

# WHITEWATER RAFTING? NEW ORLEANS FILM FESTIVALS? WHAT BOONDOGGLES WILL NYPD'S COPS GO ON NEXT?

Remember that NYPD officer who scammed a whitewater rafting trip by claiming he needed to count how many times a day some college students prayed while on vacation? He wasn't the only one scamming such vacations. As the AP reports in its latest installment on the CIA-on-the-Hudson, in precisely the same period, another NYPD officer was scamming a trip to New Orleans to document the collaboration of anti-globalization, racial profiling, labor, and immigration activists.

If possible, the tie between the NOLA meeting and NYC was even more remote than that between whitewater rafting Muslim students and the city. The mentions of NYC in the report include the addresses of local chapters of groups represented at the meeting. And it uses a game of connections—ultimately tied to demonstrations against the Sean Bell killing by NYPD cops or to May Day celebrations (both, of course, completely protected speech)—to tie those groups back to NYC.

Activists from the Jena Coalition and Critical Resistance were in attendance and presented several documentaries based on the alleged racial profiling and the alleged injustices that people of color faced across the country by their respective police departments. The New York Chapter of the Critical Resistance is located at 976 Longwood Ave Bronx, NY.

Critical Resistance was formerly located

on Atlantic Ave near Clinton Ave (confines of the 77 Pct) and at the time was being lead by Ashanti Alston (former Black Panther and Animal Rights Activist). The group hosted events prior to the 2004 Republican National Convention and was raided by the NYPD for selling alcohol to minors.

Members from the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement NYC Chapter along with Critical Resistance and members of the Sean Bell family will attend the outcome of the Sean Bell case as well as a demonstration scheduled for Friday April 25, 2008. The demonstration will be held at the Queens DA's office located at 125-01 Queens Boulevard to await the judge's verdict.

And, as it turns out, the cop reporting his boondoggle trip to NOLA actually misrepresented what he was spying on.

In April 2008, an undercover NYPD officer traveled to New Orleans to attend the People's Summit, a gathering of liberal groups organized around their shared opposition to U.S. economic policy and the effect of trade agreements between the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

When the undercover effort was summarized for supervisors, it identified groups opposed to U.S. immigration policy, labor laws and racial profiling. Two activists – Jordan Flaherty, a journalist, and Marisa Franco, a labor organizer for housekeepers and nannies – were mentioned by name in one of the police intelligence reports obtained by the AP.

[snip]

[Flaherty] said the event described by police actually was a film festival in

New Orleans that same week, suggesting that the undercover officer's duties were more widespread than described in the report.

Flaherty said he recalls introducing a film about Palestinians but spoke only briefly and does not understand why that landed him a reference in police files.

And that's it. That's all it took the NYPD to be conned into paying a cop's trip to NOLA for a film festival attended by a bunch of people supporting perfectly legal political issues.

After paying for whitewater rafting and film festival trips, I wonder what kind of swank vacations the NYPD has paid for since?

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## THE NYPD'S SURVEILLANCE OF MUSLIMS AND OCCUPY WALL STREET CONVERGES

I started my morning reading with this AP Q&A on the significance of their series on the NYPD's spying on Muslims. There are several things missing: why does the NYPD profile only businesses they believe to be owned by Muslims, and not the American chains at which recent immigrants also congregate? Why doesn't the Q&A discuss how the NYPD-on-the-Hudson got close to, but missed the two most significant plots of recent years; what does that say about the efficacy of all this spying? And why doesn't the Q&A discuss the many informants the NYPD has deployed?

That said, the AP does get to the core reason why the NYPD's program abuses the First Amendment:

Bloomberg and his aides have not addressed, however, why police kept intelligence files on innocuous mosque sermons and plans for peaceful protests. They've not explained why police noted which restaurants served "devout" Muslims, why police maintained lists of Muslims who changed their names or why innocent people attending Friday prayer services were photographed and videotaped.

Those activities, many Muslims said, make them feel like they're under scrutiny just because of their religion.

After reading that Q&A, I then read this NYT article, talking about how the NYPD's intelligence division—the CIA-on-the-Hudson again—has preemptively arrested some Occupy Wall Street protestors before they engaged in protest.

On Nov. 17, Kira Moyer-Sims was near the Manhattan Bridge, buying coffee while three friends waited nearby in a car. More than a dozen blocks away, protesters gathered for an Occupy Wall Street "day of action," which organizers had described as an attempt to block the streets around the New York Stock Exchange.

Then, Ms. Moyer-Sims said, about 30 police officers surrounded her and the people in the car.

All four were arrested, said Vik Pawar, a lawyer for Ms. Moyer-Sims and two of the others, and taken to a police facility in the East Village. He said officers strip-searched them and ignored their requests for a lawyer.

These are the same tactics—or worse—as used when the NYPD targeted Muslims planning a peaceful protest of cartoons deemed blasphemous. But most troubling is the last anecdote the NYT reports (which the NYT might have known to contextualize if they had been reporting on the NYPD spying on Muslims). In one case, they NYPD **and the FBI** are targeting an Occupy activist who, as someone who appears to have changed his name from his birth name, would have been targeted closely under the NYPD program. And they appear to be insinuating a tie with Islamic terrorism.

Mark Adams, a 32-year-old engineer from Virginia, said he was arrested in November at an Occupy Wall Street protest in Midtown and was questioned by a police detective and an agent from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who asked about his involvement with Occupy Wall Street, **requested his e-mail address and inquired whether he had ever been to Yemen or met anyone connected to Al Qaeda.**

Mr. Adams, a naturalized United States citizen who was **born in Pakistan**, said he was arrested during another protest in January and questioned by intelligence division detectives. In that instance, he said, the detectives asked him about specific names and addresses, asked about his work history, education and family, and **questioned him about a trip he had made to Ireland.**

Mr. Adams said he was disturbed that anyone would consider him a threat because of his ethnicity or political views. “It’s scary,” he said. [my emphasis]

As the AP reported last October, the NYPD conducts extensive checks and keeps records on those within the city who change their names from Arabic or Muslim-sounding names to something Americanized.

The NYPD monitors everyone in the city who changes his or her name, according to internal police documents and interviews. For those whose names sound Arabic or might be from Muslim countries, police run comprehensive background checks that include reviewing travel records, criminal histories, business licenses and immigration documents. All this is recorded in police databases for supervisors, who review the names and select a handful of people for police to visit.

[snip]

David Cohen, the NYPD's intelligence chief, worried that would-be terrorists could use their new names to lie low in New York, current and former officials recalled. Reviewing name changes was intended to identify people who either Americanized their names or took Arabic names for the first time, said the officials, who insisted on anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the program.

NYPD spokesman Paul Browne did not respond to messages left over two days asking about the legal justification for the program and whether it had identified any terrorists.

The goal was to find a way to spot terrorists like Daood Gilani and Carlos Bledsoe before they attacked.

I assume Mark Adams is not the name Adams was given when he was born in Pakistan. And so because he apparently did something that David Headley also did—change his name from his Pakistani birth name to something more Anglo—he appears to have come under scrutiny for potential terrorist ties. Because he changed his name, it appears, he got asked whether he ever went to Yemen and what he was doing on a trip to

Ireland.

I've been predicting this since the moment NYPD Counterterrorism officer Tony Bologna pepper sprayed innocent women.

But the NYPD-FBI treatment of Mark Adams is troubling for another reason. Note they asked for his email address. Given the absurdly low standards under the PATRIOT Act, which requires only that information be "relevant to" a terrorism investigation, the FBI would presumably be able to get Adams' email contacts and financial information using National Security Letters and get other information (such as geolocation under the secret PATRIOT program) using Section 215 of the PATRIOT Act.

In other words, the NYPD, apparently using their theories about name changes as a potential marker for terrorism, have found their nexus that opens up a whole set of tools under the PATRIOT Act.

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## NYPD MAKES WORK BUT NOT KNOWLEDGE

When I read the Judy Miller/Richard Clarke op-ed defending Ray Kelly (this is Judy's second go-around defending Kelly, btw), I realized something about the NYPD CIA-on-the-Hudson program. They write,

Yet NYPD efforts to engage with and selectively surveil at-risk populations are not only legal but essential. In 2002, Mr. Kelly decided that a **"broad base of knowledge"** about who lives in the New York area was crucial to preventing terrorism. "It was precisely our **failure to understand** the context in 1993"—after the first World Trade Center bombing—"that left us vulnerable in

2001," he said. So police tried to determine "how individuals seeking to do harm might communicate or conceal themselves. Where might they go to find resources or evade the law?" Such **"geographically-based knowledge"** saved "precious time in stopping fast-moving plots," he said last weekend. [my emphasis]

Ray Kelly and his defenders claim that the process of mapping out all the Muslim communities in the NYC area produces "knowledge."

But after reading the two latest sets of documents released by the AP: mapping the Syrian and Egyptian communities, it became clear that this is less about knowledge and more about make work. The Egyptian packet, in particular, reads more like the kind of crappy composition papers you see from college freshmen learning how to write and think critically—complete with significant portions just cut and pasted from online sites (in this case, the NYC and CIA sites). How much "knowledge" did an officer gain by copying the NYPD's own website to include this information in a report on Egyptians in the 68th precinct? (Note, the NYPD appears to have taken this tour guide information down in 2006 after this particular report was completed.)

The **68th Precinct** provides police service to the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights and Fort Hamilton. These middle-class neighborhoods are culturally and ethnically diverse. Over recent years there has been a significant influx of people of Middle-Eastern and Asian descent into the area. One and two family homes dominate the landscape; however, there are also many four and six story apartment houses throughout the precinct. Residents and visitors enjoy the recreational amenities afforded by the area's seven major

parks, two theaters, golf course and spectacular waterfront along "The Narrows" between Brooklyn and Staten Island. Independent merchants, as well as some chain stores, provide for ample retail shopping and other services along Third, Fifth, Eleventh and Thirteenth Avenues as well Fort Hamilton Parkway and 86th Street. Over one hundred restaurants, bars and nightclubs provide for a vibrant nightlife. Fort Hamilton is the only active duty military installation in New York City.


Does repeating the NYPD's own assessment that The Narrows is a spectacular waterfront really help find terrorists?

Then there's the sheer repetition of it, which becomes apparent if you compare the Moroccan mapping report to the Egyptian and Syrian one. Between them the reports many of the same sites, including at least the following.


- Nassem meat market
- Egyptian coffee shop
- Eastern Nights Cafe
- Bay Ridge International Cafe
- Egyptian Cafe
- Ramalla Coffee Shop
- Tutankhamun

Of what value is it for the NYPD has paid officers to go twice in the same year to the same businesses to do these completely new profiles?

**Egyptian Cafe, Moroccan Version, undated (other reports in same packet dated December 19, 2006 and April 13, 2007)**

Location Name:	Egyptian Cafe (Sharm el Aniel Cafe)	
Location Type:	Cafe	
Ethnicity:	Egyptian	
Address:	25-62 Steinway Street	
City:	QX 11285	
State:	New York	
Telephone:	718-721-0039	
Zip Code:	11103	
Product:	114	
<b>Information of Note:</b> A medium sized cafe that serves hookahs, hot tea and soft drinks. Owned and operated by two males of Egyptian descent. The restaurant is in close proximity to the Al-Ismat Mosque located at 24-38 Steinway Street. The cafe has a back yard which is usually occupied by underage smokers. This location has approximately 18 tables and can hold up to 70 customers. Observed as ATM by the entrance.		

## Egyptian Cafe, Egyptian Version, report dated July 7, 2006



➤ **Egyptian Cafe:** 25-62 Steinway Street

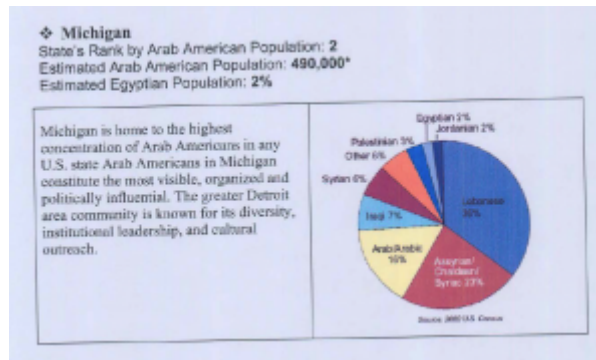
- **Business:** Traditional Arabic cafe.
- **Owner:** Egyptian.
- **Information of note:** Owned by an Egyptian male. Flyers for local community events are posted inside. Observed the purchase of un-taxed cigarettes with as well as the sale of electronics from credit card fraud.
- **Political and Inflammatory Rhetoric.**
- **Other Ethnic Groups:** Moroccans, Palestinians and Lebanese.

Yet none of this is contextualized with the larger neighborhood, a discussion of the known terrorist sympathies that might exist there.

Without that context, you don't get knowledge.

And, finally, like a freshman comp paper trying to fluff the content to reach some page length, this report includes totally irrelevant information.

Why should a report on Egyptians include a review of MI's Arabic population when—as the report notes—few of MI's Arabs are Egyptian (though the data from which the officer worked at least now states that, “Since 1990, significant increases appear in the number of Michiganders who are of Jordanian and Egyptian descent.”



Man, if Ray Kelly is sending his spooks to my state, I'm gonna send the Spartans out after him.

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## WHY DOESN'T THE FBI FOLLOW SAC MICHAEL WARD'S "SPECIFIC ARTICULABLE BASIS" STANDARD?

The Special Agent in Charge of the Newark FBI, Michael Ward, laid into the NYPD's CIA-on-the-Hudson program for its spying on New Jersey's Muslims. He raised several legitimate gripes: that the NYPD was picking and choosing the information it shared, that the NYPD wasn't focused on centers of terrorism, that it has created distrust between the Muslim community and law enforcement.

But there is one complaint that Ward should direct closer to home: that law enforcement officers have a specific articulable basis for mapping out the location of ethnicities. (Ward's comments in this start after 7:00—note what he says on video is slightly different from what he appears to have said later to the NJ Star-Ledger

journalist.)

[The public needs to know] you're following leads that are warranted and that you're not out chasing anything but you have a—there's a specific law enforcement reason behind what you're doing, and that you use the least intrusive means possible, when available.

[snip]

It's also important that [the public] know that Joint Terrorism Task Force, the FBI, and law enforcement in New Jersey in general, that we take the guidelines which we're supposed to follow very very seriously.

Mind you, I think there **should** be an articulable basis to map out locations of specific ethnicities.

But just as the NYPD doesn't agree, neither does the FBI. In fact, as the ACLU's FOIA is showing, the FBI is doing precisely the same kind of demographic mapping around the country as the NYPD is doing in NYC with their Domain Assessment program.

While the office is dawdling over releasing the unredacted copies, here's the plan the FBI put into place for mapping out Muslims in Detroit, just as the NYPD did in NYC.

There are more than forty groups designated as terrorist organizations by the US State Department. Many of these groups originate in the Middle-East and Southeast Asia. Many of these groups also use an extreme and violent interpretation of the Muslim faith as justification for their activities. Because Michigan has large Middle-Eastern and Muslim population, it is prime territory for attempted radicalization and recruitment by these

terrorist groups. Additionally, Sunni terrorist groups always pose a threat of attack on U.S. soil since it is the stated purpose of many of these groups. The Detroit Division Domain Team seeks to open a Type IV Domain Assessment for the purpose of collecting information and evaluating the threat posed by international terrorist groups conducting recruitment, radicalization, fund-raising, or even violent terrorist acts within the state of Michigan.

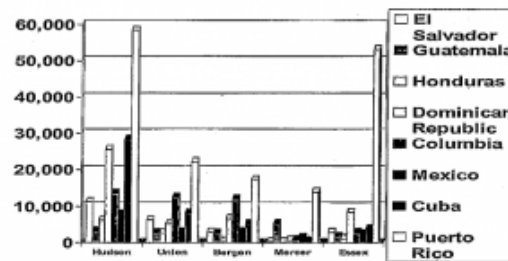
And here's how Ward's own office used census data to map out the Latino population in New Jersey as part of their efforts to fight the MS-13 gang (this was done in 2008, before Ward got appointed to Newark, but while Chris Christie was still US Attorney).

MS-13 is comprised of members from Central American countries, primarily El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. According to the 2000 Census, there are 67,320 individuals from these countries living in New Jersey. [redacted] from these countries during the time period of January, 2008 to July 2008. An analysis of Hispanic populations and [redacted] helps the Domain Team assess where [redacted] The Domain Team assesses [redacted] The Domain Team notes that New Jersey has the fifth largest Central American population in the United States. [redacted]

[snip]

According to the 2000 Census, the largest Hispanic communities in New Jersey are Puerto Rico with 366,788, the Dominican Republic with 91,316, Columbia with 69,754, Mexico with 67,667, and Cuba with 55,241. In addition tthheerree are an estimated 1,265,000 African Americans living in New Jersey from which [redacted]

(U//LES) The following chart shows New Jersey's top five Hispanic populated counties.



The Domain Assessment of NJ's Latino population includes 4 maps which appear to be just like the ones the NYPD did of Muslim populations, though they are entirely redacted.

So Ward can complain that the NYPD isn't sharing information. He can complain that the NYPD has spooked the Muslim community from cooperating with the FBI. He can gripe that the NYPD hasn't honed in on the areas at risk for terrorism.

But if Newark's Muslims are suspicious because people are conducting widescale mapping of communities, they have reason to be as suspicious of the FBI as the NYPD, because both are doing these baseless demographic mappings based on ethnicity and religion.

Update: "Surveil" taken out because it is not technically correct in FBI context.

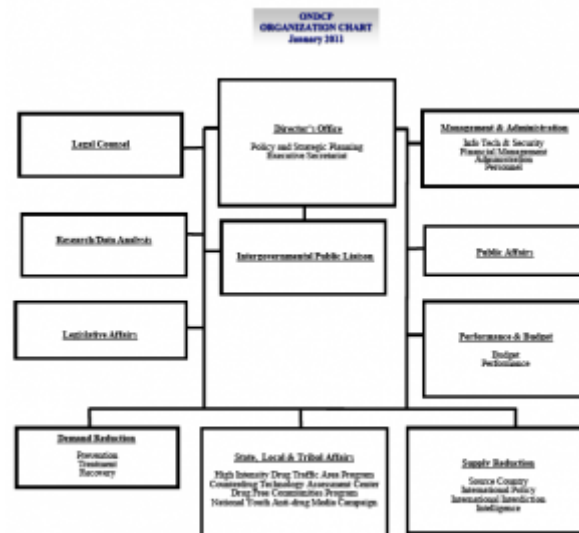
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**IF THE DRUG CZAR DOES  
NOT SUPERVISE THE  
MONEY IT DOLES OUT,  
WHO DOES?**

At the Daily Press Briefing today, Jay Carney was asked whether the White House approves of the NYPD spying on New York and New Jersey's Muslim communities.

He responded by claiming that the Office of National Drug Control Policy—the Drug Czar!—has no authority over the money.

He responded by claiming that the Office of National Drug Control Policy—the Drug Czar!—has no authority over the money.



The Office of National Drug Control Policy is a policy office that has no authority—no authority to and does not conduct, direct, manage, or supervise any law enforcement operations. The funding is provided to the H-I-D-T-A, HIDTA program, of New York and New Jersey, which then provides it to law enforcement agencies to assist in the procurement of resources like computers and other items.

[snip]

This is not an Administration program or a White House program. This is a program of the NY Police Department.

Now, there's reason to believe the response was bullshit. As the Drug Czar org chart above shows—and Deputy Drug Czar Benjamin Tucker's biography makes clear—HIDTA is solidly in the chain of command in the Drug Czar's office.

In his position, Mr. Tucker oversees ONDCP's High Intensity Drug Trafficking

**Areas (HIDTA) program** , Drug-Free Communities (DFC), National Youth-Anti-Drug Media Campaign, and Counter-Drug Technology Assessment Center (CTAC).

With 40 years of experience in the fields of law enforcement and criminal justice, Mr. Tucker is a recognized expert in community policing.

Furthermore, the Director of HIDTA, Dr. Ellen Scrivner, has her office in the Executive Office of the President.

Drug Czar Gil Kerlikowske “coordinates all aspects of Federal drug control programs” and one of those programs is HIDTA, which apparently funds spying on Muslims. And the Drug Czar’s Policy Coordination Circular—which was updated on August 3, 2011—requires that the Drug Czar review any changes to “drug policy.”

Pursuant to 21 U.S.C. §1704(b), agencies are required, except under exigent circumstances, to notify ONCDP of any proposed change in policies relating to their activities under the National Drug Control Program prior to implementation of such change.

[snip]

The Director of ONCDP reviews such proposed changes and certifies in writing whether such change is consistent with the *National Drug Control Strategy*.

In other words, Obama’s Deputy Drug Czar oversees this program, its Director works in EOP, and any changes on anything pertaining to drug policy must be approved by the Drug Czar.

That kind of micro-management inside the White House is the whole point of having a Czar rather than a congressionally-supervised agency head.

But let’s take Jay Carney’s response in good

faith for the moment. After all, the website does say that there's some local (and some Federal) oversight at the local level.

At the local level, the HIDTAs are directed and guided by Executive Boards composed of an equal number of regional Federal and non-Federal (state, local, and tribal) law enforcement leaders.

In FY2010, \$16 million was doled out under HIDTA. Yet according to Carney, the people doling out that money do not "conduct, direct, manage, or supervise" the grants. Poof! The Drug Czar is helpless to do anything about that money once it moves out of EOP.

One more point. Where Carney says this money goes to computers (which is what the AP said, in part)? The Drug Czar website says that HIDTA does the following:

- Facilitating cooperation among Federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies **to share information** and implement coordinated enforcement activities;
- **Enhancing law enforcement intelligence sharing** among Federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies;
- **Providing reliable law enforcement intelligence to law enforcement agencies** to facilitate the design of effective enforcement strategies and operations; and
- Supporting coordinated law

enforcement strategies that make the most of available resources to reduce the supply of illegal drugs in designated areas of the United States and in the Nation as a whole. [my emphasis]

That is, there sure appears to be a significant intelligence component to this purportedly oversight-free doling of funds.

Frankly, there's no right answer here. Jay Carney would like us to believe the White House Drug Czar, a position enacted precisely to concentrate oversight and control in the White House, operates programs over which it exercises no oversight.

The alternative is that the White House (though perhaps the Bush White House) approved and funded some of the CIA-on-the-Hudson.

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## THE GIRLS' SCHOOL THAT TERRIFIES RAY KELLY

Al Muslimaat Academy



This is the Al Muslimaat Academy, a school for fifth through

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twelfth grade girls certified by New Jersey's Department of Education. It is one of the many locations in Newark spied on by Ray Kelly's spies in 2007.

They considered it a "Madrassah."

They even mapped it out, along with a different school teaching first through fourth graders. I guess in case they needed to find a bunch of Muslim kids quickly.

Today's installment of the AP's CIA-on-the-Hudson series takes us out of the city altogether, to Newark, where the NYPD mapped out the Muslim community without even informing with Cory Booker, Newark's Mayor, first.



According to the report, the operation was carried out in collaboration with the Newark Police Department, which at the time was run by a former high-ranking NYPD official. But Newark's mayor, Cory Booker, said he never authorized the spying and was never told about it.

"Wow," he said as the AP laid out the details of the report. "This raises a number of concerns. It's just very, very sobering."

Booker says he will investigate.

After the AP approached Booker, he said the mayor's office had launched an investigation.  
"We're going to get to the bottom of this," he said.

Now, the NYPD might be forgiven for looking for terrorists in Newark. After all, in the summer of 2001, the 9/11 hijackers used Newark as a staging ground to prepare for their attack.

But they didn't, as far as we know, frequent mosques at all. They spent time in cheap motels and cheap restaurants, gyms, and cybercafes. They had the operational security to do most of these things in separate places, heading to Patterson and Wayne.

They certainly didn't plot out 9/11 in a girls' school.

All of which shows, yet again, how futile this whole program is and was. Futile, that is, if you're actually trying to stop terrorism. It's perfect if you want to cow members of an entire faith by criminalizing their schools, butchers, and places of worship.

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## "TERROR" BY SCARE QUOTE

Ten invented or scare quotes. That's what the NY Post employs in an effort to discredit the AP's latest report on the CIA-on-the-Hudson, this time describing surveillance of Muslim college students extending across the Northeast:

"civil rights"

"gotcha"

"workplace violence"

"workplace violence"

"civil rights"

"racist"

"racist"

"students"

"oppressed minority"

"suspect pool"

The concepts of civil rights, racism, oppressed minorities, and suspect pools are bracketed, presumably marking them as facetious or illegitimate concepts.

The Pentagon, currently seeking the death penalty for Nidal Hasan's attack on Fort Hood, is accused of treating the attack as "workplace violence."

The 9/11 hijackers, who did in fact enroll in flight schools to learn how to turn passenger jets into missiles, are accused of just posing as "students," presumably in an effort to suggest that young adult Muslims studying at colleges ranging from Yale to Laguardia Community College who were surveilled by the NYPD must also be posing too.

And it's not just by using quotation marks that the Post invents its own reality.

It suggests the NYPD has stopped "countless" terrorist attacks, when the number of total attacks in the last decade was fewer than 20, and the two most important—Faisal Shahzad and Najibullah Zazi—the NYPD missed.

Closely watching wannabe jihadis not only at home but across the country and around the world, the NYPD has foiled countless terror operations,

It supports the claim that the targets of surveillance here are wannabe jihadis by suggesting that Mike Bloomberg and Ray Kelly are simply not telling the public the evidence

justifying their profiling of innocent Muslims.

The AP story also breathlessly notes that “the latest documents mention no wrongdoing by any students,” even though “Kelly and Mayor Bloomberg repeatedly have said that the police only follow legitimate leads about suspected criminal activity.”

Was the AP born yesterday?

There’s always a gap between what public officials say to the “gotcha” media and what they actually must do – especially when it comes to terrorism. If officials could candidly talk about the daily reports they get about possible lethal jihadist activity, the country would be in a state of permanent panic.

Never mind that the AP has published at least two documents showing reports sent directly to Kelly reviewing surveillance that admits no underlying leads. The Post is willing to assert, presumably having seen less raw data than the AP, that there must be more terrorism there, terrorism worthy of permanent panic if only we knew.

The Post goes further, portraying the 9/11 hijackers as praying murderers.

On 9/11, America was shot in the back by 19 devout, praying Muslims,

I guess they were praying from the bars and strip joints they were frequenting in the months before the attack, then, because that’s how they spent their time.

In the Post’s scare quote world, tactics that have created a string of aspirational terrorists (but missed the real terrorists backed by al Qaeda) confirms a fiction that all devout Muslims are wannabe terrorists.

Or should I say, “terrorists”?

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# THE NYPD PROFILES EVERYONE'S FAVORITE TERRORIST GROUP, MEK

As I noted yesterday, the latest installment of Goldman and Apuzzo's exposure of the CIA-on-the-Hudson relies on a 2006 document laying out plans to profile Iranians and Shiites (and Palestinians) in anticipation of heightened US-Iranian conflict.

New York City has always been a prime target for terrorist groups and as the possibility of military action taken against Iran grows stronger, so does the danger of the City being attacked by agents of the Iranian government or its sympathizers.

Based on that premise, they lay out a bunch of groups to profile.

Among those, however, is the MEK, the Iranian opposition group designated as a foreign terrorist organization. Here's what the document has to say about them:

Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MEK), designated by the US Department of State as a terrorist group, has presence in NYC. MEK is strongly opposed to the current Iranian administration and it is not believe [sic] not to pose a threat of retaliation should the US engage Iran military. The group's actions here are typified by several incidents where suspected MEK members disrupted speeches and protested against Iranian officials visiting and/or present in US.

Now, at one level, the MEK actually is a

designated terrorist organization, regardless of how sensible that designation remains. So it makes sense to see them profiled by the NYPD. Though it is telling by itself that 5 years into the CIA-on-the-Hudson program, they apparently hadn't been, yet. That is, the NYPD doesn't appear to have been pursuing terrorist organizations in general. (Indeed, it did not include Colombians—who might be of interest because of terrorist organizations FARC and AUC—among its ancestries of interest.)

But in spite of the fact that according to the NYPD, the MEK doesn't pose a threat, it does appear to have included the MEK in their Iranian profiling. Among its recommended actions, it suggests,

- Expand and focus intelligence collection at locations affiliated with the MEK.
- Identify leads with subjects or locations having ties to Hamas, Hezbollah, PIJ, MEK, or the Alavi Foundation.

An excellent use of taxpayer dollars!

Granted, this document was written in 2006, so the NYPD's profiling priorities may have been improved in the interim six years. But I wonder. When such prominent New Yorkers as Michael Mukasey and Rudy Giuliani joined the MEK speaking tour (technically committing material support for terrorism under Holder v. HLP) did the NYPD start collecting intelligence on them, too?

In any case, the NYPD's belated decision to profile a designated terrorist organization at the time when they were deemed not to pose a threat sure embodies the kind of idiotic decisions that appear to lie behind the CIA-on-the-Hudson's intelligence program.

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# TARGET OF NEW YEAR'S DAY FIREBOMBING ALSO TARGET OF NYPD INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION

The latest Goldman and Apuzzo report on the CIA-on-the-Hudson provides proof that Ray Kelly and Mike Bloomberg's claims that religious institutions are not profiled are false.

The New York Police Department recommended increasing surveillance of thousands of Shiite Muslims and their mosques, based solely on their religion, as a way to sweep the Northeast for signs of Iranian terrorists, according to interviews and a newly obtained secret police document.

[snip]

The secret document stands in contrast to statements by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who said the NYPD never considers religion in its policing. Kelly has said police go only where investigative leads take them, but the document described no leads to justify expanded surveillance at Shiite mosques.

The 2006 intelligence document they obtained shows not just affirmative spying on Shiites as Shiites, but also a really muddled sense of the religious faiths of Iranians, Lebanese, and other Middle Eastern groups in this country.

But I'm particularly interested in one target of intelligence collection, according to the intelligence document: the Al-Khoei Islamic Center. That's the mosque Ray Lazier Lengend

firebombed on New Year's Day.

The intelligence report includes the following on the mosque:

Source reporting indicates that members of Alavi Foundation are worshipping and conducting business at the Al-Khoei Islamic Center located in Jamaica, Queens,

[snip]

Expand and focus intelligence collection at the Al-Khoei Islamic Center.

[snip]

Hassan Fares [alleged to be a Hezbollah member or sympathizer and accused of extorting money for the mosque] has been observed in attendance at the Al-Khoei Center and has close ties to Fadhel al-Sahlani, the Imam of Al-Khoei. The Iraqi-born al-Sahlani is alleged to be the highest Shi'a religious authority in North America. On January 13, 2006, al-Sahlani was quoted by media sources stating that the Holocaust "has been exaggerated," that "the numbers which have been mentioned are too much." Al-Sahlani added that the "killing of innocent Jews during the war was an injustice," but that the extent of Nazi persecution needed further examination. This was in support of statements made [sic] the Iranian President in regard to Holocaust. The Al-Khoei Center and al-Sahlani have been the subjects of law enforcement investigations by NYPD, JTTF, and the FBI. Al-Sahlani is the subject of a JTTF investigation for "attempting to depart the country with excess funds" and in late 2003, he was the subject of a lead investigation conducted by the Queens Case Team that alleged al-Sahlani was providing funds to a terrorist organization overseas. In January 2004, the case was closed as

“unfounded.”

Open source research suggests that the UK-based Al-Khoei Benevolent Foundation, of which Al-Khoei Islamic Center is part, is the largest Shi’a organization in the world. Treasury Enforcement Communication System (TECS) inquiries reveal the Al-Khoei Benevolent Foundation allegedly imported Islamic books from Lebanon into the US. In addition, according to the California-based Islamic Education Center’s (IEC) newsletter, an “Al-Khoei Center” in New York was identified as an organization where IEC members (in this case, California State prison inmates) can obtain books and other similar resources.

[The intelligence report includes an additional allegation about the UK parent organization’s potential ties to purchasing information about chemical propulsion in violation of sanctions against Iran.]

To be clear, there is much that merits investigation—and it looks like appropriate authorities have done so and in at least some of the cases, proved the allegations to be unfounded. There is much that doesn’t merit investigation, such as the provision of religious materials to prisoners.

But in this instance, the stated reason to conduct this heightened investigation of Al-Khoei (as well as other Shiite, Iranian, and Palestinian) institutions is because,

The present diplomatic conflict between the US and Iran over Iran’s nuclear proliferation has the potential to evolve into armed confrontation between the two nations.

The report, dated May 15, 2006, preceded the

Israeli attack on Lebanon by just a few months.

So maybe the NYPD claims it only profiles religious institutions if the US is drumming up war against them? And is it the NYPD's stance, then, at times of increased Iranian-US tensions (like, say, now), the Al-Khoei Islamic Center is a fair target?

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## RAY KELLY VS. MINIMAL OVERSIGHT

[youtube]xpOMlDVaXzc[/youtube]

In the AP's first report on the NYPD's CIA-on-the-Hudson, they quoted City Councilmen Peter Vallone reassuring that his private conversations with Ray Kelly were adequate oversight.

"Ray Kelly briefs me privately on certain subjects that should not be discussed in public," said City Councilman Peter Vallone. "We've discussed in person how they investigate certain groups they suspect have terrorist sympathizers or have terrorist suspects."

A month and a half of damning new revelations later, Vallone is not so sure.

Peter Vallone, the chairman of the council's Public Safety Committee, said the council doesn't have the power to subpoena the NYPD for its intelligence records. And even if it did, he said the operations are too sophisticated for city officials to effectively oversee. More oversight is likely needed, he said, perhaps from the federal government.

"That portion of the police department's work should probably be looked at by a federal monitor," he said after Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly testified Thursday at City Hall.

But Kelly—whose cops are being filmed on an increasingly frequent basis beating and pepper spraying peaceful protestors—likes it just fine with no oversight.

Kelly told council members that the department's internal accountability was rigorous and ensured that civil rights were being protected. And he said everything the department does is in line with court rules, known as the Handschu guidelines, that limit how and why police can collect intelligence before there's evidence of a crime.

"The value we place on privacy rights and other constitutional protections is part of what motivates the work of counterterrorism," he said. "It would be counterproductive in the extreme if we violated those freedoms in the course of our work to defend New York."

[snip]

"The AP stories make it hard to believe we're getting the balance right," said Brad Lander, a Brooklyn councilman.

"That's your opinion," Kelly said. "We're following the Handschu guidelines."

With regard to Kelly's racial profiling program (as opposed to the overreaction to Occupy Wall Street), it's not actually clear who, with City Council abdicating their oversight role, can perform that oversight. The AP notes that the Obama Administration and Congress aren't in a rush to exercise oversight over the CIA-on-the-Hudson either.

Which is precisely how Ray Kelly gets away with doing what he's doing.