



The Investigative Project on Terrorism

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**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**AT A HEARING TITLED
'IDENTIFYING THE ENEMY: RADICAL ISLAMIST TERROR'**

**PRESENTED
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Good morning Chairman Perry, Ranking Member Coleman and distinguished members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the need to identify the radical Islamist terror threat.

The Investigative Project on Terrorism works tirelessly to ensure that political leaders, national security officials and fellow Americans understand that the U.S. cannot defeat radical Islam without defining it.

Islamists and their sympathizers hate us and they will not stop hating us. Islamists, or “caliphists” as I like to call them, pursue three objectives: establish a caliphate, install a caliph to rule it and govern it under strict sharia law. They yield no middle ground or accommodation. Thus far, the U.S. has been unsuccessful in confronting and containing the threat on our path to ultimately winning.

Evidence

The trends in the war against Islamist terror both in fatalities and breadth are not positive.

On a global scale, jihadists murdered an average of 2,500 innocents annually between 2001 and 2006. The number grew to approximately 3,300 innocents by 2009, which tripled to roughly 9,500 in 2012 and tripled again to nearly 30,000 killed last year.¹

The increase in the number of victims corresponds to a wider theater of operations. From 2001-06, the threat was dispersed in area and occurred primarily in 10 countries. By 2015, significant Islamist terrorist activity could be found in 18 countries, with most concentrated in Africa and the Middle East.²

Today Libya, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Afghanistan are failed states. The Islamist cancer endangers Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. In Asia the threat is growing in countries like Thailand, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Philippines and Indonesia.

The massive migrant flows into Europe, the lack of effective assimilation and the attacks in Paris, Cologne, Brussels, Nice, London and others highlight the growing menace in Europe. The U.S. has experienced its own manifestation of radical Islam with the violent attacks in Orlando, San Bernardino and military installations throughout the country, as well as most recently with the attacks in New York, New Jersey and Minnesota.

There were 2.74 million refugees from the Middle East and North Africa in 2015.³ Additionally, there were approximately 4.8 million internally displaced persons in the Middle East alone. Iraq, Syria and Yemen accounted for more than half of the total.⁴

¹ Steven Emerson and Pete Hoekstra. “Islamist Terror Growing in Lethality and Geography, IPT Analysis Finds,” *The Investigative Project on Terrorism*, March 28, 2016, <http://www.investigativeproject.org/5241/islamist-terror-growing-in-lethality>.

² Ibid.

³ “Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015,” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*, June 20, 2016.

⁴ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Quarterly Update, April-June 2016, <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2016/IDMC-quarterly-update-2016-QU2final.pdf>.

What happened from 2009 to 2016 that led to such a massive increase in Islamist violence?

U.N Resolution 16/18

Ever since President Obama delivered his 2009 Cairo speech in which he declared his responsibility “to fight against negative stereotypes of Islam,”⁵ his administration has strengthened a partnership with the Saudi Arabia-based Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).⁶ The OIC is a 57-member government body that incorporates the contrived term “Islamophobia” into its rhetoric and diplomacy to counter perceived criticism of Islam or linking religion with terrorism.⁷

In March 2011, the partnership resulted in the adoption of U.N. Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18 to combat Islamophobia.⁸

The resolution seeks “to criminalize incitement to imminent violence based on religion or belief” and in so doing supports the suppression of any speech that negatively portrays Islam. Experts assert that the resolution “effectively imposes Sharia blasphemy standards on American law” and stands in “violation of First Amendment free-speech principles.”⁹

As one commentator noted, “Unfortunately, America’s concern for the protection of free speech seems to have gotten lost as its focus moved closer to the OIC’s positions, and an emphasis was placed on protecting Muslims in the West from ‘Islamophobia.’”¹⁰

Secretary of State Clinton co-chaired an OIC ministerial meeting in Istanbul on “religious intolerance” in July 2011 to spearhead efforts to implement the resolution¹¹ that came to be known as the “Istanbul Process.”¹² At the meeting, Clinton advocated the use of interfaith

⁵ “Remarks by the President at Cairo University, 6-04-09,” *The White House, Office of the Press Secretary (Cairo, Egypt)*, June 4, 2009, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-cairo-university-6-04-09>.

⁶ “Background: OIC-US Cooperation—2011-08-08,” *Organization of Islamic Cooperation*, <http://www.oicun.org/oicus/64/20110808013147562.html>.

⁷ “Eighth OIC Observatory Report on Islamophobia,” Presented to the 42nd Council of Foreign Ministers, Kuwait City, State of Kuwait, May 2014-April 2015, http://www.oic-oci.org/oicv2/upload/islamophobia/2015/en/reports/8th_Ob_Report_Islamophobia_Final.pdf.

⁸ “U.N. Human Rights Council (HRC) Resolution 16/18,” *Human Rights Council*, Sixteenth Session, Agenda item 9, March 21, 2011, <http://geneva.usmission.gov/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Resolution16-18.pdf>.

⁹ Andrew C. McCarthy, “In Initially Airbrushing Orlando Jihadists’s Calls, DOJ Followed Obama-Clinton U.N. Resolution against Negative Speech about Islam,” *National Review*, June 20, 2016, <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/436854/doj-followed-obama-clinton-un-resolution-against-negative-speech-about-islam>.

¹⁰ Deborah Weiss, “U.S. Praises Sharia Censorship,” *FrontPage Magazine*, May 23, 2013, <http://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/190622/us-praises-sharia-censorship-deborah-weiss>.

¹¹ “Remarks at the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) High-Level Meeting on Combating Religious Intolerance,” Istanbul, Turkey, July 15, 2011,

<http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2011/07/168636.htm>.

¹² Nina Shea. “A perverse ‘Process,’” *New York Post*, Dec. 17, 2011, <http://nypost.com/2011/12/17/a-perverse-process/>.

dialogue and “good old-fashioned techniques of peer pressure and shaming”¹³ to restrict freedom of speech without passing formal legislation to achieve the same results. Furthermore, the fact that the U.S. provided an international forum for airing grievances about Islamophobia only emboldened OIC demands for global blasphemy laws.¹⁴

The Obama-Clinton administration would later consult with the OIC to craft the fabricated story that an Internet video that nobody had ever seen caused the Sept. 11, 2012 massacre in Benghazi.¹⁵

PSD-11

In August 2010 Obama signed Presidential Study Directive-11 (PSD-11), which reportedly ordered a government-wide reassessment of prospects for political reform in the Middle East and of the Muslim Brotherhood’s role in the process.

Under PSD-11 – which the administration needs to declassify – Obama and Clinton pivoted from the historical U.S. strategy of maintaining order and stability in the Middle East. It instead turned to a strategy that emphasized support for regime change, as well as political and democratic reforms, regardless of the impact on regional stability. PSD-11 directly led to U.S. engagement with the Muslim Brotherhood.

U.S. officials did not concern themselves with questions over whether the new power structures would become allies or foes, or with intelligence agency warnings about the jihadist chaos such regime change might unleash.

An official in the Obama White House indicated at the time, “It’s a roll of the dice...”¹⁶

International Implications

The U.S. undermined long-time ally President Hosni Mubarak and embraced the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt after adopting PSD-11. Eventually Mubarak fell, and Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohamed Morsi won the presidency.

For the first time since its founding in 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood ran a major country in the Middle East, and Obama and Clinton were willing accomplices.

¹³ “Remarks at the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) High-Level Meeting on Combating Religious Intolerance,” Istanbul, Turkey, July 15, 2011,

<http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2011/07/168636.htm>.

¹⁴ Nina Shea, “The Administration Takes on ‘Islamophobia,’” *Hudson Institute*, Sept. 1, 2011, <http://www.hudson.org/research/8286-the-administration-takes-on-islamophobia->.

¹⁵ “Newly Released Documents Confirm White House Officials Set Hillary Clinton’s Benghazi Response,” *Judicial Watch*, June 29, 2015, <http://www.judicialwatch.org/press-room/press-releases/judicial-watch-newly-released-documents-confirm-white-house-officials-set-hillary-clintons-benghazi-response/>.

¹⁶ David Ignatius. “Obama’s low-key strategy for the Middle East,” *The Washington Post*, March 6, 2011, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/03/04/AR2011030404614.html>.

In Libya Muammar Gaddafi – a repressive dictator and state sponsor of terror for 40 years – reversed course and by 2003-04 allied with the U.S. He turned over his weapons programs. He paid reparations to the victims of his terrorist activity. He fought side-by-side with the West against radical jihadists.

Under the guidance of PSD-11, the administration turned on Gaddafi and sided with the Muslim Brotherhood and al-Qaida elements to dispose of him. Libya now exports weapons, training and jihadist ideology throughout the greater region.

Domestic Implications

Federal law identifies anyone who “endorses or espouses terrorist activity or persuades others to endorse or espouse terrorist activity or support a terrorist organization” as an inadmissible alien under 8 USC 1182.

Following the issuance of PSD-11 and the start of the Arab Spring, the Obama administration granted entry visas to individuals belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist groups who made statements supportive of Islamic terror activities. Many of them should not have received visas under federal law. The U.S. previously denied visas to some of the individuals. Again, it was a major shift in U.S. policy. For example:

Sheikh Rached Ghannouchi received an entry visa in the fall of 2011 despite his pro-Hamas statements¹⁷ and his meeting with former Osama bin Laden lieutenant Abu Iyadh in August 2011.¹⁸ Similar statements led the administration of President Bill Clinton to ban Ghannouchi from entering the U.S. in 1994.¹⁹

Former President of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces **Ahmed Mouaz al-Khatib al-Hassani** received a visa to enter the U.S. in March 2015. He met with Secretary of State John Kerry,²⁰ U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Samantha Power²¹ and National Security Advisor Susan Rice.²² A review of his website *Darbuna.net* reveals a litany of statements supporting the Taliban,²³ bin Laden²⁴ and 1983 Marine barracks bombing mastermind Imad Mugniyah.²⁵

¹⁷ “Rachid Ghannouchi, leader of Tunisia’s Ennadha Movement: Qatar has played a leading role in the success of the Arab revolutions.” *Al-Arab*, May 2, 2011, <https://archive.is/lQQgY> (Accessed May 21, 2015).

¹⁸ “Exclusive: The truth about Abu Iyadh told by his bodyguard,” *Tunisie Secret*, Dec. 10, 2014, <https://archive.is/Akngg> (Accessed Feb. 4, 2016).

¹⁹ Martin Kramer’s Facebook page, updated Oct. 25, 2011, <https://archive.today/mwBrG> (Accessed May 22, 2015).

²⁰ Jen Psaki. “Secretary of State John Kerry’s Meeting with Moaz al-Khatib,” *Department of State*, press release, March 25, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2015/03/239761.htm> (Accessed May 20, 2015).

²¹ Samantha Power. Twitter post, March 24, 2015, 1:48 p.m., <https://archive.is/uztqr> (Accessed May 20, 2015).

²² Joyce Karam, Twitter post, March 24, 2015, 6:36 a.m., <https://archive.today/HBMbM> (Accessed May 20, 2015).

²³ Mouaz al-Khatib. “The Coming Martyrs,” *Darbuna.net*, March 3, 2007, IPT translation from the Arabic, <https://archive.today/xwbg4> (Accessed March 30, 2015).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ “Moaz al-Khatib interview with Osman Osman,” *Al-Jazeera video*, 47:33, Aug. 15, 2012, IPT translation from Arabic, <http://www.aljazeera.net/programs/religionandlife/2012/8/15/%D9%86%D8%AD%D9%88-%D8%AD%D9%84%D9%81%D9%81%D8%B6%D9%88%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%AF> (Accessed April 12, 2015).

State Department officials granted a visa sponsored by the Syrian American Council to **Sheikh Mohammed Rateb Nabulsi** in January 2014²⁶ even though he issued an April 2001 fatwa sanctioning Palestinian suicide bombings.²⁷ Nabulsi also sanctioned the death penalty for LGBTs.²⁸

Conclusion

U.N. Resolution 16/18, PSD-11 and the decisions based upon them fundamentally reshaped American foreign policy. The flawed and naïve analyses and the policies that sprang from them created conditions that fostered the rapid expansion of Islamist terror – specifically ISIS – and sent the Middle East and North Africa into barbaric turmoil.

The reported enshrinement of PSD-11 as a new national security strategy initiated dramatic reversals of longstanding bipartisan agreement among lawmakers.

With PSD-11 the administration engaged with radical Islamists who predictably took advantage of the opportunity to fundamentally transform the region and its threat environment rather than pursuing democratic reforms.

Several questions remain unanswered that would help the country to better understand how radical Islam became such a dominating force in the world today. The Investigative Project on Terrorism suggests that Congress demand the following information:

1. The contents of PSD-11.
2. The criteria for vetting organizations in Libya, Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Afghanistan and Yemen with which the U.S. government would eventually partner.
3. The groups and individuals that passed the vetting process.
4. The names of the organizations and individuals responsible for vetting the new groups.
5. Any and all assessments by the U.S. government of the activities undertaken by these groups from 2012 to today.

Members of Congress are responsible to the American people they represent to help them make sense of the dramatic change that the Obama administration implemented in the Middle East, how they implemented it and how effective or ineffective its results may have been.

²⁶ Ken Timmerman. "Obama Administration let anti-gay Muslim leader into U.S.," *New York Post*, March 2, 2014, <http://nypost.com/2014/03/02/state-dept-lets-anti-gay-muslim-leader-into-u-s/> (Accessed April 16, 2015).

²⁷ Sheikh Mohammed Rateb Nabulsi. "Islamic topics - Brief Topics - Lesson 35: ruling on martyrdom operations in Palestine," April 23, 2001, <http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/misc/777.pdf#page=4>, IPT translation from Arabic, alternate link in the Arabic archived from Nabulsi's website: <https://archive.is/c09tt> (Accessed June 2, 2016).

²⁸ "On Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV: Muhammad Rateb Al-Nabulsi, Syrian Islamic Scholar Active in the U.S., Says Homosexuality is Filthy, 'Leads To the Destruction of the Homosexual; That Is Why, Brothers, Homosexuality Carries the Death Penalty.'" *Middle East Media Research Institute*, May 19, 2011, <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/5296.htm> (Accessed Feb. 17, 2015).