



**HOMELAND SECURITY
COMMITTEE**

**Statement of Chairman Rep. Michael McCaul (R-TX)
Homeland Security Committee Hearing**

"ISIS-Post Caliphate: Threat Implications for America and the West"

May 23, 2018

Remarks as Prepared

The terror attacks of 9/11 took the lives of almost 3,000 innocent people and left our nation in shock. In the aftermath, it was clear that serious changes needed to be made to keep our homeland safe.

While I believe we are safer today, terror threats persist. Terrorists and their followers are still killing innocent people and attempting to destroy our way of life.

This has been made clear by recent attacks against the West. London, Paris, Nice, Madrid, Manchester, Barcelona, Brussels, Berlin, and even New York, have been targets of vehicular homicides, shootings, bombings, and stabbings.

They are clearly following Sheik Adnani's call to kill by whatever means necessary, wherever they are.

And although many jihadists are resorting to small scale attacks, the thwarted plot to take down an airliner in Australia last summer was a reminder that our aviation sector is still their "crown jewel" of targets.

I am continually concerned about the security at last points of departure throughout the Middle East.

Many of the world's most dangerous terrorists are only one plane ride way.

And they will not halt their bloodthirsty campaign to take innocent life unless they are directly challenged.

Fortunately, we've had some recent success on the battlefield. Our military victory over the so-called Caliphate in Iraq and Syria was a great achievement.

However, there are remnants that remain in the Middle East, and foreign fighters who have scattered throughout Europe and parts of Africa. A comprehensive strategy is needed so ISIS cannot rally, regroup, and rebuild from a new location.

This strategy should address the root causes that breed terrorists, including a lack of economic opportunity and good governance structures.

We must also keep our eye on al-Qaeda. In recent years, al-Qaeda has expanded its global presence and is now comprised of tens of thousands of fighters across two dozen branches. They too, want nothing more than a devastating attack against the West.

Mitigating the terror threat from these groups has always been one of my top priorities.

At my direction, we established multiple task forces to discover ways we can prevent terrorist entry into the United States.

As a result of their work, we strengthened the Visa Waiver Program, enhanced our intelligence collection, and bolstered coordination to stop terrorist travel.

Currently, we are examining ways that Special Interest Aliens and potential foreign fighters are exploiting illicit pathways into our country from South and Central America.

And just yesterday, ICE Director Thomas Homan confirmed to me that many known terrorists are taking this path as well.

America is facing threats from all directions. To keep our homeland safe, we need to be prepared to confront each one.

I would like to thank all our witnesses for joining us this morning. Each of you has served as, or advised, America's top national security officials.

Every Member of this Committee is grateful for your service, your time, and your expertise.

I look forward to our discussion and to working with you to strengthen our homeland security.

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