

**Opening Statement of Congresswoman Jane Harman (D-CA)
Ranking Member, House Permanent Select Committee on
Intelligence**

May 4, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This morning, in a courthouse just a few miles from here, a federal judge will sentence Zacharias Moussaoui to life in prison, without the possibility of parole.

His trial demonstrated to the world that we don't have to compromise the rule of law – and our values – as we bring terrorists to justice. He was given an experienced defense team ... he was given a fair and public trial ... he was permitted to cross-examine witnesses ... to examine the evidence against him ... and to testify in his own defense. But that's what America stands for. And so those who say we can't have security unless we cut back on liberty don't understand where the strength of our country truly lies.

I raise this, Mr. Chairman, because this morning's hearing deals with America's image in the world and how we're faring in the fight for the hearts and minds of moderate Muslims. Moussaoui's trial demonstrated that our commitment to the rule of law is not an illusion or a false promise – it is the essence of who we are.

Al Qaeda is the first terrorist organization to migrate from physical space to cyberspace. Terrorist networks rely on the internet not just to communicate, but also to inspire, train, and recruit individuals to participate in jihad.

The War on Terror is a struggle for the hearts and minds of moderate Muslims. Al Qaeda and radical Islamist terrorists offer one vision; America offers a competing vision. Winning this struggle will require much more than neutralizing terrorists through military force. It will require having a good story to tell to the world about American intentions and values -- and dispelling the rumors.

That's why I have said the President must make clear that we do not seek permanent military bases in Iraq, we do not have designs on Iraqi oil, and that we respect the rule of law.

Sadly, the thoughtless actions and comments of a few Americans have provided high octane fuel to Al Qaeda. Pictures of Americans engaged in mistreatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib shock the conscience and give America a moral black eye. Allegations of prisoner abuse in Guantanamo; media reports of the transportation of terrorism suspects to countries that the U.S. State Department says tortures prisoners; and video images of other insensitive actions all provide ammunition the enemy, enabling him to spread his venom and poison to the minds of others.

Millions of Muslims around the world are peaceful and desire freedom, justice, and human dignity. They do not relate to the hateful ideas of Osama Bin Laden, Al Zaraqawi or Al Zawahiri, and their ilk.

Islamic extremists have used the internet and other media outlets to mount a sustained form of psychological warfare against the United States and its allies.

They are using these outlets to spread training materials as well. In a new book on use of the internet by terrorists, author Gabriel Weimann says: “The internet – an uncensored medium that carries stories, pictures, threats, or messages regardless of their validity or potential impact – is peculiarly well suited to allowing even a small group to amplify its message and exaggerate its importance and the threat it faces.”

According to news reports, in 2004 the Saudi Arabian branch of Al Qaeda launched an online magazine that exhorted potential recruits to use the internet for training purposes. The website stated: “brother, in order to join the great training camps you don’t have to travel to other lands...Alone in your home or with a group of your brothers, you too can execute the training program.” Furthermore, it appears that the extremists responsible for the July 2005 London subway bombings and other recent attacks may have received some training from the internet.

This is a very serious problem, Mr. Chairman, so I strongly recommend that this Committee hold a follow-up hearing in the coming

weeks to get a better understanding as to how the Administration is responding to this problem.

I think we have some terrific witnesses at this morning's hearing. Peter Rodman is a law school classmate of mine and one of this nation's true experts on national security. Bruce Hoffman's steady stewardship of the RAND Corporation's Washington Office -- and his first rate research on terrorism -- make a major contribution.

Bruce, I was very struck by the conclusion in your written statement in which you state that: "the U.S. is dangerously behind the curve in countering terrorist use of the internet and especially its exploitation by radical jihadis." Sadly, we seem to be behind on many fronts. In your testimony, I'd like to hear your views and ideas on potential solutions to this problem.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to the testimony.