

**Statement of Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.**  
**Committee on the Judiciary**  
**Hearing on ISIL in America: Domestic Terror and Radicalization**  
**Thursday, February 26, 2014 at 10:00 a.m.**

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Today's hearing will examine the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant or ISIL and the domestic terrorism threats posed by these terrorists. Although ISIL seems to have reared its head only in the last eighteen months, a closer look quickly reveals ISIL to be an old foe, one with whom the United States has done battle for more than a decade.

Before the group declared itself a global caliphate and adopted its current name, it was merely The Islamic State of Iraq. During the Iraq War, members of this same group were among the most prolific perpetrators of attacks on American troops and our partners in Iraq.

The procession of name changes, however, has made no difference in ISIL's commitment to harm Americans. Earlier

this month we were all reminded of this as we learned of Kayla Mueller's [Mew-ller] death after eighteen months in ISIL captivity. The 26-year old from Prescott, Arizona, traveled to Syria with Doctors Without Borders to help alleviate the suffering wrought there by Islamic Extremism.

Distance does not make us in the United States immune from ISIL's destructive ideology. From far beyond the battlefields of Syria and Iraq comes funding and support for this group's call to arms against the West. And the domestic threat is not limited to New York City or our nation's capital.

Two weeks ago in St. Louis, Missouri, five Bosnians were charged with providing material support to ISIL. The suspects allegedly provided weapons, military uniforms and equipment, and money to a sixth Bosnian who left the United States in 2013 to join ISIL in Syria. Alarminglly, all six individuals are natives of Bosnia who immigrated to the United States. Three are now

naturalized citizens of the United States and the remaining three have either refugee or legal resident status.

But the threats posed by ISIL's hateful ideology are not purely external. Inciting Americans to join their ranks or ally themselves with ISIL's mission is a pivotal component of their campaign of violence against America.

Last month, a Cincinnati man named Christopher Lee Cornell was arrested at a gun shop purchasing multiple weapons he is alleged to have been collecting for an attack here in Washington, D.C. Mr. Cornell had become an adherent of radical Islam on the Internet. Having adopted the *Jihadi* worldview, he aimed to gun down members of Congress and government employees for the glory of ISIL, a terrorist group on the other side of the world with whom he had no connection except devotion to the same perverted Islamist ideology. As FBI Director Comey has pointed out, these are not isolated

incidents. ISIL connections are being investigated in virtually every part of the United States.

But on the heels of the St. Louis and Cincinnati arrests – and just days after ISIL released a video depicting the beheading of 21 Egyptian Christians in Libya – President Obama convened a summit on “Countering Violent Extremism.” A summit that failed to include FBI Director James Comey and refused to acknowledge that ISIL and other terrorist organizations are motivated by radical Islam.

As one commentator noted, this summit was “strangely sympathetic to Islamist sensibilities and grievances at the very time when rampaging jihadists, while quoting Islamic scripture, are barbarically slaughtering their enemies and conducting a pogrom against Christians.”

The President’s unwillingness to acknowledge the true motives of these terrorists only emboldens their campaign of

terror and makes Americans less safe. Meanwhile, ISIL continues its march across western Iraq and continues to spew its propaganda of hatred and murder across the globe. Just yesterday, three New York City residents -- two from Uzbekistan and one from Kazakhstan – were arrested for plotting to travel to Syria to join ISIL and “wage jihad.” According to the criminal complaint, one of these men stated he would kill President Obama if he had the opportunity to do so.

The witnesses joining us today will hopefully shed light on the escalating domestic terror threat posed by ISIL and those who would ally themselves with Islamic extremism.

It is now my pleasure to recognize for her opening statement the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas.

**[Ranking Member Jackson-Lee delivers opening statement]**

It is now my pleasure to recognize for his opening statement the Chairman of the Full Committee, Congressman Bob Goodlatte of Virginia.

**[Chairman Goodlatte delivers opening statement]**

It is now my pleasure to recognize for his opening statement the Ranking Member of the Full Committee, Congressman John Conyers of Michigan.

**[Ranking Member Conyers delivers opening statement]**

Without objection, other Members' opening statements will be made a part of the record.

And without objection, the chair will be authorized to declare recesses during votes on the house floor.