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House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
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Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for including me in this, the first hearing of the Committee in the 109th Congress.

You have asked me to comment on global threats to the U.S. national interest in the 21st Century. As a long time consumer of intelligence, and as a citizen often surprised by history's U-turns and right angles, I hope you will allow me to narrow the focus of my remarks to relatively near-term threats to our interests where the quality of the intelligence available to our government is of particular importance. And then, if you will indulge me, I would like to say a word or two about the capacity of our intelligence organizations to deal with those threats.

The principal threat to our national security is now centered on extremist organizations and individuals who wish to destroy our values and our nation. Today the core of this extremist threat is found among certain individuals and organizations who have appropriated, and march behind, a Muslim fundamentalist banner that proclaims a holy war against those who oppose their vision of a world dominated by them and their concept of Islamic law.

The extremist threat we face is deeply ideological. In this it is much like the fascist and communist threats we have confronted in the past. But unlike Hitler's divisions and the Soviet Union, the familiar instruments of military power, armies, strategic forces, deterrence, are inadequate—or

sometimes even irrelevant—to the threat posed by suicidal fanatics who would not hesitate to use chemical, biological or nuclear weapons to kill us in the largest numbers of which they are capable.

These extremists cannot be reasoned with. While we need to understand the circumstances that lead young men and women to sacrifice their lives in hope of destroying us, in part so we can try to change those circumstances, we cannot expect to win over the hearts and minds of those who have already been indoctrinated into the jihadist cause.

Two things flow from this threat. One is the need to deprive the extremists of sanctuary and support from state sponsors and to deny them operational bases in areas that are not under the control of governments. This includes a relentless campaign to cut off their funding: without money, and large amounts of it, terrorists cannot realize their most ambitious and most dangerous objectives. This will inevitably bring us into conflict with some governments that we have regarded as friendly and others with which we hope to improve our political and diplomatic relationships.

Second is the need to prevent terrorists and their friends from acquiring chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, for the most daunting threat we face is the possession of these weapons by extremists who would not hesitate to use them.