



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Markup of H.R. 1955

Homeland Security Takes Up Bipartisan Bill on Radicalization and Homegrown Terror

July 17, 2007 (Washington) – Today, the Committee on Homeland Security Committee's subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk Assessment will mark up H.R. 1955, the "Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007." Rep. Jane Harman (D-CA), Chair of the subcommittee, submitted the following prepared statement:

"Since the 9/11 attacks almost six years ago, many of our allies have also experienced terror attacks: Madrid, London, Istanbul, Mumbai, Bali, Casablanca, and the list goes on. In many of these attacks, legal residents and even citizens were involved.

Homegrown terrorism is a worldwide threat – as the most recent effort, the failed attempt by a group of British doctors who live legally in Britain to detonate vehicle bombs and destroy Glasgow Airport so clearly demonstrates.

Domestic radicalization that leads to violence in the American homeland is one of the greatest emerging threats to the United States. In recent years, we've seen numerous cases of American citizens actively planning to murder their neighbors – including you, me, and our relatives and friends. Charges are pending against some of them:

- Russell Defreitas, an American citizen indicted last month for conspiring with an al Qaeda-inspired cell of international terrorists to destroy JFK Airport and kill thousands of people by blowing up fueling facilities;
- Mohamed Shnewer, another U.S. citizen, who allegedly plotted with several associates to attack Fort Dix in New Jersey and kill "as many American soldiers as possible" with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades, and guns – all "in the name of Allah".
- Kevin James, an American in prison in California who adopted an extremist interpretation of Islam and converted fellow prisoners to his cause. Those prisoners, two of whom are also U.S. citizens, are awaiting trial for a series of robberies in Torrance, California, in my home district and in other cities. They allegedly committed their crimes in order to raise funds for terrorist attacks against U.S. military bases, synagogues, and other targets in the Los Angeles area.
- And there's Adam Gadahn, a Jewish kid from Southern California, who went from being an alienated American teenager, to an al Qaeda sympathizer, to the mouthpiece for Osama bin Laden, preaching hate and violence across the airwaves.

If the 'homegrown' trends around the globe are any guide, the prospect of other Americans taking up arms against our homeland appears increasingly likely.

I'm proud that this Subcommittee is united today in its determination to thwart this threat. Mr. Reichert and I introduced H.R. 1955 – the Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007 – this past April. It's an important step toward making the homeland safer by helping the nation develop a better understanding of how homegrown terrorism

happens and what we can do about it.

I am equally proud that this bill, as improved by an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute which we are marking up today, has unanimous bipartisan support. Our bill, as amended, will accomplish four main goals:

- First, it establishes a National Commission on the Prevention of Radicalization and Ideologically Based Violence. The Commission will conduct an expedited but thorough study of what is happening in our country so we can find an American response to our indigenous threat.
- Second, it establishes a Center of Excellence for the Study of Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism in the United States, which will address the problem over the long term.
- Third, it requires the Department of Homeland Security and other Federal agencies to work with our international allies to learn about their own experiences with homegrown terror – in order to identify best practices from abroad that might be applied in this country.
- Finally, it requires the Department to protect constitutional and civil rights and civil liberties of all Americans as it conducts its work in this area.

The time for action is now. I'm very pleased that we have reached consensus on this important legislation, and I commend my colleagues for their commitment to getting ahead of the curve when it comes to violent radicalization and homegrown terrorism."

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