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Muslim Radicals Strike at U.S. Foreign Policy

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U.S. Rep. Peter King's recent hearing on the domestic radicalization of Muslims was an act of misdirection. While King, a New York Republican, no doubt exaggerates this phenomenon, he might as well have held a hearing on why objects drop when let go. The answer is obvious. The violence the U.S. government inflicts on the Muslim world is the source of hostility to America. If it's true of people in the Middle East and North Africa, why wouldn't it also be true of Muslim Americans?

But did King take a critical look at U.S. foreign policy? No, he didn't. That policy is sacrosanct. Thus when witness Zuhdi Jasser, president of the American Islamic Forum for Democracy, told King's Homeland Security committee, "The U.S. has a significant problem with Muslim radicalization," without mentioning the death, injury, and mayhem inflicted by the U.S. government on Arab countries, no member of the committee spoke up.

American politicians, along with most people in the country, prefer to remain in denial about this connection. Are they even aware that some government officials and entities have acknowledged that it is U.S. foreign policy that produces radicalization and terrorism?

The Pentagon's own Defense Science Board Task Force came to this conclusion in 2004 when Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld asked it to evaluate the Bush administration's war policies. The report is worth quoting at length:

"American efforts have not only failed [to separate the vast majority of nonviolent Muslims from the radical-militant Islamist-Jihadists]: they may also have achieved the opposite of what they intended.

"American direct intervention in the Muslim World has paradoxically elevated the stature of and support for radical Islamists, while diminishing support for the United States to single-digits in some Arab societies.

"Muslims do not 'hate our freedom,' but rather, they hate our policies. The overwhelming majority voice their objections to what they see as one-sided support in favor of Israel and against Palestinian rights, and the longstanding, even increasing support for what Muslims collectively see as tyrannies, most notably Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Pakistan, and the Gulf states....

"[Since 9/11] American actions and the flow of events have elevated the authority of the Jihadi insurgents and tended to ratify their legitimacy among Muslims...."

The scholar Robert Pape's exhaustive studies of suicide terrorism confirm this claim.

We have further evidence that it is U.S. policy that radicalizes Muslims. From whom? From the

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radicalized Muslims themselves.

Osama bin Laden issued his 1996 fatwa against the United States, "Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places," after the U.S. government stationed troops in Saudi Arabia, regularly bombed southern Iraq (long after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait was reversed), and enforced an embargo that would kill hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children. "Terrorising you, while you are carrying arms on our land, is a legitimate and morally demanded duty," he wrote.

According to the 9/11 Commission report, plot mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed's "animus toward the United States stemmed ... from his violent disagreement with U.S. foreign policy favoring Israel," a policy that supports the subjugation of Palestinians.

Mohamed Atta, one of the 9/11 suicide hijackers, committed himself to martyrdom on April 11, 1996, the day Israel attacked Lebanon in Operation Grapes of Wrath, writes Lawrence Wright in The Looming Tower.

Ramzi Yousef, a planner of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, lashed out at U.S. foreign policy during his sentencing: "[You] are more than terrorists; you are the one who invented terrorism and using it every day."

Richard Reid, the would-be shoe-bomber, told his sentencing judge, "Your government has killed two million children in Iraq.... Your government has sponsored the rape and torture of Muslims in the prisons of Egypt and Turkey and Syria and Jordan with their money and with their weapons."

And Faisal Shahzad, who tried to ignite a car bomb in Times Square, said in court, "[Until] the hour the U.S. pulls its forces from Iraq and Afghanistan, and stops the drone strikes in Somalia and Yemen and in Pakistan, and stops the occupation of Muslim lands, and stops killing the Muslims, and stops reporting the Muslims to its government, we will be attacking U.S."

When will Congress investigate the true cause of Islamic radicalization?