Executive Summary

This report will explore the potential threats to national security posed by religious radicalization of prison inmates in the United States. The report is the product of a multidisciplinary task force convened to review the currently available data on this subject. While radical Islam is discussed extensively, the findings are referable to any radical religious group. In order to appropriately address this issue, the process by which inmates are radicalized must be better understood. The following are the key points addressed by this report:

- Radicalization is not unique to Islam. Right-wing extremist groups are present in prisons, and have an extensive history of terrorist attacks.
- The presence of radicalization has been a component of prison life for many years.
- Radicalization in prison is a global problem. Its presence in the prison systems of other countries is relevant to the national security of the United States.
- Information sharing between the U.S., Europe, and many other countries is crucial to developing a preventative strategy.
- Information sharing among Federal, state and local prison systems is an integral part in tracking radical behavior among prisoners and religious service providers.
- Individual inmates and organized gangs may adopt forms of “Prison Islam” which incorporates violent prison culture into religious practice.
- The potential for connections between prison gangs and terrorist organizations exists in their common interest in criminal enterprises.
- Terrorist recruiting methods do not require large number of recruits to achieve success.
- The inadequate number of trusted Muslim religious providers increases the risk of radicalization.
- The inability to track inmates upon release coupled with the lack of social supports creates a window for radicalization to occur.
- Significant changes have occurred at the Federal Prison level, but change at the state and local level is difficult to assess.
- Responsibly responding to the religious needs of Islamic inmates will likely decrease the risk for radicalization.

The Task Force recommends that a Commission be formed to further investigate this important issue. The focus of the Commission would be to address the problems identified with religious practice in U.S. prisons as well as foster better information sharing between agencies. Perhaps most importantly, an objective risk assessment must be performed to ensure this threat receives the appropriate level of attention. With the world’s largest prison population (>2 million), and the largest incarceration rate
the U.S. presents a unique challenge that must be addressed with as much information as possible. 

**Introduction**

This report will focus on the threats to national security posed by religious radicalization of prison inmates in the United States. It should first be noted that radicalization is not a process unique to the practice of Islam. Radical beliefs have been used to subvert the ideals of every major religion in the world. Therefore, the comments made here about Islam are completely referable to any religion practiced by inmates. It should also be noted that inmates have a constitutional right to practice their religion, whatever that might be. New laws pertaining to religious practices of inmates have further protected these rights. The prison facilities bear the burden of proof if they wish to deny an inmates request for any service or activity related to religion. While this report will discuss problems related to religious services, there is no intended implication that these rights can or should be curtailed. The task force also recognizes the positive impact of religion on inmates. Inmate conversion to Islam, or any other religion, is not synonymous with radicalization.

This report will be concerned with the process of radicalization in prison and the characteristics of radical groups. Prisons have long been places where extremist ideology and violence could find a willing ear. In testimony before the United States Senate, Dr. Michael Waller explained that, “While in tsarist prisons, Stalin and Dzerzhinsky organized murderers and other hardened criminals that would lead the Bolsheviks and their Cheka secret police. Hitler credited his time in prison as an opportunity to reflect and write Mein Kampf.” In addition to radical Muslim influence, other groups relevant to United States prisons include a variety of right-wing groups. Insights about this process can also be gained from examination of cults known to participate in criminal activity.

Radicalization has occurred in prisons throughout the world. The ethnic and socioeconomic background of the prisoners, as well as the political environment, presents unique challenges in each country. Despite these differences, much can be learned from international experiences, especially those of Western Europe. There has been growing concern about the prevalence of radical Islam in European prisons. French officials report that radical Islamic views are being preached in a third of French prisons. In addition to knowledge gained about prison radicalization, the United States must also be concerned about the ability of radicalized inmates released in Europe to easily enter the

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1 World Prison Population (5th Ed.) Home Office Publication 234
2 United States Constitution, First Amendment
3 The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000
5 Carlile, Jennifer. *Islamic Radicalization Feared in Europe’s Jails.* Available at: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/13733782/
country. For example, Richard Reid, “the Shoe Bomber” was reportedly radicalized while spending time in a British prison.

A number of terrorist groups have used narcotic trafficking and other illegal activities to support their operations. These terrorist groups share this interest with organized prison gangs operating throughout the United States. In fact, prison gangs may adopt a form of “Prison Islam” which incorporates prison values of gang loyalty and violence. Just as young people become radicalized by “cut and paste” versions of Islam via the internet, new inmates may gain the same distorted understanding of the faith from gang leaders or other influential inmates.

The findings and recommendations of the taskforce are intended to build upon the efforts of prison officials, law enforcement, and religious leaders in the United States and abroad. A greater understanding of the susceptibility of particular inmates to radicalization and the process by which they become radicalized can act as a force multiplier for those agencies currently addressing this important issue.

**Background Information**

The threat of terrorist recruiting in U.S. prisons was brought to light in October 2003 during a hearing before the United States Senate Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security. The testimony given during the hearings identified several areas of concern in the U.S. Federal prison system. First, a variety of socioeconomic and psychological factors make inmates vulnerable to radical ideology. Second, groups known to support terrorist causes have distributed radical literature to the prison population. Although the extent of the problem was not determined, witnesses also stated that serious problems with the screening of religious providers have created an opportunity for radicalization.

Subsequent to the Senate hearings, the Department of Justice’s Office of the Inspector General (OIG) issued a report in May 2004 that detailed issues related to selection of chaplains and other religious service providers. Specifically, the report indicated that the Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP) did not adequately examine the doctrinal beliefs of potential religious service providers. Volunteers and religious contractors were required to provide endorsements from local organizations only. Since 1995, chaplains had been required to obtain endorsement from a national organization. The FBOP made the

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7 International Drug Trafficking and Terrorism. Testimony of Steven C. McCraw, Assistant Director, Office of Intelligence, FBI Before the Senate Judiciary Committee May 20, 2003


11 OIG Review 2004
change in order to increase accountability and allow the chaplains to maintain contact with the endorsing agency when they were moved to other states. The FBOP could also maintain more consistent relationships with the national agency, and more easily detect any deviation from mainstream religious practices. The Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) was the only provider of endorsements of Muslim chaplains until 2003. The FBOP stopped accepting endorsements for Muslim chaplains in response to allegations about the ISNA connections to terrorist groups.\textsuperscript{12} As a result, no new Islamic chaplains could be hired until the FBI cleared the ISNA of any association with terrorist groups. Although the OIG also found that the FBOP was effectively utilizing the ten current Muslim chaplains to screen new contractors, this was not felt to be adequate for supervision of existing inmate and non-inmate providers, because “ample opportunity exists for them to deliver inappropriate and extremist messages.”

The FBOP and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) have worked cooperatively to address the issues raised by the hearings and the OIG report, but many questions remain to be answered. The recent terrorist plot originating from a radical group at Folsom State Prison in California was a well-publicized example of the radicalization of newly converted inmates leading to recruitment into terrorist activities.\textsuperscript{13} In this case, an inmate successfully radicalized another inmate and recruited him for terrorist actions upon his release. This radicalized inmate not only prepared for these attacks, but also recruited others in a local mosque. This demonstrated the ability of radical networks to spread beyond prison walls.

\textit{Development of the Task Force}

Representatives of the George Washington University’s Homeland Security Policy Institute (HSPI) and the University of Virginia’s Critical Incident Analysis Group (CIAG) convened a task force to analyze what is currently known about radicalization and recruitment in the U.S. prison systems at the federal, state and local level. The goal of this diverse, multidisciplinary group\textsuperscript{1} was to give unbiased and well-informed recommendations for further action. The task force performed an extensive literature review and received briefings from professionals with expertise in this subject. Officials from the Federal and state governments provided background information on the process of radicalization and ongoing efforts to decrease the threat of terrorist recruiting. The task force sought and received perspectives from Muslim professionals, including religious providers in prisons and jails. Researchers of radicalization in foreign prisons provided first hand accounts of radicalization and terrorist activities overseas.

\textit{Defining Terms}

\textsuperscript{12} The investigation of the ISNA is beyond the scope of the task force and the statements made in this report are not meant to confirm or deny the allegations mentioned above. The ISNA is mentioned specifically because it is the only national Islamic organizations that has been used to endorse FBOP chaplains.

\textsuperscript{13} Prepared Remarks of Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales at the California Terrorism Indictment Press Conference, Washington, DC, August 31, 2005
There can be significant disagreement about the use of terminology to describe concepts related to terrorism and religion. In a September 2005 report to Congress, the General Accountability Office stated:

“Interviews and documents revealed that U.S. government and nongovernment sources use different terms to refer to a form of Islam that promotes hatred, intolerance, and, in some cases, violence, fueling terrorism and creating threats to U.S. interests and security. These terms include, “Islamic extremism,” “militant Islam,” “fundamentalism,” “jihadism,” “Wahhabism,” and “Salafism.” For example, DIA defines an “Islamic extremist” as “any individual or group using Islam to justify violence or terrorist acts,” whereas the National Intelligence Council’s report, Mapping the Global Future, defines “Muslim extremists” as Islamic activists who are committed to restructuring political society in accordance with their vision of Islamic law and are willing to use violence. U.S. agencies are continually refining their respective definitions of Islamic extremism as they acquire more information on the identifiers, motives, and sources of funding and support of Islamic extremism.”

In the interest of consistency, this report will utilize the following definitions of radicalization and recruitment adapted from the Department of Justice OIG report on Muslim Religious Service providers.14

Radicalization - “refers to the process by which inmates who do not invite or plan overt terrorist acts adopt extreme views, including beliefs that violent measures need to be taken for political or religious purposes.”15

Recruitment - “is used to mean the solicitation of individuals to commit terrorist acts or engage in behavior for a terrorism purpose.”16 Non-radicalized inmates may be persuaded to directly participate in actions that directly benefit the terrorist network. Therefore, a recruited individual would include anyone in the prison environment who is led to provide support to terrorists. Many members of a terrorist network may not be fully aware of their value that their actions bring to the network, as in the case of a prisoner who is coerced through blackmail to smuggle cell phone parts into the prison.

Individual radicalization - results from exposure to a radical religious service provider or charismatic inmate espousing radical ideas. This type of individual may self-recruit for a personal Jihad, becoming a “lone-wolf” terrorist. He would not necessarily have the support of a network, but he may seek out a network in the future. Even without a persistent commitment to carrying out an attack, he may be at risk for recruitment at some later date.

Organized radicalization - is a process supported by external groups who seek to influence vulnerable inmates. These groups coordinate the entry of radical religious providers into prisons and jails. They provide inmates with radical reading materials that

14 The definitions for Individual, Organized, Gang, and Para radicalization were not derived from the OIG Review
15 OIG Review 2004
16 OIG Review 2004
include non-traditional interpretations of the Koran. Inmates are also directed to radical mosques following release from prison. In part, this is accomplished by “top-down recruiting”, also known as “scouting”. This may involve specific tasking of individuals for attacks against both individuals within prisons and within outlying communities. This process is long term and direct recruiting may result long after the inmate has become radicalized.

Gang radicalization - makes use of preexisting prison gangs or networks to attract inmates. The prisoners are often drawn to these groups in hopes of being protected from other inmates. The groups also provide a sense of belonging to disillusioned youths. Once these groups become radicalized, their resources (money, communications, and intimidation) can be used to recruit others and support terrorist networks.

Para-radicalization - takes place when non-radicalized people take part in radicalized networks. This type of recruitment may occur in inmates, correctional officers, or other prison staff. Using the techniques of bribery and intimidation, radical inmates can obtain various services. Examples include smuggling of cellular phones or cell phone parts, passing of messages, and strategic transfer of particular inmates. Although the affected individuals do not hold radical beliefs, they are nonetheless an important part of terrorist network operations in the prison setting.

**The Problem**

**U.S. Prisons**

Radicalization of prison inmates in the U.S. represents a potential threat to national security. This threat results from the inherent appeal of radical ideas to many prisoners coupled with the isolated and often violent environment that shapes prison culture. Whether radicalized individually or through membership in a group, terrorist cells or organizations may recruit the radicalized inmate.

**Overview of the Process of Radicalization**

Inmates in general are particularly vulnerable to radical religious ideology due to their attitudes toward society and the need to identify with other inmates sharing the same background, beliefs, or ethnicity. When there has been little exposure to organized religion in the community, the inmates' understanding of the religion is dependent upon the religious leader at their facilities. It is during this period that radical rhetoric may exploit the inmate’s vulnerabilities and lack of grounded religious knowledge by providing validation to the inmate’s disillusionment with society and creating an outlet for their violent impulses. Gerwehr and Daly¹⁷ found that, “There is surprisingly little rigorous, scientific study on the vulnerability of individuals to recruitment by terrorist

groups.” Possible psychological factors increasing vulnerability include: High level of distress, cultural disillusionment, lack of intrinsic religious beliefs or values, dysfunctional family system, dependent personality tendencies. These characteristics are quite common in the prison environment. From an ideological standpoint, radical religious groups allow the inmates to demonize their perceived enemies and view themselves as righteous. Inmates may also be drawn to radical groups out of the need for protection, to gain status amongst other prisoners. Prison culture may also require that an inmate join a group with similar ethnic background, thus decreasing their options.

Studies have suggested that terrorist recruitment methods are not always expected to yield a high number of recruits. Radical messages may be delivered to many prisoners with the understanding that most will resist radicalization. The delivery method can be tailored to the setting. In prison, this may take the form of a radical Imam, a fellow inmate, or radical literature smuggled into the prison. As demonstrated in the New Folsom plot, a single radicalized inmate can be a significant threat. Even if the radical message resonates with only a few inmates, they could then be targeted for more intense one on one “instruction.”

Other Radical Groups Relevant to US Prisons

The growth of Islam in prisons coupled with world events has led to a focus of attention on Islam as the most prominent radical group. The relative deficit of vetted religious providers also supports the special attention paid to Islam in prison. It is worth noting that right-wing extremist groups not only have a history of terrorist attacks on US soil, but a long standing relationship with prisoners. There are many groups aligning themselves with Christian Identity ideology. These groups include: Posse Comitatus, The Order, Aryan Nations, and many of the militia movements across the country. Aryan Nations has maintained an outreach program with inmates since the 1970’s. The white supremacist beliefs of many of these groups gives them appeal to white inmates who feel they must associate with inmates of similar ethnic background. As with Islamic groups, this may be related to the need for protection. These groups do not currently have associations with foreign states or movements, but are no less committed to violence. The Phineas Priesthood is a terrorist organization with ties to Christian Identity. It is significant in that it espouses the concept of a “leaderless resistance.” By requiring that its members act independently and in extreme secrecy, it becomes very difficult to detect. Other types of terrorist groups can utilize this tactic as their networks become less centralized.

Organized Prison Gangs

International terrorist organizations share a funding source with the large prison gangs based in U.S. prisons. This shared revenue generator is criminal enterprise, most

18 Terrorist Selection
20 Terrorist Selection
commonly drug trafficking. During testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee in 2003, Steven C. McCraw, Assistant Director of the FBI, stated\textsuperscript{21}, “Terrorism and Crime are inextricably linked. International and Domestic Terrorism Organizations and their supporters engage in a myriad of crime to fund and facilitate terrorist activities.” The National Drug Threat Assessment in 2006 stated\textsuperscript{22}, “it is possible that some gangs may associate with foreign terrorists for the purpose of conducting drug trafficking and various criminal activities. Moreover, the potential for such relationships exists primarily among U.S. prison gangs, whose members seem to be particularly susceptible to terrorist and other extremist recruitment.”

\textit{Religious Services}

Compounding the problem of prison radicalization, the recruitment of Muslim chaplains has been limited by the lack of trusted, independent Islamic organizations to complete the vetting process. The lack of well-trained Muslim chaplains has led to a reliance on religious contractors and volunteers, especially in the state and local facilities. A 2004 survey\textsuperscript{23} of 193 wardens of state correctional facilities showed that only half of religious services were physically supervised and just over half use any sort of audio or video monitoring capabilities. Half the institutions allowed inmates to act as spiritual leaders.

Due to the lack of proper religious authorities available to review all materials entering the prison systems no consistently applied standard or procedure exists to determine what reading material is appropriate. In the absence of authoritative Islamic chaplains, materials that advocate violence have infiltrated the prison system undetected. The lack of individuals with a thorough knowledge of the Islam, the Koran and other religious materials entering prisons offers an opportunity for recruiters outside of prisons to paint a violent picture of Islam. Radical literature and altered Korans have been distributed to prisoners by agencies suspected or known to support terrorism. These materials end up in the hands of inmates who lead prayer services for other prisoners due to lack of available Muslim service providers and thus recruit inmates to follow the radical views expressed. Altered versions of the Koran use footnotes and supplements to “guide” the reader to a radical interpretation of the scripture.

\textit{Support after Release}

According to the recent report released by the Commission on Safety and Abuse in America’s Prisons “13.5 million people spend time in jail or prison, and 95 percent of them eventually return to our communities.”\textsuperscript{24} Vulnerability to the effects of radicalization and recruitment occurs for both incarcerated and released individuals, because many inmates leave prison with very little financial, emotional, or family support. Released inmates have significant potential value for terrorist networks that

\textsuperscript{21} Testimony of Steven C. McCrew, Assistant Director, Office of Intelligence, FBI, before the Senate Judiciary Committee, May 20, 2003.
\textsuperscript{22} National Drug Threat Assessment 2006, National Drug Intelligence Center, US Department of Justice
have recruited them. If connections are made with a radicalized community group, the recently released inmate may remain at risk for recruitment or continued involvement in terrorist networks. If these groups draw upon funding from foreign governments, they can offer much more support than other more legitimate community programs.

The potential to either be recruited or remain within terrorist networks is made worse by limited probation and parole resources. Much community support is faith-based, and in many cases can assist in successful re-entry into society. However, when inadequate formal support is provided for inmate transition, radical religious groups may fill the void by offering both financial and emotional support. By providing for them in their time of greatest need, these organizations can build upon the loyalty developed during the individual’s time in prison.

We currently lack the necessary data to determine both the extent and patterns of radical religious recruitment for incarcerated prisoners and released inmates. Even if a religious provider is removed from one facility, that provider can simply apply to enter into a prison in another state. No database exists to track inmates after release or to identify inmates associated with radical groups. No comprehensive database exists to track religious service providers who are known to expose inmates to radical Islam.

European Prisons

Some information about radicalization in European prisons is available. Although immigrant communities and their relative levels of integration vary across nations, the experience of other countries is relevant for the United States. For example, when radicalized inmates are released in Europe, they may travel to the U.S. or participate in networks with individuals inside the U.S. Because of the increasing amount of knowledge that can be shared globally through the internet, successful radicalization and recruitment techniques can more easily be adapted to the U.S. prison system.

Radicalization in Europe is not limited to recent immigrants from traditionally Islamic countries. Researchers in the Netherlands have found that radicalization occurs in many second and third generation immigrants, as well as a small number of converts of Dutch descent. These individuals tend to participate in local networks, but these groups may periodically coordinate with one another or make connections with transnational networks.25

Researchers performing fieldwork in European prisons estimate that seventy percent of European inmates are Muslim.26 Radicalization is quite common and prison officials have struggled to control it. In the interest of maintaining order, radical groups are often facilitated by prison administration. Blackmailing of prison staff and even non-Muslim religious personnel give radical inmate groups access to cellular phones and even internet

25 Violent Jihad in the Netherlands: Current trends in the Islamist terrorist threat, General Intelligence and Security Service Communications Department, March 2006

26 The exact number of Muslim inmates is not tracked consistently throughout Europe.
Attorneys provided by foreign terrorist organizations arrange for inmates to be moved in and out of particular prisons. This allows information to reach the radical inmate leaders and for coordination with networks outside the prison. As in U.S. prisons, the radical groups have made use of the techniques of violent prison gangs to intimidate others and gain control over the facilities in which they are incarcerated.

Islam is the fastest growing religion among U.S. prison inmates. U.S. prisons have similar vulnerabilities to their European counterparts. Containment and awareness of the European problem is only part of the needed response. Because successful networks adopt and adapt effective strategies learned elsewhere, the European experience must be used as an opportunity to learn about prison radicalization so that it can be disrupted at a much earlier stage.

**Current Response Efforts**

Since 2002, the FBI and FBOP have enhanced collaborative efforts to detect, address and respond to any threats to national security originating from prisons. Their experience has validated the belief that U.S. prisons have been targeted for radicalization and recruitment. Individual and organized radicalization and recruitment at the state level represents the majority of the currently known activity.

The religious leaders known to spread radical messages have, thus far, been predominately foreign-born Imams or visiting clerics. Most are well read and articulate. Some have been removed from one prison, only to reappear at a facility in a distant state. When detected, most of these individuals are usually accessing multiple institutions.

In response to the OIG report, the FBOP has made changes to many of its policies. Religious providers are now questioned about their beliefs regarding violence and other concepts related to radicalization. They are also subjected to more rigorous background checks. Muslim chaplains are involved in the screening process as subject matter experts. The ten FBOP Muslim chaplains cannot, however, interview the many thousands of religious contractors who have exposure to inmates. There is strengthened communication between the FBI and FBOP regarding the vetting process of religious service providers. The providers are also questioned and investigated regarding any connection to or funding from foreign governments. The FBOP has begun accepting endorsements of chaplain candidates from local organizations in lieu of national endorsements. FBOP staff members have received training on Islamic beliefs and FBI field offices are required to provide training to local and state prisons.

The FBOP has developed a more complete system of monitoring the inventory of religious reading material and other forms of media available to prisons. This allows for more consistent review by experienced chaplains. A set of best practice guidelines has been implemented throughout the FBOP regarding appropriate reading materials.

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guidelines are incorporated into the training provided to local and state facilities. There has been no authoritative measure of the degree to which these practices are being implemented at the state and local level.

Their mission is to identify organizations and individuals attempting to radicalize inmates and prevent their entry into prisons. Although the need for positive influences on inmates, including non-radical religious services is recognized, it is difficult to maintain the balance between the need to provide religious service and the need to prevent entry of radical religious providers.

FBOP maintains a database of inmates, which is available to, but not widely used by, local and state systems. State and local databases of information on prisoners that do exist are not universally compatible with the Federal system or with other states. The goal of the FBI and FBOP is to transfer or contain those inmates known to preach radical ideas or recruit other inmates.

Despite use of available databases and greatly improved information sharing, intelligence gaps remain. Information about who is directing and funding radicalization and recruitment efforts is incomplete. The decentralized and fluctuating leadership of radical groups contributes to this deficit.

Preliminary Findings

1. Lack of intelligence and information sharing among federal, state and local prisons to counter support and/or advocacy of violent terrorist network activities by religious providers in prisons allows recruiters to move from prison to prison while remaining under the radar of prison officials.

2. Lack of intelligence and information sharing among federal, state and local prisons on prisoners who express violent, religion based behaviors allows for such prisoners to carry out a message of extremism undetected.

3. Radicalization and recruitment in international prisons presents a problem in the U.S. due to the relative ease in which these foreign prisoners can enter the United States.

4. The lack of support groups to help reintegrate prisoners back into society upon release allows for individuals to carry the radical messages learn while confined into the community and increases the likelihood of repeat offenders. Offering help through temporary housing, job training, and emotional support are essential in the process of reintegration into society. The benefits of providing support to inmates could also be seen through a reduction in financial and social cost incurred by repeat offenses. The ability of government to provide this type of support is often limited.
5. There are many examples of local charities who accept recently released prisoners of Muslim faith to provide a foundation for men and women to become a productive member of society. These groups provide immediate assistance with housing for a small fee and offer job opportunities in the community. They also may organize mentoring programs to help build self-confidence and to instill a purpose in life. The decentralized leadership and reliance on private funding may allow promising groups to be compromised. Ways of identifying and supporting community organizations that can be trusted to provide these services in a responsible manner are needed.

6. The process of vetting materials entering prison is a vulnerability due to the lack of trained individuals to ensure the quality and authenticity of religious books, guides, pamphlets, etc. to enter the prison system. The current process of screening all religious materials entering prisons at all levels of government should be analyzed. Appropriate religious figures should be consulted to ensure the authenticity of all products used for religious purposes in prisons. A system should be developed to provide relevant and updated religious materials with no radical alterations or supplements. The goal of this system would be to support the practice of religious freedom while preventing the use of religious context to spread radical ideology.

7. Accountability of Islamic endorsing agencies is weak and must be strengthened to ensure a reliable and effective process of providing religious services to Muslim inmates. Currently there are no national organizations authorized by the FBOP to endorse Muslim chaplain candidates. Local endorsing organizations are inherently more difficult to monitor. In addition to endorsing chaplains, national organizations can also develop standards, which can be, applied other religious service providers as well. These may include educational standards and requirements for the number of hours a religious provider should spend in prisons working with inmates. The providers could be expected to guide prisoners spiritually, but also address and relay legitimate concerns of Muslim prisoners and serve as a voice of explanation behind requests made by prisoners related to religion. Methods are needed to of bolstering the legitimacy and security of national Islamic organizations.

8. The process of reviewing contracting services and the vetting of the religious leaders provided must be examined to remove radical leaders and ensure proper religious services. Current processes do not ensure that contracted religious leaders have the appropriate experience, education or background to lead fellow Muslims. Building upon the best practices implemented in the FBOP system, universal standards are needed for the large number of religious providers in state and local prisons.

9. Currently, there are an inadequate number of Muslim chaplains relative to the number of U.S. Muslim prisoners. More effective techniques are needed for recruiting Muslim chaplains to work in the prison system. These individuals can
use their professional expertise to support the vetting of contractors and religious materials. They can also serve as liaisons to the Muslim community. The small number of currently available Muslim chaplains does not allow for system-wide, direct participation.

**Preliminary Recommendations**

- Congress should create a Commission to evaluate the current efforts to counter radicalization and recruitment in U.S. prisons and offer comprehensive solutions to existing problems posing a threat to our national security. The commission would gather the necessary information to address the issues raised by the taskforce.

- The Commission should investigate the current level of information sharing between agencies involved in managing inmates and monitoring radical groups. This should include current programs aimed at addressing organized prison gangs.

- The Commission should perform an objective risk assessment regarding the influence of radical groups in the prison system.
Some additional info related to the report

On Europe:

1. There are 12-15 million Muslims in Western Europe, mostly lower class (compared to 5-6 million Muslims in the USA, mostly middle class). Muslims make up about 8 percent of the general populations of France and the Netherlands.

2. Muslims are wildly overrepresented in European prisons, but not in USA prisons (in France, approximately ten times more Muslims in prison than there are Muslims in the general population).

3. Unlike the USA, Islam is the most important religion in French prisons (and perhaps Holland). Nevertheless, while there are some 600 Catholic priests attending Christians in French prisons there are only 95 Imams attending Muslim prisoners. This shortage provides ample opportunities for non-official radical Islamists preachers and organizers.

4. But there are striking similarities between Muslims in European prisons and black American males in USA prisons (for example, in the high rate of recidivism and in low prospects for reintegration after prison - few lost "opportunity costs". Only 4 percent of Muslim prisoners in France are female, 6 percent in the UK.

5. There are increasingly many links between petty criminal elements in prisons and the large scale housing projects in the suburbs of major European cities, where Muslim populations also increasingly predominate.

6. In France and elsewhere (Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Austria) prison authorities seek out Islamists to mediate violent disputes because Islamists – especially self-denying radical Islamists - are those Muslims most respected by Muslim prisoners.

7. There are 3 categories of Muslim prisoners in Europe:
   a. Disenfranchised and not Islamized before they come to prison.
   b. North African students from the middle class, often with college degrees. These are the leaders (though Moroccans are generally somewhat less religiously-minded than the Algerians).
   c. Converts, which are increasingly very important, insofar as Islam is seen in prison as "the religion of the oppressed," and is therefore attracting politically as well as religiously sensitive people.

8. A principal reason for joining an Islamic (and especially an Islamist) group is that if you belong to such a group you will be physically protected and psychologically succored. Indeed, Islamist groups are, in fact, the best at providing such help to prisoners.

9. Most prisoners who join Islamists for protection (and this comprises perhaps the majority) become only "temporary Muslims. This phenomenon is very similar to what NYPD officials call "PrIslam" (temporary conversion to Islam for protection).

10. But, unlike in NYC, a small but influential proportion of the prisoners do become radicalized into jihad and become committed jihadis afterwards.

11. I am not authorized to talk about the details of the NYPD’s for tracking possible jihadi networks (and I don’t think the details should be talked about in any report for public consumption), but from what I have seen and heard, it is the most effective and rational program out there (including in Europe). Its long range focus is right on target ("preventive maintenance," or "what can we do for the community so that radical jihad cannot take root"), and its tracking system is not only the best suited for NYC but, from my observations in trekking with jihadis around the world, also for the increasingly decentralized and diasporic global jihadi movement.
1 Insert taskforce description here.