

Prepared Remarks

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Good afternoon and thank you.

Ever since the early 1990s, when I would come here from the State Department to hear from some of the nation's and indeed the world's leading experts on national security and the Middle East, I have been a great fan of the Institute. So, it is with great pleasure, and a significant amount of humility, that I appear before you today.

As someone who has been working for more than twenty years in the fields of national security, intelligence, and politics, I can say with certainty that I did not think my first appearance before this distinguished audience would be for the purpose of discussing homeland security. There are logical synergies and ties between the fields of homeland and traditional national security, but the tools for success in one are not necessarily the same tools for success in the other. Put another way, how we provide physical protection of the homeland and how we promote and defend our interests overseas are not the same.

My hope this afternoon is to give you a sense of what has come to be known as the field of homeland security. I will provide you some thoughts on the changing threat environment, the great strides we are making in building a true homeland security enterprise, as well as on the challenges associated with meeting the homeland security intelligence needs of this new enterprise.

Most fundamentally, I will make the case that the emergent field of homeland security, and providing it with intelligence support, is both complex and differs significantly from foreign intelligence, law enforcement, and traditional national security. Success in each domain is reliant on success in the others, even as the actors, lexicon, and operating environment between the two are often distinct.

[The New National Security Strategy](#)

As you know, President Obama released his first National Security Strategy framework last week. It is premised on the fact that national security and homeland security are integrated, and that our government has no greater priority than the safety and security of the American people. This is the primary mission of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). It is the primary mission of the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A), in which I am honored to serve.

The president makes clear that success relies on our facing the world as it is, that great advances have been made, but that those advances have been accompanied by persistent problems. Our country will continue to underwrite global security, and we will do so through our commitments to allies, partners, and institutions. The president's new National Security Strategy speaks in no uncertain terms to the new way ahead:

We will disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda and its affiliates through a comprehensive strategy that denies them safe haven, strengthens front-line partners, secures our homeland, pursues justice through durable legal approaches, and counters a bankrupt agenda of extremism and murder with an agenda of hope and opportunity. (page 4) ... Our intelligence and homeland security efforts must be integrated with our national security policies, and those of our allies and partners. (page 5)

John Brennan, the president's assistant for homeland security and counterterrorism, spoke to a public audience on May 26, one day before the release of the new National Security Strategy. It is worth noting here some key elements from Mr. Brennan's remarks:

- First, the security of the United States, its citizens, and U.S. allies and partners is and always will be paramount.
- Second, our enemy is not "terrorism," because terrorism is a tactic ... Nor do we describe our enemy as "jihadists" or "Islamists." We never have been and will never be at war with Islam. Islam, like so many faiths, is part of America.
- Third, our enemy is al-Qaeda and its terrorist affiliates; we are at war against al-Qaeda and its terrorist affiliates. The United States will disrupt, dismantle, and ensure a lasting defeat of al-Qaeda and violent extremist affiliates.
- Fourth, we will continue the never-ending work of strengthening our defenses here at home. Since 9/11, we have made enormous progress in securing the homeland. We have built upon the work of the previous administration and have accelerated efforts in many areas. We have strengthened intelligence, information sharing, and cooperation at all levels -- federal, state, local, and the private sector -- and timely analysis of threat information. Today, our defenses are stronger and the United States presents a much less hospitable environment for terrorists to carry out their cowardly attacks than ever before.
- Fifth, this is the first national security strategy of any president that integrates homeland security as part of a broader security strategy. The White House has already merged the staffs of the National Security Council, Homeland Security Council, and parts of the National Economic Council into a single, integrated National Security Staff that encompass new offices, including cybersecurity.

Finally, no nation, despite how powerful, can prevent every threat. Instead of simply building defensive walls, we must bolster our ability at all levels -- federal, state, local, and the private sector -- to withstand disruptions, maintain operations and recover quickly.

Current Threat Environment

Having tried to paint a picture of the president's over-arching strategy, I now would like to give you some perspective on how we at the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Intelligence and Analysis view the terrorist threat to the homeland.

In our view, we are facing a more diversified threat than ever before. We have gone from a centralized, cellular al-Qaeda threat to loosely networked franchised, and now to radicalized individuals inspired by, but not necessarily tied to al-Qaeda and its terrorist affiliates.

As John Brennan noted one week ago, "this is a new phase of the terrorist threat -- no longer limited to coordinated, sophisticated 9/11 style attacks, but expanding to single individuals attempting to carry out relatively unsophisticated attacks."

The number and pace of attempted attacks against the United States over the past nine months have surpassed the number of attempts during any other previous one-year period, and we believe al-Qaeda, its terrorist affiliates, and radicalized individuals will try to conduct operations in the United States with increased frequency.

Particularly disturbing is the significant increase in al-Qaeda and its affiliate's ability to use operatives that have access and familiarity with the United States.

Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano spoke to this in her remarks at the National Press Club April 15.

This is ... really a change that I have seen in my 14 or 15 months as the secretary of Homeland Security. And that is the increase in the number of U.S. citizens who themselves are radicalized to the point where they may travel to the FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan) or to Yemen ... be in a camp, learn the tradecraft of a terrorist and then return ... or learn much of it simply via the Internet, among other things.

Najibullah Zazi, who pled guilty to plotting to attack the New York City subway system last year, is a lawful permanent resident, and Faisal Shazad, now charged for his alleged role in the failed bombing attempt in Times Square on May 1, is a naturalized U.S. citizen. Both spent several years in the locale of their planned attacks. Accused Fort Hood shooter Nidal Hassan is a U.S. person, and Northwest Airlines flight 253 passenger Abdulmutallab spent some time in the United States.

U.S. persons also have joined al-Qaeda in inspiring, plotting, and in some cases planning attacks in the homeland. U.S.-born al-Qaeda spokesman Adam Gadahn recently released a video titled "A Call to Arms" and publicly called for others to emulate the attack at Fort Hood. Anwar al-Aulaqi uses recorded messages to preach a violent interpretation of Islam and promote attacks against the United States.

Gadahn and Aulaqi are American citizens who understand our society, strengths, and vulnerabilities, and use that knowledge not only to plan attacks but also, via the Internet and extremist websites, to exhort people already living in the United States to take up arms and launch terrorist attacks from within.

Al-Qaeda and its affiliates have not given up on prominent political, economic, and infrastructure targets to produce mass casualties and visually dramatic destruction. But recent events suggest a trend in which terrorists believe smaller, more achievable attacks against easily accessible targets could have dramatic effect.

Coupling softer targets with greater access to U.S. persons for planning and execution poses a heightened threat environment. Adding in what we believe to be shorter training cycles and less reliance on outside support or travel abroad means we have to operate under the premise that other operatives are in the country and could advance plotting with little or no warning.

Our bottom-line judgment is that we face an increased challenge in detecting terrorist plots under way by individuals or small groups acting quickly and independently or with only tenuous ties to foreign handlers.

[The Homeland Security Enterprise](#)

Earlier in my remarks I indicated that there are clear distinctions between traditional national security, law enforcement and intelligence programs, and the tools to support the homeland security enterprise. I would now like to turn to describing the core elements of the homeland security enterprise and its primary actors.

I also mentioned earlier that most of my career has been spent on the foreign side of the national security equation, and how different the operating environment is inside the homeland. I cannot overstate the criticality of not assuming the rules of one arena apply to the other but equally making necessary linkage between them.

The first and most central difference between traditional national security and homeland security is the role of the federal government. It is the federal government that speaks for the United States overseas. We operate under rules set forth by the federal government, regardless of whether acting unilaterally, bilaterally, multilaterally, or internationally with the international community. Rules governing what we say, how we say it, and where we operate are determined

and executed by the federal government, or by entities acting on behalf of the federal government.

The traditional national security enterprise consists of our diplomatic, military, intelligence, and foreign assistance communities coordinated in Washington, managed by an ambassador, and executed by a unified team.

On the other hand, the homeland security enterprise is completely different. It is a partnership between the federal government, states and localities, and the private sector. In traditional national security, the context is primarily the federal government. Inside the homeland, the federal government is one of several equally important actors.

Just last week, Secretary Napolitano summed up the importance of the federal/non-federal partnership in homeland security when discussing the release of the president's National Security Strategy:

DHS is working with federal, state, and local law enforcement, and with a range of community groups, to better combat the threats posed by domestic-based terrorism. We do this by ensuring that law enforcement at every level has access to information and intelligence about threats so they are fully equipped to confront them on the frontlines.

Identifying the type of suspicious activity we are seeing today associated with attempted terrorism in the homeland almost certainly will come from outside the federal government. Our security at home depends on expanding the federal government's partnerships with states, localities, and the private sector. This partnership means the federal government provides timely and predictive information on terrorist training, techniques, and patterns of behavior to the non-federal network. This information is intended to link what the federal government knows about terrorism plots and makes it relevant and actionable to non-federal partners in their communities.

This partnership must be reciprocal. Non-federal partners must know what to look out for and how to convey suspicious activity information to the federal government.

In other words, information sharing is the key to the federal/non-federal partnership. This is easier said than done. Information sharing between federal actors is often a matter of technology and culture. Information sharing with non-federal partners involves mutual investment in building classified and unclassified systems for collaboration, harmonizing federal, state, local, and the private sector information-sharing rules, and establishing the trust that the federal government will share all it can but still may not always be able to share all that it knows. Of course, and most importantly, we are talking about information sharing inside the United States.

DHS, and my home office of I&A in particular, are leading the effort to build focal points for information sharing between the federal government and non-federal partners. This effort comes together through what we call "fusion centers." Fusion centers are owned and operated by states and localities. The federal government, primarily through DHS and DOJ, provides assistance and connectivity to recognized fusion centers. DHS also ensures a federal presence at fusion centers. This presence is intended to give reach back to Washington and for the fusion of federal and non-federal information.

Fusion centers are neither joint terrorism task forces nor intelligence operations centers. Fusion centers are what their name implies -- a vital analytic mechanism for expanding the partnership network between federal and non-federal homeland security officials.

Secretary Napolitano has made standing up a fully operational national network of fusion centers one of her highest

priorities. There are currently 72 fusion centers up and running across the country. Soon, all fusion centers will have classified connectivity to the federal government and at least one representative from the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis. The DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, as well as the DHS Privacy Office provide training to federal, state, and local fusion center personnel. This is done to ensure that all activities at fusion centers are done in accordance with our cherished privacy rights, civil rights, and civil liberties.

Homeland Security Intelligence: Challenges and Complexities

Finally, I would like to spend just a few moments discussing some of the unique challenges in defining homeland security intelligence. This is a new and still developing discipline; we have a ways to go in our understanding of its primary mission space and operating environment.

Among the most challenging questions the broader homeland security community is wrestling with are the following:

- What is the homeland security intelligence playing field?
- What are its strategic and operational playing fields?
- What does it mean to produce strategic analysis on homeland security?
- Is it the same as producing classified national intelligence estimates on terrorism trends in the homeland?
- Is it like producing the State Department's annual, unclassified "Patterns on Global Terrorism"?
- Might homeland security intelligence be more like operational intelligence provided to warfighters?
- Is homeland security intelligence more akin to the tactical targeting and case support provided to traditional law enforcement and intelligence collectors overseas?

Answering these questions is made more difficult when taking into account the reality that a large swath of the homeland security intelligence customer set is non-federal partners without security clearances. And even in cases where non-federal partners have security clearances, how do we best support them in their requirement to translate the information to the vast majority of their brethren that do not have clearances?

Another evolving element in defining homeland security intelligence is how this field is integrated with the traditional law enforcement and intelligence communities. Traditional law enforcement activities, like the investigative work done by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and foreign intelligence collection done overseas, are conducted in a different context. Law enforcement investigations must have a predicate. Likewise, in a society committed to the preservation of both security and liberty, information on our citizens must not be collected solely for the purpose of monitoring religious, political, or other protected activities. Even when assessing demographic trends and detecting patterns of behavior, we must pay careful attention to ensuring that we not somehow stifle people's willingness to participate in our democratic society. In a globalized world where there is a decreasing distinction between terrorist plots conceived, planned, and executed overseas from those inside the homeland, striking the right balance between identifying and sorting potentially key bits of information necessary for homeland security intelligence has become one of our greatest and important challenges.

Finally, there are a range of obstacles integrating homeland security intelligence information with that of the larger national intelligence community. My home office, the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis, works in both worlds. It is a statutory member of the national intelligence community -- the national intelligence community that understandably has a predominantly foreign focus, rarely engages with non-federal partners, and has few requirements for information associated with U.S. persons inside the homeland. My office not only views the homeland as its primary playing field, but most often attempts to provide terrorism-related information at the unclassified level to those outside the federal government who often are unfamiliar with the scope and limitations of intelligence collection and analysis.

Conclusion

President Obama has issued his first National Security Strategy. He has said we must eliminate the increasingly frayed distinction between foreign- and homeland-based terror threats. Al-Qaeda and its affiliates make no distinction, and neither should we. Our warfighters, law enforcement officials, and intelligence operators overseas must continue to be successful in degrading and denying safe haven to al-Qaeda and its affiliates.

Those of us with responsibilities for counterterrorism at home must work through what it means to provide homeland security intelligence.

We know that securing the homeland from al-Qaeda and its affiliates requires seamless connectivity between the federal government and our state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector partners. There are more than 750,000 state and local law enforcement and first responders in the homeland. They know their communities far better than we in Washington. We can provide them guidance and current information on threat trends and patterns. But it is a reciprocal relationship, in which we are dependent on the information provided by them.

In closing, I'd like to return to where I began. The terror threat to the homeland is real and it is evolving. We must continue to evolve too. The president, federal national security community and homeland security enterprise, that comprised of state, local, tribal and private sectors, are doing all that we can to identify and disrupt threats. This means deepening the partnerships between all elements of homeland security national power. We all have a role in this enterprise.