

August 3, 2010

Director Robert S. Mueller III
Federal Bureau of Investigation
J. Edgar Hoover Building
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20535-0001

Via Fax: 202-324-3489

SUBJECT: Concern Over Anti-Islam Bias Being Incorporated into Virginia JTTF Training

Dear Director Mueller:

The undersigned organizations wish to bring to your attention the allegation that the FBI and its partners in Virginia's Tidewater Joint Terrorism Task Force recently invited a leader of a hate group to offer training to state and federal law enforcement officers.

Mr. Robert Spencer, co-founder of the hate group Stop the Islamization of America (SIOA), claimed in a recent blog post that he "gave two two-hour seminars on the belief-system of Islamic jihadists to the Tidewater Joint Terrorism Task Force."ⁱ The United States Patent and Trademark Office refused to grant SIOA a trademark because: "The applied-for mark refers to Muslims in a disparaging manner because by definition it implies that conversion or conformity to Islam is something that needs to be stopped or caused to cease."

This is not the only time Mr. Spencer has been given a platform to influence representatives of your agency.

We understand that the FBI and its partners in the Virginia JTTF are in favor of promoting diversity of opinion and are strongly against censorship. We fully support those ideals.

However, we question if that goal is being achieved by abetting Mr. Spencer's grotesque viewpoints, which lie well outside the mainstream bounds of reason and civilized debate.

Spencer has referred to Islam's Prophet Muhammad as a "...con man. Someone who is knowing [sic] that what he is saying is false, but is fooling his followers." In the same video he asserts, "From a historical stand point, it is not even clear that Muhammad existed."ⁱⁱ In that video he asserts he is writing a book currently entitled *Did Muhammad Exist*. It seems realistic to ask how a trainer who questions the existence of Islam's founder can be expected to present a reasonably-balanced view of the faith.

In a special report, the independent national media watch group FAIR (Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting), identified Spencer as one of the "Dirty Dozen: America's Leading Islamophobes" who systematically "spread fear, bigotry, and misinformation."ⁱⁱⁱ

In that report, FAIR notes, "By selectively ignoring inconvenient Islamic texts and commentaries, Spencer concludes that Islam is innately extremist and violent, and, 'Unfortunately, however, jihad as warfare against non-believers in order to institute 'Sharia' worldwide is not propaganda or ignorance, or a heretical doctrine held by a tiny minority of extremists. Instead, it is a constant element of mainstream Islamic theology.'"

In 2006, Spencer participated in a conference honoring anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn, who sought to legalize government discrimination in the Netherlands. Spencer proudly highlights his participation in this conference among his “Notable Speaking Engagements.”^{iv} Fortuyn’s anti-Muslim views and the resulting backlash against Muslims living in the Netherlands are noted in the Department of State’s International Religious Freedom Reports for 2002 and 2005.

More recently, Spencer joined with hate-blogger Pamela Geller to found a new organization named Stop the Islamization of America (SIOA).

SIOA has come to prominence through shrill opposition to the building of American mosques, anti-Islam bus and taxi advertising campaigns, support for European far-right groups and Islamophobes such as the English Defence League and Geert Wilders, and bigoted anti-Islam statements by its co-leader, Pamela Geller.^v

Geller has claimed that "Hitler and the Nazis were inspired by Islam" and offered rhetorical support to both accused Serbian war criminal Radovan Karadzic and slain Apartheid-era leader Eugene Terre'blanche.^{vi}

Geller and Spencer offered support for a call to wipe the nation of Pakistan off the map using India's nuclear weapons. They both used their blogs to promote a video urging the mass killing of all Pakistanis.^{vii}

Geller has posted images on her blog that include a fake photograph of Supreme Court nominee Elena Kagan in a Nazi uniform, another fake image of President Obama urinating on an American flag and drawings purporting to depict Islam's Prophet Muhammad as a pig. In a June 25 blog entry, Geller posted a video claiming that Muslims engage in bestiality.

SIOA is an outgrowth of a similar group in Europe that seeks to block the construction of mosques. That group, Stop the Islamization of Europe, "considers Islamophobia to be the height of common sense."

Spencer operates the “Jihad Watch” Internet hate site, which is notorious for its depiction of Islam as an inherently violent faith that is a threat to world peace. The site is well-known for its bone-chilling comments.

On November 5, 2005, Jihad Watch Board Vice-President Hugh Fitzgerald wrote:

“To be sure, plenty of Believers in exotic creeds alien or new to the West have managed to fit in perfectly well, and be friendly neighbors and loyal citizens, even if they came from Vietnam or India or China. Only one group, only one belief-system, distinguishes itself by appearing incapable of fitting in. And that is Muslims, and Islam.”^{viii}

In his article “Islam for the Perplexed,” Fitzgerald supported U.S. government and private persecution of Muslims:

“The second important goal is to stop all Muslim migration to Muslim lands, to the U.S., to Canada, to Western Europe. For obvious reasons, Muslims do not migrate to Eastern Europe and Russia. If possible, not only should migration be

stopped, but life can be made more difficult, if not by the government, then by private individuals, so that Muslims will be discouraged from remaining.”^{ix}

On October 5, 2005 Fitzgerald supported mass expulsion of Muslims from Europe:

"Europe already needs to reverse the folly of the mass Muslim migration that has helped make life so unpleasant, expensive and physically insecure for Infidels everywhere in Europe, and will continue to do so unless Muslim migration is halted, and these countries made, not Muslim-friendly, but Muslim-hostile, so that demographic conquest can end and inroads be reversed. It may come to something like the Benes Decree in Czechoslovakia.

“Surely whatever threat the tolerant Benes-Masaryk government sensed from the Sudeten Germans in 1946, which prompted their large-scale expulsion, was as nothing compared to the threat that a large Muslim population would pose to non-Muslims.”^x

Astoundingly, Spencer defended Mr. Fitzgerald, writing:

“If Hugh had written about Jews what he wrote about Muslims, he would not only be a bigot; he would be a liar. But the fact that what can be truthfully said about one group cannot be truthfully said about another does not make it untrue, or bigoted.”^{xi}

Mr. Spencer is entitled to his radical views and associations. We strongly believe that such plainly bigoted views, and those who hold them, should be relegated to the fringe of our nation’s discourse, not given a veneer of legitimacy by being invited to train the institutions and individuals charged with protecting our nation from violent extremists.

We hope to distribute your response to our respective constituencies in order to alleviate grassroots concerns regarding individuals and groups with clear anti-Muslim motivations being used as trainers for our nation’s law enforcement.

Sincerely,

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
Defending Dissent Foundation
Islamic Shura Council of Southern California
Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)
MAS Freedom
Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)
Muslim Advocates
Sikh Coalition
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)

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- ⁱ Robert Spencer, “*Spencer and the God of the Sea*” (4/24/2010) available at <http://www.jihadwatch.org/2010/07/spencer-and-the-god-of-the-sea.html>, accessed 7/27/2010.
- ⁱⁱ Robert Spencer interview, part 9 “*Prophet Mohammad: A Con Man?*” (4/26/2010) available at <http://www.livingscoop.com/watch.php?v=NDQ4>, Video accessed 7/27/2010. First reference is at 1:14. Second reference is at 0:29.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting “*Smearcasting: How Islamophobes Spread Fear, Bigotry and Misinformation.*” (October 2008)
- ^{iv} Robert Spencer “*About Robert Spencer*” (undated), available at <http://www.jihadwatch.org/about-robert-spencer.html>, accessed 7/28/2010
- ^v See “*SIOA is an Anti-Muslim Hate Group*” (7/19/2010) available at <http://www.loonwatch.com/2010/07/sioa-is-an-anti-muslim-hate-group/>, accessed 7/27/2010
- ^{vi} See “*Pamela Geller: The Looniest Blogger Ever*” (8/31/2009) available at <http://www.loonwatch.com/2009/08/pamela-geller-the-looniest-blogger-ever/>, accessed 7/27/2010
- ^{vii} See “*Pamela Geller and Robert Spencer: Wipe Pakistan Off the Map*” (3/09/2010) available at <http://www.loonwatch.com/tag/nuclear-holocaust/>, accessed 7/27/2010
- ^{viii} Hugh Fitzgerald “*Fitzgerald: On Integrating Muslims in the West*” (posted 11/03/2005), available at <http://www.jihadwatch.org/dhimmiwatch/archives/2005/11/008827print.html>, accessed 7/28/2010
- ^{ix} Hugh Fitzgerald “*Islam for the Perplexed*” (posted 6/22/2006), available at <http://www.mail-archive.com/osint@yahoogroups.com/msg22635.html>, accessed 7/28/2010
- ^x Hugh Fitzgerald “*Fitzgerald: Why the E.U. should reject Turkey*” (posted 10/05/2005), available at <http://www.jihadwatch.org/dhimmiwatch/archives/008437.php>, accessed 7/28/2010
- ^{xi} Robert Spencer “*The Racism Canard*” (1/18/2006), available at <http://www.jihadwatch.org/archives/2006/01/009834print.html>, accessed 7/28/2010