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FROM AL-SHABAAB TO AL-NUSRA: HOW WESTERNERS JOINING TERROR GROUPS OVERSEAS AFFECT THE HOMELAND

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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CONTENTS

Page

STATEMENTS

The Honorable Michael T. McCaul, a Representative in Congress From the State of Texas, and Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security:
Oral Statement 1
Prepared Statement 3
The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson, a Representative in Congress From the State of Mississippi, and Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland Security:
Oral Statement 4
Prepared Statement 6

WITNESSES

Mr. Michael Scheuer, Adjunct Professor, Center for Peace and Security Studies, Georgetown University:
Oral Statement 8
Notes on U.S. and Western Jihadis Returning Home 50
Ms. Lauren Ploch Blanchard, Specialist in African Affairs, Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress:
Oral Statement 10
Prepared Statement 13
Mr. Brett Lovegrove, Chief Executive, City Security and Resilience Network (CSARN):
Oral Statement 20
Prepared Statement 22
Mr. Richard W. Stanek, Sheriff, Hennepin County, Minnesota:
Oral Statement 26
Prepared Statement 28
Mr. Richard Mellor, Vice President, Loss Prevention, National Retail Federation:
Oral Statement 30
Prepared Statement 31
Ms. Stephanie Sanok Kostro, Senior Fellow and Acting Director, Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies:
Oral Statement 34
Prepared Statement 36

FROM AL-SHABAAB TO AL-NUSRA: HOW WESTERNERS JOINING TERROR GROUPS OVERSEAS AFFECT THE HOMELAND

Wednesday, October 9, 2013

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 2:42 p.m., in Room 311, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Michael T. McCaul [Chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives McCaul, King, Duncan, Barletta, Stewart, Hudson, Daines, Brooks, Sanford, Thompson, Jackson Lee, Clarke, Richmond, Barber, Payne, O'Rourke, Vela, and Horsford.

Chairman MCCAUL. The Committee on Homeland Security will come to order. I appreciate the patience on the witnesses' part. We obviously had votes, and we are running a little bit late, so I will try to speed up my opening statement.

I want to thank everybody for being here. The Members. I want to thank the staff for putting this hearing together on a very important topic. We are here to examine the threats to the homeland from the recruitment of Westerners to radical Islamic organizations. I now recognize myself for an opening statement.

Just weeks ago, Americans watched as hundreds ran for cover and 68 people were murdered by vicious terrorists invading a Western-style shopping mall in Kenya. Terrorizing these innocent people, including some Americans, were al-Shabaab militants, Somalian fighters who executed a horrifying attack on a soft target, much like many of the malls in our homeland. The most striking concern for Americans is that within the ranks of al-Shabaab are our own neighbors, including 40 to 50 known fighters who have left our shores to fight alongside these jihadists in Africa and the Middle East.

Just last weekend, our military carried out a mission to damage al-Shabaab, underscoring the direct interest we have in upsetting its jihadist network. It is yet another group aligned with al-Qaeda that would not think twice about hitting a Western target if given the opportunity.

Today we face a disturbing trend, as depicted in this picture.

[The information follows:]



Chairman MCCAUL. More than a hundred Americans are fighting overseas supporting terrorism, from the Middle East and Syria, or to Africa and Somalia. Individuals in our own communities are being recruited by organizations like al-Shabaab. These individuals directly undermine our homeland security. They have been recruited inside the United States, have left and could potentially return, presenting a vast vulnerability in our counterterrorism efforts. Overseas, while fighting and supporting terrorists, they receive military training, combat experience, and grow their jihadist network. Coming back with these skills and connections extends a spider web of extremism into our own backyards.

We know how this journey commonly starts. Individuals are either recruited by a trusted member of their community or over the internet. They are persuaded to leave the United States and travel abroad to fight against our Nation's interest. We have seen the recruiting materials, and they offer conflicted views, the opportunity to join a fight against an enemy it barely knows.

For example, Omar Hammami, an American citizen from Alabama, was one of the more public Americans who traveled overseas to join a terrorist organization. Hammami joined al-Shabaab in Somalia. Unlike the almost 50 Americans of Somali descent that have left the United States to support al-Shabaab, Hammami is not of Somali descent. He made a name for himself in Somalia and rose to a leadership position, eventually being placed on the FBI's Most Wanted list for violating U.S. law. He advocated al-Shabaab becoming more global and violent.

Syria is another example. Americans for the past 2 years have traveled to Syria to support the rebels, mainly al-Qaeda factions. While the number of Americans is low, the number of Westerners is high, which poses a threat not only to our allies in Europe, but also here in the United States. Fighting alongside of hardened al-Qaeda jihadists will provide these recruits with the unfortunate tools they need to wreak havoc on the country they were once a part of. The training, battle hardening, the exposure to the most

radical ideas and propaganda all lead us to ask ourselves how we prevent these people who have turned their backs on their country from bringing home the hatred and death they learned supporting al-Qaeda.

The administration must confront this issue with its full attention. The events in Kenya, while an ocean away, are not far from us. The notion that it won't talk about it, that the problem will just go away, is disturbing. The administration's failed narrative of al-Qaeda being all but decimated shows a lack of will for addressing threats and presents weaknesses that our enemies will exploit.

This danger is real. With over 40 percent of DHS leadership positions remaining vacant, including the Secretary, the administration is showing the American people how much it cares about homeland security.

Today we will examine how Americans traveling to fight alongside jihadists overseas pose a threat to the homeland and what could be done to stop this problem. From the suicide bombing last month at a Christian church in Pakistan to the Westgate Mall attack in Kenya, extremists are increasingly bent on destroying American values and American lives. We must not underestimate this threat, and we must better understand and examine the threat posed by our own citizens joining the fight abroad and potentially bringing their mission home with them.

[The statement of Chairman McCaul follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL T. MCCAUL

OCTOBER 9, 2013

Just weeks ago, Americans watched as hundreds ran for cover and 68 people were murdered by vicious terrorists invading a Western-style shopping mall in Kenya. Terrorizing these innocent people, including some Americans, were al-Shabaab militants—Somalian fighters who executed a horrifying attack on a soft target much like many of the malls in our homeland. The most striking concern for Americans is that within the ranks of al-Shabaab are our own neighbors, including 40–50 known fighters who have left our shores to fight alongside these jihadists in Africa and the Middle East.

Just last weekend, our military carried out a mission to damage al-Shabaab, underscoring the direct interest we have in upsetting its jihadist network. It is yet another group aligned with al-Qaeda that would not think twice about hitting a Western target if given the opportunity.

Today we face a disturbing trend. More than a hundred Americans are fighting overseas supporting terrorism, from the Middle East in Syria or to Africa and Somalia. Individuals in our own communities are being recruited by organizations like al-Shabaab. These individuals directly undermine our homeland security. They have been recruited inside the United States, have left, and could potentially return—presenting a vast vulnerability in our counterterrorism efforts.

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Syria is another example. Americans for the past 2 years have traveled to Syria to support the rebels, mainly al-Qaeda factions. While the number of Americans is low, the number of Westerners is high, which poses a threat not only to our allies in Europe, but also here in the United States. Fighting alongside of hardened al-Qaeda jihadist will provide these "recruits" with the unfortunate tools they need to wreck havoc on the country they were once a part of.

The training, battle hardening, the exposure to the most radical ideas and propaganda all lead us to ask ourselves how we prevent these people, who have turned their backs on their country, from bringing home the hatred and death they learned supporting al-Qaeda.

The administration must confront this issue with its full attention. The events in Kenya, while an ocean away, are not far from us. The notion that if we don't talk about it, the problem will go away is disturbing. The administration's failed narrative of al-Qaeda being all but decimated shows a lack of will for addressing threats, and presents weakness our enemies will exploit. This danger is real, and with over 40% of DHS leadership positions remaining vacant, including the Secretary, the administration is showing the American people how much it cares about homeland security.

Today, we will examine how Americans travelling to fight alongside jihadists overseas poses a threat to the homeland, and what can be done to stop this problem. From the suicide bombing last month at a Christian church in Pakistan, to the Westgate mall attack in Kenya—extremists are increasingly bent on destroying American values, and American lives. We must not underestimate this threat, and we must better understand and examine the threat posed by our own citizens joining this fight abroad—and potentially bringing their mission home with them.

Chairman MCCAUL. With that, the Chairman now recognizes the Ranking Member of this committee, Mr. Thompson from Mississippi.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for holding today's hearing. I also want to thank the witnesses for appearing today.

The purpose of this hearing is to explore the possibility that American citizens may leave this country to join terrorist groups fighting in areas of unrest overseas and return home to use tactics learned abroad to launch attacks within the United States.

We should state at the outset that Customs and Border Protection currently operates an Immigration Advisory Program. IAP, as it is commonly known, officers work in partnership with foreign law enforcement officials to identify terrorists and other high-risk passengers and then work in coordination with commercial air carriers to prevent these individuals from boarding flights destined for the United States. Since the inception of the program in 2004, IAP officers have been successful in preventing the boarding of more than 15,700 high-risk and improperly documented passengers. So while no system is perfect, we can take some comfort in knowing that we have a system in place that seems to be working.

Mr. Chairman, I understand that in addition to an examination of foreign terrorist groups this hearing will examine the vulnerability of soft targets within the United States. There is concern that if individuals are able to slip back into this country they may be most likely to attack soft targets within our borders. As we have recently witnessed, a single well-organized terrorist group attacked a mall, a soft target, in Kenya, killing over 70 people. That group, al-Shabaab, has a large presence in Kenya and neighboring Somalia. Until the mall attack, al-Shabaab had many sympathizers in Kenya. I am sure the attack on Westgate Mall will cause the Kenyan people to reconsider their support.

Regardless of the fate in Kenya, we all know that al-Shabaab does not have a large following here. I doubt that the massacre of

innocent men, women, and children at a mall will likely garner new followers in America.

Recently we have seen our share of violent attacks waged against innocent people who happen to be at soft target locations. But those attacks have not been carried out by large groups. We have witnessed the bombing of the Boston Marathon. The motivation of the Boston bombing suspects remain unknown. While one of the suspects engaged in foreign travel, the purpose of his trip remains unclear. It appears that the suspects were not involved within a foreign terrorist organization. They learned to build the bombs they used from information garnered on the internet through publicly-available websites.

Mr. Chairman, it seems that the Boston Marathon bombing has turned all the conventional wisdom about violent extremism upside down and confirmed that people do not need to travel abroad to learn violent and destructive behavior. Violent extremists can be homegrown. Mr. Chairman, as you know, I have repeatedly called upon this committee to review acts of domestic violent extremists, particularly those people who act alone. While we have seen Boston, we have also seen a shopping center in Arizona, a movie theater in Colorado, and a school in Connecticut. Those tragic events should not be ignored or forgotten in our consideration of the possibility of soft target attacks.

As we develop a policy-driven response to the vulnerability of soft targets, the most likely scenarios must be considered. In this country, the most likely scenarios involve a lone actor. Also, as we consider how soft target attacks affect the homeland, I suggest that we think about the fact that most of these locations are privately-owned. I do not know of many malls or movie theaters that welcome the addition of armed guards. I know of even fewer that would want the Federal Government to require the kinds of barriers and other security measures we see here at Federal buildings.

While the Federal Government should not pay for these improvements to private businesses, I would think that the security community would welcome a joint discussion to share information on best practices. The Federal Government need not fund these efforts, but the Government can provide an open forum for an exchange of ideas that would keep us safe without compromising our privacy or civil liberties. If we want to proactively encourage these kinds security measures in soft targets, we need to think about the role of Federal funding in assisting the States and local jurisdictions address the soft targets in their midst.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, the Federal Government plays an integral role in funding homeland security efforts of the States. Stakeholders from State and local jurisdictions have repeatedly testified before this committee that the homeland security grant funds have been essential in developing the capabilities necessary to quickly and effectively respond to a terrorist attack or natural disaster. Indeed, at this committee's hearing on the Boston Marathon bombing in May, Boston Police Commissioner Davis stated that without grant funding the response would have been much less comprehensive than it was, and without the exercise supported through Federal grant funding, there would be more people who had died in those attacks.

Unfortunately, the funding of the Homeland Security Grant Program has been reduced significantly under Republican leadership of the House, from $2.75 billion to $1.5 billion, and the sequester cuts will further erode funding. Neither the grant funding levels nor the sequester cuts are particularly relevant today; the Government is shut down, and the grants that make soft targets less vulnerable are not getting to the States and localities. The training exercises that could have been conducted or the equipment which could have been purchased will have to wait. That discussion that could have been held within the business community and its fellow partners have been put on hold because the Government is closed.

In addition to the funding provided by those Federal grant programs, the Director of National Intelligence had indicated that the Government shut-down may seriously damage our ability to protect the safety and security of this Nation and its citizens because 70 percent of the intelligence community staff has been furloughed.

Further, Mr. Chairman, I should note that we are able to have today's hearing, although there are no witnesses from the Federal Government. While the absence of the Federal Government may be advantageous for your ability to convene today's hearing, our understanding of the issues raised here today and our potential legislating or oversight response can only be effective if we have the benefit of testimony from those Federal employees who are responsible for administering the programs that keep this Nation safe. But those people cannot testify here today because they are on furlough due to the shut-down. I look forward to hearing from those Federal employees, and I look forward to their return to work.

With that, I yield back.

[The statement of Ranking Member Thompson follows:]

STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER BENNIE G. THOMPSON

MARCH 13, 2013

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Chairman MCCAUL. I thank the Ranking Member.

I also look forward to the reopening of the Government and talking to the Federal witnesses that could be helpful to this committee in our oversight responsibilities. With that, other Members are reminded that opening statements may be submitted for the record.

We are pleased to be joined here today by six distinguished witnesses to discuss this important topic.

First, Dr. Michael Scheuer is an adjunct professor at the Center for Peace and Security Studies at Georgetown University. Dr. Scheuer recently concluded a 22-year career with the CIA. While there, Dr. Scheuer held multiple positions, including senior advisor for the Osama bin Laden department.

We are very pleased to have you and honored, sir.

Next, Ms. Lauren Blanchard is a specialist in African Affairs with the Congressional Research Service, where she provides analysis on African political, military, and diplomatic affairs, and on U.S. policy in the region.

Thank you for being here as well.

Next, Mr. Brett Lovegrove, who is the chief executive for the City Security and Resilience Network and former head of counterterrorism for the city of London police. Mr. Lovegrove had over 30 years of experience and service with the Metropolitan Police Service, including a national responsibility for countering hostile recognizance with a continuing public-private partnership called Project Griffin.

Thank you so much for traveling so far to be here today, and we hope to show you some hospitality here in Washington.

Sheriff Richard Stanek is the sheriff of Hennepin County, Minnesota. Sheriff Stanek has extensive experience in countering violent extremism, has advised the Department of Homeland Security and the National Counterterrorism Center.

Thank you so much, Sheriff, for being here.

Mr. Richard Mellor serves as vice president for loss prevention at the National Retail Federation. He also works to raise the visibility of retail loss prevention issues, including organized retail crime and return fraud.

Last, but not least, Ms. Stephanie Sanok Kostro, who is acting director of Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Prior to joining CSIS, she served at the Embassy in Baghdad, where she developed policy options for the United States Government.

The witnesses' full statements will appear in the record. The Chairman now recognizes Dr. Scheuer for an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL SCHEUER, ADJUNCT PROFESSOR, CENTER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Mr. SCHEUER. Thank you, sir.

In the 17th year of this war, since it was declared in 1996, it should be noted that Americans and other Westerners have been going to assist and/or fight for the Mujahideen since at least the 1980s. That occurred during the war between the Soviets and the Afghans, of course. The numbers have certainly been increasing

since bin Laden declared war on the United States in August 1996. They especially have spiked since al-Qaeda's victories of 9/11.

Today, Syria and Somalia seem to be the two most prominent destinations for U.S. and Western fighters, but North Africa and the Sahel are also attracting Westerners. From the 1980s through today, U.S. citizens who go overseas to fight jihad return to America with several attributes, some new and some old, but all considerably strong. They return home, of course, with the same religious faith that led them to travel in the first place, and they will return with it strengthened because they won.

Since 1996, America has been engaged in what is preeminently a religious war for those who are waging it, notwithstanding the deliberately misleading protestations of our last three Presidents and many of our leading politicians. That American fighters have traveled, fought, survived, and returned home safely proves two things to themselves, their families, and their communities. First, God was pleased by their actions and made them successful and helped them survive. Second, for younger people in the Muslim community, and especially for young males, they become role models in terms of an individual fulfilling his religious duty.

They also return with an increased talent in the use of small arms and explosives, a talent which is of course teachable, and with increased skills in organization building, especially organization building in a quiet or covert sense. They also return with confidence that victory is possible. They and their colleagues now know that they inflicted humiliating defeats on the United States military in Afghanistan and Iraq, and that knowledge will boost both spirits and recruitment.

Finally, the American fighters return with a greatly increased knowledge of and contacts with other similarly-minded men from across the Muslim world. All of the Islamist wars to which American Muslim fighters travel and are fought primarily by locals, but with a variety of Mujahideen from countries that span the globe. The Americans will come home fully aware that the movement bin Laden started is now truly international and quickly growing in numbers and geographic reach. They come home with a list of contacts among their fellow Mujahideen from whom they can seek advice or more material forms of assistance.

As I noted at the start, the subject of our discussion today is about a phenomenon that is nearly 40 years old. It is clearly more serious today than ever before, but the factors that cause the problem, the factors that motivate young Muslim-Americans to become Islamist insurgents or terrorists have been the same over time. While there are a number of factors that motivate these young people, including Saudi-sponsored religious education in the United States and the bonds of tribe and clan that remain strong and vibrant even after immigration, the first and most important motivation of these young American Muslims to go to war is the interventionist foreign policy of the United States, which is fully supported by both parties, whether they hold power in Washington or not, and the existence of the un-Islamic tyrannies that govern much of the Arab world, mostly with U.S. and Western support. Since bin Laden declared war on America in 1996, al-Qaeda and its allies

had from their perspective only two indispensable allies, Allah and U.S. interventionism.

To conclude my opening statement, I would say that while what American Muslim Mujahideen bring back from the jihad with them is important, what they find in the United States upon their return is much more important in motivating what I believe will become combat situations, like the recent one in Nairobi, and even worse, in the United States over the next decade. What they will find in their return will be the steady-as-she-goes interventionist U.S. foreign policy in the Muslim world, which has been a constant for more than 30 years.

We will, for example, continue to unquestioningly arm and support Israel. We will continue to support tyranny in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Algeria, and wherever we find it useful in the Muslim world. We will continue preaching democracy but readily intervene to undermine or destroy democratically-elected regimes in places like Palestine and Egypt. Perhaps most dangerously, we will continue to prosecute the clash of civilizations started by President Bush and accelerated by President Obama and Mrs. Clinton, designed to impose secularism, democracy, and women's rights in an Islamic civilization which is willing to fight such Westernization to the death.

In terms of the length of our war with Islam, this attempt to impose and teach our little brown Muslim brothers to be just like us will lengthen the war every bit as much as the unprovoked and unnecessary military interventions in Libya, Mali, and Iraq. If you think I place too much emphasis on the motivation provided to U.S. citizen and other Western Mujahideen by U.S. and Western interventionism, I would draw your attention to the reality that, to the best of my knowledge, neither we nor any of our NATO partners have yet to capture an Islamist whose words or written or electronic documents have showed a motivation to attack based on hatred for liberty, elections, democracy, or gender equality. Invariably, they attribute their motivation to the U.S. and Western military intervention.

Thank you.

Chairman MCCAUL. Thank you, Dr. Scheuer.

Chairman now recognizes Ms. Blanchard for an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF LAUREN PLOCH BLANCHARD, SPECIALIST IN AFRICAN AFFAIRS, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE, THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Ms. BLANCHARD. Thank you. Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Thompson, and distinguished Members of the committee. Thank you for inviting CRS to testify today. My written testimony provides a detailed overview of al-Shabaab, a violent extremist group in Somalia that has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to recruit both Americans and citizens of other Western countries. In my brief statement this afternoon, I will address the transnational threats posed by al-Shabaab through a discussion of the group, its goals, and its recruitment strategies.

Al-Shabaab, as it exists today, is a hybrid organization. It is both a locally-focused Somali Islamist insurgent group and a

transnational terrorist affiliate of al-Qaeda. U.N. experts have referred to the group as a sprawling coalition of jihadist business interests and clan militias. Like several other A.Q. affiliates, al-Shabaab appears to operate largely independently, although it maintains ties with other extremist groups in the region, including al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

As Members of the committee know, to date, al-Shabaab has primarily focused its agenda on Somalia, seeking to expel foreign military forces and govern through its interpretation of Islamic law. Al-Shabaab Emir Ahmed Godane leads an extremist faction within the larger group that appears to aspire to pose a broader international threat.

Al-Shabaab had demonstrated its intent and ability to strike targets beyond Somalia's borders, at least in the neighboring region. While some in al-Shabaab may aspire to conduct terrorist attacks outside Africa, the group's capability and intent to strike inside the United States thankfully has yet to be demonstrated.

Somalia offers a permissive environment for extremists to train recruits to pursue their goals, and al-Shabaab continues to control large sections of southern and central Somalia. According to a recent report by the U.N. Monitoring Group on Somalia, al-Shabaab has at least 20 training camps, including a suicide training school near the port city of Barawe, an al-Shabaab stronghold that was the target of the Navy SEALS raid on October 5. These camps move regularly to avoid targeting from counterterrorism operations.

Who are its members? The typical al-Shabaab foot soldier is Somali and is more likely to have joined the group based on economic reasons or to defend clan interests than based on extremist beliefs. Al-Shabaab's foreign fighters are also reportedly holding a range of political and religious beliefs. Many of the Somali-Americans who have been prosecuted to date were reportedly radicalized based on a nationalist desire to defend their ancestral homeland against so-called foreign invaders. Several other American recruits were reportedly inspired by the sermons of AQAP cleric Anwar al-Awlaki. One non-Somali-American, Jehad Mostafa of San Diego, remains on the FBI's Most Wanted terrorist list. Mostafa, like the late Syrian-American Omar Hammami, has helped to produce al-Shabaab propaganda and has reportedly served as a trainer and a leader of foreign fighters.

Several Americans who were reportedly radicalized in the United States are reported to have died in Somalia. They include the first-known American suicide bomber, Shirwa Ahmed, who was reportedly radicalized while living in the Minneapolis area. At least three of al-Shabaab's suicide bombings have included Somali-Americans. Other Americans who have died fighting with al-Shabaab include converts to Islam with criminal records. Several would-be jihadists from Illinois, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia, including at least one ex-U.S. soldier, have been caught before they could reach Somalia.

U.N. experts estimate that the group continues to draw support from roughly 300 foreign fighters, and this does not include foreigners of Somali descent. These fighters appear to be predominantly from Kenya, Sudan, Yemen, but also from South Asia, Eu-

rope, Canada, Australia, and the United States. U.S. Africa Command officials suggest that these foreign fighters remain the greatest threat to Western interests, both regionally and internationally. A U.S. counterterrorism operation last weekend reportedly targeted a Kenyan-Somali, Somali-Kenyan, known as Ikrima, who has been identified as the senior al-Shabaab operative responsible for recruiting foreign fighters in Europe and directing attacks in Kenya.

How does al-Shabaab recruit? Al-Shabaab has used both real and virtual social networks to recruit. The group maintains multiple websites and an on-again, off-again Twitter feed with links to videos and statements posed on-line in both Somali, Arabic, and English to reach an international audience. Al-Shabaab uses internet chatrooms to recruit. Its foreign-born members often play a key role in this propaganda.

What threat does al-Shabaab pose to the United States? U.S. policymakers have been concerned for years with al-Shabaab's terrorist operations and recruitment activities for three main reasons. First, al-Shabaab has demonstrated its intent to strike international targets, and several Americans have been wounded or killed in the attacks. Second, its recruitment drives have led to participation of U.S. soldiers and U.S. citizens in al-Shabaab terrorist activities overseas. Third, the group has recruited Americans or individuals carrying passports from countries in the Visa Waiver Program, including countries in Europe, some of whom may seek to target the United States.

In this regard, al-Shabaab's training camps and its ability to provide recruits with battlefield experience and training in terrorist tradecraft, such as bomb-making skills, may pose the greatest long-term risks to the region and to the broader international community. The recent attack in Kenya also demonstrated that al-Shabaab is able to provide the organizational support for the planning and coordination of large-scale attacks that individual extremists might otherwise be unable to manage.

The potential for al-Shabaab supporters inside the United States to carry out attacks in support of the group's agenda is unclear and bears further investigation. In particular, U.S. citizens who have fought with al-Shabaab may inspire radicalization among family members or acquaintances. Attacks of the type implemented last month in Nairobi, using small arms to maximum deadly effect, might draw the attention of so-called self-starters or would-be terrorists in the United States.

In sum, American recruits to al-Shabaab continue to play a direct role in the group's operations in Somalia, and it appears likely that the group will continue to target U.S. citizens for recruitment. In confronting these threats, U.S. policymakers face the challenge of determining how, either through regional partners or directly, the United States can most effectively prevent al-Shabaab from growing stronger or attacking the United States without playing into the group's narrative and further fueling radicalization abroad and here at home.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Blanchard follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF LAUREN PLOCH BLANCHARD

OCTOBER 9, 2013

Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Thompson, and distinguished Members of the committee, thank you for inviting the Congressional Research Service (CRS) to testify today.

Al-Shabaab is a violent extremist group in Somalia that has successfully demonstrated its ability to recruit Americans and citizens of other Western countries. The State Department designated the group as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) in February 2008. While it has primarily focused on its agenda in Somalia, two developments in the past month, namely the group's deadly terrorist attack on an up-scale shopping mall in Kenya, and the death in Somalia of American jihadist Omar Hammami, have highlighted the transnational threats posed by al-Shabaab. These events have prompted a number of questions, not least of which are: "What role are American recruits playing in al-Shabaab?" and "Could American recruits conduct or facilitate similar attacks in the United States?".

Many details of the Nairobi mall attack remain unclear, and investigations are on-going regarding the identity of those who planned and led the attack.[1] Eyewitness accounts reported by the press and initial remarks by Kenyan officials suggested that British and/or U.S. citizens may have participated in the attack, although more recent Kenyan government statements have identified only East African nationals among the attackers.

U.S. policymakers have been concerned for years with al-Shabaab recruitment abroad for two main reasons. First, such recruitment has led to the participation of U.S. citizens in al-Shabaab terrorist activities overseas. Second, and salient to today's hearing, the group has recruited Americans or individuals carrying passports from countries in the Visa Waiver Program, including countries in Europe, who might potentially seek to target the United States.

At this point, while some in al-Shabaab may aspire to conduct terrorist attacks outside Africa, the group's capability and intent to strike targets inside the United States have not been demonstrated. However, the Westgate mall terrorist attack is another sobering demonstration of al-Shabaab's intent, and ability, to strike targets beyond Somalia's borders, at least in the neighboring region. The attack may also provide inspiration for would-be jihadists on how small arms can be used against soft targets with maximum effect. Even if U.S. citizens were not involved in the Westgate attack, perhaps the most important fact for the consideration of this committee remains that al-Shabaab has successfully recruited U.S. citizens and deployed them in terrorist operations. In this testimony, I provide some background on al-Shabaab and briefly discuss the role of foreign fighters within its ranks and its efforts to recruit from abroad.

BACKGROUND

Al-Qaeda and affiliated groups like al-Shabaab have had a presence in East Africa for almost 20 years, although the extent of their operations there has varied over time.[2] The region's porous borders, proximity to the Arabian Peninsula, weak law enforcement and judicial institutions, and pervasive corruption have combined with almost 20 years of state collapse in Somalia to provide an enabling environment for violent extremist groups.

Al-Shabaab, more formally known as *Harakat al-Shabaab Al Mujahidin* ("Mujahidin Youth Movement"), emerged about a decade ago amid a proliferation of Islamist and clan-based militias that flourished in the absence of central authority in Somalia. Loosely affiliated with a network of local Islamic courts, al-Shabaab, unlike the clan militias, drew members from across clans, ascribing to a broader irredentist and religiously-driven vision of uniting ethnic Somali-inhabited areas of Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Somalia under an Islamist caliphate.[3] Several of al-Shabaab's leaders had reportedly trained and fought with al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, and known al-Qaeda operatives in the region were associated with the group.

Al-Shabaab grew in prominence in 2006, when hardliners within the Islamic courts called for jihad against neighboring Ethiopia. Ethiopia, reportedly supported by the United States, had backed a group of Mogadishu warlords, purportedly to capture suspected al-Qaeda operatives and counter the growing Islamist presence in

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[1] CRS Report 43245, *In Brief: The September 2013 Terrorist Attack in Kenya.*

[2] For further background, see CRS Report R41473, *Countering Terrorism in East Africa: the U.S. Response*, November 3, 2010, by Lauren Ploch.

[3] The courts' leaders varied in their ideological approaches, which reflected diverse views on political Islam, clan identity, and Somali nationalism.

the Somali capital. When Ethiopia intervened directly in December of that year, deploying its own forces to Mogadishu to defeat the courts' militias, al-Shabaab played upon historic anti-Ethiopian sentiment in the country to fuel an increasingly complex insurgency.[4] Some analysts argue that al-Shabaab and other hardliners benefited directly from the U.S.-backed Ethiopian intervention that removed their rivals and gave credence to al-Shabaab's anti-foreign rhetoric.

U.S. air strikes in early 2007 against suspected al-Qaeda operatives fighting among the insurgents were incorporated into al-Shabaab's narrative that Islam in predominantly Muslim Somalia was under attack by the West and its proxy African "Crusader" forces. Al-Qaeda messaging supported this narrative—in January 2007, Ayman al-Zawahiri broadcast a call for jihadists to support Somali efforts to attack Ethiopia.[5] When African Union (AU) troops from predominantly Christian Uganda and Burundi joined the fight against al-Shabaab later that year, under a U.N. mandate and with substantial U.S. and European support, al-Shabaab repeated its charge that these forces were surrogates for an American anti-Islamic agenda.

Al-Shabaab has repeatedly used this narrative against Kenya, which launched its own military offensive against al-Shabaab in October 2011 with the stated aim of defending itself against terrorist threats and incursions. Kenya joined the AU force, known as AMISOM (the AU Mission in Somalia) in 2012. Alleged abuses by AU forces and civilian casualties purportedly resulting from U.S. and/or Kenyan air strikes have been exploited by al-Shabaab. For example, in claiming responsibility for the September 2013 attack on the Westgate mall, the group charged that the Kenyan military had "massacred" innocent civilians in southern Somalia during its operations.[6] It used a similar justification for its deadly July 2010 bombings in Kampala, Uganda.

AL-SHABAAB TIES TO AL-QAEDA

Al-Shabaab, as it exists today, appears to be a hybrid—it is both a locally-focused Islamist insurgent group and a transnational terrorist affiliate of al-Qaeda.[7] U.N. experts have referred to it as "a sprawling coalition of jihadists, business interests, and clan militias." The group announced its formal merger with al-Qaeda in February 2012, although al-Shabaab did not adopt the al-Qaeda name.[8] Like several other "AQ affiliates," al-Shabaab appears to operate largely independently. According to the U.S. State Department, it maintains ties with other extremist groups in the region, like Nigeria's Boko Haram, and al-Qaeda-affiliated groups like al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), although such links have reportedly been institutional (i.e., communications, training, and weapons linkages) rather than operational.[9]

Public statements from al-Shabaab leaders suggested for years an aspiration to be part of the al-Qaeda franchise. In 2008, after a U.S. missile strike killed al-Shabaab leader Aden Hashi Ayro, the group's leadership made multiple pronouncements of their commitment to the global jihad movement, and subsequently announced a revenge campaign against U.S. and Western targets in Somalia.[10] In Au-

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[4] See, e.g., Roland Marchal, "A Tentative Assessment of the Somali Harakat Al-Shabaab," *Journal of East African Studies*, November 2009.

[5] OSC, "Al-Zawahiri Urges Somalis, Muslims To Fight Ethiopian Forces," FEA20070105069027, January 5, 2007.

[6] OSC Report AFL20130923807221 61, "Somalia, Kenya—al-Shabaab Vocal in Claiming Responsibility for Nairobi Attack," September 23, 2013. According to the State Department, Kenya has successfully disrupted several large-scale terrorist threats, but more than 3 dozen small-scale terrorist incidents were reported in Kenya in 2012. State Department, "Kenya," *Country Reports on Terrorism 2012,* May 30, 2013.

[7] The term "Islamist" here refers to those who advance a formal political role for Islam, through the implementation of Islamic law, political mobilization through a religious party, or the creation of a religious system of governance.

[8] U.N. Security Council, *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1853 (2008)*, S/2010/91, March 10, 2010. The media wing of al-Qaeda Senior Leadership in Pakistan released a joint video message from al-Shabaab leader Ahmed Godane and al-Qaeda leader Zawahiri on February 9, 2012.

[9] The U.S. capture in 2011 of a Somali, Ahmed Warsame, has been referred to by U.S. law enforcement as an intelligence watershed on the linkages between al-Shabaab and AQAP. For U.S. Government reference to institutional links see, e.g., the description of Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau on the State Department's Rewards for Justice website, and see also U.N. Security Council, *Somalia report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea submitted in accordance with resolution 2060 (2012)*, S/2013/413, July 12, 2013.

[10] OSC, "Somalia's Mujahidin Youth Movement Spokesman Discusses Progress of Jihad," GMP20080527873001, May 8, 2008; and OSC, "Somalia: MYM Commander Shaykh Al-Zubayr Sends Message to Global Jihad Leaders," AFP20080603410001, June 1, 2008. Foreign fighter Omar Hammami (Abu Mansour al-Amriki) also expressed al-Shabaab's commitment to global

gust 2008, a top commander, Mukhtar Robow, publicly acknowledged the group's growing ties to al-Qaeda, saying, "We are now negotiating to unite as one. We will take our orders from Sheik Osama Bin Laden because we are his students."[11] He also threatened, for the first time on record, al-Shabaab attacks against targets outside Somalia, warning, "once we end the holy war in Somalia, we will take it to any government that participated in the fighting against Somalia or gave assistance to those attacking us." At that time, some U.S. officials, while recognizing linkages between the groups, publicly dismissed the idea that al-Shabaab was following orders from al-Qaeda.

Other public expressions of allegiance followed, and in September 2009, al-Shabaab released a video expressing greetings to Osama bin Laden, in which al-Shabaab leader Ahmed Godane spoke of awaiting guidance from the AQ leader.[12] Then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton referred to al-Shabaab as a "junior partner" to al-Qaeda in early 2010.[13] In June 2011, after the United States reportedly directed its first drone strikes against targets in Somalia, President Obama's then-counterterrorism advisor John Brennan declared AQAP the "most operationally active affiliate" in the al-Qaeda network, but warned that "from the territory it controls in Somalia, al-Shabaab continues to call for strikes against the United States."[14] In its 2011 National Counterterrorism Strategy, released that same month, the administration warned, "influenced by its al-Qaeda elements, al-Shabaab . . . could—motivated to advance its insurgency or to further its al-Qaeda agenda or both—strike outside Somalia in East Africa, as it did in Uganda, as well as outside the region." Unidentified U.S. military officials expressed concern at that time that some within the group were collaborating more closely with al-Qaeda to strike targets abroad, and indicated that the targets of the June drone strikes had "direct ties" to AQAP's Anwar al-Awlaki.[15] Press reports suggested that the strikes sought to disrupt a plan to conduct attacks in the United Kingdom.[16]

The practical effect of al-Shabaab's 2012 merger with al-Qaeda is unclear. Some experts argue that it is largely symbolic, given that the group appears to remain self-sufficient and continues to follow a largely Somalia-focused agenda. They see the Westgate mall attack in Kenya as part of that effort.[17] Others argue that the Westgate attack bears the hallmarks of new guidelines reportedly released by al-Qaeda leadership, instructing affiliated groups to use hostages to attract maximum publicity, and may signal a strategic shift toward a more global focus by al-Shabaab leadership.[18]

THE RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FOREIGN FIGHTERS IN SOMALIA

The typical al-Shabaab foot soldier is Somali, and is more likely to have joined the group for economic reasons, or to defend clan interests, than based on extremist beliefs.[19] But the group also continues to draws support from roughly 300 "foreign fighters," according to U.N. reporting.[20] (The U.N. estimate does not include individuals of Somali descent—if they were included in the count, the figure would almost certainly be higher.) These fighters are reportedly predominantly from Kenya,

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jihad in January 2008, OSC, "'Abu-Mansur al-Amriki' Condemns 'Courts,' Praises MYM Views, Bin Ladin," GMP20080213106001, February 7, 2008.

[11] Edmund Sanders, "Conditions May Be Ripe for Al Qaeda to Gain in Somalia," *Los Angeles Times,* August 25, 2008.

[12] OSC, "Somalia: Mujahidin Youth Movement Issues 'O Usama, Here We Are' Video," AFP20090922410001, September 20, 2009.

[13] Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Remarks during a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing, March 25, 2010.

[14] The White House, Remarks of John O. Brennan, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, on Ensuring al-Qa'ida's Demise—As Prepared for Delivery, June 29, 2011.

[15] Greg Jaffe and Karen DeYoung, "U.S. Drone Targets Two Leaders of Somali Group Allied with Al-Qaeda, Official Says," *Washington Post*, June 29, 2011 and Mark Mazzetti and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Expands Its Drone War Into Somalia," *New York Times*, July 1, 2011.

[16] Karen DeYoung, "CIA Idles Drone Flights from Base in Pakistan," *Washington Post*, July 1, 2011.

[17] Nicholas Kulish, Mark Mazzetti, and Eric Schmitt, "Kenya Mall Carnage Shows Shabaab Resilience," *New York Times,* September 22, 2012.

[18] Paul Cruickshank and Tim Lister, "Al-Shabaab Breaks New Ground with Complex Nairobi Attack," CNN, September 23, 2013. See also Ayman al Zawahiri, *General Guidelines for Jihad*, As-Sahab Media, September 2013.

[19] U.N. Information Service, Press Briefing by Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia Nicholas Kay in Geneva, September 24, 2013.

[20] U.N. Security Council, S/2013/413, op. cit.

Sudan, and Yemen, but also from South Asia, as well as from Europe, Australia, Canada, and the United States.

U.S. Africa Command officials suggest that these foreign fighters "remain the greatest threat to Western interests regionally and internationally."[21] Indeed, two Sudanese, Mohamed Makawi Ibrahim Mohamed and Abdelbasit Alhaj Alhassan Haj Hamad, who were involved in the January 2008 murder of a U.S. diplomat in Khartoum, are believed to be among the group's ranks.[22] Several foreign fighters have reportedly been targeted in U.S. military strikes in Somalia, including Bilal al Berjawi, a Lebanese-born British citizen who was reportedly wounded in a June 2011 drone strike and killed in a second strike, in January 2012. Another is Mohammed Sakr, a British citizen of Egyptian descent killed in a February 2012 strike. The U.K. government revoked their passports in 2010.

Al-Shabaab is not the first extremist group to attract foreigners to Somalia to join its ranks, but it may be the most successful. Somalia offered a permissive environment for al-Qaeda operatives like Harun Fazul and Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, co-conspirators in the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, to train recruits. But Somalia also poses organizational and logistical challenges for foreign operatives and fighters. Reports suggest, for example, that AQ operatives found Somalis' clan identities and suspicion of foreigners, as well as the unreliability of local "allies," to be impediments to their operations in the 1990s.[23] The country's widespread banditry, poor roads, weak financial services, and other logistical challenges created additional costs for al-Qaeda as it tried to move personnel and resources through the area for training.[24]

Al-Shabaab appears to have found ways to work around many of these challenges, due in large part to its continued ability, despite notable military setbacks in the past 2 years, to control significant territory in southern and central Somalia.[25] According to a recent report by the U.N. Monitoring Group on Somalia, al-Shabaab has at least 20 training camps, including a suicide training school near the port city of Barawe, an al-Shabaab stronghold that was the target of a raid by Navy Seals on October 5.[26] These training sites move frequently, but their continued existence demonstrates that al-Shabaab still enjoys some freedom of movement and territorial control in parts of the country.[27]

RECRUITMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AND AMONG THE SOMALI-AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Al-Shabaab has conducted recruitment and fundraising within the Somali diaspora community in the United States, drawing considerable attention from U.S. law enforcement officials. Several Somali-Americans have been prosecuted for terrorist financing, and U.S. citizens (many, but not all, of Somali origin) have been indicted on suspicion of traveling to train and fight with al-Shabaab. Others have been prosecuted for efforts to recruit or provide financial support to the group. Estimates vary on the number of U.S. citizens who may have joined al-Shabaab in Somalia, but more than 20 young men from Minnesota, which hosts the largest concentration of Somali-Americans, are believed to have gone to fight in Somalia, and at least four Somali-Americans have been implicated in suicide bombings there.[28]

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[21] General David M. Rodriguez, Written Responses to Advance Policy Questions for the Nominee for Commander, U.S. Africa Command, Senate Armed Services Committee, February 13, 2013.

[22] These two individuals, who were convicted of the crime in 2009 and subsequently escaped a Sudanese prison, have been listed by the United States as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs).

[23] The Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) at West Point's Harmony Project, *Al-Qaida's (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa*, 2006.

[24] Coastal Kenya, on the other hand, with its porous borders, relative stability, and basic infrastructure, including banks, provided what some consider a "weak state" environment that proved to be a conducive setting for al-Qaeda activities, and provided easier access to high-profile Western targets.

[25] Since 2006, al-Shabaab has co-opted clan leaders in south-central Somalia and manipulated local revenue streams, earning possibly as much as $15 million a month from illegal charcoal exports through Barawe port, south of Mogadishu.

[26] The camps are located primarily in Lower Shabelle region, as well as in Bay, Hiran, and Galgadud.

[27] According to the U.N. Monitoring Group, tasked by the Security Council to report on violations of international sanctions and security threats in Somalia, al-Shabaab remains in control of Middle Juba, most of Hiran, Bay, and Bakol regions, and parts of Galgudud, and Lower Shabelle regions. U.N. Security Council, S/2013/413, op. cit.

[28] "Somalis Still Leaving U.S. to Join Terror Group," *Military Times*, September 26, 2013, and Jamie Dettmer, "Al-Shabab's Jihadi Recruitment Drive in Minnesota," *The Daily Beast*, September 24, 2013.

Al-Shabaab has used both real and virtual social networks to recruit. The group has proven adept at strategic communications, using the internet to emphasize its commitment to global jihad, and to pledge fealty to al-Qaeda, which serves both its fundraising and recruitment goals. In addition to using domestic media sources to reach Somalis, the group maintains multiple websites and a Twitter feed (@HSMPress and variations, which are periodically shut down), with videos and statements posted on-line in Somali, Arabic, and English, to reach an international audience. Al-Shabaab also uses internet chatrooms to solicit contributions and recruits. Its foreign-born members often play a key role in its propaganda—a British national, for example, is believed to manage its Twitter account.

Among the most infamous of al-Shabaab's foreign fighters was a Syrian-American from Alabama, Omar Hammami, also known as Abu Mansour al Amriki, who appeared in propaganda videos and used social media for recruitment. Hammami, for whom the State Department had issued a $5 million bounty under its Rewards for Justice program, was killed in early September 2013, reportedly by former allies within al-Shabaab.[29] Another non-Somali-American, Jehad Serwan Mostafa, from San Diego is also on the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorists List, with a $5 million reward for information leading to his capture. Mostafa, who like Hammami has helped to produce al-Shabaab propaganda, has served as a trainer and a leader of foreign fighters, according to the State Department.

Several Americans who were reportedly radicalized in the United States have been reported to have died fighting in Somalia, although authorities have not confirmed information concerning their deaths in all cases.[30] They include:

- Shirwa Ahmed, a naturalized Somali immigrant who in October 2008 became the first known American suicide bomber, participating in coordinated attacks against both domestic and foreign targets, including a U.N. compound, in the northern Somali cities of Hargeisa and Bosaso. Ahmed was reportedly radicalized while living in the Minneapolis area, leaving for Somalia in late 2007.
- Omar Mohamud, a Somali-American from Seattle who may have been one of two suicide bombers who drove two stolen U.N. vehicles into an AMISOM peacekeeping base at the Mogadishu airport in September 2009.
- Farah Mohamad Beledi, a Somali-American ex-convict from St. Paul who was shot and killed while attempting a suicide bombing against a Somali military checkpoint outside Mogadishu in May 2011.
- Abdisalan Hussein Ali, a Somali-American who may have conducted a suicide bombing against AMISOM in October 2011. Ali, a pre-med student at the University of Minnesota before he disappeared in 2008, was identified in an al-Shabaab audio tape calling for jihad in the United States, Canada, and Europe.
- Dahir Gure, a Somali-American who was reportedly among the group of young men who traveled from Minneapolis to Somalia in 2007.
- Mohamoud Ali Hassan, a Somali-American engineering student at the University of Minnesota who was reportedly among the second group of young men who traveled from Minneapolis to Somalia, in 2008, and was killed in 2009.
- Abdirashid Ali Omar, a Somali-American who was reportedly among the second group of young men who traveled from Minneapolis to Somalia, in 2008.
- Jamal Bana, a Somali-American engineering student at a Minneapolis community college who left for Somalia in 2008 and reportedly died in Mogadishu in 2009.
- Burhan Hassan, a Somali-American high school student who traveled from Minneapolis to Somalia in 2008 and was reportedly killed in 2009.
- Troy Kastigar, aka "Abdirahman," an American convert to Islam with a criminal record who left Minneapolis for Somalia in 2008 and reportedly died in 2009.
- Ruben Shumpert, a Muslim convert and ex-convict from Seattle who fled Federal gun and counterfeit currency charges in 2006, traveling to Somalia, where he declared in a phone call to an FBI agent that he and his associates "would destroy everything the United States stood for."[31] He was killed in 2008, reportedly in a U.S. missile strike.

Three of the Somali-Americans listed above are part of a broader FBI investigation, Operation Rhino, into the pipeline through which Somali youth have traveled from the Minneapolis area to join al-Shabaab. Other individuals who are thought

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[29] For more on Hammami see e.g., *USA* v. *Omar Hammami;* Andrea Elliott, "The Jihadist Next Door, *New York Times*, January 31, 2010 and articles by J.M. Berger in *Foreign Policy*.

[30] Laura Yuen, "Minnesota Men Who Joined 'Jihad' in Somalia," Minnesota Public Radio, October 1, 2012.

[31] "Seattle Case Raises Questions About War on Terror," CNN, September 18, 2006.

to have gone include Ahmed Ali Omar, Khalid Mohamud Abshir, Zakaria Maruf, Mohamed Abdullahi Hassan, Mustafa Ali Salat, Abdikadir Ali Abdi, Abdiweli Yassin Isse, and Cabdullaahi Ahmed Faarax.[32] At least two additional Minneapolis residents may have left for Somalia in 2012: Mohamed Osman and Omar Ali Farah. Kamal Said Hassan, Abdifatah Isse, and Salah Osman Ahmed, who returned to the United States after fighting in Somalia, have been convicted in U.S. courts of terrorism offenses and are now serving sentences.[33] Prior to his arrest, Ahmed had found work as a security guard upon returning to Minneapolis.

Other Americans who have reportedly sought to join al-Shabaab have been arrested while preparing to travel or en route to Somalia, including:

- Craig Baxam, a former U.S. soldier from Laurel, MD;
- Mohamed Alessa and Carlos Almonte, New Jersey residents;
- Shaker Masri, a Chicago resident;
- Zachary Adam Chesser, a Fairfax, VA resident.

Another individual, Brooklyn resident Betim Kaziu, who reportedly sought to kill U.S. troops abroad made efforts to travel to Somalia and Afghanistan, among other war zones. He was ultimately arrested in Kosovo.

Al-Shabaab's foreign recruits have reportedly held a range of political and religious beliefs. Many of the Somali-Americans who have been prosecuted to date for joining or providing support for al-Shabaab were reportedly radicalized based on a patriotic agenda of defending their ancestral homeland against foreign invaders and local allies (i.e., the Somali government and its security forces). Several of the non-Somali-Americans listed above, including Chesser, Masri, Alessa, and Almonte, appear to have sought more generally to become involved in violent jihad, and were reportedly inspired by the sermons of AQAP cleric al-Awlaki, a U.S. citizen who was linked to a number of U.S.-focused jihadist plots before his death in a U.S. counterterrorism operation in Yemen in September 2011. Another American killed in that attack, the Saudi-born Samir Khan, who published the AQAP magazine *Inspire* and its predecessor *Jihad Recollections*, may have influenced Mohamed Osman Mohamud, a Somali-American who attempted to detonate what he believed to be a vehicle bomb at a Christmas tree lighting ceremony in Portland, Oregon in 2010. While Mohamud did not appear to have ties to al-Shabaab, his actions have further contributed to concerns that Somali-Americans or others recruited by al-Shabaab might attempt to strike targets in the United States.

CRS analyst Jerome Bjelopera, who has written on plots by American violent jihadists both in the United States and abroad, estimates that there have been 71 plots or attacks in the United States since September 11, 2001.[34] He notes a significant uptick in plots beginning in 2009, which he suggests may reflect a trend in jihadist terrorist activity away from schemes directed by core members of significant terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda. Most of the individuals involved in these plots did not have operational ties to terrorist groups. These plots suggest, as he posits, that some Americans, particularly first- and second-generation Muslim American immigrants and native-born Americans who converted to Islam, are susceptible to violent jihadist ideologies.

While the threat posed by al-Shabaab to domestic and foreign targets in Somalia and the broader East Africa region is clear, the group's efforts to recruit foreigners raises additional concerns. In hosting training camps and providing recruits with battlefield experience and training in terrorist tradecraft such as bomb-making skills, al-Shabaab is able to impart skills that could be used in attacks either in the region or abroad. It is also able to provide organizational support for the planning and coordination of large-scale strikes that a home-grown violent jihadist might be otherwise unable to manage. Citizens or legal permanent residents of the United States, or citizens of countries in the Visa Waiver Program, who have been recruited by al-Shabaab are a particular concern for U.S. border security.[35] Further, U.S. citizens who have fought with al-Shabaab might inspire radicalization among family members or acquaintances, and attacks of the type implemented last month in Nairobi, using small arms to maximum effect, might draw the attention of so-called "self-starters" or other would-be terrorists in the United States.

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[32] *United States* v. *Ahmed Ali Omar et ano.*, Third Superseding Indictment in the U.S. District Court of Minnesota.

[33] *United States* v. *Abdifatah Yusuf Isse* and *Salah Osman Ahmed and United States* v. *Kamal Said Hassan* in the U.S. District Court of Minnesota.

[34] CRS Report R41416, *American Jihadist Terrorism: Combating a Complex Threat*, by Jerome P. Bjelopera.

[35] Of particular concern are al-Shabaab recruits from the United Kingdom, Sweden, and other European countries in the Visa Waiver Program. Canadian citizens also do not require a non-immigrant visa.

OUTLOOK FOR AL-SHABAAB

Some observers argue that al-Shabaab has been greatly weakened by AMISOM gains in the past 2 years. However, U.N. experts suggest that avoiding direct military confrontation has allowed al-Shabaab to "preserve the core of its fighting force and resources," with some 5,000 fighters who remain "arguably intact in terms of operational readiness, chain of command, discipline and communication capabilities."[36] Since what it termed a "strategic withdrawal" from Mogadishu in August 2011, the group has conducted almost-daily guerilla-style attacks on government, civilian, AMISOM, and other foreign targets, in both urban and rural areas.[37] Notable attacks against foreign targets in 2013 include a June attack against the U.N. compound in Mogadishu, in which 22 people were killed, and a July attack on the Turkish diplomatic residence there. Al-Shabaab conducts assassinations and attacks using improvised explosive devices (IEDs) of various types, mortars, grenades, and automatic weapons, causing hundreds of civilian casualties.[38] U.N. reporting on al-Shabaab attacks indicates a surge in the group's use of grenades and IEDs and suggests evidence that the group has exported technical knowledge for the manufacture of suicide vests and IEDs to Kenya and Uganda. Complex attacks, in which explosives or suicide bombers are used to breach a perimeter and are then followed by gunmen to produce maximum casualties, have become a hallmark of the group.

The former head of the U.N. Monitoring Group on Somalia, Matt Bryden, suggests that the Westgate attack represents a dangerous new stage for al-Shabaab: "My assessment has always been that the day al-Shabaab lets go of the 'Cult of the Suicide Bomber,' we will be in a world of trouble. It's far more complicated to procure the parts for an explosive vest, as well as to find people willing to be martyrs. I always worried that if you just get guys riding in with AK–47s and grenades, they could do incredible damage."[39]

Reports of in-fighting within al-Shabaab's senior ranks have been the subject of considerable speculation.[40] Within the broader al-Shabaab insurgency is an extremist faction, led by al-Shabaab leader Ahmed Abdi Godane (aka "Abu Zubeyr"), which appears to aspire to pose a global threat. Some analysts suggest the Westgate attack in Nairobi may be an expression of Godane's consolidation of power, after having neutralized his rivals within the movement.[41] Godane has reportedly created a parallel clandestine terrorist organization, the Amniyat, within the larger al-Shabaab movement that, according to U.N. experts, has been responsible for a majority of recent suicide bombings and targeted killings in recent years. By U.N. accounts, the Amniyat is structured to function underground, unlike al-Shabaab's military apparatus, which appears vulnerable to political divisions and regional military offensives.

The Amniyat bears close watch, as do foreign fighters who have trained and fought with al-Shabaab—some foreigners have reportedly deserted the group in recent years, either because of disillusion with its military losses or because of internal dissent. Reports suggest some may have travelled to Yemen to join AQAP,[42] while others, including those linked to regional al-Shabaab affiliates like Al Hijra in Kenya, seek to shift their focus from Somalia to fighting for al-Qaeda and killing U.S. citizens in the region of East Africa.[43] The U.S. counterterrorism operation on October 5 in Barawe, Somalia, which reportedly targeted, unsuccessfully, a Somali-Kenyan Mohamed Abdikadir Mohamed, aka "Ikrima," may be indicative of the level of U.S. concern regarding al-Shabaab's Kenyan plots. Ikrima has been identified as a senior al-Shabaab operative responsible for recruiting foreign fighters and directing attacks in Kenya, including, possibly, the attack on the Westgate mall. A Kenyan intelligence report referenced by CNN suggests that Ikrima, who has also been

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[36] U.N. Security Council, S/2013/413, op. cit.

[37] See Christopher Anzalone, "Al-Shabab's Tactical and Media Strategies in the Wake of its Battlefield Setbacks," *CTC Sentinel*, Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point, March 27, 2013.

[38] For an overview of al-Shabaab attacks in Somalia in 2012–2013, see Navanti Group, "Somalia's Al-Shabaab: Down But Not Out," Homeland Security Policy Institute Issue Brief 22, August 27, 2013.

[39] "At Westgate, al-Qaida Group Figures Out That Less is More, With Dangerous Consequences," Associated Press, October 5, 2013.

[40] See CRS Report 43245, *In Brief: The September 2013 Terrorist Attack in Kenya*, for more information.

[41] Godane is blamed for the deaths of several high-profile al-Shabaab figures in recent months, including senior commanders, as well as Omar Hammami.

[42] "Al-Shabaab on Verge of Defeat, Analysts Say," *Sabahionline.com,* February 27, 2012. The Sabahi website is sponsored by U.S. Africa Command.

[43] Treasury Department, "Treasury Targets Regional Actors Fueling Violence and Instability in Somalia," July 5, 2012.

linked to AQAP and Al Hijra, may have been planning a complex attack against Kenyan government and U.N. targets in Nairobi.[44]

In summary, al-Shabaab presents U.S. policymakers with a paradox: The group has demonstrated its intent and capacity to wage a violent war on Somalis and other targets in East Africa. It has also shown its ability to recruit Americans. Its ties to groups that have conducted terrorist attacks against the United States, namely al-Qaeda and AQAP, and the reported presence of foreign fighters in Somalia with the intent to strike targets beyond the African continent, raise the group's profile among foreign terrorist organizations watched by the U.S. intelligence community. The challenge for policymakers, however, is calibrating the appropriate response—determining how, either through regional partners or directly—the United States can most effectively prevent the group from growing stronger or focusing on attacking the United States without playing into their narrative and further fueling radicalization.

Chairman MCCAUL. Thanks, Ms. Blanchard.

Chairman now recognizes Mr. Lovegrove.

STATEMENT OF BRETT LOVEGROVE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, CITY SECURITY AND RESILIENCE NETWORK (CSARN)

Mr. LOVEGROVE. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for your invitation from the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security. I am delighted to be here with my witnesses to talk about this subject.

You will know that United Kingdom has a very tragic and long history of being attacked by different terrorists, both national and international. But what that has done over the years is made us focus our minds on how we protect ourselves, whether it be government level, whether it be public sector, or whether it be the business sector. The business sector I will mention later on.

Surprisingly, these modern-day terrorists are a little bit more hidden than the ones that we have traditionally been used to. We have been focused on the jihadists, who seem to be on the list for attacking us the most.

The Muslim religion, as you know, is wholly peaceful. I want to make that point, because although I am going to be talking about jihadists, we understand in the United Kingdom—and the Muslim community has been there for in excess of 800 years—they have been a very peaceful community that have embedded themselves into the Anglo-Saxon and U.K. community, and they have great respect for other faiths.

I speak in a week where the head of MI5, Andrew Parker, underlines the fact that the United Kingdom is witnessing evidence of a movement from Pakistan and Yemen and several thousands who have been identified who see the British as a target, an ideal target for terrorist acts. He describes the whole situation of radicalism as being more diffuse, more complicated, and more unpredictable than anywhere before.

There is a responsibility from the community, however. In the United Kingdom we are in great talks with the different parts of the Muslim community to make them realize that they have a great responsibility for taking the lead in many, many things. One of the things that we have been talking about is how the Muslim community can supply more intelligence to the police community. They have done, but they need to do more. Hopefully they feel so

[44] Paul Cruickshank and Tim Lister, "U.S. Target in Somalia: An Inside Story on an Al-Shabaab Commander," CNN, October 7, 2013.

abhorrent about the terrorists in their midst that they will come through with more information, and hopefully more convictions and prosecutions will take place after that.

We identify our main areas of returning jihadists, their elements and their areas of working to be prisons and youth offender institutions, the universities, colleges, and schools, mosques and other religious institutions, family environments, and any environment where vulnerable potential recruits can be identified. More recently we have noticed the gang culture is somewhere where the jihadists are recruited because of the vulnerabilities of the young there.

This is a week also where we have reformed the Serious Organized Crime Agency into the National Crime Agency and the National Cyber Crime Unit. When we talk about soft crimes—and I will be going on to that in a minute—we mustn't forget the internet, as has already been mentioned in the previous witnesses.

Ironically, one of the main areas of radicalism is in our education departments, and that is something that we are focusing on to ensure that universities themselves actually play their part. But we would like the Muslim community to be active in condemning the legitimization of jihadism, to provide even greater amounts of community intelligence, condemning the call for the death of nonbelievers, enabling the ability for a new generation of Muslims to have a balanced discussion within the community, deliver a balanced syllabus in Muslim faith schools, and disband Muslim-only areas in universities and colleges. These are really very serious in the United Kingdom, things that we must overcome if we are going to make any positive impact.

So, soft targets: In the United Kingdom we have done an enormous amount of work already. We are not complacent, and we continue to work with the business community. But there is an increasing focus on soft targets. We have heard already the long list of things that have happened in the past where the United Kingdom is learning from those incidents. We are taking the lessons identified, and we are learning them and embedding them into our society.

I am going to move on now to the outcomes of activity. We have two very good examples, very good solutions in the United Kingdom that works well for us. The two projects are Project Griffin—and, Mr. Chairman, you were kind enough to mention that before. That is the police service working with the security industry that teaches them, and of course teaching the police officers, how to identify hostile recognizance when it takes place. We have known for many, many years that the process the terrorists go through has to include hostile recognizance, and it happens to be the most vulnerable part of their process. So we teach the private security industry, the front-of-house guards, the managers of people who are patrolling in private areas to make sure they identify that kind of behavior, to call police immediately. Many, many arrests have taken place.

The second project that I would like to mention is Project Argus. Project Argus is being led by the National Counter Terrorism Security Office, which is police function within MI5. The Project Argus gets managers and submanagers of corporates together and trains them to responding to scenarios. We train them to identify how

they can prevent incidents happening, how to manage incidents, and how to help their companies recover.

Those particular initiatives have gone world-wide. We have great interest from Australia, some interest from America, I hasten to add, and India. It is seen as a very low-cost, a very practical, and very well worthwhile set of projects.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lovegrove follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BRETT LOVEGROVE

OCTOBER 9, 2013

INTRODUCTION

I would first like to thank the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security for inviting me to submit this paper and give testimony on this very important issue to both our nations.

Whether the motivation has been foreign policy, national policy, ideological beliefs, military deployment, religious beliefs, territorial dispute, or social unrest, the United Kingdom tragically has a significant history of being the victim of terrorist attack from a number of different national and international groups. This has ultimately led the government, the public, and military sectors and the business community to re-think their ability to reduce the risks of further incidents taking place, prepare the United Kingdom for any eventuality, manage the outcomes of an attack, and respond effectively to incidents on an almost continual basis over the years.

Whereas historically the intended targets in the United Kingdom were more readily identifiable (police, military, and political) and the terrorists were known (the Irish Republican Army), the difference between the tactics, methodology, and ideology of the last century and those of today couldn't be more extreme. The terrorist in the 21st Century is more hidden from the authorities, partly because of their ability to integrate into our cosmopolitan society and be born and raised within the society they will be taught to hate. The internet also exacerbates this ability to remain anonymous and remote, transcending physical borders and with an ability to communicate their ideology to a wide audience incredibly quickly.

Unsurprisingly, it is these modern-day terrorists who use a whole range of methodologies that will continue to receive the full attention of the authorities and, in the main, the focus is placed upon the Islamists and Jihadists who have managed to turn the teachings of the wholly peaceful Muslim religion into their own vehicle for hate and murder. This focus has meant that the global society has had to totally re-think its approach to not just the act of terrorism, but all aspects of causation and effect and a real effort to understand the issues underpinning such violence.

I have therefore been asked to comment within this paper upon how the United Kingdom is currently responding to returning individuals who appear to have undergone training abroad in order to inflict harm on U.K. communities and also detail the preparations that have been put in place that are designed to protect so called "softer" targets from attack. This paper will of course not comment on confidential and secret arrangements that are currently deployed. Where I mention "UK authorities", this term includes the activities of the government, the police service, and the security services.

THE COMMUNITY-BASED RESPONSIBILITY

The ideal response to individual or groups of radicalised returning Jihadists is to make the environment so unwelcoming, that operating within society becomes difficult at least and with a high potential of being caught and introduced into the criminal justice system. Fortunately, the vast majority of people within the Muslim community in the United Kingdom has shown that it adheres to the true meaning of the Koran and not only maintains a peaceful co-existence with the many other communities, but has also shown its abhorrence to terrorists within their midst.

Despite the lack of knowledge within the Muslim community about the different methods of countering radicalisation, the abhorrence often translates into assisting the authorities and security services with intelligence that regularly disrupts the planning stages of an attack and secures the convictions of offenders. The British policing style is one that has always been embedded within its communities and therefore locally-deployed police officers are often the first to receive intelligence and they are therefore trained to gather and disseminate it quickly. The real difficulty

for members of the community and police officers alike is that it is often difficult to differentiate between a radicalised person and passionate belief.

But the responsibility for identifying terrorist activity also extends to other environments where Jihadists operate. Only when they have reasonable grounds, the U.K. authorities identify and monitor potential terrorist planning activities within:

- Prisons and youth offender institutions;
- Universities, colleges, and schools (including faith schools);
- Mosques and other religious institutions;
- Family environments;
- And any environment where vulnerable potential recruits to the cause may gather. There is also some evidence that the gang culture is also a fertile ground for promoting Jihadist ideology.

This of course includes the internet which the U.K. authorities are increasingly dedicating time and expertise to identifying offenders and interdicting planning processes.

Ironically, despite the fact that some radicalisation processes take place in education facilities, it is here that the all-important counter narrative is taking place and there is also a growing call for the wider Muslim community to take the lead in overtly countering the misrepresentation of their faith. It has been suggested that these initiatives could include:

- Condemning the legitimisation of Jihadism;
- Providing greater amounts of community intelligence to the U.K. authorities;
- Condemning the call for the death of non-believers;
- Enabling the ability for a new generation of Muslims to have a balanced discussion within the community;
- Deliver a balanced syllabus in Muslim faith schools;
- Disband "Muslims only" areas in Universities and colleges.

There are already positive trends in the United Kingdom that members within the Muslim community are calling for change and the U.K. authorities are harnessing this enthusiasm.

AT A MORE STRATEGIC LEVEL

Apart from the call for more work to take place within the Muslim community, observers are calling for new thinking that should come from the wider society; a balanced and non-sensational narrative from the media and where necessary, government-led and -funded initiatives. This strategic level call includes:

- De-radicalisation centres;
- Providing contextual information to vulnerable groups;
- Early educationally-based interdiction to identified individuals before the risk of radicalisation takes place;
- Learning opportunities from former Jihadists;
- Promoting a better understanding of Western political processes, democracy, and secularism;
- Denying Jihadists unchallenged platforms;
- Promoting the recruiting of Muslim scholars with a balanced teaching syllabus;
- Providing financial and institutional support to work centred in the community.

HOW "SOFT" ARE THE UK'S "SOFT TARGETS"?

There is an increasing list of evidence that so called "soft targets" around the world are becoming more popular as terrorist targets than previously experienced. Reasons for this change in tactic could include the fact that many previously preferred targets such as embassies, military installations, and police stations are better protected than ever before and the attacker stands to fail in their objective. Another could be that a higher "kill rate" could be just as easily achieved in crowded places in the neighbourhoods where people gather to shop, visit, relax, and work. This latter point is also far more likely to have a more emotional and psychological impact on society because this is the very place where people live and retreat from the stresses elsewhere. If their homes, shopping centres, and schools are attacked by gunmen or bombers who select random targets, then society would quite rightly feeling even more exposed than if it occurred in a city centre.

Just for clarification, I would list soft targets as being:

- Hotels;
- Airports (airside);
- Train, Marine, and bus systems;
- Shopping centres;
- Tourist attractions;
- Universities and colleges;

- Travelling business people;
- Cinemas and Theatres;
- Hospitals;
- Office blocks.

The Westgate Centre in Nairobi, the bus bomber in Bulgaria, the 10-man attack in Mumbai, and the gunman in Aurora, Colorado, and the suicide bombings in London are all tragic reminders about how vulnerable these types of locations are and unfortunately there are many more examples. Just like other countries across the world, the United Kingdom and the business sector reviews these incidents and tries to learn, embed, and sustain the lessons into its own society and organisations respectfully.

The considerations of applying a much stricter security regime to the above list are necessity, reasonableness, intelligence, societal expectation, cost, and people's rights. I believe that the pivotal consideration amongst this list is whether or not there is sufficient intelligence to believe that an attack on a soft target is likely, if so then the other considerations fall into place. A very close second to intelligence is reasonableness. If society can understand and accept the presence of these two principles, then target hardening of the soft targets is more likely.

The United Kingdom already has a number of projects that have been developed and delivered for a number of years. As I mentioned before, the United Kingdom has suffered from intermittent attacks in the past and the following initiatives are our way of hardening soft targets.

But before I go into more detail, I think that it is important to make the point that for many years U.K. authorities have engaged with the national and international business sectors with the objective of intelligence sharing, sharing best practice, briefing staff, developing alliances, and working on resilience projects. Like other developed countries there are a number of non-governmental organisations that represent subject matter companies (technologies, cyber, physical security, CCTV, petro chemical, etc.) who meet and discuss specific solutions to resilience issues.

My own company, City Security and Resilience Networks (CSARN) is a not-for-profit organisation that brings together global corporates, government departments, law enforcement, and security services across the United Kingdom and more recently Australia in order to enable these entities to share and work more effectively together. This dialogue and sharing activity has an impact on a number of business sectors, including the "soft" targets mentioned in this paper, many of whom are members of CSARN.

The outcomes of this activity are manifest in the different resilience areas that the U.K. authorities and the business community focus upon, such as:

- The convergence of inter-discipline planning and delivery;
- Business Crisis Management planning;
- Cyber system resilience;
- Physical security;
- Technological security advancement;
- Multi-agency emergency response;
- Crisis Leadership;
- Information and Intelligence exchange;
- Counter espionage;
- Organisational resilience;
- Effective fast time communication;
- Fraud;
- Crime prevention;
- Regional partnerships;
- Major event planning;
- The insider threat;
- Pandemics.

Another outcome is the rise over many years of the U.K. authorities, the business and voluntary sectors working and training together. There are a number of regular "live play" and large-scale table-top training sessions that tests the coterminous responses from government departments, financial authorities, the voluntary sector, police officers, special forces, and businesses. This regularity of working together promotes familiarity between the decision-makers, the differing systems, the abilities and constraints of each organisation, the strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunity to learn and change process and practice. Such joint training ensures that, in extremis, the U.K. authorities and the business community deploy their assets together and in a co-ordinated way.

Most of the participants come from the soft-target community and there is a real sense that hardening and securing their assets is their responsibility and over the

years these organisations have built their capability in training their crisis leaders and crisis teams, reviewed their ability to prevent or recover from a sustained cyber-attack, briefing and training their security teams, and introducing a security-minded culture.

There are two long-standing national-level projects that are worthy of note:

Project Griffin

Project Griffin is a police-led initiative to protect the United Kingdom's cities and communities from the threat of terrorism. It brings together and coordinates the resources of the police, emergency services, local authorities, business, and the private-sector security industry. Project Griffin was developed by the city of London Police and formally introduced in London in April 2004 as a joint venture between the city and Metropolitan police forces. Its remit was to advise and familiarise managers, security officers, and employees of large public and private-sector organisations across the capital on counter hostile reconnaissance, security, counter-terrorism, and crime prevention issues.

Following its unqualified success in London, Project Griffin has been recognised as national best practice and is being implemented by police forces cities and communities throughout the United Kingdom. It has also generated interest and acclaim overseas, particularly here in the United States, in Canada, and Australia.

Project Griffin seeks to enlist the help and support of individuals or groups responsible for the safety and security of buildings, businesses, districts, or neighbourhoods. It provides an official and direct channel through which the police can share and update vital information relating to security and crime prevention.

Its principal aims are to:

- Raise awareness of current terrorist and crime issues;
- Share and gather intelligence and information;
- Build and maintain effective working relationships;
- Seek solutions to defeating terrorism and crime;
- Maintain trust and confidence in the police and other authorities;
- Empower people to report suspicious activity and behaviour.

The operational framework of Project Griffin consists of four main strands:

1. Awareness Days.—These are staged locally by participating police forces to introduce the concept and establish relationships and networks. They focus on how to recognise, respond to, and report suspicious activity and behaviour. They also help participants think about their own local procedures for dealing with certain types of incidents and emergencies.

2. On-line Refresher Module.—An informative, interactive and easy-to-follow refresher package has been developed to help keep participants engaged and informed. Successful completion of the module also formally recognises their participation.

3. Bridge Calls.—Most participating police forces employ a system of regular Bridge Calls, whether by conference call, SMS, pager, or email. These keep individuals and groups aware of current information and intelligence, as well as issues or incidents affecting their particular area.

4. Emergency deployments.—Although the primary role of Project Griffin is to focus on community awareness, surveillance, and reporting, additional procedures might be activated in times of emergency. Police forces, utilising civilian powers, might seek to deploy Project Griffin registered personnel for activities such as setting up cordons or high-visibility neighbourhood patrolling.

Project Argus

Project Argus is an initiative developed by the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) and delivered by local police Counter Terrorism Security Advisers (CTSAs) throughout the United Kingdom. The 3-hour multimedia simulation poses questions and dilemmas for participants working in syndicates and aims to raise awareness of the threat from terrorism, providing practical advice on preventing, handling, and recovering from an attack. It is aimed at managers and assistant managers and can be presented at a police station, or at the location of choice, and it is free of charge.

Project Argus sessions are designed and delivered for the following sectors:

- Office and retail;
- Night-time economy;
- Hotels;
- Education;
- Health;
- Designers, planners, and architects.

Both Project Griffin and Project Argus have been widely embraced by the business community as a means to improve the way in which staff individually approaches security issues and be more readily able to identify threats and report suspicious behaviour, such as hostile reconnaissance, to police officers.

CONCLUSION

The United Kingdom shows its understanding of the terrorist threat to its shores by its ability to bring the authorities and the business communities together with the intention to ensure that it can recover quickly if attacked. The complacency doesn't exist at the strategic level as new ideas continue to take traction as new threats reveal themselves. The challenge has always been to secure the heart-and-mind engagement of professionals and decision-makers who have not necessarily succeeded through the resilience industry route and who may not be able to give due credence or effort to the solutions.

The movement and training of the radicalised should be the alarm bell that sounds as a reminder to all that the global community should be addressing these concerns both nationally and internationally together; something that the United States and the United Kingdom have always done and long may that sharing and working relationship continue.

The United Kingdom has a track record for absorbing learning and working in partnership both at home and abroad and thankfully there isn't any sign that this will stop. The soft target issue is of great concern to us and so it should be; as we all see the changing tactic of the terrorist towards crowded and comparatively unprotected sites in order to increase their ability to kill more effectively for their cause.

The U.K. authorities will continue to work, brief, train, educate, learn, share, and listen to its partners. In that way, we all stand a much greater chance of protecting every part of society from the constantly changing face of terrorism.

Chairman MCCAUL. Thank you, Mr. Lovegrove. Thank you for your travels across the pond to see us here.

The Chairman now recognizes Sheriff Stanek.

STATEMENT OF RICHARD W. STANEK, SHERIFF, HENNEPIN COUNTY, MINNESOTA

Sheriff STANEK. Thank you, Chairman McCaul and Members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. My name is Rich Stanek. I am the sheriff in Hennepin County, Minnesota. I also serve as the president of the Major County Sheriffs' Association.

In the aftermath of the Westgate Mall mass shooting in Kenya, I have been asked to testify today about the potential threat to our homeland posed by al-Shabaab, a foreign terrorist organization, as designated by the United States in 2008. Hennepin County is home to the largest Somali population in the United States. For the record, Mr. Chairman and Members, the vast majority of our Somali residents are law-abiding, valuable members of our community.

Since 2007, it is believed that several dozen young men have left Minnesota for Somalia to fight in the holy war and/or support the al-Shabaab movement. A mix of nationalism, religious extremism, underemployment, and economic conditions motivated these young men to join the fighting. These recruitment efforts are well-organized, they are professional, and they are intended to compel young men to abandon their lives in Minnesota and join the jihad.

We know some of these young men do not return. At least 7 young men from Minneapolis area have been confirmed dead, while others have since traveled to Somalia to join al-Shabaab. Three are confirmed suicide bombers, and the rest are believed to have been

killed during battles or executed for trying to disassociate themselves from al-Shabaab.

We also believe that after spending time abroad, some of these young men return to Minnesota, assimilate back into the community, and attempt to radicalize others in the Twin Cities. Our concern is that these al-Shabaab-trained operatives pose a significant threat to our community by preying on vulnerable individuals for material or direct support or by carrying out an attack in the United States.

Now, we know the issue of fraudulent travel documents, including visas and passports, go hand-in-hand with their travels abroad. With this degree of fraudulent activity, it is very hard to determine if someone has left the country or if, in fact, they have returned to our country. If someone has been radicalized and they have fraudulent paperwork letting them back into the United States, this is a gateway for future problems. Somali individuals are leaving Minnesota and illegally crossing the U.S.-Canadian border to facilitate travel easier overseas, and it is believed that travel arrangements for some of these individuals are being made within the Minneapolis area in obscure storefronts, insulated from outsiders and difficult for law enforcement to infiltrate.

In Minnesota, there were Federal indictments of individuals providing financial and material support to terrorist organizations. This was deemed the largest terrorism investigation in the country since September 11, 2001. In terms of community support for al-Shabaab, we still have an uphill battle to stop recruitment and win over the community at large. The al-Shabaab terrorist network is seen as heroic to some in the local Somali community.

As stated in this committee's Majority investigative report on July 27, 2011, a Saudi cleric who denounced al-Shabaab and other Somali combatants inside a Minneapolis Islamic center was assaulted by an angry mob for his comments. A recording of this assault was immediately posted on overseas-based jihadi chatrooms.

Mr. Chairman, Members, to get the crux of the issue, I have several suggestions for this committee. One, that local law enforcement must work in close partnership with our Federal partner agencies, and a large part of this effort is information sharing. Specifically, local law enforcement does not always receive intelligence and information in a timely manner. Without timely access to potentially key information, local law enforcement's ability to protect the public safety can be compromised.

Second is looking toward potential solutions. There has been an on-going effort to update the memorandum of understanding regarding the FBI's joint terrorism task forces. This discussion uses an existing model that will more fully inform our chief law enforcement officers of the JTTF's actions within their respective areas of responsibility.

The third recommendation is we would also like to see the security clearances maintained of JTTF task force officers, even after they are rotated back to their home agencies. This would allow our local law enforcement to use them as force multipliers.

Fourth, local law enforcement needs greater access to Federal classified information systems. It is not enough to provide clearance levels without access to the database. This will allow us to

connect the dots in real time between local law enforcement sensitive information and Classified data.

Mr. Chairman, Members, the four recommendations I just mentioned culminate with the protection of soft targets as a major concern in the United States. With the recent events overseas and the hundreds of malls and schools in our communities, we need to be more vigilant than ever. In Hennepin County, we have members assigned to the JTTF, and we have a homeland security unit that specializes in working with our private-sector partners, such as the Mall of America. By working with our private-sector partners, we have a better boots-on-the ground, proactive approach to suspicious activity reporting, which is critical to preventing attacks.

In wrapping up my testimony, Mr. Chairman and Members, clearly we need combine resources and work together to protect the homeland. We need to strengthen our sources of information to help our short-, mid-, and our long-term investigations aimed as disrupting these networks. There's a lot of work left to do, and, Chairman McCaul and Ranking Member Thompson and Members of this committee, no doubt this is a complex issue. I appreciate that you are holding this hearing today, and we in local law enforcement look forward to continuing our work with you on this important issue. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Sheriff Stanek follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RICHARD W. STANEK

OCTOBER 9, 2013

Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Thompson, and Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I am Rich Stanek, sheriff of Hennepin County in Minnesota, and I also serve as the current president of the Major County Sheriffs' Association.

In the aftermath of the mass shooting at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, I have been asked to testify today about the potential threat to our homeland posed by al-Shabaab, a foreign terrorist organization as designated by the U.S. Government in 2008. Additionally, I've been asked to provide testimony on the current preparedness posture of local law enforcement.

Hennepin County is home to the largest Somali population in the United States. For the record, the vast majority of our Somali residents are law-abiding, valuable members of our community. The tragedy in Nairobi has hit close to home. In fact, a Somali-American member of my staff lost a cousin in the mall attack.

Since 2007, it is believed that several dozen young men have left Minnesota for Somalia to fight in the "holy war" and/or support the al-Shabaab movement, which has ties to al-Qaeda. A mix of nationalism, religious extremism, under-employment, and economic conditions motivated these young men to join the fighting.

These recruitment efforts are well-organized, professional, and are intended to compel young men to abandon their lives in Minnesota or other parts of the United States and join the Jihad. In this video, the Twin Cities metro area is highlighted, and young men from Hennepin County are showcased.

We know some of these young men do not return. At least 7 young men from the Minneapolis area have been confirmed dead by family members or authorities. Of these 7, 3 are confirmed suicide bombers, 2 are believed to have been executed, and the rest are believed to have been killed during battles or executed for trying to leave al-Shabaab.

As recently as July and September 2012, open-source information reveals that several young men from the Minneapolis area, including 21-year-old Omar Farah, have traveled to Somalia to join al-Shabaab. This indicates that travel to Somalia has not stopped.

We also believe that after spending time abroad, some of these young men return to Minnesota, assimilate back into the community, and attempt to radicalize others in the Twin Cities. These Al-Shabaab-trained operatives pose a significant threat to

our community by preying on vulnerable individuals for material or direct support, or by carrying out an attack in the United States.

We know the issue of fraudulent travel documents goes hand-in-hand with their travels abroad. This includes: Visas, passports, and travel paperwork. With this degree of fraudulent activity, it is very hard to determine if someone has left the country or if they have in fact returned to the country. If someone has been radicalized and they have fraudulent paperwork letting them back into the United States, this is a gateway for future problems.

Somali individuals are leaving Minnesota and illegally crossing the U.S.-Canadian border—typically through North Dakota. It is believed that travel arrangements for some of these individuals are being made within the Minneapolis area, in camouflaged store fronts, insulated from outsiders and difficult for law enforcement to infiltrate. The individuals seek passage into Canada for several reasons, including better social welfare programs and facilitating travel to other countries with greater ease.

It is also worth pointing out the fact that these individuals do not get to Somalia on their own. Travelers receive assistance with travel arrangements, funding, and other logistics. In Minnesota, there were Federal indictments of individuals providing financial and material support to terrorist organizations—this was the largest terrorist investigation in the country since September 11, 2001. These individuals may not ever leave the United States themselves; however, they are still providing financing and other support to al-Shabaab.

We still have an up-hill battle to stop recruitment and win over the community at large. The al-Shabaab terrorist network is seen as "heroic" to some in the local Somali community. As stated in this committee's Majority investigative report on July 27, 2011, a Saudi cleric who denounced al-Shabaab and other Somali combatants inside a Minneapolis Islamic Center was allegedly assaulted by an angry mob for his comments. A recording of this assault was immediately posted on overseas-based jihadi chatrooms.

Mr. Chairman, Members, to get to the crux of the issue, local law enforcement must work in close partnership with Federal partner agencies, and a large part of this effort is information sharing. Since September 11, 2001, great progress has been made in this area, but I believe we can do more. Specifically, local law enforcement does not always receive information in a timely manner from our Federal partner agencies. Without timely access to potentially key information, local law enforcement's ability to protect the public's safety can be compromised.

Looking toward potential solutions, there has been an on-going effort to update the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs). Discussion is underway to utilize, across the country, an existing model that will more fully inform Chief Law Enforcement Officers of the JTTF's actions within their respective area of responsibility. Currently, depending on the field office, their level of engagement with local law enforcement is handled differently.

We would also like to see the security clearances maintained of JTTF task force officers, even after they are rotated back to their home agency. This would allow local law enforcement to use them as force multipliers. This makes sense, given the investment that goes into the security clearance process and their experience while participating in the JTTF.

Additionally, local law enforcement needs greater access to Federal Classified information systems. It is not enough to provide clearance levels without access to the database. This will allow us to connect the dots in real time between local law enforcement sensitive information and Classified data.

The protection of soft targets has to be a major concern in the United States. With the recent events overseas and the hundreds of malls and schools in our communities, we need to be more vigilant than ever. In Hennepin County we have members assigned to the JTTF to work with our Federal partners and we have a Homeland Security Unit that specializes in working with our private-sector partners such as the Mall of America, American Security, and others. By working with our private-sector partners, we have a better "boots-on-the-ground" proactive approach to Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) which is critical to preventing attacks. Law Enforcement needs to be able to share certain data on Suspicious Activity Reporting with the private sector so they know what to look for and can report back to local law enforcement.

Clearly, we need to combine resources and work together to protect the homeland. We need to strengthen our sources of information to help on short-, mid-, and long-term investigations aimed at disrupting these networks. There is a lot of work left to do.

Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Thompson, and Members of the committee, this is a complex issue, I appreciate that you are holding this hearing today and

we in local law enforcement look forward to continuing our work with you on this important issue.

Chairman MCCAUL. Thank you, Sheriff.

Let me just comment. This committee will be issuing a report on the Boston bombings in the November time frame. One of the areas of focus is exactly what you talked about, and that is information sharing with State and locals, MOUs to empower sheriffs and police chiefs to have access to this information, and strengthening the mission of the JTTFs. So thanks for bringing that up.

Sheriff STANEK. Thank you, sir.

Chairman MCCAUL. Chairman now recognizes Mr. Mellor.

STATEMENT OF RICHARD MELLOR, VICE PRESIDENT, LOSS PREVENTION, NATIONAL RETAIL FEDERATION

Mr. MELLOR. Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Thompson, distinguished Members of the committee, my name is Richard Mellor. I am vice president of loss prevention for the National Retail Federation. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today.

The recent tragic events at Westgate shopping mall highlight the potential for retail and other public areas around the world to be targets for terror. The National Retail Federation is the world's largest retail trade association representing retailers of all types and sizes. Retailers operate more than 3.6 million U.S. establishments and support 1 in 4 U.S. jobs, 42 million working Americans.

As vice president of loss prevention, I am responsible for the direction of NRF's loss prevention initiatives. I have over 40 years of experience within the retail loss prevention community and law enforcement. I also serve on several working committees within DHS and FEMA that are focused on infrastructure protection.

The safety and security of employees and customers is paramount to every retailer. Retailers have sophisticated protocols to deal with threats from a wide range of situations. Because the threats are always present, retailers invest heavily to ensure that they are prepared. As criminals and threats become more sophisticated, so do the retailers.

NRF has a long-standing commitment to working closely with law enforcement and our members in sharing information of critical matters. The annual Loss Prevention Conference includes presentations by retailers, law enforcement, and experts in violence intervention while protecting life and the safety of shoppers and employees. While shopping malls have been categorized by some as soft targets, it would be hard to imagine and prepare for the devastating attack conducted by the terrorists at Westgate shopping mall. Collaboration and partnership between retailers and law enforcement needs to remain strong and be vigilant now more than ever.

Retailers have been on the front lines of the war on terror for years. Nowhere is it more evident than the continuing private-public partnerships to address the growing issue of organized retail crime. Retailers' close work with law enforcement has helped to root out millions of dollars in criminal activity with direct links to terrorist groups and other overseas criminal organizations. ORC must be recognized as a significant National threat to our economy

and security. Congress must pass legislation to properly define ORC as a Federal crime and provide law enforcement with appropriate resources.

Retailers also continue to seek out the best technology solutions in an effort to not only protect the businesses, but to provide the most convenient and safest shopping environment for customers. These technologies include systems to safeguard customer information, as well as surveillance systems to ensure the stores' safety as well as the parking lots.

These systems have become a valuable tool for retailers and law enforcement. NRF has been engaged in the development of strategic alliances to assess safety threats to retail customers, employees, and the general public. These efforts have been largely focused on active-shooter violence. The NRF facilitated discussion groups, meetings, workshops between retailers and law enforcement agencies on this issue leading to the Department of Homeland Security's active-shooter guidelines in 2007, followed by a retail-specific supplement in 2011. Other industries are now using these guidelines.

The importance of the partnership between law enforcement and retailers has never been more evident after the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings. After initially ensuring the safety of the employees and customers, retailers quickly shifted their attention to helping law enforcement in their investigation. The video surveillance provided by Lord and Taylor was instrumental in helping the police identify the two subjects in the tragic bombing. The Saks Fifth Avenue store served as a temporary staging area during the initial stages of the investigation, and other retailers provided needed supplies for the officers to continue their investigation.

The protection of retail businesses, including the safety and security of their employees and customers, is a critical part of every retail business. Retailers are committed to continuously improving the vigilance in order to stay ahead of those who wish to do us harm and their employees and the customers.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify this afternoon.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mellor follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RICHARD MELLOR

OCTOBER 9, 2013

Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Thompson, distinguished Members of the committee, my name is Richard Mellor and I am the vice president for loss prevention for the National Retail Federation (NRF). Thank you very much for the opportunity to come here to testify today on the important topic of whether retail outlets can be considered "soft targets" for potential terrorist attacks.

The recent tragic events at the Westgate Shopping Mall highlight the potential for malls, shopping centers, and other public meeting areas around the world to be targets of terror. Today I would like to highlight some of the actions the retail community has taken to ensure the safety and security of their customers and their employees.

As the world's largest retail trade association and the voice of retail world-wide, the National Retail Federation represents retailers of all types and sizes, including chain restaurants and industry partners, from the United States and more than 45 countries abroad. Retailers operate more than 3.6 million U.S. establishments that support 1 in 4 U.S. jobs—42 million working Americans. Contributing $2.5 trillion to annual GDP, retail is a daily barometer for the Nation's economy. NRF's *This is Retail* campaign highlights the industry's opportunities for life-long careers, how

retailers strengthen communities, and the critical role that retail plays in driving innovation.

As vice president for loss prevention for the National Retail Federation, I am responsible for the direction of initiatives ranging from NRF's Annual Loss Prevention, or LP Conference and Loss Prevention Advisory Council to NRF's Investigator's Network. I have over 40 years of experience within the retail loss prevention community. Prior to joining NRF, I spent 12 years with Helzberg Diamonds, having most recently served as divisional vice president of loss prevention. I have also served as divisional vice president of loss prevention and security for The Bon-Ton Stores and regional director of security for Macy's East. Prior to joining the retail industry I spent time in law enforcement as a police officer.

I also have the pleasure to serve on several working committees within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that focus on infrastructure protection. These include participation in DHS' Commercial Facilities Sector Coordinating Council, the National Infrastructure Coordinating Center team, and the National Business Emergency Operations team. I am also participating in FEMA's Private Sector Sub Working Group (PSSWG) working on the National Exercise Program (NEP) Capstone Exercise 2014.

SAFETY AND SECURITY ARE PARAMOUNT

The safety and security of employees and customers is paramount for any retailer.

Retailers have sophisticated protocols to deal with the threats from a wide range of situations, including organized retail crime (ORC) activities, robbery, active-shooter incidents, impacts from natural disasters such as hurricanes or tornadoes, as well as being a potential target for a terrorist attack. Because these threats are always present, retailers invest heavily to ensure that they are prepared to deal with any and all threats against their businesses, their employees and their customers. Moreover, retailers are consistently evaluating the effectiveness of their programs and seeking improvements. As criminals and threats become more sophisticated, so do retailers.

I would like to discuss some of the steps the retail industry is currently taking to protect their businesses and customers. This includes the industry's close work with law enforcement at both the local and Federal level, specifically partnering with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on key initiatives. One such initiative is the development of DHS's Active Shooter program. Finally, I will discuss retail's role in helping law enforcement throughout the investigation of the recent Boston Marathon bombing.

RETAIL ASSET PROTECTION ACTIVITIES

The National Retail Federation has a long-standing commitment to work closely with law enforcement and our members to share information through tools such as the Department of Homeland Security's guidelines, on-line training programs, and the emergency response protocols on the NRF's Loss Prevention Information website, which can be accessed at *www.lpinformation.com.*

Additionally the National Retail Federation convenes an annual Loss Prevention Conference open to retail loss prevention and security practitioners and law enforcement agencies. At every conference since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the conference agenda has included multiple presentations by retailers, law enforcement partners, and experts in violence intervention on protecting the life and safety of shoppers and employees.

While shopping malls have been categorized by some as "soft targets," it would have been hard to imagine or prepare for the devastating attack conducted by terrorists at the Westgate shopping mall in Kenya last month. Collaboration and partnership between retailers and law enforcement needs to remain strong and vigilant now more than ever.

Retailers continually partner with law enforcement at every level of government to protect their businesses, their employees, and their customers. This partnership is not only in the prevention of crimes against their businesses, but also in the aftermath of a crime to help with the investigation.

In fact, retailers have been on the front lines in the war on terror for years.

Nowhere is this more evident than the continuing private-public partnership to address the growing burden of Organized Retail Crime (ORC). Retailers work closely with law enforcement to investigate these crimes, and their joint efforts have helped to root out millions of dollars in criminal activity with direct links to terrorist groups and other overseas criminal organizations.

Through the Seizing Earnings and Assets from Retail Crime Heists (SEARCH) Initiative, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) is actively seeking and pursuing

investigative leads related to organized retail crime that have a nexus to transnational criminal organizations.

These investigations effectively link Federal, State, and local law enforcement along with prosecutors and the financial services and retail communities to provide a multi-faceted approach to prosecuting and deterring individuals and organizations involved in organized retail crime. The retail industry strongly supports HSI's efforts in making SEARCH a National initiative.

All too often this type of organized criminal activity has been looked upon as a local problem. However, Federal investigations have proven time and time again that these ORC organizations are extremely sophisticated and regularly cross jurisdictional boundaries. It is critical that ORC be recognized as a significant National threat to our economy and security.

One thing Congress can do to strengthen the line of defense is passage of ORC legislation to properly define ORC as a Federal crime. Not only will ORC legislation help draw attention to a growing National problem but a law on organized retail crime will also provide law enforcement the appropriate resources to deal with the problem in a holistic way. The need for this legislation grows almost daily as we see the trend of ORC activities becoming more sophisticated and violent.

In addition to these partnerships, retailers continue to seek the best technologies to protect their businesses and provide the most convenient and safest shopping environment for their customers. These technology solutions include systems to protect internal operations from unauthorized access, including safeguarding customer information, as well as surveillance systems to ensure that the stores and parking areas are as safe as possible.

Electronic surveillance plays a major role in providing a safe shopping experience for today's customer. Security personnel cannot be in all places at all times but video surveillance has become the standard in the retail business to ensure total coverage. Security personnel can now view video images remotely on hand-held devices, including their smart phones, which enable them to respond quickly to incidents and safety concerns.

Technology advances in detecting movement or an individual in a restricted or remote area can be transmitted instantly to a video operator to investigate. These new systems also include analytic software for facial recognition, although this is not widely utilized by retailers at this time. Whether these systems help to prevent an event from happening or they are used in the investigation of an incident, they have become a valuable tool for retailers and law enforcement in reconstructing and investigating crimes.

RETAIL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT "ACTIVE SHOOTER" PARTNERSHIP

For more than 7 years, the National Retail Federation has been engaged in the development of strategic alliances to assess safety threats to retail customers, employees, and the general public in and around retail and business establishments. These efforts have been largely focused on the kind of "active shooter" violence we saw at the Aurora Mall as well as the potential for sophisticated terrorist acts like the Westgate Mall attacks.

Over the past decade, we have seen a rise in a new form of threat, where individuals enter retail venues and begin randomly shooting at innocent shoppers and store employees. The term coined to describe this new form of violence is "Active Shooter," and it used to characterize a situation where the shooter seems engaged in the killing and injuring of as many people as possible in an area without cause or provocation.

This type of violence is not only unpredictable and life-threatening to customers and employees alike but also puts responding police officers at deadly risk.

The retail industry reacted quickly to the rising threats with the facilitation of discussions between retail loss prevention directors and law enforcement agencies from the local, State, and Federal level. This effort led to the initial Department of Homeland Security Active Shooter Guidelines in 2007 and later, in 2011, a retail-specific program known as Emergency Response Protocols to Active Shooters, which was crafted by the NRF.

Since the Active Shooter Guidelines became available in 2007 to authorized members of the retail community and law enforcement, other industries including education, hospitality, sporting event venues, and food service groups have utilized these guidelines to assess risks, establish proactive precautions and procedures, as well as investing in safety and security equipment and technology to protect human life.

RETAIL'S ROLE IN THE BOSTON MARATHON BOMBING INVESTIGATION

The importance of the partnership between law enforcement and retailers was never more evident than after the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. After initially acting to ensure the safety of their employees and customers when the bombing occurred, retailers in Boston quickly shifted their attention to helping law enforcement in their investigation.

As has been reported in the media, video surveillance provided by the Lord & Taylor store on Boylston Street was instrumental in helping police identify the two suspects in the tragic bombing. The Saks Fifth Avenue store served as a temporary staging area for law enforcement during the initial stages of the investigation, and many other retailers provided needed supplies (water, food, batteries, cell phone chargers, etc.) for the officers to continue with their investigation.

Aside from providing supplies and vital necessities, retailers also opened their stores during off-business hours to provide law enforcement with a place to get a much-needed break, to call family members, or rest during the long and extensive search for the suspects.

NRF highlighted the retail/police partnership in a video post on our *This is Retail* website—*http://www.thisisretail.org.* As with the response and recovery efforts during hurricanes like Katrina and Sandy, retailers in Boston were instrumental in providing supplies and technical assistance to help with the emergency response as well as those affected by the disaster.

CONCLUSION

The protection of a retailer's business, including the safety and security of their employees and customers, is a critical part of a retailer's everyday business.

Retailers face many threats; yet through a mix of technology, partnerships, preparation, and training, retailers are able to ensure that they are able to respond to any threat.

Retailers are committed to continuously improving their vigilance in order to stay ahead of those who wish to do harm to their businesses, their employees, and their customers.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify this afternoon.

Chairman MCCAUL. Thank you, Mr. Mellor.

The Chairman now recognizes Ms. Kostro.

STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE SANOK KOSTRO, SENIOR FELLOW AND ACTING DIRECTOR, HOMELAND SECURITY AND COUNTERTERRORISM PROGRAM, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Ms. KOSTRO. Thank you, Chairman McCaul, Ms. Clarke, and other distinguished Members of this committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Allegations that Somali-Americans participated in last month's deadly siege at the Westgate shopping mall have highlighted several questions with homeland security implications. Why are U.S. citizens and other Westerners traveling overseas to affiliate with terrorist groups? What training are they receiving? What is the likelihood they will return to launch attacks on American soil?

U.S. citizens, especially individuals closely associated with diaspora communities, have proven willing to travel overseas for terrorist activities. As we have heard, Americans appear to have begun traveling to Somalia to fight alongside al-Shabaab against Ethiopia and Somalia's Western-backed Transitional Federal Government back in 2007. Currently, the United States is the primary exporter of Western fighters to this group.

In this group, Americans and other Westerners often received specialized missions, including propaganda, as we have seen from the slide showed earlier, recruitment, and suicide missions. The group's knowledge of firearms, target surveillance, recognizance,

and intelligence-gathering abilities represent the skills and capabilities that American members may be learning.

Regarding another al-Qaeda affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra, or JN, more than 600 Westerners have allegedly traveled to Syria in recent years to join 6,000 other foreign fighters from around the world and rebel forces against the Assad regime. There is growing concern that many of these fighters are joining JN in particular. The concern is that these individuals are becoming further radicalized, getting trained, and then returning as part of the global jihadist movement to Western Europe and the United States.

JN also appears to be using foreign fighters for propaganda. The group also has proven capabilities in combat, counterintelligence, assassinations, suicide attacks, and improvised explosive devices, such as car bombs.

For terrorist groups like al-Shabaab and JN, striking the United States at home requires two key elements, motivation and capability. Let's first take a look at al-Shabaab, which has long been a combination, as Ms. Blanchard had noted, has been a combination of fighters focused on issues within Somalian borders and a smaller number of foreign fighters with international aims.

Internal factionalism within the group has prevented them from uniting behind an international agenda, and the vast majority of al-Shabaab's attacks have occurred within Somalia. However, in recent months leaders with strong ties to al-Qaeda have consolidated control, and their leadership may signal a new willingness to launch international attacks.

On the individual member level, there have been doubts about the willingness of al-Shabaab's U.S. members to return home to launch attacks. Many U.S. citizens who went to Somalia may have been motivated by nationalism and adventurism, not a desire to participate in an international jihad. Of course, individual motivations may shift. American participation in the Westgate Mall attack could indicate a greater willingness to participate in international operations targeted at Western interests.

Regarding JN, the group is today one of the most effective rebel fighting forces in Syria. In April of this year, the group pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda, presumably meaning that it will support al-Qaeda's global jihad. But again that is motivation. That is not enough. What are the capabilities of these groups? Do they have a capability to launch an attack in the United States and what would they need to be successful?

First, a group would likely need several American or Western members to carry out such an attack. With English language skills and cultural and geographic familiarity, these individuals would readily identify targets and navigate U.S. society.

Second, attackers would need proper training. As demonstrated by Westgate, al-Shabaab possesses the knowledge and training in firearms, communications, and tactics to conduct a Mumbai-style attack. The same is likely true for JN, given that group's ability to conduct combat operations and bomb attacks.

Third, the group would need to insert members into the United States. That is where American members with U.S. passports and those with visa waivers from other Western nations would allow

them to enter the homeland without attracting the same scrutiny that others might.

Fourth, attackers would need access to weapons. Individuals, especially U.S. citizens, may not encounter much trouble acquiring firearms and ammunitions in the United States as they would elsewhere.

Finally, attackers would need, as mentioned before, a soft target, such as shopping malls, theaters, concerts, or sporting events. They could learn lessons from recent non-terrorist attacks against U.S. soft targets. We have heard earlier today about the 2011 parking lot shooting in Tucson, various school shootings from 1999 in Columbine, to 2007 Virginia Tech, to last year's tragedy in Newtown. Other soft target attacks that have been useful examples for international terrorists include the London and Tokyo subway attacks, the Beslan hostage crisis in Russia, and countless others. They have all demonstrated the vulnerability of soft targets. Terrorists, including al-Qaeda, have continued to express interest in striking such soft targets, and there is clearly no shortage of these throughout the United States.

In the interest of time, I will truncate my remarks. Again, thank you for the opportunity to be here today.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Kostro follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE SANOK KOSTRO

OCTOBER 9, 2013

Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Thompson, and distinguished Members of this committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify on the impact of Western members of certain terrorist organizations on the homeland security of the United States. Recent allegations that young Americans participated in the deadly 4-day siege at the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya—an attack against a "soft" civilian target and an attack for which Somalia-based terrorist organization al-Shabaab claims responsibility—have highlighted several critical questions with homeland security implications. Why are U.S. citizens and other Westerners traveling overseas to affiliate with terrorist groups and receive terrorist training? What training or support are those Westerners receiving? What is the likelihood they will return to launch attacks on American soil?

WESTERNERS' AFFILIATIONS AND INSPIRATIONS

It is a fact that U.S. citizens, especially individuals associated with particular diaspora communities within the United States such as Somali-Americans in Minnesota, can be vulnerable to radicalization and willing to travel overseas for terrorist training and activities. For example, the 2006 military operations of U.S.-supported Ethiopian forces in Somalia may have inspired Somali refugees and others to join the fight against Ethiopia and Somalia's Western-backed Transitional Federal Government. In fact, Americans appear to have begun traveling to Somalia to fight alongside al-Shabaab in 2007; between 2007 and 2010, roughly 20–40 Americans joined al-Shabaab, "making the United States a primary exporter of Western fighters"[1] to the group.

In addition, because al-Shabaab has traditionally been a hybrid movement with some elements focused on the conflict within Somalia and some elements focused on al-Qaeda's anti-Western vision, other foreign fighters—from the United States, Europe, the Middle East, and elsewhere in Africa—may have joined al-Shabaab because of its international aims. It appears that al-Shabaab recruits Americans and other Westerners for specialized missions, including propaganda, recruitment, and suicide missions. Although not much is known about al-Shabaab's training camps, the group's knowledge of firearms, target surveillance, reconnaissance, and intel-

[1] Seth T. Jones, Testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, October 3, 2013, *http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/CT400/CT400/RAND_CT400.pdf.*

ligence-gathering abilities alludes to the skills and capabilities that Americans and other Westerners may be learning.

Of course, many Somali-Americans travel to Somalia for legitimate reasons, from visiting family and friends to conducting business. It is near-impossible for U.S. Government agencies to track the activities of all Somali-Americans once they are in-country, and there are very real privacy implications for even attempting to do so. That said, in 2009, a senior FBI official told lawmakers, "While there are no current indicators that any of the individuals who traveled to Somalia have been selected, trained, or tasked by al-Shabaab or other extremists to conduct attacks inside the United States, we remain concerned about this possibility and that it might be exploited in the future if other U.S. persons travel to Somalia for similar purposes."[2] More recently, White House National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications Ben Rhodes stated that administration officials "monitor very carefully and have for some time been concerned about efforts by al-Shabaab to recruit Americans or U.S. persons to come to Somalia."[3]

While the numbers of Westerners joining forces with al-Shabaab are relatively small, some 5,500 foreign fighters have allegedly traveled to Syria in recent years, including roughly 600 Westerners, to join rebel forces against the Assad regime. There is growing concern that many of these fighters are joining al-Qaeda-affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra, considering that Syria may be becoming "the predominant jihadist battlefield in the world . . . The concern going forward from a threat perspective is there are individuals traveling to Syria, becoming further radicalized, becoming trained and then returning as part of really a global jihadist movement to Western Europe and, potentially, to the United States."[4]

As with al-Shabaab, al-Nusra appears to be using foreign fighters for propaganda. In addition, foreigners may be acquiring skills in combat, bomb-making, and counterintelligence. Al-Nusra, in general, has proven capabilities in assassinations, suicide attacks, and improvised explosive devices, to include car bombs.

HOMELAND SECURITY IMPLICATIONS

For terrorist groups like al-Shabaab and al-Nusra, striking the United States at home requires that they have both the motivation and the capability to do so. Whether either group currently has the motivation to attack the U.S. homeland directly is a difficult question.

For example, al-Shabaab has long been composed of a combination of local Somali fighters, who have relatively few designs beyond Somalia's borders, and a smaller number of foreign fighters with international aims. Factionalism within al-Shabaab has traditionally kept the group from fully uniting behind an international agenda, and the vast majority of al-Shabaab's attacks have occurred within Somalia.

However, there is evidence that in recent months Ahmed Abdi Godane, one of the Shabaab leaders with the strongest ties to al-Qaeda and its international agenda, has eliminated many of his rivals and consolidated his control over much of the group. If Godane as truly solidified his place as the central Shabaab leader, it may signal a new willingness to launch international attacks, potentially in the West.[5]

However, also important to consider is the motivation of the individual al-Shabaab members, who would be called upon to carry out an attack within the United States. These would almost certainly have to be U.S. citizens or Westerners, given the ability to "blend" (e.g., English-language skills, cultural familiarity) and perhaps more importantly, Western passports that would enable entry with minimal suspicion.

There have, in the past, been doubts about the willingness of al-Shabaab's U.S. members to return home to launch attacks. Many U.S. citizens who originally went to Somalia appear to have been motivated primarily by nationalism and adventurism, rather than a desire to participate in international jihad. Furthermore, there is a sizable Somali population in the United States, which includes the families of many of these young men. It may be that U.S. members of al-Shabaab are

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[2] Philip Mudd, Testimony Before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, March 11, 2009, *http://www.hsgac.senate.gov//imo/media/doc/031109Mudd.pdf?attempt=2.*

[3] Ben Rhodes, Remarks to the Press, September 23, 2013, *http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/09/23/gaggle-aboard-air-force-one-en-route-ny.*

[4] Matthew Olsen, Remarks at Aspen Security Forum, July 18, 2013, *http://aspensecurityforum.org/2013-video.*

[5] Sudarsan Raghavan, "Al-Shabab leader's ambitions appear to be as complex as his personality", *Washington Post*, September 25, 2013, *http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-09-25/world/42373211__1__mall-attack-militia-al-shabab.*

loath to participate in an attack that might bring direct or indirect harm to the U.S. Somali community.

However, there is the possibility that these individual motivations are shifting. If it is true that Americans participated in the Westgate attack, it may indicate a greater willingness on the part of al-Shabaab's American members to participate in international operations, even those that may target Westerners or Western interests specifically.

Regarding al-Nusra, it is important to note that despite this group's 2012 emergence on the world stage, al-Nusra has in fact existed for many years. With cells established in the Levant after terrorists fled Afghanistan in 2001, this group's original primary mission was to facilitate the flow of foreign fighters into Iraq. Al-Nusra's infrastructure received a boost after the Syrian revolution began in 2011, and today's the group is one of the most effective rebel fighting forces in Syria. In April 2013, leader Abu Muhammed al-Julani pledged the group's allegiance to al-Qaeda, which presumably means that al-Nusra supports al-Qaeda's vision of global jihad. That said, its focus remains predominantly on internal Syrian dynamics, and U.S. concerns are growing about its ability to destabilize the country and, by extension, the region.

If events (e.g., the ascendency of Godane within al-Shabaab, possible destabilization in Syria and a more regional or global focus for al-Nusra) motivate the groups' leadership and American members to embrace the idea of Western targets, this is cause for concern. However, motivation is not enough. There is also the question of whether they have the capability to launch an attack in the United States.

As my colleague Richard Downie of the CSIS Africa Program pointed out in his testimony before the Foreign Affairs Committee last week, the types of attacks al-Shabaab has launched in the past have not required much capability. Al-Shabaab is not likely to launch a complex bomb attack against the United States or attempt to bring down an airliner. As demonstrated by the Westgate incident, al-Shabaab prefers "Mumbai-style" attacks, in which multiple gunmen are used to strike soft targets like shopping malls.

The question is: Could al-Shabaab or al-Nusra carry out such an attack in the United States, and if so, what would they need to be successful?

First, a group would likely need several American or Western members to carry out such an attack. These individuals could more easily enter the United States without attracting attention and more readily navigate U.S. society without notice. While many of the estimated 20–40 Americans who have reportedly joined al-Shabaab may have already been killed, al-Shabaab likely still has some U.S. or Western members, who could participate in such an attack. The number of American members of al-Nusra is also small, with estimates at 10–20.

Second, attackers would need proper training. As demonstrated by Westgate, al-Shabaab already possesses the knowledge and training in firearms, communications, and tactics to make a relatively simple Mumbai-style attack deadly. The same is likely true for al-Nusra, given that group's demonstrated ability to conduct combat operations and bomb attacks.

Third, the group would need to be able to insert members into the United States. American members with U.S. passports and visa waiver holders from other Western nations would allow them to enter the homeland without attracting the same level of attention or scrutiny that others might. However, this is likely the riskiest part of the process and holds the greatest likelihood of interception for overseas terror organizations.

Fourth, the attackers would need access to weapons. Given the relative availability of firearms and ammunition in the United States, it is doubtful terror organization members, especially U.S. citizens, would have much trouble acquiring the needed weapons.

Finally, attackers would need a soft target, such as shopping malls, theaters, concerts, sporting events, or transportation systems. They could certainly learn lessons from recent non-terrorist attacks against U.S. soft targets, such as the 2011 parking lot shooting in Tucson, the 2012 Aurora theater incident, and the various school shootings from the 1999 Columbine massacre to the 2007 Virginia Tech rampage to last year's tragedy in Sandy Hook. Other soft-target attacks, including the London and Tokyo subway attacks, the Beslan hostage crisis in Russia, and countless others have demonstrated time and again the vulnerability of soft targets. Terrorist organizations, including al-Qaeda, have continued to express interest in striking such soft targets; a recent news article noted that the opening words of a document found on the body of Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, al-Qaeda's top East Africa operative and architect of the 1998 embassy attacks in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, when he was killed 2 years ago were: "Our objectives are to strike London with low-cost operations that would cause a heavy blow amongst the hierarchy and Jewish com-

munities, using attacks similar to the tactics used by our brothers in Mumbai."[6] Among targets identified were Eton College, the five-star Dorchester and Ritz hotels, and the Jewish neighborhood of Golders Green in north London. There is clearly no shortage of soft targets.

CONCLUSION

Information and intelligence are imperfect. The United States and its allies and partners spend considerable resources—financial and human—in an effort to prevent and deter terrorist incidents. But the Nation cannot know the name and location of every individual who intends to do harm. The Nation cannot harden every soft target. Because of the Nation's principles and values, which allow for privacy, freedom of movement, and other individual rights and privileges, and because we face very adaptable adversaries who seek to exploit these principles and values, we cannot prevent every terrorist attack.

That said, the United States can certainly improve its current mechanisms and systems in ways that can increase our ability to prevent, deter, or mitigate such attacks without compromising the Nation's principles and values. Recruitment of diaspora members, who are vulnerable to radicalization, often occurs in person at the local level or via the internet. Campaigns to counter these recruitment efforts can come from the private sector, non-governmental organizations, religious groups, and every level of government from Federal to State to local. In addition, information-sharing and coordination of efforts can be vastly improved, in terms of authorities and abilities to collaborative across levels of government, relations necessary to facilitate that cooperation, and the technical means by which to do so. For example, the Boston police chief reportedly complained about the spectrum availability and communications interoperability in the immediate aftermath of the Boston bombing earlier this year. Finally, of course, intelligence-sharing with friendly foreign nations can also be improved. Our knowledge of al-Shabaab and al-Nusra leadership, their intentions, and their capabilities is limited, and expanded efforts to leverage other nations' intelligence assets and to share terrorist-related intelligence will be key to addressing these potential threats before they can reach the U.S. homeland.

Chairman MCCAUL. We thank you for being here as well.

I want to follow up on a point you made, and that is that I think, you know, before this event occurred—and I recognize myself for questions—most Americans have never heard of al-Shabaab. Now, we had heard of, most of us here in briefings, knew about them for years. The fact that they targeted what I would consider to be a Western target is disturbing, but also the fact that we—Pete King had hearings in 2011 talking about how there were 40 to 50 Americans who have joined the fight. I think potentially there are many more. As you mentioned, Ms. Kostro, with travel documents. With American passports. Some U.S. citizens. I think the number is probably greater than that, quite honestly. Getting on the no-fly list, terrorist watch list is vitally important here.

But I want to focus on what is the real threat to the homeland. I think the three I would like to focus would be Ms. Kostro, Ms. Blanchard, and of course the sheriff, who deals with this, you know, almost on a daily basis. That is, we had this guy, Hammami, who is from Alabama. He is not Somalian. He is heading up the American, if you will, sort-of global jihad view within al-Shabaab. A week before this shopping mall shooting he is assassinated, about a week before, taken out by the leader of al-Shabaab. There is some speculation that it may be Hammami's faction that may have been responsible for the shopping mall tragic shootings.

Ms. Blanchard, you may be the best-qualified to talk about that. Then I want to follow up with the sheriff and Ms. Kostro on, what

[6] Paul Cruickshank, Tim Lister, and Nic Robertson, "Evidence suggests that Al-Shabaab is shifting focus to 'soft' targets," September 26, 2013, *www.cnn.com/2013/09/26/world/london-bombing-plot-qaeda/index.html.*

is a threat to the homeland here in terms of these 50-plus al-Shabaab fighters that are from the United States?

Ms. BLANCHARD. Omar Hammami had become a bit of a squeaky wheel, so to speak, for al-Shabaab. He had been critical for over a year of Ahmed Godane, the leader of al-Shabaab, basically his management style, allegations of corruption, that he was very public in broadcasting on Twitter and chatrooms, allegations of killing innocent Muslim Somalis in his attacks, allegations that had he consolidated power and sidelined several of the other major leaders in al-Shabaab. He had claimed that there was a death threat on him in April, and a number of the sort of more nationalist-focused leaders within al-Shabaab had taken his side against Godane's.

I think there is sort of an agreement among Somali watchers that him being taken out was part of this internal power struggle within al-Shabaab, in which Ahmed Godane has appeared ascendant. Speculating on sort of the correlation between his death and Westgate is hard to do, except to say that it does conveniently take away that squeaky wheel when you want to sort of reattract potential foreign recruits with an al-Qaeda focus.

Chairman MCCAUL. But certainly the shooting I think raises their profile on the global stage and will certainly help with their recruiting. I think the fact he is an American talking about jihad, Ms. Kostro, does that give you concern?

Ms. KOSTRO. It does give me cause for concern. As I mentioned, traditionally al-Shabaab has had two schools of thought. One has been locally-based. Most of the attacks have taken place in Somalia. The fact that he had become a squeaky wheel, talking about that. The Kenya attacks I think was a coming out for the new leadership within al-Shabaab to say, listen, we signed up with al-Qaeda, they have got a global jihad vision, we want to demonstrate that we are capable of doing something like that against Western-type targets in Kenya. It certainly is a concern. The fact that he was an American is always useful for propaganda.

Again, to go back to, you had asked about the likelihood of an attack here in the United States. In prior years a lot of these terrorist organizations relied on the educational systems and the religious constructs here in the United States to spread their message and to recruit. We have seen from the Boston situation, as well as what is going on in Minnesota, that the internet is playing such a huge role right now. I think having somebody like—I am sorry—like the folks from New England, there was a gentleman, I am sorry, I am blanking on his name, from Massachusetts, as well as the gentleman from Alabama, to be used as propaganda for these groups is really, really valuable.

Chairman MCCAUL. Sheriff, you and the FBI have been responsible for bringing down some of these, well, it is more recruiting and training and financing. What is your take on this? You see this again on a daily basis. Let me just say I think your outreach to the Muslim community is absolutely essential.

Sheriff STANEK. Yes, I appreciate that, Mr. Chairman. In fact, one of the things I did include in my comments was a member of my staff, a Somali-American who works for the sheriff's office, and his first cousin was killed, one of the first people killed during the Westgate Mall attacks. So it hits close to home.

But you are absolutely right. I mean, several dozen young men from across this country, several dozen from the Minneapolis area itself have traveled overseas. As we know, some of them have died in suicide bombings, some have died in battle, glorified battle in the jihad. Some met the same fate as Hammami, killed by al-Shabaab by themselves when trying to disassociate or whatever other reason.

Mr. Chairman and Members, I had included in my written comments submitted to the committee about a video, "A Path to Paradise." It was released about 6 or 7 weeks ago, prior to the Westgate Mall attack. If you get a chance to watch this 15-minute video, it is very well done. It lays out, it talks about how folks are radicalized through the internet, countering violent extremism. It lays out the soft targets that we talked about here this afternoon with your committee, the soft targets in Minnesota like the Mall of America, like our sporting venues and professional sports stadiums, like schools, like businesses. Very, very compelling.

The simple fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman and Members, is we don't know what we do not know. We did not know back in 2008 and 2009 that we were missing a number of Somali-Americans who had traveled overseas to participate in this. We didn't know until late 2008 when Shirwa Ahmed blew himself up in a suicide bombing and we recovered parts of him, identified him, and figured out he was from the Twin Cities area.

From there, over the last 5 or 6 years we have worked very hard building these trusting relationships with the Somali diaspora community, not easy to do. But we go back to our community-oriented policing philosophy, the things that we know best in order to build those trusting relationships.

I would be less than candid with you, Mr. Chairman and Members, if I didn't tell you I was extremely concerned as the sheriff of a large county, as the sheriff in Minneapolis area, about the potential for what that might bring in the future as members on the panel here today talked about whether it is a decade out or tomorrow, extremely concerned. I am very pleased that this committee has taken the time to look into this, to have these hearings, to educate yourselves, and help us on a public policy perspective what we can do in local law enforcement working with our Federal law enforcement partners.

Chairman MCCAUL. Thanks. I know you and Mr. Lovegrove probably have a lot to share in terms of you being a sheriff of a county with this problem, and you, sir, Mr. Lovegrove. I apologize, there are a lot of witnesses and I don't have a whole lot of time.

Professor Scheuer, you being from the bin Laden unit, I am very interested in your take on this organization. Bin Laden wasn't taken seriously and then he rose to power. You saw that. Al-Shabaab, little known until a couple weeks ago.

This raid in Somalia that was I guess not so successful: How do you view that impact on this organization's rise? I am interested also in your comments on Western intervention and that impact on the rise of extremism in the Middle East.

Mr. SCHEUER. I think, sir, there is a general pattern when we see these groups arise in the world, the Islamist groups. Very much initially intensely local concern, sometimes with things like corrup-

tion, education, unemployment, and, of course, always an Islamic or religious influence. Then they become more regionally-oriented. We are seeing that now with Boko Haram. We are seeing it with al-Shabaab. Certainly we have seen it grow in Algeria with the Armed Islamic Group and now the AQM in the Maghreb. Then you see an international dimension.

I just think it seems to be a natural progression of how they work, a function of people coming in from the outside to fight with them, a function of everyone who said here today something about the internet. The internet is a terribly powerful tool.

I think if you want to talk about the attack that didn't succeed on Saturday, it will make them say, we repelled the Americans. The media is saying that that was an attack to capture somebody instead of kill them, and I tend to think that I am appalled or repelled by the idea that any government in the United States would risk our soldiers on an idiocy of trying to take out a terrorist only if they could arrest him rather than killing him.

Our foreign policy is the only indispensable ally of these people. Islamic civilization, more than Western civilization, is shattered in terms of ethnicities, linguistics, sectarian differences, different levels of modernization, just an enormous number of differences.

The genius of bin Laden was he did not take up the Ayatollah Khomeini's useless effort for a decade to generate a jihad against the United States because we were degraded, we had women with short skirts, we had X-rated movies, we had beer after work. It didn't work. No one blew themselves up because we were behaving in that particular manner.

Bin Laden found one thing that united a Muslim in Montreal with a Muslim in Buenos Aires and a Muslim in Kuwait, and that is the impact of U.S. foreign policy in the Muslim world. I would certainly, if I was in charge, change many of the policies we have. But it is more important that we in this country become adults. Nothing a person does in his life doesn't have a counterreaction. Does our foreign policy cause this war? Not a chance. The people who attacked us caused this war. Does our foreign policy motivate these people? Absolutely.

Sir, if you were going to tell the American people they are fighting a war against a bunch of deranged, nihilist, fanatic extremists, we are going to be fighting a war that is constantly going to surprise the American people about the costs of what they are doing. If we come to a place where we can have a discussion that says supporting Israel is essential to the U.S. security, supporting Saudi Arabia is important, vital to U.S. security, having U.S. troops in Muslim countries is vital to U.S. security, fine. But also tell the American people that costs come with that. Right now we have spent 17 years in this war and the American people still think we are fighting a bunch of long-haired, bearded, goat-eating madmen. We are at a terrible disadvantage that we impose on ourselves, sir.

I would finish too long a statement by simply saying that we must stop the idiocy of democracy spreading. If you want to fight forever, keep trying to impose women's rights, secularism, the paganism of American culture, contemporary culture, on a religious civilization, sir.

Chairman MCCAUL. I will take stability any day of the week.

With that, the Chairman now recognizes the Ranking Member, Ms. Clarke.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank our panelists for bringing their expertise to bear on this very important topic.

I would be remiss if I didn't remind everyone here that the issues raised by this hearing could be explored in greater depth if the Federal Government shut-down did not prevent the officials charged with watching and monitoring terrorist groups from appearing as witnesses today. Without the testimony of these officials charged with watching and monitoring terrorist groups, then there is little from a policy, legislative, or oversight perspective that can be truly gained. Many of the intelligence community have been deemed nonessential and furloughed because of the Government shut-down. It is my hope that we work together to end this stalemate and get our fellow American citizens back to work on protecting the homeland and our interests abroad.

Having said that, I want to take advantage of all of the expertise that you have to bear. I have a few questions that I would like to pose. My first question goes to Ms. Kostro. Is there any indication that al-Shabaab cells currently and actively exist in the United States?

Ms. KOSTRO. In my research I have not come across any active al-Shabaab cells here in the United States.

Ms. CLARKE. Is there anyone on the panel that has a difference of that opinion?

Mr. SCHEUER. Just by implication, ma'am, if they are being recruited and there is being videos produced to affect that recruit, you can't be like the FBI and say that we haven't found it so it is not here. Obviously there is an organized something in the United States that is getting these people recruited and getting them to Somalia.

Ms. CLARKE. Does it necessarily have to be in the United States or could it be through the internet but located abroad?

Mr. SCHEUER. It could be both, ma'am.

Ms. CLARKE. Okay.

Mr. SCHEUER. I think without doubt that there is an outside influence.

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. Mellor, how vulnerable are shopping malls and retail centers here in the United States, especially as we approach another holiday shopping season that is sure to bring high volumes of people to these venues?

Mr. MELLOR. Thank you, Congresswoman. The assessment on the retailers' part, certainly the Westgate incident is an example that you could never be prepared for how devastating that that attack would be and beyond the imagination of the retailers. But now it is a reality that we have to deal with, and the preparation and conversations to be on the alert now as the busy season approaches for us have begun already. But as a matter of fact, next week I will be meeting with a large contingent of loss prevention security leaders from the retail industry and this will be a topic of conversation. So out of that I hope to come up with some recommendations we can go back to the Department of Homeland Security and law enforcement with.

Ms. CLARKE. Wonderful. I hope that you will share that, because indeed while we don't necessarily categorize some of the violent outbreaks that we have had domestically as "terrorism," we have seen these incidents in shopping centers. It is not necessarily under the guise of a jihadist necessarily, but certainly when you are dealing with mentally-deranged individuals in a population like ours, bad things can happen in retail and shopping malls. So I would be interested in seeing what protocols you are able to share with the DOH.

Then, Sheriff Stanek, can you talk about how the Somali community in your jurisdiction reacted to the young Somali-Americans going overseas? Were they less helpful in the beginning when they didn't understand or didn't believe what was happening to their children? Could you give us a sense?

Sheriff STANEK. Sure, Mr. Chairman and Members. Going back to 2007–2008 when this first came to light in terms of these folks going back overseas and being suicide bombers, law enforcement simply did not know. Members of the community who did have the information would tell us that they didn't know who to tell, how to tell, and shame on us from a law enforcement side, local law enforcement.

Again, we didn't know what we didn't know. We have worked very hard now to build those relationships in the community as a whole. But they are trusted relationships. They take time and effort to build. It is not something you just flip a switch and it comes on. It has taken 6 or 7 years to hire Somali-American deputy sheriffs and police officers. It has taken us years to build confidence and trust in those communities.

Yet the fact remains that the recruitment efforts continue. Young men from my community continue to travel overseas to participate in jihad and/or suicide bombings. We are better than we were. We are extremely concerned, as I told the Chairman earlier, of the repercussions and what that might mean moving forward.

There is one thing I wanted to mention earlier, Congresswoman, Chairman and Members, and that was about the National Counterterrorism Center, the Department of Homeland Security, and the FBI, the Federal Bureau of Investigation. All three of them work different tracks, sometimes jointly, sometimes individually, to help us with the diaspora community and the potential threat that we face.

But we would like to see them work even closer together. I am not sure what the right alignment would be. I just had a conversation this morning with an official from the Department of Homeland Security about this very thing. We would hope that moving forward they will continue to help local law enforcement in my part of the country, as well as Ohio and other parts that have large population and communities of Somali-Americans to better understand what motivates them, to better understand why they would choose a path to travel overseas and how they get there versus what they might be able to do here.

Ms. CLARKE. Very well. I thank you all once again for your testimony here today.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAUL. Thank you.

The Chairman now recognizes the Chairman Emeritus, Mr. King.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Also let me thank the witnesses for their testimony here today. I want to thank the Chairman for conducting this hearing on a really vital issue.

Let me begin with Sheriff Stanek. You mentioned what happened back in 2007 and 2008 and 2009, and we have had hearings here. For instance, Mr. Bihi testified, his nephew had been recruited to go to Somalia. He was killed. Now, do you consider him one of those who was executed or killed?

Sheriff STANEK. I am sorry, Mr. Chairman, could you repeat the question?

Mr. KING. That was a nephew of Mr. Bihi. He testified before our committee that his nephew went to Somalia, was with al-Shabaab, had telephoned him, said he was coming home, and then was found dead several days later. Do you consider that an execution or just that he was killed in action?

Sheriff STANEK. Mr. Chairman and Mr. King, I simply don't know about Mr. Bihi. I certainly know him. I have spoken to him. I understand what he has gone through. But I don't have confirmation one way or another. At any rate, he is deceased and died overseas.

Mr. KING. Right. Also during his testimony, another analysis we did, as you suggested there were people in the community who were facilitating the travel to Somalia. In your testimony you talk about the Federal indictments that come down. But again just last year and the year before that there were still young men going to Somalia, and in your testimony you say they are still providing financing and other support to al-Shabaab.

How much of a read do you think you have on the community? Like how many members of your office are working on this and how much surveillance is going on in the Somali-American community in Minneapolis?

Sheriff STANEK. Yeah, Mr. Chairman and Members, I have members of my agency that work on the Joint Terrorism Task Force, as do the local law enforcement agencies in our county. Again, we are a county of about 1.3 million folks. Then you have Ramsey County immediately across the river from us.

We work hand-in-hand with the FBI. I have got at least 6 members of my staff that work with the Somali community in a community engagement team day in and day out. But, again, that was something that was born of necessity going back 5 or 6 years after it came to light about Somali-Americans and others traveling overseas.

We are not by any means to the heart of the problem yet. You are correct in terms of the Federal Government brought their full weight to bear with the Federal indictments, the largest terrorism investigation since September 11, 2001. But it did not stop or curtail the recruitment efforts in my community or these young men traveling overseas through radicalization.

Mr. KING. Now, back in 2008 and 2009 there were people in the community, I think leaders in the community who were resisting efforts by law enforcement and actually putting pressure on the

relatives, telling them not to cooperate with law enforcement. Are those people still active in the community?

Sheriff STANEK. Mr. Chairman and Members, I can't give you specific names. I believe that many of them are, and as you know I think the testimony before this committee back in 2011 indicated that clerics, imams, their religious institutions through the different mosques, and they named them by name, were clear, and I think that testimony continues to stand today before this committee and I would concur with it.

Mr. KING. Isn't that a dangerous situation, I mean, to actually have religious leaders in your community facilitating travel or encouraging an al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorist organization?

Sheriff STANEK. Mr. Chairman, Members, that question can be answered two ways. One: Yes, but it needs some clarification. As I indicated in my testimony, the vast majority of Somali-Americans and those that live in my community are law-abiding and want to do the right thing. In fact, today we receive information generally ahead of time when these young men are being recruited or do something outside of the bounds of the Federal Government or the legal means. That is something that was not done back in 2007–2008. So our inroads and our work with these communities is having some success.

Mr. KING. I would commend you for that. I would just still say, though, that all you need is 2 or 3 or 4 people, and we saw it happen in Boston. Whether or not that was locally recruited or not, the fact is it doesn't take that many people who are trained terrorists, and especially those who have been trained in Somalia if they have come back in.

Do you believe that you have a good handle on those who have come back from Somalia, and are you able to track those who, let's say, Somali-Americans, the difference between going to Somalia on a vacation or to visit family and to be trained? How confident are you that you are able to make that distinction when they come back?

Sheriff STANEK. Mr. Chairman, Members, that really is the key question here today as far as I am concerned and why I am appearing before your committee. I do not have full confidence that members of the Somali community who have traveled overseas, participated and trained in al-Shabaab terrorist training camps, and have returned back to the United States, by whatever means, that we have a full accounting of where they are, what they are doing, or what they plan to do in the future. That concerns me as a 30-year law enforcement veteran, the sheriff of my county, a member of my citizenry and my county, and that is why I am here today.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Sheriff, and thank you for your service.

Mr. Chairman, may I just have one moment to make a comment. Professor Scheuer, I have known you over the years, but I have to take sharp disagreement with your position about our support of Israel. I believe it is essential that the United States for our security continue to support Israel. I believe that if we back away from Israel or Jordan, for instance using those countries, Morocco, as examples, that al-Qaeda will find some other excuse. We can find any number of reasons.

I can tell you during the 1990s, after Iraq, between 1995 and 2001, the only time the Americans used force overseas was to defend Muslims against Christians in Bosnia and in Kosovo, and yet the response by al-Qaeda to that was to attack us on September 11. So I think we make a mistake if we think we can somehow appease al-Qaeda by taking away whatever——

Mr. SCHEUER. Not at all a matter of appeasement, Mr. King, at all. If it was up to me I would dump the Israelis tomorrow.

Mr. KING. I know you would. I know.

Mr. SCHEUER. But all I worry about is the continuing preaching of American politicians to the American people that our relationship with the Israelis doesn't cause us to have dead Americans and extraordinary expenses in fighting the Muslim world.

Mr. KING. I would just say we would have more dead Americans if we didn't stand by our allies in the Middle East. We would just be encouraging al-Qaeda to take advantage of us. I think that——

Mr. SCHEUER. Our allies in the Middle East are mostly totalitarian, sir, and they have been for 50 years.

Mr. KING. There are not that many good people in world. The fact is you have to work with those who work with us. If I had the choice between dealing with the Israelis and al-Qaeda, I would work with Israel. If I had the choice between dealing with Jordan or al-Qaeda, I would deal with Jordan. The fact is that you can find any number of excuses why al-Qaeda is going to come after us.

Mr. SCHEUER. No, sir, you can't.

Mr. KING. Yes, I think you can. You certainly can.

Mr. SCHEUER. No, you can't, sir. Osama bin Laden would have been a terrific American politician because he stays on message. There is only one message that comes out of al-Qaeda——

Mr. KING. That is the message they are using now. If we pull out of Israel——

Mr. SCHEUER. You have to——

Mr. KING. Let me say, if we stop supporting Israel, then the message would be America was cowardly, America has backed away, they are not going to stand by their allies. There is the flip side of everything, and I would rather stand with positive elements like Israel and back them.

Mr. SCHEUER. I am a bearer of little brains, sir, but, you know, you have got to go with what you go with at the moment. These people are fighting for something substantive, for something religious, and they are not fighting us for—what reason do you suppose they are going to come up with? Because we have Hollywood? I would like to fight Hollywood. But, I mean, they are not going to fight us because we have women in the workplace. That is an insanity. What they are fighting us about is what we do. We don't have to stop what we are doing, sir, but we have to realize the cost.

Mr. KING. I think there would be more of a cost if we stop what we are doing, and that is my point.

Mr. SCHEUER. Well, that is fine. But tell the American people that.

Mr. KING. There is also a cost to what you are asking for, and I think that cost would be a lot greater.

Mr. SCHEUER. I don't think so, sir. It couldn't be worse than it is now.

Mr. KING. Then we honestly disagree. We honestly disagree.

Mr. SCHEUER. You know, you are presiding over a bankruptcy. What can be worse? What has been the goal of al-Qaeda since it was formed? To bankrupt the United States. Who is winning today, sir? We are done like dinner.

Mr. KING. We are winning and we will continue to win unless we take the advice of people like you.

Mr. SCHEUER. Sir, you are exactly wrong. We are losing. Two U.S. field armies were defeated by men in the field with weapons from the Korean War.

Mr. KING. The fact is we have not been successfully attacked since September 11.

Mr. SCHEUER. The fact is, sir, we had two military defeats overseas, which is far more important.

Mr. KING. The fact is we have not been successfully attacked, we have not been successfully attacked since September 11, because we disregard guys like you.

Mr. SCHEUER. Sir, that is a goofy argument. That is a goofy argument, sir.

Chairman MCCAUL. I hate to gavel down the Chairman Emeritus.

Mr. KING. Well, I am certainly an expert on goofiness, so I yield back.

Chairman MCCAUL. I appreciate the gentleman's spirited debate and it added a very great lively discussion, I think. You can tell his favorite team is the Fighting Irish.

Mr. SCHEUER. The Fighting Israelis, sir. Somehow people think——

Chairman MCCAUL. Let's come to order. The Chairman now recognizes, in the order of appearance, Mr. Barletta from Pennsylvania.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Sheriff Stanek, how concerned should we be about convicted jihadists continuing their recruitment efforts while they are serving time in prisons? Should we be concerned that they might try and recruit their fellow inmates who may have had little interest in terrorism prior to serving their time? Is this a threat that you have encountered at all?

Sheriff STANEK. Mr. Chairman and Members, I don't think we should treat them any different than we treat other gangs in our American prison system, whether in our State prisons, Federal prisons, or in our local jail lockups.

We are doing a better job, though, in terms of the intelligence and information sharing. I can tell you that several years ago the FBI was not interested in what we were doing in terms of our local jails, yet I book 40,000 people a year, several thousand of them Somali, and now finally we have some connection between the two, and that is a good thing.

Mr. BARLETTA. Do you believe that recruitment is going on and is it getting worse?

Sheriff STANEK. Mr. Chairman, Members, I do believe recruitment happens within the walls of our prisons, jails, Federal prisons as well. I do not have an estimate on the number of specifics.

Mr. BARLETTA. Professor, where else are Americans supporting terrorist organizations? Somalia——

Mr. SCHEUER. We have seen Americans in Yemen. Of course within Afghanistan and Pakistan. We have seen Americans go to Iraq. I am not sure about North Africa, but I believe that I have read there are some Americans with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb across North Africa and the Sahel, and other places I am sure we don't know about. But those would cover the waterfront for me, sir.

Mr. BARLETTA. Among the Americans that are maybe traveling to Syria, why might they be more inclined to fight among the radical rebels?

Mr. SCHEUER. Well, they are fighting for a cause, sir. You know, this is a cause for this generation of young Muslims. It is a very religious, very religiously-oriented for a lot of them, organization.

We made a big deal with Osama bin Laden, saying that he was a man who hijacked the religion of 1.4 billion Muslims, as if that was a possibility, and that he was a nihilist and that he was all of these madmen. Bin Laden lived and died as a good Muslim. He was regarded within the Muslim world far more as a good man than as a bad man, and he conducted himself according to the dictates of the kind of Islam he believes in.

Many of these people go overseas to fight for the same reason, and until we realize that, and until we actually accept the idea that the Saudis in our country are paying to educate our young people, are paying to put chaplains into prison that preach a kind of Islam that is far more dangerous than anything Osama bin Laden ever preached, far more anti-Jewish, anti-Christian, anti-Western, then we are fooling ourselves, sir.

Mr. BARLETTA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAUL. The gentleman from Utah, Mr. Stewart, is recognized.

Mr. STEWART. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you again for holding this important hearing.

I would like to talk with you, Professor Scheuer, for just a minute, and then I would turn to some of the other witnesses. I am not sure that I understand your testimony. Part of the reason that I am not sure is because I don't have a copy of your written testimony.

Mr. SCHEUER. No one does, sir.

Mr. STEWART. I am wondering if you can help me understand why.

Mr. SCHEUER. Why?

Mr. STEWART. Yes.

Mr. SCHEUER. Why you don't have a copy?

Mr. STEWART. Yes. Did you——

Mr. SCHEUER. I didn't send one.

Mr. STEWART. Were you asked to send a copy of your testimony?

Mr. SCHEUER. Yes, sir. We had a little bit of electronic snafu in getting the request to me.

Mr. STEWART. Okay.

Mr. SCHEUER. I didn't have time to do it. I am happy to type up my notes, but I just wrote the notes this morning.

[The information follows:]

NOTES ON U.S. AND WESTERN JIHADIS RETURNING HOME

OCTOBER 9, 2013

(1) As America enters the 17th year of the war much of Islam began waging against it in 1996, American and other Western Muslims have been traveling to support and/or fight alongside the mujahedin since the mid-1980s.

- The first Western jihadis went to fight with the Afghan mujahedin against the Red Army in the mid-1980s.
- Westerners continued to trickle into the jihads in such places as the North Caucasus, Somalia, and the Balkans in the 1990s, but the big increase in their numbers occurred after Osama bin Laden declared war on the United States in August, 1996, and especially after al-Qaeda's impressive victories on 9/11.
- Today, Syria and Somalia seem to be the most prominent destinations for U.S. and Western Muslim fighters, although some have turned up in North Africa and the Sahel as well.

(2) From the 1980s through today, U.S. Muslim citizens who go overseas to fight jihad return to America with several attributes, some old and some new, but all strongly held.

- They return home, of course, with the same religious faith that motivated to travel abroad to fight, but it will be strengthened by the simple fact that they were on the winning side.
- Since 1996, America has been engaged in what is preeminently a religious war for those who are waging it, not withstanding the deliberately misleading protests against this reality by our last 3 Presidents.
- That American Muslim fighters have traveled, fought, survived, won, and returned home safely proves two things to themselves, their families, and their religious communities:
  - God was pleased by their actions and ensured they were successful.
  - And for the younger people in the U.S. Muslim community—especially for young males—they will become role models in terms of an individual fulfilling his religious responsibility to defend Islam.
- They also will return with increased talent in the use of small arms and explosives—a teachable talent—and with increased skills at building covert organizations. They will likewise return with confidence that victory is possible. They and their colleagues know that they inflicted humiliating defeats on the U.S. and NATO militaries in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that knowledge will boost morale and recruitment.
- Finally, the American fighters will return with a greatly enhanced knowledge of and contacts with other similarly-minded men from across the Muslim world. All of the jihads to which American Muslims travel are fought by locals and an assortment of other men from countries that span the globe. The Americans will come home fully aware that the movement bin Laden started and led is now truly international in scope, and is quickly growing in numbers and geographical reach, and they will come home with a list of contacts among their fellow mujahedin from whom they can seek advice or more material forms of assistance.

(3) As I noted at the start, the subject of our discussion today is about a phenomenon that is nearly 40 years old. It is clearly more dangerous today than ever before, but the factors that cause the problem—the factors that motivate young Muslim Americans to jihad—have been the same over time.

- And while there are a number of factors that motivate these young people—including Saudi-sponsored and -funded religious education in the United States, and the bonds of family, clan, tribe, and nationalism that remain strong and vibrant even after immigration—the first and most important motivation for these American Muslims to go to war is the bipartisan and interventionist foreign policy of the U.S. Government and the existence of Israel and numerous un-Islamic tyrannies in the Arab world, all supported by the United States.
- Indeed, since Laden declared war on America in 1996, al-Qaeda and its allies have had—from their perspective—only two indispensable allies: Allah and U.S. and Western interventionism.

(4) To conclude my opening statement, I would say that while what American Muslim mujahedin bring back with them from jihad is important, what they find in the United States upon returning is will be much more important in motivating what I believe will become combat situations—like the recent event in Nairobi and others much worse—in the United States over the next decade.

- And what they will find on their return will be a steady-as-she-goes interventionist U.S. foreign policy which has been a constant for more than 30 years.

- We will be continuing to unquestionably arm, support, and justify Israel.
- We will continue to support tyranny in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Algeria, and elsewhere in the Muslim world.
- We will continue preaching democracy but stand ready to immediately intervene to undermine fairly-elected governments in places like Palestine and Egypt.
- And certainly most dangerous for U.S. National security, we will continue to prosecute the clash of civilizations, initiated by President Bush and accelerated by President Obama and Mrs. Clinton, designed to impose secularism, democracy, and women's rights on an Islamic world ready and willing to fight forced Westernization to the death.
- In terms of the length of our war with Islam, this attempt to teach our little, brown Muslim brothers to be just like us will lengthen the war every bit as much as the unprovoked and unnecessary military interventions in Libya, Mali, and Iraq.

(5) And if you think that I place too much emphasis provided to U.S. citizen and other Western mujahedin by U.S. and Western interventionism, I would draw your attention to the reality that, to the best of my knowledge, neither we nor any of our NATO partners have yet to capture a Western Islamist fighter whose words or documents have shown a motivation to attack based on hatred for liberty, elections, or gender equality. Invariably, they attribute their motivation to U.S. and Western military intervention and support for Israel and Muslim tyrannies.

Mr. STEWART. Okay. I wish we would have had that because it would have been helpful to refer to that prior to——

Mr. SCHEUER. Well, stuff happens, sir.

Mr. STEWART. Yes, believe me, I understand that stuff happens. But it is helpful to us and it would help me now in my questioning for you. Again, I want to come back to understand some of the things you said.

Before I do that, I just want to mention this quickly, I find your position on our alliance with Israel as very troubling. It won't surprise you to tell you that I disagree with you. You spent 17 years, is that right, or something like that, as a CIA analyst?

Mr. SCHEUER. Over 20 years, sir.

Mr. STEWART. Okay, over 20.

Mr. SCHEUER. Not as an analyst. I ran operations, sir.

Mr. STEWART. Okay. Would you say there is a large number of CIA analysts or employees who agree with your position?

Mr. SCHEUER. I wouldn't dare to speak for anybody but myself, sir. Only a fool wouldn't know that our relationship with Israel causes us war with Muslims.

Mr. STEWART. Well, my question is fairly simple.

Mr. SCHEUER. Yes, sir.

Mr. STEWART. I mean, you worked with hundreds of employees.

Mr. SCHEUER. Yes, sir. I didn't work with any fools, sir.

Mr. STEWART. You certainly had conversations with many of them. I am asking for your opinion. Are there a large number who agree with you?

Mr. SCHEUER. I am not a McCarthyite, sir. I am not going to say anything about that to you, sir.

Mr. STEWART. Okay. Well, I am going to take that as nonresponsive because it is a fairly simple question and I don't think——

Mr. SCHEUER. It is fairly none of your business about what my conversations with other people are about, sir.

Mr. STEWART. I am not asking for specifics of those conversations. I am asking for your opinion of your experience whether there are a large number that agreed with you. That is a fairly simple question, hardly intrusive.

Mr. SCHEUER. Very intrusive from my perspective, sir.

Mr. STEWART. Well, okay. You can have your perspective——

Mr. SCHEUER. Thank you.

Mr. STEWART [continuing]. And I think others can evaluate whether you are being agreeable or disagreeable.

Mr. SCHEUER. I am being disagreeable on this because it is none of your business.

Mr. STEWART. Yes, you certainly are.

Mr. SCHEUER. Yes, sir.

Mr. STEWART. Now, let me move on then. I would like you to explain very quickly if you can what you think the primary motivators are for Islamic jihadism?

Mr. SCHEUER. First, our support for the Israelis.

Mr. STEWART. Okay, that is your number——

Mr. SCHEUER. No, there are six.

Mr. STEWART. Okay. Put them in order if you could.

Mr. SCHEUER. Our support for tyranny for over 50 years in the Muslim world, okay. As a trigger, our presence on the Arab peninsula. Third, I would put the Israelis rising. Fourth, our ability for a long time to get oil at prices that were very much below the market level. Fifth, our presence, military presence in other countries in the Muslim world. Sixth, our abiding willingness to identify as terrorists any Muslim population that one of our allies dislikes, whether it is the Russians or the Chinese. Those six things, sir.

Mr. STEWART. I appreciate that. Let me say, and then I am going to move on to other witnesses, I was an Air Force officer for 14 years. I have spent significant time with many people from that region. It is astounding to me that you don't put in the top six what I know to be true, and that is they are motivated—many of them are motivated by their absolute hatred of the United States and what we represent, whether it is freedom, whether it is democracy, whether it is women's rights. There are many of them who are absolutely motivated by that. I know that. I have talked with them.

Mr. SCHEUER. They hate them, sir.

Mr. STEWART. I can't imagine that you would not put that in somewhere——

Mr. SCHEUER. They are not going to die for that, sir.

Mr. STEWART. Oh, they absolutely have.

Mr. SCHEUER. They have not, sir. This war is not—they wouldn't have anything we have in this country——

Mr. STEWART. Professor, you are turning a blind eye to history for you to say that they will not die for that.

Mr. SCHEUER. Bullshit, sir. You don't need to call me professor either. You can just call me Mike. The reality is no one has blown themselves up because this young lady is in this place.

Mr. STEWART. Professor, you are absolutely wrong on that. I am going to move on now.

Mr. SCHEUER. Well, no, you pulled this up. You said there are millions of people out there——

Mr. STEWART. Professor, you are absolutely wrong on that. I am going to move on, if we could.

Mr. SCHEUER. I wish you would move on.

Mr. STEWART. For the rest of you, I would like to ask you this: In the very brief time that we have, looking at something like the

attacks that we have seen in the last couple weeks that many of us fear could happen here in the United States, on a scale of 1 to 10, just generally your feeling, do you feel that that is something that we should be very concerned with or something that you think is still very unlikely here in the United States?

Ms. Blanchard, could I just begin with you, your overall assessment? Should we be very concerned, or maybe it is not something that you would consider as an imminent threat?

Ms. BLANCHARD. Well, I am not an expert in homeland security, but I would be very concerned about it.

Mr. STEWART. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Lovegrove.

Mr. LOVEGROVE. I believe from an attack point of view it is already happening. It may not be the physical attacks that we are witnessing elsewhere, perhaps in the United Kingdom, but you are being attacked certainly on the internet, the electronic platform. You are being attacked in terms of hearts and minds, and they are being won over by people who are focusing on the vulnerable. I would share the concerns of others.

Mr. STEWART. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Stanek.

Sheriff STANEK. Mr. Chairman, Members, I do believe that I am very concerned about that. I think it is already happening here in terms of living, thriving, funding. We have had prosecutions here. What is the difference whether they do it here or they go overseas? The concern is that they are going to stay here or come back here and commit those acts here in this country. I think it is just a matter of time.

Mr. STEWART. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Mellor.

Mr. MELLOR. Yes, Congressman. The retail industry is very concerned. There has been a history of violence at shopping centers and malls over the past 10 years. This escalation as it has gone up now is very troubling and we are very concerned.

Mr. STEWART. Okay. Thank you.

Ms. Kostro.

Ms. KOSTRO. I am very concerned, and that concern is growing. If you look at the last spate of attacks, the things that they have in common, soft targets that are enclosed with multiple entry points, at least 10 attackers, armed with relatively low-technology equipment, automatic weapons, hand grenades-type things that can be acquired on the market. So to go back to my testimony, the motivation is growing for international jihad that could be visited upon the U.S. homeland and the capability is there.

Mr. STEWART. Okay. Thank you for all of you. It seems to be unanimous.

Mr. Chairman, I apologize for going slightly over my time and I yield back.

Chairman MCCAUL. No apology is necessary. It was a very spirited debate.

I would caution the witness not to use vulgarity in this hearing room.

With that, I recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Thompson.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

Mr. Mellor, as part of the Retail Federation's scope, are you or your members routinely informed by DHS or some other entity about terrorist-related activities or anything that might happen on their properties?

Mr. MELLOR. Yes, Ranking Member Thompson. We do have a good handshake with Department of Homeland Security on this. The passing of information to the National Retail Federation, it is my responsibility to communicate it as appropriately to the retail community. So in the way of conference calls and messaging, reports that are appropriate to be able to pass down, there is good communication, and I do serve on a couple of different committees with the Department of Homeland Security on this.

Mr. THOMPSON. Are there some things you think we could do to improve the communication or are there some steps that you think we might have missed in this process, are you comfortable with where things are?

Mr. MELLOR. I would say that we are not completely comfortable with where things are in the way of—the timeliness of passing information before it actually gets on to the news is an issue that we deal with. Sometimes the news reporting gets the information before we actually have a chance to react to it and pass information down.

Mr. THOMPSON. A lot of times we have Classified briefings and they tell us you can't tell anybody, and we go out and we see it on the local newscast. So welcome to the club.

Sheriff, one of the issues we grapple with is, and in my statement I talked about the dwindling Federal resources that can go to local communities to support intelligence gathering, information sharing, and training, so that you know who the State counterparts are, the Federal counterparts. Do you see a continued role for the Federal Government to provide funds at the local level so that these kinds of things would go on?

Sheriff STANEK. Yeah, Mr. Chairman, Members, that is a great question. By the way, in our fusion center, and I think this committee knows what those are, we simply have CNN installed. They have always got breaking news coming across the bottom. It is the best place to get what is happening across this country, really, truly, at the end of the day.

But in direct response to your question, the Federal grant funding to help local law enforcement is extremely important. Training, prevention, equipment, things that we can't do ourselves, regionalized assets are really important to us.

Just 4, 5 weeks ago we had JCTAWS, joint counterterrorism awareness training put on by the DHS in partnership with the FBI and other Federal entities, and brought in everybody across the board, from local law enforcement to Federal law enforcement, to my friends in the private sector, hospitals, and others. It was a good table-top exercise. It is what we needed. We identified a number of gaps that we will use in the future to close those gaps.

In Minnesota and particularly in my community and my county, we work extremely well with our public-private partnerships, like I said, the Mall of America, other companies, and we believe those partnerships are extremely strong. He should have the same information that I have when I do my assessments and my risks, and

likewise we should know what he is finding on his properties. That is a sharing of information that needs to continue in this country.

Mr. THOMPSON. I think you testified earlier that, in addition to that, community engagement with local citizens is an integral part of this process also.

Sheriff STANEK. Mr. Chairman, Members, it absolutely is. Community engagement, building communities of trust, working with the diaspora community, just like we work with all communities, Latino, Asian, African American, Caucasian. It really doesn't matter at the end of the day. Law enforcement strategies do not change with one community to another. That is why we talk about community-oriented police in order to build those communities of trust.

But, again, it is a long-term relationship. It is not something that you just flip that switch and it happens. You have to work at it. You also have to be reflective of those communities in which we serve.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman MCCAUL. I thank the Ranking Member.

The Chairman now recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Duncan.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me just say I am glad that the United States stands with Israel. I will say that we should support an ally in the region, someone who is like-minded, a democratic government, who believes in capitalism and free markets, and who also has a people that worship the same god that we worship, and that is the god of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. There is a lot of commonality there, and so I am proud of that.

In the past 12 years terrorists have succeeded in attacking the homeland four times: The intentional driving of an SUV into the crowd of students at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill in 2006; the shooting of an Army recruiting office in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 2009; the shooting by U.S. Army Major Hasan at Fort Hood in 2009; the bombings this year in Boston. Of the 60 plots, 49 of those could be considered home-grown terror plots. Sixty plots against the country, 49 could be considered home-grown. This means that one or more of the actors were either American citizens, legal permanent residents, or visitors radicalized predominantly in the United States.

The *Washington Post* reported this week, in the wake of the recent special forces action in Somalia, that Obama's State Department has since 2009 opposed attacking al-Shabaab training camps because al-Shabaab was "a hybrid organization in which there was an element of East Africa, of al-Qaeda, and foreign fighters, but the large mass of the group was concerned with Somalia issues and had not signed up for global jihad."

Ms. Blanchard, do you believe that this is an accurate description of al-Shabaab?

Ms. BLANCHARD. I think, as I said in my testimony, it is both. There are elements of al-Shabaab that are focused on a global agenda and there are elements of al-Shabaab that are focused on an agenda inside Somalia. You have members, particularly among

the foreign fighter contingent, that are focused on international targets. You had two attacks in 2008 and then in June of this year on U.N. compounds inside Somalia. The narrative publicly released by al-Shabaab about the Westgate attack includes the specific intent to target Westerners, Western diplomats, and civilians.

Mr. DUNCAN. So how do you see al-Shabaab evolving over the next 10, 20 years?

Ms. BLANCHARD. Well, I don't want to project a future for them of 20 years, but they are not going away. Military advances by——

Mr. DUNCAN. Do you see them growing into an al-Qaeda-type threat?

Ms. BLANCHARD. I think the trend is there. Their military losses on the battlefield suggest that their ability to conduct an insurgency is shrinking if we are able to sort of continue those regional military advances. But what has developed and very worryingly is a sort of parallel clandestine structure called the Amniyat within al-Shabaab that Godane leads. It is composed of both Somalis and foreigners, and it appears to be structured in such a way that it can continue even if al-Shabaab loses the territory it now controls.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you for that.

Ms. Kostro, what will that mean for U.S. homeland security?

Ms. KOSTRO. Well, as al-Shabaab or elements within it focus more on international targets and knowing that there is a strongly affiliated Somali-American diaspora here in the United States, it could mean that their motivation for conducting an attack on the U.S. homeland is growing. As I mentioned before, they already have the capability to conduct small-scale attacks against soft targets. Are going to see them attempt to do what happened on 9/11? I don't believe so. However, will they do something that happened at Westgate or Mumbai or even something that happened in Russia with the Chechens in Beslan? I think that danger is indeed growing.

Mr. DUNCAN. Okay. Thank you so much.

Last weekend our Navy SEALs conducted a daring operation in Somalia to go after a key leader of al-Shabaab. According to news reports, U.S. Navy SEALs under the cover of darkness engaged hundreds of Somalis protecting the terrorist compound after infiltrating from the sea. I am always awestruck by the bravery of these incredible individuals that serve in our Navy SEALs. Reportedly, the SEALs chose to withdraw after seeing that al-Shabaab fighters were using children as human shields, and the Pentagon noted the operation proves that we can apply direct pressure on al-Shabaab at a time of our choosing. The Pentagon justified its weekend actions in Somalia based on the Authorization of Use of Military Force passed after 9/11. So do you think that is justification for that?

Ms. KOSTRO. Do I think the AUMF is justification for——

Mr. DUNCAN. For our raid on the Somalis.

Ms. KOSTRO. Yes, that AUMF has actually been cited several times in operations that we have supported in Somalia and I believe it is a useful use of that AUMF recently.

Mr. DUNCAN. That was rhetorical.

I would just like to point out, my time has expired, but point out that this operation occurred 15 days after the cowardly mall shoot-

ing that al-Shabaab perpetrated in Nairobi. It has been 393 days since the attack on our consulate in Benghazi; 393 days since Benghazi was attacked and four Americans lost their lives. Has the President taken any similar steps to bring those terrorists to justice? The answer to that, Mr. Chairman, is no. I yield back.

Chairman MCCAUL. I thank the gentleman.

The Chairman now recognizes the Ranking Member for one additional question.

Mr. THOMPSON. Ms. Kostro, you talked about the Somali population having the capacity to do something here in the United States. Is that any different from any other community here in the United States having that capacity?

Ms. KOSTRO. In fact, it is not. To have the capacity to do it you need Americans who are familiar with the territory, the culture, the language. You need access to weapons. You need the ability to move about freely. You need the training. So I believe that can be said for any diaspora communities.

What is particular about the Somali-American community is that they have reportedly felt increasingly marginalized and discriminated against, according to reports that I have seen, and that is sort of what sets them apart from similar diaspora communities that may not feel as marginalized.

Mr. THOMPSON. We can talk about it, but I will pass.

Chairman MCCAUL. I thank the Ranking Member.

Let me just close, I want to give Mr. Lovegrove, since he has traveled so many miles from London to come here, I just want to give you kind of the final word on this. Similar to the sheriff, you live in a community, Europe is a lot closer in proximity to the threat, and you have to deal with this issue really up-front, close, and personal. How you deal with that I think could give some sort of lessons learned for us here in the United States when it comes to homeland security.

Mr. LOVEGROVE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think I am going to speak as an ex-police officer but very much as a policing point of view, and I think it would be helpful, hopefully.

We are focused totally on solutions, absolutely. We absorb all the information from the fellow experts on the panel and people like them in the United Kingdom and across the world, but we then turn that intelligence, that academic and that feed into activity. What we are doing in the United Kingdom is we recognized a long time ago that the business community, the local authorities, the local government, and the police service are the tripartite that have a lot of solutions. What I mean by that is developing joint working with the communities, getting incredibly close to them, as Sheriff Stanek has already said.

But we have an immediate need to map the areas of activity of the terrorists, because it is not just about people doing hostile reconnaissance, it is not just about the internet. They are operating in an enormous amount in environments that change, because we develop solutions, they change their tactics. We then have to develop new solutions and new innovations.

So what we are doing at the moment, we are encouraging the development of deradicalization centers, and that is staffed by people who are ex-terrorists themselves, and we are in a converse kind of

way really pleased they are there. They have converted back into peaceful solutions and we embrace that energy.

We are providing contextual narrative for the youngsters who are only hearing one part of the message of hate. We are providing contextual narrative around what the West is all about, what Christianity is all about, what other faiths we should be focusing on, an appreciation of that strength.

We are focusing on early education-based interdiction, to identify individuals before they turn into radicalized individuals. We are very, very keen on that, and we are putting an enormous amount of effort there.

We are identifying learning opportunities from former jihadists, and that doesn't just mean about intelligence, about ideology. We got that. What we are asking for them to focus and help us on is the solutions that they think where we should be focusing on to make sure that the community stays on the side.

We are promoting a better understanding of Western political processes, democracy, and secularism. We are denying jihadists the unchallenged platforms for preaching hate, because we know where the platforms are and we are hand-in-hand with identifying the platforms and challenging what they are saying to the young and vulnerable. We are providing that contextual narrative as well, and that is absolutely critical.

Two more points. We are promoting the recruiting of Muslim scholars with a balanced teaching syllabus, because in the United Kingdom, in the musallas and in the faith schools they seem to be dominant, and we are providing financial and institutional support to work centered within the community to provide all these solutions.

Chairman MCCAUL. Just real quick, just following up on Professor Scheuer's testimony, what is their source of hatred?

Mr. LOVEGROVE. In the United Kingdom we hear the young men and women who are saying they are fighting for their brothers and sisters and the injustice that the United Kingdom and the coalition—and, of course, that means the United States and others—providing a war abroad. They are soldiers who are attacking the homeland, my homeland in the United Kingdom, to bring the war back to us. So their focus is very much on what we are doing abroad.

Chairman MCCAUL. For their brothers and sisters?

Mr. LOVEGROVE. Against their brothers and sisters, and they are intent on meting out what they call justice to the Western coalition.

Chairman MCCAUL. It is very interesting.

I want to thank the witnesses for an interesting and very impassioned hearing and lively discussion. According to the rules, the record will stay open for 10 days.

Without objection, the committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:30 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

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