

**House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
THACI Subcommittee Hearing on Muslim Brotherhood
April 13, 2011**

**Ranking Member Thompson
Opening Statement**

Thank you, Madame Chair.

Welcome to all of the witnesses and thank you for taking the time to inform this subcommittee about your research and experiences with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Intelligence oversight committees have an important and legitimate need to understand key organizations and individuals who influence events in countries that are important to the US, such as Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood is involved to some degree in reshaping the Egyptian government.

For that reason, this hearing can be productive if it provides a fact-based examination of the Brotherhood's activities, objectives and potential to affect US foreign policy.

However, just as important, there are limits to what this hearing can – or should – accomplish:

First and foremost, this hearing must not become a witch hunt. This hearing is not about the vast majority of Egyptian citizens who protested peacefully in Tahrir Square. Nor is this hearing about the millions of law-abiding Muslim-Americans who contribute to American society.

Intelligence oversight has absolutely nothing to do with the Constitutional activities of Americans to practice religion, attract others to their religion, participate in the political process or influence US policy, which in Washington, state legislatures, and city halls across our country, we call lobbying.

Second, this hearing should not promote guilt by association. Every organization has bad apples, so we should not judge an organization by only a few of its members. My understanding is that, since the Muslim Brotherhood has a large written record, anyone can select statements to make a case for or against it. Our experts can help us analyze those statements and provide their assessments of the Brotherhood's true intentions.

Third, today's hearing is not about terrorism. As a member of the Intelligence Committee, I certainly take very seriously our duty to protect our nation and counter terrorism. But, let's be clear: the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood is not a State Department-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization and according to the written testimony, it renounced violence years ago.

Fourth, this hearing is not an investigation into criminal activity. No one here speaks for US law enforcement or is a law enforcement officer. While we may need a follow-up closed hearing to find out if there are any Muslim Brotherhood-related violations of US law, today's open hearing is not that forum.

Finally, I strongly believe that this hearing must not become yet another recruitment tool for extremists. Experts in the field note that, even in a free society, individuals can be driven to violence if they feel victimized. My hope is that nothing is said today that can be interpreted as targeting or victimizing anyone.

Madame Chair, I know that you have also expressed the desire to have a serious discussion that does not offend any law-abiding citizen of this country. I'm eager to work together to reach that goal by keeping this session within firm parameters connected to our intelligence oversight duties.

Thank you, Madame Chair, I yield back.