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Chairman Portman, Ranking Member McCaskill, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify and answer your questions today.

I am here to discuss our government's international efforts to counter violent extremist propaganda, online, and in both social media and traditional media. This is a critical effort, especially when it comes to our whole-of government efforts to degrade and destroy ISIL, because it is clear that to our enemy, the information battlespace is as important as the physical battlespace.

Prior to March of this year, I served as the Chief of Staff in the office of Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict at the Pentagon. Based on that experience, I can tell you with confidence that the U.S. military and coalition has significant capabilities to eliminate militants from the battlefield and is doing so every day. Da'esh has already lost nearly half of its territory in Iraq, and 20 percent in Syria.

We must also continue to confront the messages that these groups push out daily to recruit people and inspire them to violence. Addressing radicalization to violence and recruitment in the information space is a key piece of any serious, meaningful, and enduring approach to countering violent extremism long-term.

To meet that challenge, President Obama signed an Executive Order in March which created the Global Engagement Center, revamping our counter-messaging strategy.

The quality and volume of violent extremist messaging has advanced dramatically since our predecessor organization was established five years ago, or even from the time when Da'esh began metastasizing into its current form, some three years ago.

The Global Engagement Center is designed to be as agile and adaptive as our adversary. We are armed with new authorities, personnel, and cutting-edge technology. The Center is charged with coordinating, integrating, and synchronizing all government communications directed at foreign audiences abroad used to diminish the influence of violent extremists.

When fully operational, the Center will comprise staff from the Departments of Defense, Treasury, Justice, State, Homeland Security, and the Intelligence Community. Working across these agencies, the Center is identifying efficiencies and opportunities in the messaging space, particularly with the Department of Defense and the Intelligence Community.

The Center is also receiving vitally needed funding and we appreciate the support of Congress. For too long, these efforts have been under resourced. In Fiscal Year 2015, the CSCC's budget was just over \$11 million, and this year, our budget has increased to a little more than \$15 million.

However, more substantial than changes to personnel or budgets, the Center is taking a fundamentally new approach in the information space. We have pivoted from direct online engagement to partner-driven messaging and content. While the U.S. government has a good message to tell, we are not always the most credible voice to tell it.

Instead, there is an abundance of credible and diverse voices across the Middle East, Europe, and Africa—governments, NGOs, and civil society groups—that we are now leveraging in this fight. We are not publicizing who many of our partners are, so that we don't undermine their credibility, but I'll give you a couple of brief examples.

In Kosovo, we recently completed a training program with local NGOs, designed to amplify credible voices there. We ran workshops to train local influencers about designing and executing a messaging campaign. For example, one participant hosts one of the most popular radio shows in his country, and has more than 200,000 individuals visiting his Facebook page. Kosovo is a compelling location because it has both the highest number of foreign terrorist fighters per capita in Europe, and an active NGO community focused on countering violent extremism.

In East Africa we worked with a civil society partner to establish an online, mobile-enabled radio station in Swahili. It airs youth-produced programming that counters the rising volume of violent propaganda in the region. The content is aimed at youth living in neighborhoods where violent extremists recruit. Separately, in the same region, we run an interactive SMS program to reach populations in inaccessible areas.

Another major difference from previous efforts is that the GEC uses state of the art digital analytics tools from the Intelligence Community, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), and the technology sector. These tools and technologies help us tailor messages to our audience and measure impact.

Based on that approach, there is a particular focus on changing audience behavior instead of attitudes and beliefs. While we may have less success in altering what an individual thinks, we can be more effective at preventing individuals from turning their beliefs into violence.

I appreciate this committee's oversight and continued support as we have revamped our fight against violent extremism in the information space.

As you all know, any long-term strategy to counter violent extremism cannot focus only on killing terrorists; it also means preventing the

recruitment of new ones. That is why successful execution of our mission is so important.

Thank you. I would be happy to answer your questions.