

THREATS TO THE HOMELAND

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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THREATS TO THE HOMELAND

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2015

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

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in room SD-342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Ron Johnson, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Johnson, Portman, Lankford, Ayotte, Ernst, Sasse, Carper, McCaskill, Tester, Baldwin, Heitkamp, Booker, and Peters.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN JOHNSON

Chairman JOHNSON. Good morning. This hearing will come to order. I want to first of all welcome our distinguished panel of witnesses. Thank you for your time. Thank you for your thoughtful testimony. Thank you for your service to this Nation.

When I took over chairmanship of this Committee—what was it? About 10 months ago—the first thing I did is I reached out to Senator Carper, another person of real integrity, and I suggested we do something maybe a little unusual for a Senate Committee. We developed a mission statement. I guess that is my business and my manufacturing background. And so we came up with one that is pretty simple. It is, simply, to enhance the economic and national security of America.

I think that accomplished two things: First of all, it starts our relationship as the Ranking Member and Chairman and as the Committee on an area of agreement. I mean, who could disagree with that? It also directed the activity of our Committee.

And so the other thing we did is we established—we have really kind of two Committees in one, Homeland Security and then Governmental Affairs. But on the Homeland Security side—and that is what this hearing is all about—we established some basic priorities, and not in any particular order. We established five: border security; cybersecurity; protecting our critical infrastructure, including our electrical grid; doing whatever we can to counter violent extremists, Islamic terrorists whose threat, Director, in your testimony you say is growing; and our fifth priority was really kind of directed at the Secretary, but I will include both you gentlemen as well, doing everything we can, committing this Committee to help you achieve your goal, your mission of keeping this Nation safe.

So, again, I want to thank you for your service. It is exactly what this Committee is trying to do. Your testimony, which I have reviewed, basically follows right down what our list of priorities are.

These threats that we face in the Nation are real. They are not diminishing. They are not receding. They are actually growing.

And so I know you are, again, three men of integrity that take your duties and responsibilities very seriously. So, again, I thank you for that. I am certainly looking forward to your testimony. I want to thank the Senators that are here. I am looking forward to a very informative hearing.

With that, I will turn it over to Senator Carper.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR CARPER

Senator CARPER. Thanks. Thanks so much, Mr. Chairman.

I want to start off by calling an audible here. I was thinking today, Secretary Jeh Johnson, coming down on the train, that in the last couple of weeks, we have been visited by Pope Francis up and down the east coast, all over the place, millions of people involved with him. We have been visited by the President of China, President Xi Jinping, a big entourage. Up in New York City, at the United Nations, I think leaders of over maybe 70 countries have visited our country, New York City, the U.N. The thing to me that is remarkable about all that—and I think you are going to touch on this in your testimony, but I want to just add a word as well. When the Secret Service screws up—and they have—we call them on it. And when people make a mistake, there needs to be accountability. I know you believe in that, and we do as well. And the Pope's visit, the visit of President Xi, the visit of all the 70 national leaders who came to our country, for it to come off without a hitch is just amazing. It is just amazing. And it gives me some encouragement that folks in the Secret Service, most of whom are hard-working and want to do the right thing, do the right thing every day, that better days lie ahead. They did not do this by themselves. They had a lot of help from other entities within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), State and local law authorities, and others. But I just want to say, as we say in the Navy when somebody does a job well, "Bravo Zulu."

Since 9/11, the most acute terrorist threats came from Osama bin Laden. Today bin Laden is dead. The core of al-Qaeda is largely dismantled.

Unfortunately, ISIS and al-Qaeda's affiliates in Yemen and Syria have filled the void. The tactics they use against us and others have changed. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in particular has perfected, as we know, using social media to spread its online propaganda and recruit members to its ranks. These new tactics mean that we can no longer rely solely on military force to eliminate a terrorist threat.

We must identify the root causes of why Westerners join the ranks of ISIS and tailor our counterterrorism tactics to meet this evolving challenge, and that is no easy task. To do this, we will have to improve our ability to counter violent extremism, and I know we are focused on that. I know this is a priority for all of our witnesses, and I commend the Secretary for establishing a new office at the Department that will be focused on countering violent extremism (CVE).

Moreover, if we are to be truly successful in countering ISIS' message, among other things, we must remind the world of the

principles and values that our country stands for. We have a long history of granting refuge to the war-weary. We have a moral obligation to continue this tradition by taking a reasonable share of Syrian refugees.

The Pope reminded us as he invoked not just the Golden Rule but Matthew 25, “When I was hungry, did you feed Me? When I was naked, did you clothe Me? When I was thirsty, did you give Me to drink? When I was sick and in prison, did you come to visit Me? When I was a stranger in your land, did you take Me in?” So there is a moral imperative here. The moral imperative for us is not to be blind to this really awful situation that is faced by all these millions of Syrian refugees, but also to realize that there is a smart way for us to play a role. We are doing a huge role financially, leader among the nations of the world in providing aid, emergency aid to the folks that are displaced, and so there is sort of a tension here between how do we be consistent with Matthew 25, the least of these, and how do we do that in a way that protects us from extremists who might like to try to use this as an opportunity to come in and infiltrate our country?

The other thing I want to mention is cybersecurity. I just came from a meeting with a bunch of folks over in the Capitol on cybersecurity, and when I finished my remarks, we took a little bit of time, and I said, “Every one of you, take 15 seconds and tell us what you think we should make as a priority. What should be our priority between now and, say, Christmas?” And they basically had two answers: one was do not let the government shut down, come up with a reasonable budget that meets our Nation’s needs in a fiscally responsible, sustainable way; and the other thing they said is cybersecurity. Cybersecurity. And we have the opportunity—we have worked very hard here under the leadership of our Chairman, a lot of folks on our Committee, to do just that, to make it possible the last Congress for DHS to have some of the tools that they need to do a better job—and you are doing a better job; we applaud you for that—but to also make sure that we focus on information sharing, do it in a smart way that incentivizes folks that are hackers or whatever it is share their information with the Federal Government and the Federal Government in real time—it comes through the DHS portal in real time, you share it with everybody else so there is no loss of time.

So those are the kind of things—we are going to take EINSTEIN, build on EINSTEIN 1, 2, 3, EINSTEIN 3A, put it on steroids, and I think you are doing a lot of good things in your Department, Mr. Secretary, to help build on those tools.

The last thing I want to say is this: A week ago, or 2 weeks ago maybe, Senator Johnson and I were invited by you, along with Tom Ridge, former Secretary, your predecessor, a former Governor with whom I served as Governor, and you invited us to come to Shanksville, Pennsylvania. It was a day I will never forget, and I just want to thank you again for that. It reminds us again of what can happen when bad people want bad things to happen in our country. We have to be on guard. We have to be ever vigilant. But it also reminds me of the strength and the course of the 40 people on that plane who refused to go down without a fight. Refused to go down without a fight. And I will always remember them, be

grateful to them, and grateful to you for reminding us on that special day of what service is really about and what the values of this country are truly about.

Thank you.

Chairman JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Carper. I would also like to thank Secretary Jeh Johnson for inviting us. The moment that stuck out in my mind—and you gave a great speech; everybody did—was when they were describing what those passengers did. Almost their final act was they did something quintessentially American: They took a vote. So I would recommend to anybody who has not gone to Shanksville—most people probably have not—to go there. There is a powerful panel there where we have phones where you can listen to three amazing voice-mail messages from the people on that plane, concerned far more about their loved ones they were leaving behind than themselves. So, again, something quintessentially American.

With that, it is the tradition of this Committee to swear witnesses in, so if you would all rise and raise your right hand? Do you swear that the testimony you will give before this Committee will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you. God?

Secretary JOHNSON. I do.

Mr. COMEY. I do.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I do.

Chairman JOHNSON. Thank you.

Our first witness is Secretary Jeh Johnson. Secretary Johnson is the fourth Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. Prior to leading DHS, Secretary Johnson served as General Counsel for the Department of Defense (DOD), General Counsel of the Department of the Air Force, and Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York. Secretary Johnson.

**TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE JEH C. JOHNSON,¹
SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**

Secretary JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As you and Senator Carper noted, last month the three of us attended a sobering ceremony in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, for the 14th anniversary of 9/11. Today, 14 years after 9/11, it is still a dangerous world.

The events of 9/11 were the most prominent and devastating example of terrorist attacks by those who are recruited, trained, and directed overseas and exported to our homeland. The 9/11 hijackers were acting on orders from al-Qaeda's external operations chief, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who was in turn carrying out the direction of Osama bin Laden.

Likewise, the attempted "Shoe Bomber" in December 2001, the attempted "Underwear Bomber" in December 2009, the attempted Times Square car bombing in May 2010, and the attempted "Package Bomb" plot in October 2010 were all efforts to export terrorism to the United States, and they all appear to have been directed by a terrorist organization overseas.

¹ The prepared statement of Secretary Johnson appears in the Appendix on page 44.

The response to these types of attacks and attempted attacks on our homeland was and is to take the fight directly to the terrorist organizations at locations overseas.

But today the global terrorist threat is now more decentralized, more complex, and in many respects harder to detect. The new reality involves the potential for smaller-scale attacks by those who are either homegrown or home-based, not exported, and who are inspired by but not necessarily directed by a terrorist organization.

Today it is no longer necessary for terrorist organizations to personally recruit, train, and direct operatives overseas and in secret and export them to the United States to commit a terrorist attack. Today, with new and skilled use of the Internet, terrorist organizations may publicly recruit and inspire individuals to conduct attacks within their own homelands. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula no longer hides the fact that it builds bombs; it publicizes its instruction manual in its magazine and publicly urges people to use it.

Today we are also concerned about foreign terrorist fighters who are answering public calls to leave their home countries in Europe and elsewhere to travel to Iraq and Syria and take up the extremists' fight there. Many of these individuals will seek to return to their home countries with that same extremist motive.

The recent wave of terrorist attacks and attempted attacks here and in Europe reflect this new reality. The Boston Marathon bombing in April 2013, the attack on the war memorial and the parliament building in Ottawa in October 2014, the attack on the Charlie Hebdo headquarters in Paris in January 2015, the attempted attack in Garland City, Texas, in May 2015, and the attack that killed five U.S. servicemembers in Chattanooga, Tennessee in July 2015—what does this recent wave of attacks and attempted attacks have in common? They were all conducted by homegrown or home-based actors, and they all appear to have been inspired, and not directed by, al-Qaeda or the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

We are concerned about domestic terrorism in the form of a “lone wolf,” which can include various aspects of domestic terrorism such as right-wing extremism as well. We devote substantial efforts to the study and understanding of these threats and will continue to further our understanding of the underpinnings of terrorist threats of all forms.

What we are doing about it I hope to discuss in further detail during the Q&A. It is set forth in my prepared remarks, and I will not elaborate that here. What I will conclude by saying is basically two points:

One, I applaud both the House and the Senate for the good work that has been done on cybersecurity legislation. I applaud the fact that it has been bipartisan. As Senator Carper noted, I believe that there is an urgent need for help from this Congress in the area of cybersecurity. The need for cybersecurity legislation has, in my judgment, been amply demonstrated just over the last 12 months with some of the things we have seen. So I hope that the House and Senate can come together, pass legislation, go to conference, and have that legislation become law.

The last thing I will say is that homeland security is part of national security. It is the front line of national security. Our job is much more difficult to protect the American people if Congress does not repeal sequestration. We simply cannot deliver for the American people all of the homeland security that they need and want if we have to work with a sequestered budget. So I urge Congress, in as strong terms as I can, to consider repealing sequestration.

Thank you.

Chairman JOHNSON. Thank you, Secretary Johnson.

I will say I continue to press leadership to bring cybersecurity onto the floor of the Senate. I think we have that commitment. I think you will see that hopefully within the next couple weeks. And the success of that will largely depend on us all working together, as we have in the past. It is amazing what you can accomplish if you concentrate on what you agree on, the things that unite us as opposed to exploit our division. So cybersecurity is certainly one of those things that we do agree on, and I am actually quite hopeful of it, again, with your help and with Senator Carper's and really everybody on this Committee.

Our next witness is Director James Comey. Director Comey is the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Director Comey has also served as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Deputy Attorney General (AG) for the Department of Justice (DOJ), and General Counsel for organizations in the private sector. Director Comey.

TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE JAMES B. COMEY,¹ DIRECTOR, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr. COMEY. Thank you, Chairman Johnson, Senator Carper. Thank you for this opportunity to appear before the Committee, especially with my two friends and colleagues here with whom we do so much work to try and protect the American people. I am grateful for their partnership.

I am not going to repeat what is in the written statement, which we have submitted for the record, and I think Jeh has captured well the challenge we face. His description of a new reality is dead on, and I simply want to amplify it because it bears stressing. A lot of us are still thinking about the terrorism threat through the paradigm of what I call "your parents al-Qaeda." And I think it is very important that the American people understand how things have changed, and so I just want to spend a brief minute on that.

ISIL has broken the core al-Qaeda paradigm by using social media to broadcast a twin-pronged call to thousands and thousands of followers around the world, including many people in the United States. They send two messages:

First, come to the caliphate and participate in the final battle between good and evil on God's side and find meaning in your life.

Second, if you cannot travel, kill where you are. Kill anyone. But especially if you could kill people in military uniform or law enforcement uniform and video it, that would be best of all.

¹The prepared statement of Mr. Comey appears in the Appendix on page 54.

And it is a message that comes in an entirely new way, because it buzzes in the pockets of troubled souls, unmoored people all over this country all day long. Twitter is worth a lot of money because it is a great way to sell shoes or books or movies. It is a great way to crowdsource terrorism. And so ISIL started investing in this in the middle of 2014, and earlier this year we saw the payoff on the investment in hundreds of investigations in all 50 States of people who are on some path between consuming this poison and responding to it by either traveling to the so-called caliphate or killing where they are.

And so the challenge we face, the folks at this table, is finding those needles in a nationwide haystack and assessing where are they on that spectrum between consuming poison to acting on poison and disrupting them before they act.

And it gets harder still. It is not just a nationwide haystack where we are looking for needles. But what ISIL has been doing over the last year is when they find a live one, someone who might be willing to kill where they are, they will move them off of Twitter where, with lawful process, we can see the communications, and move them to an end-to-end mobile message app that is end-to-end encrypted. So the needle that we may have found disappears on us once it becomes most dangerous. And with a court order—which is the way we collect the content of communications in the United States; we get a court order. We cannot see what is being said between that ISIL recruiter and someone who would kill where they are.

This is a big problem. It is an illustration of the problem that we call “Going Dark.” It illustrates to people the conflict that we are experiencing, this country, between two values we all hold dear: safety and security on the Internet, right? I can assure you Secretary Jeh Johnson and I are big fans of strong encryption. It protects what matters to us most. We must use strong encryption. But the other value that is in conflict is public safety. We must protect the people of the United States. We must find those needs and stop them before they kill. We must find child predators, we must find kidnappers, we must find drug dealers. Those two values we hold dear are crashing into each other.

I do not know what the answer is, but I keep telling folks the FBI is not an alien force imposed on America from Mars. We belong to the American people. Our tools are only those tools the American people give us through you. And I think my job is to tell folks when one of the tools you are counting on us to use to protect you is not working so much anymore, we have to talk about that.

And so there has been a lot of conversation, very productive. The administration has decided not to seek a legislative remedy now, but that it makes sense to continue the conversations that we are having that are very productive. Because here is the thing: people in industry are good folks. They share those same values, and they are working with us to figure out how could we solve this problem. And so we are talking to industry, we are talking to State and local law enforcement, we are talking to our foreign partners, because everybody who cares about these two values has to be involved in this conversation.

There is no clear answer. An important start is to remove the venom and understand we share values. We care about protecting people. We care about safety and security on the Internet. How do we maximize both values? It is a really hard thing. But I think America does hard, especially when it implicates our most fundamental values.

So I thank the Members of this Committee for their engagement on this issue and my partners here at the table, and we will continue the conversation with the American people. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman JOHNSON. Thank you, Director.

Our next witness is Director Nicholas Rasmussen. Director Rasmussen is the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). Director Rasmussen previously served as the Deputy Director of NCTC, in various functions on the National Security Council staff, and in several key positions within the Department of State. Director Rasmussen.

**TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE NICHOLAS J. RASMUSSEN,¹
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER, OF-
FICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you, Senator Carper. Like Secretary Johnson and Director Comey, I welcome the opportunity today to have a good, thoughtful conversation with the Committee.

Before getting into the threat picture in a little greater detail, I first want to stress just how well and how closely aligned we at NCTC are with my colleagues at DHS and FBI. We see the threat environment the same way. We share information. We collaborate in a very intense way every day to produce analysis to support our operations.

I will start with the good news. From an analytic perspective, the chances of a spectacular large-scale attack here in the homeland carried out by an overseas terrorist group, along the lines of what my two colleagues described, that has been substantially reduced over the last several years, and we have collectively achieved that outcome through aggressive CT action in South Asia and other places around the world, but also through the creation of a robust homeland security and counterterrorism infrastructure here in the homeland that we have developed as a community over the last decade.

And while we can look with some degree of satisfaction at the work done to reduce that threat of a large-scale mass casualty attack, there is still quite a bit to be concerned about in the threat landscape, as Secretary Jeh Johnson and Director James Comey mentioned, and that landscape is in some ways more challenging than ever.

It is also clear that the terrorists' operating paradigm has shifted, and it has shifted in ways that are proving particularly challenging as we try to identify and disrupt threats to the homeland. Today there are more threats originating in more places and involving a more diffuse and disparate set of individuals than at any

¹The prepared statement of Mr. Rasmussen appears in the Appendix on page 60.

time previously. And let me spell out what I mean by that and highlight a couple of areas of greatest focus and concern. And as you would expect, I will start with ISIL, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

In our judgment, ISIL has overtaken al-Qaeda as the leader of the global violent extremist movement, and the group does view itself as being in conflict with the West, and that conflict is being played out not just in Syria and Iraq now but also in a number of other locations around the world where ISIL has declared itself to have established a province. Those places include Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Nigeria, the Caucasus Region, and even potentially in Southeast Asia as well—Indonesia and perhaps the Philippines. And that aggressive growth and expansionist agenda has implications for our homeland threat picture, and there are three especially concerning features of ISIL as a terrorist group that make me reach this conclusion.

The first is ISIL's access to extensive resources, and that can be measured in terms of manpower, military materiel, and, of course, money.

The second concerning feature of ISIL is the territorial control that ISIL exercises in large portions of Iraq and Syria as well as in some of those province areas that I mentioned a few minutes ago.

And third is their access to a large pool of individuals from Western countries, both those who have traveled to Iraq and Syria and those who have remained in their home countries. And when we look as intelligence professionals for indicators of external operations capability in ISIL that could threaten our homeland, these are the key features that we would expect to see, and that is of concern.

In his testimony, in his published testimony, Secretary Jeh Johnson alluded to how we are coming to view the threat from ISIL, and especially the homeland piece of that threat. We are seeing that threat as having ISIL involved in some ways along a spectrum of activity. At one end of that spectrum we see isolated individuals, as Director Comey mentioned, who draw inspiration from ISIL's prolific, spectacular use of sophisticated social media, and that is true even if ISIL is not actually directing or guiding their actions. And at the other end of the spectrum, we assess that there are, in fact, individuals who may, in fact, receive direct guidance and direction from ISIL members, including people who are leaders in the ISIL organization. This spectrum is very difficult for us to penetrate and understand because of the collection difficulties that Director Comey pointed to a minute ago.

But more often than not, we see that individuals inside the homeland actually are operating somewhere between the two ends of that spectrum, and that creates a fluid picture that makes it even more challenging for us to get inside of.

Beyond our intensive focus on ISIL and the threat it poses to the homeland, though, you would certainly expect that we are continuing to devote substantial attention to al-Qaeda, its affiliates and nodes around the world. And despite the unrelenting media attention that is focused on ISIL in current days, in no respect at all,

would we downgrade our level of effort and attention on the al-Qaeda-related set of threats that we face as a Nation.

And when I am asked often to identify what my No. 1 terrorism concern is, I most often decline to answer because I would not want to suggest that our focus on ISIL comes at the expense of efforts focused on al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations.

Specifically with al-Qaeda, we are watching closely for signs that their attack capability is being restored ahead of the drawdown in Afghanistan. And while al-Qaeda's core leaders have certainly been degraded, we continue to track and investigate any indications that core al-Qaeda is engaged in plotting activity aimed at the homeland. We know that remains an ambition and their intent, so we stay on it constantly.

In both their statements for the record, both Director Comey and Secretary Johnson highlighted al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), and that is for good reason. The threat from AQAP remains at the top of our list of analytic priorities given the group's unrelenting focus on targeting U.S. interests, including potentially the homeland and potentially the aviation sector. Our work in this area is made all the more complicated by the difficult situation in Yemen at this time.

Beyond Yemen, we are also watching al-Qaeda affiliate networks and individuals in Syria who may be looking to carry out external operations attacks. Our efforts to disrupt al-Qaeda plotting emanating from Syria have certainly been successful in the last several months, and some of the most important figures of concern have been taken off the map, but there is clearly more to be done in this regard. And in the meantime, we are looking very closely for any signs of intelligence that would give us a hint as to what they are planning.

The third and final area of priority focus is the growing use of simple, opportunity-driven attacks by homegrown violent extremists (HVEs)." If you go back to 2009, we were seeing on average less than two or three of these incidents a year. By last year, the number rose to a dozen, and to date this year, that number has already doubled. And, of course, we are not all the way through the year yet. And while it is difficult for us to put numbers on the precise population of homegrown violent extremists here in the United States, there is no question in my mind that this population has increased in size dramatically over the last 18 months. And you can certainly say that ISIL has injected new energy and life into the population of homegrown violent extremists.

ISIL for its part knows that it can have an impact, as the Director said, by motivating individuals in their own locations to act in support of ISIL by carrying out individual attacks, even on a relatively modest scale.

So as I conclude, I would just like to say that we stress again we continue to work to detect, defeat, and disrupt the full spectrum of threats we face as a country, focused heavily on ISIL and the set of associated threats, but just as ardently, just as committedly, the focus remains on al-Qaeda and all of its affiliates.

I will stop there, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman JOHNSON. Thank you, Director Rasmussen.

Obviously, the purpose of this hearing is to highlight these threats so that as a public we face this new reality, as the Director and Secretary both mentioned. We obviously want to be very concerned about anything classified, but it is extremely important—Secretary Johnson, in your testimony you said, and let me repeat, “But today the global terrorist threat is more decentralized, more complex, and in many respects harder to detect.”

Director Rasmussen, your testimony: “The array of extremist actors around the globe is broader, wider, and deeper than . . . at any time since 9/11.”

Director Comey, we had a hearing called “Jihad 2.0” really exploring and highlighting the problem of and the sophistication with which ISIL is utilizing social media. In that hearing, we had testimony that said that there were at the time somewhere between 46,000 and 90,000 overt ISIS support accounts.

Now, I know Twitter has been taking some of those accounts down, but they just basically pop up with another name and another handle.

You talked about the social media, those individuals following ISIS there, then being moved over into encrypted accounts. Can you give us some sense of the numbers of people that you are concerned about that have been engaged in social media? And I do want to talk about your inability to track, but how much information do we have just in terms of the number of people that have been inspired through the social media, the open media, where we can track into encrypted accounts?

Mr. COMEY. Probably the best number I can give in an open setting is dozens.

Chairman JOHNSON. OK. I would also, as long as I am talking to you—and I know Secretary Johnson has also gone into the communities to try and engage the communities. And this is, I do not think, classified. I remember hearing in a briefing that the members of the communities themselves think that we have a complete handle on this, that we know who among their midst might be being inspired by ISIS, which that is completely false, correct? I mean, would you agree that that is sort of an assessment?

Mr. COMEY. I do. First of all, I agree with you, I think Jeh has been a leader on this, getting out there and talking to the good folks, no matter what their background, do not want their sons and daughters either going to caliphate, which is a nightmare, and dying there or killing people and surrendering their life to a long prison sentence here. The answer is it is a huge challenge because good people do what good people do, which is we tend to write an innocent narrative over troubling facts, so the hair stands up on the back of your neck, but you say, “Well, I must be misunderstanding,” or “He must just be having a bad day,” or “I must not have heard him right.” And what we are trying to get folks to do is, when the hair stands up on the back of your neck, just tell us. Tell any police officer, any deputy sheriff. We will check it out, in secret so no one gets smeared, and if it is nothing, it is nothing. But if it is something, you may have just saved your child’s life and the life of innocent people. But given human nature, that is an enormous challenge for us.

Chairman JOHNSON. There was a New York Times article that really described an FBI informant operative really having multiple, I think hundreds of conversations with the terrorist from Garland, Texas, and the FBI spent quite a few, I think hundreds of thousands of dollars for that FBI operative. Talk to me about the effectiveness of that. I am just putting myself in the position of a parent whose son, maybe a 20-year-old kid, is being engaged by the FBI, talked about different—the caliphate and all that type of thing, and then all of a sudden the FBI swoops in and says, “Did you ever talk about traveling over to Syria?” And the person is brought up on charges and convicted.

I think that is a serious concern about is that the best way to engage a community. Based on that, have we rethought that at all?

Mr. COMEY. Well, we have not rethought—we all agree, I think, that it is very important that we try to understand where are folks from this consuming to acting, make an assessment, and then take it very seriously, especially if they are moving toward acts of violence. And so we are going to continue that work, but knowing that we have to do that work I hope should motivate the good parents of the United States. No one wants their children to go die in the nightmare that is the so-called caliphate or have to be locked up because they violated the antiterrorism laws of the United States. And so it is just another reason why good parents need to talk to us, need to know what their kids are doing.

One of the challenges we all face as parents—I have five children—is a sense that you want to know where your child is going physically, you want to know if your kid is going to hang out at the mall, but you do not have such a sense of where they are online, which is the entire world. And so what we keep saying to people is when you see things that are troubling, help us engage and keep kids from getting to a place where they have to be locked up.

We have done a lot of work, the three organizations at this table, to try and build capabilities—we call them “off ramps”—so that if we can intervene early when a parent tells us about a kid, we can get that kid the help they need—sometimes it is substance abuse, sometimes it is counseling, sometimes it is religious guidance—so they do not have to become somebody we have to lock up. And so that is an ongoing conversation with the families of the United States. And we are making progress, but it is something we have to continue to push on.

Chairman JOHNSON. Secretary Johnson, again, you have been a real leader and engaged in the communities, and I applaud you for that. And, again, I am a little concerned about numbers, but I will say I am surprised if it is only a couple dozen people who have been inspired on social media, then moved to encrypted accounts. Talk to me about your engagement with communities, but also about your assessment of that number.

Secretary JOHNSON. Well, first of all, by the nature of the existing threat we face, we are concerned about a lot of people who self-radicalize, essentially, by reading things on social media without necessarily direct communications between somebody in the homeland and somebody overseas. And what we know suggests that before somebody in that situation turns to an act of violence, there are very few people who are in a position to know about it—the

parents, perhaps a brother or a spouse, somebody that is living in the immediate home with that person. And so by the nature of the problem, we do not often have advance opportunity to interdict, to arrest, to prosecute, which is why I think the CVE engagements are so important, to build bridges, lower barriers of suspicion, and encourage people in communities, this is your homeland, too, help us help you with public safety.

And so we have been out there doing this. I think we have seen a lot of good reaction, some criticism to our efforts, which I think means we know that our efforts are having an effect, but just heightening awareness and asking people for their help is fundamental given the nature of the current threat we have.

Chairman JOHNSON. Just real quick with Director Rasmussen, Director Comey talked about the balance, the very delicate balance between civil liberties and security, and we are always concerned about that. You talked about the spectrum. Where are we today in that spectrum, in that fulcrum point between civil liberties and security? And where do we really need to be?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Boy, that is an incredibly complex question, and I am not sure there is a particular point that is a resting point on that spectrum. As Director Comey suggested, we know we are facing significant new challenges in the way we have traditionally collected intelligence to get at our terrorist adversaries. Simply put, the kinds of insight we used to have into some of the more complex al-Qaeda-linked plotting is just not available to us right now. And so, naturally, in that environment we are going to exhaust every opportunity we can—every avenue we can think of to try to develop new collection opportunities. Those will, of course, have to be balanced against all of the factors you describe, Mr. Chairman, and that is an ongoing process, which is why I do not think we are at some steady equilibrium along a spectrum, I think as the Director said, is also going to be a subject of an ongoing conversation with the private sector and the parts of industry that hold critical nodes of communication. And, unfortunately, many of these terrorist actors are exercising their craft on these platforms.

I think the good news is that we have opened a conversation. There is a lot of ground to be covered in that conversation without the Federal Government dictating solutions or, as the Director said, choosing a legislative framework at this particular point. But we are at the front end of that conversation, and it has to play out over the period ahead.

Chairman JOHNSON. I recognize it is complex. I did not expect a definitive answer, and your answer is exactly right. This is a conversation, this is a discussion we must have. It has to be an honest conversation, and we have to be looking at the new reality, the threats we are facing. They are not on the run. They are growing, and we need to be concerned about that. And we have to be discussing this in a very serious and honest fashion. Senator Carper.

Senator CARPER. Let me preface my questions by again just emphasizing how much we appreciate your commitment to our country, your commitment to defending us, and the hard work that you and your team, the teams that you lead, are doing on our behalf.

As my colleagues know, I like to talk about what is the secret to a long marriage between two people, and the best answer I ever

heard: Communicate and compromise. I would add a third C to that: collaborate. And when I look at the three of you, I see the three C's—communicate, compromise, collaborate—embodied. So keep it up and thank you. You set a good example for us.

Our Chairman and I and others on this Committee like to focus not just on addressing symptoms of problems. We are pretty good at that as a Nation. We do not always look at the underlying cause or the root cause. Senator Johnson and I are going to lead a Congressional Delegation (CODEL). I think Senator Peters is going to go down with us, I think Senator Heitkamp is going down with us, and maybe a couple of House colleagues are going to go down with uninsured, and we are going to go to Honduras, maybe Guatemala, and try to get a better handle on why tens of thousands of people would risk life and limb to go 1,500 miles through a terrible situation of getting through Mexico to get to our border to face an uncertain future. We have spent \$1 trillion in the last decade or so trying to figure out how to stop people from getting in. We have spent less than 1 percent of that to try to figure out what the root causes are that are compelling people to come. So I am big root cause guy, and when I look at the cyber attacks that have been directed at our country in recent years, one of them is the Chinese. And they know what is going on. They pretend that they have not, but they know full well that there are entities within their country that are trying to steal our intellectual seed corn to be able to get economic short-cuts to prosperity at our expense, and we just pretty much underwrite the costs for them.

I just want to commend Secretary Johnson and everybody else that was involved, the President and others that were involved in convincing the Chinese that it was time to change their ways, to mend their ways. And I am not sure what the prospects are for actually succeeding in this, but the agreement that has been struck is a very, very encouraging sign. I really did not think we would be able to get that, so I applaud you.

There is a mechanism in place, Secretary Johnson, going forth, and I think it involves you, I think it involves the Attorney General, to build on what has been agreed to, to make sure that, it is not just that they are going to say this and do something else, but how do we make sure they do what they have committed to do and then for us to build on that.

Would you just talk a minute about that, please?

Secretary JOHNSON. Yes. When the Chinese were here, both for the President's visit and about 2 weeks before, we had very frank conversations about cybersecurity, about cyber norms that we believe nations should embrace, and there are a lot of good things on paper. The question now becomes whether the Chinese will do what they agreed to do on paper. And so the way forward will be putting them to the task of having ministerial-level conversations with us on a regular basis. We hope to have one before the end of this year, and we are now arranging dates to do that. So time will tell about whether or not the Chinese will live up to what they agreed to do.

I am pleased with what is on the paper, but actions will speak louder than words in this context.

Senator CARPER. All right. Thank you. I alluded earlier to actually the Pope's message, Pope Francis' message to us. When he was here, he spoke to our Joint Session of Congress a week or two ago, and his focus was on the Golden Rule and on Matthew 25, the least of these. And one of the provisions in Matthew 25 talks about, "Where were you when I was a stranger in your land? Did you welcome me in?" And we have, I think, a moral obligation to do that where we can and to look out for those that are in terrible situations. We have this need to make sure that as those 10,000 Syrian refugees come to agree that they are not embedded by a number of folks from ISIS who wish us harm.

I would just like for us to talk about what we can do, ought to do, will do, to the extent you can in a public forum, to make sure that those threats are anticipated and appropriately addressed. And that could be for a number of you—Director Comey, Secretary Johnson, Nick.

Secretary JOHNSON. Well, just to highlight one thing in particular, given the nature of how the terrorist threat has evolved, I think it is incumbent upon us at the Federal level to share as much intelligence as we can with State and local law enforcement. I think Jim's people do an excellent job at the Federal level of detecting, investigating, and interdicting terrorist threats almost on a weekly, if not daily basis. And I have been constantly impressed with how their methods have evolved to match the threat. But things like the Garland City, Texas, attempted attack highlight that it is also critical that we get information out to State and local law enforcement as well so that they are aware of what we are seeing.

Senator CARPER. Mr. Comey.

Mr. COMEY. With respect to the potential of Syrian asylees coming to the United States, it is—

Senator CARPER. There is a real tension here, as you know. We are trying to do the right thing, and at the same time, we are trying to do the other right thing.

Mr. COMEY. It is something that we have learned how to do better, screening people. The experience we had, we did not do it as well as we should have in the mid-2000s, the first decade, with Iraqi refugees. So we had to go back and redo it. We have learned a lot from that, so I think we are more effective as a law enforcement, intelligence, national security community at screening folks.

That said, there is no such thing as a no-risk enterprise, and there are deficits that we face. I am not comfortable talking about them in an open setting.

Senator CARPER. I understand.

Mr. COMEY. I do not want the bad guys to know what we might not be able to—

Senator CARPER. I understand.

Mr. COMEY. But that is how I would sum it up.

Senator CARPER. All right. Fine. Thank you.

Secretary JOHNSON. Senator, if I could?

Senator CARPER. Please, yes.

Secretary JOHNSON. With regard to Syrian refugees in particular, I agree totally with what Jim said. We should do the right thing by accepting more, but we have to be careful in doing it. We have

improved the process for vetting from a security standpoint the refugees who are admitted in this country, and I am committed to making sure that we maintain that process.

Senator CARPER. Good. Thanks.

Director Comey, you mentioned encryption, back-door ways to make sure we are trying to protect against terrible crime and criminals, and you mentioned conversations are under way. Can you tell us just a little bit more about that? Because I think this is real important, and I am sure you do, too.

Mr. COMEY. We are having increasingly productive, frank conversations with industry because I think in part the ISIL threat focused everybody's minds and understood that we are just not making this up, that there really is a conflict between values we all care about, safety and security and public safety. And so industry is not a monolith. There are lots of different services and products being provided, but what I have found is they are all people who care about the safety of America and also care about privacy and civil liberties. And so we are talking to each other about how could we accommodate both of those values. Again, this is about how could we get you in a position to comply with a court order. We are not looking for volunteers. We are not looking to sneak in anywhere. But how could we get to a place, technologically, legally, where we could get you to comply with court orders? So that is with the companies. But also really important conversations with our allies around the world who care both about the same values, the rule of law, and care about safety, public safety. And so we are having good conversations with a lot of our European allies, but how could we together come up with a framework that would make sense, embrace the rule of law, and maximize both of those values.

And the last group, with State and local law enforcement. This is actually a problem that affects State and local law enforcement most of all, because child abuse cases, domestic violence cases, car crash cases, all of those things that cops and sheriffs and DAs have to work are affected by the fact that encryption has gone from an option available to sophisticated people, which has always been, to a default. And so cops and sheriffs trying to figure out where this child went are increasingly encountering devices they cannot open with a search warrant. And so we are engaging them in the conversation, too, because this affects every community in the United States.

There is no simple answer, that is what I meant when I said the conversations are ongoing, and they have gotten healthier, because people have stripped out a lot of the venom. Folks are not questioning as much as they used to each other's motives because we are in a place where we recognize we care about the same stuff.

Senator CARPER. I will close with this quick note, if I can. We are always asking Secretary Johnson what we can do to help. He is always good to give us a to-do list. I would say to you this is an important issue, and if there are some things that we can be doing to help on the legislative side, please let us know.

Chairman JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Carper.

By the way, a quick comment or suggestion on the prioritization of the Syrian refugees we do let into this country. If we set as a No. 1 criteria family members and we can do DNA testing, that

would certainly be, I think, helpful. Plus Syrian families, Syrian American families can also be financially responsible. So I think it is setting criteria for prioritization of who we actually let in, and I think it would be helpful. Senator Tester.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR TESTER

Senator TESTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you all for your sobering testimony.

I am going to start with you, Director Comey—and the Ranking Member touched on this—about folks being on Twitter and then they go dark. And you talked about technology and legality, and you talked about working with the private sector when you responded to the Ranking Member.

The question I have is: Do you have adequate resources—this could go across the board, by the way, because I know you work on it, too, Jeh. But do you have adequate resources, do you have adequate manpower to be able to technologically stay ahead of these guys?

Mr. COMEY. A tentative yes, and here is why it is a tentative yes. The answer yes depends upon a number of things: the FBI's ability to hire out of the hole we were left with from the impact of the last sequestration, almost 3,000 vacancies. We are climbing out of that hole now. That is the first thing.

And the second thing is I do not know whether what we faced this summer is the new normal; that is, this summer we were following dozens and dozens of people all over the United States 24/7, and that is only easy on TV. And so to do that, we had to surge resources from our criminal cases to make sure we cover this so these folks did not go kill people, and we disrupted a lot of those people. And our great colleagues in the military have made some progress at degrading some of the capabilities of ISIL in their so-called caliphate. So I do not know whether what we experienced this summer will be the new normal. If it is, then I will have a resource mismatch, and I will be prudent about coming back and asking.

Senator TESTER. OK. Jeh, is your agency in the same boat?

Secretary JOHNSON. Yes, I agree with everything Jim said, and I also agree with his assessment of the "Going Dark" problem. There are demonstrable cases where we have seen that our ability to track individuals of suspicion is hampered by the means of their communication.

Senator TESTER. And so I would just ask, can technology take that darkness to light?

Secretary JOHNSON. With help from the private sector, yes.

Senator TESTER. OK. Collaboration and communication has been talked about. I think it was you, Nick, who talked about across the board you guys collaborate and communicate well. How is it working with State and local law enforcement? Are they brought up to speed? Are you concerned about information getting out that you do not want out so they are not brought up to speed? Give me the lay of the landscape. I do not care which one you want to talk about.

Mr. COMEY. I think it is in a very good place, and I think they would be the best people to check with on this. But I think our

Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF), our Fusion Centers around the country are connected in ways they were not before, and chiefs and sheriffs understand that the new reality, as Jeh said, is not a Washington-focused or New York-focused. These troubled souls, these unmoored people, are everywhere, and so they get that and they are engaged. And I think they would tell you that they are hearing earlier and more completely from all of us at this table what they need to know.

Senator TESTER. So the channels are there to flow information down and back up.

Mr. COMEY. Yes.

Senator TESTER. OK. The Ranking Member also talked about, he said it takes more than military to reduce the terrorist threats. Would you guys agree with that statement?

Secretary JOHNSON. Yes, absolutely.

Senator TESTER. And your role in reducing the domestic threat, that is your primary responsibility, correct?

Secretary JOHNSON. Yes, sir.

Senator TESTER. OK. So as Congress wraps up this year—and any one of you guys can answer this, but it would probably be you, Jeh—what would you prioritize Congress needs to do, two or three things, for you to be able to do your job—

Secretary JOHNSON. Repeal sequestration—

Senator TESTER [continuing]. That we need to get done soon.

Secretary JOHNSON. Repeal sequestration so that I can do all the things that the American public needs us to do for homeland security, whether it is cybersecurity, border security, aviation security. It is going to be very difficult to meet all of those priorities if we have to work with a sequestered budget.

Senator TESTER. Get rid of sequestration. Anything else?

Secretary JOHNSON. That is one, two, and three.

Senator TESTER. That is one, two, and three. OK. Has there been any comparison with terrorist actions in this country and other countries in the world? Are we more targeted? Is it the same threats around the world? Go ahead, Nick.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. The phenomenon that we have all described, these unmoored, untethered actors who potentially are connecting to ISIL by consuming their media and maybe seeking to act on their own, we have our concerning population of those individuals, as the Director described, as we have all described. Our European partners have a much larger population of those potential actors, several of them quite a bit larger than ours. And so by relative comparisons on scale, I think we are in a sense better off than some of our close European partners.

That by no means makes me feel sanguine about our own efforts and the level of resources, as the Director indicated, to be able to follow and track all of the individuals who may turn out to be a concern from a terrorism perspective. But our European partners are in some ways are even more challenged because they bring to the table often considerably less capability than we do, not just in their FBI equivalent or their homeland security equivalent, their ministry of interior or their domestic security service, but their whole counterterrorism and homeland security enterprise is often

considerably less well developed than ours, and they are often looking to us for help in trying to help figure that out.

Senator TESTER. And is that because they choose not to fund it?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Again, I think it is the rapid emergence of this new variant of the threat, I think they became—as would not be surprising—comfortable with their capability to deal with the kind of al-Qaeda threat and al-Qaeda affiliates as they understood it. The threat has changed in a pretty dramatic way as we have tried to outline, and it creates a new set of challenges, some of which are particularly resource intensive for law enforcement and intelligence organizations, especially in smaller countries.

Senator TESTER. This is not within your purview, but is there anybody—it seems to me what is going on in the Middle East now—and it extends far beyond that—is crazier than I have ever seen in my lifetime, and I do not think that is an imagination. I think there is just stuff going on that makes no sense. Is there—at least from my perspective it makes no sense. Is there anybody that is trying to find the root causes of why everything seems to be going upside down? You guys are dealing with the threat on this end. Is there anybody that is trying to ask the questions on why these guys are so effective? I know it is communication, the Internet and all that, but there has—maybe there does not. Is there a reason for this stuff? Is there something that is going on in the world that we could have some impacts on that would delegitimize these folks?

Secretary JOHNSON. We could have a whole hearing on this. And you are right, it is not directly within the purview of the three of us. My immediate reaction to your question is that there needs to be more of a global message and a global theme to counter the ISIL message to the Muslim world about what the Islamic State supposedly represents. And so my judgment is that in order to try to counter what we are seeing, the volatility that we are seeing in the Middle East, particularly Iraq and Syria, is a more amplified global message about how in the Muslim world in particular their efforts and their energy should be directed toward younger people in a positive, constructive way.

Senator TESTER. Thank you all for the jobs you do.

Chairman JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Tester.

By the way, Secretary Johnson, I agree with you, sequestration was a really stupid idea. But there is a way of solving this, and it is called “prioritization of spending.” And I completely agree, defense of this Nation, defense of this homeland is a top priority, and we ought to treat it that way. Senator Ayotte.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR AYOTTE

Senator AYOTTE. Thank you, Chairman. I want to thank all of you for being here and for what you do to keep the country safe and for your leadership.

And I wanted to start with a question for you, Secretary Johnson. We in New Hampshire are facing a public health epidemic with opioid and heroin abuse, and we have had a situation where we have had a 60-percent increase in drug deaths. And recently, Mr. Secretary, I know that you—thank you for reviewing the transcript of the hearing that we had, Senator Shaheen and I had, in

New Hampshire, of this Committee, which was where we had the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Commissioner Gill Kerlikowske there; we had the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Acting Administrator Jack Riley there; and Director Botticelli from the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

So they testified, but also we heard from the police chief of our largest city, Nick Willard, and Chief Willard said something that I think is really important that is right in your wheelhouse, which is they had an arrest recently—they responded to a shooting in Manchester, and they had officers “go into an apartment unknown to us previously”—these are his words—“and we found it to be a drug house. And from that we did an investigation that led to Lawrence, Massachusetts, and from Lawrence, Massachusetts, directly to Mexico. So now we know that there is a Mexican drug cartel, the Sinaloa drug cartel, that is fueling heroin to the streets of Manchester, New Hampshire, and that is alarming.”

I would agree with Chief Willard. We know this is coming over the Mexican border. It is really cheap on our streets right now, and obviously this is a very complex problem. There is some very strong, bipartisan legislation we are working on here across the aisle.

But, Secretary Johnson, can you tell me what more we need to do to interdict more drugs, especially heroin, coming over from Mexico? And how are you working with Mexican authorities on this issue and also other departments, including the FBI, DEA? Because this really is a public health epidemic.

Secretary JOHNSON. Well, first, Senator, thank you for conducting that field hearing. I found the testimony and your remarks from that enlightening, and you have put a spotlight on a serious problem in New Hampshire.

From my perspective, interdiction is the key. Interdiction at the Southern Border is the key. And what we have done in my Department is devise our Southern Border Campaign Strategy, which is a consolidated, strategic effort to bring to bear all the resources of my Department on the single problem of border security, which includes people and narcotics. So that is not just CBP. It is also Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and we are generally moving in the direction of a more coordinated strategy, which includes the DEA and other elements of our law enforcement.

Eventually, I would like to do the same thing on the northern border so that we are less stovepiped in our approach to both borders, and my hope is that at some point the Congress will codify our Southern Border Campaign Strategy into law and give us the additional resources we need to further work on this effort. But, obviously, interdiction is the key.

Senator AYOTTE. And, Director Comey, I wanted to ask you, one of the things that we know that the people who are addicted—law enforcement is telling us, rightly so, “We cannot arrest our way out of this problem.” But they want to focus on the kingpins. They want to focus on the cartels. We saw from Secretary Johnson what he just said, obviously the interdiction piece. But how is the FBI working to go after, for example, the kingpins of these enterprises

that are really making the money off of it and getting more and more people addicted, unfortunately, in our country.

Mr. COMEY. The answer is working especially closely with DEA, our strategy is focused on what we call “transnational organized crime,” so the big syndicates and the cartels, to do just what you said, to drive up the cost for them, to lock up them and their lieutenants, to make it harder for them to try to get drugs in, the interdiction being a separate piece of the strategy. And we are working hard at that every single day, but it is an enormous problem because of the shift you talked about.

Senator AYOTTE. Can I ask you, one of the issues that the chief raised and we talked about with the DEA—I just wanted to see if you had any insight on this. Chicago has an organized crime drug enforcement task force (OCDETF) model that they are working on, and I do not know if—the FBI I understood was a part of that model, which really was bringing—so it has sort of a partnership, as I understand it, DOJ, FBI, DEA, and local authorities. And our authorities are interested in could we bring a similar model to work together along with the High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) task force in New Hampshire, and I just wanted to get your thoughts on that type of model.

Mr. COMEY. Yes, it is a model that we have—I cannot remember what the nearest OCDETF task force is to New Hampshire. There may be one in Boston. I cannot recall. But that is a huge feature of our work, because drugs is not the Bureau’s specialty, but we have certain capabilities that we can bring to bear, so we tend to bring it to bear in those task forces, which is both—mostly OCDETF, actually, and also HIDTAs.

Senator AYOTTE. Well, I would ask you, because when I had Administrator Riley in New Hampshire, I would ask you, Director Comey, can you work with us on this, and Administrator Riley committed that from the DEA, too, to see—just to make sure—and I will say that Chief Willard said that he has been really pleased with the help he is getting from the FBI. But looking at are there better ways we can do this and make sure we are all working together in a cohesive fashion.

Mr. COMEY. Sure. Thank you.

Senator AYOTTE. I appreciate that.

I wanted to ask about this issue of—I know in your testimony, Director Comey, you talked about the estimate that 250 Americans have traveled—I do not know if it is in Secretary Johnson’s or your testimony—have traveled or attempted to travel to Syria to participate in, obviously, the conflict, and we are worried about, obviously, their participation in the jihad. And one thing I wanted to ask about is, I understand, Director Comey, that we have had an effort where we have been arresting people across this country very aggressively, and as I understand it, we have had maybe close to 50 arrests that are related to these issues. Maybe the person did not travel to Syria, but they have some connection where they are at least perhaps attempting to travel, a connection to ISIS. Could you tell us what is happening? Because I think it is important for the American people to understand that this is happening quite frequently. Your department is trying aggressively, working with Homeland Security, to arrest these individuals. But what have you

been doing across the country in terms of arrests that are being made?

Mr. COMEY. Yes, we are trying to—the arrests are part of our strategy to do two things: to incapacitate people who might otherwise travel over to the so-called caliphate, and then become much more dangerous to us. I know some folks say, “Why don’t you just let them all go? Maybe they will get killed there.” Well, maybe they will not. And when they have been——

Senator AYOTTE. We certainly do not want them coming back or going to hurt our partners in Europe.

Mr. COMEY. Right, and that is the future we are going to be talking about for the next 3 to 5 years. So we want to stop that.

We also want to send a really scary message because what we see in the travelers is they are getting incrementally younger, and more females think that it is a great way to find a life. So we are trying to send a message, first of all, that it is a nightmare there, especially for a woman. But that if you play around with this, you are going to end up in jail for a long stretch to try and change that behavior.

Senator AYOTTE. Could you give us a sense—I know my time is up, but who are you arresting? Like what is the background of the individuals? You said more women. Are you encountering younger people? Is this just centered in one community or is this something we are seeing across the country?

Mr. COMEY. No, the challenge for us is it is not—there is no geographic center to it, and in part because of the crowdsourced way that the message is going out, and there are kids and adults who are seeking meaning in their life, trouble people all over the United States. And so it resonates with those groups.

What I meant was we are seeing—there is not a particular demographic, either as to location or to age. The Syria travelers early on ranged from something like 18 to 63. But what we have noticed is—and it is early so this is not a high-confidence read—it seems to be drifting younger with more girls, and by girls I mean women under the age of 18, with whom this message on social media is resonating. And my hope is—and it is not just hope. I may see some early signs in the data that the message is getting out to families and to young people. First, it is a nightmare in Syria, do not go there thinking——

Senator AYOTTE. Of course, it is a nightmare. I mean, women are being raped, girls are being raped.

Mr. COMEY. Exactly.

Senator AYOTTE. It is horrific.

Mr. COMEY. It is hell on Earth. And this is not some joyride, that you will get in serious trouble if we get wind of it, and you will go to jail for a very long stretch. And we are doing—both of those things are important in driving the numbers down, but time will tell whether we are making progress there.

Senator AYOTTE. Well, thank you, and this is obviously something we are all very concerned about. I appreciate you all being here.

Chairman JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Ayotte. And, again, thank you for your leadership on this heroin issue.

If you remember, during testimony at one of our border security hearings, General McCaffrey said we are only interdicting 5 to 10 percent of illegal drugs coming in through the Southern Border, really indicating how unsecure our border is.

I want to thank Secretary Johnson. By the way, we were talking about the border metrics bill. That report language will be done I think next week, so hopefully we can get that passed as a first step, and we have been working on helping you codify your strategy, so happy to ramp up those efforts and kind of work on those areas of agreement. So thank you for that. Senator Heitkamp.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR HEITKAMP

Senator HEITKAMP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So much to talk about and so little time.

I want to thank you, Secretary Johnson, for mentioning the Northern Border. It is a big balloon. You press on one area, it is going to stress another area. Obviously, we have huge workforce challenges on the Northern Border, recruiting and retaining workforce. And so we have been working with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), working with your office, and I want to thank you for the attention that you have focused. Senator Ayotte and I have a bill that has already passed here and will hopefully require a new look at the Northern Border. So I will leave it there.

Director, I do not mean to pick on you, but I am going to. Have you ever been to Indian country personally?

Mr. COMEY. Yes.

Senator HEITKAMP. Where?

Mr. COMEY. I have been to Navajo, I have been to Acoma Pueblo, a couple other pueblos.

Senator HEITKAMP. OK. Have you ever been to a Great Plains reservation?

Mr. COMEY. I have not.

Senator HEITKAMP. Pine Ridge—

Mr. COMEY. My children go to Pine Ridge every summer, so—

Senator HEITKAMP. I want to tell you, there is no place in the United States where you have more responsibility than Indian country. And there is no place where we do not have a cop on the beat. We can talk all we want about what is happening in places like New Hampshire. When Gil was the drug czar, he came out and he spent 4 hours listening to the challenges of Native American leaders in dealing with drugs, cartels, an easy place to hide because jurisdictionally it is a no-man's-land, and there is no cop on the beat. And a Native American woman said to him, "We are an endangered species."

And we have huge and critical problems, and the FBI I think is failing in meeting the challenges, certainly in my part of the world, in protecting Native American people. We have record numbers of rapes of small children. We have a record amount of drugs. A tribal chairman told me that 40 percent of all the children born on one of my reservations is meth-addicted.

And so I am begging you to help. I am begging you to seek an opportunity to participate and to bring Federal law enforcement and bring your counterparts at DEA and really start focusing, because as we talk about the structures of law enforcement—and, I

spent 8 years, as North Dakota's Attorney General. When people said, where is it that the FBI gets along with the rest of the States, I would raise my hand. We have a terrific relationship with the FBI and local law enforcement. But we lose and we fail in Indian country. And you cannot protect a whole State when you have a huge amount of land and a huge opportunity for people who are peddling poison to basically go undetected, invisible, and not even, any threat at all of prosecution right there on the reservation. And people who can move are moving, and people who cannot move are being exploited.

And so I am wondering if within the FBI and within the Department of Justice and your counter agencies whether there is an opportunity to really do more surge work in Indian country, especially in my part of the world.

Mr. COMEY. The answer is yes, and thank you for that. It is not picking on me because I agree with you totally. And I am so grateful for your passion because I have had a bunch of meetings on this as Director. My children—when I became FBI Director—had just returned from Red Shirt Table, and my two girls said to me, “You have to do something. You would not believe what it is like.” Well, I understand in a pretty good way what it is like, and I describe it as “a crime scene without representation.” No one speaks for these places. So to hear you speak for this, Senator, is a wonderful thing.

So I have done some; not nearly enough. I have pushed additional resources to the Minneapolis Division, which covers you. I have changed the way we assign and recruit agents to Indian country to get more there and to get more talent there. But I have to do more, and so watch this space. But I would love to talk to you about it again.

Senator HEITKAMP. I would welcome the opportunity to talk about what we need to do, because a lot of people do not understand jurisdictional challenges. I spent a lot of time trying to get memorandums of understanding (MOUs) so that we could get drug task forces, and this was back when we were worried about far less influx of white powder heroin, methamphetamines is epidemic. And the challenges are not only in the public health arena, because Indian Health is not equipped to handle this, but there are certainly in the law enforcement. And we need a cop on the beat, and that is the Federal officials. You have primacy here.

And so I look forward to working with you on those issues and making sure that this big part of my community, which is Native American people, has the same level of public protection as any other American. And right now, I have a huge land mass, one cop, and a big river in between, and no way to get across the river to protect people. And these challenges are in Alaska, they are, as you said, on the Navajo. And so I want to thank you for your willingness to have this conversation. I want to tell you we are passionate about it. Senator Tester and I have talked over and over about this. And we would welcome you in North Dakota.

Thank you.

Chairman JOHNSON. Senator Portman.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR PORTMAN

Senator PORTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you all for being here and for your service.

On the issue of opioid abuse, particularly heroin, which is the growth area in my State of Ohio and around the country, we now have the alarming statistic that in Ohio it is the No. 1 cause of death, greater than auto accidents, which is typically the case.

I was able to speak at the rally on addiction that occurred on Sunday evening here and then spent the week with some of the individuals who came in from Ohio, and I do believe that this is an epidemic level at this point, particularly in certain parts of our State. And, by the way, the addiction rates in our rural communities are higher than in our urban or suburban communities now, according to the latest statistics that we have. And I focus more on the demand side and the treatment and recovery side, but law enforcement plays a critical role, and we need your help in Ohio. We do have some HIDTA programs that are working well. And I appreciate your commitment to that today.

Switching gears for a second, Secretary Johnson, just over a week ago, you stated, "The threat of foreign terrorist fighters requires the comprehensive efforts of all of our partner agencies and allied nations. We will continue to adapt to this evolving threat and take necessary action to protect the American public."

I would ask this morning, Director Rasmussen, if you could give us some information on these foreign fighters, and, specifically, my concern is, of course, these visa waiver countries. Can you tell us how many foreign fighters from visa waiver program countries have traveled to Syria to date?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I would have to get back to you with a breakdown by the visa waiver countries, as we understand it, Senator, but in aggregate, we assess that if you go back to the period when the conflict began, well over 3 years now, and look in aggregate, the population of individuals who we assess have traveled to the conflict zone is upwards of 28,000 right now. Now, that is an aggregate, so it does not mean that today as we speak there is a pool or a population inside Iraq and Syria. That captures and covers 3 years of activity. It also captures and covers activity in both directions, individuals who have died on the battlefield, individuals who have come and gone, individuals who have left and gone to other onward third locations. From the West—and that would largely capture the visa waiver countries that you are talking about, Senator—we assess that that population, that aggregate total, is somewhere in excess of 5,000, with the number of U.S. persons, as the Director indicated, being approximately 250.

So that is the broad breakdown of the numbers as we have them. The greatest supply of countries come from the immediate front-line States in the region, as you would imagine, because travel is so easy. But then as you get into the next outer ring, which, of course, would include Southern and Western Europe, of course, the population numbers are significant there as well.

Senator PORTMAN. That is a shocking number, 5,000, and just so people understand what we are talking about here, these are countries that have a visa waiver program with the United States where they can come to the United States without going through

the normal process to get a non-immigrant visa. These are countries that are sending foreign fighters into Syria. The concern is they would then go back to their country of origin and then be able to come to the United States under a visa waiver. And 5,000 is obviously a huge number and a huge concern.

If you would not mind, what I would like to do is ask you to get back to me on a more specific number from the visa waiver countries, and, specifically, I have a concern about the lack of information sharing. We have programs with some of these countries where we try to share information, but the passenger name recognition data, as I understand it, leaves us vulnerable to some of these countries sending us some of these foreign fighters.

Can you tell us a little about that, or anybody else on the panel, how that program is working and what else can be done to get better data on these people?

Secretary JOHNSON. Senator, let me start. I agree with you about the concern of foreign fighters coming from countries for which we do not require a visa, which is why last year we required additional information, data fields in the electronic system travel authorization (ESTA) database, those who want to come here, and then in August of this year, we identified a number of security enhancements that we could obtain from countries in the program so that we have a much better idea of who is coming here from those countries. They include, for example, the requirement that these countries make better use of API and PNR data, that they use the Interpol database for stolen passports on a more regular basis, that we increase the use of Federal air marshals on flights coming from these countries. There are a whole series of security enhancements that we identified that we could obtain and we are obtaining from these countries for exactly this reason.

Senator PORTMAN. And what more do you need? What more can we help you with? Is there anything legislatively we can do or a codification of any of that or other ways to ensure we do not have these foreign fighters slipping into this country?

Secretary JOHNSON. Well, HSPD-6, which is a Presidential directive, gives us a lot of authority in this area, and if countries want to be in this program, they should agree to these security enhancements. So that has been the mechanism for our seeking greater assurances on that. But this is a concern of mine, and I am always asking my staff that exact question: Is there any legislative authority that we could use—

Senator PORTMAN. Well, let us know, and on the passenger name recognition data, my understanding is there are some concerns there. Is there more we can do to tighten that up as well? And maybe you can get back to us with a specific answer on that issue.

On the Syrian refugees in general, as you know, Secretary Johnson, I have spent some time focusing on this issue of special immigrant visas for interpreters who served with our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. We have had a real hard time being able to go through the security clearance for these interpreters, who had already gone through a clearance process. And so I have to tell you, I am very skeptical of what I hear today about 10,000 Syrians coming into this country and having some sort of an expedited process to screen them, having gone through the experience of these inter-

preters. So I guess I would ask you today, and, Director Comey, also, you expressed concerns about this as well, I have noted, in the public media. How are we going to deal with this? Sixteen hundred Syrians by the end of fiscal year (FY) 2015 are going to be admitted. Don't you think that also creates a threat to the homeland? And, if you do think that—from, again, your comments that I have seen in the public media, you have a concern about that—what are we going to do about it?

Mr. COMEY. Well, yes, Senator, there is risk associated with bringing anybody in from the outside, but especially from a conflict zone like that. From the intelligence community's (IC) perspective, as I said, I think we have developed an effective way to touch all of our databases and resources to figure out what we know about individuals. And so that is my piece of it. I do not think that is a cumbersome process. My concern there is that there are certain gaps that I do not want to talk about publicly in the data available to us. But I cannot speak to the rest of the processing that may be part of what you are talking about.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, I think there is a significant gap because our intelligence in Syria is so bad. Right? I mean, we really do not have the information that we need to be able to process these folks. I think we need to figure this out quickly, given the fact we have made this commitment. But I do not know. Director Rasmussen, do you have more to add to that?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. You have certainly highlighted, as a matter of comparison, the intelligence picture we have of this particular conflict zone is not as rich as we would like it to be so that would give us—obviously, when you screen and vet, you screen and vet against available intelligence holdings. The more you have, the more likely you are to be able to catch derogatory information that would cause you to review a potential case more closely.

So I think the Director is absolutely right. We have a much more streamlined and effective system to make sure that all of our intelligence holdings are brought to bear as these decisions are made. But you can only review against what you have, and that is—and, again, we are actually building that fact into the way our analysts look at the picture as well so that at least we can identify where more questions need to be asked, even if intelligence is not available.

Senator PORTMAN. Well, my time has expired. I appreciate it, Mr. Chairman. But I think this is a huge issue, and before making these commitments, I hope that there is some dialogue with certainly you three gentlemen and your organizations, and I hope that we can come up with a screening process that is better than the one we have had on these interpreters I talked about, and particularly with even less intelligence, as you say, from the ground.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman JOHNSON. Senator Lankford.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR LANKFORD

Senator LANKFORD. Gentlemen, thank you for your work to protect the Nation. It is extremely important. And I want you to hear from the folks in Oklahoma. We appreciate the work that you do, and it is incredibly valuable. We understand very well—as Jeh Johnson was in Oklahoma not long ago, Director Comey was in Oklahoma not long ago, we understand extremely well the threats that we face. So I just wanted you to hear from us again that we are grateful for what you are doing.

I wanted to ask you, Secretary Johnson, you mentioned before about the cybersecurity bill. Can you explain to this Committee the why on the cybersecurity bill, why that is so important right now? Not the threats that are out there, but the specific language and what you need on the cybersecurity bill.

Secretary JOHNSON. Yes, sir. Two principal things come to mind immediately.

One, explicit congressional authorization for DHS'S ability to monitor, identify, and block unwanted intrusions in other Federal agencies through our EINSTEIN system. The virtue of the EINSTEIN system is that it has the ability to block intrusions, and it is a platform for greater and better technology in the future. So—

Senator LANKFORD. And that is in the Federal systems, not private systems, correct?

Secretary JOHNSON. Correct.

Senator LANKFORD. OK.

Secretary JOHNSON. No. 2, greater incentives through law for the private sector to share information with the Federal Government when it comes to cyber threat indicators. And so that is something that is in the pending legislation now before the Senate, and I think that is a very good thing.

So those are the two principal areas. There is always the data breach notification requirement and enhanced penalties, but those are the two principal things we need.

Senator LANKFORD. Voluntary cooperation or mandatory cooperation with the private sector?

Secretary JOHNSON. We believe that encouraging voluntary cooperation with the private sector is the way to go.

Senator LANKFORD. OK. That is a key aspect; I would agree on that. And I think the private sector and that cooperation, as Jim Comey mentioned earlier, the FBI does not come from Mars. We are all American citizens here, and finding ways for us to be able to work together on this I think is extremely important.

I want us to be able to shift a little bit to what some other folks have talked about. We talk about the threat from ISIS. It is spectacular. And we talk about a couple of dozen folks that are here that are major concerns. Last year, we had over 10,000 deaths by heroin on the streets of the United States. Hotel rooms, houses, on the streets, people quietly dying from heroin and from narcoterrorists moving into our borders and distributing this incredibly toxic substance across our Nation. So whether it is heroin, whether it is cocaine, whether it is marijuana, whether it is methamphetamines, it is a very strategic move that is happening, and it is extremely aggressive and seems to be accelerating at a pace we have not seen

before in many areas of certain types. We seem to have new locations that these drugs are coming from as well.

So can you help me understand the coordinated strategy not only dealing with ISIS and those threats on American soil, but the threats that are coming in from narcoterrorists around the world as well, both their distribution networks, the interdiction, and if we are dealing with new locations and new groups to bring it in? How are we coordinating that among the agencies to take that on?

Mr. COMEY. Senator, I can start from the enforcement perspective. Your description is completely accurate, and I actually worry that our country is not getting it the way you described it. Recently, the Acting Administrator of the DEA, who is a great leader, sent over his team to brief me on their current view of the threat, and it is breathtaking. Cocaine use has gone down since 2006. That is good news. All the rest, it is not just bad news. It is awful.

Senator LANKFORD. Right.

Mr. COMEY. And so the strategy from the enforcement perspective is try to disrupt the traffickers, try to lock them up, both the kingpins in Mexico, which is where this is coming from, and to disrupt the gangs and organized criminals they are using to distribute it in the United States, the goal being to try to drive up the price, to be honest. What is happening is heroin is so cheap and so pure that it is a tidal wave washing over children and killing them because they do not know how pure it is. And so that is the strategy from the law enforcement perspective: Drive up the cost by locking up as many of these people as we can.

And I cannot speak to, obviously, the international piece as well as maybe others could.

Secretary JOHNSON. Senator, on the interdiction front, I think the key is a good working relationship with the Government of Mexico. My Department and I personally spend a lot of time with my Mexican counterparts. I plan to go there next week. This will be a topic. We have our joint task forces here, but working with the Government of Mexico is obviously key, and I agree with you that we need to do a better job in this respect because the problem is getting worse.

Senator LANKFORD. Yes, it is accelerating. We seem to have supply coming from new areas as well. Are you seeing new players internationally that are trying to actually get supply to the United States? I mean, Mexico is obviously a very close neighbor. They are pushing it all the way through North America all the way to Canada. Are there other locations that you have seen on the horizon that you would say this is a new region that we have not dealt with as much but they are trying to transport to the United States?

Mr. COMEY. The big focus is Mexico, because what has happened is the Mexican traffickers have figured out that they can do better by, instead of bringing Colombian heroin or heroin from some other place than the United States and transport to the United States, they are growing it in southern Mexico. They are growing the poppies. They are refining it themselves. So it is just a business. They just shorten their transportation routes. They have dropped their cost so they can sell it at a lower cost and a higher purity. And so it is that domination.

And then the other piece, which is a plague in the West, is methamphetamine.

Senator LANKFORD. Right.

Mr. COMEY. They are making it in huge factories in Mexico. Again, they are not bringing it in from Colombia or any other place anymore. So the center ground zero for this plague across the drugs is Mexico.

Secretary JOHNSON. Let me give you a little bit of good news. The United States Coast Guard (USCG), we sent the national security cutter, the USS Stratton, on a 4-month mission down to Central America. While they were out for 4 months, they interdicted \$1 billion worth of cocaine, including large seizures off of submersibles that the cartels manufacture and run in the high seas between South America and Central America. So we want to continue those kinds of missions.

Senator LANKFORD. OK. What is needed to be able to continue that kind of interdiction? Because as has already been mentioned, it is not coming from Central America. They will produce it in Mexico. And so trying to find those locations—methamphetamine production, I believe, is going down in the United States, but it is rising rapidly in Mexico. So we have found effective ways to be able to limit the production in the United States. But now it is just being pushed out. So how are we handling trying to limit production there and to be able to work through the process? As you mentioned, visiting with your Mexican counterparts is a good step, but the fields continue to grow that are there both with poppies and marijuana. And the production, and the locations to be able to pick up the basic supplies to be able to do methamphetamine, and the international connections for those. How can we help?

Secretary JOHNSON. Greater coordinated law enforcement between our two governments. That is the key. And we do that on a regular basis, but we need to do more.

Senator LANKFORD. OK. Thank you for all your work on that. I would tell you keep your eye on the ball on that, because that is something that we deal with on our streets across the entire country all the time. You all know that very well. The focus cannot be off, obviously, international terrorism, which happened with ISIL and their plans and their intentional focus to try to penetrate the United States, but we know the narcoterrorists are penetrating us every single day, and to be able to find a way to be able to go through that.

One other quick side note, if I can, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Johnson, your Department has been very good working with the State of Oklahoma and dealing with the REAL ID. We are trying to work through all the final details. You have been good on a waiver on that with us. We are addressing that as a State, and I appreciate your waiver for us as we try to work through the final process to get up to speed on it. So I appreciate that.

Secretary JOHNSON. Thank you. The thing I would emphasize there is that we are progressing in our efforts to enforce this law, and there will come a point where we have to set some real deadlines. So I am pleased at the progress that we have been making in working with State officials in Oklahoma.

Senator LANKFORD. It has been good. Thank you.

Chairman JOHNSON. Thank you, Senator Lankford.

Director Rasmussen, in your previous testimony, you talked about the fact that we have taken a number of these terrorists off the map, and I guess I want to get your assessment of the unfortunate reality, you take them off the map and they are replaced. Both the leadership as well as the flow of foreign fighters seems to continue largely unabated. Can you just give me your sense of how effectively the people we are killing are being replaced?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I will do the best I can in open testimony, Senator, Mr. Chairman. One of the ways we look at this as an intelligence community is try to identify who brings unique capability to the terrorist enterprise, whether that is from a leadership level, a high-value leadership target, someone who may have a very specific set of skills perhaps, in the weapons of mass destruction field or use of explosives, someone who has shown ability to organize and orchestrate significant large-scale plotting activities. Those kinds of individuals will be worthy of, focused intelligence collection and whatever disruption capabilities we can bring to bear.

I will probably want to leave it there. Now, that is an ongoing—

Chairman JOHNSON. What about the flow of foreign fighters?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. The flow of foreign fighters, there is nobody who is satisfied that we have yet turned the tide in terms of getting that flow to have crested. I will say, though, if there is a good-news story somewhere embedded in this foreign fighter story, it is that the level of information sharing, some of which Secretary Johnson was talking about a few minutes ago, particularly with our European partners, is much more robust than it would have been if we had entered—at the point we entered this crisis 2 years ago.

Chairman JOHNSON. Again, the purpose of this hearing is laying out the reality, and so the reality is we have not stemmed the flow the way we want to.

Talk a little bit about the significance of the caliphate and the territory. There was an excellent article written by Graeme Wood¹ that really was pretty eye-opening, I think, for many people in Washington. We talked about that, Director Comey. Can you talk about that significance, again, lay out that reality and why part of our strategy has to be to deny them that territory to really end this caliphate?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. There are a couple of different features of ISIL's declaration of the caliphate that make it particularly concerning. One is, as you yourself suggested, Mr. Chairman, it becomes almost a magnet to attract individuals who are seeking meaning, who are seeking to participate in a global jihadist enterprise, and that is, unlike al-Qaeda, who is often running their enterprise as a clandestine movement with a very, very rigorous vetting process before allowing individuals inside the fold, ISIL is issuing an open invitation on social media for people to come to the caliphate and join.

So simply in terms of size and scale, the declaration of the caliphate gives us concern because it provides that magnet. But beyond that kind of somewhat amorphous effect, the creation of a caliphate and the control of physical space, as I mentioned in my tes-

¹The article referenced by Senator Johnson appears in the Appendix on page 64.

timony, gives the terrorist organization the opportunity to gather resources, to operate potentially in a safe haven environment. And while they are managing other priorities, it gives them the time and space to pursue more aggressive, ambitious external operations, again, maybe of the sort even that al-Qaeda did traditionally.

So that is I guess what I would say: The part of the caliphate that gives me the greatest concern is that physical space in Iraq and Syria that you yourself pointed to with your question.

Chairman JOHNSON. So the goal of our strategy with that in mind really needs to be to deny them that territory. I mean, if you are going to degrade and ultimately defeat ISIS, you have to deny them that territory.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I would agree, Senator.

Chairman JOHNSON. Director Comey, just a quick suggestion. I did meet with this young Yazidi woman, "Bazi," who had the courage to come forward and tell her story in terms of combating on social media these young women who are actually inspired to go to Syria and Iraq to join ISIS. That would be a pretty powerful way of doing it. Just a comment.

Secretary Johnson, we have held eight hearings on border security now. We are going to hold our ninth. In a couple weeks, we will issue the majority report on our conclusions from those hearings. I think we are in agreement that—because we have talked about this repeatedly. I am a manufacturer. I am always looking for the root cause. And I think we agree, Senator Carper, that the root cause of our unsecured border is literally our insatiable demand for drugs, and it has been insatiable for decades, which has given rise to the drug cartels, who are beginning to combine with transnational criminal organizations, potentially terrorist organizations, and so that is what we need to address. It is one of the reasons I pointed out the fact that General McCaffrey said we are only interdicting 5 to 10 percent of the drugs coming to the southern border, which shows you how unsecure our border is. So, again, we have to lay out that ugly and harsh reality.

I would like to give you, Secretary Johnson, the opportunity—you have talked about the strategy that you are trying to employ that you would want this Congress—and, quite honestly, a lot of this would come through this Committee—to help you codify. So can you just describe what your strategy is in kind of summary detail here. And, again, I am completely committed to work very closely with you and your Department to codify this in a step-by-step approach, which is, I think, the way we can actually accomplish it. Let us find the areas of agreement that unite us.

But can you kind of lay that out and give me the priorities of the components? Again, we started with you need information to solve a problem, so the border security metrics bill we are going to try and move that and get that passed and on the President's desk as soon as possible. But then what are the next steps? And what is your strategy?

Secretary JOHNSON. In terms of pure border security, Senator, more technology, more surveillance, to pursue a risk-based strategy so that we go after the threats where they know they exist. More surveillance, more technology, which is reflected in our fiscal year

2016 budget submission. We need help in terms of speeding the process of deportations and asylum applications in the immigration courts, more resources to accomplish that so that the time it takes to litigate is not as long as it is.

But, frankly, given—you mentioned the root causes in this country. I want to mention the root causes that exist in Central America. The last time I was on the border, I talked to a 7-year-old girl who came all the way from Central America all by herself to Texas, and more surveillance is not going to deter a 7-year-old who is fleeing poverty and violence in Central America from coming up here.

So my judgment is that we have to address the underlying causes in those countries. We talk about addressing the underlying causes for refugees in Syria. We have to do the same in Central America as well. And so the administration has asked for \$1 billion to invest in Central America, and I hope the Congress seriously considers that. As long as the conditions in those countries are as bad as they are, we are going to have the types of numbers that we have coming from Central America.

And so I want to invest in a smart, efficient border strategy which includes surveillance and technology on our border, but we have to address the underlying causes, too.

Chairman JOHNSON. But if we do survey and detect and we apprehend and we process and then we distribute and disperse around America, that sends a pretty powerful signal, too, to Central America that if you get to America, regardless of what our laws say, if you get to America and we do not send people home, that is going to increase the flow. I mean, it is the problem right now with Syria. And we just had the President of Germany in. The more Europe accepts of the refugees from the compassion that we are as people, to address that humanitarian crisis, the more they accept in, the more of the 4 million that are displaced outside will flow into Europe, the more the 7.6 million are displaced within Syria will flow—will become refugees and flow into Europe.

So we have a capacity in our country to take people. We are a Nation of immigrants. But at the same time, we have to recognize what incentives we are creating for illegal immigration. We also have to assess—and we are going to be going down to Central America—are there governing structures, are there leaders like we had in Colombia, are there leaders that will actually take that money and use it properly to improve conditions? Or are we just basically wasting that money as well? Those are legitimate questions. But I think we really do have to address this as part of our border security strategy, again, assessing the fact of our insatiable demand for drugs, also look at every incentive that we have created within our law for illegal immigration. We have talked about this. The No. 1 is work. So let us have a functioning guest worker program.

There is a host of issues, but really we can control things here. I do not know how much we can control in Central America. We are compassionate. We want to help, and that would be great. I am not sure how much we can do. But we can do things here, and so let us make sure we are addressing all those incentives within our law, within our adjudication process, that are incentivizing people to come into this country and end those incentives.

Secretary JOHNSON. I do not disagree with what you are saying, but I do believe, having spent my 22 months as Secretary of Homeland Security intensely focused on this problem, that a large part of the solution is addressing the conditions in Central America. It is not simply as a matter of compassion.

Chairman JOHNSON. Again, if we can make those economically prosperous zones, not havens for drugs and corruption, I would agree with you. I am not sure we can. Short term, there are some things we can do short term inside this country ourselves. Senator Carper.

Senator CARPER. As our Chairman has heard me say, and I think you, Mr. Secretary, have heard me say many times, find out what works, do more of that. And if we go back and look at Colombia 20 years ago, a failed nation, Plan Colombia, which we supported, funded, they had good leadership. They had a lot of leadership from the private sector as well, and bit by bit they have turned things around there. So somebody has done this before. We were involved in that, and so were other folks.

And I would say with respect to Central America and the movement of all these folks up to our country, especially last year—not as much this year—there is a root cause, and you have nailed it, Mr. Secretary. But what the Chairman says, there is a lot of wisdom in that as well. It is not a choice of doing one or the other. Actually, we need to do both. And the question is: Can we walk and chew gum at the same time? I think we can, and I think we must.

Nick, I have taken it easy on you today, and I am going to get you into the game here for a little bit. Does the name Jessica Stern mean anything to you?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Yes, sir. She is a terrorism expert, I think, in the academic world right now, but she has former government service.

Senator CARPER. And her husband does, too. Her husband, Chet Atkins, was a former colleague of several of us in the House of Representatives for a number of years, and I had the good fortune—she actually testified here, I think at our hearing on Jihad 2.0 earlier, and I had a chance to meet with her and her husband a couple of months ago. And she was good enough to give me a couple of her books, one called “ISIS: The State of Terror,” and that is a recent book; and then another one that she had written, gosh, more than a decade ago, and her older book focused on what is it that is causing estranged, alienated men, largely, to create in this country faith-based organizations in many cases that are really designed—that are morphing into terror organizations. And she grew that into visits all over the world, Palestine, if you will, Afghanistan, Iraq, all kinds of places. And what she was trying to do is drill down on root causes. What is it that is causing these mostly guys to leave their countries and go off in many cases and form an outfit or join an outfit like ISIS? And she concluded is this. She said these are mostly men without much meaning in their life. These are people who are—they do not like this country. They think of us as a Great Satan, a lot of immorality. The prospect of adventure, of real meaning in their life, the prospect of when they die they go to heaven, before they die they have all these wives,

and for people that there is not much happening in their life, there is not much prospect, she said they are ripe for the plucking.

Does she have it right there? Again, thinking about root causes, part of the root causes, why are all these people, when they come from all over the world, to join up with ISIS?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Thank you, sir. I think she certainly has part of it right, and the words you are using on her behalf or as part of her academic work echo some of the same analysis that our analysts across the community are engaged in.

But I meant to add this when one of your colleagues on the Committee asked earlier about underlying conditions or underlying causes. If you look at each and every one of the conflict zones around the world that are particularly fraught right now or where ISIL seems to be able to take hold in some form or fashion, another recurring theme that runs through it is sectarian conflict. And so when there are in those locations significant unresolved sectarian issues—and I do not need to go into the details on how that plays out in Iraq and Syria and across the Levant between the Sunni and Shia communities, that just creates a much more fertile ground for the ISIL narrative to take hold. So that, as you develop—as you consider mitigating strategies, that adds a layer of complexity to what you are trying to do, because you are not simply setting up a condition where you are good against evil or good guys against bad guys. If your terrorist population of concern is also enmeshed in a sectarian conflict in which the answers are not easy, or if they were easy, they would have been seized upon by previous Iraqi and Syrian Governments, all I am saying is that adds a layer of complexity to a somewhat more simple narrative of personal alienation. And, again, I am not saying “simple” in a derogatory way. That is just one level of the problem.

Senator CARPER. It seems that none of the people who are coming are going to join in the fight with ISIS. Some of them are coming from—they do not have much in terms of earning power. They do not have a lot of money in their lives. And one of the things that I hear that may attract them is being paid, to get some money out of this.

Could you just take a minute and give us an unclassified assessment of ISIS’ finances? Are they running a deficit? Are they having trouble paying their bills? What are some of the factors—how do these factors impact their ability to be successful?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. That is a very good question. At a gross aggregate level, we believe ISIS is a well-financed, well-resourced organization right now. At the early stages of the conflict, we assessed that some of the resource base on which they were relying was not necessarily going to be replenishable or a recurring base. You can rob a bank or the central bank in Iraq once, but you cannot rob it again and again and again. So I think we had hoped that over time ISIL’s ability to generate additional resources would go down more dramatically than it has. What they have shown is an ability to muster ways to use the natural resources present in the territory they control, principally oil, and exploit that for financial gain and actually develop their own manufacturing capability, and in a sense run an organization like a State.

And so I think unlike the al-Qaeda financial picture which we were dealing with for a number of years where you were worried about specific fundraising activities in certain far-flung capitals around the world and money flowing to, Pakistan to fund terrorist activity, this is much more self-generation by ISIL as it functions like a State, including using taxation but also extortion, also criminal means as well.

Senator CARPER. All right. Thanks. One last quick question, if I could, Mr. Chairman, and this is one for Secretary Johnson.

I understand you have established a new Office of Violent Extremism. Could you just take a moment and share with us how this office will do things maybe differently from DHS' existing efforts to counter violent extremism?

Secretary JOHNSON. A couple of things.

One, this office and this Director will report directly to me.

Two, I am consolidating all the personnel within the Department in headquarters who work on CVE in that one office under the supervision of that one Director.

And, three, we want to eventually use this office to extend its reach out into the field so that we have more reach in the field, because when you embed people in the communities, you get some good results.

And I want this office to focus on taking our efforts, along with the FBI and other agencies, to the next level, which is giving the counter-message a larger platform and encouraging leaders in those communities along with the tech sector to get together and do that, encourage philanthropies, and develop some of our own grantmaking in this specific area.

Senator CARPER. Thank you. Our thanks to each one of you. Thank you.

Chairman JOHNSON. Senator Baldwin.

Senator CARPER. It is pretty good timing.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR BALDWIN

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member.

I want to thank all three of you for your service. I was here for your testimony. As you know, I had to step out. And so at the risk of getting into some of the territory that has been covered in my absence, I apologize for that.

I want to dovetail on some of the questions that Senator Carper asked in his first round relating to the Syrian refugee crisis and, in particular, the waiting process. A number of you testified that we are getting better at the vetting process over time, but we are not 100 percent error-proof yet. Also, Chairman Johnson talked a little bit about prioritization in terms of family members of Syrian Americans.

In this public setting, if you can outline how we make this process more efficient and swift without sacrificing the thoroughness and quality. And if you can talk a little bit, Secretary Johnson, about the prioritization process, to the degree that it exists, that deals with family members. I would assume that the vetting for a child is different than the vetting for an adult and others with ties to the United States. Recognizing that we are currently in a public setting, please tell me as much as you can.

Secretary JOHNSON. Yes. There are several agencies involved in the process—United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), State Department—and when a refugee is referred to us, they are referred to us by United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). So UNHCR will have done some of its own vetting, not necessarily the security vetting that we would conduct, and in referring a refugee to the United States in particular, it is my understanding they do so because there are family connections to the United States versus some other countries. So by the time they come to us, UNHCR has adjudged them to be a good candidate for resettlement in the United States.

Once they are with us, the State Department meets with the individual. My understanding is that somebody from USCIS will personally interview the refugee. There is a pretty extensive background check now that includes vetting against a lot of other databases and agencies, including law enforcement and intelligence. It is better than it used to be, and the good news here is that UNHCR has already identified a number of refugees that they believe would be appropriate for resettlement in the United States. So we are not starting from scratch. We are waiting for people to pick up and leave Syria. UNHCR has already identified a number that are suitable for resettlement in the United States, and that is where we start.

There was a reference made to 1,600 resettled this year. I think we will finish out this fiscal year—the last fiscal year closer to around 2,000. So we will have gotten through the ones that we were focused on in fiscal year 2015. But I do want to be—and I have told our people we should be—very careful in the security reviews for each of these. I agree with the assessments that have been expressed here earlier that this is a population of people that we are not going to know a whole lot about necessarily coming from Syria. So we are going to meet our commitments with the resources we have, but we will do so carefully.

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you. Mr. Rasmussen in your written testimony, you described the increasing competition and conflict between the Taliban, ISIL, and al-Qaeda as a dynamic that you are working to understand more thoroughly. You also mentioned that the conflicts between these groups may in some respect distract from their Western targets.

You said you do not have all the answers. What are the questions that you are asking? I have always worried that conflict between these groups could lead to a competition to be more spectacular than each other and that, of course, gives us great concern.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. The conflict plays out at a number of levels. First of all, there is kind of at an ideological level conflict and competition taking place between al-Qaeda and the affiliated groups that still remain affiliated to al-Qaeda in Yemen, Al-Shabaab in Somalia, for example, other al-Qaeda-affiliated organizations, competition between them and ISIL for preeminence in the marketplace of ideas among global extremists. So that is at a very—at a high altitude.

But on the ground in certain locations, there is actually much more on-the-ground physical conflict between ISIL or ISIL-related groups with the Taliban in Afghanistan, for example, where actu-

ally there you have individuals who in other circumstances might even be comrades in arms, but in this circumstance are actually engaged in fighting and killing each other on the battlefield, even as Afghan National Security Forces and U.S. Coalition Forces are also present in the theater as well.

So I take your point that you certainly do not want to create a competition for ever greater levels of spectacular violence, but the one thing that internal conflict, particularly that conflict on the battlefield in a place like Afghanistan does, is it does tend to be pretty all-consuming for a terrorist organization to fight a ground war against other extremist adversaries in a place like Afghanistan.

So we are watching very carefully to see if the ISIL province in Afghanistan turns its attention from that effort to gain on the ground against the Taliban, turns from that project to something that would be aimed at us, particularly something with an external focus, something looking at the West akin to al-Qaeda over the last dozen years.

So I do not necessarily want to call it good news or that we are heartened, but what we do as a matter of assessment is realize that terrorist organizations often have finite capabilities, and so they do not necessarily have the ability to prioritize everything equally. The more they are engaged in that kind of effort on the ground that is often very resource-intensive, the less capacity they have to carry out the more kind of complex plotting.

Senator BALDWIN. In your verbal testimony this morning, you talked about ISIL having overtaken al-Qaeda, and you pointed to access to resources territorial control, and control over people. Is there still a very sharp distinction between ISIL and al-Qaeda with regard to their aspirations to control territory? And how does that relate to the risk that the organizations pose to our homeland?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. From al-Qaeda's perspective, ISIL's declaration of the caliphate is illegitimate and premature, and so they differ fundamentally on a central premise of the ISIL agenda.

At the same time, I would not draw some huge distinction between the two groups as they look at the legitimacy or virtue of attacking the West in whatever way that they can find the capacity to do so. Now, they are not making Common Cause with each other in that effort because of the philosophical and leadership cleavages. But at the same time, we worry and watch for individuals who might migrate across organizational lines to cooperate with each other for specific purpose-driven efforts. Just because someone is ISIL or al-Qaeda one day does not mean that that is—laminated badge from the organization may not last very long. You may find yourself changing teams, changing sides. And that is why I say what I said in the testimony about ISIL gaining preeminence. Success breeds success, and more individuals have flowed in the direction of ISIS/ISIL for that reason.

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I note that I have exceeded my time already. I have one other question that I wanted to ask the witnesses. I would ask unanimous consent to submit it for the record.

Chairman JOHNSON. That is fine, and we will keep the record open for questions for the record.

Thank you, Senator Baldwin.

It is another tradition of this Committee, at least since Senator Carper was Chairman, to give the witnesses a chance to just make kind of a closing comment, things that you would want to remark after the questioning. So I will start with you, Director Comey.

Mr. COMEY. I do not think I have anything. I think we have covered a complex set of topics in a pretty good way. I am not sitting here thinking there is something lingering.

Chairman JOHNSON. Good. I appreciate that. Secretary Johnson.

Secretary JOHNSON. Chairman, Senator Carper, I have appreciated our very constructive working relationship. I appreciate the tone that you have set at these hearings, and I appreciate your friendship.

Chairman JOHNSON. Director Rasmussen?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. The only thing—

Mr. COMEY. You can have more time. [Laughter.]

Chairman JOHNSON. Sing our praises.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. The only thing I would add, Mr. Chairman, is on the Governmental Affairs side of your Committee's hat, I think you would be pleased, I think as Senator Carper said, with how well and how closely our organizations are working together. As many of you know, NCTC is an organization that relies on contributions from other organizations. Our lifeblood, in addition to our permanent employees, is found in the contributions of other organizations. And just a couple of weeks ago, I had the opportunity to host Director Comey as he spoke to 60 or so FBI detailees assigned to NCTC who are doing terrific work on behalf of us all.

So just to say there is always room for improvement in the way we work together, we are constantly striving to get better at what we do, but I am tremendously proud of my workforce, but also the workforces that I get support from at DHS and FBI.

Chairman JOHNSON. Thank you, Director. We talked earlier about the cooperation between your agencies and State and local governments as well, and I am sure Senator Baldwin would agree with me. As I talk to individuals in Wisconsin tasked with your mission, keeping Wisconsin but also this Nation safe, they also are very pleased with the cooperation. So we are moving in the right direction, and that is kind of good news. So I appreciate that.

Again, I want to thank you for your service to this Nation, all three of you. I think America is incredibly fortunate to have men of your caliber and of your dedication and of your integrity serving in your capacity. I realize this is not a 9-to-5 job 5 days a week. This is 24/7/365 days a year, and all three of you are working hard to keep this Nation safe. So, truly, I think I speak for all of us when I thank you for your patriotism and for your service to this Nation.

Senator CARPER. I am Tom Carper, and I approve this message. [Laughter.]

Chairman JOHNSON. Again, there is an awful lot we agree on, and we are trying to find those areas that unify us.

So this hearing record will remain open for 15 days until October 23 at 5 p.m.—so you have some time, Senator Baldwin.

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you.

Chairman JOHNSON [continuing]. For submission of statements and questions for the record. This hearing is adjourned. Thank you all.

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

A P P E N D I X

Opening Statement of Chairman Ron Johnson: “Threats to the Homeland”

Thursday, October 8, 2015

As submitted for the record:

Each year, this committee holds a hearing to explore the greatest security threats facing our nation. Our objective today is to outline these threats for the American public, discuss how threats have changed over this past year, and discuss what the Department of Homeland Security and law enforcement and intelligence counterterrorism agencies are doing to keep our nation safe.

Today we will focus on cybersecurity, border security, and countering homegrown terrorists and foreign terrorist organizations who aim to harm America. We will also learn more about the Syrian refugee population and the role that Internet propaganda plays in inciting a new generation of terrorists on social media.

Terrorists continue to adapt their methods to exploit procedural, technological and security gaps in our cyber and aviation sectors. A recent CNN report noted a skyrocketing number of cyberattacks against federal agencies, with more than 61,000 attacks in 2013. In July the Office of Personnel Management reported that 21.5 million federal employees were affected by a breach of its systems. In addition, this committee has held a number of hearings at which witnesses have discussed weaknesses at our southwest and northern borders that could be exploited by terrorists.

Administration officials report that more than 28,000 foreign fighters have traveled to Syria and Iraq. Of those, at least 5,000 are Westerners, approximately 250 of them Americans. There they gain lethal knowledge and combat experience with weapons and explosives training, making them more dangerous should they return home. In addition to the threat posed by these “foreign fighters,” the war in Syria has created a humanitarian crisis of more than 4 million registered Syrian refugees. Some of these individuals seek refuge in the U.S., so we need to discuss the screening challenges in front of us to prevent potential terrorists from getting into this country.

The threat from homegrown terrorists and foreign terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), ISIS and the Khorasan group is not diminishing, and the committee wants to learn how these groups are evolving. ISIS’ use of social media has been particularly effective in communicating with and inciting homegrown violent extremists. Today, we will discuss what measures your agencies have deployed to defend against this emerging threat.

There is no question that there are terrorists, rogue nations and other criminal elements who want to harm this nation, but it is important to maintain perspective and not to overstate the threats. I’m thankful to be able to host this forum with such distinguished witnesses. I thank the witnesses for appearing today, and I look forward to your testimony.

Statement of Ranking Member Tom Carper: “Threats to the Homeland”
October 8, 2015

As prepared for delivery:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and welcome to our witnesses.

As this Committee has discussed at a number of hearings over the years, the threats our country faces have evolved significantly since 9/11.

After 9/11, the most acute terrorist threats came from Osama Bin Laden's Al-Qaeda. Today, Bin Laden is dead. The core of Al-Qaeda as we knew it has been dismantled.

Unfortunately, ISIS and Al-Qaeda's affiliates in Yemen and Syria have filled the void. The tactics they use have changed, as well. ISIS in particular has perfected using social media to spread its online propaganda and recruit members to its ranks. These new tactics mean that we can no longer rely solely on military force to eliminate a terrorist threat.

We must identify the root causes of why Westerners join the ranks of ISIS and tailor our counter terrorism tactics to meet this evolving challenge. That is no easy task. To do this, we will have to improve our ability to counter violent extremism. I know this is a priority for all of our witnesses, and I commend the Secretary for establishing a new office at the Department that will be focused countering violent extremism.

Moreover, if we are to be truly successful in countering ISIS's message, among other things, we must remind the world of the principals and values that the United States stands for. Our country has a long history of granting refuge to the war-weary. We have a moral obligation to continue this tradition by taking in our share of Syrian refugees.

With that said, we also have an obligation to ensure those people coming from Syria are thoroughly vetted in order to confirm that these people are who they say they are. It is our job—as well as the job of the witnesses testifying today—to strike an appropriate balance between these two competing interests. I hope we'll have a good conversation today about how we can do this.

But while we need to continue to focus on halting the kind of terrorist acts committed and inspired by groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS, there are other threats that have grown and evolved since 9/11 that also demand our attention.

Fourteen years ago, hardly anyone was talking about 'cybersecurity.' Today, cyber intrusions are a daily occurrence. Some cyber actors want to steal our sensitive information. Others just want to be disruptive to make political points. Some nation states, however, have the capability to use a cyber attack as a tool for espionage or even as a weapon of war.

And the vulnerabilities that make these kinds of attacks possible also open the information systems that run our government, our businesses, and our critical infrastructure to cause wide-scale economic damage or even physical harm.

Last year, this committee laid an important foundation and passed four cybersecurity bills that became law. Now we must come together – Democrat and Republican, privacy advocate and industry – to move cyber legislation here in the Senate as soon as possible.

We should start with the bill that Chairman Johnson and I, as well as Senators Ayotte, McCaskill, Collins, and Warner worked on to significantly enhance the EINSTEIN program at DHS. The Senate also needs to take up the information sharing bill sponsored by Senators Burr and Feinstein and consider amendments to the bill.

As I think about how we are going to address all the threats that our nation faces – terrorism, cyber attacks, drug traffickers, and even mother nature at times – I am reminded of the lessons in courage and sacrifice that I learned on a recent trip.

A few weeks ago, on the 14th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, I was honored to join Secretary Johnson and our Chairman in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, to visit the Flight 93 Memorial and commemorate the 40 passengers and crew who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Their story is a humble reminder of why we are all here today and the importance of the mission before us.

It is my hope that we will all remember the lessons that the passengers and crew of Flight 93 taught us about bravery and selflessness. And I hope we can use those lessons to make our country and the world a better, safer place.

Thank you again Mr. Secretary for that very special invitation.

I look forward to a productive hearing today.

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Prepared Testimony on “Threats to the Homeland”**Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Charles Johnson****Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee****October 8, 2015**

Chairman Johnson, Senator Carper, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here. I welcome the opportunity to appear before you with Directors Comey and Rasmussen to discuss threats to the homeland and what we are doing to address them. Though I am prepared to discuss the full scope of DHS missions, in these prepared remarks I will focus on: (i) counterterrorism, (ii) aviation security, and (iii) cybsersecurity.

Counterterrorism

Last month Senators Johnson, Carper and I attended a sobering ceremony in Shanksville, Pennsylvania for the 14th anniversary of 9/11. Today, 14 years after 9/11, it is still a dangerous world.

The events on 9/11 were the most prominent and devastating example of terrorist attacks by those who are recruited, trained and directed overseas, and exported to our homeland. The 9/11 hijackers were acting on orders from al Qaeda's external operations chief, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who was in turn carrying out the direction of Osama bin Laden.

Likewise, the attempted “Shoe Bomber” in December 2001, the attempted “Underwear Bomber” in December 2009, the attempted Times Square car bombing in May 2010, and the attempted “Package Bomb” plot in October 2010, were all efforts to export terrorism to the United States, and they all appear to have been directed by a terrorist organization overseas.

The response to these types of attacks and attempted attacks on our homeland was and is to take the fight directly to the terrorist organizations at locations overseas.

But, today the global terrorist threat is more decentralized, more complex, and in many respects harder to detect. The new reality involves the potential for smaller-scale attacks by those who are either homegrown or home-based, not exported, and who are inspired by, not necessarily directed by, a terrorist organization.

Today, it is no longer necessary for terrorist organizations to personally recruit, train, and direct operatives overseas and in secret, and export them to the U.S. to commit a terrorist attack. Today, with new and skilled use of the internet, terrorist organizations may publicly recruit and inspire individuals to conduct attacks within their own homelands. Al

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Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula no longer hides the fact that it builds bombs; it publicizes its instruction manual in its magazine, and publicly urges people to use it.

Today, we are also concerned about foreign terrorist fighters who are answering public calls to leave their home countries in Europe and elsewhere to travel to Iraq and Syria and take up the extremists' fight there. Many of these individuals will seek to return to their home countries with that same extremist motive.

The recent wave of terrorist attacks and attempted attacks here and in Europe reflect the new reality. The Boston Marathon bombing in April 2013, the attack on the war memorial and the parliament building in Ottawa in October 2014, the attack on the Charlie Hebdo headquarters in Paris in January 2015, the attempted attack in Garland City, Texas in May 2015, and the attack that killed five U.S. service members in Chattanooga, Tennessee in July: What does this recent wave of attacks and attempted attacks have in common? They were all conducted by homegrown or home-based actors, and they all appear to have been inspired, but not directed by, al Qaeda or ISIL.

Finally, we are concerned about domestic terrorism in the form of a "lone wolf" which can include various aspects of domestic terrorism such as right-wing extremism. We devote substantial efforts to the study and understand of these threats and will continue to further our understanding of the underpinnings of terrorist threats of all forms.

So, what are we doing about it?

The Department of Homeland Security, following the attacks in Ottawa, Canada last October, and in reaction to terrorist groups' public calls for attacks on government installations in the West, I directed the Federal Protective Service to enhance its presence and security at various United States Government buildings in Washington, DC and other major cities and locations around the country. We continue this enhanced presence today.

We are instituting measures to detect and prevent travel by foreign terrorist fighters.

There are presently 38 countries from which we do not require a visa to travel here. This "Visa Waiver Program" is a valuable program to promote trade and travel with our most valued allies. Last November, I directed that, for security reasons, we add fields to the Electronic System for Travel Authorization, or "ESTA" system that travelers from these countries are required to use.

In August 2015, we introduced further security enhancements to the Visa Waiver Program. From now on, countries in the Program will be required to, among other actions, implement arrangements to share information about known and suspected terrorists and serious criminals; collect and analyze travel data; and cooperate with INTERPOL – both for using INTERPOL's Lost and Stolen Passport Database to screen travelers crossing a

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VWP's country's borders, as well as reporting foreign fighters to multilateral organizations such as INTERPOL or EUROPOL. We also requested permission for the expanded use of U.S. federal air marshals on international flights from VWP countries to the U.S. These security enhancements will enable us to learn more about travelers from visa waiver countries and to more accurately and effectively identify those who pose a security risk before they board planes bound for the United States. These enhancements have already produced tangible security benefits.

Next, given the new reality of the global terrorist threat – which involves the potential for small-scale homegrown attacks by those who could strike with little or no notice -- we are enhancing our collaboration with state and local law enforcement. Almost every day, DHS and the FBI share intelligence and pertinent terrorist threat information with Joint Terrorism Task Forces, state fusion centers, local police chiefs and sheriffs. We have also enhanced our information sharing with businesses and critical infrastructure.

With regard to the current refugee crisis, the U.S. is committed to providing refuge to some of the world's most vulnerable people, while carefully screening refugees for security concerns before admitting them to the United States. The reality is that, with improvements to the process we have made over time, refugees are subject to the highest level of security checks. DHS works in concert with the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the National Counterterrorism Center, and the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center for the screening and vetting of refugees. All refugees admitted to the United States, including those from Syria, will be subject to this stringent security screening.

Next, given the nature of the evolving terrorist threat, countering violent extremism in this country is as important as any of our other key missions. Building trusted partnerships with diverse communities is essential to successfully countering violent extremism and curbing threats to the safety of our country. These communities must be empowered to reach those individuals most susceptible to the slick internet appeal of ISIL before they turn to violence. In the last Fiscal Year DHS held close to 200 meetings, roundtables, and other events in 14 cities in which I participated. And, since becoming Secretary, I have personally met with community leaders in Chicago, Columbus, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Boston, New York City, Houston, suburban Maryland, and northern Virginia.

We are now taking our CVE efforts to the next level. Last week I announced a new DHS Office for Community Partnerships, which builds upon the ongoing CVE work across the Department, consolidates our efforts, and takes them to the next level. This office will be the central hub for the Department's efforts to counter the evolving global terrorist threat to our country. Last week I named Mr. George Selim as the Director of this Office. George brings significant experience to his new role, having served as the Director for Community

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Partnerships for the National Security Council since 2012 and previously worked at the DHS Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.

My objectives for this Office are to build upon our partnerships with state and local communities and governments, coordinate and promote relationship building efforts inside and outside of government, identify resources to support countering violent extremism through government funded grants, public-private partnerships, technology, and philanthropy. Meanwhile, the DHS Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties will partner with the Office of Community Partnerships and lead, improve, and expand its important community engagement work including Community Engagement Roundtables, Town Hall Meetings, and Youth Forums in cities all across the country.

Finally, our homeland security efforts must also involve public vigilance and action. At the Super Bowl earlier this year, I re-launched the "If You See Something, Say Something™" public awareness campaign with the National Football League to help ensure the safety and security of employees, players, and fans during Super Bowl XLIX. The newly revamped materials highlight the individual role of everyday citizens to protect their neighbors and the communities they call home by recognizing and reporting suspicious activity. If You See Something, Say Something™ is more than slogan. The public must play an important role in keeping our neighborhoods and communities safe.

Aviation security

Since last summer I have required enhanced screening at select overseas airports with direct flights to the United States. The United Kingdom and other countries have followed suit with similar enhancements, and the European Union passed legislation for both near and long-term enhancements to cabin baggage screening requirements.

Earlier this year in response to a December incident at the Hartfield-Jackson-Atlanta airport, I asked the Aviation Security Advisory Committee (ASAC) to review and make recommendations to address concerns about whether aviation workers with airport identification badges could bypass security and smuggle weapons or explosives into an operations area or even onto an aircraft. In April, in response to the ASAC's recommendations, I directed the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to take several immediate actions, including "real-time recurrent" criminal history background checks coordinated with the FBI, reducing the number of access points to secured areas, and encouraging airport workers to report suspicious activity.

I have also prioritized the expansion of preclearance operations at foreign airports with flights to the United States. Preclearance allows U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers overseas to screen passengers bound for the United States at the front end of the flight, protecting the plane, its passengers, and our country, before they even enter the United States. We now have 15 preclearance sites overseas, in 6 different countries,

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operated by more than 600 CBP officers and agriculture specialists. The most recent preclearance operation was set up early last year in Abu Dhabi. Since that time, in Abu Dhabi alone, we have already inspected more than 580,000 passengers and crew bound for the United States, and have determined 1002 individuals to be inadmissible, including a number of them based on national security related grounds. We are in active negotiations with several countries to expand preclearance operations to ten new foreign airports. I view preclearance as an important piece of our aviation security and our counterterrorism mission.

In May, the classified, preliminary results of the DHS Inspector General's tests of TSA's screening at airports were leaked to the press. The OIG completed its classified report last month, and has provided it to the Department and to Congress. The final report recommends corrective measures that TSA is already undertaking. In May and June, I directed a series of actions constituting a 10-point plan to address the concerns raised by the OIG's testing. This plan included a number of immediate and longer-term measures. Under the new leadership of Admiral Peter Neffenger, TSA has promptly begun increasing manual screening and random explosive trace detectors, re-testing and re-evaluating the type of screening equipment tested by the OIG, revising standard operating procedures, and conducting "back to basics" training for every TSA officer in the country. Many of these measures have either been completed, or soon will be.

Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity is critical to homeland security. Cybersecurity is a top priority for me, the President, and this Administration.

To be frank, our federal .gov cybersecurity, in particular, is not where it needs to be. In the case of the breach of the Office of Personnel Management, a large amount of highly personal and sensitive information was taken by a very sophisticated actor. There is a great deal that has been done and is being done now to secure our networks. We do in fact block a large number of intrusions and exfiltrations, including those by state actors. But much more must be done.

By law, each head of a federal department or agency is primarily responsible for his or her agency's own cybersecurity. DHS has overall responsibility for protecting federal civilian systems from cyber threats, helping agencies better defend themselves, and providing response teams to assist agencies during significant incidents. We have also been able to use the unique authorities given to us by Congress to engage with the critical infrastructure community to reduce the risk that our essential services and functions could be disrupted by a cyber attack.

DHS's National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center, or "NCCIC," is the U.S. government's 24/7 hub for cybersecurity information sharing,

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incident response, and coordination. Thirteen federal departments and agencies and 16 private sector entities have regular, dedicated liaisons at the NCCIC, while over 100 private sector entities collaborate and share information with the NCCIC on a routine basis.

The NCCIC shares information on cyber threats and incidents, and provides on-site assistance to victims of cyberattacks. In this fiscal year alone, the NCCIC has shared over 15,000 bulletins, alerts, and warnings, responded on-site to 21 incidents and conducted nearly 130 technical security assessments.

It is my personal mission to significantly enhance the Department's role in the cybersecurity of our government and the Nation. To achieve this, I have directed the accelerated and aggressive deployment of important technologies, guidance, and partnerships that my Department is uniquely situated to provide.

First, we have prioritized full deployment of our EINSTEIN system: an intrusion detection and prevention system that uses classified information to protect unclassified networks. I have directed the National Protection and Programs Directorate to make at least some EINSTEIN 3A countermeasures available to all federal civilian departments and agencies no later than December 31, 2015. We are currently on schedule to achieve this goal. We have also successfully expanded our private sector version of this program – Enhanced Cybersecurity Services – to all critical infrastructure sectors.

EINSTEIN has demonstrated its value. Since its introduction, E3A has blocked over 650,000 requests to access potentially malicious websites. These attempts are often associated with adversaries who are already on federal networks attempting to communicate with their “home base” and steal data from agency networks. Importantly, EINSTEIN 3A is also a platform for future technologies and capabilities to do more. This includes technology that will automatically identify suspicious Internet traffic for further inspection, even if we did not already know about the particular cybersecurity threat.

Second, DHS helps federal agencies identify and fix problems in near-real-time using Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation programs – or “CDM.” Once fully deployed, CDM will monitor agency networks internally for vulnerabilities that could be exploited by bad actors that have breached the perimeter. CDM will allow agencies to identify, prioritize, and fix the most significant problems first. It will also provide DHS with situational awareness about government-wide risk for the broader cybersecurity mission.

Earlier this year, I directed that NPPD make the first phase of CDM available to 97% of federal civilian departments and agencies by September 30, 2015. We achieved this goal ahead of schedule and are on track to make the second phase available by the end of Fiscal Year 2016.

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Third, information sharing is fundamental to achieving our mission. We must be able to share information in as close to real time as possible while ensuring appropriate privacy protections. We have made excellent progress by leading the development of a system that makes automated information sharing possible. By November we will have the capability to automate the distribution and receipt of cyber threat indicators. Our partners in the Intelligence Community and law enforcement have participated in the development of this capability and support the policies that we have put in place to ensure that we have both appropriate privacy protections and the quick dissemination of relevant information to other agencies.

We are working closely with other agencies of our government to support the stand-up of the ODNI-led Cyber Threat Intelligence Integration Center, or “CTIIC.” This is vital because the foreign cyber threats we face as a Nation are too many, too sophisticated and increasingly too severe to wait any longer to ensure we integrate the intelligence about cyber threats to better inform our defenses and our actions – just as we do with regard to terrorist threats. DHS looks forward to full implementation of this Intelligence Community initiative, which will help all of the operational cyber centers better understand various strategic cyber threats and provide improved intelligence community support to the NCCIC, which will, in turn, enable us to share more information with our private sector partners.

Last month we participated in frank discussions with officials of the People’s Republic of China on cyber issues of concern to both our nations. This culminated in our Presidents announcing several key cybersecurity commitments. As part of these commitments, we agreed to investigate cyber crimes, collect electronic evidence, and mitigate malicious cyber activity emanating from its territory, and to provide timely responses to requests for information and assistance concerning those activities. Both sides also agreed to provide updates on the status and results of those investigations and to take appropriate action. As part of this commitment, we agreed to establish a high-level joint dialogue mechanism on fighting cybercrime and related issues. Perhaps most importantly, the United States and China committed that neither country’s government will conduct or knowingly support cyber-enabled theft of intellectual property, including trade secrets or other confidential business information, with the intent of providing competitive advantages to companies or commercial sectors. The United States and China also committed to create a senior experts group on international security issues in cyberspace.

Time will tell whether the Chinese will live up to these commitments. I intend to remain personally engaged on these issues, to ensure that China takes concrete steps to advance progress made thus far. To be sure, these commitments do not resolve all our challenges with China on cyber issues. But, they do represent a step forward in our efforts to address one of the sharpest areas of disagreement in the U.S.-China bilateral relationship. On the U.S. side, we are prepared to fulfill our commitments. Words must be matched by actions.

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We cannot detect and stop every cyber single intrusion. So often, the most sophisticated actors penetrate the gate, through a simple act of spearphishing, because they know they can count on a single user letting his guard down. But, we have made considerable progress and continue to take aggressive action.

I urge Congress to act by passing cyber legislation. I applaud the bipartisan work that has been done so far in this Congress. We need legislation to accomplish at least two things:

First, we need explicit congressional authorization of the EINSTEIN program. This would eliminate any remaining legal obstacles to its deployment across the Federal Government. The House has passed H.R. 1731, which accomplishes this; by ensuring agencies understand they are legally permitted to disclose network traffic to DHS for narrowly tailored purposes.

Second, we need the Senate to finish its work on the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act, as soon as possible. This Committee's engagement with the bill's sponsors has strengthened the legislation and incorporated important modifications to better protect privacy. I understand that work continues to make necessary changes and we greatly appreciate those efforts. But cyber criminals are not waiting to steal intellectual property or financial data, so neither can Congress wait to pass information sharing legislation. I urge you to call upon Senate leadership to bring this bill up as soon as possible so that the Senate can finish its work and pass it.

Conclusion

Finally, I want to recognize the Secret Service and the entire DHS for the extraordinary work providing security for the United Nations General Assembly and the visit by Pope Francis to the United States.

Far too often the press and public are captivated by episodes of bad news; as leaders, it is our responsibility to ensure that the public does not lose sight of the extraordinary and successful good work of our dedicated public servants, so that it is never taken for granted.

Put simply, over the last two weeks the Secret Service was successful in orchestrating one of the largest, if not the largest, domestic security operation in the history of this country. I dare to say no other government agency in the world has the experience, the tools and the skill to have accomplished this.

Over the last two weeks the Secret Service was the lead U.S. government agency for the security of over 160 world leaders, in addition to over 70 of their spouses, who came to the U.S. for the UN General Assembly and other reasons. In addition to the Pope, these world leaders included President Xi Jinping of China, President Vladimir Putin of Russia,

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Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, King Abdullah of Jordan, Prime Minister Hayda Al-Abadi of Iraq, Prime Minister Hasan Ruhani of Iran, Prime Minister Matteo Renzi of Italy, President Francois Hollande of France, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt and President Raul Castro of Cuba. Almost all of these leaders were in our country at the same time.

The security for the all these leaders (and the public) surrounding their visits to the U.S. was by no means limited to the Secret Service. Other components of the Department of Homeland Security were heavily involved:

- Homeland Security Investigations, which is part of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, committed thousands of their special agents from across the country to assist with supporting venue security and to augment dignitary protection.
- The Transportation Security Administration committed over 1,000 of their personnel and equipment from around the country, to support the magnetometers for public events and enhance security at airports and train stations in Washington, DC, New York and Philadelphia.
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency served as the lead federal agency for emergency and consequence management and coordinated responses to protect public health and safety as necessary.
- The U.S. Coast Guard committed hundreds of their personnel and vessels to support airspace and maritime security. This included the patrol and security of the East River in New York, adjacent to the United Nations, and fixed security zones in Philadelphia and Washington, DC.
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection provided hundreds of their personnel for venue security, communications, and non-intrusive inspection of items coming in to the cities.
- The Federal Protective Service personnel supported venue security.

This truly was a whole of DHS effort. All these forces, working together and with our federal agencies and our partners in state and city government, brought about safe and successful visits to the United States by the Pope and the other world leaders, in a highly professional, precise and well-coordinated manner. The Pope and others got to see and

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experience the United States, our people, and our free and democratic society, at our very best.

I look forward to your questions.



Department of Justice

**STATEMENT OF
JAMES B. COMEY
DIRECTOR
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**

**BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**AT A HEARING ENTITLED
“THREATS TO THE HOMELAND”**

**PRESENTED
OCTOBER 8, 2015**

**Statement of
James B. Comey
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation**

**Before the
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate**

**At a Hearing Entitled
“Threats to the Homeland”**

October 8, 2015

Good afternoon Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Carper, and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the current threats to the Homeland and our efforts to address new challenges including terrorists’ use of technology to communicate — both to inspire and recruit. The widespread use of technology propagates the persistent terrorist message to attack U.S. interests whether in the homeland or abroad. As the threat to harm Western interests evolves, we must adapt and confront the challenges, relying heavily on the strength of our Federal, State, local, and international partnerships. Our successes depend on interagency cooperation. We work closely with our partners within the Department of Homeland Security and the National Counterterrorism Center to address current and emerging threats.

Counterterrorism

Counterterrorism remains the FBI’s top priority, however, the threat has changed in two significant ways. First, the core al Qaeda tumor has been reduced, but the cancer has metastasized. The progeny of al Qaeda – including AQAP, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) have become our focus.

Secondly, we are confronting the explosion of terrorist propaganda and training on the Internet. It is no longer necessary to get a terrorist operative into the United States to recruit. Terrorists, in ungoverned spaces, disseminate poisonous propaganda and training materials to attract troubled souls around the world to their cause. They encourage these individuals to travel, but if they can’t travel, they motivate them to act at home. This is a significant change from a decade ago.

We continue to identify individuals who seek to join the ranks of foreign fighters traveling in support of ISIL, and also homegrown violent extremists who may aspire to attack the United States from within. These threats remain among the highest priorities for the FBI and the Intelligence Community as a whole.

Conflicts in Syria and Iraq continue to serve as the most attractive overseas theaters for Western-based extremists who want to engage in violence. We estimate approximately 250 Americans have traveled or attempted to travel to Syria to participate in the conflict. While this number is lower in comparison to many of our international partners, we closely analyze and assess the influence groups like ISIL have on individuals located in the United States who are inspired to commit acts of violence. Whether or not the individuals are affiliated with a foreign terrorist organization and are willing to travel abroad to fight or are inspired by the call to arms to act in their communities, they potentially pose a significant threat to the safety of the United States and U.S. persons.

ISIL has proven relentless in its violent campaign to rule and has aggressively promoted its hateful message, attracting like-minded extremists to include Westerners. To an even greater degree than al Qaeda or other foreign terrorist organizations, ISIL has persistently used the Internet to communicate. From a homeland perspective, it is ISIL's widespread reach through the Internet and social media which is most concerning as ISIL has aggressively employed this technology for its nefarious strategy. ISIL blends traditional media platforms, glossy photos, in-depth articles, and social media campaigns that can go viral in a matter of seconds. No matter the format, the message of radicalization spreads faster than we imagined just a few years ago.

Unlike other groups, ISIL has constructed a narrative that touches on all facets of life — from career opportunities to family life to a sense of community. The message isn't tailored solely to those who are overtly expressing symptoms of radicalization. It is seen by many who click through the Internet every day, receive social media push notifications, and participate in social networks. Ultimately, many of these individuals are seeking a sense of belonging.

As a communication medium, social media is a critical tool for terror groups to exploit. One recent example occurred when an individual was arrested for providing material support to ISIL by facilitating an associate's travel to Syria to join ISIL. The arrested individual had multiple connections, via a social media networking site, with other like-minded individuals.

There is no set profile for the susceptible consumer of this propaganda. However, one trend continues to rise — the inspired youth. We've seen certain children and young adults drawing deeper into the ISIL narrative. These individuals are often comfortable with virtual communication platforms, specifically social media networks.

ISIL continues to disseminate their terrorist message to all social media users — regardless of age. Following other groups, ISIL has advocated for lone offender attacks. In recent months ISIL released a video, via social media, reiterating the group's encouragement of lone offender attacks in Western countries, specifically advocating for attacks against soldiers and law enforcement, intelligence community members, and government personnel. Several incidents have occurred in the United States and Europe over the last few months that indicate this "call to arms" has resonated among ISIL supporters and sympathizers.

In one case, a New York-based male was arrested in September after he systematically attempted to travel to the Middle East to join ISIL. The individual, who was inspired by ISIL propaganda, expressed his support for ISIL online and took steps to carry out acts encouraged in the ISIL call to arms.

The targeting of U.S. military personnel is also evident with the release of names of individuals serving in the U.S. military by ISIL supporters. The names continue to be posted to the Internet and quickly spread through social media, depicting ISIL's capability to produce viral messaging. Threats to U.S. military and coalition forces continue today.

Social media has allowed groups, such as ISIL, to use the Internet to spot and assess potential recruits. With the widespread horizontal distribution of social media, terrorists can identify vulnerable individuals of all ages in the United States — spot, assess, recruit, and radicalize — either to travel or to conduct a homeland attack. The foreign terrorist now has direct access into the United States like never before.

In other examples of arrests, a group of individuals was contacted by a known ISIL supporter who had already successfully traveled to Syria and encouraged them to do the same. Some of these conversations occur in publicly accessed social networking sites, but others take place via private messaging platforms. As a result, it is imperative the FBI and all law enforcement organizations understand the latest communication tools and are positioned to identify and prevent terror attacks in the homeland.

We live in a technologically driven society and just as private industry has adapted to modern forms of communication so too have terrorists. Unfortunately, changing forms of Internet communication and the use of encryption are posing real challenges to the FBI's ability to fulfill its public safety and national security missions.. This real and growing gap, to which the FBI refers as "Going Dark," is an area of continuing focus for the FBI; we believe it must be addressed given the resulting risks are grave both in both traditional criminal matters as well as in national security matters. The United States Government is actively engaged with private companies to ensure they understand the public safety and national security risks that result from malicious actors' use of their encrypted products and services. However, the Administration is not seeking legislation at this time.

The FBI is utilizing all lawful investigative techniques and methods to combat the threat these individuals may pose to the United States. In conjunction with our domestic and foreign partners, we are rigorously collecting and analyzing intelligence information as it pertains to the ongoing threat posed by foreign terrorist organizations and homegrown violent extremists. We continue to encourage robust information sharing; in partnership with our many Federal, State, and local agencies assigned to Joint Terrorism Task Forces around the country, we remain vigilant to ensure the safety of the American public. Be assured, the FBI continues to pursue

increased efficiencies and information sharing processes as well as pursue technological and other methods to help stay ahead of threats to the homeland.

Intelligence

Integrating intelligence and operations is part of the broader intelligence transformation the FBI has undertaken in the last decade. We are making progress, but have more work to do. We have taken two steps to improve this integration. First, we have established an Intelligence Branch within the FBI headed by an Executive Assistant Director (“EAD”). The EAD looks across the entire enterprise and drives integration. Second, we now have Special Agents and new Intelligence Analysts at the FBI Academy engaged in practical training exercises and taking core courses together. As a result, they are better prepared to work well together in the field. Our goal every day is to get better at using, collecting and sharing intelligence to better understand and defeat our adversaries.

The FBI cannot be content to just work what is directly in front of us. We must also be able to understand the threats we face at home and abroad and how those threats may be connected. Towards that end, intelligence is gathered, consistent with our authorities, to help us understand and prioritize identified threats and to determine where there are gaps in what we know about these threats. We then seek to fill those gaps and learn as much as we can about the threats we are addressing and others on the threat landscape. We do this for national security and criminal threats, on both a national and local field office level. We then compare the national and local perspectives to organize threats into priority for each of the FBI’s 56 field offices. By categorizing threats in this way, we strive to place the greatest focus on the gravest threats we face. This gives us a better assessment of what the dangers are, what’s being done about them, and where we should prioritize our resources.

Cyber

An element of virtually every national security threat and crime problem the FBI faces is cyber-based or facilitated. We face sophisticated cyber threats from state-sponsored hackers, hackers for hire, organized cyber syndicates, and terrorists. On a daily basis, cyber-based actors seek our state secrets, our trade secrets, our technology, and our ideas — things of incredible value to all of us and of great importance to the conduct of our government business and our national security. They seek to strike our critical infrastructure and to harm our economy.

We continue to see an increase in the scale and scope of reporting on malicious cyber activity that can be measured by the amount of corporate data stolen or deleted, personally identifiable information compromised, or remediation costs incurred by U.S. victims. For example, as the Committee is aware, the Office of Personnel Management (“OPM”) discovered earlier this year that a number of its systems were compromised. These systems included those that contain information related to the background investigations of current, former, and prospective Federal government employees, as well as other individuals for whom a Federal

background investigation was conducted. The FBI is working with our interagency partners to investigate this matter.

FBI agents, analysts, and computer scientists are using technical capabilities and traditional investigative techniques — such as sources, court-authorized electronic surveillance, physical surveillance, and forensics — to fight cyber threats. We are working side-by-side with our Federal, State, and local partners on Cyber Task Forces in each of our 56 field offices and through the National Cyber Investigative Joint Task Force (NCIJTF), which serves as a coordination, integration, and information sharing center for 19 U.S. agencies and several key international allies for cyber threat investigations. Through CyWatch, our 24-hour cyber command center, we combine the resources of the FBI and NCIJTF, allowing us to provide connectivity to Federal cyber centers, government agencies, FBI field offices and legal attachés, and the private sector in the event of a cyber intrusion.

We take all potential threats to public and private sector systems seriously and will continue to investigate and hold accountable those who pose a threat in cyberspace.

Finally, the strength of any organization is its people. The threats we face as a nation have never been greater or more diverse and the expectations placed on the Bureau have never been higher. Our fellow citizens look to us to protect the United States from all of those threats and the men and women of the Bureau continue to meet — and exceed — those expectations, every day. I want to thank them for their dedication and their service.

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Carper, and committee members, I thank you for the opportunity to testify concerning the threats to the Homeland and terrorists' use of the Internet and social media as a platform for spreading ISIL propaganda and inspiring individuals to target the homeland, and the impact of the Going Dark problem on mitigating their efforts. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

**Hearing before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
“Threats to the Homeland”
October 8, 2015**

**Nick Rasmussen
Director
National Counterterrorism Center**

Thank you Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Carper, and members of the Committee. I appreciate this opportunity to discuss the threats that concern us most. I'm pleased to join my colleagues and close partners from the Department of Homeland Security and Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Threat Overview

With the fourteenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks several weeks behind us, it's clear that we've had great success at substantially reducing the chances of that kind of attack recurring. We've done that not only with aggressive CT action against core al-Qa'ida in South Asia and around the world but also through the array of defenses we've erected as a country. The counterterrorism and homeland security infrastructure that exists gives us much greater defense, disruption, and mitigation capabilities that we did not have at the time of those attacks.

That said, the array of extremist terrorist actors around the globe is broader, wider, and deeper than it has been at any time since 9/11, and the threat landscape is less predictable. While the scale of the capabilities of these violent extremist actors does not rise to the level that core al-Qa'ida had at its disposal at the time of 9/11, it is fair to say that we face more threats originating in more places and involving more individuals than we have at any time in the last fourteen years.

We remain intensely focused on the threat from ISIL. There is no doubt that the group views itself as being in direct conflict with the West. ISIL's access to resources—in terms of both manpower and funds—and territorial control in areas of Syria and Iraq are the ingredients that we traditionally look at as being critical to the development of an external operations capability. We are very concerned and focused on ISIL's trajectory in this regard. ISIL must also win the war on the ground in Syria and Iraq, which remains, we believe, a top priority for the group's leadership. This is in addition to advancing their effort to establish and administer branches in areas further afield, branches that are demonstrating increased operational capabilities in their respective regions.

We are coming to view the threat from ISIL as a spectrum, where on one end, individuals draw inspiration from ISIL's media content and perceive successes. At the other end, individuals may receive direct guidance from ISIL members. These ends of the spectrum are not polar

opposites, however. Rather, they are the clearest illustrations of what is more often than not a very fluid picture where individuals operate between the two extremes.

The tremendous efforts being made to counter the ISIL threat are absolutely warranted, but I want to stress that we still view al-Qa'ida and the various al-Qa'ida affiliates and nodes as being a principal counterterrorism priority. We would not tier our priorities in such a way that downgrades al-Qa'ida in favor of greater focus on ISIL. When we are looking at the set of threats that we face as a nation, al-Qa'ida threats still figure prominently in that analysis.

The steady attrition of al-Qa'ida senior leaders has put more and more pressure on the few that remain. We believe we have constrained both their effectiveness and their ability to recruit, train, and deploy operatives from their safe haven in South Asia; however, this does not mean that the threat from core al-Qa'ida resident in the tribal areas of Pakistan or in eastern Afghanistan has been eliminated entirely.

Ahead of the US military's drawdown in Afghanistan, we in the intelligence realm are trying to understand the level of risk the US may face over time if al-Qa'ida regenerates, finds renewed safe haven, or restores lost capability. I am confident that we will retain sufficient capability to continue to put pressure on that core al-Qa'ida network so that that situation will not arise.

We as an intelligence community will be very much on alert for signs that that capability is being restored, and we would warn immediately should we find ourselves trending in that direction. All that said, I'm still not ready to declare core al-Qa'ida as having been defeated in the classical sense of the word where the capability has been removed. So long as the group can regenerate capability, al-Qa'ida will remain a threat.

We also see increasing competition between extremist actors within South Asia itself, between and among the Taliban, ISIL's branch in South Asia, and al-Qa'ida. This is an additional dynamic that we are working to understand. While conflict among terrorist groups may well distract them from their core mission of plotting attacks against Western targets, conflict also serves to introduce a degree of uncertainty into the terrorism landscape that raises questions that I don't think we have answers to yet. This is something that we will watch very closely.

Stepping back, there are two trends in the contemporary threat environment that concern us most. First is the increasing ability of terrorist actors to communicate with each other outside our reach. The difficulty in collecting precise intelligence on terrorist intentions and the status of particular terrorist plots is increasing over time.

There are several reasons for this: exposure of intelligence collection techniques; disclosures of classified information that have given terrorist groups a better understanding of how we collect intelligence; and terrorist group's innovative and agile use of new means of

communicating, including ways in which they understand are beyond our ability to collect. I know that FBI Director Comey has spoken about these challenges on a number of occasions.

Second, while we've seen a decrease in the frequency of large-scale, complex plotting efforts that sometimes span several years, we've seen a proliferation of more rapidly evolving threat or plot vectors that emerge simply by an individual encouraged to take action, then quickly gathering the few resources needed and moving into an operational phase. This is something I would tie very much to the modus operandi of ISIL-inspired terrorists. The so-called "flash to bang" ratio in plotting of this sort is extremely compressed, and allows little time for traditional law enforcement and intelligence tools to disrupt or mitigate potential plots.

ISIL is aware of this, and those connected to the group have understood that by motivating actors in their own locations to take action against Western countries and targets, they can be effective. In terms of propaganda and recruitment, they can generate further support for their movement, without carrying out catastrophic, mass-casualty attacks. And that's an innovation in the terrorist playbook that poses a great challenge.

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)

The growing number of individuals going abroad as foreign terrorist fighters to Iraq and Syria only emphasizes the importance of prevention. Any hope of enduring security against terrorism or defeating organizations like ISIL rests in our ability to diminish the appeal of terrorism and dissuade individuals from joining them in the first place.

To this end, we continue to refine and expand the preventive side of counterterrorism. We have seen a steady proliferation of more proactive and engaged community awareness efforts across the United States, with the goal of giving communities the information and the tools they need to see extremism in their midst and do something about it before it manifests itself in violence. NCTC, in direct collaboration with DHS, has led the creation of CVE tools to build community resilience across the country.

Working and closely coordinating with the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), NCTC is engaged in this work all across the country.

We, in concert with DOJ, DHS, and FBI, sent our officers on multiple occasions to meet with the communities in places such as Denver, Sacramento, Buffalo, and Minneapolis to raise awareness among community and law enforcement audiences about the terrorist recruitment threat. Our briefing, developed in partnership with DHS, is now tailored to address the specific issue of foreign fighter recruitment in Syria and Iraq; and we have received a strong demand signal for more such outreach.

This is not a law enforcement-oriented effort designed to collect information. Rather, it is an effort to share information about how members of our communities are being targeted and recruited to join terrorists overseas. Seen in that light, we have had a remarkably positive reaction from the communities with whom we have engaged.

We continue to expand our CVE tools. With our DHS colleagues, we have created and regularly deliver the Community Resilience Exercise, a table top exercise that brings together local law enforcement with community leadership to run through a hypothetical case study based scenario featuring a possible violent extremist or foreign fighter.

We also aim to encourage the creation of intervention models at the local level. In the same way that local partners, including law enforcement, schools, social service providers, and communities, have come together to provide alternative pathways and off-ramps for people who might be vulnerable to joining a gang, we are encouraging our local partners to implement similar models for violent extremism. The more resilient the community, the less likely its members are to join a violent extremist group.

Conclusion

In summary, confronting these threats and working with resolve to prevent another terrorist attack remains the counterterrorism community's overriding mission. I can assure you that we at NCTC are focused on positioning ourselves to be better prepared to address the terrorist threat in the coming years. We expect this threat will increasingly involve terrorists' use of the online platforms that I mentioned earlier in my remarks.

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Carper, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you this morning. I want to assure you that our attention is concentrated on the security crises in Iraq and Syria—and rightly so—but we continue to detect, disrupt, and defeat threats from across the threat spectrum in concert with our partners.

Thank you all very much, and I look forward to answering your questions.

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GLOBAL

What ISIS Really Wants

The Islamic State is no mere collection of psychopaths. It is a religious group with carefully considered beliefs, among them that it is a key agent of the coming apocalypse. Here's what that means for its strategy—and for how to stop it.



AP/The Atlantic

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WHAT IS THE ISLAMIC STATE?

Where did it come from, and what are its intentions? The simplicity of these questions can be deceiving, and few Western leaders seem to know the answers. In December, *The New York Times* published confidential comments by Major General Michael K. Nagata, the Special Operations commander for the United States in the Middle East, admitting that he had hardly begun figuring out the Islamic State's appeal.

“We have not defeated the idea,” he said. “We do not even understand the idea.” In the past year, President Obama has referred to the Islamic State, variously, as “not Islamic” and as al-Qaeda’s “jayvee team,” statements that reflected confusion about the group, and may have contributed to significant strategic errors.

The group seized Mosul, Iraq, last June, and already rules an area larger than the United Kingdom. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has been its leader since May 2010, but until last summer, his most recent known appearance on film was a grainy mug shot from a stay in U.S. captivity at Camp Bucca during the occupation of Iraq. Then, on July 5 of last year, he stepped into the pulpit of the Great Mosque of al-Nuri in Mosul, to deliver a Ramadan sermon as the first caliph in generations—upgrading his resolution from grainy to high-definition, and his position from hunted guerrilla to commander of all Muslims. The inflow of jihadists that followed, from around the world, was unprecedented in its pace and volume, and is continuing.

Our ignorance of the Islamic State is in some ways understandable: It is a hermit kingdom; few have gone there and returned. Baghdadi has spoken on camera only once. But his address, and the Islamic State’s countless other propaganda videos and encyclicals, are online, and the caliphate’s supporters have toiled mightily to make their project knowable. We can gather that their state rejects peace as a matter of principle; that it hungers for genocide; that its religious views make it constitutionally incapable of certain types of change, even if that change might ensure its survival; and that it considers itself a harbinger of—and headline player in—the imminent end of the world.

The Islamic State, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), follows a distinctive variety of Islam whose beliefs about the path to the Day of Judgment matter to its strategy, and can help the West know its enemy and predict its behavior. Its rise to power is less like the triumph of the Muslim

Brotherhood in Egypt (a group whose leaders the Islamic State considers apostates) than like the realization of a dystopian alternate reality in which David Koresh or Jim Jones survived to wield absolute power over not just a few hundred people, but some 8 million.

We have misunderstood the nature of the Islamic State in at least two ways. First, we tend to see jihadism as monolithic, and to apply the logic of al-Qaeda to an organization that has decisively eclipsed it. The Islamic State supporters I spoke with still refer to Osama bin Laden as “Sheikh Osama,” a title of honor. But jihadism has evolved since al-Qaeda’s heyday, from about 1998 to 2003, and many jihadists disdain the group’s priorities and current leadership.

Bin Laden viewed his terrorism as a prologue to a caliphate he did not expect to see in his lifetime. His organization was flexible, operating as a geographically diffuse network of autonomous cells. The Islamic State, by contrast, requires territory to remain legitimate, and a top-down structure to rule it. (Its bureaucracy is divided into civil and military arms, and its territory into provinces.)

We are misled in a second way, by a well-intentioned but dishonest campaign to deny the Islamic State’s medieval religious nature. Peter Bergen, who produced the first interview with bin Laden in 1997, titled his first book *Holy War, Inc.* in part to acknowledge bin Laden as a creature of the modern secular world. Bin Laden corporatized terror and franchised it out. He requested specific political concessions, such as the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Saudi Arabia. His foot soldiers navigated the modern world confidently. On Mohamed Atta’s last full day of life, he shopped at Walmart and ate dinner at Pizza Hut.



An interview with Graeme Wood

The author describes how he tracked down the world's most influential recruiters for the Islamic State—and how they reacted after reading this story.

There is a temptation to rehearse this observation—that jihadists are modern secular people, with modern political concerns, wearing medieval religious disguise—and make it fit the Islamic State. In fact, much of what the group does looks nonsensical except in light of a sincere, carefully considered commitment to returning civilization to a seventh-century legal environment, and ultimately to bringing about the apocalypse.

The most-articulate spokesmen for that position are the Islamic State's officials and supporters themselves. They refer derisively to "moderns." In conversation, they insist that they will not—cannot—waver from governing precepts that were embedded in Islam by the Prophet Muhammad and his earliest followers. They often speak in codes and allusions that sound odd or old-fashioned to non-Muslims, but refer to specific traditions and texts of early Islam.

To take one example: In September, Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, the Islamic State's chief spokesman, called on Muslims in Western countries

such as France and Canada to find an infidel and “smash his head with a rock,” poison him, run him over with a car, or “destroy his crops.” To Western ears, the biblical-sounding punishments—the stoning and crop destruction—juxtaposed strangely with his more modern-sounding call to vehicular homicide. (As if to show that he could terrorize by imagery alone, Adnani also referred to Secretary of State John Kerry as an “uncircumcised geezer.”)

But Adnani was not merely talking trash. His speech was laced with theological and legal discussion, and his exhortation to attack crops directly echoed orders from Muhammad to leave well water and crops alone—unless the armies of Islam were in a defensive position, in which case Muslims in the lands of *kuffar*, or infidels, should be unmerciful, and poison away.

The reality is that the Islamic State is Islamic. *Very* Islamic. Yes, it has attracted psychopaths and adventure seekers, drawn largely from the disaffected populations of the Middle East and Europe. But the religion preached by its most ardent followers derives from coherent and even learned interpretations of Islam.

Virtually every major decision and law promulgated by the Islamic State adheres to what it calls, in its press and pronouncements, and on its billboards, license plates, stationery, and coins, “the Prophetic methodology,” which means following the prophecy and example of Muhammad, in punctilious detail. Muslims can reject the Islamic State; nearly all do. But pretending that it isn’t actually a religious, millenarian group, with theology that must be understood to be combatted, has already led the United States to underestimate it and back foolish schemes to counter it. We’ll need to get acquainted with the Islamic State’s intellectual genealogy if we are to react in a way that will not strengthen it, but instead help it self-immolate in its own excessive zeal.



Control of territory is an essential precondition for the Islamic State's authority in the eyes of its supporters. This map, adapted from the work of the Institute for the Study of War, shows the territory under the caliphate's control as of January 15, along with areas it has attacked. Where it holds power, the state collects taxes, regulates prices, operates courts, and administers services ranging from health care and education to telecommunications.

I. Devotion

In November, the Islamic State released an infomercial-like video tracing its origins to bin Laden. It acknowledged Abu Musa'b al Zarqawi, the brutal head of al-Qaeda in Iraq from roughly 2003 until his killing in 2006, as a more immediate progenitor, followed sequentially by two other guerrilla leaders before Baghdadi, the caliph. Notably unmentioned: bin Laden's successor, Ayman al Zawahiri, the owlish Egyptian eye surgeon who currently heads al-Qaeda. Zawahiri has not pledged allegiance to Baghdadi, and he is increasingly hated by his fellow jihadists. His isolation is not helped

by his lack of charisma; in videos he comes across as squinty and annoyed. But the split between al-Qaeda and the Islamic State has been long in the making, and begins to explain, at least in part, the outsize bloodlust of the latter.

Zawahiri's companion in isolation is a Jordanian cleric named Abu Muhammad al Maqdisi, 55, who has a fair claim to being al-Qaeda's intellectual architect and the most important jihadist unknown to the average American newspaper reader. On most matters of doctrine, Maqdisi and the Islamic State agree. Both are closely identified with the jihadist wing of a branch of Sunnism called Salafism, after the Arabic *al salaf al salih*, the "pious forefathers." These forefathers are the Prophet himself and his earliest adherents, whom Salafis honor and emulate as the models for all behavior, including warfare, couture, family life, even dentistry.

The Islamic State awaits the army of "Rome," whose defeat at Dabiq, Syria, will initiate the countdown to the apocalypse.

Maqdisi taught Zarqawi, who went to war in Iraq with the older man's advice in mind. In time, though, Zarqawi surpassed his mentor in fanaticism, and eventually earned his rebuke. At issue was Zarqawi's penchant for bloody spectacle—and, as a matter of doctrine, his hatred of other Muslims, to the point of excommunicating and killing them. In Islam, the practice of *takfir*, or excommunication, is theologically perilous. "If a man says to his brother, 'You are an infidel,'" the Prophet said, "then one of them is right." If the accuser is wrong, he himself has committed apostasy by making a false accusation. The punishment for apostasy is death. And yet Zarqawi heedlessly expanded the range of behavior that could make Muslims infidels.

Maqdisi wrote to his former pupil that he needed to exercise caution and “not issue sweeping proclamations of *takfir*” or “proclaim people to be apostates because of their sins.” The distinction between apostate and sinner may appear subtle, but it is a key point of contention between al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.

Denying the holiness of the Koran or the prophecies of Muhammad is straightforward apostasy. But Zarqawi and the state he spawned take the position that many other acts can remove a Muslim from Islam. These include, in certain cases, selling alcohol or drugs, wearing Western clothes or shaving one’s beard, voting in an election—even for a Muslim candidate—and being lax about calling other people apostates. Being a Shiite, as most Iraqi Arabs are, meets the standard as well, because the Islamic State regards Shiism as innovation, and to innovate on the Koran is to deny its initial perfection. (The Islamic State claims that common Shiite practices, such as worship at the graves of imams and public self-flagellation, have no basis in the Koran or in the example of the Prophet.) That means roughly 200 million Shia are marked for death. So too are the heads of state of every Muslim country, who have elevated man-made law above Sharia by running for office or enforcing laws not made by God.

Following *takfiri* doctrine, the Islamic State is committed to purifying the world by killing vast numbers of people. The lack of objective reporting from its territory makes the true extent of the slaughter unknowable, but social-media posts from the region suggest that individual executions happen more or less continually, and mass executions every few weeks. Muslim “apostates” are the most common victims. Exempted from automatic execution, it appears, are Christians who do not resist their new government. Baghdadi permits them to live, as long as they pay a special tax, known as the *jizya*, and acknowledge their subjugation. The Koranic authority for this practice is not in dispute.



Musa Cerantonio, an Australian preacher reported to be one of the Islamic State's most influential recruiters, believes it is foretold that the caliphate will sack Istanbul before it is beaten back by an army led by the anti-Messiah, whose eventual death—when just a few thousand jihadists remain—will usher in the apocalypse. (Paul Jeffers/Fairfax Media)

CENTURIES HAVE PASSED since the wars of religion ceased in Europe, and since men stopped dying in large numbers because of arcane theological disputes. Hence, perhaps, the incredulity and denial with which Westerners have greeted news of the theology and practices of the Islamic State. Many refuse to believe that this group is as devout as it claims to be, or as backward-looking or apocalyptic as its actions and statements suggest.

Their skepticism is comprehensible. In the past, Westerners who accused Muslims of blindly following ancient scriptures came to deserved grief from academics—notably the late Edward Said—who pointed out that calling Muslims “ancient” was usually just another way to denigrate them. Look instead, these scholars urged, to the conditions in which these ideologies

arose—the bad governance, the shifting social mores, the humiliation of living in lands valued only for their oil.

Without acknowledgment of these factors, no explanation of the rise of the Islamic State could be complete. But focusing on them to the exclusion of ideology reflects another kind of Western bias: that if religious ideology doesn't matter much in Washington or Berlin, surely it must be equally irrelevant in Raqqa or Mosul. When a masked executioner says *Allahu akbar* while beheading an apostate, sometimes he's doing so for religious reasons.

Many mainstream Muslim organizations have gone so far as to say the Islamic State is, in fact, *un-Islamic*. It is, of course, reassuring to know that the vast majority of Muslims have zero interest in replacing Hollywood movies with public executions as evening entertainment. But Muslims who call the Islamic State un-Islamic are typically, as the Princeton scholar Bernard Haykel, the leading expert on the group's theology, told me, “embarrassed and politically correct, with a cotton-candy view of their own religion” that neglects “what their religion has historically and legally required.” Many denials of the Islamic State's religious nature, he said, are rooted in an “interfaith-Christian-nonsense tradition.”

Every academic I asked about the Islamic State's ideology sent me to Haykel. Of partial Lebanese descent, Haykel grew up in Lebanon and the United States, and when he talks through his Mephistophelian goatee, there is a hint of an unplaceable foreign accent.

According to Haykel, the ranks of the Islamic State are deeply infused with religious vigor. Koranic quotations are ubiquitous. “Even the foot soldiers spout this stuff constantly,” Haykel said. “They mug for their cameras and repeat their basic doctrines in formulaic fashion, and they do it *all the time*.” He regards the claim that the Islamic State has distorted the texts of Islam as preposterous, sustainable only through willful ignorance. “People want to

absolve Islam,” he said. “It’s this ‘Islam is a religion of peace’ mantra. As if there is such a thing as ‘Islam’! It’s what Muslims do, and how they interpret their texts.” Those texts are shared by all Sunni Muslims, not just the Islamic State. “And these guys have just as much legitimacy as anyone else.”

All Muslims acknowledge that Muhammad’s earliest conquests were not tidy affairs, and that the laws of war passed down in the Koran and in the narrations of the Prophet’s rule were calibrated to fit a turbulent and violent time. In Haykel’s estimation, the fighters of the Islamic State are authentic throwbacks to early Islam and are faithfully reproducing its norms of war. This behavior includes a number of practices that modern Muslims tend to prefer not to acknowledge as integral to their sacred texts. “Slavery, crucifixion, and beheadings are not something that freakish [jihadists] are cherry-picking from the medieval tradition,” Haykel said. Islamic State fighters “are smack in the middle of the medieval tradition and are bringing it wholesale into the present day.”

Our failure to appreciate the essential differences between ISIS and al-Qaeda has led to dangerous decisions.

The Koran specifies crucifixion as one of the only punishments permitted for enemies of Islam. The tax on Christians finds clear endorsement in the Surah Al-Tawba, the Koran’s ninth chapter, which instructs Muslims to fight Christians and Jews “until they pay the *jizya* with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.” The Prophet, whom all Muslims consider exemplary, imposed these rules and owned slaves.

Leaders of the Islamic State have taken emulation of Muhammad as strict duty, and have revived traditions that have been dormant for hundreds of

years. “What’s striking about them is not just the literalism, but also the seriousness with which they read these texts,” Haykel said. “There is an assiduous, obsessive seriousness that Muslims don’t normally have.”

Before the rise of the Islamic State, no group in the past few centuries had attempted more-radical fidelity to the Prophetic model than the Wahhabis of 18th-century Arabia. They conquered most of what is now Saudi Arabia, and their strict practices survive in a diluted version of Sharia there. Haykel sees an important distinction between the groups, though: “The Wahhabis were not wanton in their violence.” They were surrounded by Muslims, and they conquered lands that were already Islamic; this stayed their hand. “ISIS, by contrast, is really reliving the early period.” Early Muslims were surrounded by non-Muslims, and the Islamic State, because of its *takfiri* tendencies, considers itself to be in the same situation.

If al-Qaeda wanted to revive slavery, it never said so. And why would it? Silence on slavery probably reflected strategic thinking, with public sympathies in mind: when the Islamic State began enslaving people, even some of its supporters balked. Nonetheless, the caliphate has continued to embrace slavery and crucifixion without apology. “We will conquer your Rome, break your crosses, and enslave your women,” Adnani, the spokesman, promised in one of his periodic valentines to the West. “If we do not reach that time, then our children and grandchildren will reach it, and they will sell your sons as slaves at the slave market.”

In October, *Dabiq*, the magazine of the Islamic State, published “The Revival of Slavery Before the Hour,” an article that took up the question of whether Yazidis (the members of an ancient Kurdish sect that borrows elements of Islam, and had come under attack from Islamic State forces in northern Iraq) are lapsed Muslims, and therefore marked for death, or merely pagans and therefore fair game for enslavement. A study group of Islamic State scholars

had convened, on government orders, to resolve this issue. If they are pagans, the article's anonymous author wrote,

Yazidi women and children [are to be] divided according to the Shariah amongst the fighters of the Islamic State who participated in the Sinjar operations [in northern Iraq] ... Enslaving the families of the *kuffar* [infidels] and taking their women as concubines is a firmly established aspect of the Shariah that if one were to deny or mock, he would be denying or mocking the verses of the Koran and the narrations of the Prophet ... and thereby apostatizing from Islam.

II. Territory

Tens of thousands of foreign Muslims are thought to have immigrated to the Islamic State. Recruits hail from France, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Australia, Indonesia, the United States, and many other places. Many have come to fight, and many intend to die.

Peter R. Neumann, a professor at King's College London, told me that online voices have been essential to spreading propaganda and ensuring that newcomers know what to believe. Online recruitment has also widened the demographics of the jihadist community, by allowing conservative Muslim women—physically isolated in their homes—to reach out to recruiters, radicalize, and arrange passage to Syria. Through its appeals to both genders, the Islamic State hopes to build a complete society.

In November, I traveled to Australia to meet Musa Cerantonio, a 30-year-old man whom Neumann and other researchers had identified as one of the two

most important “new spiritual authorities” guiding foreigners to join the Islamic State. For three years he was a televangelist on Iqraa TV in Cairo, but he left after the station objected to his frequent calls to establish a caliphate. Now he preaches on Facebook and Twitter.

Cerantonio—a big, friendly man with a bookish demeanor—told me he blanches at beheading videos. He hates seeing the violence, even though supporters of the Islamic State are required to endorse it. (He speaks out, controversially among jihadists, against suicide bombing, on the grounds that God forbids suicide; he differs from the Islamic State on a few other points as well.) He has the kind of unkempt facial hair one sees on certain overgrown fans of *The Lord of the Rings*, and his obsession with Islamic apocalypticism felt familiar. He seemed to be living out a drama that looks, from an outsider’s perspective, like a medieval fantasy novel, only with real blood.

Last June, Cerantonio and his wife tried to emigrate—he wouldn’t say to where (“It’s illegal to go to Syria,” he said cagily)—but they were caught en route, in the Philippines, and he was deported back to Australia for overstaying his visa. Australia has criminalized attempts to join or travel to the Islamic State, and has confiscated Cerantonio’s passport. He is stuck in Melbourne, where he is well known to the local constabulary. If Cerantonio were caught facilitating the movement of individuals to the Islamic State, he would be imprisoned. So far, though, he is free—a technically unaffiliated ideologue who nonetheless speaks with what other jihadists have taken to be a reliable voice on matters of the Islamic State’s doctrine.

We met for lunch in Footscray, a dense, multicultural Melbourne suburb that’s home to Lonely Planet, the travel-guide publisher. Cerantonio grew up there in a half-Irish, half-Calabrian family. On a typical street one can find African restaurants, Vietnamese shops, and young Arabs walking around in

the Salafi uniform of scraggly beard, long shirt, and trousers ending halfway down the calves.

Cerantonio explained the joy he felt when Baghdadi was declared the caliph on June 29—and the sudden, magnetic attraction that Mesopotamia began to exert on him and his friends. “I was in a hotel [in the Philippines], and I saw the declaration on television,” he told me. “And I was just amazed, and I’m like, *Why am I stuck here in this bloody room?*”

The last caliphate was the Ottoman empire, which reached its peak in the 16th century and then experienced a long decline, until the founder of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, euthanized it in 1924. But Cerantonio, like many supporters of the Islamic State, doesn’t acknowledge that caliphate as legitimate, because it didn’t fully enforce Islamic law, which requires stonings and slavery and amputations, and because its caliphs were not descended from the tribe of the Prophet, the Quraysh.

Baghdadi spoke at length of the importance of the caliphate in his Mosul sermon. He said that to revive the institution of the caliphate—which had not functioned except in name for about 1,000 years—was a communal obligation. He and his loyalists had “hastened to declare the caliphate and place an imam” at its head, he said. “This is a duty upon the Muslims—a duty that has been lost for centuries ... The Muslims sin by losing it, and they must always seek to establish it.” Like bin Laden before him, Baghdadi spoke floridly, with frequent scriptural allusion and command of classical rhetoric. Unlike bin Laden, and unlike those false caliphs of the Ottoman empire, he is Qurayshi.

The caliphate, Cerantonio told me, is not just a political entity but also a vehicle for salvation. Islamic State propaganda regularly reports the pledges of *baya’a* (allegiance) rolling in from jihadist groups across the Muslim world. Cerantonio quoted a Prophetic saying, that to die without pledging allegiance

is to die *jahil* (ignorant) and therefore die a “death of disbelief.” Consider how Muslims (or, for that matter, Christians) imagine God deals with the souls of people who die without learning about the one true religion. They are neither obviously saved nor definitively condemned. Similarly, Cerantonio said, the Muslim who acknowledges one omnipotent god and prays, but who dies without pledging himself to a valid caliph and incurring the obligations of that oath, has failed to live a fully Islamic life. I pointed out that this means the vast majority of Muslims in history, and all who passed away between 1924 and 2014, died a death of disbelief. Cerantonio nodded gravely. “I would go so far as to say that Islam has been reestablished” by the caliphate.

I asked him about his own *baya’a*, and he quickly corrected me: “I didn’t say that I’d pledged allegiance.” Under Australian law, he reminded me, giving *baya’a* to the Islamic State was illegal. “But I agree that [Baghdadi] fulfills the requirements,” he continued. “I’m just going to wink at you, and you take that to mean whatever you want.”

To be the caliph, one must meet conditions outlined in Sunni law—being a Muslim adult man of Quraysh descent; exhibiting moral probity and physical and mental integrity; and having *’amr*, or authority. This last criterion, Cerantonio said, is the hardest to fulfill, and requires that the caliph have territory in which he can enforce Islamic law. Baghdadi’s Islamic State achieved that long before June 29, Cerantonio said, and as soon as it did, a Western convert within the group’s ranks—Cerantonio described him as “something of a leader”—began murmuring about the religious obligation to declare a caliphate. He and others spoke quietly to those in power and told them that further delay would be sinful.

Social-media posts from the Islamic State suggest that executions happen more or less continually.

Cerantonio said a faction arose that was prepared to make war on Baghdadi's group if it delayed any further. They prepared a letter to various powerful members of ISIS, airing their displeasure at the failure to appoint a caliph, but were pacified by Adnani, the spokesman, who let them in on a secret—that a caliphate had already been declared, long before the public announcement. They had their legitimate caliph, and at that point there was only one option. "If he's legitimate," Cerantonio said, "you must give him the *baya'a*."

After Baghdadi's July sermon, a stream of jihadists began flowing daily into Syria with renewed motivation. Jürgen Todenhöfer, a German author and former politician who visited the Islamic State in December, reported the arrival of 100 fighters at one Turkish-border recruitment station in just two days. His report, among others, suggests a still-steady inflow of foreigners, ready to give up everything at home for a shot at paradise in the worst place on Earth.



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Bernard Haykel, the foremost secular authority on the Islamic State's ideology, believes the group is trying to re-create the earliest days of Islam and is faithfully reproducing its norms of war. "There is an assiduous, obsessive seriousness" about the group's dedication to the text of the Koran, he says. (Peter Murphy)

IN LONDON, a week before my meal with Cerantonio, I met with three ex-members of a banned Islamist group called Al Muhajiroun (The Emigrants): Anjem Choudary, Abu Baraa, and Abdul Muhid. They all expressed desire to emigrate to the Islamic State, as many of their colleagues already had, but the authorities had confiscated their passports. Like Cerantonio, they regarded the caliphate as the only righteous government on Earth, though none would confess having pledged allegiance. Their principal goal in meeting me was to explain what the Islamic State stands for, and how its policies reflect God's law.

Choudary, 48, is the group's former leader. He frequently appears on cable news, as one of the few people producers can book who will defend the Islamic State vociferously, until his mike is cut. He has a reputation in the United Kingdom as a loathsome blowhard, but he and his disciples sincerely believe in the Islamic State and, on matters of doctrine, speak in its voice. Choudary and the others feature prominently in the Twitter feeds of Islamic State residents, and Abu Baraa maintains a YouTube channel to answer questions about Sharia.

Since September, authorities have been investigating the three men on suspicion of supporting terrorism. Because of this investigation, they had to meet me separately: communication among them would have violated the terms of their bail. But speaking with them felt like speaking with the same person wearing different masks. Choudary met me in a candy shop in the East London suburb of Ilford. He was dressed smartly, in a crisp blue tunic reaching nearly to his ankles, and sipped a Red Bull while we talked.

Before the caliphate, "maybe 85 percent of the Sharia was absent from our

lives,” Choudary told me. “These laws are in abeyance until we have *khilafa*”—a caliphate—“and now we have one.” Without a caliphate, for example, individual vigilantes are not obliged to amputate the hands of thieves they catch in the act. But create a caliphate, and this law, along with a huge body of other jurisprudence, suddenly awakens. In theory, all Muslims are obliged to immigrate to the territory where the caliph is applying these laws. One of Choudary’s prize students, a convert from Hinduism named Abu Rumaysah, evaded police to bring his family of five from London to Syria in November. On the day I met Choudary, Abu Rumaysah tweeted out a picture of himself with a Kalashnikov in one arm and his newborn son in the other. Hashtag: #GenerationKhilafah.

The caliph is required to implement Sharia. Any deviation will compel those who have pledged allegiance to inform the caliph in private of his error and, in extreme cases, to excommunicate and replace him if he persists. (“I have been plagued with this great matter, plagued with this responsibility, and it is a heavy responsibility,” Baghdadi said in his sermon.) In return, the caliph commands obedience—and those who persist in supporting non-Muslim governments, after being duly warned and educated about their sin, are considered apostates.

Choudary said Sharia has been misunderstood because of its incomplete application by regimes such as Saudi Arabia, which does behead murderers and cut off thieves’ hands. “The problem,” he explained, “is that when places like Saudi Arabia just implement the penal code, and don’t provide the social and economic justice of the Sharia—the whole package—they simply engender hatred toward the Sharia.” That whole package, he said, would include free housing, food, and clothing for all, though of course anyone who wished to enrich himself with work could do so.

Abdul Muhid, 32, continued along these lines. He was dressed in

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mujahideen chic when I met him at a local restaurant: scruffy beard, Afghan cap, and a wallet outside of his clothes, attached with what looked like a shoulder holster. When we sat down, he was eager to discuss welfare. The Islamic State may have medieval-style punishments for moral crimes (lashes for boozing or fornication, stoning for adultery), but its social-welfare program is, at least in some aspects, progressive to a degree that would please an MSNBC pundit. Health care, he said, is free. (“Isn’t it free in Britain, too?” I asked. “Not really,” he said. “Some procedures aren’t covered, such as vision.”) This provision of social welfare was not, he said, a policy choice of the Islamic State, but a policy *obligation* inherent in God’s law.



Anjem Choudary, London’s most notorious defender of the Islamic State, says crucifixion and beheading are sacred requirements. (Tal Cohen/Reuters)

III. The Apocalypse

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>

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All Muslims acknowledge that God is the only one who knows the future. But they also agree that he has offered us a peek at it, in the Koran and in narrations of the Prophet. The Islamic State differs from nearly every other current jihadist movement in believing that it is written into God's script as a central character. It is in this casting that the Islamic State is most boldly distinctive from its predecessors, and clearest in the religious nature of its mission.

In broad strokes, al-Qaeda acts like an underground political movement, with worldly goals in sight at all times—the expulsion of non-Muslims from the Arabian peninsula, the abolishment of the state of Israel, the end of support for dictatorships in Muslim lands. The Islamic State has its share of worldly concerns (including, in the places it controls, collecting garbage and keeping the water running), but the End of Days is a leitmotif of its propaganda. Bin Laden rarely mentioned the apocalypse, and when he did, he seemed to presume that he would be long dead when the glorious moment of divine comeuppance finally arrived. “Bin Laden and Zawahiri are from elite Sunni families who look down on this kind of speculation and think it's something the masses engage in,” says Will McCants of the Brookings Institution, who is writing a book about the Islamic State's apocalyptic thought.

During the last years of the U.S. occupation of Iraq, the Islamic State's immediate founding fathers, by contrast, saw signs of the end times everywhere. They were anticipating, within a year, the arrival of the Mahdi—a messianic figure destined to lead the Muslims to victory before the end of the world. McCants says a prominent Islamist in Iraq approached bin Laden in 2008 to warn him that the group was being led by millenarians who were “talking all the time about the Mahdi and making strategic decisions” based on when they thought the Mahdi was going to arrive. “Al-Qaeda had to write to [these leaders] to say ‘Cut it out.’”

For certain true believers—the kind who long for epic good-versus-evil battles—visions of apocalyptic bloodbaths fulfill a deep psychological need. Of the Islamic State supporters I met, Musa Cerantonio, the Australian, expressed the deepest interest in the apocalypse and how the remaining days of the Islamic State—and the world—might look. Parts of that prediction are original to him, and do not yet have the status of doctrine. But other parts are based on mainstream Sunni sources and appear all over the Islamic State’s propaganda. These include the belief that there will be only 12 legitimate caliphs, and Baghdadi is the eighth; that the armies of Rome will mass to meet the armies of Islam in northern Syria; and that Islam’s final showdown with an anti-Messiah will occur in Jerusalem after a period of renewed Islamic conquest.

The Islamic State has attached great importance to the Syrian city of Dabiq, near Aleppo. It named its propaganda magazine after the town, and celebrated madly when (at great cost) it conquered Dabiq’s strategically unimportant plains. It is here, the Prophet reportedly said, that the armies of Rome will set up their camp. The armies of Islam will meet them, and Dabiq will be Rome’s Waterloo or its Antietam.

“Dabiq is basically all farmland,” one Islamic State supporter recently tweeted. “You could imagine large battles taking place there.” The Islamic State’s propagandists drool with anticipation of this event, and constantly imply that it will come soon. The state’s magazine quotes Zarqawi as saying, “The spark has been lit here in Iraq, and its heat will continue to intensify ... until it burns the crusader armies in Dabiq.” A recent propaganda video shows clips from Hollywood war movies set in medieval times—perhaps because many of the prophecies specify that the armies will be on horseback or carrying ancient weapons.

Now that it has taken Dabiq, the Islamic State awaits the arrival of an enemy

army there, whose defeat will initiate the countdown to the apocalypse. Western media frequently miss references to Dabiq in the Islamic State's videos, and focus instead on lurid scenes of beheading. "Here we are, burying the first American crusader in Dabiq, eagerly waiting for the remainder of your armies to arrive," said a masked executioner in a November video, showing the severed head of Peter (Abdul Rahman) Kassig, the aid worker who'd been held captive for more than a year. During fighting in Iraq in December, after mujahideen (perhaps inaccurately) reported having seen American soldiers in battle, Islamic State Twitter accounts erupted in spasms of pleasure, like overenthusiastic hosts or hostesses upon the arrival of the first guests at a party.

The Prophetic narration that foretells the Dabiq battle refers to the enemy as Rome. Who "Rome" is, now that the pope has no army, remains a matter of debate. But Cerantonio makes a case that Rome meant the Eastern Roman empire, which had its capital in what is now Istanbul. We should think of Rome as the Republic of Turkey—the same republic that ended the last self-identified caliphate, 90 years ago. Other Islamic State sources suggest that Rome might mean any infidel army, and the Americans will do nicely.

After mujahideen reported having seen American soldiers in battle, Islamic State Twitter accounts erupted in spasms of pleasure, like overenthusiastic hosts upon the arrival of the first guests at a party.

After its battle in Dabiq, Cerantonio said, the caliphate will expand and sack Istanbul. Some believe it will then cover the entire Earth, but Cerantonio suggested its tide may never reach beyond the Bosphorus. An anti-Messiah, known in Muslim apocalyptic literature as Dajjal, will come from the Khorasan region of eastern Iran and kill a vast number of the caliphate's

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fighters, until just 5,000 remain, cornered in Jerusalem. Just as Dajjal prepares to finish them off, Jesus—the second-most-revered prophet in Islam—will return to Earth, spear Dajjal, and lead the Muslims to victory.

“Only God knows” whether the Islamic State’s armies are the ones foretold, Cerantonio said. But he is hopeful. “The Prophet said that one sign of the imminent arrival of the End of Days is that people will for a long while stop talking about the End of Days,” he said. “If you go to the mosques now, you’ll find the preachers are silent about this subject.” On this theory, even setbacks dealt to the Islamic State mean nothing, since God has preordained the near-destruction of his people anyway. The Islamic State has its best and worst days ahead of it.



Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was declared caliph by his followers last summer. The establishment of a caliphate awakened large sections of Koranic law that had lain dormant, and required those Muslims who recognized the caliphate to immigrate. (Associated Press)

IV. The Fight

The ideological purity of the Islamic State has one compensating virtue: it allows us to predict some of the group's actions. Osama bin Laden was seldom predictable. He ended his first television interview cryptically. CNN's Peter Arnett asked him, "What are your future plans?" Bin Laden replied, "You'll see them and hear about them in the media, God willing." By contrast, the Islamic State boasts openly about its plans—not all of them, but enough so that by listening carefully, we can deduce how it intends to govern and expand.

In London, Choudary and his students provided detailed descriptions of how the Islamic State must conduct its foreign policy, now that it is a caliphate. It has already taken up what Islamic law refers to as "offensive jihad," the forcible expansion into countries that are ruled by non-Muslims. "Hitherto, we were just defending ourselves," Choudary said; without a caliphate, offensive jihad is an inapplicable concept. But the waging of war to expand the caliphate is an essential duty of the caliph.

Choudary took pains to present the laws of war under which the Islamic State operates as policies of mercy rather than of brutality. He told me the state has an obligation to terrorize its enemies—a holy order to scare the shit out of them with beheadings and crucifixions and enslavement of women and children, because doing so hastens victory and avoids prolonged conflict.

Choudary's colleague Abu Baraa explained that Islamic law permits only temporary peace treaties, lasting no longer than a decade. Similarly, accepting any border is anathema, as stated by the Prophet and echoed in the Islamic State's propaganda videos. If the caliph consents to a longer-term peace or permanent border, he will be in error. Temporary peace treaties are renewable, but may not be applied to all enemies at once: the caliph must wage jihad at least once a year. He may not rest, or he will fall into a state of sin.

One comparison to the Islamic State is the Khmer Rouge, which killed about a third of the population of Cambodia. But the Khmer Rouge occupied Cambodia's seat at the United Nations. "This is not permitted," Abu Baraa said. "To send an ambassador to the UN is to recognize an authority other than God's." This form of diplomacy is *shirk*, or polytheism, he argued, and would be immediate cause to hereticize and replace Baghdadi. Even to hasten the arrival of a caliphate by democratic means—for example by voting for political candidates who favor a caliphate—is *shirk*.

It's hard to overstate how hamstrung the Islamic State will be by its radicalism. The modern international system, born of the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, relies on each state's willingness to recognize borders, however grudgingly. For the Islamic State, that recognition is ideological suicide. Other Islamist groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, have succumbed to the blandishments of democracy and the potential for an invitation to the community of nations, complete with a UN seat. Negotiation and accommodation have worked, at times, for the Taliban as well. (Under Taliban rule, Afghanistan exchanged ambassadors with Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates, an act that invalidated the Taliban's authority in the Islamic State's eyes.) To the Islamic State these are not options, but acts of apostasy.

THE UNITED STATES and its allies have reacted to the Islamic State belatedly and in an apparent daze. The group's ambitions and rough strategic blueprints were evident in its pronouncements and in social-media chatter as far back as 2011, when it was just one of many terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq and hadn't yet committed mass atrocities. Adnani, the spokesman, told followers then that the group's ambition was to "restore the Islamic caliphate," and he evoked the apocalypse, saying, "There are but a few days left." Baghdadi had already styled himself "commander of the faithful," a title ordinarily reserved for caliphs, in 2011. In April 2013,

Adnani declared the movement “ready to redraw the world upon the Prophetic methodology of the caliphate.” In August 2013, he said, “Our goal is to establish an Islamic state that doesn’t recognize borders, on the Prophetic methodology.” By then, the group had taken Raqqa, a Syrian provincial capital of perhaps 500,000 people, and was drawing in substantial numbers of foreign fighters who’d heard its message.

If we had identified the Islamic State’s intentions early, and realized that the vacuum in Syria and Iraq would give it ample space to carry them out, we might, at a minimum, have pushed Iraq to harden its border with Syria and preemptively make deals with its Sunnis. That would at least have avoided the electrifying propaganda effect created by the declaration of a caliphate just after the conquest of Iraq’s third-largest city. Yet, just over a year ago, Obama told *The New Yorker* that he considered ISIS to be al-Qaeda’s weaker partner. “If a jayvee team puts on Lakers uniforms that doesn’t make them Kobe Bryant,” the president said.

Our failure to appreciate the split between the Islamic State and al-Qaeda, and the essential differences between the two, has led to dangerous decisions. Last fall, to take one example, the U.S. government consented to a desperate plan to save Peter Kassig’s life. The plan facilitated—indeed, required—the interaction of some of the founding figures of the Islamic State and al-Qaeda, and could hardly have looked more hastily improvised.

Given everything we know about the Islamic State, continuing to slowly bleed it appears the best of bad military options.

It entailed the enlistment of Abu Muhammad al Maqdisi, the Zarqawi mentor and al-Qaeda grandee, to approach Turki al-Binali, the Islamic State’s chief

ideologue and a former student of Maqdisi's, even though the two men had fallen out due to Maqdisi's criticism of the Islamic State. Maqdisi had already called for the state to extend mercy to Alan Henning, the British cabbie who had entered Syria to deliver aid to children. In December, *The Guardian* reported that the U.S. government, through an intermediary, had asked Maqdisi to intercede with the Islamic State on Kassig's behalf.

Maqdisi was living freely in Jordan, but had been banned from communicating with terrorists abroad, and was being monitored closely. After Jordan granted the United States permission to reintroduce Maqdisi to Binali, Maqdisi bought a phone with American money and was allowed to correspond merrily with his former student for a few days, before the Jordanian government stopped the chats and used them as a pretext to jail Maqdisi. Kassig's severed head appeared in the Dabiq video a few days later.

Maqdisi gets mocked roundly on Twitter by the Islamic State's fans, and al-Qaeda is held in great contempt for refusing to acknowledge the caliphate. Cole Bunzel, a scholar who studies Islamic State ideology, read Maqdisi's opinion on Henning's status and thought it would hasten his and other captives' death. "If I were held captive by the Islamic State and Maqdisi said I shouldn't be killed," he told me, "I'd kiss my ass goodbye."

Kassig's death was a tragedy, but the plan's success would have been a bigger one. A reconciliation between Maqdisi and Binali would have begun to heal the main rift between the world's two largest jihadist organizations. It's possible that the government wanted only to draw out Binali for intelligence purposes or assassination. (Multiple attempts to elicit comment from the FBI were unsuccessful.) Regardless, the decision to play matchmaker for America's two main terrorist antagonists reveals astonishingly poor judgment.

CHASTENED BY OUR EARLIER INDIFFERENCE, we are now meeting the Islamic State via Kurdish and Iraqi proxy on the battlefield, and with regular air assaults. Those strategies haven't dislodged the Islamic State from any of its major territorial possessions, although they've kept it from directly assaulting Baghdad and Erbil and slaughtering Shia and Kurds there.

Some observers have called for escalation, including several predictable voices from the interventionist right (Max Boot, Frederick Kagan), who have urged the deployment of tens of thousands of American soldiers. These calls should not be dismissed too quickly: an avowedly genocidal organization is on its potential victims' front lawn, and it is committing daily atrocities in the territory it already controls.

One way to un-cast the Islamic State's spell over its adherents would be to overpower it militarily and occupy the parts of Syria and Iraq now under caliphate rule. Al-Qaeda is ineradicable because it can survive, cockroach-like, by going underground. The Islamic State cannot. If it loses its grip on its territory in Syria and Iraq, it will cease to be a caliphate. Caliphates cannot exist as underground movements, because territorial authority is a requirement: take away its command of territory, and all those oaths of allegiance are no longer binding. Former pledges could of course continue to attack the West and behead their enemies, as freelancers. But the propaganda value of the caliphate would disappear, and with it the supposed religious duty to immigrate and serve it. If the United States were to invade, the Islamic State's obsession with battle at Dabiq suggests that it might send vast resources there, as if in a conventional battle. If the state musters at Dabiq in full force, only to be routed, it might never recover.



Abu Baraa, who maintains a YouTube channel about Islamic law, says the caliph, Baghdadi, cannot negotiate or recognize borders, and must continually make war, or he will remove himself from Islam.

And yet the risks of escalation are enormous. The biggest proponent of an American invasion is the Islamic State itself. The provocative videos, in which a black-hooded executioner addresses President Obama by name, are clearly made to draw America into the fight. An invasion would be a huge propaganda victory for jihadists worldwide: irrespective of whether they have given *baya'a* to the caliph, they all believe that the United States wants to embark on a modern-day Crusade and kill Muslims. Yet another invasion and occupation would confirm that suspicion, and bolster recruitment. Add the incompetence of our previous efforts as occupiers, and we have reason for reluctance. The rise of ISIS, after all, happened only because our previous occupation created space for Zarqawi and his followers. Who knows the consequences of another botched job?

Given everything we know about the Islamic State, continuing to slowly bleed it, through air strikes and proxy warfare, appears the best of bad military options. Neither the Kurds nor the Shia will ever subdue and control the whole Sunni heartland of Syria and Iraq—they are hated there, and have no appetite for such an adventure anyway. But they can keep the Islamic State from fulfilling its duty to expand. And with every month that it fails to expand, it resembles less the conquering state of the Prophet Muhammad than yet another Middle Eastern government failing to bring prosperity to its people.

The humanitarian cost of the Islamic State's existence is high. But its threat to the United States is smaller than its all too frequent conflation with al-Qaeda would suggest. Al-Qaeda's core is rare among jihadist groups for its

focus on the “far enemy” (the West); most jihadist groups’ main concerns lie closer to home. That’s especially true of the Islamic State, precisely because of its ideology. It sees enemies everywhere around it, and while its leadership wishes ill on the United States, the application of Sharia in the caliphate and the expansion to contiguous lands are paramount. Baghdadi has said as much directly: in November he told his Saudi agents to “deal with the *rafida* [Shia] first ... then *al-Sulul* [Sunni supporters of the Saudi monarchy] ... before the crusaders and their bases.”

Musa Cerantonio and Anjem Choudary could mentally shift from contemplating mass death to discussing the virtues of Vietnamese coffee, with apparent delight in each.

The foreign fighters (and their wives and children) have been traveling to the caliphate on one-way tickets: they want to live under true Sharia, and many want martyrdom. Doctrine, recall, requires believers to reside in the caliphate if it is at all possible for them to do so. One of the Islamic State’s less bloody videos shows a group of jihadists burning their French, British, and Australian passports. This would be an eccentric act for someone intending to return to blow himself up in line at the Louvre or to hold another chocolate shop hostage in Sydney.

A few “lone wolf” supporters of the Islamic State have attacked Western targets, and more attacks will come. But most of the attackers have been frustrated amateurs, unable to immigrate to the caliphate because of confiscated passports or other problems. Even if the Islamic State cheers these attacks—and it does in its propaganda—it hasn’t yet planned and financed one. (The *Charlie Hebdo* attack in Paris in January was principally an al-Qaeda operation.) During his visit to Mosul in December, Jürgen

Todenhöfer interviewed a portly German jihadist and asked whether any of his comrades had returned to Europe to carry out attacks. The jihadist seemed to regard returnees not as soldiers but as dropouts. “The fact is that the returnees from the Islamic State should repent from their return,” he said. “I hope they review their religion.”

Properly contained, the Islamic State is likely to be its own undoing. No country is its ally, and its ideology ensures that this will remain the case. The land it controls, while expansive, is mostly uninhabited and poor. As it stagnates or slowly shrinks, its claim that it is the engine of God’s will and the agent of apocalypse will weaken, and fewer believers will arrive. And as more reports of misery within it leak out, radical Islamist movements elsewhere will be discredited: *No one has tried harder to implement strict Sharia by violence. This is what it looks like.*

Even so, the death of the Islamic State is unlikely to be quick, and things could still go badly wrong: if the Islamic State obtained the allegiance of al-Qaeda—increasing, in one swoop, the unity of its base—it could wax into a worse foe than we’ve yet seen. The rift between the Islamic State and al-Qaeda has, if anything, grown in the past few months; the December issue of *Dabiq* featured a long account of an al-Qaeda defector who described his old group as corrupt and ineffectual, and Zawahiri as a distant and unfit leader. But we should watch carefully for a rapprochement.

Without a catastrophe such as this, however, or perhaps the threat of the Islamic State’s storming Erbil, a vast ground invasion would certainly make the situation worse.

V. Dissuasion

It would be facile, even exculpatory, to call the problem of the Islamic State “a problem with Islam.” The religion allows many interpretations, and

Islamic State supporters are morally on the hook for the one they choose. And yet simply denouncing the Islamic State as un-Islamic can be counterproductive, especially if those who hear the message have read the holy texts and seen the endorsement of many of the caliphate's practices written plainly within them.

Muslims can say that slavery is not legitimate *now*, and that crucifixion is wrong *at this historical juncture*. Many say precisely this. But they cannot condemn slavery or crucifixion outright without contradicting the Koran and the example of the Prophet. "The only principled ground that the Islamic State's opponents could take is to say that certain core texts and traditional teachings of Islam are no longer valid," Bernard Haykel says. That really would be an act of apostasy.

The Islamic State's ideology exerts powerful sway over a certain subset of the population. Life's hypocrisies and inconsistencies vanish in its face. Musa Cerantonio and the Salafis I met in London are unstumpable: no question I posed left them stuttering. They lectured me garrulously and, if one accepts their premises, convincingly. To call them un-Islamic appears, to me, to invite them into an argument that they would win. If they had been froth-spewing maniacs, I might be able to predict that their movement would burn out as the psychopaths detonated themselves or became drone-splats, one by one. But these men spoke with an academic precision that put me in mind of a good graduate seminar. I even enjoyed their company, and that frightened me as much as anything else.

NON-MUSLIMS CANNOT TELL Muslims how to practice their religion properly. But Muslims have long since begun this debate within their own ranks. "You have to have standards," Anjem Choudary told me. "Somebody could claim to be a Muslim, but if he believes in homosexuality or drinking alcohol, then he is not a Muslim. There is no such thing as a

nonpracticing vegetarian.”

There is, however, another strand of Islam that offers a hard-line alternative to the Islamic State—just as uncompromising, but with opposite conclusions. This strand has proved appealing to many Muslims cursed or blessed with a psychological longing to see every jot and tittle of the holy texts implemented as they were in the earliest days of Islam. Islamic State supporters know how to react to Muslims who ignore parts of the Koran: with *takfir* and ridicule. But they also know that some other Muslims read the Koran as assiduously as they do, and pose a real ideological threat.

Baghdadi is Salafi. The term *Salafi* has been villainized, in part because authentic villains have ridden into battle waving the Salafi banner. But most Salafis are not jihadists, and most adhere to sects that reject the Islamic State. They are, as Haykel notes, committed to expanding *Dar al-Islam*, the land of Islam, even, perhaps, with the implementation of monstrous practices such as slavery and amputation—but at some future point. Their first priority is personal purification and religious observance, and they believe anything that thwarts those goals—such as causing war or unrest that would disrupt lives and prayer and scholarship—is forbidden.

They live among us. Last fall, I visited the Philadelphia mosque of Breton Pocius, 28, a Salafi imam who goes by the name Abdullah. His mosque is on the border between the crime-ridden Northern Liberties neighborhood and a gentrifying area that one might call Dar al-Hipster; his beard allows him to pass in the latter zone almost unnoticed.

A theological alternative to the Islamic State exists—just as uncompromising, but with opposite conclusions.

Pocius converted 15 years ago after a Polish Catholic upbringing in Chicago. Like Cerantonio, he talks like an old soul, exhibiting deep familiarity with ancient texts, and a commitment to them motivated by curiosity and scholarship, and by a conviction that they are the only way to escape hellfire. When I met him at a local coffee shop, he carried a work of Koranic scholarship in Arabic and a book for teaching himself Japanese. He was preparing a sermon on the obligations of fatherhood for the 150 or so worshipers in his Friday congregation.

Pocius said his main goal is to encourage a halal life for worshipers in his mosque. But the rise of the Islamic State has forced him to consider political questions that are usually very far from the minds of Salafis. “Most of what they’ll say about how to pray and how to dress is exactly what I’ll say in my *masjid* [mosque]. But when they get to questions about social upheaval, they sound like Che Guevara.”

When Baghdadi showed up, Pocius adopted the slogan “Not my *khalifa*.” “The times of the Prophet were a time of great bloodshed,” he told me, “and he knew that the worst possible condition for all people was chaos, especially within the *umma* [Muslim community].” Accordingly, Pocius said, the correct attitude for Salafis is not to sow discord by factionalizing and declaring fellow Muslims apostates.

Instead, Pocius—like a majority of Salafis—believes that Muslims should remove themselves from politics. These quietist Salafis, as they are known, agree with the Islamic State that God’s law is the only law, and they eschew practices like voting and the creation of political parties. But they interpret the Koran’s hatred of discord and chaos as requiring them to fall into line with just about any leader, including some manifestly sinful ones. “The Prophet said: as long as the ruler does not enter into clear *kufr* [disbelief], give him general obedience,” Pocius told me, and the classic “books of

creed” all warn against causing social upheaval. Quietist Salafis are strictly forbidden from dividing Muslims from one another—for example, by mass excommunication. Living without *baya’a*, Pocius said, does indeed make one ignorant, or benighted. But *baya’a* need not mean direct allegiance to a caliph, and certainly not to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. It can mean, more broadly, allegiance to a religious social contract and commitment to a society of Muslims, whether ruled by a caliph or not.

Quietist Salafis believe that Muslims should direct their energies toward perfecting their personal life, including prayer, ritual, and hygiene. Much in the same way ultra-Orthodox Jews debate whether it’s kosher to tear off squares of toilet paper on the Sabbath (does that count as “rending cloth”?), they spend an inordinate amount of time ensuring that their trousers are not too long, that their beards are trimmed in some areas and shaggy in others. Through this fastidious observance, they believe, God will favor them with strength and numbers, and perhaps a caliphate will arise. At that moment, Muslims will take vengeance and, yes, achieve glorious victory at Dabiq. But Pocius cites a slew of modern Salafi theologians who argue that a caliphate cannot come into being in a righteous way except through the unmistakable will of God.

The Islamic State, of course, would agree, and say that God has anointed Baghdadi. Pocius’s retort amounts to a call to humility. He cites Abdullah Ibn Abbas, one of the Prophet’s companions, who sat down with dissenters and asked them how they had the gall, as a minority, to tell the majority that it was wrong. Dissent itself, to the point of bloodshed or splitting the *umma*, was forbidden. Even the manner of the establishment of Baghdadi’s caliphate runs contrary to expectation, he said. “The *khilafa* is something that Allah is going to establish,” he told me, “and it will involve a consensus of scholars from Mecca and Medina. That is not what happened. ISIS came out of nowhere.”

The Islamic State loathes this talk, and its fanboys tweet derisively about quietist Salafis. They mock them as “Salafis of menstruation,” for their obscure judgments about when women are and aren’t clean, and other low-priority aspects of life. “What we need now is fatwa about how it’s haram [forbidden] to ride a bike on Jupiter,” one tweeted drily. “That’s what scholars should focus on. More pressing than state of Ummah.” Anjem Choudary, for his part, says that no sin merits more vigorous opposition than the usurpation of God’s law, and that extremism in defense of monotheism is no vice.

Pocius doesn’t court any kind of official support from the United States, as a counterweight to jihadism. Indeed, official support would tend to discredit him, and in any case he is bitter toward America for treating him, in his words, as “less than a citizen.” (He alleges that the government paid spies to infiltrate his mosque and harassed his mother at work with questions about his being a potential terrorist.)

Still, his *quietist* Salafism offers an Islamic antidote to Baghdadi-style jihadism. The people who arrive at the faith spoiling for a fight cannot all be stopped from jihadism, but those whose main motivation is to find an ultraconservative, uncompromising version of Islam have an alternative here. It is not moderate Islam; most Muslims would consider it extreme. It is, however, a form of Islam that the literal-minded would not instantly find hypocritical, or blasphemously purged of its inconveniences. Hypocrisy is not a sin that ideologically minded young men tolerate well.

Western officials would probably do best to refrain from weighing in on matters of Islamic theological debate altogether. Barack Obama himself drifted into *takfiri* waters when he claimed that the Islamic State was “not Islamic”—the irony being that he, as the non-Muslim son of a Muslim, may himself be classified as an apostate, and yet is now practicing *takfir* against

Muslims. Non-Muslims' practicing *takfir* elicits chuckles from jihadists ("Like a pig covered in feces giving hygiene advice to others," one tweeted).

I suspect that most Muslims appreciated Obama's sentiment: the president was standing with them against both Baghdadi and non-Muslim chauvinists trying to implicate them in crimes. But most Muslims *aren't* susceptible to joining jihad. The ones who are susceptible will only have had their suspicions confirmed: the United States lies about religion to serve its purposes.

WITHIN THE NARROW BOUNDS of its theology, the Islamic State hums with energy, even creativity. Outside those bounds, it could hardly be more arid and silent: a vision of life as obedience, order, and destiny. Musa Cerantonio and Anjem Choudary could mentally shift from contemplating mass death and eternal torture to discussing the virtues of Vietnamese coffee or treacly pastry, with apparent delight in each, yet to me it seemed that to embrace their views would be to see all the flavors of this world grow insipid compared with the vivid grotesqueries of the hereafter.

I could enjoy their company, as a guilty intellectual exercise, up to a point. In reviewing *Mein Kampf* in March 1940, George Orwell confessed that he had "never been able to dislike Hitler"; something about the man projected an underdog quality, even when his goals were cowardly or loathsome. "If he were killing a mouse he would know how to make it seem like a dragon." The Islamic State's partisans have much the same allure. They believe that they are personally involved in struggles beyond their own lives, and that merely to be swept up in the drama, on the side of righteousness, is a privilege and a pleasure—especially when it is also a burden.



Fascism, Orwell continued, is

psychologically far sounder than any hedonistic conception of life ... Whereas Socialism, and even capitalism in a more grudging way, have said to people “I offer you a good time,” Hitler has said to them, “I offer you struggle, danger, and death,” and as a result a whole nation flings itself at his feet ... We ought not to underrate its emotional appeal.

Nor, in the case of the Islamic State, its religious or intellectual appeal. That the Islamic State holds the imminent fulfillment of prophecy as a matter of dogma at least tells us the mettle of our opponent. It is ready to cheer its own near-obliteration, and to remain confident, even when surrounded, that it will receive divine succor if it stays true to the Prophetic model. Ideological tools may convince some potential converts that the group’s message is false, and military tools can limit its horrors. But for an organization as impervious to persuasion as the Islamic State, few measures short of these will matter, and the war may be a long one, even if it doesn’t last until the end of time.

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**Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Hon. Jeh C. Johnson
From Senator Tammy Baldwin**

“Threats to the Homeland”

October 8, 2015

Question#:	1
Topic:	Radical Islamic Websites
Hearing:	Threats to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Question: In your testimony, you expressed concern that individuals are increasingly becoming inspired, as opposed to directed, by al Qaeda and ISIL, to engage in terrorist activities whether overseas or at home. Specifically, you note these individuals self-radicalize, thereby making it increasingly difficult for anyone – let alone law enforcement – to know about their intentions before they turn to radical action.

Does DHS have the capability to track (perhaps, via IP-address) the trends of individuals around the globe who access radical Islamic websites?

Response: The DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) maintains the ability to research and collect information, based on I&A’s Intelligence Oversight requirements under Executive Order 12333, on individuals who provide content to radical Islamic and other social media websites, as long as the websites are open to the public and the individuals allow members of the public to access the content. I&A also de-conflicts collection targets with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It is a challenge to identify and obtain information regarding individuals who use such websites but seek to mask their identities or otherwise prevent access to their online activities. Individuals will often adopt different on-line personas (e.g., different handles, monikers, or names) for use on different platforms. Technology to mask Internet Protocol (IP) addresses and other information is readily available on the internet. A simple change in venue (such as using different internet cafes) adds multiple IP addresses to decipher.

Question: What are the legal and technological obstacles that DHS faces in order track these individuals?

Response: Under Executive Order 12333, as amended, I&A is restricted to gathering information that is available publicly or through overt research and collection. Overt collection such as this is generally not intended to track individuals accessing violent extremist social media websites. The I&A Open Source Collection and Raw Reporting

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program collects specific Intelligence Oversight-approved information that is publicly available. The DHS I&A Open Source Program does not collect information that may be restricted within websites, such as those behind privacy settings.

Question#:	2
Topic:	Radical Islamic Propaganda
Hearing:	Threats to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Question: Does DHS have the capability to GPS-track (perhaps, via IP-address) those individuals across the globe who indicate an increasing trend of watching, or disseminating access to, radical Islamic propaganda on the internet?

What are the legal and technological obstacles?

Response: DHS has some capability to track violent extremist messaging. DHS recommends a classified briefing to fully address this question.

Question: DHS cannot physically patrol the world -- does DHS have close working-relationships with other intelligence agencies around the globe such that real-time information sharing with these agencies is available to locate and intercept these sorts of high-risk individuals?

Response: DHS relies on close working relationships with other intelligence agencies to share information on threats to inform our risk-based operational mitigation efforts. DHS recommends a classified briefing in concert with our Intelligence Community partners to fully address this question.

**Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to Hon. Jeh C. Johnson
From Senator Joni Ernst**

“Threats to the Homeland”

October 8, 2015

Question#:	3
Topic:	Foreign Fighters
Hearing:	Threats to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Joni Ernst
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Question: To the extent that can be discussed in an open record, is there any evidence of returning foreign fighters or ISIL sympathizers in the U.S. banding and working together on American soil?

Response: To date, we are aware of only one case of a returned foreign terrorist fighter allegedly engaged in plotting in the Homeland, an Ohio man who was charged in April 2015.

At least two plots in the Homeland so far this year have included multiple Homegrown Violent Extremists working together to engage in violence. For example, in May 2015, two violent extremists working in concert perpetrated the attack at the “Draw Mohammad” event in Garland, Texas, and an associate of the shooters was later arrested for allegedly providing them with assistance prior to the attack.

Question#:	4
Topic:	Law Enforcement
Hearing:	Threats to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Joni Ernst
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

Question: I realize you have made efforts to increase coordination and collaboration between our law enforcement and national security agencies, but are there any additional areas of cooperation or improvements with respect to communication that you believe could be made in addressing threats to our homeland? Can communication and cooperation be improved between federal agencies and state and local law enforcement?

Response: DHS continually seeks to further improve information sharing between and among the federal government and our state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) law enforcement partners. SLTT law enforcement personnel are on the front lines of homeland security and are the most likely to identify threats in their local communities. To support their efforts, the DHS Office of Intelligence Analysis (I&A) deploys personnel – including Intelligence Officers, Reports Officers, and Regional Directors – to state and major urban area fusion centers and other strategic locations nationwide to collaborate with their SLTT and private sector partners and facilitate the execution of the intelligence cycle at the local level.

These I&A field personnel engage with SLTT law enforcement partners to collect unique SLTT information and report it, as appropriate, to federal partners for subsequent intelligence analysis and dissemination. I&A field personnel also disseminate intelligence and threat information from the Intelligence Community to their local SLTT partners at the local level. In this way, these field personnel act as nodes by which the federal government can communicate intelligence priorities to and from state and local law enforcement.

The DHS Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) also works with our SLTT partners to improve the knowledge base when it comes to protecting the homeland. For example, S&T is completing a project examining how to integrate mental health and education into Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programming. One of the deliverables will be cross-training primers for law enforcement, mental health professionals, and education professions so that each professional understands where the others fit into the CVE process. DHS S&T is also beginning a project evaluating the CVE efforts in the pilot cities of Boston and Los Angeles. This evaluation will help improve the efforts of local partners participating in CVE by helping them determine which CVE pilot efforts are having the desired impact. Information will be consistently shared with stakeholders in these communities.

Question#:	4
Topic:	Law Enforcement
Hearing:	Threats to the Homeland
Primary:	The Honorable Joni Ernst
Committee:	HOMELAND SECURITY (SENATE)

DHS looks forward to continuing to work with Congress to foster intelligence and information sharing nationwide and improve the nationwide information sharing environment.

**Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to The Honorable James B. Comey
From Senator Joni K. Ernst**

**“Threats to the Homeland”
October 8, 2015**

1. Russia has been referred to as the greatest existential threat to our country by many of our military leaders – including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joe Dunford. Additionally, there has been a great deal of talk about Russia’s activities with respect to cyber espionage. However, it remains vital to our national security to not lose sight of more traditional espionage activities being done on the ground. To the extent possible in an open record, what is your assessment of the threat posed by Russia through traditional espionage from its foreign and military intelligence services? In your opinion has the threat increased? And finally, does the FBI still have the resources it needs to protect our nation against these traditional counterintelligence threats?

2. According to Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work, the new intelligence sharing agreement between Russia, Iran, Iraq, and Assad’s Syria caught the administration by “surprise.” Considering the efforts of our men and women in uniform, and the billions of American taxpayer dollars spent in support of the Iraqi people and the Iraqi government, I am troubled the Iraqi central government may have made this agreement with our adversaries without consulting with the U.S. government. In light of this recent revelation:
 - a. Is the FBI conducting an assessment of the U.S. classified information that may be obtained by Russia and the potential intelligence risks posed by this new agreement?
 - b. How many U.S. allies have publicized intelligence sharing agreements with Russia?

3. To the extent that can be discussed in an open record, is there any evidence of returning foreign fighters or ISIL sympathizers in the U.S. banding and working together on American soil?

4. I realize you have made efforts to increase coordination and collaboration between our law enforcement and national security agencies, but are there any additional areas of cooperation or improvements with respect to communication that you believe could be made in addressing threats to our homeland? Can communication and cooperation be improved between federal agencies and state and local law enforcement?

5. How concerned are you of ISIL, al Qaeda or its affiliates, or those radicalized by them, exploiting the refugee crisis to infiltrate the United States?

The responses to these questions are classified SECRET and are on file in the Office of Senate Security.

**Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to The Honorable James Comey
From Senator Tammy Baldwin**

“Threats to the Homeland”

October 8, 2015

1. In your testimony, you expressed concern over the “Going Dark” phenomenon, whereby ISIL removes “live ones” from Twitter and moves them to mobile messaging apps with end-to-end encryption, resulting in the FBI’s inability to further track the content of cyber information flowing between ISIL and the “live ones.” Specifically, you state that these mobile messaging apps used by ISIL that have end-to-end encryption prohibit the FBI from collecting the content of the information exchanged between ISIL and the “live ones” because, even with a search warrant, the FBI cannot access the information due to the encryption. You stated that you believe that we can “Go Light” with help from the private sector.
 - A. Although obtaining the content of the information exchanged by “live ones” may not be discoverable due to advanced encryption, is the location of the individuals similarly undiscoverable? Presently, can the FBI GPS-track the Twitter accounts or other social media accounts of “live ones” within the United States borders preemptively in order to intervene before these individuals “Go Dark”?
 - i. Specifically, what are the legal and technological obstacles that hamper this ability?
 - a. For example, once the “live ones” show up on the FBI’s radar, but before ISIL moves these individuals to encrypted mobile messaging apps, are we able to obtain information relating to the location of these individuals? If so, how accurate is this location information (i.e., does the location information inform the FBI of the city where the individual posted the message or the geographic coordinates?). Additionally, given the constitutional concerns, is there any Federal legislation the FBI may utilize to obtain search warrants on the location of “live ones” who are merely contacting ISIL, but who have not yet acted themselves?
 - ii. Further, how freely, effectively and efficiently does information flow from State and Local agencies to Federal agencies regarding particular individuals – in this case “live ones”?
 - a. For example, if an individual appears on the FBI’s radar due to information shared on social media, what is the extent to which the FBI can receive information on that individual that has been collected by State and Local agencies – specifically, prior arrests and/or contacts with the individual, and various personal information regarding that individual?

- B. In addition, with respect to those individuals who travel to the Middle East to become active participants of terrorism, who funds their travel? How are these monetary transactions taking place? Are these monetary transactions traceable or untraceable? If untraceable, what is the form of its un-traceability (i.e., does ISIL fund individuals travel expenses by electronic currency such as "bit-coin" or underground networks?).
 - i. Is there any technology the FBI could implement to counter, offset, or render unusable the effectiveness of these monetary transactions?

The responses to these questions are classified SECRET and are on file in the Office of Senate Security.

**Post-Hearing Questions for the Record
Submitted to The Honorable Nicholas Rasmussen
From Senator Joni K. Ernst**

**“Threats to the Homeland”
October 8, 2015**

1. According to Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work, the new intelligence sharing agreement between Russia, Iran, Iraq, and Assad’s Syria caught the administration by “surprise.” Considering the efforts of our men and women in uniform, and the billions of American taxpayer dollars in support of the Iraqi people and the Iraqi government, I am troubled the Iraqi central government may have made this agreement with our adversaries without consulting with the U.S. government. In light of this recent revelation:
 - a. Is the FBI conducting an assessment of the U.S. classified information that may be obtained by Russia and the potential intelligence risks posed by this new agreement?
 - b. How many U.S. allies have publicized intelligence sharing agreements with Russia?
2. To the extent that can be discussed in an open record, is there any evidence of returning foreign fighters or ISIL sympathizers in the U.S. banding and working together on American soil?
3. I realize you have made efforts to increase coordination and collaboration between our law enforcement and national security agencies, but are there any additional areas of cooperation or improvements with respect to communication that you believe could be made in addressing threats to our homeland? Can communication and cooperation be improved between federal agencies and state and local law enforcement?
4. How concerned are you of ISIL, al Qaeda or its affiliates, or those radicalized by them, exploiting the refugee crisis to infiltrate the United States?

The responses to these questions are classified TS//SCI and are on file in the Office of Senate Security.