

RACIAL PROFILING IS WRONG, SOMETIMES

The NYT has a long article revealing that TSA officers in Boston were profiling people of color as part of its behavior detection program.

In interviews and internal complaints, officers from the Transportation Security Administration's "behavior detection" program at Logan International Airport in Boston asserted that passengers who fit certain profiles – Hispanics traveling to Miami, for instance, or blacks wearing baseball caps backward – are much more likely to be stopped, searched and questioned for "suspicious" behavior.

"They just pull aside anyone who they don't like the way they look – if they are black and have expensive clothes or jewelry, or if they are Hispanic," said one white officer, who along with four others spoke with The New York Times on the condition of anonymity.

It's an important article that deserves attention, particularly given the White House's practice of refusing to let citizens use the White House's own accountability mechanisms to complain about the TSA, as happened Friday when it took down its petition process just before the petition attained the signatures that would have elicited a White House response.

But the article dissolves into hilarity around about paragraphs 35 and 36, when the article quotes a noted civil libertarian assailing racial profiling.

Representative Peter T. King, a New York Republican who has pushed for more aggressive counterterrorism measures, said he was troubled by the reports of profiling in Boston.

“If it is going on, it is wrong and can’t be defended,” Mr. King said.

Peter King?!?! The NYT quotes Peter King worrying about racial profiling without noting that with King’s rabid support the NYPD has turned the Gray Lady’s own city in to the poster child for illegal racial profiling? Without noting that King has turned the House Homeland Security Committee into an instrument of racial profiling? C’mon, NYT, you can’t be unaware that these comments, from King, are not credible!

Or maybe they are. After all, since Wade Page’s attack on a Sikh temple brought increased focus on the threat represented by white supremacists, King has faced calls to hold hearings on the radicalization of white people, just like he held a never-ending series of hearings on the radicalization of Muslims. Maybe King has thought about how inappropriate it would be to suggest all white people—or even all white supremacists—might be terrorists. Maybe King has developed a new found hatred of racial profiling now that there’s good reason white people might be targeted.

But you’d think the NYT would want to explain why a local Congressman’s statements conflict so dramatically with his past actions.