

**Hearing before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs
The Homeland Threat Landscape and U.S. Response
September 19, 2012**

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Thank you Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins, members of the Committee. I appreciate this opportunity to be here today to discuss the terrorist threat against the United States and our efforts to counter it.

I also want to express my appreciation to the Committee for your steadfast leadership and your support of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). I am particularly pleased to be here today with Secretary Napolitano and Director Mueller. We are close partners in the fight against terrorism.

I have now served as the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center for just over a year. During this year—with the support and guidance of Congress—our nation has made significant progress in the fight against terrorism. Our nation has placed relentless pressure on al-Qa‘ida core’s senior leadership. We have denied the group safe havens, resources, and the ability to plan and train. Following the death last year of Usama bin Ladin, several of his top lieutenants have been eliminated. Leaders who remain lack the same experience and are under siege. They have limited ability to recruit and communicate with other operatives. In short, the intelligence picture shows that al-Qa‘ida core is a shadow of its former self, and the overall threat from al-Qa‘ida in Pakistan is diminished.

Further, the government has disrupted terrorist attacks in the United States and abroad. Our intelligence, military, and law enforcement officers have worked to identify and stop terrorist plots before they are executed. And we have investigated and prosecuted individuals who have sought to carry out and have supported terrorist operations.

In addition, we have continued to build an enduring counterterrorism framework. NCTC—along with the FBI and DHS—is dedicated to analyzing and sharing terrorism information across the government and to the mission of detecting and preventing terrorist attacks against our citizens and interests around the world.

While these gains are real and enduring, 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, adaptive, and persistent.

Now more than a decade after the September 11th attacks, we remain at war with al-Qa‘ida, and we face an evolving threat from its affiliates and adherents, who rally around the al-Qa‘ida brand. Indeed, the threats we face have become more diverse. As al-Qa‘ida’s core leadership struggles to remain relevant, the group has turned to its affiliates and adherents to carry out attacks and to advance its ideology. These groups are based in an array of countries, including Yemen, Somalia, Nigeria, and Iraq. To varying degrees, these groups coordinate their activities and follow the direction of al-Qa‘ida leaders in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region.

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Many of the extremist groups themselves are multidimensional, blurring the lines between terrorist group, insurgency, and criminal gang. Unrest and political uncertainty from Northern Mali to the Sinai can present opportunities terrorists can exploit and areas from which they can operate.

Confronting this threat and working with resolve to prevent another terrorist attack is NCTC's overriding mission. We continue to monitor threat information, develop leads, work closely with domestic and international partners, and develop strategic plans to combat our terrorist adversaries. While we have taken important steps against al-Qa'ida and other terrorist groups, much work remains. The dedicated professionals at NCTC, along with our partners across the government and overseas, remain steadfast and committed to sustaining and enhancing the effort to protect the nation.

In my statement, I will begin by examining the terrorist threats to the homeland and to U.S. interests. I will then describe NCTC's role in addressing these threats and some of the key reforms and initiatives we have adopted.

The Terrorist Threat in Transition

Pakistan-Based Al-Qa'ida Core

Over the past several years, sustained counterterrorism pressure has systematically degraded Pakistan-based al-Qa'ida's leadership and operational capabilities. These efforts have left the group at its weakest point in the last ten years. Although core al-Qa'ida remains committed to its overarching goals, it is clearly a group in decline.

The death of Usama bin Ladin on May 2, 2011 removed al-Qa'ida's founder and leader and its staunchest proponent of spectacular attacks against the U.S. . The subsequent losses of several of Bin Ladin's top lieutenants and senior operational planners—including general manager 'Atiyah 'Abd al-Rahman in August 2011 and his replacement Abu Yahya al-Libi this June—have eroded the group's bench of potential leaders and have shaken al-Qa'ida's sense of security in Pakistan's tribal areas. Remaining leaders have been driven underground to varying degrees and the group has shifted a substantial portion of its attention from terrorist plotting to security and survival.

Operationally, core al-Qa'ida has not conducted a successful operation in the West since the 2005 London bombings. The group, however, remains committed to striking Western targets, including the United States. Its degraded capabilities almost certainly will compel operational planners to place a greater emphasis on smaller, simpler plots that are easier to carry out against soft targets.

Since Bin Ladin's death, multiple al-Qa'ida leaders have publicly endorsed the concept of individual acts of violence. We remain concerned that individuals such as alleged Fort Hood shooter Nidal Hassan and Toulouse shooter Mohammed Merah may inspire other like-minded individuals to conduct attacks in al-Qa'ida's name.

Despite its shrinking leadership cadre, al-Qa'ida continues to issue propaganda and media statements specifically focused on the Arab unrest. Persistent unrest in places such as Yemen, Libya, Egypt, and Syria may also provide core al-Qa'ida a propaganda opportunity to claim victories over the United States and reinvigorate its image as the leader of the global movement.

Al-Qa'ida's Affiliates: A Persistent and Diversifying Threat to the U.S. and Overseas Interests

AQAP. Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) remains the affiliate most likely to attempt transnational attacks, including against the United States. Despite Anwar al-Aulaqi's death, the group maintains the intent and capability to conduct anti-U.S. attacks with little to no warning.

In its three attempted attacks against the U.S. Homeland—the airliner plot of December 2009, an attempted attack against U.S.-bound cargo planes in October 2010, and an airliner plot this May—AQAP has shown an awareness of Western security procedures and demonstrated its efforts to adapt. The death of al-Aulaqi probably temporarily slowed AQAP's external plotting efforts but did not deter the group from attempting another aviation attack in May. We are also concerned by AQAP's efforts to exploit the security vacuum associated with the Arab Spring, although the group has suffered recent setbacks in these efforts.

AQAP also remains intent on publishing the English-language *Inspire* magazine—previously spearheaded by al-Aulaqi and now-deceased Samir Khan—in order to mobilize Western-based individuals for violent action. While the deaths of al-Aulaqi and Khan have affected the quality of the magazine, the publication endures and continues to reach a wide global audience of extremists.

AQIM and Boko Haram. Al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Boko Haram remain focused on local and regional attack plotting, including targeting Western interests in Nigeria. The groups have shown minimal interest in targeting the U.S. Homeland.

AQIM is actively working with local extremists in northern Mali to establish a safe haven from which to advance future operational activities. We are watching developments closely including the presence of militants in Niger; AQIM's ability to operate from a safe haven could eventually threaten U.S. and allied interests. While Boko Haram is primarily focused on plotting against targets in Nigeria, in April a spokesman for the group publicly threatened to find a way to attack a U.S.-based news outlet if its coverage of Islam did not change.

Al-Qa'ida in Iraq. Since the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq late last year, Al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) has conducted near-monthly country-wide attacks against government, security, and Shia civilian targets. During the past two years AQI has continued to release media statements supporting global extremism.

AQI's propaganda statements have cited its support for uprisings against secular governments in the Middle East and North Africa and, in a June statement, the group expressed solidarity with the Syrian Sunni population. In January 2011, it published an explosives training

video that called for lone wolf attacks in the West and against so-called apostate regimes in the Middle East.

During the past two years, American and Canadian authorities have arrested several North America-based AQI operatives, highlighting the potential threat posed to the United States. The FBI in May 2011 arrested Kentucky-based Iraqi refugees Waad Alwan and Shareef Hamadi for attempting to send weapons and explosives from Kentucky to Iraq and conspiring to commit terrorism while in Iraq. Alwan pled guilty to supporting terrorism in December 2011; Hamadi pled guilty just last month. In January 2011, Canadian authorities arrested dual Iraqi-Canadian citizen Faruq 'Isa who is accused of vetting individuals on the internet for suicide operations in Iraq.

Al-Shabaab. We continue to monitor al-Shabaab and its foreign fighter cadre as a potential threat to the U.S. homeland, although the group is mainly focused on combating the ongoing African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and regional military incursions which have eroded the group's territorial safe haven since late last year.

The group, which formally merged with al-Qa'ida in February, also remains intent on conducting attacks against regional and Western targets in East Africa, especially in countries supporting the Somali Government and allied forces in Somalia. Probable al-Shabaab sympathizers conducted several low-level attacks in Kenya earlier this year. Some al-Shabaab leaders in the past have publicly called for transnational attacks, including threatening to avenge the January death of British national and al-Shabaab senior foreign fighter Bilal Berjawi.

Al-Shabaab has attracted foreign fighters from across the globe, including more than 20 U.S. persons – mostly ethnic Somalis – who have traveled to Somalia since 2006.

Other Terrorist Threats

Lebanese Hizballah. Lebanese Hizballah has intensified its terrorist activities around the world and we remain concerned the group's activities endanger U.S. interests and citizens, as well as our allies.

Since May 2008, Hizballah plots against Israeli targets in Azerbaijan, Egypt, and Israel have been disrupted, and additional operational activity in Turkey has reportedly been uncovered. The mid-July attack on an Israeli tourist bus in Burgas, Bulgaria that killed six, the early July arrest of an operative in Cyprus, and the January plotting against tourists in Bangkok all bear the hallmarks of Hizballah. The group has engaged in an increasingly aggressive terrorist campaign since the end of its 2006 war with Israel and probably accelerated by the death of its operations chief 'Imad Mughniyah in Syria in 2008.

Since the start of unrest in Syria in early 2011, Hizballah has also provided training and extensive logistical support to the Government of Syria. The Treasury Department recently designated Hizballah for providing support to the Government of Syria.

Syria. We are monitoring the activities of several groups in Syria, including the development there of a terrorist group known as al-Nusrah Front, which announced its existence in a January video posted on extremist-affiliated web forums. The group has styled itself as the defender of Syrian Sunnis in propaganda statements. Al-Nusrah has openly claimed suicide, car bomb, coordinated assault, and small arms attacks against Syrian regime targets.

Multiple actors are now present in Syria and we are focused on any non-state actors inside or outside of Syria who may seek to acquire Syria's now-acknowledged chemical weapons stockpile. The U.S. is monitoring the weapons sites and remains concerned about the security of these weapons especially with the escalation of violence in Syria. We're working closely with the National Counterproliferation Center (NCPC), through our joint WMD-Terrorism Office, stood up this year, to monitor and help counter those who may seek to acquire Syria's weapons.

Additionally, unaccounted for conventional Libyan weapons pose a regional threat if they proliferate to non-state actors and make their way onto the Syrian battlefield. The Libyan regime stored conventional weapons in hundreds of unsecured locations throughout the country which included at least 20,000 MANPADS, not all of which have been recovered.

Iranian Threat. Iran is still the foremost state sponsor of terrorism, 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. The threat to U.S. interests from Iranian or Iranian-sponsored terrorist attacks has increased in the past year.

The disrupted Iranian plot to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador to the United States in late 2011 demonstrates that Iran is more willing to conduct terrorist operations inside the United States than was previously assessed. As part of the plot, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force attempted to use a dual Iranian-U.S. national to recruit Mexican criminal organizations to conduct the assassination, raising our concerns that Iran may seek to leverage its growing ties to Latin America to conduct activities in the U.S. Iran has recently been linked to terrorist operations in Azerbaijan, Georgia, India, and Thailand.

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, in particular Lebanese Hizballah. Hizballah has directly trained Syrian government personnel inside Syria and has facilitated the training of Syrian forces by Iran's terrorist arm, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps - Qods Force (IRGC-QF). Iran's relationship with Hizballah has gradually evolved since the 1980s from a traditional state sponsor-proxy relationship to a strategic partnership, both pursuing their aims against Israel and the United States.

South Asia-Based Militants. Pakistani and Afghan militant groups – including Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Haqqani Network, and Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LT) – continue to pose a direct threat to U.S. interests and our allies in the region, where these groups probably will remain focused. We continue to watch for indicators that any of these groups, networks, or

individuals are actively pursuing or have decided to incorporate operations outside of South Asia as a strategy to achieve their objectives.

TTP's claim of responsibility for the 16 August attack on Pakistan's Kamra air base and its threat to attack Coalition supply lines through Pakistan underscore the threat the group poses in the region. TTP leaders have repeatedly threatened attacks against the United States, including after the death of Bin Ladin in May 2011. TTP's claim of responsibility for the failed Times Square bombing in May 2010 demonstrates its willingness to act on this intent.

The Haqqani Network continues a campaign of high profile attacks in Afghanistan and has conducted multiple attacks against NATO and Afghan Government targets, notably the 18-hour multi-pronged assault against military, security, and government facilities in Kabul and three other cities in April. Earlier this month, the Secretary of State notified Congress of the Administration's intent to designate the Haqqani Network as a Foreign Terrorist Organization under the Immigration and Nationality Act and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist Entity under Executive Order 13224. Moreover, we remain concerned by the Haqqani Network's ability to provide facilitation and safe haven for local and global groups such as al-Qa'ida and to enable these groups to influence one another.

LT leaders have maintained a regional focus. LT provides training to a wide range of Pakistani and Western militants, some of whom could plot terrorist attacks in the West without direction from LT leaders. LT members frustrated with the group's focus on South Asia likewise could leave LT to join a more globally focused group such as al-Qa'ida. LT leaders almost certainly recognize that an attack on the U.S. would bring intense international backlash upon Pakistan and endanger the group's safehaven there.

LT has demonstrated a willingness to attack Western interests in South Asia in pursuit of its regional objectives, as it did through a high-profile operation targeting hotels frequented by Westerners during the Mumbai attacks in 2008.

The Evolving Threat from Homegrown Violent Extremists

Homegrown violent extremists (HVEs), including those who are inspired by al-Qa'ida's ideology, continue to pose a threat to the United States. HVEs inspired by al-Qa'ida are almost certainly entering a period of transition as U.S.-based violent extremists adjust to the deaths and disruption of influential English-language figures who helped al-Qa'ida's ideas resonate with some in the U.S.

Now-deceased AQAP members Anwar al-Aulaqi and Samir Khan were probably best positioned to create propaganda specifically for an American audience and mobilize HVEs. Their propaganda remains easily accessible online and will likely continue to inspire HVE violence.

The growth of on-line English language violent extremist content during the past three years has fostered a shared identity—but not necessarily operational collaboration—among

HVEs. Plots disrupted during the past year were unrelated operationally, but may demonstrate a common cause in rallying independent violent extremists to plot against the U.S.

Lone actors or insular groups pose the most serious HVE threat to the homeland. HVEs could view lone offender attacks as a model for future plots in the United States and overseas. The perceived success of previous lone offender attacks combined with al-Qa'ida and AQAP's propaganda promoting individual acts of terrorism is raising the profile of this tactic.

The arrests last year of Texas-based Saudi Khalid Aldawsari and U.S. Army Private First Class Naser Abdo, as well as attacks in France, underscore the threat from lone offenders who are able to adapt their plans quickly by rapidly changing timelines, methods, and targets to meet existing circumstances—all without consulting others.

THE ROLE OF NCTC

NCTC's Core Missions

The overarching mission of NCTC is to lead the effort to combat international terrorism. In 2004, 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 in 2001—led the Commission to recommend the creation of a National Counterterrorism Center which should “break the mold of a national government organization” and be a center for joint strategic operational planning and joint intelligence.

In 2004 Congress established NCTC and set forth the Center'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 Integration and Analysis. NCTC serves as the primary organization in the U.S. government for integrating and assessing all intelligence pertaining to international terrorism and counterterrorism. NCTC has a unique responsibility to examine all international terrorism issues, spanning geographic boundaries to identify and analyze threat information, regardless of whether it is collected inside or outside the United States.

NCTC has access to the full catalogue of reporting—both foreign and domestic—on international 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 analytic cadre includes detailees and assignees from across the intelligence community and government, ensuring NCTC products reflect the diversity of the entire intelligence community and not the analytic view of one group or agency.

Watchlisting. NCTC hosts and maintains 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. 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 and law enforcement activities that ultimately help prevent terrorist plans and operations against U.S. interests.

Situational Awareness and Support to Counterterrorism Partners. NCTC supports our counterterrorism partners at both the federal and state and local levels.

In particular, our unique, centralized access to intelligence information on terrorist activity enables our analysts to integrate information from foreign and domestic sources and to pass that information in a timely manner to other agencies. Below are several examples:

- NCTC provides around-the-clock support to domestic counterterrorism activities through the NCTC Operations Center, which is co-located with FBI Counterterrorism Division Watch. NCTC produces and disseminates daily situational awareness products and chairs secure video teleconferences three times a day to facilitate timely information exchanges between counterterrorism partners.
- The Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group (ITACG), located at NCTC, led by senior DHS and FBI officers, and reporting to NCTC, brings together federal and non-federal intelligence, law enforcement, and first responder detailees, who are dedicated to providing relevant intelligence to state, local, tribal, and private sector partners. ITACG ensures that shared information is timely, relevant, and framed into situational awareness products for public safety officials—including police officers and firefighters—enhancing their capabilities to quickly assess and effectively respond to suspected and actual terrorist activities. In response to potential Congressional action to eliminate DHS' funding for the ITACG, we are exploring with FBI and DHS ways to preserve and sustain key counterterrorism intelligence functions within NCTC, and to complement DHS and FBI's efforts. Our role is to integrate information and to ensure it can be shared with the people who need to know.
- NCTC facilitates the dissemination of information at unclassified levels to support DHS and FBI efforts to inform law enforcement and local officials of potential dangers to include near-real-time export of watchlist data to the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center.
- NCTC provides threat information to DHS regarding individuals who have been identified as overstaying their visas in the United States, and we work regularly with

DHS and FBI to provide briefs to federal, state and local officials at Fusion Centers regarding counterterrorism matters.

- NCTC ensures the timely dissemination of finished intelligence and situational reporting via the NCTC Online CURRENT—the premier classified website and repository for counterterrorism reporting and analysis. The site is available on multiple platforms with more than 10,000 monthly users from 45 different organizations, including FBI-led Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs). It is also available on DHS’s Homeland Secure Data Network to certain state and local officials in the fusion centers.

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 DHS and the FBI 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, as well as 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. We have held these workshops in a number of major U.S. cities, most recently in Los Angeles.

Key NCTC Initiatives

Facing a dynamic and complex terrorist environment, NCTC is changing and adapting to build on the past several years of experience to meet these threats and the challenges they present. With lessons learned from AQAP’s December 2009 failed airline bombing and other plots, NCTC has implemented several key initiatives to advance our ability to identify and prevent terrorist attacks.

Information Sharing. NCTC is promoting information integration and sharing across the counterterrorism community with the development of the Counterterrorism Data Layer (CTDL). The CTDL provides NCTC users with a single access point to millions of pieces of government counterterrorism-related data gathered from multiple government data sets. Prior to

December 2009 analysts were required to search multiple networks and integrate this information manually, making it difficult to identify and explore potential links of relevance. Different formats, information fields, and naming conventions further complicated our efforts. Now, NCTC's data systems are being developed to ingest relevant data and to allow NCTC analysts to identify, search, exploit, and correlate terrorism information in a single environment.

Thanks to the support of our key counterterrorism partners, including DHS and the FBI, NCTC is also making significant progress in acquiring priority data sets. Today, thanks to NCTC's unique access to all terrorism-related intelligence possessed or acquired by the government, 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 analytic searches, conduct link analysis and data visualization, and triage information – all designed to identify potential threats at the earliest possible moment.

As a part of this effort, I would note that the FISA Amendments Act – which authorizes intelligence agencies to collect invaluable intelligence regarding international terrorists, cybercriminals, and weapons proliferators by targeting non-Americans overseas – is set to expire at the end of this year. These provisions were thoughtfully crafted and carefully implemented to ensure the privacy and civil liberties of Americans are protected. Reauthorizing this legislation is critical and must be done as soon as possible to avoid any gap in our collection capabilities.

Finally, we are committed to handling data 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. Specifically, we protect information through procedures approved by the Attorney General under Executive Order 12333, and we adhere to the requirements of the Privacy Act. In fact, our recently updated Attorney General Guidelines) incorporates a series of additional safeguards, oversight mechanisms, and reporting requirements designed to ensure we protect civil liberties and privacy when executing our mission. Compliance with these protections is reviewed at several levels—including NCTC's Civil Liberties and Privacy Officer, ODNI's Office of General Counsel, ODNI's Civil Liberties and Privacy Office, and the Intelligence Community Office of Inspector General.

Pursuit Group. 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, enabling the 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. 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 such as the FBI, CIA, or DHS for intelligence purposes or action.

Watchlisting and TIDE Enhancements. NCTC has adopted important reforms in the watchlisting process and has improved NCTC's receipt, processing, and quality of information sharing in support of the Center's watchlisting and screening responsibilities. 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. As the threat continues to evolve, our watchlisting experts are proactively working with NCTC's Pursuit Group and the counterterrorism community to expedite the sharing of information to build more complete terrorist identities. We have also enhanced our ability to store, compare, match, and export biometrics such as fingerprint, facial images, and iris scans.

The community watchlisting guidance was revised in 2010 to provide flexibility to push forward information that previously had not met the requirements. Nevertheless, 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 a First Amendment protected activity.

NCTC Domestic Representatives. NCTC has developed a domestic representative cadre, deploying officers to serve as counterterrorism liaison representatives in seven cities around the country. These officers partner with FBI-led JTTFs and with fusion centers, bringing the national counterterrorism intelligence picture to regional federal, state, and local officials. The NCTC representatives engage with counterterrorism partners at all levels and provide analytic insights drawn from the full catalogue of counterterrorism intelligence collection. Based on the positive feedback we have received about this program, we are sending representatives to two additional cities and will be aligned with the DNI domestic representative program to provide nationwide coverage.

Countering Violent Extremism. As our understanding of the threat evolves, so too must our approach to defeating it. 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 to violence the next generation of terrorists. We recognize that al-Qa'ida's recruitment is not constrained by geographical boundaries, which is why we are working closely with U.S. government partners both overseas and at home. We also recognize that communities are best placed to identify and prevent recruitment efforts.

Therefore, working side by side with FBI, DHS, DOJ, State, and DoD, we are building whole-of-government approaches focusing on expanding government and community understanding of all forms of violent extremism, including al-Qa'ida-inspired radicalization to violence. Domestically, in partnership with DHS and FBI, NCTC developed a "Community Awareness Briefing" to inform members of American communities about the threat of terrorist recruitment and to facilitate discussions with those communities about their role as potential catalysts in efforts to counter the al-Qa'ida narrative. NCTC is working with federal, state, and local partners to broadly disseminate the briefing to communities around the country. We are

also working with DHS and FBI to work with local law enforcement on approaches to community engagement in this context. Internationally, NCTC works with our colleagues at the State Department to support CVE work in embassies across Europe, North Africa and South Asia.

NCTC continually examines al-Qa'ida-inspired violent radicalization in order to understand and track this dynamic threat. We published the Radicalization Dynamics Primer, which includes a new framework that describes the process of radicalization, mobilization, and engagement in violent action for al-Qa'ida- inspired individuals. The Primer was coordinated throughout the Intelligence Community, and is intended as a reference guide for U.S. policymakers, law enforcement officers, and analysts—including civilian and military personnel—who assess or take action on radicalization to violence trends in their areas of responsibility. NCTC, in collaboration with FBI and DHS, also developed a training curriculum to enable law enforcement and government agencies to more effectively identify, counter, and report on violent extremists in the homeland. Several hundred federal, state, local government and law enforcement representatives across the country have received the training and given it positive reviews.

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Chairman Lieberman, Ranking Member Collins, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you this morning.

The talented men and women who work at NCTC perform a unique and vital service to the nation, and we benefit from the integration of analysts and planners from across the intelligence community, the military, and other federal, state, and local partners. As NCTC bolsters its efforts to meet the challenges ahead, our progress is dependent on our diverse and dedicated workforce. Maintaining this workforce—through continued commitment and support from the FBI, DHS and other organizations—is a priority for the Center.

The men and women I am privileged to represent appreciate this Committee's interest and guidance as they work around the clock to identify and disrupt potential terrorist threats. Thank you for your continued support of our mission.