

AL-SHABAAB: HOW GREAT A THREAT?

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

OCTOBER 3, 2013

Serial No. 113-86

Printed for the use of the Committee on Foreign Affairs



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov/> or
<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

85-104PDF

WASHINGTON : 2014

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Internet: bookstore.gpo.gov Phone: toll free (866) 512-1800; DC area (202) 512-1800
Fax: (202) 512-2104 Mail: Stop IDCC, Washington, DC 20402-0001

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

EDWARD R. ROYCE, California, *Chairman*

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, New Jersey	ELIOT L. ENGEL, New York
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, Florida	ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA, American Samoa
DANA ROHRABACHER, California	BRAD SHERMAN, California
STEVE CHABOT, Ohio	GREGORY W. MEEKS, New York
JOE WILSON, South Carolina	ALBIO SIRES, New Jersey
MICHAEL T. McCAUL, Texas	GERALD E. CONNOLLY, Virginia
TED POE, Texas	THEODORE E. DEUTCH, Florida
MATT SALMON, Arizona	BRIAN HIGGINS, New York
TOM MARINO, Pennsylvania	KAREN BASS, California
JEFF DUNCAN, South Carolina	WILLIAM KEATING, Massachusetts
ADAM KINZINGER, Illinois	DAVID CICILLINE, Rhode Island
MO BROOKS, Alabama	ALAN GRAYSON, Florida
TOM COTTON, Arkansas	JUAN VARGAS, California
PAUL COOK, California	BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER, Illinois
GEORGE HOLDING, North Carolina	JOSEPH P. KENNEDY III, Massachusetts
RANDY K. WEBER SR., Texas	AMI BERA, California
SCOTT PERRY, Pennsylvania	ALAN S. LOWENTHAL, California
STEVE STOCKMAN, Texas	GRACE MENG, New York
RON DeSANTIS, Florida	LOIS FRANKEL, Florida
TREY RADEL, Florida	TULSI GABBARD, Hawaii
DOUG COLLINS, Georgia	JOAQUIN CASTRO, Texas
MARK MEADOWS, North Carolina	
TED S. YOHO, Florida	
LUKE MESSER, Indiana	

AMY PORTER, *Chief of Staff*

THOMAS SHEEHY, *Staff Director*

JASON STEINBAUM, *Democratic Staff Director*

CONTENTS

	Page
WITNESSES	
Seth Jones, Ph.D., associate director, International Security and Defense Policy Center, RAND Corporation	6
Mr. Dan Borelli, chief operating officer, The Soufan Group	16
Mr. Mohamed Farah, executive director, Ka Joog	21
Mr. Richard Downie, deputy director and fellow, Africa Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies	24
LETTERS, STATEMENTS, ETC., SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING	
Seth Jones, Ph.D.: Prepared statement	8
Mr. Dan Borelli: Prepared statement	18
Mr. Mohamed Farah: Prepared statement	23
Mr. Richard Downie: Prepared statement	26
APPENDIX	
Hearing notice	60
Hearing minutes	61

AL-SHABAAB: HOW GREAT A THREAT?

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2013

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:07 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ed Royce (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman ROYCE. This hearing will come to order at this time.

Today we are going to meet to assess the threat—I will just ask all members to take their seats at this time.

Today we are going to discuss the threat from al-Shabaab, which is al-Qaeda's franchise in the Horn of Africa. We are going to discuss the threat that it poses to Somalia, the threat to the Horn of Africa, to the region, and the threat that it poses to the West, including the United States.

Al-Shabaab translates to "the youth." And that organization officially swore allegiance, if you will recall, last year in February to al-Qaeda, but the leadership for many years of al-Shabaab had been working closely with Osama bin Laden, and as a consequence, the roots there are very deep.

Al-Shabaab has been primarily focused in the past on attacking the young Somali Government because the focus on al-Shabaab was the establishment of a very extreme form of Sharia in Somalia. And they continued their attacks on African peacekeepers that came into that region that were working to secure that country.

But this is changing, this is evolving. And the dramatic attack on September 21st on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya, demonstrates al-Shabaab's ability and demonstrates their desire to threaten civilians throughout East Africa. And in this plot, you had 70 killed, you had over 200 injured. It is very common knowledge, if you are going to attack a mall, most of the adults in a mall, over 70 percent, are usually female, and many of them are going to have children with them. So this planned attack obviously was focused on maximizing the psychological damage. Several Americans also were wounded there, as you might know.

And this is not the first time that this group has carried out this type of deadly attack in the region. If you will recall the attack in Uganda, July 2010, there were a series of bombings against civilians watching the first World Cup match in Kampala, Uganda. Seventy-four were killed there by al-Shabaab, many more injured, including, by the way, one American killed there. Today we are

joined by the FBI agent who lead the Bureau's investigation into that deadly al-Shabaab attack in Uganda.

Last year, about a quarter of al-Shabaab's attacks took place in Kenya, so that is a significant increase. For al-Shabaab, these attacks are retribution for a neighboring country's contribution of troops to the U.N.-authorized African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia. This peacekeeping effort, which has made great strides, has been strongly backed by the United States, by the African Union, by the European Union.

Of considerable concern, al-Shabaab has demonstrated a unique ability to recruit young members of the Somali diaspora community in Europe and in the United States and convince them to travel to Somalia, convince them to join the fight. U.S. Africa Command suggests that these foreign fighters, in their words, "remain the greatest threat to Western interests regionally and internationally."

One witness today called the United States a "primary exporter of Western fighters to the al-Qaeda-affiliated group." Indeed, one of the first Americans to become a suicide bomber carried out his attack in Somalia. Online videos that are shown here in the United States and shown in the West, shown in Britain, promise potential recruits a glamorous new life. And we will hear today about one effort in the Somali-American community to counter such propaganda and recruitment.

Needless to say, we need to be on top of this al-Qaeda-aligned group's reach into the U.S. Al-Qaeda leadership recently encouraged sympathizers in the United States to carry out smaller but still deadly attacks as individuals or in teams of two or three. And such strikes on U.S. soil could be similar to the one al-Shabaab launched.

Al-Qaeda elements have proven their ability to inspire and to train attackers, and they have done this primarily over the Internet, as demonstrated by the Boston Marathon bombers and the Fort Hood shooter.

Two years ago, when Dr. Jones first appeared before the Terrorism Subcommittee that I chaired at the time to discuss the future of al-Qaeda, we discussed al-Shabaab. And, at that time, the head of Britain's MI-5 was warning that, in his words, "It is only a matter of time before we see terrorism on our streets inspired by those who are today fighting alongside al-Shabaab." That was the British view at the time.

Given our support for the African peacekeeping mission and the fact that the U.S. remains a top al-Qaeda target, we need to get ahead of al-Shabaab's efforts to radicalize vulnerable youth. And we need to do that before that statement applies to streets in the West.

So I will now turn to our ranking member, Mr. Eliot Engel from New York, for his opening remarks.

Mr. ENGEL. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this hearing.

And welcome to our panelists.

We are here today to discuss al-Shabaab, a Somalia-based terrorist organization that continues to threaten the Horn of Africa and Western interests there.

Two weeks ago, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, a group of heavily armed terrorists stormed the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, intent on killing innocent civilians. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the heinous attack as punishment for Kenya's involvement in the AU mission there. After a 4-day siege, the attackers were finally overpowered, but not before murdering at least 67 men, women, and children. Among them was the wife of a U.S. Foreign Service national, who was 7 months pregnant.

While attacks by al-Shabaab in Kenya are not new, the Westgate Mall attack was particularly ruthless. It was the worst terrorist attack Kenya has seen since the 1998 al-Qaeda bombing of the U.S. Embassy. And it raises important questions for Kenya, the international community, and Members of Congress, as well, about al-Shabaab's size, strength, and intentions.

For many years, al-Shabaab controlled most of Somalia and imposed a brutal form of Sharia law. As just one illustration of their complete disregard for human life, al-Shabaab banned most international organizations from gaining access to large parts of the country during the devastating famine in 2011, leading to the deaths of thousands of Somalis.

In late 2011, Kenyan forces joined AMISOM, the African Union mission to Somalia, and helped to finally turn the tide against al-Shabaab. AMISOM has had a number of successes against al-Shabaab, first by expelling the group from Mogadishu and later from Kismayo, a port that had provided a significant source of revenue for the terrorist group.

Despite these successes, it seems that AMISOM has reached its physical limit of expansion in Somalia. While al-Shabaab has been deprived of valuable territory, it continues to cause military and civilian casualties inside Somalia with new guerilla tactics. And now we have this brazen attack by the group in Kenya's capital.

All of this must lead us to ask, is al-Shabaab as weak as we thought it was? Can we expect more attacks of this scale in Kenya and possibly other countries contributing to AMISOM, such as Uganda? Have internal struggles in al-Shabaab made the group more focused on global jihad today than in the past?

I understand that it is difficult to say anything definitive about an organization as shadowy as al-Shabaab, but given this latest attack, I believe we must reexamine what we thought we knew about the organization.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to highlight the significance of the very large Somali refugee population in Kenya, which represents another facet of this complex picture. After decades of war and instability in Somalia, it is not surprising that there are nearly between 1 million and 2 million Somalis living in Kenya today.

It will be tempting for the Kenyan people in government to blame Somalia for their insecurity and call for Somali refugees to be sent home. I sincerely hope it does not come to this. Kenya has long been one of the world's most generous host countries. The fact that the Dadaab refugee camp constitutes the second-largest city in the entire country is evidence of this. I hope Kenya will continue to provide a safe haven to those fleeing from violence, hunger, and constant fear.

I mention this not only because of the humanitarian implications but also because it has a very real bearing on al-Shabaab's ability to grow its network, recruit, and operate in Kenya. I think it will be valuable to hear from our panelists on what they think Kenya can do with respect to its Somali community that would help impair al-Shabaab's operations and, conversely, what actions could make the terrorist threat even worse.

So I would like to thank the chairman once again for holding this hearing, and I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Engel.

We will go now to Mr. Chris Smith of New Jersey for 1 minute. He is the Africa Subcommittee chair.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, last week, staff director Greg Simpkins and I were in Jos, Nigeria, and heard from Christians who were survivors of fire bombings and a murderous campaign by Boko Haram, a sister-type organization to al-Shabaab.

We need to recognize more fully, I believe, the threat posed by these cowards, these terrorists, who are slaughtering people. And, as we all know, the reason why the Kenyans were targeted is because they have deployed peacekeepers to try to bring some kind of peace and stability to Somalia, which has suffered for so long under the grip of al-Shabaab.

I would point out that there was a statement made by al-Shabaab pointing out that they will intensify. "We will strike Kenyans where it hurts, turn their cities into graveyards and rivers of blood," which they say will flow in Nairobi.

To its credit, Kenya has not turned and run. Strongly, Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta has said, we will not be intimidated, we will not be cowed. And he talked about keeping his peacekeepers on the ground to try to bring some semblance to that war-torn country. We need to stand in solidarity with the Kenyans, Ugandans, who we all recall, just few years ago, while people were watching the World Cup, were slaughtered by al-Shabaab because Uganda had deployed peacekeepers as well.

So we need to do more to support this, because this growing intolerance, this hatred, is spreading throughout Africa. Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, they have to be defeated.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Karen Bass of California, ranking member of the Africa Subcommittee.

Ms. BASS. Thank you very much. I want to thank the chair and the ranking member for holding this hearing today.

The crisis at the Westgate Mall is deeply troubling and represents a serious security concern to East Africa, our partners, and, by extension, our country. While al-Shabaab has been significantly handicapped by counterterrorism activities carried out by the African Union mission in Somalia and with support from our military, the events of last month are a cold reminder that we can't lose focus in preventing and eliminating terrorist elements throughout the continent.

I want to remind my colleagues that, while we are here to address al-Shabaab, there are similar concerns in West Africa that also require our attention. These groups are destabilizing factors on

a continent that is, in fact, becoming more stable, peaceful, and is increasingly a target for economic investment.

I also want to mention that on the news this morning I saw that al-Shabaab essentially has initiated another threat, saying that they intend to go back into Kenya. And I really hope that our witnesses have an opportunity to address this.

Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

We will go now to Judge Ted Poe of Texas, chairman of the Terrorism Subcommittee, for 1 minute.

Mr. POE. While the attack on the Westgate Mall in Kenya was ongoing, the terrorist group responsible, al-Shabaab, was sending out tweets. Twitter knew about the al-Shabaab account a year before the attack, but Twitter refused to take it down. Unlike Facebook and YouTube that go after these terrorist sites, Twitter wants the FBI to tell them when to take down a particular site, and, apparently, the FBI remained silent for various reasons.

It is against U.S. law to support terrorists, and Twitter claims it doesn't allow terrorists to use the Twitter account. Twitter says that it has no way of knowing if an account is run by a terrorist group or not, but Twitter also has a rule, you can't claim to have a false identity on Twitter. So, either way, Twitter should be taking down terrorists accounts. Either the terrorist group really is operating the account or it is not and somebody is misrepresenting it.

It is time for Twitter to stop violating U.S. law and giving terrorists a free way to release their propaganda and hate to the world. I look for some answers today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Poe.

This morning, we are joined by a distinguished panel to address this issue.

We have Dr. Seth Jones back, associate director at RAND Corporation's International Security and Defense Policy Center. Dr. Jones specializes in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, with a particular focus on al-Qaeda.

We also have Mr. Don Borelli, chief operating officer of The Soufan Group, a 25-year veteran of the FBI, former special agent in charge of the Joint Terrorism Task Force in New York. Mr. Borelli's work at the FBI included investigations and research related to al-Shabaab, including leading the investigation of al-Shabaab's 2010 World Cup bombing.

Mr. Mohamed Farah is the executive director of Ka Joog, which means "stay away," a Somali-American youth organization working to counter the negative influences of groups like al-Shabaab in Somali communities in the United States. Mr. Farah has been on the front lines of his community's counter-radicalization efforts and was given the FBI Director's Community Leadership Award in 2012.

Richard Downie is the deputy director of the Africa program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Mr. Downie analyzes emerging political, economic, social, and security trends in Africa, with a particular focus on sources of instability on the sub-continent.

Without objection, the witnesses' full prepared statements will be made part of the record, and members may have 5 days to submit statements and questions and any extraneous material they want to put in for the record.

And we will ask all of our witnesses, of course, to summarize their testimony to 5 minutes, if you would.

And, Dr. Jones, we are going to begin with you.

**STATEMENT OF SETH JONES, PH.D., ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR,
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY CENTER,
RAND CORPORATION**

Mr. JONES. Thank you very much, Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and members of the committee. Thanks for inviting me and us in general to testify at this hearing, "Al-Shabaab: How Great a Threat?"

As those of you who just spoke noted, the al-Shabaab attack at Westgate Mall and its follow-up attacks—because it conducted attacks later in and around the Kenya-Somali border—are a stark reminder that this Somali-based group, an al-Qaeda affiliate, remains lethal. Despite some losses—it has been pushed out of Mogadishu, the Somali capital, and Kismayo, a logistical hub for the group—the group does present, in my view, a significant terrorism threat in the region, including to United States Embassies and citizens in East Africa, the Horn, and potentially in other areas.

At the moment, it is my judgment that al-Shabaab does not appear to be plotting attacks against the U.S. homeland, certainly not to the degree that an organization like al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen. But there are several reasons, in my view, why America should be concerned about al-Shabaab and recent developments.

First, as we saw with the Westgate attack, al-Shabaab does have a competent external operations capability. The Westgate Mall attack was well-planned, well-executed, involved impressive intelligence collection, surveillance, reconnaissance of the target. It had operatives prepared to ask a range of questions to individuals before killing them or letting them go inside the mall. These skills obviously could be used to attack the United States and its interests in that region.

Second, al-Shabaab officials have expressed an interest in targeting U.S. and other foreign targets in East Africa. They have also planned to kidnap Americans and other foreigners in the region. They have plotted attacks against malls, supermarkets, Embassies. Obviously, the U.S. Embassy was struck in 1998 by al-Qaeda in the same country.

Third, and perhaps most concerning, Americans from cities like Phoenix and Minneapolis over the past several years have traveled to Somalia to fight with al-Shabaab. We have had a number of suicide bombers. Other American cities—Boston; Seattle; Washington; San Diego; Columbus; Lewiston, Maine—have seen individuals either recruited or left for Somalia.

Now, the FBI and law enforcement in a range of these cities have done an effective job over the past several years of wrapping up a number of these individuals. But the ability of the group to recruit

in these areas, in particular reach out to individuals through social media, does pose a concern.

Based on an examination of counterterrorism efforts against al-Qaeda more broadly since its establishment in 1988, I would suggest the U.S. consider several steps to help weaken al-Shabaab in this region, including, more broadly, in the United States.

But in the region, the first is implementing what I would call a light footprint strategy that focuses on covert intelligence, law enforcement, clandestine, special operations forces—I covered al-Shabaab somewhat when I was in U.S. special operations—and then diplomatic efforts to work with the Somali Government and its neighbors, the good case, I think, of working with the Somali Government and its neighbors, such as Kenya and Ethiopia, in their efforts to counter al-Shabaab in its financial logistics and other networks in the region and in Somalia itself.

This means, just to be clear about this, in my view, the United States should not consider and should certainly not deploy conventional U.S. forces to Somalia. Again, I think this is a good case of working with the Somali Government and local governments in the region to take the lead in this effort. The U.S. role should be what I would call a light footprint. I would be happy to spend more time talking about that.

The second issue, and one that I think we have not done a particularly good job, is to aggressively undermine al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda's, more broadly, extremist ideology. For al-Shabaab, the struggle to overthrow the Somali Government and establish an extreme version of Sharia is just as much an ideological as it is a military struggle.

The U.S. over the past 2 decades has done things like disbanded the U.S. Information Agency. In my view, we have a very disjointed information campaign among multiple agencies. I think when we saw really one of the most effective efforts against the Soviet Union in the cold war, done, among others, by Ronald Reagan, it was a substantially increased overt and covert effort to combat the Soviet Union's ideology. Again, I think we are weak here.

Let me just close briefly with a statement from al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri back in 2005: "I say to you that we are in a battle, and more than half of this battle is in the battle of the media, and that we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our umma."

In conclusion, members of the committee, I would just like to highlight that al-Qaeda realizes this is an ideological battle.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Jones follows:]

The Terrorist Threat from Al Shabaab

Seth G. Jones

RAND Office of External Affairs

CT-400

October 2013

Testimony presented before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on October 3, 2013

This product is part of the RAND Corporation testimony series. RAND testimonies record testimony presented by RAND associates to federal, state, or local legislative committees; government-appointed commissions and panels; and private review and oversight bodies. The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors. RAND® is a registered trademark.



Published 2013 by the RAND Corporation
1776 Main Street, P.O. Box 2138, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138
1200 South Hayes Street, Arlington, VA 22202-5050
4570 Fifth Avenue, Suite 600, Pittsburgh, PA 15213-2665
RAND URL: <http://www.rand.org/>
To order RAND documents or to obtain additional information, contact
Distribution Services: Telephone: (310) 451-7002;
Email: order@rand.org

Seth G. Jones¹
The RAND Corporation

*The Terrorist Threat from Al Shabaab*²

Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs
United States House of Representatives

October 3, 2013

Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify at this hearing, "Al-Shabaab: How Great a Threat?" This is a timely hearing because of the recent attacks in East Africa, the movement of some Americans to Somalia to fight with the al-Qa'ida linked group al Shabaab (the Youth), and the accessibility in the United States of al Shabaab propaganda on social media sites. This testimony is divided into three sections. The first briefly examines the threat from al Shabaab. The second section discusses U.S. counterterrorism steps. And the third offers a brief conclusion, reiterating the importance of countering the ideology of al Qa'ida and its allies.

Assessing the Threat from al Shabaab

The al Shabaab terrorist attack at Westgate Mall in Kenya and its follow-up attacks are a stark reminder that the Somalia-based group remains lethal. Despite recently being pushed out of Mogadishu, the Somali capital, and Kismayu, a key logistical hub for the group, Shabaab presents a significant terrorism threat in the region, including to U.S. embassies and its citizens in East Africa. Al Shabaab, whose leaders publicly pledged allegiance to al Qa'ida in February 2012, has been on the radar screen of U.S. counterterrorism officials for several years. As early as 2009, al Shabaab operatives began courting al Qa'ida, issuing recordings with such titles as "At Your Service Osama."

Al Shabaab seeks to overthrow the Somali government and establish an Islamic emirate with an extreme version of sharia (Islamic law). Its leaders support al Qa'ida's ideology of re-establishing a caliphate, though they are focused on East Africa.³ Al Shabaab has

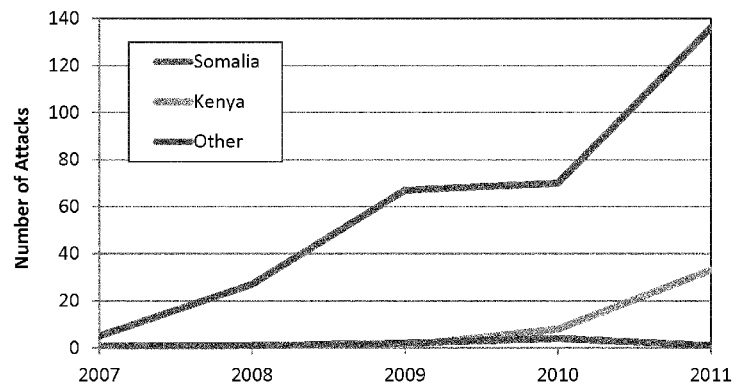
¹ The opinions and conclusions expressed in this testimony are the author's alone and should not be interpreted as representing those of RAND or any of the sponsors of its research. This product is part of the RAND Corporation testimony series. RAND testimonies record testimony presented by RAND associates to federal, state, or local legislative committees; government-appointed commissions and panels; and private review and oversight bodies. The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors.

² This testimony is available for free download at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT400.html>.

³ See, for example, Al Shabaab, Final Statement of the Conference of Islamic State Scholars in Somalia, December 3, 2011.

concentrated its attacks on the Somali government and neighboring states that are conducting military operations against al Shabaab, especially Kenya and Ethiopia. Since 2007, 85 percent of al Shabaab's attacks have taken place in Somalia, with another 12 percent in Kenya, as highlighted in Figure 1.⁴

Figure 1: Al Shabaab Attacks, 2007-2011⁵



At the moment, al Shabaab does not appear to be plotting attacks against the U.S. homeland. But there are several reasons why America should still be concerned about al Shabaab. First, al Shabaab possesses a competent external operations capability to strike targets outside of Somalia. The Westgate Mall attack was well-planned and well-executed, and involved sophisticated intelligence collection, surveillance, and reconnaissance of the target. These skills could be used for other types of attacks directly targeting the United States and its citizens.

Second, al Shabaab officials, including leader Ahmed Abdi al-Mohamed, have expressed an interest in striking U.S. and other foreign targets in East Africa, according to U.S. and Western government officials. They have also planned to kidnap Americans and other foreigners in the region, as well as plotted attacks against malls, supermarkets, embassies, and other locations frequented by Westerners. After all, al Shabaab leaders consider the United States an enemy

⁴ The data is from the Global Terrorism Database at the University of Maryland's National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), accessed on September 27, 2013.

⁵ Thanks to Nathan Chandler for help with the figure. The data is from the Global Terrorism Database at the University of Maryland's National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), accessed on September 27, 2013.

and its citizens as “kuffar,” or apostates.⁶ As one al Shabaab document noted, it is halal (lawful) to kill and rob non-Muslims: “The French and the English are to be treated equally: Their blood and their money are halal wherever they may be. No Muslim in any part of the world may cooperate with them in any way ... It leads to apostasy and expulsion from Islam.” The document then added: “Ethiopians, Kenyans, Ugandans and Burundians are just like the English and the French because they have invaded the Islamic country of Somalia and launched war on Islam and Muslims.”⁷

Third, and perhaps most concerning, Americans from cities like Phoenix and Minneapolis have traveled to Somalia over the past several years to fight with al Shabaab. Between 2007 and 2010, more than 40 Americans joined al Shabaab, making the United States a primary exporter of Western fighters to the al Qa’ida-affiliated group.⁸ Al Shabaab has made an active and deliberate attempt to recruit young American men both in person and on the Internet. Shabaab recruitment in Somali-American communities began around the 2006 invasion of Somalia, a predominantly Muslim country, by Ethiopia, which has a large Christian population and is Somalia’s historic enemy. Some of the initial recruiters had participated in earlier rounds of fighting in Somalia and returned to the United States as veterans with tantalizing war stories.⁹ In addition to Minneapolis and Phoenix, al Shabaab recruiters have attempted to attract individuals in other American cities like Boston, Seattle, Washington, San Diego, Columbus, and Lewiston, ME. Many of these Americans transited through the U.S.-Mexican border, though others flew out of the United States legally by airplane.

The experience of these Americans has been mixed. Some found Somalia an inhospitable environment and went elsewhere. Others became enmeshed in internal rivalries. The American operative Omar Shafik Hammami, for instance, was killed in an ambush in early September 2013 by his former extremist allies. The son of a Southern Baptist mother and a Syrian Muslim father, Hammami was raised in Daphne, Alabama and later embraced Salafism before moving to Somalia in 2006 to fight for al Shabaab. And still others died in the fighting. One of the first Americans to become a suicide attacker, Shirwa Ahmed, joined al Shabaab and blew himself up in Somalia in October 2008. Another recruit, 22-year-old Abidsalan Hussein Ali from Minneapolis, agreed to be a suicide bomber and attacked African Union troops on October 29, 2011.

⁶ Al Shabaab, *The Experience of Our Brothers in Somalia*, undated.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁸ Committee on Homeland Security, *Al Shabaab: Recruitment and Radicalization within the Muslim American Community and the Threat to the Homeland* (Washington, DC: U.S. House of Representatives, July 27, 2011), p. 2.

⁹ Brian Michael Jenkins, *Stray Dogs and Virtual Armies: Radicalization and Recruitment to Jihadist Terrorism in the United States Since 9/11* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2011), pp. 12-14.

In response to the movement of Americans to Somalia, the FBI spearheaded a nationwide counterterrorism effort to identify and arrest al Shabaab militants. With the help of local law enforcement and the Somali-American community, the FBI has arrested numerous individuals in the United States, such as Zachary Adam Chesser, for their involvement with al Shabaab. In May 2013, for example, Omer Abdi Mohamed was sentenced to 144 months in federal prison; Abdifatah Yusuf Isse, Salah Osman Ahmed, and Ahmed Hussein Mahamud were each sentenced to 36 months in federal prison; and Mahamud Said Omar was sentenced to 20 years in prison for involvement with al Shabaab.¹⁰

Americans need a sober understanding of the group. Al Shabaab does not appear to be plotting attacks against the U.S. homeland, and it has suffered a series of military defeats at the hands of Somali, Kenyan, and other African forces. But as the Westgate Mall attack shows, al Shabaab has the capability to conduct high-profile attacks in the region. The United States should be on high alert in East Africa.

U.S. Counterterrorism Actions

Based on an examination of counterterrorism efforts against al Qa'ida's since its establishment in 1988, the United States can take two steps to help weaken al Shabaab in East Africa.¹¹ The first is implementing a light footprint strategy that focuses on covert intelligence, law enforcement, clandestine Special Operations Forces, and diplomatic efforts to support the Somali government and its neighboring allies – especially Kenya and Ethiopia – in their efforts to counter al Shabaab and its financial and logistical support networks. A light footprint strategy means refraining from deploying conventional U.S. forces to Somalia. In cases such as Somalia, where terrorists do not pose an immediate threat to the U.S. homeland, the United States should support local governments and allies who take the lead. The U.S. goal should be to support local civilian and security agencies capable of undermining al Qa'ida's ideology and capabilities.

The second step is to aggressively undermine al Shabaab's – and al Qa'ida's – extremist ideology. For al Shabaab leaders, the struggle to overthrow the Somali government and establish an extreme version of sharia is just as much an ideological as a military struggle. As one al Shabaab document summarized, the group has a media arm that "produces and distributes the jihadist movies of the movement as well as meetings and speeches for the leaders and spreading

¹⁰ U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Minnesota, Four More Men Sentenced for Providing Material Support to Terrorists, May 14, 2013.

¹¹ Seth G. Jones, *Hunting in the Shadows: The Pursuit of Al Qa'ida Since 9/11* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2012).

them across the World Wide Web with cooperation with the brothers in the Media Front.”¹² This explains why the turbaned al Shabaab gunmen that infiltrated the Westgate Mall arrived with a set of religious trivia questions. As terrified civilians hid in toilet stalls, behind mannequins, in ventilation shafts, and underneath food court tables, the assailants began a high-stakes game of twenty questions to separate Muslims from those they considered infidels. They asked captives to recite specific Quranic verses and to name relatives of the Prophet Muhammad, killing those who failed to provide the correct answers.¹³

Unfortunately, U.S. efforts against al Shabaab – and al Qa’ida more broadly – have been disjointed. In 1999, the State Department disbanded the U.S. Information Agency, which played a prominent role in countering Soviet ideology during the Cold War. Today, no U.S. government agency has the lead role for countering the ideology of al Qa’ida and its broader movement.¹⁴ The State Department has the lead for public diplomacy, but has not developed a comprehensive inter-agency strategy to counter al Qa’ida’s ideology. The CIA is involved in some clandestine activity, but most senior officials do not view undermining al Qa’ida’s ideology as its core mission. The Department of Defense is also involved in some efforts, but they are dispersed among U.S. Central Command, U.S. Special Operations Command, and other organizations. Ultimately, it is the President and the National Security Staff’s responsibility to appoint a lead agency and hold it responsible. An effective campaign has to be done carefully, however, and led by credible Muslims.

One of the most important battlefields against al Shabaab is on the Internet. After all, the struggle against al Qa’ida and its allies – including al Shabaab – is, in part, a struggle of ideas. Over the past decade, radicalization has become much less formal. The rise of the Internet and social media has fundamentally changed terrorist activities. Individuals like Anwar al-Awlaki (now deceased), Adam Gadahn, and Shaykh Abdallah Ibrahim al-Faisal have utilized YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Internet chat rooms, and other forums to distribute propaganda, recruit new supporters, and seek financial aid. Some, like Awlaki before his death, were successful in motivating individuals to conduct terrorist attacks. Others, like Gadahn, largely failed. As one al Qa’ida communiqué blithely noted in 2011, “In today’s world, there’s a place for the underground mujahideen who support the religion of Allah, men and women and youths in their cities and villages, and from their homes, and with their individual creativity and what is possible for them,

¹² Al Shabaab, *The Experience of Our Brothers in Somalia*, undated.

¹³ Rukmini Callimachi, “Terrorists Used New Tactic to Spare Some Muslims,” *Associated Press*, September 29, 2013.

¹⁴ The United States also has the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), an independent federal agency that oversees all U.S. civilian international media. But its effectiveness has been highly debated. Broadcasters within the BBG network include the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (Alhurra TV and Radio Sawa), Radio Free Asia, and the Office of Cuba Broadcasting (Radio and TV Marti).

as long as they are parallel with the general plans of the mujahideen ... the arena of electronic warfare."¹⁵

A Battle of Hearts and Minds

In the end, the struggle against al Shabaab and the broader al Qa'ida movement will be decades, not months or years. Much like the Cold War against Marxism-Leninism, it is also predominantly an ideological struggle. When Ronald Reagan came into office in 1981, he substantially increased overt and covert efforts to combat the Soviet Union's ideology. In early 1982, for example, White House staffers drafted National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 32, which Reagan signed into law on May 20, 1982. It authorized broad-ranging information and other activities to "reverse" the expansion of Soviet control across the globe.¹⁶ "Democracy triumphed in the cold war," Reagan wrote in the final chapter of his memoirs, "because it was a battle of values – between one system that gave preeminence to the state and another that gave preeminence to the individual and freedom."¹⁷

While there are obvious differences between America's Cold War campaign against Marxism-Leninism and today's struggle against al Qa'ida and other extremist groups, both involve ideological components. Al Qa'ida leaders are acutely aware of the importance of ideas. Al Qa'ida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri remarked in a 2005 letter to al Qa'ida in Iraq leader Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi: "I say to you: that we are in a battle, and more than half of this battle is in the battlefield of the media. And that we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma."¹⁸

Since the struggle against al Qa'ida and its allies – including al Shabaab – is partly an ideological one, it is high time for the United States to put sufficient resources into undermining al Qa'ida's extremist ideology.

¹⁵ As-Sahab Media, "You Are Held Responsible Only for Thyself – Part Two," June 2011.

¹⁶ Ronald Reagan, *An American Life: The Autobiography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990).

¹⁷ The White House, U.S. National Security Decision Directive Number 32, May 20, 1982.

¹⁸ Letter from Ayman al-Zawahiri to Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, July 9, 2005. Released by the Harmony Project, Combating Terrorism Center, West Point.

Chairman ROYCE. Let's go now to Mr. Borelli.

**STATEMENT OF MR. DAN BORELLI, CHIEF OPERATING
OFFICER, THE SOUFAN GROUP**

Mr. BORELLI. Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of this committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today on such an important topic.

As mentioned, I am a 25-year veteran of the FBI. My last position was assistant special agent in charge of the Joint Terrorism Task Force in New York. In that position, I was responsible for FBI international terrorism matters, including those involving Africa, and I led the team of more than 60 FBI agents to Kampala, Uganda, in July 2010 to investigate the simultaneous suicide bombing attacks during the World Cup soccer game, which was conducted by al-Shabaab. So I have firsthand experience in dealing with the atrocities committed by this terrorist group.

Since leaving the FBI, as COO of The Soufan Group I have helped oversee our countering violent extremism, or CVE, research, including a recent study into countering the narratives of violent extremism. And I led our team to Minnesota, Kenya, and Uganda, focusing our research on al-Shabaab. I personally interview policymakers, community leaders, security officials, and young people in the cross-hairs of al-Shabaab recruiters. And that is what I would like to focus on today, is al-Shabaab's recruitment efforts, particularly those involving Western youth.

It is important to note that al-Shabaab—their political agenda is divided into different factions: The nationalist agenda, which aims to fight against foreign troops in Somalia and to install a Sharia-based government in Somalia; and the global jihad agenda, aligned with al-Qaeda and focusing its efforts against the West and its allies.

This division of ideals within al-Shabaab is also reflected in al-Shabaab's recruiting efforts. The narrative of the nationalist agenda uses reports of violence in Somalia, along with a compelling combination of propaganda that appeal to a sense of obligation to defend Somalia from foreign invaders. The global agenda is in line with the broader al-Qaeda message, claiming that the West is at war with Islam.

After speaking with many members of the Somali-American community in Minnesota, we found that the narrative that resonates loudest with Somali youth is overwhelmingly political as opposed to religious. It focuses on the nationalist agenda and is driven by a deep nationalist concern for the future of Somalia.

However, just because a young person might be enticed to join al-Shabaab to defend his Somali homeland doesn't mean that he isn't a threat to the U.S. Our fear is that, while Somalis here in the U.S. may travel to Somalia with a nationalist agenda to defend Somalia, they could be converted into following the global agenda, the al-Qaeda agenda, and return to the U.S. to launch attacks here.

We have seen this pattern with other communities. The thwarted attack against the New York Subway system in 2009 illustrates this threat. Najibullah Zazi, an Afghan who traveled back to his homeland with the idea of fighting there, was co-opted by al-Qaeda

and convinced he could do more good by taking the fight back to the U.S.

So what, therefore, can we do to mitigate this threat and counter al-Shabaab's recruiting tactics both here in the U.S. and abroad? Our strategy needs to be multifaceted. We need to continue to put pressure on al-Shabaab through military, law enforcement, intelligence, and economic resources. We need to expand our efforts in promoting education and critical thinking among would-be recruits for terrorist groups.

As we have seen in Minnesota, many who join al-Shabaab to help their Somali homeland, they need to understand that al-Shabaab is not helping their homeland. Rather, it is committing atrocities against its own people. Potentially vulnerable recruits need to see how they are being manipulated by al-Shabaab. They need to understand that al-Shabaab will turn their attentions to help Somalia into a global terrorist agenda that aims to export violence and kill innocent people.

How do we do this? We need to understand that extremists use local grievances as initial motivators to recruit, so the counter-narrative must take place at the local level. And we need to be very strategic in the medium, the message, and the messenger we use. Our focus should be on helping credible voices in the community counter the message of violent jihad offered by al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda, and the like.

And the Internet needs to be an integral part of this strategy. As we have recently seen, al-Shabaab was bragging on Twitter about the attack on the Westgate Mall. We need to be just as effective using the Internet, if not more so.

Lastly, we must not make the same mistake with al-Shabaab that we did with al-Qaeda, and that is viewing it as only a local or regional threat. In the early 1990s, many smart people ignored al-Qaeda because it was seen as a group only focused on the Middle East and Central Asia. We have seen how a terrorist organization gone unchecked can morph into a global threat. We must not let that happen with al-Shabaab.

I look forward to expanding on these points and others during the question-and-answer period.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Borelli.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Borelli follows:]

Don Borelli
Chief Operating Officer, The Soufan Group
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
October 3, 2013

By way of background, I'm a 25-year veteran of the FBI. My last position was Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the Joint Terrorism Taskforce in New York. The New York FBI office has extraterritorial responsibility for Africa; consequently, I was responsible for FBI international terrorism matters involving Africa. In that position, I led a team of more than 60 FBI Agents to Kampala, Uganda in July 2010 to assist the Uganda Police Force in their investigation of the simultaneous suicide bombing attacks during the final game of the 2010 World Cup Soccer game – which was conducted by al Shabaab. So I have firsthand experience in dealing with the atrocities committed by this terrorist group.

Since leaving the FBI, as COO of The Soufan Group, I have helped oversee our Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) research, including our recent year-long global study into Countering the Narratives of Extremism, which we launched on September 9th of this year. I led our team to Minnesota, Kenya and Uganda, focusing our research on Al Shabaab. And I personally interviewed policy makers, community leaders, security officials, and young people in the crosshairs of al Shabaab recruiters. And this is what I would like to focus on today: al Shabaab's recruitment efforts, particularly those focusing on Western youth.

**

While the September 21st attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, put al-Shabaab back into the international spotlight, it never left the lenses of security practitioners and CVE experts. Somalis here in the U.S.—not all of them being American citizens—account for nearly a quarter of the terrorism indictments in the United States since 2009. About two-thirds of these indictments were for traveling or attempting to travel abroad to fight in Somalia or to send others to fight, while the other third involve financing to al Shabaab. (*Source – The Fordham Ledger: Facts and Figures in National Security*)

It's important to note that al Shabaab's political agenda is divided into different factions: the nationalistic agenda, which aims to fight against foreign troops in Somalia, regain lost territory within Somalia, and to install a sharia-based government in Somalia; and the global jihad agenda, aligned with al Qaeda and focusing its efforts against the West and its allies. This division of ideals is also reflected in al Shabaab's recruiting efforts.

The narrative of the nationalist agenda uses reports of violence in their ancestral home, along with a compelling combination of propaganda, and accurate reporting, that appeal to a sense of obligation to defend Somalia from "foreign invaders." The

global agenda, is in line with the broader al Qaeda message of a global Islamic caliphate.

After speaking with many members of the Somali-American community in Minnesota, we found that the narrative that resonates loudest with Somali youth is overwhelmingly political as opposed to religious. It focuses on the nationalist agenda, and is driven by a deep nationalist concern for the future of Somalia.

However, just because a young person might be enticed to join al Shabaab to defend his Somali homeland, this doesn't mean he isn't a threat to the U.S. Our fear is that while Somalis here in the U.S. may travel to Somalia with a nationalist agenda, and intend to stay and fight there, they could be converted into following the global agenda—the al Qaeda agenda—and return to the U.S. to launch attacks here.

We have seen this pattern with other communities. The thwarted attack against the New York subway system in 2009 illustrates this threat. Najibullah Zazi, an Afghan who traveled back to his homeland with the idea of fighting there, was coopted by al Qaeda and convinced he could do more good by taking the fight back to the U.S. And as we all know, stopping attacks from U.S. citizens and green card holders is a much, much, greater challenge than stopping attacks from foreigners. The Boston Marathon tragedy is a stark reminder of this threat.

What, therefore, can we be doing to mitigate the threat and counter al Shabaab's recruiting tactics both here in the U.S. and abroad?

Our strategy needs to be multifaceted. We need to continue to put pressure on al Shabaab through militarily, law enforcement, intelligence and economic resources, and we need to continue our support for the African Union and other forces attempting to rebuild Somalia.

We need to expand our efforts in promoting education and critical thinking among would-be recruits for groups. As we have seen in Minnesota, many who join al Shabaab do so to help their Somali homeland. They need to understand that al Shabaab is not helping their homeland; rather, it is committing atrocities against its own people. Potentially vulnerable recruits need to see how al Shabaab and its allies in Al Qaeda are manipulating them. They need to understand that al Shabaab will turn their intentions to help Somalia into a global terrorist agenda that aims to export violence and kill innocent people in so doing.

So how do we do this?

We need to understand that extremists use local grievances as initial motivators to recruit, so the counter-narrative must take place at the local level, and we need to be very strategic in the medium, the message, and the messenger we use. For example, where people are being recruited because of alleged (or even true) local or tribal grievances, it is community leaders and groups that need to be on the forefront of the response. Our focus should be on helping credible voices in the community counter the message of violent jihad offered by al Shabaab, al Qaeda, and the like.

And as we know, the Internet has created new challenges in combatting the violent extremist message. As recently as last week we saw al Shabaab bragging about the Westgate attack on Twitter. We need to be just as effective in using the Internet, if not more so.

Lastly, we must not make the same mistake with al Shabaab that we did with al Qaeda—that is, viewing it as only a local or regional threat. In the early 1990s many smart people ignored al Qaeda because it was seen as a group only focused on the Middle East and Central Asia. We have seen how a terrorist organization gone unchecked can morph into a global threat. We must not let that happen with al Shabaab.

I look forward to expanding on these points, and others, during our question and answer session.

###

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Farah?

**STATEMENT OF MR. MOHAMED FARAH, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, KA JOOG**

Mr. FARAH. Bismillah, ir-Rahman, ir-Rahim. In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I would like to thank you for the invitation to talk about this important matter. Our community stands in solidarity with the people of Kenya and the folks that lost their loved ones in the recent attacks a week ago.

My name is Mohamed Farah. I am the executive director of Ka Joog. I am here today as a concerned citizen of this great Nation and on behalf of the largest Somali-American youth organization in the United States.

Ka Joog was formed in 2007 by a dozen students from high-school-level to college-level students who had few things in common, such as education, art, positive role models in the community, and proud citizens of a country with limitless opportunity for those who are willing to work hard.

The term "Ka Joog" means to stay away or stay out, and the message behind that is to get youth away from any negative influences that hinders their success or reaching their best potential.

We are all wondering the same thing in this room this morning: How is it that American youth can succumb to radical recruitment? Sure, any of us today sitting here would not dream of strapping explosives on, let alone even fight alongside extremists for whatever overly glorified cause. But why? Because we have all been educated, well educated, to understand that our human potential is worth far more than an explosive vest and that our human purpose transcends the murderous agenda of extremists. The number-one issue of our community is the recruitment of our youth.

As Americans, we must constantly assure ourselves that these attempts made by al-Shabaab and their affiliate entities are acts of desperation. Religious scholars have already denounced their claim to legitimacy in the light of Islam. At this particular point, the veil slowly has been lifting to reveal the true agenda and political intent of this extremist group.

We shall no longer be the victim of their terror. We shall no longer let their actions affect our children. And, most certainly, we shall not generalize by the actions of a few individuals who have tainted the name of the Somali people across this great Nation.

Al-Shabaab has taken every possible measure in full capacity to cloak their ideology with an appealing message to our youth. They have targeted the disenfranchised, marginalized, and socially estranged youth with a message of restitution infused with religious righteousness. Those young men that left victim to deception are no longer with us today, and thus will be the same fate of so many more youth unless we act swiftly. Why is it that we spend millions of dollars on counterterrorism and still American citizens are disappearing and fighting alongside with al-Shabaab?

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for the time to address this concern. I would like to finish by saying that this is an uphill battle, that we must call on the cooperation of all agencies, communities, and organizations who share a vested interest in the safety

of our youth and who wish to seize the efforts of extremist entities. We must empower local partners to be more adequately equipped to deter youth from becoming radicalized and recruited.

Ka Joog and the rest of our community lack the vital resources—I will repeat again: Ka Joog and the rest of our community lack the vital resources to safeguard our children and, most importantly, to safeguard our freedoms here in the United States of America. Ka Joog and the community has been fighting since 2007, and I urge you, this committee and our Federal Government, my Government, to stand with us to fight al-Shabaab and eliminate this cancerous ideology and take this fight to Somalia.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Farah, very much. [The prepared statement of Mr. Farah follows:]

KA JOOG

ENRICHING THE LIVES OF SOMALI-AMERICAN YOUTH

My name is **Mohamed Farah**. I am the Executive Director of Ka Joog. I am here today as a concern citizen of this great nation, and on the behalf of the largest Somali-American youth organization in the U.S., Ka Joog was formed back in 2007 by a dozen of students, from high school level to college students, who had few things in common such as education, art, positive role models in the community and proud citizens of a country with limitless opportunity for those who are willing to work hard. The term Ka Joog means to stay out or stay away, and the message behind that is to get youth away from any negative influences that hinders there success or reaching their best potential.

We are all wondering the same thing in this room this morning. How is it that, our American youth can succumb to radical recruitment? Sure, anyone of us today sitting here wouldn't dream of strapping explosives on let alone even fight alongside extremists for whatever overly glorified cause. But Why?, Why, because we have been all well-educated to understand that our human potential is worth far more than an explosive vest, and that our human purpose transcends the murderous agenda of extremist. The number one issue of our community is the recruitment of our youth.

As Americans we must constantly assure ourselves, that these attempts made by Al-Shabaab and their affiliate entities are acts of desperation. Religious scholars have already denounced their claim to legitimacy in the light of Islam. At this particular point the veil slowly has been lifting to reveal the true agenda and political intent of this extremist group. We shall no longer be victims of their terror, we shall no longer let their actions affect our children, and most certainly we shall not be generalized by the actions of a few individuals who have tainted the name of the Somali people.

Al Shabaab has taken every possible measure in full capacity to cloak their ideology with an appealing message to our youth. They have targeted the disenfranchised, marginalized, and socially estranged youth with a message of restitution infused with religious righteousness. Those young men that felt victim to deception are no longer with us today. And thus will be the same fate of so many more youth unless we act with swiftly. Why is it that we spend millions of dollars on counter terrorism and still American citizens are disappearing and fighting alongside with Al-Shabaab.

In conclusion I would like to thank you for the time to address this concern. I would like to finish by saying that this is an uphill battle that must call on the cooperation of all agencies, communities, and organizations who share a vested interest in the safety of our youth, and who wish to cease the efforts of extremist entities. We must empower local partners to be more adequately equipped to deter youth from becoming radicalized and recruited. Ka Joog and the rest of our community lack the vital resources to safeguard our children and most importantly to safeguard of freedoms here in the United States of America.

Chairman ROYCE. And we will go now to Mr. Downie.

**STATEMENT OF MR. RICHARD DOWNIE, DEPUTY DIRECTOR
AND FELLOW, AFRICA PROGRAM, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC
AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

Mr. DOWNIE. Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on the threat posed by al-Shabaab.

I will make some brief remarks about the evolution of this terrorist group, its current capabilities and objectives, and offer some thoughts on how its threats can best be dealt with by the United States and its allies in East Africa.

Al-Shabaab is a fragmented group representing different interests and objectives. It began as the armed wing of a broader Islamist movement which briefly governed parts of Somalia before it was toppled by invading troops from Ethiopia in 2006. It gained popularity by presenting itself as a nationalist movement protecting Somalis from foreign aggression. Pragmatists within its ranks were quick to spot business opportunities as the group took more territory. Many of its foot soldiers tagged along in the hope of a meal or were coerced to join.

But there has always been a faction within al-Shabaab that has harbored grander ambitions of waging international jihad. This faction now has control and has been strengthening its ties with al-Qaeda.

The Westgate attack reflects this group's ascendancy. Its leader, Ahmed Godane, said the aim was to avenge Kenya for its invasion and occupation of southern Somalia, launched 2 years ago to push back chronic instability from the two countries' shared border. Al-Shabaab had a similar motive when it staged bomb attacks in Uganda in 2010. Uganda is the largest contributor to the African Union's peacekeeping force in Somalia.

But the targeting of the Westgate, a shopping mall packed with families from around the world, shows that al-Shabaab wished to make a broader statement, not only to the countries in the region but also to the Western allies which support them.

There are some key points to bear in mind about the attack.

First, we should be wary of using Westgate to draw broader conclusions about the risk posed by al-Shabaab to the U.S. homeland. The threat level is not substantially or necessarily changed by events in Nairobi, more than 7,000 miles away.

The most alarming aspect of Westgate is that al-Shabaab has, from its perspective, scored a big hit with relative ease. It has realized that all it needs is a soft target, good planning, low-tech weaponry, plenty of ammunition, and determined attackers willing to die for their cause. We should expect attempts to repeat this method of attack.

The Westgate attack also continues the operational shift of al-Shabaab toward an international agenda that aligns more closely with al-Qaeda. It is therefore more likely to look for targets beyond Somalia's borders and seek opportunities to team up with like-minded groups in the broader region. There are suggestions, for example, that the Westgate attack may have been carried out with the help of a Kenya-based affiliate, al-Hijra.

If U.S. citizens are found to have been involved in Westgate, the complexion of the attack changes significantly. We know that a small number of U.S. Citizens have supported al-Shabaab in the past, both physically and materially, but that support has tended to flow one way, toward Somalia. There is little evidence pointing toward any intent to attack the U.S. Homeland, but vigilance is required. Building trust with the Somalia community in the United States will be a critical part to the prevention strategy.

However, the more immediate threat is not to the U.S. homeland but to the interests of the United States in East Africa, which are substantial. Therefore, I have some brief suggestions for the United States and its partners to consider.

First, the U.S. should intensify efforts to help Kenya strengthen its ability to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks. Improving intelligence capacities is critical. So, too, is the need to improve communication and coordination among its security agencies.

Instilling a security consciousness among the Kenyan public is another key way to bridge the intelligence gap. But it is a challenge, given the high levels of distrust in the police, who cannot be relied upon to act on information from the public. The U.S. should seek to build momentum behind efforts to reform and professionalize the Kenyan police, turning them into an organization that people respect rather than fear or deride.

As the Kenyan authorities seeks to neutralize the threat from al-Shabaab, the assistance of Somali-Kenyans and Somalis living in Kenya will be critical. The United States should urge the Kenyan authorities to reach out to these communities and avoid heavy-handed actions that might alienate them, such as threatening to expel refugees.

But, ultimately, the key to dealing with al-Shabaab will be found in Somalia. Therefore, removing the threat of al-Shabaab means isolating and relentlessly pursuing the most extreme wing responsible for the Westgate attack.

As for the majority of al-Shabaab members, who joined for reasons other than the pursuit of international jihad, it may be possible to rehabilitate them through a combination of threats and inducements. They may even be persuaded to abandon violence and join the political process.

More broadly, policy responses must be formulated to tackle the conditions of insecurity, economic hardship, and poor governance, which allowed extremism to take hold. The United States is an important funder of the Somalia Federal Government. It should use this influence to press for inclusive governance, improved security, and delivery of public services.

I thank you for your attention and welcome your questions.

Chairman ROYCE. We thank you, Mr. Downie.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Downie follows:]

Statement before the House Foreign Affairs Committee

“AL SHABAAB: HOW GREAT A THREAT?”

A Statement by

Richard Downie

Deputy Director and Fellow, Africa Program

Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

October 3, 2013

2170 Rayburn House Office Building

Statement for the Record

Chairman Royce, Ranking Member Engel, and distinguished members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to testify on the threat posed by Al Shabaab. I will make some brief remarks about the evolution of this terrorist group, its current capabilities and objectives, and offer some thoughts on how its threat can best be dealt with by the United States and its allies in the East Africa region. With your permission, I will submit a longer written statement for the record.

Introduction

The gun attack and four-day siege which left at least 67 people dead at the Westgate shopping mall in Kenya's capital, Nairobi, has focused minds on the threat posed by the Somalia-based terrorist group, Al Shabaab. The group was quick to claim responsibility for the atrocity. In an audio message, its leader Ahmed Godane, said the motivation was to avenge Kenya for its invasion of southern Somalia in October 2011 and to put pressure on the Kenyan authorities to withdraw its troops, which remain in occupation of a large slice of Somalia's south-west, adjacent to Kenya's eastern border. If that was the objective, it appears to have backfired, at least for the time being. Kenyans have come together impressively in the days since the attack, from the long lines of volunteers giving blood to the wounded to the social media campaign organized on twitter under the hashtag, #WeAreOne. And while tough questions are being asked about the conduct of Kenya's security services before and during the attack, the government of Uhuru Kenyatta has vowed that its troops will not be deterred from their campaign in Somalia.

The evolution of Al Shabaab

Al Shabaab has undergone a steady evolution since it emerged as the extremist, armed wing of the Islamic Courts Union, a much broader based Islamist movement that established a modicum of security in parts of Somalia before it was swept aside by invading troops from Ethiopia—with tacit U.S. support—at the end of 2006. These events allowed Al Shabaab to present itself as a nationalist force bravely resisting aggression by Somalia's traditional enemy—Ethiopia—and vastly increased its support among ordinary Somalis, particularly as the occupation became prolonged and brutal. By the time the final Ethiopian troops withdrew in January 2009, Al Shabaab found itself in control of much of southern Somalia.

Faced with the challenge of governing territory for the first time, Al Shabaab quickly resorted to harsh and intolerant tactics. Music was banned, women forced to cover themselves, children forcibly recruited to its fighting brigades, and stonings and amputations meted out to those who transgressed its extreme interpretation of Sharia law. At the same time, Al Shabaab's resistance to the Western-backed Transitional Federal Government in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, meant that no target was considered off limits. Revulsion at its tactics reached new heights when 19 of the country's brightest and best young people were blown up by a suicide bomber as a government minister addressed their graduation ceremony in December 2009. The nadir came in 2011 when famine befell areas of Somalia under Al Shabaab control because of the group's failure to respond to a chronic drought and its refusal to allow international humanitarian aid workers access to the needy. By the time the emergency was declared over, more than a quarter of a million people had died, half of them children under the age of six.

In the meantime, Al Shabaab was pushed back by the combined pressure of a domestic backlash and foreign intervention. Most notably Kenya, which resolved to take action. It has become exasperated by the permanent insecurity on its shared border, apprehensive about the implications for its tourist industry and for a major infrastructural program that would extend across the country's northern region, and alarmed by the steady stream of Somalis crossing into its territory to take up residence in the world's largest refugee camp, Dadaab. Nearly 2,500 Kenyan troops invaded southern Somalia in October 2011, eventually succeeding in pushing Al Shabaab back from the border and ousting the group from its main stronghold—and economic lifeline—the southern port city of Kismayo. Under pressure, in retreat, and cut off from lucrative port revenues, Al Shabaab shifted tactics and retreated into asymmetrical warfare.

Given this brutal history, how can we account for the residual appeal of Al Shabaab among some Somalis? The first thing to say is that the vast majority of Somalis revile the actions of this group. That said, Al Shabaab has had some success in presenting its activities as some kind of national resistance movement against what it sees as an illegitimate government in Mogadishu propped up by Western interests. The group has been adept at feeding off the internecine conflicts inherent in Somalia's clan structure, intervening in local level disputes and manipulating grievances to present itself as a force that champions the claims of citizens angry at their local, regional, or national governing authorities.

The Westgate attack, however, suggests that different interests are now driving Al Shabaab's activities. While certain members may have nominally espoused the language of nationalist resistance and others have jumped aboard in the hope of making money or at least getting a daily meal, a third group is clearly driven by a desire to advance the cause of international jihad. This final faction is now in control of the movement. It is led by Ahmed Godane, a 36 year-old from Somaliland and a veteran of jihadist campaigns in Afghanistan and Kashmir. It is Godane who pledged fealty to Al Qaeda at the beginning of 2010, formalizing the agreement in 2012, and who appears to have launched an internal purge of Al Shabaab members who reject his methods. Analysts have noted an exodus of foreign fighters from Al Shabaab in recent months, amid grumbles about Godane's leadership style. A succession of dissidents have been killed or gone missing. They include an Al Shabaab commander originally from Alabama, Abu Mansoor al-Amriki, who was killed last month along with a British member of the group. Meanwhile, the former spokesman of Al Shabaab, Sheikh Mukhtar Robow, has disappeared, and Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, considered the father of violent extremism in Somalia, has been detained by the authorities. Significantly, this purge appears to have brought Godane closer to some Kenya-based militants who may have provided assistance for the Westgate attack.

Current capabilities of Al Shabaab

What does the attack say about Al Shabaab, its current capabilities and its modus operandi? There has been a tendency in recent months to portray Al Shabaab as weak, fragmented, and under pressure. The Westgate attack does not necessarily contradict that analysis. After all, it does not require much beyond fanatical determination and good planning to attack a lightly-guarded suburban shopping mall full of families and children with guns and grenades. This was the ultimate soft target. The attack also follows a pattern of previous actions, both inside and outside Somalia, in which civilians have been

targeted. In 2010, Al Shabaab bombs killed 76 people in Uganda as they watched the soccer World Cup final at two bars in the capital, Kampala. The stated motive for the attack was also consistent with Westgate; the involvement of foreign troops in Somalia, this time Ugandan contributors to the African Union Mission in Somalia, AMISOM.

Furthermore, the Nairobi attack confirms the ascendancy within Al Shabaab of the hardcore internationalist wing aligned to Al Qaeda central that is committed to raising its profile and impressing its superiors with high-profile attacks on Western targets. This has regional implications given that this faction is more interested in looking beyond Somalia and cultivating links with terrorist outfits further afield. Groups in Kenya and Tanzania offer the most likely sources of support. Both countries have a small but growing problem with Islamist extremism, especially in the coastal regions and Zanzibar. In particular, investigators are examining the possibility that the Westgate mall attack was a collaborative effort between Al Shabaab and a Kenyan affiliate, Al Hijra. According to the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia, there has already been some transfer of personnel between the groups, with members of Al Hijra taking part in operations in Somalia before returning home in 2012.

This latest attack sounds a warning that further 'spectaculars' should not be discounted, given the apparent ease in which the Westgate operation was mounted. Al Shabaab appears to have settled on a frighteningly simple formula that takes a page from the playbook of Lashkar-e-Taiba, the terrorist group which staged a coordinated attack on Mumbai in 2008. This approach does not require high explosives and suicide bombs. All that is needed is a soft target, a few guns, plenty of ammunition, and some willing 'martyrs.' In the absence of good intelligence, there is little the authorities can do to prevent such atrocities. There are a multitude of potential targets and it is neither possible nor desirable to harden security at all of them to the extent that they could withstand an assault by determined attackers throwing hand grenades and firing guns.

Responding to the threat: Supporting Kenya

The United States has a close interest in ensuring that the perpetrators of the Westgate Center attack are held responsible. There are national security interests at stake, not least because of the ongoing speculation that some of those involved may have been U.S. citizens. For the time being, and unless such links are confirmed, the Westgate attack neither raises nor lowers the threat posed by Al Shabaab to the U.S. homeland. The ability of a terrorist group to attack a shopping center more than 7,000 miles from the United States does not shed much light on its capacity to do so closer to home.

Irrespective of the threat to the homeland, the United States has multiple, important interests in East Africa which must be protected from groups like Al Shabaab. Kenya has consistently been the United States' strongest ally in East Africa. Nairobi is the economic hub of the entire region and a major contributor to the African growth story that is prompting the U.S. Government to engage more heavily in the continent. The United States has important business interests in Kenya, with IBM and GE among the corporate giants maintaining regional offices in the country. The U.S. embassy in Nairobi is its largest in Africa and the management headquarters for multi-billion dollar assistance programs covering the whole region. Moreover, the United States and Kenya are closely bound together by a shared exposure

to terrorism dating back to 1998, when Al Qaeda blew up the former U.S. embassy building in Nairobi, killing 218 people.

However, this latest attack comes at a time of strained bilateral relations. Kenya has already expressed its unhappiness with what it described as an “unfriendly” travel advisory issued by the State Department last Friday urging U.S. citizens in Nairobi and Mombasa to exercise caution. More broadly, bilateral relations have been unsteady by the election earlier this year of President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy, William Ruto, who face charges of crimes against humanity at the International Criminal Court related to the outbreak of mass violence during and after the 2007 elections. Since the Westgate attack, President Kenyatta and others have argued that, at this time of crisis, the ICC trials will be a distraction with implications for national security. This presents the United States, which has urged Kenya to fully cooperate with the ICC, in an awkward position. However, the events of the past week do nothing to alter the seriousness of the charges faced by the president and his deputy, which deserve to be heard in full.

Political differences aside, Kenya is—and should continue to be—an important security partner of the United States. In addition to providing assistance to the investigation into the Westgate attack, the United States has committed more than \$90 million to building Kenya’s counter-terrorism capacity. But early inquiries into the attack have exposed serious intelligence failures—both among Kenya’s security services and by extension the main international counter-terrorism partners who support them—which underline the challenges of preventing such atrocities.

One acute shortcoming is the endemic corruption in Kenyan public life. Too many public officials are willing to turn a blind eye to criminal conduct in return for a bribe. Press reports in Kenya suggest that vital information which may have prevented the Westgate attack or led to the capture of some of the key organizers was missed in this way. The Kenya police, an institution which has successfully resisted multiple attempts at reform, is particularly culpable. A U.S. initiative to improve professional standards among the police could significantly enhance Kenya’s national security.

Beyond the formal security apparatus, the Westgate attack underlines the important role the public can play in being the “eyes and ears” of the authorities in preventing terrorism. However, the public will only develop a security consciousness if they trust their police or intelligence officials to act on the information they give them. Two communities that can play a particularly important role in offering information are Somalis living in Kenya and Kenyans of Somali origin. It is therefore particularly important that the Kenyan authorities do not punish these communities for the actions of a few by launching heavy-handed security actions, making arbitrary arrests, and expelling or threatening to expel refugees.

Responding to the threat: Supporting the Somali Federal Government

Ultimately, however, the key to defeating Al Shabaab will be found in Somalia, not Kenya. Al Shabaab is an outgrowth of more than 20 years of chronic disorder in Somalia, and at least another 20 of misrule before that. Efforts to strengthen the embryonic capacity of the Somali Federal Government (SFG) to restore security, stability, and consensual government to Somalia will be necessary initial steps toward

removing the conditions which allowed Al Shabaab to flourish. The SFG, with international support, has made modest progress since taking office one year ago. But it has many tasks to accomplish before its mandate expires in 2016, not least proving to a distrustful public that it is genuinely committed to governing in the interests of all Somalis.

The Westgate attack suggests that for now, Godane's fanatical wing of Al Shabaab is in the ascendancy. He and his acolytes must be found and detained before they can strike again. The U.S. should be extremely cautious in taking the lead in any operation to neutralize Godane. U.S. airstrikes against Al Shabaab leaders have been hugely controversial in the past and carry high potential for popular backlash, collateral damage, or unintended longer-term consequences. Instead, the U.S. should support regionally-led intelligence and surveillance efforts and utilize existing policy tools to encourage Godane's capture and prosecution, including the State Department's Rewards for Justice Program, which has a \$7 million reward on offer for information leading to his arrest.

In addition, the United States can continue to assist the African Union-led peacekeeping force which has put Al Shabaab on the back foot in recent months—and has in part prompted its resort to the asymmetrical tactics of bombings and hit-and-run attacks inside Somalia. The United States has been an important supporter of the AMISOM mission, which currently numbers approximately 17,700 troops from Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Djibouti, and Sierra Leone, providing more than \$700 million since 2007. But AMISOM will not be in Somalia forever and is therefore no more than a temporary solution to the country's security problems. The Somali National Security Forces have a long way to go before they can be considered ready to meet the security needs of their citizens. They are under-resourced, under-equipped and ill-disciplined. The United States and other donors are trying to help by paying salaries and providing basic training to certain vetted units, but this effort will only bear fruit over the long term. In the meantime, constant vigilance will be required in order to ensure that human rights norms are respected.

It would be a mistake to think that a military solution alone will remove the scourge of Al Shabaab. Efforts must be intensified to track the money that sustains Al Shabaab operations. Current efforts by leading international banks to stop doing business with the money transfer companies through which some of this funding is believed to flow are understandable, but misguided, because they are likely to drive the remittance process underground and cause serious damage to the legitimate Somali economy.

More important than either security responses or financial transaction monitoring is the need for Somalia to pursue a political process to reach out to and potentially rehabilitate the broader swathe of Al Shabaab followers who are driven less by dreams of international jihad and more by the pursuit of local or national grievances or simply the next meal. There is scope, it seems, for the Somali Federal Government to negotiate with these people, and through a combination of threats and inducements persuade them to leave violence behind. It is not beyond the realms of possibility that the bulk of Al Shabaab could one day transition into formal politics. In its private conversations with the SFG, the United States should discreetly encourage this process.

Chairman ROYCE. Let me ask a question of Mr. Farah first, and that has to go to the question of young Somali-Americans that al-Shabaab attempts to recruit.

Are there particular types of young men for which they have a greater instance of success when they try to recruit? What is the target?

Mr. FARAH. Al-Shabaab is targeting the disenfranchised youth. That is their tactic. And that is the game that we need to—that we are playing here. We need to be able—the youth in the community, you know, there are a lot of underlying issues. Radicalization doesn't happen overnight; it is a process.

And so what we need to do is really try to engage the disenfranchised youth that are missing, whether it is jobs, whether it is lack of mentorship. Those are the youth that al-Shabaab is targeting, and that is the core issue here. That is what we need to target.

Chairman ROYCE. I just finished Ed Husain's book, "The Islamist." I don't know if you have read it yet, but it is a very interesting perspective on this issue.

Let me ask you about how you would assess the U.S. Government's anti-radicalization efforts. And I will probably ask Mr. Borelli the same question.

Mr. FARAH. My assess in regards to what our Government is doing in terms of al-Shabaab, we are very good at, you know, the external work, you know, in terms of a military going after, you know, a terrorist across the world. But what we need to do is inside, within the community, our Federal Government must invest local entities like Ka Joog to do more engagement, more work.

What happened over a week ago shows me and shows us in the community that we need to do more work. So what I would suggest is that our Federal Government must invest local entities and must empower local entities to do more work within the community and across the Nation.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Farah.

Mr. Borelli, your thoughts on that?

Mr. BORELLI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Number one, I do agree with Mr. Farah, in that the Federal Government needs to invest at the local level. We have seen that these recruitment efforts are hatched at the local level. They start with local grievances. And the best way to stop that message, to counter that message, is by credible voices in the community.

I am not sure that the Federal Government has really a good strategic plan yet for doing that. In terms of, kind of, CVE, we have seen that many different agencies within the Federal Government have a role in the CVE, in countering this violent message, and, in some cases, it seems to be a bit disjointed and disconnected.

We have also seen that a lot of this responsibility has been put on the backs of law enforcement, FBI and Homeland Security. And sometimes that may not be the best messenger to be working on CVE when, on one hand, you are trying to bridge this gap and build this trust and develop a dialogue on Monday and then on Thursday, you know, your counterparts from your same agency are in the community making arrests, putting sting operations together.

So you have sometimes opposing forces that have different agendas but within the same agency. So I think this is something that we also should be looking at closely.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Borelli.

Dr. Jones, in past hearings, we have learned of various networks, some of them affiliated with al-Shabaab, involved in smuggling Somalis into the United States. And I was going to ask you if this is still happening. And I was going to ask you, for what purpose would al-Shabaab smuggle people into the United States?

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, my understanding is the pace of smuggling and actually individuals leaving the United States has likely decreased somewhat over the past probably 2 years. But I think there is an interest in recruitment and fundraising in the United States within the Somali community, the Somali-American community.

So the primary reasons for bringing people in are to recruit, to go back to Somalia, and to fundraise and to ensure that there is money that is going into the pockets of some cash-strapped members of al-Shabaab.

Chairman ROYCE. In the past, how were people brought into the U.S.? How did they make access into the—

Mr. JONES. One of the primary roots was through the U.S.-Mexican border, through the southern route. If somebody has a legitimate passport and the name does not come up, you can fly in. But other than that, a primary route is through multiple border crossings along the U.S.-Mexican border.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

We are going to go to Mr. Eliot Engel from New York.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to refer back to a question I mentioned in my opening statement, and anyone that would like to answer this is welcome to.

Could you discuss the relationship between the Kenyan security forces and the Somali population and provide analysis of what kind of engagement could be effective in combating al-Shabaab?

Mr. Downie?

Mr. DOWNIE. The relationship between the Kenyan security forces and Somalis has not been good, both inside Somalia and in Kenya as well.

Inside Somalia, where Kenyan forces invaded the southern part of the country 2 years ago, there were growing suspicions that Kenya is not purely interested in pushing insecurity away from its border but that it is also pursuing political and, to some extent, business interests in southern Somalia. And that is clearly creating resentment within Somalia.

Meanwhile, inside Kenya, there is a tendency when we have attacks like this for the Kenyan security forces to lash out somewhat indiscriminately, targeting members of the Somali-Kenyan community in Nairobi. And there is also, as we have heard, a large Somali refugee community. These are incredibly counterproductive measures because these are the two communities that the Kenyans have to rely most closely on for getting information about these sorts of attacks.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, many observers have suggested that the attack at Westgate was a desperate attempt to bolster recruiting and provoke an overreaction against the Somali community in Kenya. Do you agree? And what sort of policy responses are to be avoided in order to avoid this scenario?

Mr. JONES. Ranking Member Engel, I think there were probably multiple motivations for conducting the attack. I suspect, as we have seen with other organizations, not just al-Shabaab, overreaction would be welcomed by al-Shabaab. It would encourage recruitment.

I suspect there were other reasons: A desire to exact revenge on Kenyan forces, which have conducted lethal operations against al-Shabaab training camps within Somalia; and also to get attention. They got 24/7 attention from multiple international media sites. So I think there were multiple reasons for doing that.

I think, from an overreaction standpoint, I think one thing that we have to be careful about is we don't encourage the Kenyans to overreact, conduct overt attacks within Somalia that are likely to walk into the same issues that several of our witnesses have talked about, that walk us into a nationalist problem which encourages recruitment within Somalia.

Mr. BORELLI. If I may add one thing, Mr. Engel, is that I think the Westgate attack was very shrewd for recruiting.

As I mentioned before, you have various factions within al-Shabaab. You have more of a nationalist faction, and you also have kind of the global jihad mentality. This attack seemed to appeal to both. You were able to launch an attack against Kenya and against, you know, the country that has boots on the ground of your country, so it appeals on one hand to that nationalist movement, but also by targeting Westerners and all of the media, the global media that was given to this attack, it has the broader appeal to the al-Qaeda-like faction.

So I think, in that sense, it was very shrewd and could be a good recruiting tool.

Mr. DOWNIE. I might just add one thing, as well. Clearly, this was an attempt to get attention with the mother organization, with al-Qaeda. We have seen that, in the past, at least Osama bin Laden was somewhat dubious about al-Shabaab's seriousness as an organization, even thought they were too indiscriminate in their attacks and that they were killing too many Muslims. There has been a conscious effort, at least in the way that al-Shabaab has presented this attack, that they tried to single out Christians.

And I think we shouldn't actually be taken in by this PR from al-Shabaab. You know, the single largest loss of life in the attack was at the beginning when a grenade was lobbed into a group of people, mothers and children watching a cooking demonstration, and a gunman open fire. This was a completely indiscriminate attack.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, since you mentioned al-Qaeda, let me just get one last quick question in.

What is the relationship, the nature of the relationship, between al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab? Al-Shabaab we know in 2012 announced its formal merger with al-Qaeda, but what does that mean? Do

they take directions from al-Qaeda? Do they get training? Do they get operational or financial support?

Mr. DOWNIE. Frankly, it is hard to know. Certainly, the two groups have been moving closely together, particularly since Ahmed Godane became the emir, the leader of al-Shabaab. You know, he has been trying consciously to reach out and appeal to al-Qaeda.

Whether, though, this attack involves substantial support, coordination with al-Qaeda funding, or even received a blessing from al-Qaeda, I certainly am not aware of that.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you very much, Mr. Engel.

We now go to Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, chairman of the Middle East Subcommittee.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Well, this horrible al-Shabaab attack, coupled with the closure of over 20 U.S. Embassies and consulates this past summer and last month's targeted suicide bombings against Christians in Pakistan by an al-Qaeda-linked group, proves that terrorist groups are extremely active still and their influence is far-reaching. And the threats to our U.S. national security interests from extremist groups, such as al-Shabaab and Boko Haram, remain very real. The United States must not let down our guard.

These groups, as you have pointed out, are attempting to strengthen their ties to communities here in the United States. And that must be of grave concern to all of us because it will spread their propaganda to recruit susceptible youths to join their ranks. And, as you had pointed out in your testimony, the youths recruited by al-Shabaab are more driven by nationalistic and political ideologies, rather than religious ones, but can easily be converted to a global al-Qaeda agenda.

And if we know that al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda have been successful in recruiting these susceptible youths, what more can we do to target those communities in an effort to counter this influence?

Also, if we are going to fight terrorism and their activities, we have to develop a comprehensive strategy that can disrupt their networks, prevent their operations from spreading. And one entity that can be of assistance to us is the U.S. Africa Command. But what we have seen is that this combatant command continues to lack the necessary assets, infrastructure, personnel, and resources to effectively fight terrorism successfully.

Another key aspect to dismantling al-Shabaab's activities is through the drug trade. We have known that the threat of narco-terrorism continues to grow. It is used by many terrorist organizations to finance their illicit activities and expand their networks.

Last year, a senior DEA official testified that, as a result of drug trafficking, "Millions of dollars a year are being sent to Somalia and other countries in the Horn of Africa, some of which ends up in the coffers of terrorist organizations such as al-Shabaab."

So, in conjunction with our regional allies, we need to fight this extremism head-on. We have to reassess our priorities, continue to use initiatives that are doing fairly good work but could be beefed up. The East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative, the Trans-Sahara

Counterterrorism Terrorism Partnership, they could help our allies in Africa more to protect national security interests and dismantle terrorist cells. But we have seen that these programs lack prioritization, they lack clear objectives, realistic benchmarks of what they can do to look at our progress in fighting these extremists.

In your assessment, would you say that the United States has been giving the threat of al-Qaeda the attention and focus that we should? Do we need to reevaluate our assessment of these threats and our policies and programs in place to fight them?

So U.S. communities and reassessing the threats, anyone who wishes to take any of these.

Thank you, sir.

Mr. BORELLI. I will—thank you, Congresswoman.

I think, to your point about stopping the threat and trying to target the threat against these young people in the communities, I think we do need to continue to evaluate our programs both locally and federally. And, as Mr. Farah pointed out, some very good work is being done inside the community, and we need to continue to support that.

As an example, when I was in Minnesota visiting the local community and speaking with many of the young Somali people there, they had actually put together a YouTube video showing the atrocities committed by al-Shabaab and showing how al-Shabaab was manipulating people with a distorted message. And these are the type of programs that we can put forth to support, using the Internet, using the same social media that is recreating these people, use it as a counter-narrative.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Anyone else wish to comment?

Mr. FARAH. Yep. If I may add to what my colleague here said, I think we definitely do need to reassess on moving forward in regards to the threats of al-Shabaab. In the recent attacks, what it shows us is that al-Shabaab is not weak as we think. We need to do more and more work within the community.

And, you know, we have to understand that 99.99 percent of our community are law-abiding citizens. We are talking about a few individuals. But those few individuals are the ones that we need to target, that we need to go after, and those other ones that we need to engage—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. FARAH [continuing]. Before—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir. I just ran out of time. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Sires of New Jersey, ranking member of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this meeting.

You know, as I listen to you, what is the main source of revenue of al-Shabaab? Where do they get their money? Is it through drugs, through—

Mr. JONES. My understanding is they have redundant sources of funding from illegal criminal activity, including involvement in the charcoal network, to kidnapping, to multiple other sources, including taxation in southern Somalia.

So, redundant sources of funding, as well as funding from a diaspora population of Somalis across the globe, including from the U.S.

Mr. SIRES. I assume we keep track, especially in the U.S., of people who are contributing to these people, somehow?

Mr. JONES. Yes. And some have been arrested for that.

Mr. SIRES. We have made arrests?

Mr. JONES. Yes, we have made arrests.

Mr. SIRES. Okay.

Mr. BORELLI. The thing is, it is very difficult to track the money once it gets to Somalia. There are many people in the Somali diaspora that send money to their families because they desperately need it. The problem is that, once the money gets there, it is hard to track if it is actually going to feed their relatives or if it is being diverted to go to al-Shabaab. And this is the challenge for law enforcement because, quite frankly, you know, some of those people need the money and it is sent there with good intent but it is diverted.

Mr. DOWNIE. I might just add, this is a very live issue right now. Because of the difficulties of monitoring the money transfer services, where much of this money flows, a lot of banks are getting leery of doing business with these firms.

The problem is—and it is certainly true that it is hard to monitor the flows, but by cracking down on these money transfers, you are also stopping vital sources of income for Somalis. And just at the moment where the country is starting to rebuild its economy to some extent, cutting off those flows could have a disastrous effect in the development prospects for Somalia.

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Farah, how does the Muslim community in Somalia and Kenya view al-Shabaab?

Mr. FARAH. I can—99.99 percent of the Somali diaspora across the world condemn the work of al-Shabaab. This is something that—al-Shabaab do not convey my image, they do not convey the image of the Somali communities across the United States, nor across the globe.

Mr. SIRES. So I guess one way of tracking the money would be the community that sends the money making sure that the money goes to the relatives that it is intended to.

Mr. FARAH. Definitely. And that is where we really have to take things back to Somalia and really empower the Federal Government and the regional government to really put laws, you know, a system that we can oversee where money is flowing.

Mr. SIRES. Are the agencies in this country working with you on some of these issues?

Mr. FARAH. Oh, definitely. Yep, everybody in the community is on board in terms of where al-Shabaab stands in the community, and that is—it doesn't stand anywhere. I mean, it is condemned throughout—across the community.

Mr. SIRES. Okay.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

We are going to go now to Mr. Christopher Smith, the chairman of the Africa Subcommittee.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

To our distinguished witnesses, I know you know this very well—in 1998, Assistant Secretary Carpenter, our Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security, sat where you sat and said that the U.S. Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam were “soft targets.” And, of course, we have had a multiyear effort to harden those targets.

No matter what we do, anybody in the world, there will never be a hardening of supermarkets, restaurants, and the like, which underscores the need to destroy these hideous terrorist organizations. Because they pick, through guerilla action, where they want to destroy people and destroy physical infrastructure.

If you could tell us—you know, Dr. Jones, you said that unfortunately U.S. efforts against al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda more broadly have been “disjointed.”

Mr. Downie, you said that current efforts by leading international banks to stop doing business with money transfer companies, through which some of this funding is believed to flow, are understandable but, your words, are “misguided.”

And I am wondering, you know, when al-Shabaab was named as a foreign terrorist organization in March 2008, one of the mainstays of that law is to go after the financial transactions that keep them afloat and aid and abet their killing. How effective has the FTO designation been? How would you assess the weaknesses and strengths of the U.S. response? If you can go into some further elaboration.

And while you are answering, Mr. Downie, you mentioned that Ahmed Godane is now in control of the movement and he is in ascendancy. If you could elaborate on what that portends, in terms of further internationalizing the efforts.

And, finally, if I could, many of us have met with Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud, the President of Somalia. How do you assess his work, his capabilities? He is trying, with U.S. and other support, to build up a military capability, hopefully with a strong emphasis on human rights. If you could speak to that, as well.

Mr. DOWNIE. Thank you. I will tackle the last couple of questions there.

The importance of Godane’s emergence as a leader, I think it is significant. He is, you know, on the very, very end of the scale in terms of extremism. Since his rise to the top of the organization, al-Shabaab has definitely tried to orient itself more closely with al-Qaeda. He is very much motivated by the international jihadist agenda.

And he has been absolutely ruthless within al-Shabaab, as well. This is a very fragmented organization. And just in the last few months, he seems to have, through assassinations and other disappearances of potential rivals, some of whom disagreed with his methods, has consolidated his power and sort of strengthened those ties with al-Qaeda. So that has significance in terms of the group’s choice of targets and willingness to look at targets outside of Somalia.

In terms of the new President of Somalia, President Mohamoud has been in office for a year now. Given the challenges that Somalia faces—more than 20 years without a functioning government—he is doing okay. It is modest progress.

In his favor, he is a serious person. He is not tainted by the politics of the past; he has come from outside of politics. He is trying his best. He has a technocratic government around him. But the challenges are immense. And one of them is the one you highlighted, and that is security. So efforts to strengthen the security services of Somalia are required.

Mr. SMITH. Is the U.S. Government doing all that it can do?

Mr. DOWNIE. I think one of the weak spots is the one you highlighted, is the financing piece. But there are no very easy solutions to that. By clamping down on the remittances, as I say, you are holding back the economic progress in Somalia, as well. So it is somewhat of a blunt tool.

Mr. SMITH. Okay.

Dr. Jones?

Mr. JONES. Yeah, I was just going to say more broadly on the FTO designation, when I look around the globe, look, there are some al-Qaeda affiliates, like Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria, which have clearly strengthened. Their control of territory has grown. Shabaab's has decreased. So I think the efforts that the U.S. and some of the neighbors and the Somali Government have done to al-Shabaab have decreased its control of territory and put it on the run.

It is not dead. And I think the lesson that we have learned over the past couple of weeks is, if we take our foot off the gas a little bit, this group does have the capability to strike.

So I hope we come back to the ideological issue here because I would say that is the biggest weakness we have right now, and the FTO designation is—they are still recruiting.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. We will go now to Mr. Faleomavaega of American Samoa.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am curious, wanting to ask Mr. Farah, how come 88,000 Somali-Americans live in Minnesota? I was under the impression that Somalia is a very warm country. Do you have snow in Somalia, as well? I am curious.

Mr. FARAH. Not that I am aware of. I don't think there is snow in Somalia.

However, there are a lot of reasons why Somalis move to Minnesota, and the same reason that I did. Really, Minnesota is very good when it comes to raising a family. The economy is much better compared to other States. And, really, in the Somali community, everything goes by referrals. And so, if a family calls, you know, another family and they say, "Hey, Minnesota is where you need to be," that is where the bus is going, that is where they will be moving.

And so that is where a lot of the—that is why you are seeing a large concentration of the Somalis living in Minnesota.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I am also aware of the fact that I think quite a sizeable number of people from—the Hmong people from Vietnam—

Mr. FARAH. Definitely.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA [continuing]. Also live in Minnesota.

And I'm just curious—maybe Mr. Borelli could help me—is there any particular reason? Economics? It seems that Minnesota is giving our country a good example for immigrants to come to, because they seem to be offering a lot better programs than other States.

Is that the reason why so many of our Somalian-Americans live in Minnesota, Mr. Borelli?

Mr. BORELLI. Based on my discussions with people in that community, that is, in fact, the case. It is very easy for people from other countries to go. They can get some programs that help them get on their feet, get established. And then it just becomes a very hospitable place for people from other countries to make it in the United States.

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA. There is a—I wanted just to get your response. You know, when we had the Oklahoma City bombing, there was an immediate profiling by Federal agencies as well as State enforcement officers in Oklahoma. Anybody with an Arabic surname was questioned, because the presumption being—and this is the stereotyping, the profiling, to say that this terrorist act must have been done by a Muslim terrorist. Well, it turned out to have been an American.

And I am just curious, Dr. Jones, Mr. Borelli, have there been any incidents—Mr. Farah—that our Somalian-American community have been profiled since this incident took place in Nairobi, where serious questions have arisen about the loyalty of our Somalian-American community, an event of this terrorist act that took place in Nairobi?

Dr. Jones?

Mr. JONES. I am not aware of any, but I don't live in Minneapolis, so I would defer to my colleagues.

Mr. FARAH. Thanks for the question.

Since the incident happened in Kenya, there has been a lot of media throughout the community really scrutinizing the image of the Somalis. And, really, again, what we need to reiterate again over and over is that the majority of the community are law-abiding citizens. We are talking about a few individuals, and those few individuals do not convey the message or the image of the Somalis.

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA. Well, it seems to me—and then correct me if I am wrong, our experts—I believe there are only, what, several hundred al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, but we have al-Shabaab with some 5,000 members? Am I correct on the information that was given, that there are 5,000 members that make up the al-Shabaab organization?

Dr. Jones?

Mr. JONES. That number sounds a little high now for full-time members. But I think you are correct to point out that the numbers of al-Shabaab are larger than the numbers of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.

Mr. FALEOMAVEGA. Mr. Borelli?

Mr. BORELLI. I believe Dr. Jones is right.

And if I could kind of make a point on your other statement, I think we have learned lessons over the course of the years in law enforcement that—don't jump to conclusions too quickly. We need to not look at the person's last name or where they are from; we need to look at their actions and keep a very open mind. Because

recruitment and radicalism and the opportunity to join a terrorist group and commit acts of violence transcends a person's place of birth or their religion.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I appreciate that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN [presiding]. Thank you, Mr. Faleomavaega.

Mr. Rohrabacher of California is recognized.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much.

Just to note, Mr. Faleomavaega, I did extensive investigations on the Oklahoma City bombing, and I still believe that there was a Muslim connection to that. And it is all the way from Terry Nichols being down in Cebu City at the same time that Ramzi Yousef was, just a few weeks before the Oklahoma City bombing, would indicate that. But that has never been proven.

Yeah, radicals, whether they are Anglos or whether they are Muslims, seem to have the same enemies, and that is decent people throughout the world and especially the United States of America, which is trying to ally ourselves with good and decent people of the world.

Let me just note that we are talking about thousands of people in a terrorist organization, thousands of people. This is not an operation that can be financed through contributions from individuals who sympathize.

What is the cost of a bullet in Somalia? I would say the cost of a bullet is probably around 10 to 25 cents a bullet. Not to mention the cost of an RPG or the cost of explosives or the cost of vehicles or the cost of training or the cost of recruiting. These are enormous costs. These are things that cannot be done by—and one of the problems we have here, Madam Chairman, in the United States, is our law enforcement is trying to find out somebody who has donated \$100, some cab driver somewhere, to this terrorist network somewhere in the world.

No, we need to get down to the nitty-gritty and find out who is providing the hundreds of millions of dollars to the terrorist operations throughout the world and who is spending the money to recruit these young people, who is providing that money. And, for some reason, I just have an inkling that they are people in the Middle East who make a lot of money from oil. I don't know what countries they are, but I just have that inkling.

And I would suggest that we could be able to prove that if we wanted to. But we have been keeping that information from the United States, as to who is pumping in millions, tens of millions of dollars into these terrorist operations.

Now, am I off base when I think that? Mr. Jones? Gentlemen?

Mr. JONES. Well, look, I think there is a lot of gray in how much and from where al-Shabaab gets all of its funding. But I would say it does get large amounts of funding from other locations in addition to the Middle East. Kidnapping actually can be quite profitable, as can illegal trafficking in a range of goods, including the charcoal smuggling, which, in some cases, is in the hundreds of thousands and, when you add it to kidnapping, in the millions of dollars.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Right. So they have to put it in a bank, right? I mean, someone has to have those resources that you are

talking about into a central location and then distribute it. So there are banks involved in this in some way. Is that correct?

Mr. JONES. That is likely. Again, I am not a treasury expert, so would defer to those who have followed the banking more than I have.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Okay.

Well, all I can suggest here, Madam Chairman, and what I am suggesting today is we have been—and I like that Mr. Borelli is talking about how we have to get down to some of the actual psychological and combat the recruitment of people in these communities. But we have ignored the big guys.

You want to get to the source, the bottom, and cut them off, people with money, cutting them off from recruiting people. But we have been going after the little guys. We have been going after these people individually, when we have some very big players in international terrorism who, for some reason, we have not been willing to touch, whether they are big banks or whether they are somebody in Saudi Arabia who has \$1 billion someplace and is pumping in \$10 million to \$20 million a year into these things. We are ignoring them.

And I would hope that our Government, after this horrible massacre in Kenya, decides to focus on some of the big guys who are really financing all of this mayhem around the world.

Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

Mr. SMITH. Would you yield?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. SMITH. If I could, has the indictment of Uhuru Kenyatta by the International Criminal Court in any way frustrated the U.S.'s ability to work side-by-side with the Kenyans?

As you know, he has stated he will not be intimidated. He does have a large number of peacekeepers deployed in Somalia.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Smith. That is a wonderful question, and we hope that they get the opportunity to answer it at some point.

Now we will turn to Ms. Gabbard for her question and answer.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

Thank you, gentlemen, for sharing your insights with us here today.

A couple of questions first for Mr. Farah with regards to the work that Ka Joog is doing. If you could give a couple of examples on the outreach that you are actually doing in the community, as well as your suggestions, both with the nongovernmental or non-profit organizations within the Somali community can do, as well as law enforcement, in a proactive way to prevent these recruiting efforts.

And secondly to that, if you could speak a little bit about how the Somali-American community views these recruiting efforts and what actions within the community, as well as externally, they are taking to denounce these efforts.

Mr. FARAH. Thank you for the questions.

In terms of Ka Joog, our mission is to really empower the youth to really stay away from all negativity, whether it is al-Shabaab or gangs. You know, we have to treat al-Shabaab like a gang, and that is exactly what they are.

We do a lot of—art and education really go hand-in-hand in everything that we do. In terms of art, we are talking about spoken word and play. We use the arts to engage the youth. But, ultimately, education is the key. Tutoring and mentoring is the core of what we do. And recently we have created really the first-ever Somali Boy Scouts. That is something that we haven't seen recently. Again, we are trying to integrate the youth to the greater society as best fit.

There is a lot of great work in the community that is being done before us. What we need to do is invest in those programs, and that is what is missing here. Aside from what we are doing externally in the United States, we need to focus on what is going on in the community and empower local entities.

I mean, Ka Joog is an all-volunteer-based organization. How can we fight al-Shabaab, when they have millions of dollars and you have entities like Ka Joog and others in the community who are, you know, who are running on E, pretty much, and our Federal Government is MIA, missing in action?

In terms of the Somali community, they feel the same way across the board when it comes to al-Shabaab. You know, we condemn the work of al-Shabaab, and those few individuals don't convey the message for the Somali community.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you.

And to the rest of the panel, I don't know if you are able to estimate what percentage of the financing for al-Shabaab is coming from the U.S. or is coming from these remittances that you are talking about.

And, secondly, those recruits that al-Shabaab is getting from the U.S., is it your understanding that their intent is largely to engage in fighting abroad or here?

Mr. BORELLI. Based on the conversations that I have had in speaking with people in Minnesota, their intention is to fight abroad. But, as I mentioned, especially now with a change or consolidation of power and this more of a global jihad message, the fear is that they can be turned to come back and take the fight here in the U.S.

With regard to your question about financing, I don't have a number, a percentage—maybe one of my colleagues has—in terms of total remittances.

Mr. DOWNIE. No, the subject matter is just so murky, given the way that money is transferred and the lack of transparency within that system.

One thing I should say, and that is to follow up on Dr. Jones' remarks earlier, is that a key source of financing for al-Shabaab until very recently has been from within Somalia itself, from taxation of populations in al-Shabaab-controlled areas, from controlling previously the largest port in the south of the country. So if there is a silver lining from any of this, it is that now that al-Shabaab has been pushed back from some of the territory it controls, its funding is being squeezed, as well.

Ms. GABBARD. Thank you.

I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

And now we are honored to recognize Mr. McCaul, the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to echo the gentleman from California's remarks, Mr. Rohrabacher, about the funding issue. I got briefed yesterday, as I do, on the threats, and the majority of these threats, when you look at these organizations and you look at the funding streams, the majority of them tie back to the Saudi peninsula in terms of funding. And this is sort of the inconvenient truth that no one talks about, and no one wants to deal with it either.

There was an article today; it says "\$100,000 Sent from Gulf to Fund 25 Assassins" to the elite intelligence unit of the Somali terrorist organization al-Shabaab.

This is something, Madam Chair, we are going to have to deal with at some point in time. And I know it has been something that, the Saudis being our ally, you know, presents a problem, and it is a challenge. But it is something I think we need to address and see it for what it really is.

I do wear two hats, and I am concerned about the threat to the homeland with respect to these Americans. We had a hearing on the Homeland Security Committee in 2011. Up to 50 of these al-Shabaab members are from the United States. I think there are more than that. Fifty that we know about.

So I think the first question is to Mr. Borelli.

With your expertise with the FBI, what degree of confidence do we have on the identity of these Americans over there, in terms of who are they? Can we get them on the no-fly list? Are they on the no-fly list? What is the threat to the homeland with respect to them returning after being trained and recruited in the war on terror?

Mr. BORELLI. I think with regard to your first question, in terms of being able to positively identify these individuals, get them on the proper watch lists, and so forth, a lot of progress has been made. I have been outside of the FBI for 3 years now, so I can't speak to what has happened in that gap from when I retired till today. But I think, when I did leave the FBI, we had a fairly high degree of confidence.

Nothing is 100 percent. Again, this is where we need to engage the community to help us help the FBI identify these people, to know when they leave the community, when they go off the grid, and confirm the fact that they have joined the ranks of al-Shabaab.

Secondly, I would say to your other point, the risk to the homeland, I would say, is definitely there. I don't know if it is higher today than it was a month ago. But, again, my fear is the Najibullah Zazi type of situation, where somebody leaves with the intent to fight abroad and they are co-opted to take the fight back home. And certainly these individuals, if they have been off the grid for a while, if they have a blue passport, they can get back into society, reintegrate, and then we have a very serious problem that can go undetected.

Mr. MCCAUL. And to that point, within al-Shabaab we know there is a rift between the American from Alabama, Mr. Hammami, and Godane, who is the current leader. And the rift, as I understand it, is between whether they want to focus their inter-

ests regionally or whether they want to expand that, as you talked about external operations, beyond the region to Western targets and possibly the United States. Mr. Hammami was assassinated by Godane and his disciples a week before this shopping mall attack.

The other thing that worries me about the shopping mall is it is a symbol of Western—it is sort of a Western target. So you put all that together, and that is very confusing and disturbing as well.

And, Dr. Jones, what do you make of this rift within al-Shabaab and the assassination of Hammami? And were these Americans under Hammami's control in any way responsible and complicit with this attack on a Western symbol, the Westgate shopping mall?

Mr. JONES. I can't speak to the degree of involvement by Americans. I mean, my understanding is that is still being looked at by our own agencies, to some degree.

But what I would say is, (A), I would strongly support your point of notable rifts within the organization. (B), there has been encouragement, apparently from Ayman al-Zawahiri, to conduct attacks outside of just Somalia.

And, (C), I would also note that what the U.S. does can influence it. Not just Zazi but Faisal Shahzad in 2010 was involved in an SUV attempted attack in Times Square. That organization, the Pakistan Taliban, was assessed earlier that year by our U.S. intelligence community not to be a threat to the homeland. We assassinated, the year before, the head of that organization with a drone strike.

If we were to take those kinds of action in Somalia, my guess is they would be right back after us. So our actions also can impact where this goes forward.

Mr. MCCAUL. I see my time has expired. Thank you very much.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Vargas of California is recognized.

Mr. VARGAS. Madam Chairman, thank you very much for the opportunity.

I do want to focus us a little bit on the United States. Obviously, I read here on page 4 that al-Shabaab has demonstrated a remarkable ability to recruit Somali-Americans since at least 2007. The epicenter of this effort has been Minnesota, where there is a large Somali-American population.

I represent the area of San Diego, and we also have a fairly large Somali population. During the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, my wife and I decided we wanted to adopt a Muslim family that went through the horrors of that ethnic cleansing, so we did. And they lived with us for 2 years, and during those 2 years I got to meet many in the Somali community who had also been airlifted to California.

Now, I have not heard of any recruitment in San Diego for al-Shabaab or any other terrorist organization. Could you comment on that?

Mr. BORELLI. I would say the fear is that the Internet does not know the boundaries between San Diego and Minnesota. And we have seen that al-Shabaab is really very effective in using the Internet. Many of these young people get that message from the Internet.

So, while there may not be boots on the ground and, you know, that type of recruiting, I think the fear is that you absolutely have recruiting in San Diego via the Internet.

Mr. VARGAS. And then my follow-up question for you, and I think I heard it earlier, the notion that maybe Somali terrorists were coming across the Mexico-California or Mexico-Texas border, the border from Mexico and the United States. Do we have any evidence at all of that?

Mr. JONES. Yes, in particular the movement of individuals from the United States south across the border. Some have returned. I am not aware of many that have returned that have been prepared to conduct attacks. But, yes, movement of individuals going in both directions.

Mr. VARGAS. Because my understanding is that most of the Somalis that were brought here actually have permits to be here, have legalized status.

Mr. JONES. The vast majority do. My only point earlier was that there is a human trafficking network that has moved Somalis out and into the United States via the U.S.-Mexican border. But that does represent a very, very small percent—

Mr. VARGAS. The reason I say that is because always the border seems to become the excuse, saying that the terrorists are coming across the border. And I have a very good relationship with the Border Patrol there; in fact, we met here last week. And they have not apprehended many terrorists coming across the San Diego-Tijuana border.

It seems that most of the terrorists—and I do agree that there are a number of them, obviously, here; we have caught people, we have fined people—seem to have come here legally, either in an airlift, some humanitarian effort on the part of United States. They have permits to be here. Is that correct?

Mr. JONES. Yes, that is the vast majority. But, again, I would also point out that some Americans, including Somali-Americans, have left to go fight in al-Shabaab through that border, as well. So it is not just the returning.

Mr. VARGAS. So it is the exiting the United States, it is not the entering the United States, then.

Mr. JONES. I don't know the percentage that have entered via that way. I am—

Mr. VARGAS. Do we have any evidence of anyone that has entered that way?

Mr. JONES. I can't speak to that.

Mr. VARGAS. Do you have any information of any name, any person that may have been arrested trying to enter the United States?

Mr. JONES. I can check and get back to you on that.

Mr. VARGAS. Would you, please? Because I would like to know that. Because it is usually used as an excuse, that the border is so porous, all these terrorists are coming through, and it seems to me that mostly landscapers are, you know, not many terrorists.

It seems that most of the people who become terrorists are those that arrive in this country with some sort of visa, some sort of permit, where we, through our generosity as a Nation, take a look at some horrible event that is happening around the world and we allow people to come here on a humanitarian basis. And then, un-

fortunately and scandalously and outrageously, they become terrorists or terrorist sympathizers.

And I think that we should prosecute them and we should go after them and show them no mercy, really. You know, when the United States stretches out its hand for friendship, as we have historically, you know, we should not tolerate any sort of terrorist or terrorist activity or terrorist sympathizers.

But, again, I just wanted to make the point that you hear it over and over, all these terrorists coming from Mexico or the southern border into the United States, and we don't seem to have any information on that. We do have lots of information of terrorists who come from other parts legally into the country, become radicalized, go and fight somewhere else, and then they blame it on my hometown, where there is no evidence of it.

Mr. JONES. Yeah. We will get back to you on that.

Mr. VARGAS. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman ROYCE [presiding]. Thank you.

We go now to Mr. Ted Poe of Texas.

Mr. POE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have three questions, gentlemen. First one: How does al-Shabaab use Twitter? And what do you understand Twitter's policy, if any, is toward al-Shabaab?

Dr. Jones?

Mr. JONES. My understanding is that they have used surrogates to send out messages on Twitter. But I cannot speak to Twitter's policies on monitoring or targeting al-Shabaab on Twitter.

I would also say that, much like a number of groups that we have seen, militant groups, including ones affiliated with al-Qaeda, they have become very active on multiple social media forums, including in this Twitter case, to get information out really as a propaganda tool.

Mr. POE. Anybody else want to weigh in on that?

Mr. DOWNIE. Only really to support that point and that, you know, al-Shabaab means "the youth." It attracts a lot of young people who are media-savvy, and they have used those skills and familiarity with Internet, social media, to great effect, posting videos. And it is powerful recruitment tool, and I think we need to respond to that.

It was very interesting—

Mr. POE. Excuse me for interrupting. What do you mean, "respond"? What do you mean by "we need to respond"?

Mr. DOWNIE. Well, we need to be smart in how we use information, as well.

Just to give you one example, as the Westgate attack was unfolding, al-Shabaab, or people purporting to be al-Shabaab members, were churning out messages goading the Kenyan authorities on Twitter feeds. The Kenyans were trying to respond through their own social media but were really a step behind the whole time, were flatfooted. And so it caused a lot of confusion.

I think, as governments, we need to be a little bit smarter about how to respond to this threat.

Mr. POE. What are the long-term goals, objectives, or policy of al-Shabaab?

I would just open it up. Anybody who wants to weigh in on that? I will just start picking folks if nobody wants to weigh in.

Mr. DOWNIE. Well, as I mentioned in my testimony, al-Shabaab is a very broad organization. Clearly, the ascendant wing now is one that is committed to global jihad, that increasingly looks beyond the borders of Somalia to launch attacks, primarily within the East Africa region, targeting specifically those countries that have peacekeeping troops in Somalia, but, of course, on the lookout for soft targets that represent so-called Western interests. So that is why I think the Westgate Mall was, from their purposes, a perfect target to pick.

Mr. POE. So their goals are just to cause chaos, worldwide jihad, murder, pillage?

Mr. DOWNIE. Their goals have evolved throughout time. They started out almost as a nationalist armed wing opposing the Ethiopian invasion at that time. They went through a process, once Ethiopian troops left, of holding substantial amounts of territory in Somalia and tried, with disastrous consequences, to govern territory. Eventually, they were forced back, largely from other African peacekeeping troops in there. Now they seem to have pulled back and are pursuing this jihadist agenda.

So when I hear people say that al-Shabaab is weak now, that might be true. They have narrowed down their agenda. But that, paradoxically perhaps, makes them more dangerous. They have channeled their objectives to narrower goals, and that is the jihadist terrorist attack agenda, I think.

Mr. POE. In Africa, do we see al-Shabaab and other al-Qaeda affiliates growing in influence? Is their influence about the same, or is it diminishing? Is al-Qaeda's influence diminishing in Africa? Increasing, the same, diminishing?

Dr. Jones, I see you are pushing the button.

Mr. JONES. I would say, across the board in Africa, when you include North Africa as well as the Horn, I would say there is a slight increase in influence of al-Qaeda and broader Salafi jihadist movements in countries like Libya, countries like Egypt now, and several other locations.

Somalia, as I said earlier, again, it does appear over the past 2 years that Shabaab's control of territory has decreased. But if you are asking about Africa more broadly, I would say there has been a slight growth.

Mr. POE. All right.

Anyone else?

Mr. DOWNIE. Yeah, I would say the influence ebbs and flows across time. There has been a slight growth more recently, particularly in the Sahel region, this band of very vulnerable states just south of the Sahara, specifically in Mali, where an al-Qaeda affiliate actually took control of part of that country for a short time but has subsequently been pushed back, largely through a military intervention by France with some support from others.

Another area of concern is northern Nigeria, with Boko Haram, an extremist movement, launching attacks and killing multiple people in that part of Nigeria. Although, primarily, the motives there seem to be domestic by nature, so I would not say that they necessarily pose a threat to the U.S. homeland, for example.

Mr. POE. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Lois Frankel from Florida.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to the panel for being here.

You know, I think I share with Americans that what happened at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi was just horrible. And I know our heart goes out for the victims and their families. And now we see CNN and other media outlets have turned away to other stories, obviously.

What I would like to ask you to do—and I am just going to ask a very, very basic question, which is, if you could lay out in as clear a manner as possible why Americans should be concerned about what happened, what is the potential threat from al-Shabaab not only in the region but beyond the region, here, that needs our attention, given what is happening internally in the United States.

Mr. BORELLI. I will take the first crack at that.

I think the biggest reason that we should be concerned, as Americans, is looking back at history and what happened with al-Qaeda, that we viewed originally al-Qaeda as being not a threat to America, as a regional problem, focusing its efforts on the Middle East and Central Asia. And we learned the lesson of how a terrorist organization can morph and change and become our number-one enemy.

So, in my opinion, that is the biggest concern that we have with al-Shabaab, is that it can morph and change into more of a global threat than it is now.

Mr. FARAH. If I can add to that, I think our biggest—we should be very concerned about al-Shabaab because it is not just a regional issue. I think their biggest goal is really to do us harm here in the United States if they are capable of doing that. Really, their main goal is really to attract disadvantaged youth and to really brainwash them.

And that is really where we need to come in and stop that before that happens. And that really should be our main concern, is doing more work internally within the United States, and then treat al-Shabaab as, you know, as we are treating al-Qaeda.

Mr. JONES. Very briefly, one, al-Shabaab has a capability to conduct external operations outside of Somalia. Two, they have an interest in targeting the United States, its Embassies, its citizens, kidnapping as well as killing. And, three, they have been recruiting in American communities, including over the Internet.

So I think you put all three of those together, yes, there should be a concern.

Mr. DOWNIE. I would just add, finally, we talked a lot about the potential threat to the U.S. homeland today, but there are very important substantial U.S. interests in East Africa, in Kenya, an important ally of the United States. Nairobi is home to the largest U.S. Embassy in Africa. It is the hub for important development programs that cover the whole region. Many big U.S. firms have regional offices in Kenya.

So, irrespective of al-Shabaab's capability to hit the U.S. homeland, they certainly have proven their ability to attack neighboring

countries to Somalia. And that, by necessity, involves U.S. interests.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you.

Mr. Borelli, did you want to add anything to that?

Mr. BORELLI. No. I think all my colleagues summed up the situation very accurately.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chair, I waive my time.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Ms. Frankel. Very good question. We go now to Jeff Duncan of South Carolina.

Mr. DUNCAN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And let me just remind the folks that al-Shabaab has been around for quite a while. They announced a merger in February 2012 with al-Qaeda. So they are not just a franchise, they are actually part of the whole structure now.

In past hearings, Mr. Chairman, we have learned of various networks, some of them affiliated with al-Shabaab, involved in smuggling Somalis into the United States through Mexico.

Dr. Jones, is this still happening? And for what purpose do you think al-Shabaab smuggles people into the United States?

Mr. JONES. My understanding is it is happening. I cannot give you specific numbers on how many may be smuggled right now.

But I think your question on the purpose, there may be several purposes: People wanting to return home and people intent on recruiting or fundraising. I think those are the primary reasons.

Mr. DUNCAN. Okay.

Would anyone else like to comment on that on the panel?

Okay. Beside the 2010 attack in Kampala during the World Cup, al-Shabaab has focused much of its attention in Somalia. This attack in Kenya fits exactly the strategy that al-Zawahiri laid out just recently for al-Qaeda globally.

Does the Westgate attack refute the claim that al-Shabaab is on the retreat?

Dr. Jones?

Mr. JONES. I think one assesses the competence of terrorist organizations like al-Shabaab in several ways. One would look at their control of territory, which they have lost. But I think what they have demonstrated is, though they have lost ground—and I think that issue is important, because, you know, one of their goals is to attempt to overthrow the Somali Government. Their success on that part of their strategy has—they have not been victorious at recently.

But what I think they have shown and what this does demonstrate is, even though they have lost some ground, they still have an attack capability. And I think if you look at the history of al-Qaeda, the strength and weaknesses of its affiliates and of the organization itself have ebbed and flowed in a series of waves. And even with a collapse of Shabaab into southern parts of Somalia, again, they are a dangerous organization.

Mr. DUNCAN. Do you think that capacity extends beyond the African continent? Do you think Shabaab has the capacity to carry out this type of attack or a Mumbai-style attack somewhere else in the world?

Mr. JONES. I think it is certainly feasible, I think, based on the fact that they have, again, conducted an external operation outside of Somalia, they have done the collection, analysis, reconnaissance of the target, they have moved people and fighters into place.

What they would need in a specific country, let's say the United States or in Europe or somewhere else, is they would need the people in place, the infrastructure in place to do that. If they had that and had an interest, they could do it.

Mr. DUNCAN. Do you think our focus, counterintelligence focus, being so singularly, almost, focused on al-Qaeda as a whole, do you think we have taken our eye off these smaller subgroups like Shabaab? Are there other subgroups that might be planning similar attacks that we need to focus on, as well?

Mr. JONES. I think an important chunk of our intelligence community recognizes the threat from Shabaab. I can't characterize whether they have—and I would say in response to that, you know, the FBI, among other organizations, has been very effective at penetrating them in the United States.

So I do think we recognize the threat. Recently, whether we have laid off a little bit, that is a more interesting question. I mean, that is certainly plausible.

Mr. DUNCAN. Yeah.

Yes, sir?

Mr. DOWNIE. Could I just add, I don't think we have taken our eye off the ball in terms of Shabaab, but we should be aware of potential other groups in the wider region.

And what seems an alarming element of the Westgate attack is that it appears al-Shabaab may have fostered links with a Kenya-based group called al-Hijra, which emerged from an extremist mosque in Nairobi and may have had some involvement with this attack, although investigations obviously are ongoing.

So I think we always need to be alert for the emergence of new groups and particularly their attempts to make contact with other broader terrorist groups in the region. Tanzania is another country where there is a small but growing problem with Islamic extremism in parts of that country, as well.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, guys.

My time is about expired. I will yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

We go now to Mr. Brad Sherman from California.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

America provides advice to other countries on the rule of law and good government. We are now in a situation where many of us are embarrassed to be part of the Federal Government and its Congress.

This shutdown, what effect has it had on our image, particularly in East Africa, as a country and a model to follow and our capacity to train, to gather information, to do the development projects that are aimed at hearts and minds?

I realize this is a bit away from the questions you may have prepared for, but does anyone have an answer to how the shutdown is affecting our efforts in East Africa?

Dr. Jones?

Mr. JONES. Mr. Sherman, I don't know what the perception is in East Africa. I would say my biggest concern, the longer this grows is—or at least one concern, I don't know if it is the biggest—one concern is our ability to continue to monitor this threat from intelligence agencies if we have people that have been furloughed.

Mr. SHERMAN. There are an awful lot of folks at the State Department, I happen to know, that are being furloughed right now. Trips to Africa have been cancelled just in the last 10 minutes. And this is no way to run a superpower.

Dr. Jones, does al-Shabaab have important assets, strategic assets, that are amenable to destruction from the air by the Kenyan, British, or American airpower?

Mr. JONES. They do have some. The Kenyans have used fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters to target al-Shabaab camps, structures that they have established, such as headquarters. So, yes, they do have some facilities that can be targeted.

Mr. SHERMAN. And is the Kenyan Air Force up to doing that which can be done? Or is there a lot that could be done by American airpower, British airpower that cannot be done by the Kenyan Air Force?

Mr. JONES. I am not an expert on the Kenyan Air Force. I am not an expert on the Ethiopian Air Force. But I would say that they have been successful at helping the Somali Government push back Shabaab from several key areas, including Kismayo and Mogadishu.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Farah, I am very sure that the vast majority of Somali-Americans are law-abiding and that only a tiny fringe is engaged in law-breaking in order to help al-Shabaab.

My question to you is, does al-Shabaab have significant legal support? That is to say, people in the community rooting for them, praising them, condemning the efforts of the Ethiopian and Kenyan militaries. And are there Web sites based here in the United States, dot-org, dot-com, et cetera, that condemn Kenya's actions in Somalia and/or praise al-Shabaab?

Mr. FARAH. I can assure you that a great majority of the community is on the same page when it comes to al-Shabaab. You know, nobody goes out there and start—you know, gets excited, you know, when they hear al-Shabaab on the news or when they hear of attacks by al-Shabaab. Everybody in the community feels the same way as I do, which is, you know, condemning the——

Mr. SHERMAN. What about those Web sites? If I spoke Somali, could I find pro-Shabaab or anti-Kenya Web sites in the Somali language based here in the United States?

Mr. FARAH. I am not aware of any Web sites of such.

Mr. SHERMAN. Okay.

The Kenyan Government has painted a picture of 10 to 15 attackers, one with a British and up to three with American citizenship. What is your best estimate, to anyone on the panel, as to how many attackers there were and how many of them had passports either from the United States or a visa-waiver country, which of course includes Britain?

Mr. Downie?

Mr. DOWNIE. We honestly have very little to go on right now. The Kenyan authorities have been very slow in providing information about the attack. We still don't know some of the very basics: How many attackers, in what groups, how many escaped, were hostages taken. We have very, very little to go on, other than, and now it turns out, a fake Twitter account from al-Shabaab, which gave a list of names of people. And we just have no ability to——

Mr. SHERMAN. And we don't think that is even al-Shabaab?

Mr. DOWNIE. Well, al-Shabaab have said this wasn't them. I mean——

Mr. SHERMAN. And, finally, does al-Shabaab have substantial support among Somalis who live in East Africa but outside the borders of Somalia—that is to say, Kenya, the Ogaden, Egypt, Djibouti, et cetera?

Mr. DOWNIE. There are some sources of support from outside Somalia, particularly in Kenya, the main Somali district within Nairobi, called Eastleigh. The Kenyans have raised concern about the enormous refugee camp within the Kenyan border, just close to the Somali border, where 500,000 people now——

Mr. SHERMAN. And that is the second-largest city in Kenya.

Mr. DOWNIE. Right.

Mr. SHERMAN. So the second-largest city in Kenya and a district in the largest city of Kenya not only contain Somalis but that there is some substantial support within those areas for al-Shabaab.

Mr. DOWNIE. I wouldn't say substantial. The Kenyan authorities certainly say so, but the Kenyans are obviously very concerned about this refugee camp. They have been hosting it for 20 years, and it is perhaps in their self-interest to talk up the threat.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Colonel Paul Cook of California.

Mr. COOK. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Because of recent events, I am going to ask this question. Any indication that they could have access to chemical weapons from any source?

Mr. JONES. I am not aware of any, Mr. Cook.

Mr. COOK. In your opinion, it would be a major game-changer if they could develop something like that, in terms of spreading terror in a place. I, quite frankly, expected something a long time ago, and nothing known from you?

Mr. JONES. No, nothing I am aware of. Again, I would point to other groups where we have seen efforts, including Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria with a chemical program right now, including sarin, but not here.

Mr. COOK. Well, that is what I am worried about, sarin and some of the other things, and maybe some other allies that might not have it now but in the future get access to that—Syria, et cetera.

The weapons that were used in the attack, primarily small arms, AK-47s, let's see, RPGs? Any mortars or rockets, anything that could elevate it a stage? Or no indication of that yet?

Mr. DOWNIE. There is no indication right now. From what we have learned, and the information is still patchy, it was small arms and grenades.

Mr. COOK. Okay. Do they have SA-7s, SA-9s, ASU-23/4s, anti-aircraft capability at all, to the best of your knowledge?

Mr. DOWNIE. No.

Mr. COOK. And it goes back with that other question that was asked. Okay.

I know I am throwing a lot of questions, but I usually don't get a chance to ask so many questions, so I am going to make the most of it.

It kind of looks like there is always a major event, obviously talking about the attack, in conjunction with the World Cup and the big mall. Has anyone looked at Sochi? I know it is the Winter Games. If it was the Summer Games in that area, I think—I don't think the Somali or the Kenyan bobsled team is going to be a target. But you look at the proximity to North Ossetia and the Caucasus and connections with other terrorist groups.

That is 5 months, if my math is right, or 6 months, coming up, and we haven't heard much about it. I am sure the Russians are going to have top security. But have you looked at that or heard of anything at all?

Mr. DOWNIE. I have certainly not heard anything. All I would say is that I think al-Shabaab has a plethora of closer, easier targets to hit, and the Westgate Mall was evidence of that.

Mr. COOK. Okay. I hope the Mall of America is not a target because of its location in Minnesota. But my question was, do they have a presence in Canada, which has different rules—I am talking about al-Shabaab getting in and out of the country. Or have you noticed any?

Mr. FARAH. Nope.

Mr. COOK. Okay. I just—I always look at a map and try and—all right.

My last question is, is there any presence of al-Shabaab in Djibouti or in Yemen in terms of arms-dealing?

Mr. JONES. I would say in answer to that that there is and there has been a relationship between al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, AQAP, which is based in Yemen. They have conducted some training. They have conducted some shared tactics, techniques, and procedures. They are both al-Qaeda affiliates. That is the biggest link in the Gulf area.

Mr. COOK. Nothing in Qatar?

Mr. JONES. Other than funding, I am not aware.

Mr. COOK. And they have gotten funding from Qatar?

Mr. JONES. Well, they have gotten funding from the Gulf, from inside the Gulf. I can't give you definitive answers on from which Gulf countries, other than, you know, I think it is certainly possible.

Mr. COOK. Okay. Thank you.

I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN [presiding]. Thank you, Mr. Cook.

And we are pleased to recognize Dr. Yoho of Florida for his questions.

Mr. YOHIO. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Gentlemen, I appreciate you being here.

Mr. Borelli, you said that the youth movement is politically motivated and not religious. Is there a way that you can separate that from the Muslim faith? I mean, don't they kind of go hand-in-hand?

Mr. BORELLI. They do go hand-in-hand, but in the conversations we had, the idea of this war against the West, this Islamic notion, did not come up in our conversations. I mean, it was primarily couched in a way that the youth were concerned that there were foreign troops on the ground in Somalia, and they felt it was their duty to go back to Somalia to defend their homeland. It wasn't like a crusade war of the West against Islam.

Mr. YOHO. Okay. Thank you.

And, Dr. Jones, again, I agree with my colleague, Jeff Duncan, over here about the smuggling of the Somalis into the United States through Mexico. And you agree that it did happen. And it doesn't take many people to come in here to wreak havoc in this country. You know, it is like a cake mix. They say one drop of kerosene can ruin the cake.

And so that is an issue of ours, where it is imperative that we secure the border. And would you agree with that, for that reason there?

Mr. JONES. Absolutely. Sure. I mean, one of the things that came out of the bin Laden documents just in 2011 was an interest in getting somebody with a Mexican visa.

Mr. YOHO. Right. And, you know, it is like a cancer that metastasizes, and it doesn't take a lot.

I want to direct these questions to you, Mr. Farah. Why do most of the Somali immigrants come to America, or a lot of them, I will say?

Mr. FARAH. A lot of them come to America for a lot of reasons. Obviously, Somalia is in a state—I mean, was in a state of civil war back then. You know, education, job development, the American dream—I mean, that is just a couple options of why folks move.

Mr. YOHO. That is a wonderful thing, isn't it, the American dream?

Mr. FARAH. It is a wonderful thing.

Mr. YOHO. Freedom?

Mr. FARAH. It is a wonderful—freedom is a major, a major—

Mr. YOHO. I agree.

Mr. FARAH. Yep.

Mr. YOHO. Are the majority of the Somalis in America, are they practitioners of the Muslim faith?

Mr. FARAH. Yes.

Mr. YOHO. Okay. Do most Somalis adhere to the belief in the Sharia law or American law? Or is it a combination?

Mr. FARAH. I mean, the majority of the Somali people across this Nation go by the laws that we have here on our land.

Mr. YOHO. Okay.

Let me ask you this. How well have the Somalis in Minnesota, which is my home State—I was born there, proud to be from there—how well have the Somali immigrants assimilated into America, as far as culture, ideals, beliefs, and, I think most importantly, loyalty to the United States of America?

Mr. FARAH. They are very—well, let me say this. The Somali community, especially in Minnesota, are very loyal to this great Nation.

In terms of the assimilation, to some extent, they have been assimilated to the greater society. However, we do need to do a lot more work. There is a lot more work ahead of us that—especially the youth. There are a lot of issues, especially identity. I mean, the new generation, are we Somalis? Somali-Americans?

And that is what we are doing, you know, in terms of Ka Joog and our work, is really making sure that kids who—because they are not going back to Somalia. This is their home. This is my home.

Mr. YOHO. Right. Well, and I commend you for the work you are doing with Ka Joog.

Let me ask you this. What is the average age in the Minnesota region of the average Somali? I mean, is it thirty? Twenty-five?

Mr. FARAH. The majority of the community is between 5 to 24.

Mr. YOHO. Okay. What is their graduate rate?

Mr. FARAH. The graduation rate is very low. And that is what I was talking about earlier. There are a lot of underlying issues, such as a lack of education, lack of jobs.

Mr. YOHO. Why is there a lack of education?

Mr. FARAH. Well, because—

Mr. YOHO. If they are assimilating into our country.

Mr. FARAH. To some extent, to some extent. We do need to do more work. I mean, there is a lot—in terms of, if you look at it gender-wise, females are doing great work. I mean, they are graduating far more than their counterparts. In terms of the males, there is a lack of mentorship. And that is where we come in. The high school rate is very low when it comes to boys, and so that is where we need to do—

Mr. YOHO. All right, let me ask you something before I run out of time. What is the employment rate with the Somali male?

Mr. FARAH. Based on the research that I was recently reading, just within one of the main communities in the Somali—one of the main neighborhoods, it was well over 17 percent. And that is way higher—

Mr. YOHO. That is the unemployment rate.

Mr. FARAH. That is the unemployment rate. That is way higher than the average of the State.

Mr. YOHO. I agree.

Madam Chair, I am out of time, but I have my questions that I will submit.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. Thank you, Dr. Yoho.

And now we are pleased to recognize Mr. Weber for his questions.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Jones, in your—Dr. Jones—no kin to Indi, I presume—in your comments, you said that you doubted that al-Shabaab had competent external operations capability.

Mr. JONES. Can you repeat that one more time? I argued earlier that they do have an external operations capability.

Mr. WEBER. Okay, well, I must have missed that. I thought you said you didn't think they could export—basically, I took from that

you didn't think they could export their horrific deeds to the United States. You are saying you believe they can?

Mr. JONES. Well, what I noted, and it is in the testimony, is that the mall attack does demonstrate an ability to conduct operations outside of Somalia. What I haven't seen much is evidence of an interest in exporting those capabilities to the United States.

Mr. WEBER. Okay.

So they have a recruitment system that they use, where they actually actively recruit people in person and then they do it on social media. Could you hazard a guess, is it 50/50, percentage-wise? Is it 10 percent in person, 90 on social media?

Mr. JONES. I couldn't give you a percentage. I would say it is probably quite large on social media.

Mr. WEBER. Okay.

Mr. JONES. I could not give you a percentage, though.

Mr. WEBER. Okay.

And, Mr. Borelli, I think you said that there is about—or I have seen the figure, there are 7,000 to 9,000 fighters, and I heard 5,000 being bandied around as I came back in from getting some coffee. Is 7,000 to 9,000 fighters still an accurate estimate?

Mr. BORELLI. I don't believe I was the one who commented on the number of fighters—

Mr. WEBER. No?

Mr. BORELLI [continuing]. So I will defer to my colleagues.

Mr. WEBER. Anybody?

Mr. DOWNIE. It is virtually impossible to know. I have seen various figures, ranging from 5,000 to 7,000. But this is a very amorphous organization, and people drift in and out. And the wing that we should be particularly concerned about, the international jihadist wing, would be much smaller than that, I would imagine. But these are guesstimates.

Mr. WEBER. Okay.

And then also a question for you, Mr. Borelli. My youngest son is in the FBI, by the way. So we appreciate your service.

Who monitors the historical schedule, if you will? Terrorism is on the rise. So there has to be a list, chart, call it whatever you want to, of the countries, you know, the incidents, who is involved, the number of deaths. Who monitors that?

Mr. BORELLI. I think multiple agencies monitor that within the intelligence community. Certainly, FBI headquarters keeps statistics on all these—the number of terrorist groups and the number of estimated fighters and the different attacks that they have been responsible for. But also CIA, DOD, multiple agencies keep statistics on this.

Mr. WEBER. There is a ranking of the most credible threats to the least credible, is there not?

Mr. BORELLI. There is, and I believe that comes out under the authority of the DNI. I believe that is correct.

Mr. WEBER. Okay. Well, who monitors that? As a group begins to move up that ranking, who gets that red flag?

Mr. BORELLI. I think, and I will also defer to my colleagues, but it is constantly reassessed, at least on a yearly basis, where the intelligence community looks at all of the factors—you know, intent, capability, which groups are moving up, moving down—and they

are constantly being reassessed for the priority and the amount of resources that we must direct at those groups.

Mr. WEBER. And is that information, to your knowledge—or, Dr. Jones, would you like to weigh in on that? No?

Mr. JONES. I think that is correct.

Mr. WEBER. I am sorry?

Mr. JONES. I don't have anything further to add.

Mr. WEBER. You think that is right.

Mr. Downie?

Okay. Is that information shared with other agencies? And I don't mean just U.S.—well, I do mean U.S. agencies, of course, but I also mean internationally.

Mr. JONES. I can't comment on how much is shared internationally, with two exceptions. One is documents, obviously, in particular in the Four and Five Eyes communities, they are shared closer with the British, the Canadians, the Australians, and then New Zealand.

I would also point out, at least when I served in government, there were regular national intelligence estimates on the threat to the homeland that were combined by the National Intelligence Council. And so it included the assessments of all agencies.

Mr. WEBER. I was the vice chair of the Texas borders committee in the Texas legislature. And Steve McCraw, a former FBI guy, now director of DPS, said that there were 70, if I remember the numbers correctly, sects, s-e-c-t-s, of eastern religions coming across our southern border.

Mr. Borelli, do you have any knowledge to that?

Mr. BORELLI. I don't have any knowledge to that.

Mr. WEBER. Dr. Jones?

Mr. JONES. I can't confirm that. I mean, we have a lot.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. WEBER. Okay. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Weber.

We thank our witnesses for their time today, and for their excellent testimony. This is obviously a serious threat we are going to stay on top of, and the committee will continue to monitor the situation.

And, with that, the hearing is adjourned.

Thank you, gentlemen.

[Whereupon, at 12:13 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

Edward R. Royce (R-CA), Chairman

October 3, 2013

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live via the Committee website at <http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov>):

DATE: Thursday, October 3, 2013

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

SUBJECT: Al-Shabaab: How Great a Threat?

WITNESSES: Seth Jones, Ph.D.
Associate Director
International Security and Defense Policy Center
RAND Corporation

Mr. Dan Borelli
Chief Operating Officer
The Soufan Group

Mr. Mohamed Farah
Executive Director
Ka Joog

Mr. Richard Downie
Deputy Director and Fellow
Africa Program
Center for Strategic and International Studies

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.



COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day Thursday Date 10/03/13 Room 2172

Starting Time 10:07 A.M. Ending Time 12:13 P.M.

Recesses 0 (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____) (____ to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Edward R. Royce, Chairman
Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☒

Executive (closed) Session ☐

Televised ☒

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☒

Stenographic Record ☒

TITLE OF HEARING:

Al-Shabaab: How Great a Threat?

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

See Attendance Sheet.

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

None.

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☒ No ☐
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

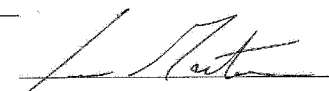
STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: (List any statements submitted for the record.)

None.

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____

or

TIME ADJOURNED 12:13 p.m.



Jean Marter, Director of Committee Operations

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Full Committee Hearing

<i>Present</i>	<i>Member</i>
X	Edward R. Royce, CA
X	Christopher H. Smith, NJ
X	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, FL
X	Dana Rohrabacher, CA
X	Steve Chabot, OH
	Joe Wilson, SC
X	Michael T. McCaul, TX
X	Ted Poe, TX
X	Matt Salmon, AZ
	Tom Marino, PA
X	Jeff Duncan, SC
X	Adam Kinzinger, IL
	Mo Brooks, AL
X	Tom Cotton, AR
X	Paul Cook, CA
X	George Holding, NC
X	Randy K. Weber, Sr., TX
X	Scott Perry, PA
	Steve Stockman, TX
	Ron DeSantis, FL
	Trey Radel, FL
	Doug Collins, GA
X	Mark Meadows, NC
X	Ted S. Yoho, FL
	Luke Messer, IN

<i>Present</i>	<i>Member</i>
X	Eliot L. Engel, NY
X	Eni F.H. Falcomavaega, AS
X	Brad Sherman, CA
	Gregory W. Meeks, NY
X	Albio Sires, NJ
X	Gerald E. Connolly, VA
	Theodore E. Deutch, FL
	Brian Higgins, NY
X	Karen Bass, CA
X	William Keating, MA
X	David Cicilline, RI
	Alan Grayson, FL
X	Juan Vargas, CA
	Bradley S. Schneider, IL
X	Joseph P. Kennedy III, MA
	Ami Bera, CA
	Alan S. Lowenthal, CA
X	Grace Meng, NY
X	Lois Frankel, FL
X	Tulsi Gabbard, HI
X	Joaquin Castro, TX