

unconstrained
analytics

in a struggle, analysis must be unconstrained by preconceptions

PURGED:

**A Detailed Look at 'The Purge' of
U.S. Counterterrorism Training
by the Obama Administration**

Patrick Poole
February 2017

On June 28, 2016, the Senate Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on Oversight, Agency Action, Federal Rights and Federal Courts held a hearing chaired by Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) investigating a series of policies established by the Obama Administration during 2011-2012 that effectively neutered FBI counterterrorism training and blinded our nation's national security, defense and intelligence agencies to the threat from Islamic terrorism.¹

In what some experts have termed a hostile “political warfare campaign” driven by an alliance between the administration, Islamic organizations and cooperating media figures, analysts and subject matter experts were blacklisted, and books and training materials were purged from official counterterrorism training programs government-wide.²

This “purge” has contributed to clues being missed by the FBI in major terrorism cases, including the April 2013 bombing of the Boston Marathon,³ and more recently the June 2016 massacre at The Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida, by Omar Mateen, who had been the target of previous FBI investigations in 2013 and 2014.⁴

One of the first indicators of these efforts was the cancellation of an anti-terrorism conference scheduled for August 10-12, 2011 hosted by the CIA's Threat Management Unit.

A series of policies established by the Obama Administration during 2011-2012 effectively neutered FBI counterterrorism training and blinded our nation's national security, defense and intelligence agencies to the threat from Islamic terrorism.

1 Senate Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight, Agency Action, Federal Rights and Federal Courts, “Willful Blindness: Consequences of Agency Efforts To Deemphasize Radical Islam in Combating Terrorism,” June 28, 2016; <http://www.judiciary.senate.gov/meetings/willful-blindness-consequences-of-agency-efforts-to-deemphasize-radical-islam-in-combating-terrorism>

2 Katherine Gorka, “The Political Warfare Campaign Against U.S. Counter-Terrorism Experts,” Westminster Institute [October 2012]; <http://www.westminster-institute.org/articles/the-political-warfare-campaign-against-u-s-counter-terrorism-experts/>

3 Judicial Watch, “Feds Missed Chances to Stop Boston Marathon Bomber,” April 1, 2014; <http://www.judicialwatch.org/blog/2014/04/feds-missed-chances-to-stop-boston-marathon-bomber/>

4 Kerry Pickett, “Did FBI Training Material Purge Cause Agency to Drop the Ball on Orlando Shooter?” *The Daily Caller*, June 12, 2016; <http://dailycaller.com/2016/06/12/did-fbi-training-material-purge-cause-agency-to-drop-the-ball-on-orlando-shooter/>

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As a general rule banning books in government-funded libraries is considered rank censorship.

As reported by veteran Pentagon reporter Bill Gertz at the *Washington Times*, the conference was cancelled at the demand of Islamic groups who objected to presentations that were to be conducted by former Joint Chiefs of Staff intelligence analyst and international law expert Stephen Coughlin and Steve Emerson of The Investigative Project on Terrorism.⁵ An email sent to conference registrants explained that the Department of Homeland Security would be formulating new guidelines for vetting speakers and screening presentation content.

Alarms by Islamic groups protesting the participation of the speaker were prompted by an alarmist article by Dina Temple-Raston of National Public Radio.⁶ Many of the claims made in the NPR article were later proved false in two separate courts of law.

The cancellation of the CIA terrorism conference was followed in September 2011 by a series of articles penned by far-Left blogger Spencer Ackerman at *WIRED Magazine* that claimed counterterrorism trainers and materials used by the FBI were promoting "Islamophobia."⁷ One of Ackerman's targets was books in the library at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, that he deemed offensive.⁸ It should be noted that as a general rule banning books in government-funded libraries is considered rank censorship.

While a number of claims made by Ackerman in his series of articles were later found much like Temple-Raston's NPR article to be manifestly false, inside U.S. government agencies individuals targeted by Ackerman's articles were prohibited from speaking publicly in defense of themselves and their work and "The Purge" continued apace.

Black October

Then in October 2011, a remarkable series of events dramatically shifted U.S. government policies largely fueled by Ackerman's reporting.

The first event was the circulation by Homeland Security's Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties to government agencies of a list of "Countering Violent

5 Bill Gertz, "Inside the Ring: Anti-Terror Trainers Blocked," *Washington Times*, October 5, 2011; <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/oct/5/inside-the-ring-295822498/>

6 Dina Temple-Raston, "Terror Training Cast Pall Over Muslim Employee," *National Public Radio*, July 18, 2011; <http://www.npr.org/2011/07/18/137712352/terrorism-training-casts-pall-over-muslim-employee>

7 James Taranto, "Best of the Web: 'Call Them Racists,'" *Wall Street Journal*, July 20, 2010; <http://www.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052748703724104575379200412040286>

8 Spencer Ackerman, "New Evidence of Anti-Islam Bias Underscores Deep Challenges for FBI's Reform Pledge," *WIRED*, September 23, 2011; <http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2011/09/fbi-islam-domination/>

Extremism (CVE) Training Do's and Don'ts.”⁹ Among those targeted in the DHS training ban were what the document called “self-professed ‘Muslim reformers,’” who the agency warned “may further an interest group agenda instead of delivering generally accepted, unbiased information.”¹⁰

Among other “don’ts” declared by DHS was this warning:

Don't use training that relies on fear or conspiracies to motivate law enforcement. Don't use training premised on theories with little or no evidence to support them. Examples (from the report “Manufacturing the Muslim Menace”) of unsubstantiated theories include...Mainstream Muslim organizations are fronts for Islamic political organizations who true desire is to establish Sharia law in America.

Remarkably, some of the very organizations that the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties had partnered with had been identified by the Justice Department as fronts for international terrorist organizations in the Holy Land Foundation terrorism financing trial in 2007 and 2008, including the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the North American Islamic Trust (NAIT), and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).¹¹ At the time these guidelines were published, the president of ISNA, Imam Mohamed Majid, was serving on the DHS Countering Violent Extremism Working Group.

Not only had the Justice Department named these organizations as unindicted co-conspirators during the trial, but federal prosecutors had outlined in court documents that these organizations were integral parts of an international conspiracy to funnel money to the terrorist group HAMAS.¹² In one Justice Department filing, prosecutors noted that “numerous exhibits were entered into evidence establishing both ISNA’s and NAIT’s intimate relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood, the Palestine Committee, and the defendants in this case.”¹³



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Land Foundation terrorism
financing trial.**

⁹ Department of Homeland Security, Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, “Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Training: Do’s and Don’ts,” N.D.; <https://www.scribd.com/document/141998997/DHS-CRCL-CVE-Training-Dos-and-Donts>

¹⁰ Jamie Weinstein, “No Moderates Need Apply,” *The Daily Caller*, May 17, 2013; <http://dailycaller.com/2013/05/17/thedc-morning-no-moderates-need-apply/>

¹¹ Charles C. Johnson, “Homeland Security Guidelines Advise Deference to Pro-Shariah Muslim Supremacists,” *The Daily Caller*, May 17, 2013; <http://dailycaller.com/2013/05/17/homeland-security-guidelines-advise-deference-to-pro-sharia-muslim-supremacists/2/>

¹² Josh Gerstein, “Islamic Groups Names in Hamas Funding Case,” *New York Sun*, June 4, 2007; <http://www.nysun.com/national/islamic-groups-named-in-hamas-funding-case/55778/>

¹³ Justice Department, “Government’s Memorandum in Opposition to Petitioners Islamic Society of North America and North American Islamic Trust’s Motion for Equitable Relief,” *U.S.A. v. Holy Land Foundation et al.*, CR NO. 3:04-CR-240-P, July 10, 2008, p. 2; https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/asset_upload_file142_36171.pdf#page=2

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Dallas Division

Federal Judge Hands Down Sentences in Holy Land Foundation Case
Holy Land Foundation and Leaders Convicted on Providing Material Support to Hamas Terrorist Organization

U.S. Attorney's Office
May 27, 2009

Northern District of Texas
(214) 659-8600

WASHINGTON—Today, in federal court in Dallas, U.S. District Judge Jorge A. Solis sentenced the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLF) and five of its leaders following their convictions by a federal jury in November 2008 on charges of providing material support to Hamas, a designated foreign terrorist organization, announced acting U.S. Attorney James T. Jacks of the Northern District of Texas, and David Kris, Assistant Attorney General for National Security. "These sentences should serve as a strong warning to anyone who knowingly provides financial support to terrorists under the guise of humanitarian relief."

HLF was incorporated by Shakeri Abu Baker, Mohammad El-Mezain, and Ghassan Elshahi. Mufid Abdalqader and Abdulrahman Odleh worked as fund raisers. Together, with others, they provided material support to the Hamas movement.

- Shakeri Abu Baker, 50, of Garland, Texas, was sentenced to a total of 65 years in prison. He was convicted of 10 counts of conspiracy to provide, and the provision of, material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization; 11 counts of conspiracy to provide, and the provision of, funds, goods and services to a Specially Designated Terrorist; 10 counts of conspiracy to commit, and the commission of, money laundering; one count of conspiracy to impede and impair the Internal Revenue Service (IRS); and one count of filing a false tax return.
- Mohammad El-Mezain, 55, of San Diego, California, was sentenced to the statutory maximum of 15 years in prison. He was convicted on one count of conspiracy to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization.
- Ghassan Elshahi, 55, of Richardson, Texas, was sentenced to a total of 65 years in prison. He was convicted on the same counts as Abu Baker, and one additional count of filing a false tax return.
- Mufid Abdalqader, 49, of Richardson, Texas, was sentenced to a total of 20 years in prison. He was convicted on one count of conspiracy to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, one count of conspiracy to provide goods, funds, and services to a specially designated terrorist, and one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering.
- Abdulrahman Odleh, 49, of Patterson, New Jersey, was sentenced to 15 years in prison. He was convicted on the same counts as Abdalqader.
- HLF, now defunct, was convicted on 10 counts of conspiracy to provide, and the provision of, material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization; 11 counts of conspiracy to provide, and the provision of, funds, goods and services to a Specially Designated Terrorist; and 10 counts of conspiracy to commit, and the commission of, money laundering.

The Court reaffirmed the jury's \$12.4 million money judgment against all the defendants, with the exception of El Mezain, who was not convicted of money laundering.

From its inception, HLF existed to support Hamas. Before HLF was designated as a Specially Designated Terrorist by the Treasury Department and shut down in December 2001, it was the largest U.S. Muslim charity. It was based in Richardson, Texas, a Dallas suburb. The "material support statute," as it is commonly referred to, was enacted in 1996 as part of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act. That statute recognizes that money is fungible, and that money in the hands of a terrorist organization—even if for so called charitable purposes—supports that organization's overall terrorist objectives.

The government presented evidence at trial that, as the U.S. began to scrutinize individuals and entities in the U.S. who were raising funds for terrorist groups in the mid-1990s, the HLF intentionally hid its financial support for Hamas behind the guise of charitable donations. HLF and these five defendants provided approximately \$12.4 million in support to Hamas and in goal of creating an Islamic Palestinian state by eliminating the State of Israel through violent jihad.

The government's case included testimony that in the early 1990s, Hamas' parent organization, the Muslim Brotherhood, planned to establish a network of organizations in the U.S. to spread a militant Islamist message and raise money for Hamas. The government's case also included testimony about Hamas material found in zakat committees. The defendants sent HLF-raised funds to Hamas-controlled zakat committees and charitable societies in the West Bank and Gaza. Zakat is an Arabic word referring to the religious obligation to give alms.

HLF became the chief fundraising arm for the Palestine Committee in the U.S. created by the Muslim Brotherhood to support Hamas. According to a videotape of a 1993 Palestine Committee meeting in Philadelphia, former HLF President and CEO Shakeri Abu Baker, spoke about playing down their Hamas ties in order to keep raising money in the U.S. Another videotaped phone call included Abdulrahman Odleh, HLF's New Jersey representative, referring to a suicide bombing as "a beautiful operation."

The government also presented evidence that several HLF defendants have family members who are Hamas leaders, including Hamas' political chief, Moussa Abu Marook, who is married to a cousin of Ghassan Elshahi. HLF's former Chairman of the Board, Ghassan Elshahi, who also served as the vice-president of marketing for Teladom Corporation, is currently serving an 80 month sentence following his conviction on several charges related to export violations. Mohammed El-Mezain was HLF's Director of Endowments and Mufid Abdalqader was a major HLF fundraiser. Two named defendants, Akram Mubal and Hutham Maghawri are fugitives.

The defendants provided financial support to the families of Hamas martyrs, detainees, and activists knowing and intending that such assistance would support the Hamas terrorist organization. Since 1995, when it first became illegal to provide financial support to Hamas, HLF provided approximately \$12.4 million in funding to Hamas through various Hamas-affiliated committees and organizations located in Palestine-controlled areas and elsewhere.

During trial, the government also presented evidence that HLF was so concerned about investigators uncovering the group's intentions that they kept a manual entitled "The Foundation's Policies and Procedures." HLF followed various security procedures outlined in the manual to include hiring a security company to search the HLF for listening devices, ordering defendant Hutham Maghawri, a fugitive, to take training on advanced methods in detecting wiretaps, shredding documents after board meetings, and maintaining incriminating documents in off-site locations.

The case was investigated by the Joint Terrorism Task Force, involving agents from federal, state, and local agencies including: FBI, IRS - Criminal Investigation, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Department of State, U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division, the Texas Department of Public Safety, and the Dallas, Plano, Garland and Richardson, Texas, Police Departments. In addition, the Department of Justice Criminal Division's Asset Forfeiture and Money Laundering Section provided assistance.

The case was prosecuted by James T. Jacks, acting U.S. Attorney; Barry Jonas, Trial Attorney for the Department of Justice Counterterrorism Section; and Elizabeth J. Shapiro, Deputy Director, Federal Programs Branch, Department of Justice, serving as a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney.

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Later in that same filing the federal prosecutors observed:¹⁴

ISNA and NAIT, in fact, shared more with HLF than just a parent organization. They were intimately connected with the HLF and its assigned task of providing financing support to HAMAS.

Shortly after HAMAS was founded in 1987, as an outgrowth of the Muslim Brotherhood, Govt. Exh. 21-61, the International Muslim Brotherhood ordered the Muslim Brotherhood chapters throughout the world to create Palestine Committees, whose job it was to support HAMAS with "media, money and men." Govt. Exh. 3-15. The U.S. Muslim Brotherhood created the U.S. Palestine Committee, which documents reflect was initially comprised of three organizations: the OLF [HLF], the IAP [Islamic Association for Palestine], and the UASR [United Association for Studies and Research]. **CAIR was later added to these organizations.** Govt. Exh. 3-78 (listing IAP, HLF, UASR and CAIR as part of the Palestine Committee, and stating that there is "[n]o doubt America is the ideal location to train the necessary resources to support the Movement worldwide..."). **The mandate of these organizations, per the International Muslim Brotherhood, was to support HAMAS, and the HLF's particular role was to raise money to support HAMAS' organization inside the Palestinian territories.** [p. 13, emphasis added]

During the Holy Land trial, **FBI Agent Lara Burns testified in court that CAIR was a front for HAMAS.**¹⁵

One trial exhibit submitted by federal prosecutors explained that these organizations were dedicated to a "civilizational-jihadist process" to destroy America from within and replace the Constitution with sharia [Islamic law]:¹⁶

The Ikhwan [Muslim Brotherhood] must understand that their work in America is a kind of grand Jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and "sabotaging" its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers so that it is eliminated and God's religion [Islam] is made victorious over all other religions.¹⁷

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁵ Jason Trahan, "FBI: CAIR is a Front Group, and Holy Land Foundation Tapped Hamas Clerics for Fundraisers," *Dallas Morning News*, October 7, 2008; <http://crime-blog.dallasnews.com/2008/10/fbi-cair-is-a-front-group-and.html/>

¹⁶ Jason Trahan, "Muslim Brotherhood's Papers Detail Plan to Seize U.S.," *Dallas Morning News*, September 17, 2007; <http://www.dallasnews.com/news/crime/headlines/20070917-muslim-brotherhood-s-papers-detail-plan-to-seize-u.s.ece>

¹⁷ Mohamed Akram Adlouni, "An Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal for the Group in North America," May 22, 1991; *U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation*, Government Exhibit Elbarasse 3; <http://coop.txnd.uscourts.gov/judges/hlf2/09-25-08/Elbarasse%20Search%203.pdf#page=21>

Federal prosecutors specifically cited this internal Muslim Brotherhood planning document as the strategic goal of these U.S.-based Islamic groups—the very same group advising the Obama Administration.¹⁸

The federal judge in the Holy Foundation case agreed with the case presented by the federal prosecutors had made regarding these organizations,¹⁹ stating in one ruling that:

“...the Government has produced ample evidence to establish the associations with CAIR, ISNA and NAIT with HLF...and with HAMAS.”²⁰

One of the architects of the new DHS guidelines was Mohamed Elibiary, who served on the DHS Countering Violent Extremism Working Group, was appointed in October 2010 by Secretary Janet Napolitano to the Homeland Security Advisory Council²¹ and later served as a senior fellow for the agency, who publicly admitted to his role in developing the DHS guidelines.²² Unsurprisingly, he was a regular source for WIRED’s Spencer Ackerman.²³

Elibiary served in these roles despite his long history of speaking at extremist events,²⁴ his public statement in support of radical jihadist ideologues from the Muslim Brotherhood,²⁵ and declaring America “an Islamic country.”²⁶ After one of Elibiary’s tweets claiming it was “inevitable that ‘Caliphate’ returns as the



The damage done by Mohamed Elibiary by pushing DHS policies of blacklisting and censorship have not been reversed.

18 Justice Department, “Government’s Memorandum in Opposition to Petitioners Islamic Society of North America and North American Islamic Trust’s Motion for Equitable Relief,” p. 12; https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/images/asset_upload_file142_36171.pdf#page=12

19 Josh Gerstein, “Judge’s Ruling on Islamic Groups as ‘Unindicted Co-Conspirators’ Made Public,” *POLITICO*, November 19, 2010; <http://www.politico.com/blogs/under-the-radar/2010/11/judges-ruling-on-islamic-groups-as-unindicted-co-conspirators-made-public-030922>

20 Judge Jorge Solis, “Memorandum Opinion Order,” *U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation et al.*, July 1, 2009, pp. 14-15; http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/1425.pdf#page=15

21 Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Press Secretary, “Secretary Napolitano Swears in Homeland Security Advisory Council Members,” October 18, 2010; <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2010/10/18/secretary-napolitano-swears-homeland-security-advisory-council-members>

22 Ryan Mauro, “Pro-Brotherhood DHS Advisor Creates Lawfare Blind Spot,” *The Daily Caller*, October 28, 2013; <http://dailycaller.com/2013/10/28/pro-brotherhood-dhs-advisor-creates-lawfare-blind-spot/>

23 Spencer Ackerman, “FBI’s Key Muslim Ally: Bigoted Briefings ‘Make My Job Harder,’” *WIRED*, September 20, 2011; <https://www.wired.com/2011/09/u-s-muslims-fbi-cooperation/>

24 Patrick S. Poole, “Homeland Security’s Muslim Adviser Spoke at Conference Honoring Ayatollah Khomeini,” *Breitbart News*, October 18, 2010; <http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2010/10/18/homeland-security--s-muslim-advisor-mohamed-elbiary-spoke-at-conference-honoring-ayatollah-khomeini/>

25 Judicial Watch, “Napolitano’s New Adviser Supports Al-Qaeda’s Hero,” October 27, 2010; <http://www.judicialwatch.org/blog/2010/10/napolitano-s-new-adviser-supports-al-qaeda-hero/>

26 Adam Kredo, “DHS Adviser Tweets: America ‘An Islamic Country,’” *Washington Free Beacon*, November 1, 2013; <http://freebeacon.com/national-security/dhs-adviser-tweets-america-an-islamic-country/>

The net effect of the DHS guidelines was to effectively ban any discussion of the facts about their outreach partners presented by the Justice Department in federal court and to blacklist any counterterrorism trainer who raised the issue.

Islamic State was sweeping across northern Syria and Iraq, just days before the Islamic State declared their caliphate,²⁷ and amidst an ongoing congressional inquiry into his extremist statements and claims he had circulated law enforcement sensitive materials to the media, DHS notified members of Congress he had been let go.²⁸

The damage done by Mohamed Elibiary by pushing DHS policies of blacklisting and censorship have not been reversed.

The net effect of the DHS guidelines was to effectively ban any discussion of the facts about their outreach partners presented by the Justice Department in federal court and to blacklist any counterterrorism trainer who raised the issue.

But "the purge" was about to get worse.

On October 19, 2011, three separate events would occur that would demonstrate the coordinated effort between the administration and its Islamic outreach partners to institutionalize the guidelines set out just days before by DHS.

The first event was the publication of an op-ed in the *Los Angeles Times* by Salam al-Marayati, a Democratic Party operative, Obama adviser and president of the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC), calling for a ban on so-called "anti-Muslim" trainers and materials, claiming that such endangered the partnerships between Islamic organizations and law enforcement.²⁹

The hypocrisy of al-Marayati's demands is seen when considered that he had previously been removed from a U.S. government terrorism commission in 1999 for his statements in support of a terrorist organization.³⁰ Immediately following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, al-Marayati came under fire again for comments he made on a Los Angeles radio program just hours after the attacks saying that the chief suspects should be "the state of Israel."³¹

MPAC as an organization has been criticized for publications defending terrorist organizations and equating Islamic suicide attacks with Patrick Henry and "American freedom fighters."³²

27 Adam Kredo, "Senior DHS Adviser: 'Inevitable that 'Caliphate' Returns,'" *Washington Free Beacon*, June 16, 2014; <http://freebeacon.com/national-security/senior-dhs-adviser-brags-inevitable-that-caliphate-returns/>

28 Adam Kredo, "Controversial DHS Adviser Let Go Amid Allegations of Cover Up," *Washington Free Beacon*, September 15, 2014; <http://freebeacon.com/issues/controversial-dhs-adviser-let-go-amid-allegations-of-cover-up/>

29 Salam al-Marayati, "The Wrong Way to Fight Terrorism," *Los Angeles Times*, October 19, 2011; <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/oct/19/opinion/la-oe-almarayati-fbi-20111019>

30 Laurie Goodstein, "Gephardt Bows to Jews' Anger over Nominee," *New York Times*, July 9, 1999; <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/07/09/us/gephardt-bows-to-jews-anger-over-a-nominee.html>

31 Larry B. Stammer, "Jewish-Muslim Dialogue Newly Tested," *Los Angeles Times*, September 22, 2001; <http://articles.latimes.com/2001/sep/22/local/me-48579>

32 Andrew C. McCarthy, "The History of MPAC," *National Review*, August 7, 2012; <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/313257/history-mpac-andrew-c-mccarthy>

On September 11, 2012—the same day that mobs stormed the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and Al Qaeda terrorists attacked the U.S. Consulate and CIA annex in Benghazi—MPAC published a blacklist of 25 speakers, academics and subject matter experts they demanded be prohibited from giving counterterrorism training [myself included, with MPAC accusing me of being a “pseudo-expert” in an area that I have never taught nor have I declared myself to be an expert].³³

An October 19 event featuring Islamic groups and sponsored by the Justice Department [the same agency that had identified several of the organizations and Islamic leaders in attendance at the event] was held at George Washington University on the topic of “Post 9/11 Discrimination.” One of the speakers at the event was Deputy Attorney General James Cole, and his speech at the event is published on the Justice Department’s website.³⁴ Also in attendance was the head of DOJ’s Civil Rights Division Tom Perez (now secretary of the Commerce Department).

Reporter Neil Munro of *The Daily Caller* was also at the DOJ conference and reported that **some Islamic leaders called for the criminalization of criticism of Islam under discrimination laws** without any reference to how such rules would run afoul of the First Amendment’s protection of free speech.³⁵

According to Munro, ISNA’s Mohamed Magid openly called for “Perez to change the federal government’s rules governing terror investigations, for more private meetings with top justice department officials, for the reeducation of FBI agents, and for more people to oppose criticism of Islam, which he labelled ‘religious bigotry and hate.’”

These sentiments were formalized that same day in a seven-page letter signed by fifty-seven U.S. Islamic groups, including ISNA, CAIR and MPAC, to Obama’s “counterterrorism czar” John Brennan [who then became the CIA Director] again invoking Spencer Ackerman’s reporting.³⁶

Among the demands made in the letter from the Islamic groups were:

“Purge all federal government training materials of biased materials”

33 Muslim Public Affairs Council, “MPAC Releases ‘Not Qualified: Exposing America’s Top 25 Pseudo-Experts on Islam,’” September 11, 2012; <http://www.mpac.org/issues/islamophobia/mpac-releases-not-qualified-exposing-america-top-25-pseudo-experts-on-islam.php#.Uzl-XF0y2C>

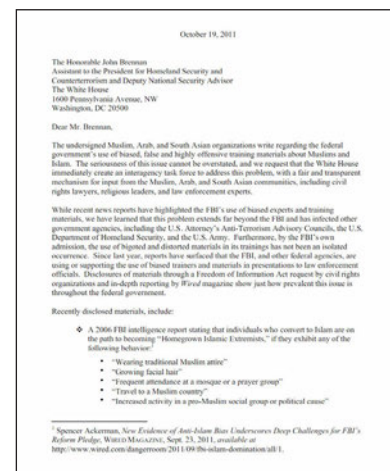
34 Justice Department, Office of Public Affairs, “Deputy Attorney General James M. Cole Speaks at Department’s Conference on Post 9/11 Discrimination,” October 19, 2011; <https://www.justice.gov/opa/speech/deputy-attorney-general-james-m-cole-speaks-department-s-conference-post-911>

35 Neil Munro, “Progressives, Islamists Huddle at Justice Department,” *The Daily Caller*, October 21, 2011; <http://dailycaller.com/2011/10/21/progressives-islamists-huddle-at-justice-department/>

36 Muslim Advocates, “Letter to John Brennan on FBI’s Use of Biased Experts and Training Materials,” October 19, 2011; <https://www.muslimadvocates.org/letter-to-dhs-john-brennan-on-fbis-use-of-biased-experts-and-training-materials/>



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Purges, blacklists, book banning, mandatory “re-education” and punishment would otherwise sound like a program by the Khmer Rouge, not so-called U.S. “civil rights” organizations.

“[M]andatory re-training program for FBI agents”

“[A]ll trainers and other government employees who promoted biased trainers and training materials are effectively disciplined”

Purges, blacklists, book banning, mandatory “re-education” and punishment would otherwise sound like a program by the Khmer Rouge, not so-called U.S. “civil rights” organizations. But these events of “Black October” would set in motion a radical shift in our nation’s national security and counterterrorism policies.

The Obama Administration Responds

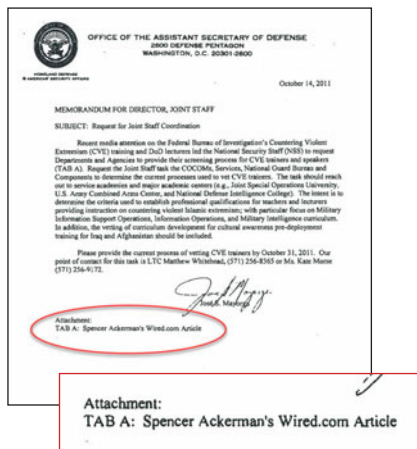
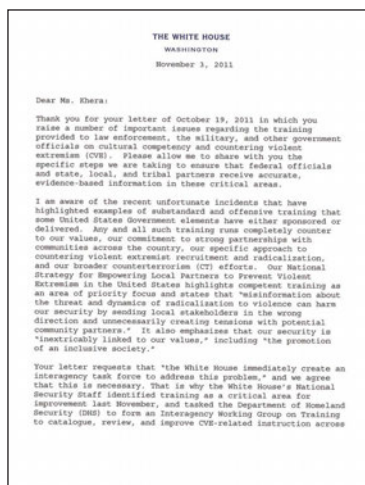
The October 19th letter by the fifty-seven Islamic groups received a reply from Brennan two weeks later (which one former White House official described to me as “lightning speed”) acceding to their demands and promising swift action by the administration.³⁷

The White House was true to its word. Just days later the Pentagon issued a Joint Staff Action Directive directed at multiple elements within the Defense Department, including academic institutions, calling for the vetting of all “CVE trainers.”³⁸ Curiously, the Joint Staff directive was drafted on October 14—prior to the Islamic groups’ letter being sent to the White House—but was embargoed until November 15, presumably to give time for Brennan’s response to be sent and received.

The directive stated that “the intent is to determine the criteria used to establish professional qualifications for teachers and lecturers providing instruction on countering violent Islamic extremism; with particular focus on Military Information Support Operations, Information Operations, and Military Intelligence curriculum.”³⁹

Yet again, the sole reason cited for such efforts was Spencer Ackerman’s reporting and a copy of one of his articles was added as an attachment.⁴⁰

In December 2011, the White House issued the “Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States”—the local partners, of course, being Islamic organizations, including those cited by the Justice Department as working to aid foreign terrorist orga-



37 Letter from John Brennan to Farhana Khera, November 3, 2011; <http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/misc/742.pdf>

38 Jose Mayorga, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, “Memorandum for Director, Joint Staff,” October 14, 2011; <http://dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Joint-Staff-Action-Trainers.pdf>

39 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

40 J.E. Dyer, “Pentagon Memo Fishing for Counterterrorism Training Standards Leaned Heavily on WIRED Reporter’s Assertions,” *The Daily Caller*, November 30, 2011; <http://dailycaller.com/2011/11/30/pentagon-memo-fishing-for-counterterrorism-training-standards-leaned-heavily-on-wired-reporters-assertions/>

nizations.⁴¹ All national security and law enforcement agencies on the federal, state and local level would now have to consult these groups and rely on “local partners” as a matter of policy. And as made clear in Salam al-Marayati’s Los Angeles Times op-ed, **Islamic groups complaining about counterterrorism policies or training would disrupt government efforts to “counter violent extremism” gave them an implicit veto over counterterrorism policies.**

The State Department under Hillary Clinton got into the game as well. Earlier in the year Clinton had made remarks at a meeting with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Istanbul on the topic of “Combatting Religious Intolerance,” **saying that the U.S. government would employ “old fashioned techniques of peer pressure and shaming” in addressing “Islamophobia” with a vow to “promoting interfaith education and collaboration” to those ends.**⁴²

Clinton specifically invoked a pending UN Human Rights Council Resolution [HCR 16/18]⁴³ sponsored by the OIC on “combatting intolerance” that the OIC unashamedly said was intended to create a global regime to stifle criticism of Islam.⁴⁴ Clinton failed to explain how these could be taken in the absence of any constitutional mandate for “peer pressure and shaming,” or how her plans for “interfaith education and collaboration” and de facto Islamic blasphemy laws avoided the First Amendment’s prohibition of separation of church and state.

Clinton met with OIC leaders for three days behind closed doors at the State Department in December 2011,⁴⁵ where one of the stated topics of discussion with these foreign leaders was “training government officials on religious and cultural awareness.”⁴⁶ **Not only would U.S.-based Islamic groups have a direct say in the counterterrorism training of U.S. government officials and agents, but it would also be done now in consultation with foreign Islamic states.**

Not only would U.S.-based Islamic groups have a direct say in the counterterrorism training of U.S. government officials and agents, but it would also be done now in consultation with foreign Islamic states.

41 Executive Office of the President of the United States, “Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States,” December 2011; <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/sip-final.pdf>

42 U.S. Department of State, “Remarks at the OIC High-Level Meeting on Combating Religious Intolerance,” July 15, 2011; <http://www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2011/07/168636.htm>

43 United Nations Human Rights Council, “Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief,” HCR 16/18, April 12, 2011; http://www.2ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/16session/A.HRC.RES.16.18_en.pdf

44 Robert C. Blitt, “Defending Islam From Free Speech,” *USA Today*, January 12, 2015; <http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2015/01/11/defending-islam-free-speech-muslim-oic-un-hate-speech-criticism-column/21609273/>

45 Patrick Goodenough, “State Dept Aims to Denounce ‘Offensive Speech’ While Upholding Free Expression,” *CNS News*, December 13, 2011; <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/state-dept-aims-denounce-offensive-speech-while-upholding-free-expression>

46 U.S. State Department, Office of the Spokesperson, “Secretary Clinton Addresses Istanbul Process for Combating Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief,” December 12, 2011; <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2011/12/178705.htm>

A Justice Department senior attorney told a group of Muslim activists that statements made on social media outlets, such as Facebook, critical of Islam could be considered civil rights violations.

The State Department would later publish a report on those December consultation proceedings with the OIC.⁴⁷ That December the OIC's UNHCR Resolution 16/18 was approved with the support of the Obama Administration and the State Department, however the free speech implications of this new U.S.-backed regime did not go unnoticed.⁴⁸

That these new speech codes are now being translated into official Obama Administration policy can be seen in the statements by a Justice Department senior attorney, who told a group of Muslim activists that statements made on social media outlets, such as Facebook, critical of Islam could be considered civil rights violations.⁴⁹

The FBI's "Islamophobia" Star Chamber

One of the stated primary objectives in the Islamic groups' demands for action by the Obama Administration was the fundamental transformation of the FBI's counterterrorism training and investigative policies. And ultimately, they got what they wanted.

On February 8, 2012, a number of leaders from the Islamic organizations that had signed the October 19 demand letter met with FBI Director Robert Mueller, including representatives from ISNA and MPAC.⁵⁰ Their intent was to check the progress of their demands for a "purge" (the term they used) of the bureau's counterterrorism training materials, again invoking Spencer Ackerman's articles. They were told that more than 700 documents and 300 presentations had been purged from the FBI's training.

But as Dr. Sebastian Gorka, a trainer for numerous military and law enforcement agencies, has recounted as "the purge" was being implemented during this period a demand was made for his presentation on Al-Qaeda delivered repeatedly during FBI training events for review. A week later his PowerPoint presentation was returned with instructions to remove several slides on the demand of an anonymous reviewer. **Not only was Dr. Gorka afforded no opportunity to**

47 U.S. State Department, "Report of the United States on the First Meeting of Experts to Promote Implementation of United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18," April 19, 2012; <http://geneva.usmission.gov/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/FINAL-Implementation-Meeting-Report-4-18.pdf>

48 Abigail Esman, "Could You Be a Criminal? US Supports UN Anti-Free Speech Measure," *Forbes*, December 30, 2011; <http://www.forbes.com/sites/abigailes-man/2011/12/30/could-you-be-a-criminal-us-supports-un-anti-free-speech-measure/>

49 Judicial Watch, "DOJ: Social Media Posts Trashing Muslim May Violate Civil Rights," May 30, 2013; <http://www.judicialwatch.org/blog/2013/05/doj-social-media-posts-trashing-muslims-may-violate-civil-rights/>

50 Islamic Society of North America, "ISNA & Nat. Orgs. Meet with FBI Dir. to Discuss Biased FBI Training Materials," February 14, 2012; <http://web.archive.org/web/20120216025316/http://www.isna.net/articles/News/ISNA--Nat-Orgs-Meet-with-FBI-Dir-to-Discuss-Biased-FBI-Training-Materials.aspx>

appeal or explanation of why certain elements had been deemed “inflammatory,” but the identity of the reviewer was never disclosed.

As complaints from inside the national security, intelligence and law enforcement community of these “Star Chamber” procedures began to reach Capitol Hill, several members of Congress began to make inquiries to the FBI as to why these trainers were being denied due process to defend their training and their work.

The result was a March 23, 2012, meeting between a representative from the FBI responsible for purging the counterterrorism training materials, and attorneys and staffers with the House Judiciary Committee. A transcript of that conversation based on an audio recording made of the meeting revealed that questions were raised about the identities and qualifications of the three anonymous outside contractors who were hired by the FBI to review all of their counterterrorism training materials.

When one congressional staff attorney asked, given the poor historical record of the FBI in selecting Muslim advisers and outreach partners,⁵¹ how the Bureau knew the outside contractors responsible for purging the FBI’s counterterrorism training material were “good guys,” the jaw-dropping response from the FBI agent tasked with overseeing the department’s purge was, “Well I mean—I guess we—ultimately, I don’t.”

Even more troubling was a document the FBI presented to the congressional staffers that was represented as the “guiding principles” by which the materials were reviewed.

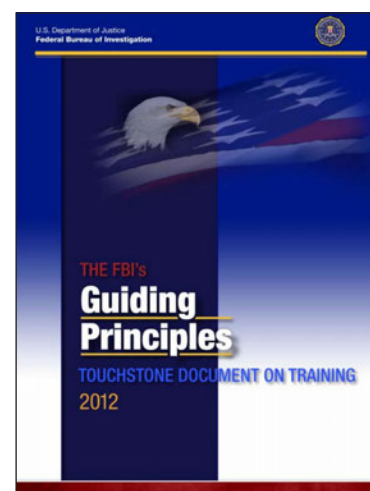
The “FBI’s Guiding Principles” document shows an even more shocking shift in U.S. government policies:

Training must clearly distinguish between constitutionally protected statements and activities designed to achieve political, social, or other objectives, and violent extremism, which is characterized by the use, threatened use, or advocacy of use of force or violence (when directed at and likely to incite imminent lawless activity) in violation of federal law to further a movement’s social or political ideologies. ***This distinction includes recognition of the corresponding principle that mere association with organizations that demonstrate both legitimate (advocacy) and illicit (violent extremism) objectives should not automatically result in a determination that the associated individual is acting in furtherance of the organization’s illicit objective(s).***⁵²

51 Patrick S. Poole, “The FBI’s Muslim Outreach Follies,” *PJ Media*, May 9, 2012; <https://pjmedia.com/blog/the-fbis-muslim-outreach-follies/?singlepage=true>

52 Federal Bureau of Investigation, “The FBI’s Guiding Principles: Touchstone Document on Training,” March 2012, p. 1; <https://web.archive.org/web/20120325152104/http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/training/guiding-principles>

When a congressional staff attorney asked how the Bureau knew the outside contractors responsible for purging the FBI’s counterterrorism training material were “good guys,” the FBI agent tasked with overseeing the department’s purge said, “I don’t [know].”



The net effect of the whole government-wide purge has been to hamstring our counterterrorism agencies and shut down terrorism investigations.

One congressional staff attorney described to me the implications of the FBI's "touchstone" policy:

The FBI is clearly saying here that if you support a designated terrorist organization or group that engages in violence, but that same organization engages in some kind of non-violent activity, like religious or ideological instruction, your support for that terrorist organization is deemed by this administration as constitutionally protected.

There are two immediate problems with the FBI's policy. First is that it is in direct conflict with federal law and the Supreme Court's decision in the *Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project* that found that even non-violent support for a terrorist group is a violation of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act. The second problem is practical. For all the talk by this administration about countering violent extremism, if that violent extremist group engages in non-violent activity there's no ability for the government to ever counter its extremism because they have thrown a constitutional cloak over everything. They've undercut virtually all basis to do CVE.

Look, it's clear the real reason for this policy is that the administration had to rehabilitate their Muslim outreach partners, like ISNA and CAIR, who the Justice Department had proved during the Holy Land Foundation trial had supported terrorism. That's a matter of court record. And the net effect of this and the whole government-wide purge has been to hamstring our counterterrorism agencies and shut down terrorism investigations. So we shouldn't be surprised when Americans get killed because of this political correctness.

Curiously, all traces of the FBI's Touchstone document recently disappeared from their website immediately after the Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) began asking question about the counterterror training purge in the aftermath of The Pulse nightclub massacre in Orlando, and after he chaired a Senate Judiciary subcommittee hearing on the topic.

The March 2012 meeting between the FBI and House Judiciary Committee staff resulted in raising more questions than it answered. But when Congress began asking questions about the FBI's questionable standards for purging their training materials and who was doing the reviewing, the FBI began throwing up obstacles.⁵³

53 Judicial Watch, "U.S. Government Purges of Law Enforcement Training Material Deemed 'Offensive' to Muslims," September 1, 2015; <https://www.judicialwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/JWSRGovtPurgeActiveMeasures1SEP2015.pdf>

When members of Congress began asking about the identities and background of the FBI's outside "subject matter experts" (SMEs), the FBI took the **unprecedented step of classifying their names**. And then when members of Congress asked to review the documents and presentations that had been purged, rather than providing them for review, the FBI made them sign confidentiality agreements and they had to review the purged materials in a secure room at FBI headquarters under the watchful eye of multiple FBI minders.⁵⁴

But the absurd lengths taken by the FBI were just beginning.

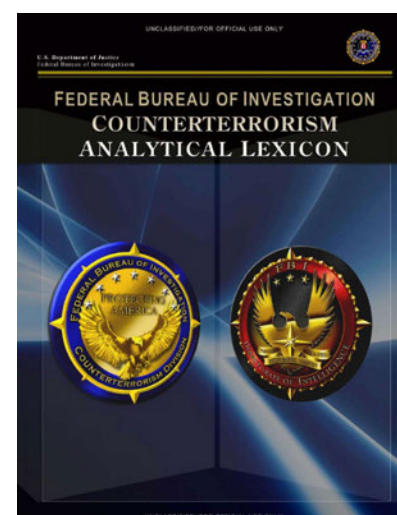
On May 10, 2012 Congressman Louie Gohmert [TX-01] gave a speech on the House floor using a graph prepared by Stephen Coughlin comparing the terms used in the 9/11 Commission Report with the National Security Intelligence Strategy and the FBI's Counterterrorism Analytical Lexicon, noting terms such as "jihad," "Islam," and even "Al-Qaeda" that had been repeatedly used by the 9/11 Commission had now been virtually eradicated in the later documents.⁵⁵

Remarkably, the following day a staffer in the FBI's congressional liaison office called the House Judiciary Committee to claim that the FBI Counterterrorism Analytical Lexicon noted in Rep. Gohmert's presentation didn't actually exist. As I reported at the time, the FBI lexicon is not only publicly available, it is repeatedly referred to in other U.S. government documents.⁵⁶

And when Rep. Gohmert asked FBI Director Mueller during a House Judicial Committee oversight hearing about the identities of the outside experts used to purge the training, Mueller said that the names would only be disclosed to members of Congress in a classified setting.⁵⁷

Government watchdog Judicial Watch finally obtained redacted copies of the purged FBI materials only after filing a lawsuit against the bureau,⁵⁸ discovering that some materials that the unnamed reviewers found to be factually accurate were nonetheless rejected based on highly subjective criteria, such as the reviewer objecting that the "tone" of the presentation was inappropriate.⁵⁹

When members of Congress asked to review the documents and presentations that had been purged, the FBI made them sign confidentiality agreements and they had to review the purged materials in a secure room at FBI headquarters under the watchful eye of multiple FBI minders.



54 Mark Flatten, "Bachmann Says FBI Agents Watched Over Her Shoulder," *Washington Examiner*, June 14, 2012; <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/bachmann-says-fbi-agents-watched-over-her-shoulder/article/1348876>

55 "Gohmert Speaks on Taliban's Growing Strength," Youtube.com, May 10, 2012; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iQc-XRjCxxg&feature=youtu.be&t=29m54s>

56 Patrick S. Poole, "FBI Denies Existence of Their Own Counter-Terror Lexicon," *PJ Media*, May 11, 2012; <https://pjmedia.com/blog/fbi-denies-existence-of-its-own-counter-terror-lexicon>

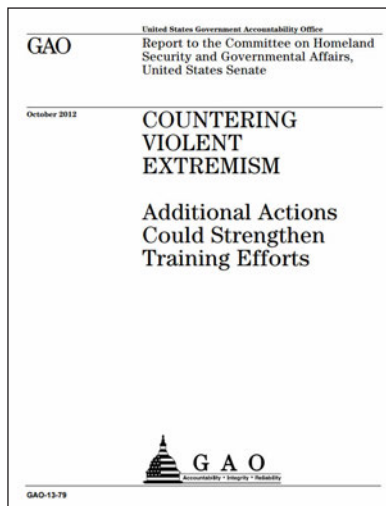
57 Mark Flatten, "No PC Here, Mueller Tells House Panel," *Washington Examiner*, May 9, 2012; <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/article/1282046>

58 Judicial Watch, "Documents Responsive to Judicial Watch's FOIA Request Seeking Records of the FBI's Counterterrorism Training Material Review," May 20, 2013; <http://www.judicialwatch.org/bulletins/documents-responsive-to-judicial-watches-foia-request-seeking-records-of-the-fbis-counterterrorism-training-material-review/>

59 Mark Flatten, "Newly Released Docs Show Inconsistencies in FBI Training Manual Censorship," *Washington Examiner*, May 22, 2013; <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/newly-released-docs-show-inconsistencies-in-fbi-training-manual-censorship/article/2530247>

Were the Claims of Widespread “Islamophobia” in Counterterror Training True?

But for all the media hysteria and calls for blacklists and mandatory retraining demanded by Islamic groups, was it really the case that U.S. government counterterrorism training was so pervasively biased against Muslims that it demanded the complete overhaul of such training across all agencies? Was it really necessary for the Obama administration to abandon counterterrorism in favor of “countering violent extremism”?



Out of nearly 25,000 attendees over the period, and more than 8,400 participant evaluations, only 77 evaluations (0.003%) deemed the training “biased,” “offensive,” or “inaccurate” for any reason whatsoever.

An objective measure of the scope of this alleged problem is provided by an October 2012 General Accounting Office [GAO] report on DHS and DOJ/FBI “CVE” programs for fiscal years 2010 and 2011—a two-year period concluding at the very same time it was alleged that these programs were rife with “biased” and “Islamophobic” material and instruction, and that demands for the “purge” were in full swing.⁶⁰

The GAO investigated these programs explicitly at the request of the chairman and ranking member of the Senate Homeland Security Committee in response to the questionable and agenda-driven reporting on the so-called “biased” and “Islamophobic” terrorism training.

The GAO looked into these DHS and DOJ/FBI programs and the participant feedback evaluations submitted by thousands of attendees. Out of nearly 25,000 attendees over the period, and more than 8,400 participant evaluations, only 77 evaluations deemed the training “biased,” “offensive,” or “inaccurate” for any reason whatsoever:

DHS and DOJ collected feedback from 8,424 state and local participants in CVE-related training during fiscal years 2010 and 2011, and 77—less than 1 percent—provided comments that expressed such concerns.

So less than 1 percent of participants providing evaluations had any objection. What were the types of things these 77 respondents—again out of 24,700, or 0.003% of program participants—expressed concern about?

The GAO report identifies three areas:⁶¹

1. The course information or instruction was politically or culturally biased [54 evaluations]. For example, participant comments that fell into this category were that the instructor had a liberal bias, and other comments were that the instructor too often relayed his or her personal views.

⁶⁰ United States General Accounting Office, “Countering Violent Extremism: Additional Actions Could Strengthen Training Efforts” GAO-13-79 [October 2012]; <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-79>

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

2. The course information or instruction was offensive (12 evaluations). For example, one concern raised in this category was that an instructor presented Islam in a negative manner, whereas another concern was that a guest presenter spoke disrespectfully about the United States.
3. The course information was inaccurate (11 evaluations). For example, comments that fell into this category raised concern that an instructor provided misinformation about dressing norms for Middle Eastern women and that an instructor cited incorrect information about a criminal case discussed during the class.

As the GAO examiners found, when it came to the handful of complaints about politically or cultural bias in the training, some participants found it was too politically correct.

As the GAO examiners found, when it came to the handful of complaints about politically or cultural bias in the training, some participants found *it was too politically correct*.

And when it came to the claims of rampant Islamophobia, **the GAO report only identified one program participant who believed the instructor presented Islam in a negative manner.**

A table on the various programs and the respective type of concerns for each of those programs is published in the report.⁶²

⁶² p. 57.

Table 9: Types of Concerns State and Local Participants Raised about DHS and DOJ CVE-Related Training That Occurred during Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011

Training provider ^a	Approximate total number of state and local participants in CVE-related trainings (rounded to the nearest hundred) ^b	Number of participants that provided feedback ^c	Number of participants that raised concerns		
			Politically or culturally biased	Offensive	Inaccurate
DOJ SLATT	11,000	5,005	17	1	4
FBI National Academy	300	248	4	2	1
FBI Citizens' Academy ^d	900	121	0	0	0
FBI NJTTF Program	1,400	1,053	26	5	3
DOJ USAOs	7,700	1,185	3	1	2
DHS I&A	1,100	28	0	0	0
DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Institute	2,300	784	4	3	1
Total	24,700	8,424	54	12	11

Source: GAO analysis of DHS and DOJ participant evaluations.

So when the hysterical claims of widespread "Islamophobic" training in virtually every major U.S. government agency by Islamic groups based almost exclusively on the reporting of Spencer Ackerman were put to the objective test by an impartial observer, **those claims were shown to be vastly unfounded** by examining the feedback of the thousands of program participants who actually sat in those training sessions.

What can be seen from these episodes is that in less than a year, the Obama Administration instituted policies—driven directly from the White House—that censored counterterrorism trainers and training on the basis of whether certain Muslim groups (some of which with highly questionable records) deemed them offensive.

The data compiled by the GAO shows that contrary to the demands of those insisting on a government-wide purge and retraining, actual complaints claiming bias were so statistically insignificant that they wouldn't even amount to a rounding error.

Conclusion

The GAO report on these training programs conducted at the very time that the "purge" was conducted, and in response to demands for the purge, eviscerate the bogus claims of widespread bias.

What can be seen from these episodes is that in less than a year, the Obama Administration instituted policies—driven directly from the White House—that censored counterterrorism trainers and training on the basis of whether certain Muslim groups (some of which with highly questionable records) deemed them offensive. The arbitrariness with which this campaign has been conducted raises serious questions about the dubious constitutionality and legality of these efforts.

And yet the result of these policies has wrought a fundamental transformation of how our nation's national security, intelligence and law enforcement agencies conduct counterterrorism.

Many experts inside and outside those agencies, and even Capitol Hill, are concerned those changes are not for the better.

One veteran Pentagon report, Bill Gertz, recently warned about the inability of the Obama administration to effectively counter the ideological warfare of Islamic terrorist groups and the deleterious effects of the U.S. government to outsource that capability to foreign countries at U.S. taxpayer expense without anything to show but catastrophic failure.⁶³

Gertz notes the effects have been disastrous for the Defense Department. Other assessments of training inside the Defense Department chronicle a culture of fear and retaliation against anyone—military or civilian—who was seen to be challenging the embedded political correctness, or worse, were directly targeted by Islamic groups.⁶⁴ Recent media reporting confirms the extent of the disaster wrought by "the purge."

63 Ginni Thomas, "National Security Expert: 'Americans Are In the Dark' About The Threats to the U.S.," *The Daily Caller*, January 14, 2017; <http://dailycaller.com/2017/01/14/national-security-expert-americans-are-in-the-dark-about-the-threats-to-the-us-video/>

64 David J. Rusin, "Denying Islam's Role in Terror: Problems in the U.S. Military," *Middle East Quarterly* (Spring 2013), pp. 19-26; <http://www.meforum.org/3485/us-military-islam>

The *Associated Press* just reported the results of an extensive investigation into the Pentagon's counter-narrative program targeting terrorist groups and found it rife with corruption and virtually ineffective if not counterproductive.⁶⁵

According to the AP:

A critical national security program known as "WebOps" is part of a vast psychological operation that the Pentagon says is effectively countering an enemy that has used the internet as a devastating tool of propaganda. But an Associated Press investigation found the management behind WebOps is so beset with incompetence, cronyism and flawed data that **multiple people with direct knowledge of the program say it's having little impact.**

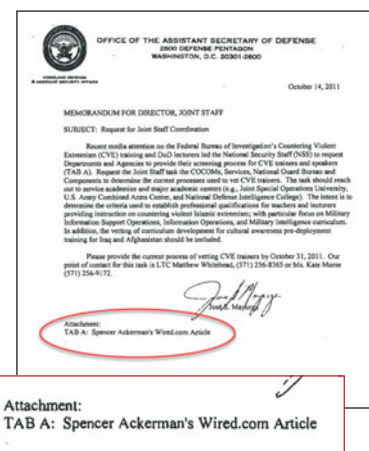
Several current and former WebOps employees cited **multiple examples of civilian Arabic specialists who have little experience in counter-propaganda, cannot speak Arabic fluently and have so little understanding of Islam they are no match for the Islamic State online recruiters.** [emphasis added]

This damning assessment exhibits the net results of "the purge."

A Joint Chiefs of Staff Action Memorandum issued at the height of the "purge" on October 11, 2011 directed a new undefined and secretive CVE screening process for all trainers involving "Military Information Support Operations, Information Operations, and Military Intelligence curriculum," or, the military's "eyes out" operations.⁶⁶ Once again, the Joint Chiefs were responding exclusively to the suspect reporting of Spencer Ackerman.⁶⁷ The WebOps program, where the *Associated Press* now reports civilian specialists have little understanding of Islam, is part of the Pentagon's Information Operations targeted by the October 2011 Joint Chiefs Action Memorandum.

But the devastating effects of the "purge" aren't limited to civilian specialists operating behind computer screens, but the warriors on the front lines fighting against the Islamic terrorists that have sworn to destroy our society and threaten attacks against our homeland.

The Pentagon's counter-narrative program targeting terrorist groups was found rife with corruption and virtually ineffective if not counterproductive.



⁶⁵ Desmond Butler and Richard Lardner, "US Military Botches Online Fight Against the Islamic State," *Associated Press*, January 31, 2017; <http://www.bigstory.ap.org/article/b3fd7213bb0e41b3b02eb15265e9d292/us-military-botches-on-line-fight-against-islamic-state>

⁶⁶ Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, "MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR, JOINT STAFF: Request for Joint Staff Coordination," Oct. 14, 2011; <http://dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/joint-staff-action-trainers.pdf>

⁶⁷ J.E. Dyer, "Pentagon Memo Fishing for Counterterrorism Training Standards Leaned Heavily on WIRED Reporter's Assertions," *The Daily Caller*, Nov. 30, 2011; <http://dailycaller.com/2011/11/30/pentagon-memo-fishing-for-counterterrorism-training-standards-leaned-heavily-on-wired-reporters-assertions/>

Having intentionally purged the Defense Department's training of any ability to define the enemy, America's top warriors admit they have been blinded, losing any ability to identify, and then defeat, the enemy.

In December 2014, the *New York Times* reported that Major Gen. Michael Nagata, then-head of Special Operations Command Central, had held a series of conference calls attempting to understand why the Islamic State had grown so dangerous.⁶⁸

Trying to decipher this complex enemy—a hybrid terrorist organization and a conventional army—is such a conundrum that General Nagata assembled an unofficial brain trust outside the traditional realms of expertise within the Pentagon, State Department and intelligence agencies, in search of fresh ideas and inspiration. Business professors, for example, are examining the Islamic State's marketing and branding strategies.

In the midst of these discussions, Gen. Nagata issued this damning indictment of how the Obama administration's CVE policies following the “purge” had blinded the very tip of the American war-fighting spear:

“We do not understand the movement, and until we do, we are not going to defeat it,” he said, according to the confidential minutes of a conference call he held with the experts. **“We have not defeated the idea. We do not even understand the idea.”**

Having intentionally purged the Defense Department's training of any ability to define the enemy, America's top warriors admit they have been blinded, losing any ability to identify, and then defeat, the enemy.

No greater epitaph of the failure (or success) of the counterterror training “purge” could attest to the damage done to the safety and security of America.


68 Eric Schmitt, “In Battle to Defang ISIS, U.S. Targets its Psychology,” *New York Times*, Dec. 28, 2014, p. A1; <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/29/us/politics/in-battle-to-defang-isis-us-targets-its-psychology-.html>



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