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BEFORE  
THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
ON  
RADICALIZATION  
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Chairman Lieberman, Senator Collins and other distinguished Members, it is a pleasure to appear before you today to discuss the efforts of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on radicalization.

**Introduction**

I am pleased to appear before the Committee to highlight the Department of Homeland Security's work in the area of preventing and countering radicalization. This issue is one of singular importance, and I commend the Committee for holding this hearing.

The issue of "radicalization" has received growing attention based on developments both overseas and at home. Terrorist attacks by "homegrown" violent Islamic extremists in Madrid and the United Kingdom, and the arrests of radicalized individuals in the United States, Canada, and Australia, have demonstrated the diversity of the patterns, trends, and developments associated with the radicalization phenomenon.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) defines radicalization as the process of adopting an extremist belief system, including the willingness to use, support, or facilitate violence, as a method to effect societal change. It is important to note that we do not limit our analysis of the radicalization process to those who claim to be Muslim and have become violent. Our understanding of the phenomenon of radicalization must encompass a wide range of threats against our country, including various white supremacy and fascist organizations, militia movements and other violent groups, among others. When we understand the process that leads a person to support and/or pursue violence, we will be in the best position to protect our country from the widest possible range of threats we face.

Although much of my discussion will deal with violent Islamic extremists, I want to emphasize that those who support the use of violence to achieve their goals represent a small, fringe element within the American Muslim community. It is critical that we recognize that American Muslims have been, and will continue to be, a highly valued part of the fabric of our Nation. American Muslims have been outspoken in their opposition to terrorist violence and have been strong contributors to our country for many generations. American Muslims are active participants in our secular democracy and, as with all Americans, we will continue to ensure that they have the freedom to choose the best way to raise their families, receive an education, relate to and participate in government, start a business, and become prosperous in their professions. Thus, my

comments today regarding threats posed to the American public are addressed to a small number of people of a variety of faiths and backgrounds who support terrorist violence.

The United States is fortunate that radicalization seems to have less appeal here than in other parts of the world. Though it is difficult at this stage to determine the exact cause of these differences, there appear to be a set of advantages the U.S. enjoys. Among these are economic advantages associated with low barriers to employment markets and business creation, traditional cultural acceptance of religious expression and free speech, unfettered participation in the U.S. political process, and a high degree of social integration. As we learned from the Oklahoma City bombing, our country is not immune to homegrown violent extremism.

Radicalization is a global problem that must be addressed through focused efforts targeting its root causes. My Department has developed a comprehensive approach to address this important concern. Given the elasticity of the term “radicalization,” and the complexity of the issues surrounding it, there is no one single part of the DHS enterprise best-suited to develop and implement a departmental strategy to address issues related to radicalization. Consequently, this effort harnesses the full power of DHS by incorporating intelligence, law enforcement, policy, research, community outreach, legal, science and technology, and academic options, tools, and initiatives. And, we will align ourselves with the broader U.S. government programs and initiatives focused on radicalization including those run by the Department of Justice's Federal Bureau of Prisons and Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the National Counterterrorism Center, among others. As an organization created to secure the homeland, DHS is taking innovative steps to prevent and counter domestic radicalization. This approach has three interconnected elements:

- Developing a better understanding of the radicalization phenomenon;
- Enhancing the capacity of the Department and its partners to counter radicalization; and,
- Engaging with key communities to promote civic engagement and protect civil liberties.

### ***Develop a Better Understanding of the Radicalization Phenomenon***

The first element in our approach is to develop a more thorough understanding of the issue. Countering and preventing domestic radicalization requires that we understand all facets of the phenomenon. This requires a partnership between intelligence analysts, policy makers and researchers.

One of the main pillars in our strategy is the development of a national assessment on the dynamics of domestic radicalization. While capitalizing on our intelligence resources is important, DHS is also working with the academic and scientific communities to better understand the radicalization phenomenon. Through its relationships with academia and sponsorship of research, the Department has begun engaging scholars and practitioners to better understand the social and behavioral dynamics of radicalization.

### ***Enhance the Capacity of the Department and its Partners to Counter Domestic Radicalization***

The second element in our strategy is to work to improve DHS' capacity, as well as to enhance the capacity of state and local governments, and our foreign partners, to address and counter domestic radicalization. We are committed to working closely with our law enforcement partners at the state and local level to recognize the signs of radicalization, and improve local outreach efforts to vulnerable communities. Given their understanding and well-established relationships with local communities, community officials, police officers, and civic leaders are essential tools in the effort to counter domestic radicalization.

DHS is therefore working to improve and formalize information sharing and reporting pathways to create a common operating understanding of the scope of radicalization. As DHS officials and community leaders throughout the nation understand more about the radicalization phenomenon, they will be able to provide greater information on trends, nodes, and potential cases of radicalization in their communities. We will use existing relationships and organizational structures, such as the Fusion Centers and the States' Homeland Security networks, to improve understanding of the radicalization process, to report immediate operational threats, and to train our workforces to meet the highest standards of professionalism as they interact with religious and ethnic minorities.

Our Department also has engaged extensively with international partners on these issues. While the dynamics of radicalization may vary in countries with legal, economic, and social structures that differ from those of the United States, the efforts of other nations may provide lessons on how to both undermine the factors contributing to radicalization and mitigate its effects. In this regard, the Department is working with our foreign partners to share information and, where feasible, to identify trends and patterns in radicalization. For example, under the auspices of the UK-US Joint Contact Group, we are working with the UK Home Office to develop best practices to prevent and counter the domestic radicalization phenomenon and promote civic engagement.

We must build the capacity of our own workforce to confront the issues that we face today, while maintaining respect for privacy and civil liberties. As a result, our workforce will be offered the finest training materials available today. Towards this end, the Department's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties has released a training video for DHS personnel on basic aspects of Arab American and Muslim American Cultures and Beliefs. It has also produced educational posters that give guidance on how to screen individuals wearing religious head coverings. Similarly, our Department's new Chief Learning Officer, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, and training offices at various components are focusing training resources on these issues.

### ***Engage Key Communities***

The radicalization process often thrives upon falsehoods and misinformation. With the proliferation of media resources and outlets such as 24 hour news and the internet, it is possible for individuals and groups to quickly promulgate rumors, conspiracy theories, and propaganda to wide audiences with little or no accuracy or accountability. The effects of this misinformation can be corrosive to our attempts to implement rational, impartial, and effective policies to protect the homeland.

The Department will continue to work with the media and community groups to create an informed public, and will ensure that our actions, and the context within which we determine our actions, are made known to the public while ensuring the protection of intelligence and law enforcement information and operations. We must continue to create inroads and opportunities for dialogue with all Americans of every ethnic, cultural and religious community.

Public outreach and engagement initiatives with key communities play a major role in the Department's efforts to prevent and counter domestic radicalization. In order to fully capitalize on the strategic advantages the nation enjoys, we are seeking to build an unprecedented level of cooperation with key ethnic and religious groups, who truly represent their communities, and engage these communities as full partners in our efforts to prevent radicalization.

An effective strategy to prevent and counter domestic radicalization requires that we not only engage these communities, but also take proactive steps to build trust and respond to issues of concern to Americans of different ethnicities, cultures, and faiths. To be successful, the Department must be able to fully explain and defend our policies and, where appropriate, make necessary adjustments to account for legitimate concerns.

The Department has also assembled an "Incident Management Team" to engage with Arab, Muslim, and South Asian American leaders in the aftermath of any future terrorist act or homeland security incident. This group will be activated in the hours after any future significant terrorist act, and was in fact deployed after the arrests in London this past August. The goal of the group is to provide community leaders with timely and relevant information from key security agencies, as well as for community leaders to provide the government with information on tensions or reactions from the communities. We believe that this Incident Management Team will be a critical tool in the hours and days after another terrorist attack on our country.

## **Conclusion**

I want to thank you again for this opportunity to testify about our efforts to counter and prevent radicalization in the homeland. As I am sure you and your colleagues appreciate, this phenomenon presents a real and serious challenge to our nation, and requires that we utilize the full ambit of intelligence and law enforcement resources. In doing so, however, we should also capitalize and take advantage of the many benefits American society affords.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.