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Statement of Secretary Janet Napolitano before the United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs,

Release Date: September 22, 2010

Empowering Communities and Police to Combat Violence

We also are empowering local jurisdictions and communities to work together to address violent extremism. The potential threat of homegrown violent extremism is very clear. Some two dozen Americans have been arrested on terror charges since 2009. While it is not clear if this represents an actual increase in violent radicalization, versus a rise in the mobilization of previously radicalized individuals, it is nonetheless evident that over the past 12 months, efforts by violent extremist groups and movements to communicate with and recruit individuals within the United States have intensified. And the profiles of Americans who have been arrested on terror charges, or who we know are involved in terrorism overseas, indicate that there is no "typical" profile of a homegrown terrorist. While we work to address violent extremism, we must acknowledge that there is much we do not know about how individuals come to adopt violent extremist beliefs.

All of this was noted in a detailed report by the Bipartisan Policy Center's National Security Preparedness Group co-chaired by Lee Hamilton and Tom Kean. It is important to emphasize, though, the actions are currently underway to address the threat of homegrown violent extremism, including our regular consultations with international partners. We know that information-driven, community-oriented approaches led by local police departments in close partnership with community members have been very successful in reducing violence in many American communities. The Homeland Security Advisory Council's (HSAC) Countering Violent Extremism Working Group - comprised of security experts, elected officials, law enforcement leaders, community leaders, and first responders from around the country - has provided DHS with a number of recommendations on how to support local law enforcement and community-based efforts to identify and combat sources of violent extremism.

Based on the HSAC Working Group's recommendations, and in conjunction with the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Department of Justice, the Counter Terrorism Academy, and the Naval Postgraduate School, we are developing a curriculum for state and local law enforcement focused on community-oriented policing, to enable frontline personnel to identify activities that are indicators of criminal activity and violence. This training will be available through a number of venues, including regional community policing institutes and DHS' Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.

We are producing a series of unclassified case studies that examine recent incidents involving terrorism. These will inform state and local law enforcement personnel, as well as members of communities, about common behaviors and indicators exhibited by the suspects in these cases.

DHS is also creating a series of intelligence products for the fusion centers and law enforcement personnel that will discuss tactics, techniques and plans of terrorist organizations, including the recruitment and training of individuals living in the United States.

In addition, DHS is convening a series of regional summits with state and local law enforcement, government, and community leaders this fall to focus on best practices. These summits will allow all participants to provide and receive feedback on successful community oriented policing and other programs aimed at preventing violence and crime. DHS will gather these case studies and best practices and share them with law enforcement nationwide, employing the widely used platforms that the Department has already established.

Finally, DHS continues to work with the Department of Justice to leverage grant programs to support training and technical assistance for SLTT law enforcement. The Department is working to incorporate community-oriented policing concepts into our broader preparedness efforts. And at the same time - because these new initiatives and policies are inherently relevant to DHS' local community partnerships - the Department is expanding the cultural training and engagement activities performed by the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. These activities will help both DHS personnel and SLTT law enforcement to better understand, identify, and mitigate threats to American communities.

Community leaders play a vital role in countering violent extremism. Many have helped disrupt plots and have spoken out against violent extremism. They play a central role in addressing this issue, and we are committed to continuing to work closely with them.

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