

WRITTEN EVIDENCE OF CONGRESSMAN PETER T. KING

**CHAIRMAN, UNITED STATES HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY**

BEFORE THE

**HOUSE OF COMMONS, SELECT COMMITTEE ON HOME
AFFAIRS**

PRESENTED ON

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The spate of recent homegrown terrorist attacks within the United States and abroad has reinforced the unquestionable fact that homegrown radicalization is part of Al Qaeda's strategy to continue attacking the United States and its allies. In an effort to examine the most prescient and dangerous threats facing the United States, the Committee on Homeland Security convened a series of hearings to examine the critical issue of the radicalization of Muslim-Americans. Specifically, the Committee has held three hearings over the past few months that have examined various aspects of the radicalization of Muslim-Americans within the United States. Each hearing has yielded significant findings that have shed considerable light on this critical issue. While the Committee's examination of this problem remains ongoing, the evidence collected thus far provides substantial insight into the extent and threat of radicalization within the United States.

Although the initial announcement of these hearings generated considerable controversy and opposition, the hearings have nonetheless proven successful in that they have had a significant and beneficial impact in fostering an honest dialogue about the growing issue of radicalization within the United States. Moreover, they have liberated and empowered many Muslim-Americans who had been intimidated by leaders in their own communities, but are now able to come forward and address this issue.

COMMITTEE FINDINGS

HEARING # 1: "THE EXTENT OF RADICALIZATION IN THE AMERICAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY AND THAT COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE."

- Finding #1: The Radicalization of Muslim-Americans Constitutes a Real and Serious Threat
- Finding #2: There is a Significant Lack of Muslim-American Community Cooperation with Law Enforcement
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HEARING # 2: "THE THREAT OF MUSLIM-AMERICAN RADICALIZATION IN U.S. PRISONS."

- Finding #4: The Radicalization of Prison Inmates to an Extremist Form of Islam is a Significant Problem, which Can Often Manifest Once Radicalized Prisoners Are Released
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- Finding #6: There are Direct Ties Between Al Shabaab and Al Qaeda and its Affiliates, and Al Shabaab Recruits are Often Indoctrinated into Al Qaeda's Ideology and Network
- Finding #7: Individuals Who Have Been Radicalized and Recruited By Al Shabaab May Pose a Direct Threat to the National Security of the United States and its Allies
- Finding #8: The Committee's Hearings on the Radicalization of Muslim-Americans Have Empowered Muslims to Effectively Address this Issue.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE THREAT OF DOMESTIC RADICALIZATION

As we commemorate the 10-year anniversary of the horrific terrorist attacks on September 11th, we must not forget that the threat posed by Al Qaeda and its affiliates remains as deadly and paramount as ever. While successful counterterrorism operations removed the menace of Osama bin Laden from the earth, his ideological legacy and unwavering resolve to attack the United States and its Western allies unfortunately live on.

As a result of the Allied invasion of Afghanistan in which troops played such a major role and subsequent counterterrorism efforts in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region, core Al Qaeda's primary safe haven is under siege, hindering its ability to carry out large-scale attacks on the U.S. Homeland and other Western nations. Al Qaeda and affiliates such as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) have been forced to transform their strategy and adapt their operational doctrine. A key focus of this new doctrine is based on recruiting and radicalizing Westerners and United States persons capable of perpetrating attacks within those nations. As a result of this evolving strategy, the threat no longer emanates solely from remote Al Qaeda operatives coordinating attacks halfway across the world, but rather from radicalized individuals residing within the Homeland who are now ready to engage in terrorist activities in their own communities. This strategy shift presents a critical challenge to the counterterrorism, intelligence, and law enforcement communities within the U.S. and for our allies. In addition, the emergence of influential, English-speaking Al Qaeda representatives such as Anwar Al Awlaki has enhanced Al Qaeda's ability to successfully implement its strategy of targeting U.S. persons and Westerners for recruitment.

Al Qaeda and its affiliates are using various tools to target and radicalize recruits in the West, including propaganda statements, videos, and magazines. For example, in July 2010, the Yemen-based Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) launched the first in its series of slick, online, English propaganda magazines, entitled *Inspire*. To date, AQAP has produced six issues of *Inspire*. American citizens Anwar al-Awlaki and his protégé Samir Khan are reportedly behind the development and production of the magazines, with Khan allegedly serving as the magazine's editor.¹

Inspire appears to be targeted at American and Western European audiences in an effort to reach aspiring terrorists. It is essentially a "how to" for would-be terrorists cloaked in pop-culture packaging, and resembles most mainstream publications in structure: including letters from the editor, articles from well-known Al Qaeda leaders, high-resolution graphics, and a "how to" section. The magazine is a dangerous step in AQAP's strategy to recruit and radicalize Americans and Western Europeans, and highlights the shifting threat posed to the United States and its allies.

¹ Cole, Matthew. "Slickest Al Qaeda Magazine Yet From Young American Editor," January 17, 2011. <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/issue-al-qaeda-inspire-magazine/story?id=12632256>

The apparent increasing frequency of U.S. persons becoming radicalized is an alarming trend and a great concern for U.S. national security. According to Attorney General Eric Holder, in the last two years there have been 126 people indicted for terrorist related activity, including 50 U.S. Citizens.² As Times Square bomber Faisal Shahzad stated in his October 2010 appearance before the Southern District Court of New York: “*Brace yourselves, because the war with Muslims has just begun. Consider me only the first droplet of the flood that will follow me.*”³

COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

On February 9, 2011, then-National Counterterrorism Center Director Michael Leiter testified before the Committee that “... *AQAP remains intent on conducting additional attacks targeting the Homeland and US interests overseas and will continue propaganda efforts designed to inspire like-minded individuals to conduct attacks in their home countries.*”⁴ At the same hearing, Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano testified that the threat level today is as high as it has been since September 11th because of increased radicalization in the United States.

As Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security, I have a responsibility to ensure that the Committee examines the most prescient and critical threats facing the United States. Under this mandate, I convened a series of hearings to examine the critical issue of the radicalization of Muslim-Americans. While the initial announcement of these hearings generated considerable controversy and opposition, I remained steadfast in my belief that these hearings are a critical facet of what I believe to be the main responsibility of this Committee - to protect America from a terrorist attack. The Department of Homeland Security and the Committee on Homeland Security were formed in response to the Al Qaeda attacks of 9/11. Undoubtedly, Congressional investigation of Muslim-American radicalization is the logical response to the unquestionable fact that homegrown radicalization is part of Al Qaeda’s strategy to continue attacking the United States and its allies. I would not back down to political correctness.

COMMITTEE FINDINGS

Over the past few months, the Committee on Homeland Security has held three hearings that have examined various aspects of the radicalization of Muslim-Americans within the United States. Each hearing has yielded significant findings that have shed considerable

² Cloherty, Jack and Thomas, Pierre. "Attorney General's Blunt Warning on Terror Attacks," December 21, 2010, <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/attorney-general-eric-holders-blunt-warning-terror-attacks/story?id=12444727>

³ “Times Sq. bomber's vile rant as he gets life in jail,” *New York Post*, October 6, 2010, http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/manhattan/proud_to_be_terrorist_DBtc5U2eAYhWzacVpxK24K#ixzz1FEKYwFDD

⁴ Leiter, Michael, Testimony before the House Committee on Homeland Security, "Understanding the Homeland Threat Landscape – Considerations for the 112th Congress," February 9, 2011, www.nctc.gov/.../Transcript-HHSC_Understanding-the-Homeland-Threat.pdf

light on this critical issue. While the Committee's examination of this problem remains ongoing, the evidence collected thus far provides substantial insight into the extent and threat of radicalization within the United States.

HEARING # 1: "THE EXTENT OF RADICALIZATION IN THE AMERICAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY AND THAT COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE."

In March 2011, the Committee convened its first hearing to examine this issue. Specifically, the hearing focused on the extent of radicalization in the Muslim-American community, and the community's level of cooperation with law enforcement to counter the problem.

FINDING #1: THE RADICALIZATION OF MUSLIM-AMERICANS CONSTITUTES A REAL AND SERIOUS THREAT

Unfortunately, the radicalization of Muslim-Americans has become a direct threat to the national security of the United States. Despite this fact, many refuse to fully acknowledge this problem or just how extensive this matter has become.

Witnesses at the hearing addressed this issue and discussed the extensive nature of the threat of radicalization within the United States, and perceived reticence to fully acknowledge the problem. One of the witnesses, Mr. Melvin Bledsoe (the father of radicalized Little Rock recruiting center shooter Carlos Bledsoe), acknowledged:

It seems to me that the American people are sitting around and doing nothing about Islamic extremism, as if Carlos's story and the other stories told at these hearings aren't true. There is a big elephant in the room, but our society continues not to see it. This wrong is caused by political correctness. You can even call it political fear - yes, fear. Fear of stepping on a special minority population's toes, even as a segment of that population wants to stamp out America and everything we stand for.

Another witness, Dr. M. Zuhdi Jasser (President and Founder of the American Islamic Forum for Democracy) also asserted:

The course of Muslim radicalization in the United States over the past two years makes it exceedingly difficult for anyone to assert with a straight face that in America we Muslims do not have a radicalization problem.

FINDING #2: THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT LACK OF MUSLIM-AMERICAN COMMUNITY COOPERATION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

While the threat of domestic radicalization and homegrown terrorism has increased over the past few years, many within the Muslim community have expressed criticism of law enforcement's counterterrorism operations. Several Muslim organizations, such as the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the Muslim Public Affairs Council

(MPAC), have repeatedly criticized law enforcement actions taken to stop potential terrorist activity. They accuse the FBI of falsely entrapping Muslim-Americans and recommend guidelines for Muslims who choose to cooperate with law enforcement and the FBI.

Witnesses at the hearing also discussed the Muslim-American community's lack of cooperation, and specifically the role that groups like CAIR play in discouraging Muslim-Americans from cooperating with law enforcement. Dr. Jasser noted:

When we speak about "cooperation of Muslims with law enforcement", what is more important is the growing culture of driving Muslims away from cooperation, partnership, and identity with our nation and its security forces. Our civil rights should be protected and defended, but the predominant message to our communities should be attachment, defense, and identification with America not alienation and separation.

Too many so-called Muslim leadership groups in America, like the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) or Muslim Advocates, have specifically told Muslims across the nation, for example, not to speak to the FBI or law enforcement unless they are accompanied by an attorney. Rather than thanking the FBI for ferreting out radicals within our community, they have criticized sting operations as being "entrapment"- a claim that has not stood the test of anti-terrorism court cases since 9-11. Informants end up being showcased as bad apples and subjects of lawsuits rather than patriots.

Another witness, Mr. Abdirizak Bihi (the Director of Somali Education and Social Advocacy Center whose nephew Burhan Hassan was radicalized and recruited in Minneapolis to join Al Shabaab in Somalia, where he was ultimately killed) discussed this issue and how Mosque leadership in Minneapolis encouraged its congregants (and the families of the missing young men who had fled to Somalia) not to cooperate with law enforcement. Moreover, Mr. Bihi testified that when the families of the missing young men went to law enforcement for help, the mosque disparaged them and claimed that they were lying about the disappearance of their children. Mr. Bihi stated:

The mosque leadership continued to disseminate a strong message that there were no children missing, rather than we the families were tools and being used by infidels to try and destroy the mosque. As a result of this, the families united and started Saturday meetings that included outreaching to other community members that also had missing children. We learned from the mosque leadership's tactics used to defame us that the community was the targeted audience, and we framed our outreach strategy to educate the community about the realities of what was happening to us. An intense outreach from both the mosque leadership and the family members started to unfold in the Somali American community, where we were trying to convince the community that our children were taken, that we weren't trying to destroy our own mosques (that we built), and that nobody can destroy a mosque.

At the same time, the mosque leadership was sending the message to the families

that had not yet spoken out, that:

- *if they speak up about their missing loved ones will end up in Guantanamo because nobody cares about Muslims;*
- *they have a better chance of getting their children back into the country if they remain silent;*
- *if they speak up, they will be morally responsible for having killed all the Muslims and destroyed all the mosques.*

Mr. Bihi also testified about the dangerous influence of powerful groups such as CAIR, who continue to discourage Muslim-Americans from cooperating with law enforcement. He noted:

Just as we continued to make progress in laying out the realities to our community, powerful organizations such as CAIR stepped into our community and stifled whatever progress we had made by trying to tell our Somali American community not to cooperate with law enforcement. CAIR held meetings for some members of the community and told them not to talk to the FBI, which was a slap in the face for the Somali American Muslim mothers who were knocking on doors day and night with pictures of their missing children and asking for the community to talk to law enforcement about what they know of the missing kids. It was a slap in the face for community activists who had invested time and personal resources to educate the community about forging a good relationship with law enforcement in order to stop the radicalization and recruitment of our children. We held three different demonstrations against CAIR, in order to get them to leave us alone so we can solve our community's problems, since we don't know CAIR and they don't speak for us. We wanted to stop them from dividing our community by stepping into issues that don't belong to them.

FINDING #3: THERE IS A NEED TO CONFRONT THE ISLAMIST IDEOLOGY DRIVING RADICALIZATION

Despite the growing problem of Islamist radicalization within the United States, many appear reticent to publicly acknowledge the ideological driver behind Al Qaeda's radicalization and recruitment of American citizens.

However, witnesses at the hearing acknowledged the need to address the ideological driver of radicalization of Muslim-Americans, namely Islamist extremism. Dr. Jasser asserted:

If the root cause of Muslim radicalization is Islamism (political Islam), what good is any effort at counterterrorism that decouples any suggestion of theology no matter how separatist from terror? How can law enforcement effectively do counter terrorism in our country without recognition that Political Islam and its narrative is the core ideology when, at its extreme, drives the general mindset of the violent extremists carrying out the attacks?

...Homeland Security, government, media and our general population are only focused on that final step when the jihadists seek violence against our homeland. But we will all be chasing our tails for centuries if that remains your focus. I implore you to walk it back and treat the problem at its root, at its jugular—the supremacism of political Islam.

...Our nation's attempts at counter-radicalization have proven so far ineffective because it has lacked a strategy and a forward ideology into Muslim communities. We have been so fixated on preventing the next attack that we have neglected to develop the tools necessary to defeat the ideology that drives the attack. It is malpractice for us to believe that by eschewing violence we solve the problem.

HEARING # 2: "THE THREAT OF MUSLIM-AMERICAN RADICALIZATION IN U.S. PRISONS."

In June 2011, the Committee convened its second hearing, which examined the threat of Muslim-American radicalization within the United States prison system.

The current problem of Muslim-American radicalization in U.S. prisons is significant, and has been acknowledged by Executive Branch policymakers and legislators of both parties. Former Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Harley Lappin, testified to Congress that "inmates are particularly vulnerable to recruitment by terrorists," and "we must guard against the spread of terrorism and extremist ideologies."⁵ A number of cases since 9/11 have involved terrorists who converted to Islam or were radicalized to Islamism in American prisons, then subsequently attempted to launch terror strikes in the U.S. upon their release from custody. These radicalized terrorists have also carried out attacks overseas. In January 2010, Senator John Kerry, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, released a report that stated: "Three dozen U.S. citizens who converted to Islam while in prison have traveled to Yemen, possibly for Al Qaeda training."

Prison radicalization, unfortunately, is not unique to the United States. Recently, the British Home Secretary emphasized the growing threat of Islamist radicalization and unveiled its new counter-radicalization strategy to thwart terrorist recruitment behind bars. Just as home grown Al Qaeda terrorist attacks in Britain - including the 2005 subway attacks in London, the 2006 liquid explosives plot to blow up American planes flying from Britain and the 2007 car bomb attack on the Glasgow Airport - were emulated several years later in the United States with the attempted New York subway bombings in September 2009, the Fort Hood murders in November 2009 and the attempted Times Square bombing in May 2010, we must assume the same with prison radicalization.

⁵ *Terrorist Recruitment and Infiltration in the United States: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Terrorism and Homeland Security of the S. Comm. on the Judiciary, 108th Cong. (2003) (statement of Director Lappin).*

FINDING #4: THE RADICALIZATION OF PRISON INMATES TO AN EXTREMIST FORM OF ISLAM IS A SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM, WHICH CAN OFTEN MANIFEST ONCE RADICALIZED PRISONERS ARE RELEASED

Recent cases over the last few years including Richard Reid, Kevin James, Michael Finton, James Cromitie and Jose Padilla have illustrated the danger of prison radicalization, which continues to constitute a serious threat.

One of the witnesses, Deputy Chief Michael P. Downing (Commanding Officer of the Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau of the Los Angeles Police Department) discussed this threat, noting:

It is generally understood that the majority of prison converts assimilate back into what they were doing prior to going to prison, however, it is the exception cases that have and will continue to strike fear in the hearts of Americans. It was estimated that seventeen to twenty percent of the prison population, or approximately 350,000 inmates comprise of Muslim inmates in 2003, and that 80% of the prisoners who convert while in prison, convert to Islam. It is further estimated that 35,000 inmates convert to Islam annually.

...There are several ongoing cases whose story is yet to be told, however, the common denominator is conversion to a radical form of Islam while in prison.

...Just as isolated, and balkanized communities can become incubators of violent extremism, so too can prisons. If left unchecked prisons can and do become incubators of radicalization leading to violent extremism.

Another of the witnesses, Mr. Patrick Dunleavy (retired Deputy Inspector of the Criminal Intelligence Unit, New York Department of Correctional Services; and the author of *The Fertile Soil of Jihad: Prison's Terrorism Connection*), noted:

The prison population is vulnerable to radicalization by the same agents responsible for radicalizing Americans outside of the prison walls. Despite appearances, prison walls are porous. It is easy for outside influences to access those on the inside, and for inmates to reach from the inside out. As the former Deputy Inspector General of the Criminal Intelligence Division in the New York State Department of Corrections, I am aware that individuals and groups that subscribe to radical, and sometimes violent, ideology have made sustained efforts over several decades to target inmates for indoctrination. Some of these groups act as the certifying bodies responsible for hiring imams into the prison system, thus affording them continuous access to the prison population. In addition, the cycle of radicalization continues through post-release programs.

While some have asserted that prisoners who are converted to a radical form of Islam do not pose a threat once they are released, Mr. Dunleavy discredited this notion by addressing the dangerous post-release activity a number of prisoners have engaged in.

Mr. Dunleavy noted:

The task force investigation also found that although the initial exposure/conversion/indoctrination to extremist jihadi Islam may begin in prison, it often matures and deepens after release through the contacts on the outside that the inmate made while they were serving their sentences in prison. Among those contacts are transition programs, which offer former inmates assistance in finding housing or finding work. Most of the programs for Muslims transitioning out of the prison system are sponsored by mosques that are local to the prisons. Many of these mosques have extremist leanings and are known to adhere to Wahabbi ideology. In addition to the transition programs, many of the sponsoring mosques also have volunteers or formal programs to provide religious instruction inside the prisons. Thus, contact between the outreach program and the inmate has already been established by the time the prisoner is released. The prisoner is already familiar with the program's personnel and ideology, and therefore their transition to the outside is facilitated by familiar hands.

... One of the influences in some of the homegrown terrorism cases has been the involvement, either directly or indirectly, of radical Islamist clergy. Since 9/11, the involvement of radical Islamist imams has been mentioned as a precipitating factor in the cases of Richard Reid, Jose Padilla, and others.

In 2009 the "Newburgh Four"; James Cromitie, Laguerre Payen, David Williams, and Onta Williams, were arrested for plotting to bomb synagogues in New York City and shoot down military aircraft with stinger missiles. All had converted to a radical form of Islam while serving time for a variety of offenses. They did not know each other while they were incarcerated, but met each other after their release, while attending a local mosque connected to a prison ministry.

FINDING #5: THE RADICALIZATION OF PRISON INMATES IS OFTEN PRECIPITATED BY THE PRESENCE OF RADICAL CLERGY OR EXTREMIST MATERIALS WITHIN THE PRISON

Witnesses at the hearing discussed the pervasive nature of radical clergy and literature throughout the prison system, and its correlation with the radicalization of prison inmates.

Mr. Dunleavy addressed this issue, stating:

.. It has been confirmed that radical Islam is present in the New York State prison system and also in the New York City jails. The apparatus by which this radical form of Islam was introduced into the system was identified as consisting of multiple components, including, clergy, religious volunteers, visitors, fellow inmates and Islamic organizations from around the world that sent parcels and literature into the prisons.

.. There is certainly no vetting of volunteers who provide religious instruction, and who, although not paid, wield considerable influence in the prison Muslim

communities. Many such volunteers are former convicts.

Deputy Chief Downing also discussed the threat of extremist literature being disseminated throughout the prison system, noting:

Anwar Al Awlaki, a prominent United States born Islamic scholar of Yemeni descent and internet radicalizer is wanted by the United States for Terrorism prosecution. His radical literature has found its way into the prison system and has been used by known extremists to facilitate recruitment and radicalization activities within prisons.

...The spiritual philosopher of Al Qaeda, Sayyid Qutb, wrote the radical Islamist manifesto Ma'alim fi al-Tariq (Milestones Along the Road) while in an Egyptian prison. Copies of this document exist in the prison system and contribute to radicalization.

HEARING # 3: "AL SHABAAB: RECRUITMENT AND RADICALIZATION WITHIN THE MUSLIM AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND THE THREAT TO THE HOMELAND."

This hearing examined Somalia-based terrorist organization Al Shabaab's ongoing recruitment, radicalization and training of Muslim-Americans. Since 2006, a number of American citizens, many of whom are part of the Somali-American community, have been radicalized within the United States to terrorist activity (often by Al Shabaab recruiters or sympathizers) and have fled to join Al Shabaab. At least 40 Americans have joined Al Shabaab in Somalia and more than a dozen have been killed there, including at least three incidents of suicide attacks. According to a Committee review of Department of Justice (DOJ) prosecutions, there are approximately 38 cases of defendants charged in the US in connection with Al Shabaab or other extremist organizations in Somalia, from states including Minnesota, California, New Jersey, Missouri, Alabama, Virginia, Illinois, New York and Texas.

Reflecting a disturbing trend across global terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Al Shabaab and its leadership appear to be actively attempting to recruit Americans, including a targeted recruitment of Americans who are not of Somali descent. This recruitment is headed in large part by Omar Hammami, an American (non-Somali) citizen from Alabama who joined Al Shabaab in Somalia and now serves as its key English-speaking representative.

In addition to Al Shabaab's growing radicalization and recruitment of Americans, the group has also actively recruited a number of Canadian citizens, including one recently killed. Al Shabaab spokesman Omar Hammami spent time living in Toronto's Somali community before he ultimately fled to Somalia. In addition, the Somali communities in Minneapolis and Toronto often maintain close ties, including familial relationships as well as cross-border commercial traffic.

The hearing also examined Al Shabaab's affiliation with Al Qaeda in the Arabian

Peninsula (AQAP) and the homeland security implications. In addition to its connections with Al Qaeda senior leadership, Al Shabaab has also developed alliances with several al Qaeda affiliates, including Algeria's Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Yemen's Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Al Shabaab's broadening cooperation with AQAP is particularly concerning considering the critical threat AQAP poses to the U.S. Homeland and that organization's unwavering attempts to pursue an attack against the United States.

FINDING #6: THERE ARE DIRECT TIES BETWEEN AL SHABAAB AND AL QAEDA AND ITS AFFILIATES, AND AL SHABAAB RECRUITS ARE OFTEN INDOCTRINATED INTO AL QAEDA'S IDEOLOGY AND NETWORK

Witnesses at the hearing discussed Al Shabaab's ties to Al Qaeda and its affiliates, and the direct threat that such cooperation poses to the United States and its allies. One of the witnesses, Mr. Thomas Joscelyn (a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies) noted:

There is extensive evidence that Shabaab's recruiting in the West is not limited to "nationalistic" aims. While some recruits probably do travel to Somalia to take part in a "local" (civil) war, there is always the potential for these same recruits to become indoctrinated in Shabaab's al Qaeda-inspired ideology once they arrive there. Indeed, this has been al Qaeda's strategy, to fold "local" conflicts into an international jihad. Moreover, some Shabaab recruits are clearly radicalized before they even depart American soil.

... Shabaab's recruits in the West have received training from senior al Qaeda operatives who are also members of Shabaab. Earlier this month, the Department of Justice agreed to a plea deal with a Minneapolis man named Omar Abdi Mohamed. According to a DOJ press release, Mohamed admitted that he helped Shabaab recruit Somali-Americans. The DOJ explains: "Upon arriving in Somalia, the men resided in al-Shabaab safe-houses in Southern Somalia until constructing an al-Shabaab training camp, where they were trained. Senior members of al-Shabaab and a senior member of al-Qaeda in East Africa conducted the training." That is, Shabaab's Minneapolis recruits were delivered to a senior al Qaeda member for training.

Another witness who prosecuted many of the cases in Minneapolis regarding Al Shabaab recruitment and radicalization, Mr. William Anders Folk (the Former Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Minnesota), discussed the role of Al Qaeda's underlying ideology in the radicalization of Al Shabaab's recruits, stating:

In addition to recruiting by al-Shabaab as an organization and by individuals on behalf of al-Shabaab, religious figures such as Anwar al-Awlaki have provided potential recruits with ideological underpinnings for individuals to fight in

Somalia on behalf of al-Shabaab. As has been publicly reported, al-Awlaki's "Constants on the Path to jihad" has provided recruits and potential recruits with an ideological framework, however distorted and incorrect it may be, to fight on behalf of al-Shabaab in Somalia.

FINDING #7: INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN RADICALIZED AND RECRUITED BY AL SHABAAB MAY POSE A DIRECT THREAT TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES AND ITS ALLIES

As previously referenced, at least 40 Americans and a number of Canadian citizens have joined Al Shabaab in Somalia. While many believe those individuals are motivated solely to fight within Somalia, the dangerous possibility remains that they may in fact return to the United States or Canada, with the intention of perpetrating terrorist activity. One of the witnesses, Mr. Ahmed Hussen (Canadian Somali Congress National President) discussed this possibility, stating:

It is very disturbing to us as Canadian citizens to see the children of those who fled the civil war in Somalia return to a country they barely know and contribute to its misery. There is an additional concern that these individuals would come back to threaten and harm Canada, the very country that has given us peace, security and opportunity.

Mr. Folk also discussed the danger in Al Shabaab recruits returning to the United States, noting:

It is impossible to predict with certainty what, if anything, and who, if anyone, will come to the United States after training and indoctrination by al-Shabaab. It is obvious, however, that individuals who are trained, indoctrinated and deployed in combat by al-Shabaab have learned how to carry-out acts of lethal violence. Additionally, it is clear that the ideology espoused by al-Shabaab echoes that of al-Qaeda. This combination of ability and ideology illustrates the threat that is posed by even one al-Shabaab veteran residing in the United States. The ability to prevent or detect such a person from entering the United States or carrying-out any terrorist acts in the United States requires continued vigilance of the group's activities in Somalia, but also to ensure that supporters or sympathizers within the United States are targeted for investigation.

FINDING #8: THE COMMITTEE'S HEARINGS ON THE RADICALIZATION OF MUSLIM-AMERICANS HAVE EMPOWERED MUSLIMS TO EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS THIS ISSUE

Despite the mindless criticism directed against the Committee hearings, the reality is that they have liberated and empowered many Muslim-Americans who had been intimidated by leaders in their own communities but are now able to come forward.

This point was reinforced at the last hearing held by one of the Committee's Muslim witnesses, Mr. Hussen, who noted in his opening statement:

I would like to close by saying that these hearings are extremely important to us. They empower us, and they remove the stigma in our community that prevents us from talking about these issues that are really important to our community. These hearings are very empowering.

WAY FORWARD

While I have no doubt that the Committee's radicalization hearings have had a significant and beneficial impact in fostering an honest dialogue about the growing issue of radicalization within the United States, I remain concerned that this problem is far from resolved.

According to the results of a recent pew poll, 16% of American Muslims have a favorable or only somewhat unfavorable view of Al Qaeda. Further, 13% of American Muslims believe that suicide bombing or other violence against civilians, to defend Islam from its enemies, is often, sometimes or rarely justified. Pew states that there are 2,750,000 American Muslims. That means that there are 440,000 American Muslims who view Al Qaeda as only a somewhat unfavorable organization, and 357,500 who believe that killing civilians in the name of Islam can in some cases be justified. These numbers are startling and expose a dangerous disconnect between a number of Muslim-Americans and the democratic values cherished by Western nations.

The radicalization of Muslim-Americans by the Islamist ideology promulgated by Al Qaeda and its affiliates is a problem that the United States cannot continue to simply ignore or deflect. Unfortunately, I am concerned that within the United States, political correctness has prevented many from sufficiently acknowledging and tackling this dangerous problem.

I applaud the UK government for its unwavering and honest examination of this problem, exemplified by the recently revised "Prevent" strategy, which offers a candid assessment of the problem and a model for effectively addressing and countering this problem. I also applaud this Committee's inquiry into the roots of violent radicalization, a matter critical to the national security of both the United Kingdom as well as the United States.

Unfortunately, terrorism knows no boundaries and continues to threaten the lives of citizens of both the United States and the United Kingdom. We are facing an adversary intent on attacking Western nations and all we stand for. As we pass the 10-year anniversary of the September 11th attacks, we cannot allow the memories of that tragic day to fade away. We continue to face an unwavering threat, and must be fully aware that homegrown radicalization is part of Al Qaeda's strategy to continue attacking the United States and the United Kingdom.

Thank you for your time and for allowing me the opportunity to discuss this critical issue.

APPENDIX

“THE EXTENT OF RADICALIZATION IN THE AMERICAN MUSLIM COMMUNITY AND
THAT COMMUNITY’S RESPONSE”

MARCH 10, 2011

1. Chairman King’s Opening Statement
2. Prepared Statement: **Dr. M. Zuhdi Jasser**, President and Founder, American Islamic Forum for Democracy
3. Prepared Statement: **Mr. Abdirizak Bihi**, Director, Somali Education and Social Advocacy Center
4. Prepared Statement: **Mr. Melvin Bledsoe**, Private Citizen
5. Prepared Statement: **Sheriff Leroy Baca**, Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department

“THE THREAT OF MUSLIM-AMERICAN RADICALIZATION IN U.S. PRISONS”

JUNE 15, 2011

6. Chairman King’s Opening Statement
7. Prepared Statement: **Mr. Patrick T. Dunleavy**, Deputy Inspector General (Ret.), Criminal Intelligence Unit, New York State Department of Correctional Services
8. Prepared Statement: **Mr. Kevin Smith**, Former Assistant United States Attorney, Central District of California
9. Prepared Statement: **Mr. Michael P. Downing**, Commanding Officer, Counter-Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau, Los Angeles Police Department
10. Prepared Statement: **Professor Bert Useem**, Department Head and Professor, Sociology Department, Purdue University

“AL SHABAAB: RECRUITMENT AND RADICALIZATION WITHIN THE MUSLIM AMERICAN
COMMUNITY AND THE THREAT TO THE HOMELAND”

JULY 27, 2011

11. Chairman King's Opening Statement
12. Committee's Investigative Report: Al Shabaab: Recruitment and Radicalization within the Muslim American Community and the Threat to the Homeland
13. Prepared Statement: **Mr. Ahmed Hussen**, Canadian Somali Congress National President
14. Prepared Statement: **Mr. Thomas Joscelyn**, Senior Fellow, Foundation for Defense of Democracies
15. Prepared Statement: **Mr. William Anders Folk**, Former Assistant United States Attorney, District of Minnesota
16. Prepared Statement: **Mr. Tom Smith**, Chief of Police, Saint Paul, Minnesota.