Understanding the Threat to the Homeland from AQAP

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Chairman King, Ranking Member Higgins, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. The decision to step back and take a hard look at al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) at a time when all eyes are fixed on Syria is a prudent one. It is far too easy to lose sight of key pieces of the big picture when the heat of a particular crisis draws our focus.

Yet to do so would be a real mistake. Notwithstanding the importance of Syria as a threat to (U.S.) national, regional, and international security—and as a situation that terrorists may seek to exploit, there is a broader range of forces and factors that pose serious and ongoing threats to the United States. One critical example is the terrorist group AQAP which is currently the al Qaeda affiliate that poses the greatest threat to the U.S. homeland.

Why AQAP Matters

- AQAP is the most active of al Qaeda's affiliate groups. AQAP has directly targeted the U.S. homeland as well as U.S. interests abroad on multiple occasions.
- AQAP (and Yemen) is home to one of the world's most dangerous and innovative bomb-makers who has actively tried and shown himself to be able to circumvent U.S. countermeasures intended to thwart his improvised explosive devices.
- AQAP has invested significantly in encouraging radicalization and "lone wolf" homegrown attacks, including "Inspire" magazine. AQAP's efforts in this regard propagate the ideology that underpins al Qaeda as a movement, and provide the "how-to" do it yourself in terrorist tactics, techniques, and procedures.
- AQAP is currently led by Nasser al-Wuhayshi, formerly a direct confidant of Osama bin Laden, who was recently named the number two figure within al Qaeda writ large. The number two leadership slot is symbolically important but also operationally so, particularly as the boundaries between al Qaeda components (core and affiliates) fade away and their activities converge.
- AQAP has for some time assumed a leadership role within al Qaeda as a whole, and has cooperated with multiple al Qaeda affiliates. AQAP's leadership position offers a conduit to foster intent in others to attack the U.S. homeland and U.S. interests.

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AQAP was established in 2009 by the merger of Yemeni al Qaeda with Saudi al Qaeda elements that were driven out of the Kingdom. The influence of Yemeni al Qaeda was felt long before, however, and pre-dated 9/11. Bear in mind that Yemen, the birthplace of Osama bin Laden, was the host country of the terrorist attack on the U.S.S. Cole in 2000, in which seventeen U.S. sailors perished. Since its creation, AQAP has demonstrated ample evidence of intent to attack the U.S. homeland and U.S. interests, including the 2009 Christmas Day airliner bomb attempt by "underwear bomber" Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab the 2010 cargo / plane bomb attempt in which explosives were concealed in printer cartridges; and the spring 2012 concealed explosives plot.[1] The first two of these attempted attacks were overseen by AQAP's former external operations leader Anwar al-Awlaki. AQAP has managed to attract western recruits or others with the ability to travel, to facilitate such attacks. In addition to Abdulmutallab, examples include American Sharif Mobley, who is in the custody of the Yemeni government following his shooting of two Yemeni security guards, and British national Minh Qhang Pham, who was indicted on terrorism charges in New York in 2012.

Most recently, this August (before all eyes turned to Syria and the regime's use of chemical weapons on its own people there), there was much discussion of a threat stream emanating from Yemen, where AQAP is based. A spate of articles appeared in the press reporting on a so-called "conference call" between al Qaeda Senior Leadership (AQSL) figure Ayman al-Zawahiri and a dozen chiefs of al Qaeda affiliates including AQAP's Nasser al-Wuhayshi.[2] The intelligence suggested that a major terrorist plot directed against western targets was afoot and prompted a range of countermeasures including a U.S. decision to shut temporarily nineteen embassies and consulates. The plot is said to have involved "a new generation of liquid explosive, currently undetectable," which U.S. officials described as "`ingenious'."[3]

In addition to these various demonstrations of intent to attack, AQAP has also evidenced a record of innovation in terror tradecraft. AQAP's lead bomb-maker Ibrahim al-Asiri personifies this, as the mastermind behind the devices used in the 2009 attempted assassination of the Saudi Interior Minister, the 2009 Christmas Day attack, the 2010 cargo printer bomb, and plots that involve surgically implanted explosives.

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[1] Reuters, "Foiled Plot Shows Militants Seek Detection-Proof Bombs," May 7, 2012.
http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/07/us-usa-security-plot-idUSBRE84612820120507
[2] Eli Lake, Josh Rogin, "Exclusive: Al Qaeda Conference Call Intercepted by U.S. Officials Sparked Alerts," The Daily Beast (August 7, 2013), http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/08/07/al-qaeda-conference-call-intercepted-by-u-s-officials-sparked-alerts.html.
[3] Rhonda Schwartz and James Gordon Meek, "Al Qaeda Threat: Officials Fear `Ingenious' Liquid Explosive," ABC News (August 5, 2013) http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/al-qaeda-threat-officials-fear-ingenious-liquid-explosive/story?id=19871892

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Over and above his own considerable expertise, al-Asiri has been training the next generation of bomb-makers.[4] AQAP has also expressed an interest in attacks using biological warfare agents, including ricin.[5]

Encouraging radicalization and "lone wolf" homegrown attacks has been a further hallmark and focus of AQAP. Cases of this type inspired by AQAP—and Anwar al-Awlaki in particular— include the attack on Fort Hood in 2009 by Major Nidal Hasan, the attack on a military recruiting center in Arkansas in the same year by Carlos Bledsoe, the 2010 attack on a British parliamentarian by student Roshonara Choudhry, and the Boston marathon bombing earlier this year.

AQAP "bridge figure" Anwar al-Awlaki possessed an almost unmatched ability to recruit and inspire new and existing members to al Qaeda's cause and ideology. Though killed in a drone strike in 2011, Awlaki's voice lives on including in the many radical and violent "sermons" that he recorded in multiple media formats—and continues to resonate.

Ideology is the lifeblood that sustains al Qaeda, and instruments such as "Inspire" magazine are intended to fuel the fire, including the "homegrown" component. Although the original authors and publishers of "Inspire" (Awlaki and colleague Samir Khan) are now deceased, the magazine continues and its production values have improved recently. Immediately following the death of Awlaki and Khan, there was a highly noticeable degradation of "Inspire"; the more recent issues of Inspire, including the 11th issue released after the Boston marathon attack, once again demonstrate high production quality and appear to be written by a native English speaker.

The linkages between AQAP and other al Qaeda affiliates and terrorist groups are another source of significant concern. As mentioned, current AQAP leader al-Wuhayshi is the overall number two in al Qaeda.[6] He is also directly connected to Osama bin Laden, having served as his secretary until 2001. For him, the battle may be personal; being a direct protégé of bin Laden may add an extra layer of resolve and determination to his actions. Other important links exist, however, beyond al-Wuhayshi's connection with AQSL. These include AQAP ties to al-Shabaab in Somalia, as discussed by convicted terrorist leader Ahmed Warsame in his guilty plea[7]; and a reported AQAP role in the attack on the U.S. mission in Benghazi.[8]

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[4] Andrew Scarpitta, "Terrorist Deck of Cards: Leaders of Al Qaeda affiliates are clubs, " The Washington Times—Communities (September 9, 2013) http://communities.washingtontimes.com/neighborhood/simply-world/2013/sep/9/terrorist-deck-cards-clubs/

[5] Eric Schmitt and Thom Shanker, "Qaeda Trying to Harness Toxin for Bombs, U.S. Officials Fear," New York Times (August 12, 2011) http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/13/world/middleeast/13terror.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

[6] Barbara Starr, "US official: Al Qaeda core chief picks number two from Yemeni affiliate," CNN (August 5, 2013) http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2013/08/05/us-official-al-qaeda-core-chief-picks-number-two-from-yemeni-affiliate/

[7] See FBI press release on Warsame plea deal at http://www.fbi.gov/newyork/press-releases/2013/guilty-plea-unsealed-in-new-york-involving-ahmed-warsame-a-senior-terrorist-leader-and-liaison-between-al-shabaab-and-al-qaeda-in-the-arabian-peninsula-for-providing-material-support-to-both-terrorist-organizations

[8] UPI, "AQAP Eyed for Benghazi Role," May 3, 2013. http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2013/05/03/AQAP-eyed-for-Benghazi-role/UPI-39181367594594/

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AQAP in Broader Context

Though AQAP occupies a vaunted place within the larger al Qaeda hierarchy (which, as mentioned above, is itself something of a misnomer as the boundaries between core and affiliates of al Qaeda are fading away and operational and ideological activities converge), the organization is by no means the only important threat that the United States faces at this time. As evidenced by the above reference to Ayman al-Zawahiri, even AQSL is now reinvigorated and reappearing. Indeed just last week, on the day after the twelfth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Zawahiri released an audio message calling for further attacks on the United States, intended to "bleed America economically by provoking it to continue in its massive expenditure on its security."[9]

Although the primary threat vector no longer emanates from AQSL alone, the threat streams coming from al Qaeda affiliates and those inspired by al Qaeda are many and varied. At the group level, these include: al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram in Nigeria[10], and Ansar Dine in Mali.[11] In Africa and the Middle East alone, there are still multiple al Qaeda affiliates that continue to thrive, most notably in the Sahel and in Somalia.[12] Indeed, there is an arc of Islamist extremism that stretches across Africa from east to west, through the Sahel and the Maghreb.[13]

The latest and most concerning hot spot to emerge is undoubtedly Syria. Outgoing CIA Deputy Director Michael Morell has identified Syria as "the greatest threat to U.S. national security."[14] Former FBI Director Robert Mueller echoed the point immediately prior to completing his term of service and leaving office; he "warned that an increasing flow of U.S. citizens heading to Syria and elsewhere to wage jihad against regional powers could end up in a new generation of homegrown terrorists."[15] Just one returning fighter with lethal intent and competence could

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[9] Reuters, "Al Qaeda calls for attacks inside United States" (September 13, 2013) http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/13/us-qaeda-zawahri-idUSBRE98C05820130913
[10] Omar S. Mahmood, "Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria: No Easy Fix," HSPI Issue Brief (April 3, 2013) http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/HSPI%20Issue%20Brief%2018%20Boko%20Haram.pdf
[11] Rida Lyammouri, "Northern Mali: Armed Groups, State Failure, and Terrorism," HSPI Issue Brief (May 30, 2013) http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/HSPI%20Issue%20Brief%2020%20Northern%20Mali.pdf
[12] Navanti Group, "Somalia's Al-Shabaab: Down But Not Out," HSPI Issue Brief (August 27, 2013) http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/HSPI%20Issue%20Brief%2022%20Somalia%20Al%20Shabaab.pdf
[13] Frank J. Cilluffo, "The Future of Homeland Security: Evolving and Emerging Threats," Testimony Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs (July 11, 2012) http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/Testimony%20-%20SHSGAC%20Hearing%20-%2011%20July%202012.pdf. Frank Cilluffo, Joseph Clark, and Clinton Watts, "Pardon the Pivot: What about Africa?" HSPI Issue Brief (March 6, 2013) http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/HSPI%20Issue%20Brief%2017%20-%20What%20About%20Africa.pdf. Navanti Group, "Origins and Dimensions of Instability in Post-Qaddafi Libya," HSPI Issue Brief (July 30, 2013) http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/HSPI%20Issue%20Brief%2021%20Instability%20Post-Qaddafi%20Libya.pdf
[14] "CIA Official Calls Syria Top Threat to U.S. Security," The Wall Street Journal (August 6, 2013) http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323420604578652330222498920.html
[15] Carlo Munoz, "FBI's Mueller warns of new generation of homegrown terrorists," The Hill (August 23, 2013) http://thehill.com/blogs/defcon-hill/operations/318539-fbis-mueller-warns-of-new-generation-of-homegrown-terrorists-

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cause serious harm. In Syria alone, there are thousands of foreign fighters—including from fourteen European countries, Chechnya, China, North Africa, the Balkans, Australia, and North America.[16]

At the same time, a veritable witch's brew of jihadists exists in Pakistan including, for example: the Haqqani network, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (often dubbed the "Pakistani Taliban"), Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami (HuJI), Jaish-e-Mohammed, and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. We have seen in the past and continue to see substantial evidence of cooperation and collaboration between these latter groups and al Qaeda. Though some of these groups may be more regionally or locally focused, they increasingly ascribe and subscribe to al Qaeda's goals and the broader global jihad, with U.S. and Western targets increasingly in their crosshairs.[17]

Ungoverned and under-governed spaces such as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in Pakistan and Afghanistan, Yemen, the Sahel, and Somalia pose a potent challenge. Here, failed, failing, or weak states offer a propitious climate for jihadists to regroup, train, plan, plot, and execute attacks. Former head of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) General Carter Ham warned, while still in office last year, that AQIM (operating in southern Algeria, northern Mali, and eastern Mauritania; and spreading elsewhere in the Sahel), plus al-Shabaab in Somalia, and Boko Haram in Nigeria, "are seeking to coordinate and synchronize their efforts." General Ham characterized each of these groups as "by itself, a dangerous and worrisome threat"; but he was particularly concerned by the emerging trend of them sharing "funds, training and explosive material."[18]

Compounding the challenges posed the ecosystem described above is the so-called "lone wolf" who self-radicalizes and prepares to commit violence without directly reaching out to al Qaeda or others for support and guidance. The term lone wolf is a bit of a misnomer, however, since individuals in this category have at least been inspired, goaded and in some cases facilitated by external forces—which in turn blurs the line between the foreign and domestic. In such cases, the mission of prevention is all the harder because there may be little for law enforcement or counterterrorism professionals to pick up on ahead of time, when we are still left of boom. The

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[16] Sharon L. Cardash, Frank J. Cilluffo, Jean-Luc Marret, "Foreign Fighters in Syria: Still Doing Battle, Still a Multidimensional Danger," Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique—Note no. 24/13 (August 2013) http://www.frstrategie.org/barreFRS/publications/notes/2013/201324.pdf. See also Frank J. Cilluffo, Jeffrey R. Cozzens, and Magnus Ranstorp, "Foreign Fighters: Trends, Trajectories & Conflict Zones," Joint Report of the George Washington University Homeland Security Policy Institute and the Swedish National Defence College (October 1, 2010) http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/report_foreignfighters501.pdf
[17] Cilluffo, "The Future of Homeland Security: Evolving and Emerging Threats" (July 11, 2012) http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/Testimony%20-%20SHSGAC%20Hearing%20-%2011%20July%202012.pdf
[18] David Lerman, "African Terrorist Groups Starting to Cooperate, U.S. Says" Bloomberg (June 25, 2012) http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-06-25/african-terrorist-groups-starting-to-cooperate-u-s-says.html

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mission remains critical, though, as evidenced by the discovery of more than 60 "homegrown" jihadi terrorism plots since September 11, 2001.

In short, the system is still blinking red, and the United States would be extremely ill advised to think or act otherwise. In a report released just last week, the Bipartisan Policy Center assessed that al Qaeda and affiliates are in "some 16 different theaters of operation—compared with half as many as recently as five years ago." Among the "sites of revival and resuscitation" is Iraq.[19] Nor can we take our eye off the ball of state-sponsored terrorism, such as that perpetrated by the Government of Iran and proxies such as Hezbollah. Although state-sponsored terrorism is beyond the scope of this hearing, it will undoubtedly demand significant attention.[20]

Implications for U.S. Counterterrorism Policy versus AQAP

The United States has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in support of counterterrorism measures directed against al Qaeda in Yemen, but the need for direct U.S. counterterrorism engagement in the country persists. Below I address four elements that should be central to and included in U.S. counterterrorism efforts against AQAP; but the list is not meant to be comprehensive.

1. Drones and Special Operations

The bulwark of our strategy has been a sustained drone campaign informed by solid intelligence. As I have written with my colleague Clint Watts: "Light-footprint drone and special operations force (SOF) missions specifically focused on short-term tactical counterterrorism objectives can help avoid the long-term quagmire of Yemeni insurgencies while immediately degrading AQAP's ability to strike the U.S."[21] While in itself insufficient and of itself not a perfect

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[19] Anna Mulrine, "9/11 Commission leaders push for changes in US terrorism fight," The Christian Science Monitor (September 11, 2013) http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Military/2013/0911/9-11-Commission-leaders-push-for-changes-in-US-terrorism-fight-video. Peter Bergen, Bruce Hoffman, Michael Hurley, and Erroll Southers, "Jihadist Terrorism: A Threat Assessment," Bipartisan Policy Center Report (September 2013) http://bipartisanpolicy.org/sites/default/files/Jihadist%20Terrorism-A%20Threat%20Assesment_0.pdf

[20] Frank J. Cilluffo, "The Iranian Cyber Threat to the United States," Testimony Before the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence; and Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies (April 26, 2012) http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/Iran%20Cyber%20Testimony%204.26.12%20Frank%20Cilluffo.pdf. See also: Cilluffo, "A Line in the Sand: Assessing Dangerous Threat to Our Nation's Borders" (November 2012) http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/testimony11.16.12.pdf; and Frank J. Cilluffo, "Cyber Threats from China, Russia, and Iran: Protecting American Critical Infrastructure," Testimony Before the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies (March 20, 2013) http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/Meehan_Cilluffo%20Testimony%20March%202013.pdf

[21] Frank J. Cilluffo and Clinton Watts, "Yemen & Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula: Exploiting a Window of Counterterrorism Opportunity," HSPI Issue Brief (June 24, 2011) http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/issuebrief_yemenaqap.pdf

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option (since the possibility of "blowback" or backlash effects cannot be entirely eliminated), the described tools have proven to be both powerful and effective.

As I have also stated elsewhere, "targeted attacks on AQ's leadership in Pakistan severely disrupted the terror group's ability to plan and execute terror attacks abroad." Applied to Yemen, this same tactic and strategy has yielded substantial counterterrorism advances from a U.S. perspective. The threat from AQAP has not disappeared, of course; but the terrorist group has been forced to look over its shoulder constantly—which diverts the adversary's limited amounts of energy and resources into self-preservation, and away from plots and planning against the United States and its allies. If there is an alternative policy course that could produce an equally favorable outcome, the critics have yet to specify it. Meantime, the specified course of action allows us "to lay the groundwork and move toward a long-term Yemen strategy…".[22]

Although the balance of power between government and al Qaeda forces in Yemen has vacillated over time, the "Arab Spring" of 2011 toppled Yemeni President Saleh and created a window of opportunity that al-Wuhayshi and associates exploited successfully. Yemeni government forces pushed back in 2012, reversing the territorial gains made by the Islamists the previous year. But the militants remain in-country, though now they are scattered and interspersed throughout Yemen rather than heavily concentrated in a few locations. In addition, the adversary has prioritized the building of anti-drone capabilities.[23] In some ways, therefore, the current situation is more dangerous and more difficult to address than in past.

> 2. Robust Intelligence Collection

Robust intelligence collection vis-à-vis terrorist threats must always be a priority, in part because the yield of such collection efforts informs both strategy and a wide range tactics (including operations, counter-measures, etc.). In the wake of leaks, AQAP— which was already a difficult intelligence target—has become an even greater collection challenge for the United States. Post-leaks, AQAP has improved its operational security and changed its practices; think tradecraft, communications, and planning.

Whether AQAP remains poised to deliver on the plot that came to light this August is yet to be seen. However, the terrorist group has demonstrated and continues to demonstrate significant ability and intent to do harm to the United States and its interests. Some have even speculated that the August plot was simply a test of U.S. systems, meant to inform future attack. Whatever

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[22] Ibid. See also Frank Cilluffo and Clinton Watts, "Countering the Threat Posed by AQAP: Embrace, Don't Chase, Yemen's Chaos," Security Debrief (July 14, 2011) http://securitydebrief.com/2011/07/14/countering-the-threat-posed-by-aqap-embrace-don%E2%80%99t-chase-yemen%E2%80%99s-chaos/

[23] Craig Whitlock and Barton Gellman, "U.S. documents detail al-Qaeda's efforts to fight back against drones," Washington Post (September 3, 2013) http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-09-03/world/41723879_1_u-s-drone-campaign-al-qaeda-commanders-unmanned-aircraft

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the case, AQAP has proven that it has the capacity to attain global reach, as the source of active threat to the United States on more than one occasion. Against this background and despite the level of challenge it entails, it is imperative to redouble U.S. efforts to obtain robust intelligence on this threat—with special emphasis accorded to AQAP's bomb-makers and others involved in external operations.

3. Aviation Security and Thwarting Terrorist Travel

AQAP has demonstrated a persistent interest in carrying out attacks against and using the global aviation system. With each successive plot, they have attempted to improve their tradecraft and develop new devices and techniques to bypass our security measures. Given this, it is imperative that TSA and its foreign partners remain nimble at anticipating new types of threats and rapidly developing the means to detect them.

Given AQAP's focus on finding western operatives to carry out attacks, it is also important that intelligence information is used to inform the risk-based screening of travelers, both by expediting low-risk travelers through programs such as PreCheck and by providing extra scrutiny for higher-risk travelers. The Passenger Name Record (PNR) information that Customs and Border Protection (CBP) receives from travelers coming from Europe is vital in carrying out such risk-based screening. CBP and TSA have also been successful since the cargo planes plot of October 2010 at improving risk-based screening of international air cargo, through their joint Air Cargo Advance Screening (ACAS) pilot project.

4. U.S.-Based Efforts to Combat Violent Islamist Extremism

As noted earlier, AQAP has been focused not only on carrying out its own attacks but also on radicalizing individuals and encouraging them to act on their own and carry out attacks in their home countries. The biggest element missing from U.S. statecraft on counterterrorism relates to our efforts—which have been lacking—to counter and defeat the jihadist ideology. The result is that the terrorist narrative lives on and continues to attract and inspire those who wish us harm.
The State Department's Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications is doing some good work overseas in this area in foreign languages. But it is not enough. A systemic strategic communications effort is needed, aimed at exposing the hypocrisy of our adversaries' words versus their deeds. Nor domestically have we figured out how to address the issue of online violent Islamist extremism. Although this challenge appeared on White House radar years ago and a strategy to address "online violent extremist radicalization" was promised by the White House in 2011, this significant and complex undertaking was instead treated in a cursory blog post earlier this year.[24]

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[24] Frank J. Cilluffo and Sharon L. Cardash, "It's the Ideology, Stupid," The National Interest (June 3, 2013) http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/It%27s%20the%20ideology,%20stupid.pdf. Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Working to Counter Online Radicalization to Violence in the United States," The White House Blog (February 5, 2013) http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/02/05/working-counter-online-radicalization-violence-united-states

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Conclusion

The bottom line is that we must not take our foot off the gas pedal when it comes to U.S. counterterrorism efforts. Now is not the time to offer our adversaries time and space in which to expand and entrench, or further regroup and reconstitute.

This admonition is all the more important as the United States prepares to conclude the combat role of its military forces in Afghanistan in 2014. The decision on whether to retain or remove U.S. and allied forces from Afghanistan raises a host of strategic issues. Strictly from a tactical counterterrorism perspective however, U.S. withdrawal is a concern, just as it was in Iraq.[25] Indeed, nature abhors a vacuum; and there is no shortage of actors hostile to the United States who presently seek to exploit a range of ungoverned and under-governed spaces worldwide (failed and failing states), as well as transitional circumstances such as those that prevail in Egypt.[26] Accordingly, along with our allies, we must continue to target the leaders of foreign terrorist organizations, and their military and operational planners.

AQAP is just one of many organizations that demand the attention of U.S. law enforcement and intelligence officials as well as our military forces. Al Qaeda, its affiliates, and those inspired by al Qaeda's ideology have by no means been defeated.[27] The United States must therefore meet the challenge posed by its adversaries with equal determination, patience, and resolve.

Thank you once more for the opportunity to testify before you today. I look forward to trying to answer any questions that you may have.

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[25] Frank J. Cilluffo and Sharon L. Cardash, "Baghdad Surprise?" HSPI Commentary (August 20, 2010) http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/commentary17_BaghdadSurprise.pdf
[26] Frank J. Cilluffo and Sharon L. Cardash, "Tumult in the Middle East: When and Where Will the Next Shoe Drop?" HSPI Commentary (February 17, 2011) http://www.gwumc.edu/hspi/policy/commentary021_mideast.pdf
[27] Katherine Zimmerman, "The Al Qaeda Network: A New Framework for Defining the Enemy," A Report by AEI's Critical Threats Project (September 2013) http://www.criticalthreats.org/sites/default/files/pdf_upload/analysis/Zimmerman_the_al_Qaeda_Network_September_2013.pdf

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