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The greatest threat to the United States from al Qaeda, its affiliated groups, or those animated by al Qaeda’s ideology, emanates today from Europe. There are four strands to this argument which will be amplified in my testimony. The first, is that there is little or no evidence of American “sleeper cells” found in the US since the 9/11 attacks. Secondly, the most significant Islamist terrorist plots in the United States in the past decade have generally not involved “sleeper cells,” but rather terrorists who have come into the U.S. from abroad, often from Europe. Third, in 2004, we saw with the Madrid attacks and the disruption of serious terrorist plots in London that there are European sleeper cells that have the ability and motivation to carry out major terrorist operations, and even, perhaps, to attack the United States itself. Fourth, the European threat from militant jihadists will likely increase over time as declining European populations are replaced by rising Muslim immigration into Europe, a combination of circumstances that is generating, and will continue to generate, rising Muslim alienation in many European countries, and a significant amount of backlash against Muslim immigrants in countries such as the Netherlands.

Since the 9/11 attacks we have seen little evidence of US sleeper cells. The terrorism cases that American officials have prosecuted since 9/11 have often followed the trajectory of an initial trumpeting by the government only to collapse, or to be revealed as something less than earth shattering, when the details emerge months later. Remember Chaplin James Yee the “spy” at Guantanamo who turned out to be cheating not on his country, but on his wife? Or, the unfortunate Oregon lawyer who was busted for his role in the Madrid bombing attacks, but was, in fact, thousands of miles from Spain at the time of the bombings? Or how the Justice Department held a press conference to announce the disruption of a Buffalo, New York “al Qaeda terrorist cell,” when in reality those arrested had made the dumb mistake of lying to federal investigators about briefly attending a Taliban training camp? There was no evidence that that those arrested in Buffalo were involved in terrorism of any kind, or had ever been part of al Qaeda.

Indeed, an authoritative survey by NYU’s Center on Law and Security released in February found that of the hundred and twenty criminal cases that the Bush administration has pursued under the rubric of the war on terrorism since 9/11, “the courts have indicted relatively few individuals on the charge of direct acts of terrorism and convicted only one (Richard Reid),” the so-called shoe bomber who, of course wasn’t a “sleeper cell”, but a British-Jamaican who tried to blow up an American Airlines

flight he boarded not in Paris, Texas, but in Paris, France. (Since the NYU report was published, French citizen Zacarias Moussawi has also pled guilty to planning to attack the White House.)

The American sleeper cell phenomenon has been exaggerated by both US officials and overheated stories in the media, but that is not to say that such sleepers have not existed in the past. Ali Mohamed, a member of al Qaeda who played a role in planning the 1998 bombing of the US embassy in Kenya, for instance, was a US Army sergeant in the late '80s who married a Mexican-American woman, and was working as a computer network specialist in California when he was finally arrested after the Kenya embassy attack, fourteen years after he first settled in the States. However, since 9/11 there has been no evidence of sleepers like Ali Mohamed operating in the U.S. At a certain point these sleeper cells are either so asleep that they are effectively dead, or they simply don't exist. The onset of the Iraq war and the presidential election both offered perfect symbolic occasions for the supposed cells to strike, but nothing happened. The 9/11 Commission concluded, building on the work of the largest criminal investigation in history, that the hijackers did not plug into a support network in this country. This fact, taken together with the tiny number of real terrorism cases post-9/11 and the absence of terrorist attacks in the US over the past three and a half years, leads one to surmise that there are no American sleeper cells. And support for this view came from an unlikely quarter in March 2005: The FBI, in a leaked report, concluded that "US Government efforts to date also have not revealed evidence of concealed cells or networks acting in the homeland as sleepers."

That's the good news. But is that the real problem, anyway? There have indeed been a small number of terrorist sleepers that have embedded themselves in American society for many years such as Ali Mohamed, but the real threat from Islamist terrorism in the U.S. has historically come from visitors to the country. That was the case in the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center, the mastermind of which, Ramzi Yousef, arrived from Pakistan intent on attacking American targets, and it was also the case of the 9/11 attackers. And it was also true of Ahmed Ressam, who was stopped at a Canadian border crossing in December 1999 on a mission to bomb Los Angeles airport, and of the shoe bomber, Richard Reid, and also of Zacarias Moussawi.

Today, the Islamist terrorist threat to Americans largely emanates from Europe, not from domestic sleeper cells or, as is popularly imagined, the graduates of Pakistani madrassas who can do little more than read the Koran and so do not have either the linguistic or technical skills to make them a serious threat. Omar Sheik, for instance, the kidnapper of Wall Street Journal reporter, Danny Pearl, is a British citizen of Pakistani descent who graduated not from a madrassa, but from the academically rigorous London School of Economics. Richard Reid is also British, as is Saajid Badat who last week pled guilty in London to training in Afghanistan to use a shoe bomb similar to Reid's to blow up a transatlantic flight in late 2001. (Badat got cold feet and bailed out of the plot). Similarly, al Qaeda member Zacarias Moussawi is French; Ahmed Ressam became radicalized in Italy, and the 9/11 pilots turned to the most militant form of Islam while living in Hamburg. Indeed, last month, at a conference marking the first anniversary of

the Madrid bombing, Robert Leiken, of the Nixon Center, presented his study of 373 radical Muslim terrorists arrested or killed in Europe and the United States from 1993 through 2004, of which an astonishing 41 percent were Western nationals, who were either naturalized or second generation Europeans, or were converts to Islam. Leiken found more terrorists who were French than the combined totals of Pakistani and Yemeni terrorists!

Future terrorist attacks that will be damaging to American national security are therefore likely to have a European connection. Citizens of the European Union who adopt al Qaeda's ideology can both move around Europe easily and also have easy entrée into the United States because of the Visa Waiver Program that exists with European countries. European members of al Qaeda, for instance, could either come to the US to launch a significant attack on the scale of what took place in Madrid last March, or they could launch a major terrorist strike in Europe- such as a radiological 'dirty' bomb attack in the City of London, a key financial center—that would have a devastating effect on the global economy, and by extension the American economy.

As the eminent French scholar, Gilles Kepel, has pointed out: "The war for Muslim minds around the world may turn on the outcome" of how European Muslims deal with Islamist militancy in their midst, and the extent to which European Muslims can be truly integrated into their host societies. This will not be something that can be achieved quickly. First, there is the matter of numbers. France alone is host to some five million Muslims, about as many Muslims as live in the United States. And while only a handful of American Muslims have proven susceptible to al Qaeda's ideology (in this instance, the American Dream seems to really work) that is not so with a substantial minority of Europe's Muslims, many of whom are relatively recent arrivals. In 1945 less than one million Muslims lived in Europe. There are now as many as 20 million, a good number of whom are having problems integrating into their host countries because, by and large, Muslims in Europe are more discriminated against than Muslims in the United States. Algerians in France and Pakistanis in Britain, for instance, are often treated as second-class citizens.

A survey of Islamist militant groups and Islamist extremism in Europe would merit a book in itself, so my testimony will focus on the threat emanating from Britain, a country that illustrates many of the features of the wider European problem, and where the threat from Islamist extremists is especially high. In 2004 Sir John Stevens London's former Metropolitan Police Commissioner warned that an Islamist extremist attack in London was "inevitable," while a government report estimated that between ten and fifteen thousand British Muslims are supporters of al Qaeda or related groups. The estimate was based on intelligence, opinion polls, and a report that eight thousand Muslims last year attended a conference held by Hizb-ut-Tahir, which the Home Office describes as an extremist organization. British authorities believe that between three and six hundred British citizens were trained in al Qaeda and Taliban camps in Afghanistan. And several hundred men are believed to have fought in Kashmir and returned to Britain in the 1990s. In March, Sir Ian Blair, the present Metropolitan Police Commissioner, told a radio interviewer "I agree with the Prime Minister's assessment...that there are

hundreds of people who came back from the [Afghan training] camps and are now in the United Kingdom, and that is a very dangerous issue.” Indeed, Sir Ian recently cautioned that terrorists could see the upcoming British general election on May 5th as “a real opportunity.”

Most British Muslims are young and many are poorly integrated into society and therefore vulnerable to extremism. Seventy percent of them are under thirty years old, compared to forty-five percent for the UK as a whole. The unemployment rate among the British Muslim community runs ten percentage points above the national average of 5%. In the case of 16-24 year old Muslim men the unemployment rate is 28%. And, unsurprisingly, a sense of anger shows up in polling data among British Muslims. Eight out of ten believe that the war on terrorism is a war on Islam, while a poll conducted last year under the auspices of *The Guardian* newspaper found a surprising 13% who said that further attacks by al Qaeda or similar organizations on the United States would be justified. This sort of sentiment can be found in a rap video that surfaced last year called “Dirty Kuffar” the lyrics of which included the following verse, “OBL [bin Laden] pulled me like a shining star! Like the way we destroyed them two towers, ha-ha!”

London—known for these purposes as Londonistan-- has attracted a wide range of Islamist militants in the past decade who are inspired by the actions and rhetoric of bin Laden. One of the most well known is the one-eyed cleric, Abu Hamza, who until 2003 was the imam of the Finsbury Park Mosque, where both Zacarias Moussawi and Richard Reid worshipped. Serious Arab opposition figures in London regard Abu Hamza as a self-publicizing joke, as he is neither a profound scholar of Islam, nor an important political figure. But, as we shall see, sometimes jokes can turn deadly serious. And the story of Abu Hamza is also emblematic of how young British men are incited to acts of terrorism, and the somewhat slow response of the UK authorities to clamp down on those who abuse its honorable tradition of tolerating dissident views.

In late 1998, after Abu Hamza had called for the killings of “non-believers” in Yemen, a group of eight second-generation British Muslims of Asian and Middle Eastern parentage, several of whom had ties to Abu Hamza, responded to that call. One was his son, Mohammad; another was his son-in law. The eight Britons, aged between 17 and 33, grew up in the Midlands or the London area. Most of them had gone to school for courses in business studies, computers or accounting, and those who had jobs, worked in unexceptional lines of work like the insurance business. They told those who asked that they were on vacation to Yemen to visit family members, or pick up some Arabic. But a routine traffic stop by a Yemeni cop near Aden on December 24, 1998 unraveled a far more interesting tale. Inside the car were three of the Brits who sped away, only to be quickly arrested. Their arrests led the Yemeni government to a house where they found a trove of items not normally associated with a quiet vacation: mines, rocket launchers, computers, and encrypted communication equipment. The Yemeni government said that the Brits were planning a veritable festival of Christmas bombing attacks in Aden, directed at a church; the British consulate, and an American demining team working in the area.

Five days after the Brits were arrested, eighteen tourists from the United States, Britain, and Australia vacationing in Yemen were seized by a group of jihadist kidnapers who were hoping to spring their British colleagues from jail. The leader of the kidnapers was in touch by phone with Abu Hamza during the operation. A botched rescue effort by the Yemeni army led to the deaths of four of the tourists. It took six years until Abu Hamza was finally arrested in the spring of 2004 on extradition charges from the United States on the grounds that he had provided recruits to al Qaeda in Afghanistan, and that he was involved in the 1998 Yemen attack. Last August, British authorities also belatedly brought charges against Hamza for inciting racial hatred.

Another flamboyant, London-based Islamist militant is Sheik Omar Bakri Muhammad, a Syrian who styles himself the judge of his own *sharia* court. In 1997, Bakri founded Al-Muhajiroun, an organization that attracted much media attention before its official disbanding in October 2004. Just as Abu Hamza influenced some impressionable second-generation British Muslims to try and attack western targets in Yemen in 1998 so too Bakri seems to have been a spiritual mentor for two second-generation, college-educated, middle-class men of Pakistani heritage who, on April 30, 2003, walked into Mike's Place, a busy jazz club near the US embassy in Israel, on a suicide mission. Once inside the club, the younger of the two men succeeded in detonating a bomb, killing himself and three bystanders, while the other man fled the scene. Bakri told the *Daily Telegraph* that he knew one of the Mike's Place attackers, Omar Sharif, "very well and he used to attend regularly at my sessions. He was my brother and I am very proud of him and any Muslim who will do the same as him."

The Mike's Place bombing was highly unusual; it was the first time that a UK citizen had committed an act of suicide terrorism in Israel. If such an attack can happen in Israel it can also happen in the United States. The Mike's Place attack demonstrates that the US might be vulnerable to suicide attackers who are British or are nationals of other European countries.

Omar Bakri has also been connected to a recent significant terrorist plot; the alleged plan by a group of young Islamic men to use half a ton of ammonium nitrate stored near Heathrow to blow up targets in the UK. Ammonium nitrate was the material used in the Oklahoma City bomb that killed 168 people and also in the attack on the discothèque in Bali that killed 200 tourists. In March 2004, nine suspects were arrested in Luton, west London and Sussex in raids on twenty-four homes, following two months of surveillance. Eight of the nine arrested are of Pakistani descent. All were born and raised in Britain, and many are middle class. The uncle of two brothers charged in the plot told reporters that it had been Bakri's Al-Muhajiroun that had radicalized his nephews. The trial of five of those arrested is due to start in September 2005.

Also in 2004, police arrested twelve other terrorist suspects, aged nineteen to thirty-two, including senior al Qaeda operative, Issa al-Britani. Many of the suspects were British citizens of Pakistani descent, and some had fought in Kashmir in the 1990s. Raids were conducted in north London, Watford, Luton, and Blackburn, and police seized an estimated \$360,000 worth of equipment, including one hundred computers and

two hundred mobile phones. The U.S. accuses al-Britani of casing financial targets in New York and Washington between August of 2000 and April of 2001. Those targets included the IMF, the World Bank, the Prudential building in Newark and the New York Stock Exchange. Al-Britani's arrest resulted in the Department of Homeland Security elevating the threat level to orange this past summer.

Al-Britani, age thirty-two, was born in Britain or moved there when he was young. He fought in Kashmir in the 1990s after converting to Islam (from Hinduism) in his twenties, instructed militants in al Qaeda's Afghanistan camps, and later wrote "The Army of Madinah in Kashmir." The book details strategies for conducting jihad, including the use of "germ warfare." The 9-11 Commission concluded that Al-Britani traveled with Tawfiq bin Attash, one of bin Laden's bodyguards, to Kuala Lumpur in January 2000. This visit occurred several days before the Kuala Lumpur meeting where the September 11 attacks were discussed. From interrogations of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (KSM) U.S. investigators believe that bin Laden told al-Britani through KSM to conduct surveillance of financial and Jewish targets in New York and Washington in 2001. British investigators also believe that al-Britani began planning to attack a British target in January 2000, potentially the Heathrow Express, which connects Heathrow airport with downtown London.

Since 9/11 British citizens have planned the kidnapping-murder of American journalist Danny Pearl, attempted to bring down U.S. airliners with shoe bombs, contemplated additional attacks on financial landmarks in New York and Washington, and have carried out suicide operations in Israel. This record demonstrates that Islamist militant groups in the United Kingdom, as is the case in several other major European countries, represent a threat not only to their own homelands, but also to the United States.
