



One Hundred Twelfth Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20515

February 8, 2011

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson  
Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Homeland Security  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear  Ranking Member Thompson:

I am writing in reference to your letter of February 1, 2011 wherein you state that the upcoming hearing on radicalization within the Muslim-American community should be expanded to include "a broad-based examination of domestic extremist groups regardless of their ideological underpinnings." I strongly disagree.

While there have been extremist groups and random acts of political violence throughout our history, the al Qaeda attacks of 9/11 and the ongoing threat to our nation from Islamic jihad were uniquely diabolical and threatening to America's security, both overseas and in our homeland.

The sui generis nature of this threat was demonstrated by, among other things, (a) Congress authorizing the President to use military force against al Qaeda, (b) enactment of the PATRIOT Act and the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Protection Act of 2004, (c) the largest government reorganization since 1947 in the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and (d) the creation of the Homeland Security Committee.

Because of these and other measures taken after 9/11, al Qaeda has realized the difficulty it faces in launching attacks against our homeland from overseas. Thus it has adjusted its tactics and is now attempting to radicalize and recruit from within our country. In the last two years alone more than 50 Americans have been charged with terror related crimes.

It was this dramatically increased threat which Attorney General Holder said "keeps him awake at night" and drove him "to make people aware of the fact that the threat is real, the threat is different, and the threat is constant." Attorney General Holder also noted that the teachings of Islamic jihadist Anwar Al Awlaki inspired many of the most recent terrorist attacks. This threat is real, and we can hardly afford to ignore the motivating ideology behind nearly every recent homegrown attack, such as the Zazi plot, the Times Square Attack, Fort Hood, the Portland Christmas bombing attempt, and numerous others.

In short, the homeland has become a major front in the war with Islamic terrorism and it is our responsibility to fully examine this significant change in al Qaeda tactics and strategy. To include other groups such as neo-Nazis and extreme environmentalists in this hearing would be extraneous and diffuse its efficacy. It would also send the false message that our Committee believes there is any threat equivalency between these disparate groups and Islamist terrorism.

Very simply, the Committee cannot ignore the fact that al Qaeda is actively attempting to recruit individuals living within the Muslim American community to commit acts of terror. Pursuant to our mandate, the Committee will continue to examine the threat of Islamic radicalization, and I will not allow political correctness to obscure a real and dangerous threat to the safety and security of the citizens of the United States.

Sincerely,



PETER T. KING  
Chairman