



Fear, Inc. 2.0

The Islamophobia Network's Efforts to Manufacture
Hate in America

By Matthew Duss, Yasmine Taeb, Ken Gude, and Ken Sofer February 2015

Center for American Progress



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Introduction

At its core, the United States is a nation built on a few fundamental values. The values of freedom of religion and basic civil liberties are enshrined in the Bill of Rights and have been upheld time and time again by the U.S. Congress and courts. A basic respect for the rights of minority groups throughout the country—whether these minorities are ethnic, religious, political, geographic, or social—are inherent in the founding principles of the United States. All Americans—progressives and conservatives alike—share these core values that have formed the backbone of an inclusive, multidimensional society for nearly 250 years.

But the journey toward a more perfect union has not always been smooth. During World War II, for instance, Japanese Americans were unjustly interned because they were seen as “others.” In 1960, many opposed the election of President John F. Kennedy because they erroneously believed that his Catholic faith meant that his first loyalty would be to the Pope rather than the Constitution—and that if the two ever came in conflict, he would take orders from the Pope.

More recently, American Muslims in the United States have been targeted, profiled, or seen as suspect because of their faith.

In 2011, the Center for American Progress published “Fear, Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America”¹ in order to identify and expose the organizations, scholars, pundits, and activists comprising a tightly linked network that spread misinformation and hateful propaganda about American Muslims and Islam. The report found that seven charitable foundations spent \$42.6 million between 2001 and 2009 to support the spread of anti-Muslim rhetoric.² The efforts of a small cadre of funders and misinformation experts were amplified by an echo chamber of the religious right, conservative media, grassroots organizations, and politicians who sought to introduce a fringe perspective on American Muslims into the public discourse.

In the three years since “Fear, Inc.” shined a light on the Islamophobia network and exposed the network’s key members, a number of them have been marginalized by the mainstream media and politicians. For example, the American Conservative Union publically reprimanded misinformation expert Frank Gaffney and made it clear that he is no longer welcome at their annual Conservative Political Action Conference.³ Conservative politicians from Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) to former presidential candidate Mitt Romney have pushed back against the “sinister accusations” of the Islamophobia network.⁴ And the anti-Muslim caucus in Congress took a huge hit by losing some of its loudest members, such as Reps. Allen West (R-FL) and Michele Bachmann (R-MN).

Unfortunately, in both the United States and abroad, some have seized on CAP’s 2011 report as evidence to support their own negative perceptions about the United States, claiming that the United States is indeed hostile to Muslims and Islam. To be clear, the Islamophobia network that CAP identified in 2011 is not indicative of mainstream American views. In fact, the views of anti-Muslim actors stand in stark contrast to the values of most Americans. The findings of the 2011 report, as well as this report, should not be misconstrued as a sign of widespread public antipathy toward the Muslim community in the United States, although concerns remain about the rise of anti-Muslim attitudes in the United States during the past few years. Instead, these two reports reveal how a well-funded, well-organized fringe movement can push discriminatory policies against a segment of American society by intentionally spreading lies while taking advantage of moments of public anxiety and fear. We are seeing this dynamic play out yet again in the aftermath of the attack on French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, as former elected officials and certain media commentators have used the terror attack as an opportunity to call for increased profiling of the American Muslim community.

Although the first report succeeded in identifying and marginalizing many members of the Islamophobia network, a number of these misinformation experts are still able to disproportionately influence public policy in America. From hate-group leader David Yerushalmi’s impact on anti-Sharia legislation across the country to Islamophobe William Gawthrop’s influence on the FBI’s training manuals, it is clear that the well-funded and well-connected individuals within the Islamophobia network still have the ability to promote bad public policies that ultimately affect all Americans.⁵

Islamophobia in the United States takes many shapes and forms. It takes the form of a general climate of fear and anger toward American Muslims, as seen in the “civilization jihad” narrative,⁶ the religious right’s rhetoric, and the biased media coverage of the Boston Marathon bombing. It comes out in cynical political efforts to capitalize on this climate of fear, as seen in state-level anti-Sharia bills introduced across the country and in far-right politicians’ grandstanding. And perhaps most dangerously, it manifests itself in institutional policies that view American Muslims as a threat, as seen in the FBI training manuals that profile Islam as a religion of violence.⁷

But while the Islamophobia network has launched a variety of attacks on the American Muslim community during the past several years, the general public has also been more vigilant, and both progressives and conservatives have effectively rejected many of these anti-Muslim efforts. The public pushback—from New York City to Lansing, Michigan, and from Boston to Birmingham, Alabama—has been crucial in keeping the Islamophobia network where it belongs—on the fringes of American society. And while anti-Muslim groups continue their efforts incessantly, there has been a rise in religious and interfaith groups pushing back against Islamophobia.

Although the American public largely dismisses such prejudiced views, the Islamophobia network’s efforts to target American Muslim communities remain significant and continue to erode America’s core values of religious pluralism, civil rights, and social inclusion. The rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, or ISIS, offers the Islamophobia network a new opportunity to leverage unrelated geopolitical events in order to create a caricature of Islam, foment public anxiety, and push discriminatory policies against American Muslims. The Islamophobia network’s new effort to equate mainstream American Muslims with the perverted brand of Islam promoted by ISIS is a reminder of the ongoing vigilance needed to push back against the anti-Muslim fringe.

This report examines several key elements of the Islamophobia network, including:

- The civilization jihad narrative and theories of Muslim Brotherhood infiltration of the U.S. government
- The Islamophobia network’s influence among the religious right and faith groups combating anti-Muslim sentiment

- The impact of the Islamophobia network on law-enforcement training
- The response to the Boston Marathon bombing and the narrative of Islamic extremism
- Politically motivated Islamophobia and pushback by mainstream conservatives

The first “Fear, Inc.” report sought to expose elements of the Islamophobia network by giving the mainstream public the information it needed to refute the claims and distortions made by the network’s misinformation experts. This report identifies the Islamophobia network’s ongoing efforts to promote policies that violate and contradict core American values and interests. The defense of these core values remains ongoing. As this report demonstrates, it only takes one individual with disproportionate influence to negatively affect the treatment of an entire group of American citizens.

Chapter 1: Civilization jihad

During an April 14, 2014, episode of “Fox & Friends,” host Steve Doocy introduced Allen West—former Republican representative from Florida and conservative firebrand—by noting Allen’s view that “radical Islamists are busy building a voting bloc to sneak their political agenda into the American system.”¹ According to West, radical Muslims across the United States are voting to “institutionalize policies that favor them” over other Americans. Their ultimate goal, he explained, is to “destroy America from within using a civilizational jihad, and that’s exactly what you see happening.”² West didn’t pull this notion out of thin air.

As discussed in the Center for American Progress’s 2011 report, “Fear, Inc.,” the Center for Security Policy, or CSP, is a key source of information for the Islamophobia network. In June 2012, CSP posted a 10-part video series, “The Muslim Brotherhood In America,” which essentially lays out their entire unfounded theory of the threat posed by American Muslims.³ The video series also served as the main source for former Rep. Michele Bachmann’s (R-MN) 2012 witch hunt against Huma Abedin, an American Muslim and long-time aide to Hillary Clinton; this incident is detailed later in this report.⁴ In the video, Frank Gaffney—CSP’s president, a Reagan administration defense official, and the most visible proponent of Islamophobia in Washington—describes American Muslims, whom he collectively refers to as “Islamists,” as “a threat as serious as any America has ever encountered.”⁵ Gaffney imagines a Muslim Brotherhood conspiracy that seeks to infiltrate U.S. institutions and thereby bring the U.S. populace under the authority of Islamic religious law, known as Sharia, which he defines as “a totalitarian Islamic doctrine.”⁶ For an in-depth refutation of this interpretation of Islamic Sharia law, see CAP’s 2011 paper, “Understanding Sharia Law.”⁷

Frank Gaffney

Frank Gaffney is one of the main players in the Islamophobia network and the president of the far-right Center for Security Policy, or CSP, which advocates for aggressive and conservative U.S. foreign policies.⁸

Gaffney is one of the lead engineers of the anti-Sharia movement, and he has been a proponent of the idea that American Muslims seek to impose a totalitarian Islamic regime on the United States. In 2010, he served as an associate author for CSP's sensational and highly inflammatory report, "Shariah: The Threat to America."⁹ Gaffney is closely linked to David Yerushalmi, who authored the model anti-Sharia bill, which would make adherence to Sharia "a felony punishable by 20 years in prison."¹⁰ This template anti-Sharia legislation was used in state legislatures across the country with the intent of stigmatizing Muslims and creating hysteria about the nonexistent threat of Sharia law.¹¹ Yerushalmi also serves as general counsel to the CSP.

Gaffney has even launched allegations against influential figures in the Republican Party, including tax reform advocate Grover Norquist and Suhail Khan, a former political appointee in the George W. Bush administration. Gaffney's unsubstantiated claims that Norquist and Khan are agents of the Muslim Brotherhood earned him the condemnation of the American Conservative Union, or ACU. He was subsequently banned from the organization's annual Conservative Political Action Conference, or CPAC.¹² In an exclusive interview with the authors of this report, Khan said "Gaffney has definitely been marginalized in the conservative movement. While he's tried to smear the reputation of others with his fear mongering, he has only managed to harm his own image."¹³

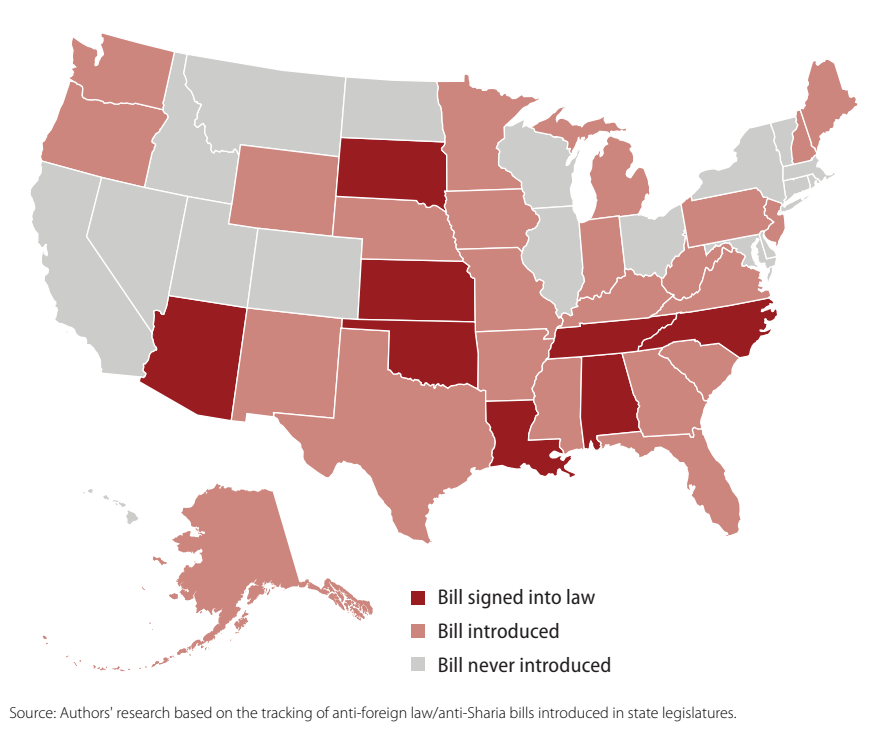
In June 2012, CSP posted a 10-part video series, "The Muslim Brotherhood in America," based on the unfounded theory that American Muslims are using engagement in civic and political society to infiltrate local, state, and federal governments in order to "destroy America from within using a civilizational jihad."¹⁴ The video series served as the main source for former Rep. Bachmann's witch hunt against Huma Abedin.¹⁵

In 2012, CSP's annual revenue was more than \$3.2 million, and Gaffney's annual salary as the organization's president was nearly \$300,000. CSP received more than \$7 million from donors in the Islamophobia network between 2001 and 2012. In addition to funding from donors in the network, between 2008 and 2012, Gaffney's CSP also received \$300,000 from Daniel Pipes's Middle East Forum, a controversial far-right think tank that is known for its anti-Islam views and hawkish foreign policy recommendations.¹⁶

FIGURE 1

Mapping the anti-Sharia bills

Thirty-two states have introduced legislation to ban the nonexistent threat of Sharia law from being used in their courtrooms



Fortunately, conservatives have somewhat marginalized Gaffney over the past several years. The ACU condemned Gaffney and prohibited him from attending the group's annual CPAC due to his outrageous allegations that ACU board members Grover Norquist and Suhail Khan are part of a Muslim Brotherhood conspiracy.¹⁷ Gaffney, however, still enjoys a multimillion-dollar budget at CSP and remains a popular featured speaker at the annual Values Voter Summit and other prominent conservative venues such as the Heritage Foundation.¹⁸ Despite his fringe and debunked views, Gaffney is also still invited to testify on Capitol Hill.¹⁹

Much of the basis for Gaffney’s presentation—particularly his claim that America is under threat from a widespread Islamist “influence operation”—is based on a single document entered into evidence during the 2008 federal trial of the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development. At the time, the foundation was the largest Islamic charity in the United States and had been accused by prosecutors of financing terrorist operations.²⁰ Several employees of the charity were eventually convicted of funneling money to the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas.²¹ The document—titled “Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal for the Group in North America,” or the 1991 Explanatory Memorandum—has been utilized repeatedly by members of the Islamophobia network to suggest that American Muslim organizations serve as the vanguard of an Islamist plot to take over America.²²

The memorandum, authored by Muslim Brotherhood activist Muhammad Akram, describes how the goal of the Muslim Brotherhood in the United States is to find ways to undermine and sabotage American civilization from within.²³ It’s a damning document, and it makes clear that there are, in fact, radical Islamist elements with the goal of destroying America. The document, however, does not make at all clear how widespread that goal actually is.

As demonstrated in CAP’s “Fear, Inc.” report, rather than exposing a wide-ranging plot, this document was written by a single member of the Muslim Brotherhood seeking outside support and very likely intending to boost his own credentials and contacts.²⁴ According to George Washington University professor and Muslim Brotherhood expert Nathan Brown, “Nobody has ever produced any evidence that the document was more than something produced by the daydream of one enthusiast.”²⁵ Yet this document is repeatedly cited as ironclad proof that the various groups mentioned in it were conspiring to overthrow the U.S. government.²⁶

One of the 10 segments comprising Gaffney’s video series, titled “Civilization Jihad,” is devoted to the conspiracy theory that the Muslim Brotherhood uses “seven stealthy techniques” as part of a “civilization jihad” designed to destroy America “from within.”²⁷ These supposed “stealthy techniques” are either imagined by Gaffney or are innocuous activities Gaffney portrays as insidious efforts to subvert the Constitution, even though the activities themselves are protected speech and/or protected religious practices under the First Amendment. While Gaffney attempts to distinguish between what he calls “Sharia-compliant Muslims”—by which he means the supposed civilization jihadists—and moderate Muslims, many of the activities he cites as evidence of the former’s influence are actually the latter’s innocuous practices.²⁸ (see text box below)

Examples of so-called civilization jihad

- Gaffney presented constitutionally protected activities—such as advocating for Eid al-Fitr as a paid holiday, requesting time off to pray, and building mosques or Islamic centers—as “stealthy techniques” to achieve “favored treatment or concessions.”²⁹ For example, Gaffney and his allies dubbed the Park51 community center that opened in downtown Manhattan the “Ground Zero Mosque,” claiming that its construction was actually an act of Muslim triumphalism for the 9/11 attacks.³⁰
- The Center for Security Policy claims that the Muslim Brotherhood is “subverting the educational system” by “penetrating public schools systems,” “establishing Islamic charter schools,” “skewing textbooks to put Islam in a favorable light and demean other faiths,” and “using curricula to proselytize” in public schools across the United States.³¹
- The 10-part video presentation cites Sharia-compliant finance, which prohibits the earning of interest, as “one of the most insidious and successful instruments of civilization jihad.” It also cites isolated discussions of Sharia law during legal disputes in U.S. courts as evidence of a widespread infiltration of the U.S. legal system.³²

Although Gaffney devotes 2 of the 10 parts of “The Muslim Brotherhood in America” to how the Muslim Brotherhood has allegedly infiltrated the Obama administration, he reserves most of his contempt for fellow conservatives. Four parts of the series are dedicated to Gaffney’s assertion that one of the Muslim Brotherhood’s “most successful influence operations” is “its penetration and manipulation of the Republican Party and the conservative movement in America.”³³

That assertion would probably surprise most Republicans and conservatives. Gaffney links the alleged infiltration of the conservative movement to communism, saying “the influence operations tradecraft employed by the Muslim Brotherhood has been well-honed by previous totalitarian ideologues.” Their tactics, Gaffney argues, “seem to be lifted directly from the playbook of the Communist International and KGB. This is, as the Soviets used to say, no accident, comrade.”³⁴

Frank Gaffney’s “civilization jihad” conspiracy theory relies almost entirely on the 1991 Explanatory Memorandum—or, as many have described it, on “the day-dream of one enthusiast.”³⁵ To claim that the memorandum is proof of a vast Muslim Brotherhood plot to take over America—and that mainstream American Muslim groups are connected to this plot—is a clear misinterpretation and distortion of the facts.

Chapter 2: Islamophobia and the religious right

Elements of the religious right have increasingly dabbled with more explicit anti-Islamic rhetoric. Representing a key constituency for the Republican Party, fundamentalist Christians have been able to push Islamophobic discourse into mainstream GOP politics, with segments of the religious right have been at the forefront of fear mongering about Muslims. They are often motivated by outlandish narratives claiming that Muslims seek to take advantage of America’s tradition of religious tolerance and secularism in order to gain a domineering foothold in the United States. Through their clash of civilizations discourse and even messianic ideas of fulfilling prophecy, religious right leaders have managed to make stigmatization of Muslims politically valuable—ensuring that many members of the religious right support Islamophobia.

2014 Values Voter Summit

The annual Values Voter Summit, or VVS—co-sponsored by the Family Research Council, Liberty Counsel, the American Family Association Action, and other religious right advocacy groups—is where the far-right religious views of conservative grassroots activists meet the presidential aspirations of Republican candidates.¹ The forum, traditionally held in the fall in Washington, D.C., emphasizes so-called religious liberty but certainly not when in reference to the adherents of Islam.

At the 2014 Values Voter Summit—a forum that describes itself as preserving “the bedrock values of traditional marriage, religious liberty, sanctity of life and limited government”²—participants heard from many of the architects and amplifiers of the Islamophobia network, including anti-Muslim activist Brigitte Gabriel, the Center for Security Policy President Frank Gaffney, then Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN), former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee (R), and conservative radio show hosts Mark Levin and Glenn Beck.³

During her remarks, former Rep. Bachmann called for a war on Islam, claiming it to be a religion that spawns extremist groups such as ISIS. She said:

We have jihadists who are subscribing to this radical ideology that dying in the name of Islam gets them to heaven. This is spiritual warfare. And what we need to do is defeat Islamic jihad. Sadly, President Obama has the wrong prescription. He even fails to acknowledge their motivations for bringing about jihad. Yes, Mr. President, it is about Islam. ... And I believe if you have an evil of an order of this magnitude, you take it seriously. ... You declare war on it, you don't dance around it. Just like the Islamic State has declared war on the United States of America.⁴

Bachmann wasn't the only Values Voter Summit speaker to take the opportunity to spur anti-Muslim and anti-Islam sentiments. Mark Levin, radio host and conservative firebrand, called outgoing Attorney General Eric Holder a "coward because he won't talk about Islam."⁵ Brigitte Gabriel, a notorious anti-Muslim activist, spoke of "the cancer of Islamic barbarism" and claimed that "radical Islamists" constitute 15 percent to 25 percent of Muslims worldwide, an unsubstantiated figure that the Islamophobia network frequently uses.⁶ Presidential hopeful Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) referred to Muslim-majority countries such as Egypt and Pakistan as "haters of Christianity" and called for an end to all foreign aid to "Islamic radicals in Syria, Egypt, and elsewhere."⁷

During his remarks at the summit, the former Republican governor of Arkansas, Mike Huckabee, who has referred to Muslims as "uncorked animals,"⁸ urged the United States to make clear its position in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "When it comes down to the battle between the descendants of Ishmael [Muslims] and descendants of Isaac [Jews] ... we will stand with those who stand for biblical truth and liberty and that is not something we will ever apologize for or ever be ashamed. We will stand with the nation of Israel."⁹

There was, in fact, no shortage of Muslim and Islam bashing at the 2014 Values Voter Summit. Gary Bauer—a former GOP presidential candidate and president of American Values, a religious right advocacy group—said President Barack Obama has "more [interest] in defending the reputation of Islam than he does in saving the lives of Christians."¹⁰ These outlandish remarks prompted a standing ovation.¹¹ Bauer also had some advice for the next Republican presidential nominee saying if that person has "a heart and a brain," he will tell President Obama that "defending Islam" is not "in his job description."¹²

2013 Values Voter Summit

At the 2013 Values Voter Summit, participants also heard from many of the leading voices in the Islamophobia network. Participants attending the session titled “Is It Too Late To Reclaim America?” heard a lecture by Arthur Ally, founder of The Timothy Plan, a co-sponsor of VVS and a mutual fund firm where investments are screened to “promote biblically responsible investing.”¹³ But Ally wasn’t there to talk about biblically responsible investing; instead, he came to talk about Satan’s plan to destroy America.

According to Ally, Satan uses three channels to accomplish America’s downfall: one is communism; another is the emergent church; and the third is Islam.¹⁴ Ally told the audience that Islam was like communism and Satan uses both in the same way. Communism is “a godless form of government,” said Ally, who then pivoted to Islam. “It’s not a religion. It’s a movement to dominate the world under the guise of religion.”¹⁵

To educate his audience on Islam, Ally distributed compact discs of a sermon by Pastor Paul Blair, titled “By Whose Standard? The Islamic Strategy to Overthrow America.”¹⁶ In the sermon, Blair, a former NFL football player turned culture warrior, argues that the Bible is the “standard of absolute truth” and the only cornerstone of law in America.¹⁷ Blair contended that, in contrast, Islam denies the deity of Jesus Christ, the basis of the only American faith, Christianity. He goes on to say that “our rule of law in America” came from “God’s law,” and as such, Islam “is not compatible with the Constitution.” The goal of Islam, says Blair, is to “overthrow America.”¹⁸

And just like at the 2014 summit, the 2013 summit saw views such as Ally’s and Blair’s share the dais with leading politicians, some of whom will most likely be contenders for the Republican presidential nomination in 2016, including Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX), Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL), and Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY). As mentioned previously, many of these political leaders express views on Islam that are drawn from the same well of religious sentiment: that America is a Christian nation founded on biblical “truths” and that Christianity in America and around the world is under threat by Islam.

Paul Blair: Portrait of an anti-Islam pastor

Paul Blair, the pastor whose sermon was distributed at both the 2013 and 2014 Values Voter Summits, may not be a household name. But his views get disseminated through events such as VVS, Tea Party and conservative political meetings, and religious right conferences, where likely many well-intentioned individuals, including devout Christians, are exposed to misleading caricatures and false depictions of Islam. These anti-Muslim themes are repeated in conservative media, helping to shape conservative attitudes about Islam, even as policymakers, legislators, and judges reject efforts to restrict the civil liberties of Muslims in the United States.

Blair's opposition to the expansion of a mosque in Edmond, Oklahoma, for example, was heralded by the Clarion Project, formerly the Clarion Fund, which is the nonprofit group behind the anti-Muslim film "Obsession: Radical Islam's War Against the West." This film was distributed to more than 28 million swing-state voters before the 2008 presidential election.¹⁹ As chronicled in the first "Fear, Inc." report, the film featured many of the misinformation experts of the Islamophobia network.²⁰ Ryan Mauro of the Clarion Project lauded Blair's efforts to stop what Blair termed a "Muslim Brotherhood mosque."²¹ Blair's theory of how the mosque was connected to the Muslim Brotherhood is based on discredited claims about the Explanatory Memorandum, which is detailed in the "Civilization jihad" chapter of this report. His theory appears to be drawn directly from the claims made by Frank Gaffney, founder of the Center for Security Policy.²²

Blair, whose biography does not claim any formal training in theology,²³ promotes his own four-part lecture series, "Islam 101."²⁴ Blair is one of the original 33 pastors who participated in "Pulpit Freedom Sunday," an initiative of Alliance Defending Freedom, a religious right legal firm formerly known as the Alliance Defense Fund.²⁵ Pulpit Freedom Sunday is an effort that started in September 2008 to challenge the Internal Revenue Service ban on clergy endorsing political candidates from the pulpit.²⁶ In 2008, Blair endorsed Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) in his presidential bid as the GOP nominee from his pulpit.²⁷ In 2010, Blair again took to the pulpit to throw his support behind a political candidate, this time endorsing Oklahoma Republican gubernatorial candidate Mary Fallin, which drew a complaint from Americans United for the Separation of Church and State.²⁸ In 2014, the number of pastors participating in Pulpit Freedom Sunday grew to 1,800.²⁹

Blair is also a member of the Black Robed Regiment, a coalition of pastors organized by Chuck Baldwin, a pastor, activist, and radio host who was the 2008 presidential nominee of the far-right Constitution Party.³⁰ Baldwin established the organization in 2007 as a defense against a "tyrannical" federal government, which is "becoming more egregious, more unconscionable, more unconstitutional."³¹

Blair's Reclaiming America for Christ and Reclaiming Oklahoma for Christ events regularly draw several elected state officials.³² He also speaks to local Tea Party groups, the John Birch Society, and the Oklahoma Conservative Political Action Committee, which supports state legislators who are constitutionalists and who "oppose expansive government and promote liberty, free market economics, and Judeo-Christian standards."³³

Blair's project has spread beyond Oklahoma. In Missouri, members of the Reclaiming Missouri for Christ caused the Al-Salam Day School, a Muslim elementary school in Ballwin, Missouri, to shut down for a day when the anti-Muslim group leafleted outside the building. "The only way to heaven is through Jesus," said one member of the group. "We believe Jesus is God, and you don't believe Jesus is God," said another.³⁴

In a 2011 video testimonial, Blair had nothing but praise for the John Birch Society, the virulently anti-communist organization that was prominent in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s but has since faded into near obscurity. In the video, he called the group "a wonderful source of information and activism for people who need to know the truth about America's incredible heritage, about the foundation of the Constitution, and the necessity of us to return to constitutional government here in America."³⁵ When Blair ran unsuccessfully for the Oklahoma State Senate in 2012, the Birch Society's magazine, *The New American*, promoted his candidacy.³⁶

Exploring the attitudes of ideologues and self-appointed "experts" such as Blair helps explain how the propaganda disseminated by an Islamophobe such as Gaffney is absorbed and recycled by grassroots activists. This is why anti-Muslim sentiment continues to animate some grassroots conservatives and why some politicians continue to exploit those attitudes to generate fear over what they portray as threats to America—particularly what they claim is the country's Christian heritage.

While the VVS presents itself as a conference about policy, the anti-Muslim elements of past summits did not focus on legislation such as efforts across the country to enact anti-Sharia legislation in the states—efforts that have largely failed. Instead, VVS conferences serve to further the secondary goal of the anti-Sharia movement: to fuel anti-Muslim sentiment. David Yerushalmi—the lawyer who is largely responsible for the movement and who drafted the model anti-Sharia legislation used by activists across the country—said the goal is to shape public attitude and is not about legal substance.³⁷ Speaking of the anti-Sharia legislation, Yerushalmi

told *The New York Times* in a 2011 interview, “If this thing passed in every state without any friction, it would not have served its purpose. ... The purpose was heuristic—to get people asking this question, ‘What is Shariah?’”³⁸

The Islamophobia network, through the influence it has garnered with conservative fundamentalist groups, is sure to affect public attitudes and, to a degree, the 2016 presidential election—particularly in the Republican primary. Efforts to appeal to an increasingly conservative base create the potential for a Republican primary dominated by hostile views toward Islam, with candidates seeking to attract voters by promoting hawkish foreign policy agendas or voicing support for efforts to ban Sharia law.

Conservative leaders such as Tea Party-favorite Sen. Cruz have already shown how enthusiastically they are willing to court the support of such fringe voters and groups. Cruz has worked closely with Frank Gaffney and has invited Gaffney to give testimony on Capitol Hill.³⁹ Cruz has also participated in the “Uninvited II” conference—a national security summit filled with anti-Muslim activists, politicians, and commentators who are generally excluded from the Conservative Political Action Conference. The Uninvited II conference featured Gaffney as the moderator.⁴⁰ And in 2012, while a candidate for U.S. Senate, Cruz didn’t shy away from endorsing Gaffney and company’s creeping Sharia conspiracy theories.⁴¹ In response to a question at a candidate forum about whether Sharia law is a problem in the United States, Cruz responded “Sharia law is an enormous problem.”⁴²

Similar to the past few years, religious right groups will likely produce more anti-Muslim films and documentaries in the lead up to the 2016 elections in an effort to instill fear in the electorate and drum up support for more conservative candidates. In November 2014, the Christian Action Network, or CAN, released its latest film “Europe’s Last Stand/America’s Final Warning.” According to Martin Mawyer, the founder of CAN and the film’s writer and director, the film “examines the Islamic invasion of Western Europe and its threat to European democracy, freedoms, culture and history” and also serves as a “warning” to the United States. The film claims that “This Islamic invasion – which we are witnessing on its rampage through Europe and the Middle East – is headed here to America!”⁴³

Islamophobia will remain outside the mainstream, and as detailed later in this report, the embrace of it has sometimes proven politically costly for candidates.⁴⁴ But it is nonetheless a political point of view that will likely continue to be an influential force among the most hardline and conservative elements of U.S. society in the near future.

The Family Research Council and FRC Action

The Family Research Council, or FRC, and FRC Action, the group's advocacy arm, are the main sponsors of the Values Voter Summit.⁴⁵ In 2012, the FRC named Lt. Gen. William G. "Jerry" Boykin its executive vice president.⁴⁶ Boykin, a former Pentagon official who described the War on Terror as a battle against Satan,⁴⁷ was one of Gaffney's co-authors on his sensationalistic and misleading report, "Shariah: The Threat to America."⁴⁸

In a June 2003 speech to a church in Oregon, Boykin said Islamic extremists hate the United States "because we're a Christian nation, because our foundation and roots are Judeo-Christian and the enemy is a guy named Satan."⁴⁹ Civil and human rights organizations, mainstream commentators, and elected officials, including former Sen. Joe Lieberman (I-CT), denounced Boykin's remarks.⁵⁰ Similarly, Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) and 26 members of the U.S. House of Representatives co-sponsored House Resolution 419, which condemned Boykin's "religiously intolerant remarks" and called on President George W. Bush to "clearly censure and reassign Lieutenant General Boykin,"⁵¹ who was serving as deputy assistant secretary for intelligence at the Pentagon.⁵²

In March 2013, Boykin spoke at the 30th International Prophecy Conference, a gathering organized by Joe VanKoevering, pastor of Gateway Christian Center in St. Petersburg, Florida. VanKoevering also runs the website, God's News Behind the News, which describes itself as a "prophecy resource for the world." VanKoevering has suggested that the Antichrist will be Muslim and will be the Mahdi, or the messiah of some Islamic theology.⁵³

The theme of the conference was "Israel, the Church, and the Last Days."⁵⁴ In Boykin's presentation to the conference, he maintained that Israel is "the epicenter of everything we see unfolding in the world," where "the last battle will be fought, where God will finally destroy his enemies. Life is about warfare."⁵⁵ The Book of Revelation, said Boykin, "gives such a vivid picture of Jesus Christ coming back riding a white horse in a blood-stained white robe, leading a mighty army to destroy his enemies." Those enemies, according to Boykin, are Muslims. He maintained that Islam's fundamental objectives are to "establish this global caliphate, this superstate," "establish Sharia," and destroy Israel.⁵⁶

American Family Association Action

AFA Action, another Values Voter Summit sponsor, is the advocacy arm of the American Family Association, or AFA, which describes itself as a source of “information and inspiration in resisting the moral decline and secularization of our nation.”⁵⁷ Bryan Fischer—the former director of issues analysis for AFA and a radio host for its affiliated American Family Radio—has a long history of anti-Muslim statements.⁵⁸ “From a Christian standpoint, from a New Testament standpoint, there’s no question that Muslims are worshipping a demon. Allah is a demon God,” said Fischer during a 2012 broadcast.⁵⁹

Like others in the Islamophobia network, Fischer makes no distinction between moderate and radical Islam and argues that American Muslims have no First Amendment protections.⁶⁰ In an October 2014 tweet promoting one of his videos, Fischer wrote, “We should treat Islam like the Ebola virus.”⁶¹

In response to comedian Bill Maher’s September 2014 remarks that most Muslims believe “humans deserve to die for merely holding a different idea” and that the Muslim community has “too much in common with ISIS,”⁶² Fischer wrote the following in a column for the AFA blog, *The Stand*: “It’s sobering to realize that this comedian has a much more realistic view of our enemy than our president, the man who is in charge of protecting us from Islamic fundamentalists.”⁶³

On the 11th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, attacks, Fischer wrote in a column for *Renew America*, “The threat to our freedoms comes not from radical Islam but from Islam itself.” He suggested barring immigration from Muslim majority countries and barring Muslims from serving in the U.S. military. “Until we are given a foolproof means of detecting dangerous Muslims and distinguishing them from the rest, simple prudence dictates this course of action,” wrote Fischer.⁶⁴

In early 2015, a number of mainstream conservative and evangelical groups heavily criticized the Republican National Committee, or RNC, for organizing a trip to Israel sponsored by AFA.⁶⁵ Said Noble, managing editor of an evangelical magazine and professor at Oklahoma Baptist University, said of the trip, “There are a lot of conservative evangelical groups that the RNC can work with ... that are not extreme and hurtful and un-Christian.”⁶⁶

Liberty Counsel and Liberty Counsel Action

Liberty Counsel, the Christian right legal firm, and Liberty Counsel Action, its advocacy arm, are also Values Voter Summit sponsors.⁶⁷ One of Liberty Counsel's projects is the annual Awakening Conference, which regularly features radical religious right leaders and Islamophobes such as Gaffney, Boykin, Bachmann, and arguably the most well-known anti-Muslim activist, Pamela Geller.⁶⁸ The annual Awakening Conference is organized by the Liberty Counsel and promoted by the Freedom Federation, which is comprised of several religious right organizations that espouse anti-Islam sentiments, including the American Family Association, Concerned Women for America, and Eagle Forum.⁶⁹ As detailed by the Southern Poverty Law Center's Hatewatch blog, the conference "brings together economic conservatives, national security hawks and stars of the anti-gay – and increasingly anti-Muslim – religious right to address the future of America."⁷⁰

Mathew Staver, Liberty Counsel's founder and chairman, is an attorney and dean of the law school at Liberty University, which was established by Moral Majority founder, Jerry Falwell. Staver, whose Liberty Counsel purports to defend and protect religious liberty, does not seem to believe that Muslims are entitled to the same constitutional protections as other Americans. Upon learning that the conservative law firm Becket Fund for Religious Liberty funded a religious liberty clinic at Stanford University Law School,⁷¹ Staver promptly raised questions about "whether or not there will be much emphasis placed on advancing the Muslim cause." Islam, he told the American Family Association's news site, One News Now, "is a political ideology" and therefore not protected by the First Amendment.⁷²

Evangelical writer Warren Throckmorton discredited Staver's assertion with a lengthy quote from Thomas Jefferson, who wrote that in drafting the Bill of Rights, the framers rejected an amendment that referred to Jesus Christ as the "holy author of our religion." Jefferson interpreted this as "proof that they mean to comprehend, within the mantle of its protection, the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and the Mahometan [Islam], the Hindoo, and infidel of every denomination."⁷³

Concerned Women for America

Concerned Women for America, or CWA, founded in 1979, has long been involved in anti-gay and anti-abortion political activity.⁷⁴ But in 2013, the group announced its decision to make one of its core issues of concern about the “threat of global terrorism and the movement in the Middle East to squelch the nation of Israel” and “increased anti-Israel sentiment within our government.”⁷⁵

CWA has endorsed the “creeping Sharia” conspiracy theory and has claimed that “Islam is more than a religion; it is a military strategy and a political and socio-economic system.”⁷⁶ The group has recorded a podcast with Tom Lynch, the director of Mission Advancement for the Thomas More Law Center. During the podcast, titled “Confronting the threat of Islam,” Lynch claimed the goal of Islam is to “establish an Islamic nation under Allah and sharia law.”⁷⁷ Thomas More Law Center is a Christian right law firm that previously filed a lawsuit on behalf of Pastor Terry Jones—the pastor who burned Qurans—against the city of Dearborn, Michigan, for forcing the pastor to sign an indemnification agreement before Jones planned to speak in the city in 2012.⁷⁸

In October 2014, CWA held a pro-Israel rally⁷⁹ featuring many of the players in the Islamophobia network. Speakers included former Arkansas Gov. Huckabee, known for his anti-Islam rhetoric,⁸⁰ and Rep. Trent Franks (R-AZ),⁸¹ who consistently repeats many of Gaffney’s conspiratorial theories and was one of five members in the U.S. House of Representatives to sign former Rep. Bachmann’s letters to the Obama administration, alleging government infiltration by the Muslim Brotherhood.⁸²

Christian Action Network

Martin Mawyer founded the Christian Action Network, or CAN, in 1990 with the stated goal of protecting “America’s religious and moral heritage through educational efforts.”⁸³ According to the organization’s website, “in the 2000s, CAN began to focus on the issue of Islamic Sharia law” and “its encroachment in American society.” CAN worked alongside the American Center for Law and Justice and a number of groups in the Islamophobia network to oppose the construction of the Park51 community center in lower Manhattan.⁸⁴

In September 2011, former Rep. Allen West (R-FL) sponsored a Capitol Hill briefing to screen the film “Sacrificed Survivors: The Untold Story of the Ground Zero Mega Mosque,” the Christian Action Network’s bigoted and misleading film about Islam and the efforts to construct the Park51 community center.⁸⁵

CAN has also released other anti-Islam films “Homegrown Jihad: The Terrorist Camps Around U.S.”⁸⁶ and “Islam Rising: Geert Wilders’ Warning to the West.”⁸⁷ Geert Wilders is a member of the Dutch parliament who claims Islam is an inherently violent religion,⁸⁸ says the “Quran is a fascist book,” and asserts that “the purest joy in Islam is to kill and to be killed.”⁸⁹

In September 2014, Christian Action Network debuted its latest film “Europe’s Last Stand/America’s Final Warning” in Rome, Italy, with U.S. screenings in November 2014.⁹⁰ According to Martin Mawyer, the organization’s founder, the film “examines the Islamic invasion of Western Europe and its threat to European democracy, freedoms, culture and history.” It also serves as a warning to Americans that this so-called “Islamic invasion” is coming to the United States.

Religious and interfaith organizations combating Islamophobia

In recent years, anti-Muslim bigotry has revealed itself in the form of opposition to the construction of mosques in New York, Tennessee, and New Jersey,⁹¹ as well as through a sophisticated anti-Sharia movement responsible for the introduction of more than 100 anti-Islam bills in state legislatures.⁹²

Despite the religiously motivated Islamophobia orchestrated by right-wing Christian groups, there are a plethora of religious and interfaith organizations working on a daily basis to combat Islamophobia. In October 2012 alone, Christian and interfaith organizations launched four campaigns to combat such anti-Muslim bigotry.⁹³ There have also been a series of important national and international campaigns launched to further Muslim-Christian dialogue. One such initiative, “A Common Word,” started in October 2007 on Eid al-Fitr when 138 Muslim scholars, including grand muftis from seven countries, sent an open letter to Pope Benedict XVI and Christian leaders emphasizing the many commonalities between Christianity and Islam.⁹⁴ To many, that letter served as the most important interfaith document in almost half a century.⁹⁵

The organizations detailed below are some of the main groups working to combat anti-Muslim bigotry and to dispel the misconceptions and stereotypes promoted by the Islamophobia network.

Shoulder-to-Shoulder

Shoulder-to-Shoulder is a national campaign comprised of 29 faith-based national organizations that work to end anti-Muslim sentiment and combat Islamophobia in the United States.⁹⁶ It was launched in November 2010 in response to the anti-Muslim bigotry surrounding the construction of the Park51 community center in New York. Shoulder-to-Shoulder “works not only on a national level, but offers strategies and support to local and regional efforts to address anti-Muslim sentiment and seeks to spread the word abroad.”⁹⁷ The campaign’s membership includes Protestant, evangelical Christian, Catholic, Baptist, Jewish, Muslim, and interfaith organizations.⁹⁸

In 2011, Shoulder-to-Shoulder denounced Rep. Peter King’s (R-NY) series of Muslim radicalization congressional hearings.⁹⁹ In 2012, Pamela Geller posted ads in New York City’s subway and Washington’s metro rail stations that referred to Muslims as “savages.”¹⁰⁰ In response, Shoulder-to-Shoulder released a joint letter signed by 168 Washington-area religious leaders and organizations urging the transit authority to donate all of the revenue earned from Geller’s ads to charitable organizations.¹⁰¹ Shoulder-to-Shoulder also purchased counter-ads in Washington, D.C., metro stations with the following message: “Hate speech is not civilized. Support peace in word and deed.”¹⁰²

Interfaith Alliance

Founded in 1994, the Interfaith Alliance, which is a member of the Shoulder-to-Shoulder campaign, has been vocal in pushing back against Islamophobic rhetoric.¹⁰³ According to its website, “Interfaith Alliance celebrates religious freedom by championing individual rights, promoting policies that protect both religion and democracy, and uniting diverse voices to challenge extremism.”¹⁰⁴

The interfaith Alliance has been especially active in pushing back against Islamophobic rhetoric in Congress. In response to Rep. King’s Muslim radicalization hearings, the Interfaith Alliance initiated a letter-writing campaign in local New York papers to criticize the hearings. The Alliance also co-sponsored a pray-in at Rep. King’s district office, organized rallies, and supported educational programs about Islamic law.¹⁰⁵

On July 26, 2012, the Interfaith Alliance released a letter signed by 42 groups denouncing former Rep. Michele Bachmann's witch hunt against long-time Hillary Clinton aide, Huma Abedin.¹⁰⁶ In February 2013, Interfaith Alliance President Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy sent a letter to Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-TX) condemning his "continued demonization of Islam."¹⁰⁷

Interfaith Alliance also partnered with the Religious Freedom Education Project—a project of the First Amendment Center that seeks to educate the public about the importance of religious freedom—to dispel myths and stereotypes about American Muslims. In October 2012, the organizations jointly released an informational pamphlet, titled "What is the Truth About American Muslims? Questions and Answers."¹⁰⁸ The booklet was endorsed by 23 religious, interfaith, secular, and civil rights organizations, including People for the American Way Foundation, Friends Committee on National Legislation, the Sikh Coalition, and the Secular Coalition for America.¹⁰⁹

New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good

The New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good, or NEP, promotes dialogue between Muslim and Christian communities. Rev. Richard Cizik founded NEP with the mission to "advance human well-being as an expression of our love for Jesus Christ."¹¹⁰

On September 7, 2010, NEP President Cizik and Executive Director Steven Martin, along with other faith-based leaders, held an emergency summit to address "rising anti-Muslim rhetoric and violence."¹¹¹ A joint statement released at the summit stated: "As religious leaders in this great country, we have come together in our nation's capital to denounce categorically the derision, misinformation and outright bigotry being directed against America's Muslim community."¹¹² NEP also released a documentary film, "Islam in America: The Christian Truth," in October 2012.¹¹³ The film details stories of ordinary American Muslims, as well as of conservative Christians who no longer harbor resentment toward Islam and Muslims but strive instead for peace and understanding.¹¹⁴

Sojourners

Evangelical author Jim Wallis, who founded Sojourners, describes the religious group as “Christians who follow Jesus, but who also sojourn with others in different faith traditions and all those who are on a spiritual journey.”¹¹⁵

In fall 2012, Sojourners purchased ad space from the Washington Metropolitan Area and New York City Transit Authority to display posters featuring the message “Love Your Muslim Neighbors”¹¹⁶ in response to Geller’s inflammatory anti-Muslim metro rail ads.¹¹⁷

In response to an arson attack on a mosque in Toledo, Ohio, in September 2012, Sojourners expanded its billboard campaign.¹¹⁸ Sojourners spokesman Tim King said “It’s only an extremist fringe that would ever attack another religion’s place of worship in this country.” He explained that “unless we offer up an alternative voice, it will be the message and acts of extremists that most across the country and the world hear.”¹¹⁹

Chapter 3: Islamophobia masquerading as law-enforcement counterterrorism training

Even though the vast majority of the leading figures in the Islamophobia network operate well outside of the mainstream, they are having a direct impact on how tens of thousands of local and state police officers view Islam and Muslims. Virulent anti-Muslim messages are often imbedded in law-enforcement training programs. The Islamophobia network and individuals influenced by the network are taking advantage of federal funds available to police and law-enforcement agencies for training programs in counterterrorism techniques. The demand for such training vastly increased in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11; however, weak and under-resourced oversight of many of these training programs has made them a forum for anti-Muslim sentiment. Even the FBI has employed anti-Muslim trainers, published anti-Muslim training manuals, and promoted Islamophobic books for all new FBI agents.¹

Teaching America's police officers that all Muslims are suspicious and Islam is inherently evil is counterproductive because it drives a wedge between law enforcement and Muslim communities and creates endless red herrings that make detecting actual terrorist plots more difficult. After civil rights groups and the media exposed these anti-Muslim training activities, some local police agencies, and notably the FBI, have changed their practices.² However, unrepentant Islamophobes are still providing training to police and other law-enforcement agencies across the country. The extent and continuation of these trainings—even after they have been revealed to be anti-Muslim—indicates the insidious power of even fringe actors in the national policy debate and underscores the need for constant vigilance and efforts to identify and root out Islamophobia from American civic life.

Huge demand for counterterrorism trainers but little oversight

The 9/11 attacks dramatically refocused federal, state, and local law-enforcement agencies on the identification and prevention of terrorist attacks. This shift represented a major change for most state and local police forces, which, prior to the attacks, “had very small terrorism prevention and response budgets.”³ However, in the wake of 9/11, the federal government stepped in, appropriating nearly \$1 billion in 2002 alone for local law-enforcement counterterrorism training and assistance.⁴ Additional funding continued to flow from the federal government in subsequent years, creating a huge demand for individuals and companies that could train local police forces in the new field of detecting and preventing terrorism.

Not surprisingly, in the rush to respond to 9/11, poor management and oversight plagued this massive new training and equipping effort. Seven separate federal government departments funded local law-enforcement counterterrorism training: the Departments of Homeland Security, Defense, Energy, Health and Human Services, Justice, Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency. In 2006, the Congressional Research Service found that these seven government agencies lacked consistent priorities, suffered from duplication, and had weak or nonexistent coordination.⁵

At the state and local level, these problems were magnified and persist to this day, particularly as they relate to the content of the training courses provided to police and other law-enforcement officials. The state agency charged with managing law-enforcement training programs for Oklahoma, for example, has only one part-time staff member to vet the curriculum of the more than 3,000 law-enforcement training courses conducted in the state each year.⁶ State and local police forces are often forced to rely on private companies to review and certify counterterrorism trainers, but these companies are known to have given accreditation to trainers with virulent anti-Muslim views and little actual counterterrorism experience.⁷ Islamophobes have exploited these gaps to spread hateful anti-Muslim messages to America’s police officers in the guise of counterterrorism training.

Anti-Muslim trainers

A handful of anti-Muslim activists have disproportionately affected training programs for state and local police officers. It is likely that the overwhelming majority of individuals involved in these counterterrorism trainings are imparting legitimate information and educating America's local police officers in appropriate ways. But a few trainers are pushing hateful and harmful messages that are counterproductive to the goal of preventing terrorist attacks. Highlighted below are some of these individuals and their connections to the Islamophobia network.

William Gawthrop, an FBI analyst, developed much of the now infamous FBI anti-Muslim training materials.⁸ Gawthrop joined the FBI after managing the Joint Terrorism Task Force of the Defense Department's controversial unit, the Counterintelligence Field Activity, or CIFA, which he left in 2006.⁹ CIFA was created after 9/11 to monitor threats to domestic military installations and was supported by Lt. Gen. William G. Boykin when he was deputy undersecretary of defense for intelligence.¹⁰ Boykin is featured in Chapter 2 of this report as a notorious anti-Muslim figure within the religious right. He believes Islam is a political ideology that should not receive protection under the First Amendment.¹¹ In 2005, NBC News revealed documents that showed CIFA was collecting information on peaceful anti-war and anti-nuclear weapons groups in violation of prohibitions on the military collecting and retaining information on Americans.¹²

In 2013, the now retired Gen. Boykin spoke to Oklahoma police officers at the state capitol along with Frank Gaffney.¹³ Boykin's views on Islam have been known since he made headlines in 2003 while leading the U.S. military's effort to track down Osama bin Laden during President George W. Bush's administration. In a series of speeches to Christian groups, Boykin cast the fight against Al Qaeda in starkly religious terms, claiming the United States is "the army of God," and Muslims' god is "an idol."¹⁴ Boykin was also the co-chair of Center for Security Policy's Team B II task force.¹⁵

Before joining the FBI, Gawthrop was quoted on an extreme right-wing website saying, “There is evidence to support the contention that the sources of terrorism in Islam may reside within the strategic themes of Islam.”¹⁶ Those views, however, did not prevent him from crafting a large part of the counterterrorism training materials that the FBI used for all of its agents, according to a major report in *Wired* magazine.¹⁷ Among other inflammatory, inaccurate, and insidious materials in the FBI training program were the claims that mainstream “American Muslims are likely to be terrorist sympathizers; that the Prophet Mohammed was a ‘cult leader’; and that the Islamic practice of giving to charity is nothing more than a ‘funding mechanism for combat.’”¹⁸

Walid Shoebat has ridden his claim that he is a reformed Islamic terrorist who has converted to Christianity to acclaim in anti-Muslim circles and numerous lucrative speaking engagements with local police and law-enforcement agencies, universities, and Christian groups.¹⁹ He is profiled extensively in the Center for American Progress’s 2011 “Fear, Inc.” report.²⁰ None of Shoebat’s accounts of his experience as a terrorist, however, are verifiable, and many critics have accused him of being a charlatan.²¹ Both CNN and *The Jerusalem Post* have conducted extensive investigations into Shoebat’s past and found “no evidence to support that biography.”²² Regardless of the veracity of his biography, what is absolutely certain is that Shoebat promotes a virulent anti-Muslim message, spreads wild conspiracy theories, and has no business providing instruction on Islam or counterterrorism.²³

In 2011, Shoebat told an audience of about 300 South Dakota police officers that “all Islamic organizations in America should be the No. 1 enemy.”²⁴ He believes and has stated that “Islam is not the religion of God—Islam is the devil.”²⁵ He is the author of the discredited book *Why We Want to Kill You* and gave a lecture discussing his work at the Air Force Academy.²⁶ CNN reported that Shoebat’s earnings from his book and video sales and his speaking engagements to law-enforcement groups and others totaled more than \$500,000 in 2009.²⁷ His latest book, titled *The Case For Islamophobia*, pushes the conspiracy theory that President Barack Obama is a secret Muslim and claims that the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, or ISIS, terrorists are deliberately contracting the Ebola virus to use as a weapon against Americans.²⁸ Shoebat is also one of the many so-called experts featured in the Clarion Project’s anti-Muslim documentary film, “Obsession: Radical Islam’s War Against the West.”²⁹

Sam Kharoba is somewhat unusual among the other anti-Muslim counterterrorism trainers in that he does not have nor claim any military or law-enforcement experience or a past as a former terrorist or even a Muslim. A Christian born in Jordan, he was a computer programmer in Louisiana on 9/11 and quickly began developing a database of the names of every terrorist or jihadi website in the hopes of selling it to the U.S. government.³⁰ He has never sold that database, but he was able to jump onto the gravy train of federally funded counterterrorism training.

Kharoba was profiled extensively in the *Washington Monthly's* 2011 exposé of the prevalence of anti-Muslim messages in the counterterrorism training programs for state and local cops.³¹ According to that account, Kharoba has instructed his trainees that a Muslim wearing a headband of any kind is preparing for martyrdom. During his training, he advocates that law enforcement harass all Muslim businesses with bogus health or other types of inspections and notes that a Muslim with different spellings of his or her name on identification cards—which is a common occurrence for many non-Americans with long names—was sufficient probable cause for arrest. Furthermore, according to the *Washington Monthly* article, Kharoba told his students, “Anyone who says that Islam is a religion of peace is either ignorant or flat out lying.”³²

John Guandolo is a former FBI agent who was forced to resign from the bureau in late 2008 following revelations of an inappropriate sexual relationship with a witness in a major political corruption case.³³ He quickly began a second career as an Islamophobic conspiracy theorist and had no trouble finding work providing counterterrorism training to local law-enforcement officials.

The same month he was forced out of the FBI, Guandolo—a former Marine—capitalized on his FBI and military experience and became vice president of the Strategic Engagement Group, a consulting firm that works with state and local law-enforcement agencies. Since then, he has spoken extensively to police and law-enforcement groups around the country, including in Virginia, Tennessee, Kansas, and Arizona.³⁴

Guandolo's particular brand of Islamophobia has centered on allegations that Muslims are infiltrating the highest levels of the U.S. government. He has made claims that CIA Director John Brennan has converted to Islam and "brought known Hamas and Muslim Brotherhood leaders into the government and into advisory positions."³⁵ Guandolo also claims that Saudi Arabia was key in putting President Obama—who, according to Guandolo, is also a secret Muslim—into office and may be plotting to take over the United States.³⁶ In 2010, Guandolo was a member of the task force, dubbed Team B II, that authored the report, "Shariah: The Threat to America," for Gaffney's ultra-conservative think tank, Center for Security Policy.³⁷

Exposed by civil rights groups and the media

It took nearly a decade for widespread attention to be focused on the problem of anti-Muslim messages spread through counterterrorism trainings. In 2010 and 2011, a series of investigative reports by journalists—at times supported by official documents obtained by civil rights groups—exposed Islamophobic training of law-enforcement agencies. In 2010, *The Washington Post* released a series of articles examining the expansion of the national security government bureaucracy since 9/11 and discussed concerns about the quality of training given to local law enforcement.³⁸ In 2011, the *Washington Monthly* focused exclusively on anti-Muslim activists conducting counterterrorism training, highlighting the role of Kharoba.³⁹ That same year, CNN dug into the background of Shoebat.⁴⁰

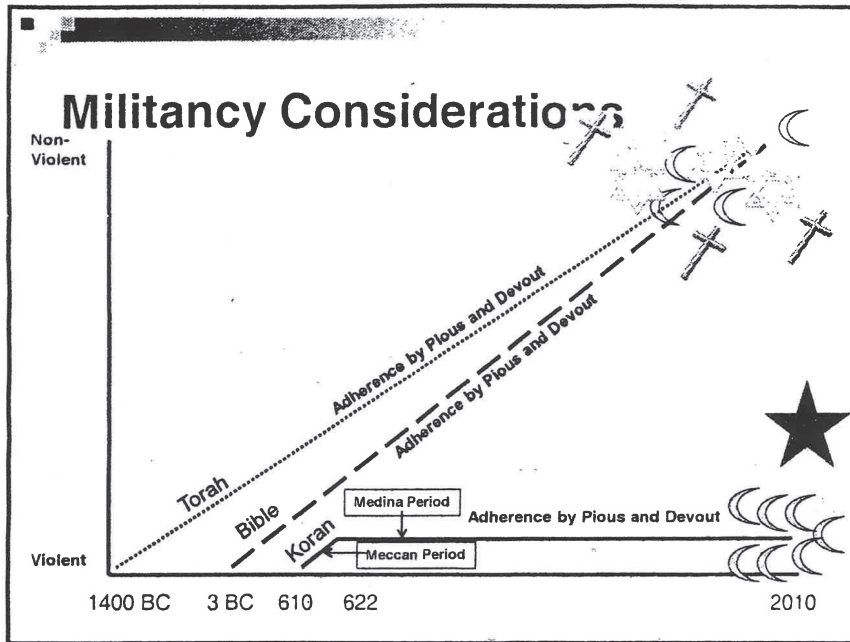
It was the series of articles by *Wired* magazine, however, that revealed the extensive anti-Muslim messages at the FBI's Quantico, Virginia, training center and caused the largest fallout.

Beginning in July 2011, *Wired* reporters culled the FBI's manuals and presentations used to instruct agents in counterterrorism, and they uncovered that the FBI's predominant message was that all Muslims should be treated with suspicion. Moreover, the training stressed that common Islamic religious practices—such as regular attendance at mosques or giving to Islamic charities—which are protected by the First Amendment, were an indicator of violent behavior or a front for supporting terrorism.⁴¹ For example, a chart used in one official training presentation posited, "the more 'devout' a Muslim, the more likely he is to be 'violent.'"⁴²

According to *Wired*, another FBI presentation called "Militancy Considerations" measured the relationship between religious adherence, or piety, and violence

among Jews, Christians, and Muslims and claimed that only Muslims remain largely violent.⁴³ The presentation stated that over the centuries, Jews and Christians moved from “violent” to “nonviolent.” However, the presentation noted that for Muslims, the “moderating process has not yet happened,” and adherents to this religion are still classified as “violent.”⁴⁴

FIGURE 2
The FBI’s Islam training documents



Source: Spencer Ackerman, “FBI Teaches Agents: ‘Mainstream’ Muslims Are ‘Violent, Radical,’” *Wired*, September 14, 2011, available at <http://www.wired.com/2011/09/fbi-muslims-radical/all/>.

The training program, it was further reported, also contained recommendations for agents on further reading material to better understand Muslims and the Islamic world. Alarming, included on the reading list are Islamophobic books by Robert Spencer and Raphael Patai.⁴⁵ Spencer’s book, *The Truth About Mohammed: Founder of the World’s Most Intolerant Religion*, has been criticized in a law journal for vilifying Muslims and spreading misinformation with a “lack of analysis, absence of historical context, and gaps in information.”⁴⁶ Patai’s book, *The Arab Mind*, instructs its readers that Arabs are more responsive to force than ideas or reason, a disturbing and wildly inaccurate message to impart to federal law-enforcement agents who may be tasked with interrogating suspected terrorists of Arab descent.⁴⁷

These anti-Muslim FBI training manuals, largely the work of Gawthrop, were obtained by the Northern California chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union and the Asian Law Caucus after they jointly filed a Freedom of Information Act request in 2010 related to government surveillance on American Muslim communities.⁴⁸

By November of 2011, the *Wired* magazine investigation on the FBI training program prompted meaningful change. Attorney General Eric Holder denounced the anti-Muslim training materials, stated that the Gawthrop material “is not being used anymore by the FBI,” and implemented a process to ensure a similar situation does not happen again.⁴⁹ That process, according to *Wired*, resulted in the purging of at least 700 pages of FBI “documents of instructional material about Muslims, some of which characterized them as prone to violence and terrorism.”⁵⁰

Counterproductive counterterrorism training

It is not simply wrong for law-enforcement officers to be taught inaccurate and inflammatory information about Muslims, but it is also counterproductive. When state and local police officers are instructed to treat all Muslims with suspicion, it creates a barrier between law enforcement and the communities they are charged with protecting. When it is revealed that the basis of some police counterterrorism training is that Islam is an evil religion, it only exacerbates that barrier, undermining the kind of cooperation necessary for effective law enforcement of all crime, not just terrorism. Attorney General Holder lamented that the use of anti-Muslim training programs and materials by the FBI would “really have a negative impact on our [federal law enforcement agencies’] ability to communicate effectively ... with this community [American Muslims].”⁵¹

Training law enforcement to see a terrorist plot in every mosque also creates a likelihood of false alarms, diverting police attention and resources and ultimately ensnaring innocent Muslims in unnecessary investigations. However, the anti-Muslim trainers think this is a positive feature, not a flaw. Kharoba actually uses one of the more infamous false alarms, the Alligator Alley incident from 2002, in his courses.⁵² A stretch of Interstate 75 in Florida was shut down for almost a full day, three men were arrested, and state and local police searched for explosives—with almost total cable news coverage—all based on a tip from a diner at a roadside Shoney’s restaurant.⁵³ In his training session, Kharoba does not explain the full story: that the tip was a false alarm and that the three individuals arrested were completely innocent medical students who happened to be Muslim.

Kharoba uses a photo of one of the men, highlights that his mustache is trimmed in a manner indicative of radicalism, and claims that he was a “textbook case” of an adherent to radical Islam.⁵⁴

The federal government is investing huge sums to leverage state and local police agencies to help better detect and prevent terrorist attacks. However, in some instances, the payoff is biased and inaccurate instruction about Islam and Muslims that actually makes that goal of increased safety harder to achieve. As former FBI Agent Mike German said of the FBI training fiasco: “Factually flawed and biased law enforcement training programs only expand the risk that innocent Muslim and Arab Americans will be unfairly targeted for investigation and prosecution, and stigmatized in their communities.”⁵⁵

The exposure in *Wired* of the FBI’s anti-Muslim training materials led directly to that material being purged from use and the establishment of a process to prevent such occurrences in the future. Other media reports on the extent of anti-Muslim training of state and local police officers have brought needed attention to the problem, but unfortunately, it has not stopped. Guandolo is still regularly featured as a speaker at law-enforcement gatherings: notably, in 2014, the Culpepper County sheriff in Virginia sponsored Guandolo to speak to his officers, and the Maricopa County Attorney organized an event with Guandolo in Phoenix, Arizona.⁵⁶ Clearly, exposure of anti-Muslim training is not enough.

It is not feasible, nor necessarily advisable, for the federal government to mandate one consistent curriculum for all state and local counterterrorism training. But it can allocate sufficient funds to the localities specifically for the purpose of providing adequate resources to develop their own standards of review and vetting of the counterterrorism training they provide law enforcement. Furthermore, it can ensure that the training programs it funds are consistent with constitutional rights. The Department of Homeland Security, or DHS, should adopt the procedure outlined in a 2013 bill introduced by Rep. Yvette Clarke (D-NY) that requires state and local officials to receive approval for counterterrorism training programs from the DHS chief officer for civil rights and civil liberties as policy.⁵⁷

It is not only Muslims in America who are harmed when law-enforcement agencies receive flawed and biased training, although they are currently the most vulnerable. The security for all Americans is degraded when those charged with protecting are poorly trained, and the rights of all Americans are eroded when a specific group is unfairly targeted.

Chapter 4: Coverage of the Boston Marathon bombing

On April 15, 2013, two pressure cookers filled with shrapnel exploded on Boylston Street near the finish line of the annual Boston Marathon. The homemade bombs killed three spectators and injured another 264 people, causing widespread panic throughout the city and terrorizing the rest of the country.¹ The Boston Marathon bombing was the most significant terror attack on U.S. soil since the 9/11 attacks in 2001.

Within three days of the attack, the perpetrators were identified as brothers Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev, two young Chechen Muslim immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Dzhokhar, 19, was a naturalized American citizen who was attending college in nearby Dartmouth, Massachusetts. His older brother, Tamerlan, 26 years old, was a permanent U.S. resident who had dropped out of college a few years before the attack.²

Their Muslim faith would soon become the focus of public scrutiny and provide an opportunity for the Islamophobia network to stir up anti-Muslim sentiment and promote discriminatory policies against American Muslims and Muslim immigrants.

“Dark-skinned” suspects and the false identification of innocent people

In the confusion immediately following the attack, the mainstream media made several notable mistakes, including incorrectly identifying the suspects as “dark-skinned” or “Saudi males.”³ Although such mistakes frequently happen in fast-moving news stories, the mistakes fueled public hysteria about Islamic extremism and led to the harassment of several innocent American Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim for their alleged involvement in the attack.

Among them was Sunil Tripathi, whose name was circulated by users of the social networking site Reddit. As it turned out, Tripathi, a Brown University student, had been missing since March; his body was later found near Providence, Rhode Island.⁴ Another was Salah Barhoum, who the *New York Post* falsely identified as a suspect and put his photograph on the cover of its April 18 edition and included another photo with its April 19 story saying he had been “cleared.”⁵ An understandably upset Barhoum would later say: “The only thing they look at is my skin color and since I’m Moroccan I’m kind of dark. ... To be blamed for all that injury and death. It’s the worst.”⁶

In the wake of the bombings, anti-Muslim hysteria led to several attacks against American Muslims, including Mohamed A. Salim, an Army reservist and Iraq veteran.⁷ Salim, who works as a taxi driver, was punched in the face by a passenger who said, “If you’re a Muslim, you’re a [expletive] jihadist.”⁸ In another incident, a man screamed, “F--- you Muslims! You are terrorists! I hate you! You are involved in the Boston explosions! F--- you!” and punched Heba Abolaban, a young woman wearing a hijab who was walking with her baby in a residential neighborhood in Malden, Massachusetts.⁹

Conspiracy theory and the narrative of Islamic extremism

The mainstream media’s incorrect initial reporting of the Boston Marathon bombing case can be brushed off as honest mistakes in a rapidly changing news story. But less excusable is the insidious narrative about the Tsarnaev brothers’ Muslim faith that some media outlets and politicians latched onto following the attacks. Although most mainstream media coverage was relatively cautious when it came to leaping to conclusions about the role of Islam in the bombers’ motivations—as opposed to the bombers’ own misguided thought processes—a few news outlets broadcast programs that promoted the anti-Muslim slant of their coverage.

Most notably, Fox News and Glenn Beck’s radio program—his news site, The Blaze—were unabashed in tying the attacks to Islam. The *New York Post*—owned by Rupert Murdoch, executive chairman of Fox’s parent company, News Corp.—made its own dubious contributions by falsely identifying suspects with destructive results.¹⁰

Fox News host Bill O'Reilly scolded President Barack Obama for not immediately condemning Islam as the force behind the attacks, as well as American Muslims, a group he claimed "largely remain[ed] silent" about Islamic terrorism.¹¹ Conservative radio host Bill Cunningham, appearing on Sean Hannity's Fox News television program, suggested President Obama's "middle name [Hussein] is a clue" as to why the president had failed to condemn terrorism, "because it runs contrary to the things he was taught when he was a boy in Honolulu and Jakarta, Indonesia."¹²

Fox News repeatedly interviewed several anti-Islam misinformation experts to substantiate its coverage of the bombings, including Frank Gaffney, who complained that the FBI had been hampered because its agents had been told to not "look for jihad."¹³ Also on Fox News, Brigitte Gabriel of ACT! for America—a citizen action group warning against attempts to establish an "Islamic government in North America"¹⁴—claimed the Tsarnaev brothers were part of an "army" of "Islamists;" and Steve Emerson, founder of the Investigative Project on Terrorism, repeated a debunked conspiracy theory that claimed the Department of Homeland Security deported a Saudi national who was injured by an explosion in connection with the Boston Marathon bombing.¹⁵

Glenn Beck and the "money man" lie

In possibly the most egregious example of false reporting fueled by out-and-out profiling, Glenn Beck spent days on his radio program falsely claiming that a Saudi student, Abdulrahman Ali Alharbi, was a terrorist operative who had planned and collaborated in the Boston attack.¹⁶ The New York Post was the first to falsely identify Alharbi as a suspect. However, it was soon understood that Alharbi, who was injured in the bombing and hospitalized, was merely a witness.¹⁷ But that didn't stop Beck from repeating and embellishing his fictional version of the story for days. At one point, he claimed that he had "exclusive information" about the alleged deportation order for Alharbi, which, in the words of a senior law-enforcement official, turned out to be "one hundred percent false."¹⁸ Beck also claimed that he had information that would expose Alharbi as "a very bad, bad, bad man,"¹⁹ including the fact that Alharbi was an Al Qaeda "control agent" who recruited the Tsarnaev brothers and that the U.S. government was covering up Alharbi's involvement.²⁰ The only source Beck cited for his claim—that Alharbi had been on a terrorist watch list and had been improperly vetted for his student visa—was Fox News commentator Todd Starnes.²¹

Beck went on to claim that Alharbi was “the money man” behind the bombings.²² On his website, *The Blaze*, Beck described his claims as “a story that the mainstream media has all but completely ignored.”²³

Alharbi later told *The Islamic Monthly*, “I am double injured from the explosion then from the media. So, it’s not easy to forget. Because you [sic] just going to write my name and search about [me], you are going to think I am from Al-Qaeda and, like terrible things.”²⁴ Alharbi filed a defamation suit against Beck in April 2014, which Beck unsuccessfully tried to get dismissed in December.²⁵

Using the bombing as an excuse for racial profiling

Cynical politicians exploited the false media reports surrounding the Boston Marathon bombing and the conspiratorial focus on the perpetrators’ Muslim faith. These politicians quickly responded to the attacks by successfully introducing discriminatory legislation, such as a measure in the Senate comprehensive immigration bill that would give the U.S. Department of Homeland Security the authority to conduct extra screenings and essentially profile people from Arab and Muslim countries applying for legal status.²⁶ Conservative pundits called for the torture of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, who was taken into custody after surviving the shootout that killed his brother; the surveillance of all mosques in America; and even the arrest of Tamerlan Tsarnaev’s wife for wearing a hijab.²⁷

Rep. Peter T. King (R-NY)—chairman of the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence and leader of the infamous “Muslim radicalization” hearings in Congress in 2011—called for increased profiling of the Muslim community and expanding the NYPD’s Muslim surveillance program to communities across the country following the Boston Marathon bombing. “Police have to be in the community, they have to build up as many sources as they can, and they have to realize that the threat is coming from the Muslim community and increase surveillance there,” said King. “I’ve been talking about radicalization of the Muslim community, and I think this [Boston Marathon bombing] is an example of it.”²⁸

In addition to calls for increased surveillance, immigration restrictions became a focal point of the anti-Muslim response to the bombings. After Beck's false claims about Alharbi, Fox News' Bob Beckel called for barring Muslim students from the country "for some period of time so that we can at least absorb what we've got, look at what we've got, and decide whether some of the people here should be sent back home or sent to prison."²⁹ Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL) echoed Beckel's position arguing, "We can place whatever restrictions we want" on student visas. Rubio stated that "if Boston exposes flaws in our system, immigration or otherwise, we should address that."³⁰

Similarly, Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) sent a letter³¹ to then-Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) stating his support for reinstating the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System, or NSEERS—a program that the Department of Homeland Security implemented after 9/11 in order to racially profile against individuals from Arab and Muslim-majority countries.³² Rep. Steve King (R-IA) also called for extra scrutiny of immigrants from certain countries: "We need to take a look at the visa-waiver program and wonder what we're doing. If we can't background-check people that are coming from Saudi Arabia, how do we think we are going to background check the 11 to 20 million people that are here from who knows where?"³³

Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-TX), a Tea Party favorite who is famous for his anti-Muslim rants on the House floor, also connected the Boston Marathon bombings to immigration reform and claimed that Al Qaeda is infiltrating the U.S.-Mexican border. "We know Al Qaeda has camps on the Mexican border," Gohmert said. "We have people that are trained to act Hispanic when they are radical Islamists. ... When you have the greatest liberties, you will draw people that want to destroy you."³⁴

Finally, Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) introduced an amendment to the Senate immigration reform bill that essentially green lighted profiling by calling for extra scrutiny of Muslim immigrant applicants applying for legal residency.³⁵ The provision required the Department of Homeland Security to conduct "additional security screening" on applicants from "a region or country known to pose a threat, or that contains groups or organizations that pose a threat, to the national security of the United States."³⁶

Public pushback and the rejection of anti-Muslim policies

Despite the effort by members of the Islamophobia network to use the Boston Marathon bombing as an opportunity to promote long-standing conspiracies and policies targeting the American Muslim community, the effort largely failed to gain traction among the general public and moderate politicians. The Boston Marathon bombing experience significantly differed from the public reaction to previous flashpoints, such as the attempted Christmas Day bombing involving the infamous “underwear bomber” in 2009³⁷ or the so-called “Ground Zero Mosque,”³⁸ when there was little organized pushback against the Islamophobia network’s anti-Muslim hysteria.

One of the major differences in the wake of the Boston Marathon bombing was a level of organization and vigilance by Muslim advocacy groups, human rights organizations, faith groups, and civil liberty leaders to pushback against anti-Muslim efforts. Groups such as ReThink Media, Media Matters for America, the Interfaith Alliance, and the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization quickly organized daily calls, offered talking points, appeared in the media, and placed op-eds to help correct some of the misinformation being promoted by anti-Muslim organizations.³⁹

Thanks in part to the organized pushback, coverage of the bombing by most major media outlets largely avoided broad claims that the alleged bombers’ religion was the motivation for their crime or that their crime was linked to the supposed violent nature of Islam. Despite initial mistakes and missteps, most media outlets quickly amended incorrect statements about the identities of the suspects and gave little credence or openly refuted the conspiracy-laden narratives promoted by Glenn Beck and other far-right news outlets.

The mostly balanced coverage of the Boston Marathon bombing helped produce a level-headed approach to public policy and deflated some politicians’ calls for discriminatory immigration, student visa, and law-enforcement policies. One and a half years after the bombing, none of the controversial policy changes promoted in the immediate aftermath of the bombing have been signed into law. Efforts to actively discriminate against immigrants and travelers from Muslim-majority nations have gone nowhere, as have suggestions to impose NYPD-style surveillance of Muslim communities across America. Furthermore, attempts to try Dzhokhar Tsarnaev in a military tribunal instead of a civilian court have rightly been rejected.⁴⁰

Perhaps the story of Heba Abolaban, the young Muslim immigrant mother who was attacked in Malden, Massachusetts, while walking her baby in a stroller, best displays the national shift in attitude. Shortly after the attack on Abolaban, Gary Christenson, the mayor of Malden, invited the young mother to speak at the community's interfaith peace vigil, where roughly 400 members of her community warmly welcomed her.⁴¹ In an interview with the authors of this report, Kevin Molis, the Malden chief of police, speaking about Abolaban and the community event said, "When you see people from various races, religious, ethnic backgrounds and social and economic backgrounds, they really have the same common hopes, wishes, and desires. We have a lot more things in common than we have differences."⁴²

Anti-Muslim attacks are not uncommon after national flashpoints such as the Boston Marathon bombing, but the response of Abolaban's community stands in stark contrast to the Islamophobia network's attempts to exclude American Muslims from the country's national fabric. Events such as Malden's interfaith vigil highlight the success that an organized pushback against anti-Muslim rhetoric can have.

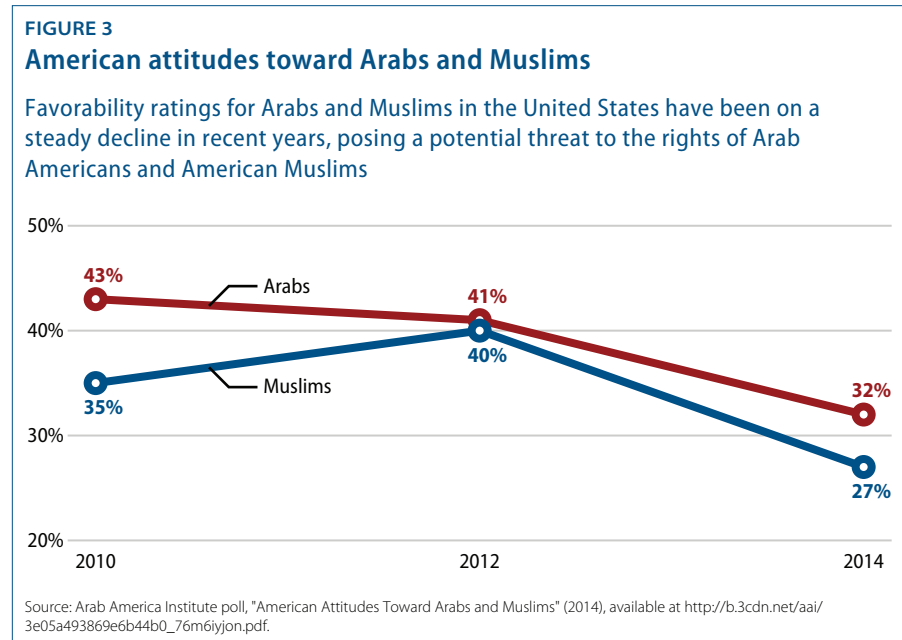
Chapter 5: Politically motivated Islamophobia and mainstream conservative pushback

Islamophobia still resonates at the local and state level, with conspiracy theories surrounding Sharia law finding political purchase and legislation targeting Muslims gaining traction—thanks partly to the ceaseless efforts of misinformation experts such as Frank Gaffney and David Yerushalmi. But the stigmatization of Islam at the national level has diminished over the past several years and is now confined to a smaller and shrinking fringe of activists and elected officials.

Arguably the ugliest recent chapter in the national debate concerning Islam occurred in 2010 during the controversy over the proposed Park51 community center in Manhattan. Dubbed the “Ground Zero Mosque” by its opponents because of its proximity to the site of the World Trade Center, the project gained national media attention when anti-Muslim activists Pamela Geller and Robert Spencer, founders of “Stop Islamization of America,” launched a nationwide campaign to oppose the project. Opponents of the community center depicted the project as a symbol of Islamic “triumphalism” and rallied politicians, commentators, and religious right leaders to deprive Muslims of their First Amendment protected rights.

Not surprisingly, a number of political candidates in 2010 sought to use the manufactured fear about Park51 to drum up votes and financial contributions. However, only 2 of the 17 candidates who made Park51 a central issue proved successful in 2010,¹ including Carl Paladino, a Republican Tea Party candidate for New York governor. In a highly inflammatory ad, Paladino said “as governor I will use the power of eminent domain to stop this mosque and make the site a war memorial instead of a monument to those who attacked our country.”² Paladino lost to Democratic candidate and current Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who had defended the First Amendment rights of Muslims to build the mosque. Since the Park51 incident, there has been a steady marginalization of the Islamophobia network, including a few instances where prominent conservative leaders publically denounced anti-Muslim discourse.

Politically motivated Islamophobia, however, still remains a reality with some candidates who continue to run on platforms that feed into the anti-Islamic hysteria of the far right.



The 2014 midterm elections

While anti-Muslim rhetoric was still prevalent during the 2014 midterm elections, it was less widespread and effective than during the 2010 midterm elections.³ In the 2014 midterms, of the nine candidates vying for federal and state offices who sought to boost their election chances by playing into Islamophobic sentiment, only one non-incumbent was victorious, and four of the other candidates suffered defeats.⁴

Larry Kaifesh, a Republican candidate vying for Illinois' eighth congressional district in the 2014 midterms, centered his campaign on sensationalizing the threat of Islamic extremism against incumbent Rep. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL).⁵ Duckworth had previously unseated Republican Joe Walsh, who, similar to Kaifesh, ran a notoriously anti-Muslim campaign during his successful 2010 congressional race in this district and claimed that Muslims were "trying to kill Americans" in the suburbs of Chicago.⁶

During an interview with the *Chicago Tribune's* editorial board, Duckworth explained that she voted against funding Syrian rebels in the fight against ISIS because Congress hadn't considered the implications of such a commitment.⁷ In addition to lambasting Duckworth for voting against the proposal, Kaifesh also blasted Islam and the Prophet Muhammad: "I think if you follow Islam the way Muhammad wanted you to, you will be intolerant of nonbelievers, you will support aggression and you will believe that there will only be peace in the world if the world is Islam."⁸

In the *Illinois Review* in September 2014, Kaifesh criticized President Obama for saying ISIS is not Islamic.⁹ Kaifesh said President Obama "claimed ISIS is 'not Islamic,' and in doing so ignores the most basic key of their organizational identity. ... Political correctness has prevented our nation's war fighters and decision makers from seeing the problem that ISIS presents us in its totality."¹⁰ Kaifesh's remarks also won him the endorsement of former Rep. Allen West (R-FL), who was one of the most vocal anti-Muslim voices during his tenure in the U.S. House of Representatives.¹¹ In a district with more than 104,000 independent voters and nearly equal numbers of registered Republicans and Democrats, Kaifesh's bigoted beliefs about Muslims ultimately did not resonate as well as he hoped, and he lost his race.¹²

Another candidate who relied on Islamophobia in 2014 was businessman Brian Ellis, who challenged incumbent Republican and Tea Party favorite Justin Amash for Michigan's third congressional district seat in the GOP primary.¹³ Ellis' campaign sought to stir up fear of Islam and Muslims. In his strongly negative campaign ads against Amash, Ellis called the Arab American congressman "Al Qaeda's best friend in Congress."¹⁴ While Amash was the nonestablishment candidate, he went on to win the election by a margin of 57 percent to 43 percent.¹⁵ During his victory speech, Amash took his opponent to task, saying "To Brian Ellis, you owe my family and this community an apology for your disgusting, despicable smear campaign."¹⁶

Amash was first elected to Congress in 2010 and currently chairs the House Liberty Caucus. A staunch libertarian, he became a national figure during the Edward Snowden National Security Agency, or NSA, leaks scandal, after which he introduced an amendment to the annual defense appropriations bill in the House that would have defunded the NSA's bulk data collection program.¹⁷

Amash's 2014 re-election campaign serves as an example of how xenophobic fear mongering and pandering to Islamophobes will not ensure victory for political candidates—not even for an establishment-backed Republican candidate such as Brian Ellis in a Republican primary.

While there was successful pushback against Islamophobia in Michigan's third congressional district and other localities in 2014, other instances were concerning. For example, the New Hampshire Republican State Committee drew inspiration from David Yerushalmi's American Laws for American Courts model legislation and added opposition to Sharia law to its platform.¹⁸

Conversely, several Republican Party leaders seized on opportunities to denounce anti-Muslim bigotry expressed by elected officials. These included calls by RNC Chairman Reince Priebus and Michigan state Chairman Bobby Schostak for the resignation of Republican national committeeman David Agema,¹⁹ who was responsible for authoring an anti-Sharia bill in Michigan while serving in the state legislature.²⁰ In an interview with the authors of this report, Michigan State Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D) explained that a diverse coalition of groups came together to defeat this legislation because "more and more people understood that this foreign law act impacted all faiths and that it was a slippery slope."²¹ "We have a national committeeman who feels it's his duty to handicap the entire party by running around and creating this kind of divisiveness. This nonsense is taking the entire party off message," said Joe Munem, a Republican consultant in Warren, Michigan.²²

Additionally, Bob FitzSimmonds, treasurer of the Virginia Republican Party, was pressured to resign in August 2014 after making anti-Muslim comments on his Facebook page.²³ In the Facebook post, FitzSimmonds criticized President Obama for congratulating Muslims on Eid al-Fitr, the holiday marking the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.²⁴ When FitzSimmonds' comments came to light, fellow Republican William Howell, speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates, called for FitzSimmonds' resignation and condemned his comments as "reprehensible and not reflective of the values of the commonwealth or its citizens."²⁵ Additionally, Virginia GOP Chairman Pat Mullins and Vice Chairman Michael E. Thomas; John Scott—chairman of the Young Republican Federation of Virginia; the Virginia Black Conservative Forum; and 13 Republican Virginia state delegates also called for FitzSimmonds' resignation.²⁶

The 2012 elections

While candidates with platforms that demonized Muslims and Sharia law saw a mix of defeats and victories during the 2012 elections, the seeds of conservative pushback against Islamophobia were beginning to sprout.

Unfortunately, in August 2012, the Republican National Convention played into the hands of Islamophobes by including a plank in the party's platform to show opposition to the manufactured threat of Sharia law.²⁷ This was undoubtedly spurred on by polls suggesting an increase in anti-Muslim feelings among the Republican base. One such poll, conducted by the Arab American Institute in August 2012, showed that only 26 percent of Republicans held a favorable opinion of Muslims, 15 percent less than in 2003.²⁸

However, 2012 saw the unseating of Florida Republican Allen West, one of the most notable Islamophobes in Congress. West lost his congressional seat to Democratic challenger Patrick Murphy,²⁹ even though he outspent Murphy by more than \$13.4 million.³⁰ While West's embrace of Islamophobia undoubtedly helped him attract funds from the Islamophobia network,³¹ the voters of the 18th congressional district that he represented were clearly fed up with West's divisive politics. Indeed, West's anti-Islamic bigotry helped Murphy gain significant financial support from prominent American Muslim businessmen in Florida.³²

Allen West's other Islamophobic colleague, former Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN), barely squeaked out a victory in her race in 2012.³³ Similar to West, Bachmann gained significant financial support for her extreme anti-Islamic positions, which included launching a bigoted attack against longtime Hillary Clinton aide, Huma Abedin.³⁴ (see text box below) Bachmann did not seek re-election in 2014.

In addition to West, the Republican Party lost two other vocal Islamophobes in 2012: Rep. Joe Walsh (R-IL) and Florida state Rep. Adam Hasner (R), who both lost congressional races.³⁵ Walsh, who has said Muslims are infiltrating Chicago suburbs and are "trying to kill Americans every week"³⁶ was supported by anti-Muslim activist Pamela Geller, who circulated a video of his opponent, Rep. Duckworth covering her hair during a visit to a mosque in Illinois.³⁷ A *Florida Independent* article noted that Hasner, who was seeking Florida's 22nd congressional district seat, was engaged in a "long-time crusade against the supposed threat of Sharia in the U.S."³⁸ After Republican leaders saw how these Islamophobic candidates fared in the election, they began to disassociate themselves from those fanning anti-Muslim sentiment.³⁹ "They have gotten a bit of bad odor," said GOP anti-tax activist Grover Norquist in an interview with *Mother Jones*.⁴⁰

Also in 2012, David Ramadan became the first Muslim member of the Virginia General Assembly despite protests from Islamophobes such as Frank Gaffney,⁴¹ blogger Pamela Geller,⁴² and Brigitte Gabriel with ACT! for America, a far-right group that conflates all Muslims with terrorists.⁴³ In an August 2011 op-ed in *The Washington Times*, Gaffney had gone so far as to claim Ramadan was “concealing” his true views and hostility toward the United States in order to advance his agenda.⁴⁴ “As we are seeing play out in the Middle East at the hands of Islamists of various stripes, democracy is no guarantee against people who are hostile to it – some of whom are perfectly capable of concealing that hostility to advance their purposes,” wrote Gaffney.⁴⁵ However, Edwin Meese—former attorney general in President Ronald Reagan’s administration—denounced Gaffney’s allegations and endorsed Ramadan, motivated partly by Gaffney’s smear campaign.⁴⁶ “I felt that this was an unfair attack ... I think it’s always serious when any American is disparaged ... solely because of their religion or their background when there’s no basis for it,” said Meese.⁴⁷

The Huma Abedin controversy

On June 13, 2012, five members of Congress—Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN), Rep. Trent Franks (R-AZ), Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-TX), Rep. Thomas Rooney (R-FL), and Rep. Lynn Westmoreland (R-GA)—sent a letter to Harold Geisel, the deputy inspector general at the U.S. Department of State. The letter alleged that certain State Department activities and policies “appear to be a result of influence operations by individuals associated with the Muslim Brotherhood.” Specifically, the letter suggested that Huma Abedin, a longtime aide to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, should be treated with suspicion because of alleged family “connect[ions] to Muslim Brotherhood operatives and/or organizations.”⁴⁸

Relying almost entirely on evidence provided by Frank Gaffney’s Center for Security Policy, the allegations in the letter proved to be the usual farrago of insinuation and guilt-by-association that characterizes most of CSP’s work on the subject. Only this time, by virtue of their high-profile target, the allegations provoked a furious backlash.

Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN) referred to the letter as “16 pages worth of nothing ... Just regurgitated nonsense.”⁴⁹ Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) took to the Senate floor to defend Abedin as “an intelligent, upstanding, hard-working and loyal servant of our country and our government” and condemned her accusers. “These sinister accusations rest

solely on a few unspecified and unsubstantiated associations of members of Huma's family, none of which have been shown to harm or threaten the United States in any way," McCain said.⁵⁰ "These attacks on Huma have no logic, no basis and no merit. And they need to stop now."⁵¹ In a statement, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) praised McCain for his rejection of the allegations against Abedin. "Every wave of new immigrants to America has faced a wave of ignorance and discrimination," Pelosi said. "I would have hoped that this type of discourse no longer existed in our country, but clearly we have more educating to do with respect to what America is about."⁵²

Leaders of the House Intelligence Committee, on which Bachmann sat at the time, soon chimed in against her and the other accusers. "We are in a special situation as members of the intelligence committee, and we get a lot of briefings and to deal with the issue of terrorism and those types of thing," said Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD), the committee's top Democrat.⁵³ "It's unfortunate that someone like Michele would make that kind of comment without facts."

Former representative and committee Chairman Mike Rogers (R-MI) also said, "That kind of assertion certainly doesn't comport with the Intelligence Committee," adding "I have no information in my committee that would indicate that Huma is anything other than an American patriot." Rogers also made clear that Bachmann's allegations against Abedin "was not an activity that was sanctioned as any intelligence committee matter."⁵⁴

On July 26, 2012, the Interfaith Alliance released a letter signed by 42 groups criticizing Bachmann and other's allegations.⁵⁵ "These letters question the loyalty of faithful Americans based on nothing more than their religious affiliations and what is at best tenuous evidence of their associations," the groups wrote. "As such, your actions have serious implications for religious freedom and the health of our democracy."⁵⁶ People for the American Way called on Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-OH) to remove Bachmann from the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.⁵⁷

The conservative website The Daily Caller joined in, featuring an op-ed by journalist Tom Rogan denouncing both the witch hunt and the broader problem of Islamophobia in the GOP. Bachmann and other's allegations were "unjustified (based on a report written by a wacko), immoral and symptomatic of a casual and idiotic anti-Islamic sentiment that has crept into Republican dialogue," wrote Rogan.⁵⁸

Conservative pushback against the anti-Sharia movement

In the conservative magazine *First Things*, Robert P. George, a Princeton University scholar and well-known conservative advocate for religious freedom, has countered opponents of mosques by evoking the standard of religious freedom for all faiths. “A precedent established by people in, say, Murfreesboro, Tennessee who despise Islam and see it as a pernicious force, may prove very handy to people in, say, San Francisco who have a similar attitude towards Catholicism,” George has stated.⁵⁹

In the conservative *National Review*, Matthew Schmitz, deputy editor of *First Things*, called on conservatives to end their efforts to enact laws banning Sharia law. “Anti-Muslim bigots and their public apologists,” Schmitz wrote, “must be vigorously opposed by Americans who recognize the value of a religious voice in the public square and the imperative that all Americans be treated equally under the law, whether they are religious or irreligious, Christian, Muslim, or Jew.”⁶⁰

Schmitz was referring not only to proponents of these bans, but to prominent conservative politicians, such as Newt Gingrich, who have “dignified the disreputable anti-Sharia movement by mentioning the threat of Sharia in campaign appearances.”⁶¹

However, as journalist Adam Serwer notes, Schmitz “is hopelessly outnumbered at *National Review*, where many of the writers and commenters weighing in are confused at Schmitz’ inability to perceive Muslim Americans as the collective Fifth Column everyone understands them to be.”⁶²

Among Schmitz’s opponents was David Yerushalmi, the architect of the anti-Sharia laws, who took issue with Schmitz’s accusation of bigotry. “To even suggest, as Mr. Schmitz does, that those of us confronting the reality of transnationalism and Islamism are harboring some darker motives is, to put it mildly, patently offensive,” wrote Yerushalmi.⁶³

While Islamophobia clearly still has a home on the political right, the past few years indicate that it has failed to gain traction among mainstream conservatives. As Randa Fahmy Hudome, a prominent Muslim political activist and a former political appointee in the George W. Bush administration recently noted, “There is a self-policing factor in the Republican Party, when some members get a little off base on some of these issues ... That’s the state of play right now.”⁶⁴

However, there still exists among many conservatives, an entrenched aversion and fear of Islam. As Peter Beinart of *The Atlantic* has said, “in conservative circles today, in fact, high-profile expressions of anti-Muslim bigotry are as routine as anti-black or anti-Jewish slurs were a half-century ago.”⁶⁵

Until there is systematic change in the perception of anti-Muslim bigotry, and change that equates Islamophobia with the equally ugly evils of anti-black, anti-Jewish, or any other type of prejudice, discrimination against Muslims will continue. The flow of anti-Muslim bigotry, whether espoused by conservative politicians and commentators or by institutionalized policy, can only be stemmed with greater public awareness about Muslims and marginalization of Islamophobic attitudes.

Conclusion

From Capitol Hill to government agencies to state courthouses to the national airwaves, members of the Islamophobia network continue to spread misinformation and hateful rhetoric about the American Muslim community and its role in American society. The first “Fear, Inc.” report, published by CAP in 2011, exposed the small cadre of individuals and organizations that comprise the Islamophobia network. This follow-up report expands on how this network fans anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States—resulting in real-world consequences for millions of ordinary Americans.

This disturbing campaign of misinformation and demonization bears resemblance to some of history’s darkest chapters. The roots of Islamophobia—ignorance, disinformation, and sweeping generalizations—bring to mind despicable anti-Semitism and the struggles of other minorities for equal rights in the United States. Millions of law-abiding Muslims in America today face day-to-day discrimination, unlawful surveillance, and profiling, simply because of their religious beliefs. The Founding Fathers enshrined the free practice of religious beliefs in the Constitution; Thomas Jefferson specifically had the protection of Muslims in mind when drafting the First Amendment.¹

The stories in this report are a reminder that despite a well-funded and highly connected fringe movement such as the Islamophobia network, Americans from across the political spectrum can come together to defend the shared values of American society, including the protection of religious minorities.

In order to defeat this network of hate, American society needs to condemn anti-Muslim bigotry in all its forms—whether masquerading as government counterterrorism training programs or in the form of hateful ads on the sides of city buses and subways. Continuing to successfully push back against anti-Muslim propaganda is dependent on ongoing vigilance against efforts to demonize and exclude American Muslims from the public sphere. If collectively, American society fails to shun the Islamophobia network’s fear mongering, then inequality and injustice will continue in the form of violent attacks and hate crimes, negative public attitudes, and unjust policies.

The Islamophobia network will not cease to look for opportunities to exploit fear and uncertainty to advance its hateful agenda. The rise of ISIS—coupled with religiously motivated attacks in Ottawa, Canada; Sydney, Australia; and Paris, France—is already being exploited for propaganda value by anti-Muslim organizations. These groups use the actions of a few extreme individuals as an excuse to discriminate against, profile, and spy on a community of 2.6 million Americans.² Islamophobic ideologues and their patrons contend that all Muslims are terrorists and that the United States should effectively be at war with the world’s 1.6 billion Muslims.³ Such attitudes are not only an affront to America’s traditions of religious tolerance and pluralism but are also extremely damaging for America’s image overseas.

To use the actions of extremist groups to justify discrimination campaigns against ordinary American Muslims is patently unjustifiable and an appalling affront to all Muslims who have been victimized by such groups. While the past few years have seen positive development on the anti-discrimination front with elected officials from both sides of the aisle speaking out against Islamophobia, disturbing anti-Muslim sentiments still find their way into not just conservative media, but also ostensibly liberal programs such as “Real Time with Bill Maher.”

Islamophobia is likely to remain in the national conversation with the upcoming presidential election in 2016. Potential candidate Gov. Bobby Jindal (R-LA) has already made news this year by repeating the widely debunked claims that cities such as Birmingham in the United Kingdom are “no-go” zones for non-Muslims.⁴ Other potential candidates who will likely compete in a primary include Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX), who claimed “Sharia law is an enormous problem” in 2012, and Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY), who gave a speech at the 2013 Values Voter Summit about the “war on Christianity” being waged by tens of millions of Muslims around the world.⁵

As this report shows, the main danger of such Islamophobic messaging and sentiment is discrimination against American Muslims in the forms of racial profiling and occasionally even violence. The policies promoted by the Islamophobia industry will not only serve to trample the civil rights and liberties of American Muslims but will infringe on the rights of all Americans.

As a nation, the time has come for Americans of all backgrounds and political denominations to stand for religious freedom and appreciation for ethnic and religious diversity. We hope that by exposing the real world impact of the intricate network of Islamophobia in the United States, the influence of these individuals and organizations can be curtailed and the legitimacy of their arguments can be diminished in the eyes of most Americans.

Appendix: Key organizations, donors, and media outlets of the Islamophobia network

Organizations

Society of Americans for National Existence

Key individuals: David Yerushalmi

What they say: The Society of Americans for National Existence, or SANE, was founded by David Yerushalmi, who is the driving force behind the anti-Sharia movement in the United States. SANE advances David Yerushalmi’s obsession with criminalizing Sharia law and pushes legislation that makes adherence to Sharia a felony carrying a 20-year prison sentence.¹ Yerushalmi’s most significant contribution to the Islamophobia network was as the author of the model “anti-Sharia” legislation introduced in more than 30 states.² Yerushalmi’s think tank presents Sharia as a pressing threat to American values and as a conspiracy to overthrow the government.

The Middle East Forum

Key individuals: Daniel Pipes

What they say: The Middle East Forum, or MEF, is a conservative think tank founded by Daniel Pipes in 1990. According to the organization’s website, its mission is to “promote American interests in the Middle East and protect Western values from Middle Eastern threats.”³ It relies upon its publication, the *Middle East Quarterly*, and a network of monitoring programs—including Campus Watch, Islamist Watch, and the Legal Project—to inculcate fears of “militant Islam” infiltration and to monitor the people and organizations whose views contradict Pipes.

TABLE A1

The top eight funders of Islamophobia

A list of the eight largest donors to think tanks and organizations in the United States identified by the Center for American Progress as being anti-Islam and/or supporting policies discriminating against Muslims.

	Clarion Project	Middle East Forum	David Horowitz Freedom Center	Center for Security Policy		CTSERF	Investigative Project on Terrorism	Society of Americans for National Existence	Jihad Watch	American Congress for Truth	American Islamic Forum for Democracy	Total
Donors Capital Fund and Donors Trust	\$18,403,600	\$6,768,000	\$177,000	\$1,289,000			\$405,000					\$27,042,600
Scaife Foundations			\$4,650,000	\$3,425,000		\$2,400,000						\$10,475,000
Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation		\$430,000	\$5,090,000	\$1,020,000								\$6,540,000
William Rosenwald Family Fund, Middle Road Foundation, & Abstraction Fund	\$25,000	\$4,248,729	\$54,750	\$473,500		\$15,000	\$86,000		\$5,000		\$45,000	\$4,952,979
Russell Berrie Foundation		\$273,016				\$2,736,000	\$793,335					\$3,802,351
Fairbrook Foundation		\$410,000	\$789,500	\$166,700			\$25,000	\$90,000	\$253,250	\$125,000		\$1,859,450
Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker Foundation and Charitable Trust	\$80,000	\$464,000	\$87,000	\$405,000		\$200,000	\$100,000			\$75,000		\$1,411,000
Alan and Hope Winters Family Foundation				\$271,075			\$75,000	\$387,288		\$8,697	\$75,000	\$817,060
Total	\$18,508,600	\$12,593,745	\$10,848,250	\$7,050,275		\$5,351,000	\$1,484,335	\$477,288	\$258,250	\$208,697	\$120,000	\$56,900,440

Source: CAP research based on the eight foundations' 990 forms filed with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service from 2001 to 2012.

[Stop Islamization of America](#)

Key individuals: Robert Spencer, Pamela Geller, and David Horowitz

What they say: In 2010, Pamela Geller co-founded the anti-Muslim group, Stop Islamization of America, or SIOA, with Robert Spencer to allegedly fight radical Islam. Geller claims that SIOA is a “human rights organization dedicated to freedom of speech, religious liberty, and individual rights; no special rights for special classes.”⁴ In summer 2010, SIOA led protests against the New York City Park51 community center, which Geller and the Islamophobia industry deliberately mislabeled the “Ground Zero Mosque.”⁵

[Investigative Project on Terrorism](#)

Key individuals: Steven Emerson

What they say: The Investigative Project on Terrorism, or IPT, is a research organization founded by Steven Emerson in 1995.⁶ IPT hallows itself for its collection of intelligence on Islamic terrorist groups, but the IPT’s chief function is presenting Islam as an inherently radical, violent, and antagonistic religion. IPT employs unsubstantiated threats that portray Muslims as dangerous to accrue funding often transferred to Emerson’s for-profit entity, SAE Productions. Also suspect is Emerson’s reputation for fabricating evidence to substantiate his ravings about Muslim extremism.⁷

Jihad Watch

Key individuals: Robert Spencer and David Horowitz

What they say: Jihad Watch is a program of the David Horowitz Freedom Center, directed by Robert Spencer. Jihad Watch's primary purpose is to conduct research "regarding the current state of radical jihad theology and ideology."⁸ Spencer is the primary driver in promoting the myth that peaceful Islam is nonexistent and that violent extremism is inherent within traditional Islam.⁹

David Horowitz Freedom Center

Key individuals: David Horowitz and Robert Spencer

What they say: The David Horowitz Freedom Center is a well-funded key organization in amplifying the alleged threats of Muslim extremism in the United States.¹⁰ Founded in 1988 by David Horowitz, the Freedom Center is one of the main organizations that "helped spread bigoted ideas into American life," according to the Southern Poverty Law Center.¹¹ From 2009 to 2011, the David Horowitz Freedom Center operated its own blog, NewsReal, which, among other things, promoted the myth that Muslim extremists infiltrated an array of political organizations on both the left and the right.¹² Built on the fear of an Islamic crusade against the West, the center and Horowitz have been organizing Islamofascism Awareness Week programs on hundreds of campuses across the country.¹³

Center for Security Policy

Key individuals: Frank Gaffney and David Yerushalmi

What they say: Founded in 1988 by Frank Gaffney, the Center for Security Policy, or CSP, is a nonprofit conservative think tank and a main driver of the "creeping Sharia" conspiracy theory.¹⁴ CSP's 2010 report "Shariah: The Threat to America" alleges that the United States is under serious threat of coming under Islamic religious law.¹⁵ Frank Gaffney employs CSP as a vehicle to develop and promote his paranoid conceptions, namely that mosques shroud Muslim sedition and that Sharia is, above all, a totalitarian ideology.

Act! for America

Key individuals: Brigitte Gabriel

What they say: Brigitte Gabriel founded ACT! for America in 2007 as a citizen action network to “inform, educate, and mobilize Americans regarding the multiple threats of radical Islam.”¹⁶ Gabriel validates everything championed by experts in the Islamophobia network but goes one step further, ruthlessly demeaning Arabs and Muslims as having no soul.¹⁷ Gabriel’s ACT! for America is a single-issue group that aims to posit fear of Islam as a force in politics.

The Clarion Project

Key individuals: Rabbi Raphael Shore

What they say: A nonprofit based in New York City, the Clarion Project—formerly the Clarion Fund—describes itself as an organization that seeks to “expos[e] the dangers of Islamic extremism.”¹⁸ To further their efforts, the Clarion Project has produced several anti-Muslim films—most notably, “Obsession: Radical Islam’s War Against the West” and “The Third Jihad.”¹⁹

Top eight funders

Donors Capital Fund

The Donors Capital Fund is a supporting organization of a donor-advised-fund, DonorsTrust. Patrons maintain anonymity when their contributions are funneled to the organization of their choice, but evidence of the \$26,689,600 that the Donors Capital Fund contributed to Islamophobic groups from 2005 to 2012 is, however, quite public.²⁰

Richard Mellon Scaife Foundations

Richard M. Scaife is the billionaire chairman of his three foundations, the Sarah Scaife, Carthage, and the Allegheny. Scaife exclusively funds the ideological right wing and contributed a total of \$10,475,000 to the Islamophobia network between 2001 and 2012.²¹

Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation

The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, named for the co-founders of the Allen-Bradley Company, contributes millions to conservative groups inclined to promote limited government and a dynamic marketplace. From 2001 to 2012, however, \$6,540,000 went toward funding key players in the Islamophobia network.²²

Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker Foundations and Charitable Trust

Founder of the Becker CPA Review, Newton Becker now serves as board president of a foundation that contributes money to the Jewish community and to Israel advocacy organizations. Still, \$1,411,000 of the foundation's capital found its way to the Islamophobia network between 2001 and 2012.²³

Russell Berrie Foundation

The Russell Berrie Foundation directs its contributions toward “promoting the continuity and enrichment of Jewish communal life” and advancing “the spirit of religious understanding and pluralism.”²⁴ In what seems like stark contrast to this pursuit, the foundation provided \$3,802,351 from 2001 to 2012 to anti-Muslim organizations.²⁵

William Rosenwald Family Fund, Middle Road Foundation, and Abstraction Fund

The William Rosenwald Family Fund, Middle Road Foundation—formerly Anchorage Charitable Fund—and the Abstraction Fund are a linked set of foundations with a history of generous donations to conservative institutions. In addition to their donations to mainstream conservative groups, between 2001 and 2012, these organization doled out \$4,952,979 to six different notoriously Islamophobic groups.²⁶

Fairbrook Foundation

Aubrey and Joyce Chernick control the Fairbrook Foundation. While the Fairbrook Foundation supports a number of mainstream conservative groups that are not Islamophobic, the group also donated \$1,859,450 to the Islamophobia network between 2004 and 2011.²⁷

Alan and Hope Winters Family Foundation

The Alan and Hope Winters Family Foundation is a new donor to the Islamophobia network. The foundation donated \$817,060 to the Islamophobia network between 2008 and 2012.²⁸ In addition to their support for Islamophobic organizations such as David Yerushalmi's SANE and Frank Gaffney's CSP, the Alan and Hope Winters Family Foundation has also contributed to a number of mainstream conservative organizations and pro-reproductive rights groups.

The religious right

The Eagle Forum

Key individuals: Phyllis Schlafly, Brigitte Gabriel and Frank Gaffney

What they say: The Christian right-wing Eagle Forum now ventures beyond its legacy of catering to “social values activists” and embraces the anti-Sharia hysteria of the Islamophobia network. In 2009, the forum broadcasted threats of radical Islam at its How to Take Back America conference. The Eagle Forum also partners with ACT! for America, as well as the Center for Security Policy to pursue an anti-Muslim agenda.²⁹

The American Family Association

Key individuals: Bryan Fischer

What they say: To complement its history of championing the movements of the social right, the American Family Association has adopted an Islamophobic agenda. Radio talk show host and director of issues analysis, Bryan Fischer, utilizes this organization to disseminate his anti-Muslim sentiment.³⁰

The Tennessee Freedom Coalition

Key individuals: Lou Ann Zelenik

What they say: The Tennessee Freedom Coalition, established in 2010, is aligned closely with the Tennessee Eagle Forum chapter. Lou Ann Zelenik's organization is perhaps best known for the 16-minute video they co-produced to “expose” radical Islamist preachers in Nashville.³¹

American Center for Law & Justice

Key individuals: Pat Robertson

What they say: Pat Robertson’s American Center for Law & Justice, or ACLJ, claims to be a leading defender of religious freedom. In the past few years, however, ACLJ began to focus more and more on Islam. Specifically, ACLJ filed a lawsuit to block the construction of the Park51 community center in New York City, thereby effectively attempting to deprive a non-Christian religious community of its constitutionally protected rights.³²

Christians United for Israel

Key individuals: John Hagee

What they say: John Hagee perpetuates the conspiratorial theories of the Islamophobia network about the threat of “Islam” to America and claiming that Muslims have a “scriptural mandate to kill Christians and Jews.”³³

Right wing radio

The Rush Limbaugh Show

Carried by more than 600 American radio stations, “The Rush Limbaugh Show” is the most popular talk show in America. Almost undoubtedly, Limbaugh’s frequent portrayal of Obama as a Muslim contributed to the 18 percent of people in 2010 who incorrectly claimed the president was a Muslim.³⁴

The Sean Hannity Show

The nearly 14 million listeners who tune into Sean Hannity’s radio show are destined to hear the very same talking points echoed by various other contributors to the Islamophobia network. Hannity fields questions regarding President Obama’s religious affiliation and also peddles conspiracy theories of Muslim terrorist infiltration.³⁵

The Savage Nation

Mike Savage hosts “The Savage Nation,” a radio program charged with issuing derogatory slurs toward minority groups, including Muslims. Similar to other members of the Islamophobia network, Savage brands Obama as a Muslim, but he has also gone so far as to say that all Muslims should be deported.³⁶

The Glenn Beck Program

Glenn Beck’s radio show boasts more than 9 million listeners weekly. This is to say that 9 million people are privy to Beck’s tendency to equate Muslims with terrorism and his fabricated speculations as to the number of Islamic terrorists in the United States.³⁷

The Mark Levin Show

Mark Levin is another talk show host who gives the microphone to biased voices against Islam, such as Zudhi Jasser. Jasser has repeated conspiracy theories that the Park51 community center in New York City is an example of Islamic extremism that seeks to “create Islamic states.”³⁸

Focal Point

The religious right boasts virulent anti-Muslim radio host Bryan Fischer, the director of issues analysis for the American Family Association as host of “Focal Point” on American Family Radio. Some of Fischer’s rants are filled with raw hate; for instance, he claims American Muslims have no First Amendment rights and should be deported and halted from immigrating to this country.³⁹

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