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Counterterrorism

Statement of
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Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I welcome this opportunity to discuss the policy of the administration on counterterrorism, to describe the threat of terrorism in the United States, and to bring you up-to-date on how the FBI is using the counterterrorism resources Congress has provided over the past several years to address this problem.

Acknowledgments

At the very outset, I want to recognize the early leadership that Senators Gregg and Hollings, along with the other members of the committee, have exhibited in this critical area. Their efforts, initially in the Senate mark-up of the 1997 Justice

Appropriations Act and then in the conference agreement for the Omnibus Appropriations Act, provided the FBI with \$133.9 million in new funding as part of a comprehensive counterterrorism initiative.

On behalf of the men and women of the FBI, especially those who work tirelessly toward protecting the American people against the threat of terrorism, I wish to thank you for your support. I am confident that our efforts will justify your past commitment and continued support to this important area of the FBI's responsibility.

United States Policy on Terrorism

The protection of our nation and its people against the threat of terrorism, by individuals and groups operating from home and abroad, is one of the highest priorities of the administration. As a nation, we must stand firm in our resolve against terrorism. We must not allow those who would resort to acts of terrorism to succeed in influencing the policies and actions of our government and tearing apart the very fabric of American society.





- The government's policy to fight terrorism is articulated in Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) -39, "U.S. Policy on Counterterrorism." This policy, signed by President Clinton on June 21, 1995, makes it clear that the national policy of the United States is to regard acts of terrorism as both a threat to national security and a criminal act, and to respond vigorously to all such acts on our territory or against our citizens wherever they occur.
- The United States is also committed to strengthening the ability of the international community to prevent acts of terrorism before they occur and to respond more effectively to acts of terrorism when they do occur.
 - Just recently, the Attorney General submitted to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees the administration's comprehensive counterterrorism strategy that was requested by Senate Report 104-353. This plan builds upon the foundations and responsibilities articulated in PDD-39.

Four Major Cornerstones of Policy

There are four major cornerstones through which the government's policy on terrorism is to be implemented. These are:

- To reduce the vulnerabilities of the United States to terrorism;
- to deter terrorist acts before they occur;
- to respond to terrorist acts that do occur, including apprehension and punishment of terrorists and management of the consequences of terrorist acts; and
- to develop effective capabilities address the threat posed by nuclear, chemical, or biological materials or weapons.

Within the scope of these four cornerstones, the roles and responsibilities of the many agencies involved in the government's counterterrorism effort are articulated. Interagency coordination and cooperation are key factors underlying the principles upon which the government's policy is built and are the path to its success.

Nature of the Terrorist Threat

Based upon this policy of treating terrorists as criminals and applying the rule of law, the United States is one of the most visible and effective forces in identifying, locating, and apprehending terrorists here and overseas. At the same time, this policy invites the possibility of reprisals. To help put this into perspective, I would like to discuss the nature of the terrorist threat -- both international and domestic -- that our nation faces today.

International Terrorist Threat

- International terrorism against the United States is that which is foreign based and/or directed by countries or groups outside the United States, or whose activities transcend national boundaries. The threat posed specifically by foreign terrorists has increased in the past three years and will continue for the foreseeable future.
- The current international terrorist threat to the United States government, its people, and its interests can be divided into three major categories: (1) State sponsors of international terrorism, (2) formalized terrorist groups, and (3) loosely-affiliated international islamic extremists.

State-sponsored Terrorism

- The first major threat to Americans comes from state sponsors of international terrorism. State sponsors include Iran, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Cuba, and North Korea. In recent years, terrorist activities by Cuba and North Korea appear to have declined, due primarily to the deteriorating economic situations in both countries. However, the activities of Iran, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, and Libya have continued.
- These state sponsors continue to view terrorism as a tool of foreign policy. Past activities included direct terrorist support and operations by official state agents. Following successful investigations which have identified the activities of state agents involved in terrorism, state sponsors now generally seek to conceal their support of terrorism by relying on surrogates to conduct actual operations.
- State sponsors, however, continue to remain engaged in anti-western terrorist activities by funding, organizing, networking, and providing other support and instruction to many extremists. A classic example of state sponsored terrorism was the attack on Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988, which killed 270 people. Two Libyan intelligence operatives, Lamen Fhimah and Abdel al-Megrahi,

were indicted for their role in the attack.

Formalized Extremist Groups

- The second major international terrorist threat to the United States is posed by formalized extremist groups. These autonomous organizations have their own infrastructures, personnel, financial arrangements, and training facilities. They are able to plan and mount terrorist campaigns overseas, and support terrorist operations inside the United States.
- Extremist groups such as Lebanese Hizballah, the Egyptian al-Gamat al-Islamiyya, and the Palestinian Hamas have placed supporters inside the United States who could be used to support an act of terrorism here. Hizballah is one of the most dangerous of these groups.
- Hizballah has staged numerous anti-United States terrorist attacks, including the suicide truck-bombing of the United States Embassy and the United States Marine Corps barracks in Lebanon in 1983 and the United States Embassy annex in Lebanon in 1984. Elements of the group were also responsible for the kidnaping and detention of United States hostages in Lebanon.

International Radical Fundamentalists

- The final major international terrorist threat to the United States stems from loosely-affiliated Islamic terrorists, such as the World Trade Center bombers and Ramzi Ahmed Yousef. These extremists are neither surrogates of, nor strongly influenced by, any one nation. They have the ability to tap into a variety of official and private resource bases in order to facilitate terrorist acts against United States interests.
- Loosely-affiliated extremists may pose the most urgent international terrorist threat to the United States at this time since they are relatively unknown to law enforcement. They have the ability to travel freely, obtain a variety of identities, and recruit likeminded sympathizers from various countries and/or factions.
- Some of these extremists in the United States are developing or experimenting with advanced communications, electronic mail, and the Internet. For example, supporters of Shayke Omar Abdel Rahman solicited monies for his defense through the Internet during his trial for the planned multiple attacks against New York City landmarks and United States government facilities.

Revolutionary and Insurgent Groups

Revolutionary and insurgent groups continue to operate in South and Central America and other locations. These groups have been responsible for kidnapings of American business representatives, religious missionaries, and tourists, as well as other crimes. However, at this time, it does not appear that these groups represent a major international terrorist threat to the United States government or its interests.

Domestic Terrorism Threat

- Domestic terrorist groups are those which are based and which operate entirely within the United States, or its territories, and whose activities are directed at elements of the United States government or its civilian population. The threat posed by domestic terrorist groups has remained significant over the past several years. Domestic terrorist groups represent interests spanning the full political spectrum, as well as social issues and concerns. FBI investigations of domestic terrorist groups are not predicated upon social or political beliefs; rather, they are based upon planned or actual criminal activity.
- The current domestic terrorist threat primarily comes from right-wing extremist groups, militia groups, Puerto Rican terrorist groups, and special interest groups.

Right-wing Extremist Groups

- A basic philosophical tenet of many right-wing extremist groups is a belief in the superiority of the white race and that blacks, jews, and other ethnic minorities are inferior racially, mentally, physically, and spiritually. Much of their philosophy flows from a racist, anti-semitic religion known as "Christian Identity." Christian Identity teaches that white non-jews are God's chosen race and that jews are the offspring of Satan.
- Many right-wing extremist groups also espouse anti-government sentiments. These groups refer to the federal government as the Zionist Occupation Government and claim that it is controlled by jewish interests. A number of right-wing groups also believe

that the federal government is bent on stripping constitutional rights from individual citizens of the United States.

In an attempt to live apart from "inferior people," some right-wing groups advocate creating a separate nation from the five states comprising the northwest region of the United States, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming.

Right-wing extremist groups believe that either an economic and/or social collapse which will bring about the biblical armageddon is imminent. Therefore, they routinely engage in survivalist and/or paramilitary training to ensure the survival of the white race and/or United States.

Among the right-wing extremist groups operating in the United States are: the Army of Israel, the Aryan Nations, the Texas Aryan Brotherhood, the California Militia, the Viper Militia, the Mountaineer Militia, the Republic of Texas, Our One Supreme Court, the Texas Constitutional Militia, the Utah Free Militia, the North Idaho Militia group, and the Freemen.

Militia Groups

Since 1992, the United States has experienced an exponential growth of militia groups. While the majority of militia members are law abiding citizens, there is a small percentage of members within militia groups who advocate and conspire to commit violent criminal acts. Of particular concern to the FBI is the potential for militias to be infiltrated by extremists who seek to exploit militias and their members in order to further their own terrorist agendas.

While militia groups are often multi-racial, they are predominately white. They generally view themselves as "sovereign" citizens who are exempt from the laws and regulations of the United States government. Militia members often subscribe to the theory that the federal government is in a conspiracy with the United Nations that would result in the creation of a one-nation world government, or new world order. This one-world government would use foreign troops in the United States to seize all privately owned weapons and imprison and execute patriotic militia members.

Many militia groups advocate stockpiling weapons and explosives and conducting paramilitary training as part of their preparation for what they believe will be an inevitable armed conflict with the government. Some militia groups openly advocate the overthrow of the federal government.

Militia members and cells are engaged in a wide variety of criminal activity, such as the illegal sale and purchase of automatic weapons, issuing threats against federal and elected officials, the illegal transportation of explosives, bombings, destruction of government property, and the filing of spurious lawsuits designed to harass law enforcement, elected officials, and others, as well as to disrupt the courts. Some militia members engage in fraudulent financial schemes to raise funds. Others have committed armed robberies of banks and armored cars.

I want to emphasize, again, that FBI investigations of militia groups are predicated upon violations of federal law and are not based upon members lawful exercise of their First or Second Amendment rights.

Puerto Rican Terrorist Groups

Although the last terrorist incident involving Puerto Rican terrorist groups was a bombing in Chicago in December 1992, these groups continue to be of concern. Between 1982 and 1994, approximately 44 percent of the terrorist incidents committed in the United States and its territories are attributed to Puerto Rican terrorist groups. Efforts are continuing to locate fugitives still at large from these incidents. Further, several incarcerated members of Puerto Rican terrorist groups are due to be released from prison in 1998.

Puerto Rican terrorist groups believe the liberation of Puerto Rico from the United States justifies the use of violence to obtain that objective. These groups characterize their terrorism activities as "acts of war" against invading forces and, when arrested, they consider themselves to be "prisoners of war" who must be treated as such according to the Geneva Convention. Clandestine behavior and security are of utmost importance in these group's activities.

Puerto Rican terrorist groups consider any act that brings funds, weapons, and other supplies into these organizations as justified. Among the acts committed by these groups are murders, armed robberies of banks and armored carriers, thefts of weapons, bombings of United States government buildings, and bombings of United States military facilities. These groups also target federal and local government officials.

The EPB - Macheteros has been the most active and violent of the Puerto Rico-based terrorist groups since it emerged in 1978. The FALN (Armed Forces for Puerto Rican National Liberation) is a clandestine terrorist group based in Chicago which emerged in the 1970's. The MLN (Movement of National Liberation) is the "above ground" support group and political arm of the FALN. The MLN is the major fundraiser for the FALN. Among the business ventures operated by the MLN are a bakery and

Special Interest Terrorist Groups

Special interest terrorist groups engage in criminal activity to bring about specific, narrowly-focused social or political changes. They differ from more traditional domestic terrorist groups which seek more wide-ranging political changes. It is the willingness to commit criminal acts that separates special interest terrorist groups from other law-abiding groups that often support the same popular issues. By committing criminal acts, these terrorists believe that they can force various segments of society to change attitudes about issues considered important to them.

The existence of these types of groups often does not come to law enforcement attention until after an act is committed and the individual or group leaves a claim of responsibility. Membership in a group may be limited to a very small number of co-conspirators or associates. Consequently, acts committed by special interest terrorists present unique challenges to the FBI and other law enforcement. Unfortunately, these types of terrorist acts are growing more prevalent.

An example of special interest terrorist activity is the February 2, 1992, arson of the mink research facility at Michigan State University. Rodney Coronado, a member of the Animal Liberation Front, pled guilty to arson charges on July 3, 1995. The Animal Liberation Front is a militant animal rights group founded in England in 1976.

Assessing the capabilities of international and domestic terrorist groups to inflict harm on American citizens and the United States government is critical to developing the capabilities and strategies needed to implement the four cornerstones that are embodied by PDD-39.

FBI Roles and Responsibilities

As I stated earlier, PDD-39 establishes the roles and responsibilities for the many government agencies that are involved in the government's counterterrorism response. PDD-39 defines these roles and responsibilities within the context of the four cornerstones through which the government's policy on terrorism is to be implemented. In many instances, PDD-39 reaffirmed roles and responsibilities set out in earlier executive orders and by federal statutes.

PDD-39 also established new roles and responsibilities based on the assessment of the current terrorism threat to the United States, especially in light of the dramatic changes resulting from the dissolution of the former Soviet Union and the Communist Bloc. It is within this framework that I would like to talk about the FBI's counterterrorism roles and responsibilities.

Reducing our Vulnerabilities

In general, PDD-39 confers upon the heads of all Executive Branch departments and agencies the responsibility of ensuring that their personnel and facilities, and the people and facilities within their jurisdiction, are fully protected against terrorism. As lead investigative agency, PDD-39 confers upon the FBI responsibility for reducing vulnerabilities by an expanded counterterrorism program.

PDD-39 further directed the Attorney General, in her role as the chief law enforcement officer, to chair a cabinet committee to review the vulnerability to terrorism of government facilities in the United States and the nation's critical infrastructure. She was also directed to make recommendations to the President and the appropriate cabinet member or agency head regarding the findings of the committee.

In response to this tasking, the Attorney General established the critical infrastructure working group which included representatives from the Department of Defense and the intelligence community. The group identified eight national critical infrastructures: telecommunications, transportation, emergency services, banking and finance, electrical power systems, water supply systems, gas/oil storage and transportation, and continuity of government. The group also identified two categories of threat to these infrastructures -- physical and cyber.

In July 1996, the President issued an Executive Order on critical infrastructure protection that established the President's Commission on Critical Infrastructure Protection. The order also established an interim Infrastructure Protection Task Force. The purpose of the task force is to identify and improve coordination of existing infrastructure protection efforts throughout the government until the completion or development of a comprehensive national policy and strategy for critical infrastructure protection. The FBI was selected to chair the task force. The commission oversees the work of the task force.

The United States government seeks to deter terrorism through public diplomacy, by reducing terrorist capabilities at home and abroad, and by seeking the return of indicted terrorists to the United States for prosecution.

Responding to Terrorism

To develop and coordinate the government's response to international and domestic terrorism, the President has established lead agency responsibilities among the various departments of the Executive Branch.

The President reaffirmed the Department of Justice as the overall lead agency domestically. In addition to being responsible for the prosecution of terrorists that violate United States law, the department is responsible for the development and implementation of policies addressing domestic terrorism. For foreign incidents, the Department of State is the lead agency.

The President reaffirmed the FBI as the lead agency for investigating terrorist acts planned or carried out by foreign or domestic terrorist groups in the United States or which are directed at United States citizens or institutions abroad.

Effective response and coordination obviously requires good interagency support coordination. The PDD directed the establishment of rapidly deployable interagency emergency support teams to respond to terrorist incidents. The Department of State is given responsibility for leading and managing the foreign emergency support team in foreign incidents. The FBI is designated as being responsible for the domestic emergency support team in domestic incidents. Both teams are to include modules for specific types of incidents, such as nuclear, biological, or chemical threats.

Other responsibilities of the FBI, consistent with its existing authorities, are to collect, analyze, and disseminate intelligence on terrorist groups and activities, and to disseminate internal threat warnings. Finally, to facilitate intelligence community and law enforcement cooperation, the FBI has been directed to establish a domestic counterterrorism center.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

The acquisition, proliferation, threatened or actual use of weapons of mass destruction by a terrorist group or individuals constitutes one of the gravest threats to the United States. The government's policy recognizes that there is no higher priority than preventing the acquisition of this capability or removing this capability from terrorist groups potentially opposed to the United States.

The FBI is working closely with the Department of Defense to carry out other authorized weapons of mass destruction programs, such as Nunn-Luger. We are actively undertaking initiatives to employ all necessary measures, assets, and resources to achieve these objectives.

During the past year, the FBI has implemented several new initiatives to meet this challenge. These initiatives are not conducted in a unilateral manner, but with the FBI working with many other United States government agencies and state and local agencies to coordinate crisis and consequence management.

These initiatives involve the FBI's role in the interagency community to assist in the training of law enforcement and emergency responders throughout the United States; to issue and update contingency plans for FBI field offices and other crisis management agencies; to participate in interagency exercises; to create the domestic emergency support team; and to implement the joint Department of Defense/FBI international training initiative in the former Soviet Union.

Special Events Management

The FBI plays a major role in the intelligence and security planning for many special events occurring within the United States, such as the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, the Democratic and Republican National Conventions, and Presidential Inauguration.

These events routinely receive a high degree of visibility both domestically and internationally. As such, these events represent potential targets for acts of terrorism in which the resulting consequences could cause significant harm to either United States national interests or international political stability.

Counterterrorism Resources

PDD-39, as well as other Executive Orders and federal statutes, has served as the blueprint for developing the various counterterrorism initiatives and funding proposals that have been generously supported by the committee. In developing these initiatives, I have sought to address not only counterterrorism investigative requirements, but also certain critical infrastructure

capabilities of the FBI that allow our investigators and analysts to perform their jobs. Establishing and maintaining an effective counterterrorism capability within the FBI requires a careful balance between investigative resources and related information, technology, and forensic support services.

1995 Counterterrorism Supplemental

In the aftermath of the April 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, the administration submitted a supplemental budget request for the FBI to enhance domestic terrorism capabilities. Congress responded by enacting a 1995 supplemental appropriation that provided 427 support positions and \$77.1 million to the FBI. Among the items funded by Congress were several major, multi-year projects, such as the upgrading of FBI command center capabilities.

The FBI has filled all of these 427 support positions; 425 employees are on board and 2 have been provided appointment letters. Among these new positions were 190 special surveillance group staff, 25 analysts for the counterterrorism center, 75 intelligence research specialists, 50 police officers, 69 technical staff, and 18 field clerical staff.

We have obligated \$54.8 million of the 1995 supplemental funding, as of March 31, 1997. Recently, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees cleared the FBI's request to use \$7.5 million of the remaining unobligated funds for the computer investigation and infrastructure threat assessment center, as well as initiatives related to the Infrastructure Protection Task Force. The largest amount of unobligated funds is for the renovation and upgrading of the FBI command center, which is a multi-year project scheduled for completion in 1998.

1996 Counterterrorism Initiative

Congress provided the FBI with \$158.8 million in 1996 for counterterrorism activities, including 222 new positions. We have hired 209 individuals, including all 131 agents and 78 of 91 support staff.

Of the \$158.8 million provided, \$89.5 million has been obligated as of March 31, 1997. The remaining unobligated 1996 counterterrorism amendment funding consists of no-year construction and violent crime reduction funds for several major, multi-year initiatives, primarily the construction of a new FBI Laboratory facility and the FBI command center.

The FBI has selected a site for the new facility at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia. We expect to begin site preparation later this summer. Funding was also provided for a multi-year modernization of laboratory equipment and to acquire equipment for evidence response teams in FBI field offices.

The 1996 appropriation also included the remainder of the funding planned for the FBI command center project, as well as funding to support FBI Digital Telephony and Tactical Operations programs. These latter two programs are critical to maintaining our technical capabilities in counterterrorism matters. These are long-term programs that will allow us to keep pace with changing technologies.

1997 Counterterrorism Initiative

As I mentioned earlier, Congress provided the FBI with \$133.9 million in new counterterrorism resources in the 1997 appropriations. This funding will allow us to assign 644 additional agents and 620 support employees to support our counterterrorism programs, FBI Laboratory, Critical Incident Response Group, and service operations.

Most of the new agents and support positions are allowing us to double the "shoe-leather" for counterterrorism investigations so that we can address emerging domestic and international terrorist groups, establish an investigative capability for chemical/biological/nuclear incidents, identify key assets and conduct infrastructure vulnerability assessments. Each of these areas directly supports the four major cornerstones of the government's counterterrorism policy.

We are also expanding the number of joint terrorism task forces that have proven to be extremely valuable in facilitating cooperation among federal, state, and local law enforcement.

To support our expanded field counterterrorism efforts, Congress also funded improvements for FBI information and intelligence capabilities. We are establishing our Computer Investigation and Infrastructure Threat Assessment Center (CITAC) at FBI headquarters to serve as a resource for investigations of computer crimes and attempts to disrupt or disable the national information infrastructure. We are implementing a plan to improve our language translation capabilities, particularly in the areas of Farsi and Arabic.

We are acquiring computers that will provide us access to classified intelligence computer networks and databases so that we can exchange information with our partners and access their data. Efforts are underway to update the database of key asset information. We are strengthening state and local law enforcement involvement with our counterterrorism center.

To improve forensics and crisis management capabilities, Congress provided funding to establish a hazardous materials response capability within the FBI Laboratory so that we can fulfill our role in terrorist incidents where chemical or biological agents or nuclear materials are suspected or involved. Funding was also provided to upgrade the training provided to federal, state, and local law enforcement, firefighter, and public safety officers through the FBI's Hazardous Response School at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. We are developing a capability to exchange forensic information with other foreign governments so that we can improve our ability to link terrorist incidents and identify persons responsible for terrorist acts.

We are implementing a crisis management program that provides training to senior law enforcement managers, including the Attorney General, top Department of Justice officials, FBI Special Agents in Charge, and others, who are key decision-makers in the management and resolution of a hostage-taking incident, a terrorist act, a prison siege, or other crisis situation. Our crisis management program also assists in the planning and conducting of training exercises that assess the readiness of federal agencies, state and local government, and others in responding to a chemical and biological incidents or other similar threats.

Finally, to provide a more secure work environment, Congress provided funding to acquire physical security equipment for FBI offices, such as x-ray machines, magnetometers, and closed-circuit television systems; to hire contract guard and security for field offices and the FBI Academy; and to add additional police officers to protect our new Washington, D.C. field office. These physical security upgrades are consistent with the measures recommended in the vulnerability assessment of federal facilities that was mandated after the Oklahoma City bombing.

1998 President's Budget

The 1998 budget request to Congress includes \$83.3 million to fully fund the new counterterrorism positions provided by the Congress in the 1997 Appropriations Act. Most of this funding is for personnel compensation of agent and support staff.

Additionally, within our technology crimes initiative, an increase of \$5.9 million is proposed to fund the operations of the CITAC. Initial funding for the CITAC was provided as part of the counterterrorism initiative in the 1997 Appropriations Act. CITAC supports both criminal and national security investigations. This additional funding is needed for contractor support services, technical equipment, training, and operational travel. The 1998 budget also proposes 56 positions (34 agents) and \$5.9 million for computer crime investigations.

The dual threats that the CITAC addresses are among the most challenging and dynamic problems that the FBI must address in meeting its national security and criminal missions. Illegal electronic intrusion into computer networks is a rapidly escalating crime and security problem. In addition to terrorists, white-collar criminals, economic espionage agents, organized crime groups, and foreign intelligence agents have been identified as "electronic intruders" responsible for penetrations of American computer systems and networks.

The United States government relies upon the national information infrastructure for the efficient, uninterrupted flow of electronic information for air traffic control, military communications, energy distribution, public safety, and other essential government programs and services. Intelligence and industry forecasts indicate the United States is just beginning to realize the potentially damaging effects and extent of the computer crime problem.

Conclusion

The dynamic nature of the counterterrorism threat to the United States is a significant challenge to the FBI, as well as all of the other federal, state, and local agencies involved in combating terrorism. PDD-39 clearly articulates the policy of the United States towards terrorism, identifies the major underpinnings of this policy, and designates roles for federal agencies.

Consistent with this overall statement of policy, and with the resources you have provided us, the FBI is developing and implementing a comprehensive counterterrorism strategy. Our success in achieving our goals and objectives in thwarting international and domestic terrorism will depend, in part, upon the continued support of the Congress. I am hopeful that we will be able to enjoy the continued support of Congress as we work toward achieving our counterterrorism goals and objectives.

I strongly believe that the American people expect the FBI to do its best to, first prevent acts of terrorism from happening, and two, to effectively respond to and investigate those acts of terrorism that are committed so that the persons responsible for such heinous crimes are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. I know that with the committee's continued support, the FBI will be able to meet the challenge of terrorism in the United States.