



One Hundred Twelfth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

February 1, 2011

The Honorable Peter King
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman King:

I write to request that you broaden the scope of your examination of ideological-based violence.

Terrorists of all ideologies seek to do Americans harm. According to a polling of state law enforcement agencies conducted by the Department of Homeland Security's START Center of Excellence, there are a variety of domestic extremist groups more prevalent in the United States than Islamic extremists, including neo-Nazis, environmental extremists, anti-tax groups, and others.¹ Islamic extremist groups were named a threat in 31 states, according to the poll; Neo-Nazi groups, by contrast, posed a serious threat in 46 states.

Ideological-based violence of all kinds has been on the rise, according to a variety of indicators. As the incident in Spokane, Washington, this past Martin Luther King Day has shown, Islamic extremists aren't the only ones willing and able to utilize sophisticated devices intended to kill many Americans. In fact, three of the five CBRNE plots since 2001 were planned by white supremacist groups; none of them were attributed to Muslim extremists.²

While I share your concern about the threat posed to our nation from violence borne of ideologically driven extremism, I believe that this Committee's exploration of the current

¹ "Surveying State Police Agencies about Domestic Terrorism and Far-Right Extremists." Joseph Simone, Jr., Joshua Freilich, and Steven Chermak. *University of Maryland Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism* (Feb. 2008). http://www.start.umd.edu/start/publications/research_briefs/20080221_state_agency_survey.pdf.

² "Building on Clues: Examining Successes and Failures in Detecting US Terrorist Plots, 1999-2009." Strom, et al. *The Institute for Homeland Security Solutions* (Oct. 2010). https://www.ihssnc.org/portals/0/Building_on_Clues_Strom.pdf.

and emerging threat environment should be a broad-based examination of domestic extremist groups, regardless of their respective ideological underpinnings. I hope you share my belief that in the final analysis, the ideology of a bomb maker matters less than the lethal effects of his creation.

I look forward to working with you to further this Committee's mission and safeguarding our nation from all enemies, foreign or domestic.

Sincerely,


Bennie G. Thompson
Ranking Member