



U.S. Rep. Jane Harman
36th District of California



OPENING STATEMENT

2400 Rayburn Building, Washington, DC 20515

<http://www.house.gov/harman>

Opening Statement for Congresswoman Jane Harman (D-Venice)
Chair Intelligence, Information Sharing and Terrorism Risk Assessment Subcommittee:
“Radicalization, Information Sharing and Community Outreach: Protecting the Homeland from Homegrown Terror”

AS PREPARED:

“Twenty months ago, police in Torrance disrupted the first known prison-based terrorist cell in the U.S. that was planning devastating attacks in the Los Angeles area.

“Those arrested were Americans and one permanent resident.

“The allegations against them, if true, present a chilling account of the threat we face from “home grown” terrorism.

“Among other things, they are charged with having planned attacks on synagogues on Jewish holidays – in order to maximize the number of deaths – and on U.S. military bases and recruitment centers.

“To fund their terror campaign, the defendants allegedly robbed 11 gas stations in and around Torrance. That’s where the Torrance Police Department came in.

“But for the hard work of some local officers – whose efforts led to the discovery of maps and other evidence that unraveled the plot – many, many lives could have been lost.

“Those Torrance Police Department officers worked with LAPD and FBI partners to share information and build a case in a way that would have been almost unimaginable before 9/11.

“I want to commend them all for that great service – to Torrance, to California, and to their country.

“We’re holding this field hearing on radicalization to learn more about the “home grown” terror threat to our nation.

“Let me be clear: when we talk about “radicalization” and “home grown” terrorists, we’re not talking about people from any particular ethnic, political, or religious group.

“On the contrary, we’re talking about ideologically-driven violence, whether by a white, U.S. Bronze Star honoree named Timothy McVeigh; or in Belgium, a female Catholic convert to Islam who traveled to Iraq

and blew herself up; or in the UK, third generation Britons of Pakistani descent who killed their countrymen on buses and trains.

“Last fall, Dame Eliza Manningham Buller – the Director of Britain’s MI5– revealed for the first time the seriousness of the home grown terrorism threat in her country.

“She stated that MI5 and local police in the UK are currently investigating some 200 separate terrorist networks that include over 1600 individuals who are actively planning attacks both domestically and overseas. And those are just the ones she knows about.

“When I met with her in my Washington office, I reminded her that what happened here in Torrance shows that the threat is also emerging on this side of the Atlantic.

“But focusing our efforts against any particular group of people would be futile. The Washington Post recently reported that police in Western Europe are arresting “significant numbers of women, teenagers, white-skinned suspects and people baptized as Christians” – people who until now were not on the radar screen as radicals prone to violence.

“In fact, the demographics of those being arrested are so diverse that many European officials say that they have given up trying to predict who is most likely to become a terrorist. Age, sex, ethnicity, education and economic status simply have become more and more irrelevant.

“The same is true here. How do we explain why Adam Gadahn, a 17-year old Jewish kid from Santa Ana became a radical, moved to Pakistan, now works as Osama Bin Laden’s spokesman, and is under indictment here for treason?

We simply need a better understanding of what’s going on.

“That’s why I’m very pleased to be joined by the distinguished witnesses on our two panels this morning.

“On the first, we’ll hear from LAPD Chief William Bratton, Torrance Police Chief John Neu, and Special Agent in-Charge Janice Fedarcyk from the FBI’s Los Angeles office.

“They will be talking with us about the Torrance arrests, what home grown terrorism is, and what we might do about it.

“We’ll then hear from Sireen Sawaf from the Muslim Public Affairs Council who serves as a representative on the FBI’s Multi Cultural Advisory Committee and David Gersten from DHS.

“Both will share their own thoughts about home grown terrorism and how engagement with minority communities can help prevent it.

“And finally, an old friend, author, and consultant on terrorism, Brian Jenkins of the RAND Corporation, will put our subjects in perspective.

“I’m joined today by some of my Committee colleagues – Ranking Member Dave Reichert of Washington, Norm Dicks of Washington, Ed Perlmutter of Colorado, and Dan Lungren of California.

“Welcome again to you all.