

**Hearing Before the Senate Committee on
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs**

“Ten Years After 9/11: Are We Safer?”

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I. Introduction

Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today—along with Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano and FBI Director Mueller—to discuss the evolution of the terrorist threat facing our nation over the last decade and how we are addressing that threat. I also want to thank the Committee for your support of the National Counterterrorism Center, and for the strong working relationship this Committee has developed with NCTC.

It is appropriate that we continue this week to reflect on the day that our nation suffered the single most destructive terrorist attack in our history. In so doing, we honor those who perished and the sacrifices made by the families and loved ones left behind.

The Committee’s hearing is entitled, “Ten Years After 9/11: Are We Safer?” The short answer to that question is “yes.” While al-Qa’ida and its affiliates continue to pose a significant threat, we are safer than we were on September 11, 2001. Thanks to the skill and hard work of thousands of dedicated men and women in the intelligence, homeland security, diplomatic, and law enforcement communities—as well as our men and women in uniform—we have made significant progress in the fight against terrorism.

With the support and guidance of Congress, we have built an enduring counterterrorism framework by creating new institutions to address terrorist threats. This framework—including the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC)—has increased the sharing of terrorism-related information within the government, and between federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement, as well as with the public. The government has prevented attacks by disrupting terrorists in the United States and abroad, and prosecuting those arrested for supporting terrorists or their operations. The United States has worked with its partners internationally to promote governance and deny safe haven to terrorists, as well as to counter the flow of funds to terror groups, including designating terrorist entities to cut off funding worldwide.

Al-Qa’ida as an organization is weakened. We have placed relentless pressure on its leadership and worked to deny it safe haven, resources, and the ability to plan and train. Usama Bin Ladin, who more than anyone was responsible for the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, is dead—killed by U.S. forces in one of the most bold and challenging counterterrorism operations in our history.

At the same time, al-Qa'ida, its affiliates and adherents around the world, as well as other terrorist organizations, continue to pose a significant threat to our country. This threat is resilient and adaptive and will persist for the foreseeable future. America's campaign against terrorism did not end with the mission at Bin Ladin's compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan in May. A decade after the September 11th attacks, we remain at war with al-Qa'ida and face an evolving threat from its affiliates and adherents. Confronting this threat and working with resolve to prevent another terrorist attack is NCTC's focus, first and foremost.

In my statement, I will begin by examining the evolution of the terrorist threat. I will then describe the role of NCTC and the recent reforms we have adopted. Finally, I will identify some of the challenges we face going forward.

II. The Evolving Terrorist Threat

1. Al-Qa'ida Core and its Allies in Pakistan Pose Threat Despite Degradation

Counterterrorism successes and sustained pressure have left al-Qa'ida at its weakest point in the last ten years, and significantly degraded the group's ability to conduct attacks outside of South Asia. This is exemplified by the lack of a successful operation in the West since the 7 July 2005 transportation bombings in London. Further, the killing of Usama bin Ladin in May and last month's killing of al-Qa'ida's newest deputy, Atiyah abd al Rahman, mark strategic milestones in our fight against al-Qa'ida, and are likely to accelerate al-Qa'ida's decline, but does not mute the impact of its narrative.

Al-Qa'ida Core. Al-Qa'ida core's capability to recruit, train, and deploy operatives for anti-Western attacks has been reduced. Yet the group remains the ideological leader of the global extremist movement and continues to influence extremists through public media statements. Core al-Qa'ida's advancement of several unsuccessful smaller-scale Western plots in the past two years, including against the homeland and Europe, highlight its ability to continue some attack preparations while under sustained counterterrorism pressure, and we remain concerned al-Qa'ida may be plotting an attack against the United States at home or overseas. Moreover, while most observers view the non-violent successful tactics of the Arab Spring demonstrators in Egypt and Tunisia as a repudiation of al-Qa'ida message and approach, the group's leadership continues to seek openings for its destructive narrative. Since January they have prepared at least 12 propaganda messages related to the Arab Spring, making it a key theme of their media strategy.

- In the aftermath of Bin Ladin's death, al-Qa'ida leaders moved quickly to name his long-time deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, as his successor. Al-Zawahiri is the only active leader remaining from that core group of al-Qa'ida leaders who were in Afghanistan in the lead-up to 9/11. Since this announcement, some affiliates have publicly sworn allegiance and pledged support to Zawahiri, reinforcing the importance of al-Qa'ida core's leadership role in the global movement.

- While al-Qa‘ida core’s capabilities to attack the United States are diminished, and they have failed to conduct another homeland attack in the 10 years since 9/11, the group’s intent to strike us at home remains strong. In advance of the 9/11 anniversary this year, al-Qa‘ida leader al-Zawahiri issued a public statement encouraging sympathizers to attack the United States.
- Recently obtained information suggests that as of February 2010, al-Qa‘ida was contemplating large attacks in the homeland on symbolic dates, specifically the tenth anniversary of 9/11. However, degraded external operational capabilities suggest al-Qa‘ida may seek smaller scale, achievable tactics and targets of opportunity. As of spring 2010, al-Qa‘ida core believed targets worthy of the group’s focus included prominent transportation, infrastructure, economic, and political targets.

Al-Qa‘ida’s Pakistan-Based Militant Allies. The success of Operation Enduring Freedom after 9/11 in expelling al-Qa‘ida from its Afghanistan safe haven forced the group to rely on local allies and new hosts across the border in Pakistan. Since its relocation, al-Qa‘ida has consistently encouraged its local militant allies to expand their operational agendas to include U.S. and Western targets—both within the region and overseas. Faisal Shahzad’s May 2010 attempted bombing in Times Square is a stark reminder that al-Qa‘ida allies such as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) continue to threaten U.S. interests in the Afghanistan and Pakistan region. Such threats—including threats to avenge Bin Ladin’s death—have the stated intent and demonstrated capability to attempt attacks in the in the United States.

- TTP in mid-June said the group supports Ayman al-Zawahiri as al-Qa‘ida’s new leader and further claimed Zawahiri is TTP’s “chief and supreme leader”; TTP’s spokesman described al-Zawahiri as a capable person who would inspire the group to take on the West.” A TTP deputy claimed in an AP interview that TTP would “complete [bin Ladin’s mission] with a new zeal” and a separate leader vowed to “hit American targets outside Pakistan.”
- Other al-Qa‘ida allies in Pakistan and Afghanistan, notably the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani Network, have close ties to al-Qa‘ida. These groups have demonstrated the intent and capability to conduct attacks against U.S. persons and targets in Afghanistan, and we are looking closely for any indicators of attack planning in the West. Both groups also continue to provide safe haven to al-Qa‘ida and neither has publicly disavowed ties to the terrorist group despite sustained counterterrorism pressure.

Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LT)—perpetrators of the November 2008 coordinated armed assault against multiple targets in Mumbai—is one of the largest and most dangerous of the militant groups and poses a threat to a range of interests in South Asia. LT has been implicated in multiple attacks in India, including the 11 July 2006 attack on Mumbai commuter trains and the December 2001 armed assault on the Indian Parliament building. Attacks in Kashmir and India have had a destabilizing effect on the region, increasing tensions between India and Pakistan. LT is increasing its operational role in attacks against coalition forces in Afghanistan. LT has not previously conducted attacks in the United States or the West; however, LT, or individuals who trained with LT in the past but have adopted a more global extremist agenda, could pose a

threat to the homeland and the West, particularly if they were to work in collaboration with al-Qa'ida, its allies and affiliates, or other like-minded terrorists.

2. The Evolution of al-Qa'ida's Regional Affiliates and the Increasing Threat to the West

Ten years after 9/11, we face a much more diffuse and diversified threat, largely due to the emergence and evolution of regional affiliates who support al-Qa'ida core's strategy of creating a self-sustaining global extremist movement. To varying degrees, the affiliates have increased the scope of their operations, seeking to strike some U.S. and Western targets both inside and outside of their respective regions.

Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Yemen was already a key battleground and regional base of operations from which AQAP could plan attacks, train recruits, and facilitate the movement of operatives prior to the outbreak of the Arab Spring related violence earlier this year. AQAP's gains and the regime's governing challenges are increasing our concerns about the group's capability to conduct additional attacks targeting the homeland and U.S. interests overseas, as well as our concerns about the group's continuing propaganda efforts designed to inspire like-minded Western extremists to conduct attacks in their home countries.

- AQAP's two attempted attacks against the homeland—the attempted airliner attack during December 2009, and its follow-on effort to down two U.S.-bound cargo planes in October 2010 using explosives-laden printer cartridges—were indicative of a determined enemy capable of adjusting tactics to achieve success.
- AQAP also is encouraging extremists in the United States to strike here. Each of AQAP's first six issues of *Inspire* magazine has featured a section titled, "Open Source Jihad," which aims to provide easily followed instructions on weapons use, explosives construction, and targeting ideas.

Al-Qa'ida Operatives in East Africa and Al-Shabaab. East Africa remains a key operating area for the Somalia-based terrorist and insurgent group al-Shabaab and other al-Qa'ida associates. Despite recent setbacks in Mogadishu, al-Shabaab is still a significant threat to U.S. interests and remains committed to al-Qa'ida's ideology. At least 20 U.S. persons—the majority of whom are ethnic Somalis—have traveled to Somalia since 2006 to fight and train with al-Shabaab. The impact of the famine on the fighting in Somalia is not yet clear.

- In the past year, at least two young men who left the United States and traveled to Somalia were killed while fighting with al-Shabaab.
- The June death in Somalia of al-Qa'ida veteran Fazul Abdullah Muhammad, a.k.a. Harun Fazul, removes one of the most capable operatives in the region. Nonetheless, we remain concerned that foreign fighters associated with his network continue to train and plot against U.S. and Western targets.

Al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). AQIM has had limited success in exploiting the Arab Spring in North Africa, and there is no indication their propaganda has found a receptive audience. AQIM threatens U.S. and other Western interests in North and West Africa, primarily through kidnap-for-ransom operations and small arms attacks; though, the group's recent execution of several French hostages and first suicide bombing attack in Niger last year demonstrate AQIM's lethality and attack range. Sustained Algerian efforts against AQIM have degraded the organization's ability to conduct high-casualty attacks in the country and compelled the group to shift its operational focus from northern Algeria to the vast, ungoverned Sahel region in the south.

- AQIM continues to hold multiple European hostages, most recently kidnapping an Italian woman in February.

Al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI). Ongoing counterterrorism successes against AQI—to include the deaths of the group's top two leaders last year in a joint Iraqi/U.S. military operation—have continued to put pressure on the organization. AQI's recent public statement claiming 65 separate attacks in May and June indicate the group remains an active and capable al-Qa'ida affiliate. Immediately following UBL's death the current leader of AQI publically reaffirmed his group's support for al-Qa'ida and Ayman al-Zawahiri. The arrests in May of two AQI-affiliated Kentucky-based Iraqi refugees highlight the potential threat posed by U.S.-based AQI-associates. We assess that AQI remains committed to al-Qa'ida's global agenda and are concerned they may be intent on conducting external operations, to include in the homeland.

- Al-Qa'ida in Iraq has released two Arabic-language propaganda statements encouraging individual terrorist acts, including a January video that called for lone offender attacks against Western infrastructure and students and an early April interview in which AQI's leader generally reiterated the January call for attacks and noted that weapons used in Iraq are available in most countries.

3. Homegrown Violent Extremists Activity Remains Elevated

Homegrown violent extremists (HVEs)—inspired by al-Qa'ida's global extremist agenda—are a key element of the evolution and diversification of the threat since 9/11. The growth of online English-language violent extremist content during the past three years has fostered greater cohesion, but not necessarily collaboration, among HVEs. Plots disrupted during the past year were unrelated operationally, but are indicative of a common cause rallying independent extremists to want to attack the homeland.

A key feature of this trend has been the development of a U.S.-specific narrative—a blend of al-Qa'ida inspiration, perceived victimization, and glorification of past Homegrown plotting—that addresses the unique concerns of U.S.-based violent extremists. HVEs who independently plan attacks with no direction from associates in the U.S. or overseas are difficult to detect and disrupt and could advance plotting with little or no warning.

- Arrests of HVEs in the United States in 2010 and 2011 remained at elevated levels. The arrest of U.S. Army PFC Naser Jason Abdo—who allegedly planned to kill American

soldiers near Ft. Hood—underscores our concerns about the ongoing threat from lone offender HVEs. U.S.-based extremists continue to be motivated to carry out violence on the basis of a variety of personal rationales, highlighting the continued intent by some HVEs to take part in violence despite having no operational connections to terrorists overseas.

- Al-Qa‘ida core and some of its regional affiliates have repeatedly encouraged independent attacks, which could further encourage HVEs toward violent acts. Increasingly sophisticated English-language propaganda, including *Inspire* magazine, that provides extremists with guidance to carry out homeland attacks remains easily available via the Internet. English-language web forums also foster a sense of community and further indoctrinate new recruits, both of which can lead to increased levels of violent activity.
- Although al-Qa‘ida’s Pakistan-based senior leaders previously encouraged self-initiated attacks in propaganda, their video released on June 3rd titled, “Thou Art Held Responsible Only for Thyself,” marked the group’s most explicit endorsement of individual terrorist acts and first public encouragement of cyber attacks.

4. State Sponsors of Terrorism

In September 2001, seven countries—Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria—were on the State Sponsors of Terrorism List. Today, only Cuba, Iran, Sudan, and Syria remain.

Iran is still the foremost state sponsor, and since 9/11 the regime has expanded its involvement with terrorist and insurgent groups—primarily in Iraq and Afghanistan—that target U.S. and Israeli interests. Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force and Ministry of Intelligence and Security have been involved in the planning and execution of terrorist acts and the provision of lethal aid—such as weapons, money, and training—to these groups, particularly Lebanese Hizballah.

- Iran’s relationship with Hizballah since 9/11 has evolved from a traditional state sponsor-proxy relationship to a strategic partnership that provides a unified front against Israel and the U.S.
- During the past decade, Syria has narrowed and shifted how and who it supports as a result of such events as the 9/11 attacks, the Palestinian intifadahs, the death of Arafat, and the Iraq war. The Assad regime limits support to groups directly relevant to Syrian interests in Lebanon, the Occupied Territories, and Iraq.
- Since 2001, Sudan has taken action against several terrorist groups within Sudan and gradually improved cooperation with the U.S. and regional partners. We remain concerned about permanent improvements in Khartoum’s counterterrorism legislation, HAMAS, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad remaining in Sudan.

III. The National Counterterrorism Center

1. The Role of NCTC

Created in the aftermath of the attacks on 9/11, the overarching mission of the NCTC is to lead the effort to combat international terrorism. In its 2004 report, the 9/11 Commission observed that, “the United States confronts a number of less visible challenges that surpass the boundaries of traditional nation-states and call for quick, imaginative and agile responses.” That observation—as true today as it was when the 9/11 Commission issued its report—led the Commission to recommend the creation of a National Counterterrorism Center. As the 9/11 Commission proposed: “Breaking the mold of national government organization, this NCTC should be a center for joint operational planning and joint intelligence.”

In December 2004, Congress established NCTC. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 set forth NCTC’s key responsibilities. These responsibilities are captured in NCTC’s mission statement: “Lead our nation’s effort to combat terrorism at home and abroad by analyzing the threat, sharing that information with our partners, and integrating all instruments of national power to ensure unity of effort.”

Intelligence Analysis and Integration. By law, NCTC serves as the primary organization in the U.S. government for analyzing and integrating all intelligence possessed or acquired by the government pertaining to terrorism and counterterrorism, except intelligence pertaining exclusively to domestic terrorism and domestic counterterrorism. NCTC has a unique responsibility to examine all international terrorism issues, spanning geographic boundaries and allowing for intelligence to be analyzed regardless of whether it is collected inside or outside the United States. NCTC has access to the entire catalogue of reporting—both foreign and domestic—on terrorism issues.

NCTC’s strategic analyses are vetted and coordinated throughout the intelligence community, which adds multiple analytic perspectives. NCTC produces coordinated assessments on such critical terrorism issues as terrorist safe havens, state sponsors of terrorism, counterterrorism cooperation worldwide, and regional terrorism issues and groups. NCTC also regularly prepares intelligence assessments that are integrated into NCTC’s Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning to inform policymakers on the progress of U.S. counterterrorism efforts.

NCTC’s strong analytic cadre, which includes detailees and assignees from across the intelligence community, means that NCTC products reflect the diversity of the entire intelligence community and not the analytic view of one group or agency.

Watchlisting. NCTC also serves as the central and shared knowledge bank on known and suspected terrorists and international terror groups, as well as their goals, strategies, capabilities, and networks of contacts and support. As the federal government’s central and shared knowledge bank, NCTC has developed and maintains the Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment (TIDE) on known and suspected terrorists and terrorist groups. In this role, NCTC

advances the most complete and accurate information picture to our partners to support terrorism analysts. We also support screening activities that ultimately help prevent terrorist plans and operations against U.S. interests.

Strategic Operational Planning. NCTC is charged with conducting strategic operational planning for counterterrorism activities, integrating all instruments of national power, including diplomatic, financial, military, intelligence, homeland security, and law enforcement activities. In this role, NCTC looks beyond individual department and agency missions toward the development of a single, unified counterterrorism effort across the federal government. NCTC develops interagency counterterrorism plans to help translate high level strategies and policy direction into coordinated department and agency activities to advance the President's objectives. These plans address a variety of counterterrorism goals, including regional issues, weapons of mass destruction-terrorism, and countering violent extremism. The strategic operational planning process integrates all phases of the planning cycle—developing a plan, monitoring its implementation, and assessing its effectiveness and resource allocations—and creates communities of interest to coordinate and integrate implementation.

For example, NCTC is joining with the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to conduct workshops across the United States that enable cities to better develop and refine their response plans to evolving terrorist threats. These “Joint Counterterrorism Awareness Workshops” increase the ability of federal, state, local and private sectors partners to respond to a threat by discovering gaps in capabilities, planning, training and resources; and identify existing programs or resources that can close those gaps. The workshops also provide a venue to share best practices at the state and local levels and serve as a basis for identifying issues and gaps that may subsequently be addressed nationwide.

Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group. In 2007, this Committee played an integral role in creating the Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group, or ITACG. Located at NCTC, the ITACG is led by DHS in partnership with the FBI. The group brings together federal and nonfederal intelligence, law enforcement and first responder communities and is dedicated to bridging the intelligence information gap between traditional intelligence agencies and state, local, tribal and private sector partners. The ITACG's role in the intelligence community is to advocate for the intelligence and information needs of these key partners and to help federal intelligence agencies improve the way in which they produce and disseminate intelligence information to intelligence customers. The ITACG has representatives from a geographically diverse set organizations and agencies, with expertise in law enforcement, fire and rescue, and health services.

2. Key NCTC Initiatives

With the support of Congress, NCTC and the rest of the government have made strides in the fight against terrorism, but much work remains. We face threats from a dynamic and complex terrorist environment. NCTC is committed to changing and adapting to meet these threats and the challenges they present. In particular, over the last two years—with lessons learned from the failed airline bombing in December 2009—NCTC has implemented several initiatives to improve our ability to identify and prevent terrorist attacks.

Pursuit Group. In January 2010, NCTC created the Pursuit Group to develop tactical leads and pursue terrorism threats. The formation of the Pursuit Group has provided the counterterrorism community with a group of co-located analysts that have unparalleled data access and expertise, which enables Pursuit Group to focus exclusively on information that could lead to the discovery of threats aimed against the homeland or U.S. interests abroad. With teams comprised of personnel from across the intelligence community, with access to the broadest range of terrorism information available, Pursuit Group analysts are able to identify actionable leads that could otherwise remain disconnected or unknown. While the majority of the intelligence community understandably follows current threats, Pursuit Group analysts can ensure that terrorism cases are examined as thoroughly as possible by pursuing non-obvious and unresolved connections, identifying unknown, known or suspected terrorists, and focusing on seemingly unimportant details that could yield relevant information.

The Pursuit Group provides investigative leads, collection requirements, and potential source candidates to operational elements like the FBI, CIA, or DHS for intelligence purposes or action. During the first 3 quarters of Fiscal Year 2011, the Pursuit Group completed over 800 actions that provided the counterterrorism partners, including the federal law enforcement community, with new knowledge and analysis on tactical terrorism threats. These actions range from communicating directly with other agencies via cable to providing information for TIDE, watchlisting, and no-fly nominations.

Watchlisting and TIDE. NCTC has adopted important reforms in the watchlisting process and has improved NCTC's receipt, processing, and the quality of information sharing in support of the Center's watchlisting and screening responsibilities. Specifically, the intelligence community adjusted the minimum identifying information necessary to allow additional individuals to be entered into the Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment (TIDE) and took other measures to ensure more effective record and database searches, correlation of data, and processing of encounters. In July 2010, the community watchlisting guidance was revised to provide flexibility to push forward information that previously had not met the requirements. The added features include a bulk ingest application, automatic processing of the nominations, and exporting records to the Terrorist Screening Center in near-real time. We also increased our ability to store, compare, match, and export biometrics such as fingerprint, facial images, and iris scans. At the same time, however, we have taken great care to ensure that our core civil liberties and privacy protections are preserved. Nominations of U.S. persons to a watchlist must still be supported by "reasonable suspicion" that the person is a "known or suspected terrorist," and a person cannot be watchlisted based solely upon First Amendment protected activity, or based solely upon race, ethnicity, or religious affiliation.

One of the key gaps we identified in the watchlisting process was the need to enhance existing TIDE records with additional information. NCTC is now taking a more aggressive and innovative approach to seek methodologies and data repositories to ingest biographic, biometric, and derogatory information. We also are conducting large scale data correlation efforts on a nightly basis, enabling discovery of previously unknown terrorist connections and attributes. As the threat continues to evolve, our watchlisting experts are proactively partnering with NCTC's Pursuit Group and the counterterrorism community to expedite the sharing of information to build more complete terrorist identities.

Information Technology. NCTC has implemented several significant improvements to its information technology. These include:

- expanding advanced data correlation services to process and filter massive data sets;
- improving technology supporting the development of leads to identify non watchlisted names or aliases; and
- updating NCTC’s integrated data repository with several country-specific data sets.

For example, prior to December 2009, analysts were required manually to search and integrate information—data from multiple networks residing in specific databases had to be searched, selected, and copy/pasted to get the relevant information to the analyst’s primary workspace. Now, NCTC’s “Counterterrorism Data Layer” is being developed to ingest relevant data and to allow NCTC analysts to search, exploit, and correlate terrorism information in a single environment. Thanks to the efforts of the DNI, Secretary Napolitano, Director Mueller, and the Directors of the CIA, NSA, and DIA, NCTC is acquiring priority data sets for ingestion, and for the first time, NCTC analysts can search across key homeland security and intelligence information and get back a single list of relevant results. Moreover, sophisticated analytical tools are in place to permit analysts to conduct ‘Google-like’ searches, conduct link analysis and data visualization, and to triage information. These efforts are being pursued with careful consideration of legal, policy, and technical issues to protect privacy and civil liberties.

Countering Violent Extremism. Over the past ten years, the government has expanded its counterterrorism efforts to include a focus on preventing al-Qa‘ida and its adherents from recruiting and radicalizing the next generation of terrorists, both overseas and at home. Efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism focus on undercutting the terrorist narrative, improving government and law enforcement expertise for understanding the threat, and building more resilient communities—making radicalization and recruitment to violence more difficult for al-Qa‘ida’s and its allies and affiliates. Because this new approach takes a more holistic view of the threat, it requires the active engagement of departments and agencies whose missions go beyond traditional counterterrorism and law enforcement missions.

In this framework, the National Security Council (NSC) is leading a “whole of government” approach for the U.S. Government’s efforts to counter violent radicalization, as described in the August 2011 domestic radicalization strategy, *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*. NCTC supports the NSC implementation of the strategy by working closely with our federal partners, as well as with state, local and tribal partners to build and support programs, activities, and efforts that directly and indirectly counter violent extremism.

NCTC Workforce. As NCTC re-doubles its efforts to meet the challenges posed by al-Qa‘ida, its affiliates and adherents, our progress is dependent on our dedicated and diverse workforce. The talented men and women who work at NCTC perform a unique and vital service to the nation, NCTC has benefitted from the integration of analysts and planners from across the

intelligence community, the U.S. military, and other federal, state, and local partners. Maintaining this diversity through continued commitment from intelligence agencies and other organizations is a priority for NCTC. We continue to strengthen this workforce by providing the training, resources, and leadership needed to ensure the Center's continued success.

IV. Challenges Ahead

We continue to address challenges in dealing with the dynamic and adaptive terrorist threat environment. The nature of the threat challenges our analysts' ability to sort and connect critical bits of information across disparate data sets. The rapid change and proliferation in communications technologies require a proactively postured intelligence community, while effectively balancing the protection of sources and methods, and the need to share information.

The drawdown of U.S. military forces in Iraq and changes in relationships with key partners, such as Egypt, may affect our ability to maintain access to long-term targets. The potential impacts of the Arab Spring and upheaval in the Middle East are not yet fully understood, particularly as they relate to the al-Qa'ida narrative and key relationships.

While remaining vigilant against foreign-inspired threats, efforts to build resilience within our communities are essential to continuing progress against al-Qa'ida inspired radicalization recruitment, and mobilization to violence here at home. Engagement and partnerships with communities remain important to protecting them from the influence of al-Qa'ida, its affiliates and adherents. Integrating and harmonizing the efforts of federal, state, local, and tribal entities will remain a challenge—one we must continue to pursue.

Finally, all of our efforts must be consistent with our core values. We must carry out the mission of NCTC in a manner that retains the trust of the American people and remains true to the oaths we have taken to support and defend the Constitution. NCTC is committed to fulfilling this solemn responsibility by protecting civil liberties and privacy and respecting the rule of law. While we work to protect the Nation, we are dedicated to upholding the trust of the American people and exemplifying the values on which the nation was founded.

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Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins and members of the Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to testify before the committee today. Your support has made it possible to reduce the likelihood of a successful terrorist attack. As you know, perfection is no more possible in counterterrorism than it is in any other endeavor. NCTC, in partnership with the entire counterterrorism community, continues to work tirelessly to reduce the likelihood of an attack, but we cannot guarantee safety. We must continue to foster the resilience of the American people to prepare for a potential attack.

With your determined leadership, NCTC and our key partners—sitting here with me today—we have established a strong posture against the enemies who seek to do us harm, and will continue to make progress in this fight. Every day, the threat information we review underscores the fluid and dynamic terrorist threat to the United States. We must work

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relentlessly to reduce that threat to our nation. In the months and years to come, I look forward to working with this Committee and the rest of Congress to keep the American people safe.

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