



Written by [Steven J. DuBord](#) on December 4, 2009

Al-Qaeda a Threat in U.S. Says Napolitano

Al Qaeda agents pose a threat to the United States and to U.S. interests abroad, and some are already here on American soil with the intent to attack various targets, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano said on December 2.

Napolitano gave this forthright assessment of the danger posed by al Qaeda one day after President Barack Obama announced his decision to send 30,000 additional U.S. troops to Afghanistan and warned that agents have been "sent here from the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan to commit more acts of terror."



The Homeland Security Secretary made her remarks to the America-Israel Friendship League in New York, saying that a recent spate of domestic arrests related to terrorism should "remove any remaining comfort that some might have had from the notion that if we fight the terrorists abroad, we won't have to fight them here." This goes against the line of reasoning put forth by Obama's predecessor, George W. Bush, who used it to justify the foreign wars he launched.

"The fact is that home-based terrorism is here. And like violent extremism abroad, it is now part of the threat picture that we must confront," Napolitano declared. "Individuals sympathetic to al Qaeda and its affiliates, as well as those inspired by their ideology, are present in the U.S., and would like to attack the homeland or plot overseas attacks against our interests abroad."

Napolitano gave the example of Najibullah Zazi, an airport shuttle driver in Denver who was arrested in September after allegedly receiving al Qaeda training in Pakistan. Zazi allegedly tested homemade bombs like those used in the 2004 Madrid transit bombings and then drove from Denver to New York. He is facing charges of conspiring to use weapons of mass destruction.

In a separate case, U.S. prosecutors in October accused David Headley, a Chicago businessman, of conspiring with members of Lashkar-i-Taiba, an extremist Islamic group in Pakistan allied with al Qaeda, to plan terrorist attacks in Denmark and India.

A U.S. counterterrorism official pointed to Zazi as "the first concrete case" since 9/11 of al Qaeda sending operatives to the United States for the purpose of carrying out a terror attack. Intelligence analysts have long believed the threat existed, but the counterterrorism official noted it had so far failed to materialize.

"The surprising thing is Zazi is the first," the official said. He referred to Zazi's contacts with al Qaeda's central leadership as being "at most one step removed."

Here is an example that waging foreign wars will not keep America safe from terrorism. Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano's own words about the falseness of "the notion that if we fight the terrorists abroad, we won't have to fight them here," prove that Obama's decision to send more troops to Afghanistan is not going to make America safer.



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In fact, the more countries of the world our men and women in uniform occupy, the more recruits there will be to swell the ranks of terrorists. Every accidental civilian death — an unavoidable consequence of war — represents the potential for extremists to recruit new members who will be motivated to seek revenge through terrorism.

The more U.S. troops in these foreign lands, the more targets we give to the enemy. Only by returning America's brave warriors to their home soil can we keep them out of unnecessary danger and stifle terrorist recruitment.

Photo of Secretary Napolitano: AP Images



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