

*Comment: Mr. Jasser appears to be a moderate or even liberal follower of Islam. Although it is refreshing to finally hear a Muslim speak of the separation of Mosque and State, I find myself wondering how accurately Mr. Jasser is representing the Koran, especially since I have so little personal understanding of the Koran's teachings. What I do know is how liberal Christians twist and turn the teachings of the Bible to suit their liberal world view. I can only assume that, humans being human, liberal Muslims may be doing the same to their holy book and traditions as do liberal Christians to theirs. Nevertheless, separation of Mosque and State should be front and center in the American Muslim culture. Unfortunately, it is not. – Webmaster*

## **An American Muslim's View -- Why Our Community Needs the King Hearings On Radical Islam**

*By Dr. M. Zuhdi Jasser*

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Representative Peter King's (R-N.Y.) decision to hold hearings on American Muslim radicalization has presented an incredible opportunity to American Muslims.

The course of radicalization over the past two years makes it exceedingly difficult for anyone to assert with a straight face that America is immune to the global Muslim radicalization problem. American Muslims must take the lead in creating solutions to the radicalization of our own. These hearings will provide the long overdue platform for us to step away from the standard denials and apologetics in order to reclaim our Muslim identity from the terrorists and redefine ourselves within the framework of the American pantheon.

The attacks of 9/11 brought the fight to our shores and woke us up to the reality of the global threat to American security and our very way of life. The attacks also redefined what it meant to be an American Muslim.

For me, the attacks led to the creation of our [American Islamic Forum for Democracy \(AIFD\)](#) and mobilization of a lifelong mission to contribute to building the future of Islam for our children through liberty and freedom and the separation of mosque and state. The biggest obstacles to that legacy for American Muslims are Islamists, domestic and foreign advocates of the platform of political Islam. It is time for our diverse Muslim communities to reclaim our faith from the control of Islamists.

Without a paradigm shift in the way we address the issues of Islamist terror and ideology, I am ever more fearful of what lies ahead for American Muslims. Radicalization and terror are but a symptom of an underlying ideological conflict between modern western liberal democracy and the false dream of the Islamic state and its instrument of shar'iah law.

Most Muslim organizations seem to have spent the past decade building the American Muslim identity on a collectivization of American Muslims portrayed as victims of American racism instead of benefactors of American freedom. They have fed into the global narrative that America is at war with Muslims and Islam. They are obligated to do that with their allegiance to the myopic platform of political Islam and the collectivization of Muslims.

American Muslim communities have suffered one of the greatest cases of identity theft in U.S. History. American Muslims are allowing their identity to be hijacked by Islamists including the radicals, the victimologists and contrarily to a growing anti-Islam movement. The sad part is that the first two are from within our own community and give credibility to the third. Congressman King's hearings may finally present the opportunity to demonstrate the ideological diversity of American Muslims.

We have seen a tremendous surge in the number of attacks from Islamist radicals on US soil. American Muslims need to view the attacks of 2009 and 2010 as just as earth shattering as 9/11. The continuum of radicalization in America is hard to miss with acts of treason by Faisal Shahzad, Mohamed Osman Mohamud, and Umar Abdulmuttalab, and the massacre at Fort Hood committed by Major Nidal Hasan.

We have also seen the breakup of terrorist cells in every corner of the United States from Los Angeles to Baltimore. American Muslim communities need to seize the opportunity that was missed with 9/11. We need to reclaim our identity and define for ourselves a continuum of liberty that is the only way to counter the separatism of political Islam that ultimately ends in radicalization.

As the contest of ideas grows in the struggle for the very souls of Muslims, the continuing acts of Muslim radicals make me fear for the future that my children will inherit. Americans are still waiting to see a palpable counter-Islamist movement from within the House of Islam. If their patience wears too thin, the response may turn visceral and further constrain reform activism.

That movement must build institutions that advocate and disseminate ideas that provide a liberty-based alternative to Islamism. Those ideas must be the substance of our paradigm shift toward internal change.

I believe that the "silent majority" of American Muslims are here to embrace the freedom that America guarantees and reject the ideology of political Islam, its theocracy, and shar'iah that at its core threatens the very existence of American freedom. This silent majority must define a Muslim identity rooted in freedom of thought, separation of mosque and state, and disavow the entire construct of the Islamic state and the necessity for shar'iah in government.

We must transmit to our children a love for America and its founding principles in addition to a love of God and our personal faith of Islam. Muslims can better practice Islam in an environment that universally protects the rights of every individual to practice their faith as they choose much better than one labeled by man as "Islamic". Universal religious freedom is an absolute requirement for the free practice of all faiths.

While shar'iah means God's law too many Muslims, the reality is that when it is applied by government it is manmade law. We must convince Muslims that governments and legal systems based in reason and the separation of mosque and state are preferable to those based in shar'iah. No matter how "democratic" a shar'iah based system is presented, its entire foundation is predicated on a supremacist ideology, familiar only to Muslims, that is incompatible with the US Constitution and universal religious freedom. The purest practice of Islam is one in which Muslims have complete freedom to accept or reject any of the tenants or laws of the faith.

Defining the Muslim identity as an Islamist, a salafist, a jihadist or a wahhabist can no longer be acceptable to a moderate Muslim at home with American liberty. We Muslims must step away from history and redefine the moderate Muslim to our youth as someone who embraces Islam and liberty. The future of American Security depends upon Muslims mustering the courage to dissect the Islamic ideas that fuel volatile separatism from a modern Islam that we want to leave our children.

Representative King's hearings are the springboard American Muslims have needed. This platform will set the stage to begin the hard work of internal reform necessary to defeat the ideology of Islamism that is the root cause of radicalization.

*Dr. M. Zuhdi Jasser, a medical doctor and a former U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander, is the founder and president of the [American Islamic Forum for Democracy](#) based in Phoenix, Arizona.*