

Opening Statement of  
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to the  
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence  
Terrorism, HUMINT, Analysis, and CI (THACI) Subcommittee  
Room B-318 Rayburn Building  
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Madame Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I retired from the Intelligence Community (IC) nearly 10 years ago, but have remained involved with it ever since. In my career, I held senior positions including CIA's Deputy Director of Intelligence, Assistant Director of Central Intelligence for Analysis and Production, and Chairman of the National Intelligence Council. After retirement, I worked in the White House Transition Planning organization for the Department of Homeland Security, heading the team for Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection. I subsequently served for two years as the staff director of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security and briefly as the first staff director of the permanent Homeland Security Committee.

Since government retirement, I have served voluntarily on various research committees and task forces supporting US intelligence agencies, including on counterterrorism. I am currently a sector president of BAE Systems, which provides products and services to customers including the US defense and intelligence communities. From all these experiences, I have observed the performance of the IC in recent years with keen interest, though I clearly no longer qualify as an insider. My comments, therefore, should be seen as informed impressions rather than authoritative assessments, but hopefully they will be helpful in any case.

I am a member of the National Security Preparedness Group (NSPG), which sponsored the study on preventing violent radicalization ably conducted by Peter Neumann. I was pleased to provide comments to Dr. Neumann during the research and drafting phases. I regard the finished paper as a constructive, insightful contribution to the evolving debate today on counter-radicalization in the United States. The paper is finished, but the national debate will continue for some time.

I would identify five key judgments in the report:

- Today, we benefit from many commendable government and non-government counter-radicalization initiatives at the Federal, state and local levels. They need, however, to be better coordinated, more sharply focused, and increased – especially at the local level.
- The successful targeting by foreign-based terrorist groups of vulnerable US communities, while not an epidemic, is a serious and growing problem that needs

to be addressed with greater urgency at every level of government and community.

- Counter-radicalization, which defies easy definition, relates to multi-front policies to **prevent** recruitment of individuals to violence. These broad-based policies are directed largely toward vulnerable communities with influence on potential recruits. They are not law-enforcement policies aimed at recruited terrorists. Counter-radicalization is not counter-terrorism, though, if and when successful, it should reduce the terrorist threat.
- Federal, state and local policies to promote counter-radicalization are interconnected, but the greatest impact is at the local level where government, law enforcement, and non-government groups have the greatest potential to understand community strengths and vulnerabilities, to develop constructive partnerships, to promote open dialogue and otherwise to prevent radicalization. Many promising local initiatives, however, appear to be seriously under-resourced and their performance across the country is uneven.
- US Muslim communities may be the most targeted by foreign terrorists today, but there is no basis for an “us against them” approach to this disparate and diversified US population. Negative generalizations about US Muslims, from leadership at any level or location, can lead to isolation of these communities and are clearly counterproductive to needed outreach, engagement, and capacity building for counter-radicalization.
- There are lessons to be learned from foreign counter-radicalization experiences, but the US will – and should – continue to develop its own model based on the preponderant role here of local government and community, on our preference for decentralized government, and on our historic commitment to civil liberties.

I will make four personal comments based on my professional experience that go beyond what the reports states, while not contradicting it.

- The number of known homegrown terrorists since 9/11, while growing in recent years, is relatively small. But the urgency is big. In the era of IT-driven globalization, small groups of terrorists can move people, finance, and information (including destructive know-how) across borders as never before. Minor actors can do catastrophic damage!
- Still, it is important to recognize the positive aspect of the small numbers. I believe this is testimony to the bedrock commitment of most Americans to our Constitutional freedoms and democratic way of life. If you or I hear about a terrorist conspiracy, we call the local police. We don’t aid and abet the terrorists. In my CIA career, this was not the case in many countries I analyzed on a day-to-day basis at different times in Latin America, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and parts of Asia. It is not the case among Arab peoples fighting for their freedom today. The trust between people and local government

in the United States, including law enforcement, is the global gold standard. Any policy or activity that erodes that traditional confidence within local communities weakens our counter-radicalization efforts. Our Constitution is our strongest instrument against radicalization, not an impediment. This is not fanciful rhetoric for me. It is the revelation from a career of assessing the rest of the world.

- I would build on the passing reference the report makes to the impact of perceived US foreign policy to terrorist narratives. Long before 9/11, we heard Al Qaeda protest US support of repressive regimes in the Middle East. What we have observed over the past year, however, is US sympathy toward Arab populations who are now dying in growing numbers to remove those corrupt and repressive regimes. The Arab protesters, who have lost their fear, are demanding political rights and economic opportunity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, not – as Osama bin Laden would have it – calling for restoration of a 16<sup>th</sup> century Islamic Caliphate. Surely, all of this should freshen the narrative for America’s counter-radicalization policies.
- Finally, it is clear enough that our counter-radicalization efforts today, along with those of our European counterparts, are focused on the threat from extremist Muslim ideologues. In recent decades, however, we also have experienced violence at the hands of Timothy McVeigh in Oklahoma, militias and cult groups in our western states, and a range of “radical groups” in the “anti-establishment” era of the 1960s and 1970s. At the same time, hostile foreign governments have continued to target and recruit many once-loyal Americans to betray their country. There has to be benefit for the future in a broader study of the factors that impel people to cross the line to violent extremism – or that prevent them from doing so. We still have a lot to learn.

Thank you Madame Chairman. I would be pleased to take any questions or comments you may have.