

# FORT HAMILTON ANTI-TERRORISM AWARENESS NEWSLETTER (APR 10)

The "Jihad Jane" phenomenon-with the recent arrest of two blonde American women converts on terrorism charges-raises serious national-security issues. But it's also the latest evidence of the rise of a dangerous cultural manifestation: the "jihadi wannabe," the disgruntled, disaffected, lonely, and bored sociopath for whom holy war has become a sort of alternative fantasy life. In some circles, waving the flag of militant Islam has become the latest expression of countercultural subversiveness.

Forensic psychiatrist Marc Sageman, a terrorism expert and former CIA case officer, calls it "jihadi cool." American Muslim lawyer Arsalan Iftikhar dubs these folks "jang bangers"-where jihad meets "gang bangers."

To me, as an American Muslim challenging extremist interpretations of Islam, it's especially troubling. Converts, such as the two American women arrested, Colleen Larose and Jamie Paulin-Ramirez-represent one market for jihadi fantasies. Some of the most notorious have included westerners jailed in connection with various jihad movements: "American Taliban" John Walker Lindh; "Shoe Bomber" Richard



Reid; "Dirty Bomber" Jose Padilla; and "Twentieth Hijacker" Zacarias Moussaoui. Often, jihadi wannabes try to out-Muslim Muslims. Take the case of Yvonne Ridley, a British journalist who converted to Islam after being captured by the Taliban crossing into Afghanistan after 9/11. She has become so hard core in her adherence to fundamentalist teachings that she refused to shake the hand of leading Egyptian Muslim cleric Sheikh Muhammad Tantawi when she met him in early 2006. Tantawi, who died earlier this month, scolded her, asking, what kind of Islam are they teaching you in Europe?

Muslims raised in America often seem focused on trying to prove they haven't sold out to secularism even though they have grown up in the West. They include Major Nidal Hassan, the Fort Hood shooter, and the five young men from Northern Virginia who jetted to Pakistan to fight the jihad, according to charges just filed against them by the government of Pakistan.

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