



NEWS

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American Muslims show support for NYPD counter-terrorism programs

***American Islamic Leadership Coalition gathers at One Police Plaza to stand with NYPD
in its efforts to counter Muslim radicalization***

NEW YORK (March 5, 2012) – Representatives of over 20 Muslim organizations and activists affiliated with the American Islamic Leadership Coalition (AIRC) will gather on Monday, March 5, 2012 at One Police Plaza in New York City to demonstrate their support of the New York City Police Department (NYPD). The event starts at 10:00 AM EST and will be joined by Congressman Peter King (R-NY), Chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security.

Since the 2007 release of its Intelligence Division's landmark report, "*Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat*," the NYPD has come under a systematic and coordinated assault by highly-politicized Islamist organizations and their enablers, intent on dismantling the NYPD's successful counter-terrorism and counter-radicalization programs. These groups would prefer to see American Muslims shackled to a mindset of victimization, and thus alienated from American society at large, rather than confront the very real issues we face in our communities, including the threat of extremist ideology.

It is important to note that published NYPD documents clearly and appropriately distinguish between the religion of Islam, and the highly politicized ideology of hatred, supremacy and violence characteristic of political Islam (i.e., "Islamism"), and especially the subset thereof known as "jihadi Salafism." Significantly, since the attacks of 9/11, the NYPD has displayed far greater courage in acknowledging and addressing the ideological factors that cause radicalization among Muslims, than have the majority of federal agencies explicitly tasked with defending our nation and its people.

The AIRC deplores the widespread tendency of government officials, journalists, academicians and activists to assume that Islamist organizations historically linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, Jamaat-e-Islami, Wahhabism and Salafism represent mainstream American Muslims or our concerns.

The American Islamic Leadership Coalition recognizes and regrets the widespread fear of Islam and Muslims that has arisen in recent years in North America and Europe. However, we ascribe this rise of anti-Islam and anti-Muslim attitudes *primarily* to the actions of Muslims themselves (i.e., Islamists), whose efforts to establish an Islamic caliphate, an Islamic state, and/or to impose an antiquated and falsely-divinized human understanding of Islamic law upon others by force, dominate our daily headlines, and inevitably generate a strong sense of disgust—and visceral mistrust—among many of our fellow citizens.

Any and all efforts to conceal the Islamist agenda, or render its discussion beyond the pale of acceptable discourse—by branding such talk as "Islamophobia" or "hate speech"—threatens not only our common freedom and security, but the very future of Islam itself. For the Islamists' prime goal is the silencing of Muslim

opposition, and of any voice in the Muslim world that would challenge their monolithic, sterile and shallow understanding of Islam, which lacks the spirituality that enables religion to serve as a true path to God.

A campaign of vilification waged by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and its allies against the NYPD has reached new heights over the past six weeks, with no less than eight separate stories having appeared in the *New York Times* from January 24 – February 15, 2012, including an editorial from its editorial board and a page one feature, which concern the screening of a film entitled *The Third Jihad* to some 1,400 NYPD officers while they waited for a training program.

In light of the swirling controversy over the New York Police Department's counter-terrorism and counter-radicalization practices, we feel it is our civic, moral and religious duty to publicly address a number of issues raised by this controversy.

We have viewed *The Third Jihad*, and regard the information presented therein to be both factually accurate, and important for our fellow Muslim and non-Muslim citizens to understand, debate and address. *The Third Jihad* is narrated by Dr. Zuhdi Jasser, an AILC founding member, and a devout Muslim, physician and former Lieutenant Commander in the United States Navy. At the very outset of the film Dr. Jasser states, "*This is not a film about Islam. It is about the threat of 'radical' Islam. Only a small percentage of the world's 1.3 billion Muslims are radical.*"

The Third Jihad explicitly distinguishes between the religion of Islam, and the highly politicized ideology of religious hatred, supremacy and violence characteristic of Islamism. While the film does not examine the pluralistic, tolerant and spiritual traditions of Islam that lie at the heart of our own understanding thereof, this does not imply that the film is inaccurate in its depiction of what it specifically terms "*radical Islam*," as exemplified by movements such as al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Wahhabism (aka "Salafism") and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Notwithstanding Islamist claims to the contrary, we believe there is nothing inappropriate about the NYPD or other security agencies using the film *The Third Jihad* to help their staff understand and recognize the ideology that underlies and animates Islamist terrorism.

In recent weeks, other media outlets have targeted the NYPD for its community policing, and its monitoring efforts on college campuses, alleging that these constitute religious discrimination and profiling.

The AILC affirms that all inhabitants of the United States are entitled to equal protection under the law, regardless of race, ethnicity and religion. However, there is a major distinction between alleged religious profiling and sound law enforcement. As Mayor Bloomberg stated recently:

"We cannot repeat the mistakes we made after the 1993 bombing and slack in our vigilance...Reacting after the fact is not enough...We do not target individuals based on race or religion...We follow all possible leads wherever they take us."

The issue at hand is not "improper surveillance." Rather, it is the responsibility of the NYPD to know the communities it must serve and protect, and to anticipate any terrorist threats thereto, including those that arise from the ideological indoctrination of Muslims with a "jihadi-Salafi" mindset. In regard to the legality of the NYPD's activities, we note that according to the modified Handschu guidelines, "[f]or the purpose of protecting or preventing terrorist activities, NYPD is authorized to visit any place and attend any event that is open to the public, on the same terms and conditions as members of the public generally."

To our knowledge, no NYPD counter-terrorism cases have given rise to departmental abuses of power. Nor have any of the scurrilous attacks directed against the NYPD cited specific legal improprieties known to have occurred. We find it particularly disturbing that while seeking to undermine public confidence in the NYPD through

innuendo—and issuing calls for “oversight,” “corrective training” and “participation” by the “Muslim community” (i.e., Islamists!) in all counter-terrorist programs initiated by the NYPD—none of these reports have cited a single case in which the NYPD has been admonished by executive or judicial authorities for the tactics it employs to prevent terrorist attacks.

Unlike those who dream of establishing an Islamic state or caliphate, members of the AILC are dedicated to the *separation* of state and religion and the defense of our constitution, which guarantees equality before the law and the right of all individuals to worship as they see fit.

Thus, we come to New York City as a coalition, to proclaim that American Muslims are not monolithic, and that a broad spectrum of Muslims support the courageous work of the NYPD to defend this city, and our nation, from attack.

About the American Islamic Leadership Coalition (AILC)

The American Islamic Leadership Coalition (AILC) is a diverse coalition of liberty-minded, North American Muslim leaders and organizations. AILC’s mission advocates for defending the US Constitution, upholding religious pluralism, protecting American security and cherishing genuine diversity in the faith and practice of Islam. AILC provides a stark alternative to the Islamist organizations that claim to speak for what are diverse American Muslim communities. For more information on AILC, please visit our website at <http://www.americanislamicleadership.org/>.

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