



Written by [Daniel Sayani](#) on June 20, 2011

Congress: Hearings Show Widespread Islamic Radicalization in U.S. Prisons

The House Homeland Security Committee Wednesday conducted its second hearing on Islamic radicalization in the United States. Under the leadership of Rep. Peter King (R-N.Y., left), the committee hearing focused specifically on processes of radical Islamic proselytizing in the American prison system.



King stressed that there “is no doubt” that fanatical Islamists are trying to radicalize U.S. prison inmates. And he castigated the “vacuous morons” at the *New York Times* and elsewhere who contend that his hearings are politically incorrect. King made the comments on MSNBC’s *Morning Joe* Thursday, the day after he convened the second in a set of hearings into the radical Islamist threat in the United States.

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“We’ve had a number of cases where they’ve gone on from prison to a post-prison radicalization and then to carry out attempted jihad,” King said. “This shouldn’t even be debatable: There’s no doubt it’s there — we could have a question about the extent of it, we could have a question about how far we should go as far as dealing with it.”

King noted that he received considerable criticism after the first hearing in March:

When I see critics coming up like CAIR [Council on American-Islamic Relations] and other groups attacking me for holding these hearings, I would be derelict if I didn’t have these hearings. This is a real issue — it’s there — it’s something to be concerned about.

And I just found going back to the first hearing, you had those vacuous morons at *The New York Times* attacking me in four editorials and two front-page stories, and you had the Council on American-Islamic Relations, you had the media going apoplectic. And the fact is: I will stand by every word that came out of that hearing — they were fair, they were decisive, and they were absolutely necessary.

As chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, I have no alternative. I’m not going to back down to political correctness.

King was asked what anecdotal evidence prompted him to schedule the hearing on radicalization in U.S. prisons. He responded that law enforcement officials had informed him that some radical Muslim chaplains were coercing prison inmates. He added,

Virtually any prison official you talk to — in this case we had the officials there . . . describing how vital it is that we stop this radicalization. Part of the problem is that there is no way of vetting —



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there is really [no] systematic way [of] vetting who Muslim chaplains are going to be.

King stressed that moderate Islam has been a guiding force in prisoner rehabilitation over the years, despite the radical elements.

“Many young men — especially African-American men — have turned their lives around by being converted to Islam,” he said. “So it’s not the conversion to Islam, it’s the radical type of Islam that is being carried out.”

The hearings were characterized by moments of intense debate between King and Democratic members of the committee, who raised their usual cries of “Islamophobia.” [Bert Useem](#), a professor of sociology at Purdue University in Indiana, testified that only a few cases of terrorism had actually involved prison radicalization. Citing evidence from academic studies, Useem said that in only 12 instances since September 11 had there been “some evidence for radicalization behind bars.” He concluded: “Muslim American terrorists are not especially likely to emerge from our prisons.”

Democrats used the hearings to argue for wholesale prison reform rather than a narrow focus on American Muslims. Laura Richardson (D-Calif.) denounced the entire series of hearings as “racist and discriminatory,” and accused King of fomenting “hatred.”

Recent events and sociological analyses of Islamic radicalization in prison, however, refute the Democrat perspective and indicate that, in fact, radical Muslim chaplains capitalize on the alienation, rage, disaffectedness, and resentment found among American prisoners, just as sociological research has found that cult recruitment and initiation into potentially dangerous hate groups is inversely proportional to factors such as level of education, social status, and law-abiding tendencies.

Primary targets of Islamic proselytism in American prisons include African American males, who are instructed in the writings of Louis Farrakhan and Malcolm X, whose writings exploit disaffected prisoners by associating America’s Christian heritage with prisoner hatred for law enforcement. A primary example of this phenomenon occurred in 2005, when a group of prison converts to Islam calling itself Jam’iyyat Ul-Islam Is-Saheech (JIS), plotted to strike U.S. military facilities and synagogues in the Los Angeles region. The leader of the group — Kevin Lamar James, imprisoned for robbery — was indicted in 2006 on conspiracy to wage war against the United States through terrorism. Kevin Smith, former federal prosecutor in California, called it a “seditious conspiracy” hatched inside California’s prison system, while Patrick Dunleavy, a retired official in the New York State Department of Correctional Services, commented that radical Muslims have been trying to convert U.S. inmates to their cause for decades. “Despite appearances, prison walls are porous,” he said. “Individuals and groups that subscribe to radical Islamic ideology have made sustained efforts to target inmates for indoctrination.”

King’s hearings are not without precedent; in 2006, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee held hearings on the Islamization of American prisons. Forensic psychiatrist [Gregory Saathoff](#) noted that on 9/11, as many as a third of federal inmates praised the attacks, and their cheers could be heard in cellblock after cellblock, indicative of both Islamic influence and a culture conducive to radicalization. [Douglas Hagmann](#), Director of the Northeast Intelligence Network, noted:

Most recent statistics available show that one out of three African-American inmates in U.S. prisons convert to Islam while incarcerated. The type of Islam to which they convert teaches the same ideology as the 9/11 hijackers, which is the “Wahhabi” or “Salafi” form of Islam that originated in and is continually being exported from Saudi Arabia. The high rate of conversion of



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inmates to Islam, and specifically the Wahhabi brand of Islam is no accident. The lack of oversight of teaching materials brought in to prisons to facilitate their conversion is no accident. The influx of Wahhabi chaplains into our prison system and military is no accident. The entire process is by design, and consists of a sophisticated combination of personnel placement, funding, and an active support structure of numerous interrelated entities and individuals.

Other examples include widespread dissemination among prisoners of literature from the Al-Huda Mosque in Atlanta, which admonishes convicts that “violence is a justified human response of oppressed people, such as in Palestine” [sic], and the disturbing case of Imam [Warith Deen Umar](#), a Nation of Islam leader who was employed by the New York State Department of Corrections for over 20 years as head of Muslim chaplaincies, and who expressed support for the 9/11 attacks in a *Wall Street Journal* interview.

[According to Fox News:](#)

Rep. King’s office said that the next hearing will be held in late July and will focus on reports of Americans joining al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, a Yemen-based offshoot of al Qaeda that has been linked to attempted attacks on U.S. targets, including the foiled Christmas 2009 bombing of an airliner over Detroit, and explosives-laden parcels found on cargo flights last year.



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