

**The Nature of the Terrorist Threat**  
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More than five years after the cataclysm of September 11, 2001, the terrorist threat has become more varied, complicated and difficult to understand than perhaps at any time in memory. The United States faces an array of different kinds of terrorist threats, some of which are related, some of which are not. Some are extraordinarily dangerous; others pose a risk on a much smaller scale. Some are genuinely global; others are purely local, others still reach beyond their countries of origin but are better characterized as more or less regional.

American citizens are understandably confused by the panoply of forms this security threat takes. Moreover, confusion about forms and the irregular incidence of successful terrorist attack causes further uncertainty about the dimensions of the threat. Indeed, for Americans who are not living in Iraq, the actuarial tables do not show much of change regarding the likelihood of dying in a terrorist act -- even factoring in September 11. Yet in my view, the potential for a devastating attack or series of attacks and for grave damage to American interests remains. For these reasons, it is imperative that legislators and policymakers do their utmost to clear away some of the misunderstandings that inevitably cloud this subject. Consequently, I am grateful to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the committee for having this hearing. I hope to do my best help you as you seek to clarify the nature of the threat today.

### **Categories of Terror**

It is worth spelling out some of the main types of terrorism the world faces. No taxonomy is completely satisfying, but for the sake of simplicity, we should stipulate that there are essentially three categories. The first includes the familiar ethno-nationalist groups persist in such diverse parts of the world as the Basque region of Spain and Sri Lanka. By and large, however, such groups show little inclination to increase substantially the lethality of their attacks. They are therefore usually a second-tier concern – highly disruptive to the societies in which they are found but posing little danger to the global order.

The second category, state-sponsored terror, persists and is unlikely to ever disappear. But there is something approaching a consensus among scholars that is a phenomenon on the wane. Several of those countries that were on the State Department's list have either experienced regime change (Iraq) or appear to have gotten out of the business of terror (Libya); others are largely inactive (Cuba). Today, state-sponsorship of terror continues

most strongly in the Middle East, where both Iran and Syria support Palestinian rejectionist groups. With the outlook for the Middle East uninspiring, this is likely to continue. But attacks against European nations and the United States have declined greatly. Syria has avoided targeting Westerners and its proxies have not attacked United States assets in the last two decades. Iran's last major attack on a Western target was the 1996 bombing of the U.S. troop facility at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia. In short, the state sponsors' appear to be operating now on the assumption that they cannot carry out significant operations undetected, and therefore, the risk of retaliation has become excessive.

State sponsorship of terror could, of course, come roaring back. The most likely circumstances in which this would occur would be an armed conflict between the United States and Iran. But even in that case, the likelihood of Iranian proxies such as Hezbollah carrying out a catastrophic attack is limited, since Tehran will be reluctant to do anything that would elicit an overwhelming military response.

One oft-discussed nightmare scenario involving state sponsors of terror is much less likely to occur than is often suggested: namely, an attack with a weapon of mass destruction such as a nuclear or biological weapon. This specter was summoned regularly by members of the Bush administration in the run-up to the war with Iraq, with the argument that "on any given day," Saddam Hussein might give a nuclear weapon to a terrorist group because it would allow him to hurt the United States "without leaving fingerprints." Setting aside the issue of Iraq's non-possession of such weapons, this was extraordinarily unlikely to occur for the same reason that state sponsorship has waned generally: there is no way to be assured that one's involvement will be undetected. What is true of a limited attack that destroys a plane or kills a couple of hundred people is much truer of one that would kill tens or hundreds of thousands.

Prudence is an aspect of statecraft even for the most dangerous dictators in a way that it is not for non-state actors like al Qaeda. Indeed, the fact that Saddam never used non-nuclear weapons of mass destruction owes, it appears, the 1991 warning he received from Secretary of State James Baker, which threatened overwhelming retaliation. To be sure, one should not base national security decisions solely on the belief in others' prudence. World leaders rightly worry that North Korea might sell some of the fissile material it has produced in recent years. But the likelihood of Iran one day handing a nuclear device to Hezbollah is remote.

The third and most dangerous form we face is that of radical Islamist terror. As we have seen both on 9/11 and in a number of other conspiracies, these terrorists possess a desire to kill on the grand scale. In contrast to the large majority of terrorist groups, jihadists have demonstrated an interest in indiscriminate killing, including with weapons of mass destruction going back as far the early 1990s. The aspiration to use such weapons – and after 9/11, no one should doubt that they would use them – indicates that these militants see violence in a different way than most others. For them, the violence is not a means of forcing an opponent into negotiations and incremental concessions but a sanctified

activity that aims at massive change. To a degree not true of most other terrorists, the violence is also an end in itself.<sup>1</sup>

### **Jihadist Violence: Al Qaeda and the Consequences of Iraq**

One of the greatest complications in understanding the jihadist threat today derives from multiplicity of different terrorist groups we find within what has become a global social movement. It makes sense to begin what is probably most familiar: Al Qaeda. It appears increasingly clear that whatever damage the organization suffered at the time of its expulsion from Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, the blows were not fatal. On the contrary: Al Qaeda's organization appears to be strengthening, with its leadership based either in the Federal Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan on the Afghanistan border, or elsewhere in Pakistan.

The most telling indicator of al Qaeda's survival and renewed efforts to attack Western targets has been the "Heathrow plot," of last summer, in which British based terrorists sought to bomb as many as 10 U.S. commercial jetliners while in flight over the Atlantic. This plot, though disrupted fairly early in its planning cycle, could have resulted in roughly as many deaths as the 9/11 attacks. It is interesting note that this conspiracy was a kind of updating of the failed "Bojinka" plot – also known as "Manila Air" that Ramzi Yousef and Khalid Sheikh Mohamed sought to carry out in 1994-1995 using liquid explosives that were to be assembled into bombs on board. The signal difference is that this time, the operatives were prepared to commit suicide and go down with the planes – something the Bojinka planners did not contemplate. The Heathrow plot, though the most spectacular, is not the only one that has been traced to al Qaeda.

In the near-term, there is little prospect that the threat from the core al Qaeda organization will diminish. The group appears well-ensconced in the FATA, and the government of Pakistan shows little inclination to dislodge it. The recently concluded ceasefire between the Pakistani authorities and the tribal powers indicate that Islamabad is tired of the pummeling its forces have suffered and unwilling to carry out more than the occasional symbolic strike on terrorist infrastructure. As a result, we must face the fact that Pakistan's tribal areas are now a sanctuary for the group. Unmolested, al Qaeda will to continue its work re-networking many of the disparate units in the jihadist world. It may reenergize its efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction, though the lack of industrial infrastructure in the FATA will cause some difficulties, assuming the work is done there. We can also expect a steady stream of communications and guidance from al Qaeda to its sympathizers and soldiers in the outside world.

Of the other forms of jihadist terror that we confront today, several either have their origin or have derived great benefits from the war in Iraq. The West would have faced a significant challenge from jihadist violence no matter how it reacted after 9/11. But the invasion of Iraq, gave the jihadists an unmistakable boost. Terrorism is about advancing a narrative and persuading a targeted audience to believe it. Although leading figures in

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<sup>1</sup> For a more extensive discussion of violence and jihadist terror, see Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror* (New York: Random House: 2002)

the American administration have often spoken of the terrorists' ideology of hatred, U.S. actions have too often lent inadvertent confirmation to the terrorists' narrative. In its most barebones formulation, that narrative holds that America and its allies seek to occupy Muslims' lands, steal their oil wealth and destroy their faith. Radical Islamists interpret much of history through this prism: From the Sykes-Picot redrawing of borders in the Middle East after World War I to the creation of Israel to the U.S. deployment to Saudi Arabia and the invasion of Iraq in Operation Desert Storm. Radical Islamists believe, moreover, that the United States supports the autocrats of the Muslim world as a way of keeping the believers down and undermining the faith.

So, not surprisingly, U.S. actions in Iraq have given the radicals fresh fodder for their "clash of civilizations" claims. Polling in Muslim nations over the last three years has shown that America's image has plummeted to historic lows. The invasion and the botched occupation opened a new "field of jihad" for militants who were more than eager to take on U.S. forces in the Arab heartland. For the radicals, killing Americans and their Western allies is the essential task; by doing so, they demonstrate their bona fides are the only ones determined to stand up for Muslim dignities. The presence of coalition forces in Iraq thus provided an irresistible invitation.

Whatever one thinks of American intentions in going into Iraq, in the context of the culture of grievance that exists in much of the Muslim world, the extremists' narrative has had a profound resonance. Through their violence, the jihadists have also created a drama of the faith that disaffected Muslims around the world can watch on television and the Internet. New areas of the globe are increasingly falling under the shadow of this growing threat. To be sure, the jihadists have not achieved anything like a true mobilization of Muslim opinion, and the overwhelming majority of Muslims will not embrace a vision of their faith that places violence at its very center, but the process of radicalization has gained momentum.<sup>2</sup>

Because in large measure of Iraq, three new categories of terrorists have emerged. The first group is comprised of self-starters, also often called "home-grown terrorists." We have become familiar with them through such attacks as 2004 bombings in Madrid, the 2005 bombings in London, the murder of Dutch artist Theo van Gogh by a young Dutch Muslim militant also in 2005. These are individuals who may have very little connection to al Qaeda or other preexisting groups, but they have been won over by the ideas of Osama bin Laden and his followers. These terrorists are self-recruited and often self-trained, using the vast wealth of instructional materials available on the Internet. Self-starters have appeared not only in Europe but also in Canada, the Maghreb, the Middle East and in Pakistan, a country with a well-established jihadist infrastructure which some of the new recruits deemed insufficiently aggressive.

A complete parsing of their motivation is difficult, but it is clearly the case that Iraq was on the lips of those who carried out bombings in Madrid in 2005 and London in 2005, as

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<sup>2</sup> For a superb discussion of the role of the World Wide Web in contemporary terrorism, see Gabriel Weimann, *Terror on the Internet: The New Arena, The New Challenges*, (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press: 2006)

well as on those of Mohammed Bouyeri, the Dutch-Muslim murderer of Theo van Gogh. The recent arrest of six British citizens who were apparently plotting to kidnap and execute a British Muslim soldier indicates, much as the murder of van Gogh (who was first shot and then decapitated) the tactical influence that events in Iraq have exerted on some home-grown terrorists. (It has become routine event in the investigation of terrorist conspiracies to find a library of video recordings of action in Iraq in the possession of operatives.) We should expect more such examples of “retail” with the expansion of the self-starter phenomenon, as individuals who are uncertain of their technical capacities seek to leverage individual acts of terror through the use of publicity or particularly gruesome violence.

It is true that as a group, the self-starters have a less experience and are less skilled than, say, those who have gone through al Qaeda training camps. However, a significant number of highly educated individuals show up in these cells. If only a small percentage of these groups manage to carry out attacks, we could therefore see a considerable amount of damage and casualties. We should also not make the mistake of believing that terrorists who begin as self-starters will not find the connections, training and resources they seek. It is now widely accepted that the July 7, 2005 Tube bombings in London were carried out with guidance and support from jihadists in Pakistan, including possibly al Qaeda members, who the operatives may have met during visits.

The two other groups of terrorists are both centered in Iraq: The first consists of the foreign fighters who traveled there to fight against U.S. and coalition forces. Contrary to the expectations voiced by the administration at the outset of the war, those who came to Iraq did not represent the global remnants of al Qaeda after its eviction from Afghanistan. On the contrary, studies by the Israeli expert Reuven Paz and the Saudi scholar Nawaf Obeid both demonstrate that the foreign fighters are overwhelmingly young Muslims with no background in Islamist activism. That is, they represent another pool of the recently radicalized.<sup>3</sup> Although U.S. officials have repeatedly argued over the last three years that the Jordanian born Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and his band of foreign fighters represented a very small percentage of the insurgents in Iraq, their violence drove the insurgency - especially the large-scale attacks, such as the attack on the Golden Mosque in Samarra mosque last February that gave the country a powerful push toward an all-out civil war. There are contradictory reports about how many foreign fighters there are in Iraq and whether the influx continues. What we can say, however, is that if they leave Iraq victorious – and the jihadists are today in a triumphalist mood -- they could become the vanguard of a new generation of jihadists, much as the veterans of the fighting in Afghanistan in the 1980s and 1990s were the founding generation of al Qaeda.

The last group that deserves attention is comprised of Iraqi jihadists who have emerged from the turmoil of the last three years. Today, al Qaeda in Mesopotamia has become predominantly Iraqi, and there are any number of other, sometime affiliated jihadist groups. According to some reputable sources, there could be more than 15,000 in their

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<sup>3</sup> Reuven Paz, Arab Volunteers Killed in Iraq: An Analysis, Project for the Research of Islamist Papers, Occasional Papers (2005) [http://www.e-prism.org/images/PRISM\\_no\\_1\\_vol\\_3\\_-\\_Arabs\\_killed\\_in\\_Iraq.pdf](http://www.e-prism.org/images/PRISM_no_1_vol_3_-_Arabs_killed_in_Iraq.pdf) and Bryan Bender “Study Cites Seeds of Terror in Iraq,” Boston Globe, July 172005

ranks. The chaos in Iraq has allowed for extensive training and development in various terrorist tactics and urban warfare, including increasingly proficient use of improvised explosive devices. Furthermore, the proliferation of such tactics - thanks to traveling fighters and information-sharing via the Internet - has made it likely that the style of urban warfare tactics will likely be exported to distant regions. Where the collapsed state of Afghanistan allowed numerous opportunities for bin Laden's endeavors, the ongoing insurgency in Iraq has produced a new type of threat: a real-time, authentic 'jihad' experience which is grooming a new generation of committed fighters.

These fighters will likely have a durable sanctuary in al-Anbar province in western Iraq – it is an unwelcome development that five years after being run out of Afghanistan, the jihadist movement can now boast a sanctuary in the heart of the Arab world as well as one in South Asia. It is too early to say what the long-term orientation of these Iraqi jihadists will be - will they focus their violence solely on the fledgling regime in Baghdad, or will some of them join the global jihad and seek to export violence beyond their borders? Many, undoubtedly, will continue to focus on Baghdad, and the continuing sectarian violence may well reorient some jihadist energies into anti-Shia activity. Still, U.S. intelligence officials have cautioned that the radicals are also looking for outside targets. The November 2005 bombings of three hotels in Amman may give us a foretaste of what is to come. The presence of large refugee populations – a well-documented source of radicalism -- in Jordan, Syria and other regional nations could help the jihadists as they seek to spread their violence.<sup>4</sup>

There is a clear lesson in our experience in Iraq: the instrument of military force is a highly problematic one for fighting terror, especially fighting an ideologically-driven movement like the jihadists'. Undoubtedly, there will be times when military operations against terrorists are appropriate – as they were in 2001-2002 in Afghanistan, and as they might be in a range of other circumstances. But confronting jihadists with military force too often glamorizes the terrorists. They can portray themselves as the true standard-bearers of Muslim dignity, and the only ones who are prepared to confront the hated occupier. As we have seen, the tableau of these fighters in action has had a galvanizing effect on radicals around the world. Military forces typically have a large footprint, and their presence can alienate exactly those individuals in a given community who do not want to radicalize. Military action against terrorist targets often causes the deaths of many innocents, no matter how much care is taken. With tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of Iraqi deaths during the years of the U.S. presence, inevitably many Iraqis have come to blame the tragedies that have befallen their families on us. It is also noteworthy that the Sunni insurgency in Iraq has become increasingly salafist/jihadist across the board, and the Baathist component appears to have shrunk. In short, we may well face a specifically Iraqi jihadist threat for many years to come.

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<sup>4</sup> This conclusion was reached by the U.S. Intelligence Community and appears in the controversial National Intelligence Estimate "Trends in Global Terrorism," whose key judgments were released in September, 2006. Declassification of this document came after the text of this article was completed, but its conclusions are broadly consonant with the picture described herein.

## **The Geography of Jihad**

Let me turn briefly now to the geography of jihad. Here the picture is one of metastasis. With more than 30 failed plots across the continent in roughly five years, Europe has become a central battlefield. In Australia, meanwhile, a major dragnet wrapped up 18 conspirators who appear to have been plotting an attack on the country's one nuclear research reactor. In South Asia—as the recent bombings in Mumbai and the worrisome spread of violence in Bangladesh demonstrates—the incidence of Islamist violence has grown dramatically. In Southeast Asia, the threat persists, but the inroads, especially against Jemaah Islamiya and Abu Sayyaf have been significant and provided one of the most promising developments in the fight radical Islamist violence.

The implications in the Middle East/Persian Gulf region of so much jihadist activity in Iraq are ominous, and it is important to note that jihadist violence had largely been absent from the area since the late 1990s. At that time, the Arab security services had succeeded in dismantling many of the extremist organization, and the remainder of the problem had been exported to Afghanistan or Europe. The war in Iraq has changed all that, and a rash of violent acts has occurred. In November 2005 when three hotels in Amman were bombed by Iraqi suicide operatives -- the first major attacks in Jordan and the most stunning demonstration of the spillover effect of the turmoil in Iraq. But they were hardly the only such cases. Kuwait, a country with no history of jihadist violence, experienced running gun battles between authorities and militants and discovered plotters within its own military. Syria, a country that waged a campaign of extermination against Islamists in the early 1980s, has seen Sunni radicalism reemerge. Qatar experienced its first vehicle bombing in early 2005. Saudi Arabia suffered a series of bombings and attacks, and while the authorities have gained the upper hand against al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the group still exists, as the near-miss at the vast Abiqaiq oil production facility last year demonstrated. According to intelligence sources, an al Qaeda cell now exists in Gaza, as well. One hardly needs to speculate on the possible consequences of an al Qaeda attack against an Israeli target.

The United States has been fortunate not to have been struck again since 9/11, and a number of reasons can be adduced for this: The American Muslim community has thus far been largely immune to the jihadist virus because of its high level of integration, education and affluence compared with Europe's communities. Thanks to successful intelligence, law enforcement and homeland security performance, it is more difficult for radicals from abroad to gain entry into the country.

We should not draw the conclusion, though, that attacking us at this time is the jihadists' top priority. In a real sense, the terrorists are getting what they need in Iraq. It is easier for jihadists to kill Americans there than it is in the United States, and those casualties provide the radicals with the proof they need to show the global community of Muslims of their devotion to their cause. Although jihadists are not responsible for killing all of the more than 3100 U.S. soldiers who have fallen in Iraq, they undoubtedly will stake a claim along those lines.

Over the long term, however, the terrorists will seek to rebuild their networks and capabilities to attack the United States at home. This is the gold standard for them, and if the overall strength of the movement is growing, reestablishing the capacity to carry off “spectaculars” will be on their agenda. No one, Americans least of all, should be complacent and believe that radicalization and terrorist attacks are not going to happen at home. The United States is experiencing a significant rise in anti-Muslim sentiment, fanned in no small part by right-wing religious groups, some of which have cast Islam as the replacement for the Soviet Union. Incidents of attacks against Muslims have been increasing as well. In these circumstances, the chances that angry and alienated young individuals will turn to violence could well increase.

How long might it take for the jihadist movement to run its course? David Rapoport, one of the founders of modern terrorism studies, has argued that terrorism comes in “waves” that have a life-cycle of 30-50 years, and he contends that we are in the middle of a fourth wave of modern terror that has been characterized by religious motivation.<sup>5</sup> Rapoport may be right, but a number of factors make prediction hazardous. The first is the terrorists’ motivation. Drawing distinctions between religious motivation and the more traditional political forms of terrorism is difficult to do – it would be folly to say that al Qaeda’s goals, for example, are not political, or that another ideology, say Nazism, did not have a cult-like religious quality. But because of the jihadists’ appropriation of sacred texts to buttress their case that they are avatars of a true and uncorrupted faith, their ideology may prove more durable than those that have animated other causes. Though their actions may be appalling to many Muslims, those who are attracted to it may find in it a rare authenticity. The sense of sanctification can provide an emotional energy that can perhaps carry believers far, and it is impossible to say that this movement will peter out in the same manner that, say, anarchism did. It is conceivable that the same forces of acceleration that has driven acceptance of the jihad over the Internet could also speed its decline. But here, too, we are in uncharted territory.

### **Beyond Radical Islam**

Perhaps because of the historical discontinuity represented by al Qaeda, there is a tendency to identify catastrophic terrorism solely with radical Islam and believe that the two will one day disappear together -- that the only acts of such terror that we need to fear are ones carried out by Muslims. But this thinking is mistaken. Events outside of Islam in the period before 9/11 suggest that the motivation to commit acts of catastrophic terror.

It is not news that a global religious revival has been underway for several decades in virtually every faith and, with the exception of Western Europe, in virtually every part of

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<sup>5</sup> The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11(1) David C. Rapoport Anthropoetics 8, no. 1 (Spring / Summer 2002) and accessed at <http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap0801/terror.htm#n1>



the world. This tide of spiritual reaffirmation is, in effect, raising all boats, including those of individuals inclined to violent expression. The advances of globalization and the technological society appear ineluctably to be conjuring and empowering separatists, absolutists and apocalyptics – those whose eyes are fixed on the sacred, and who view negotiation as betrayal of faith.<sup>6</sup>

One can cite examples of dangerous, violent trends in several traditions: Among Jewish extremists, there was a conspiracy to blow up the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem as a way of purifying the Temple Mount and ushering in a new and fateful millennial era, and in 1995, a religious student carried out the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in what was surely one of the most strategic acts of terror since the killing of the archduke in Sarajevo in 1914. Timothy McVeigh, the chief author of the destruction of the federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995 had been influenced by the American Christian Identity movement. He expected that the detonation of the 4400 pound bomb in his truck was meant to ignite an Armageddon-like rising against the U.S. government. Finally, the global rise of cults adds a further dimension to the danger. It was, after all, the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo that truly broke the taboo on using a weapon of mass destruction in its sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway. Aum, which emerged from the bubbling mass of Japanese “New New Religions” combined elements from the Book of Revelations with some Buddhist doctrines into a surpassingly weird doctrine, and the attack, it appears, was meant to serve as a harbinger and confirmation of the sect’s vision of a coming apocalypse. Impressively, Aum had also worked on biological and nuclear procurement before the subway attack, and, with its large business empire, had extraordinary resources at its command.

What makes this all so worrisome is that industrial societies provide a wealth of targets which, if attacked could cause massive destruction – the United States has 123 chemical plants that, if successively struck, would each put 1 million or more people at risk. Moreover, the barriers to entry for those who wish to fabricate the most dangerous weapons are falling. So, for example, in the coming years, for example, the technology for making chemical weapons is likely to become more accessible. The development of “micro reactors,” machines that are only a bit larger than an average bread basket, will allow chemical companies to produce chemicals in smaller quantities on short order. This serves the needs of “just-in-time” manufacturing, but the same technology in the wrong hands will make it easier to produce some of the most dangerous nerve agents, such as VX and Sarin.

Biological weapons may pose a greater threat, because small quantities can go further – one kilogram of anthrax spores could kill 10,000 people under the right conditions – some agents are infectious, and detection is often slow. Most worrisome of all is the galloping technological progress that is putting the means for producing biological agents in the hands of thousands of people. Biological weapons production is not easy: producing anthrax spores that are the right size so that they are inhaled into the lung is quite difficult, as is drying the agent and dispersing it.

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<sup>6</sup> For a more detailed discussion of violence and the global religious revival, see Benjamin and Simon *Age of Sacred Terror*

Technology, however, will soon lower these hurdles considerably, and, at the same time, the number of people with the training to prepare dangerous biological agents is growing rapidly. Today, there are perhaps 10,000 individuals in the world with the range of expertise necessary to produce military-quality biological weapons. But the number of people who have the training not just to culture pathogens but also to manipulate their genetic material in a variety of ways that can make these agents more dangerous – by increasing infectiousness, lethality, drug-resistance and the like – runs into the hundreds of thousands and possibly millions. The revolution in biotechnology has meant that the number of facilities where such work could be done is undoubtedly in the thousands, and genuinely global oversight is impossible.<sup>7</sup>

The threat of nuclear terrorism has also become much more real. Already, it is conceivable that terrorists could engineer a crude bomb if they acquired fissile material. Concerns about radical Islamists doing exactly that are already widespread. When the Center for Strategic and International Studies canvassed a group of leading scholars of radical Islam and nuclear weapons experts in 2005, a third of the respondents believed that the terrorists already had the capability to make a bomb, while the average of the other respondents put the necessary skill in the terrorists' hand in about five years. What the Islamists can do now, other groups will likely be able to do in the future. Given that there are still hundreds of tons of poorly secured nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union and many tons of highly enriched uranium in research reactors around the world, some with weak defenses, the specter of nuclear terrorism looks like it is here to stay.

“The privatization of violence,” is a phrase that has been much used to describe the rise of the new terror and the appearance of terrorist groups with the capacity to do as much or more harm than states. The expression, though, needs to be understood as the description not of a simple action but a historic dynamic. Because of the relentless advance of technology, violence will be privatized into the possession of ever smaller, “more private” units. The power that will soon be at the disposal of very limited groups and even individuals will be considerable – think about how few people it might take to create a biological weapon.

The situation is by no means hopeless; the societies of the West, with their enormous research establishments, will develop many technological remedies and countermeasures to defend themselves. But it will take great ingenuity, vision and determination to keep ahead of those drawn to terrorist violence.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

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<sup>7</sup> I am indebted to former U.S. Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig for his assistance on these estimates.