



Testimony of Secretary Napolitano before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, "Eight Years after 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland" (Written Testimony)



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(Remarks as Prepared)

Chairman Lieberman, Senator Collins, and members of the Committee: Thank you for this opportunity to testify on the range of actions the Department of Homeland Security is taking to confront the terrorist threat to the homeland.

Guarding against terrorism is the founding purpose of our Department. Addressing this threat will always remain our highest priority, and as a major part of this mission, we are continually bolstering our efforts against domestic threats.

The way to secure our country from this type of terrorism is the same way we must secure it from terrorism in general. This is a shared responsibility in which all Americans have a role to play. The federal government; law enforcement on the state, local, and tribal levels; and the American people are the lines of defense against terrorism, whether foreign-affiliated or homegrown. They complement each other, and they must work together.

DHS is pursuing a collaborative, layered, strategic approach, working with the public and all levels of government to build the Nation's overall capacity to prevent or respond to any threat that may arise. All of DHS' law enforcement components focus on counterterrorism as part of their mission. These DHS components collaborate extensively with each other and with federal partners—such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC)—on important counterterrorism operations.

As a critical part of our efforts, DHS is reinvigorating its coordination and collaboration with our state, local, and tribal partners—the Nation's first preventers and first responders. The work of state, local, and tribal law enforcement at the local level puts them in the best position to notice when something is out of place and warrants a closer look—which is often the first step to thwarting a domestic terrorism plot. The Department facilitates information sharing with state, local, and tribal law enforcement to improve their understanding of domestic terrorist threat, in part by filling information gaps between the federal Intelligence Community (IC) and the Nation's thousands of law enforcement agencies. DHS is also strengthening the Department's intelligence enterprise by supporting the state and major urban area fusion centers where state, local, tribal, and federal law enforcement and other emergency response providers share information and intelligence.

The Department also works with a wide variety of communities, individuals and civic organizations to promote preparedness, community engagement and partnerships that constitute a strong defense against violent extremism. In all our work, we ensure that DHS and our partners act with the highest regard for the Constitution and the laws of the land. As President Obama has said, our security and our liberty are not mutually exclusive values—DHS aggressively protects both.

Combating terrorist threats within the United States poses a challenge in part because the threat is so diffuse. Terrorists inspired by international terrorist organizations can come from any age group, ethnicity, area, religious background, or claimed ideological affiliation. It is important to emphasize that no religious belief is a threat to our security. Indeed, DHS

does not and will not police beliefs. But violent extremism is a very real threat, and DHS will combat any terrorist or terrorist group that threatens the American people with violence, no matter what belief lies behind that violence. Violent extremists operating in the United States have just one overarching characteristic in common: they pose a threat to the security of the American people. In turn, the American people are joined together by our common responsibility to secure ourselves from this threat.

Federal Law Enforcement Efforts to Combat Terrorism

Thousands of DHS personnel carry out our counterterrorism mission every day. Every law enforcement component within DHS has statutory responsibilities that are critical to combating the range of terrorist threats. DHS personnel within Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the U.S. Secret Service (USSS), the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and its Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS) perform critical counterterrorism law enforcement work whenever they are on the job. They count among their daily responsibilities tasks such as securing the aviation and marine sectors, securing our borders, and combating the smuggling of dangerous contraband such as illegal weapons—all of which are critical to countering domestic terror threats. These “boots on the ground” are the forward-facing part of DHS’ expansive counterterrorism effort. These DHS personnel play an indispensable role in the overall mission of keeping the Nation safe.

DHS also plays a critical role in ensuring a more unified federal effort against terrorism—one of the key reasons the Department was founded. We work together with many federal departments and agencies to secure our Nation from attacks inspired by international terrorist organizations through information sharing, investigation, engagement and enforcement. DHS works closely at the interagency level—with the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Department of Justice, the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the ODNI, among others—to combat violent extremism on many fronts. I am happy to be testifying today alongside representatives of two of our indispensable federal partners—Director Robert Mueller of the FBI and Director Mike Leiter of NCTC.

Among our partnerships, DHS offers robust support to Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs), led by the FBI, that include federal and local law enforcement officers and intelligence analysts. DHS personnel from our operational law enforcement components—including ICE, CBP, USSS, TSA, and FAMS—are hard at work in JTTFs across the country right now, conducting law enforcement work that is keeping Americans safe from criminal activity that has its roots in violent extremism. JTTFs have proven instrumental in securing the American people from a number of terrorist threats, and we view our ongoing participation in them as an indispensable part of DHS’ overall counterterrorism work.

The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) within DHS strengthens the counterterrorism capabilities of law enforcement—on the federal level and other levels—through training in intelligence collection and information sharing, critical infrastructure and key resource protection, improvised explosive and weapons of mass destruction recognition, and critical incident response.

DHS coordination with federal partners strengthens the information sharing, investigations, and preparedness activities necessary to secure our country from the whole range of terrorist threats. But the Department also collaborates extensively outside the federal government—a critical part of DHS’ role in strengthening the Nation’s overall security from the threat of terrorism.

State and Local Partnerships and Information Sharing

While federal efforts are critical and essential to the Nation’s security from terrorism, let me be clear: The federal government can’t do it alone. Law enforcement on the state, local, and tribal level represents a critical ring of defense against terrorism of all kinds. The Department of Homeland Security assists these so-called “first preventers” in addressing terrorist threats that manifest within the United States—helping them to make sense of the activities they are encountering on the beat that may represent the first steps in a terrorist plot.

DHS works with state, local, and tribal governments to facilitate information sharing—a particularly important tool in our efforts to combat terrorism, whether they are international or homegrown extremists. All the steps the Department is taking to strengthen our intelligence enterprise are centered upon an important objective: ensuring DHS provides law enforcement with useful information by intently focusing our intelligence and analysis on meeting the needs of our partners. Across DHS, there are multiple operational, technological, programmatic and policy-related activities underway that focus on both improving the sharing and analysis of information with these consumers and between departmental components. Despite significant resources being devoted to these efforts, there is always a need to ensure that they are efficient and have been integrated with government-wide initiatives to improve information sharing such as those associated with the efforts to establish the Information Sharing Environment (ISE).

Strong information sharing is essential to law enforcement’s ability to assess data and analyze threats. As the primary

information-sharing entity within the Department, DHS' Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) is taking the lead in meeting this need. I&A is currently undergoing an important realignment to strengthen to delivery of useful, actionable intelligence to state and local law enforcement, based on their particular needs. This focus on information sharing with our state, local and tribal partners has elevated the Department's role at the Nation's 72 state and major urban area fusion centers. These centers, established by state and local authorities themselves, are the primary way that DHS shares intelligence and analysis with our homeland security partners and are key tools for stakeholders at all levels of government to share information related to threats.

These centers allow DHS to bridge the information gap between the IC and state, local, and tribal authorities, but they are not simple extensions of the IC. Rather, they are analytic centers that ensure that law enforcement have the information necessary to protect America's local communities. My priority is for all of them to be centers of analytic excellence that provide the maximum possible benefit to the Nation's security.

DHS is in the process of taking a major step toward this goal by establishing a Joint Fusion Center Program Management Office (JFC-PMO) within I&A to ensure coordination across all DHS components toward the twin priorities of strengthening fusion centers and DHS intelligence products. This will be a Department-wide effort that will require the involvement of a range of DHS components. Fusion centers are a high priority, and all DHS components will have new or enhanced roles in providing coordinated support to them. The JFC-PMO will:

- Lead a unified Department-wide effort to develop and implement survey tools to ensure state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies have the opportunity to define and identify the types of homeland security-related information they need and the format in which they need it.
- Develop mechanisms to assess regional and national threats and trends by gathering, analyzing and sharing locally generated as well as national information and intelligence through fusion centers.
- Coordinate with state, local, and tribal law enforcement leaders to ensure that DHS is providing the right personnel and resources to fusion centers.
- Promote a sense of common mission and purpose at fusion centers by offering training, exercises and other support that build the kind of peer-to-peer relationships across all disciplines – including terrorism analysis—that are the cornerstones of active and vibrant thinking, analysis, and information exchange.
- Develop, promote and sustain rigorous legal, privacy, civil rights and civil liberties-related training and support to law enforcement partners and DHS personnel.

I have directed the Acting Under Secretary for I&A to submit a plan that outlines the proposed organizational structure, functions, business processes, and specific action objectives of that office. Throughout this process, I&A is working with the ODNI and other federal partners on adopting best practices in production, planning, and customer service. Congress has identified the establishment of an office such as the JFC-PMO as a critical to improving information sharing, and we are moving forward with a sense of urgency on this issue.

The establishment of an office that coordinates all DHS efforts to strengthen fusion centers comes in addition to other actions we have already taken—and continue to take—in this regard. I&A has deployed 41 intelligence officers to fusion centers nationwide, with another 25 currently in the pipeline. I&A will deploy a total of 70 officers by the end of fiscal year 2010. Furthermore, I&A will continue to install the Homeland Secure Data Network (HSDN), which allows the federal government to share Secret-level intelligence and information with state, local, and tribal partners, at all 72 fusion centers by the end of FY 2010. Currently, 30 fusion centers have access to HSDN.

Earlier this month, I announced an important partnership that will strengthen HSDN: a new arrangement with the Department of Defense (DOD) for select fusion center personnel to access terrorism-related information from DOD's classified network. This reflects DHS' extensive work with our federal partners to ensure the federal government as a whole collaborates successfully with state and local law enforcement to combat terrorism, and I want to thank DOD for its partnership. Under the new initiative, select fusion center personnel with a federal security clearance will be able to access specific terrorism-related information resident on the DOD Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNet)—a secure network used to send classified data. This agreement is an important step forward in ensuring that first preventers have a complete and accurate picture of terrorism threats.

Other interagency partnerships further contribute to the quality of terrorism-related information and analysis that DHS shares with state and local law enforcement. As part of its current realignment, I&A has considered its analysis role

within the IC, and is focusing on strengthening its analysis in several areas where its expertise is most needed. Two of these areas are violent radicalization and domestic terrorism—areas where I&A cooperation with federal partners is vital to success. I&A is currently realigning to collaborate with NCTC and other federal agencies for substantive reporting on violent radicalization in order to provide law enforcement with an accurate and comprehensive view of the threat. Furthermore, I&A will work with the FBI and other federal law enforcement partners to identify analysis and other reporting that could be relevant to our state, local and tribal law enforcement partners, in order to improve information-sharing efforts.

These resources and strategies not only facilitate the day-to-day operations of fusion centers and DHS I&A, but also a number of other important programs:

- Fusion centers conduct support initiatives designed to familiarize state, local, and tribal law enforcement with violent radicalization, train them to recognize threats in their regions, and assist them in identifying, collecting, analyzing and sharing information on violent radicalization activities in their respective jurisdictions. This is the primary role of the Regional Threat Analysis (RTA) Branch of I&A.
- At the request of state, local, and tribal law enforcement partners, I&A continually produces Homeland Security Reference Aids (HSRAs). Each of these reports focuses on the threat posed by a specific violent domestic extremist or terrorist group. These products serve as primers on various violent extremist groups of concern; set forth the objectives, membership, presence, activities, and capabilities of these groups; and assess the threats they pose to law enforcement and the general public.
- I&A and fusion centers work together on joint analytical products on violent radicalization and violent extremist activity in the United States.

The realignment of the Office of Intelligence & Analysis will also strengthen our cooperation with fusion centers and aid I&A in combating violent extremism. First, I&A is reorganizing a number of functions previously dispersed throughout the Office under the leadership of the Deputy Under Secretary for Plans, Policy, and Performance Management (PPPM). PPPM's responsibilities include developing and unifying applicable strategies, plans and policies for I&A, using collaborative outreach, advocacy, and strategic futures analyses. These efforts, conducted in coordination with all DHS intelligence components, will lead to an integrated DHS intelligence enterprise focused on mission and consumers—namely, our state, local and tribal partners. Second, I&A is realigning its Operations element to integrate a number of previously scattered functions under it. The new I&A Operations element will maximize the effectiveness of I&A's knowledge management, counterintelligence, mission support and training, collection requirements, and external operations programs by coordinating them. It will also better align I&A's information technology capabilities with the needs of our analysts and our law enforcement partners. These changes will strengthen the efforts of the DHS intelligence enterprise, and fusion centers in particular, to provide timely and useful information and analysis to law enforcement regarding terrorist threats within the United States.

I want to emphasize that in all of our information-sharing programs, especially with regard to programs focused on violent extremism, DHS works to ensure the highest regard for our Constitutional rights, especially the First Amendment freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, and protest. The Department's Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) works with I&A and other DHS components on policies and procedures to safeguard these rights, and provides training and reference materials for our law enforcement partners that help ensure their respect for these rights, as well. This is an important priority for us, as we work toward a Nation whose people *and* values are secure.

Engaging Communities, Individuals, and Others Outside of Government

Though the federal government and state, local, and tribal law enforcement continually work to secure the Nation from the threat of terrorism, government can't counter the threat alone—the American public has a key role to play in our security, particularly against the threat of violent extremism.

In many ways, the public's role in helping to secure the Nation from domestic terror is the same as securing our country from the broader threat of terrorism. The steps are simple—notify the authorities if something seems suspicious, and prepare for any incident that may occur. With regard to violent extremism, individuals have another important role: ensuring that our communities are not places where violent extremism can take root.

While only a tiny fraction of any American community ever embraces violent extremism, preventing and countering violence and other criminal activity is a shared responsibility. With this in mind, DHS is working with communities, individuals, and others outside of government in order to better understand the phenomenon of violent extremism and to develop strategies to counter its causes.

The Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 charges DHS with leadership on the issue of violent extremism and violent radicalization within the United States. DHS established its Counter Violent Extremism Working Group (CVEW) in January to coordinate counter-violent extremism efforts across the Department. In addition to and separate from the operational and intelligence activities I discussed earlier, these efforts also include comprehensive community outreach and engagement programs.

Many of DHS' outreach efforts are led by the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL), which promotes civic engagement with many different communities as a means of increasing communication, building trust, and fostering resilient communities. In addition to serving those primary goals, engaging key communities also helps to prevent the isolation and alienation that many believe are precursors for violent extremism. It is important to note that such engagement with the many key groups which with CRCL holds dialogues—such as Arab and Somali American communities, as well as Muslim and Sikh leaders—is important in and of itself as a matter of civil rights protection and smart, effective law enforcement. But by helping communities more fully engage with their government, DHS is also preempting alienation and creating buy-in to the broader shared responsibility of homeland security.

CRCL's Engagement Team works closely with these key communities and other members of the American public in order to provide information and respond to concerns. The Engagement Team is currently active in eight metropolitan areas*, convening roundtable meetings and coordinating outreach events for community members and federal, state, and local government officials.

CRCL is also helping to increase the cultural competency of DHS employees, as well as federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement, on issues such as religious dress, misguided stereotypes of religious or minority groups, and cultural practices. This process helps to prevent the alienation of these communities from their public servants and helps to create a spirit of partnership. In turn, CRCL has worked with community leaders to encourage young people to seek jobs with the federal government, which has further improved the language skills and cultural competency—and thereby the effectiveness—of DHS. The DHS Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives also works with CRCL and other federal partners to encourage civic involvement at the grassroots level within religious communities in order to ensure that at-risk populations are afforded every opportunity to engage their community leaders and address concerns.

Through its own programs and outreach to community groups, another DHS component—U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)—helps to foster successful immigrant integration and build a common civic identity among all Americans. USCIS offers educational and teaching resources to immigrants, both before they leave their country of origin and after they arrive in the United States, to promote America's civic identity and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The Office of Citizenship within USCIS provides training and technical assistance to educators, volunteers, public libraries, and immigrant-serving organizations in teaching immigrants three parts of America's common civic identity: communicating in English, embracing the principles of American democracy, and identifying with U.S. history.

DHS also engages academia and international partners in countering violent extremism. DHS' Science & Technology Directorate, the Department's research arm, conducts efforts to understand the phenomenon of violent radicalization by developing stronger links between national and international scholars, policymakers, and practitioners. S&T supports research on understanding how violent extremism develops within individuals, groups, and societies; measuring the level of violent extremism in the U.S.; understanding the roles that communities, governments, and civic organizations play in moving individuals toward and away from violent extremism; and documenting the impact of media on the spread of violent extremism. DHS has also formed the U.S.-U.K. Joint Contact Group (JCG) and the U.S.-Germany Security Contact Group (SCG) – formal bilateral relationships between DHS and the U.K. Home Office and German Interior Ministry, respectively—which in part focus on countering violent extremism. CRCL has worked through these groups to establish strong relationships with Muslim communities worldwide. In addition, I have met personally with several of my counterparts from European Union countries on the topic of violent radicalization, and how the United States can learn from European experiences.

Our security is a shared responsibility. So DHS and other federal government actions to engage individuals, communities, academia, and international partners—on preparedness, as well as on preventing violent extremism from taking root in America—are critical to this effort.

Conclusion

DHS was created to combat the threat of terrorism to the homeland. We are making important progress by coordinating, engaging and sustaining America's many rings of defense—federal agencies; state, local, and tribal law enforcement; civic organizations; international partners; and the American public—to ensure that violent extremism does not take root in our country. Working together, each of these rings of defense can bring about greater security from the range of terrorist threats.

Chairman Lieberman, Senator Collins, and members of the Committee: Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and thank you for your continuing support of DHS and its mission to combat terrorism. I am happy to answer your questions.

*Washington, D.C.; Houston, Texas; Chicago, Illinois; Los Angeles, California; Boston, Massachusetts; Detroit, Michigan; Columbus, Ohio; and Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota.

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