

**Hearing before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
The Homeland Threat Landscape and U.S. Response  
November 14, 2013**

**The Honorable Matthew G. Olsen  
Director  
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Thank you Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Coburn, and 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 its consistent support of the men and women at the National Counterterrorism Center, and I would encourage you to visit us to see our operations first-hand. I am particularly pleased to be here today with DHS Acting Secretary Rand Beers and FBI Director James Comey. We are all close partners in the fight against terrorism.

It has been just over a year since I last testified before this Committee. Last year I testified that, "Al-Qa'ida core is a shadow of its former self, and the overall threat from al-Qa'ida in Pakistan is diminished." That assessment remains true today. However, al-Qa'ida is still the ideological leader of a movement that includes affiliated groups and followers worldwide. As a result, the terrorist threat to the United States remains persistent, emanating from a dedicated and diverse array of actors.

Al-Qa'ida's core leadership in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region is still navigating its response to ongoing events in the Muslim world and working to ensure the survival of the global jihadist movement. Additionally, political change and unrest in the Middle East and North Africa are creating opportunities for veteran jihadists to recruit and train the next generation of militants, some of whom are less dogmatic in their embrace of al-Qa'ida's ideology, yet support its anti-Western agenda. These developments are blurring the lines between terrorists, insurgents, and criminal groups operating in these regions.

Here in the United States, the attack against the Boston Marathon in April highlighted the danger posed by lone actors and insular groups not directly tied to terrorist organizations, as well as the difficulty of identifying these types of plots before they take place. Coupled with January's attack at the In Amenas gas facility and September's attack at a Nairobi shopping mall, these attacks could portend a terrorist interest in softer, less symbolic and less protected targets.

Confronting these threats and working with resolve to prevent terrorist attacks remains 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. With our partners, we have taken important steps, but 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 the remainder of 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 initiatives we have adopted.

## **TERRORIST THREAT OVERVIEW**

***Pakistan-Based Al-Qa'ida Core.*** Despite core al-Qa'ida's diminished leadership cadre, remaining members will continue to pose a threat to Western interests in South Asia and will attempt to strike the Homeland should an opportunity arise. Al-Qa'ida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri's public efforts to promote individual jihad in the West through propaganda — most recently in his 9/11 anniversary video statement—have increased. At the same time, the Pakistan-based group's own capabilities have diminished. Operationally, core al-Qa'ida has not conducted a successful operation in the West since the 2005 London bombings.

Zawahiri remains the recognized leader of the global jihadist movement among al-Qa'ida affiliates and allies, and the groups continue to defer to his guidance on critical issues. Since the start of the Arab unrest in North Africa and the Middle East, Zawahiri and other members of the group's leadership have directed their focus to these regions, encouraging cadre and associates to support and take advantage of the unrest.

The withdrawal of Coalition forces from Afghanistan may exacerbate the unsteady security trends in the country, and has the potential to create an environment in which core al-Qa'ida veterans reconstitute the remnants of the group. Al-Qa'ida's historical ties to Afghanistan make the country an attractive operating area, especially if the group can leverage its longstanding relationships with Afghan insurgents who supported it in the years preceding 9/11. At the same time, the draw of other active jihadist fronts, such as Syria, is likely to stem the flow of future al-Qa'ida recruits to the Afghanistan-Pakistan region.

***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 remains a significant threat in Pakistan even after the death of its leader Hakimullah Mehsud in November. Its claim of responsibility for the September attacks against a Christian church in Peshawar that killed close to 80 civilians and a Pakistani general officer underscore the threat the group poses inside the country. TTP also remains intent on attacking the United States. TTP twice this year publicly reaffirmed the group's desire to attack the US and its allies.

The Haqqani network is one of the most capable and lethal insurgent groups in Afghanistan and poses a serious threat to the stability of the Afghan state as we approach 2014 and beyond. The Haqqani network's continued ability to launch major attacks in Kabul and the

east suggests the Haqqanis will remain a viable challenge to Afghan government control in the eastern and central provinces post 2014.

We remain concerned by the Haqqani network's continued willingness to harbor al-Qa'ida, the Haqqanis' strength in eastern Afghanistan and its close partnership with al-Qa'ida militants. The Haqqanis have conducted numerous high-profile attacks against U.S., NATO, Afghan government, and other allied nation targets. The most significant attack was the 18-hour multi-pronged assault against military, security, and government facilities in Kabul and three other cities in April 2012. We assess the Haqqanis are likely to carry out additional high-profile attacks against Western interests in Afghanistan.

LT remains focused on its regional goals in South Asia. The group is against improving relations between India and Pakistan, and its leaders consistently speak out against India and the United States, accusing both countries of trying to destabilize Pakistan. LT has attacked Western interests in South Asia in pursuit of its regional objectives, as demonstrated by the targeting of hotels frequented by Westerners during the Mumbai attacks in 2008. LT leaders almost certainly recognize that an attack on the United States would result in intense international backlash against Pakistan and endanger the group's safe haven there. However, LT also provides training to Pakistani and Western militants, some of whom could plot terrorist attacks in the West without direction from LT leadership.

### **Al-Qa'ida's Affiliates: A Persistent Threat to the United States and Overseas Interests**

**AQAP.** Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) remains the affiliate most likely to attempt transnational attacks against the United States. AQAP's three attempted attacks against the United States to date—the airliner plot of December 2009, an attempted attack against U.S.-bound cargo planes in October 2010, and an airliner plot in May 2012—demonstrate the group's continued pursuit of high-profile attacks against the West, its awareness of Western security procedures, and its efforts to adapt.

AQAP also presents a high threat to U.S. personnel and facilities in Yemen. In response to credible al-Qa'ida threat reporting in early August, the State Department issued a global travel alert and closed U.S. embassies in the Middle East and North Africa as part of an effort to take precautionary steps against such threats. We assess that we at least temporarily delayed this particular plot. In addition, over the past year AQAP has kidnapped Westerners in Yemen and carried out numerous small-scale attacks and several large-scale operations against Yemeni government targets, demonstrating the range of the group's capabilities.

AQAP continues its efforts to radicalize and mobilize individuals outside Yemen through the publication of its English-language magazine *Inspire*. Following the Boston Marathon bombings, AQAP released a special edition of the magazine claiming that accused bombers Tamarlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev were “inspired by *Inspire*,” highlighting the attack's simple, repeatable nature, and tying it to alleged U.S. oppression of Muslims worldwide.

**Al-Shabaab.** We continue to monitor al-Shabaab and its foreign fighter cadre as a potential threat to the U.S. homeland, as some al-Shabaab leaders have publicly called for

transnational attacks and the group has attracted dozens of US persons—mostly ethnic Somalis—who have traveled to Somalia since 2006.

Al-Shabaab is mainly focused on undermining the Somali Federal Government and combating African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and regional military forces operating in Somalia. While the mid-September attack and hostage crisis at a mall in Kenya was linked to al-Shabaab, it is unknown what element of the group planned the attack. The attack demonstrated that the group continues to support targeting regional and Western interests across East Africa, as part of its campaign to remove foreign forces aiding the Somali Government.

Al-Shabaab since 2011 has lost many former urban strongholds in southern Somalia and suffered from internal strife. We do not yet know the long-term effects of the recently reported death of Omar Hammami—an American citizen who created propaganda, recruited, and fought for al-Shabaab—will have on the group and its outreach to foreign fighters.

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

In Mali, the French-led military intervention has pushed AQIM and its allies from the cities that they once controlled, however the groups maintain safe haven in the less populated areas of northern Mali and continue to plot retaliatory attacks. Elsewhere in the region, AQIM is taking advantage of permissive operating environments across much of North Africa to broaden its reach. AQIM is seeking to collaborate with local extremists, including Ansar al-Sharia groups in Libya and Tunisia, as well as Boko Haram and Ansaru in Nigeria, which share the intent to target Western interests. In late October AQIM ransomed four French hostages for a reported payment of over 20 million Euro, which will increase the group's operational capability and further its outreach efforts.

In August, former AQIM commander Mokhtar Belmokhtar's battalion merged with local extremist ally Tawhid Wal Jihad in West Africa, establishing the new extremist group al-Murabitun, which will almost certainly seek to conduct additional high profile attacks against Western interests across the region. Belmokhtar has played a leading role in attacks against Western interests in Northwest Africa this year, with his January attack on an oil facility in In-Amenas, Algeria and double suicide bombings in Niger in May.

Since late 2012, Nigeria-based Boko Haram and its splinter group Ansaru have claimed responsibility for three kidnappings of Westerners, raising their international profile and highlighting the growing threat they pose to Western and regional interests.

***Al-Qa'ida in Iraq.*** Al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI), also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, is at its strongest point since its peak in 2006 and this year has significantly increased its pace of attacks. The group is exploiting increasingly permissive security environments in Iraq and Syria to fundraise, plan, and train for attacks.

AQI has maintained an experienced cadre of operatives in Iraq. The group's amir last year initiated a campaign of attacks against prisons to free members, which culminated this July in high-profile coordinated attacks on two Iraqi prisons that freed hundreds of prisoners.

In addition, AQI continues to operate in Syria, where the group has recruited many foreign fighters, including Westerners. AQI's growing cadre of Westerners in Syria probably bolsters the group's pool of external operatives who could be used to target the west.

*Syria.* We are monitoring the activities of several other extremist groups fighting against the Asad regime in Syria, including the al-Qa'ida-associated al-Nusra Front. Al-Qa'ida in Iraq founded al-Nusra Front in late 2011 to act as its operational arm in Syria, although the two groups split following a public dispute in April 2013. Al-Nusra Front has mounted suicide, explosive, and firearms attacks against regime and security targets across the country and provides limited public services to the local population.

Al-Nusra Front's leader, Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani, in April 2013 pledged allegiance to al-Qa'ida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, publicly affirming the group's ties to al-Qa'ida. Many moderate opposition groups fight alongside al-Nusra Front and other Sunni extremists in Syria and depend on extremists for resources, including weapons and training.

Since early 2012, thousands of fighters from around the world—including the United States—have traveled to Syria to support oppositionists fighting against the Asad regime, and some have connected with extremist groups, including al-Nusra Front. This raises concerns that capable individuals with extremist contacts and battlefield experience could return to their home countries to commit violence.

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 United States is monitoring the weapons sites and remains concerned about the security of these weapons given the escalation of violence in Syria. We're working to monitor and help counter those who may seek to acquire these deadly weapons.

## **Other Terrorist Threats**

*Iranian Threat.* Iran remains the foremost state sponsor of terrorism, and works through the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force and Ministry of Intelligence and Security to support groups that target U.S. and Israeli interests globally.

Iran continues to be willing to conduct terrorist operations against its adversaries. This is demonstrated by Iran's links to terrorist operations in Azerbaijan, Georgia, India, and Thailand in 2012. Iran also continues to provide lethal aid and support the planning and execution of terrorist acts by other groups, in particular Lebanese Hizballah.

The defense of the Syrian regime is an Iranian national priority, and Iranian military forces, including individuals from the Qods Force, are in Syria working with Hizballah to bolster Asad. Iran and Hizballah have built a militia to defend the regime, which could also be used as a lever for Iranian influence if Asad were to fall, with Iraqi Shia fighting alongside the pro-regime

forces. Because of the value Iran places on defending the Asad regime, a U.S. strike in Syria could put U.S. interests, especially those in Iraq, in danger of retaliatory attacks by Iran and its surrogates.

***Lebanese Hizballah.*** Lebanese Hizballah remains committed to conducting terrorist activities worldwide and the group's activities could either endanger or target U.S. and other Western interests. The group has engaged in an increasingly aggressive terrorist campaign in recent years and will probably continue this pace of operations.

The European Union designated Hizballah's "military wing" as a terrorist organization on 22 July 2013, following the March conviction of a Hizballah member in Cyprus, a July 2012 bus bombing in Bulgaria, and the group's intervention in Syria. Since the start of unrest in Syria in early 2011, Hizballah has closely coordinated with Iran to provide a range of support critical to the Asad regime. In many cases Hizballah is no longer concealing its efforts to develop, train, and equip a sizeable pro-regime militia while it likely is also contributing thousands of its own fighters.

***Leftist/anarchist terrorist threat.*** The suicide attack against the U.S. Embassy in Ankara earlier this year illustrated the continuing threat to U.S. interests posed by politically motivated groups like the Turkish leftist terrorist group Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C). The February attack killed a Turkish security guard at the entrance to the Embassy compound. This, together with additional attacks against Turkish government targets and the group's proclamations, demonstrate its operational viability and continuing threat to U.S. interests in Turkey.

## **Homegrown Violent Extremists**

Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVEs) remain the most likely global jihadist threat to the Homeland. While the threat posed by HVEs probably will broaden through at least 2015, the overall level of HVE activity is likely to remain the same: a handful of uncoordinated and unsophisticated plots emanating from a pool of up to a few hundred individuals. Lone actors or insular groups who act autonomously pose the most serious HVE threat.

The Boston Marathon bombing in April underscores the threat from HVEs who are motivated, often with little or no warning, to act violently by themselves or in small groups. In the months prior to the attack, the Boston Marathon bombers exhibited few behaviors that law enforcement and intelligence officers traditionally use to detect commitment to violence. We are concerned that 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.

Many HVEs lack advanced operational training, which forces them to seek assistance online from like-minded extremists or pursue travel to overseas jihadist battlegrounds to receive hands-on experience. Recent political unrest in many parts of North Africa and the Levant,

including in Syria, affords HVEs opportunities to join militant groups overseas. Foreign terrorist groups could leverage HVEs to recruit others or conduct operations inside the US or overseas.

HVEs make use of a diverse online environment that is dynamic, evolving, and self-sustaining. This online extremist environment is likely to play a critical role in the foreseeable future in radicalizing and mobilizing HVEs towards violence. Despite the removal of important terrorist leaders during the last several years, the online environment continues to reinforce an extremist identity, supplies grievances, and provide HVEs the means to connect with terrorist groups overseas.

Looking ahead, we assess HVEs probably will continue gravitating to simpler plots that do not require advanced skills, communication with others, or outside training. We assess HVEs probably will move towards more active shooter events such as Nidal Hassan's attack at Ft. Hood, the recent Navy Yard shooting, or Anders Breivik's mass shooting at a political youth camp in Norway. HVEs stress targeting military personnel, bases, facilities, recruiting stations, and places where military personnel gather.

## **NCTC's ROLE**

NCTC's serves as the primary U.S. government organization for analyzing and integrating all terrorism information. As we enter into our tenth year of service, we have stayed true to our 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 continues to serve 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. To better detect and disrupt an attack, we continue to refine and improve our counterterrorism data layer and our analysts' access to intelligence from across the community. These accesses, leveraged by our skilled and diverse interagency workforce, and combined with our sophisticated analytic tools, are absolutely necessary in developing our best all-source, collaborative terrorism analysis.

***Leading the Intelligence Community's Terrorism Warning Program.*** NCTC chairs the Interagency Intelligence Committee on Terrorism (IICT), which is the Intelligence Community's terrorism warning body. The IICT—which is comprised of the "Warn 8" Agencies (CIA, DHS, DIA, FBI, NCTC, NGA, NSA, and DOS)—is responsible for the publication of Community-coordinated terrorist threat warning products including IICT Alerts and Advisories. These products warn of threats against U.S. personnel, facilities, or interests. The IICT also issues Standing Advisories for areas with persistently high threat environments, and Assessments and Memorandums on other terrorism issues. The IICT serves several thousand customers, from senior policy makers, to deployed military forces and state and local law enforcement entities.

***Watchlisting and TIDE.*** 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.

***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.

***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.

## **Key NCTC Initiatives**

In the past year, NCTC implemented several new initiatives, many stemming from past lessons learned, to advance our ability to identify and prevent terrorist attacks.

***Joint Counterterrorism Assessment Team.*** This past April, NCTC, DHS, and FBI established the Joint Counterterrorism Assessment Team (JCAT) as the successor to the Interagency Threat Assessment Coordination Group (ITACG). Since 2007, through the combined efforts of FBI, DHS, and NCTC, the ITACG set the standard for information sharing between the Intelligence Community and state, local, tribal, and territorial partners. However, because of budget constraints, the ITACG construct as codified in law was not sustainable. Recognizing the importance of preserving these crucial information sharing functions, NCTC, in partnership with FBI and DHS, established the new JCAT.

JCAT is where public safety professionals—law enforcement, emergency medical services, fire service, intelligence, homeland security, and public health officials—are making a difference in the counterterrorism community. JCAT members are state and local first responders and public safety professionals from around the country. They work at NCTC side-by-side with federal intelligence analysts from NCTC, DHS, and FBI to research, produce, and share counterterrorism intelligence responsive to state, local, tribal, and territorial needs.

JCAT is focused on producing clear, relevant, and federally coordinated intelligence on significant international terrorism events that have the potential to impact local or regional public safety conditions here at home. JCAT does so by ensuring counterterrorism intelligence



intended for those defending our communities is presented, whenever possible, in an unclassified format that resonates with the first responder and public safety communities. JCAT serves as an advocate for the first responder community, creating awareness and an understanding of the first responder's role in counterterrorism within the IC while providing advice and recommendations on how best to tailor intelligence to satisfy the needs of those protecting our communities.

***NCTC/DIA Integration Efforts.*** DIA and NCTC have a strong relationship dating back to the formation of NCTC's predecessor, the Terrorist Threat Integration Center in 2003. DIA officers, like many others from across the community, helped create and stand up NCTC. More recently, in November of 2012, NCTC and DIA signed a Memorandum of Agreement that co-located many of DIA's strategic counterterrorism analysis personnel at NCTC. As this Committee knows, this partnership provides a model within the IC for collaboration and integration and it is yielding results.

In the first six months, DIA and NCTC jointly produced over 120 finished intelligence products—meaning that the authorship included officers from both DIA and NCTC. Such collaboration allows senior policy makers and Congress to benefit from intelligence analysis informed by unique DoD expertise and NCTC perspectives in a single product.

Joint finished intelligence production is most visible, but DIA/NCTC collaboration and integration spans across the CT spectrum, from watchlisting and warning, to support to CT operations and policy deliberations.

***Strategic Snapshot of the Worldwide Terrorist Threat to U.S. Interests.*** As part of its effort to improve overall terrorist threat situational awareness in the aftermath of the attack on the U.S. Temporary Mission Facility in Benghazi, NCTC began producing a Strategic Snapshot of the Worldwide Terrorist Threat to U.S. Interests. This graphical product is intended to display countries where NCTC assess there is a credible threat of terrorist attack against U.S. persons or facilities, or where the overall security environment causes us to assess a heightened risk of terrorism. More detailed city/region specific Counterterrorism Threat Orientation Graphics are being produced collaboratively with the support of our National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency detailees. Originally mechanisms to support State Department's diplomatic security effort, these products are now used regularly by senior customers throughout the government.

***TIDE improvements.*** This year, NCTC reduced a historic backlog of Department of State Consular Consolidated Database (CCD) records consisting of visa information on known and suspected terrorists that are already in TIDE and/or watchlisted in the Terrorist Screening Database (TSDB). NCTC reduced the backlog by 88 percent while identifying the known or suspected terrorist CCD records of greatest significance for immediate analyst processing.

In 2013, in accordance with Homeland Security Presidential Directive-24/National Security Presidential Directive-59, NCTC delivered thousands of biometric files on known or suspected terrorists (KSTs) to the Terrorist Screening Center. As a result, these KSTs will have their biometric data properly placed into the watchlisting systems of various screening agencies.

***Kingfisher Expansion.*** Kingfisher Expansion (KFE) went live in June 2013 and leverages improved technology to provide speed and accuracy to the visa adjudication process.

KFE examines 100 percent of the approximately 11 million visa applicants each year to identify any connections to terrorism by comparing applicant data to the classified data holdings in TIDE, reducing unwarranted counterterrorism security advisory opinions (SAOs) by 80 percent and saving State Department millions of dollars annually in SAO processing costs. KFE is an interagency program with a secure on-line vetting platform that allows FBI, DHS, and the Terrorist Screening Center to participate in the applicant reviews. This allows for a more comprehensive and coordinated response back to State Department.

***NCTC Domestic Representatives Expansion.*** NCTC continues to build upon its domestic representative program, having now deployed officers to serve as counterterrorism liaison representatives in ten cities around the country, including Boston and Atlanta this year. These officers partner with FBI-led JTTFs and with fusion centers, bringing the national counterterrorism intelligence picture to regional federal, state, local, and tribal officials. The NCTC representatives engage with counterterrorism partners at all levels and provide analytic insights drawn from the full catalogue of counterterrorism intelligence collection.

***Countering Violent Extremism.*** As our understanding of the threat evolves, so too must our approach to defeating it. As the April attack in Boston demonstrates, we may have little to no warning when a homegrown violent extremist mobilizes to violent action. Over the past year, NCTC has continued our work with federal, state and local officials as well as community partners to expand efforts to raise community awareness about the threat of terrorist radicalization and recruitment. This coordinated approach ensures centralized policy direction and assessment, but accommodates local and community-based programs that vary across the country. Therefore, working side by side with interagency partners, we are building whole-of-government approaches focusing on expanding government and community understanding and response of all forms of violent extremism, including al-Qa'ida-inspired radicalization to violence in both the real and online environments.

***Continued Joint Counterterrorism Awareness Workshop Series (JCTAWS).*** For several years now NCTC has been collaborating with DHS/FEMA and the FBI to conduct Joint Counterterrorism Awareness Workshops throughout the United States that enable cities to assess and enhance their response plans and capabilities in the face of evolving terrorist threats. Of note, one of our first JCTAWS events was in Boston in 2011.

JCTAWS is a two day event, typically sponsored by a municipal law enforcement agency that engages all sectors of the community. Workshop participants are briefed on current threats, case studies of past attacks and responses, and the medical community's planning efforts for a mass casualty event. NCTC develops an exercise scenario specific to the city, depicting a complex terrorist attack that uses active shooters, explosives, and coordinated communication (including manipulation of social media) to terrorize a region. Senior commanders, operational responders, and members of the private sector discuss their responses to the scenario, and work to identify shortfalls in capabilities, resources, and plans.

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Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Coburn, and members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you this morning, and I look forward to answering your questions.