You prove your relevance and your power and your recruiting stature as you are doing this.

I think in order to keep this in perspective, you need to think that, you know, Yemen produces probably 180,000 barrels a day. So it is a very small amount of oil that we are talking about, compared to Saudi Arabia, which produces about 10 million barrels per day.

So the impact, you know, when we see attacks against the energy infrastructure, usually the price goes up several dollars, but it usually moderates within the week. This is in part because we have never had a successful attack against a major energy installation.

Mr. THOMPSON. But if in fact AQAP looked at Saudi Arabia as a target, then what you have just said is we have a real problem.

Mr. BARFI. Absolutely. There is a history of attacks and attempted attacks against energy infrastructure inside the kingdom. AQAP has tried to mount attacks inside the kingdom, continues to do so, and this will continue to be a risk.

I think the Saudis recognize this. I think the Americans recognize this. This is a target that is not only well-protected, but I think people understand that, you know, were there to be a successful attack, the consequences could be very catastrophic for the

economy and for the environment and all kinds of other after-effects.

Mr. THOMPSON. Okay.

I yield back.

Mr. MEEHAN. Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

I now turn to the gentleman from Minnesota, Mr. Cravaack.

Mr. CRAVAACK. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you very much for our distinguished panel here.

I want to hear what you have to say. My job as a Congressman is to protect Americans at home and abroad. I understand the asymmetric threat that we have in, again, some of these terrorist groups.

I have now promoted you to be the Cabinet of the President. You are in front of the President right now. I have to make a decision in 4 minutes and 36 seconds. How would you brief the President in telling him how to combat this threat? Thank you.

Mr. BOUCEK. Well, I think the important thing is to start out that we need to keep this in perspective, that terrorism is our biggest problem from Yemen. It is not Yemen's biggest problem. Terrorism is not going to destroy the Yemeni government. Al-Qaeda is not going to bring down the Saleh government.

Focusing exclusively on terrorism will exacerbate the problems, I fear. So how do you help the Yemeni government build a better government? How do we get them to have the capacity to deliver more services? How do we improve the relationship between the Yemeni government and the people?

The people need to feel that they have something invested in this, so it has to be, you know, addressing issues like governance, corruption, the economy, jobs, all of these systemic issues that, you know, are long-term issues.

That has to be coupled with an immediate counterterrorism response, because there are cells and individuals, actors in Yemen that are plotting and planning operations right now.

But this needs to be something that is not a large American footprint. It needs to be something that we do in cooperation with the Yemenis. This has to be a Yemeni-led program, because the Yemenis need to be out in front of this. Otherwise, we would de-legitimize the Yemeni government, which will ultimately increase the terrorism problem.

So I think if we only focus on terrorism, we run the risk of making it worse. There is a need for robust counterterrorism, but it has to be much more quiet.

Mr. BARFI. I think the first thing we need to focus on, building on what Dr. Boucek said, we need better government programs. We need to restore citizens' faith in their government. They don't have much faith in the government. So the government needs to be more responsive.

We have to understand that there is no "made in Washington" solution to Yemen. We need to work with our regional allies. Chief among them is Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council. These countries have a much better understanding of the problems that Yemen faces than we do.

We need to have better knowledge about Yemen. We just don't know that much about the country. You know, in the wake of the

parcel plot bombing, intelligence agencies started scouring the country, looking for people who spoke special regional dialects in Yemen. There is just not that—they just don't have that here. So these are the things that we really need to work on in the short term.

Mr. BRACHMAN. I think in terms of AQAP's attempt to reach back here in the United States through propaganda and media, we don't have interagency consensus about what it is we are looking for or how do we know who is going to go operational. We don't have metrics. We don't have behavioral profiles, templates, frameworks for understanding the kinds of behavior that we are seeing on-line more and more.

So I think we need to invest a lot of intellectual horsepower into looking at new trends in social media. There is a number of bodies of literature that just haven't been brought to bear to this issue that are appearing, you know, throughout al-Qaeda on-line media.

So we need to understand that terrain before I think we can develop strategies, but we are pretty behind the curve in terms of that.

Mr. CRAVAACK. I appreciate those comments, and I understand the problem. Now we have to deal with a solution. Just as you said, I just was briefed just a couple of seconds ago regarding a soldier that was killed in Germany using, again, on a bus somebody pulled out a weapon and killed him, along with two others that were injured.

So this is the type of asymmetric warfare that I fear most coming to the United States. My worst fear is not necessarily someone with a special weapon. It is someone that uses some type of buyer weapon in the United States small as an aerosol can. This is what I fear. This is what I want to defend against. I understand our assets need to be in Yemen, but at the same time how do we defend the homeland? I have got 36 seconds, and I hope I have some indulgence on the answer.

Mr. BOUCEK. I think I would just say very briefly I think the best way that we can look at Yemen is in terms of risk management. We are not going to solve Yemen's problems, but we can limit our exposure. We can do that by the programs that my colleague just talked about. I think having a robust counterterrorism effort, trying to build governance and address the issues.

Addressing water would go a long way. Eighty percent of violence in Yemen is about people fighting over water. That is not kind of the impression we have in the media, but I think if we want to reduce the overall level of violence in society, if we want to, you know, help Yemeni get along, we can do some things that, you know, are high-impact that are low-cost.

Mr. BARFI. Security is our last line of defense in the homeland. I mean, whether it is security at the airport or at the entrance to the Cannon building, this is the last line of defense. We need to get the problem at the source, and that means better intelligence.

We can't think that we can focus on a place like Yemen by just intercepting phone calls, which is a lot of what is going on. We need to get better intelligence on the ground. We need to develop tribal assets.

As early as the mid-1990s, when we tried to take out Osama bin Laden, we had tribal assets in Afghanistan. Afghanistan was not a high priority for the United States. Yemen is. I mean, that is the thing that we need to do. We need better intelligence on the ground, sir.

Mr. BRACHMAN. I would say that al-Qaeda's personalities are not, they're not plug-and-play. It takes years to develop these kinds of cults of personality that come around, say, like Awlaki. So when they are taken out, they have a serious impact on the organization's ability to, you know, project itself in the media to inspire people.

So I think from my perspective, it is not the users of, say, "Inspire," those who are downloading Awlaki's videos. It is Awlaki himself. It is Samir Khan. It is the producers, because these people, they are disproportionately impactful in terms of al-Qaeda's propaganda, so I would go to the source on that.

Mr. CRAVAACK. Thank you, gentlemen.

I will yield back the negative balance of my time, sir.

Mr. MEEHAN. Thank you, Mr. Cravaack.

Now I would like to turn to the gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. Jackson Lee.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I thank Mr. Thompson for his very able handling of this intelligence subcommittee. We do miss Jane Harman and wish her well.

Thank you, gentlemen, for your presentation today.

I am glad to what the end of the statement that you made, Mr. Barfi, you mentioned the issue of human intelligence. Let me first of all acknowledge the need for securing the homeland. I guess that is why I have been on this committee since its origins, since it was considered a select committee on homeland security post hours after 9/11.

As well, I think one can balance the civil liberties and Constitutional privileges that we have in this country along with very astute handling of security issues. So forgive me if I have, pose questions that seem to be somewhat provocative, but let me just pose a rapid series of questions.

I will start with you, Mr. Barfi, and then I would change my tone. Do we need military action to address this question?

Mr. BARFI. At this point in time, I think that it is best to work with our Yemeni allies to take out al-Qaeda, to take out the threat that it poses. Increased American military action in Yemen only causes blowback and increases the recruiting appeal of AQAP.

What we have seen with the missile strikes in December and January, in December 2009 and January 2010, were not all that efficient. There was talk that we killed senior leaders, and we had only killed about, I think, one senior leader and one mid-level leader, so we just doesn't have the good intel on that as well. So I would caution—I would advise against that and try to work with the Yemeni military and try to build up their capacity, ma'am.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Dr. Brachman.

Mr. BRACHMAN. Ma'am, al-Qaeda strategist and thinker Abu Yahya al-Libi wrote a whole statement on this exact question, saying that he knows we are smart enough not to bring military forces directly into Yemen, but it is our need to still justify to the Amer-

ican people that we are doing something that will cause us to delegitimize the Yemeni regime by bragging about the military-to-military relationship that we have. So the more that we talk about it, the more that their Government will look like upon of us.

So there is the bigger point here is that al-Qaeda has—they telegraph everything. They lay down strategies, and I don't think that piece made any traction with the U.S. Government, so they are always telling us how they are thinking about us, and they are usually a step ahead in terms of thinking about what we are thinking about in terms of military strength.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. So your answer is—

Mr. BRACHMAN. I agree.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Not to use—all right.

Mr. BRACHMAN. I agree—and to be quiet about the kinds of relationships—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Any kind of interaction that we have.

Dr. Boucek.

Thank you.

Mr. BOUCEK. I think, you know, the place for American military action needs to be very quiet and very clandestine, or else we will make the situation much, much worse, I think, as my colleague said.

I think instead of thinking of Yemen in terms of trying to do Pakistan, we should try to think about it in terms of how to do Colombia. How do you build the capacity for the Yemenis to do this?

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me throw this out, so I can get my questions then before the actual bell rings. I think it was quite well framed, and I think all of you framed it to indicate how distracted the Yemeni leadership is—civil war, protests, secessionist movement, particularly a population that has, what, 40, 40 percent plus unemployment, mostly young men, and as I understand it in my visit, a 4 o'clock break with some kind of khat that distracts a lot of them.

So my question, if you can answer these two questions, give me the real, real threat of Yemen's ability to promote future attacks on the United States either by the cleric that is there, and then secondly, the impact of Saudi Arabia's closing of the border, no opportunity for jobs, and the importance of human intelligence.

Mr. BOUCEK. I think I would say very quickly, Ms. Lee, the ability to mount attacks comes when the Yemeni government's authority and capacity is eroded. This is what we see. This was played out last places throughout the world, and we know what will happen in Yemen if we don't do something to stop this. It will affect American domestic security.

In terms of the role for Saudi Arabia, Yemen's future lies with the Gulf and Saudi Arabia. If we give \$300 million in aid to Yemen, the military and security systems and development, in their turn the Saudis would probably give \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion worth of assistance. They have the longest, deepest relationship, and it is their problem first and foremost.

We all need to be on the same page, and we need to work with Saudi Arabia to address this issue.

Mr. BARFI. The problem that we have in Yemen is that there are two-fold here. The regime does not view AQAP as its primary

threat. Saleh has said this to American diplomats in the past. The Houthi rebellion in the north, the sectarian rebellion in the north, is his chief priority.

The AQAP does not pose an existential threat to the regime. It cannot bring the regime down, so it is just a minor thorn in its side. In contrast, to the United States it is a very big issue, and this is what we harp on when we speak to President Saleh, when we send our diplomats and senior officials. So that is the problem in one way.

As for Saudi Arabia, the problem with Saudi Arabia is that it plays a double-edged game in Yemen. It supports the regime on one hand, and it supports the tribes on the other, which weaken the central regime. So we need to encourage the Saudis that stability is in their interest and convince them to support the regime and not elements that destabilize the government.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Dr. Brachman.

Mr. BRACHMAN. Just very quickly, I think it is a two-step process in terms of al-Qaeda targeting into the United States to radicalize our citizens. The first step is they are the proverbial satellite, right? They project the bad signal up into the sky, and then they convince as many Americans as possible that they can be Batman, right? So that is a call to action.

I think that is the most dangerous thing, from my perspective, is that they have focused on doing that more than any other al-Qaeda franchise that we have seen, and they are better at it than any other al-Qaeda—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. They are calling to action.

Mr. BRACHMAN. That is right.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Chairman, thank you for indulgence. I yield back.

Mr. MEEHAN. Thank you, Ms. Lee.

At this point in time, I would like to turn now to the gentleman from New York, Mr. Higgins.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Yemen is the poorest country in the Middle East. As has been said, the unemployment rate is very high, 35 to 40 percent. Like most countries in North Africa and the Middle East, it is also very young.

My question is: You know, when you look at civil unrest, is it the civil unrest that we want that will result in your political reform, or is it the civil unrest that will be exploited for bad purposes? Some have said, particularly administration officials, that a lot of this civil unrest in the Middle East and in Yemen is a rejection of violent jihad. Just your thoughts on that, each of you?

Mr. BARFI. Having spent a month in the region, I can tell you that these protests are very secular in origin. Inside the squares they are shouting secular slogans. They are not talking about jihad. They don't talk about Allah. They don't talk about religion.

That said, there is a bridging between the moderate Islamist, which is the Muslim Brotherhood, and the secular activists in places like Liberation Square in Egypt. They were very active. The Muslim Brotherhood really helped.

But the Muslim Brotherhood is much different than the radical jihadists such as al-Qaeda. So if we hear a regime like—excuse me,

if we see a regime like Yemen fall, and we ask what will happen next, it will be somewhere between Tunisia and Libya. It will not be as pleasant as what we saw in Egypt on that account, sir.

Mr. BRACHMAN. Sir, I would just respond from al-Qaeda's perspective. Zawahiri has put out thirds of statements on this. Other al-Qaeda figures have. I have never seen their interest in being so quiet. They realized that they need to make concessions, compromises, coalitions.

So right now al-Qaeda's line is wait and see, keep your head down. This is the most reflective, I guess, that I have seen al-Qaeda senior leadership. They realize that things are afoot right now, and they aren't the dominant party, but they think that they can work within this kind of space, that this might afford them to slowly consolidate and coalesce some strength.

Mr. BOUCEK. I think when we are talking about Yemen and the potential for unrest, there should be very significant concern for the United States, especially because there is no government to replace the current regime. President Saleh has made himself the one indispensable political actor in Yemen, and no one else can fill that vacuum when he leaves.

Yemen has never been a fully functioning, cohesive, unified state, and likely never will be in the short term.

Mr. HIGGINS. Correct.

Mr. BOUCEK. We need to prepare for that. I think when we think about what happened in North Africa and other places in the region, no one wants to see, I think, from a government point of view, no one wants to see President Saleh go, because we need this government in the fight with AQAP, which is our biggest concern.

I think this comes to a point that we do not understand who makes decisions in Yemen and why. Until we understand why they make the decisions they do, we won't be able to re-incentivize them to do things differently.

Mr. HIGGINS. Right. The United States has a considerable investment in development and military aid to Yemen. You know, how reliable is this president? You know, we deal with this stuff in Pakistan, Afghanistan, where by day they are our friends, and at night they are not. It is very duplicitous.

Does President Saleh see that al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is the existential threat? Or was it the rebels in the north and the south that he is preoccupied with? You know, I am just—

Mr. BOUCEK. I mean, I think you can look at what is going on at the country in terms of the civil war or the south or the protest movement or AQAP. These are all symptomatic of the breakdown of the Yemeni state. I think I would argue that if we do not reverse the problem to match our rhetoric, if we talk about Yemen being a National priority, if we talk about AQAP being the most significant threat, we don't put anywhere near the amount of resources we should to deal with this problem.

Pakistan gets billions of dollars in assistance every year, and Yemen gets \$300 million. The Yemenis look at us and think, you know, how big is your checkbook and what have you done for me lately? This is how they look at international partners. Does it match their commitment?

Mr. HIGGINS. Okay.

Mr. BARFI. Well, the problem on that, in the difference in Pakistan and Yemen, is Yemen just doesn't have the technical capacity to absorb massive amounts of aid. I think in 2006 there was a donor conference. I think \$5.7 billion was pledged.

Three years later, I don't think more than 5 percent or 6 percent of that aid was disbursed, because they just don't have the technical act. They don't have the experts to absorb that aid. The ministries aren't ready. The bureaucracy is inefficient. So we can't look at those types of situations and say, oh, we can just model upon Yemen—to model that, put that on Yemen.

To answer your question, sir, Saleh is firmly entrenched in the U.S. camp to battle al-Qaeda. In the past the Yemeni regime has forged alliances with jihadists, especially those returning from Afghanistan, the Afghan Arabs.

But after the Christmas day bombing, Saleh came out with really a big diatribe against al-Qaeda. He used very, very negative language, the first time I ever saw him speak so, too, personally against al-Qaeda in this fashion. He has really come on board to fight al-Qaeda.

That said, the problem is that the military just don't have the capacity and the resources to fight al-Qaeda. When they send military units into these al-Qaeda strongholds, instead of capturing al-Qaeda members, the soldiers are captured. This has happened on a few occasions. Military training takes a lot of time, and we have to be patient.

Mr. HIGGINS. Got it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. MEEHAN. Thank you, Mr. Higgins.

I am going to give an opportunity for those who would like to just ask one more round of questions to follow up on any of the information that came before us to this point in time. So I will first recognize myself to ask a question in response to what you have been talking about, each of you, in your analysis.

I am struck by the fact that much of this seems to be focused in a way which is precarious. A lot of what we are doing is we are playing a waiting game as well, in which we watch events unfold in Yemen, as we are watching in other places.

Your testimony appeared to suggest that we want to be very, very careful about any kind of military involvement, which would that include as well if we are able to identify Awlaki and, you know, sending a drone in there to take out Awlaki? I mean, in a very unstable environment, do we still continue to act proactively to try to protect the homeland?

A lot of what you are discussing focuses on our ability to both watch and perhaps encourage more stabilization in Yemen to tamp down the threat, but how does that reflect the threat we have to actual acts of terrorism being carried out in the United States that would harm United States citizens?

I think we seem to have two—not necessarily conflicting, but two different interests here that we are talking about. Certainly, we want to protect first and foremost the homeland here. Can we do that and still watch events unfold in a way in which we are sort of waiting to see?

Mr. BOUCEK. I think I would respond by saying I think there is a need to be proactive, to be sure. But I think we oftentimes want to look at organizations like AQAP and think of it as a organization with a clearly identified leadership, where is eliminating the top 10 or 15 people will eliminate the organization.

I think that that thinking, unfortunately, probably does not mesh with much reality on the ground, where there is a movement that this comes out of. I think we can degrade the capacity for this organization to strike at American targets, to be sure, but in the end we need a long-term view.

I think this is the big dilemma facing, you know, American foreign policy is that it is not just Yemen. It is anyplace where state authority is eroded, like Tajikistan or Mauritania or fill in the blank. Places where central government authority does not exist, bad stuff will come out of.

This is a long process to build that, so we need to look at this, you know, in the short term and the near term, but also how do we square, you know, our immediate security concerns by supporting a government like the Yemeni government and also have the dialogue with the Yemeni people saying that we are supporting reform, democracy, and improvement of your lives, because it looks like these two are at odds.

By first supporting the Yemeni government that is keeping the Yemeni people down, we will exacerbate the problem. So we need to have a dialogue and a policy that will embrace all of this.

Mr. BARFI. I agree wholeheartedly with Chris. If you take out the AQAP leadership, there is no guarantee that something new might not—might pop up in the future. I mean, look at al-Qaeda's history.

We took out the top leadership. The No. 2 guy was arrested in 2004. The No. 1 guy we got with a drone missile in 2002, 2003. I think it was 2002. The organization came back. You will always find somebody to take over this role.

That said, if we have information of a strike against the American homeland, there is no doubt that we need to take preemptive measures against that, too, to snuff it out before it occurs.

The administration has put a great premium on Anwar Awlaki, that she is a very key player in AQAP. I am not convinced of that. I think that he plays a role in the organization, but he is not as important as people like Nasir al-Wahishi and Qasim al-Rimi, who are the political leader and the military leader.

Awlaki does work on the western side, and that is our big threat, and the problem is that we see these things, these issues, through a security, a military security prism. That is not what the people on the ground in Yemen see. They want improvement in their lives. They want a better tomorrow. We need to work with them to get that. If we don't, there will be more people to take these peoples' place in al-Qaeda, sir.

Mr. MEEHAN. Thank you.

Let me turn it to my colleague, Mr. Thompson, for his question.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much. This has been an excellent panel, and the information presented has been very good—troubling, but good.

Mr. Barfi, let me thank you for making that extra effort to get here. I kind of pushed in the Chairman's ear what it took, but we do appreciate your getting here—the other witnesses also.

One of the issues that is surfacing now is we have looked at aviation security as a vulnerability, and we have historically chased the threat after it occurs. From a planning standpoint is it still aviation, or you think that some other threats out here that we ought to be cognizant of in a similar light as we are aviation? I will just start with Dr. Boucek and go down.

Mr. BOUCEK. Thank you. I would say briefly, I think, that when we look at AQAP, they often go after the same targets. When they succeed, they try again. I think if you looked at—you know, there have been several attacks against the American embassy. That should be a concern when you think about aviation. Twice they have targeted American aviation. That has not yet succeeded, so I would anticipate that that would continue.

When I look at the organization and the material they have produced and the things they have failed, one of the things I am most concerned about are points that my colleagues have made, which is how this movement has opened up the potential for others to participate.

I think when you look at the people who have been accused and charged with crimes in participation with terrorism in this country, the fact that some of them have never been to Yemen, but are influenced—by Yemen, that is what is concerning to me.

If it is a random shooting or bombing, I think they don't look like major plots, but I think we would see that more and more.

Mr. THOMPSON. So are you talking, like, over the internet or just through other means of communication, or—

Mr. BOUCEK. I mean, I think when we look at the past, you know, cases in this country, people that have communicated with individuals in Yemen, people have tried to go to Yemen, people have been influenced by material produced from Yemen, from individuals in Yemen, I think that is a concern.

As we see the Yemeni government's capacity erode, it is jeopardizing American security.

Mr. BRACHMAN. I think there are two competing trends here. Several years ago a self-styled al-Qaeda pundit released an essay called "Cold Terrorism." He said that we are so bent on the big explosions and getting a lot of media visibility, we actually do ourselves a disservice, because that forces the overreaction, then, of law enforcement and intelligence against it.

So why don't we just do kind of what happened during the Cold War—fight by proxy, do things quieter? I mean, he said, rather than hijacking and blowing up a plane, why don't we just drive two Greyhound buses off a bridge? We kill the same number of people. There is no security. It will be a lot easier.

It made a lot of sense, but nobody read it. The article got no traction. Nobody talked about it. It just was really boring, because there is still this mythology around things that blow up within al-Qaeda. This is a machismo organization that it is media first for them.

So I think while you see this interest within the "Inspire" magazines about, you know, going to a restaurant in the District of Co-

lumbia or weld on a blade under your Ford F-150 and drive through crowd of people, you know, it is gimmicky and novel, but at the end of the day you still want to blow up a plane or fly a plane into something. I think that is still kind of where it is. But I don't know which trend will win out.

Mr. BARFI. There is always the desire for spectacular attacks, because they gain you more publicity. But this is a war of attrition. It is long-term. It is a 100-year war. It is a 1,000-year war. Any attack that you have against the American homeland is considered a great success.

Nidal Hasan's attack in Fort Hood was an amazing success, because you had it in the most secure part of the American homeland, on a military base. We will probably see the likelihood of AQAP reaching out to more Muslims in the Western world to plot small-scale attacks, which they can then raise as the banner of success. So I think that is what we will be looking for in the short to medium term, sir.

Mr. THOMPSON. Sort of like lone wolves or those kinds of individuals are what you are talking about?

Mr. BARFI. Exactly. You make contact with these people on the internet. This is what Dr. Brachman, his expertise and what he told us all about. They are reaching out to these people on the internet. You are going to get these loners, and they are going to be brought in by the recruiting and the propaganda, make connections with them. It doesn't take a lot of planning and expertise. You know, they are armchair fans, the fantasy league.

The problem with this is from a security standpoint, we just can't stop something like that. There is just not a lot of security. The last line of security to get into, you know, a place like the Cannon building is not going to help when you walk into a restaurant, because we don't have that. So this is probably what we are going to see in the short to medium term.

Mr. THOMPSON. One other comment, one other thing, Mr. Chairman. We have tried to layer some of this—is to get the public more involved and, you know, if you see something, you ought to say something rather than just go about your business, so to speak, because this notion that Government can provide all the defenses necessary to protect us from any of these threats, I think, at best is a novel, if not something that learned individuals know we can't fully accomplish.

So not saying that we won't do our best to prevent it, but one of the other challenges we have is how vigilant we are as a Nation when something like this happens and is successful. Part of the modeling has been after some other countries that have been involved in terrorism a good bit. So it is a challenge.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I think you have put together a good panel of witnesses, and the information has been very informative. I yield back.

Mr. MEEHAN. Well, thank you, Mr. Thompson. I appreciate your comment. I just want to take 1 second to add to that very, very important observation.

I note that that was both—an observation was made by a vendor that prevented the actual harm in New York Times Square. Most recently, evidence seems to suggest it was the observation made by

a vendor of one of our chemicals that alerted authorities to the unfolding of a potential event in Texas. Both of those cases were when an involved citizen stepped up and alerted authorities to suspicious activities. So thank you for making that observation, Mr. Thompson.

I note the attendance of my colleague from it is either Missouri or Missoura, depending on which part you are from, Mr. Long. But I know that he will be reviewing the record and doesn't have questions for us today.

So I want to thank you for being a very, very good panel for us that brought a full perspective, or a more full perspective, into this unique challenge of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, particularly into the context of unfolding events in Yemen.

We will be guided by your observations in our continuing quest to both not just understand the nature of the threat as it grows and emerges, but what our responsibilities are to work with the resources in our Nation to protect our homeland from actual events of terrorism that result from this and other activities around the world.

So I am very, very grateful for your presence here, your testimony and your questions from the other Members.

The Members of the committee may have additional questions for the witnesses, and we will ask you to respond to those in writing at some point in time, if in fact they do, and the hearing record will be open for 10 days to do so.

I remind the subcommittee that 15 minutes after the end of this, we will move to HVC-302 to receive a classified briefing on this same issue from the FBI, the National Counterterrorism Center, and the Department of Homeland Security for their observations posed by al-Qaeda and the homeland.

Let me just make my parting comment reflect on. As we have been sitting here, unfolding events around the world still—my colleague, Mr. Cravaack, referenced it. It appears that there have been two United States soldiers who have been killed in what looks like a terrorist attack in Frankfurt, Germany, in an airport.

So first and foremost, of course, our thoughts and prayers are with them and their families at this very sad time. But it drives home the very real nature of the matter that is before us today.

So I want to express again my appreciation to each of you. Without objection, the committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:26 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]



## A P P E N D I X

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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HONORABLE BILLY LONG FOR CHRISTOPHER BOUCEK

*Question 1.* Where do AQ's resources come from? How well-funded are they?

Answer. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's resources appears to come from several sources. These include funds derived from criminal activity, such as bank robberies and armored car robberies. Fundraising is also a source of financial support for the organization, and there have been several cases in other Gulf States of alleged fundraising for AQAP. It should be remembered, however, that terrorism is a relatively inexpensive endeavor, and large sums of money are not needed to mount successful operations. According to AQAP, the October 2010 package bomb operation cost only \$4,200.

*Question 2a.* AQAP like other terrorist organizations such as Hamas in the Territories or Hezbollah in Lebanon, has used the corruption in government and poor economic conditions to broaden their base of followers.

How do you address the leadership vacuum within the Yemeni or other governments?

*Question 2b.* How can persuasive leadership inspire the people to actively participate in moving their country forward toward development, or join in the debate over how best to do so?

*Question 2c.* How can you teach leadership in a place where it has been suppressed?

Answer. AQAP's manifestation in Yemen is the result of many factors—chief among them is declining capacity of the Yemeni central government. The under-governed spaces in Yemen have been increasing in recent years, and this has been exploited by AQAP. Washington has very little leverage with which to influence events (or the leadership) in Yemen. The U.S. Government must be realistic about what the United States—or the international community—can accomplish. Ultimately, many of Yemen's problems cannot be solved. Resource depletion, economic failure, and explosive population growth represent an almost insurmountable set of challenges, and these conditions cannot be completely reversed.

The primary policy challenge with regard to Yemen is how to build the relationship between the Yemeni people and their government. This will require building the capacity of the Yemeni government to be responsive to the needs of its people and to expand the capability of the central government to deliver basic services throughout the country. It will also require the building of confidence in the Yemeni people that their government is working in their interests.

*Question 3.* How can you make the argument to the Yemeni government that their goals of maintaining stability and fighting AQ are not exclusive and can be done concurrently inasmuch as resources are concerned?

Answer. While the Yemeni government often views AQAP and Islamist terrorism as a threat, it has not been a primary challenge or even a major threat to the regime. There are many more serious challenges that pose a direct threat to the stability of the state and the survival of the regime. Since the start of the current protest movement, the Yemeni government has redeployed its counter-terrorism assets from going after AQAP and moved them to bolster internal security. In recent months Islamist fighters—possibly including some al-Qaeda elements—have been increasingly active in the south of the country. As the central government's authority continues to recede, the operational space for AQAP is increasing. While the Saleh government has sought to reassert control in some areas, their ability to fully establish control is not known.

*Question 4a.* You mentioned that our overreaction from the media and changing nature of AQ have shifted the definition of "success" from successfully carrying out an attack toward instilling fear and forcing the government to deplete its resources, leveraging a \$4,200 operation into a multi-billion dollar effort to counter such an operation. The planning and funding of a 9/11-style attack are no longer necessary

to achieve these goals. You say that hijacking two Greyhound buses and driving them off a bridge would not have such an impact as an explosion or bomb, but the attacks we have seen (or attempts) have been much smaller in scale.

If the goal is to instill fear in people, do you think that there will be a time in the near future when AQ begins using Israeli-style attacks in restaurants or nightclubs, effectively creating an environment of fear? Or small subway attacks?

*Question 4b.* How would the United States handle this sort of campaign?

Answer. This question is not directed to me.

*Question 5.* How can governments learn from the tactics of AQ and use social media and community networks to counter the message AQ is getting out to their followers?

Answer. I would suggest that our challenge is not getting out a different message to compete with that of AQAP, but in demonstrating that the United States is working to address the systemic challenges in Yemen that gives rise to al-Qaeda and other violent opposition.

A collapsing economy, rampant corruption, widespread unemployment, rapid resource depletion, and a series of political and socio-economic challenges have manifested as security challenges to the current ruling government. A policy centered on counter-terrorism to the near exclusion of other issues will ultimately prove counter-productive. While initial gains may be seen, they may be short-lived. Improving American security will come when conditions in Yemen improve for all Yemenis. Working to make small improvements across the spectrum of these challenges, we can reduce the severity of their impact, lessen the humanitarian suffering, and strengthen the Yemeni government. This will hopefully improve U.S. security and bolster Yemeni stability.

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HONORABLE BILLY LONG FOR JARRET BRACHMAN

*Question 1.* Where do AQ's resources come from? How well-funded are they?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

*Question 2a.* AQAP like other terrorist organizations such as Hamas in the Territories or Hezbollah in Lebanon, has used the corruption in government and poor economic conditions to broaden their base of followers.

How do you address the leadership vacuum within the Yemeni or other governments?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

*Question 2b.* How can persuasive leadership inspire the people to actively participate in moving their country forward toward development, or join in the debate over how best to do so?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

*Question 2c.* How do you teach leadership in a place where it has been suppressed?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

*Question 3.* How can you make the argument to the Yemeni government that their goals of maintaining stability and fighting AQ are not exclusive and can be done concurrently inasmuch as resources are concerned?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

*Question 4a.* You mentioned that our overreaction from the media and changing nature of AQ have shifted the definition of "success" from successfully carrying out an attack toward instilling fear and forcing the government to deplete its resources, leveraging a \$4,200 operation into a multi-billion dollar effort to counter such an operation. The planning and funding of a 9/11-style attack are no longer necessary to achieve these goals. You say that hijacking two Greyhound buses and driving them off a bridge would not have such an impact as an explosion or bomb, but the attacks we have seen (or attempts) have been much smaller in scale.

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Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

*Question 4b.* How would the United States handle this sort of campaign?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

*Question 5.* How can governments learn from the tactics of AQ and use social media and community networks to counter the message AQ is getting out to their followers?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

#### QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HONORABLE BILLY LONG FOR BARAK BARFI

*Question 1.* Where do AQ's resources come from? How well-funded are they?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

*Question 2a.* AQAP like other terrorist organizations such as Hamas in the Territories or Hezbollah in Lebanon, has used the corruption in government and poor economic conditions to broaden their base of followers.

How do you address the leadership vacuum within the Yemeni or other governments?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

*Question 2b.* How can persuasive leadership inspire the people to actively participate in moving their country forward toward development, or join in the debate over how best to do so?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

*Question 2c.* How do you teach leadership in a place where it has been suppressed?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

*Question 3.* How can you make the argument to the Yemeni government that their goals of maintaining stability and fighting AQ are not exclusive and can be done concurrently inasmuch as resources are concerned?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

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