

**Opening Statement of Chairman Joseph Lieberman  
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Hearing  
“The Role of Local Law Enforcement in Countering Violent Islamic Extremism”  
Washington, DC  
October 30, 2007**

**Good morning. Today we hold our fifth hearing of this year on the challenge of homegrown Islamist extremism in America – this one focusing on the role of local law enforcement in detecting and preventing another terrorist attack on our homeland – but not one planned, manned and financed from abroad, like the 911 attacks, but one conceived from within our nation by – as you will soon hear – “unremarkable people” bent on spectacular destruction.**

**Earlier this year, this Committee heard testimony from Secretary Michael Chertoff, FBI Director Robert Mueller, DHS Chief Intelligence Officer Charlie Allen and others that the threat from homegrown violent Islamist extremism is on the rise in America and that the federal government cannot counter it alone.**

**At our hearing on September 10<sup>th</sup>, Director Mueller said:  
“The role of our [local] law enforcement partners is absolutely  
critical to identifying individuals and groups presenting this  
threat.”**

**In fact, it is the men and women of state and local law  
enforcement who, both by the strength of their numbers and  
through their daily contact with the public, are the most likely  
to be the first to come across the new breed of homegrown  
terrorists.**

**That makes this proud blue line of 750,000 law  
enforcement officers across the nation our first line of defense  
against homegrown terrorism.**

**Today’s two panels of witnesses will give us the  
opportunity to learn about local law enforcement counter-  
terrorism strategies from a geographic cross section of our  
nation’s police agencies – we have north and south, east and  
west, and the heartland all represented here, and that reminds  
us that the threat of Islamist terrorism is national.**

**We will first hear from the Intelligence Division of the New York City Police Department, whose representatives will discuss the findings of their groundbreaking report:**

**“Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat.”**

**After more than two years of investigation, the NYPD team has mapped out the radicalization process that is taking place in New York City, the United States and elsewhere. Their conclusions are riveting, impressive and disturbing.**

**Violent Islamist ideology can motivate alienated but otherwise “unremarkable” individuals not normally found on law enforcement’s radar to commit terrorist acts. Often the Internet is a driver and an enabler of the radicalization process in America, as our Committee learned in a hearing earlier this year.**

**Once radicalized, people may act on their own or in small cells without any direction from, or connection to, a foreign terrorist organization.**

**This is the pattern that has developed in attacks, both carried out and thwarted, in Europe and the United States— from London, England to Lackawanna, New York, from Fort Dix, New Jersey to Portland, Oregon.**

**The NYPD report also lays out the challenge for local law enforcement in this area – they must be able to identify, preempt and thus prevent homegrown terrorist attacks, even though plans for such attacks may not resemble typical criminal behavior that would draw police attention.**

**That’s why neighborhood intelligence and outreach to the Muslim community is so important.**

**The second panel includes other local law enforcement from the Los Angeles, Miami Dade and Kansas City police departments.**

**They will tell us about the tools and tactics they have been developing to help detect, deter and disrupt terrorist plots.**

**At the heart of their strategies is the requirement for knowledge of and familiarity with violent Islamist ideology and**

**the local Muslim communities who overall are not engaged in such activities.**

**Each of these local police departments has reached out to their Muslim communities and established relationships with local Muslim leaders and with the Muslim-American families in their cities who want nothing more than to raise their families and prosper in this country they are proud to be citizens of.**

**Each has developed strategies that integrate the global threat of Islamic terror into local solutions, whether it is LAPD's new Community Mapping Project, Miami-Dade County's focus on long-term intelligence gathering, or Kansas City's patrolling strategies and actions to stop terrorist financing.**

**It is crucial that these and other local efforts be linked together so clues to potential terrorist attacks are not lost through jurisdiction silos but are shared by local departments nationwide through shared intelligence databases, fusion**

**centers and Joint Terrorism Task Forces that can connect the dots with information gathered at all levels – and geographies – of law enforcement.**

**The departments represented here today are doing this very well but that is not the case nationwide. One of the major post-9/11 reforms was to break down the stove pipes. It is critically important that we come together and share information.**

**I thank our witnesses for being here and look forward to their testimony. It is critical to our homeland security.**

**Sen. Collins.**