



THE INVESTIGATIVE PROJECT ON TERRORISM

IMAM TALIB EL-HAJJ ABDUR RASHID



Imam Talib El-Hajj Abdur Rashid visited the White House at least twice. He met with Paul Monteiro, Associate Director, White House Office of Public Engagement on June 8 2010 and with President Barack Obama on July 13, 2010.

Biography

Imam Talib has been the chief Imam of the Mosque of the Islamic Brotherhood in New York City since 1989.¹ Imam Talib is also the Amir [leader] of the Harlem Shura, chairman of the President of the Majlis Ash-Shura of New York, a member of the National Committee to Free Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin,² and Deputy Amir of the Muslim Alliance of North America (MANA).³ He was also a member of the advisory board of the Khalil Gibran Academy.⁴

According to The American Muslim website, Imam Talib advises interfaith coalitions in New York, like Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement, A Partnership of

¹Al-Hajj Talib Abdur-Rashid biography, The Huffington Post, available at <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/Al-Hajj%20Talib%20%E2%80%98Abdur-Rashid>

² Biography of Abdur-Rashid, Al-Hajj Talib, The American Muslim, Oct. 9, 2005, http://theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/abdur_rashid_al_hajj_talib

³ Muslim Alliance of North America Executive Committee list, available at <http://www.mana-net.org/subpage.php?ID=about>

⁴ Elizabeth Green, "Group Demands Firing of Arabic School Adviser," *New York Sun*, August 20, 2007. <http://www.nysun.com/new-york/group-demands-firing-of-arabic-school-adviser/60909/>

Faith in New York City, The Temple of Understanding, The Interfaith Center of New York, The N.Y.C. Dept. of Education Chancellors Interfaith Advisory Committee to the NYC Dept. of Education, and the Bertram Beck Institute on Religion and Poverty.⁵ Imam Talib has also been a Muslim Chaplain in New York since 1977.⁶ As a chaplain, he worked at “the Sing-Sing Correctional Facility in Ossining, New York for 11 years, and is currently a part-time employee for the New York City Department of Corrections.”⁷ He is a Muslim Consultative Network board member.⁸

He attended two White House meetings; June 8 and July 13, 2010, White House visitor logs show. In the June meeting, he was among 41 people meeting with White House Associate Director for Public Engagement Paul Monteiro. The next month, Talib was among 325 people to hear from President Obama. The White House calendar indicated the remarks were on a National HIV/AIDS Strategy.

Defense of Convicted Terrorists and Criminals

- At a press conference to call for the release of convicted terrorist **Sami Al-Arian**, Talib said:

“One tenth of the world’s prison population is in this one country, the United States of America. And it has long been a policy, as articulated by representatives of the United States government, that there are, as they say, ‘no political prisoners in America; rather, there are just people that have committed crimes.’ Well, in the case of Dr. Al-Arian, we have someone who has committed no crime other than to have perhaps a political view that differs from that of people ... And in America even that is not supposed to be a crime. Dr. Al-Arian’s case is one that should be of concern to every American, regardless of your faith or lack of faith, regardless of your political orientation.”⁹

- Imam Talib defended convicted cop-killer **Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin** to the *New York Amsterdam News* in May 2004:

⁵ Biography of Abdur-Rashid, Al-Hajj Talib, The American Muslim, Oct. 9, 2005, http://theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/abdur_rashid_al_hajj_talib

⁶ Imam Talib, Facebook biography, <http://www.facebook.com/imamtalib/info>

⁷ Biography of Abdur-Rashid, Al-Hajj Talib, The American Muslim, Oct. 9, 2005, http://theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/abdur_rashid_al_hajj_talib

⁸ MCN Board list, available at <http://web.archive.org/web/20090205005953/http://mcnny.org/Board.html> and <http://web.archive.org/web/20090203095626/http://mcnny.org/imam.html>

⁹ Press Conference to Call for the Release of Hunger Striking Palestinian Professor Sami Al-Arian, The Malcom X & Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center, New York, New York. April 15, 2008. Press release: <http://www.cair.com/ArticleDetails.aspx?mid1=777&&ArticleID=24579&&name=n&&currPage=1>

“The incarceration of Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin is the latest stage in a pattern of harassment, frame-ups and setups of him by the U.S. government.”¹⁰

And:

“The pattern stretches over approximately 40 years and is designed to neutralize his effectiveness as a leader to negate the unique dimension of his contributions to the struggle of oppressed peoples and a Muslim freedom fighter born and raised in America.”¹¹

- He also defended **Dr. Rafiq Sabir**, who is currently serving 25 years in prison for terrorism related offenses:

“Dr. Sabir was well-known here in Harlem and known, really, as a humanitarian physician.”¹²

Anti-Israel

- Although Talib called the Holocaust “one of the great tragedies of humanity, along with slavery, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Bosnia, and Rwanda,”¹³ he **defended President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s** stance on destroying Israel:

“But he [Imam Talib] said Mr. Ahmdinejad’s call for Israel’s destruction reflects a ‘sentiment born of the legitimate anger, frustration, and bitterness that is felt in many [parts of the Muslim World.]’ Mr. Abdur Rashid said hostility toward Israel in the Muslim world is due in part to Israel’s ‘ongoing injustice toward the Palestinian people.’”¹⁴

Attacks on American Law Enforcement and Democracy

- In a March 2012 blog, Imam Talib **attacked the NYPD** for alleged spying on Muslims:

“MUSLIM AMERICANS OF IMMIGRANT ORIGIN - WAKE UP and stop attempting to ignore the presence of the secret weapon in your midst - Muslim Americans of African descent, as a people. And when I say ‘secret

¹⁰ Yusef Abdus-Salaam, “Imams Call for End of Torture,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 2, 2004.

¹¹ Yusef Abdus-Salaam, “Imams Call for End of Torture,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 2, 2004.

¹² Jennifer Peltz, Tal Abbady and Peter Franceschina, “Doctor’s Associates Don’t See A Terrorist,” *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, June 5, 2005. http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/2005-06-05/news/0506050172_1_al-qaida-dr-rafiq-sabir-federal-investigators

¹³ Russell Berman, New York Muslim Leader Backs Iranian in Saying Holocaust is Exaggerated,” *New York Sun*, January 13, 2006. <http://www.nysun.com/new-york/new-york-muslim-leader-backs-iranian-in-saying/25814/>

¹⁴ Russell Berman, New York Muslim Leader Backs Iranian in Saying Holocaust is Exaggerated,” *New York Sun*, January 13, 2006. <http://www.nysun.com/new-york/new-york-muslim-leader-backs-iranian-in-saying/25814/>

weapon' I don't mean as terrorists. Have you noted that African Americans are the only 'native' Muslim ethnicity on the NYPD 'ancestries of interest' list?"¹⁵

- In that same blog post, Imam Talib **accused Muslims working with the NYPD as being collaborators:**

“MUSLIM APOLOGISTS FOR THESE NYPD POLICIES - WAKE UP! Don't sell yourself and the Ummah short by being a collaborationist. Muslim religious and community leaders who oppose these unjust policies are not naive nor mis-guided. If you think we are, then perhaps you are. This is not about you or even us. This is about freedom.”¹⁶

- Similarly, in another March 2012 blog post, Imam Talib **denounced Muslims who work with law enforcement:**

“...As for the collaborators and opportunists well, you know the type. During slavery in America they were called “house negroes”. During colonialism they were called ‘the boss’s man.’ At a time when the Muslim community is unifying to denounce injustice and those responsible for it, these men and a woman or two stand alone ,or else with the enemies of justice, supporting those whose need to be held accountable, and apologizing for those who should themselves be apologizing... So what do Muslim collaborationists and compromisers do? They kiss the ring of those in authority, kowtow, serve as mouth-pieces and apologists, and provide Ray Kelly and Peter King with the opportunity to say that they’re “meeting with Muslim leaders” while in actuality they are avoiding doing so. Those Muslim opportunists should be ashamed of themselves and make *tauba* (i.e. repent and make amends) for their words and deeds.”¹⁷

- Imam Talib **accused the American government of “setting people up”:**

“We don’t trust the American government and the way that it does things and sets people up,’ says Al-Hajj Talib ‘Abdur-Rashid, the imam of the Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood, a large congregation in Harlem. Imam ‘Abdur-Rashid points to slavery, generations of segregation and

¹⁵ “The Latest NYPD Expose: It’s Not Just the Muslims,” Imam Talib’s Blog, March 23, 2012, available at <http://imamtalib.blogspot.com/2012/03/latest-nypd-expose-its-not-just-muslims.html>

¹⁶ “The Latest NYPD Expose: It’s Not Just the Muslims,” Imam Talib’s Blog, March 23, 2012, available at <http://imamtalib.blogspot.com/2012/03/latest-nypd-expose-its-not-just-muslims.html>

¹⁷ “Stop Selling Out The Ummah! – Collaborators and Opportunists,” Imam Talib’s Blog, March 8, 2012, available at <http://imamtalib.blogspot.com/2012/03/stop-selling-out-ummah-part-1.html>

government investigations of Dr. King and other black heroes as the cause of the widespread skepticism.”¹⁸

- As a speaker at the American Muslim Council 2nd Annual Imam Conference on April 28, 2002, Imam Talib attacked American democracy:

“I believe it is vital that those in our position as Muslim people in America, what is our position? It is that of a Muslim religious minority in a land ruled by non-Muslims, according to public laws based on other than the Sharia and what I call a selective participatory Democracy. And what I mean by a selective participatory Democracy is a Democratic system that on the surface at least affords all citizens equality of access, expression and opportunity but below the surface of that on the very real level of practicality it operates according to the dynamics of race and class, and religion. **So the Democracy that exists here is doled out selectively.** You have a certain skin color, a certain level of money you get one level of Democracy. If you have another skin color and another level of money you get another level of Democracy. That’s how the participatory Democracy functions in reality, not on paper.”¹⁹

On Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay:

- “Imam Talib Abdur-Rashid, of MIB and chairman of the council's Justice Committee, said, ‘We believe that the recent revelation of abuses at the hands of U.S. Army personnel in both Camp Bucca and Abu Ghraib prisons in Iraq are directly related to a **long history of such human rights violations at home in America.**’
- “He added that most Americans ‘know little about the ugly **abusive side of American prison** incarceration.’ The Imam pointed out that two of the soldiers accused of abuses at **Ghraib** prison were employed as prison guards in civilian life. He also noted, ‘Imam **Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin**, the former H. ‘Rap’ Brown, was held just last year in Alabama under conditions similar to those in Guantanamo Bay.’”²⁰

¹⁸ Paul M. Barrett, “One Imam Traces Path of Islam in Black America,” *Wall Street Journal*, October 24, 2003, <http://online.wsj.com/article/0,,SB106694267937278700,00.html> , reprinted in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, <http://www.religionnewsblog.com/4820/one-imam-traces-path-of-islam-in-black-america>

¹⁹ AMC 2nd Annual Imam Conference. April 28, 2002. “The Role of Imam in Political Activities,” Alexandria, Va.

²⁰ Yusef Abdus-Salaam, “Imams Call for End of Torture,” *New York Amsterdam News*, June 2, 2004.