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Remarks to the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce

Ambassador Cofer Black, Coordinator for Counterterrorism

Fairfax County, Virginia

September 30, 2004

Introduction

Thank you for that kind introduction, Dick. It is an honor to address this inaugural event of the Chamber's newest initiative: The International Business Exchange Council. I will talk a little bit about:

- . The state of international terrorism,
- . America's counterterrorism efforts, and
- . How this impacts on commercial operations abroad.

The enemy went to war against us long before we, as a country, went to war against them. Following the September 11 attacks, the United States applied the Bush doctrine: any person or government that supports, protects, or harbors terrorists is complicit in the murder of the innocent, and will be held to account. Our military forces were brought to bear against those in Afghanistan who aided and abetted our enemies, and broke the back of the al-Qaida terrorist organization that attacked us. Nevertheless, as we have seen most recently and tragically in Russia and Indonesia, the threat from terrorism persists. Currently we focused like a laser on the remaining 25% of the al-Qaida leadership that we have as yet not captured, arrested or killed as well as al-Qaida associated groups.

In addition to the tragic loss of life on 9/11 which we all mourn, there are also economic costs for your Council to consider. The September 2004 Homeland Security magazine states that...."The economic consequences of a major terrorist attack are sobering. The Milken Institute estimates that metropolitan areas in the United States suffered an estimated \$191 billion economic loss from the Sep 11 attacks. The insurance industry will pay out roughly \$32.5 billion in claims...."

The U.S. National Strategy for Combating Terrorism creates the policy framework for coordinated actions to prevent terrorist attacks against the United States, its citizens, its interests, and its friends around the world and, ultimately, to

create an international environment inhospitable to terrorists and all those who support them.

U.S. CT Strategy

We have implemented this strategy to act simultaneously on four fronts:

- **Defeat** terrorist organizations of global reach by attacking their sanctuaries, leadership, finances, and command, control and communications;
- **Deny** further sponsorship, support, and sanctuary to terrorists by cooperating with other states to take action against these international threats;
- **Diminish** the underlying conditions that terrorists seek to exploit by enlisting the international community to focus its efforts and resources on the areas most at risk; and
- **Defend** the United States, its citizens, and interests at home and abroad.

Success in the GWOT will only come through the sustained, steadfast, and systematic application of all elements of national power--diplomatic, financial, law enforcement, intelligence, and military, in cooperation with willing partners in the international community.

Successes Against al-Qaida

Since September 11, 2001, about three-quarters of al-Qaida's senior leadership and more than 3,400 lower-level al-Qaida operatives or associates have been detained or killed in over 100 countries, facilitated by cooperation among law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Terrorist cells have been wrapped up around the globe, from Singapore to Italy and Saudi Arabia, as well as here at home (Buffalo, Portland, and North Carolina). Interestingly, since Afghanistan, few of the significant AQ killed or captured have been the result exclusively of U.S. military operations. The majority of these successes were the result of our international partners working with each other, alone, or with our help.

We have made extensive efforts to attack al-Qaida's finances, which is the lifeblood of its operations, including the movement of operatives, the corruption of officials and local populations, and the acquisition of arms and explosives. Since 9/11, more than 170 countries have issued orders freezing or seizing approximately \$142 million in terrorist-related financial assets. More than 380 terrorists have been designated under E.O. 13324, which freezes any assets that may be present in the United States.

Even if the terrorists don't have assets, we can block the assets of those who feed them. Almost 1500 terrorist-related accounts have been blocked around the world, including 106 in the United States. Over 80 countries have introduced new terrorist-related legislation, and 94 have established Financial Intelligence Units to block money laundering and the misuse of charities in the support of terrorists.

Meanwhile, we have strengthened our defenses in the United States. We have implemented more stringent screening procedures, and worked with the international community to raise global law enforcement and security standards. We have also been engaged to provide many countries with the training and assistance needed to support and expand their own counterterrorism efforts.

Our ongoing operations against al-Qaida have served to isolate its leadership, and sever or complicate communications links with its operatives scattered around the globe. The surviving al-Qaida leadership must now devote much more time to evading capture or worse. This has complicated al-Qaida's communication and coordination efforts, which are much harder and time-consuming in the current operating environment. We have also seen examples of terrorist activities delayed for extended periods as al-Qaida affiliates await instructions from an increasingly isolated central leadership.

Also, as al-Qaida's known senior leadership, planners, facilitators, and operators are brought to justice, a new cadre of leaders are stepping up. These individuals are increasingly no longer drawn from the old guard, no longer the seasoned veteran al-Qaida trainers from Afghanistan's camps or close associates of al-Qaida's founding members. Critical gaps have been cut out of the al-Qaida leadership structure, and these relatively untested terrorists are assuming greater responsibilities. We are relentlessly going after these new leaders as they are identified.

The removal of the Taliban regime from Afghanistan by Coalition forces stripped al-Qaida of its primary sanctuary and support, and shut down long-standing terrorist training camps. Although our work continues in Afghanistan to root-out the remnants of al-Qaida's former strength, al-Qaida has lost a crucial safe haven. In short, al-Qaida has been deeply wounded, and has been forced to evolve in ways not entirely of its own choosing in order to remain a viable threat.

Al-Qaida has proven to be resilient, despite its loss of leadership and safehavens. We have seen al-Qaida and other terrorist groups forming a global jihadist network, which seeks to exploit weak counterterrorism regimes and to establish links with other like-minded terrorist groups to raise funds, recruit, spread propaganda, plan, and conduct terrorist attacks. Al-Qaida is becoming perhaps less capable as an organization, but more an idea.

Al-Qaida as a Movement

There are growing indications that a number of largely Sunni Islamic extremist groups are moving to pick up al-Qaida's standard and attempting to pursue global jihad against the United States and its allies. Al-Qaida's influence has spread to other terrorist organizations. There are also growing indications that al-Qaida's ideology is spreading well beyond the Middle East, particularly its virulent anti-American rhetoric. This has been picked up by a number of Islamic extremist movements that exist around the globe.

In particular, groups like Ansar al-Islam and the Zarqawi network pose a real threat to U.S. interests, as has been shown very clearly by their beheadings and other deadly activities in Iraq. In Asia, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) are also working to further al-Qaida's objectives.

While it would be a mistake to believe that we are confronted by a monolithic threat composed of legions of like-minded terrorist groups working in concert against our interests, it would be fair to say that we are seeing greater cooperation between al-Qaida and smaller Islamic extremist groups, as well as even more localized organizations.

Identifying and acting against the leadership, capabilities, and operational plans of these groups poses a serious challenge now and for years to come.

In addition to these groups, there are literally thousands of jihadists around the world who have fought in conflicts in

Kosovo, Kashmir, Chechnya, and elsewhere. As I said earlier, we see these "foreign fighters" operating in Iraq, where we are fighting them with our Coalition and Iraqi partners. These jihadists will continue to serve as a ready source of recruits for al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations. These localized groups and individuals are vulnerable to incitement, be it from some foreign media or radicalized religious teachings. Countering their violent actions represents a real challenge to law enforcement and security services to identify and counter them. We seek to take advantage of the fact that many of these individuals tend to be less capable of conducting major attacks than more organized terrorist groups.

We are determined that our efforts to bolster political will and our assistance to augment the capabilities of partner security services will succeed in identifying and countering these threats. We are mindful of the continuing threat posed by State Sponsors of Terrorism, particularly Iran and Syria.

Iran remains one of the "most active state sponsor of terrorism in the world. It continues to be involved in the planning of and support for terrorist acts and exhort a variety of groups that use terrorism to pursue their goals. Iran continues to provide Lebanese Hezbollah and Palestinian rejectionist groups--notably HAMAS and the Palestine Islamic Jihad--with funding, safehaven, training, and arms. Iran's relationship to al-Qaida is more "mixed", as they claim to have detained a number of high-ranking members of the organization. We require that al-Qaida members in Iranian custody be transferred to the custody of the United States, their countries of origin, or third countries in order to gain threat intelligence, and thereby save lives.

Syria continues to provide political and material support to Palestinian rejectionist groups. HAMAS, PIJ, the PFLP and other groups all operate from Syria. Syria also continues to permit Iran to use Damascus as a transshipment point for resupplying Hezbollah in Lebanon. As with Iran, Syrian performance on al-Qaida has been mixed: Damascus has cooperated with the United States and other foreign governments against al-Qaida, and has discouraged signs of public support for al-Qaida, including in its media and at mosques. Syria has also made an effort, only partially successful, to halt the flow of fighters through Syria into Iraq.

The United States continues to apply pressure on Iran and Syria, and all State Sponsors, to cease their aid to terror. We are continuing to work with our international partners to press our view that these states must fundamentally change behavior before receiving the full advantages of international citizenship. We will continue to utilize unilateral political and economic pressure on these states as well, through various U.S. sanctions and diplomatic approaches.

As I have said, the support of these State Sponsors continues to be central to the operations of several major terrorist groups that threaten the interests of both the United States and its allies. This phenomenon stands apart from the developing trend toward decentralized, locally supported terrorist groups like al-Qaida and the expansion of the global jihadist movement.

Groups like HAMAS and Hezbollah attempt to cloak themselves in the guise of solely humanitarian and political organizations. For our part, we are working hard to convince the world of their true intentions and nature.

A developing "good news" story is that Libya has taken some significant steps to repudiate its past support for terrorism. Libya has fulfilled its UN requirements relating to the renunciation of terrorism. Libya is also providing assistance in the global war on terrorism and has pledged further cooperation. The government has also taken concrete steps in eliminating its weapons of mass destruction. This has reduced the likelihood of WMD material and technology being transferred into terrorist hands. Last week, President Bush signed an Executive Order terminating the

national emergency that had been in effect against Libya since 1986. That action removed certain restrictions on Libya and unblocked more than one billion dollars in assets frozen under the Libya sanctions program. Libya remains a designated State Sponsor, and we are continuing to press for resolution of all outstanding issues--including the settlement of claims by Americans against Tripoli for past terrorist acts--but we have made remarkable progress over the past year.

The scope of the terrorist threat makes clear that no one country can hope to succeed in fighting the war alone: as President Bush has stressed on numerous occasions, the global threat we face requires a global strategy and a global response – and this is exactly what we are doing, both bilaterally with our partners, and by aggressively mobilizing the United Nations and other international organizations to fight terrorism in every corner of the globe. In that effort, we have many close and reliable partners in Asia: Cooperation has been forthcoming, and rapid response to immediate threats the norm.

Threat to Financial Markets

Al-Qaida has sought to hit targets of both symbolic significance and concrete importance. It is clear that terrorists have an interest in damaging or disrupting the U.S. economy to the greatest extent possible; as was reported in the press, information obtained from the recent series of arrests around the world strongly suggests that al-Qaida has considered targeting financial institutions.

As I indicated at the start of my presentation, the costs of 9/11 to the U.S. were considerable, particularly in light of how little it seems to have cost the terrorist to mount the attacks. So what can you do to address the threat?

Therefore, the first thing that can and must be done is to increase security and awareness of the threat. One of the sad truths about al-Qaida is that it can be professional—they case their targets, look for weaknesses and strike against those objectives against which they feel they have the greatest chance of success. If you will forgive me for being somewhat flippant about a very serious subject, what this means is that you have to keep in mind the old joke about the two men and the shark: When the swimmers were confronted by a huge and hungry shark, one of them immediately began putting on his flippers. "What are you doing that for?" the others asked "you can't out swim that shark." "I don't have to," the first replied, "I only have to out swim you." The same calculus exists with respect to security for your facilities and personnel—the more secure you are, the more your employees are aware of and responding to the possible threat, the more likely it is that the terrorists will search elsewhere for a less-protected, softer target— we have concrete evidence of this having happened in the past. The more we frustrate their targeting efforts the more time we buy for ourselves to catch them.

The best way to anticipate and thereby, to the extent possible, deflect terrorist threats is by developing accurate and timely information about such threats and sharing that information as broadly as possible. As more and better information about threats is disseminated, people in the private sector who own and operate business and our financial infrastructure can better estimate the risks they bear and can more effectively reduce the probability of a disruption.

In general, the key for individual businesses in a time of terrorism is to manage those risks and not allow yourselves or your businesses to be managed by them. Take intelligent common sense steps to reduce your exposure—be proactive. Expect the unexpected and be ready to respond to crisis by having a variety of crisis plans in place. To push out your security perimeter, take steps to control access to your facilities. Consider the utility of dispersing your people and other assets, rather than concentrating them at a single location. Be aware of and consider using new technologies

that advance security and safety: Fingerprint identification, retinal scanners and other technology can help avert unnecessary risks. Most importantly, continually reevaluate security at your facilities both within and outside the U. S. Terrorists are deterred by what they see. Visible evidence of physical protection measures like cameras, patrolling guards, and personnel access technology when combined with stand off perimeters will continue to deter terrorists. Despite the thought of suicide attacks, they still aim to execute a successful attack. We need to take away any confidence that success is probable.

Of one thing I am certain: the coalition of civilized nations will stand together to fight terror. Terrorists and those who support them will be given no respite, no refuge from the justice they deserve. They will be brought to justice, or justice will be brought to them. We are in this fight together, and for the long haul; there can be no accommodation with this evil. Thank you.

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