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CAIR Welcomes New Security Strategy's Focus on Confronting Al-Qaeda

Strategy: 'Neither Islam nor any other religion condones the slaughter of innocents'

(WASHINGTON, D.C., 5/27/2010) -- The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) today said it supports the Obama administration's decision to focus on confronting Al-Qaeda and partnering with Muslim communities as part of the newly issued [National Security Strategy](#).

CAIR also welcomed the Obama administration's continued de-linking of the Islamic faith from the actions of violent extremists as exemplified by the following excerpt from the [strategy](#): "[W]e reject the notion that al-Qa'ida represents any religious authority. They are not religious leaders, they are killers; and neither Islam nor any other religion condones the slaughter of innocents."

CAIR expressed appreciation for [remarks about the strategy](#) made by Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism John Brennan, who said: "Nor do we describe our enemy as 'jihadists' or 'Islamists' because jihad is a holy struggle, a legitimate tenet of Islam, meaning to purify oneself or one's community, and there is nothing holy or legitimate or Islamic about murdering innocent men, women and children."

Brennan also noted that Muslim leadership's condemnations of violent extremists "often do not get the recognition they deserve, including from the media."

SEE: ["Securing the Homeland by Renewing American Strength, Resilience and Values"](#)

In a statement, CAIR National Executive Director Nihad Awad wrote:

"The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) supports the policy of confronting Al-Qaeda and its extremist affiliates.

"In our view, and as the President noted in his 2009 speech in Cairo, Egypt, military power alone is not a solution to the problems we see in Afghanistan, Pakistan and elsewhere.

"During his speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies on May 26, 2010, John Brennan said: 'an action that eliminates a single terrorist, but causes civilian casualties, can, in fact, inflame local populations and create far more problems – a tactical success, but a strategic failure.'

"We agree. CAIR is gravely concerned that ongoing civilian casualties lessen us as a nation, impede our moral authority internationally and provide our **enemies with an opportunity to win people to their destructive mindset.**

"We should address the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan based on a reduction in our nation's intervention and on increased support for indigenous solutions based on the will of the people and the decisions of democratically elected governments.

"This includes not abandoning the Afghan people like we did following their defeat of the Soviet Union. They have suffered decades of war. We should ensure that their children have the benefits of education and economic opportunity that will secure them from extremism. The same principle applies to the people of Iraq.

"Depriving Al-Qaeda of support also requires America to pursue an even-handed approach to ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the creation and support of a viable and independent Palestinian state.

"Further, we must empower the governments of areas in which Al-Qaeda has taken root to oversee their own security, in part by impressing upon them that security comes through fostering a culture that respects human and minority rights, political and religious dissent, freedom of expression and belief and the rule of law.

"While we are securing our homeland, we must not transform it into a place that discards the ideals of the American Revolution.

"Protecting civil liberties at home is critical. As Dalia Mogahed, an advisor with the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships noted before the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs in February 2009, 'Muslim Americans' legal and social welfare in their own country is viewed as a litmus test for America's position toward Muslims in general.'

"In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, national security legislation and policies related to detention, surveillance, torture, the shutting down of American

Muslim charities, government agent provocateurs in mosques, citizenship delays, politicized 'terror' trials, Justice Department guidelines allowing race and ethnicity to be factors in opening an investigation, and the dubious activities of so-called terrorism 'fusion centers' have all contributed to a contraction of civil liberties.

"The approval of the possible assassination of an American citizen rocked our confidence in the commitment to rule of law in some quarters of our society.

"Attorney General Holder's recent announcement that he might ask Congress to cut back on Miranda rights for certain criminal suspects is also troubling. Eroding American civil liberties is not a path to defeating violent extremists.

"Finally, we will support the National Security Strategy's stated goal of making 'clear [America's] intent to build.' CAIR calls on members of the American Muslim community to step forward to help strengthen our nation's 'diplomacy and development capabilities' as called for in the strategy."

CAIR is America's largest Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization. Its mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.

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