

Transition Memo

Honorable Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly
City of New York Police Department



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Date: December 1, 2013, New York

Submitted by the Muslim Advisory Council to the NYPD

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Mr. Haris Hromic	World Bosniak Congress
Ms. Daisy Khan	American Society for Muslim Advancement
Imam Tahir Kukiqi	Albanian Islamic Cultural Center
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The composition of NYC's Muslim community is very diverse in terms of their sectarian persuasions, ethnicities, and national origins. Some are fully integrated in society while others are struggling to find their way and fully participate in a democratic system of governance. It is estimated that 50,000 Muslims immigrate to the United States annually. Meanwhile, Muslims make up 10% of New York City's population with mosques and community centers growing at a historic rate. In 2010, it was estimated that 800,000 Muslim reside in the five boroughs.

Under the most favorable circumstances, this diversity would warrant a carefully crafted policing approach that emphasizes community outreach and partnership. Public confidence is essential for the development of a sustained common need for the protection of every citizen's life and property.

The NYPD's recent efforts to build partnerships with local communities should serve as a model of cooperation to other cities. There is no better time than now to set an example by demonstrating how Muslim New Yorkers, working hand-in-hand with local law enforcement, can dispel distrust and fear as a first step towards eradicating extremism.

While hosting an Iftar dinner for members of Muslim communities, Mayor Bloomberg spoke about New York being a trendsetting city. "When New York adopts a new policy," he said, "every other major city in the world follows suit."

The purpose of this document is to highlight both the challenges this administration faced in its relationship-building efforts with the citywide Muslim community and its achievements in developing and implementing a policy of engagement and dialogue between the NYPD and the Muslim community.

Complicating matters are the security threats that culminated with the September 11th attacks that destroyed the World Trade Center and caused the death of nearly 3,000 people. Like the population of the city itself, the victims came from a wide range of backgrounds. They represented 90 nationalities and faiths; at least 60 of those killed were Muslims.

Since that time, there have been 16 plots against the city, perpetrated by al Qaeda and its affiliates. The NYPD must counter these threats while preserving an orderly and civilized society. There is a careful balance that must be struck between security and civil liberties. The NYPD is an organization that is constantly striving to achieve that balance through the development of proactive policing strategies that respect the constitutional rights of all individuals.

It is important for law enforcement agencies to recognize that the Muslim community has valid concerns and valuable advice to offer. Time and time again, the Muslim community feels that it is being held responsible for the actions of a few. Many feel wounded and marginalized, but well-designed outreach programs such as those the department has already created can restore trust and goodwill between the NYPD and members of the Muslim community.

Over the past 12 years, the NYPD has made great strides in ensuring public safety and allocating resources to protect the lives, dignity, and property of Muslims in NYC. It has also demonstrated

a great deal of inclusion and outreach towards the Muslim community. One way the Police Department has done that is through the creation of two sports leagues in 2008 for members of the city's Muslim immigrant community. Each summer, police officers and Muslim youth meet on the soccer field and the cricket pitch to build bonds of friendship in a non-threatening environment. This is important because all too often, minorities have no interaction with the police unless they are being confronted in an adversarial situation. In some cases, they may even be questioned, given a summons or arrested. The Police Department's community outreach programs have helped to change this unfortunate reality, ensuring that police officers have concrete social ties to the communities they are protecting.

It helps that the Police Department has made it a priority to attract Muslim recruits. There are currently 1,500 Muslim police officers patrolling the five boroughs. At least 350 of them belong to a NYPD Muslim Officers Society, which was established in 2008. There is also an Imam serving in the Department's Chaplain's Unit.

Once a year, the NYPD also hosts a luncheon prior to Ramadan for hundreds of the city's Muslim leaders. These gatherings provide an opportunity for them to communicate directly with the Police Commissioner and commanding officers about everything from radicalization to complaints regarding alternate-side parking regulations.

The Police Department has demonstrated that Muslims stand equal to other citizens of New York City by cracking down on hate crimes. From 2001 through 2012, there have been 96 bias-motivated incidents against members of the Muslim community, and the NYPD treats every one seriously. Due to the work of the Hate Crime Task Force, Muslim New Yorkers can sleep more soundly at night, secure in the knowledge that the authorities are dedicated to protecting them from bigots and hate mongers.

This was especially evident between 2009 and 2010, when controversy surrounded a proposal to build a community center near Ground Zero. When members of the Muslim community were regularly receiving threats, the NYPD took an active interest in protecting individuals and groups most at risk.

As an extension of this effort, the Police Commissioner created the Muslim Advisory Council (MAC) in 2012 and appointed ten leaders from the Muslim community to serve as his advisors. The goal of the MAC is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the NYPD in reconciling matters of trust and partnership with the Muslim Community.

Our interest in serving this committee came largely from our desire to improve the well-being of society as a whole and to improve conditions in our own communities through active engagement with public and law enforcement officials. The NYPD considers the Muslim Community a full and equal partner in the fight against violent extremism and is committed to countering any assertion that portrays New York City Muslims as a collective threat to national security or to other New Yorkers. We support the Police Department's mission to detect specific individuals and related sources that pose potential and imminent threats and to deal with them by using the most appropriate law enforcement tools.

We are hopeful that the next administration will preserve this operational model. By ensuring the continuity of resources and the seamless operation of the Muslim Advisory Council (MAC), we can continue to strengthen the common security of all NYC residents.

As we look to the future, it is important to note a few events that have strained the relationship between the Muslim Community and the NYPD:

In May 2007, the New York's Muslim Community was surprised to learn that the Police Department commissioned a report on homegrown Islamic radicalization without the input and consultation of Muslim experts, Imams or community members. It is evident that many Muslims are willing and eager to help resolve these issues through their expert advice. We recommend that the NYPD ensure that any similar initiatives allow for ample collaboration.

In January 2012, it was disclosed that the Police Department had screened the controversial movie *The Third Jihad* for a number of New York City police officers at in-service training. The basis for concern was an interview in the film that depicted Muslims as violent fanatics bent on overthrowing the American government. When the NYPD learned of the objectionable content, the video was permanently removed from the curriculum and replaced by a new video designed with input from the MAC. In the video, Muslim police officers provided the narration and shared their experience and informed perspectives. The video, which was shown at this year's pre-Ramadan luncheon, was well-received by the audience. So much so that the MAC has requested that it be made available for our own outreach efforts.

In August 2013, as part of a series by the Associated Press on the NYPD's intelligence gathering activities, it was alleged that the Police Department designated certain mosques as being part of "Terrorism Enterprise Investigations" (TEIs) and subject to long-term surveillance. The NYPD has stated that there are major distortions and misinformation in the AP reports and that it does not investigate institutions, only individuals. Furthermore, the department asserted that it subjects every investigation to strict, federally approved guidelines known as Handschu that protect First Amendment and other constitutional rights. As stated in the guidelines, the NYPD is permitted to "attend any place or event that is open to the public, view online activity that is accessible to the public, and prepare reports and assessments to help us understand the nature of the threat."

According to the NYPD its efforts to learn about the demographics of the metropolitan area is part and parcel of its community-based mission and its goal to protect the city, so it has documented public places within the Muslim community and prepared a series of reports. Regrettably, we believe some aspects of this approach have served to erode some of the goodwill the NYPD has fostered by other means, including the Pre-Ramadan gatherings, sports leagues, and various community-based initiatives. We are confident that the NYPD will make every effort to avoid similar misunderstandings in the future. At the same time, the MAC seeks to maintain an external voice and partnership with the NYPD and Muslim community. Our mission is to promote civic engagement and to facilitate direct communication with Police Commissioner and other NYPD executives regarding the most pressing issues affecting the Muslim community. Our

ultimate goal is to build an engaged, vibrant and prosperous community whose well-being is firmly rooted in civic engagement, mutually earned trust and respect, and an active sense of collective responsibility for safety and security of all citizens of New York City.

As part of these efforts, we plan to review and make recommendations to the NYPD regarding training materials and share our expertise and resources on ongoing basis. The MAC will recommend a 3 to 5 year strategic direction and advise the Police Commissioner on matters of resource allocation for the sustainability of the advisory council and borough subcommittees (BSCs). These will consist of ten members for each borough, except Staten Island which will have five members. The primary responsibility of each BSC will be to establish a strong, trusting and engaged working relationship with the Police Department's borough and precinct commanding officers on issues concerning the Muslim community. The subcommittees will also have an opportunity to use a direct channel of communication between the members of NYPD Muslim Advisory Council and the Police Commissioner to ensure that grass-roots level concerns are addressed with the appropriate urgency and commitment.

During the months of September and October, we have commenced a BSC nomination process, starting with a pilot project on Staten Island BSC. Each BSC will consist of representatives based on population, and members will be selected from community-based organizations. A suggested profile of a BSC member would be a community representative, Imam or mosque leader, or the head of a community organization. We are seeking individuals who are interested in developing a cooperative relationship with law enforcement agencies in general and with NYPD in particular. They will be required to reside, work or worship in the respective borough; be familiar with local law enforcement issues concerning the Muslim community; and be able to attend regular meetings with NYPD borough commanders as well as with members of the MAC.

The MAC will coordinate events and forums between the NYPD, borough subcommittees and community groups and provide appropriate literature, alerts, safety tips, etc. It can also create forums to encourage community feedback, stream systematic and accurate messaging as well as explain serious misconceptions critical to the well-being of the Muslim community. In addition, the NYPD will provide training about its programs, such as Crime Prevention.

In the past six months, the MAC has made great strides in its ability to facilitate an open dialogue with the NYPD and proposed new collaborative efforts to deter violent extremism. At a meeting with department executives in September of 2013, we discussed publishing a joint report on strategies and tactics to engage this challenge at its root levels, possibly by emulating parts of the Singapore model in which law enforcement and the Muslim community have worked together to reduce the threat of terrorism. Police Commissioner Kelly, Deputy Commissioner for Intelligence David Cohen, and Deputy Commissioner for Legal Matters Douglass Maynard agreed that the process of creating such a report as a tool for both the NYPD and the Muslim community. Deputy Commissioner Cohen also stated that the resources for such a report could be made available. The report would be widely disseminated into the community and could also be used as a guidebook for parents and educators. We believe that this collaborative effort and its results could be used as a model by major cities in the US and the throughout the world and we strongly encourage its design and implementation.

This Council desires risk-conscious and proactive advisory and we maintain a relentless curiosity that is always mindful of principled and ethical behavior. The relationship we have established with the NYPD is one that is generous with expertise and time, going beyond the expected while focusing on the long-term well-being of our community. We hope to continue offering integrated advice, seamless resources, and sustained partnership defined by convictions and the courage to responsibly stand together on the issues that matter.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to strengthening our partnership with the NYPD for many years to come.

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