

# Transcript of House Homeland Security Committee Hearing on Islamic Radicalization in the United States

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Hearing Held on March 10, 2011

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KING:

Good morning. The Committee on Homeland Security will come to order.

The committee is meeting today to hear testimony on the extent of radicalization in the American Muslim community and to investigate that community's response.

The chair wishes to remind our guests today that demonstrations from the audience, including the use of signs and placards, as well as verbal outbursts are a violation of the rules of the House. And the chair wishes to thank our guests for their cooperation in maintaining order and proper decorum.

In the interests of time, the ranking member and I have agreed we'll have three member witnesses testify on panel one. And after prior consultation with my friend, the ranking member from Mississippi, Mr. Thompson, I ask unanimous consent that Congressman Dingell, Congressman Ellison and Congressman Wolf, as member witnesses, not be subject to questions from committee members.

(CROSSTALK)

KING:

No, they're going to be testifying as one panel. They're testifying as one panel.

(CROSSTALK)

KING:

Without objection, so ordered.

I believe the ranking member has a unanimous consent request to make.

THOMPSON:

Yes. I'd like to ask unanimous consent that Congressmen Carson, Pascrell and Green, when he comes in, be allowed to sit on the panel.

KING:

Without objection, so ordered.

At this time I will now recognize myself for an opening statement.

At the very outset let me thank all the witnesses, the member panel and the witnesses who have traveled to be with us here today. Thank you very much for giving the time in this what I believe to be a very valuable and important hearing.

KING:

Today's hearing will be the first in a series of hearings dealing with the critical issue of the radicalization of Muslim Americans. I am well aware that the announcement of these hearings has generated considerable controversy and opposition.

Some of this opposition, such as from my colleague and friend Mr. Ellison and Mr. Pascrell, has been measured and thoughtful. Other opposition both from special interest groups and the media has ranged from disbelief to paroxysms of rage and hysteria.

Let me make it clear today that I remain convinced that these hearings must go forward -- and they will. To back down would be a craven surrender to political correctness and an abdication of what I believe to be the main responsibility of this committee to protect America from a terrorist attack.

Despite what passes for conventional wisdom in certain circles, there is nothing radical or un-American in holding these hearings. Indeed, congressional investigation of Muslim American radicalization is the logical response to the repeated and urgent warnings which the Obama administration has been making in recent months.

Just this past Sunday, for instance, Denis McDonough, the deputy national security adviser to President Obama, made a major speech on radicalization, stating that, quote, "Al Qaida and its adherents have increasingly turned to another troubling tactic, attempting to recruit and radicalize people to terrorism here in the United States.

"For a long time, many in the U.S. thought that we were immune from this threat. That was false hope and false comfort. This threat is real and it is serious."

Mr. McDonough went on to say, "Al Qaida does this for the express purpose of trying to convince Muslim Americans to reject their country and attack their fellow Americans," end of quote.

I should also add my own personal conversations with McDonough, Mr. McDonough, prior to the speech, he told me to go forward with the hearing and that the administration welcomed congressional involvement.

Similarly, in late December, Attorney General Holder said the growing number of young Americans being radicalized and willing to take up arms against our country, quote, "keeps him awake at night," unquote.

And two weeks before that, the attorney general defended the FBI's sting operation against Mohamed Osman Mohamud who attempted a terror attack during Christmas tree lighting celebration in Portland, Oregon, saying -- the attorney general said he made no apologies for this operation.

Quote, said the attorney general, "Those who characterize the FBI's activities as entrapment simply do not have their facts straight," end of quote.

One month ago, sitting right there, Secretary Napolitano testified before this committee and said the threat level today is as high as it has been since September 11th because of increased radicalization in our country.

And I would ask the audience and the committee just notice this chart over here. Just in the last two years alone, these are terror plots which were blocked by our government.

Virtually every part of the United States is affected by this. It affects the entire nation. Those of us in the Northeast perhaps have more threats, but the fact is that we've found out no one is immune from these type threats, these type attacks.

This committee cannot live in denial, which is what some of us would do when they suggest that this hearing dilute its focus by investigating threats unrelated to Al Qaida.

The Department of Homeland Security and this committee were formed in response to the Al Qaida attacks of September 11. There is no equivalency of threat between Al Qaida and neo-Nazis, environmental extremists or other isolated madmen. Only Al Qaida, and its Islamist affiliates in this country are part of an international threat to our nation.

Indeed by the Justice Department's own record, not one terror- related case in the last two years involved neo-Nazis, environmental extremists, militias or anti-war groups.

I have repeatedly said that the overwhelming majority of Muslim Americans are outstanding Americans and make enormous contributions to our country. But there are realities we can't ignore. For instance, the Pew poll, which said that 15 percent of Muslim American men between the age of 18 and 29 could support suicide bombings. This is the segment of the community Al Qaida is attempting to recruit.

To combat this threat, moderate leadership must emerge from the Muslim community. As the majority and minority staff of the Senate Homeland Security Committee concluded in its report which ironically enough was entitled "Violent Islamist Extremism and the Homegrown Terrorist Threat," this report concluded "Muslim community leaders and religious leaders must play a more visible role in discrediting and providing alternatives to violent Islamist ideology," end of quote.

This means that responsible Muslim American leaders must reject discredited groups such as CAIR, the Committee on American -- the Committee on Islamic American Relations (sic). CAIR was named as an unindicted co-conspirator in the terrorist financing case involving the Holy Land Foundation.

In the lead-up to this hearing, I found it shocking and sad that the mainstream media accepted CAIR's accusations as if it were a legitimate organization.

Thankfully, FBI Director Mueller has ordered the FBI to cease all dealings and contact with CAIR, possibly and probably because of this type of placard and poster which was posted by San Francisco CAIR. I would hope that all law enforcement officials would follow the lead of the FBI director.

Al Qaida realizes that the measures we have put in place over the past nine-and-a-half years make it very difficult to launch a large- scale attack against our homeland from outside the country, which is why they have altered their strategy and are using people living legally in the United States.

These include New York City subway bomber, Najibullah Zazi, Fort Hood terrorist U.S. Army Major Nidal Hasan, Colleen LaRose, known as Jihad Jane, Time Square bomber, Faisal Shahzad, Little Rock recruiting center shooter, Carlos Bledsoe -- his father is a witness here today -- and dozens of individuals in Minneapolis associated with the Somali terrorist organization Al-Shabaab -- and the uncle of one of those young man who was radicalized in Minneapolis, sent to Somalia, and eventually killed is also with us here today -- and then, also, the Mumbai plotter, David Headley.

Let me thank all of the witnesses for giving up their valuable time to be with us here today.

I want to express special thanks, however, to Melvin Bledsoe and Abdirizak Bihi. These brave men have endured suffering no father or uncle should ever have to go through. Their courage and spirit will put a human face on the horror which Islamic radicalization has inflicted and will continue to inflict on good families, especially those in the Muslim community, unless we put aside political correctness and define who our enemy truly is.

As we approach the 10-year anniversary of the September 11th attacks, we cannot allow the memory of that tragic day to fade away. We must remember that in the days following the attack, we were all united in our dedication to fight back against Al Qaida and its ideology.

Today we must be fully aware that homegrown radicalization is part of Al Qaida's strategy to continue attacking the United States. Al Qaida is actively targeting the American Muslim community for recruitment. Today's hearing will address this dangerous trend.

And now it's my privilege to recommend -- or to recognize the distinguished ranking member of the committee, the gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. Thompson.

THOMPSON:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

As we began today's hearing, I want to take a moment to thank you for agreeing to my request to invite Representative Dingell and Sheriff Baca. These witnesses will add to the committee's understanding of the outreach and cooperation between the Muslim community and government officials.

I want to reiterate, however, my belief that a hearing on the linkage between extreme ideology and violent action should be a broad-based examination. Yesterday, the FBI made an arrest in the recent Martin Luther King Day bombing attempt. News reports identified a suspect as a member of the same white supremacist (sic) group that influenced Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh.

I urge you, Mr. Chairman, to hold a hearing examining the homeland security threat posed by anti-government and white supremacist (sic) groups. As the Committee on Homeland Security, our mission is to examine threats to this nation's security. A narrow focus that excludes known threats lacks clarity and may be myopic.

THOMPSON:

I understand that our personal experiences play a role in how we see the world. We've all come to this place from somewhere else.

As I understand it, the chairman's background includes the history of a country divided by religion and torn by a prolonged and violent struggle.

I'm from Mississippi. My personal history is one which nonviolence was a bedrock principle in a struggle for societal change and political rights. Religion played a role in that struggle, too, but we are not here in these places now.

As members of Congress, our words transcend this hearing room. We must be vigilant that our words and our actions do not inflame.

Acknowledgement of an obligation to be responsible does not equal political correctness. We must be mindful that this country is conducting two wars. Our words and our actions cannot be used to endanger our soldiers.

I had hoped that this hearing could be used as a forum to point out a recent report of the Southern Poverty Law Center. Last week, the Southern Poverty Law Center released a chilling report: The number of active hate groups in the United States topped 1,000 for the first time, and an anti-government movement has expanded dramatically for the second straight year.

The Southern Poverty Law Center study indicates that several factors have fueled this growth. Those factors include resentment over the changing racial demographics of this country, frustration over the lagging economy, and the mainstreaming of conspiracy theories and other demonizing propaganda aimed at minorities and the government.

I'm particularly troubled that much of the current vitriol has been directed toward the president and first lady.

In the work -- wake of the Gabrielle Giffords shooting, news accounts indicate that in a public meeting, a member of Congress heard a threat made against the life of the president that was greeted with laughter. We live in troubling times.

I've heard concerns that today's hearing would stoke a climate of fear and distrust in the Muslim community. It may also increase the fear and distrust of the Muslim community, for -- for law enforcement officials' outreach, and cooperation may become more difficult.

As we consider the possible domestic effects of our actions, we must also consider the possible effects abroad. As I look at the recent uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East, I'm struck by the fact that these movements are inspired by secular notions of democracy and freedom. Theocracy seems to be on the sidelines.

In scores of hearings and briefings, members of this community have been told that Al Qaida remains a recruiting tool in the notion that the powers of the West are aligned against the people of the Middle East.

The U.S. is accused of engaging in a modern-day crusade against Islam. We cannot give this lie a place to rest.

I cannot help but wonder how propaganda about this hearing -- focuses on American Muslim community -- will be used by those who seek to inspire a new generation of suicide bombers.

I yield back.

KING:

I thank the gentleman from Mississippi. Thank you, Ranking Member Thompson.

And just remind other members of the committee that opening statements may be submitted for the record.

And now I would like to welcome our first panel, the gentleman from Michigan, the dean of the House, Congressman John Dingell; the gentleman from Minnesota, Congressman Keith Ellison; and the gentleman from Virginia, Congressman Wolf.

And as -- I don't have to tell any of you, you know your entire written statements will appear in the record. I would ask you to try to summarize your statements at this time.

And now it is my privilege to -- to ask Chairman Dingell to begin his testimony.

Thank you, John.

DINGELL:

(OFF-MIKE)

KING:

Chairman, I think your microphone is...

DINGELL:

And I thank you and (inaudible) the ranking member, Mr. Thompson, for your courtesy and also the members of the committee for your kindness to me.

This is a hearing which has great potential, and I'm very hopeful that under your leadership and with the cooperation of members of the committee that -- that good results will have been achieved. And there is reason for us to go into this question of risk to our nation. And that is, of course, one of the assigned businesses of this particular committee.

For the record, I'm John Dingell, member of Congress from Michigan's 15th Congressional District. As you mentioned, I'm the dean of the House. I have engaged in the practice of being chair of committees for many years, and also in running investigative committees.

I represent a very polyglot and diverse congressional district in which we have all races, religions, and all parts of the world society represented.

I represent a very fine community of Muslim Americans that I'm here to tell you something, which you know, and that is they are loyal, decent, honorable Americans. They hold elective office.

They have immigrated to our state from all parts of the Middle East. They're Lebanese, Yemeni, Palestinian, Iraqi, Egyptians, amongst others, Iranians. And they come from all parts of the world.

Muslim Americans are honorable citizens, loyal Americans, and they're as much distressed as we are about what it is we see going on. They are, as I mentioned, not only ordinary citizens but professionals, elected officials, members of the state legislature, people who sit on the -- on the courts as judges, and persons who hold other high offices in our society.

They are almost, without exception, honorable, loyal citizens. And as I've indicated, they are distressed as much as we are about the behavior of Al Qaida and other threats to their nation as we are to sharing their concerns about what is of danger to our nation.

The -- as I mentioned, for years I ran investigative committees. I kept a picture of Joe McCarthy hanging on the wall so that I would know what it was I did not want to look like, to do or to be.

I believe that this committee going into these matters wisely, carefully, and well can achieve a fine result of alerting the nation to the real concern.

I would beg you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of the committee to do what I know you are fully intent upon doing, and that is to see to it that as we go into these matters, we do not blot the good name or the loyalty, or raise questions about the decency of Arabs or Muslims or other Americans en masse.

There will be plenty of rascals that we can point at and say, "These are real dangerous to the nation that we love and that we serve."

I want to tell you how much I appreciate your courtesy in permitting me to be here this morning. And I know that you will see to it, Mr. Chairman and the members of the committee, that we address the problems that we confront in terms of our national security in a fair, decent, thoughtful, and honorable fashion.

And I am prepared to leave, then, this high responsibility to you; and with the assurances of my good wishes and support. And, again, the hope that people will understand that the purposes of this hearing should be to find where there is wrongdoing, danger, and risk to our country, while at the same time not raising threats about the loyalty or the patriotism of important branches of our society who are as loyal, decent and good, thoughtful, and honorable Americans as are all of us here present in this room.

And I thank you for your courtesy to me, Mr. Chairman.

KING:

Thank you, Chairman Dingell.

And I have to admit, I still haven't acclimated myself to seeing you on the other side of the microphone...

(LAUGHTER)

... through the many years when you were sitting in the chairman's chair.

So thank you for your testimony this morning.

DINGELL:

We've been friends a long time.

Thank you.

KING:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Our next witness is Congressman Ellison from Minnesota.

I would just add as a preface -- and I have no idea what Congressman Ellison is going to say. He and I have very divergent views on this issue, but we try to maintain a -- very easily have maintained a cordial relationship.

And when Congressman Ellison spoke to me in mid-December about the possibility of being at the hearing, I welcomed his request. And I'm pleased to have him here today to certainly explain and discuss his version and his analysis of the -- of the crisis confronting us today.

And with that, I recognize the gentleman from Minnesota, Mr. Ellison.

ELLISON:

Thank you, Chairman King, for allowing me to testify today.

Though the chairman and I sometimes do disagree, including on the aspects of this hearing, I appreciate his willingness to engage in this dialogue.

Let me also thank the ranking member, Chairman Thompson -- excuse me, Ranking Member Thompson for his commitment to homeland security and civil rights for all.

It's a challenge to protect both security and liberty, but Congressman Thompson seems to strike the right balance.

ELLISON:

I'd like to introduce Talat Hamdani, who is with us today. She's the brave mother of Mohammad Salman Hamdani, a first responder who died trying to rescue fellow Americans on 9/11.

I'd like to make three points today, Mr. Chairman.

First, violent is a serious concern to all Americans and is the legitimate business of this committee.

Second, this committee's approach to this particular subject, I believe, is contrary to the best of American values and threatens our security, or could potentially.

Finally, we need increased understanding and engagement with the Muslim community in order to keep America safe.

Let me elaborate on my first point. Understanding the roots of domestic terrorism is the legitimate business of the House Homeland Security Committee. I share the chairman's concern

about violent extremism. I voted for the Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007 authored by Representative Jane Harman.

This bill was a common-sense approach to studying violent extremism in the United States. After gathering more feedback from the community, I expect to introduce a similar bill in the future.

I recently made a presentation sponsored by the Center for American Progress called "Strengthening American Security: Identifying, Preventing and Responding to Domestic Terrorism." My presentation there addressed causes of violent extremism and solutions for prevention and intervention.

The safety of our families and communities is at stake in our discussion today. We should apply the utmost professionalism to this issue, which leads me to my second point.

We need to conduct a thorough, fair analysis and to do no harm. The approach of today's hearing, I fear, does not meet these standards. Today's hearing is entitled, "The Extent of Radicalization of the American Muslim Community and That Community's Response."

It's true that specific individuals, including some who are Muslims, are violent extremists. However, these are individuals, not entire communities. Individuals like Anwar al-Awlaki, Faisal Shahzad, Nidal Hasan do not represent the Muslim community.

When you assign violent -- their violent actions to the entire community, you assign collective blame to a whole group. This is the very heart of stereotyping and scapegoating. This is the heart of my testimony today. Ascribing evil acts of a few individuals to an entire community is wrong. It is ineffective, and it risks making our country less safe.

Solutions to the scourge of domestic terrorism often emerge from individuals from within the Muslim community, a point I address later in my testimony. However, demanding a community response as the title of the hearing suggests, asserts that the entire community bears responsibility for the violent acts of individuals.

Targeting of the Muslim American community for the actions of a few is unjust. Actually, all of us, all communities are responsible for combating violent extremism. Singling out one community focuses our analysis in the wrong direction.

Throughout human history, individuals from all communities and faiths have used religion and political ideology to justify violence. Let's just think about the KKK, America's oldest terrorist organization, the Oklahoma City bombing, the shooting at the Holocaust Museum by James von Brunn, and bombings at Planned Parenthood clinics. Did Congress focus on the ethnic group or religion of these agents of violence as a matter of public policy? The answer is no.

Stoking fears about an entire group for a political agenda is not new in American history. During World War II, the United States government interned the Japanese-Americans and spied on German-Americans. During John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign his opponents portrayed

his -- portrayed a dire future for an America with a Catholic president. We now view these events of our past as a breach of our treasured American values.

Let's talk about facts rather than stereotypes. In fact, the Muslim American community rejects violent ideology. The RAND Corporation, a highly respected research organization, released a report last year that states the following, quote: "Given a low rate of would-be violent extremists, about 100 amongst the estimated 3 million American Muslims, suggests that the American Muslim population remains hostile to jihadist ideology and its exhortations to violence."

At a Justice Department press conference just yesterday, Attorney General Eric Holder said, quote, "The Muslim community has contributed significantly to the resolution of many things that have resolved over the -- resolved over the last -- over the course of the last 12 to 18 months. Tips have been received, information has been shared, has been critical to our effort to disrupt plots that otherwise might have occurred."

Muslim American community across the country actively works with law enforcement officials, from dialogues with Attorney General Eric Holder, to community meetings with local police in Minneapolis. Recently tips from Muslim American community foiled two domestic terror plots, including the case of the Times Square bomber and the Northern Virginia Five. Law enforcement officials depend upon those relationships.

A recent report by the Muslim Public Affairs Council stated that information provided by Muslim Americans has helped to foil seven domestic terror plots and 40 percent of the -- of all plots since 9/11. A 2011 study from Duke University Triangle Center on terrorism reiterated that 40 percent of the domestic terror plots that have been prevented with the aid of the Muslim American community.

This cooperation with law enforcement is rooted in relationships and trust, relationships we should nurture. A witness at today's hearing, Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca, testified before the House Homeland Security Subcommittee last year. He said, to effectively detect and manage extremists, police need to have trust and the understanding of the Muslim communities who live within and outside the United States; simply, police need public participation.

As leaders, we need to be rigorous about our analysis of violent extremism. Our responsibility includes doing no harm. I am concerned that the focus of today's hearing may increase suspicion of the Muslim American community, ultimately making us all a little less safe.

We have seen the consequences of anti-Muslim sentiment, from backlash against Park51 Muslim Community Center, to the hostilities against the Islamic Center in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, to a threatened Koran burning in Gainesville, Florida. Zoning boards in communities like DuPage, Illinois, are denying permits to build mosques.

At the height of the Park51 controversy, a man asked a cabbie whether he was a Muslim. When the cabbie said, "Assalamu-alaikum," which means, "Peace be unto you," the individual stabbed him.

Denis McDonough, the president's deputy national security adviser, recently spoke at the ADAMS Center at the All -- the All Dulles American Muslim Society. Mr. McDonough noted that Al Qaida's core recruiting argument is that the West is at war with Islam.

A chief goal of our national security policy is to undermine this argument. This requires active engagement with Muslim community at home and throughout the world. As President Obama said in his Cairo speech, quote, "Islam is not part of the problem in combating violent extremism. It is an important part of promoting peace."

This brings me to my last point, and I will try to hurry, Mr. Chairman, 'cause I see the time. OK.

The best defense against extreme ideologies is social inclusion and civic engagement. FBI Agent Ralph Boelter, head of the Minneapolis FBI, illustrates my point. He led a large-scale probe into counterterrorism involving local Somali-Americans headed -- heading overseas to fight with terrorist organizations. He's now coming to D.C. to become the agency's deputy assistant director in charge of counterterrorism.

Boelter's strategy: To find extremism, the agency needs to establish sincere relationships within the community. Quote, "We had to be able to show people that they could trust me, trust us," Boelter said of the local community.

FBI Agent Boelter, quote, "showed a side to the FBI that people don't see," unquote, said Minneapolis Police Chief Tim Dolan. "They needed that. They needed a little more to make their case. And it paid off because of the connections he made. People came forward. He became somebody that they were willing to go to," unquote.

Unfortunately, I fear that this hearing may -- may undermine our efforts in this direction. Recently, on a news program, it was stated, quote, "How about the number of young Somali men who went to Somalia and the imams and leaders in Minneapolis Muslim community who refused to cooperate at all? They denying for a long time that they had even left."

This sweeping statement regarding the community I represent is inaccurate. Unfortunately, why weren't law enforcements from Minneapolis invited to testify before this committee about the effective counterterrorism work that is going on in Minneapolis today? I invite that -- I invite and would welcome such an invitation.

ELLISON:

In January, the Department of Homeland Security of the Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (sic) convened a youth summit with Somali-American youth and law enforcement agencies in Minneapolis.

The event attracted over 100 people, including U.S. Attorney, three Somali-American police officers, myself, several law enforcement and security agencies. The meeting provided an opportunity for Somali youth groups to learn more about the various roles and responsibilities of

the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and to discuss community issues and concerns with government representatives.

Meeting participants discussed ways in which Somali youth and government entities can improve communication.

Muslim Americans have been part of the American scene since the nation's founding. A little-known fact is that Cedar Rapids, Iowa is one -- is home to one of the oldest mosques in America. The Muslim community is just like the rest of us. Muslims serve our nation as doctors, lawyers, teachers, business owners, cab drivers, and even members of Congress.

Muslim Americans live in every community in America. They are our neighbors. In short, they are us. Every American, including Muslim Americans, suffered on 9/11. Twenty-nine Muslims died at the World Trade Center. Three Muslims died in the hijacked airplanes, United flight 175 and American flight 11. Muslims stood with the rest of America united in grief and in resolve to protect America. Along with Americans of all faiths, Muslim Americans rushed into save and rescue victims of Al Qaida's terrorism.

Let me close with a true story, but remember that it's only one of many American stories that could be told. Mohammed Salman Hamdani was a 23-year-old paramedic, a New York City police cadet, and Muslim American. He was one of those brave first responders who tragically lost his life in 9/11 terrorist attacks almost a decade ago. As the New York Times eulogized, he wanted to be seen as an all-American kid. He wore number 79 on the high school football team in Bayside, Queens, where he lived.

He was called "Sal" by his friends. He became a research assistant at the Rockefeller University and drove an ambulance part-time. One Christmas he sang Handel's Messiah in Queens. He saw all of the "Star Wars" movies, and it is well known that his new Honda was the one that read -- with the "Young Jedi" license plates.

Mr. Hamdani bravely sacrificed his life to try to help others on 9/11. After the tragedy, some people tried to smear his character solely because of his Islamic faith. Some people spread false rumors and speculated that he was in league with the attackers because he was a Muslim. But it was only when his remains were identified that these lies were exposed.

Mohammed Salman Hamdani was a fellow American who gave his life for other Americans. His life should not be identified as just a member of an ethnic group or just a member of a religion, but as an American who gave everything for his fellow Americans.

I yield back.

JACKSON LEE:

Mr. Chairman?

KING:

I thank the gentleman for his testimony.

JACKSON LEE:

Mr. Chairman?

KING:

The gentlelady from Texas?

JACKSON LEE:

Parliamentary inquiry. Being moved by the statement of Mr. Ellison, I am wondering whether or not you would waive the rules of this committee to allow all members to have opening statements...

(CROSSTALK)

KING:

No, I will not. I would tell the gentlelady...

(CROSSTALK)

JACKSON LEE:

I think -- Mr. Chairman, I would like to finish my inquiry. I think because of the severity of this issue and the passion that is being expressed and the concern for demonizing of one group, that members need to be on the record to be able to express their view, their opposition, or their support for the format and the structure of this hearing.

KING:

Reclaiming my time, the regular rules of procedure will be followed, and I recognize the gentleman from Virginia.

JACKSON LEE:

I object, Mr. Chairman.

KING:

I recognize the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Wolf. Mr. Wolf has served long in the Congress. He has shown particular interest in this issue and his district has had severe cases of radicalization. I recognize Mr. Wolf.

WOLF:

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to testify. I commend your leadership in holding these hearings and I will revise and summarize.

I've been following radical Islamic terrorism for nearly three decades. In 1998, I authored legislation creating the National Commission on Terrorism and highlighted the threat from Osama bin Laden in my introductory remarks. I was the chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee that funds the FBI on September 11, 2001 and worked closely with Director Mueller from 2002 to 2006 to transform its missions to deal with the terrorist threat.

I am again chairman of that subcommittee and have received regular briefings on terrorism and visit the Counterterrorism Center quite often in Northern Virginia and the (inaudible) about the new and growing threat posed by domestic radicalization.

According to the Congressional Research Service, there have been 43 home-grown jihadist terrorist plots and attacks since 9/11, including 22 plots or attacks since May, 2009. As U.S. government officials, law enforcement and community leaders seek to combat this emerging challenge, we must foster partnerships with peaceful and law-abiding Americans of the Muslim faith.

Mr. Chairman, over the last three decades, I have seen first-hand the violence and the repression against Muslims in many countries and have spoken out in their defense in places such as Sudan, Chechnya, Kosovo and China. In Bosnia, I was one of the only members to visit a Muslim men prison camp run by the Serbs, where I saw evidence of modern-day ethnic cleansing and supported lifting the arms embargo so the Muslim population could defend themselves in Bosnia and Sarajevo.

I am mindful of the important role that American Muslims play today. They are teachers, doctors, policemen and soldiers. They are mothers, fathers, neighbors. They are patriotic Americans. Some have paid the ultimate price in service to the country. I am reminded of a young Pakistani American that I had the privilege of meeting at Walter Reed Hospital. He had lost both legs in combat in Iraq. He was a patriot who makes us proud and he was a Muslim.

In my oversight of the Justice Department, including both its civil rights and national security programs, I am mindful of the government's responsibility to safeguard the rights of all Americans. There have been instances in our nation's history, especially when our country has been under attack, where the civil liberties of certain groups of people have been violated because other people were afraid. This is inexcusable, but this is the exception and not the rule.

Yet, Mr. Chairman, we cannot ignore the phenomenon of domestic radicalization. It is a national security challenge that must be confronted. According to a recent report by respected counterterrorism experts Bruce Hoffman and Peter Bergen called "Assessing the Terrorist Threat," I quote, they said, "The American melting pot has not provided a firewall against the radicalization and recruitment of American citizens and residents, though it has arguably lulled us into a sense of complacency that home-grown terrorism couldn't happen in the United States."

They went on to say, "By not taking more urgently and seriously the radicalization and recruitment that was actually occurring in the U.S., authorities failed to comprehend that this was not an isolated phenomenon. Rather, it indicated the possibility that even an embryonic terrorist radicalization and recruitment infrastructure had been established in the U.S. homeland," end of quote.

Consider the following individuals who have been radicalized in my state of Virginia, or I would even say here in Northern Virginia. In October, 2010, Farooque Ahmad from Ashburn, Virginia, was arrested for allegedly plotting attacks on the Washington Metro system, targeting stations to find times to kill as many people as possible.

In July, 2010, Zachary Chesser, graduate of Oakton High School, was arrested in New York en route to join Al-Shabaab in Somalia. Chesser pled guilty to charges of providing material support to terrorists, communicating threats, and soliciting crimes of violence and was sentenced to 30 years.

In November, 2009, five American Muslim teenagers from Fairfax County were arrested in Pakistan attempting to join militant Islamist organizations. They have been sentenced to 10 years in a Pakistan prison.

In November, 2009, Virginia native Army Major Nidal Hasan killed 13 servicemen and -women serving at Fort Hood, Texas. Hasan grew up in Arlington, went to Wakefield High School, and later moved to Roanoke.

In 2004, Abdul Rahman al-Amoudi from Falls Church, Virginia was convicted on three charges of terrorist financing and conspiring to assassinate Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah and was sentenced to 23 years in prison.

WOLF:

In 2003, Ahmed Omar Abu Ali, Northern Virginia resident, and the Islamic Saudi Academy's 1999 valedictorian, was arrested in Saudi Arabia and was later convicted in federal district court in Alexandria of conspiracy to commit terrorism, including a plot to assassinate President Bush. He was sentenced to life in prison.

One also cannot overlook the prominent role that Anwar Awlaki, an American citizen, played in Northern Virginia during his time preaching at a mosque in Falls Church, Virginia. This is particularly noteworthy given his recruitment of the Fort Hood shooter, the Christmas Day bomber and the Times Square bomber.

Some experts say the Internet is the conduit through which radical voices like Awlaki corrupt minds, while others say it is the important importation of radical Wahhabism.

As we deal with a growing threat, it is troubling, Mr. Chairman, to see a group such as the Council on American Islamic Relations, commonly known as CAIR, attempt to stifle debate and obstruct cooperation with law enforcement.

In June 2009, I spoke on the House floor in great detail laying out my concern about CAIR and discussing the Holy Land Foundation case. The foundation and five of its former organizers were found guilty of illegally funneling more than \$12 million to Hamas. And we know Hamas -- Hamas is a terrorist organization on the terrorist list by the E.U., by the United States, and wants to destroy Israel. They're designated a foreign terrorist organization.

And among the unindicted co-conspirators in the case was CAIR. CAIR is routinely, and I believe mistakenly, elevated in the press as the voice of mainstream American Muslims. And they have been granted access to the highest levels of government at times.

Last week during a hearing before my subcommittee, Attorney General Eric Holder recognized CAIR's, quote, "troubled history," he said. And FBI Director Robert Mueller has suspended all noninvestigative cooperation with CAIR.

My concern about CAIR is not limited to its disturbing origins and connection to terrorist finances. I'm equally concerned about CAIR's role in attacking the reputations of any -- attacking the reputations of any who dare to raise concerns about domestic radicalization.

In a May 25, 2007, Wall Street Journal op-ed, Tawfik Hamid, a former member of a terrorist organization, described terror as, quote, "perhaps the most conspicuous organization to persistently accuse opponents of Islamophobia," end of quote.

Additionally, in October 2008, the editorial page editor of the Columbus Dispatch spoke to CAIR's bent on accusation as a means of muzzling debate. They said, and I quote, "For many years CAIR has waged a campaign to intimidate and silence anyone who raises alarms about the danger of Islamic extremism.

"The group acts properly when it hammers home the point that only a small number of Muslims support religiously motivated violence and that targeting law-abiding Muslims is wrong."

They went on to say, "Where CAIR errs is in labeling anyone who discusses Islamic terrorism as a bigot and hate-monger, an Islamophobe, to use CAIR's favorite slur," end of quote.

However, discourse is not all that CAIR seeks to silence. In many cases its national and state chapter leaders actively dissuade American Muslims from cooperating with law enforcement. After dozens of Somalian-Americans disappeared from the Minneapolis area in 2009, CAIR attempted to drive a wedge between the Muslim community and the FBI, which was seeking to track down the missing men.

According to official estimates, at least two dozen Americans have moved to Somalia in recent years to join the terrorist group Al-Shabaab and roughly 10 -- 10 Americans who have gone there have been killed in fighting or acts of terrorism while they've been connected with Al-Shabaab.

In January 2011, CAIR's California chapter displayed an old poster on its website which stated, "Build a wall of resistance, don't talk to the FBI." Although CAIR removed the poster once the media reported on it, it reflects a larger and I think a very troubling pattern.

When the terrorism commission legislation was moving in 1998. in CAIR's own words, they asked Muslims to contact leaders of the House- Senate committee and urge them to amend or eliminate the new legislation that would create a national commission on terrorism. This was misguided, and fortunately it was not successful.

Regrettably, the commission's recommendations sent to Congress in 2000 -- in June 2000 were generally ignored until 9/11, when 3,000 people were killed, including more than two dozen -- two dozen -- from my congressional district.

Let me be clear: CAIR is counterproductive and it is hurting the American Muslim community. I raise these concerns because if we are to successfully counter domestic radicalization, law enforcement in particular will need the active engagement of Muslim communities.

Mr. Chairman, I have a recommendation to address the challenge of domestic radicalization head-on. I commend the FBI and Director Mueller and all the men of the FBI -- and men and women of the FBI and our other services for the outstanding work that they have done in intercepting would-be terrorists before their attacks.

But, despite the FBI's success, the U.S. does not have an effective or a coherent policy to thwart radicalization. That is why I will soon be introducing legislation to create a team B to bring fresh eyes to U.S. domestic radicalization and counterterrorism strategy.

The team would represent a new approach which focuses not just on connecting the dots of intelligence but on rethinking the nature of threats to stay a step ahead in understanding how to break the radicalization and recruitment cycle that sustains terrorism, how to disrupt the goal of a terrorist network and how to strategically isolate it.

During the Ford administration, the CIA created a Team B, composed of outside experts, to reexamine intelligence relating to Soviet capabilities. Their conclusions were markedly different than those of the agency officials. Many of their assessments were used in the Reagan administration to deal with the Soviets, ultimately leading to the end of the Cold War.

Today, our intelligence community and federal law enforcement are so inundated with reports and investigations that they do not have the capacity to step back and strategically reevaluate the threat before us. I believe a team B would provide a tremendous service in making recommendations on how we can disrupt domestic radicalization.

I was working closely with former Congressman Jane Harman on a bipartisan proposal, before she retired to leave to go to the Woodrow Wilson Institute. For over a year, I repeatedly have written the administration urging them to implement this proposal. They have not.

Mr. Chairman, I urge your support of this legislation, and thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I strongly believe your hearings will provide the Congress with a starting point for a new dialogue about fighting extremism and radicalization.

We cannot afford to be silent. I am reminded of the song by Simon and Garfunkel, "The Boxer," that says "man hears what he wants to hear, but disregards the rest."

We cannot disregard the issue of radicalization in our country. Your hearings can provide a productive forum for a much-needed dialogue about domestic radicalization. And I want to thank you very much for your leadership.

KING:

Thank you, Chairman Wolf, for your testimony. And we look forward to considering your legislation. Thank you.

The panel is dismissed.

I want to thank all the congressional witnesses for their testimony. And I would now invite the witnesses on the second panel to be seated at the witness table for your testimony.

KING:

Let me again thank each of the four witnesses for being here today for giving us their valuable time, their input and their varying views, but all that I believe is essential as we go forward. And I look forward to the testimony of our first witness today.

Dr. Zuhdi Jasser is the president and founder of the American Islamic Forum for Democracy. A devout Muslim, Dr. Jasser founded AIFD in the wake of the 9/11 attacks on the United States as an effort to provide an American Muslim voice advocating for the preservation of the founding principles of the United States Constitution.

I must say, as a member of Congress, I remember Dr. Jasser when he was here. He's a respected physician and former lieutenant commander of the United States Navy. And he actually worked in the attending physician's office here in the United States Capitol.

For better or worse, he kept us healthy. Some of our constituents may not be too happy about that, but you did a great job of keeping us -- keeping us very healthy.

And, again, I appreciate you being here today.

And the gentleman is recognized, Dr. Jasser.

Doctor, could you put on the microphone there, please?

JASSER:

Thank you.

KING:

Thank you.

JASSER:

Thank you, Chairman King, Ranking Member Thompson, distinguished members of the committee for seeking my testimony on what I feel is the most important threat to American security in the 21st century.

As Chairman King said, I come to you as a devout Muslim and somebody that is very concerned about our country, and not only its polarization but its paralysis in dealing with this problem.

We formed our organization to address this, but yet we've not been able to even move one step forward significantly because of that paralysis.

One camp on the polarization refuses to believe that any Muslim could be radicalized, and yet we see, as we've discussed here until now, a significant increase in the number -- an exponential increase of the number of radicalized Muslims that may not be from within our communities that we know, but are Muslims nonetheless.

On the other side of the polarity is those that feel that Islam is the problem and (inaudible) want to label Muslims as all one collective, and really are seeking no solutions.

I think in the majority in the middle is moderate America that is looking for a solution. And I think these hearings are an opportunity for Muslims to address that solution.

Let me be clear and state up front that unequivocally, for the record, that the U.S. has a significant problem with Muslim radicalization.

You know, listen, I'm Muslim and I realize that it's my problem, and I need to fix it. And that's what I'm trying to do. It's unfortunate that you have -- some of the best work on radicalization is being done by non-Muslims, like the NYPD report on radicalization. Most Muslim groups condemn that report, when in fact we Muslims should have been doing that report.

Let me also state clearly that it is a problem that we can only solve. Christians, Jews, non-Muslims cannot solve Muslim radicalization. So, yes, there may be other types of violent extremism, but that cannot be solved by non-Muslims.

So we can close our eyes and pretend it doesn't exist. We can call everybody a bigot or Islamophobic to even talk about it. But you're not going to solve the problem, and the problem is increasing exponentially.

What I -- what I hope that we can discuss is get beyond this blind concept of violent extremism. It is a final step, but radicalization is a continuum. Cooperation is a continuum.

I personally never known a Muslim that wouldn't report somebody about to blow something up or commit an act of violence, but that's a final step on a continuum of radicalization.

I believe there are small elements, but significant elements of ideology within our community that is radicalizing based on the identification, the lack of identification and the separatism and the disenfranchisement of certain Muslims from this society that makes them not bond, makes them not trust the government, makes them distrust the FBI, and creates a culture of a lack of cooperation. That's what we need your help in solving.

America's current paradigm is failing.

And, you know, I'm a physician. I was trained as a physician to -- patients come in, they've got three or four symptoms. Typically, they have one diagnosis. They don't come in with three symptoms and three diagnoses.

So when we look at the problem of radicalization, we have to realize that the panoply of excuses that are given -- that foreign policy, our domestic policy, all this kind of stuff -- those will never run out. At the end of the day, it's a moral corruption within a certain segment that is using our religion, hijacking it for a theo- political movement that is not only domestic, but it is global.

And the reason I'm here today and taking the time away from my family and my work to do that, to be here with you, is because we're failing. We are not addressing this. We're so much soaking up the bandwidth of the discussion in this country on this with victimization that we're not addressing the core problem and the root cause.

And, yet, these halls, this government was based on discussing religious diversity. Our -- our founding fathers, our establishment clause was based on being able to have discussions that were functional on religion. But, yet, once a -- a movement, a threat hijacks religion, we seem to become completely dysfunctional and we get histrionics, and we can't even talk about that. And I hope we can move beyond that.

I fear for the legacy that my children will have. Because I want them to be able to have the gift just like I got from my parents that felt American -- the first minute they stepped off the plane when they came from the oppression of Syria, and they understood that they could practice their faith, their beautiful faith of Islam more freely here than they could anywhere else in the world.

Why? Because this government is not under one faith. It's under God, and it's based on liberty. These are the principles.

Just as Prime Minister Cameron said, we can't continue to play defense. We need a muscular liberalism. And so far, our tax money, our resources has been squandered. We've continued to play defense.

And until we have an ideological offense into the Muslim communities domestically and globally to teach liberty, to teach the separation of mosque and state, you are not going to solve this problem. We are not going to solve it.

I'm not saying that you can solve theology. You shouldn't be solving theology. That's my problem. But we need to build public/private partnerships to build platforms where you can advocate for the laws of the Constitution that are universal human rights that are based in the equality of men and women, the equality of all faiths before law.

These are principles that certain pockets of Islamic law, Islamic legalisms within systems in this country and outside are advocating that are in contradiction with our government, our society, and end up radicalizing on a continuum, end up creating a culture of lack of cooperation.

And until you treat that diagnosis -- what I call political Islam -- spiritual Islam will continue to suffer, our faith community will suffer, and this country's security will continue to suffer.

The current groups that have been speaking on our behalf, I think, have been failing. They may be well-intended about civil rights, but they're apologetics, their dismissals have been completely failing.

I think, if you look at Nidal Hasan, he didn't become radical overnight. And if you look at his resume, it's frighteningly similar to mine. But yet something happened in him over years -- over years. And you can't just blame Awlaki.

Awlaki himself, before he became a radicalizer, was being radicalized somewhere. And he was giving sermons in mosques in Denver and San Diego and Northern Virginia. And when you talk to certain leaders in the Muslim community they say, "Oh, all of a sudden we don't know what happened. He became violent."

That's not the way it works. Pathology creeps up over time. And there is -- just as we see in alcoholism, there's enablers. And the enabling that's been happening in some of our -- not all and not even a majority -- has been -- has been, I think, significantly causing a progression of this problem. And that's why we're not treating it and getting better.

KING:

Dr. Jasser, if you could try to conclude in about 30 seconds, please?

JASSER:

Yes, sir.

KING:

Thank you.

JASSER:

So, ultimately, we need solutions. Our organization has talked to and created a Muslim liberty project that looks at inoculating Muslims with the ideals of liberty, giving them the empowerment to counter imams, to feel that they can represent their own faith.

We have a retreat coming in the next month to bring Muslims in from all over the country to begin that retreat (ph) process.

This is our homeland. And we want to set this (inaudible) to begin, if you will, a counter jihad, an offense to counter the ideas. That I think is the best way to use our resources as a nation, and remember that the freedoms that we have don't come with a cheap price, and we need to give back. And that the solution ultimately (inaudible) fear of Muslims, if it exists, is for Americans to see Muslims leading the charge against radical Islam.

Thank you.

KING:

Thank you, Dr. Jasser.

Our next witness is Melvin Bledsoe, the father of Carlos Leon Bledsoe -- also known as Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad.

Mr. Bledsoe is recognized for five minutes.

And, if you could, Mr. Bledsoe, try to keep your remarks within five minutes or close to that.

Pleased to represent -- recognize Mr. Bledsoe.

BLEDSOE:

Thank you for -- thank you very much for allowing me to be -- come here today and to tell the country what happened to my son.

This hearing today is extremely important to begin the discussion about the issues of Islamic radicalization in America.

My sincere hope: that this committee can somehow address the issue in a meaningful, productive way.

First of all, I'd like to express my deepest sympathy to the family of Private William Long, and the wounded soldier Quinton Ezeagwula.

I would like to talk about those complicity -- complicity (sic) in (inaudible) Private Long's murder: the Islamic radicals who programmed and trained my son Carlos to kill.

I want to tell American people and the world what happened to my son.

BLEDSOE:

We sent him off to college at Tennessee State University in Nashville, Tennessee, in the fall of 2003. Our dream about his future ended up in a nightmare.

Carlos is my only son. He grew up in Memphis, Tennessee. My wife and I operate a tour company in Memphis, Tennessee, and Carlos started helping out with the family business at the age of 8. Loved to talk and -- talk to the traveling public, and he had a lot of fun interacting with the customers.

After graduating from high school, Carlos wanted to get a degree in business. We thought perhaps he would come back to Memphis to run the business and give my wife and I a early retirement.

After the fall of 2005, his sophomore year in Nashville, Carlos came home that Christmas for the holiday. We were sitting around the family room and Carlos' only sister, Monica, and her husband and I having a normal conversation about general things in life. But at a certain point Carlos and his brother-in-law Terrell got into a heated conversation about Muslim religion.

Then and later we felt like Carlos' personality changed when we spoke about Islam. We thought maybe he had some Muslim friends and was offended by the comment.

The next time Carlos came home, we saw another side of him that we didn't see before. During that -- during the night he took off all the pictures from the walls of the bedroom where he slept. He even took off the picture of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. off the wall.

We asked Carlos, "What is going on with you?" He replied that he is now a new convert to Islam and that everything he does from now on will be to honor Allah.

We got very concerned why Carlos was growing up with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. picture on the wall, hung on his bedroom wall, but now he's treating that picture as if he was nobody, Dr. King was nobody to him. We asked Carlos not to take the Dr. King picture off the wall. He took it off the wall anyway.

This became a big concern to us. We went to Nashville to visit him more. We wanted to learn more about who was he hanging around with and what was really going on with Carlos. We discovered that Carlos had dropped out of school at the beginning of the 2005 semester. He was working a temporary job.

He'd gotten a dog while in college. Now we found out that he turned the dog loose in the woods because he was told that Muslims considered dogs as a dirty creature. I couldn't understand how he could do that because Carlos grew up with dogs in the house ever since he was 5 years old.

So my wife and I thought that (inaudible) something is -- something and someone is getting into his head and changes his way of thinking. It had gotten to the point we had to -- no interest -- he had no interest in coming home even for the holidays.

All this was part of his brainwashing, changing his thinking a little bit at a time. He had a job in Nashville with some Muslims who he tells him -- who tells him that Islamic law, his employer, had to let him pray certain times of the day, regardless of what was going on, on his job. As a business owner I told Carlos it would be very difficult for employees (sic) -- to do this for all his employers (sic).

At this time, at the next step on his progress of radicalization, Carlos was convinced to change his name. He chose the name Abdulhakim Muhammad. At this point his culture was no longer important to him, only the Islamic culture mattered.

Some Muslim leader had taken advantage of my son, but he's not the only one being taken advantage of. This is an ongoing thing in Nashville and many other cities in America. In Nashville Carlos was captured by best describes hunters. He was manipulated and lied to.

That's how he made his way to Yemen. Carlos was hoping to go there for a chance to cross over to Saudi Arabia and visit Mecca. He was taught that all the true Muslim must do this one time in life. He was taught that he would get -- he was taught that he would get to walk on the grounds where the Prophet Mohammed walked and be able to travel the area.

But these hunters had other plans for him. They set him up, to tell him that he could teach English in a British school in Aden, in the south of Yemen. The school turned out to be a front for Carlos, front, and Carlos ended up in a training camp run by terrorists. Carlos joined with the Yemeni extremists facilitated by their American counterpart in Nashville.

We have since discovered that that former imam in Nashville mosque, the Al Farooq Mosque, wrote the recommendation letter for Carlos needed to -- needed to for the school in Yemen. We also discovered that that school functioned as the intake front for radicalization training of westerners for jihad.

From what I understand, the FBI had been following Carlos since and before he left Nashville, continued to follow him after he came back from Yemen. When Carlos was arrested in Yemen overstaying his visa in October 2008, he was interviewed by the FBI agent based in Nashville even before the U.S. Embassy was alerted about his arrest. According to U.S. -- according to the embassy in Sanaa, the FBI was alarmed about what they learned from Carlos.

We wish to have -- we wish that they could have told us, his family, about what they learned. If we knew how serious his extremism had become, we could have put in every effort to stop the tragedy in Arkansas from even happening.

My son was arrested in Yemen. My family cried out for help to bring him -- bring my son back to America from the American government. We got in touch with the United States Embassy, the

State Department. We also asked for help from our U.S. Representative Steve Cohen's office and the FBI special agent, Greg Thomason, who had been tracking my son in Nashville.

After our son was finally released and brought home to us, no one said anything to us about what might have happened in Yemen or what they may have learned that so alarmed the FBI who interrogate Carlos while in -- while he was in the custody of Yemen political security organization. Carlos' experience in Yemen's political jail was the final stage of his radicalization. He was in there with true evil- doers, hardcore Al Qaida member who convinced him to get revenge on America.

Something is wrong with Muslim leaders in Nashville. What happened to Carlos at those Nashville mosques isn't normal. I have -- I have other family member who are Muslim. They are modern, peaceful, law-abiding people who have been Muslim for many years, they are not radicalized.

I also have several uncles and brothers in the military. Our family has fought in the United States every war since the Civil War. I have nephews who are currently in Afghanistan as I speak fighting for the democracy and freedom for all Americans.

It seems to be to me to American -- it seems to be to me that Americans are sitting around doing nothing about extremists, radical extremists as Carlos' story and other stories at these hearing aren't true. This is a big elephant in the room. Our society continues not to see it. This wrong called political correctness, you can even call it political fear. Fear of stepping on special minority population toe even as a segment of that population wants to stamp out America and everything we stand for.

I must say that we -- I must say that we are losing American babies. Our children are in danger. This country must stand up and do something about the problem.

Yes, my son tragedy you are hearing about today. But tomorrow it could be your son, your daughter. It might be an American, African American child that they went after in Nashville. Tomorrow the victim might have blonde hair, blue eyes. One thing for sure, it would happen again.

KING:

Mr. Bledsoe, you just finish up in the next 10 seconds, please.

BLEDSOE:

I must stop -- we must stop these extremist invaders from raping the minds of American citizen. Carlos grew up in a -- grew up in a happy-go-lucky kid. He always had a big smile on his face, loved to crack a joke or two. Everyone liked him. He loved to play team sports like basketball and football. He loved swimming and dancing, listening to music.

Today, I want to have -- today we have two families that has been destroyed. This could have been prevented. I would like to see something change that no other family in this great country of ours has to go through what our family are facing today. God help us. God help us.

KING:

Thank you, Mr. Bledsoe.

Our next witness is Abdirizak Bihi. He's the director of Somali education and the Somali Social Advocacy Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is the uncle of Burhan Hassan.

Mr. Bihi? And I'll ask you to try to confine your remarks to five minutes or slightly more. Thank you.

BIHI:

First of all, I want to say thank you to Chairman King and members of the committee for allowing me to speak on behalf of the Muslim Somali-American community today.

I also want to thank the Somali-American community for helping us, the families of the missing children or youth, to stand up against the radicalization of our youth.

BIHI:

I want to tell you why I'm here today and how important this, it is for me. I'm here because of my nephew, Burhan Hassan. Not only him, between 20 and 40 others who are Somali-Americans in the state of Minnesota that has been lured, brainwashed, radicalized by members of our community and lured back home into a burning inferno in the civil war.

I want to talk about my nephew.

My nephew and his family, my sister -- I love my sister, and her family was along about hundreds of thousands who fled from -- from the civil war into the neighboring Kenya, where, in the campus there was no order, but the rape, mass killing and disorder was the day. Everybody begged and longed for the day that they should be rescued by the international community.

Fortunately, my -- my sister and her family, she was one of the luckiest ones that made it to the shores of the United States of America. My nephew immediately adopted slang and become a student. He was loved by the community.

His mom and I and everybody else, the best thing for us is to put him in Sunday Koranic school and that was the mosque, the center of Abubakr As Saddiqua. We invested in this center with all our money to make it bigger so it could help our youth and instead of being on the danger of the streets to be influenced into bad behavior. We wanted our children to succeed.

Unfortunately, on the night election -- historical night of 2004- 2008, November 4, my sister kept calling the family and missed her son. We keep calling everybody. We finally end up with other families, we come to the end of that, our kids were lured back into Somalia.

We went to the mosque and the center and ask for answers. Everybody promised that they will meet with us. The other day, we were waiting for the imam and the other leaders, all we did was saw -- open the Somali TV and see them, instead of helping us find our children, condemning us as tools being used to destroy our own mosque and religion. That was more hurtful than missing our children because now we have to deal with being known in our bigger community as tools to destroy our faith and our community.

That set the foot on -- set the stage on for two years of struggle -- struggle. And the point of view was the Somalia-American community. Whoever wins the community, if they win the community and convince the community that they are not missing children, but liars like me and my family and 20 other single moms who lost their (inaudible).

Well, after two years of demonstrations, educating, fighting with basically our rental and personal money, and efforts of sleeping three hours a night, two and a half years, we won the heart and minds of the community.

But in the middle of the saga, though we never get help -- we never got help from our leaders, from our organizations, through our big Islamic organizations -- but in the middle of our winning, where the community started to sympathize with us, what happened to us, what happened to our engineers, doctors, lawyers, my nephew wanted to go to Harvard and become a lawyer or a doctor, just like you, but with all those things, then big organizations come to our community that we have never seen.

CAIR, such a beautiful name, Islamic organizations instilled with mosques that mosques are organizations that will hurt us so more than our kids missing hurt, called us tools. The center we built, the people we gave millions, our goal, our lives, our imams we trust. I want to warn you, it's only one center out of 40-something centers, and that's where all the kids are missing. All of them.

This organization comes in, agrees with other leaders too that we are liars, we have a clan, tribal problems. I don't know where that came from. We have no clan, tribe or language problems. We are one community. We have been hurt by other Muslims in our community. We have been denied to stand up. We had to do three demonstrations on the street in the rain, in the snow in Minnesota -- I know how you do know Minnesota, it is cold -- against the Islamic organization that is claiming in the House of Congress they are so powerful that they are helping us, that we are tools to be used by Republican, by Democrat, by liberal, by neo-conservative, by Nazis, by Jewish, by this.

We have been Muslims since Mohammed, our prophet (inaudible). And I want to tell you, my community, the American -- Somali-American community is the most beautiful community in the world I've known. They are 99.9 percent good American citizens that work day and hard, day and night, 18 hours, 17 hours, seven days, to chase American dream.

They don't have a voice. We have been kidnapped. So our -- our children, we have been kidnapped by leadership that we have never seen, (inaudible) umbrella.

KING:

Mr. Bihi, if you can try to finish, You have 30, 40 seconds.

BIHI:

I will finish that. I want to conclude, for two and a half years they have not done anything else. The Somali community wants to be heard.

And I thank you, Mr. King, Congressman King, and other members of the committee for getting me here, for panelists like him and like me.

My community wants to be heard. I would ask you to look and open investigations as to what is happening in my community. We are isolated by Islamic organizations and leaders who support them.

Talk to the common (inaudible), Mohammed (ph) and Halim (ph) on the street of close to 100,000 members of my community. I want to tell you, 85 percent of our vulnerable youth do not have viable employment. They're not already engaged in a constructive programs. And if we stand and speak up for that, we are labeled and hurt instead of being supported. We need your support, we need a voice to speak up. We have been hurt. And we are not going away.

KING:

Thank you.

BIHI:

What I want to say last...

(APPLAUSE)

KING:

I'd ask the audience to refrain from any response, please.

BIHI:

What I want to say last, is it is important to mention that -- that the Somali community in fact abhor and hate Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab as we speak is killing thousands of people and making them refugees in the city of Mogadishu. And the world must understand there is no government of Somalia, this problem will continue.

My last statement is, as I never had this opportunity, the challenge is that the community is lacking strong, viable, independent...

KING:

Mr. Bihi, your time expired, actually your time has expired. I have to -- the next witness is Sheriff Baca.

I understand the gentlelady from -- Ms. Richardson -- has asked to recognize Sheriff Baca.

And, obviously, Sheriff Baca, your time will not be limited.

Ms. Richardson?

RICHARDSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Sheriff Lee Baca is a former U.S. Marine. He's served in law enforcement -- he served as a law enforcement officer for 46 years. He was elected as our Los Angeles County sheriff in 1998.

Sheriff Lee Baca commands the largest sheriff's department in the United States, leading over 18,000 budgeted, sworn and professional staff, law enforcement officers, and serves over 4 million people, many of the cities, two of which happen to be in my district, both Compton and Carson. His jurisdiction includes 40 cities, nine colleges, 58 superior courts and a local jail system housing over 20,000 prisoners.

Sheriff Baca is a respected witness. He has been to this committee testifying in both 2009 and 2010 and was invited here by our ranking member, Mr. Thompson.

Please join me in welcoming Sheriff Lee Baca.

BACA:

Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

I thank Ranking Member Thompson and your committee for this hearing today.

Moreover, I'd like to thank Secretary Janet Napolitano and the Department of Homeland Security for the support Los Angeles has received regarding combating violent extremism.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department has long been a leader in the development of relationships with the various ethnic, cultural and religious communities that thrive in the Los

Angeles area. We have established strong bonds through continuing outreach and physical presence at important events to every community.

Therefore, I would caution that to comment only on the extent of radicalization in the Muslim American community may be viewed as singling out a particular section of our nation. This makes a false assumption that any particular religion or group is more prone to radicalization than others.

For example, according to information provided by the Congressional Research Service, there have been 77 total terror plots by domestic non-Muslim perpetrators since 9/11. In comparison, there have been 41 total plots by both domestic and international Muslim perpetrators during the same period. Reports indicate that Muslim Americans helped foil seven of the last 10 plots propagated by Al Qaida, within the United States.

Evidence clearly indicates a general rise of violent extremism across ideologies. Therefore, we should be examining radicalization as an issue that affects all groups regardless of religion.

BACA:

It is counterproductive to build trust when individuals or groups claim that Islam supports terrorism. This plays directly into the terrorist propaganda that the West's war on terror is actually a war against Islam.

It is critical to build mutually respectful relationships with Muslim American communities and endeavor to work together to protect all Americans. For example, new immigrants or citizens -- excuse me, let me start this again.

For example, as new immigrants or citizens, the vast majority of Muslim community members within my jurisdiction is fiercely proud of their American identity and display their patriotism on a daily basis. When I made critical outreach to the community after 9/11, I was overwhelmed by the number of Muslims who were ready and willing to connect with law enforcement.

Moreover, after the 2005 transit bombings in London, the Muslim American Homeland Security Congress was formed in Los Angeles County to engage Muslim community members in our efforts to counter violent extremism. The Homeland Security Congress is comprised of leaders from the religious, business, professional and academic centers of the Muslim American community.

Moreover, it supports the efforts of our Muslim community affairs unit made up of Arabic-speaking Muslim deputy sheriffs. And I might add that the Los Angeles Police Department has the same effort going. The Muslim American Homeland Security Congress provides support to our homeland security efforts not only in Los Angeles, but entire Southern California.

According to the Institute for Homeland Security Solutions report, building on clues, examining successes and failures in detecting U.S. terrorist plots from 1999 to 2009, 40 percent of all extremist plots were thwarted as a result of tips from the public and informants. Muslim

American community leaders in Los Angeles have not hesitated to put themselves in potentially uncomfortable positions to interact with local law enforcement.

In 2010, the Muslim Public Affairs Council enthusiastically responded to a request to speak at our annual radicalization and home-grown violent extremism conference. Speaking to 200 law enforcement personnel, Salam Umar Yahdi (ph) and Edina Lekovik subjected themselves to an intense period of questions and answers from the audience regarding Islam radicalization and terrorism. Due to their courage and willingness to answer any question presented, the evaluation of their performance was overwhelmingly positive.

Outreach to the Muslim community is also done by our law enforcement outreach coordinators group which includes the Los Angeles Police Department, the city of Los Angeles, the California Emergency Management Agency, the FBI, the United States attorney general's office, the Transportation Security Administration, and our most supportive federal partner, the Department of Homeland Security.

In America, we are obligated to protect all citizens and their respective religions and to effectively detect and find extremists. Police leaders must have trust and understanding of all communities. The Muslim community is no less or no more important than others, as no one can predict with complete accuracy who and what will pose the next threat against our nation.

Simply put, police need public participation, and to accomplish that strategies such as public trust policing need to be a priority in our nation. Simply, our enemies cannot thrive or even survive when a majority of people share common goals and pledge to be an asset for each other in the fight to counter violent extremism.

Thank you for listening to my brief testimony on a subject that is vital to all Americans.

KING:

Thank you, Mr. Baca. We certainly appreciate the condensation of your testimony. Thank you very much.

The chair will recognize himself.

Dr. Jasser, thank you for your testimony. You listened to the testimony of Mr. Bledsoe and Mr. Bihi. I would ask you, do you see these as isolated cases? Or as a part of a -- or is it part of a systemic problem in the Muslim American community? And if it is, how would that be impacted as far as mosques, as far as CAIR, and as far as overseas funding?

JASSER:

Chairman King, I can't underscore how important this question is, is that is this simply anecdotes (inaudible) crime problem, or is there a systemic problem? Now, the first thing we need to say is that the vast majority of mosques are places that all of our families go worship, patriotic

Americans like every other cross-section of America. And not only are they not a threat, but would report anything that they see.

Having said that, though, we have a problem internally. Where is that? It's a minority, but there's an ideology that exists in some mosques -- not all, not a majority -- but in some mosques. And it's a significant number. And what I'm talking about is not the violent part. We need to change that paradigm from (inaudible) talking about violence. It is about separatism, that idea that the Islamic state takes precedence. Islamic law takes precedence over American law.

So if you look, for example, mosques that I've seen a sermon in Phoenix where one of the largest mosques, they held up one of CAIR's pictures and the picture said something extremely insulting about American soldiers and what they're doing in Iraq. And you can't tell me that that doesn't have an impact upon radicalizing Muslims at that mosque.

Now, is that free speech? Absolutely. Do their civil rights need to be protected? Absolutely. But there should have been a huge protest from people in that mosque that what he did violated and offended us as Americans, but there wasn't. There was silence.

So I think it's time, and this platform that we have here and on should be a platform to awaken the silent Muslim majority that exists there, that love this country, to start to do some self-repair rather than turning a blind eye and pointing fingers to other faiths.

Funding is also an issue. There's a lot of consolidation of thought within mosques. And one of the other things I think is important for the committee to understand is that our population is extremely diverse, but yet in this country the groups that seem to represent us are those that are mobilized based on being an Islamic lobby, which is really part of political Islam.

Most of our families left that political Islamic party mentality in the Middle East and came here to be part of a political infrastructure that separates church and state. So to say that, "Well, how do we engage those Muslims? Where are they?" They're hard to get to because they don't want to be involved in Islamic or Muslim organizations because they separate mosque and state. So I think it's important that we make that distinction.

Now, looking at the Islamists as a group, again not all -- violence is a small part of their mentality. But yet as you look at the bigger part, they facilitate the concept that the Islamic state is supremacist, is better, Islamic law should be part of government -- all this needs reform and only we can do that.

And some of the mosques, for example, get funding and have a common source of ownership called the North American Islamic Trust, listed as an unindicted co-conspirator in the Holy Land Foundation trial. They hold deed to some -- they quote 300 mosques on their website. Some say up to 50 percent of mosques.

And yet if you look at some of the teachings that the Islamic Society of North America and a few others endorse, they are associated, and I put this in my testimony, some of their imams are associated with the Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America.

So along with some of that funding that came originally from petrodollars in the '70s comes I think an ideology that is pervasive with Wahhabism, which is a fundamentalist Islamist strain, or Islamism as an entity or political Islam.

Very different from Islam as a faith, I believe. We still have to go through that enlightenment process and that reform, but you can't disconnect the funding. And there have been committees in this House that have studied that. The Judiciary Committee in the Senate studied the funding issue of mosques in 2003. I think that is a whole other issue.

But I do think along with it comes apologetics, a lack of reform, and a sense of basically trying to evangelize Islam rather than trying to internalize American ideals into our faith, which is two different things. So it's a significant problem.

KING:

Thank you, Dr. Jasser.

In my final seconds, Mr. Bledsoe, I was very moved by your testimony. In the lead-up to these hearings, this hearing was attacked by everybody from CAIR to Kim Kardashian to the New York Times as being such a dangerous moment that we were going to have here today.

Why did you come to testify? What do you hope your testimony will bring about? And what is your opinion of this hearing?

BLEDSOE:

I think (inaudible). I think it's very necessary for this hearing to be. I think that as you can see, a lot of people are still in denial that we even have a problem in America with radicalization. I came here to speak to the American people. I wanted to say something on behalf of my son and my grandson which is 9 months old, hoping that he don't get caught up in that same trap or get captured by that same hunter that my son got caught up in.

BLEDSOE:

I also wanted to say to the American people that I hope that my coming here today, there's someone out there in the world, in America, that could hear my story and learn something from the radicalization stages and the process of radicalization, that they can catch some of that, which I did not understand at the time my son was being processed and radicalized, hoping that some other child, some other parent could understand and save that child.

If I can save one other child from going through what my family (inaudible) gone through, or the victim family (ph) went through, then I think my trip here to this committee were worthwhile.

KING:

Thank you, Mr. Bledsoe.

And I'm privileged to recognize the distinguished ranking member from Mississippi, Mr. Thompson.

Mr. Thompson?

THOMPSON:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Sheriff Baca, as a professional law enforcement person, can you share what your training and experience has taught you in working with different communities within Los Angeles County?

BACA:

Yes. The concept of public trust, in my opinion, is the core message of my testimony. That policing requires extraordinary ability to interact with people, particularly in a diverse society where people, whether they're here for long periods of time or immigrants, generally have a mistrust of what we represent on the initial contact.

So in the building of relationships in our particular subject today is, obviously, the Muslim community, we believe that what's important is that through relationship building, through programs such as our Muslim outreach effort, and the idea that every individual could be a victim of a crime.

And -- when it comes to violent extremism or, let's just say, even violent gangs, the same approach that you use for a violent gang should be used for what we're now talking about in violent extremism concerning terrorism.

Once you do that, you have ceded the community into a place where if the informant cannot contact a cop directly, the informant knows someone who can. And so the idea that we must always, as a law enforcement strategy, be the first ones to know is highly unlikely. That is true of any crime or any gang, but it's also very fundamentally an important point to make when it comes to radicalization.

Obviously, the witnesses here had some exposure before the actions were taken. And as a result, the question is, how well can you listen? What I didn't hear is when were the police notified, or when were authorities notified. What I'm trying to do is close the gap.

What I want to know, as soon as possible, is that when you're experiencing these unusual behaviors within mosques or within individuals within your family, the time to notify authorities is now. And I believe that's part of the reason why these hearings are very, very important.

THOMPSON:

Thank you very much.

Dr. Jasser, one of the schools of thought among some of these members of the committee is that we ought to profile Muslims in America. Do you agree with that?

JASSER:

I don't agree with blind profiling. That's unconstitutional. However, smart law enforcement that doesn't waste our resources on investigating people that would not have a high propensity toward radicalization, I think, is smart also.

So we have to be careful...

(CROSSTALK)

THOMPSON:

No, no, no. The school of thought is that we ought to profile all Muslims in America.

JASSER:

You can't do that because...

THOMPSON:

That's fine, but that's the school of thought.

Mr. (inaudible) what's your position on that?

Yes?

BIHI:

Oh, I...

(CROSSTALK)

KING:

Microphone, please.

BIHI:

I'm 20,000 times against the profiling (inaudible) not only Muslimists (ph), but any group.

THOMPSON:

Absolutely.

One of the comments that those of us who had serious problems about hearings of this nature is that you run the risk of profiling law-abiding citizens in this country who just happen to be Muslim.

And I think what we have to do is take, as Sheriff Baca said -- those individuals who see illegal or other activities taking place need to be taught to report it.

One of the ways you do that is to engage the community, the law enforcement community, as soon as possible.

And I think from a professional law enforcement's opinion standpoint, that's where we ought to be.

Last point, Dr. Jasser. Another comment attributed to this committee school of thought is there are too many mosques in America. Do you agree with that?

JASSER:

Absolutely not. My family has built a number of mosques. I've been involved in that. I feel it's one of the reasons they came to this country, is in order to exercise that freedom.

THOMPSON:

Thank you very much.

JASSER:

Can I add one thing, Chairman?

Chairman King, may I add one thing regarding law enforcement issues?

KING:

Yes, Dr. Jasser.

(UNKNOWN)

Mr. Chairman, regular order...

KING:

Mr. Thompson controls the time. Mr. Thompson controls the time.

THOMPSON:

The point is, from my questioning standpoint, I think religious freedom has an absolute place in America.

(CROSSTALK)

THOMPSON:

No, no, you -- you said that there are not too many mosques in America...

(CROSSTALK)

THOMPSON:

And I'm saying I agree with you.

JASSER:

As far as law enforcement's concerned, I think...

THOMPSON:

No, I did not ask the law enforcement question.

JASSER:

The first question you did, sir.

THOMPSON:

But I did not ask it of you.

BIHI (?):

May I say something about...

KING:

Has the gentleman from Mississippi -- yield back his time?

THOMPSON:

Yes.

KING:

OK.

I recognize the gentleman from California, Mr. Lungren, for five minutes.

LUNGREN:

Well, thank you.

First of all, I don't recognize those schools of thought as representing anybody on this side of the aisle.

Secondly, I want to welcome Sheriff Baca here. He's an old friend. We worked in law enforcement together, and we worked with your department in creating the community-oriented policing and problem-solving program that you've carried through, of which I would say this is an extension; that is what you referred to here today.

At the same time, I would say to those who criticize us for a singular focus here that I have been on panels that have investigated the continuing presence of Nazi war criminals in the United States and whether or not we should continue to investigate and prosecute them. I've served on panels that dealt with the wartime relocation of Japanese-Americans and Japanese nationals, that was limited to that.

I have been in hearings in which we have looked at the problem of youth gang violence -- and we didn't talk about non-youth gang violence.

I've been on the Judiciary Committee when we held hearings about the unsolved murders of African-Americans in the South four decades after that, and where we made sure that there was financing for the Justice Department to pursue those cases. And we didn't go beyond that.

I've been there where we've examined the Ku Klux Klan, but we didn't go beyond that at that time. And when I was attorney general, we did investigate skinhead groups and militias. And we were not criticized, or if we were, I didn't think it was reasonable criticism to say we didn't look at other gangs at that time.

My point is that we are looking at a specific problem, and we're trying to deal with it.

And Sheriff Baca, you indicated that you need to have cooperation of law enforcement.

What would you say about a poster that tells people, "Build up a wall. Do not cooperate with the FBI"?

BACA:

I wouldn't advise that to any group of American citizens or any group that's an organization that would like to help solve the problem. Obviously, we need the help.

And I think that people that don't trust law enforcement are in a position where they should learn how to trust law enforcement. But the law enforcement community itself has to lead in that relationship. Most people tend to step away from law enforcement.

LUNGREN:

I appreciate that. But -- but organizations that tell -- affirmatively say, "Do not cooperate with law enforcement," are not exactly helpful in us solving this problem, correct?

BACA:

That's correct.

LUNGREN:

Mr. Bihi, you mentioned that when you had this problem of looking for your nephew, along with the other 20 lost young people -- you keep telling us that, and that's a nice euphemism for the fact that you found that they had been spirited away to a foreign country. And your nephew was killed when he was there, is that not correct?

BIHI:

That's correct, sir.

LUNGREN:

And when you brought that to the attention of members of leaders of your mosque, did they encourage you to deal with law enforcement?

BIHI:

No, as a matter of fact, they threatened me, intimidated me, and not only me, the whole families. And there are three messages that they have put out. One message was very strong message, that if -- I'm talking about the families that have not reported their missing -- their children to the FBI or to the police.

One, the first message...

KING:

Mr. Bihi, can you move the microphone a little closer, please?

BIHI:

Yes, sir. Thank you.

The first message was to the parents that, if you as a single mother, with a cultural language barrier, are (inaudible), if you go to the FBI or to the police, they don't care about you because anyway you are Muslim; they will send you to Guantanamo -- very strong message.

The second message was you have more chances for your son to slip back into the country if you don't have (inaudible) a big mouth like Bihi or other families, if you stay quiet. And some families succeeded.

The third was moral and religious. It was, after life, if you do that, you're going to be responsible for the eradication of all mosques and all Islamic society in north America. And you will have eternal fire and hell.

LUNGREN:

Mr. Bihi, would you call that intimidation?

BIHI:

That is the worst form of intimidation.

LUNGREN:

So you were a target of intimidation?

BIHI:

What's that, sir?

LUNGREN:

You were a target and your family were a target of intimidation to stop you from cooperating with law enforcement. Is that correct?

BIHI:

Yes, intimidation in its biggest form. And I -- if you let me, I would like to say something about what our great sheriff said about community and the FBI relations.

We reported the missing kids to the police within hours when we woke up. Several police stations, including the police officers at the Minneapolis International -- St. Paul Airport -- next morning we set up an appointment and we met all the FBI. I believe our great director Ralf Balter (ph) was there, too. Eki Winston (ph) was there, too.

I also want to mention another thing about hooking up with the FBI and the Islamic community. If we let -- if we don't have organizations and imams and leader that create hurdles and blocks and threats and intimidations, we could have done by ourselves, and we have done that.

We in the Somali community get the credit -- our congressman should give us the credit, should give me the credit for making all the efforts the director, Ralf Balter (ph) has said about the Somali community.

KING:

The time of the gentleman has expired.

BIHI:

And if you check the USA Today about the report they made us and what the work we have done, it was our credit.

KING:

Mr. Bihi, his time has expired.

The gentlelady from California, Ms. Sanchez, is recognized for five minutes.

SANCHEZ:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask unanimous consent to put forward 34 different letters for our body of work here from different organizations across the nation who have submitted for testimony.

KING:

Without objection, so ordered.

SANCHEZ:

Thank you, gentlemen, for being before us. And in particular, welcome, Sheriff Baca. I know you've been before our committee several times.

I have the privilege of representing Orange County, California, as you know, probably the second or third largest Islamic and -- and/or Arab population in the nation. So I'm well aware of the work that you have done, not only up in L.A. County, but most people don't realize that, in the time of a terrorist attack or a national emergency, we actually fold under your leadership in Los Angeles. So we have worked a lot together. It's a pleasure, always, to have you here with us.

Today my question is to Mr. Jasser. In your testimony, you say, "Too many so-called Muslim leadership groups in America, like CAIR, or Muslim advocates, have specifically told Muslims across the nation, for example, not to speak to the FBI or law enforcement unless they're accompanied by an attorney.

Now, the right to have an attorney present when speaking to law enforcement is a specific principle of American civil liberties. So as a minority, I would advocate to people, in particular minorities, that they should have their attorney present when being investigated, talked to, spoken to, addressed by the FBI.

So by what legal principle do you assert that any minority in America should waive that American principle?

JASSER:

Congresswoman Sanchez, I don't disagree with you. I'm talking about this as a father. When I walked up to a police officer or the FBI -- I teach my children that they're your friends, that you can talk to them. If they ask you things, they're not going to be attacking you. The narrative...

SANCHEZ:

But if they come to your home at night, like they do in my community, like some come to my community, and knock at 8:00 p.m. at night to ask questions, if it were you on the other side of the door, not knowing what questions they were going to ask, would you not say, "Can you come back tomorrow to my office of -- my office, my business office?"

Would you not say, "Let me call my attorney and I'll come meet you down at the FBI office?"

Or would you say, "Sure, come on in, I'll answer any question."

JASSER:

It depends on the circumstances. And I don't disagree with...

(CROSSTALK)

SANCHEZ:

You don't understand the circumstances when somebody comes to your office late at night like that. You would assert the privilege of an attorney, would you not?

JASSER:

Congresswoman, not all the time, no, I would not. I'm not constantly under fear from the government because I have nothing to hide.

Now, I'm not saying you don't have civil rights to protect. That is part of the discussion. But when that discussion that you just went through dominates the entire discourse about Muslims in America, it creates a narrative that this government's against you and it creates a narrative that it's anti-Islam and anti-Muslim.

Yes, we should have our civil rights protected. It's part of the bandwidth. The rest of it should be about how much we love this government, how much we should join the military, how much we should help homeland security.

SANCHEZ:

And we have those discussions -- thank you, Doctor. We have those discussions, obviously, in the minority community. I sit on the Armed Services Committee also. And, you know, I think that's...

JASSER:

I am part of the minority community.

SANCHEZ:

... one of the really rockbed ideas of the Latino community, for example. But I still would suggest to anybody that, if the FBI comes late at night knocking on your door, you tell them you'd like to meet them at some other place at some other time with your attorney.

Sheriff Baca, could you talk about some of the initiatives in particular that you have implemented in your department to work better with the community?

And it's coming from this background. When we have problems -- for example, when we ask people to do 586-G (ph), which is to go after immigrants and, you know, knock on doors and look for undocumented, or when we have these sort of situations where law enforcement comes, in a certain way intimidating. It's always -- it's intimidating for me when law enforcement stops me and I have to pull over. I'm driving a car and all of a sudden I see the flashing lights in the back. You know, my heart starts to beat. Law enforcement is like that for -- even for those of us who work with you.

What would -- you know, so minority communities in particular, I think, have a very big sensitivity to law enforcement. What do you think happens?

What are the initiatives you try so that in fact minority communities and immigrant communities are not afraid and actually move forward and come forward with information?

Don't you think, when we intimidate them or point them out or profile them or have some of these comments come out like that, that it's dangerous to our ability to get communities to help us?

BACA:

The first thing I do is I train all deputies, when they enter our academy and exit it, to recite the core values of the sheriff's department by heart. And I'll recite them now.

This is a bedrock of the American Constitution, the Bill of Rights, civil rights and even human rights. And that is -- the core values are this. "As a leader of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department I commit myself to not only perform my duty with respect for the dignity of all people, the integrity to do what is right and fight what is wrong, wisdom to apply common sense and fairness in all that I do and the courage to stand against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and bigotry in all its forms."

Now, when you look at the history of bias in America, the reality is that our founders created a brilliant document, the Constitution, then the bill of rights. Civil rights are real. But human rights are part of the element here when you have an international problem such as terrorism.

So people need to clearly know from a law enforcement agency, where do you stand before you even talk to me? Who are you and what do you represent?

No police officer, no sheriff, no anybody with law enforcement authority will ever step outside of the American legal system in doing their job. We are the most regulated, perhaps, form of public service that anyone can imagine.

So my first outreach to the community is to say, if you don't have an encounter with my deputies that is within those core values, then I need to know about this.

Now, when you go a step further -- there's programs galore. I had advisory councils not only of all the faiths but these particular issues that are within faiths where people come to me because they have concerns and fears, whether it's Orthodox Jews or whether it's Muslims or whether it's Pakistanis or whether it's South Asians or whether it's Middle Easterners.

BACA:

The truth is, is that America is becoming a society of the world. And because of that, we have to be sensitive. We have to know how to work with the various communities.

I have over 160 languages spoken in Los Angeles. I have deputies of all these religions and all these ethnic groups. And we travel throughout the world, quite frankly, on this counterterrorism issue, of which was, quite frankly, a predictable issue after the Gilmore report came out of Congress. And yet Los Angeles had a terrorism early warning group before 9/11.

And so when you look at this from the standpoint of why even this hearing is so vital is because Americans need to wake up and start learning more about all the issues that affect their well-being and that police alone can't solve this problem, nor can Congress, nor can the administration, without cooperation locally, state-wide, nationally, as well as internationally.

And we have no national police in America. This is why I reach out to New York and check -- check with them on their issues. I reach out to all the major cities as a member of the Major City Chiefs Association (sic). But then I reach out to my own community so there's no gap regarding resources.

The real truth is that the American public must step up to the plate and do more. Even if it's just educating yourself.

Now, on the issue of mosques, for example -- yes, sir -- we can...

KING:

Ten seconds (inaudible).

BACA:

... we can go into mosques in Los Angeles, and we do that frequently.

KING:

OK. The time of the gentlelady has expired.

The gentleman from Alabama, Mr. Rogers, is recognized for five minutes.

ROGERS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Before I enter my questions, I do want to point out I've been a member of this committee since it was established as standing committee and even before that, when it was a select committee.

And at no point have I ever heard a member of this committee on either side of the aisle assert that we have too many mosques, too many Muslims, or anything of the kind. So I don't know where the ranking member got that school of thought, but it didn't come from this chamber.

Sheriff Baca, thank you for being here again. It's good to see you. I'm curious...

KING:

If the gentleman would yield for one minute. I think what the ranking member was doing was -- I said at one time there are too many mosques that don't cooperate with law enforcement. I think the testimony today has backed that up. I never said there's too many mosques in America.

ROGERS:

Thank you.

Sheriff, a little earlier you heard this assertion that CAIR has warned people that they need to have a lawyer before they talk to law enforcement. Do you feel like that your jurisdictional residents, whether they're Muslim, Jewish or Christian, should have to have a lawyer before they

talk to you or one of your sheriff deputies to inform you about something they see as being a potential problem?

BACA:

No, I don't personally believe they should take that initial step. So in answer to your question, no.

ROGERS:

OK. Do you believe that your sheriff's deputies, when they're out interacting in the communities and doing their community policing and talking with merchants and individuals, should, before they talk to them, warn them that they need -- that they have the right to an attorney before they talk to the sheriff's deputy?

(CROSSTALK)

ROGERS:

It's a yes or no question.

BACA:

Generally, no. But if we have a suspicion that they're about to commit a crime, then...

ROGERS:

Then yes?

BACA:

There's only so much question you can ask before you even have to advise them of their constitutional right. That is one of the key fundamental points here.

ROGERS:

But what I'm talking about, just out interacting with the community. Not pursuing a crime, or a suspect. But, you know, a lot of information that your deputies get are going to be from interactions with folks out on the beat.

And I want -- I want to make it sure -- make it known that I don't think they have to have an attorney to talk -- present to talk with residents, when they're just finding out how things are going. And that was the assertion I seemed to be getting a little while ago from the gentlelady from California's questions.

We don't want our young people or our residents to feel like they've got to be afraid of law enforcement in this country. If you're being investigated for a crime, it's different. But just to talk

with law enforcement, I don't think an attorney is required, and I don't think you would want to have to have that requirement to be able to do your job or your deputies do their job.

I'm real interested, Mr. Jasser or Dr. Jasser, what do you specifically think that you should see done in an organized fashion that would help the Muslim community begin to work to more self-police the very small radical agents or elements of the community?

Because I agree, the overwhelming majority of Muslims are law-abiding, good Americans, and I don't want to paint them with a broad brush. But still, there is that small element in the community that's radicalizing. What -- what would you like to see happen in an organized fashion to curb that?

JASSER:

Well, I can tell you that I look upon this no different than we did the Cold War, and that we need to start putting resources, we need to develop public-private partnerships, we need to stop using the lowest hanging fruit that exists already as Islamic groups in Washington, not that they're all Islamist, but many of them are.

But the ones that are not typically are much less funded, they're much less endorsed or supported by media, government, et cetera. So we need to start creating platforms like this for America to see that we're a diverse population, that we're not all represented by the victim-mongering groups and other groups, that many of us take it -- take our responsibility as Americans seriously.

So we need to create a kitchen cabinet, if you will, of strategy, that homeland security is not just a crime problem, which is sort of what I've been hearing a little bit is that, well, it's just a crime problem and we need to work on the ground.

That's important, but homeland security is much more than that. As Prime Minister Cameron said, we not only get the -- have to get rid of the violence, but the pool in which the violent radicals swim. And we need to drain that.

That's going to need a generational posture that we build institutions based on liberty for and within the Muslim community, so we can build forward platforms for forums for debates. We'll do the reform. We'll do the theological reform, but you help us put resources domestically into new institutions based on enlightenment for freedom and liberty.

ROGERS:

Sheriff Baca, what would you like to see happen. Now, you obviously -- you've stated that this hearing is worthwhile. And you've been working on this for a long time, even before 9/11. And you mentioned earlier that you have an annual forum on the counterterrorism.

What would you like to see happen from the organized standpoint that would better facilitate this flow of information from the Muslim community about potential problems within that community?

BACA:

Well, like my colleagues in the National Sheriffs Association and the Major City Chiefs Association (sic), which I'm a member of, and these are all the key elements of local law enforcement leadership, to have a little more concentration on coordinating our joint regional intelligence centers.

We are currently sharing some of the things that I've testified to, and my deputies are going throughout the country on an individual basis. But if there was a way that we could develop best practices within the law enforcement community, and the federal government combined, on a continuum of training. Now, we go to Flood City (ph), we go to different places throughout the country to help each other.

And I have to give high credit to the Department of Homeland Security for what they're doing. But I would focus on continuing what we've already established.

I mean, a lot of work has been done by this committee. We're not starting anew here. We're just fine tuning as I see this and listening to other ideas.

But if you could look at a subcommittee, which I know you have, that would allow for my colleagues to come in and talk in a prepared manner about these suggestions, I think you'd have a better idea as to what local law enforcement needs.

ROGERS:

Thank you very much.

I yield.

KING:

The time of the gentleman is expired.

The gentlelady from Texas is recognized for five minutes.

JACKSON LEE:

I thank the gentleman very much.

And I want to first thank personally all of the witnesses that are here today.

I respect the fact that you are here, Sheriff Baca. We have worked together, we visited. I thank you so very much for your presence here today.

But I'm reminded of someone, a proverb now quoted by Sheila Jackson Lee, cleaning a dirty kitchen. You can't clean it with dirty water.

There are no redeeming factual information that we will receive today that can add to the abhorrence that all of us have on terrorism in the United States of America. We don't disrespect the witnesses. At least I do not.

But, you see, it already has been tainted, this hearing. There are no loud signs of reasoning that are coming through this hearing. The reason is because it has already been classified as an effort to demonize and to castigate a whole broad base of human beings.

I cannot stand for that. And I brought with me the Constitution. It's a living and breathing document. The First Amendment allows us the freedom of religion, the freedom of association and expression.

But I will tell you today that this breathing document is in pain. We could have had a hearing that spoke about any number of issues of terrorism. We might have gone back to the cold cases of the civil rights movement, acts of terror. We might have tried to understand where the Klansmen still roam today and terrorize individuals in parts of this country.

Maybe we would have found out what those who are opposed to the Jewish faith are doing to Jewish communities and synagogues, no matter what their religion. And maybe we would go and question Muslims who are hovering and scared because someone might suggest that they too are someone who is eager to do terrorist acts.

JACKSON LEE:

We would be better off if we would have a hearing speaking about the importance of human intelligence, funding for the elements of the Department of Homeland Security that could on human resources, to be able to hear from individuals who do want to engage and help this country promote its values.

Mr. Jasser, may I just ask, are you a Muslim?

JASSER:

I'm a devout Muslim who prays and fasts and tries to raise my kids to be conservative orthodox Muslims, yes, ma'am.

JACKSON LEE:

Thank you, sir.

Are there any other Muslims on the witness table?

And that is Mr. Bihi?

KING:

The record will acknowledge that Mr. Bihi is raising his hand.

JACKSON LEE:

Thank you so very much. And the reason why I ask that question is because Muslims are here cooperating. They are doing what this hearing has suggested that they do not do.

It is an irony and an outrage that we are wasting time when Muslims are sitting before us, a Muslim is on this panel, a Muslim has testified. And so I question, where are the uncooperative Muslims?

Let me quickly put in the record another aspect of Mr. McDonough's statement that our chairman was so eager to quote and suggest that that he whispered to him to have this hearing.

Like all of you and like me, millions of Americans find community, comfort and support in their faith. That includes President Obama, who is a Christian, but spoke in Cairo.

So today reminds us that being religious is never un-American. Being religious is quintessentially American. God bless America.

Then I would simply suggest another comment here saying President Obama recognized that through our words and deeds we can either play into Al Qaida narrative and messaging or we can challenge it and thereby undermine it. We are determined to undermine it.

This hearing today is playing into Al Qaida right now around the world. It is diminishing soldiers that are on the front line that are Muslims. Those who lost their lives. And it is going in the same route of an Arizona and other states.

Sheriff Baca, one quick question to you, please. Can law enforcement find friends in diverse communities?

BACA:

Yes.

JACKSON LEE:

Have you been able to solve problems by developing and understanding an Arab officer, a Hispanic officer, an African officer, or an African-American officer, sir, or an Anglo officer that happens to be from Portugal or happens to have the ability to speak to someone from the Balkans who is here in the United States? Is that a positive form of law enforcement?

BACA:

Yes, it is. And we have the ability to reach all minorities within the County of Los Angeles. And Sergeant Mike Abdeen, who is here, he can stand up...

JACKSON LEE:

Please.

BACA:

... is the sergeant -- and he's a Muslim, he is the sergeant of our Muslim affairs outreach.

JACKSON LEE:

Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

Thank you very much.

KING:

All members and guests will refrain from outbursts.

JACKSON LEE:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am overwhelmed by this hearing and the lack of factual basis for it and I don't believe...

KING:

Time of the gentlelady is expired.

The gentleman from Texas is recognized...

(CROSSTALK)

JACKSON LEE:

... Nazis and Klansmen and others.

KING:

Time of the gentlelady is expired.

JACKSON LEE:

It is an outrage. And as you well know, you have already said...

KING:

The time of the gentlelady is expired.

JACKSON LEE:

... there are not enough -- there are too many mosques in this country. That is absurd, it is outrageous that someone proceeds to hold up another controversial poster. It is outrageous. Obviously, we don't agree with that.

KING:

The time of the gentlelady is expired.

The gentleman from Texas is recognized for five minutes.

JACKSON LEE:

I yield back.

MCCAUL:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And let me, as we're talking -- that's quite an act to follow, let me say.

As we talk about the Constitution, in the preamble it talks about providing for a common defense, and that's what this -- this committee, that's our primary mission, that's what this committee is all about.

It is unfortunate in my view that some have attempted to mischaracterize this hearing as an attack on American Muslims. Let me be clear, it is not this committee that is doing that, but Al Qaida that is targeting and attacking our Muslim youth, as evidenced by the testimony of Mr. Bledsoe and Mr. Bihi.

In the past two years there have been 27 terror plots and each of them involved extreme radicalization of the Muslim faith. This is not to say that all Muslims are a threat. To the contrary. The moderate Muslim is our greatest ally in fighting recruitment of Muslim youth. And the cases of our witnesses, along with Major Hasan, the Fort Hood shooter, and many others show that the threat to America lies within our own country.

Major Hasan was promoted, repeatedly, in the name of political correctness, despite obvious signs of radicalization. These indications included conversations with al-Awlaki, arguably the greatest threat to the United States today. And to ignore the threat of radical Islamic extremism in the name of political correctness presents a serious threat to the American people.

Both Attorney General Holder and Secretary Napolitano have testified that the number of jihadist websites present imminent danger to the United States. And having worked for the

Justice Department prior to Congress, I understand the importance to coordinate outreach between law enforcement and the Muslim community. And I am very concerned that there are organizations out there speaking for the Muslim American community telling them not to coordinate with the FBI and law enforcement, as evidenced by the poster that we saw by the Council on American-Islamic relations.

I hope we can begin the dialogue and ask the necessary questions. Before I ask the questions of the witnesses, I want to -- I want to read from Senator Lieberman's letter to the -- to John Brennan, the assistant to the president for homeland security, when he said the failure to identify our enemy for what it is, violent Islamic extremism, is offensive and contradicts thousands of years of accepted military and intelligence doctrine to know your enemy.

We have to know our enemy. And it is radical Islam, in my judgment.

I'd like to ask Mr. Bledsoe and Mr. Bihi, your children were kidnapped by these two mosques, they were held hostage, they were sent overseas to both Yemen and to Somalia, and their lives were destroyed. Have these two mosques done anything to repair the relationship? Have they ever told you that they're sorry? And have they ever told you that they will change their practices?

BLEDSOE:

I'll speak first. No, I have not heard from a mosque at all about whether or not they are sorry.

And I think that going back to the question, the lady from Texas, we're not talking about all Muslim. We're talking about Islamic radicalization. And that I wanted to make clear because that is a difference.

I have Muslim in my family, I mentioned earlier. I'm sitting beside two, in the middle, I'm sitting in the middle between two. So we're not talking about all Muslim. We're talking about the ones who are hiding behind the moderate Muslim. And they're the one who is a threat to America, a threat to our babies, a threat to the children, and they are in the danger.

MCCAUL:

Do the mosques know that they're responsible for the radicalization of your son?

BLEDSOE:

Sure, they know. But they're waiting around to do it again to someone else's child. That's why I'm here today hoping that American people, you're listening. I hope you hear me. I hope you learn something from that. I don't think that any other child or any other parent in America should have to go through what I'm facing today.

MCCAUL:

And I agree with that.

Mr. Bihi, has the mosque that radicalized your nephew ever apologized or taken responsibility?

BIHI:

Sir, no, never have they apologized. They, as a matter of fact, attacked us and call us names and tools of infidels.

And it seems that still nobody from the leadership of our Congress in the state of Minnesota, the Islamic organizations, none of them have ever met 20 or more Somali-American families who were refugees, get their kids from civil war, lucky enough to raise their kids in a college level. Those families were hurt. Not a congressman, not CAIR, not any other organization, not the mosque people, none of them ever visited them or even mentioned them. As a matter of fact, they call us liars.

MCCAUL:

Then -- and infidels.

One last question, Sheriff Baca. You have -- appeared before Jane Harman and myself last Congress and...

KING:

Time of the gentleman expired.

MCCAUL:

OK. I'll follow up with a written question. Thank you.

KING:

The gentlelady from California, Ms. Richardson, is recognized for five minutes.

RICHARDSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask unanimous consent that a copy of the following items would be submitted and submitted for the record. One would be a text of the attorney general's interview. The second would be a letter sent to you on March 9th, a 2007 Political Insider article and a reference to a 2011 hearing in this committee. Without objection?

KING:

So ordered, without objection.

RICHARDSON:

Thank you, sir.

Mr. Chairman, few members of this committee have experienced the events of 9/11 more traumatic than you have. And based upon those experiences and the inception of this House committee, Chairman King and Ranking Member Thompson, you've produced tangible results. And because of that work I made every effort to serve on this committee.

Unfortunately today, though, as a member I vehemently oppose the narrow approach this committee is taking in this hearing.

RICHARDSON:

I was born in the 1960s. In my elementary history classes I saw shocking films of American leaders in the '40s and the '50s disgracefully violating the principles of which this country was founded. The only difference history will say today is that those shows were in black and white and this one now is in color.

Discrimination, a definition, is the treatment or the consideration of or of making a distinction in favor of or against a person or thing based upon a group, class or category to which that person or thing belongs, rather than on its individual merit.

When elected officials or public servants are sworn in for duty, including with the oath is an understanding not to abuse the power given. One definition of abuse of power is the improper use of authority by someone who has that authority because he or she holds a public office. I believe the narrow scope of this hearing is discriminatory and it is an abuse of power.

Research by the Congressional Research Center (ph) has spoken. We saw a chart there that talked about Muslim plots, but it didn't talk about the 44 non-Muslim plots which are more than double of what we have seen of other extremists.

According to the Institute of Homeland Security Solutions, Al Qaida and the allied movements were responsible for 26.7 (sic) domestic terror attacks, while also white supremacists accounted for 23.3 percent. Thus, restricting this hearing for the consideration of radicalization of American Muslims and not equally of other groups is wrong.

The House Judiciary Committee and House Energy and Commerce Committee have not investigated other religious groups or their leaders for failing to cooperate with law enforcement that may have allegedly caused mental or physical harm to children. So clearly, this committee is setting a dangerous precedent in treating one religious group different than another, thereby calling into the question this committee's actions and whether those actions violate this country's laws and principles.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to reference for the record the attorney general's actual interview, an interview when Mr. -- when Mr. Holder said that "it's one of the things that keeps me up at

night." Holder said, "You didn't worry about this even two years ago, about individuals, about Americans." He never said "Muslim Americans."

Also, we need to point out that in 2007, and I won't say people by name because I do respect my colleagues, it was said in reference in a political article, "too many mosques are in this country; there are too many people sympathetic to radical Islam." Nothing referenced to cooperation. In this committee hearing on February 9th, 2011, it was said in this hearing, "We've got to focus on those people who harm us. It's the Islamic extremists. These are dangerous things."

Now, I also want to point out a reference that wasn't talked about in this hearing. I asked Michael Leiter, the National Counterterrorism Center director, I asked him specifically, "What percentage of the people being looked at by your agency for domestic terror threats were Muslims?" His answer for the record, "It is absolutely tiny -- a minute percentage of Muslim population that is being looked at."

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask my sheriff for the record because the whole cause of this hearing was to say there was a lack of cooperation.

Sheriff Baca, you talked about what you do. Tell us what the Muslim community does. Do they fail to initiate and cooperate with you?

BACA:

It's a very, very good question to ask. I think what we have here is the perspective that I believe has to be widened in terms of who are the Muslims that cooperate. And I believe that Muslims are cooperating much more outside of organizations, as well as inside of organizations. We have both.

You can't look at this from a perspective of who's cooperating based on organizations alone. The truth is that Muslims are just as independent, just as feisty, just as concerned about safety. They certainly don't want their homes or their mosques blown up. And thereby, as individuals, they have been doing things with local law enforcement without the cover, so to speak, of an organization.

But even with the organizational effort, what I see is an emerging confidence in the Muslim community, particularly in Los Angeles, and I think it's true in New York to a degree through my contacts with Muslims even in New York, that people are getting more realizing to the point that police aren't out to mess around with them; that there basically is this primary focus on prevention. And we have spent a lot of energy locally in these joint regional intelligence centers just to prevent stuff from happening at its earliest possible point.

The truth of it all is that we're as a nation doing relatively good. We're not going to eliminate this possible problem, but as a nation we're getting better and better and better, and this is why I'm here. I don't particularly think these hearings can be negative totally. I believe that they have a potential to keep the public involved in this discussion, which will further lead to better solutions

and the robustness of the opinions will say that everyone's entitled to say what they're saying. That's what I'm taking from this particular hearing.

KING:

The time of the gentlelady is expired.

And the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Bilirakis, is recognized for five minutes.

BILIRAKIS:

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate it.

And I thank the witnesses for being here today and testifying.

I'll get right into the questions. Terrorist organizations have become increasingly adept at using the Internet and social media to recruit, inspire and motivate individuals already in the United States to carry out attacks on their behalf. And this question is for Mr. Jasser, Sheriff Baca, but others who wish to, you're free to respond as well.

One -- one such website that has been described as key to Al Qaida's communications was hosted by a web-hosting company in my area of Tampa Bay in the state of Florida. The site has since been taken down.

What are your thoughts on how to combat the use of the Internet and other technology by terrorist organizations overseas to inspire and encourage terrorist attacks in our country by those who are already here?

JASSER:

Congressman, that's a wonderful question. And I think it points to the fact that we have not had any type of cyber-counter- jihad, if you will. Why? Because that can only be done by Muslims. So we need your support to do that. And we can do it with the right resources by countering that ideology.

The Islamist narrative basically says America is against Muslims. It creates all this narrative that America is going to Iraq, to Afghanistan to convert -- to convert Muslims, kill them, attack them. That's the narrative. We can prevent -- our strategy so far has been to try to break down that propaganda. That's wrong. We need to have a forward strategy of liberty-minded, freedom-minded ideas into the Islamic consciousness.

We can do that as Muslims, but we need your help to do that through creating websites, a social network. I mean, look what happened in Egypt and Tunisia. That was just simply through social networking. And that countered a lot of the -- that wasn't Islamists that did that. Most of that was secular Muslims that wanted to take control of their own future.

But when we have a government that produces a report, an after- action incident report after the Nidal Hasan incident, and the word "Muslim" or "Islam" or "jihad" isn't even in the whole document, you wonder why we're so paralyzed in treating this. I as a Muslim, I need this conversation. If we're going to fix this cancer that's within the whole viable, wonderful, beautiful faith that I practice, we need to be able to talk about it. It's like trying to treat cancer without saying the word.

It's not Islam, but it's jihadism. It's Islamism. It's a political entity that we can fight on the web very well, but we've been absent. We've surrendered the constitution to the jihadists.

BILIRAKIS:

Sheriff?

BACA:

Yes, the Sheriff's Department, as you know, in the LAPD along with all of our federal and state partners, runs this joint regional intelligence center, which is an open source investigative arm. But we morph it up into the joint terrorism task forces when we are dealing with specific things such as cyber-terrorism and these websites.

We monitor them. Some points, they get shut down, and other times we monitor them and continue to monitor them because it is an excellent source for what would later become an actual investigation.

So there is a broader strategy that is involving all of our levels of government in this website issue.

BILIRAKIS:

Thank you.

Next question for the entire panel...

BIHI:

May I answer a little bit of that?

BILIRAKIS:

Would you like to say something? Please, please do. Please do. Thank you.

BIHI:

Lately, we have been seeing the excuse that they are old. There are no recruiters for these kids. These kids are recruited by the Internet, by the cyberspace. I do not believe that there is a kid that

gets up in the middle of the night and just who walks blindly into a computer, logs onto a jihadi or Al Qaida website or Al-Shabaab, and decides the next day to fly in and explode themselves. That's very weak excuse.

The radicalization process or the brainwashing process takes years. There must be somebody on the ground to exploit this kid, what his anger is, what are his weaknesses, like if there's no father, if there's no mentor, if they are smart, if they are weak.

BIHI:

So the process takes forever. Internet is one of the last steps to do online courses, to educate yourself into academic level of -- of being gone.

Thank you.

BILIRAKIS:

Thank you.

Mr. Bledsoe, you wanted to add something?

BLEDSOE:

No -- I have no comments (inaudible).

BILIRAKIS:

OK, very good.

My next question for the entire panel -- I know, I don't have a lot of time, Mr. Chairman. What demographics have demonstrated to be particularly susceptible to extremist recruiting efforts within America? To what extent are youth and universities particularly at risk?

For the entire panel.

JASSER:

Yeah, I'll jump in quick, and -- and tell you that that's why we focused our Muslim liberty project on young adults 15 to 30. Because if you look at the study, the Pew poll showed that young Muslim adults in this country 15 to 29, 25 percent thought there was maybe some justification for suicide bombing. That is not typical of the general population of Muslims.

It's a demographic that we need to target. We need to look at -- figure out -- because their minds are shaped, they're being pulled. As Prime Minister Cameron said recently, it's an identity problem. They're not identifying with this nation.

We need to renew a discussions about what this country stands for, what our principles are. Bring them in so that as Muslims they feel American, positive about this country. And then that'll inoculate them against that radicalization.

KING:

The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. Richmond, is recognized for five minutes.

RICHMOND:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Ranking Member.

I would say that earlier we heard quotes from members from the FBI director, and we've heard quotes from Eric Holder. And there's an old blues song that says, "If you're going to tell it, tell it all."

What we didn't hear quoted was the fact that the FBI director said that homegrown extremists and lone wolf activity are as serious a threat to the homeland as Al Qaida and its affiliates. And that's not what this hearing deals with.

We also heard from Eric Holder that the cooperation of Muslims in Arab American communities has been absolutely essential in identifying and preventing terrorist attacks.

So while we're here today I will thank the -- the panelists and the witnesses that are here because I understand the -- the problem that we have.

And I will not only say that I think to focus on just the Muslim community is wrong, I will offer that we could have had another hearing today, but some of the same witnesses -- and Mr. Bledsoe and Mr. Bihi, I think that there are a number of families around this country that are suffering your same pain. And I pray for you and I pray for them also.

But we could have had a title of a hearing today that simply said, "What is driving passive and activist Americans to being militant and extremists?" And that covers the broad rainbow and spectrum of what's going on in this country without singling out a particular group.

Here's some very pointed questions, and especially to Mr. Bledsoe and Mr. Bihi first. Do you agree that -- that part of the propaganda that they use to recruit is that America, the narrative -- as Dr. Jasser said, the narrative is that America is at war with Islam?

BLEDSOE:

No, I don't agree with -- so much with that. I think that they used it too to recruit as well to say, "American (ph) doesn't appreciate African-Americans." And that's one of the -- I think the reason you find a lot of African-American being recruited. Because they can use that as a weakness.

RICHMOND:

Thank you.

BIHI:

Sir, thank you for your question. To the particular group of the Somali-American, which is a large group -- I'm dealing with -- the main thing and the main victims are Somali population in the country of Somalia.

But it's also part of the American hatred (ph), is part of it, and the Western world, and other worlds including the Muslim world leaders.

So to -- to shed a light on this, these people have a target to use these kids, not only in the United States of America, but also other countries including Somalia that they are shedding blood as we speak right now for 20 years.

RICHMOND:

Dr. Jasser, I did quote you correctly when you said that the -- the narrative and the propaganda is that America is at war with Islam.

JASSER:

Yeah, that's the narrative from the Islamist side, yes.

RICHMOND:

Yes.

And Mr. Bledsoe, I would say, as a young African-American male, your sentiment that that's part of the propaganda that's used -- I will say that it's also a worry to me when so many people, especially on this committee and in -- in Congress, who have never been a victim of profiling based on race, religion or any others, are quick to suggest that that is a legitimate crime-fighting tool when it's irresponsible and not the smartest way to fight crime.

Dr. Jasser, do you believe today that there are people promoting propaganda based on this hearing alone that's saying that this is evidence of America's war with Islam?

JASSER:

There may be some exploiting that for that, but I hope we're mature as a country to be more pragmatic and practical, and use this as an opportunity to go beyond that and not allow an ideology that cloaks itself in a religion to basically have a poison pill that prevents us from dealing with it.

So if it's a theo-political movement, how else can we counter it? How do we promote those constitutional ideals against those that want theocracy, that -- that co-opt (ph) our communities for a -- a -- wanting to put sharia law into government and other things? How do we fight that if we can't even discuss it because we're worried about offending sensibilities?

How do we treat the Nidal Hasans of the world if our government spends millions on a report that doesn't even cite his theological slip down radicalism? How do I do that? How can I help you as a Muslim, how can I help my children resurrect their faith from radicalization if I can't talk about it?

RICHMOND:

Well, I think we can talk about it, and we talk about it in the terms of the Constitution and religion. We don't have to single out the single religion, but we can have an honest dialogue about race, we can have an honest dialogue about religion if we talk about the fact that it's not just the -- the Muslim religion or the Islamic religion that we're targeting. That it's a broad spectrum.

JASSER:

But 220 arrests of terror cases in the last two years, 180-plus were Muslims. So you're going to waste all this time discussing all of the other faiths, which I can't help you with, while we have a Muslim problem that I can help you with -- not for most Muslims, a minority. But we're going to waste all that time and resources because we're worried about offending Muslims because of political correctness?

RICHMOND:

No, I would just suggest to you that every terror plot is important, and that every life that's lost is important.

I would not consider it a waste of time to talk about extremeness of any form or fashion because they take lives. And we can talk about -- and I won't go through the incidents. But that's what's important to me, to make sure that we don't focus so far on one segment that we miss an entire segment that's gone on somewhere else. And that's what's important.

And I think that there was a way to do it comprehensively, and I'm just disappointed that we didn't do it that way.

But...

(CROSSTALK)

RICHMOND:

... I think you all had some very good points.

And I'll yield back.

KING:

(inaudible) has expired. Thank you.

The gentleman from Georgia, Dr. Broun?

BROUN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank y'all all for being here.

When I was in the Marine Corps I was taught to know your enemy. And I think that's extremely important.

The enemy in this -- the focus of this hearing today is not the Islamic religion. It's Islamicists. It's the radical jihadists. It's the radicalization of our youth, as Mr. Bledsoe and Mr. Bihi have talked about.

And I think it's absolutely critical that we as a nation focus upon doing exactly what I was taught in the United States Marine Corps, to know your enemy.

Dr. Jasser, I'm very appreciative of your work and your testimony, and particularly your answer to Mr. Richmond. Because I think it's extremely important to focus on who wants to destroy this country.

And I believe that there -- that there are entities within this country that are supporting those radical jihadists. I think there are organizations that are very public that are supporting the radical jihadists.

And we need to know exactly who our enemy is. We need to focus upon that enemy and not let political correctness deter us from that. And I thank you, Dr. Jasser, in that regard.

I think political correctness is also an enemy of us focusing upon those who want to destroy this country. I don't know a single person on this side of -- of the aisle that is Islamophobic. I think every single person, every single Republican wants to focus on exactly what this hearing is all about, and that's the radicalization which is a tremendous, tremendous national security problem.

BROUN:

And, Dr. Jasser, we've heard a lot about CAIR. And I'd like to hear from you, what's your view of CAIR is. And in your view, does CAIR represent all Muslim Americans? Does CAIR represent you? And is CAIR helping or hurting your effort to try to foster peace, to foster liberty and freedom within the Muslim community?

JASSER:

Thank you, Congressman Broun.

You know, I'll tell you that we have to realize that one of the things we're missing in these demographics is that Muslims are 4 million to 5 million Americans, and the minority of them belong to these organizations. The minority of them actually go to mosque regularly.

So we have to be careful. Yes, mosques and practicing our faith is something I love; I have helped -- involved with that because of my -- I take my faith as something that I want to practice actively. But many Muslims choose not to. That doesn't mean they are not represented by these discussions. That doesn't mean we should ignore them.

And what happens is the groups that inherently collectivize under the Islamic banner become the representatives of Muslims, which is actually not really consistent with our American ideals. And yet, in the Middle East, we -- there is a lot of banter between secularists and Islamists because they realize that it's not anti-Islam to be against the Muslim Brotherhood-type groups.

And I think we have to realize, when we look at groups like CAIR, they, sort of, come out -- I believe they come out of that same mentality, which is the collectivization of Muslims. And they will use systems in order to avoid dealing with pathologies that we need to treat.

So the -- and the interesting thing, even the whole concept American-Islamic relations -- I teach my kid that being American is Islamic. There's no "relations" (ph) between the two. It's basically inherently the same.

So the whole construct of it is built on a separation, if you will. And I think it's one of -- actually, we may be giving it too much importance because it's one of a large number of organizations that serve to advance political Islam in the West.

Rather, there is a sense that those advocates for those groups want to bring Islam here rather than absorb American liberty, American freedom and reform our faith.

The evidence I have of that -- look at how much work they have done, or the Islamic Society of North America, or any of them, to modernize the legal systems of our faith to be commensurate with the laws of this land and not in conflict.

You'll find, and I put in my testimony, groups like the Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America that include some of the imams that these groups work with. They've never made stances against

some of the fatwas or religious rulings in there, so they basically become enablers of ideas that tell Muslim kids, don't really take a citizenship here if you don't have to, if you don't want to; you know what, if somebody commits an act of apostasy and leaves the faith, our law, if it was Muslim majority, they should be killed. This is the law that's on the books.

So my biggest fear, besides all of this discussion, I hope to generate new books, new schools of thought in our Islamic legalisms that aren't in conflict with this society and give Muslims an identity that's consistent with liberty. And these organizations aren't doing that.

KING:

The gentleman's time...

BROUN:

Thank you.

KING:

The gentleman's time is expired. The gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Clarke, is recognized for five minutes.

CLARKE:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thousands of innocent people were killed as a result of attacks on this country. It's understandable why the issue of terrorism in America elicits outrage and emotion.

Sheriff Baca, I've got a question for you, but one thing I wanted to commend you is that those core values that your deputies make an oath to, underscore the rights that we all have in this country to be treated fairly by our government.

And I recognize those rights, not only as a member of Congress who's taken an oath to uphold the Constitution, but also, Mr. Chair, on a personal note. It's because my father, who cared for me, who loved me, was a Muslim. He died when I was eight years old, but I'll never forget him. He was a kind and gentle soul. But most importantly, what I remember is that his love for people was based in his faith in God.

In order for us to make sure that 9/11 never, ever happens again, I urge all of us as members of Congress to make our decisions based on sound intelligence, not on profiling, not on stereotyping, which could lead and fuel more hatred and more bigotry.

I'm going to ask my question in a second. But, Sheriff, I commend first responders like yours because, you know, the best way, I realize, to better prepare our country against these attacks is

to fully equip our men and women who risk their lives as police officers, firefighters, as emergency medical providers, to make sure they have the resources.

In Michigan, the Council on American-Islamic Relations have worked with law enforcement. As a matter of fact, just last year, they met 13 times with federal law enforcement officials in order to create a better dialogue between the community and federal law enforcement.

I appreciate any thoughts you may have to better foster relations between law enforcement and the Muslim community. And if you choose to, you can cite some examples that you know about firsthand.

And if there is time remaining, I would like to yield my remaining time to Member Richardson.

BACA:

Well, as we can tell by the testimony of the witnesses and your comments, we have a very diverse Muslim community in the United States.

First of all, organizations are more helpful than not. I believe that the message and the narrative should be that everyone can pitch in, in one form or another, at the right time.

When it comes to countering violent extremism, all resources can count, and we should not discount resources in any fashion, irrespective of the various points that have been made.

When we formed the first Muslim American Homeland Security Congress -- and this is an organization made up of organizations, individuals, including the Shura Council and mosques that are individualized.

What we have, when we talk about CAIR as an organization, CAIR supported the development of the Muslim American Homeland Security Congress.

Furthermore, they support the Muslim outreach program that I'm doing. What I think has happened here is that CAIR is only a multitude of chapters, not one single organization.

In southern California I have not heard of any substantial complaints from my deputies, who were involved in the investigative processes that I alluded to in my earlier testimony, of saying "Don't cooperate."

Now, what's going on in other parts of the country, I can't attest to. I have never had a briefing on the whole issue from the FBI, as to what their particular position is.

But I will say that, when I asked, after particularly the London and -- excuse me -- after 9/11, I asked CAIR, "If I were in your position, I would post admonitions in mosques, if you have that ability to, that advise the attendees that come to pray to not bring in extremist points of view."

And this was very particularly important to me because, at one mosque that I went to, a young man came up to me when we were in a meeting of solidarity amongst the faiths and I had the wife of Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky with me, who is Jewish. He couldn't make the meeting. And I was holding onto a Koran. And an individual, a young man, came up to me and said, "You are forbidden to hold the Koran."

And then what I said, "Well, you better open up this Koran because it was given to me by the imam of this mosque. And it's people like you that are giving the Islamic community, the Muslim community a bad name."

And he just walked out, and that was the end of that little confrontation.

But the point here is that I have not experienced anything that suggests that CAIR supports terrorism in the southern California CAIR organization.

KING:

The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentleman from New York, Mr. Higgins, is recognized for five minutes.

HIGGINS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

KING:

I'm sorry. To -- back -- so I actually go back to the gentlelady from Michigan, Ms. Miller.

MILLER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Sorry, Mr. Higgins.

(LAUGHTER)

You know, Mr. Chairman, first of all, I want to thank you very much for holding this hearing. I think it is very, very important. And certainly, after listening to the testimony today of all of the witnesses, it's very clear that we have situations here in America that we need to examine candidly, as we all seek the very same thing, which is a strong, safe, secure America.

And, you know, in the runup to today's hearings, we heard an awful lot of talk about how we should not be prejudging any one single group. And I appreciate that. And I think, after hearing the compelling testimony today, I think many, many, particularly in the media, were just as misguided by prejudging what this hearing was all about.

Because I'm very hopeful that this hearing will actually strengthen our country. I think it's an opportunity to have an actual pivot, historically, for us, and to help us all to stand together as Americans first, above everything else.

MILLER:

And I just would make an observation. I know so many of my colleagues have mentioned that we should be having all of these hearings on other groups who could potentially be threats to America -- and I don't know why we never had any of those hearings during the last four years.

Here we had the Fort Hood massacre and didn't have a hearing on it. But we are having hearings on FEMA trailers.

So, you know, I represent a district in southeast Michigan right next to Mr. Dingell who spoke earlier and next to Mr. Clarke from Detroit as well. And, as you've heard, we have the largest Arabic population in the country, a very diverse Arabic population with Lebanese, Syrian, Iraqi, Chaldeans, Palestinians, Jordanians, Yemenis and many, many others. And these proud Americans make up a very important and vibrant part of our community.

And, you know, before I came to the Congress, I actually had the great honor and privilege of serving as Michigan's secretary of state, which, two of my principal responsibilities were, first of all, running the state elections but secondly serving as the motor vehicle administrator. So I was - - I worked closely with the Arabic community to make sure they were registered to vote, if they were eligible, and then issuing their driver's licenses.

And I remember running into a bit of a buzz saw when we had some female members of the Arabic -- the Arabic community who didn't want to have their driver licenses photos taken unless they were completely covered with just their -- their eyes showing.

And we said, you know, no, if you're going to have a Michigan driver's license, which is used as a fundamental part of your identity, you have to have a picture taken. And we tried to be very sensitive, having a female clerk take the picture after hours in a back room, et cetera.

But, you know, we want to be very sensitive to cultural differences, but in -- in America we have equal rights for all and special rights for none.

Recently Adam Gadahn, who was born in California and then radicalized, made a statement. He's actually known as the American spokesperson for Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula.

And he made some comments several months ago, calling on Muslims, and I will quote, "living in the miserable suburbs of Detroit to take the initiative, to perform the individual obligation of jihad."

And I would say that the radical Al Qaida thoughts do not speak for our neighbors who stand up for American ideals of liberty and freedom and democracy.

And, again, it's my hope that this hearing will reiterate to those in the mosques or just in the Muslim community, anywhere, that if they hear of efforts from radical extremists to peddle their hate of radicalization, that they understand that they can and they must come forward to law enforcement to assist.

And my question would go to Mr. Bledsoe, who, your testimony, sir, touched me. And particularly as you say how you have Muslims in your own family, could you -- how do you think America could better educate ourselves, sir, on the religion of Islam, the Islam religion, so that others, particularly parents, might be able to recognize if their children have turned the wrong way on a very proud and peaceful religion, to a -- the wrong side of this religion, to one that is of hate and it's perverted that religion. How do you think we could better educate ourselves?

BLEDSOE:

I think we can better educate ourself by first teaching the American citizens, American children, what Islam is and what Islam is not. I think that is one thing that needs to be done. More Americans (inaudible) need to be educated about the religion and not be afraid to understand the religion.

I want to go back, while I'm speaking here, to the sheriff, when he spoke about you got to call the police when you see different things happening. Now, as the process of radicalizing someone, especially with my son, we did not know what was happening when he was taking his dogs out in the woods and leaving them or taking a picture down off the wall.

It is something new to America. It's something new to me. As I couldn't quickly just say, "oh, because you come a Muslim, that, you know, you cannot do these kind of things."

You know, I felt that was part of the culture, of learning the religion. But, yet, I found out later it was more than that.

So I'm saying to the American people, it's a process what happens. It takes a while sometimes to realize that your child is being radicalized.

But what I have said today, I hope that someone is listening. And if you find that your child is getting rid of the dog we already had for many, many years, or he's distancing himself from the family, staying away from the family, not coming home from college on holidays, yes, you should perhaps call the law enforcement and get them involved.

KING:

The time of the gentleman (sic) has expired.

Now the gentleman from New York, Mr. Higgins.

HIGGINS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, finally.

I just want to thank the panel. I think this has been a very productive discussion, one in which I have learned quite a bit from.

In the aftermath of 9/11, you know, we were all taught that we are not at war as a nation with Islam. We were at war with those who hijacked that religion and used it to justify their murderous and cowardly acts.

From that, a lot of relationships were developed between the law enforcement community, local, state and federal, with the Muslim community, to try to better understand one another.

I think we're at a point where progress has been made but still much work needs to be done. And when I look at or hear the sheriff from Los Angeles talk about the programs that have been developed in your community, it's very similar to that of my community in Buffalo, New York.

A smaller city, directly south of Buffalo, is a city called Lackawanna, an old steel city that was home to the Lackawanna Six. They were six Muslim American men who were convicted of providing material support to Al Qaida by training in their camps in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Efforts are being made in our community now -- they were very young -- efforts are being made to deradicalize, to counter radicalize. And that should be, I think, the focus of what it is we're doing in promotion of movement forward in that direction as well.

You know, there's a lot of misunderstanding when you get into this issue. And people, I think, get invested into their emotional positions that really don't have a factual base.

Give you an example: In this nation we have not only a Christian- Judeo tradition, we have a Christian-Judeo-Islamic tradition in this nation. At the basis of those religions are compassion, forgiveness, love, and tolerance.

The prophet Mohammed is a prophet of mercy. In my Catholic tradition, I was raised by the Sisters of Mercy.

So I think we all have a lot to learn from one another about this issue. We have a long way to go. The radicalization of Muslims in America is in large part influenced by the convergence of new technology that allows groups to communicate in ways that they never were able to before.

Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula has a publication called Inspire. They are trying to influence throughout the world, unlike they've ever been able to before and since their -- their inception. These present extraordinary challenges.

So I think that provides a basis from which our nation, all our law enforcement agencies in each individual state. each individual locality develop those relationships with the Muslim American community.

Because in the end, we are all -- we are all Americans. And people don't come to this country by and large to create havoc. They come because they thirst for the freedom that we have and that's what they want for themselves and their families.

So, Sheriff, if you want to just elaborate a little bit further on some of the programs that you've been working on, and I'd be very interested in that.

BACA:

Well, I'll share with you -- thank you, Mr. -- Congressman.

I'll share with you what the Muslims themselves in Los Angeles are interested in, and this is part of the relationship building. They're interested and we've given them programs on domestic violence. We've given them programs on gang activities and awareness, our youth and teens, a driving education, the terrorism issue, obviously, narcotics education and awareness and identity theft avoidance and awareness.

And so I was intent on listening to your overview, which I wholeheartedly agree with. When you -- when you think about it, most Americans don't think on a daily basis like we do here. You know, we're -- we're obligated to think on a very high level of concern and sophistication -- and we can disagree all we want.

BACA:

But the truth is that the average American should be able to go about their business on a daily basis and not have to worry about this, because that's what they're paying us to do.

So in the context of your question, what I think is the bigger problem is that most Muslims don't even know what the Koran's all about. This is my assertion.

When I -- when I go around and I start talking to people -- since I've been given a Koran I'm been obligated to read it. And there's references to Mary, the mother of Jesus, in the Koran, there's references to Moses and Judaism.

And according to the widespread belief of scholars of Islam that you cannot be a Muslim unless you honor Judaism and Christianity. You cannot exclude those two faiths from the internal composition of what the prophet was saying when this whole Koran became what it is.

That, I think, is my biggest advice to the Muslim community in America in essence: Get smarter on your own faith. Praying five times a day is a ritual that is important but it is not Islam. It is the ability to have a sense of tolerance for Judaism, Christianity and all faiths of the world. That's the message that I think is not being heard by the American public.

KING:

Time of the -- time of the gentleman is expired.

Mr. Walberg from Michigan, please, is recognize for five minutes.

WALBERG:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for holding this hearing. I think it's an important time to do it and time to carry on what this committee was originally established to do.

And I thank you as well for hanging the pictures in the back of the room again, to remind us of the purpose of this committee, that we would understand that liberty and its price is eternal vigilance.

And I thank the witnesses for being here today. And, yes, indeed, for Muslims being here and cooperating today. Because, indeed, it is the Muslim community that is at the table today and represented at the table today that I think desires to have a change in what's going on and the perception that results from positive effort and standing against the radicalization of their young people, and others who aren't their young people but are being pulled in.

And so I thank you for your courage in stepping to the table today and sharing with us your story. To allow that story to be told more let me just quickly go to a question.

Dr. Jasser, what do you hope will be taken away from this hearing for Muslim Americans and also for non-Muslim Americans?

JASSER:

Thank you, Congressman. I hope we see this as the beginning of a dialogue. And that it's interesting, you know, some of the feedback I got leading up to this was what's the government doing getting involved in religious issues, it's against the First Amendment. But now, as I heard the conversation just a second ago, I saw that religious issues are all right as long as everything's positive.

And I certainly -- that's the Islam that I teach my children. But we have to realize that there are many Islams out there. And if we are going to protect our homeland we need to develop a strategy, a forward strategy with a platform for organizations that are Muslim, that -- and our government to work together in a public-private partnership.

I think a lot of the discussion here has been healthy as far as the cooperation that exists. There are a lot of partnerships that exist that have been very successful.

But those partnerships are about the crime element, the violence. The problem is far deeper. It's an ideological one. It's where you see, for example, in Michigan, there was a shooting of an imam who was basically running a radical sect called Ummah. His name was Luqman -- Luqman Abdullah.

And the Islamic groups, including CAIR Michigan (ph), had to have an autopsy redone because they're worried that the shooting was inappropriate. No mention of the ideology of separatism,

that he wanted to have an Islamic state. All these things that we should be filling the Internet with, new ideas, we're not doing.

And our homeland security is at risk because those things cause a continuum of radicalization. And we need platforms to begin to do that at universities, at think tanks, at all the institutions that this government helps change the agenda of society.

I hope this is a pivot point in changing the agenda so you can help me create -- and us and other organizations; there are a lot of other organizations like mine doing this reform work -- and not allow just the revivalists to get the microphone, but the reformists, to say that we want to modernize.

WALBERG:

Thank you, Dr. Jasser.

I have many Muslim friends in -- both in Michigan, as well as in Uganda. In the recent Somalian bombings that took place at the World Cup, during the World Cup experience, and in Kampala, Uganda, had a very -- I thankfully still have a very, very dear friend who was at that restaurant who was chaperoning an American group of people. He's Ugandan. There were Christians and there were Muslims in the room at the same table.

Due to two bodies in between my friend and the suicide bomber he lived to transport bodies and victims to the hospital in a van that I've traveled in many times and many miles.

After that bombing, the word came out from the Somalian-Muslim terrorist group Al-Shabaab apologizing to Ugandans for their lives being lost because their efforts were to go after Americans and whites.

Now, you have -- you have experienced it firsthand, Mr. Bihi. How concerned are you that other young Somali males from your community may be radicalized and influenced to join the violent jihad either in the United States or in Somalia?

BIHI:

We are really very concerned. We are extremely concerned that we have our immediate outreach concerning this matter right away without funding, no support, with all those pressures on silencing. We won the hearts of hundreds of people, young people, not to change their minds.

We have influenced, as you have heard, we have a huge (inaudible) because of the long running civil war by Al-Shabaab in Somalia, over 25 years now. We have influenced Denmark, the community in Denmark, we have influenced the community in Canada, in Sweden, in Switzerland, in Germany, in London, in Lancaster, in Liverpool, in Malaysia, in all over the world, Luxembourg, Netherlands, in Ireland. We are getting (inaudible) of every time you open the TV there's a young Somali man being indicted because of his intentions to do a jihad.

We are victims, are vulnerable to organizations that are taking and picking on us like a salmon fish. And every time we try to speak up against this we got problems. We're intimidated by strong organizations that are not welcome in our community because we are not going to stop.

As a matter of fact, Uganda, it made us, we are sitting, I and my youth coordinator, with the sign on the table of the news to do a Ramadan, it was Ramadan time, Ramadan basketball tournament for the youth. Because from my experience, I'm an expert, I can say that, I have been there from the beginning.

I don't just mention the media. We find out that recruiters, we see eye on eye each other on the coffee shops, showing the young men how glorious it is, how successful they are riding these horses, exploding themselves, seeing all these glorious things.

And we have to combat when they did that in Uganda. So immediately we organized, with no penny, to rent a big gym, to organize 400 young men to play basketball.

WALBERG:

I wish you all -- I wish you all good success.

KING:

The time of the gentleman is expired.

WALBERG:

Thank you.

BIHI:

Thank you.

KING:

And the gentlelady from California, Ms. Speier, is recognized for five minutes.

SPEIER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

At the outset I must say that I find this hearing to be grossly incomplete, and I feel that without the representation of the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, the Department of Justice, we are seeing a very skewed discussion, with the exception of Sheriff Baca, who is here.

While I think these anecdotes are interesting, I don't believe these are experts. And I would suggest that if we're really going to be complete in this hearing, we should also be investigating

the Army of God and their website in which they openly praise Christian terrorists as part of an effort to look at homegrown terrorism in this country.

Let me start by first asking Dr. Jasser if you believe the majority of mosques in this country are actively recruiting terrorists.

JASSER:

That's not what I said, ma'am.

SPEIER:

I'm just asking you that question.

JASSER:

No, I do not believe the majority of mosques are actively recruiting terrorists.

SPEIER:

Do you believe you have expertise to be speaking?

JASSER:

It's interesting. That's the question that theocrats ask me all the time, so it seems like you're asking me the same thing.

My love of my faith, my demonstrable experience in dealing with this issue of reform, of knowledge of not only my scripture and my practice of faith, but the Constitution I think positions me pretty well to deal with it and be part of the solution.

I'm not sure who else you'd like to solve this problem, but I think it's only Muslims that can do. And it would be sort of like asking at the time of the American revolution that you want to have testimony about the Church of England's threat to America and you would only listen to the priests.

JASSER:

And, you know, that would be wrong, because it was the lay community that ultimately -- the intellectual lay community that understood their faith, that brought about the reform and the change against the establishment.

So -- so I hope you don't look upon expertise as something that gets handed down from the clerics, most of whom are part of the problem.

SPEIER:

No, but I'm a practicing Roman Catholic. I go to church every single Sunday. I'm a lector in my parish. And I'm no more prepared to speak about the pedophilia in the Catholic Church because I am a practicing Roman Catholic. And I think we do need to have experts come here to testify on home-grown terrorism in this country. And while I appreciate the anecdotes of those who have spoken, I don't think that they are necessarily very enlightening.

(CROSSTALK)

SPEIER:

Sheriff Baca, let me ask you, how important have Muslim Americans been in your efforts to foil terrorist plots in Los Angeles County?

BACA:

Well, Los Angeles County is blessed, as you know. We haven't had an attack as such. And I think that the ability to prevent is what we're trying to do more than anything else. Our weighing of success across the nation cannot be weighed alone by Los Angeles' model.

What I do believe is that if I were a New Yorker or if I was a D.C. resident or even someone in the fields of Pennsylvania, that there is a whole different reality about terrorism when it happens in places that you love and have grown up in in the more specific way.

And therefore the variability of the panel today is that I speak about what I do to prevent terrorism. These individuals have a more intimate weighing in on the issue of terrorism. The doctor, on the other hand, is a scholar, more perhaps than even a medical doctor.

But the truth is is that this is a most difficult subject to get your arms around. And I believe that our country is doing magnificently, given all the complexity of a big country that spreads not only throughout the mass-land of America, but everyone around the world, particularly the countries abroad.

And where I'm stepping in to say where I'm helping, I'm helping the Middle East police departments and I'm dealing with Muslims that are in my profession around the world. We haven't (inaudible) into that. Because we're not going to deal with anything without the connectivity of resources outside America with those that are inside America.

SPEIER:

If I could interrupt for one more question. I'm running out of time.

BACA:

Yes.

SPEIER:

I don't know how much discussion has been had about the "lone wolf" phenomenon. But certainly the Congressional Research Service and their review has spoken about the lone wolf. We've seen it in the Jared Loughners, the Timothy McVeighs, in some of the -- the Christmas Day bomber and the like.

So what would you say about the risk of home-grown terrorism coming from or called "lone wolf"?

BACA:

Well, it's definitely there. I mean, you know, the -- the concept of a lone wolf terrorist is based on a variety of explanations, but it is definitely part of the element of an attack that will occur similar to the one in New York.

But there's always help. You know, there's -- the lone wolf theory is an interesting one. Rarely does anyone have the smarts enough to pull off one of these attacks on their own. So I think the fact that there's a lone person, whether it's an Abdulmutallab coming out of Nigeria on a Christmas holiday period, they'll execute on their own as a single person, but behind them there's always someone around that's a pure jihadist, violent jihadist who is helping them accomplish their mission.

KING:

The time of the gentlelady has expired.

The gentleman from Minnesota, Mr. Cravaack, is recognized for five minutes.

CRAVAACK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I'd like to thank the members of the panel, particularly Mr. Bledsoe and Mr. Bihi and Mr. Jasser. I do consider your testimony expert testimony. You live it.

BLEDSOE (?):

I want to say thank you.

CRAVAACK:

You're welcome.

JASSER (?):

Thank you.

CRAVAACK:

You live it every day. You have been fighting for it in Minneapolis every day on a daily basis. I commend you for your courage, your conviction, and I applaud you, especially Mr. Bihi, living in Minneapolis in Minnesota. I understand what you've gone through and I understand the trials and tribulations that you have -- have gone through as well.

And I commend you, sir, not only you, but also your family members that have also had to have been brave through this whole thing as well because you, sir, have been under persecution by entities that are supposed to represent the Muslim faith. So I commend you, sir.

And Mr. Bledsoe, and I just can't say that enough. And thank you very much for your courage.

Mr. Bihi, you are representing voices from Minnesota, families whose sons have been radicalized and sent abroad to wage jihad against Muslims and non-Muslims living in Somalia. At the forefront, I want to recognize here, and in a very public way, that Minnesota Somalis are by and large good people who are here chasing the American dreams that my grandparents came for just like you, raising their kids to be great Americans and bettering our great state, the state of Minnesota.

And I reject the message from some on this committee and these hearings as doing anything but initiating an open process and not only protecting Muslim Americans, but protecting all Americans. My goal is to put a spotlight on this particular issue and then refocus this lens on the small number of individuals and organizations in the Muslim community that are 100 percent committed to totally implement Islamic law, which is in direct violation of Article Six of the Constitution of the United States.

So again, gentlemen, I thank you very much for your commitment to this.

Sheriff, I just have a couple questions for you, if you don't mind, sir. And thank you for your service in the corps.

BACA:

Semper fi, Marine.

CRAVAACK:

I'm sorry, sir. I'm a Navy guy so I hope you won't hold it against me, but I hauled lots of Marines in the Philippines in the CH-53 Echoes.

Sir, I have a question for you in regards to CAIR. You are aware that this is a Hamas and Brotherhood -- Muslim Brotherhood entity. Is that correct, sir?

BACA:

No, I'm not aware of that.

CRAVAACK:

OK, sir, let me bring this to your attention then. This was actually proven, (inaudible) the FBI identifies (ph) 1993 Philadelphia meeting as a Hamas meeting and that all attendees of this meeting are Hamas members. The two people that were in that meeting were both founders of CAIR.

So my question is, sir, basically you're dealing with a terrorist organization, and I'm trying to get you to try to understand that they might be using you, sir, to implement their goals.

BACA:

Well, thank you for asking me that question, but it sounds more like a possible accusation of me being misused by an organization that quite frankly -- let me just answer you this way. I'm an elected official, as you are. If the FBI has something to charge CAIR with, bring those charges forward and try them in court and deal with it that way.

There is a reality that in my culture as a police officer that you have facts and you have a crime. Deal with it. We don't play around with criminals in my world. If CAIR is an organization that's a, quote, "criminal organization," prosecute them. Hold them accountable and bring them to trial.

CRAVAACK:

My time is limited, sir. Are you saying that the FBI was wrong in identifying that CAIR is part of Hamas, an entity of Hamas?

BACA:

Let me say this. You don't want to cause a conflict between me and the FBI.

CRAVAACK:

I'm just asking...

BACA:

We work together better than perhaps this committee works together.

(LAUGHTER)

CRAVAACK:

That would be an understatement at this point.

Sir, I'm just asking you a question. If -- let me ask you this question, though, a hypothetical maybe. If you knew that CAIR was a terrorist organization sponsored by Hamas, would you continue to work with them?

BACA:

You're asking me a question that I'm not qualified to answer because I'm not representing Hamas. I'm not representing CAIR. I'm not representing anything other than your personal safety and I do work well with your police in the great state that you represent.

CRAVAACK:

Sir, I'm doing the same thing. I'm just trying to protect the United States of America's citizens. So thank you very much, and I yield back my 10 seconds.

KING:

The time of the gentleman is expired. And the only addition I would make is this committee usually does get along pretty well.

The gentlelady from New York, my colleague, Ms. Yvette Clarke, recognized for five minutes.

CLARKE:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And let me say that today's hearing has been great congressional theater. Certainly, the equivalent of reality TV and I'm just -- I'm just really appalled at the fact that we have not really gotten to a substantive conversation about how we define terrorism, how we define the whole idea of radicalization.

Because just in listening -- if I had my eyes closed, and listening to Mr. Bledsoe and Mr. Bihi, not to diminish what they've been through, because their experience is real, but I have parents in my district who can sit and talk about their children being recruited, their children being brainwashed, and their children are gang members. OK?

And the bloodshed, the lives that have been lost in communities like mine across this nation, since I've been here, has not been an issue of homeland security.

And when I hear Dr. Jasser talk about the concerns about the elements of radicalization and existence in Islam, I'm also reminded that there are those same elements evident in Christianity and in Judaism. I know because I represent all three faiths in my district.

And as someone who was directly impacted by 9/11 and who has lived in a community where we have respected every human being irregardless of their background, their ethnicity, their

religion, to see us come to this day where we are pointing fingers at one another -- I don't see the benefit in it.

I see the benefit in the approach of Sheriff Bach (sic). I see the benefit in us opening up -- opening up the dialogues. But I don't see the benefit in stigmatizing, in finger-pointing, or even creating the specter that it may occur even if it doesn't, as being something worthy of where we should be in our collective humanity in the 21st century.

And so while I can empathize with the challenges faced by these families, we can all point to instances in our districts where families are suffering. The goal here should be how do we address that suffering through communication, through dialogue, through enlightenment, which is where we need to be in the 21st century.

I'd like to take this moment and yield the balance of my time to the gentlelady from California, Ms. Laura Richardson.

RICHARDSON:

Thank you, Ms. Clarke.

For the record, I just wanted to clarify and build upon the question, the last question I asked to Sheriff Baca. There have been two issues that Mr. King brought up for this hearing. One was the fact of, are American Muslims cooperating with law enforcement? The second issue is the scope.

And so I just want to clarify. Your answer was, you think these hearings are good.

And I agree that having an open discussion about problems and preventing terrorism is good, but what I want to clarify for the record, so it's not used against us, is do you agree that discussions like this should not -- sure, we should talk about preventing terrorism and radicalization, but should the scope be so narrowed only to include American Muslim community or should other communities and other groups also be discussed in this same fashion?

Because thus far we haven't been told of those hearings.

BACA:

Well, I believe it depends on the time and scope. I know that you've heard significantly from all four of us. And I think that these witnesses are incredibly important. But if you -- if you try to package it all up in one big group, we'll be here for three weeks.

RICHARDSON:

No, Mister...

(CROSSTALK)

RICHARDSON:

Sheriff Baca, I'm not suggesting all necessarily in the one time. But it's very important we get this answer. And I've got 32 seconds.

The question is, don't you think there should also be a discussion of the other groups?

BACA:

Oh -- oh, definitely. You know, in my testimony...

RICHARDSON:

Thank you...

(CROSSTALK)

BACA:

... you know, more radical extremist acts of crime are occurring in the United States of America - - on the reports that have been given by members of Congress and myself on this committee -- that non-Muslim extremists are a problem in this country.

And, you know, and -- we don't have to go too far back in history to understand what the Ku Klux Klan's all about. And -- and I believe the sensitivities are -- as the sensitivities are, if you lived in New York, you lived in Washington, and you lived in places in the United States that were harmed by these terrorists on 9/11 or if you lived in parts of America where you were lynched, or you were ultimately -- had your churches burned down, there's no difference in the outcome.

And so I think that there's a reason for different points of view on this matter.

But I'm glad for the consciousness that we have here on the discussion, because I am a very strong opponent of any kind of violence that is basically so indiscriminate. Whether -- whether it's Holocaust violence or just one individual, either way, the damage is unacceptable to civilization.

KING:

The time of the gentlelady has expired.

(CROSSTALK)

RICHARDSON:

... Baca and thank you...

(CROSSTALK)

KING:

The gentleman from Illinois is recognized for five minutes.

WALSH:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, again, you've heard this before, but thank you for having the foresight and the courage to put this hearing on.

Mr. Bihi and Mr. Bledsoe, a colleague on the other side referred to you as not expert -- your testimony as not expert testimony. And I think the word she used to describe your experiences was "interesting."

Mr. Bihi, Mr. Bledsoe, take a shot at that. What you both have gone through, is "interesting" the word you'd use to describe it?

BLEDSOE:

No, I think it's (inaudible) describe it as a tragedy.

I'd also like to say to perhaps the person who was speaking on the other side, I'm wondering, how did they get on the commission to speak about some of the things they're speaking about?

(LAUGHTER)

I mean -- I mean, we're not talking about how much of a professional or expert. We're speaking about what happened here to our children, and what -- we're speaking about what may happen to your children. We're speaking about the danger.

I think most of the people that I'm hearing on the other side are talking about political fear. And that's what I mostly hear here. There is -- now, there are certain population of -- a small population we're talking about, the Islamic extremists, who -- we're worried about stepping on their toes and they're talking about stamping us out. Not just stamping us out, but everything that America stands for.

I'm wondering, why don't the people pull their blinders off?

WALSH:

Mr. Bledsoe, to that point, what -- what do you think they're afraid of? Fear of what?

BLEDSOE:

I think they're afraid of political fear, perhaps not getting re-elected or something. But this is real. This is a real thing happening in America. If it's -- if -- it's not going to happen by not doing anything about it, that's (inaudible) sure. I think that if you ignore (inaudible) we don't have a problem, then you're inviting the problem to come again.

WALSH:

Mr. Bihi, how -- what -- what word would you use besides "interesting" to describe what you went through?

BIHI:

There are no words to describe what I went through or those families went through. We basically put our neck out, all of us, and we destroyed ourselves.

Well, did we do it again with this type of environment all the time that we are facing (inaudible) all the way for just speaking out for our country and for our children or our communities? Yes. We will do it. Because the immensity of the danger, the immensity of the danger. The person or the organization that was very successful could change the brain of your loved kid, who loves (inaudible) so much and made him to go to the worst place on earth and explode himself. That organization is dangerous.

It's not about Bihi or my brother here being experts. We are not looking for certification. We are looking to save the (inaudible).

Our kids died -- my kid died. Many of them died. We never stop. We paid the price for speaking up. We never stop. We saved hundreds and hundreds in the United States, thousands around the diaspora.

So I think it's good to reward those families who speak out to save others.

His son is in jail. We are trying to save the rest, not looking to be experts. But we are the (inaudible)

WALSH:

Dr. Jasser, why are so many other American Muslim organizations afraid of holding these hearings? They didn't want to hold this hearing. What, in your estimation, are they afraid of?

JASSER:

You know, that's a great question. And I think, you know, at the end of the day, change is very difficult, you know.

JASSER:

I was asked about, what am I doing here? And, you know, my family asks me that frequently because of all the pressure we get because of what I do. It's not an easy task taking on an establishment, taking on a mentality that will not change, that will not reform, that will not realize that there's changes that have to happen internally and ideology in order to prevent this cancer from happening.

So the pressures are innumerable, especially for a minority population. It's interesting that -- that they are circling the wagons instead of, I think, the best way to let fear of Muslims melt away is to have them see us leading the charge.

So -- and in many ways, also, we're not intellectually equipped, I think, from a religious standpoint, because we haven't had the infrastructure built in liberty and theology because so many Muslims, I think, don't understand the faith well and have not been educated in a Western mindset. And we have to build these infrastructures to allow that reform to happen.

But it's a lot of tribalism, I think, and a lot of circling of the wagons, and there's -- that has to change, and they don't want...

WALSH:

Thank you.

JASSER:

This change is difficult.

WALSH:

Thank you all.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

KING:

The time of the gentleman time is expired. And Mr. Davis from Illinois is recognized for five minutes.

DAVIS:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to thank all of the witnesses for coming.

As I've listened, I've heard the Constitution being mentioned a number of times. And I thought of the preamble that simply says that "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are

created equal and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, and that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

And I'd also say the pursuit of justice. And I think all people want to be viewed and treated the same way, with equal rights, equal protection under the law, and the opportunity to pursue what they think, especially as long as it is not violating the rights of others.

Sheriff Baca, I've always been, since I've known about you, impressed with your law enforcement career, especially the way that you handled things like law enforcement misconduct and the way that you try and bring people together to understand the role of law enforcement.

And I was just thinking that, you know, the city of Chicago is looking for a police chief right now.

(LAUGHTER)

And while we wouldn't try to steal you from -- but we would like to clone you, if we could, and just bring you, because I think that you represent a level of law enforcement professionalism and understanding of what the role of law enforcement is that I've been looking for, searching for and wanting to see ever since I've been involved in public life.

And so I simply commend you for the way in which you have expressed yourself today and for the track record that you have developed.

I'd like to ask Mr. Bihi and Mr. Bledsoe a question right now. And I understand fully -- I live in inner-city Chicago, have lived there all of my adult life. We have a large Muslim community, gathering sometimes with 15,000, 20,000 people will actually going and listen to Minister Farrakhan speak and -- and will be enthralled the whole time.

What conditions do you think exist that -- that cause radical groups to think that they can successfully recruit and radicalize young people, especially, in neighborhoods and communities like the one that I just described?

BLEDSOE:

Well, I do know a little bit about Chicago. And you're speaking mostly what they call Black Muslims, and Louis Farrakhan and Elijah D. Muhammad and Malcolm X followers.

I think there is somewhat of a difference. But as far as the recruitment part, I think the recruitment part will come before, like when people are denying that we have a problem, and that's one of the recruitment -- I think people will go after -- if we don't have a problem, then they can recruit easier.

DAVIS:

Well, I agree that I do mean African-Americans, but I must confess that my breadth is much bigger, much wider, much broader. And I interact with all kinds of Muslims pretty much on a regular and ongoing basis.

What I'm really trying to get at, I guess, is -- is are there situations that would cause individuals to believe that they're going to be successful?

I mean, I don't go hunting unless I think some game is there.

BLEDSOE:

Yes.

DAVIS:

I don't go fishing unless I think there is some fish in the lake.

BIHI:

May I answer that, sir?

Do you want to add something?

BLEDSOE:

Well, I'm going to add something.

You know, there are professional people out there that are looking for just -- just that. You know, I mean, there are professional people looking out to recruit American citizens not only in Chicago but a lot of other American cities.

BIHI:

Sir, if I may add, yes, there are many reasons as to why they're looking for our youth.

Number one, if you look at the -- the similarities of those who are missing from Minneapolis or from Denmark or from Copenhagen or from Sweden or from (inaudible), they all share one thing. They all are mostly from single-mom households. Young men that usually do not have mentorship at home are almost 85 percent.

Number two, they are looking for very, extremely smart young people who never had any problem.

Third, they are looking for kids who are from America and those Western countries who are from those countries that will not have a problem when they are training. They can go back and

slip into those countries, and (inaudible) on the idea, so they can just order them to do those dirty, wicked jobs.

DAVIS:

Thank you very much.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

KING:

Thank you, Mr. Davis.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania, the former United States attorney, Mr. Meehan?

MEEHAN:

Thank -- thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to thank this entire panel. I know it's been a long process, but I -- I really do believe that we're gaining a great deal from your insights.

Sheriff Baca, I want to thank you for the work that you do. And I know you represent all law enforcement. I had the good opportunity to come in as a United States attorney just a week after September 11, and I watched colleagues like you all across the United States fan out and reach into the community. And I have to say we got a great deal of dialogue from members all across, including many who practiced the Muslim faith.

So I don't think the issue, really, today is so focused on, you know, the question of dialogue. It's as much the question of are we getting the right ability to communicate in a way that helps us prevent the next event?

And I have been aware that one of the things that we were asked to do by the very experts that aren't here today was to go out into the community and speak to folks just like you so we could understand better how to handle this. And I have tried to look at the broad spectrum of things that have been put forth quite a bit here today.

But, Dr. Jasser, I'm going to focus on something that you touched. And it's into this area between, you know, this elephant in the room that we're not supposed to be talking about, religion and jihadism.

You made a statement that the root cause of Muslim radicalization, and this is what it's about, is Islamism, political Islam. And then I was struck by your -- your word.

"How can law enforcement effectively do counterterrorism in our country without recognition that political Islam and its narrative is the core ideology when, at its extreme, it drives the general mindset of the violent extremists carrying out attacks?"

That's what we want to prevent, are those attacks. Can I ask you to describe, in just a little more detail, what do you mean by political Islam?

JASSER:

Thank you, Congressman, for asking me that. Because I think it's so vital to understanding that, as we've heard repeatedly, there's Islam, my faith, which is the moral constructs of integrity and honesty and virtuousness and what I bring to my scripture and my relationship with God, as the Judeo-Christian tradition is.

Then there's political Islam, which is a movement to put -- to create a theocratic state based in Koranic interpretation that uses sharia or Islamic law or Islamic jurisprudence.

Now, I may practice sharia or Islamic law in my life, but that's a choice. And our organization believes that it's no longer religious law, it's no longer a religion if government coerces you to do that.

But that antagonism between this country's understanding of the establishment clause and the beauty of liberty versus political Islam, which wants to put into place Islamic states like Iran, like the Taliban had in place, or like the Wahhabi system in Saudi Arabia, or, milder yet, there are versions of political Islam that are 3.0 or 4.0 that use democracy and elections, but yet end up still being based not in reason but society is based in scriptural exegesis where the only people that can have opinions are the imam or scholars of Islam.

And therefore lay Muslims like myself get dismissed from proceedings because we're not experts in Islamic law and therefore it becomes an oligarchy.

That is what we're up against. And there is the extreme versions like Osama bin Laden, that believes in caliphism or trying to create a global hegemony of Islamic states. And there's the more sort of slippery versions that believe in democracy. And I think you can look at the threat by looking at why most of the radical groups around the world were hatched from Muslim Brotherhood ideology and Sayyid Qutb. People should read up those ideas and look at what they've done.

And I think as we understand that, you'll see a lot of those ideas influencing identification of Muslims. I put in my materials in the appendix some charts that look at the radicalization process. One was from the NYPD report. The other was from a counterterrorism expert, Patrick Poole, who looked at the fact that you end up with terror on the top but there's a lot of feeders into that.

The primary feeder is the separatist feeling from some Muslim youth that they dream of a utopia to bring the state back to the way it was at the time of the Prophet Mohammed. And the time of

the Prophet Mohammed, in the 7th century, he mixed roles of being a head of state, a general, and a messenger of god.

We need to start creating new ideas -- they call that -- some would call it heretical, I call it modernization -- new ideas that separate those roles because Faisal Shahzad, the Times Square bomber, when he was in front of the judge, he told him, I did this because I was a Muslim soldier.

So the Ummah, our Muslim community, is looked by these individuals as being a political unit, military unit, and until we separate that you will never stop terrorism.

KING:

The time of the gentleman is expired.

MEEHAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

KING:

And now got three members who were added today by unanimous consent.

From Indiana, my friend Mr. Carson is recognized for five minutes.

CARSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for these hearings. Appreciate it.

And thank you, Ranking Member Thompson, as well as the witnesses.

I just want to say to Dr. Jasser's point quickly, I don't think that this conversation should be given over totally to the intellectuals. I know we have some disagreements, but I agree with your premise. We have to be very suspicious about these so-called gatekeepers...

JASSER:

Thank you.

CARSON:

... as it relates to the religion. I think all Muslim business persons, physicians and so on should have a contribution, and we shouldn't minimize or trivialize folks' experiences and lessen their credibility as it relates to testifying.

Having said that, as a proud American Muslim, Sheriff Baca, I spent over a decade in law enforcement, including some time in an intelligence capacity with the Department of Homeland Security. I want to thank you for dispatching the sergeant to meet with me as I visited L.A.

But during the time I worked in law enforcement, I worked with informants and cooperating witnesses from all backgrounds on a wide variety of cases. And in every case, one reality held true: that those who trusted law enforcement, the judicial system and our government were most likely to provide useful information in a very timely manner. Also, those who felt singled out or targeted were much less likely to provide useful information as well.

Since the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security and the passage of the Patriot Act, there have been considerable discussions about certain law enforcement and intelligence practices that may do more to spur anti-American sentiment in the Muslim community than to apprehend terrorist plotters.

National security letters, warrantless and roving wiretaps, as well as under cover investigations in mosques have already caused many Muslims to fear that their constitutional rights are being disregarded in the name of preventing terrorism.

Can you tell us, Sheriff, how these and other law enforcement and intelligence practices have impacted Muslim populations, in L.A. particularly? Also tell us if you have any suggestions about how this committee and Congress might better structure these procedures to protect civil rights while maintaining effectiveness.

BACA:

Well, that's a very tough question to answer in a short period of time, but I'll make my best effort.

Intelligence gathering in and of itself is an interesting subject. And as we know, in many of the experiences the United States has gone through since 9/11, that intelligence in and of itself moves the subject matter around. Meaning what you believe is in one report may be modified by another report, which may be modified by another report, which ultimately leads to where is the pea under the shell.

And I don't think anybody that's in the law enforcement world that's involved in intelligence gathering -- I'm pleased to know you have been -- understands that if you don't have the authority in the intelligence world to make an arrest at the time that the evidence demonstrates it's eminent and it should be done, then the question is, what intelligence do you believe and what intelligence don't you believe and who are your sources and what are your sources' motives for providing you the information?

Now, it's very clear to me that if Abdulmutallab's dad came into a police station anywhere in America and said that, "My dad is acting a little weird and I need some help," that we would know exactly what to do.

But this was not the case. The process was morphed into an intelligence mode and then it went into a status file as opposed to an active file. And I think we've corrected that in our federal intelligence-gathering system.

But if we look at intelligence as being the bible of all truth, we're in deep trouble in this country. What we have to do is we have to continue to improve what we do, to use techniques that are clearly not obscuring evidence but clearly making sure that the evidence is in fact what is being reported to be. And I think therein is a whole different discussion that the Intelligence Committee can deal with, or subcommittee.

But when it comes down to the truth of all forms of investigative work, that it is not an exact science 100 percent of the time. So what is the safeguards? It has to be there's rules to follow.

Now, we follow the rules that the federal government set forth in intelligence gathering at our local joint regional intelligence centers and the Joint Terrorism Task Force. So we have the rules in place.

But the human element is another issue with me, and that is that if we have intelligence officers that have a bias about a particular group they're investigating, you're going to have some problems with the communication capabilities there.

I believe in bias-free policing, I believe in public trust policing. I don't believe you can judge one Muslim for the acts of another. You can't judge anybody from the acts of another.

What we have to do is get to the point where, whatever is being advised to Congress, that we say, OK, we get it. We've had a hearing. Now we've got to go out into the communities that are affected by the subject matter. And I welcome the continual dialogue, continual examination, and continual visitation.

But I do believe that we need to always be mindful of what's going on in the intelligence community.

KING:

The time of the gentleman is expired.

And, Sheriff Baca, my understanding -- Sheriff Baca?

BACA:

Yes, sir?

KING:

My understanding from talking with the ranking member is that you will have to catch a plane, I believe, at 3 o'clock, and he suggests you may have to leave...

BACA:

Yes.

KING:

... the panel by 1:30.

BACA:

Yes.

KING:

Whatever time you leave is obviously up to you. In the event we're in the middle of something when you leave, I thank you sincerely for your testimony and for your contribution and for your patience.

BACA:

And I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and your committee. It's been a pleasure.

KING:

Thank you, sir.

THOMPSON:

Will the gentleman yield?

KING:

Absolutely.

THOMPSON:

Sheriff, thank you very much. I know you made a big sacrifice to get here. Your testimony has been absolutely essential to this committee. Thank you much.

(UNKNOWN)

May I (inaudible) a response before the sheriff leaves? May I (inaudible) a response?

KING:

No, actually, you're on to the next.

Now recognize the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Rigell, for five minutes.

RIGELL:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I'd like to thank each of our panel of witnesses here for participating in the hearing.

Now, Americans of Muslim faith, they truly are an integral part of our nation's community and play -- contribute to the quality of life in this country. And they are our neighbors and our friends. Muslims serve honorably as policemen, teachers, and in our armed services, and some indeed have given the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our freedom and our way of life.

My deep respect for the Muslim community is the foundation upon which I approach this critical issue.

So it's with alarm and, frankly, with a degree of sadness that I conclude that the radicalization of our youth, one, that is intent on spreading violent Islamic extremists -- extremism is indeed taking place in this country, posing (ph) a serious and increasing threat to our security.

And that's why I respectfully reject the charge that this hearing is unnecessary and an assault on any particular faith.

I see this as a conversation, albeit an over hyped one, but it's a conversation that must take place. And I commend the chairman for remaining steadfast and holding a thoughtful dialogue on this subject.

Dr. Nasser (sic), I'd like to address my -- my first question to you, sir. I note that in your written testimony, you conclude one paragraph with this line: "The liberty narrative is the only effective counter to the Islamist narrative."

You certainly have my attention. I fully agree with that. And what -- what are the next steps to -- to play that out and to -- to use that -- that proper message to counter what's taking place now?

JASSER:

Yeah, you know, I think -- I look at my own life about why I turned out the way I did and Nidal Hasan turned out the way he did. I grew up, for example, learning that our system of governance -- people are innocent until proven guilty, our law enforcement's innocent until proven guilty. So same process.

And I think what we need to do is we don't have -- we've talked abroad about nation building and how that doesn't work. Now we've shifted into institution building. And it's interesting that somehow we -- we compartmentalize things abroad different than we do domestically. And, in fact, it's the same issue. It's the same diagnosis.

The concepts of liberty -- my -- my parents were -- were blessed to have -- my father was blessed to have been educated in London, so the understanding of separation of church and state was something he internalized as an undergrad. But there's no educational infrastructure to bring Jeffersonian democracy to many of our own heritages.

So if we're going to get these ideas into the communities so that it becomes part of the institutions we build, and we take on the imams and we remind the imams that "imam" means teacher, it doesn't mean leader. All you do is teach us religion. You don't lead society. You don't have a role in government.

This whole enlightenment process needs institutions that you can help us build, help us provide the infrastructure to do that, but yet allow Muslims to do it.

And I think it doesn't cross the First Amendment, because your role is to advance liberty, to advance freedom, advance and help ideas of equality, of human rights, universal human rights concepts. And then you make sure that we live to those, and our Islamic institutions endorse those.

And then we start engaging in Al Jazeera, in media and Muslim media these ideas. Because right now most of the foreign media or Islamic media is not having this discourse. It's all about polarity of being Islam, being Muslim, advocating for Islam versus the West. And that polarity can go away with institution building.

RIGELL:

Thank you.

And -- in the short time we have remaining here, what role have foreign imams played and, in fact, are playing today in -- in spreading, you know, this radical form of Islam?

JASSER:

I can't tell you how important that is, in that what they're doing -- and -- and -- CIA -- former CIA Director Jim Woolsey had talked about the fact that the Saudis have spent over \$90 billion in spreading their ideology of Wahhabism in the past two generations.

RIGELL:

Including America?

JASSER:

Including the United States. And that's why I mentioned those mosques. There's mosques in Cincinnati, in L.A., in New York, all across the country that have been part of Saudi investments and their ideology abroad.

And in order to counter that we need a strategy to help counter those institutions that are building those ideas.

RIGELL:

Dr. Jasser, I -- and all of -- of our witnesses today, thank you so much for being here. And, Dr. Jasser, I applaud you being a bold voice on this subject. Thank you.

JASSER:

Thank you.

RIGELL:

I yield back.

KING:

I thank the gentleman for yielding.

And now we'll recognize the gentleman from Texas, a former member of this committee, Mr. Green.

Good to have you back.

GREEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's an honor to be back.

And, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Thompson, I came by today because I love America. I love what America stands for. I love the Pledge of Allegiance. It means something to me: Liberty and justice for all.

I love the Declaration of Independence: All persons created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights.

I love the Constitution, a copy of which I hold in my hand: "We the people," is what it says.

And then it goes on to say with this very First Amendment, the very first amendment, "Congress shall make no law representing an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

By the way, this clause recognizes religion first. It is the first of the first -- the first.

And I want you to know, not only do I love America, I love the American people. I love them regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ethnicity or sexuality. I love the American people.

And because I love the American people I want to say in clear and concise terms, I have no problem with discussing terrorist organizations that are rooted in religion, which is why I want to discuss the KKK.

The KKK requires that its members profess a belief in Jesus Christ. The KKK says that the Christian faith is the white man's religion. The KKK says that Jews are a people of the Antichrist. The KKK wants to preserve the true Gospel, the Gospel of the white man's religion.

By the way, I'm the son of a Christian preacher. I have some credentials when it comes to Christianity. I was born into Christianity, baptized into Christianity. No one can say that I'm less a Christian than anybody else, and I'm no more a Christian than anybody else.

We have had 100 years of terrorism perpetrated by the KKK on Jews and African-Americans and some others in this country, 100 years. Which brings me to my point: Mr. Chairman, I love you and I love all of my friends here today. I do not assign any malice or forethought to anybody. I don't believe anything has any degree of malevolence associated with it. But I must tell you, it is not enough for things to be right. They must also look right.

It may be right but it doesn't look right when we take on Islam and allow this to take place and we don't tell the truth about the abuses associated with the KKK and Christianity.

Christianity, according to the KKK, is the reason why they do what they do. Why not include the KKK in this discussion today? Why not have a broader topic that does not focus on one religion?

It doesn't look right, Mr. Jasser when we focus on one religion to the exclusion of others. That's the point being made.

You are an intellectual, and you understand what I'm saying.

It's not about what you are defending and the points you're making.

Nor yours, Mr. Bledsoe.

Nor yours, Mr. Bihi.

It's about the fundamental fairness associated with freedom of religion in this country, and we don't single out one religion and give the appearance by in so doing that there is something dastardly associated with being a part of this religion.

Regardless as to all of the disclaimers that are going to be made, that is still a perception that some people will have.

And I want you to know that when I board an airplane, I am looked upon with an eye of suspicion. For some reason, people tend to think that I am Muslim. For some reason, a person told me I needed to go back home to my -- my foreign country; that I don't belong in this country.

For some reason people think that people who are Muslim, many -- how many is many?

KING:

The time of the gentleman has expired.

GREEN:

I still have five...

KING:

No you don't.

The time of the gentleman has expired.

GREEN:

Thank you for the time, Mr. Chairman.

May I just say this, Mr. Chairman?

KING:

Surely.

GREEN:

Let's -- let's not only let things be right. Let's make them look right. And let's let's broaden this and not single out the American Muslim (inaudible).

KING:

I now recognize the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Duncan.

DUNCAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to yield 30 seconds or so to Mr. Bledsoe to respond if he would like to to Mr. Green's comments.

BLEDSOE:

Again, I think that he's making a point. I mean, today we're not talking at this hearing about KKK. We're talking about extremist Islam, radicalization of American citizens. And I hope that you get that day that you can be back in this hearing. That's my hope.

DUNCAN:

Thank you.

GREEN:

Would the gentleman, Mr. Duncan, yield 10 seconds?

DUNCAN:

No.

(CROSSTALK)

GREEN:

Mr. Chairman, it is within protocol to ask for a yield.

KING:

No, I -- it's up to the gentleman to...

DUNCAN:

I (inaudible) time.

A Newsweek article October 22nd, 2010 said this: "The left is wrongly defending Islamism, an extremist and at times violent ideology, which it confuses with the common person's Islam," which I add is a religion, "while the right is often wrongly attacking the Muslim faith, which is confuses with Islamism."

Thank you, guys, for pointing that out this morning.

I want to thank Mr. Bledsoe and Mr. Bihi for sharing your stories of your sons. As a father of sons myself, my heart goes out to you.

I'm not aware of anyone on this side of the political spectrum that is attacking Islam, nor anyone wishing to limit anyone's First Amendment rights. But rather, I believe we are raising awareness of Islamism, a political ideology and how that ideology is being used in this country.

I am regularly astonished and outraged -- outraged -- by this administration's continued failure to single out who our enemy is. Mr. Bledsoe said in his testimony that there's a big elephant in the room, but our society continues not to see it. And you say that this wrong is caused by political correctness and even political fear.

I've got a slide on the board and I know it's going to be hard to read, but if you'll look at the 9/11 commission and the number of times enemy, jihad, Muslim Brotherhood, Al Qaida, Hezbollah, Hamas are mentioned. And then if you look at the FBI counterterrorism analytical lexicon and the national intelligence strategy, you'll see zeroes beside the fact that they don't mention enemy jihad, Muslim Brotherhood, Al Qaida. It's an astonishing contrast.

But what I came here today to comment on and delve into is a completely different line of thought, and it is this. An issue that is of particular concern to me and my constituents, and that is the threat of sharia law to the United States Constitution. The Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments produced a report in '08 on the global war on terrorism authored by Robert Martinage, currently deputy undersecretary of the Navy.

In that report, Martinage states that the centerpiece of Al Qaida's strategy for the long war is exploiting Muslim sense of individual religious obligation by declaring a defensive jihad against the West and apostate regimes. The Organization of Islamic Conference, representing 57 member states, declares on its website that it has a considerable weight within these institutions where it makes others listen to the voice of Islamic Ulama and presents the image of moderate Islam -- tolerant, open to dialogue and bearing the message of peace, harmony and solidarity between men.

But according to the OIC's own Cairo declaration on human rights and Islam, article 25, is clearly states that Islamic sharia is the only source of reference for the explanation or clarification of any of the articles in this declaration.

As the United States Constitution is the law of this land, any attempt to subvert it amounts to sedition. I took an oath to uphold the Constitution against enemies both foreign and domestic, and it is my desire to see multiple hearings, Mr. Chairman, not only here in this committee, but also in House Armed Services Committee, Intelligence Committee, Foreign Affairs Committee, Judiciary Committee examining the role that Islamic doctrine plays in the radicalization process, assessing the degree to which jihadist organizations such as Muslim Brotherhood and its front organizations, influence our American Muslim communities.

So I want to ask this to Dr. Jasser -- Jasser, I'm sorry. Do you feel that the U.S. government has done an adequate job learning about Islam and how Islamic doctrines affect the behavior and community norms of Muslims residing in America? And how does Islamic doctrine and sharia law shape the responsiveness of local U.S. Muslim communities to law enforcement efforts that target Islamic jihad?

JASSER:

Thank you, Congressman Duncan. I think that's a wonderful question and I think, just like we talked about, there's various forms of Islam around the world. Sharia also means very different things to different Muslims. At our -- in my home, it's a private thing. Do I want it in government? Absolutely not.

That really is the doctrine of the enemy. They want to create an Islamic state. There is no way any concept that the Brotherhood has of an Islamic state could ever be a great ally of the United States because there's two different lenses through which we see the world.

We're allies with other democracies that are secular, but to ever be an ally with an Islamic state based on sharia would be impossible. And I think ultimately this is the problem is that -- and this is why I provided a list of scholars in my testimony that are based on the Assembly of Muslim Jurists. These scholars are still based in Islamic law from the 13th, 14th century, from people like Ibn Taymiyyah and others. They have not created a new school of thought.

And what happens is that intellectual Islam or authoritative Islam still has not absorbed the ideas of a Western society based under God rather than under Islam. And our forefathers went through this whole discussion of not having the word "Christian" in our founding document. The Islamic community has not gone through that discussion and that evolution. And we're avoiding it.

We need to address it. And we need to address the fact the government we seek -- we don't only accept the laws of this land as a minority, but even if we were a majority, we'd want the same -- the same laws. That hypocrisy is part of the world many Muslims live in. They absorb their laws of the land as a minority, but they have a doctrine that they believe in that they follow within their own organizations that's based on Islamic law, which allows a duality that I think affects their identification with the society.

And not all mosques -- I know many mosques that don't teach that. They're looking for the right books. I mean, if you go and I would tell all of you to go to the Islamic book services...

(CROSSTALK)

KING:

The time of the gentleman has expired.

JASSER:

... and you won't find too much reform work in that.

DUNCAN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

KING:

I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey, also a former member of the committee, Mr. Pascrell.

PASCRELL:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I yield 10 seconds to Mr. Green.

GREEN:

I will be very brief.

I thank God that we did not have a hearing on Christianity and how it is radicalizing young American boys. We could have. We did not. That's my point.

I yield back.

PASCRELL:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Green.

It's good to see you both. We've been here since 9:30. I was thinking a little longer than that. We were here since the beginning of this committee. And it wasn't my idea to leave, but they put me in something else.

KING:

We miss you, Bill.

PASCRELL:

Yeah, sure.

(LAUGHTER)

KING:

Sometimes.

PASCRELL:

We'll see -- we'll see in another five minutes whether you're saying the same thing.

Islam is a beautiful religion, Mr. Chairman, but this hearing was not on Islam. It was on the Muslim community. There is a big difference. So when you're admonishing people that they don't know what they're talking about, there's the title of this hearing.

Correct, Mr. Chairman?

(CROSSTALK)

PASCRELL:

Muslim -- well, it says it. That's what we're talking about. But the extremes, many times, are in the eyes of the beholder. When we don't understand a people, we're all -- all of us bound to mischaracterize and to stereotype. I don't believe anything I've heard and I was in the hearing quite some time today and part of it I wasn't. I was in another meeting.

I don't think I heard anything from any of the panelists, and thank you for being here, trying to bring to -- lead to a conclusion that we should start stereotyping more or we should start profiling. Because you always have to find a response or an answer to what you are trying to attack. We want to protect this country. We love this country. Democrats don't love it any more than Republicans and vice versa.

So I must say to you, Mr. Bledsoe, when you say "the other side," I don't know what the hell you're talking about. We are all in this together, believe me, sir. My heart goes out to you and Mr. Bihi, but we're all in this together. Let's get it straight from the beginning.

I can -- am convinced that this hearing would result in good because when reasonable people will conclude that the greatest majority of Muslims, like every other community in this country, are patriots -- are patriots to America.

Right, Dr. Jasser?

JASSER:

Yes, sir.

PASCRELL:

You agree with me, Dr. Jasser, don't you?

JASSER:

Yes, sir.

PASCRELL:

Every sit-down -- every sit-down that I've had -- we've discussed this -- with the FBI about my own district -- I live, I come from Paterson, with one "T," New Jersey, the second-largest Muslim community, Paterson and its environs, in the country.

I grew up in the neighborhood -- Arabic neighborhood. Ate more Arab food than Italian food. That doesn't make me know more about the community, but you'll have to take my word for it now, and I'll stand corrected if you come up with something else, that every time I've sat down with the FBI about my own district, I was told, many times, that there are -- is no hidden agenda and that you need not fear the recruiting and the very recruiting that we're talking about today in this hearing.

Now does that mean that every district in the country, does that mean Chairman King's district has the same kind of view? I don't know.

I mean, some pretty bad people came out of some mosques and some pretty bad people came out of Catholic churches, et cetera, et cetera.

But we can't -- we've got to do everything we can to avoid a wide brush, because it gets us nowhere. And we can't defend our own children and our own neighborhoods if we have bad information.

Why should we be surprised? We know our enemies are probing this system every day. They come in many forms, many shapes. Right now, as we speak in this hearing, the enemy is probing our systems. No question about it. So we need to be strong.

The graph you showed a few moments ago is very hurtful to the very community you are investigating. Very hurtful. And it's very hurtful to the administration, because I don't think one administration wants to protect us any less than another administration. That is foolish.

KING:

The time of the gentleman has expired.

PASCRELL:

It doesn't bring us to any resolve, Mr. Chairman.

KING:

And even after five minutes of that, Mr. Pascrell, I still love you.

Recognize the gentleman from Pennsylvania. also another former U.S. attorney, Mr. Marino.

MARINO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the chair for this desperately need hearing. I want to thank your courage and your leadership for bringing this to the forefront. And I hope that we have more of these hearings.

And for my colleagues on the other side, I want to tell my good friend that I will be with you shoulder to shoulder in the hearings with -- for the Ku Klux Klan...

(CROSSTALK)

MARINO:

... and any -- and any other racist group that defiles this country.

GREEN:

Ten-second yield?

MARINO:

No, sir, no, sir.

GREEN:

You would address me, but you would not allow me to just respond in 10 seconds?

MARINO:

No.

KING:

The gentleman from Pennsylvania controls the time.

GREEN:

Well, I would -- I would...

(CROSSTALK)

KING:

The gentleman from Pennsylvania controls the time.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania controls the time.

(CROSSTALK)

MARINO:

Out of respect, I will be there with you. But the issue today is terrorism.

GREEN:

The Klan is a terrorist organization that has been over a hundred years...

KING:

The gentleman from Pennsylvania...

GREEN:

You have not suffered...

KING:

The gentleman from Pennsylvania controls the time. Mr. Green, as a guest of the committee.

Mr. Marino, your time.

MARINO:

Thank you, sir.

This hearing today is not about religion, with all due respect. It's about terrorists. It's about people who kill men, women, and children in the name of religion, which is a blasphemy in and of itself.

So as far as the witnesses are concerned, I want to thank you for being here. I want to thank you for your courage to stand up as Americans in America before America and the world and tell the truth.

As a United States attorney, I prosecuted a homegrown terrorist, and he is in prison now for 30 years. And it was the right thing to do.

Now, the questions that were asked today were well thought out and professionally asked. And you excellently answered them.

But as a freshman congressman I think sometimes we fail to ask this question of you.

And, Doctor, I'd like to present this to you, and the other gentlemen can respond if we have time. What do you expect from us, from Congress? What should we be doing to promote the fact that this is not about a religion?

Because I have many friends that are Muslims and love this country as much as any one of us do. What do you expect from us?

JASSER:

Thank you, Congressman.

I hope and I pray every night as I do this work that you develop the political will to deal with this problem, that we separate all the theatrics and all the concern with vitriol and all that, and get to how to solve the problem in that our enemy is using a language that some people will articulate as offensive.

And as a Muslim I am telling you, it is not offensive. And I want to deal that. Because we use the language -- we use words like jihad and set-up (ph) and things like that at home, but I don't want my children to take the predominant thoughts of those that are right now predominating the web, cyber jihad.

The reformist mindset is very hard to find on the web, and that's because we haven't had the resources.

So we need the political will. We need the maturity as a nation to be able to discuss religion, sometimes say things that might not be right, but not get offended and realize that we respect religious practice and that the First Amendment is freedom of religion but not freedom from religion. But yet somehow we've gotten so polarized that we can't do that.

And I hope, because what's going to happen -- and these charts have showed it, is that we have seen exponential increases in attacks and our law enforcement is going to continue chasing their tail thinking that community outreach works, and we're not draining the pool of the ideology because we can't confront it. It is surrender.

MARINO:

I have less than a minute left.

Gentlemen, if you please?

BLEDSOE:

I'd like to say that I think -- I'd like for the Congress to get here, out of this, is call a terrorist what it is. You know, say what it is.

I mean, many times I'm hearing people say everything but what it is. And for the gentleman sat next to you, the other side, I'm speaking of -- when I spoke about the other side, I sure in hell (ph) was talking about the side that was, that didn't understand what this meeting is all about.

MARINO:

And 20 seconds?

BIHI:

(inaudible) I think that this...

(CROSSTALK)

BIHI:

... is about religion, this is about saving families, the young people who were supposed to be doctors and the security of this nation.

I think we should forget about our political affiliations and conditions, and just take an opportunity and take advantage of Muslim families, American Muslim families coming forward, demonstrating to be heard on what's happening in their community.

I think it's a great challenge.

I thank the committee. I thank Congressman King. This is very important and it should continue to open the doors.

Nobody hates me. I don't see (inaudible) hurting. I see my own community hurting me, and I want you to allow me to deal with that. I want to deal with that. I don't want somebody else I don't know...

KING:

The time of the gentleman is expired.

Let me first of all thank all the witnesses. Of course, Sheriff Baca, who had to leave, I want to thank him tremendously for his testimony. He's been before this committee a number of times. We also thank Dr. Jasser, Mr. Bledsoe, Mr. Bihi for your testimony.

And I also, let me on a personal note thank the ranking member. This may -- despite some of the consternation, this meeting actually went a lot easier than it could have, and I thank the ranking member for making a number of procedural agreements prior -- prior to the committee to eliminate and to avoid unnecessary problems that we could have had. And I thank him for that.

Members of the committee, you may have some additional questions, we will ask you. The witnesses will respond to those in writing. The record will be held open for 10 days.

And without objection, the committee stands adjourned.