



## **The Post 9/11 FBI: The Bureau's Response to Evolving Threats**

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Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I am honored and privileged to be here today to talk about the evolving terrorism threat and how the FBI is addressing this threat. I have seen the list of previous speakers and am humbled to be among them. Before getting started, I want to take a couple of minutes to talk about one of the FBI family who recently passed away...Mike Resnick.

### **Michael Resnick**

Mike passed away on February 2 after a bout with cancer and left behind a great legacy. He was a devoted family man who loved his wife Sarah and their young daughter Jordan. He was also a dedicated FBI Special Agent who embodied the FBI core values of courage, honesty, and integrity.

He never backed down from a challenge or sidestepped the tough issues. He took them head-on. Mike held many positions within the FBI to include his time running the Charlotte JTTF and the Charlotte SWAT Team, but his last position as the Senior Director for Information Sharing and Technology for the National Security Council is where he made the greatest impact. He worked tirelessly to overcome myriad issues on information sharing that not only affected the FBI but also the Intelligence Community and our federal, state, and local law enforcement partners.

Mike's legacy is best exemplified by a quote from John Brennan, the President's Advisor on Homeland Security and Terrorism: "(Mike) wanted to make sure everything was in order for those who will carry on his work." Mike was a true leader and innovator who will be greatly missed by all of us.

The FBI appreciates the opportunity to remember Mike in this forum.

### **Current CT Threat**

I'd like to take a few minutes to talk about the current state of the terrorism threat, the FBI's responsibility in neutralizing this threat, and the critical efforts we are undertaking with the Intelligence Community and law enforcement partners. I hope this will leave you with a better understanding of the FBI's role in countering terrorism, its commitment to disrupting individual and group plots, and its efforts to better collect and analyze intelligence to help us better understand and mitigate the terrorism threat.

First, let me characterize the current threat environment as we see it and the challenges we face in understanding and getting in front of the threat. I do not think this nation has ever faced a more fluid, more dynamic, or more complex terrorism threat. We are seeing an increase in the sources of terrorism, a wider array of terrorism targets, a greater cooperation among terrorist groups, and an evolution in terrorist tactics and communication methodology. The long-term planning undertaken by senior core al-Qa'ida leaders which led to the 9/11 attacks is much more difficult for them to attain in today's environment. It is replaced with somewhat less sophisticated, quick-hitting strikes that can be just as lethal but which take less funding, fewer operatives, less training, and less timing to execute.

I would like to discuss four dynamic terrorism threats. These by no means are the only threats we face, but these are the threats I will be focusing on today. First, al-Qa'ida and its various affiliates; second, homegrown violent extremists; third, domestic terrorism; and finally I will touch briefly on the changing world climate.

### **Al-Qa'ida**

Core al-Qa'ida continues to present a high threat to our national security as they have both the intent and capability to attack the homeland. They remain committed to attacking the United States in high-profile attacks, but the disruption efforts of the U.S. government, in particular the work done by our DOD and CIA personnel, have taken their toll. This has created an environment which makes training, moving funds, and communicating very difficult. While experiencing challenges in its ability to directly conduct terrorist attacks, core AQ is sharing financial resources, training, tactics, operational expertise, recruits, and operatives with other like-minded groups.

While core AQ remains a serious threat, I believe the most serious threat to the homeland today emanates from members of AQAP. AQAP leaders such as Anwar Aulaqi and Samir Khan have published articles on the internet detailing their intent to strike the United States. Several key AQAP figures were born or educated in the United States and understand our culture, our limitations, our security protocols, and our vulnerabilities. They use this understanding to develop and refine new tactics and techniques to defeat our security measures and attack us. AQAP also understands and expertly exploits social media to share their knowledge with others of similar mindsets. They realize the importance and value of reaching English-speaking audiences and are using the group's marketing skills to inspire individuals to attack within the homeland. In many cases they are attempting to provide them with the knowledge to do so, without having to travel or train abroad.

The two most recent AQAP attacks demonstrate the complexity and diversity of the threat. AQAP claimed credit for both the December 2009 attempted bombing of Northwest Flight 253 and the October 2010 attempted bombings of air cargo flights bound for the United States from Yemen. In each instance, AQAP was able to recruit a small group of individuals committed to attacking the United States and whose backgrounds were less likely to trigger security scrutiny. Additionally, AQAP claimed a significant victory for each attack due to both the fear they created and the economic impact expended by the United States and others to screen passengers and packages compared to the small expenditure on their part.

## Homegrown Violent Extremism

The homegrown violent extremist threat is one of the serious terrorism threats we face inside the homeland outside of al-Qa'ida and its affiliates. Homegrown violent extremism is very difficult to define. It is a rapidly evolving threat with characteristics that are constantly changing due to external experiences and motivational factors. We have seen the HVE threat manifest itself in several forms.

First, we have seen individuals inside the United States become radicalized and motivated to conduct attacks against the homeland. These individuals can be as diverse as U.S.-born citizens, naturalized U.S. citizens, foreign students, green card holders, or illegal immigrants, but the commonality is their desire to strike inside the United States. Let me give you a few examples.

- In September 2009, a 20-year-old Jordanian student named Hosam Maher Smadi was arrested and charged with attempting to place a vehicle bomb outside of a 60-story building in downtown Dallas.
- In November 2009, U.S. Army Major and U.S. citizen Nidal Hasan walked into the Deployment Center at Fort Hood, Texas, where he shot and killed 13 DOD employees and wounded 32 others.
- In October 2010, a Pakistani American named Farooque Ahmed was arrested by the FBI for allegedly plotting to bomb a subway station in the Washington, D.C., Metro system. This week, Ahmed pled guilty to material support to terrorism charges and was sentenced to 23 years imprisonment.
- In November 2010, a 19-year-old Somali student named Mohamed Osman Mohamud was arrested for allegedly attempting to detonate what he believed was a car bomb during a Christmas tree-lighting ceremony in Portland, Oregon.
- In December 2010, a 21-year-old American of Nicaraguan descent named Antonio Martinez was arrested for allegedly plotting to bomb a military recruiting center in Catonsville, Maryland.
- In February 2011, a 20-year-old Saudi student named Khalid Aldawsari was arrested for allegedly building a bomb to be used in terrorist attacks against several targets, including the Texas home of former President George W. Bush.

Second, we have seen U.S. citizens become radicalized in the United States and travel or attempt to travel overseas to obtain training and return to the United States or to join and fight with groups overseas.

- In 2009, Najibullah Zazi and associates traveled to Pakistan and receive training from AQ before returning to the United States and plotting to use a weapon of mass destruction in a plot to blow up commuter trains.
- In late 2009, a group of five young American men originally from Northern Virginia traveled to Pakistan, where they were detained and sentenced to 10 years in prison in Pakistan on terrorism-related charges.

- In May 2010, Faizal Shahzad attempted to bomb Times Square in New York City. Shahzad traveled to Pakistan and received training from Tehrik-e-Taliban in Pakistan (TTP) before returning to the U.S. to conduct a terrorist attack.
- In July 2010, Virginia native Zachary Chesser was arrested by the FBI while attempting to travel to Somalia, where he intended to join the terrorist organization al-Shabaab as a foreign fighter.
- Since 2006, more than 12 U.S. citizens have been killed in Somalia while fighting with al-Shabaab.

Lastly, we have seen U.S. citizens become radicalized and use the internet to further their radicalization, contribute to the radicalization of others, or provide services to facilitate internet radicalization. Whereas the internet was previously used to spread propaganda, it is now used in recruiting, radicalizing, training, and inciting terrorism. Thousands of extremist websites promote violence to a worldwide audience predisposed to the extremist message, and more of these websites and U.S. citizens are involved in internet radicalization.

- Key AQAP figures and U.S. citizens Anwar Aulaqi and Samir Khan have an unlimited reach to those around the world and help oversee AQAP's production of *Inspire* magazine.
- Pennsylvania-based Emerson Begholly was a self-radicalized internet extremist who provided translation services for extremist web forums.
- We have seen internet radicalization in individuals as young as 14 years old.

What makes these HVE subjects most dangerous is they demonstrated the willingness to take overt, operational steps as well as the ability to procure the materials necessary to carry out their terrorist actions. Finally, and most importantly, they demonstrated the resolve to act.

### **Domestic Terrorism**

While much of the media attention is focused on international terrorism, the FBI continues to maintain a robust effort against domestic terrorism.

The domestic terrorism movement continues to remain active, and several recent domestic terrorism incidents demonstrate the scope of the threat.

- In March 2010, nine members of the Michigan-based Hutaree Militia were indicted for their alleged involvement in a plot to kill law enforcement officers.
- In January 2011, a pipe bomb was discovered at a Martin Luther King Day parade in Spokane, Washington, and a subject has been arrested by the FBI's JTTF.
- In February 2011, three subjects were arrested on weapons and firearms charges in relation to alleged domestic terrorist activity in Fairbanks, Alaska.

We have all seen the devastation wrought by individuals intent on attacking their own communities for political ends. It has been nearly 16 years since the Oklahoma City bombing—in fact, next Tuesday marks the anniversary of that attack—but there are many of us in this room who remember the details of that horrific day, and its lasting impact.

### **Changing World Climate**

The fast-changing worldwide political climate also presents a new and challenging CT threat. As events unfold around the world, we must determine if these events translate into a potential threat to the homeland and, if so, how this threat will manifest itself.

The governments of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen have drastically changed in the last 6 months, and these changes have impacted our approach to combating terrorism with our overseas partners.

Many of these governments were long-term dictatorial regimes with established counterterrorism track records. They are now led by transitional or interim governments, military regimes, or democratic alliances with no established record on counterterrorism efforts. Al-Qa'ida thrives in such conditions and countries of weak governance and political instability—countries in which governments may be sympathetic to their campaign of violence.

### **FBI Response to the Threat**

Now that I've laid out the current terrorism threat environment, let me take a few minutes to talk about how the FBI is responding to this broad and diverse terrorism threat. We are taking an evolutionary approach in three key areas: improved intelligence strategy, interagency partnerships and information sharing, and better use of limited resources.

We have undergone a fundamental change to our business model and are currently undergoing a paradigm shift in the way we collect and use intelligence.

We have transformed and continue to transform from a reactive “investigative led” model to a proactive “intelligence led” one where intelligence drives our investigative strategies, enhances our understanding of terrorism threats, and increases our ability to address and mitigate these threats. Within the Counterterrorism Division, we have implemented a “Fusion Cell” concept wherein we take a target-centric approach to the threat by combining FBI and Intelligence Community tactical analysis, strategic analysis, and operational capabilities to identify and mitigate the priority threats. We use the intelligence generated from these Fusion Cells to strategically select targets posing the greatest threat.

Through these Fusion Cells, we have increased our ability to develop a holistic understanding of the threat from all angles by increasing human source development and penetration, enhancing our awareness of the domain in which these terrorists operate, and better positioning ourselves to know and understand the gaps in our knowledge of the CT threat.

We are strategically allocating our limited resources to target the greatest threat with a high impact approach. By doing so, we are balancing the fine line between disrupting a single subject and continuing to collect against the subject to gain a greater understanding of the threat and potential network.

In addition to changing our fundamental business approach, we are also enhancing our interagency, public/private industry, and law enforcement partnerships.

Through our Joint Terrorism Task Force partnerships, we are able to exponentially multiply the resources combating the global CT threat. There are more than 100 JTTFs across the country. Each one enhances interagency cooperation, coordination, and communication while expanding our intelligence base. We are providing personnel, equipment, and training to state and local fusion centers who serve as a focal point for federal, state, and local information sharing. We have developed a cadre of skilled analysts, which now make up Field Intelligence Groups housed in all 56 FBI Field Offices.

More than 60 Legal Attache offices around the world have helped the FBI strengthen relationships with our international partners while expanding our global outreach in combating the terrorism threat. In the ever-changing global environment I spoke of earlier, these relationships built by our Legal Attache offices have been instrumental in our CT efforts abroad.

We collaborate and share subject matter and analytic expertise with foreign partners to identify global extremist networks. Upon request, we provide technical and forensic expertise to foreign governments to aid in their crime scene investigations.

The partnerships we have developed with business, private industry, and the general public have paid great dividends for us. We spend a great deal of time and effort to educate these partners on the indicators of terrorist activity, and the tips generated from these partners have already paid huge dividends, as was seen in the Texas case of Aldawsari, where a tip from a chemical company helped accelerate the disruption.

We have developed the eGuardian system to better communicate with state and local law enforcement. This system is a two-way system on reporting and sharing threat information. E-Guardian makes the FBI's terrorist threat and suspicious activity reporting readily available to state, local, and tribal partners while pushing out threat reporting added by local law enforcement partners to a nationwide audience.

We have increased our collaboration with NCTC, CIA, NSA, and DHS to better share intelligence and related information. In addition, we have worked with DHS to shorten the time period for approval and dissemination of Joint Intelligence Bulletins and are working on ways to make them more useful to our state and local law enforcement partners.

Another key element in our effort to combat the terrorism threat is the better use of resources. Since 9/11, the FBI has significantly increased the resources targeting the terrorism threat.

We have doubled the number of Agents and tripled the number of Intelligence Analysts working the counterterrorism threat.

We have tripled the number of JTTFs nationwide and experienced a 500% increase in the number of FBI, federal, state, and local resources assigned to JTTFs.

Despite the exponential increase in these resources in the decade since 9/11, we still must make the best use of limited resources. Our strategic targeting approach enables us to use our limited resources against the greatest CT threat.

We leverage the resources and abilities of our state and local partners. In every disruption I noted earlier, it was the combination of local, state, and federal officers/agents and resources that make up the JTTFs that led to the disruptions and arrests. I cannot stress enough the benefit of this daily collaboration around the country. If we can neutralize a domestic CT threat by applying state or local criminal charges, we do it. We utilize unique skill sets and language abilities possessed by our JTTF Task Force Officers to combat the greater CT threat.

We also leverage the resources of our Intelligence Community partners. We share our intelligence with our Department of Defense partners to help neutralize overseas threats and similarly use our Intelligence Community partners to increase the collection and exploitation against overseas CT threats.

### **Conclusion**

As you can see, the CT threat is a complex and evolving threat, so we must be equally flexible in our approach if we are to be successful in countering it.

Thank you for taking time out of your busy day to come down here today. It's been my honor and privilege to speak to you today. I'll be glad to take any questions you have.