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THE STATE OF AL QAEDA, ITS AFFILIATES, AND ASSOCIATED GROUPS: VIEW FROM OUTSIDE EXPERTS

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

HEARING HELD
FEBRUARY 4, 2014

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THE STATE OF AL QAEDA, ITS AFFILIATES, AND ASSOCIATED GROUPS: VIEW FROM OUTSIDE EXPERTS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Tuesday, February 4, 2014.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:02 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" MCKEON, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. The committee meets to receive testimony on the state of Al Qaeda from outside experts. Our witnesses include Dr. Seth Jones, Mr. William Braniff, Mr. Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, and Dr. Christopher Swift. Gentlemen, thank you all for joining us here today.

The committee has conducted several classified briefings on this topic. However, today is an opportunity to build on that knowledge in an open forum with these thoughtful and highly respected experts. Al Qaeda declared war on the United States and then successfully attacked us multiple times in 1998 and 2000, culminating with the horrific attack on 9/11. Since then Al Qaeda, its affiliates, and associated groups have maintained their global presence, increased their safe havens, and expanded their influence. They continue to plot attacks against our homeland and our allies and partners around the globe. In an op-ed just a few weeks ago Peter Bergen asserted that, and I quote, "From Aleppo in western Syria to Fallujah in central Iraq, Al Qaeda now controls territory that stretches more than 400 miles across the heart of the Middle East. Indeed, Al Qaeda appears to control more territory in the Arab world than it has done at any time in history."

Similarly, as several of your written statements conclude, Al Qaeda appears to be a growing threat. These trends are disturbing and lie in stark contrast to the President's wishful narrative that Al Qaeda is on a path to defeat. I applauded the President's decision to take out Osama bin Laden. However, this tactical success did not end what former CENTCOM [Central Command] Commander General John Abizaid called the long war against Al Qaeda. Nonetheless, President Obama has promised to revise and ultimately repeal the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force, which is the very authority that underpins our operations against these groups. What the President seems to ignore is that the enemy gets a vote. While the President seeks an end to war on ter-

rorism and is not providing the leadership necessary for our efforts in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda seeks a continued war against the United States and the West. This is the reality, and this is what our policy and strategy must address. To do otherwise puts the United States and our interests across the globe at dire risk.

We look forward to your thoughts on how this committee can best shape our Nation's policies, strategies, and capabilities to address the long war that Al Qaeda continues to fight. Mr. Smith is delayed today with his plane, as you know that we have some weather problems somewhere, and Ms. Sanchez is the ranking member right now. Ms. Sanchez.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McKeon can be found in the Appendix on page 43.]

STATEMENT OF HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CALIFORNIA, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing because I think it is an incredibly important topic, one that we are going to be returning to, I think, quite often in the next year or so.

First of all, I would like to thank the gentlemen before us on the panel for appearing before us, and I think this whole issue that you brought up about the Authorization for the Use of Military Force [AUMF] and what we do with it, what it really covers, et cetera, is going to be a very important topic for our committee.

You know, everybody believes that the military force that we agreed to right after the attacks of September 11th really have to do with the forces within Afghanistan and our work there, and the reality is that we are still seeing Al Qaeda out there after 12 years from those attacks.

So although Al Qaeda no longer has the freedom to train thousands of people in Afghanistan and even though Osama bin Laden has been killed, and even though we believe that a lot of the leadership of Al Qaeda have been captured or killed, Al Qaeda has obviously morphed into other groups and has relationships with other cells and other groups in other places, so we can't lose the sight of that. I think we need to be vigilant in our efforts to ensure that that group which really means to hurt the United States and its citizens, we need to make sure that we are vigilant about how we eliminate that threat to our people.

And so I am going to be very interested to see what we come up with as we move forward because, you know, I want to read a little bit about the text of the AUMF here. It authorized a war against those who, and I quote, "planned, authorized, committed or aided the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons," and that may not cover the future organizations that mean to threaten us. So I think it is an appropriate time for us to start thinking about what this means.

I am not asking our panel today, obviously, to propose an alternative legislation. I think it is far too early for that, but I hope that they can help us to understand what is the threat out there now, what does it look like, what do we need to be concerned about, how do we determine whether certain persons or organizations, in fact, are in combat. How do we combat them? What do we look at? Is

it their devotion to an ideology? Is it their belligerent actions or what other factors should we consider as we take a look at this?

How many of these groups have global foci that incite direct attacks on the United States? I think we need to be concerned about all these things. And when should we be using the U.S. military? Should we be directly involved? Should we have a situation like we see in Somalia where we have different capacities working on there to sort of tamper things down? Do we look at what we are doing in Iraq, where we have the Iraqi Army and others, and we are giving just some help there? What is the appropriate way for us to use our military and our other resources to ensure that Al Qaeda doesn't spring up, doesn't have these camps, isn't training people, and isn't perpetrating attacks against the American people?

So I think it is an important topic. I thank you for bringing it up again, Mr. Chairman, and I am going to submit our side's full statement for the record. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith can be found in the Appendix on page 45.]

The CHAIRMAN. You bring up a very interesting point. Just a couple of years ago, the DOD [Department of Defense] counsel came to me and said he needed to have it enlarged because he has to approve all of the special forces attacks, and he says he was having to be pretty creative because from the time we originally passed the authority, there had been a lot happen, a lot of evolvement. In fact, some of our main problem was Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and they weren't even in existence at the time of 9/11.

So this is an evolving issue, and I think whether we get tied up on whether we—whatever the name of the terrorist group is, most of them have the same, the same—I mean, just the name terror, that is what they, how they function, and we need to be ever vigilant worldwide, protecting our interests. I mean, when they attack an embassy, such as happened in Benghazi, that is American soil, whether it is within the continental borders of the United States or one of these embassies or consulates around the world, that is American territory. So we really look forward to your expertise and guidance today because this is something that we are definitely going to have to look at.

Dr. Jones.

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

Dr. JONES. Thank you, Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Sanchez, and members of the committee, thanks for inviting us to testify at this hearing on the state of Al Qaeda, its affiliates, and associated groups.

I am going to divide my remarks into three components. I am going to first talk about the organization and at least the way I see the broader movement organized, then I am going to talk about key trends in the data, and then third is implications for the United States.

I think there has been a tendency among some journalists and pundits to lump all Sunni Islamic groups under the title Al Qaeda, which I think has clouded a proper assessment of the movement,

and this gets to issues that we will talk about later, including on AUMF. I am going to refer and focus my remarks on a slightly broader set of groups that I am going to call Salafi jihadists that fit several criteria. These are groups that emphasize the importance of returning to a pure Islam, and then they also believe that violent jihad is a religious duty, their goal here is to establish an extreme Islamic emirate.

Today this broader movement, which does include Al Qaeda, is decentralized, in my view, among four tiers. First is the core in Pakistan, led by Zawahiri. I was out in that region a couple of months ago along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border looking at the status of those individuals. Second is about a half dozen formal affiliates that have sworn allegiance to the core, located in Syria, Somalia, Yemen, and North Africa. It looks like we have lost the most recent one, or lost one recently in Iraq.

Third, a panoply of Salafi jihadist groups that have not sworn allegiance, formally they have not sworn "bay'at," or loyalty, to senior Al Qaeda leaders in Pakistan, but they are committed to establishing an Islamic emirate, and several of them have plotted attacks against the U.S., against U.S. embassies, against U.S. diplomats, against U.S. targets overseas.

And then finally the inspired individuals and networks including the Boston bombers that, while they had no direct connections, were involved in listening to Al Qaeda propaganda and using the propaganda to build the bombs, including from Inspire magazine.

I think several trends are concerning as I look across these groups. First, according to data I have collected, there has been an increase in the number of Salafi jihadist groups globally, particularly in North Africa and the Levant. Examples include groups operating in Tunisia, Algeria, Mali, Libya, Egypt, including the Sinai, Lebanon, and Syria. There has also been an increase in the number of fighters within these groups, and then finally, an increase in the number of attacks perpetrated in particular by Al Qaeda and its affiliates.

Second, as I noted earlier, this movement has become more decentralized, I think, which does raise questions about the AUMF, which we will come back to, and that while there are similarities among some of these groups, there are also substantial differences.

Third, I think it is worth noting that only some of these groups are currently targeting the United States homeland and its interests overseas, like U.S. embassies and U.S. citizens. The most concerning, at least in my view, are Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and inspired individuals, like the 2013 Boston Marathon bombers. I would highlight concerns about the growth in the number of foreign fighters, Americans, Europeans, and others in Syria, the growth in social media and the terrorist use of chat rooms, Facebook, Twitter to access, that are making it easier for Americans in the United States to access this information.

But let me just point out that there are a range of groups that are not Al Qaeda and have never formally pledged allegiance that have posed a threat. Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia, for instance, has plotted attacks against U.S. diplomats and infrastructure in Tunis. Operatives from Ansar al-Sharia Libya, the Muhammad Jamal

Network and others were involved in the 2012 attack that killed U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens.

There are threats from groups including out of the North Caucasus that threaten U.S. athletes and their family members and other travelers to the Sochi Olympics in Russia right now. Many of these groups are not formal affiliates of Al Qaeda, have never pledged allegiance, but they remain threats, and I think that is worth highlighting.

Let me just conclude by saying that I think an effective U.S. strategy has got to include three brief components. One is focus on covert intelligence, law enforcement, special operations, diplomatic and other activity to target these groups, including their financial and logistical networks overseas. This should not be and I think is not just a military exercise but requires multiple organizations from within the U.S. Government outside of the Department of Defense and outside of the Intelligence Community.

The second step I think is helping local governments establish basic law and order as a bulwark against these groups. I think there have been some helpful steps in cases like Mali where we don't see groups plotting attacks against the U.S. homeland. The French did step in, get involved with special operations forces to push back Harakat Ansar al Dine Tuareg groups operating in Mali. That is a helpful step I think from an ally, and in some cases, may be better to hand this off to allies, particularly where we don't see plotting against the U.S.

My last comment is just to serve as a reminder that I would say much like the Cold War, this struggle that we are going to be talking about today is, in part, an ideological one. As the head of Al Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri wrote recently, I quote, "The strength of this movement is derived from the message it spreads to the ummah and the downtrodden all around the globe." An effective campaign must, must include countering the ideology.

We can talk about more specifics later, but let me just turn this back and to thank you, chairman and ranking member, and members of the committee for having this hearing. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Jones can be found in the Appendix on page 47.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Braniff.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM BRANIFF, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR THE STUDY OF TERRORISM AND RESPONSES TO TERRORISM, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Mr. BRANIFF. Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Sanchez, and esteemed members of the committee, I would like to thank you on behalf of the START [Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism] Consortium for inviting us to speak with you today on the state of Al Qaeda. There is unfortunately much to say.

In 2012, the most recent year for which START has provided a complete set of global terrorism data to the Department of State, more than 6,800 terrorist attacks killed more than 11,000 people. Even if you compare these more conservative Department of State statistics against the more inclusive global terrorism database, sta-

tistics dating back to 1970, the previous record for number of attacks was over 5,000. This makes 2012 the most lethal or, excuse me, the most active year of terrorism on record.

Strikingly, the six most lethal groups in 2012, the Taliban, Boko Haram, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Tehrik-e-Taliban in Pakistan, Al Qaeda in Iraq, and al-Shabaab are generally considered fellow travelers of Al Qaeda, and yet Al Qaeda itself was not responsible for a single attack in 2012. What should we take from these seemingly contradictory developments? Did Al Qaeda succeed by inspiring widespread jihadism, or has it lost to a variety of more parochial, albeit popular actors?

Using preliminary data from a different project examining terrorist group behavior, it appears that 12 of the 20 most lethal organizations, and 10 of the 20 most active organizations had alliance connections to Al Qaeda in 2012, ranging from collaboration to mere rhetorical support, suggesting that Al Qaeda remained a central hub in a network of highly lethal and active terrorist organizations. There are four primary reasons for this development.

One, Al Qaeda exploited relationships created during the anti-Soviet jihad and inserted itself into other violent campaigns beginning in the 1990s. While Al Qaeda is rarely successful at reorienting the nature of the conflict in toto, it does frequently succeed in altering the targeting and tactical preferences of subsets of violent actors in these theaters.

Two, similarly, veterans of the anti-Soviet jihad returned to locally and regionally oriented groups, infusing them with the globalized understanding of their respective conflicts.

Three, many of these highly networked veterans encouraged their respective organizations to establish a physical presence in other jihadist fronts as well, capitalizing on the recruitment, fundraising, and equipment pipelines pouring resources into these conflict zones.

Four, and finally, Al Qaeda fostered a virtual landscape that quickly became a place where local, regional, and global forms of jihadism overlapped for geographically, ideologically, and strategically diverse participants.

Taken as a whole, the increasingly intertwined histories of local, regional, and global actors has at least four salient consequences. First, the global jihadist cause often benefits from resources mobilized for other purposes. As long as there are local and regional jihadist fronts, global jihadist actors will have access to resources that they can direct against the far enemy.

Second, the multiplicity of narratives espoused by local, regional, and global jihadist actors creates numerous mobilization pathways into any one conflict zone. Consider Najibullah Zazi who left the United States to join the Taliban and defend Afghanistan, but who was redirected by Al Qaeda to plot suicide attacks against the New York City subway system. Zazi was not primed to target American civilians when he entered into this militant ecosystem, but the geographic collocation of local and global jihadist organizations enabled that eventuality.

Third, the harmonization of parochial and cosmic narratives by Al Qaeda's propaganda organ helps conflate actions on the ground, increasing the chances that western interests will be targeted in a

foreign setting. Consider the recent threat from Vilayat Dagestan, the sovereignty-seeking organization that committed two suicide attacks in Volgograd, Russia, this December. If the Winter Olympics are held, the group threatened additional attacks targeting tourists in retaliation for "the Muslim blood that is shed every day around the world, be it in Afghanistan, Somalia, Syria, all around the world."

Fourth, the propagation of the global jihadist ideas—this propagation of global jihadist ideas has helped to inspire a new cohort of individuals who are prepared to take action without ever having joined a formal organization. Al Qaeda's endorsement of lone actor jihadism following the Fort Hood attack bolstered this threat.

While it is certainly a mistake to conflate every local and regional jihadist organization with Al Qaeda, the interplay of local, regional, and global jihadism over 35 years presents a reality that counterterrorism professionals continue to address. In contested regions far from Al Qaeda's geographic center of gravity, violence targeting both local Muslim populations and western targets persists. It is no longer always useful to identify where Al Qaeda ends and other organizations begin.

It would be dangerous therefore to conclude that because the Al Qaeda organization is not generating violent attacks itself, that the attrition strategy fostered by the organization for over 20 years is also ineffectual. This has been the most active 2 years in the history of modern terrorism, and Al Qaeda remains as the historical, organizational, and ideological center of the most lethal terrorist threats of our time. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Braniff can be found in the Appendix on page 65.]

STATEMENT OF DAVEED GARTENSTEIN–ROSS, SENIOR FELLOW, FOUNDATION FOR DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACIES, AND ADJUNCT ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, SECURITY STUDIES PROGRAM, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Mr. GARTENSTEIN-ROSS. Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Sanchez, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to be here with you today to discuss the state of Al Qaeda and its affiliates.

Despite early hopes that the revolutionary events of the Arab Spring might be the death knell of jihadism, Al Qaeda and other militant groups have adapted to the new environment and have made gains. The U.S. needs to adjust its approach accordingly. Right now, in fact, militant groups have a significant opportunity. Western observers hoped that the Arab uprisings would weaken Al Qaeda by showing that nonviolent change was possible in the region and by providing a democratic alternative to long-standing dictators, but the region's challenges are providing these groups with fertile new recruiting ground.

Egypt's coup showed that democracy is reversible, perhaps particularly so if Islamist groups are being empowered. Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri had been saying this since the revolutions began, and since the coup, Zawahiri and other leading jihadist figures have claimed vindication. Also the brutal conflict in Syria where a once hopeful movement has given way to blood-soaked

tragedy has been a virtual incubator for extremism. Unfortunately, these reverses of the Arab Spring's initial hopes came atop already existing efforts by jihadist groups to exploit changes in the region.

One change has been prisoner releases. The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence report on the September 2012 Benghazi attack notes that it was carried out by a number of individuals connected to terrorist groups, including the Muhammad Jamal Network. Jamal is one of many jihadists to have been released from Egyptian prison, making him part of an Arab Spring trend in which prisons in affected countries have been emptied. In many cases, it is good that prisoners have gone free, as the old dictatorships were notorious for jailing and abusing their political prisoners, but jihadists were also part of these releases. Militancy in both Egypt and also Libya was strengthened by prisoner releases.

This is also true of Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia whose leader Abu Ayadh al-Tunisi had been in prison since 2003 for involvement in terrorism abroad but was released in the March 2011 general amnesty. It is impossible to overstate the degree to which prisoner releases have strengthened regional militancy, and we can see the bloody results in such places as Egypt's Sinai region.

A second change is new "dawa" opportunities for these groups, which can be understood as missionary activity, except rather than trying to convince non-Muslims to convert to Islam, jihadist groups often focus on converting other Muslims to their extreme practice of the faith. New dawa opportunities allowed jihadism to spread in places like Egypt and Tunisia where Ansar al-Sharia had a particularly sophisticated strategy that exploited social media to increase its presence and visibility.

We should also be concerned about the resurgence of charities that support militancy. Prior to 9/11, Al Qaeda received significant funding from a network of Islamist charities, and these NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] seem to be reemerging. The most significant factor in the rebound has been the Syrian conflict. A recent Brookings Institution report notes the role of Persian Gulf donors and charities who have helped to shape the ideological, and at times, extremist agendas of rebel brigades. The report singles out Kuwaiti institutions because that country has fewer financial controls than other Gulf States.

So what can the United States do? We need to understand that this is a longer term campaign, not a sprint to finish off a weaker foe, and we need to make our counterterrorism efforts both more strategic and also more sustainable. I offer five brief recommendations.

First, we need to beware of second order consequences when the U.S. decides to use its military might. The chaos produced by the Libya campaign, including ungoverned territory in the south and a regional flow of arms resulted in more potent jihadist factions in the region. While the primary rationale for the intervention was humanitarian, as long as Al Qaeda and jihadism remain strategic priorities for the United States, we need to be cognizant of the impact that major U.S. commitments can have on this phenomena.

The risk of second order consequences gives rise to another priority, better harnessing the talents of open-source analysts. Right now, open-source analysis suffers from a dearth of reliable informa-

tion, such as access to data in the documents recovered by the raid that killed Osama bin Laden. The 17 Abbottabad documents that the U.S. Government released in 2012 represent less than 1 percent of the total cache. Declassification of those documents should be hastened.

Third, we need to recognize the limitations of the U.S.'s targeted killing campaign. This campaign is seemingly premised around the idea that a leadership attrition-based strategy can defeat Al Qaeda, but if Al Qaeda is resilient in the face of this kind of attrition, as the evidence suggests, we need to think comprehensively about the impact of the strikes, including consequences when innocent people are killed. The U.S. shouldn't simply eschew targeted killings as a counterterrorism tool, but we should consider the idea that the tactic may be overused, particularly signature strikes.

Fourth, I concur with Dr. Jones that partner nation assistance is important. President Obama correctly observed that not all Al Qaeda affiliates and not all jihadist groups pose an equal risk to the United States, thus the U.S. should not bear all the cost in this fight. Partner nation assistance can include building local police capacity and also intelligence capabilities.

Fifth and finally, the elephant in the room is detention. Many pundits clearly hope that the U.S. doesn't need a detention policy, but we do. Detention of enemy combatants is a traditional tool of warfare because of concerns that a captured fighter if released will return to the fight, and the criminal justice system doesn't fully satisfy the rationales underlying detention. While detention is more complex in the case of nonstate actors than state-to-state conflict, as long as the threat is growing rather than receding, law-of-war detention remains relevant as a matter of policy. And related to this, we should set clearer policy about interrogation designed to clear actionable intelligence prior to Mirandizing jihadists who will be prosecuted in the criminal justice system. The U.S. has done this in several cases, and in some, like the case of Sulaiman Abu Ghaith, it is arguable that there is a need for a longer pre-Miranda interrogation.

The bottom line is that Al Qaeda is not on the verge of collapse. Unfortunately, we need to think strategically about this as a longer term conflict. I look forward to your questions and exchanges.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Gartenstein-Ross can be found in the Appendix on page 85.]

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Swift.

STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER SWIFT, ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Dr. SWIFT. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Sanchez, honorable members of the committee, this is my first time testifying before the United States Congress, and I am both honored and humbled to be here with my distinguished colleagues.

I am going to draw on some of the insights I have developed over the last 10 years conducting field work in regions including Afghanistan, Chechnya, and Dagestan, the central Asian republics, and most recently, southern Yemen. My goal is to help use these insights to frame some of the threats we face and some of the decisions we must make in the coming year.

Mr. Chairman, honorable members, as my colleagues have explained this morning, we currently face a constellation of complex, dynamic, and constantly evolving threats, threats that compel us to reexamine our assumptions, recalibrate our strategy, and ultimately revise the legal frameworks authorizing the use of military force.

I would respectfully suggest that three questions must shape your inquiry. The first is how does Al Qaeda influence local insurgents; second, how do these insurgents contribute to Al Qaeda's global jihad; and third and most significantly, how can we distinguish one adversary from the next? Answering these questions is crucial to our shared security, yet rather than engaging these complex relationships in their own right, a majority of pundits and policymakers routinely cast disparate groups as part of a common global conspiracy. They confuse radical ideologies with local political priorities, and in doing so, they presume that Al Qaeda will inspire, dominate, and control indigenous insurgents.

Mr. Chairman, honorable members, we perpetuate these presumptions at our peril. Despite lessons our forces have learned in the field over the space of the last decade, the United States Government still has no framework for understanding the relationship between transnational terror syndicates and indigenous insurgents, and for all our emphasis on terrorist links and networks, our leaders lack consistent, objective criteria for distinguishing Al Qaeda's franchises and their affiliate forces from superficially similar patterns of indigenous militancy.

The result, ladies and gentlemen, is confusion. After a decade of protracted deployments and enhanced surveillance at home, we still don't know exactly who our adversaries are, how they interact, or how precisely to defeat them.

Mr. Chairman, honorable members, these oversights represent the single greatest challenge before this committee today. They hamper our efforts to identify and confront the emerging challenges my colleagues have discussed this morning. They weaken the consistency and perceived legitimacy of our operations, and most significantly they undermine our ability to think and act strategically. We cannot align our means and ends until we define the challenges we face.

Mr. Chairman, honorable members, in his May 2013 speech at the National Defense University, President Obama explained that the United States is still at war with Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and their associate forces. I share that view, and I know members of this committee do as well. But unfortunately, the term "associated forces" has no legal or strategic meaning, nor do the terms "affiliate forces," "co-belligerents" or "Al Qaeda-linked groups," and when your Senate colleagues asked the Pentagon to define these terms and the specific threats they represent, they were met with silence.

Some of that silence is understandable. Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael Sheehan correctly notes that terrorist threats are murky and shifting, and that it would be difficult for Congress to get directly involved in the designation of specific Al Qaeda affiliates. A list-based approach similar to that we use for economic sanctions would not account for sudden changes in the character or composition of local terrorist and insurgent groups. It would be

clear, but it would also be underinclusive. Our current approach by comparison is overinclusive. By emphasizing tactics and rhetorics, we are collapsing distinctions between transnational terrorist syndicates and superficially similar patterns of indigenous violence. The more we emphasize the ideologies that bring these groups together, the less we appreciate the local and sometimes very parochial interests that drive them apart.

The lesson here is simple, Mr. Chairman, members, if we want to prevail on the battlefield and win in the war of ideas, we must first categorize our enemies and prioritize the threats they face.

Three criteria, in my opinion, should guide this process. First, we must distinguish between groups with global ambitions and those pursuing more parochial ends. Groups with strong ties to a particular community or territory are far less likely to defer to the whims of foreign fighters.

Second, we must distinguish militant Islamists on the one hand from Salafi jihadists on the other. While these ideologies may seem similar to us in principle, they are ultimately irreconcilable in practice. For militant Islamists, jihad is a means to an end. For Salafi jihadists, jihad is an end unto itself.

Third, we must draw operational distinctions between groups that emulate Al Qaeda, groups that collaborate with Al Qaeda, and groups that subordinate themselves to Al Qaeda's whims. These distinctions will help us qualify the operational links between local insurgencies and the global jihad. As I explain in my forthcoming book, some groups form ad hoc alliances with Al Qaeda without ever accepting its authority, while others will embrace Al Qaeda's message and its methods even when there are no meaningful connections between them.

Mr. Chairman, honorable members, the criteria I am presenting today reveal a spectrum of escalating threats. At the low end, we find autonomous rebels that espouse local ideologies and pursue local objectives. Grounded in a discrete community with a clear constituency, they are more likely to resist infiltration by foreign fighters.

At the high end, however, we find Al Qaeda's subordinate franchises, franchises that combine global ambitions with a globalized ideology that glorifies perpetual war. Each syndicate in this spectrum presents its own unique challenges. Some threaten our allies with limited risks to ourselves. Others destabilize vital regions without ever reaching American soil, and a growing number are reviving Al Qaeda's global jihad through local insurgencies. Confronting this diversity will require a more nuanced and discriminating strategy. This war has changed, ladies and gentlemen, but it is not yet over.

Mr. Chairman, honorable members, two centuries ago the Prussian strategist Carl von Clausewitz warned that leaders must first establish the kind of war they are entering into, not mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into something alien to its true nature. This is the challenge before us today. We must set priorities based on a clear understanding of our adversaries. We need objective criteria focused on interests, ideologies, and operations rather than subjective speculation that seeks to build Al Qaeda up or define the

threat down. In short, we need to see the world as it is, not as we might hope it would be.

Mr. Chairman, honorable members, I believe that every President needs the discretion to identify and interdict terror threats in the field, but I also know that Congress plays an essential role in defining the legal and strategic parameters for the use of force. With all the challenges and controversies that face our Armed Forces today, this framework desperately needs your attention. Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Swift can be found in the Appendix on page 105.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Dr. Jones, Mr. Gartenstein-Ross, as expressed during my opening statement and as many of you on the panel noted, the threat from Al Qaeda, its affiliates, and its associated groups appears to be increasing or, at a minimum, at least, evolving. However, the President is contemplating revising the 2001 AUMF to potentially narrow its scope, and in his own words eventually repeal it.

Given your understanding of the threat posed by Al Qaeda, the goals of Al Qaeda, and the evolution of Al Qaeda since the death of bin Laden, is a limitation or narrowing of tools to take the fight to Al Qaeda and its affiliates consistent with the realities on the ground currently?

Dr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the question. It is a very, very important question. In my view, I would strongly suggest thinking about criteria. I would be very concerned about limiting the scope of the AUMF for the general purposes of limiting its scope. I have got probably three things, three quick things I wanted to say about it. One is as virtually everybody here has noted, the movement that we are talking about has decentralized. The AUMF is tied very specifically to the September 11th attacks. That was a decade and a half ago, and the reality is that we have multiple groups on multiple continents plotting attacks against the United States homeland, but in particular, against U.S. interests including embassies overseas, diplomats, and citizens. The current AUMF, as I read it, has to tie an individual organization to Al Qaeda or at least to groups that were involved in plotting the September 11th attacks. We are living in a different world today. We have groups in North Africa plotting attacks against U.S. embassies that are not Al Qaeda. We have the group in Iraq over the last several days formally break away from Al Qaeda. Are they not included now in the AUMF because they have disassociated themselves? I would argue that if we are going to revisit the AUMF, we have got to incorporate a way of defining, I would say it differently than Dr. Swift did. I would focus on groups that are threatening, plotting attacks against the United States homeland or its interests overseas. I do think there needs to be more transparency, I think it is worth considering sunset clauses to revisit this issue, but I do think it is also worth recognizing that we are living in a very, very different world from September 11th.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. GARTENSTEIN-ROSS. For the reasons given by Dr. Jones, I think that an alteration of the AUMF is inevitable. I think it is going to happen at some point. A sound legal footing is very much

necessary for any sort of military action the U.S. undertakes, including those related to the threat of terrorism and jihadism, and as my colleagues have articulated, right now AUMF is premised on the nexus to 9/11, which in many cases has been receding, and I think that Dr. Jones' example of ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria] being booted out of Al Qaeda is a very good example of where that actually raises very important legal questions and shows some of the limitations of the AUMF framework.

That being said, the question was about limitations on the AUMF, making it more narrow, and given the multiplicity of threats that we face and the morphing of threats, if the direction was only towards narrowing the AUMF, there are certainly dangers inherent to that.

I want to find out one final thing as well, which is an issue if and when the AUMF does become altered, which is that right now our detention policy is premised upon the AUMF, so one question that is going to emerge is the detainees that the Obama administration says it considers too dangerous to be released even though they aren't going to be tried, the question that thus arises is if the AUMF is altered, what then happens to the detainees? There certainly will be legal challenges after any alteration comes up, and I think that that is something that anybody involved in tailoring a new AUMF has to have in mind during that process.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Ms. Sanchez.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. President Obama has stated his intent to revise and maybe repeal the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force. I would like to ask Dr. Swift what specific considerations should be taken into account before any revision or repeal? What should we think about with respect to this document?

Dr. SWIFT. Thank you, Ranking Member Sanchez. Appreciate the question. Putting on my lawyer hat for a moment here, I think it is very important to emphasize that the goal here is not to narrow the scope of the AUMF or to expand the scope of the AUMF, but to align our ways, means, and laws in such a way that we can achieve the ends that we are after, and what I am proposing this morning and what I cover more extensively in my forthcoming book is a tiered set of criteria that one would use to determine whether a group represents a clear and present danger to the United States based on their objective profile, whether they represent a regionalized threat that we should help allies address, or whether they address a fundamentally local threat that might be vulnerable to future infiltration and colonization.

And the three key criteria to look at here, Representative, are ideology, again distinguishing militant Islamists on the one hand from Salafi jihadists on the other. The second is their interests; are their interests locally focused or parochially focused or are they globally focused? Do they have transnational ambitions? Or do they want to run the particular part of the world that they are from?

And then third, operations, this very big difference between emulation on the one hand, mimicking Al Qaeda's message and methods, which is something we see, for example, in the North Caucasus, a place where I have done a fair amount of research, whether they collaborate with Al Qaeda, whether they are entering

into an alliance relationship that is sustained over time, or whether it is simply an ad hoc relationship based on the fact that they find themselves fighting against the same adversary today but maybe not tomorrow. And then distinguishing those two categories of operational interface from the full-on subordination of groups, the full-on indoctrinization and melding of a local subsidiary with a global Al Qaeda parent, and that occurs beyond just the ideological realm, and by focusing on ideology and on tactics and on rhetorics and by focusing on links-based analysis rather than organizational-based analysis, by looking at these things from the top down rather than from the field up, where I have been doing my research the last 10 years, we have gotten parts of it right, but we have got other parts of it wrong.

And part of what we have gotten wrong is the ability to draw distinctions and set priorities based on our interests, not based on the threatening things that groups may say about themselves.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Okay. I would like to ask all the panelists just a quick yes or no. So let's take a look at the most, one of the most recent attacks we saw was, I believe, in a mall in Kenya, as I recall. I just want to do some hypotheticals because I want to understand whether you think the current AUMF that we have, you know, falls to criteria. So let's say that the people who attacked, who—you know, we know what happened, gunmen went in there, they shot people, killed people, et cetera. If they had, if we could find that they were allied to Al Qaeda, would the current AUMF cover those people if we had American citizens who were killed?

Dr. JONES. Yes, al-Shabaab, as an Al Qaeda affiliate, has sworn allegiance, so the answer in my view is yes.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Okay. What if it had been a group that we could find no tie to Al Qaeda, would our ability to go after these people from our end rather than the Kenyans, for example, fall under the current legal construct that we have?

Dr. JONES. Ranking Member Sanchez, I am not a lawyer, so I don't know the answer. It is a fuzzy area.

Ms. SANCHEZ. That is what I am trying to figure out. I am trying to indicate whether, what we need to think about as we look forward to some of these attacks that may happen.

Dr. SWIFT. Ranking Member Sanchez, I am an international lawyer——

Ms. SANCHEZ. Okay.

Dr. Swift [continuing]. And I practice in this area. Technically no, but the President would still have broad authority under his Article 2.2 powers to protect both U.S. citizens overseas, to intervene to assist allies. If the Kenyans had asked for our assistance, there would be no need for the AUMF.

Ms. SANCHEZ. What if the Kenyans didn't ask, or what if it was a country, Somalia or some place like that that really didn't want to deal with us?

Dr. SWIFT. Then, Representative, the President would be falling back on his Article 2.2 authorities, which underscores why it is so important to take an objective criteria-based approach to this sort of analysis because the AUMF as it is currently construed is underinclusive. The problem is if we define the AUMF based on ideology, or based solely on links between individuals that aren't substan-

tiated, if we don't look at the character and quality of those relationships, the AUMF could become dangerously overinclusive in a way that is not tailored to our interests both at home and around the world.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Chairman, let me ask one final question. Because, you know, we have talked a lot about how we are going to pivot towards Asia, we are looking at maybe a larger military presence or working with countries out in the Asian area, and I remember from a trip that I took maybe about 4 years ago going to see extreme jihadist type of extremist groups that operate in the Philippines, that operate in Indonesia, that operate into the southern portion of Thailand, for example. If these groups were not outwardly connected to Al Qaeda, do we need a different construct to cover if they would attack a mall where our American citizens would be there, or where they would attack one of our embassies, for example?

Dr. SWIFT. Representative, I would respectfully argue that we do need a different construct, and that construct needs to take into account the ideology of the organization, the interests of the organization, and the operations of the organization. One of the difficulties of linking everything back to Al Qaeda and the Taliban circa September of 2001, as all of my colleagues have mentioned here this morning, is it really narrows our ability to respond to the threat as it evolves, but at the same time, we have got to be sure that when we are expanding the scope of the AUMF, we are expanding how and when and why we use force, that we don't allow war to serve itself, that we allow war to serve our strategic interests, our national interests, and that we are thinking very critically about who our adversary is. If we don't define our adversary first, our adversary will define us in the war we are fighting.

Ms. SANCHEZ. Thank you. And I yield back, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Thornberry.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate you-all all being here today. I also think it is important to point out and remind everybody that in this committee, in both the NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act] for fiscal year 2012 and 2013 updated the AUMF. It may not have been perfect language, but we took language used by both the Obama and Bush administrations, it passed the House with bipartisan support in making that adjustment, and we couldn't convince our Senate colleagues to go around. I think this committee was concerned for several years about having the proper legal framework for our men and women who we send out all around the world to do the things we ask them to do, and I think it is too bad that not everybody was as up to speed maybe as this committee.

I want to back up for just a second and focus on the threat and ask you-all's comments starting with you, Dr. Jones. In his interview with The New Yorker magazine, the President was asked, Is Al Qaeda growing in capacity? And this was his answer: "The analogy we use around here sometimes, and I think is accurate is if a JV [junior varsity] team puts on a Lakers uniform, that doesn't make them Kobe Bryant." And it says "Obama said."

I am not sure I understand that, but the implication to me is that we have already defeated the Lakers, and now we just have

to deal with the JV in Yemen and in North Africa, and al-Shabaab, and all these people in Iraq and Syria, they are not major league players. Now, is that the way that you-all see the current threat we face today from these groups? Dr. Jones.

Dr. JONES. No, I view the threat somewhat differently. I would point recently to the administration's decision to close nearly two dozen embassies as useful examples of the threat to U.S. structures and diplomats overseas. You don't close embassies if you don't have a threat. You do close them when you have active plots to target embassies, diplomats, and citizens overseas.

Within the last year we have also had an active plot generated by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula targeting, among other things, U.S. aircraft in the United States. They have been looking at various options for concealing a bomb inside of a number of different luggage compartments and others to take down a U.S. airline. I consider, Mr. Thornberry, the threat serious. I do not consider this JV.

Now, there are some individuals involved in plots that have been JV incompetent individuals, but more broadly speaking, I do think the threat is serious, and I think the administration's actions overseas demonstrate that the threat is serious.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you. I would just like to go down the line right quick in the remaining time. Mr. Braniff.

Mr. BRANIFF. Thank you for the question. I think part of the issue here is that terrorism is a bit of a difficult thing to analyze because of the numbers associated with it. Al Qaeda's 9/11 attack has an oversized impact on our assessment of the organization; understandably so, it is the most lethal attack in the history of terrorism, but Al Qaeda is responsible for approximately 80 attacks over the last 25 years. It is not a highly prolific organization in terms of number of attacks. That is around three per year.

When you look at these other organizations that we have talked about, the six most lethal in 2012 that I mentioned, they are killing thousands of people per year, year after year, and so when you add those numbers together, what you see is these are highly lethal organizations that are highly prolific, they are conducting vast numbers of attack that are undermining the local government, our ability to help the local government, our ability to act within that space. If you just think about the, what is going on in Syria right now, for example, our ability to act decisively is undermined by the presence of multiple, even fighting factions within this broader Salafi jihadi community.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you. So you are worried about the Spurs and the Timberwolves and other people, not the JV for the Lakers? Mr. Gartenstein-Ross.

Mr. GARTENSTEIN-ROSS. I think that there is two implications to the President's statement, one of which I agree with, one of which I disagree with. The first is that not all threats are equal, I think that is correct. The second implication, though, when he says they are JV players putting on Lakers jerseys is that these new groups that are putting on the style of Al Qaeda, they are not really Al Qaeda, these affiliates aren't Al Qaeda, and this gets to a fundamental question in terrorism studies right now, which is are there unacknowledged affiliates?

I want to turn to a quick example, which has been mentioned a couple of times, Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia. If you go back a year, 2 years ago, this was considered to be a very local or regionally focused group with limited connections to Al Qaeda. More recently, you have had the Tunisian government after banning it put forward specific information. Not only was their leader someone who formed the Tunisian combatant group which committed the assassination of the Northern Alliance commander Massoud just 2 days prior to the 9/11 attacks, but also the Tunisian government has put forward information saying that Tunisi actually took an oath of bay'at, or an oath of allegiance to the head of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Abu Musab Abd al-Wadud.

They also said that they are receiving funding directly from Al Qaeda, which if you look at the quality of these links would actually make them much more of an unacknowledged affiliate. I think we need to be cognizant that organizational ties may be far deeper than sometimes the surface level discussion the public sphere lets on.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you all so much for being here. You have addressed certainly the question that Al Qaeda's repudiating of ISIS raises in some ways in terms of the complexity I think of the issues that we are looking at, but I wondered whether we do tend to look at all groups across the spectrum through the eyes of Al Qaeda and therefore miss perhaps what the intent of other groups might be at this time, and could you address whether that threat is coming to the United States and the homeland or if that, their activities are really more focused in other ways, and if that were true of ISIS, what about other groups? How do we best understand and really be able to bring together our best analytical advice when the organizations are perhaps growing in areas that we are not necessarily focusing on? How do we prevent that?

Mr. GARTENSTEIN-ROSS. I think Dr. Swift's argument that we look at their interests, we look at their ideology, and we look at what they are targeting at the moment is a good framework for understanding this. So, for example, to return to my example of Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia, I think in my view the best evidence suggests that they have a very strong relationship to the Al Qaeda network, but that being said, that doesn't mean they are targeting the United States, certainly not the continental U.S. They did help to organize the demonstration in Tunisia, in Tunis that caused the ransacking of the U.S. Embassy there and almost killed U.S. diplomats on September 14th of 2012. They are not of no interest, but it is a group where to have U.S. drones flying over Tunisia or to have U.S. Special Operations forces conducting raids would be very much out of step, in my view, with our interests given that Tunisia right now is cracking down, they are capable of doing so, and having the U.S. in there could inflame the situation.

So I think that regardless of what their ideology or organizational ties are, we also have to look at how they are operating at that given moment. I think we should take those groups seriously but understand that we have a very large tool kit, and our tendency early in the war on terror was to take the burden all our-

selves and to have the U.S. really bear the brunt of the costs. It is important to diffuse costs, especially given the state of our economy, and I think we are moving right now in that direction.

Mrs. DAVIS. Dr. Jones, did you have something?

Dr. JONES. Yes. I think it is an excellent question, and I think we, the government in general does not have a great answer at this point to it. I think, frankly, it is, in part, an intelligence answer. I think what the Intelligence Community needs probably to do better is to identify those groups that are plotting attacks today and tomorrow against the U.S. homeland and U.S. interests overseas.

I think this is the third, I would interpret this is the third of Dr. Swift's criteria. I think the other two, the ideology, we can fight a lot, and some of those terminology in my view gets fuzzy, but we, the question is do we have intelligence that groups are plotting attacks against the U.S. homeland? There are a number that fit into this category. Yemen, Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia has plotted attacks against Tunis, Muhammad Jamal has as well.

There is a second category which sort of fits into the groups of concern but don't, aren't plotting. When we have Americans fighting in Syria and Americans fighting in Somalia, we may not see active plots, but we need to closely monitor those groups because they can switch quickly, and when you have Americans going there. Then we have a third criteria where we have no evidence at all.

So I would argue that this should be more of an intelligence-driven process on attacks that threaten the U.S., both at home and overseas than it is today.

Ms. DAVIS. Dr. Swift.

Dr. SWIFT. Representative Davis, if I might offer you some intelligence from southern Yemen, I want to use Yemen as an example of some of the complexity we face in this area and also to answer part of the question Representative Thornberry asked. We have no answer, not just not a good answer, because we have no objective criteria, we have no analytical framework that is consistent across theaters and threats, and because we really don't have any boots on the ground in any of the places where these threats are emerging.

I spent several weeks in southern Yemen interviewing tribal leaders who are fighting Al Qaeda door to door in their own villages, and I can tell you that if you ask them what is happening with Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula that they will give you an image of an organization that is taking the ideological dictates of global jihad and merging them with the practical realities of local insurgency.

And I would respectfully suggest in answer to Mr. Thornberry's question that that is not the JV team, that is actually a much more threatening team than Al Qaeda core ever was. Why? Because there is a geographic shift back to the Arab-speaking world rather than the cultural and linguistic and religious periphery of the Islamic world. Why? Because people are grounded in their own tribal and family structures. It is localized and globalized at the same time. Why? Because we have a generational shift to people in their late 30s and early 40s, people about the same age as the people testifying before you this morning, who have seen all of the mis-

takes that their leaders made ahead of them, and most importantly, because we have a shift to a generation that didn't fight against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, a generation that fought against the United States in Afghanistan.

So if you want to know what is going on, you have got to have a framework, you have got to have criteria, we have got to be on the ground.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you very much, Chairman McKeon. Thank you for your leadership on this issue and thank all of you for being here today. I am really grateful for your presentations because I am very concerned that Chairman McKeon is really correct, that the American people need to remember that Al Qaeda declared war on the American people in 1996. They declared war, again, with the fatwa by Al Qaeda in 1998 on the American government, and then even specifically, we should take it personally, American taxpayers, and so we equally should not forget, we should remember the attacks of 9/11 and the global war on terrorism, and you being here today really should be really positive for the American people to understand the threat that is facing us.

Sadly in June, the President, as was indicated by Chairman McKeon, was in a situation of wishful thinking that Al Qaeda was being diminished, and that it is really not a problem, as Vice Chairman Thornberry pointed out, too. That is just wrong, and we had specific examples. The mass murders at Fort Hood were dismissed as workplace violence, the murder at the recruiting station in Little Rock was called a drive-by shooting, the mass murders in Benghazi were identified as a video protest. None of that was true. And so the American people need to know, and I appreciate you being here.

In fact, I also want to point out that we have a growing threat. This was first brought before the Foreign Affairs Committee last summer. Dr. Fred Kagan of the American Enterprise Institute had this chart, the American people need to know that we have a growing terrorist threat across North Africa, the Middle East, central Asia, and I appreciate Congresswoman Sanchez pointing out as far as Indonesia itself, we have a situation where we should address the world as it is, Dr. Swift, thank you.

[The chart referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 115.]

Mr. WILSON. I believe that the demonstrators in Tehran in Iran, the state sponsor of terrorism, mean what they say. They carry signs in English, death to America, death to Israel, and we should take it seriously, and that is why I would like to know from each of you what would be your message to the American people on the threat, the threats of terrorism to American families and what do you believe is the proper response of the U.S. Government? And beginning with Dr. Jones.

Dr. JONES. Well, I would point out much like the Cold War, which was a decades-long struggle, the war that we are dealing with today is a decades-long struggle. It is not just a military one, it should not be conceived only in military terms, but is one that is just as much ideological as it is military. That is the message that I would take back to the American population and to remind

them that this is not going to end tomorrow, it is not going to end next week, that we have to prepare for a very, very long struggle, and preparing people for a long struggle I think precludes the response that we have seen from some policymakers that we are on the verge of defeat.

Mr. BRANIFF. Representative Wilson, thank you for the question. I would have the same question for American families as I would for the government, that is to keep in mind Al Qaeda's strategy. Al Qaeda is waging an attrition strategy. They hope to attrit our political, economic, and military will. Political will is where that intersects with the American family. We need to be resilient as a country, but we need to understand that in the case of Al Qaeda and its relative decline compared to the Al Qaeda affiliates, just because it is not Al Qaeda core pulling the trigger doesn't mean it still can't attrite the United States ability to engage with the Muslim world.

And so while we could take comfort in the fact that Al Qaeda core is not conducting attacks to the extent that they used to, we still need to mind that their attrition strategy can still be alive and well thanks to the associated movement that is still conducting attacks.

Mr. GARTENSTEIN-ROSS. I think both of my colleagues have put forward eloquent messages to the American people, this is, in fact, a longer struggle. When it comes to terrorism, one thing I always tell the public is that we shouldn't be in fear. One thing terrorism tries to do is to terrorize us. We should act not out of fear but out of interest because this remains a problem to American interests, and we should address it accordingly.

Dr. SWIFT. Representative Wilson, I have a very short answer to your question. When we don't draw distinctions between our adversaries, we fight Al Qaeda's war on Al Qaeda's terms.

Mr. WILSON. Well, thank each of you, and indeed as a co-warrior, I remember being told that we could not win against communism, that it was the wave of the future, and so we did, and thanks to the American military we have a greater spread of democracy today than in the history of the world. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Johnson.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, thank you all for coming today. We have, this country has increasingly relied upon—or I won't say relied upon but used universal data collection in an effort to hamper the operations of these networks, these Salafi jihadist groups so as to prevent their attacking the United States or any of its foreign interests. What—do you have an opinion as to the impact of privatizing data collection on America's ability to protect its citizens internally and its interests overseas? And, if so, what is that opinion? And start with Dr. Jones and work your way down.

Dr. JONES. I do think there is an interest in collecting some degree of limited data. I think it was helpful in several plots, thwarting several plots including the Zazi plot which the investigation began with an intercept from Zazi back to his Al Qaeda handler in Pakistan. The question, in part, as I see it, gets to who holds the metadata that is collected. I think there is a strong argument for having the private sector hold the metadata and have the U.S.

Government have to access it. There may be other options there. I don't know what that actually looks like. And there are probably three or four different options, but I think bringing the private sector in if they are willing to do it is certainly an option worth strongly considering.

Mr. BRANIFF. Sir, thank you for the question. I don't have a strong opinion in the matter. This is not my background or area of expertise. I would argue just simply that given Dr. Swift's I think rightful contention that it is important to really understand at a very granular level which of the subsects of organizations are interested in targeting the United States and given the assertion of many of us that this is a really highly dynamic threat that has evolved quite a bit, and it is very fluid, we have to stay on top of it really in a real-time kind of a sense, the only way to do that is through data collection efforts, or at least that needs to be part of the intelligence picture. The mechanics of how that takes place I don't have a strong opinion, but I think there is a necessary function there given the requirement for really excellent intelligence to be effective in this front. Thank you.

Mr. GARTENSTEIN-ROSS. Sir, that was an excellent question. I think that both ensuring the security of the Nation and also safeguarding citizens' privacy rights are incredibly important, and part of the story of U.S. data collection is one of evolution of technology, evolution of ability to surveil, and evolution of threats in which one hand wasn't aware of what the other was doing. In other words, our ability to collect maximum amounts of data increased at a time when we had a need because of threats to do so, and I think that there isn't a very strong framework in place right now to balance these considerations.

With respect to privatization, I think it is very worthy of consideration, but I am not convinced it actually better protects privacy and in many ways it may actually make privacy problems worse, because I am not convinced that the private sector will be a better guarantor than the government of making sure that data isn't breached. At least in the government, people who can access the data have to be cleared in advance. You don't have the same need to clear people and the same checks and balances that are occurring to make sure that corrupt people aren't in there within the private sector, so I have concerns that we may be actually putting data in the hands of entities in which it is less secure rather than more secure.

Dr. SWIFT. Representative Johnson, you raised some pretty important questions, both with respect to section 721 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and section 1275 I believe, of the USA PATRIOT [Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism] Act.

Mr. JOHNSON. 215.

Dr. SWIFT. I would echo some of the statements made by my colleagues here. I actually don't see nearly as much of a concern withholding the stuff inside the government. We have 3-, 4-, 5-, 600 years of a system of people going to a magistrate with a warrant and getting permission to engage in a search, and I, as a lawyer, have a lot of faith in that system. I think temporary, recent break-

downs in that system are worthy of oversight, but I don't think it is worthy of an overhaul of the entire system.

I would say that my bigger concern relates to our overemphasis and overreliance on signals intelligence. If you look at what actually broke the case in terms of the Tsarnaev attacks in Boston after the Boston Marathon bombing last year, it was good old-fashioned police work on the ground. If you look at where our forces get their leads in the field, it is good old-fashioned intelligence gathering on the ground. There is only so much of this that we can do by remote control, and there is a lot of this that needs to be done by training the most valuable asset that we have, and that is human beings.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you.

Mr. THORNBERRY [presiding]. Mr. Franks.

Mr. FRANKS. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Braniff, I will direct this to you, sir. Thank you all for being here, and certainly I am glad you are on our side. Mr. Braniff, when describing Al Qaeda, the President has said many times and in many ways that we have Al Qaeda on the run, and when campaigning for his reelection in 2012, the President claimed that Al Qaeda was "decimated," but considering the testimony here today and, of course, some of the many other experts in the field, it appears that "on the run" may mean dispersed recruiting and evolving on many fronts. So I have to ask you a difficult question. Do you think what the administration is saying regarding Al Qaeda's demonstrative diminishment and being on the run is truthful?

Mr. BRANIFF. Representative Franks, thank you for the question. The last Al Qaeda attack on, in our global terrorism database occurred in 2011, and so clearly it is an organization that's operational capacity has been decimated, it has been undermined by a lot of pressure, so I think Al Qaeda core, the organization, as a trigger puller, as a bomb thrower, has been undermined, but that doesn't mean that the strategy waged by Al Qaeda, an attrition strategy is not alive and well, and the problem with, the insidious thing about an attrition strategy is that it doesn't have to be well run from the top as long as there are enough people on the ground creating fires that someone else has to go put out, and so the threat posed by Al Qaeda core is not diminished. The actual operational level of activity of Al Qaeda core has been diminished in my opinion.

Mr. FRANKS. Well, we know that sometimes we have succeeded in attacking terrorism on a tactical level with almost unprecedented success, but in terms of dealing with them on a strategic success with the ideological concerns, I am just wondering if, in the perhaps unlikely event that Al Qaeda would gain access to some type of weapon of mass destruction, is that still a major concern that all of us should have given that that was a primary discussion when this sort of first became kind of in our collective awareness? Yes, sir, Mr. Braniff.

Mr. BRANIFF. Thank you again for the question. So there is a research project run by Karl Rethemeyer and Victor Asal called the Big Allied and Dangerous project that looks at what makes terrorist organizations more likely to pursue weapons of mass destruction, or what makes organizations more likely to be highly lethal, and in both cases the answer is not ideology alone, it is instead

highly central organizations, highly networked organizations, and Al Qaeda is the most highly networked organization around, and so is it more likely than others to try to pursue weapons of mass destruction? Based on that empirical study, the answer is yes. I think that it is part of the reason why we are so concerned about Syria. It obviously has access to chemical weapons. It still has to be a grave concern because we know that there are numbers of organizations who have voiced their desire to gain and use those weapons. It isn't the central sort of animating thing that keeps me up at night, but I think it is certainly of high concern.

Mr. FRANKS. Well, thank you, sir.

Mr. Gartenstein-Ross, I would ask you, to what extent has Al Qaeda in Iraq or AQI, which now calls itself the Islamic State of Iraq in the Levant among other names, to what extent have they grown in capabilities and areas of control in Iraq or Syria and neighboring countries over the last couple of years, and what factors have contributed to this growth such as the war in Syria and the sectarian political disagreements and conflict in Iraq itself?

Mr. GARTENSTEIN-ROSS. Representative Franks, as was noted earlier, ISIS or ISIL [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant] was just expelled from Al Qaeda recently. This is a very new development, but with respect to their capabilities and also what they stand for, that hasn't really altered. One of the most significant developments over the past 2 months was January 1st of this year when ISIS undertook a surprise attack, capturing large parts of both Fallujah and Ramadi. It still controls a large portion of Fallujah to this day. What that indicates is both a capability that is massively expanded. Last year, almost 8,000 Iraqis died in violence. It was the most violent year in Iraq since 2007 at the heart of the civil war within that country. They also continue to control territory of northern Syria, but this actually is something that is very much worth watching, the splits between Al Qaeda and ISIS because if there is going to be fragmentation within Al Qaeda, and a reduction in the monopoly it holds over jihadism, I think this is what is going to cause it. However, rather than Al Qaeda fracturing, I think that there is a chance that we will see ISIS fracturing. You can already see some dissent within its ranks, and this very much bears watching who is more weakened by the split between the two.

Mr. FRANKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you. Ms. Duckworth.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, thank you for being here today. I want to return to the discussion on more recent Al Qaeda-affiliated groups. You know, we have had a little bit of discussion on how they have historically focused more on local grievances as opposed to a global jihad, but then we also had a discussion on how Al Qaeda in Iraq, or Jabhat al-Nusrah in Syria are relying on foreign fighters.

Looking to specifically Southeast Asia, what does this, how does this dynamic work out with these foreign fighters going and participating in these two conflicts, and then potentially returning home to Jamal Islamia, Abu Sayyaf or these groups, you look at what is happening in Thailand with their election ongoing, yet they

have an ongoing conflict in the southern part of Thailand with their Islamic provinces.

So maybe I will just start with Dr. Swift and move my way down. Can you sort of comment on that dynamic of the foreign fighters coming back to the individual groups around the country—around the world.

Dr. SWIFT. Certainly, Representative Duckworth, thank you for the question. Foreign fighter flows, there is some alliteration for us, are a very complicated phenomenon. If we were to speak at the level of generalities, the trend over the last 5 to 7 years has been for ethnic Arabs to leave the cultural, geographic, linguistic periphery of the Muslim world and retrench back into Arab majority areas. We see that with the dynamics my colleagues have just described in Syria. I saw it very acutely when I was in southern Yemen, and there are good reasons for that. One, they speak the language; two, they know the local culture; three, they are on home turf, and it is possible for them to develop relationships that are based on mutual dependency rather than temporary exploitation.

What we are seeing in places like southern Thailand, what we have seen in Mindanao with Abu Sayyaf and the MILF [Moro Islamic Liberation Front], what we have seen in Indonesia is a lot of ideological colonization and infiltration that occurred during the earlier phase of the war on terror, and what has happened is as some of those groups within those particular societies have become more marginalized and more radicalized over time, we have seen them come up the food chain, come up the tiers from being sort of an autonomous local rebel group to becoming an ideologically aligned radical group to perhaps even becoming an Al Qaeda affiliate, but we don't see them rising to the level yet of a transnational syndicate or to the level of, say, a full-on Al Qaeda franchise.

So in the ideological sphere we are seeing a lot of resonance in terms of the emulation of tactics, rhetoric, and message, we see a lot of transfer of knowledge there, but in terms of actual alliance formation, in terms of common long-term political interests, we actually see a divergence, and that is part of the reason why the U.S. Army and the Philippine Army have had so much success in places like Mindanao where they have been able to drive a wedge between Abu Sayyaf, on the one hand, which was more globalized in terms of its objectives, and the MILF, which was a local organization with parochial interests that temporarily adopted a global ideology to further those interests.

So, again, this reinforces my earlier point about the need for criteria that are based on interests, ideology, and the structure of the operational links between the group, and if we don't break things down in that way, everything, the whole map starts to look red, and that is not an effective way to manage a strategy, much less manage military appropriations for the forthcoming year or the forthcoming 10 years.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Is there potential there for these foreign fighters, upon returning home to, say, Malaysia or southern Thailand to have made connections to access resources monetarily or otherwise? And I see Dr. Jones nodding and also Mr. Gartenstein-Ross, I have just a few minutes left, a minute left. Very quickly. Yes?

Dr. JONES. Briefly, we have seen fighters that have moved to theaters to engage in combat in jihad in Syria, Libya, Iraq the last several years do make connections. It builds in capabilities if they want to come back and continue operation, but it also can build financial links to donors in multiple locations, including the Persian Gulf.

Mr. GARTENSTEIN-ROSS. I agree with my colleagues. One final quick thing to add with respect to the foreign fighter flow, last year I was living in the Netherlands at a time when they first discovered that there were over a hundred young Dutch Muslims who had gone over to fight in Syria, and that problem has only increased in western Europe since then. The most recent report states that about 1,800 western European Muslims have gone over.

So looking at theaters, in addition to Southeast Asia, I think that my two biggest concerns are western Europe and the return of foreign fighters there and also Tunisia, which has had a large amount for such a small country, and, look, not all foreign fighters, even when radicalized, come back and carry out attacks, but people who have been at the frontline can have trouble reintegrating even into a militant milieu in those areas, and this could create a problem for stability in I think both western Europe, but more so in Tunisia.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you. Dr. Heck.

Dr. HECK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for being here and for your insights. Note, we have touched a little bit on this kind of excommunication of ISIS from core Al Qaeda. How do you view the implications of that? Are there really any—are there any real world implications globally, regionally, and then locally of this division between ISIS and core Al Qaeda?

Dr. JONES. That is a very, very good question. I would, just in the interest of time, focus on two. One of them is within Syria itself. We have already seen some limited fighting between ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusrah and other opposition fighters. I think this has the potential to increase the tension between ISIS and other opposition groups, including the Al Qaeda affiliate.

The second issue is we have seen in the past this organization called Al Qaeda in Iraq broaden its scope of targets to include Jordan, Amman, if you count the Zarqawi era. I would say this is worth monitoring whether the break changes the scope of targeting of this organization to include other countries in the region, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and others. It is not clear at this point, but that is definitely worth watching. The group has gone in that direction in the past.

Dr. HECK. Anyone else with a view?

Mr. GARTENSTEIN-ROSS. Yes, sir. This is an excellent question. I agree with Dr. Jones that there is a potential for increased jihadist infighting within Syria. You have already seen calls from prominent clerics that fighters should defect from ISIS to other factions that are more aligned with Al Qaeda like Jabhat al-Nusrah. For example, Abdallah al Muhaysini has made that call, which is a fairly significant call. I would look for also, secondly, funding networks, does funding shift? This is something that can have an effect within Syria, within Iraq, and also for the global Al Qaeda net-

work. I will get to what I think rides on the second, but the third thing I would look to is clerical defections.

You have had clerics who have thrown in with Jabhat al-Nusrah, some clerics who have thrown in with ISIS, and we can see certain clerics who have endorsed ISIS now starting to modify their tone and turn towards Jabhat al-Nusrah. Who people align with will make a difference in terms of the future shape of jihadism. This is where I think it actually makes an enormous difference, less so in Syria than with respect to the global network. As I said earlier, you might see a fragmentation within Al Qaeda if ISIS is able to succeed despite the fact that it was expelled from Al Qaeda because it could embolden other affiliates similar to what ISIS did to basically flout commands if ISIS is able to succeed.

If, on the other hand, ISIS doesn't succeed, if it gets fragmented and upended by the actions that are now being taken against it, it is going to serve as a stark warning to affiliates, and it will increase further the kind of control that Al Qaeda's core leadership can exert because ISIS will be an example of what happens. So because of that, it is kind of hard to know what to root for, at least for me, but I think that it has tremendous implications, and we really are in uncharted territory right now.

Dr. HECK. Mr. Braniff, do you have a comment?

Mr. BRANIFF. Just very briefly. In social movement theory, there is something called the radical fringe effect, which means that if an organization that is more radical than you pops up to your right or to your left, it makes you look more mainstream. ISIS was kicked out of the Al Qaeda club because it was too violent with respect to violence against other Sunnis. This makes Al Qaeda look less extreme to potential funders, potential recruits. So resource mobilization, I think from the Muslim world, may increase to groups like Al Qaeda or within the Al Qaeda camp. I see it as a potential problem.

Dr. HECK. Dr. Swift.

Dr. SWIFT. Dr. Heck, I just want to underscore a strategic distinction that pops up as a result of ISIS's excommunication as well. In Al Qaeda over the last 4, 5 or 6 years, there has been a big debate over the best way forward in terms of strategy, and the best way to describe that debate is to compare the Zarqawi model, the model that was used in Iraq of intimidation, of control, of violence for the sake of violence versus the al-Wahishi model being used in southern Yemen today, which is about a gradual building out of the base by forming networks of mutual dependency with the indigenous tribal structures.

ISIS has no place in an Al Qaeda that is moving towards the Wahishi model, and I think it is important to note that Wahishi's nomination and acceptance as the number two person in Al Qaeda shows that Al Qaeda is making a—has made a generational change in addition to making a geographical change, it has grown up a little bit more. It is interested in sustaining itself into the future and fighting a long war, not in jihad for its own sake, not in jihad for the sake of the glorification of the individual fighter, and I think that is part of the distinction that is being drawn here. That tension between the Zarqawi model and the Wahishi model is going to be the big debate inside Al Qaeda in the next 5 years.

Dr. HECK. Thank you all very much. Yield back, Mr. Chair.

Mr. THORNBERRY. Thank you. Mr. Gallego.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I—We have long talked about the whole government approach. Frankly, I am kind of surprised that we don't already, you know, distinguish I guess between the different goals on that level. I would think that is fairly basic. But one of the things that I think is more complicated than that is something that happens, it seems to happen and sucks the U.S. in every time, and that is, you know, you go in to do one job and then all of a sudden you start doing 15 jobs, and there is mission creep. And so how would you suggest that we focus solely on the mission at hand and what do you do about the situation where you have all of this mission creep so that it ends up taking a toll and, frankly, at the end of the day you don't really get where you wanted to go? All of you, I guess, or whoever.

Dr. SWIFT. Representative, I may make a stab at that question. Part of the problem comes back to the broader issue of having no strategy and not having criteria that allow us to draw distinctions between our adversaries. Because we haven't had a strategy based on categories and priorities of threat, we have, instead, relied on doctrine, whether it is counterterrorism doctrine or counterinsurgency doctrine, and doctrine is very, very important. It explains how you use your force and your resources in a given theater to achieve the objectives in that theater, but it doesn't answer the broader questions of strategy and policy as to whether that theater is worth the investment and how much of an investment you are willing to make in the theater, so if we want to be able to understand how to limit mission creep, if we want to be able to identify the scope of our engagement in some of these theaters around the world or the way that we assist allies and friends in some of these theaters around the world, we have got to have a very clear and very precise understanding of who our adversary is, how they interact with other groups, and how our interests are implicated by the same.

Mr. GALLEGO. Anybody else?

Mr. GARTENSTEIN-ROSS. I took a stab at this a bit in my opening statement when I talked about second order consequences with our U.S. military commitments. I think even if we have a very clear understanding of who our enemy is as, for example, we did in Somalia when committing to supporting Ethiopian military action in late 2006, sometimes mission creep occurs anyway. Part of the problem is, number one, when ahead of time it is not clear exactly what our goal is. Is it just to displace an enemy? Is it to try to stabilize a state? What if the enemy is then going to come back unless you stabilize the state?

And as you start to ask those questions after making that initial commitment, that can cause a mission naturally to creep. Now one way we have dealt with that, I think, is by moving towards multilateral efforts. For example, in Somalia, even though I think one could accurately say that there has been U.S. mission creep, the U.S. has kept its mission rather limited. It is in a very supporting role as opposed to being at the forefront, while both AMISOM, the African Union Mission in Somalia, and also other local countries have taken the lead on the ground.

Likewise in Mali, I think that is another area where the U.S. made a commitment, but overall it was allied forces as opposed to the United States that was in the forefront. I think that defining the enemy, setting goals are good criteria, but that is not going to solve mission creep in and of itself, and I think that when we make U.S. commitments, we always have to factor in that mission creep is going to be likely at the very outset, and to that extent, especially when something is very marginal to our strategic interests, we should think very carefully about whether we should make that commitment in resources and potentially in lives.

Dr. JONES. I think the danger of mission creep is an important one to consider. I mean, I served for almost a decade in Afghanistan and a few other theaters in U.S. special operations, so saw mission creep up close. I think the mentality here has got to shift, and I think it has begun a little bit to one where we don't have to do it ourselves. We—and this is something several of us have said on this panel. We have got to work much better than we do with partnering nations in the countries we are operating with, and then our allies.

So the French example—so mission creep, we could have gone down a mission creep avenue in Mali. We did not. The French felt particularly threatened, this is their colonial era. They actually went in, the U.S. provided limited intelligence and a few other things, the French provided the vast majority of combat power with the Malian government. That was an example, I think, of the U.S. interests were minimal. It was a Salafi jihadist group or a series of them operating. The threats weren't that serious, and so in that case it was well within reason to support local Malian and local French allies. The problem—and this is where this is going to get a little challenging—is what do we do in countries where there is a very acute threat to American security, national security, active plotting against the U.S. homeland and very little government capacity on the ground? That is the problem we face in Afghanistan. I still think that will be a challenge in countries like that.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. HECK [presiding]. Ms. Walorski.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you, gentlemen, for your insights today. Mr. Braniff, you talked about the attrition strategy, and I was wondering if you could expound on that a little bit, what that strategy entails.

Mr. BRANIFF. Representative Hartzler, thank you for the question. Al Qaeda diagnosed the failures of local and regional jihadist groups in the 1970s, 1980s, and even into the 1990s. These local, more parochial movements tried to overthrow their government or reclaim land that they had lost that was occupied by an outside power, and they failed time after time, and one of the reasons that Al Qaeda came down or Al Qaeda's diagnosis of this problem was that it was because the far enemy, the United States, was supporting the near enemy, whether it was the occupying power, Israel or the Mubarak regime, the Saleh regime in Yemen, with $1.3, $1.4 billion of aid a year, and of course these local and regional movements would fail time after time given that support from the far enemy.

So Al Qaeda reoriented its targeting, or tried to help reorient the targeting and tactical preferences of local, regional groups, including its own groups to target the U.S. and the far enemy. The idea would be that if they could attrit our political, military, and economic will to engage in the Muslim world, we would sever ties ourselves, the American people would demand that we walk away from Syria, from Iraq, from Afghanistan and Pakistan, et cetera, and once the American people demand that we walk away and we don't pour money into those regimes, then the local and regional regimes can be successful, and one emirate at a time, you can start to reclaim some of that land, ultimately wedding those emirates together to reestablish the caliphate.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Very good. What would you consider the number one threat that Al Qaeda poses to us today?

Mr. BRANIFF. The threat that they will attrit our political will to remain engaged in the Muslim world.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Would you agree?

Mr. GARTENSTEIN-ROSS. I think the number one threat they pose is also attrition-based, but I think it is actually economic. When you look at the amount of resources that we have to expend, and I wrote a book in 2011, I should state, called "Bin Laden's Legacy," which looks in great detail at Al Qaeda's economic strategy. I believe bin Laden saw the economy as the U.S.'s center of gravity, that if you can create significant attrition to the U.S. economy, then that can achieve the goals that Mr. Braniff outlined, and if you look at—he gave an interview actually in October 2011, just after the 9/11 attacks, when bombs were falling in Afghanistan to an Al Jazeera reporter, and during that interview, he talked about what he accomplished with the 9/11 attacks. The very first thing he pointed to was their economic impact, and he went on at length talking about lost productivity. He sounded very much like an economist.

And if you look now at our commitments overseas, both direct military outlays and also assistance that we are providing, if you look at security measures, Al Qaeda and allied forces have very much been trying to drive up our costs.

A good example of this is a plot in October of 2010 in which Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula placed parcel bombs aboard two planes, a UPS [United Parcel Service] plane and a FedEx [Federal Express] plane, and it didn't kill anybody. The parcel bombs were actually deactivated, but despite that, they released a commemorative issue of the English-language magazine Inspire all about the plot. The reason why was because in their view, it would drive up our costs. Anwar al-Awlaki, the late AQAP [Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula] leader, not leader of the group, but he was a leader within the organization, had an essay in which he said it leaves you with two options. Either you don't do anything and we try again, or else you spend billions and billions of dollars on protecting global freight, which is, you know, at the center of basically global commerce, so that is what they are targeting, and I think that is the biggest threat.

Mrs. HARTZLER. What policy tools do you think we should be considering right now to rein in and to mitigate any threats from Al Qaeda?

Mr. GARTENSTEIN-ROSS. I think the major thing we need to do to address that threat is ensure efficiency in our counterterrorism efforts. If you look at our early counterterrorism efforts, I think TSA [Transportation Security Administration] is emblematic of the kind of inefficiency we had at that time, where you stocked it with lots and lots of personnel. Initially there was no effort to allocate risks among different passengers.

Now TSA has moved in a different direction. It is trying to even assess relative threats before people get to the gate, and in that way, provide less scrutiny to some people, more to others. I think moving in an efficient direction is something we need to explicitly do in our counterterrorism efforts. It is not always an easy process, it is sometimes controversial, but I believe it is extraordinarily important.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Very good. We have 30 seconds. Does anybody else want to add anything? Dr. Jones.

Dr. JONES. Yeah, let me just make two comments. One is I think one set of policy tools we should not go down, and we did make this mistake over the last 10 years with large numbers of conventional American forces overseas to deal with this. I think there is a role for clandestine forces, I think large numbers of conventional forces has generally been problematic.

The second issue is I think we still have not gotten our hands on how best to consolidate and make efficient a counter-radicalization and ideological strategy overseas. We did that well in the Cold War.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you very much.

Dr. HECK. And now Ms. Walorski.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen. A few of you alluded to the issue of detainee releases in your opening remarks. My question is have prison breaks and detainee releases provided additional manpower to these groups, specifically AQAP? Whoever, it doesn't matter.

Mr. GARTENSTEIN-ROSS. Representative, that is a great question. The answer is absolutely. You know, AQAP actually has its origins in a prison break which gave rise to the new organization, and one of the very significant developments last year is, in July you saw a series of prison breaks. The most significant was in Iraq at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison, which is now being used to house high value terrorists. Over 500 people were broken out of Abu Ghraib, including—we don't have a full accounting of it yet, but it may have included, for example, individuals who were involved in the chemical weapons plot that was broken up in Iraq. Likewise, you had a prison break in Libya and also one in Pakistan, and the amalgamation of these is going to have an impact on the capabilities of this movement.

You can also, one other thing I would add, as I alluded to in my opening statement, not—there were prison breaks and also prisoner releases as part of the early Arab Spring, and that also we can see the effect in terms of reenergizing and creating new movements in places like Tunisia, in Libya, in Egypt where former prisoners play an enormous role in the militant organizations that now dominate that landscape.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Dr. Jones.

Dr. JONES. Yeah, I just want to highlight one area where we should be somewhat concerned. There is now a growing tension between the U.S. and the Afghan governments over the release of prisoners in Afghanistan.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Right.

Dr. JONES. I think this is something to watch, not just for the Al Qaeda individuals, but for those that have served for insurgent groups, particularly the Taliban in Afghanistan. So, yes, several of the witnesses have been correct, we have got individuals that have either escaped from or been released in Egypt, in Tunisia, in Yemen, in Iran actually. I think we have got a potential problem in Afghanistan as well with the downsizing and the release of prisoners.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Let me just ask you this, Dr. Jones, in relation to that: So how easy would it be for a militant who escapes or is released from prison in Yemen to join up with a local AQAP given the activity level there to begin with?

Dr. JONES. If they retain connections relatively easily, when I was in Yemen recently, I would say the networks are fairly easy. If we go back to 2008 and 2009, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab was able to find Anwar al-Awlaki and Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and he wasn't even from Al Qaeda. He had been educated in both the Persian Gulf, and before that, in the U.K. [United Kingdom]. If he can do it, somebody with those network ties definitely can.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Dr. Swift.

Dr. SWIFT. I was just going to say that when I was in Yemen, I found connections to Al Qaeda within 2 days of being on the ground.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Wow.

Dr. SWIFT. And turned down those interviews because it they would have put the people I was with at risk. So it is very easy. I also want to emphasize, though, that when we look at the manpower issues and we look at, you know, the inspiration and all the rest, yet there is a great concern about this caldron of radicalization that people are in in detention and then sending them back, but if you want to look at what is actually driving the increase in manpower in places like Yemen, it is not detainees, it is not drones, those are our domestic political debates. It is a $60-a-month economy and an Al Qaeda organization that shows up and pays between $200 and $400 a month, that is a game changer for young men looking for their way in the world with no education, it is a game changer for people trying to feed a family, so you have to look at those local economic dynamics and not just our own debates here in Washington.

Mrs. WALORSKI. And I appreciate that. And when we talk about solutions, and we talk about, you know, what do we do as policy and we talk about and we partner with all these other countries, what relationship, if any, and how difficult will that be given now the elevated status of the Muslim Brotherhood because of the Arab Spring, and because of the leadership in many of these nations around all of these hot spots? What dynamic does that throw in when it comes to working with these other countries now? Go ahead, Dr. Gartenstein.

Mr. GARTENSTEIN-ROSS. I think it depends from one country to another. In Egypt it was a problem. The Muslim Brotherhood was not generally people who were clearly being involved in international militancy. That helped foster the growth of jihadist networks there. If you look to Tunisia, on the other hand, and Nahda, which is the party that has been in power, the Islamist party which is a part of the global Muslim Brotherhood network, has actually gone to war with Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia. At first they were very hesitant to do so, they were accused by some secularists of aligning with them, but now they are very much committed to fighting them. So I think that is going to be something that is very local, and I point to that in Tunisia, I think it is somewhat dependent upon the culture there. Even the Al-Nahda party, an Islamist party, is a very, the founder of the modern Tunisia state, Habib Bourguiba, was a francophone, he was very much committed to secular ideals, and their background is not really fighting for Islam to dominate the state, but actually fighting much more for a place for Islam within the state, which gives them a very different outlook than Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. So I think I would say it poses a challenge, but locally there is going to be some distinctions between different affiliates of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Okay, thank you. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. HECK. Mr. Nugent.

Mr. NUGENT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate this panel and your insights in regards to what is going on as it relates to Al Qaeda and other affiliates. You know, when you look back over time, and we have got 3 billion people, it took us to 1960 to get 3 billion, we doubled in 40 years, and we expect to double again, and so I guess that to me is how do we deal with those failed nation states because I would think Al Qaeda and others like that fill the void when I think it was mentioned when there are no jobs, when the government can't provide services, how do we deal with that? I mean, through a policy decision that we seem really don't have a direction in this government, you know, how do we look forward to how do we, how we are going to deal with that particular issue? Any one of you I would like to hear.

Mr. GARTENSTEIN-ROSS. I think this is an excellent question, and this is, to me, one of the key national security issues that we are going to be dealing with over the coming decades. When you talk about another doubling in population, there are other consequences to that. Water resources will be strained, food resources will be strained, our energy resources will be strained, you will have a lot of people who don't have jobs particularly as technology develops and you can displace workers more easily, it is going to create a lot of areas where nation states that were once strong begin to fail. You can already see an increase in the number of failed states, failing states, and territories that are ungoverned. Violent non-state actors, not just Al Qaeda, but a full range of violent non-state actors, drug cartels, smuggling organizations, nationalist militant groups, they are going to be a larger part of the landscape.

One thing I would suggest, something that I think we are moving towards actually is you will see more countries that don't look like the Westphalian state, where instead you have multiple centers of power where basically you have a situation of cosovereignty where

violent non-state actors actually control territory in conjunction with the nation state controlling other parts. You can see that already in Libya where you have powerful militias that keep stability in certain areas, you can see this in Somalia where you have not only the government and the African Union forces, but you also have local organizations like Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah, which provide stability elsewhere. I think one thing the U.S. is going to have a serious discussion about over the course of the next decade is how do you deal with violent non-state actors that actually can provide stability and work to help the government and work against the opposition that we want to defeat, and I think that is going to be one of the keys, but it is a very complex question that in my view is really going to shape the future of national security over the next couple of decades.

Mr. NUGENT. Mr. Swift.

Dr. SWIFT. Representative Nugent, we have been fighting on the wrong battlefield, sir. The United States is a strong, successful national state, nation state. The battlefield we really need to be fighting on in a lot of these places where we have states, but they are just sort of fragile facsimiles of a state is society, and society always has a way of governing itself in terms of relationships, in terms of networks, in terms of law, usually the law preexists the formation of the state, economics preexist the formation of a state.

Mr. NUGENT. When you look at a country like Afghanistan, though, that is just the opposite as what occurred; is that correct?

Dr. SWIFT. Representative Nugent, I have spent a fair amount of time sitting jirga in Afghanistan doing local dispute resolution, so I respectfully suggest that there was a law, it just wasn't a national law, and so one of the things we need to be considering when we are moving forward is looking at where the centers of power actually are and looking at where the key economic and social relationships actually are rather than assuming that state structures are going to be the answer.

In some places they are and must be, and ultimately in many places we would like to see something that looks like a western Westphalian state, but if our interest is targeted towards dealing with the threats as we find them in the field, then we have to deal with the field as we find it, even if there is no state there.

Mr. NUGENT. I appreciate that comment. Dr. Jones.

Dr. JONES. Yes, just briefly. If you look at some of the progress fighting against al-Shabaab in Somalia, they have been pushed out of Kismayo, their key port city, they have been pushed out of Mogadishu, the capital. It is a very weak state. You look at World Development Bank indicators, among the weakest states in the world, and how has that been possible? It has actually been possible for a number of reasons, and this is a case where the U.S. has not been engaged to anywhere near the degree it was in Afghanistan or Iraq. It was the leveraging of local tribes, subtribes, militia forces, the help of neighbors like Kenya and Uganda, the help of AMISOM forces and the help of also of the Somali government, so I would support what Dr. Swift just noted and actually would point to Somalia as a useful example where we have seen this, one of Al Qaeda's affiliates actually weakened along these lines.

Mr. NUGENT. Thank you very much, and I yield back.

Dr. HECK. Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to stay on that same train of thought if I could. I have several questions, one of them getting back specifically to the President's comments about Al Qaeda being defeated back in 2012. It seemed to me that maybe he took the death of Osama bin Laden to mean that Al Qaeda had been defeated, and many of us had very strong disagreements with that, that it meant the group would fracture and then there would be multiple fronts in which you would have to take this on because they didn't have a leader, but we got to the question of Libya, and that is where I had gone, and one of the questions that has been talked about is what are the United States goals when we get involved in a situation and what is the framework?

When Qadhafi was taken out of power, did that create more opportunities for Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations in that region of the world, or did it reduce their opportunities for growth?

Dr. JONES. I would just say, empirically, Libya today is a hotbed of jihadist activity, camps in multiple parts of the country from groups not just in Libya, that is Ansar al-Sharia Libya, but Muhammad Jamal has activity, Ansar al-Sharia Tunisia, Belmokhtar's organization, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. The challenge is the overthrow of the Qadhafi government was not followed through with an effort to stabilize the country, both at the national and the substate level, so there has been a major void when you get outside of cities.

Mr. SCOTT. Let me follow up with one question, and I would like for each of you to answer this one when you get a chance. I see it the same way, by the way, Dr. Jones, and one of my key questions is what happened to the weapons that Qadhafi had? And do you believe that obviously the United States and our allies didn't go in and secure those weapons so do we, should we believe that Al Qaeda and the other militants are the ones that ended up with the weapons that Qadhafi had after we, after the United States took him out.

And, by the way, the President made that decision, it did not come before Congress. I do not believe that he would have gotten permission from Congress. That is just speaking from one person. Because I think the questions that we are asking today would have been asked before that action was taken, what happens after he is gone?

Dr. JONES. I haven't done a careful itinerary of where all the weapons in Libya have gone, but I do know some of the weapons caches were raided by jihadist groups. They ended up—for example, the French reported fighting against groups including Harakat Ansar al-Dine in Mali that were using weapons that they verified were secured from Libyan weapons caches, so we do know that they have gone to other theaters, and some have got into the hand of jihadist groups. I just can't give you a percentage of how many got into the hands of these kinds of organizations. Others obviously got into the hands of some of the Libyan militia forces that aren't necessarily jihadist groups that have more parochial views.

Mr. BRANIFF. Representative Scott, I would just add that it might be slightly even more complicated than just Qadhafi's weap-

ons. When these sorts of fronts are opened up, resources often pour in from other places as well, and jihadist organizations have a long history, especially in North Africa, of glomming on to existing jihadist fronts. GIA [Armed Islamic Group] did it in Chechnya, GSPC [Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat] in Bosnia, and then in Iraq where they latched on to other jihadist fronts, siphoned off resources, moving into those fronts for their own purposes, and we should have every expectation that that happened as well in Libya, although that would have happened as long as there was a fight against Qadhafi, not necessarily because of U.S. action.

Mr. GARTENSTEIN-ROSS. Representative Scott, I agree with my colleagues, and I would just add that this is a good example of where we have to understand the world as it will be as opposed to what we would like. There was a lot of early optimism of what revolutions meant, and I think that we should have understood the danger when we didn't fully appreciate the strategic situation in the region of taking action that was going to very much speed it up. When you look at the second order consequences of Libya, it extends not just to regional jihadism, it may extend also to other areas such as Syria. I believe something like that really deserves further investigation so that we can understand what the consequences actually were, sir.

Dr. SWIFT. Representative, I think my colleagues have covered the waterfront here. I would just make two notes. The first is that a lot of these pathways were already open, and they opened during the U.S. intervention in Iraq as groups were moving across North Africa, including through Libya, into the theater in Iraq. So some of these things are preexisting and are not related directly to Qadhafi or to our intervention in Libya.

The second thing my esteemed colleague Daveed has raised a very good point about revolutions generally. Most revolutions fail to consolidate political mobilization and social mobilization. Social mobilization is you get out and fight, political mobilization is you pull together institutions to replace the institutions you have torn down. To the extent that we are going to be involved in any place where a revolution is taking place, we have got to be very careful that the folks that we back have an institutional framework rather than an emphasis, as we see with a lot of Al Qaeda affiliates, on war for its own——

Mr. SCOTT. I am out of time. I think these are questions that all should have been answered prior to the President taking action. Thank you.

Dr. HECK. Mr. Jones.

Mr. JONES OF NORTH CAROLINA. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, and this has been a great panel. Thank you all for being here today to share your knowledge with those of us in the Congress about this very, very important issue. I want to—my question will deal with the bilateral strategic agreement that this Nation is trying to sign with Afghanistan and their leader at the present time, Karzai. I know there is supposed to be an election forthcoming in Afghanistan. The people in my district, the 3rd District of North Carolina, the home of Camp Lejeune Marine base, 60,000 retired military, do not understand the stupidity of this policy in Afghanistan.

On the 30th of January in The Washington Post, and I am sure you probably read it, after billions in U.S. investment, Afghanistan roads are falling apart. I have met with Douglas Wissing, who wrote the book "Funding the Enemy," we did a press conference with him as a matter of fact. John Sopko has testified at the subcommittee level many times about the waste, fraud, and abuse. The New York Times on January the 30th, "U.S. Aid to Afghanistan Flows On Despite Warnings of Misuse." With the knowledge that you have to share with us here today, the Taliban, it is my understanding that a nation like Afghanistan that has fought with foreigners for many, many years, including recently before America the Russians, they, right or wrong, seem to want to have the country that they have, whether we want them to have it based on their culture or not.

My question to you, in behalf of the people that I represent, if the President does complete this agreement that we have roughly 10 more years of America, which is financially broke, and we will soon be debating on the floor of the House an increase in the debt ceiling—the last time I voted for a debt ceiling was in 1998 or -9, and the debt at that time was $5.6 trillion. It is now over $17 trillion. If they raise the debt ceiling, it will either be $19 trillion or $20 trillion, and we will continue to borrow the money from foreign governments to pay Karzai.

My point is that knowing what you know that I don't know, how in the world can our Nation in such dire needs of its own try to reach a 10-year agreement to continue to fund their needs so they can blow it up? In my opinion, the Taliban do not want America's presence. Now, if you get into Al Qaeda and these other jihadist groups, I really would like for you to speak specifically to the sanity of 10 more years of spending money that we do not have with almost no accountability, and as John Sopko said, the waste, fraud, and abuse is worse today than it was 12 years ago.

Would you speak to the sanity of my question and the sanity of a policy of what we are trying to do in Afghanistan? Thank you, and I appreciate if each one could share your opinions.

Dr. JONES. I think that is a very, very good question. I don't see this in terms of black and white. I think the work that John Sopko and his organization has done, the light they have shined is useful. I would just bring in two points. One is I think there has been a fair amount of money that has been wasted, American taxpayer money that has been wasted for the wrong purposes in Afghanistan. But I would just argue that there continue to be threats from some groups to the U.S. homeland, we have had two major groups plotting attacks from there, Al Qaeda and the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, U.S. citizens in the region including the Haqqanis and Lashkar-e-taiba, so I don't think what that means is we walk away. What I would argue is we have got to be a lot smarter in how we spend our money and the size of our force presence there so that we can continue to deal with those threats without the waste and corruption that we have had over the past several years. I do think there are ways to do it.

Dr. HECK. The gentleman's time has expired. Dr. Wenstrup.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think we have come away with a lot of good insight from each of you today, and I appre-

ciate that. You know, I have come away with that if you look like a terrorist and act like a terrorist, you are a terrorist regardless of your affiliation. I don't think there is card-carrying members among the terrorist groups necessarily. But I think what we always have to do is address, you know, what is the threat to the United States, to its citizens, and to our interests, and then address what our relationship is with the nation that is involved, and then their capabilities, and what they are able to do as far as prevention, as far as reaction to an action, and then subsequent detention, and those are the things I think that we need to be focusing on around the world and what those relationships are, and it can vary from country to country. But, you know, after 9/11, I sat there and thought, you know, this is going to take 40 years, we are not just going to change this overnight.

You mentioned a decade. I think it is a generational change that we should be addressing, and I don't see us doing that. I think we had the opportunity in Iraq, I served in Iraq at Abu Ghraib prison, I was there for a year, you know, we made headway with the Iraqi people, and we have lost that. We gained trust, we have lost that. We had a chance to change a generation of thought patterns. Went into a country where, in an area of the world where they think that everything that is wrong is our fault, and then they got to see a different side of us. I don't see us doing anything today that changes the next generation in that part of the world, and I would like you to speak to that and maybe your thoughts on that.

And then also I think it has become clear that we need a well-defined international justice and detention system. We have not done that. We have avoided it. Saying we are going to close Guantanamo doesn't cover it. We need to do it, and we can do it, and it is a different tier. This is not Timothy McVeigh and this is not World War II. We need to address that as a nation, and we haven't done it, and I think we should. Turn it over to whoever wants to speak on those two issues.

Mr. GARTENSTEIN-ROSS. Sure, Representative Wenstrup, I think that the detention point I would like to speak to briefly. I think that is a very important point. What we are dealing with is a class of actors that don't fit within the Geneva Conventions. The Geneva Conventions explicitly anticipate state-to-state warfare, and in the case of violent non-state actors, you have two specific problems. One is that when you anticipate detention until the cessation of hostilities, which is what the Geneva Conventions anticipate, you don't know when a war is going to end, but when it is state-to-state, you are pretty sure it is not going to be 10 years, 15 years, 40 years, while in the case of violent non-state actors it may well be.

The second thing is that in state-to-state conflict, the enemy wears a uniform. In this case the enemy does not. The U.S. has made some progress working with the International Committee on the Red Cross to try to refine its own detention policies, but I strongly agree with you, strongly that the need for detention policy is not going to go away because in many cases, members of the opposing force have committed no crime, but they are still members of the opposing force. Therefore, the criminal justice system does not properly deal with them. If we are going to be in wars, we or

our allies need a detention policy, and I think this is, as you said, best worked out at an international level in order to reduce the kind of criticism that what you are doing is unlawful, but the point is that a policy is 100 percent needed, sir.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you. Any comments on changing the next generation?

Dr. JONES. Yeah, I have got a few. One is when we have committed American money and forces to areas that are still dealing with challenges, the challenges we are talking about here, I think it is very important that we not abandon those places. I think that is a message that if we do abandon, we send a very dangerous message. I would also say when we make a commitment as a nation, when the U.S. Government makes a commitment along these lines, we must adhere to it. I have concerns about the redrawing of red lines that have repeatedly been moved and what that has done to U.S. standing in various parts of the world, and I would just finally argue that the groups we are talking about here aren't just Al Qaeda, but the groups that pose a threat to the United States are extremist in nature, and I think we have got to continue to work both at home and abroad to demonstrate and to argue that those organizations, those networks, and those individuals are an extreme version of Islam, they are an abomination of the religion, and they are generally not supported in those populations. Until that happens, I think we won't see an end to this.

Mr. BRANIFF. Just very briefly that Al Qaeda's affiliated organizations are giving us a lot of ammunition to use against them in the body counts that they are generating year after year, and we should be using that.

Dr. HECK. The gentleman's time has expired. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the esteemed members of our panel for your testimony this afternoon. I think certainly the takeaway is that global jihadism, regardless of the name of the actor or the group, will remain both a short-term and a long-term threat both to our Nation and our national interests, and that this administration and this Congress should be mindful of the growing decentralization and proliferation as we evaluate our policies. Again, thank you very much for being here this morning. The meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:06 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

February 4, 2014

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

FEBRUARY 4, 2014

Opening Statement of Hon. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, Chairman, Committee on Armed Services

HEARING ON:

State of Al Qaeda, Its Affiliates, and Associated Groups: View from Outside Experts

February 4, 2014

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. The committee meets to receive testimony on the state of Al Qaeda from outside experts. Our witnesses include Dr. Seth Jones, Mr. William Braniff, Mr. Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, and Dr. Christopher Swift. Gentlemen, thank you for joining us today.

The committee has conducted several classified briefings on this topic. However, today is an opportunity to build upon that knowledge in an open forum with these thoughtful and highly-respected experts.

Al Qaeda declared war on the United States and then successfully attacked us multiple times in 1998 and 2000, culminating with the horrific attack on 9/11. Since then, Al Qaeda, its affiliates, and associated groups have maintained their global presence, increased their safe havens, and expanded their influence. They continue to plot attacks against our homeland, and our allies and partners around the globe.

In an op-ed just a few weeks ago, Peter Bergen asserted that: "From … Aleppo in western Syria to … Fallujah in central Iraq, Al Qaeda now controls territory that stretches more than 400 miles across the heart of the Middle East … Indeed, Al Qaeda appears to control more territory in the Arab world than it has done at any time in its history." Similarly, as several of your written statements conclude, al-Qaeda appears to be a growing threat. These trends are disturbing and lie in stark contrast to the President's wishful narrative that Al Qaeda is "on a path to defeat."

I applauded the President's decision to take out Osama bin Laden. However, this tactical success did not end what former CENTCOM commander General John Abizaid called, "The Long War" against Al Qaeda. Nonetheless, President Obama has promised to revise and ultimately repeal the 2001 Authorization for the Use of

Military Force, which is the very authority that underpins our operations against these groups.

What the President seems to ignore is that the enemy gets a vote. While the President seeks an end to the war on terrorism and is not providing the leadership necessary for our efforts in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda seeks a continued war against the United States and the West. This is the reality, and this is what our policy and strategy must address. To do otherwise puts the United States and our interests across the globe at dire risk. We look forward to your thoughts on how this committee can best shape our nation's policies, strategies, and capabilities to address "the long war" that Al Qaeda continues to fight.

Statement of Ranking Member Adam Smith

Hearing on "State of Al Qaeda, Its Affiliates, and Associated Groups: View from Outside Experts"

February 4, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing, and I would like to thank each of our witnesses for appearing before us today. This is an important subject, and one to which I believe we will be returning many times in the near future.

The attacks of September 11, 2001, brought home to Americans the threat posed by Al Qaeda, and Congress reacted by swiftly passing an Authorization for the Use of Military Force. U.S. forces invaded Afghanistan, toppling the Taliban regime and killing and capturing many Al Qaeda fighters. We're holding this hearing more than 12 years after those attacks by Al Qaeda.

We have had some great successes in this war—Al Qaeda no longer has the freedom to train thousands of fighters in Afghan safe havens, Osama bin Laden has been killed, and much of the core leadership of Al Qaeda has been captured or killed. If President Karzai will sign the Bilateral Security Agreement he negotiated with the Obama Administration, Afghanistan will likely have a future as a stable and secure country, able to prevent Al Qaeda from basing there again—this would be a strategic win for all of us. However, at the same time as we have been successfully eliminating the original organization, Al Qaeda has morphed into new groups and metastasized in other places. We cannot lose sight of this and must be vigilant in our efforts to ensure that the group, whether core Al Qaeda or an associated force, cannot threaten the United States or its people.

In the minds of many around the world and this country, the Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) that Congress passed back in 2001 has become linked to the war in Afghanistan. Some believe that as we bring our troop levels down and end our involvement in active combat there, that we will need to rethink the AUMF and how we proceed. As Al Qaeda changes, the plain text of the AUMF, authorizing a war against those "…who planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, or harbored

such organizations or persons…" may not cover those organizations who could threaten us in the future. So this may be an appropriate time to start to think about how to proceed in the future.

I do not ask our witnesses today to propose alternative legislation. It is too early for that. But, I hope that they can help us to consider objective criteria with which we may identify those groups or individuals with whom we need to be concerned? How do we determine whether certain persons or organizations are in fact persons or organizations that we must combat—through their devotion to an ideology, by their belligerent actions, or according to other factors? How many of these groups have global foci that incite direct attacks on the United States? How many have local foci that involve attacks on regional countries, and when do we need to be concerned about those with a more local focus?

When should the United States military be directly involved and when are we better served to rely on alternative means for providing security? When should we rely on partner nations to take action? For all the worry about the stability of Iraq, the Iraqi government appears to be taking action against the Al Qaeda offshoot, ISIS, with weapons supplied by us—is that the model for the future? Or does the combination of U.S. direct action, action by regional countries, UN peacekeepers, and some old fashioned "nation building" that's been the preferred approach in Somalia represent the future? Does the United States need a replacement for the AUMF or can we rely on covert actions, the right of "customary self defense", law enforcement methods, partners, or a combination thereof, to deal with threats going forward? Washington is notoriously bad at focusing on more than one threat at a time, so how do we balance the focus on Al Qaeda with other potential threats? I hope our witnesses will help us think through these questions.

Again, Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing.

Testimony

Back to the Future

The Resurgence of Salafi-Jihadists

Seth G. Jones

RAND Office of External Affairs

CT-405

February 2014

Testimony presented before the House Armed Services Committee on February 4, 2014

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1776 Main Street, P.O. Box 2138, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138
1200 South Hayes Street, Arlington, VA 22202-5050
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Seth G. Jones[1]
The RAND Corporation

Back to the Future:
The Resurgence of Salafi-Jihadists[2]

Before the Committee on Armed Services
United States House of Representatives

February 4, 2014

Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify at this hearing, "The State of Al-Qaeda, its Affiliates, and Associated Groups."

There is considerable disagreement about the strength and composition of al Qa'ida and the broader milieu of Salafi-jihadist groups. Some argue that al Qa'ida – especially core al Qa'ida – has been severely weakened, and there is no longer a major threat to the United States from terrorist groups.[3] According to University of Chicago professor John Mearsheimer: "Terrorism – most of it arising from domestic groups – was a much bigger problem in the United States during the 1970s than it has been since the Twin Towers were toppled."[4] Former CIA operations officer Marc Sageman concludes that "al Qaeda is no longer seen as an existential threat to the West."[5] Some contend that the most acute threat to the United States comes from home grown terrorists.[6] Others maintain that al Qa'ida is resilient and remains a serious threat to the United States.[7] Finally, some claim that while the al Qa'ida organization established by Osama bin Laden is in decline, "al Qa'idism" – a decentralized amalgam of freelance extremist groups – is far from dead.[8]

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[1] The opinions and conclusions expressed in this testimony are the author's alone and should not be interpreted as representing those of RAND or any of the sponsors of its research. This product is part of the RAND Corporation testimony series. RAND testimonies record testimony presented by RAND associates to federal, state, or local legislative committees; government-appointed commissions and panels; and private review and oversight bodies. The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors.
[2] This testimony is available for free download at http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT405.html.
[3] See, for example, John Mueller and Mark G. Stewart, *Terror, Security, and Money: Balancing the Risks, Benefits, and Costs of Homeland Security* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); John J. Mearsheimer, "America Unhinged," *National Interest*, January / February 2014, pp. 9-30. On the weakness of core al Qa'ida see James R. Clapper, *Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community* (Washington, DC: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, March 2013).
[4] Mearsheimer, "America Unhinged," p. 12.
[5] Marc Sageman, "The Stagnation of Research on Terrorism," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 30, 2013. On the response to Sageman, see John Horgan and Jessica Stern, "Terrorism Research Has Not Stagnated," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 8, 2013.
[6] Sageman, "The Stagnation of Research on Terrorism"; Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).
[7] Bruce Hoffman, "Al Qaeda's Uncertain Future," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol. 36, 2013, pp. 635-653; Bruce Riedel, "Al Qaeda is Back," *The Daily Beast*, July 26, 2013.
[8] Andrew Liepman and Philip Mudd, "Al Qaeda is Down. Al Qaedism Isn't," *CNN*, January 6, 2014. Accessed on January 12, 2014 at http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2014/01/06/al-qaeda-is-down-al-qaedism-isnt/.

Which of these arguments is right? This testimony makes several arguments. First, there has been an *increase* in the number of Salafi-jihadist groups and followers over the past several years, particularly in North Africa and the Levant. Examples include groups operating in such countries as Tunisia, Algeria, Mali, Libya, Egypt (including the Sinai), Lebanon, and Syria. There has also been an *increase* in the number of attacks perpetrated by al Qa'ida and its affiliates. Second, however, the broader Salafi-jihadist movement has become more decentralized. While there are some similarities among Salafi-jihadists, there are also substantial differences. Salafi-jihadist leaders and groups often disagree about the size and global nature of their desired emirate, whether to attack Shi'a, and the legitimacy of striking civilian targets. Third, only some of these groups are currently targeting the U.S. homeland and its interests overseas like U.S. embassies and its citizens. The most concerning are al Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and inspired individuals like the 2013 Boston Marathon bombers, though the growing number of Western fighters traveling to Syria to fight against the Assad government presents a potential threat.

The rest of this testimony is divided into four sections. The first examines the organizational structure and capabilities of al Qa'ida and other Salafi-jihadist groups. The second section explores reasons for the resurgence of Salafi-jihadists. The third section outlines threats to the U.S. homeland and U.S. interests overseas. And the fourth provides general policy recommendations.

The Organization and Capabilities of Salafi-Jihadists

The unfortunate tendency among some journalists and pundits to lump all Islamic terrorists as "al Qa'ida" has clouded a proper assessment of the movement. Consequently, I will focus on al Qa'ida and other Salafi-jihadists. Used in this context, the term Salafi-jihadists refers to individuals and groups – including al Qa'ida – that meet two criteria. First, they emphasize the importance of returning to a "pure" Islam, that of the Salaf, the pious ancestors. Second, they believe that violent jihad is *fard 'ayn* (a personal religious duty).[9] Salafi-jihadists consider violent jihad a permanent and individual duty.[10] Many Salafists are opposed to armed jihad and advocate the *da'wa* or "call" to Islam through proselytizing and preaching Islam. But Salafi-jihadists like al Qa'ida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri support both Salafism *and* armed jihad.[11]

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[9] See, for example, bin Laden's fatwa published in the London newspaper *Al-Quds al-'Arabi* in February 1998, which noted that "to kill Americans is a personal duty for all Muslims." The text can be found at: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/military/jan-june98/fatwa_1998.html.

[10] Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and the Pharaoh*, translated by John Rothschild (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993); Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 41.

[11] On Salafi-jihadists, for example, Alain Grignard, "La littérature politique du GIA, des origines à Djamal Zitoun - Esquisse d'une analyse," in F. Dassetto, ed., *Facettes de l'Islam belge* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Academia-Bruylant, 2001). Also see Assaf Moghadam, "The Salafi-Jihad as a Religious Ideology," *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (February 2008), pp. 14-16.

Today, this movement is increasingly decentralized among four tiers: (1) core al Qa'ida in Pakistan, led by Ayman al-Zawahiri; (2) a half dozen formal affiliates that have sworn allegiance to core al Qa'ida (located in Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, and North Africa); (3) a panoply of Salafi-jihadist groups that have not sworn allegiance to al Qa'ida, but are committed to establishing an extremist Islamic emirate; and (4) inspired individuals and networks.

1. Core Al Qa'ida: The first tier includes the organization's leaders, most of whom are based in Pakistan. Al Qa'ida leaders refer to this broader area as Khurasan, a historical reference to the territory that once included Persia, Central Asia, Afghanistan, and parts of northwestern Pakistan during the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates.[12] Core al Qa'ida is led by Ayman al-Zawahiri. There are still a range of Americans in core al Qa'ida (such as Adam Gadahn) and operatives that have lived in America (such as Adnan el Shukrijumah), who are committed to targeting the United States. Al Qa'ida's senior leadership retains some oversight of the affiliates and, when necessary, may attempt to adjudicate disputes among affiliates or provide strategic guidance. But Zawahiri's challenges with the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) in 2013 and 2014 highlight core al Qa'ida's limitations in enforcing its judgments. Around July 2013, Zawahiri took an unprecedented step by appointing Nasir al-Wuhayshi, the emir of AQAP, as his deputy, elevating the importance of Yemen for core al Qa'ida.

2. Affiliated Groups: The next tier includes affiliated groups that have become formal branches of al Qa'ida. What distinguishes "affiliates" from other types of Salafi-jihadist groups is the decision by their leaders to swear bay'at (allegiance) to al Qa'ida leaders in Pakistan. These organizations include ISIS based in Iraq, AQAP based in Yemen, al Shabaab based in Somalia, al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) based in Algeria and neighboring countries, and Jabhat al-Nusrah based in Syria. All of the groups became formal affiliates within the past decade: ISIS in 2004, initially as al Qa'ida in Iraq; AQIM in 2006; AQAP in 2009; al Shabaab in 2012; and Jabhat al-Nusrah in 2013 after breaking away from ISIS.[13]

There has been an increase in the number of attacks from al Qa'ida and its affiliates. Most of these attacks have occurred in "near enemy" countries and against local targets. A further breakdown of the data shows that violence levels are highest in Yemen (from AQAP), Somalia (from al Shabaab), Iraq (from ISIS), and Syria (from ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusrah). These attacks include a mixture of suicide attacks, complex attacks using multiple individuals and cells, assassinations, and various types of improvised explosive devices against local government targets and civilians.[14]

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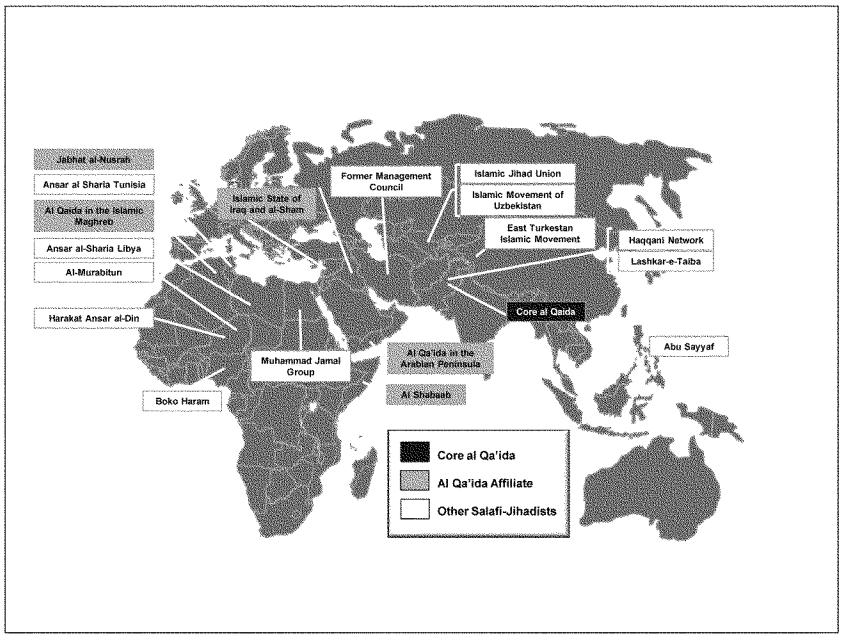
[12] See, for example, letter from Ayman al-Zawahiri to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani, May 2013.

[13] These dates refer to the year in which the affiliate publicly announced that their emirs had sworn bay'at to al Qa'ida central leaders.

[14] Data are from the Global Terrorism Database at the University of Maryland's National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). Accessed on January 12, 2014, at www.start.umd.edu/gtd/.

3. Allied Groups: Next are a series of allied Salafi-jihadist groups whose leaders have not sworn bay'at to core al Qa'ida in Pakistan. This arrangement allows these Salafi-jihadist groups to remain independent and pursue their own goals, but to work with al Qa'ida for specific operations or training purposes when their interests converge. There are a substantial number of allied Salafi-jihadist groups across Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Caucasus. Perhaps most concerning, there has been an increase in the number, size, and activity of Salafi-jihadist groups in two areas: North Africa and the Levant. Examples include the Mohammad Jamal Network (Egypt), Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (Egypt), Mujahideen Shura Council (Egypt), Ansar al-Sharia Libya (Libya), al-Murabitun (Algeria and other countries), Ansar al-Sharia Tunisia (Tunisia), Harakat Ansar al-Din (Mali), and Boko Haram (Nigeria).

Figure 1: Example of Core Al Qa'ida, Affiliates, and Other Salafi-Jihadist Groups



4. Inspired Individuals and Networks: The last tier includes those individuals and networks with no direct contact to core al Qa'ida, but who are inspired by the al Qa'ida cause and outraged by perceived oppression of Muslims in Afghanistan, Chechnya, Palestinian territory, and other countries. They tend to be motivated by a hatred of the West and its allied regimes in the Middle East. Without direct support,

these individuals and networks tend to be amateurish, though they can occasionally be lethal. Tamerlan Tsarnaev, the ringleader of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings, was motivated by the extremist preaching of now-deceased AQAP operative Anwar al-Awlaki, among others. Tsarnaev and his brother also used al Qa'ida propaganda materials, including an article from *Inspire* magazine, as guides to build their bombs.[15] But many other plots were rudimentary, and their half-baked plans would have been difficult to execute.

Why a Resurgence?

The rise in Salafi-jihadists groups has likely been caused by two factors. One is the growing weakness of governments across Africa and the Middle East, which has created an opportunity for Salafi-jihadist groups to secure a foothold. The logic is straightforward: weak governments have difficulty establishing law and order, which permits militant groups and other sub-state actors to fill the vacuum.[16]

Governance, as used here, is defined as the set of institutions by which authority in a country is exercised.[17] It includes the ability to establish law and order, effectively manage resources, and implement sound policies. A large body of quantitative evidence suggests that weak and ineffective governance is critical to the onset of sub-state actors – including insurgent and terrorist groups. One study, for example, analyzed 161 cases over a 54-year period and found that financially, organizationally, and politically weak central governments render insurgencies more feasible and attractive due to weak local policing or inept counterinsurgency practices.[18] The reverse is also true: strong governance decreases the probability of insurgency. In looking at 151 cases over a 54-year period, one study found that effective governance is critical to prevent insurgencies, arguing that success requires the "provision of temporary security, the building of new institutions capable of resolving future conflicts peaceably, and an economy capable of offering civilian employment to former soldiers and material progress to future citizens."[19] In addition, strong governmental capacity is a negative and significant predictor of civil war, and between 1816 and 1997 "effective bureaucratic and political systems reduced the rate of civil war activity."[20]

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[15] "Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom," *Inspire*, Issue 1, Summer 1431 (2010), pp. 31-40.
[16] Ann Hironaka, *Neverending Wars: The International Community, Weak States, and the Perpetuation of Civil War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005); James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 97, No. 1 (February 2003), pp. 75-90. On the importance of building institutions, see Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
[17] World Bank, *Governance Matters 2006: Worldwide Governance Indicators* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2006), p. 2.
[18] Fearon and Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," pp. 75-76.
[19] Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 5.
[20] Hironaka, *Neverending Wars*, p. 45.

There are good reasons to believe that weak governance has contributed to the rise of Salafi-jihadist groups. Since 2010, a year before the Arab uprisings, there has been a significant weakening of governance across the Middle East and North Africa, according to World Bank data. Levels of political stability dropped by 17 percent from 2010 to 2012, government effectiveness by 10 percent, rule of law by 6 percent, and control of corruption by 6 percent across the Middle East and North Africa.[21] Of particular concern, governance deteriorated in numerous countries that saw a rise in Salafi-jihadist groups. Take rule of law, which measures the extent to which agents have confidence in – and abide by – the rules of society, as well as the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence. Between 2010 and 2012, the government's ability to establish a rule of law declined by 21 percent in Egypt, 31 percent in Libya, 25 percent in Mali, 20 percent in Niger, 17 percent in Nigeria, 61 percent in Syria, and 39 percent in Yemen – according to World Bank data. To make matters worse, most of the countries had low levels of rule of law even before this drop.[22] This decline appears to be, in part, a consequence of the Arab uprisings.

A second factor is the spread of Salafi-jihadist militant networks within the Middle East and Africa. Operatives who have spent time training at al Qa'ida and other Salafi-jihadist camps or fighting in countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya have moved to new countries in North Africa and the Levant and established Salafi-jihadist groups.

Individuals that spend time at training camps generally establish trusted social relationships.[23] Training camps provide a unique environment for terrorists to pray together, reinforcing their ideological views; share meals; train together in classrooms, at shooting ranges, and through physical conditioning; socialize with each other during breaks; and, after training is completed, sometimes fight together. Camps create and reinforce a shared religious identity and strategic culture dedicated to overthrowing infidel regimes.[24] For example, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who attempted to blow up an airplane landing in Detroit on Christmas Day 2009, attended an al Qa'ida training camp in the Shabwah region of Yemen. There were over two-dozen fighters who dug trenches, crawled through barbed wire, and practiced tactical movements such as clearing buildings. The daily routine at the training camp consisted of rising early, praying, reading the Qur'an, completing warm-up drills, and conducting tactical training. After lunch, the students completed additional tactical training drills and stayed in tents at night.[25] The social

[21] World Bank, Worldwide Governance Indicators Data Set. Accessed December 16, 2013.
[22] World Bank, Worldwide Governance Indicators Data Set. Accessed December 16, 2013.
[23] Thomas Hegghammer, "The Recruiter's Dilemma: Signaling and Rebel Recruitment Tactics," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (2012), pp. 3-16; Max Abrahms, "What Terrorists Really Want: Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy," *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Spring 2008), pp. 100-101.
[24] On identity and strategic culture see, for example, Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Peter J. Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
[25] See, for example, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab Comments, Training Video of Abdulmutallab, Al Malahim Media Foundation (al Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula), Released in 2010.

interaction during daily routines experienced by individuals like Abdulmutallab creates a strong bond among operatives.

While there is limited data on foreign fighter flows, there is some evidence that individuals from al Qa'ida and other Salafi-jihadist camps and battle fronts have migrated to the Middle East and North Africa.[26] In Syria, for example, Jabhat al-Nusrah leaders, including Abu Mohammed al-Jawlani, were veterans of the Iraq war and members of al Qa'ida in Iraq. Mohktar Belmokhtar, the emir of Al-Murabitun, split off from AQIM in 2012 and had spent time in al Qa'ida training camps in Africa in the 1990s. In Egypt, Muhammad Jamal trained in Afghanistan in the late 1980s with al Qa'ida, where he learned to make bombs.[27] In Tunisia, Ansar al-Sharia's leader, Sayfallah Ben Hassine, spent considerable time at training camps in Afghanistan in the late 1990s and early 2000s, where he apparently met Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri.[28]

The Threat to the United States

Not all Salafi-jihadist groups present a direct threat to the U.S. homeland. In the near term, AQAP likely presents the most immediate threat, along with inspired networks and individuals like the Tsarnaev brothers that perpetrated the April 2013 Boston Marathon bombings. The growth in social media and the terrorist use of chat rooms, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and other sites has facilitated radicalization inside the United States. While al Qa'ida leaders did not organize the Boston attacks, they played a key role by making available the propaganda material and bomb-making instructions utilized by the Tsarnaevs.

Other affiliates do not appear to pose an immediate threat to the U.S. homeland. AQIM is focused on overthrowing regimes in North Africa, including Algeria. Al Shabaab's objectives are largely parochial, and it has conducted attacks in Somalia and the region. But al Shabaab possesses a competent external operations capability to strike targets outside of Somalia. The Westgate Mall attack was well-planned and well-executed, and involved sophisticated intelligence collection, surveillance, and reconnaissance of the target. These skills could be used for other types of attacks directly targeting the United States and its

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[26] On the transnational movement of terrorists see, for example, Thomas Hegghammer, "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Explaining Variation in Western Jihadists' Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 107, No. 1, February 2013, pp. 1-15; Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jihad," *International Security*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 2011, pp. 53–94.
[27] United Nations, *Security Council Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee Adds Two Entries to Its Sanctions List* (New York: United Nations, October 2013). Available at: http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2013/sc11154.doc.htm
[28] U.S. Department of Defense, JTF-GTMO-CDR, MEMORANDUM FOR Commander, United States Southern Command, SUBJECT: Recommendation for Continued Detention Under DoD Control (CD) for Guantanamo Detainee, ISN US9TS-000510DP, September 15, 2008; U.S. Department of Defense, JTF-GTMO-CDR, MEMORANDUM FOR Commander, United States Southern Command, SUBJECT: Recommendation for Continued Detention Under DoD Control (CD) for Guantanamo Detainee, ISN US9TS-000502DP, June 22, 2007; Haim Malka and William Lawrence, *Jihadi-Salafism's Next Generation* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 2013).

citizens. In addition, Americans from cities like Phoenix and Minneapolis have traveled to Somalia over the past several years to fight with al Shabaab. Between 2007 and 2010, more than 40 Americans joined al Shabaab, making the United States a primary exporter of Western fighters to the al Qa'ida-affiliated group.[29]And ISIS and Jahbat al-Nusrah are primarily interested in establishing Islamic emirates in Iraq, Syria, and the broader region.

Still, several Salafi-jihadist groups pose a threat to the United States overseas. Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia, for instance, has planned attacks against U.S. diplomats and infrastructure in Tunis, including the U.S. embassy. Operatives from Ansar al-Sharia Libya, the Muhammad Jamal Network, and AQIM were involved in the 2012 attack that killed U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens. Several Salafi-jihadist groups pose a threat to the forthcoming Sochi Winter Olympics, including Imirat Kavkaz based out of the North Caucasus and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

Other groups, like Jabhat al-Nusrah, could be a long-term threat. Jabhat al-Nusrah's access to foreign fighters, external network in Europe and other areas, and bomb-making expertise suggest that it may already have the capability to plan and support attacks against the West. There appears to be a growing contingent of foreign fighters – perhaps several thousand – traveling to Syria to fight in the war. A substantial portion of these fighters are coming from the region, including Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq. Some have come from Chechnya. Others have apparently come from Afghanistan and Pakistan. But a significant number also appear to be coming from the West, especially from Belgium, France, and Sweden. Extremists have traveled to Syria from other European countries. According to Spanish officials, for example, a network based in Spain and Morocco sent approximately two dozen fighters to Jabhat al-Nusrah over the past year. It is unclear how many of these fighters have returned to the West, but some have apparently returned to Germany, Denmark, Spain, and Norway among others. In October 2012, authorities in Kosovo arrested the extremist Shurki Aliu, who had traveled from Syria to Kosovo and was involved in recruiting and providing material to Syrian opposition groups. A small number of Americans – roughly one hundred – have apparently traveled to Syria to support the Syrian opposition.[30]

It is currently unclear whether most of these fighters will remain in Syria over the long run, move to other war zones such as North Africa, or return to the West. And even if some return, it is uncertain whether they will become involved in terrorist plots, focus on recruiting and fundraising, or become disillusioned with terrorism. Still, foreign fighters have historically been agents of instability. They can affect the conflicts they join, as they did in post-2003 Iraq by promoting sectarian violence and indiscriminate tactics. Perhaps more important, foreign fighter mobilizations empower transnational terrorist groups such as al Qa'ida, because volunteering for war is the principal stepping-stone for individual involvement in

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

[30] Author interview with government officials from Europe and the Middle East, December 2013. This "support" ranges from fighting to assisting non-governmental organizations aiding the Syrian opposition.

more extreme forms of militancy. When Muslims in the West radicalize, they usually do not plot attacks in their home country right away, but travel to a war zone first. A majority of al Qa'ida operatives began their militant careers as war volunteers, and most transnational jihadi groups today are by-products of foreign fighter mobilizations.[31]

Key Steps

Based on these developments, U.S. policymakers should be concerned about the number, size, and activity of al Qa'ida and other Salafi-jihadist groups. Some of these groups pose a direct threat to the U.S. homeland, embassies, and citizens overseas, while others are currently targeting local regimes.

Yet Salafi-jihadist groups are vulnerable for several reasons. First, the decentralized structure of Salafi-jihadist groups creates potential weaknesses. Decentralized groups are more likely to face principal-agent problems since it is more difficult to detect and discipline operatives engaged in shirking or defection. In addition, there is a higher possibility of division with decentralized groups, making it easier for government agencies to play groups against each other and sow discord among them. The 2014 fighting between Jabhat al-Nusrah and ISIS provides recent evidence. Second, there is little popular support for al Qa'ida and other Salafi-jihadist groups, including in North Africa and the Levant. As Ayman al-Zawahiri explained in his *General Guidelines for Jihad*, an important goal of the movement is "to create awareness in the Ummah regarding the threat posed by the Crusader onslaught."[32] But for Salafi-jihadists like Zawahiri, their ummah is small. Third, governance appears to be strengthening in some countries. One example is Somalia. The Transitional Federal Government has reduced al Shabaab's control of territory to portions of southern Somalia with support from Kenya, Uganda, the African Union Mission in Somalia, pro-government militias, and Western countries like the United States.

Still, an effective U.S. strategy needs to begin with an honest assessment of the problem. Three steps can help weaken al Qa'ida in the future.

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[31] Thomas Hegghammer, "The Rise of Muslim Foreign Fighters: Islam and the Globalization of Jihad," *International Security*, Vol. 35, No. 3, Winter 2010/11, pp. 53-94.
[32] Ayman al-Zawahiri, "General Guidelines for Jihad," Al-Sahab Media Establishment, 2013.

The first is implementing a robust strategy that focuses on covert intelligence, law enforcement, special operations, and diplomatic activity to target Salafi-jihadist groups plotting attacks against the United States, as well as the financial and logistical networks of these groups. The United States should refrain from deploying large numbers of conventional forces to Muslim countries, which is likely to radicalize local populations. In cases where al Qa'ida and other Salafi-jihadists are *already* plotting attacks against the U.S. homeland or U.S. interests overseas, a failure to become directly engaged could severely jeopardize U.S. national security. The risks of not being engaged would be serious. Americans could die and there would likely be substantial political costs if Americans concluded that U.S. policymakers did not do enough to prevent an attack.

The second step is helping local governments establish basic law and order as a bulwark against al Qa'ida and other extremists. In cases where al Qa'ida and other Salafi-jihadists do not pose a significant threat to the homeland or U.S. interests overseas, the United States should support local governments and allies as they take the lead. A good example is the French-led operation in Mali in 2013. In these cases, the United States may refrain from directly targeting terrorists but still deploy small numbers of U.S. military forces, intelligence operatives, diplomats, and other government personnel to train and equip local security forces, collect intelligence, and undermine terrorist financing.

The third is aggressively undermining al Qa'ida's extremist ideology. In 1999, the State Department disbanded the U.S. Information Agency, which played a prominent role in countering Soviet ideology during the Cold War. Today, no U.S. government agency has the lead role for countering the ideology of al Qa'ida and its broader movement. But an effective campaign has to be done carefully, covertly, and led by credible Muslims in these countries. In the end, the struggle against the al Qa'ida movement will be long – measured in decades, not months or years. Much like the Cold War, it is also predominantly an ideological struggle. As Ayman al-Zawahiri wrote in 2012: "The strength of al-Qa'ida … is derived from the message it spreads to the ummah and the downtrodden all around the globe."[33] Other Salafi-jihadist leaders agree. AQAP leader Nasir al-Wahishi remarked: "Our most important weapon is the media. You

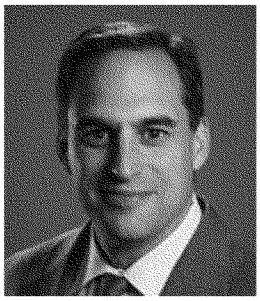
[33] Ayman al-Zawahiri, "Truth Has Come and Falsehood Has Perished," Ansar al-Mujahidin Network, September 2012.

are kindly requested to put in place the right people, who can express themselves well and convey our message."[34]

Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Committee, thank you again for organizing this hearing. I look forward to your questions.

[34] Letter from Nasir al-Wahishi to Emir of Al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb, May 21, 2012, Associated Press collection. The document is part of a cache of documents that the Associated Press found on the floor in a building occupied by al Qa'ida fighters in Mali.

Seth G. Jones



Associate Director, International Security and Defense Policy Center
Washington Office

Education

Ph.D. and M.A. in political science, University of Chicago; A.B., Bowdoin College

Biography

Seth G. Jones is associate director of the International Security and Defense Policy Center at the RAND Corporation, as well as an adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins University's School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS). He served as the representative for the commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations. Before that, he served as a plans officer and advisor to the commanding general, U.S. Special Operations Forces, in Afghanistan (Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command–Afghanistan).

Jones specializes in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, including a focus on Afghanistan, Pakistan, and al Qa'ida. He is the author of *Hunting in the Shadows: The Pursuit of al Qa'ida after 9/11* (W.W. Norton, 2012) and *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (W. W. Norton), which won the 2010 Council on Foreign Relations Silver Medal for Best Book of the Year. He is also the author of *The Rise of European Security Cooperation* (Cambridge University Press, 2007). Jones has published articles in a range of journals, such as *Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy,* and *International Security*, as well as in such newspapers and magazines as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal*.

Among his many RAND publications are *Afghanistan's Local War* (2010), *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan* (2010), *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering Al Qa'ida* (2009), and *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan* (2008). Jones is also coauthor of RAND's series of reports on nation-building.

Jones received his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

Previous Positions

Representative for the commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations; Plans officer and advisor to the commanding general, U.S. Special Operations Forces, in Afghanistan

Recent Projects

- Counterterrorism efforts against al Qa'ida
- How terrorist groups end
- Counterinsurgency operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan
- Best practices in nation-building

Selected Publications

Seth G. Jones "Al Qaeda in Afghanistan," in Bruce Hoffman and Fernando Reinares, *Leader-Led Jihad*, Columbia University Press (forthcoming)

Seth G. Jones, "The False Promise of the Arab Uprisings," *Foreign Affairs*, 92(1), 2013

Seth G. Jones, *Hunting in the Shadows: The Pursuit of al Qa'ida after 9/11*, W.W. Norton, 2012

Seth G. Jones, "Think Again: Al Qaeda," *Foreign Policy*, (193), 2012

Seth G. Jones, *Afghanistan's Local War: Building Local Defense Forces*, RAND (MG-1002-MCIA), 2010

Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan*, W.W. Norton, 2010

Seth G. Jones and Martin Libicki, *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering al Qa'ida*, RAND (MG-741-1-RC), 2008

Seth G. Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency," *International Security*, 32, 2008

DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRACT AND GRANT INFORMATION

INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES: Rule 11, clause 2(g)(5), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 113th Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants) received during the current and two previous fiscal years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. This form is intended to assist witnesses appearing before the House Committee on Armed Services in complying with the House rule. Please note that a copy of these statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the witness's personal privacy (including home address and phone number) will be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness's appearance before the committee.

Witness name: Seth Jones

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

___Individual

_x_Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented: RAND Corporation

FISCAL YEAR 2013

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
1	DoD	$63,539,233	NDRI

FISCAL YEAR 2012

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
1	DoD	$63,920,538	NDRI

FISCAL YEAR 2011

Federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
1	DoD	$64,274,080	NDRI

Federal Contract Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2013): 1;
Fiscal year 2012: 1;
Fiscal year 2011: 1.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2013): See attached;
Fiscal year 2012: See attached;
Fiscal year 2011: See attached.

List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2013): See attached;
Fiscal year 2012: See attached;
Fiscal year 2011: See attached.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2013): $63,539,233;
Fiscal year 2012: $63,920,538;
Fiscal year 2011: $64,274,080.

Federal Grant Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of grants (including subgrants) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2013): 0;
Fiscal year 2012: 0;
Fiscal year 2011: 0.

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2013): N/A;
Fiscal year 2012: N/A;
Fiscal year 2011: N/A.

List of subjects of federal grants(s) (for example, materials research, sociological study, software design, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2013): N/A;
Fiscal year 2012: N/A;
Fiscal year 2011: N/A.

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2013): 0;
Fiscal year 2012: 0;
Fiscal year 2011: 0.

House Armed Services Committee
"The State of Al-Qaeda, its Affiliates, and Associated Groups: View from Outside Experts"

Testimony of William Braniff
Executive Director
National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START)
University of Maryland
4 February 2014

Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, and esteemed members of the committee, I would like to thank you on behalf of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, known as START, [1] for inviting us to speak with you today. I've been asked to reflect on the "State of al-Qa'ida its Affiliates and Associated Groups." There is, unfortunately, much to say.

Data

In 2012, the most recent year for which START has provided a complete set of global terrorism data to the Department of State for its Congressionally-mandated Country Reports on Terrorism, more than 6,800 terrorist attacks killed more than 11,000 people.[2] Even if you compare these more conservative 2012 figures provided to the Department of State against the more inclusive Global Terrorism Database (GTD) statistics dating back to 1970, the previous record for number of attacks was set in 2011 with more than 5,000 incidents.[3,4] This makes 2012 the most active year of terrorism on record.

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[1] START is supported in part by the Science and Technology Directorate Office of University Programs of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security through a Center of Excellence program based at the University of Maryland. START uses state-of-the-art theories, methods and data from the social and behavioral sciences to improve understanding of the origins, dynamics and social and psychological impacts of terrorism.

[2] It is important to note that incidents had to meet all six inclusion criteria used by START's Global Terrorism Database to be included as a terrorist incident in the Statistical Annex of the Country Reports on Terrorism 2012. However, the Global Terrorism Database itself requires only five of six criteria be satisfied for an event to be included giving the varying definitions of terrorism and to provide flexibility for those who use GTD for different analytical and operational purposes. Specifically, START includes incidents that meet three mandatory criteria and then two of the three following additional criteria:

1. The violent act was aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious, or social goal;
2. The violent act included evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience (or audiences) other than the immediate victims; and
3. The violent act was outside the precepts of International Humanitarian Law insofar as it targeted non-combatants.

Therefore, the GTD includes a greater number of terrorist incidents than the dataset provided to the Department of State for the Country Reports on Terrorism 2012. If the GTD's inclusion standards are applied to 2012 data, 8,400 terrorist attacks killed more than 15,400 people. By either measure, 2012 is the most active year of terrorism on record.

[3] It is critical to note that beginning with 2012 data collection, START made several important changes to the GTD collection methodology, improving the efficiency and comprehensiveness of the process. As a result of these improvements, a direct comparison between 2011 and 2012 likely overstates the increase in total attacks and fatalities worldwide during this time period. However, analysis of the data indicates that this increase began before the shift in data collection methodology, and important developments in key conflicts around the world suggest that considerable upward trends remain even when accounting for the possibility of methodological artifacts.

Strikingly, it could be argued that the six most lethal groups in 2012 were all part of "al-Qa'ida and its Associated Movement," a phrase used to simplify a very dynamic landscape of violent organizations and individuals. Using data provided to the Department of State, these groups were attributed responsibility for approximately 5,000 fatalities: the Taliban (more than 2,000 fatalities), Boko Haram (more than 1,100 fatalities), al-Qa'ida in Iraq (more than 830 fatalities), Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (more than 500 fatalities), al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (more than 280 fatalities), and al-Shabaab (more than 280 fatalities).[5]

Based on preliminary terrorism incident data for January through June of 2013, and again using the Department of State's inclusion standards, the eight most lethal organizations in that time-period include the Taliban, al-Qa'ida in Iraq, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, Boko Haram, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, al-Nusrah Front, al-Shabaab, and al-Mua'qi'oon Biddam Brigade. These preliminary data reinforce the hypothesis that groups generally associated with al-Qa'ida remain the most lethal groups in the world.

Notably, al-Qa'ida itself was not directly responsible for any attacks in 2012 or the first six months of 2013 for which we have preliminary data. To help interpret these data on terrorist groups, I turned to a START research project funded by the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate's Office of University Programs, the Big Allied and Dangerous (BAAD) project, led by Victor Asal and Karl Rethemeyer.[6] This project has demonstrated empirically that organizations with greater numbers of alliance

[4] I am indebted to Erin Miller and the entire Global Terrorism Database team, as well as primary investigators Gary LaFree and Laura Dugan (University of Maryland) for the rigor and objectivity undergirding this terrorism incident data.
[5] Using the more inclusive GTD inclusion standards, these include the Taliban (more than 2,500 fatalities), Boko Haram (more than 1,200 fatalities), al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (more than 960 fatalities), Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (more than 950 fatalities), al-Qa'ida in Iraq (more than 930 fatalities) and al-Shabaab (more than 700 fatalities).
[6] I am indebted to Victor Asal and Karl Rethemeyer, START researchers at the University at Albany – SUNY, who conducted this preliminary analysis and generated the associated graphic for the purpose of this testimony.

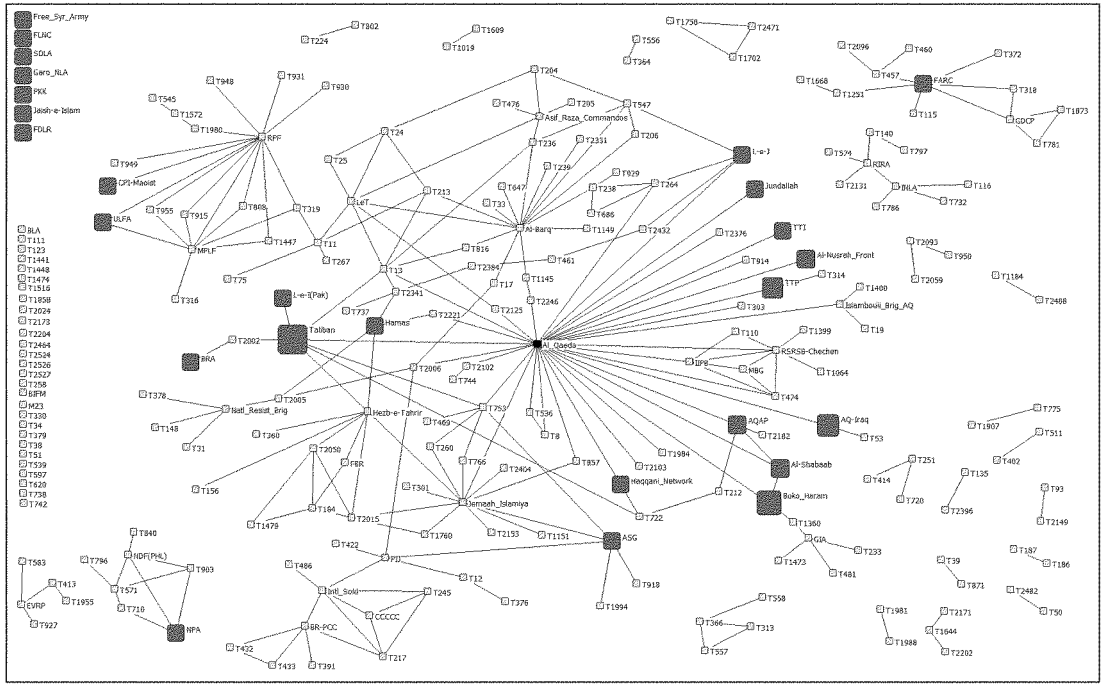
connections to other terrorist organizations demonstrate greater lethality on average[7] and are more likely to use or pursue chemical, biological, nuclear, or radiological weapons.[8]

Using preliminary data through 2012 that is currently going through a quality control process, it appears that 12 of the top 20 most lethal organizations have alliance connections to al-Qa'ida and 10 of the top 20 most active organizations (measured by number of terrorist attacks recorded in the GTD) also have alliance connections to al-Qa'ida[9] (see the figure on the next page).[10] While al-Qa'ida did not make the list of the top 20 most lethal or active organizations in 2012, all data suggest it remains a central hub in a network of highly lethal and active terrorist organizations.

Please see the "Network Connections and Lethality" figure on the next page.

[7] Asal, Victor, and R. Karl Rethemeyer. 2008. "The Nature of the Beast: Terrorist Organizational Characteristics and Organizational Lethality." *Journal of Politics*, 70(2): 437-449.
[8] Asal, Victor, Gary Ackerman, and R. Karl Rethemeyer. 2012. Connections Can Be Toxic: Terrorist Organizational Factors and the Pursuit of CBRN Weapons *Studies in Terrorism and Conflict* 35:229–254.
[9] Alliance connections can be categorized according to six types of inter-group connections: "alliance," "suspected alliance," "umbrella," "suspected umbrella," supported cause, and "joint claims for attacks." Alliances or suspected alliances are reports of cooperation of any form. Umbrella relationships or suspected umbrella relationships exist when one organization speaks and/or acts on behalf of other organizations. Supported cause is public rhetorical support for a given organization.
[10] Red nodes represent organizations that were in the top 20 in terms of fatalities, incidents, or both in 2012. Blue nodes connected to other nodes represent all other organizations with a least one alliance or connection in 2012. Isolated blue and red nodes had no alliance connections with other organizations. The larger the node, the more fatalities are attributed to the organization in 2012 by the GTD. This map is only for 2012; it does not reflect past alliance connections or past terrorist activity.

Network Connections and Lethality



Source: Big Allied and Dangerous Dataset II (BAAD II)
Primary Investigators: Victor Asal and Karl Rethemeyer, University at Albany

START
NATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR THE STUDY OF TERRORISM AND RESPONSES TO TERRORISM

Analysis[11]

As a result of the absence of al-Qa'ida Core attacks in 2012 and the first six months of 2013, the al-Qa'ida organization rarely captures media attention except when another important cadre member is killed or captured. Instead, observers now ponder the meaning of the continuous or frequently increasing levels of violence from other violent jihadist groups in the context of a post Arab-Spring world. This is despite the fact that the various narratives of the Arab Spring seemed to undermine al-Qa'ida's reliance on violence and its call to reestablish the caliphate as the governing structure for the Muslim nation. Additionally, individuals continue to join jihadist groups or plot violent attacks of their own volition.

What should we take from the seemingly contradictory developments of a popular rejection of al-Qa'ida on the world stage just a few years ago, and record-setting levels of jihadist violence over the last two years? Did al-Qa'ida succeed by inspiring widespread jihadism, or has it lost to a variety of more popular, parochial actors? To address these questions, it is essential to understand al-Qa'ida's origins and its place in the broader Islamist landscape; only in context can the seeming decline of the al-Qa'ida organization and the persistence of violent jihadism be understood and can governments formulate policy for an expansive threat environment beyond al-Qa'ida Core.

The failure of local jihadist groups to successfully topple corrupt Muslim rulers, the "near enemy," and regionally-oriented irredentist groups to reclaim political control of occupied territory has been a source of frustration since the 1970s. Following Usama bin Ladin's failure to convince the Government of Saudi Arabia to allow his community of jihadist veterans to protect the Arabian Peninsula from Saddam

[11] Much of this section of testimony is a synthesis of the research and educational efforts of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, and specifically the team of instructors that comprised the Practitioner Education Program.

Hussein's Bathist military, al-Qa'ida formulated the master narrative that would underpin the next 20 years of ideological and operational output as follows:

> The reason that the Royal Family would not allow the *mujahidin* to defend Mecca and Medina from Iraq's advance was the same reason that local and irredentist jihadist groups elsewhere had failed in their parochial contests. The regimes were illegitimate proxies of foreign powers, and behind each of these puppet regimes was the military and economic aid of the "far-enemy." Led by the United States, the far enemy pulled the strings across the Muslim world for their own imperial purposes and to undermine Islam.

Al-Qa'ida's grand strategy would emerge from this diagnosis; al-Qa'ida would enable and repurpose the violence of other militant actors to erode the political, economic, and military will of the United States to remain engaged in the Muslim world. If al-Qa'ida's geographically distributed attrition warfare could sever the ties between what it regarded as the puppet-master and the puppets, revolutionary local and regional jihadist campaigns could reestablish Islamic governance for the Muslim nation, one emirate at a time, until the caliphate could be reestablished.

To realize this grand-strategy, al-Qa'ida positioned itself at the conceptual center of the global jihadist landscape, helping to create the multi-faceted threat that has since manifested in at least four ways.

1. Al-Qa'ida exploited interpersonal and inter-organizational relationships created during the anti-Soviet jihad and inserted itself into extant violent campaigns beginning in the 1990s and continuing until today. It provided martial and ideological training, financing, and propaganda support when it did not also engage directly in violence, as was the case in the Arabian Peninsula in the early 1990s, the mid 2000s, and remains the case today under the aegis of al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and front groups such as Ansar al-Sharia.

The penchant for global jihadist actors to reorient and enable the violence of foreign fighters and segments of existing organizations often creates tensions among the jihadist factions, or between the local populace and the militant actors, as we have seen in Iraq, Somalia and now Syria. As a result, al-Qa'ida rarely succeeds in retaining popular support among the populace over time or reorienting jihadist groups *en toto* to their tactical and targeting preferences. However, they frequently achieve partial successes that amplify al-Qa'ida's operational reach far beyond their organizational safe haven in North Waziristan.

2. Similarly, veterans of the anti-Soviet jihad returned to locally and regionally-oriented groups indoctrinated with a globalized understanding of their respective conflicts. This infusion of global jihadist thought occurred in regions as culturally disparate as Southeast Asia and the Caucasus, where individuals like Ibn al-Khattab helped to retool the ethno nationalist separatist movement in Chechnya as a religious conflict, fostering a spiral of increasingly violent tactics between Russian and Chechen forces during the second Chechen war. Russia would eventually displace the violence in Chechnya to nearby regions including Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkariya, and North Ossetia-Alania, in which a number of terrorist groups also adopted the symbols and spectacular tactics of global jihadism. It was this injection and ultimate embrace of global jihadism over several decades that created the threat facing the upcoming Sochi Olympics.

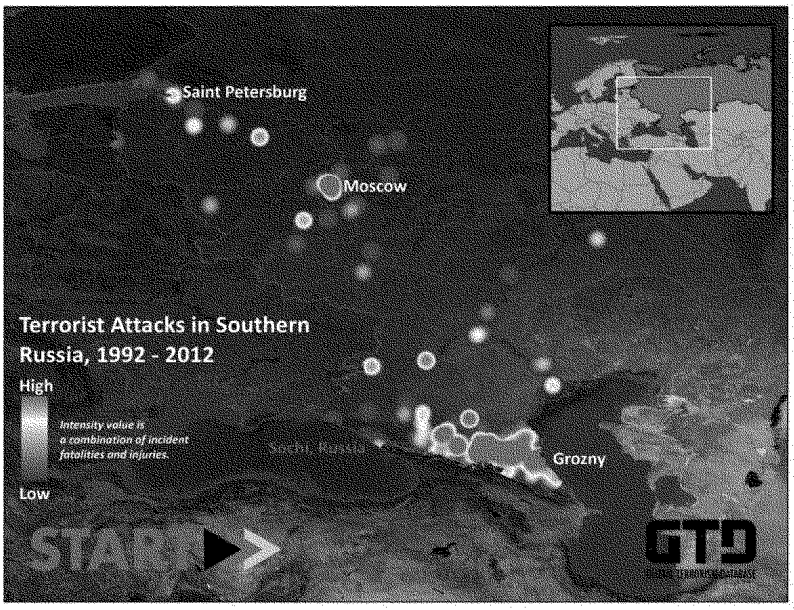
A recent START background report introduces the threat as follows:[12]

> Two suicide bombings in December targeted a train station and trolleybus in Volgograd, Russia, killing at least 34 people and wounding many more. The

[12] Miller, Erin. 2014. "Background Report: Terrorism and the Olympics: Sochi, Russia 2014." START (January). http://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/STARTBackgroundReport_TerrorisminOlympicsSochiRussia_Jan2014_0.pdf.

attacks, which took place approximately 400 miles from Sochi, highlight the potential threat of terrorist violence at the 2014 Winter Games. The militant group Vilayat Dagestan, part of the Caucasus Emirate, claimed responsibility for the Volgograd attacks. A statement made by the group threatens that if the Winter Olympics are held, the group will carry out additional attacks, particularly targeting tourists in retaliation for "the Muslim blood that is shed every day around the world, be it in Afghanistan, Somalia, Syria, all around the world."[13]

Attacking international tourists at the Olympics and Russian civilians in Volgograd are equated; they are portrayed as two facets of the same fight.



[13] Heritage, Timothy. 'Militant Islamist video threatens Winter Olympics,' Reuters, January 20, 2014. http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/20/us-russia-olympics-militants-idUSBREA0J0CX20140120.

3. Many of the highly networked veterans of the anti-Soviet jihad encouraged their respective organizations to establish a physical presence in other jihadist fronts as well, capitalizing on the associated ideological legitimacy for recruitment, access to training and battlefield experience, and access to fundraising and equipment pipelines pouring resources into those conflict zones. This phenomenon furthered the globalization of jihadism started during the anti-Soviet jihad.

   For example, Algerian jihadist groups participated in Bosnia and then Iraq, creating the relationships that would eventually lead to the reincarnation of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) as al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).[14] After civil war erupted in Libya in 2011, it was not a departure from historical precedent when al-Qa'ida emir Ayman al-Zawahiri encouraged the AQIM network to syphon resources flowing into Libya for their own violent purposes across North Africa. Neither is it unusual that Mokhtar Belmokhtar, an AQIM commander and veteran of the anti-Soviet jihad, has recently united his AQIM brigade with the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa to create a new jihadist umbrella organization on the heels of French intervention in Mali. This new organization, al-Murabitun, paid homage to al-Qa'ida's emir, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and stated its intent to unite jihadist groups across the Sahel and North Africa as an emirate akin to the storied Muslim empire which controlled *al-Andalus* and fought successfully to delay Europe's *Reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula.[15]

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[14] Brown, Vahid. 2010. "Al-Qa'ida Central and Local Affiliates." In *Self-Inflicted Wounds: Debates and Divisions within al-Qa'ida and its Periphery*, eds. Assaf Moghadam and Brian Fishman. Combating Terrorism Center at West Point.

[15] Cristiani, Dario. 2013. "Al-Murabitun: North Africa's Jihadists Reach into Hisotry in the Battle against European 'Crusaders.'" *Terrorism Monitor*, 11(19).

4. Finally, al-Qa'ida was forced to invest significant resources into virtual activities following the loss of its training camps in Afghanistan after September 11, 2001, and because of its inability to control the operational and media output of al-Qa'ida in Iraq. While al-Qa'ida's online communication architecture allowed it to interact with a geographically dispersed community and to protect its brand, it also created an environment where countless organizations and individuals could voice competing and complimentary ideas. The virtual landscape quickly became a place where local, regional and global forms of jihadism overlapped for a geographically, ideologically, and strategically diverse audience.

Taken as a whole, the increasingly international and intertwined histories of local, regional and global jihadist actors have at least four salient consequences.

First, and most significantly, the global jihadist cause often benefits from resources mobilized for the purpose of defensive or classical jihad – a concept far easier to justify politically and religiously than the offensive jihad practiced by global jihadists.[16] Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia illustrate this volatile relationship between military occupations or aerial strikes into sovereign territory and violent mobilization. As long as there are local and regional jihadist fronts, global jihadist actors will have access to resources that they can direct against the "far enemy."

Second, the multiplicity of grievances and narratives espoused by local, regional and global actors creates numerous radicalization and mobilization pathways into any one conflict zone. This can facilitate radicalization and the reorientation of individuals such as Najibullah Zazi, who left the United States with his two co-conspirators to join the Taliban and defend Afghanistan against U.S. occupation, but who was identified by al-Qa'ida's external operations cell, trained, and sent back to

[16] Hegghammer, Thomas. 2008. "Islamist violence and regime stability in Saudi Arabia." *International Affairs*, 84(4).

the United States to plot suicide attacks against the New York City subway system. Zazi was not primed to target American civilians when he entered into this militant ecosystem, but the geographic colocation of local and global jihadist organizations enabled that eventuality.

Third, the harmonization of parochial and cosmic narratives by al-Qa'ida's propaganda organ, and similar propaganda nodes run by affiliated organizations, helps conflate actions on the ground, increasing the chances that Western interests will be targeted in foreign settings. The threat against the Sochi Olympics cited above is a timely example.

Fourth, the propagation of global jihadist ideas through personal contact with jihadist veterans and the propagation of jihadism online help to inspire a new cohort of inspired individuals who are prepared to take action without ever having joined a formal organization, or in some cases, without ever having met, face to face, another like-minded individual. This threat was bolstered by the endorsement of lone-actor jihadism by al-Qa'ida Core and al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula following the Fort Hood attack, and consistently thereafter by English-language media such as Inspire Magazine.

Conclusion

The death of the 21st century's first super-empowered individual, Usama bin Ladin, lead to broad reflection about the viability of his organization and its place in a changing political landscape. Underscoring al-Qa'ida's failure to generate widespread support for both the ends (severing of ties between the West and the Muslim world and reestablishment of the caliphate) and means (attrition by way of violence) of its campaign, early Arab-Spring protestors mostly acted peacefully and

within the parameters of the international system that al-Qa'ida sought to overthrow. Control of the nation-state, not its dissolution, remained the goal of popular protests.

Yet in the wake of this political turmoil, extant violent groups persist, new violent groups have emerged, and global terrorism has reached its modern apex. While many violent groups coalesced around a local agenda without any impetus from the al-Qa'ida organization, al-Qa'ida's long-running propagation of global jihadism and its vilification of the West has influenced these militant organizations to varying degrees. As a result, in contested regions far from al-Qa'ida's geographic center of gravity, violence targeting both local Muslim populations and far-enemy targets persists making the resulting mix of jihadist violence more difficult to disentangle. Moreover, jihadist violence often occurs in places where anti-American sentiment is significant, creating the very real risk that American audiences will conflate the two.

The interplay of local, regional and global actors presents a new political reality that counterterrorism professionals continue to address. This condition will persist to varying degrees even if the al-Qa'ida organization fails to recover from the withering attacks made against it in recent years. While the al-Qa'ida of the 1990s was a corporate entity, albeit a highly networked one, it is no longer always useful to identify where the al-Qa'ida organization ends and others begin.

Sophisticated counterterrorism policy must minimize the effects of global jihadism without inciting local and regional groups to take up its cause, and without allowing al-Qa'ida to erode the nation's political will to remain engaged with the Muslim world. This requires an understanding of the jihadist narrative, the ability to distinguish it from political Islam and anti-American sentiment, as well as an understanding of the specific history that allows al-Qa'ida to enable the violence of others in so many regions of the world.

It would be dangerous to conclude that because the al-Qa'ida organization is not generating violent attacks itself, that the attrition strategy fostered by the organization is also ineffectual. These have been the most lethal two years in the history of modern terrorism, and al-Qa'ida remains at the historical, organizational, and ideological center of the most dangerous terrorist threats of our time.

WILLIAM BRANIFF

Education

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, School of Advanced International Studies *Bologna, Italy*
Masters in International Relations May 2006: Strategic Studies and International Economics *Washington, DC*

- Curriculum included Strategy and Policy, Foundations of Jihadist Terrorism, The Art and Practice of Intelligence, History of Irregular Warfare, Behavioral Sociology of Conflict.
- Co-Founder of the Strategic Studies Lecture Series at the SAIS-Bologna Campus.
- Planned, organized, and led the annual crisis simulation exercise.

UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY *West Point, NY*
Bachelor of Science May 1999: Arts, Philosophy and Literature (*Graduated in Top 6% of Class*)

- Dean's List all semesters and received the Superintendent's Award for academic and leadership excellence.
- One of twelve Rhodes and Marshall Scholarship Candidates selected out of a class of 1000 cadets.
- Phi Beta Khappa inductee.

Professional Leadership

Captain, Armor Branch; U.S. Army
Instructor in Terrorism Studies; United States Military Academy at West Point
Director of Practitioner Education, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point
Executive Director, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START)

Experience

2012-Present **National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism** *University of Maryland*
Executive Director

- Lead a 40 person headquarters element based at the University of Maryland
- Oversee approximately 150 researchers active in the international research consortium working on multi-year projects related to the human causes and consequences of terrorism and extremist violence
- Serve as the primary liaison to START's government partners, including DHS, DoD, and DoS
- Architect and prime mover of START's "transition" strategy intended to optimize the relevance of START's research for practitioners and policy-makers

United States Military Academy at West Point, Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) *West Point, NY*
2007 - 2012 **Director of External Education** *Washington, DC*

- Responsible for the development and execution of a counterterrorism curriculum for multiple government entities engaged in the counterterrorism mission.
- Program Manager for the FBI-CTC Collaborative, a multi-million dollar educational initiative delivering 23 semesters of counterterrorism education (900 hours of instruction for over 3000 students at 64 events across the nation) to the FBI each fiscal year along with a text book and additional educational materials.
- Manages a team of approximately 25 academicians and retired practitioners.
- Serves as a West Point Instructor for the Terrorism Minor program in the Department of Social Sciences, as well as one of three primary instructors for the CTC's External Education Program.

2006-2007 **National Nuclear Security Agency, Department of Energy** *Washington, DC*
Foreign Affairs Specialist

- Foreign Affairs Specialist for the Office of International Nuclear Material Protection and Cooperation.
- Responsible for strategic planning and sustainability issues regarding nuclear counter-terrorism programs at nuclear facilities within the Former Soviet Union.
- Served as the Special Assistant to the Director and Deputy Director (Senior Executive Service positions).

1999-2004 **United States Army** *Germany, Kosovo, USA*

Armor Company Commander

- Responsible for the daily operations of and long term planning for an organization of fifty-five military and ten civilian personnel.
- Maintained fifteen rifle and pistol ranges on which my company trained basic and advanced marksmanship to 10,000 initial entry soldiers annually. Developed and incorporated two modules into FT Knox's marksmanship curriculum based on lessons learned from Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.
- Supervised the construction of a multi-million dollar indoor marksmanship training center and developed a plan to implement training at the facility.

Armor Battalion Scout Platoon Leader, Armor Company Executive Officer, Armor Company Platoon Leader

- Selected over thirty Lieutenants in the battalion to lead a thirty-three person reconnaissance platoon composed of ten combat vehicles and equipment valued at over $1.5 million. Served as the battalion's expert on reconnaissance and security operations.
- Supervised and led a sixty-five person tank company as second-in-command. As the company's logistics expert, was responsible for the maintenance of a combat vehicle fleet valued over $35 million and including 14 M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tanks.
- Led a sixteen person tank platoon for six months of training and a six month peacekeeping deployment in Kosovo. Worked independently with international organizations and foreign military units to foster a secure environment in a sector totaling over seventy sq kilometers and inhabited by 1500 Albanian and Serbian Kosovars.

Selected Publications

- *Terrorism and Political Islam*, eds. William Braniff, Christopher Heffelfinger, and Erich Marquardt, Combating Terrorism Center, 2008.
- *Terrorism and Political Islam: A Desk-Side Reference for Political, Missionary, and Militant Organizations*, eds. William Braniff, Christopher Heffelfinger, and Erich Marquardt, Combating Terrorism Center, 2009.
- "Anticipating al-Qa'ida's Next Strategic Evolution" in *Understanding Jihadism: origins, evolution, and future perspectives*, eds. Brynjar Lia and Qandeel Siddique, Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, June 2009.
- Bill Braniff, & Assaf Moghadam. "Towards Global Jihadism: Al-Qaeda's Strategic, Ideological and Structural Adaptations since 9/11," in *Perspectives on Terrorism* [Online], 5.2 (2011): 11 June 2012.
- Bill Braniff and Assaf Moghadam, "Al Qaeda's Post-9/11 Evolution: An Assessment," in *Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Understanding the New Security Environment, Reading and Interpretations,* eds Russel Howard, Reid Sawyer, and Natasha Bajema, 4th edition, 2011.

Selected Presentations

- "Anticipating al-Qa'ida's Next Strategic Evolution," Understanding Jihadism Conference, Oslo, Norway, March 2009.
- "Understanding al-Qa'ida," Joint Special Operations University, MacDill Air Force Base, 2009-2010.
- "Frameworks for Understanding Domestic Islamist Plots," National Collaboration and Development Course, Pennsylvania, 2010.
- "Radicalization in the Salafi-Jihad," National Counterterrorism Center, Virginia, January 2010.
- "Evolution of the Salafi-jihad," World Affairs Council, Norfolk, Virginia, March 2010.
- "Conceptual Frameworks for Understanding al-Qa'ida," Council on Foreign Relations, Atlanta, Georgia, April 2010.
- "Understanding al-Qa'ida," Committee on Foreign Relations, Indianapolis, Indiana, June 2010.
- "Al-Qa'ida in Context," Joint Forces Staff College, Norfolk, VA, July 2010.
- "Understanding the Enemy," National September 11th Museum and Memorial Lecture Series, New York, New York, June 2010.
- "Economic Jihad: Al-Qa'ida's Attrition Strategy," Wal-Mart Home Office, Bentonville, Arkansas, July 2010.
- "Introduction to START Data, Methodology and Finding," National Science and Technology Council's Subcommittee on Human Factors, March 2012.
- "Introduction to START Data, Methodology, and Findings," Department of Homeland Security, March 2012.

Selected Media Appearances

- "FBI takes counterterrorism classes, National Public Radio, July 2008.
- "Exploring 9/11: The World Before and After," National September 11th Museum and Memorial Webcast on Al-Qa'ida's ideology, 2008.
- "West Point Experts Codify Terrorism," Cornell Daily Sun, March 2009.
- "Experts Fear al-Qaida May Turn to Piracy, National Public Radio, April 2009.
- "Al-Qaida Media Blitz has Some on Alert," National Public Radio, April 2009.
- WHCU Morning Radio interview with Sean Hannity on al-Qaeda's Structure and Function, Cornell, New York, March 2009.
- KCUR *Up to Date* interview with Steve Kraske on the threat posed by al-Qaeda, Kansas City, Missouri, April, 2010.
- "In Attack, Al Qaeda-Linked Somali Group Expands Reach," Wall Street Journal, July 2010.
- "Assessing Somalia's Terror Threat," International Relations and Security Network, December 2009.
- "Exploring 9/11: The World Before and After," National September 11th Museum and Memorial Webcast on the death of Osama bin Laden, 2011.
- "Choosing From the Many Lessons of Sept. 11," an expert panel discussion, New York Times, June 4, 2012.
- "Death of al-Libi is a crippling blow," AFP article, June 5, 2012.
- "Drones could destabilize Pakistan," AFP video, June 6, 2012.

Additional Information

- Active Secret Clearance.
- Intermediate written, spoken, and oral comprehension of the Russian Language.

DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRACT AND GRANT INFORMATION

INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES: Rule 11, clause 2(g)(5), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 113th Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants) received during the current and two previous fiscal years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. This form is intended to assist witnesses appearing before the House Committee on Armed Services in complying with the House rule. Please note that a copy of these statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the witness's personal privacy (including home address and phone number) will be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness's appearance before the committee.

Witness name: William Braniff

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

_X__Individual

___Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented:

FISCAL YEAR 2013

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
Contract	Joint Special Operations University	$8000	Lecturing on terrorism-related topics
Contract	Federal Bureau of Investigations	$1200	Lecturing on terrorism-related topics

FISCAL YEAR 2012

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
Contract	Joint Special Operations University	$10,000	Lecturing on terrorism-related topics

FISCAL YEAR 2011

Federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
Contract	Joint Special Operations University	$10,000	Lecturing on terrorism-related topics

Federal Contract Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2013):2;
Fiscal year 2012: 1;
Fiscal year 2011: 1.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2013): Joint Special Operations University, FBI;
Fiscal year 2012: Joint Special Operations University;
Fiscal year 2011: Joint Special Operations University.

List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2013):Lecturing on terrorism-related topics;
Fiscal year 2012: Lecturing on terrorism-related topics;
Fiscal year 2011: Lecturing on terrorism-related topics.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2013): $9200;
Fiscal year 2012: $10,000;
Fiscal year 2011: $10,000.

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Congressional Testimony

The Arab Spring and Al-Qaeda's Resurgence

Daveed Gartenstein-Ross
Senior Fellow, Foundation for Defense of Democracies
Adjunct Assistant Professor, Georgetown University

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1726 M Street NW • Suite 700 • Washington, DC 20036

Daveed Gartenstein-Ross February 4, 2014

Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you to discuss the state of al-Qaeda, its affiliates, and associated groups. My testimony will focus on how the Arab Spring environment presented new opportunities for al-Qaeda, altered its focus in discernible ways, and allowed it to experience significant geographic expansion.

Not only is the expansion of al-Qaeda's recognized affiliates clear, but also a large number of new organizations have cropped up in the Middle East and North Africa that profess an allegiance to al-Qaeda's ideology, salafi jihadism, yet claim they are organizationally independent from its network. These claims cannot necessarily be taken at face value. Indeed, two central questions that analysts of jihadist militancy debate today are: 1) to what extent are these new jihadist groups connected to the al-Qaeda network, and 2) to what extent is al-Qaeda's senior leadership (AQSL) able to set priorities and strategy for its affiliates, and thus either control or influence their activities? Uncertainties surrounding both questions somewhat complicate the U.S.'s policy response.

This testimony begins by examining the question of what al-Qaeda is, and what its goals are. Thereafter, it turns to the perceptions that al-Qaeda and other salafi jihadists had of the Arab Spring, and their ideas about how the movement could benefit. The testimony then calls into question the notion that al-Qaeda's senior leadership has been decimated—which, if true, means that intentions aside, the group would be unable to execute strategy in the new environment. I then turn to factors that did in fact strengthen al-Qaeda and jihadism during the Arab Spring, before giving an overview of al-Qaeda's current position. I conclude by discussing what kinds of policy responses are appropriate for the United States to adopt to address this challenge.

What is al-Qaeda?

For the purposes of this testimony, I adopt a definition of "al-Qaeda" that would be considered valid by most analysts of the group: the core leadership and recognized affiliates. However, I also believe that the growth of salafi jihadism in places like Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt has an impact on al-Qaeda's network and capabilities, so my testimony discusses these places as well.

Two models for understanding al-Qaeda. It's worth understanding that there are currently two competing models for understanding al-Qaeda that speak to some of the uncertainties that analysts confront. One model can be called the minimalist view, under which al-Qaeda is relatively small. This conception holds that al-Qaeda should be understood, at most, as the group's senior leadership and recognized affiliates who have had an oath of allegiance to that leadership publicly accepted. An example of this dynamic is when Somali militant group al-Shabaab became part of al-Qaeda in February 2012: it was personally announced by al-Qaeda emir Ayman al-Zawahiri. However, the minimalist view often argues that al-Qaeda's recognized affiliates are in reality only tenuously connected to AQSL because the leadership lacks mechanisms to exercise command and control, and affiliates have become increasingly independent and local in their outlook. Indeed, many proponents of the minimalist view hold that groups that

have taken up al-Qaeda's mantle but aren't engaged in active plots against the United States cannot really be considered al-Qaeda.

There is also a competing view, which we can call the expansive view, in which AQSL plays a more powerful role within the network, and al-Qaeda may be broader than just the recognized affiliates because the group may have taken on unacknowledged affiliates during the Arab Spring. Proponents of this view can point to the large cache of documents captured from Osama bin Laden's Pakistan hideout, which establishes that the jihadist leader wanted to rebrand the organization prior to his death. Under the expansive view, the various Ansar al-Sharia groups that suddenly sprung up in the Arab Spring environment may in fact be part of al-Qaeda.

The notion that these groups might be al-Qaeda is illustrated by Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia (AST). A year or two ago, most observers would have considered AST to be a purely local organization. To be sure, there were reasons to suspect from the time of AST's birth that it might be more than just local. Its leader, Abu Iyadh al-Tunisi, had longstanding jihadist credentials as well as specific connections to al-Qaeda. Among other things, while living in Taliban-run Afghanistan in 2000, Abu Iyadh founded the Tunisian Combatant Group (TCG), which facilitated the assassination of Northern Alliance leader Ahmad Shah Massoud in Afghanistan just before al-Qaeda executed the 9/11 attacks.[1] The following year, the United Nations designated TCG an al-Qaeda associated organization. Further, AST members Sami bin Khamis Essid and Mehdi Kammoun had been an important part of al-Qaeda's network in Italy.[2]

Over time, growing evidence suggested connections between AST and al-Qaeda's North African affiliate, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Tunisian authorities alleged in December 2012 that the Uqba ibn Nafi Brigade, a militant group operating between Algeria and Tunisia that engaged in frequent combat with Tunisian authorities at the border, linked AQIM to AST operationally.[3]

The following year, after AST allegedly assassinated two secular politicians, the Tunisian government officially designated the group a terrorist organization and banned it. Tunisia also released new information connecting AST to AQIM and the al-Qaeda network more generally. This included allegations that AST emir Abu Iyadh al-Tunisi and AQIM leader Abu Musab Abdel Wadoud had signed a handwritten "Allegiance Act," and that Abu Iyadh had made "an oath of allegiance to an Algerian emir" (likely Abdel Wadoud).[4] Tunisian sources further claimed that AST's funding came from al-Qaeda financiers.[5] When the U.S. State Department designated AST on January 10, 2014, it

[1] Aaron Zelin, "Missionary at Home, Jihadist Abroad: A Profile of Tunisia's Abu Ayyad the Emir of Ansar al-Sharia," *Militant Leadership Monitor* 3:4 (April 2012), p. 8.
[2] Aaron Zelin, "Who's Who in Tunisia's Salafi-Jihadi Community: A Look at Key Leaders in Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia," *Militant Leadership Monitor* 4:4 (April 2013), p. 10.
[3] Mourad Sellami, "Cellule d'Al Qaîda démantelée aux frontières: Les precisions du ministre de l'intérieur tunisien," *El Watan*, December 22, 2012.
[4] See description of Tunisia's evidence in Daveed Gartenstein-Ross & Bridget Moreng, "Tunisia's War with Ansar al-Sharia: New Revelations About Al-Qaeda's North African Network," *War on the Rocks*, Oct. 21, 2013.
[5] "Al-Qaeda Funds Ansar al-Sharia, Tunisia Reveals," *All Africa*, August 29, 2013.

described the group as "ideologically aligned with al-Qaeda and tied to its affiliates, including AQIM."[6]

This progression of evidence demonstrates a great deal. AST was initially understood as local despite its leader's international connections. Over time, evidence began to suggest some operational connection to AQIM. The precise contours of this relationship were vague at first, but grew increasingly concrete as more allegations were made public. At this point, both Tunisia and the U.S. have made clear that their intelligence suggests initial descriptions of AST as purely local were inaccurate. Indeed, if Tunisia's claims are accurate—including Abu Iyadh taking a formal oath of allegiance to AQIM's emir, and AST receiving funding from al-Qaeda—then rather than just being *tied* to al-Qaeda, AST may *be* al-Qaeda.

Al-Qaeda's goals. Contrary to some views of it, al-Qaeda is a strategic actor. There are a variety of reasons it decided to go to war against the United States, but prominent among them was its belief that doing so could help the group to achieve its regional objectives. As Thomas Joscelyn notes, "Al-Qaeda's jihadists are not just terrorists; they are political revolutionaries."[7] Atop their revolutionary agenda is the desire to control territory, and to implement their hard-line version of *sharia* where they do.

This goal of controlling territory and imposing religious law helps to illuminate the reasons for a division within the jihadist movement concerning whether it should focus its militant efforts on the "near enemy"—toppling the corrupt Arab regimes, which jihadists often refer to as apostate governments—or instead target the "far enemy," the United States and other Western powers.[8] While al-Qaeda viewed both the United States and the apostate Arab regimes as its enemies before the 9/11 attacks, it decided to focus its militant efforts against the U.S. and other Western countries.

A study released in the summer of 2009 by a jihadist "think tank" sheds some light on what kind of considerations went into this decision. The study explained that in waging war on Saudi Arabia, al-Qaeda faced the decision of fighting Saudi Arabia directly or striking at the U.S. presence in that country. If it fought Saudi Arabia, al-Qaeda's attacks would have encountered not only a ferocious counterterrorism response, but also condemnation from the Saudi *ulema* (religious scholars). In that case, al-Qaeda's war against the Saudis would have been a losing effort, "given the size and weight of the religious institution, and the legitimacy and prestige it instilled in the people's minds across more than 70 years."[9] But the study viewed striking at the Americans as a wise choice, because the kingdom would be forced to defend their presence, "which will cost them their legitimacy in the eyes of Muslims." Moreover, the

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[6] U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, "Terrorist Designations of Three Ansar al-Sharia Organizations and Leaders," January 10, 2014.
[7] Thomas Joscelyn, "Know Your Enemy," *Weekly Standard*, January 20, 2014.
[8] See Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
[9] Historical Studies and Strategic Recommendations Division, "Strategic Study on Global Conflict and the Status of the Jihadist Trend," July 4, 2009.

ulema would be delegitimized too if they defended the U.S. presence.

This study provides some indication of the strategy involved in targeting the United States on 9/11 and thereafter: when the U.S. was the target, that didn't mean that fighting America was in fact the group's overarching goal. Instead, al-Qaeda was keenly aware that fighting America could simultaneously undermine regimes in the region and deter the U.S. from coming to their aid. Indeed, before 9/11 al-Qaeda's senior leadership believed they could cause the U.S. government to withdraw its support for various Muslim rulers and Israel, as they believed American support was the main reason why early jihadist efforts to overthrow Muslim dictatorships ended in bloody fiascos.

As the next section discusses further, the Arab Spring has changed al-Qaeda's strategic calculus because the revolutions revealed the fundamental weakness of the region's regimes. This allows al-Qaeda to focus more on the region, as it believes that it can now attain its goals there without first concentrating militant efforts on the United States. Contrary to the claims of some analysts, when jihadist groups are regionally focused that doesn't mean that the groups are therefore not part of al-Qaeda. As Joscelyn wrote of arguments concerning locally focused groups not being "true" al-Qaeda, "Such arguments miss the entire reason for al-Qaeda's existence, which has always been to acquire power in 'local' settings. This is why al-Qaeda has always devoted most of its resources to fueling insurgencies."[10]

The Arab Uprisings and Salafi Jihadist Strategy

As the Arab Uprisings intensified, major salafi jihadist strategists quickly reached a rough consensus about what the developments meant. They agreed that the political upheavals were good for the movement for a variety of reasons. These strategists thought that several dynamics would weaken their foes while strengthening the jihadists' hand.

Jihadist observers believed that the uprisings demonstrated the limits of U.S. and Western power. Jihadists believed "global infidelity" would have intervened, for example, to prop up Tunisia's Ben Ali regime had Western countries not realized that the government was doomed regardless of what actions they took.[11] They had similar perceptions of Hosni Mubarak's fall in Egypt. Describing the United States as "confused and astonished," Abu Yahya al-Libi explained that America "did not know what to do as they lost this most loyal puppet which was losing its own grip on power. His reign deteriorated day after day until it crumbled before the defiance of the people."[12]

Referring to a weakening United States, Zawahiri said that the "tyrants" it supported were seeing their thrones crumble at the same time "their master," the U.S., was being defeated. He pointed to the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. "defeats" in Iraq and Afghanistan, and still more defeats during the Arab Spring uprisings: "It was then

[10] Joscelyn, "Know Your Enemy."
[11] See forum member Imarat al-Jihad, "Tunisian Incidents: Did Infidelity Shed Its Skin and Have a Conscience Awakening?," Ansar al-Mujahedin Network, January 17, 2011.
[12] Abu Yahya al-Libi, "To Our People in Libya," posted on Shumukh al-Islam Network, March 12, 2011.

defeated in Tunisia, losing its agent there. Then it was defeated in Egypt, losing its greatest agents there." Even in Libya, where NATO intervened to topple Muammar Qaddafi's regime, Zawahiri framed the West as being defeated: in Qaddafi it lost an "agent" who "participated in a war against Islam in the name of fighting terror, who handed all of the nuclear material and reactors to them."[13]

In other words, jihadists thought the U.S. was no longer able to simply intervene to protect its own client states, thus showing why an increased regional focus stemmed naturally from al-Qaeda's understanding of events. This jihadist perception altered the movement's strategies, allowing al-Qaeda and its allies to focus their efforts on the region in specific ways.

Al-Qaeda's strategic adaptations were intimately related to two specific advantages that its leading thinkers discerned in the new environment. The first was prisoner releases. A lengthy hagiographical account of how "the mujahedin" had escaped from the Abu Za'bal prison appeared on the Ansar al Mujahedin Network, a jihadist web forum, soon after the Egyptian uprising began. Thereafter, jihadist thinker Hani al-Siba'i published multiple lists of violent Islamists who were released from Egyptian prisons.[14] The second perceived operational advantage was that the fall of established regimes would lead to an era of greater openness that would create unprecedented opportunities to undertake *dawa*.[15] As one Malaysian academic has noted, *dawa* "refers to calling or inviting people to embrace Islam. Though not an article of the Islamic faith, Muslims are urged to be actively engaged in *dawa* activities."[16] Most frequently, salafi jihadists' *dawa* efforts are focused not on leading non-Muslims to Islam, but on persuading other Muslims to accept their particular version of the faith. This focus on other Muslims can be seen, for example, in the statement of Abu al-Mundhir al-Shinqiti, an influential jihadist sheikh believed to be of Mauritanian origin, who warned of the need to "concentrate on the aspect of preaching" in Tunisia due to the ignorance about religion that Ben Ali's regime had inflicted upon the population.[17]

Of course, the salafi jihadist movement has never been satisfied in constraining

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[13] Ayman al-Zawahiri, "And the Americans' Defeats Continue," posted on Global Jihad Network, October 12, 2011.

[14] See Hani al-Siba'i, "The Release of Prisoners After Nearly Twenty Years of Injustice," Ansar Dawlat al-Iraq al-Islamiyah, February 23, 2011; Hani al-Siba'i, "The Release of a New Batch After Long Years Behind Bars," Al-Jahafal, February 27, 2011; Hani al-Siba'i, "Urgent: The Release of a New Batch of Those Charged with Military Verdicts," Ansar Dawlat al-Iraq al-Islamiyah, March 4, 2011; Al-Maqrizi Center for Historical Studies, "Names of the Released Detainees from the al-Aqrab, al-Istiqbal, al-Wadi, and Burj al-Arab Prisons," Shumukh al-Islam Network, March 18, 2011.

[15] See Ayman al-Zawahiri, "And be Neither Weakened nor Saddened," Al-Sahab Media, August 15, 2011; Hamzah bin Muhammad al-Bassam, "Heeding the Advantages and Lessons of the Two Uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia," Ansar Dawlat al-Iraq al-Islamiyah, February 25, 2011; Hamid bin Abdallah al-Ali, "The Joy Lies in the Harvest of the Two Revolutions," posted on al-Ali's official website, February 15, 2011; Atiyatallah Abd al-Rahman, "The People's Revolt... The Fall of Corrupt Arab Regimes... The Demolition of the Idol of Stability... and the New Beginning," distributed by the Global Islamic Media Front, February 16, 2011.

[16] Munawar Haque, review of Sohirin M. Solihin, *Islamic Dawa: Theory and Practice* (Kuala Lumpur: IIUM Press, 2008), published in *Intellectual Discourse* 17:1 (2009), p. 119.

[17] Abu al-Mundhir al-Shinqiti, "Answers to Questions from Our Tunisian Brothers," *Minbar al-Tawhid wal-Jihad,* December 15, 2011.

itself to nonviolent *dawa*. Its strategists thus presented a staged plan which one can discern from the early theoretical work. Even while the movement was undertaking *dawa* peacefully, in ways it could not under the old regimes, strategists encouraged the movement to prepare to later engage in violence.[18]

The State of Al-Qaeda's Senior Leadership

Conventional wisdom holds that al-Qaeda's senior leadership has been decimated by Osama bin Laden's death and the drone campaign that the U.S. has been waging. If this is the case, then regardless of the opportunities it perceives from the Arab Spring, perhaps al-Qaeda is unable to execute any of its strategic ideas. However, I would question this conventional wisdom for two reasons. First, the available evidence suggests that leadership attrition does not degrade groups like al-Qaeda to the extent that is often believed. Second, there is specific evidence that AQSL retains capabilities despite this attrition.

Relevant to the question of what impact attrition has had on AQSL is an important monograph published by Lt. Col. Derek Jones entitled *Understanding the Form, Function, and Logic of Clandestine Insurgent and Terrorist Networks*.[19] Jones notes that, historically, the overt and visible parts of a guerrilla group aren't the most important components. Instead, look to the clandestine underground. It is a well-worn adage that, by slowly eroding the opponent's will, a guerrilla network "wins by not losing." Of course, a network doesn't require mere survival in order to win, but must also maintain the ability to mount attacks.

Unfortunately, al-Qaeda long ago understood how to lessen its organizational signature. Jones argues that al-Qaeda and similar groups are clandestine cellular networks: clandestine in that they are designed to be out of sight and cellular in that they are compartmentalized to minimize damage when the enemy neutralizes some portion of the network. Compartmentalization takes two forms. First, at a cell level, a minimum of personal information is known about other cell members. Second, there is strategic compartmentalization between different elements within the organization. Counterinsurgents can capture one person in a cell without destroying the cell; and where cell members must interact directly, structural compartmentalization attempts to ensure that the cell cannot be exploited to target other cells or leaders.

Jones writes that counterinsurgents routinely mistake the more overt parts of an insurgency—which can be easily replaced—for the clandestine cells that generate them. But some of the seemingly spontaneously generating cells may say less about the supposedly decentralized nature of a network than it does about the clandestine leadership's ability to hold itself out of view and recover from seemingly fatal reverses.

The most troubling implication of Jones's study is that al-Qaeda may be well positioned to recover from the losses that so many analysts believe have devastated it.

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[18] Al-Bassam, "Heeding the Advantages and Lessons of the Two Uprisings."
[19] Derek Jones, *Understanding the Form, Function, and Logic of Clandestine Insurgent and Terrorist Networks* (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: Joint Special Operations University, 2012).

As Jones argues, the form, function, and logic of this organization are designed to maximize its chances of survival, and thus "the removal of single individuals, regardless of function, is well within the tolerance of this type of organizational structure and thus has little long-term effect."[20] Though this point may be overstated as applied to very effective figures like bin Laden or Anwar al-Awlaki, the powerful point remains that the logic of organizations like al-Qaeda is such that their ability to recover from leadership and other losses is maximized.

Much like today, conventional wisdom a decade ago held that al-Qaeda's core leadership had been decimated. A 2004 *Los Angeles Times* article outlines the perceptions counterterrorism experts held at the time: "Osama bin Laden may now serve more as an inspirational figure than a CEO," and "the al-Qaeda movement now appears to be more of an ideology than an organization."[21] This conventional wisdom proved to be inaccurate; and indeed, prevailing views of al-Qaeda have tended to underestimate its resilience. As Bruce Hoffman recently noted in an academic article documenting widely shared perceptions of al-Qaeda dating back to 2003, "Al-Qaeda Core has stubbornly survived despite predictions or conventional wisdom to the contrary."[22] Other academic work examining the drone campaign also undermines the notion that this attrition-based strategy is likely to cripple the jihadist group.[23]

In addition to the possibility that analysts are overestimating the impact of attrition, there are specific reasons to believe al-Qaeda remains a viable network. At the time of bin Laden's death, al-Qaeda was anything but a shattered organization: documents captured from his compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan indicated that bin Laden "was a lot more involved in directing al-Qaeda personnel and operations than sometimes thought over the last decade," and that he had been providing strategic guidance to al-Qaeda affiliates in Yemen and Somalia.[24] Press reporting identified a dispersed leadership with named individuals in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, and East Africa. There have been no reports that the vast majority of leaders identified in the wake of bin Laden's death were killed or that their authority has diminished.

Information that has come out over the past few years further indicates that the network remains functional. For example, the Egyptian press has published correspondence from the Jamal Network, which is based in both Egypt and Libya, showing that Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) served as a conduit between its leader, Muhammad Jamal, and Zawahiri. Other documents show that Muhammad Jamal sent an individual to Mali to serve as his representative there during the country's period of jihadist rule in the north, thus confirming the overlap between various jihadist groups. Indeed, press reports indicating that AQIM, AST, Ansar al-Sharia in Libya, Boko Haram, and the Malian jihadist groups MUJAO and Ansar al-Din have worked together

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[20] Ibid., p. 2.
[21] Douglas Frantz et al., "Al-Qaeda Seen as Wider Threat," *Los Angeles Times*, September 26, 2004.
[22] Bruce Hoffman, "Al-Qaeda's Uncertain Future," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 36:8 (2013), p. 636.
[23] See, e.g., Aaron Mannes, "Testing the Snake Head Strategy: Does Killing or Capturing Its Leaders Reduce a Terrorist Group's Activity?," *Journal of International Policy Solutions*, Spring 2008, pp. 40-49; Megan Smith and James Igoe Walsh, "Do Drone Strikes Degrade al-Qaeda? Evidence from Propaganda Output," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 25 (2013), pp. 311-27.
[24] Lolita C. Baldor et al., "Source: Bin Laden Directing al-Qaeda Figures," Associated Press, May 6, 2011.

operationally in Africa. And August press reporting of what was colloquially dubbed an al-Qaeda "conference call" between more than twenty of the network's far-flung operatives indicates continuing communications capabilities.[25]

AQSL's expansion into Yemen provides further reason to believe that the senior leadership is growing even more connected. Nasser al-Wuhayshi of AQAP was promoted in 2013 to al-Qaeda's general manager. This indicates a geographic broadening of the core leadership: there is no reason that AQSL can only exist in South Asia, and the general manager position should be considered part of the group's core. AQSL's expansion into Yemen means that they now operate from a more central geographic location from which it will be easier to manage operations in Africa, the Middle East, and elsewhere.

Factors Strengthening al-Qaeda and Jihadism

Three primary factors have strengthened al-Qaeda and jihadism in the Arab Spring environment, two of which fundamentally relate to the jihadist strategy previously outlined: prisoner releases, *dawa* opportunities, and the resurgence of jihadist-aligned charity networks.

Prisoner releases. The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence report on the notorious September 2012 attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi notes that a number of individuals affiliated with terrorist groups were involved, including those affiliated with the Muhammad Jamal Network.[26] Jamal himself is notable as one of many jihadist figures to have been released from Egyptian prison.[27] This makes Jamal part of the aforementioned trend that began with the Arab Spring uprisings, in which prisons in affected countries have been emptied. In many cases, it is a good thing that prisoners have gone free: the Arab dictatorships were notorious for unjustly incarcerating and abusing their political prisoners. But jihadists were part of this wave of releases.

Prisoners went free for a variety of reasons. In Libya, Qaddafi's government initially used releases as an offensive tactic early after the uprisings, setting prisoners free in rebellious areas in order to create strife.[28] As the rebellion continued, some prison governors decided to empty prisons they were charged with guarding, including as a means of defection.[29] Chaos also allowed prison escapes, and gunmen attacked prisons in order to free inmates. Regimes that experienced less chaotic transitions, including Tunisia and Egypt, were hesitant to continue imprisoning virtually anybody jailed by the old regime, including violent Islamists with blood on their hands.

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[25] Eli Lake and Josh Rogin, "U.S. Intercepted al-Qaeda's 'Legion of Doom' Conference Call," *Daily Beast*, August 7, 2013.
[26] U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, "Review of the Terrorist Attacks on U.S. Facilities in Benghazi, Libya, September 11-12, 2012," January 15, 2014.
[27] Siobhan Gorman and Matt Bradley, "Militant Link to Libya Attack," *Wall Street Journal*, October 1, 2012.
[28] Mohammed Abbas, "Libya Prisoner Release Stokes Fears of Tribal Strife," Reuters, March 3, 2011.
[29] Nick Meo, "Libya: Prisoners Released or Escaped in Their Hundreds," *Telegraph* (U.K.), August 23, 2011.

Moving beyond Muhammad Jamal, other prominent figures from Egypt's jihadist movement were also freed from prison. The most notorious is Muhammad al-Zawahiri, the brother of al-Qaeda's emir and a former member of Egyptian Islamic Jihad. Zawahiri played a prominent role in encouraging jihadists to join the September 2012 attack on the U.S. embassy in Cairo, and American officials told *The Wall Street Journal* that he has also helped Muhammad Jamal connect with his brother, the al-Qaeda chief. Other released Egyptian inmates returned to operational and media roles, including Murjan Salim, who has been directing jihadists to training camps in Libya. Figures like Jalal al-Din Abu al-Fatuh and Ahmad 'Ashush, among others, helped loosely reorganize networks through media outlets al-Bayyan and al-Faruq. Prisoner releases helped regenerate jihadist networks in the Sinai that have been able to cause a great deal of bloodshed since the country's July coup.

Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia's striking growth was also attributable to prisoner releases. AST leader Abu Iyadh al-Tunisi had been imprisoned since 2003 for involvement in terrorism abroad, but was released in the general amnesty of March 2011. In fact, prominent AST members have claimed that the organization was born during periods of imprisonment, when "communal prayer time served as a forum for discussion and refining ideas that would be put into practice on release."[30]

In Libya, many former prisoners, including some leaders of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, said they would forsake armed struggle and join the political process. But other released prisoners returned to jihadist violence. Mohammed al-Zahawi and Shaykh Nasir al-Tarshani of Katibat Ansar al-Sharia in Benghazi both spent years in Qaddafi's notorious Abu Salim prison.[31] Abu Sufyan bin Qumu, another Ansar al-Sharia leader based in Derna, was formerly imprisoned in both Guantánamo Bay and Abu Salim.

Dawa opportunities. Newfound opportunities to undertake *dawa* allowed the spread of salafi jihadist ideology in places like Egypt and Tunisia. In Egypt, members of the salafi jihadist current such as Muhammad al-Zawahiri and Ahmad 'Ashush were able to personally advocate for the movement on television for the first time.

In Tunisia, AST developed a sophisticated *dawa* strategy. It continues to undertake *dawa* even after the Tunisian government banned it, but AST youth leader Youssef Mazouz said the group now carries out "less than half the work it used to before August when it could plan events openly and post details on Facebook."[32] Some of AST's *dawa* efforts have been rather traditional: holding *dawa* events at markets or universities, holding public protests, and dominating physical spaces, such as cafés, near places of worship. But AST also used innovative approaches to *dawa*, including provision of social services (something other militant Islamic groups like Hizballah and Hamas have also done) and its use of social media. As noted, AST's ban now impedes its ability to leverage social media.

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[30] Louise Loveluck, "Planting the Seeds of Tunisia's Ansar al-Sharia," *Foreign Policy*, September 27, 2012.
[31] Mary Fitzgerald, "It Wasn't Us," *Foreign Policy*, September 18, 2012.
[32] "The Salafist Struggle," *The Economist*, January 1, 2014.

AST's social services activity has included distribution of food, clothing, and basic supplies, as well as sponsorship of convoys that provide both medical care and medicine. These efforts concentrated on areas of Tunisia that are typically neglected by the government, such as rural and impoverished areas, and AST also provided emergency humanitarian assistance in the wake of such natural disasters as flooding. AST's social services are typically accompanied by distribution of literature designed to propagate its ideology. But even at its height, AST's distribution of social services didn't reach the same areas consistently: it isn't clear any communities saw AST as a services provider week after week. This is where AST's savvy use of social media was particularly relevant. Almost immediately after it undertook humanitarian efforts, AST would post information about its latest venture, including photographs, to its Facebook page and other websites. Social media served as a force multiplier: while AST didn't provide consistent services to a single area, its social media activity illustrated a rapid pace of humanitarian assistance, and thus helped the group achieve its goal of visibility.

The context in which this *dawa* work was undertaken is important, as the country's economy suffered and much of its revolutionary hopes had faded. AST positioned itself as a critic of the status quo and a champion of those whom the system neglected. This helped AST develop into a growing movement by the last time I did field research there, in April 2013. Whether the new Tunisian constitution will rekindle revolutionary hopes remains to be seen.

Resurgence of jihadist-aligned charity networks. Prior to the 9/11 attacks, al-Qaeda received significant funding from a well-financed network of Islamist charity organizations. As a monograph produced for the 9/11 Commission noted, prior to those attacks "al-Qaeda was funded, to the tune of approximately $30 million per year, by diversions of money from Islamic charities and the use of well-placed financial facilitators who gathered money from both witting and unwitting donors."[33] Despite the efforts made to shut down such groups, Islamist-leaning international charities and other NGOs have been reemerging as sponsors of jihadist activity.

In Tunisia, the pictures, videos, and information that AST posted on its Facebook page suggest that AST received support from jihadist charity networks. In at least one case, it received medical supplies from the Kuwaiti charity RIHS (the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society). The fact that RIHS supported a jihadist-oriented group in Tunisia will come as no surprise to seasoned watchers of terrorist financing. The U.S. Treasury Department designated RIHS in 2008 "for providing financial and material support to al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda affiliates, including Lashkar e-Tayyiba, Jemaah Islamiyah, and Al-Itihaad al-Islamiya."[34] The Treasury designation also charges that RIHS provided financial support specifically for terrorist acts. And that's not AST's only connection to sympathetic foreign organizations. The literature it passes out at *dawa* events can be traced to at least three book publishing houses in Saudi Arabia: Dar al-Qassem, based in Riyadh; Dar al-Tarafen, based in Taif; and the Cooperative Office for the Call and

[33] National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *Monograph on Terrorist Financing* (2004), p. 4.
[34] U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, "Kuwaiti Charity Designated for Bankrolling al-Qaeda Network," June 13, 2008.

Guidance and Education Communities, based in Dammam. It's likely that AST, which has distributed a significant amount of these publishers' literature, either has a direct relationship with the publishers or else a designated intermediary.

The most significant theater for jihadist charities' rebound, though, will likely be Syria. A recent comprehensive report published by the Brookings Institution notes the role of "individual donors in the Gulf," who "encouraged the founding of armed groups, helped to shape the ideological and at times extremist agendas of rebel brigades, and contributed to the fracturing of the military opposition."[35] The report singles out Kuwaiti donors and charities in particular—including the aforementioned RIHS—in part because Kuwait has had fewer controls than other Gulf countries.

Further, the Syrian Islamic Front (SIF)—an umbrella group of six organizations that is considered one of the key jihadist elements within the Syrian opposition—has clearly expressed ties to Turkish and Qatari government-linked NGOs. The video proclaiming the creation of this new group in December 2012 showed SIF members providing aid to Syrian civilians with boxes and flags bearing the logos of the Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH). In January 2013, SIF posted a video to YouTube depicting its members picking up aid from IHH in Yayladagi, Turkey, that was to be distributed in Syria. Other boxes and flags in SIF's December 2012 video belonged to Qatar Charity, which used to go by the name Qatar Charitable Society. Evidence submitted by the U.S. government in a criminal trial noted that in 1993 Osama bin Laden named the society as one of several charities that were used to fund al-Qaeda's overseas operations.

Other charities that in the past supported al-Qaeda and jihadist causes may also be on the rebound. For example, when the U.S. Treasury Department designated the Al Haramain Islamic Foundation (AHIF), a Saudi charity that provided significant support to al-Qaeda internationally, it noted that AHIF's leadership "has attempted to reconstitute the operations of the organization, and parts of the organization have continued to operate."[36] Further, the U.N.'s Office of the Ombudsperson overseeing sanctions of al-Qaeda-linked individuals has produced a delisting in 38 different cases as of the time of this testimony.[37] The delisting of al-Qaeda supporters at the United Nations could further re-energize al-Qaeda charity networks.

Al-Qaeda Today

Over the past year, al-Qaeda's affiliates and other jihadist groups have made striking gains. Both the organization and the movement appear to be growing rather than withering.

Syria is the central front for transnational jihadism. Extremist groups like Jabhat

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[35] Elizabeth Dickinson, *Playing with Fire: Why Private Gulf Financing for Syria's Extremist Rebels Risks Igniting Sectarian Conflict at Home* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2013), p. 1.
[36] U.S. Department of the Treasury, Press Release, "Treasury Designates Al Haramain Islamic Foundation," June 19, 2008.
[37] The status of cases being considered by the Ombudsperson's office can be found at http://www.un.org/en/sc/ombudsperson/status.shtml.

al-Nusra and the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) have proven to be some of the country's most effective rebel factions. Jihadists have gained full control over such cities and towns as Raqqa and Shadadi in the north. ISIS has in fact become adept at the targeted use of violence against Raqqa's citizens, for the purposes of dominating and intimidating them as it implements a harsh version of *sharia*.[38] Further compounding concerns stemming from the Syria conflict, a recent study published by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation found that up to 11,000 foreign fighters have flocked to the battlefield to fight Bashar Assad's government, of whom around 2,000 are from Western Europe.[39] This has sparked fears in their countries of origin that the fighters could pose a security threat upon their return.

It's worth noting the escalating tensions between ISIS and AQSL.[40] I believe it's far too early to claim, as some analysts already have, that this means we have clearly entered a period where al-Qaeda's core leadership has become marginalized. Indeed, al-Qaeda's loyalists can be found at top levels of two of the most effective groups in Syria even if one discounts their role in ISIS entirely. But it's worth following this conflict closely, as the ramifications are important.

In addition to Syria's instability, Libya's central government has never been able to establish itself following the NATO campaign that helped overthrow Qaddafi. The deteriorating conditions have helped the jihadist cause. Some of the attackers in the January operation at the gas facility located in In Amenas, Algeria, reportedly trained in southern Libya camps, and used the country as a staging ground for the hostage-taking operation.[41] Those camps have also been used to prepare militants for suicide missions; and Libya's lawlessness has provided jihadist militants space to operate, as many fled there to evade pursuit after the French intervention in Mali.[42]

Iraq has also been backsliding into chaos, driven by ISIS's blossoming capabilities. By the end of 2013, more than 6,000 Iraqis had died in violence, the highest level of fatalities since 2007, the peak year of Iraq's bloody civil war. As U.S. forces withdrew from Iraq two years ago, American and Iraqi officials expressed concern that al-Qaeda was "poised for a deadly resurgence."[43] Rather than proving alarmist, these warnings likely understated the speed and magnitude of the organization's rebound. On January 1, ISIS was able to capture large portions of Fallujah and Ramadi, and as of the preparation of this testimony (January 27), it continues to retain significant ground in both, as well as elsewhere in Anbar. The fact that it was able to seize and hold large portions of both cities, and caught the Iraqi security forces unaware when it did so, is testament to ISIS's regeneration.

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[38] Chris Looney, "Al-Qaeda's Governance Strategy in Raqqa," *Syria Comment*, December 8, 2013.
[39] Aaron Y. Zelin et al., "Up to 11,000 Foreign Fighters in Syria; Steep Rise Among Western Europeans," *ICSR Insight*, December 17, 2013.
[40] See, e.g., Ben Hubbard, "The Franchising of al-Qaeda," *New York Times*, January 25, 2014.
[41] Paul Cruickshank and Tim Lister, "Algeria Attack May Have Link to Libya Camps," CNN, January 23, 2013.
[42] Adam Entous, Drew Hinshaw and David Gauthier-Villars, "Militants, Chased from Mali, Pose New Threats," *Wall Street Journal*, May 24, 2013.
[43] Michael S. Schmidt and Eric Schmitt, "Leaving Iraq, U.S. Fears New Surge of Qaeda Terror," *New York Times*, November 5, 2011.

Another al-Qaeda franchise that is seemingly recovering its capabilities, based on the attacks it was able to execute, is the Somali militant group al-Shabaab. Shabaab once controlled more territory in southern Somalia than did the country's U.N.-recognized government, but it lost its last major urban stronghold of Kismayo to advancing African Union forces in October 2012. However, Shabaab's capabilities have recovered since then. The group captured worldwide attention on September 21, 2013, when terrorists associated with the group launched a spectacular assault on Nairobi's Westgate Mall. The attack dragged on for four days, killing 67 and injuring at least 175.

But even before that, there were signs that a complex operation like Westgate was possible, as Shabaab carried out increasingly sophisticated attacks throughout the year. These included an April 2013 attack on a Mogadishu courthouse that killed 29, and a June 2013 twin suicide bombing at Mogadishu's U.N. compound that claimed 22 lives. Over the course of 2013, Shabaab was able to kill between 515 and 664 people, according to a database that I maintain.

But al-Qaeda's biggest gain last year was perhaps the July military coup that deposed Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi, and the often-brutal crackdown on protesters that followed. After the coup, jihadist groups in the Sinai went on an immediate offensive, with targets including security officers and Christians. That offensive has both extended beyond the Sinai region and continued into this year, with a series of four January 24 bombings in Greater Cairo, including an explosion at the security directorate.

Egypt's coup also bolstered al-Qaeda's narrative. Many Western observers had hoped the Arab uprisings would weaken al-Qaeda by providing a democratic alternative to the region's dictators. These hopes rested on an inexorable march toward democracy that would prompt increasing numbers of citizens to participate in the new political systems. But the coup showed that democracy is reversible—perhaps particularly so if political Islamist groups are in power. Al-Qaeda emir Ayman al-Zawahiri had been saying exactly this since the revolutions began—claiming in March 2011 that Egypt's new regime, even if nominally democratic, would "preserve and maintain the old policies that fight Islam and marginalize the *sharia*." Though it's too early to say whether more people are gravitating toward al-Qaeda's argument as a result, Zawahiri and other leading jihadist thinkers have already claimed vindication after the coup, and we can expect more full-throated rhetoric on this point in the coming year.

Al-Qaeda also continues to be a force in its traditional strongholds. For example, it has spearheaded an assassination campaign in Yemen that has, for more than two years, targeted the country's military officers.

Bearing in mind the manner in which prisoner releases gave new life to jihadism in North Africa, a final concern is a series of jailbreaks in July. The most significant was a July 21 jailbreak at Iraq's notorious Abu Ghraib prison that freed about 500 prisoners from a facility boasting a high concentration of skilled jihadists. On July 28, prison riots coupled with an external attack freed 1,117 inmates from Benghazi's Kuafiya prison.[44]

[44] "Clashes Erupt in Benghazi After Blasts," Al Jazeera, July 29, 2013.

And a sophisticated July 30 prison break in Pakistan, where almost 250 prisoners escaped, was claimed by the militant group Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan.[45] Some of the least surprising news of the year was that U.S. officials came to suspect that these incidents, all occurring around the same time, might "be part of an al Qaeda-coordinated 'Great Escape'-like plot."[46]

Conclusion: Al-Qaeda and U.S. Policy

As I stated at the outset, the Arab Spring environment has both altered al-Qaeda's focus and also helped the group, and jihadism more broadly, to experience growth. I offer four major policy recommendations.

First, it is important to beware of second-order consequences related to al-Qaeda and jihadism when the U.S. decides to use its military might or otherwise commit significant resources internationally. There were significant second-order consequences to the U.S. campaigns in both Iraq and Libya. Of course, the primary rationale for the intervention in Libya was humanitarian, but as long as al-Qaeda and jihadism remain a strategic priority for the United States, it is vital to understand the impact of major U.S. commitments on these phenomena. In a similar vein, while America's indecisiveness didn't help it on the world stage after Syria's Bashar al-Assad crossed a U.S.-announced "red line" in August by using chemical weapons against rebel forces, American military action in Syria likely would have carried even greater risks.

The risk of second-order consequences gives rise to a second priority. Better harnessing the talents of open-source analysts has the potential to sharpen U.S. counterterrorism policies and alert policymakers to possible pitfalls. This testimony has outlined two competing views of al-Qaeda, and it's worth noting that public discussion of the jihadist group is impeded by the fact that open-source analysts lack basic information about the al-Qaeda network that can be found in such primary source documents as those recovered after the raid that killed bin Laden in Abbottabad. The seventeen Abbottabad documents that the U.S. government released in 2012 represent less than 1% of the total cache of information, and they don't even contain a single complete correspondence. To improve public sphere discussion about al-Qaeda, declassification of those documents should be hastened.

Third, we need to recognize the limitations of the U.S.'s targeted-killing campaign. The pace of this campaign strongly suggests that it is premised around the idea that an attrition-based strategy can defeat al-Qaeda. But if al-Qaeda is resilient in the face of this kind of attrition, it's important to think more comprehensively about the impact of the strikes, including the consequences when innocent people are killed. While the U.S. shouldn't simply eschew targeted killing as one counterterrorism tool, we should seriously consider the idea that the tactic is being massively overused.

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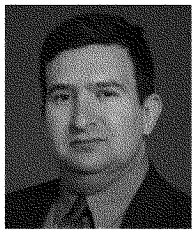
[45] Jeremy Ravinsky, "Jailbreak! Security Found Lacking in Iraq, Libya, Pakistan," *Christian Science Monitor*, July 30, 2013.
[46] James Gordon Meek and Rebecca Bluitt, "Al-Qaeda's 'Great Escape' Plot? Hundreds of Terrorists Freed," ABC News, November 1, 2013.

Finally, partner-nation assistance is important. President Obama correctly observed that not all al-Qaeda affiliates pose an equal risk to the United States (although it should be noted that if a group isn't targeting the U.S., that doesn't mean that it isn't actually al-Qaeda). It's important that the U.S. not bear all the costs in the fight against the jihadist group, and burden-sharing has improved under Obama. Partner-nation assistance can take the form of building local police capacity, as capable local police can respond more effectively to the growth of salafi jihadist groups. Another important form of partner-nation assistance is intelligence cooperation.

Thank you for inviting me to testify today. I look forward to your questions.

Daveed Gartenstein-Ross

Senior Fellow, Foundation for Defense of Democracies
Adjunct Assistant Professor, Security Studies Program, Georgetown University



Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and an adjunct assistant professor in Georgetown University's security studies program, focuses his research on the challenges posed by violent non-state actors. Studies he has authored examine the history, organizational structure, and strategy of the jihadist group Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia; the economic aspects of al-Qaeda's military strategy; and the radicalization process for homegrown jihadist terrorists. He is the author or volume editor of twelve books and monographs, including *Bin Laden's Legacy* (Wiley, 2011), and has published widely in the popular and academic press, including in *The New York Times*, *Reader's Digest*, *Foreign Policy*, *The Atlantic*, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, *The Yale Journal of International Affairs*, and German political science journal *Der Bürger im Staat*.

Gartenstein-Ross has presented his research at events sponsored by the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Uppsala University (Sweden), the Universität Tübingen (Germany), the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya (Israel), the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Counterterrorism Center, and U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, among others. He has been featured in the Distinguished Speaker Series at the University of Southern California's National Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events (CREATE), and has been a keynote speaker at the Global Futures Forum.

In addition to his academic work, Gartenstein-Ross consults for clients who need to understand violent non-state actors and twenty-first century conflict. His client work has included live hostage negotiations in the Middle East, border security work in Europe, risk assessment of possible terrorist attacks, examination of alternative futures for terrorist and smuggling networks, expert witness work for asylum seekers from the Horn of Africa, and story and series development for media companies. He also regularly designs and leads training for the U.S. Department of Defense's Leader Development and Education for Sustained Peace (LDESP) program.

Gartenstein-Ross is a Ph.D. candidate in world politics at the Catholic University of America, where he received a M.A. in the same subject. He earned a J.D., *magna cum laude*, from the New York University School of Law, and a B.A., *magna cum laude*, from Wake Forest University. He is a senior fellow at George Washington University's Homeland Security Policy Institute, and a visiting research fellow at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism—The Hague. He can conduct research in five languages, including Arabic and French.

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FOUNDATION FOR
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DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
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Witness name: **Daveed Gartenstein-Ross**

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

___Individual

__X_Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented: Foundation for Defense of Democracies (501c(3) think tank)

FISCAL YEAR 2013

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
Contracts	Department of Defense	$27,078.84	LDESP Lectures

FISCAL YEAR 2012

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
Contracts	Department of Defense	$14,555.55	LDESP Lectures

FISCAL YEAR 2011

Federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
Contracts	Department of Defense	$35,127.19	LDESP Lectures

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List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

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Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2013):_ $27,078.84_____;
Fiscal year 2012:___ $14,555.55_____;
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Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

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Fiscal year 2012:_____;
Fiscal year 2011:_____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2013):_____;
Fiscal year 2012:_____;
Fiscal year 2011:_____.

UNTANGLING THE TERRORIST WEB: CATEGORIZATION & PRIORITIZATION IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

Testimony by Dr. Christopher Swift
Adjunct Professor of National Security Studies
Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service
Georgetown University

Fellow, Center for National Security Law
University of Virginia School of Law

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Armed Services

February 4, 2014

Dr. Christopher Swift
House Committee on Armed Services

1. Good morning. Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, honorable members: this is my first time testifying before the United States Congress, and I am both honored and humbled to appear with these distinguished colleagues. Over the last decade I have conducted field research on al-Qaeda, its affiliates, and associated forces in conflict zones including Afghanistan, the North Caucasus and, most recently, Yemen. My goal this morning is to use the insights derived from this fieldwork to help frame the threats we face and choices we must make. I respectfully request that my remarks be entered into the record.

2. Mr. Chairman, honorable members: Americans greeted the passing of Osama bin Laden with a mixture of pride and relief. After ten years of conflict and countless casualties, many hoped that the loss of al-Qaeda's leader would bring the War on Terror to an end. Initially the signs seemed hopeful. Decimated by drone strikes, bin Laden's successors grew more paranoid, more marginalized, and more isolated from their local allies. Senior al-Qaeda leaders began to disappear. Senior Pentagon officials predicted al-Qaeda's strategic defeat. And as the Arab Spring swept across the Middle East, a growing chorus of pundits and policymakers argued that it was time for America to declare victory and come home.

3. These calls proved premature. As my colleagues explained this morning, a new generation of terrorist and insurgent leaders is emerging from bin Laden's shadow. Some of these groups are survivors, with the remnants of al-Qaeda's Iraqi franchise finding new inspiration in the Syrian Civil War. Others are upstarts, with previously unknown syndicates in Egypt, Libya, and Mali infiltrating and colonizing ungoverned spaces. The result is a constellation of complex, dynamic, and constantly evolving threats—threats that compel us to re-examine our assumptions, recalibrate our strategy, and ultimately revise the legal frameworks authorizing the use of military force.

4. Three questions shape this inquiry. How does al-Qaeda influence local insurgents? How do these insurgents contribute to al-Qaeda's global jihad? And most significantly, how can we distinguish one adversary from the next? Answering these questions is crucial to our shared security. Yet rather than examining these complex relationships in their own right, pundits and policymakers routinely cast disparate groups as part of a common global conspiracy. They confuse radical ideologies with political priorities. And in doing so, they presume that al-Qaeda will inspire, dominate, and control local insurgents.

5. Our experience presents a more complicated picture. Coalition forces in Iraq undermined al-Qaeda by turning tribal leaders against foreign fighters. NATO commanders in Afghanistan actively exploited the personal and political tensions between al-Qaeda and the Taliban. And to the extent that the United States has intervened in the Syrian Civil War, we have done so by identifying and supporting moderate rebel factions. Each of these decisions defies notions of a unitary, undifferentiated threat. Rather than fighting a global war across local theatres, America and its allies instead face a series of regional crises, each with their own unique causes, characteristics, and consequences.

6. We ignore this distinction at our peril. Despite lessons learned in the field, the U.S. Government has no framework for understanding the relationships between transnational terrorists and indigenous insurgents. And for all their emphasis on terrorist "links," and "networks," our leaders lack consistent, objective criteria for distinguishing al-Qaeda's franchises and affiliate forces from other terrorist and insurgent groups. The result is confusion. After a decade of protracted deployments abroad and enhanced surveillance at home, there is no public consensus about who our adversaries are or how they interact.

7. Mr. Chairman, honorable members: these oversights represent the single greatest challenge in the War on Terror today. They hamper our efforts to identify and confront emerging threats. They weaken the consistency and perceived legitimacy of our operations. Most significantly, they undermine our ability to think and act strategically. We cannot align our means and ends until we define the challenges we face.

8. So what categories should we use? In his May 2013 speech at the National Defense University, President Obama explained that the United States is still at war with "Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and their associated forces." I share that view, as do many members of this Committee. But the term "associated forces" has no legal or strategic meaning. Nor do the terms "affiliate forces," "co-belligerents," or "al-Qaeda linked groups." And when your Senate colleagues asked the Pentagon to define these terms and the threats they represent, they were met with silence.

9. Some of that silence is understandable. Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael Sheehan correctly notes that terrorist threats are "murky," and "shifting," and that "it would be difficult for Congress to get involved in the designation of specific al-Qaeda affiliates." A list-based approach could not account for sudden changes in the character or composition of local terrorist and insurgent groups. It would be clear, but it would also be under-inclusive.

10. Our current approach, by comparison, is over-inclusive. By emphasizing tactics and rhetoric we are collapsing the distinctions between transnational terrorist syndicates and superficially similar patterns of indigenous violence. The more we emphasize the ideologies that bring these groups together, the less we appreciate the local and even parochial interests that drive them apart. The lesson here is simple. If we want to prevail on the battlefield and win the war of ideas, then we must categorize our adversaries and prioritize the threats they pose.

11. Three criteria should guide this process. First, we must distinguish groups with global ambitions from those pursuing more parochial ends. Groups with strong ties to a particular community or territory are less likely to defer to the whims of foreign fighters. Even if they share the same radical ideology, they will ultimately express these ideas through local hostilities. People of all political persuasions think globally and act locally. We should not be surprised when terrorists and insurgents do the same.

12. Second, we must distinguish militant Islamists from Salafi-jihadists. Militant Islamists are revolutionaries. They fight for a social and political order built on religious foundations. Their violence serves a political purpose—even when that purpose is one that we oppose. Salafi-jihadists, by comparison, are nihilists and anarchists. They subvert social and political order to serve twisted notions of religious duty. While these ideologies may seem similar in principal, they are irreconcilable in practice. For militant Islamists, jihad is a means to an end. For Salafi-jihadists, jihad is an end unto itself.

13. Third, we must draw operational distinctions between groups that emulate al-Qaeda, groups that collaborate with al-Qaeda, and groups that subordinate themselves to al-Qaeda's will. Emulation is mere mimicking. Collaboration creates partnerships. And subordination involves a public merger between a local subsidiary and global parent. These distinctions qualify the operational "links" between local insurgencies and the global jihad. As I explain in my forthcoming book, some groups will form *ad hoc* alliances with al-Qaeda without accepting its authority. Others will embrace al-Qaeda's message and methods even when there are no meaningful connections between them.

14. The criteria I'm presenting today reveal a spectrum of escalating threats. At the low end we find autonomous rebels that espouse local ideologies and pursue local objectives. Grounded in a discrete community with a clear constituency, they are more likely to resist infiltration by foreign fighters. At the high end we find al-Qaeda's subordinate franchises—franchises that combine global ambitions with a globalized ideology that glorifies perpetual war.

15. Each syndicate in this spectrum presents its own unique challenges. Some threaten our allies with limited risk to ourselves. Others destabilize vital regions without reaching American soil. And some are reviving al-Qaeda's global jihad through local insurgencies. Confronting this diversity will require a more nuanced and discriminating strategy. The war has changed, but it is not yet over.

16. More than two centuries ago, the Prussian strategist Karl von Clausewitz warned that leaders "must first establish the kind of war they are embarking, not mistaking it for, nor turning it into, something alien to its true nature." This is the challenge before us today. We must set priorities based on a clear understanding of our adversaries. We need objective criteria focused on interests, ideologies, and operations rather than subjective speculation that seeks to build al-Qaeda up, or define the threat down. In short, we need to see the world as it is, not as we want it to be.

17. Mr. Chairman, honorable members: I believe that every President needs the discretion to identify and interdict terrorist threats in the field. But Congress also plays an essential role by establishing the legal and strategic framework for the use of force. With all the challenges and controversies confronting the armed services today, this framework desperately needs your attention. Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

Dr. Christopher Swift

Christopher Swift is an Adjunct Professor of National Security Studies at Georgetown University. An attorney and political scientist, Dr. Swift brings more than fifteen years of experience to his research on terrorism, armed conflict, and the intersection between constitutional law, international law, and national security. His forthcoming book, *The Fighting Vanguard: Local Insurgencies in the Global Jihad*, draws on field research in Afghanistan, Central Asia, the North Caucasus, Yemen, and other conflict zones to untangle the complex global web of terrorist and insurgent groups.

In addition to his academic pursuits, Dr. Swift is also an attorney with Foley & Lardner, LLP. As a member of the firm's White Collar Litigation, National Security, and International practices, he counsels clients on matters involving arms controls, economic sanctions, export controls, foreign investment, international trade disputes, treaties and other aspects of public and private international law. He also represents *pro-bono* clients in matters involving constitutional law, veterans' law, and refugee and asylum law.

Prior to entering private practice, Dr. Swift served in the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, where he investigated international transactions involving terrorist syndicates, weapons proliferators, and other sanctioned entities. He also served as an International Law Fellow at the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, where he advised policymakers on terrorism and human rights in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the former Soviet Union.

Dr. Swift's policy experience spans roles with Dartmouth College, Freedom House, Center for Strategic & International Studies, and the University of Virginia Law School's Center for National Security Law. He frequently appears as a guest analyst on legal and national security issues for *ABC News, Al-Jazeera*, the *BBC, CBS News, CNN, National Public Radio*, and other leading broadcast media.

Dr. Swift is a New Hampshire native, an Eagle Scout, and a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations. He holds a Ph.D. in Politics and International Studies from the University of Cambridge, a J.D. from Georgetown University, and M.St. in International Relations from the University of Cambridge, and an A.B. in History and Government from Dartmouth College.

Contact Information

Direct:	+1 202.295.4103
Mobile:	+1 202.243.9072
Twitter:	@christopheswift
E-mail:	cms75@georgetown.edu
Web:	www.christopher-swift.com

DISCLOSURE FORM FOR WITNESSES
CONCERNING FEDERAL CONTRACT AND GRANT INFORMATION

INSTRUCTION TO WITNESSES: Rule 11, clause 2(g)(5), of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives for the 113th Congress requires nongovernmental witnesses appearing before House committees to include in their written statements a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source of any federal contracts or grants (including subcontracts and subgrants) received during the current and two previous fiscal years either by the witness or by an entity represented by the witness. This form is intended to assist witnesses appearing before the House Committee on Armed Services in complying with the House rule. Please note that a copy of these statements, with appropriate redactions to protect the witness's personal privacy (including home address and phone number) will be made publicly available in electronic form not later than one day after the witness's appearance before the committee.

Witness name: Christopher Swift

Capacity in which appearing: (check one)

✓ Individual

___Representative

If appearing in a representative capacity, name of the company, association or other entity being represented:

FISCAL YEAR 2013

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
N/A			

FISCAL YEAR 2012

federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
N/A			

FISCAL YEAR 2011

Federal grant(s) / contracts	federal agency	dollar value	subject(s) of contract or grant
N/A			

Federal Contract Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of contracts (including subcontracts) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2013): N/A;
Fiscal year 2012:_____;
Fiscal year 2011:_____.

Federal agencies with which federal contracts are held:

Current fiscal year (2013): N/A;
Fiscal year 2012:_____;
Fiscal year 2011:_____.

List of subjects of federal contract(s) (for example, ship construction, aircraft parts manufacturing, software design, force structure consultant, architecture & engineering services, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2013): N/A;
Fiscal year 2012:_____;
Fiscal year 2011:_____.

Aggregate dollar value of federal contracts held:

Current fiscal year (2013): N/A;
Fiscal year 2012:_____;
Fiscal year 2011:_____.

Federal Grant Information: If you or the entity you represent before the Committee on Armed Services has grants (including subgrants) with the federal government, please provide the following information:

Number of grants (including subgrants) with the federal government:

Current fiscal year (2013): N/A;
Fiscal year 2012: _____;
Fiscal year 2011: _____.

Federal agencies with which federal grants are held:

Current fiscal year (2013): N/A;
Fiscal year 2012: _____;
Fiscal year 2011: _____.

List of subjects of federal grants(s) (for example, materials research, sociological study, software design, etc.):

Current fiscal year (2013): N/A;
Fiscal year 2012: _____;
Fiscal year 2011: _____.

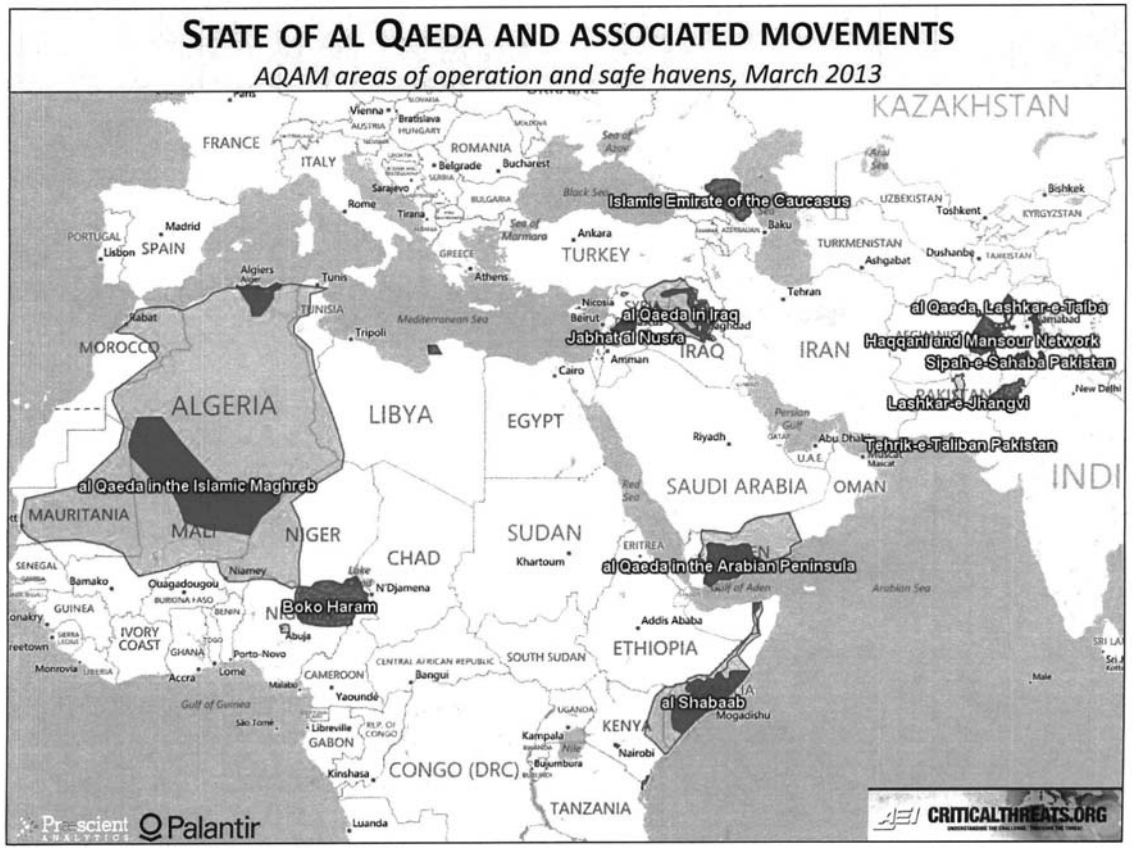
Aggregate dollar value of federal grants held:

Current fiscal year (2013): N/A;
Fiscal year 2012: _____;
Fiscal year 2011: _____.

23 January 2014

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

FEBRUARY 4, 2014


STATE OF AL QAEDA AND ASSOCIATED MOVEMENTS
AQAM areas of operation and safe havens, March 2013
Islamic Emirate of the Caucasus
al Qaeda in Iraq
Jabhat al Nusra
al Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Taiba
Haqqani and Mansour Network
Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan
Lashkar-e-Jhangvi
Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan
al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
Boko Haram
al Shabaab
KAZAKHSTAN
FRANCE
ITALY
SPAIN
PORTUGAL
MOROCCO
ALGERIA
TUNISIA
LIBYA
EGYPT
TURKEY
IRAQ
IRAN
SAUDI ARABIA
OMAN
SUDAN
CHAD
NIGER
MALI
MAURITANIA
ETHIOPIA
KENYA
TANZANIA
CONGO (DRC)
GABON
CAMEROON
GUINEA
IVORY COAST
GHANA
SENEGAL
UZBEKISTAN
TURKMENISTAN
KYRGYZSTAN
TAJIKISTAN
ROMANIA
GREECE
BULGARIA
Mediterranean Sea
Black Sea
Sea of Marmara
Red Sea
Gulf of Aden
Arabian Sea
Gulf of Guinea
Persian Gulf
Madrid
Lisbon
Algiers
Tunis
Rabat
Tripoli
Cairo
Amman
Beirut
Nicosia
Baku
Ankara
Athens
Tehran
Riyadh
Abu Dhabi
Muscat
Khartoum
Addis Ababa
Mogadishu
Nairobi
Kampala
Bujumbura
Kinshasa
Luanda
Libreville
Yaoundé
Bangui
Abuja
Porto-Novo
Lomé
Accra
Monrovia
Bamako
Ouagadougou
Niamey
N'Djamena
Vienna
Bratislava
Belgrade
Bucharest
Sarajevo
Rome
Tirana
Bishkek
Toshkent
Ashgabat
Dushanbe
Islamabad
New Delhi
Male
Sri Lanka
INDI
Pr-scient
Palantir
AEI
CRITICALTHREATS.ORG

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

FEBRUARY 4, 2014

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. TURNER

Mr. TURNER. Since the inception of Al Qaeda in 1988, when do you believe they posed the most significant threat to the United States; was the September 11, 2001, attack the peak of Al Qaeda's ability to impose terror on Americans or was this, simply, vulnerability in the U.S. defense posture?

Dr. SWIFT. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. TURNER. Do you believe Al Qaeda has the ability today to conduct a large-scale attack against the continental U.S. or any of its forward locations on foreign soil?

Dr. SWIFT. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. TURNER. What do you see the strength of Al Qaeda being in 5 years and how can we prevent them from emerging as a dominant force among terror networks?

Dr. SWIFT. [The information was not available at the time of printing.]