

**OPENING STATEMENT: CHECHEN HEARING**  
**(April 26, 2013)**

The origins of the terrorist attack in Boston have drawn attention to a region that has not received the study it deserves. The terrorist brothers had roots in Chechnya even though they grew up in America and had sought U.S. citizenship. Chechnya is part of the Northern Caucasus which also includes Dagestan where the father of the two bombers lives.

Two major wars were fought in Chechnya in the 1990s as the province sought independence from Russia. Many Chechens fled to other parts of the region and into Central Asia. Dagestan was not directly involved in the wars, but has become a hotbed of radical Islamic activity.

There are reports of Chechens fighting in Afghanistan against US and NATO troops, and Chechen networks in Europe. Al-Qaeda has made recruitment of Chechens a priority, and they are thought to have trained in Pakistan.

The appearance of Chechen fighters outside the Northern Caucasus is ominous. The original Chechen uprising against Russia was secular and nationalist. Within this context, there would be no motive for Chechen exiles to attack the United States; especially after we had given them sanctuary.

The worldview of some Chechens has been radicalized, as was the case of the two Boston terrorists into a jihadist mentality of global war against all infidels.

Is this happening on a regional basis and why? What outside forces have sought to transform the North Caucasus and Central Asia into a region of Muslim extremism which did not exist before? In particular, what impact has Saudi Arabia played in sending money and missionaries into the region and building mosques and schools to impact the minds young people, who make up such a large part of the population?

Greater cooperation with Russia and the governments Central Asia should be explored in order to properly respond to this emerging threat.

This part of the world is critical to the future of the human race. If it becomes dominated by a radical version of Islam, it will change the course of history in an extremely negative way. Muslims deserve freedom and progress, but the jihadist mindset hates freedom and will drown progress in a sea of blood. Even as a minority viewpoint, the radicals have done great damage throughout Muslim society from Pakistan and Afghanistan to the Caucasus. And they have attacked the United States as well as Europe and Russia.

We must find ways to expand on our long friendships with Muslims to build a better future; one of peace and prosperity because it is in the interest of all of us to live in such a world.