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Before the Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk Assessment
House Homeland Security Committee
Islamic Radicalization
5 April 2007**

Chairman Harman, Ranking Member Reichert, and members of the Subcommittee, I want to thank you for this opportunity to speak to you on the topic of Islamic radicalization in the United States, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) efforts to address this emerging threat with our other federal, state, and local partners. I would like to emphasize before I begin that the issue is not Islam itself, but how the religious ideology is used by violent extremists to inspire and justify their actions. The FBI does not investigate members of any religion for their religious beliefs, but rather focuses on investigating activities that may harm the United States.

Successes in the war on terrorism and the arrests of many key al-Qa'ida leaders have diminished the ability of the group to attack the United States (US) Homeland. At the same time, a broader Sunni extremist movement has evolved from being run entirely by al-Qa'ida central, to a broader movement. This is demonstrated by the 2004 Madrid bombings, the July 2005 London bombings, and recent disruptions in the US, United Kingdom, Canada, Bosnia, Denmark and elsewhere.

That said, al-Qa'ida's core remains committed to attacking the United States and continues to demonstrate its ability to adapt its tactics to circumvent security measures and reconstitute its ranks. Al-Qa'ida is also attempting to broaden its appeal to English-speaking Western Muslims by

disseminating violent Islamic extremist propaganda via media outlets and the Internet.

Although the most dangerous instances of radicalization have so far been overseas, the Islamic radicalization of US persons, whether foreign-born or native, is of increasing concern. Key to the success of stopping the spread of radicalization is identifying patterns and trends in the early stages.

The FBI characterizes homegrown Islamic extremists as US persons who may appear to be assimilated, but, to some degree, have become radicalized in their support for Islamic jihad. They often see themselves as devout Muslims and reject the cultural values, beliefs, and environment of the United States. Let me make it clear that the FBI is not interested in these people because they have rejected American culture and adopted a strict, devout view of Islam. We are interested in them when and where there are reasonable indications that they may provide support for, or directly commit, a terrorist attack inside the United States because of their radicalized view of Islam. The threat from homegrown Islamic extremists is likely smaller in scale than that posed by overseas terrorist groups such as al-Qa'ida, but is potentially larger in psychological impact. Several recent cases illustrate the nature of the issue.

- Since August 2005 the FBI, other federal agencies, and our foreign partners have dismantled a global network of extremists who are operating independently of any known terrorist organization. Several individuals affiliated with this network were arrested for providing material support in connection with the plotting of a terrorist attack in the United States.
- The apparent increase of cases involving homegrown Islamic extremists may represent an increased sensitivity of law enforcement to activities not previously regarded as terrorism, but we cannot rule out the possibility that the homegrown phenomenon could be growing.

The FBI has identified certain venues, such as prisons and the internet, that present opportunities for the proselytizing of radical Islam.

The European and American experience shows that prisons are venues where extremists can be radicalized and recruited among the inmate population. Prison radicalization primarily occurs through

anti-US sermons provided by contract, volunteer, or staff imams, radicalized inmates who gain religious influence, and extremist media. Ideologies that radicalized inmates appear most often to embrace include the Salafi form of Sunni Islam (including revisionist versions commonly known as “prison Islam”) and an extremist view of Shia Islam similar to that of the Government of Iran and Lebanese Hizballah.

Most cases of prison radicalization appear to be carried out by domestic Islamic extremist groups with few or no direct foreign connections, like the Sunni Islamic extremist group in California, the Jam’iyyat Ul-Islam Is-Saheeh (JIS), identified in July 2005. Although the Committee is familiar with this case, I regret that I am unable to elaborate publicly on it at this time due to pending legal proceedings, and the FBI’s responsibility to ensure the defendants in this case receive a fair and impartial trial. I would like to emphasize, however, that not all prison radicalization is Islamic in nature. Domestic groups such as white supremacists also recruit in prisons.

In response to this possible threat, the FBI and the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) have been actively engaged in efforts to detect, deter, and interdict efforts by terrorist and extremist groups to radicalize or recruit in US prisons since February 2003. As a result of the JIS case here in Los Angeles, the FBI organized a Prison Radicalization Working Group which is comprised of more than 15 federal, state, and local agencies, and over 30 task force officers. As part of these efforts, we have identified “best practices” for correctional institutions to combat the spread of radicalization.

The Internet is also a venue for the radicalization of young, computer-savvy Westerners— both male and female - who identify with an Islamic extremist ideology. An older generation of supporters and sympathizers of violent Islamic extremism, in the post-9/11 environment of increased law enforcement scrutiny, has migrated their radicalization, recruitment, and material support activities online. Radicalization via the Internet is participatory, and individuals are actively engaged in exchanging extremist propaganda and rhetoric online which may facilitate the violent Islamic extremist cause. These online activities further their indoctrination, create links between extremists located

around the world, and may serve as a springboard for future terrorist activities.

Overseas experience can also be a significant element in facilitating the transition from one who has a proclivity to be radicalized, and who may espouse radicalized rhetoric, to one who is willing and ready to act on those radicalized beliefs. Although radicalization can occur without overseas travel, the foreign experience appears to provide the networking that makes it possible for interested individuals to train for and participate in operational activity. The experience may vary from religious or language instruction, to basic paramilitary training.

- We assess that the overseas experiences of John Walker Lindh¹ played a pivotal role in his involvement with the Taliban. Once overseas, he was directed by radicalized individuals to attend extremist universities, and ultimately training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The FBI approaches the radicalization issue on two levels:

- We are attempting to understand the dynamics of individual and organizational radicalization to identify early indicators as to whether individuals or groups are demonstrating the potential for violence.
- We are engaged in extensive outreach to Muslim communities to dispel misconceptions that may foster extremism.

With respect to the latter point, I would like to spend some time discussing the Los Angeles Field Office's efforts over the years to develop and foster a positive working relationship with our Muslim, Arab, Armenian, Sikh, and Coptic communities.

In September 2003, the Los Angeles Field Office (LAFO) initiated the formation of the Muslim, Arab, Armenian, Sikh, and Coptic Ombudsman Program per a directive by Director Mueller. It was decided that a council should be formed through which information, ideas, and concerns could be shared between the FBI and said communities. The inaugural meeting of the Committee was hosted

¹John Walker Lindh, after pleading guilty in the Eastern District of Virginia to supporting the Taliban, in violation of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) (50) U.S.C. § 1705(b)0, and carrying an explosive during the

by LAFO on May 17, 2004. Since that date, the Committee has met on the third Monday of each month to address issues and concerns ranging from the FBI's Counter Terrorism and Counter Intelligence missions, the Patriot Act, and interviews of individuals within Arab, Armenian, Muslim, and Sikh communities, as well as guest presentations by other agencies. The Committee has grown to 35 members, and is continuing to grow to include, among others, four members from college Muslim student organizations. As a result of the interactions between the FBI and the Committee members, LAFO has participated in a number of town hall meetings and community functions at which an FBI presence is requested, as well as media events hosted by Muslim community organizations. Members of the Multi-Cultural Advisory Committee have also provided information to the FBI which has resulted in investigations of potential radical extremists living among their communities. In the spirit of partnership and sharing information, Committee members have hosted a number of events for FBI personnel to broaden their cultural and religious understanding of the various aspects of the Arab, Armenian, Muslim, Sikh, and Coptic communities in the greater Los Angeles area. LAFO maintains daily contact with the Committee members via telephone, e-mail, and in person meetings.

With respect to collaborations that have been forged among law enforcement and other public safety sectors, the FBI and its law enforcement partners have been working together for a number of years to address terrorism related matters. In 1984, in order to coordinate counterterrorism threats and responses associated with the Summer Olympic Games event which took place in Los Angeles, the FBI initiated a working group with the Los Angeles Police Department and Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department. This led to the formation of the Los Angeles Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) in 1986.

Today, the Los Angeles JTTF program has expanded to include the Long Beach JTTF, the Orange County JTTF, and the Inland Empire JTTF, which coordinate their investigations through the Los Angeles JTTF, and ultimately with the National JTTF. The combined resources of the various formalized and ad-hoc JTTF groups in the greater Los Angeles territory includes more than 260 full-

time task force investigators, consisting of approximately 150 FBI Special Agents, and 110 other federal, state, and local task force agents/officers. The following is a listing of the various local, state, and federal agencies who participate on the JTTF's in LAFO's territory:

Local Agencies:

Los Angeles Police Department

Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department

Beverly Hills Police Department

Long Beach Police Department

Los Angeles International Airport Police Department

Los Angeles City Fire Department

Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, Bureau of Investigations

Torrance Police Department

Los Angeles Port Police

Redondo Beach Police Department

Orange County Sheriff's Department

Orange County District Attorney's Office

Ventura County Sheriff's Department

Santa Ana Police Department

Anaheim Police Department

Cypress Police Department

Garden Grove Police Department

Irvine Police Department

San Bernardino Police Department

San Bernardino Sheriff's Department

Riverside Sheriff's Department

Banning Police Department
Barstow Police Department
Beaumont Police Department
BNSF Railroad Police Department
Chino Police Department
Colton Police Department
Corona Police Department
Fontana Police Department
Hemet Police Department
Indio Police Department
Montclair Police Department
Murrieta Police Department
Ontario Police Department
Ontario Airport Police Department
Palm Springs Police Department
Redlands Police Department
Riverside Police Department
UC Riverside Police Department
Upland Police Department
Buena Park Police Department

State Agencies:

California Highway Patrol
California Department of Justice (CATIC)
California Army National Guard
California Department of Motor Vehicles

Federal Agencies:

United States Secret Service

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Department of State Diplomatic Security Service

United States Army

Air Force Office of Special Investigations

Department of Treasury, Internal Revenue Service

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives

U.S. Postal Inspection Service

Naval Criminal Investigative Service

Defense Criminal Investigative Service

Central Intelligence Agency

Drug Enforcement Administration

Federal Air Marshals

U.S. Coast Guard

Environmental Protection Agency

U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Transportation Security Administration

Department of Defense

U.S. Bureau of Prisons

Amtrak Rail Police

In addition to the long standing JTTF program, the Los Angeles FBI has also developed a number of information sharing programs and initiatives to ensure that our partners are fully aware of intelligence and threat information developed by the FBI and other agencies.

As part of the transformation undertaken by the FBI since September 11, 2001, we have

developed and directed the implementation of the Field Intelligence Group (FIG) program, which serves as the mechanism by which the Field Divisions evaluate threats. The FIG is utilized by the FBI to evaluate regional and local perspectives on a variety of issues, to include the receipt of and action on integrated investigative and intelligence requirements. FIGs further provide the intelligence link to the JTTFs, Fusion Centers, FBIHQ and the Intelligence Community at large. FIGs, which have been established in all 56 Field Offices since October 2003, consist of Intelligence Analysts, Special Agents, Language Analysts, and Special Surveillance Groups. FIG personnel have been embedded in more than twenty-five Fusion Centers and/or Multi-Agency Intelligence Centers (MAICs) around the country.

Among the fundamental post September 11th changes, sharing intelligence is now the paramount objective. We have developed an FBI intelligence presence within the intelligence and law enforcement communities by sharing Intelligence Information Reports (IIRs), Intelligence Assessments (IAs), Intelligence Bulletins (IBs), and related intelligence information on platforms routinely used by our law enforcement and Intelligence Community partners, including JWICS, SIPRNet and Law Enforcement Online (LEO), as well as on the FBI Intranet. This effort has resulted in more than 7,400 IIRs, 150 IBs, and 100 IAs that have been posted on all listed platforms; in addition, over 400 Current Intelligence Reports have also been produced, of which over 50 have been shared with the intelligence community through NCTC Online. We are also using our internal, closed network to provide FBI employees with access to raw, current and finished intelligence products. Additionally, we utilize unclassified, but law enforcement sensitive portals, such as Law Enforcement Online (LEO) and The Intelligence and Terrorism Alert Network (TITAN), to disseminate products to officers on the street relative to both terrorism and criminal matters on which we have developed analysis.

Regarding the Fusion Centers and/or Multi-Agency Intelligence Centers, Los Angeles established a Joint Regional Intelligence Center (JRIC) in which federal, state, and local resources were commingled in order to produce an integrated multi-agency intelligence processing center. The Los

Angeles JRIC is a groundbreaking cooperative which fully integrates intelligence intake, vetting, analysis/fusion, and synthesis from a multitude of law enforcement and public safety agencies. The JRIC also disseminates developed intelligence, provides analytical case support, analyzes trends, and provides tailored analytical products to end users. The JRIC was founded by the FBI, the United States Attorney's Office for the Central District of California, the California Governor's Office of Homeland Security, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD), and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). Other agencies who participate in the JRIC provide analysts to staff the facility, and the JRIC's services are available to all law enforcement agencies throughout our seven county region. The partnerships formed in the JRIC allow the facility to be a central contact point for law enforcement and public safety intelligence, and provides for a smoother flow of leads and intelligence to prevent duplication, fragmentation, and circular reporting.

Chairwoman Harman, Ranking Member Reichert, and members of the Subcommittee, there has been a lot of discussion and speculation about the effectiveness of the FBI and its partners to combat terrorism, and the manner in which information is processed and shared to ensure the prevention of terrorist attacks on American soil. The FBI has made significant improvements in the past six years to ensure we are pooling our federal, state, and local resources accordingly, and working as one team to address potential threats to our homeland. In my 25 years working as a law enforcement officer, I have never experienced the level of collegial partnerships between law enforcement and public safety agencies as I have here in Los Angeles. We fully appreciate and understand the tasking that the American people expect of us, and we are standing shoulder to shoulder with our partners to accomplish this mission.

Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today and share the work the FBI and our federal, state, and local partners are doing to address terror threats to our country. I am happy to answer any questions.