

# Homegrown terrorism focus of conference

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Newsday – by Kery Murakami



Rep. Peter King and several law enforcement officials said Wednesday that the next terrorist attack on the United States would probably come from homegrown terrorists rather than from foreign attackers. The shift, they said, makes it essential for police to enlist businesses and community members to be on the lookout for such plots.

Addressing more than 100 people at an anti-terrorism conference at Dowling College's Oakdale campus, King said the nation's heightened preparedness since the 9/11 attacks will make it "very difficult, if not impossible, for al-Qaida to carry out an attack from overseas."

King (R-Seaford) told the audience that al-Qaida has "metastasized," and is focusing on recruiting United States citizens. "The enemy lives among us," King told the audience of mostly law enforcement officials.

Michael Balboni, who oversaw New York's homeland security operations as Deputy Secretary for Public Safety from 2007 to 2009, agreed with the assessment. Citing a study by the Homeland Security Policy Institute at George Washington University, Balboni said there were 21 terrorism cases nationally involving either U.S.-born or naturalized citizens between 2001 and 2009. Between 2009 and 2011, he said there were 25.

Nassau Police Deputy Commissioner William Flanagan said the county had sent crime trend information to participating businesses since 2004 through the SPIN (Security/Police Information Network) program. Another program, Operation Safeguard, asks businesses to be on the lookout for suspicious activity such as the purchase of unusually large amounts of products that can be used to make explosives.

Suffolk County would like to increase the number of businesses in its version of the two programs, SCAN (Suffolk County Alert Network), said Mark White, Suffolk police's deputy chief of homeland security. The program was started in 2007. He said police would also step up efforts to encourage parents to be aware of what their children view on the Internet to prevent their possible radicalization.