

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
Subcommittee on Terrorism, HUMINT, Analysis, and Counterintelligence
April 13, 2011
Opening Statement

Mrs. Myrick

The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Human Intelligence, Analysis, and Counterintelligence will come to order.

The first order of business is to welcome the Ranking Member, Mike Thompson, the other members of this subcommittee, and those from the full committee who have joined us today. Mike Thompson is a good friend of mine. Like the Chairman and Ranking Member of the full committee, Mike and I are committed to working in a bipartisan fashion on this subcommittee whenever possible. We met recently to discuss the way ahead for this subcommittee, and as a result we have a robust, bipartisan plan for oversight of the areas under this subcommittee's broad jurisdiction.

Today we are having an open hearing on the Muslim Brotherhood. Open hearings are rare for the House Intelligence Committee and its subcommittees, but Chairman Rogers and I feel that this important issue should be discussed in front of the American people. As governments are shaken in the Arab Spring, intelligence

agencies across the world are studying what kind of governments would follow in a new geo-political landscape across the Middle East. Central to this discussion is the Muslim Brotherhood. Founded in Egypt in 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood was dedicated to implementing traditional Islamic sharia law, in opposition to British imperial rule. An interesting debate has arisen regarding the role the Muslim Brotherhood might play in future governments. Some assert that the Muslim Brotherhood has not renounced violence as a political means and any inclusion of the Brotherhood would fundamentally undermine democratic movements and governments.

Due to confusion about the nature and the degree of the threat from the Muslim Brotherhood, this topic deserves further exploration. The purpose of this hearing is to discuss the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood both in the Middle East and in the United States in an effort to clarify what this group aims to do and how it pursues those aims. I seek to encourage a discourse about the Muslim Brotherhood to help assist analysts across the world struggling to understand what comes next in the Middle East. Additionally, this hearing will address how our government is and should be dealing with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Much of the confusion surrounding the Muslim Brotherhood stems from its abandonment of violence. When the group declared that it would no longer use violence to achieve its goals, many in America and throughout the world ceased to view it as a threat of any kind. The group's apparent embrace of democracy has further convinced some that it is a harmless organization that shares the freedom loving values of much of the Western world.

However, the depth of the Brotherhood's commitment to non-violence is unclear. It may renounce violence as a means to gain power in Egypt, but don't forget that it is the parent organization of the Palestinian Hamas, which pledges its commitment to violence against Israel in its founding charter. In addition, the Muslim Brotherhood's most influential theologian, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, has sanctioned attacks on American forces in Iraq, endorsed Palestinian suicide bombings and recently proclaimed his wish to kill a Jew before he dies. It is this man whom the Brotherhood brought to Tahrir Square for the first Friday sermon after Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was ousted in February.

I believe we must also look beyond tactics—whether they are violent or non-violent—and explore the root issue, their core beliefs and ideology. The 9/11 Commission Report states that "our strategy must match our means to two ends:

dismantling the al-Qaeda network and prevailing in the longer term over the ideology that gives rise to Islamist terrorism.” That is why I believe that when we talk about the threat the Muslim Brotherhood poses, we must not merely look at whether they are violent or non-violent. We must also look at the extremist ideology they espouse and whether it leads to radicalization and ultimately acts of terrorism.

My own view is that some of the avowed changes in the Muslim Brotherhood are merely superficial. Their abandonment of violence is arguably for tactical reasons, and I suspect that it is still opposed to genuine pluralism and the protection of minority rights. For example, non-Muslims and women are not afforded the same rights as Muslim men under the Muslim Brotherhood’s way of thinking. We need to examine closely whether its true goal of instating a worldwide Islamic regime is still in place. Mustafa Mashhur, the reported leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt from 1996 until 2002 wrote that “jihad for Allah is not limited to the specific region of the Islamic countries, since the Muslim homeland is one and is not divided.”

This is also a very important issue because the Muslim Brotherhood appears to be active in the U.S., although not in the traditional sense. There are no card carrying members of the group here. There are no buildings on K Street with “Muslim Brotherhood” in the lobby directory. Instead, the group spreads its influence through a

large number of affiliated organizations throughout the country. This allows the Muslim Brotherhood to muddy the water when it comes to foreign funding and influence and to hide behind groups that have plausible deniability of their involvement with the Brotherhood when necessary. We know this because the Department of Justice produced clear evidence in the Holy Land Foundation Trial—the largest terrorism finance trail in American history—that showed that the Muslim Brotherhood is in America and outlined how it operates here. Our witnesses today will be able to shed some light on the evidence produced in this trial and explain how the Muslim Brotherhood operates behind the scenes.

The federal government does not have a comprehensive or consistent strategy for dealing with the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliated groups in America. Nor does it have a strategy for dealing with the Brotherhood in Egypt or the greater Middle East. A lack of understanding about the group has led to a classic case of government disorientation—we have heard the full spectrum of views on, and approaches to interaction with, the Brotherhood from various government officials. This inconsistency makes me feel like our government is playing checkers while the Muslim Brotherhood is playing chess. I would like to hear from our witnesses their views on what the government's policy should be with regard to the Brotherhood.

We will clarify the aims of the Muslim Brotherhood by hearing from some of the preeminent experts on the group, including a local Muslim leader, a scholar who just wrote a book entitled, *The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West*, two experts on Middle Eastern affairs who recently returned from trips to Egypt, and a professor who specializes in political science and international affairs. We have a very balanced panel of witnesses sitting before us, two of whom were invited by the Ranking Member, so that we can have a fulsome discussion that addresses all sides of the issue.

One of the privileges of the Intelligence Committee is that we have regular access to Intelligence Community personnel who provide us with classified information on matters of national security. As such, I intend to follow up on this hearing in the near future with a closed, classified hearing on the Muslim Brotherhood to allow subcommittee members to hear from the Executive Branch what the government knows about this group and what it is doing to address this threat. My hope is that this hearing will provide Congress with a better understanding of the Muslim Brotherhood so that we can ask government officials more informed questions about their policies and strategies toward the Muslim Brotherhood.

I'd now like to invite my friend, the Ranking Member, to make an opening statement.