

## U.S. Attorney's Report to the District

Osama bin Laden is dead. The daring raid that led to his death earlier this month was a stunning blow to al-Qaeda. Leaders and allies of bin Laden's terrorist network have been pummeled by missile strikes in Pakistan and elsewhere. The battle against that network, however, is far from over. While it is now possible to imagine a future in which our hyper-vigilance on national security matters can be relaxed somewhat, for the foreseeable future we must be on guard against those who would carry on Bin Laden's violent legacy. For the U.S. Department of Justice, protecting national security will continue to be our top priority, and U.S. Attorney's Offices nationwide will continue to play a vital role in that effort.

In late March, the nation's U.S. Attorneys gathered at the National Counterterrorism Center in Virginia for a two-day conference on national security matters. We heard from the Attorney General and FBI Director Mueller, received classified briefings, and learned about best practices for responding to terrorist incidents. On May 2, the day after the announcement of bin Laden's death, I joined the Attorney General in Washington during a conference call he held to remind U.S. Attorneys of the need to stay alert for potential revenge attacks. And on May 10, my office's National Security Section and I participated in a multi-agency joint counterterrorism workshop here in Sacramento, in which representatives of private industry and of federal, state and local agencies worked through a mock scenario involving a terrorist attack in Sacramento.

While we prepare for the worst, we hope for the best. Before those Navy Seals landed in Pakistan, al-Qaeda's standing and its appeal to dissatisfied young people in the Middle East was already in decline. The regime changes in Egypt and Tunisia hold the promise of more change to come. The wave of popular revolts that have spread through the region have ignited a flame of hope in the Muslim world in stark contrast to the violent nihilism of al-Qaeda. The road to a stable democracy in countries that have never known it will be long and tortuous, but it is a path that empowers people to take action for positive change.

This month is the 50th anniversary of the first bus trips of the Freedom Riders, young men and women, black and white, from all over the country, who risked violence in Alabama and the harsh conditions of Parchman Penitentiary in Mississippi to nonviolently challenge injustice and inequality in our own country. Within the year they had secured the legal desegregation of bus and train stations throughout the South, an enduring testament to the power of people to create positive change. That was a watershed moment in this country's path toward a fairer society. For those Middle Eastern countries currently in the throes of popular rebellion, this may be a similar moment for them.