



# **Department of Justice**

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**STATEMENT**

**OF**

**JOHN M. VANYUR  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMS DIVISION  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS**

**BEFORE THE**

**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY  
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**CONCERNING**

**PRISON RADICALIZATION: ARE TERRORIST CELLS  
FORMING IN U.S. CELL BLOCKS**

**PRESENTED ON**

**SEPTEMBER 19, 2006**

STATEMENT OF JOHN M. VANYUR  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMS DIVISION  
FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY  
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

September 19, 2006

Chairman Collins and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss the efforts the Bureau of Prisons is taking to ensure we are preventing the recruitment of terrorists and extremists in our Federal prisons.

Of the roughly 2.2 million incarcerated persons in the United States, the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) is responsible for the custody and care of 192,000 inmates confined in 113 Federal prisons and in facilities operated by private companies and by State and local governments. Our mission is to protect society by confining offenders in the controlled environments of prisons and community-based facilities that are safe, humane, cost-efficient, and appropriately secure; and to provide work and other self-improvement opportunities to assist offenders in becoming law-abiding citizens.

The BOP is committed to providing inmates with the opportunity to practice their faith while at the same time ensuring that Federal

prisoners are not radicalized or recruited for terrorist causes. The support that has been provided by the FBI, the agencies represented on the National Joint Terrorism Task Force (NJTTF), other components of the Department of Justice, and many other members of the law enforcement and intelligence communities has been invaluable in our efforts in this area.

We understand the importance of controlling and preventing the recruitment of inmates into terrorism. We also acknowledge that this is an evolving issue, especially as it relates to the relationships between terrorism, certain radical or extremist ideologies, and the penchant of those who adhere to these ideologies to recruit others to their positions.

We know that inmates are particularly vulnerable to radical recruitment and we must guard against the spread of terrorism and extremist ideologies. Our practices in institution security and inmate management are geared toward the prevention of any violence, criminal behavior, disruptive behavior, or other threats to institution security or public safety, including the radicalization of inmates.

Over the last several years, our agency has taken a number of significant measures, and we are actively engaged in several

ongoing initiatives to ensure that Federal inmates are not recruited to support radical organizations or terrorist groups. For example, we have eliminated most inmate organizations in order to control the influence that outside entities have on Federal inmates. We also have enhanced our information and monitoring systems, our intelligence gathering and sharing capabilities, and our identification and management of disruptive inmates.

For over a decade, we have been managing inmates determined to have ties to terrorism by confining them in secure conditions and by closely monitoring their communications. We have established a strategy that focuses on the appropriate levels of containment and isolation to ensure that inmates with terrorist ties do not have the opportunity to radicalize or recruit other inmates.

All inmates determined to have terrorist ties are clearly identified and tracked in our information systems. The most dangerous terrorists are confined under the most restrictive conditions allowed, and many of these inmates are housed in our most secure facility, the Administrative Maximum United States Penitentiary in Florence, Colorado.

We monitor and record all telephone communication (except attorney-client conversations) involving inmates with terrorist ties and, following established procedures, we share any relevant information with the FBI, the NJTTF, and other agencies. In addition, our institutions work closely with the local Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF) to share information and intelligence about these inmates.

The Bureau has worked diligently, particularly since 9/11, to enhance our intelligence gathering and sharing capabilities in order to ensure a seamless flow of intelligence information between our agency and other law enforcement and counter-terrorism agencies. We have two full-time employees assigned to the NJTTF to facilitate our involvement on this task force and to coordinate the exchange of intelligence related to corrections.

These two members of the NJTTF also manage the Correctional Intelligence Initiative (CII), a nationwide NJTTF special project involving correctional agencies at the Federal, State, and local levels, designed to detect, deter, and disrupt the radicalization and recruiting of inmates. This initiative involves training of correctional administrators by each local JTTF; exchange of intelligence; communicating best practices to local JTTFs in order to detect, deter, and disrupt radicalization; and

coordination of liaison and intelligence-sharing activities between local JTTFs and corrections agencies.

Most importantly, through the CII, intelligence regarding any attempts by inmates, religious providers, or others to radicalize any segment of the population is gathered and shared, and appropriate interdiction action is taken by the proper correctional authority.

In addition to containing and isolating inmates who could attempt to radicalize other inmates, we help inmates become less vulnerable to any such attempts.

Experts have identified the societal marginalization of inmates as a key factor in their becoming radicalized. The Bureau of Prisons provides inmates with a broad variety of programs that have been proven to assist in the development of key skills, thereby minimizing the likelihood of the inmates being marginalized.

The programs we provide include work in prison industries and other institution jobs, vocational training, education, substance abuse treatment, religious programs, and other skills-building and pro-social values programs.

Moreover, we are well aware of the important role religious programs can play in preparing inmates to successfully reintegrate into society following release from prison.

Religious programs and chaplaincy services are provided to the approximately 30 faiths represented within the Federal prison population. Within the constraints of security, we provide worship services, study of scripture and sacred writings, and religious workshops; and we make accommodations to facilitate observances of holy days. Full-time civil service chaplains in the Bureau of Prisons lead worship services and provide pastoral care and spiritual guidance to inmates, and they oversee the breadth of religious programs and monitor the accommodations provided by contract spiritual leaders and community volunteers. The overwhelming majority of inmates participate in religious programs in a positive, healthy, and productive way.

We screen all of our civil service staff, volunteers, and contractors to avoid hiring or contracting with anyone who would pose a threat to institution security. Each BOP civil service chaplain must meet all the requirements for employment as a Federal law enforcement officer, including a field investigation, criminal background check, reference check, drug screening, a pre-employment suitability interview, and a panel interview. In

addition, chaplains must meet requirements unique to their employment and the scope of their duties. Like all BOP employees, chaplains are strictly prohibited from using their position to condone, support, or encourage violence or other inappropriate behavior.

Our religious contractors and volunteers are also subject to a variety of security requirements prior to being granted access to the institution including: criminal background checks; law enforcement agency checks to verify places of residence and places of employment; a fingerprint check; gathering information from employers from over the previous 5 years; and drug testing.

The Bureau continues to work closely with the FBI and the NJTTF with regard to the screening of religious service providers. Information on staff chaplains and on contractors and volunteers (whether the contractor or volunteer is being considered to help provide religious services or not) is checked against databases supported by the FBI. We have also enhanced the supervision of programs and activities that take place in our chapels over the last 3 years; and we have trained nearly all our staff on recognizing the signs of potential radicalization.

Chairman Collins, this concludes my formal statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other Members of the Committee may have.