



Fear, Inc.

The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America

Wajahat Ali, Eli Clifton, Matthew Duss, Lee Fang, Scott Keyes, and Faiz Shakir

August 2011

Center for American Progress



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Fast facts on the Islamophobia network

This in-depth investigation conducted by the Center for American Progress Action Fund reveals not a vast right-wing conspiracy behind the rise of Islamophobia in our nation but rather a small, tightly networked group of misinformation experts guiding an effort that reaches millions of Americans through effective advocates, media partners, and grassroots organizing. This spreading of hate and misinformation primarily starts with five key people and their organizations, which are sustained by funding from a clutch of key foundations.

The funding

- More than \$40 million flowed from seven foundations over 10 years.
- The foundations funding the misinformation experts: Donors Capital Fund; Richard Mellon Scaife Foundation; Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation; Newton and Rochelle Becker Foundation and Newton and Rochelle Becker Charitable Trust; Russell Berrie Foundation, Anchorage Charitable Fund and William Rosenwald Family Fund; Fairbrook Foundation.

The misinformation experts

- Five experts generate the false facts and materials used by political leaders, grassroots groups, and the media:
 - Frank Gaffney at the Center for Security Policy
 - David Yerushalmi at the Society of Americans for National Existence
 - Daniel Pipes at the Middle East Forum
 - Robert Spencer of Jihad Watch and Stop Islamization of America
 - Steven Emerson of the Investigative Project on Terrorism
- These experts travel the country and work with or testify before state legislatures calling for a ban on the nonexistent threat of Sharia law in America and proclaiming that the vast majority of mosques in our country harbor Islamist terrorists or sympathizers.
- David Yerushalmi's "model legislation" banning Sharia law has been cut and pasted into bills in South Carolina, Texas, and Alaska. His video on how to draft an anti-Sharia bill and his online tools have been picked up nationwide.

The reach

- The movement is moving nationwide in more than 23 states—made possible by a combination of new, single-minded Islamophobia groups, exemplified by Brigitte Gabriel's ACT! For America, Pam Geller's Stop Islamization of America, David Horowitz's Freedom Center, and existing groups such as the American Family Association and the Eagle Forum.
- Misinformation experts are broadcast around the country and the world, with their work cited many times by (among others) confessed Norway terrorist Anders Breivik.
- U.S. politicians such as Reps. Peter King (R-NY), Allen West (R-FL), and Michele Bachmann (R-MN) repeat these anti-Muslim attacks give credence to incorrect facts.

The impact

- This small network of people is driving the national and global debates that have real consequences on the public dialogue and on American Muslims.
- In September 2010, a *Washington Post*-ABC News poll showed that 49 percent of Americans held an unfavorable view of Islam, a significant increase from 39 percent in October of 2002.

Why it matters

- These attacks go right to the heart of two critically important national issues: the fabric and strength of our democracy and our national security. Our Constitution upholds freedom of religion for all Americans. Contending that some religions are not part of the promise of American freedoms established by our founders directly challenges who we are as a nation.
- One of Al Qaeda's greatest recruitment and propaganda tool is the assertion that the West is at war with Islam and Muslims—an argument that is strengthened every day by those who suggest all Muslims are terrorists and all those practicing Islam are jeopardizing U.S. security.

Introduction and summary

On July 22, a man planted a bomb in an Oslo government building that killed eight people. A few hours after the explosion, he shot and killed 68 people, mostly teenagers, at a Labor Party youth camp on Norway's Utoya Island.¹

By midday, pundits were speculating as to who had perpetrated the greatest massacre in Norwegian history since World War II. Numerous mainstream media outlets, including *The New York Times*,² *The Washington Post*,³ and *The Atlantic*,⁴ speculated about an Al Qaeda connection and a "jihadist" motivation behind the attacks. But by the next morning it was clear that the attacker was a 32-year-old, white, blond-haired and blue-eyed Norwegian named Anders Breivik. He was not a Muslim, but rather a self-described Christian conservative.⁵

According to his attorney, Breivik claimed responsibility for his self-described "gruesome but necessary" actions.⁶ On July 26, Breivik told the court that violence was "necessary" to save Europe from Marxism and "Muslimization." In his 1,500-page manifesto, which meticulously details his attack methods and aims to inspire others to extremist violence, Breivik vows "brutal and breathtaking operations which will result in casualties" to fight the alleged "ongoing Islamic Colonization of Europe."⁷

Breivik's manifesto contains numerous footnotes and in-text citations to American bloggers and pundits, quoting them as experts on Islam's "war against the West." This small group of anti-Muslim organizations and individuals in our nation is obscure to most Americans but wields great influence in shaping the national and international political debate. Their names are heralded within communities that are actively organizing against Islam and targeting Muslims in the United States.

Breivik, for example, cited Robert Spencer, one of the anti-Muslim misinformation scholars we profile in this report, and his blog, Jihad Watch, 162 times in his manifesto.⁸ Spencer's website, which "tracks the attempts of radical Islam to subvert Western culture," boasts another member of this Islamophobia network in America, David Horowitz, on his Freedom Center website. Pamela Geller, Spencer's frequent collaborator, and her blog, Atlas Shrugs, was mentioned 12 times.⁹

Anti-Muslim
rhetoric “is not
cost-free”, says
former CIA officer
Sageman.

Geller and Spencer co-founded the organization Stop Islamization of America, a group whose actions and rhetoric the Anti-Defamation League concluded “promotes a conspiratorial anti-Muslim agenda under the guise of fighting radical Islam.”¹⁰ The group seeks to rouse public fears by consistently vilifying the Islamic faith and asserting the existence of an Islamic conspiracy to destroy “American values.” Based on Breivik’s sheer number of citations and references to the writings of these individuals, it is clear that he read and relied on the hateful, anti-Muslim ideology of a number of men and women detailed in this report—a select handful of scholars and activists who work together to create and promote misinformation about Muslims.

While these bloggers and pundits were not responsible for Breivik’s deadly attacks, their writings on Islam and multiculturalism appear to have helped create a world view, held by this lone Norwegian gunman, that sees Islam as at war with the West and the West needing to be defended. According to former CIA officer and terrorism consultant Marc Sageman, just as religious extremism “is the infrastructure from which Al Qaeda emerged,” the writings of these anti-Muslim misinformation experts are “the infrastructure from which Breivik emerged.” Sageman adds that their rhetoric “is not cost-free.”¹¹

These pundits and bloggers, however, are not the only members of the Islamophobia infrastructure. Breivik’s manifesto also cites think tanks, such as the Center for Security Policy, the Middle East Forum, and the Investigative Project on Terrorism—three other organizations we profile in this report. Together, this core group of deeply intertwined individuals and organizations manufacture and exaggerate threats of “creeping Sharia,” Islamic domination of the West, and purported obligatory calls to violence against all non-Muslims by the Koran.

This network of hate is not a new presence in the United States. Indeed, its ability to organize, coordinate, and disseminate its ideology through grassroots organizations increased dramatically over the past 10 years. Furthermore, its ability to influence politicians’ talking points and wedge issues for the upcoming 2012 elections has mainstreamed what was once considered fringe, extremist rhetoric.

And it all starts with the money flowing from a select group of foundations. A small group of foundations and wealthy donors are the lifeblood of the Islamophobia network in America, providing critical funding to a clutch of right-wing think tanks that peddle hate and fear of Muslims and Islam—in the form of books, reports, websites, blogs, and carefully crafted talking points that anti-Islam grassroots organizations and some right-wing religious groups use as propaganda for their constituency.

Some of these foundations and wealthy donors also provide direct funding to anti-Islam grassroots groups. According to our extensive analysis, here are the top seven contributors to promoting Islamophobia in our country:

- Donors Capital Fund
- Richard Mellon Scaife foundations
- Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation
- Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker foundations and charitable trust
- Russell Berrie Foundation
- Anchorage Charitable Fund and William Rosenwald Family Fund
- Fairbrook Foundation

Altogether, these seven charitable groups provided \$42.6 million to Islamophobia think tanks between 2001 and 2009—funding that supports the scholars and experts that are the subject of our next chapter as well as some of the grassroots groups that are the subject of Chapter 3 of our report.

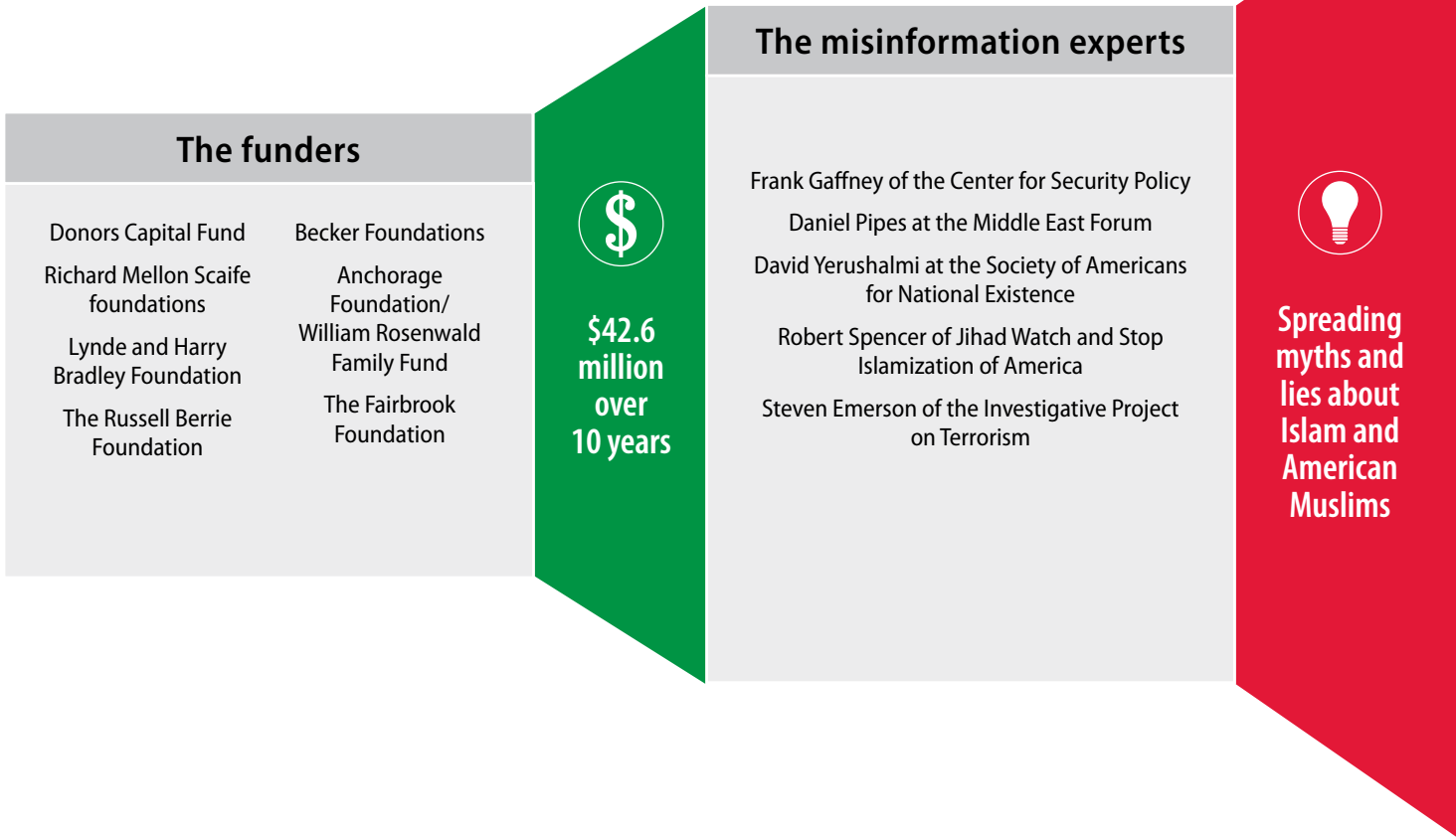
And what does this money fund? Well, here's one of many cases in point: Last July, former Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich warned a conservative audience at the American Enterprise Institute that the Islamic practice of Sharia was “a mortal threat to the survival of freedom in the United States and in the world as we know it.” Gingrich went on to claim that “Sharia in its natural form has principles and punishments totally abhorrent to the Western world.”¹²

Sharia, or Muslim religious code, includes practices such as charitable giving, prayer, and honoring one's parents—precepts virtually identical to those of Christianity and Judaism. But Gingrich and other conservatives promote alarmist notions about a nearly 1,500-year-old religion for a variety of sinister political, financial, and ideological motives. In his remarks that day, Gingrich mimicked the language of conservative analyst Andrew McCarthy, who co-wrote a report calling Sharia “the preeminent totalitarian threat of our time.”¹³ Such similarities in language are no accident. Look no further than the organization that released McCarthy's anti-Sharia report: the aforementioned Center for Security Policy, which is a central hub of the anti-Muslim network and an active promoter of anti-Sharia messaging and anti-Muslim rhetoric.

In fact, CSP is a key source for right-wing politicians, pundits, and grassroots organizations, providing them with a steady stream of reports mischaracterizing Islam and warnings about the dangers of Islam and American Muslims. Operating under the leadership of Frank Gaffney, the organization is funded by a small num-

The Islamophobia megaphone

How a tight network of anti-Muslim, anti-Islam foundations, misinformation experts, validators, grass roots organizations, religious right groups, and their allies in the media and in politics profoundly misrepresent Islam and American Muslims in the United States



The Islamophobia echo chamber

The religious right

Pat Robertson
John Hagee
Ralph Reed
Franklin Graham

The political players

Rep. Peter King
Rep. Sue Myrick
Rep. Allen West
Rep. Renee Elmers
Rep. Paul Broun
Rep. Michele Bachmann

The media

Fox News Channel
David Horowitz
Freedom Center
Pamela Geller and Atlas Shrugs
Washington Times
The National Review
Christian Broadcast Network
Clarion Fund
Rush Limbaugh
Sean Hannity
Mike Savage
Glenn Beck
Mark Levin
Bryan Fischer

The grassroots organizations

Brigitte Gabriel's
ACT! For America
Pamela Geller's
Stop Islamization of America
Eagle Forum
Tennessee Freedom Coalition
State Tea Party movements
American Family Association



Amplifying
fear and
misinformation
in this
Islamophobia
echo chamber

Misleading
the public

The public

ber of foundations and donors with a deep understanding of how to influence U.S. politics by promoting highly alarming threats to our national security. CSP is joined by other anti-Muslim organizations in this lucrative business, such as Stop Islamization of America and the Society of Americans for National Existence. Many of the leaders of these organizations are well-schooled in the art of getting attention in the press, particularly Fox News, *The Washington Times*, and a variety of right-wing websites and radio outlets.

Misinformation experts such as Gaffney consult and work with such right-wing grassroots organizations as ACT! for America and the Eagle Forum, as well as religious right groups such as the Faith and Freedom Coalition and American Family Association, to spread their message. Speaking at their conferences, writing on their websites, and appearing on their radio shows, these experts rail against Islam and cast suspicion on American Muslims. Much of their propaganda gets churned into fundraising appeals by grassroots and religious right groups. The money they raise then enters the political process and helps fund ads supporting politicians who echo alarmist warnings and sponsor anti-Muslim attacks.

These efforts recall some of the darkest episodes in American history, in which religious, ethnic, and racial minorities were discriminated against and persecuted. From Catholics, Mormons, Japanese Americans, European immigrants, Jews, and African Americans, the story of America is one of struggle to achieve in practice our founding ideals. Unfortunately, American Muslims and Islam are the latest chapter in a long American struggle against scapegoating based on religion, race, or creed.

Due in part to the relentless efforts of this small group of individuals and organizations, Islam is now the most negatively viewed religion in America. Only 37 percent of Americans have a favorable opinion of Islam: the lowest favorability rating since 2001, according to a 2010 ABC News/*Washington Post* poll.¹⁴ According to a 2010 *Time* magazine poll, 28 percent of voters do not believe Muslims should be eligible to sit on the U.S. Supreme Court, and nearly one-third of the country thinks followers of Islam should be barred from running for president.¹⁵

The terrorist attacks on 9/11 alone did not drive Americans' perceptions of Muslims and Islam. President George W. Bush reflected the general opinion of the American public at the time when he went to great lengths to make clear that Islam and Muslims are not the enemy. Speaking to a roundtable of Arab

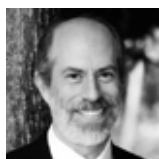
The leading lights of the Islamophobia network

The main players who conjure up and spread misinformation about American Muslims and Islam in the United States

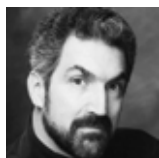
The scholars



Steven Emerson
The Investigative
Project on Terrorism



Frank Gaffney
Center for Security Policy



Daniel Pipes
Middle East Forum



Robert Spencer
Jihad Watch & Stop
Islamization of America



David Yerushalmi
Society of Americans for
National Existence

The validators



Nonie Darwish
Former Muslims United
and Arabs for Israel



Zuhdi Jasser
American Islamic
Forum for Democracy



Walid Phares
Future Terrorism Project



Walid Shoebat
Former purported Islamic
terrorist turned apocalyptic
Christian

The activists



Brigitte Gabriel
ACT! for America



Pamela Geller
Stop Islamization
of America



David Horowitz
David Horowitz
Freedom Center

and Muslim American leaders at the Afghanistan embassy in 2002, for example, President Bush said, “All Americans must recognize that the face of terror is not the true faith—face of Islam. Islam is a faith that brings comfort to a billion people around the world. It’s a faith that has made brothers and sisters of every race. It’s a faith based upon love, not hate.”¹⁶

Unfortunately, President Bush’s words were soon eclipsed by an organized escalation of hateful statements about Muslims and Islam from the members of the Islamophobia network profiled in this report. This is as sad as it is dangerous. It is enormously important to understand that alienating the Muslim American community not only threatens our fundamental promise of religious freedom, it also hurts our efforts to combat terrorism. Since 9/11, the Muslim American community has helped security and law enforcement officials prevent more than 40 percent of Al Qaeda terrorist plots threatening America.¹⁷ The largest single source of initial information to authorities about the few Muslim American plots has come from the Muslim American community.¹⁸

Around the world, there are people killing people in the name of Islam, with which most Muslims disagree. Indeed, in most cases of radicalized neighbors, family members, or friends, the Muslim American community is as baffled, disturbed, and surprised by their appearance as the general public. Treating Muslim American citizens and neighbors as part of the problem, rather than part of the solution, is not only offensive to America’s core values, it is utterly ineffective in combating terrorism and violent extremism.

The White House recently released the national strategy for combating violent extremism, “Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States.” One of the top focal points of the effort is to “counter al-Qa’ida’s propaganda that the United States is somehow at war with Islam.”¹⁹ Yet orchestrated efforts by the individuals and organizations detailed in this report make it easy for al-Qa’ida to assert that America hates Muslims and that Muslims around the world are persecuted for the simple crime of being Muslims and practicing their religion.

Sadly, the current isolation of American Muslims echoes past witch hunts in our history—from the divisive McCarthyite purges of the 1950s to the sometimes

violent anti-immigrant campaigns in the 19th and 20th centuries. New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg has compared the fear-mongering of Muslims with anti-Catholic sentiment of the past. In response to the fabricated “Ground Zero mosque” controversy in New York last summer, Mayor Bloomberg said:

In the 1700s, even as religious freedom took hold in America, Catholics in New York were effectively prohibited from practicing their religion, and priests could be arrested. Largely as a result, the first Catholic parish in New York City was not established until the 1780s, St. Peter's on Barclay Street, which still stands just one block north of the World Trade Center site, and one block south of the proposed mosque and community center... We would betray our values and play into our enemies' hands if we were to treat Muslims differently than anyone else.²⁰

This report shines a light on the Islamophobia network of so-called experts, academics, institutions, grassroots organizations, media outlets, and donors who manufacture, produce, distribute, and mainstream an irrational fear of Islam and Muslims. Let us learn the proper lesson from the past, and rise above fear-mongering to public awareness, acceptance, and respect for our fellow Americans. In doing so, let us prevent hatred from infecting and endangering our country again.

In the pages that follow, we profile the small number of funders, organizations, and individuals who have contributed to the discourse on Islamophobia in this country. We begin with the money trail in Chapter 1—our analysis of the funding streams that support anti-Muslim activities. Chapter 2 identifies the intellectual nexus of the Islamophobia network. Chapter 3 highlights the key grassroots players and organizations that help spread the messages of hate. Chapter 4 aggregates the key media amplifiers of Islamophobia. And Chapter 5 brings attention to the elected officials who frequently support the causes of anti-Muslim organizing.

Before we begin, a word about the term “Islamophobia.” We don’t use this term lightly. We define it as an exaggerated fear, hatred, and hostility toward Islam and Muslims that is perpetuated by negative stereotypes resulting in bias, discrimination, and the marginalization and exclusion of Muslims from America’s social, political, and civic life.

The current
isolation of
American Muslims
echoes past witch
hunts in our history.

It is our view that in order to safeguard our national security and uphold America's core values, we must return to a fact-based civil discourse regarding the challenges we face as a nation and world. This discourse must be frank and honest, but also consistent with American values of religious liberty, equal justice under the law, and respect for pluralism. A first step toward the goal of honest, civil discourse is to expose—and marginalize—the influence of the individuals and groups who make up the Islamophobia network in America by actively working to divide Americans against one another through misinformation.

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Chapter 1

Donors to the Islamophobia network

A small group of conservative foundations and wealthy donors are the lifeblood of the Islamophobia network in America. They provide critical funding to a clutch of right-wing think tanks and misinformation experts who peddle hate and fear of Muslims and Islam—in the form of books, reports, websites, blogs, and carefully crafted talking points, which dedicated anti-Islam grassroots organizations and some right-wing religious groups use as propaganda for their constituency. These foundations and wealthy donors also provide direct funding to anti-Islam grassroots groups.

In this chapter of our report, we examine the top seven foundations and their principal backers who fund these Islamophobia groups. We then detail which of these groups receive this flood of cash to propagate their anti-Islam, anti-Muslim misinformation campaigns. Sometimes the money flowing from these foundations and their donors is clearly designed to promote Islamophobia, but more often the support provided is for general purpose use, which the think tanks and grassroots organizations then put to use on their primary purpose—spreading their messages of hate and fear as far and wide as they can. It is possible that some of these donors and foundations, who spend millions improving child health and creating a more equal society, have no knowledge of the hateful and inaccurate propaganda generated with their money.

Whether by design or by accident, the top seven philanthropic foundations we profile in this chapter are providing outsized support to a small but very vocal group of Islamophobic groups in our nation—groups that use their money to spread a deliberately misleading message about Islam and Muslims that is fundamentally antithetical to our nation’s founding principles of religious freedom, inclusivity, and pluralism.

According to our extensive analysis, here are the top seven contributors to promoting Islamophobia in our country:

- Donors Capital Fund
- Richard Mellon Scaife foundations
- Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation
- Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker foundations and charitable trust
- Russell Berrie Foundation
- Anchorage Charitable Fund and William Rosenwald Family Fund
- Fairbrook Foundation

The financial information on these foundations is from 2001 and 2009, the last year for which complete information is available, with some of the financial information gathered accounting for only the more recent of those years and other information only available through 2008. We gathered this information from publicly available documents filed by the foundations with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. The most recent of these forms, known as 990s, are cited in this report so that readers can find their way to all of the documents.

The top seven funders of Islamophobia

A list of the seven largest donors to think tanks and organizations in the United States identified by the Center for American Progress as anti-Islam and anti-Muslim

	Investigative Project on Terrorism	CTSERF	Middle East Forum	CSP	
Donors Capital Fund	\$400,000		\$2,300,000		
Richard Mellon Scaife foundations		\$1,575,000		\$2,900,000	
Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation			\$305,000	\$815,000	
Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker foundations and charitable trust	\$25,000	\$200,000	\$355,000	\$405,000	
Russell Berrie Foundation	\$100,000	\$2,736,000	\$273,016.22		
Anchorage Charitable Foundation and William Rosenwald Family Fund	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$2,320,229.33	\$437,000	
Fairbrook Foundation	\$25,000		\$410,000	\$66,700	
Total	\$560,000	\$4,526,000	\$5,963,246	\$4,623,700	

Source: CAP research based on the seven foundations' Form 990s files with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service from 2001 to 2009.

Some of these organizations are donors to conservative causes in general, such as the Richard Mellon Scaife foundations and the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation. In 2009, for example, Richard Mellon Scaife’s Sarah Scaife Foundation contributed \$550,000 to the conservative American Enterprise Institute,¹ and the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation sent \$4.45 million to the Federalist Society.²

Some provide philanthropic support to important efforts to protect equality and religious freedom. Take the Russell Berrie Foundation. It provided grants in 2009 totaling \$145,000 to the New Israel Fund—an organization that promotes “equality for all the citizens of [Israel] regardless of religion, national origin, race, gender or sexual orientation.”³ But others, such as the Donors Capital Fund, are clearly dedicated to funneling large sums of money to right-wing, and in many cases Islamophobic, organizations.

Here are the top seven foundations, ranked according to the amount of funding provided to this network, beginning with the Donors Capital Fund.

	Clarion Fund	Jihad Watch	David Horowitz Freedom Center	American Congress for Truth	Total
	\$18,053,600		\$15,000		\$20,768,600
			\$3,400,000		\$7,875,000
			\$4,250,000		\$5,370,000
	\$15,000		\$86,000	\$50,000	\$1,136,000
					\$3,109,016
	\$25,000		\$11,000		\$2,818,229
		\$253,250	\$618,500	\$125,000	\$1,498,450
	\$18,093,600	\$253,250	\$8,380,500	\$175,000	\$42,575,296

Donors Capital Fund

Donors Capital Fund is a 501(c)(3), 509(a)(3) supporting organization associated with DonorsTrust, a so-called “donor-advised fund” that disburses money based on the directions of a donor. Since the fund handles money from multiple donors and donors names aren’t disclosed, contributions made through the Donors Capital Fund are difficult to trace. Potential donors are required to open a minimum \$1 million account to utilize the fund’s services.⁴

The Donors Capital Fund facilitates philanthropic contributions to “a class of public charities firmly committed to liberty” and charities that “[promote] private initiatives rather than government programs as the solution to the most pressing issues of the day.”⁵ The board of Donors Capital Fund has several well-known conservatives. The chair is Adam Meyerson, the president of the Philanthropy Roundtable, a national association of individual donors and trustees.

In addition, it includes Senior Fellow Christopher DeMuth of the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative Washington, D.C., think tank with a history of fostering an aggressive U.S. foreign policy, and his colleague AEI Weyerhauser Fellow Steven Hayward. Other board members include: Acton Institute (a conservative Christian think tank) Executive Director Kris Alan Mauren; Institute for Justice (a libertarian public interest law firm) President William H. Mellor; conservative economist and *Wall Street Journal* editorial page columnist Stephen Moore; and Heritage Foundation Vice President John A. Von Kannon, representing the top conservative think tank in the country.⁶

In 2009, Donors Capital Fund provided nearly \$60 million in contributions to a variety of mainstream conservative groups, none of which are Islamophobic. Donations included: the American Enterprise Institute (\$2.7 million); the anti-regulatory Americans for Prosperity Foundation (\$1.1 million); the Sam Adams Alliance, which seeks to “raise awareness of free market principles and policy” (\$3.2 million);⁷ the Heartland Institute, an advocate of free-market principles and partner with cigarette maker Philip Morris (\$2.2 million);⁸ the State Policy Network, a network of free market-oriented think tanks (\$2.6 million); and the Federalist Society, a conservative organization that promotes an originalist interpretation of the Constitution (\$1.3 million).

The Donors Capital Fund makes our top seven list of contributors in this report because it contributed \$21,318,600 to groups promoting Islamophobia from 2007 to 2009. These funds went to the Middle East Forum, Clarion Fund, Investigative Project on Terrorism, and the David Horowitz Freedom Center.

Donors Capital is most famous for contributing more than \$17 million to the Clarion Fund in 2008, the largest recipient of Donors Capital's largesse "by a large margin," according to CounterPunch's Pam Marten.⁹ Indeed, Donors Capital Fund's contributions made up 96 percent of all the funding Clarion Fund received that year.¹⁰ That \$17 million, provided by a single anonymous source (who is alleged to be Chicago businessman Barre Seid, according to the website Salon.com¹¹), helped pay for a DVD the Clarion Fund distributed, "Obsession: Radical Islam's War Against the West," to more than 28 million swing-state voters before the 2008 presidential election.¹²

And that DVD, says the Florida Security Council's director Tom Trento, who helped distribute the film in 2008, is "the single most powerful piece of media over the past five years in persuading average Americans to the Islamist threat."¹³ In the subsequent chapters of this report, we'll demonstrate just how accurate Trento's observation is.

Reached for comment, a Donors Capital Fund executive said DFC was established to promote liberty and so long as recommended groups are IRS-approved charities eligible for grants then DFC will honor account advisor recommendations.

Richard Mellon Scaife foundations

Richard M. Scaife is the billionaire "funding father of the right" who contributes to numerous mainstream conservative causes, think tanks, foundations, and advocacy groups through three foundations: the Sarah Scaife, the Carthage, and the Allegheny.¹⁴ He is the principal heir to the Mellon family banking, oil, and aluminum fortune, with an estimated worth of \$1.2 billion. He is ranked 993 on *Forbes* magazine's list of billionaires.¹⁵

Scaife is currently the chairman of his three foundations. Michael W. Gleba, a Pittsburgh attorney, is the president of the Sarah Scaife Foundation and treasurer for the Carthage Foundation. Scaife maintains close ties to the Heritage

Foundation in his capacity as the vice chairman of the conservative think tank.¹⁶ Heritage president Edwin Feulner serves as a trustee for the Sarah Scaife Foundation, according to its latest tax filings. In 2009, the Sarah Scaife Foundation contributed \$550,000 to the conservative American Enterprise Institute; \$125,000 to the hawkish American Foreign Policy Council; and \$40,000 to *Commentary*, a neoconservative magazine and online publication.¹⁷

Between 2001 and 2009, Richard Mellon Scaife's foundations contributed \$7,875,000 to Islamophobic groups profiled in this report. Among the recipients were the Center for Security Policy (\$2,900,000), the Counterterrorism & Security Education and Research Foundation (\$1,575,000), and the David Horowitz Freedom Center (\$3,400,000).¹⁸

The Richard Mellon Scaife foundations did not respond to requests for comment by time of publication.

Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation

The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation serves as a legacy for two brothers, Lynde and Harry Bradley, co-founders of the Allen-Bradley Company, a manufacturer of factory automation equipment.¹⁹ The Bradley Foundation is an established supporter of conservative causes. Its programs “support limited, competent government; a dynamic marketplace for economic, intellectual, and cultural activity; and a vigorous defense, at home and abroad, of American ideas and institutions,” according to the foundation's website.²⁰

The Bradley Foundation has contributed millions of dollars to mainstream conservative think tanks and groups that are not Islamophobic, including the Cato Institute, the Federalist Society, the Heritage Foundation, the Hoover Institution, the Institute for American Values, and the Hudson Institute, to name a few.²¹ Between 2000 and 2005 the foundation also contributed more than \$1.2 million to the Project for the New American Century, a highly influential think tank during the George W. Bush administration that helped develop his military and foreign policy.²²

The Bradley Foundation's board comprises well-known conservatives and some lesser-known names, including columnist George Will; Terry Considine, chief executive of AIMCO Apartment Homes, who serves as the foundation's chairman; David V. Uihlein, president of Uihlein-Wilson Architects; Michael W. Grebe, the foundation's president and chief executive officer; Princeton University Professor Robert

P. George, whom *The New York Times* describes as “this country’s most influential conservative Christian thinker;”²³ Marshall & Ilsley Corporation Chairman Dennis J. Kuester; Wausau-Mosinee Paper Corporation Chairman San W. Orr Jr.; attorney Thomas L. Smallwood; and the president of Milwaukee’s Messmer Catholic Schools, Brother Bob Smith.²⁴

The Bradley Foundation from 2001 to 2009 provided \$5,370,000 in funding to the Islamophobia network. These funds went to the Middle East Forum (\$305,000), the Center for Security Policy (\$815,000), and the David Horowitz Freedom Center (\$4,250,000).²⁵ The Bradley Foundation, however, also supports organizations that seek to explain mainstream Islamic thoughts and values. The foundation, for example, provides funding to the American Islamic Conference, an organization that began for the purpose of “promoting tolerance and the exchange of ideas among Muslims and between other peoples.”²⁶

The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation did not respond to requests for comment by time of publication.

Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker Foundation, Newton and Rochelle Becker Family Foundation, and Newton and Rochelle Becker Charitable Trust

In 1957, Newton Becker founded the Becker CPA Review, which helps students prepare for the CPA exam. In 1996, the Becker CPA Review was acquired by DeVry Inc. for \$18,421,000 plus \$17,935,000 for its copyrights and intellectual property.²⁷ Becker also is a founding investor and chairman of Luz International, a company that manufactured solar power plants and had research and manufacturing facilities in Israel²⁸ until its dissolution in 1992 and the loss of its entire \$45 million in funding.²⁹

The Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker Foundation’s tax filings describe its mission statement as conducting philanthropy “directed to the Jewish community, particularly Jewish organizations and programs that combat media bias against Israel and the Jewish people, Israel advocacy, and democracy defense.”³⁰ Board members of the foundation include Newton Becker, board president; Marvin Schotland, president of the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles;³¹ Rochelle Becker, Newton Becker’s wife; Allan Cutrow, former president of the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles;³² Mark Karlan, a member of the advisory board for the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles;³³ David Becker, Newton and Rochelle’s son; Michael Januzik, a senior

vice president at the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles;³⁴ and Fay Althausen, an account executive at the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles.³⁵ Board members of the trust include David Becker, the executive director, and Rochelle Becker.³⁶

In addition to important educational and cultural projects, the Becker Foundation, Becker Family Foundation, and Becker Trust, between 2001 and 2009 together contributed \$1,136,000 to Islamophobic organizations examined in subsequent pages of this report. Among the recipients: the Investigative Project on Terrorism (\$25,000), the Counterterrorism & Security Education and Research Foundation (\$200,000), the Middle East Forum (\$355,000), the Center for Security Policy (\$405,000), the Clarion Fund (\$15,000), the David Horowitz Freedom Center (\$86,000), and Act! For America (\$50,000).³⁷

The Newton D. & Rochelle F. Becker foundations and charitable trusts did not respond to requests for comment by time of publication.

Russell Berrie Foundation

The Russell Berrie Foundation was created in 1985 by the late multimillionaire Russell Berrie, who made his fortune in the stuffed animal and toy business and was named in 1998 as one of the 40 most generous Americans by *Fortune* magazine.³⁸ Berrie died in 2002. The Berrie Foundation board includes Angelica Berrie, the wife of Russell Berrie;³⁹ Myron Rosner, an attorney in New Jersey; and Scott Berrie, the son of Russell Berrie.⁴⁰

The goal of the Russell Berrie Foundation is to “promote the continuity and enrichment of Jewish communal life,” foster “the spirit of religious understanding and pluralism,” and to raise “the awareness of terrorism.”⁴¹

The Russell Berrie Foundation funds a large number of mainstream Jewish and Israeli charities that are not Islamophobic. Grants in 2009 included \$10,000 to Israel Documentaries for Education; \$291,000 to Rutgers Hillel; and \$5,330,000 to American Society for Technion, which supports the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology.⁴²

Along with the important philanthropic work listed above, the Russell Berrie Foundation contributed \$3,109,016 between 2001 and 2009 to organizations engaging in anti-Muslim work profiled in this report. Among the recipients: the

Counterterrorism & Security Education and Research Foundation, receiving \$2,736,000; the Investigative Project on Terrorism (\$100,000); and the Middle East Forum (\$273,016.22).⁴³

The Russell Berrie Foundation did not respond to requests for comment by time of publication.

Anchorage Charitable Fund and William Rosenwald Family Fund

David Steinmann, a director at American Securities Management, and Elizabeth Varet, the chairwoman of American Securities Management and a granddaughter of Sears Roebuck founder Julius Rosenwald, both serve as trustees for the Anchorage Charitable Fund and the William Rosenwald Family Fund. Steinmann also is a board member on Frank Gaffney's Center for Security Policy and Daniel Pipes's Middle East Forum.

Additional board members of the Anchorage Charitable Fund include Michael A. Varet, Sarah R. Varet, David R. Varet, and Joseph R. Varet.

The Anchorage Fund contributed tens of thousands of dollars to mainstream conservative institutions such as the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a nonpartisan policy institute; the Hoover Institution; the Hudson Institute; the American Enterprise Institute; and the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs.⁴⁶

Between 2001 and 2008, the Anchorage Charitable Fund and William Rosenwald Family Fund contributed \$2,818,229 to Islamophobic organizations. Among the donations: \$2,320,229.33 to the Middle East Forum; \$437,000 to the Center for Security Policy; \$25,000 to the Clarion Fund; \$15,000 to the Counterterrorism & Security Education and Research Foundation; \$11,000 to the David Horowitz Freedom Center; and \$10,000 to the Investigative Project on Terrorism. The Rosenwald Family Fund also contributed to the American Islamic Forum for Democracy, one of the think tanks profiled in this report because the head of it, Zuhdi Jasser, is often tapped by the Islamophobe network as a validator of their views on Islam and Muslims in America.⁴⁷

We should note that in the 2008 tax year, the Anchorage Fund “suffered a complete loss of its investment through PJ Administrator LLC,” according to its 2008 tax filings.⁴⁸ PJ Administrator is listed as a client of Bernie Madoff,⁴⁹ who was

exposed in 2008 as running an elaborate Ponzi scheme. Charitable contributions from both funds have significantly declined since 2008.

The Anchorage Charitable Fund and the William Rosenwald Family Fund did not respond to requests for comment by time of publication.

Fairbrook Foundation

The Fairbrook Foundation, an affiliate of the California Community Foundation, is controlled by Aubrey and Joyce Chernick.⁵⁰ Aubrey Chernick is a Los Angeles-based software engineer whose net worth is estimated to be \$750 million,⁵¹ due in large part to selling his software company to IBM Corp. in 2004.⁵² In 2002⁵³ he founded the security firm National Center for Crisis and Continuity Coordination.

Aubrey Chernick is president and chairman of the Fairbrook Foundation board. Joyce Chernick serves as vice chair. In 2009, the last year for which we have complete financial information, the Fairbrook Foundation provided tens of thousands of dollars to mainstream conservative foundations that are not Islamophobic, such as the Hudson Institute and the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.⁵⁴

Between 2004 and 2009, the Fairbrook Foundation contributed \$1,498,450 to Islamophobic organizations profiled in this report. Among the recipients: ACT! For America, receiving \$125,000; the Center for Security Policy (\$66,700); the David Horowitz Freedom Center (\$618,500); the Investigative Project on Terrorism, (\$25,000); Jihad Watch (\$253,250); and the Middle East Forum (\$410,000).⁵⁵ Importantly, the foundation provided the majority of the \$920,000 in support going from the David Horowitz Freedom Center to Robert Spencer's Jihad Watch, according to *Politico*.⁵⁶

Separate from the Fairbrook Foundation, Aubrey Chernick is a trustee of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy⁵⁷ and helped provide the \$3.5 million⁵⁸ in initial capital to start the conservative blog Pajamas Media, which used its online platform to oppose the Park51 community center in New York City.⁵⁹

Reached for comment, a Fairbrook executive said it is the foundation's policy not to comment on inquiries regarding donor grants beyond noting that the foundation is a tax-exempt public charity.

The importance of this charitable giving to the Islamophobia network

Altogether, these seven charitable groups provided \$42.6 million in total to Islamophobic think tanks between 2001 and 2009—funding that supports the misinformation scholars and experts that are the subject of our next chapter as well as some of the grassroots groups, which are the subject of Chapter 3 of our report. The importance of this funding cannot be overstated. This money enables a very small and tight-knit group of radical right-wing scholars, experts, and grassroots organizers to craft and share reams of misinformation about Islam and American Muslims.

This enables them to mutually reference each other's highly inaccurate or purposively deceptive material as facts and then subsequently disseminate it to other grassroots groups and politicians through right-wing media outlets. We look at those media outlets in Chapter 4 of our report, and then examine how some right-wing politicians, including several Republican Party presidential candidates, use these media outlets and grassroots groups to support their Islamophobic political rhetoric in search of political donations and voters.

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Chapter 2

The Islamophobia misinformation experts

A small group of conservative foundations and wealthy donors are the lifeblood of the Islamophobia network in America, supporting a central nervous system consisting of a clutch of misinformation experts. Just as Newt Gingrich relied on these experts' talking points to grossly mischaracterize the dangers of Sharia law in our country, the five men profiled in this chapter are responsible for orchestrating the majority of misinformation about Islam and Muslims in America today. This small network produces talking points and messages relied upon and repeated by every segment of this interconnected network of money, grassroots leaders, media talking heads, and elected officials.

There are five key think tanks led by scholars who are primarily responsible for orchestrating the majority of anti-Islam messages polluting our national discourse today:

- **Frank Gaffney** at the Center for Security Policy
- **David Yerushalmi** at the Society of Americans for National Existence
- **Daniel Pipes** at the Middle East Forum
- **Robert Spencer** of Jihad Watch and Stop Islamization of America
- **Steven Emerson** of the Investigative Project on Terrorism

All five are actively promoting the deeply mistaken portrayal of Islam—a religion of nearly 1.6 billion people worldwide, including 2.6 million Americans—as an inherently violent ideology that seeks domination over the United States and all non-Muslims.¹ Spencer neatly sums up their inaccurate and perverse view of Islam as “the only religion in the world that has a developed doctrine, theology and legal system that mandates violence against unbelievers and mandates that Muslims must wage war in order to establish the hegemony of the Islamic social order all over the world.”²

This small band of radical ideologues has fought to define Sharia as a “totalitarian ideology” and “legal-political-military doctrine” committed to destroying

Western civilization.³ (See box.) But a scholar of Islam and Muslim tradition would not recognize their definition of Sharia, let alone a lay practicing Muslim. In fact, Sharia is followed in part and in different ways by every practicing Muslim. There are no Ten Commandments that make up Sharia. Instead, it is, for Muslims, the ideal law of God as interpreted by Muslim scholars over centuries to achieve justice, fairness, and mercy, primarily through personal religious observances such as prayer and fasting.⁴

But by intentionally misdefining Sharia itself as the problem, the misinformation experts profiled in this chapter are effectively arguing that only the extremists' interpretations of Islam are authentic, and that therefore the diversity of

Sharia nonsense

Manufactured by the Islamophobia network and then endlessly hyped across our country

The latest calculated smear against Islam and Muslims in America by the small but vocal members of the Islamophobia network is the deliberate misdefinition of Sharia, or Islamic religious law. This network mischaracterizes Sharia as a totalitarian ideology of hate and triumphalism committed to replacing the U.S. Constitution with a radical Islamist Caliphate that will subordinate and punish all non-Muslim adherents.

This description is unrecognizable to the overwhelming majority of Muslims here and abroad. In fact, Sharia is followed in part and in different ways by every practicing Muslim. There is no Ten Commandments that encapsulate Sharia. Instead it is, for Muslims, the ideal law of God as interpreted by Muslim scholars over centuries to achieve justice, fairness, and mercy through personal religious observance such as prayer and fasting.¹

Undeterred, the Islamophobia network's description of Sharia is spread based on a sophisticated misinformation campaign designed to draw donations to the right-wing foundations, think tanks, grassroots organizations, and conservative Christian fundamentalist groups, to drum up political campaign contributions and votes for radical right-wing politicians, and to boost the political power of right-wing media organizations that promote such hate and fear. Here's a sampling of the Islamophobia network's consistent public campaign to use their skewed version of Sharia over time for their own monetary and political ends.

The Center for Security Policy's Frank Gaffney warns that a new missile defense logo is evidence of Obama's submission to Sharia:

Team Obama's anti-anti-missile initiatives are not simply acts of unilateral disarmament of the sort to be expected from an Alinsky acolyte. They seem to fit an increasingly obvious and worrying pattern of official U.S. submission to Islam and the theo-political-legal program the latter's authorities call Shariah.²

Islamophobia grassroots activist Brigitte Gabriel promotes her ACT! for America conference on Radical Islam:

They also need to understand the many ways in which jihad is being carried out against the United States, from violent jihad to "stealth" jihad to the advance of creeping shariah Islamic law into our society.³

Propagandist Andrew McCarthy, a leading purveyor of the "creeping Sharia" myth, writes an article on *The National Review* with the title:

The President Stands With Sharia⁴

moderate interpretations within Islam is meaningless. They also cast suspicion upon all observant American Muslims.⁵

Similarly, they boldly mischaracterize the extent to which radical Islam is infiltrating America through the presence and active participation of American Muslims in civic, social, and political life. Look no further than the controversy in 2010 surrounding the Park51 community center in lower Manhattan, which revealed how these experts perpetuate the notion that mosques are no longer houses of worship but “Trojan horses” harboring and disseminating radical Islamic theology.⁶

Daniel Pipes, another go-to expert in the Islamophobia network, repeats the attack on Obama:

Mr. Obama, in effect, enforced Islamic law, a precedent that could lead to other forms of compulsory Shariah compliance.⁵

Newly elected Rep. Allen West (R-FL) says Congress needs to address the Sharia threat:

I think one of the critical things that we must come together is that there is an infiltration of the Sharia practice into all of our operating systems in our country as well as across Western civilization. So we must be willing to recognize that enemy.⁶

Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN) on the killing of Osama bin Laden and Sharia law:

Tonight's news [of bin Laden's death] does not bring back the lives of the thousands of innocent people who were killed that day by Osama bin Laden's horrific plan, and it does not end the threat posed by terrorists, but it is my hope that this is the beginning of the end of Sharia-compliant terrorism.⁷

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- 7 Office of Congresswoman Michele Bachmann, “Bachmann Statement on Death of bin Laden,” May 1, 2011, available at <http://bachmann.house.gov/News/DocumentSingle.aspx?DocumentID=238809>.

Park51 is the new name of the Cordoba Project, initiated in 2009 as a planned Muslim community center that is two blocks from Ground Zero. Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, one of the project's lead organizers, works with New York City, the FBI, and the State Department to combat Islamist extremism. His new center is modeled on New York's 92nd Street Y, a Jewish community center that serves diverse groups across the city. "We want to push back against the extremists," said Rauf, explaining his intentions behind constructing the center.⁷ The project plans detail a cultural center to house a swimming pool, a basketball court, a library, as well as a prayer space.

These well-intended goals were ignored by the five men profiled in this chapter who instead promote a fabricated myth that the center would be built as a testimony to Islam's dominance. On June 30, 2010, Gaffney wrote, "The Ground Zero mosque is designed to be a permanent, in-our-face beachhead for Shariah, a platform for inspiring the triumphalist ambitions of the faithful."⁸

On July 25, 2010, this talking point was parroted by Newt Gingrich on Fox News, when he reiterated that the mosque is "a kind of triumphalism that we should not tolerate."⁹ The Middle East Forum's Daniel Pipes repeated the talking point that Rauf's community center "will spread Islamist ideology."¹⁰

Then there is the conspiracy theory about Muslim American civil liberties organizations being proxies for the Muslim Brotherhood and paving the way for radical Islam. According to Gaffney—citing CSP's "Shariah: The Threat to America" report—"it is now public knowledge that nearly every major Muslim organization in the United States is actually controlled by the MB [Muslim Brotherhood] or a derivative organization. Consequently, most of the Muslim-American groups of any prominence in America are now known to be, as a matter of fact, hostile to the United States and its Constitution."¹¹ The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in Egypt in 1928 by schoolteacher Hassan al-Banna, and is regarded as the seminal Islamist political organization in the world.

Gaffney has also made similar accusations about associations with the Muslim Brotherhood about the president of the United States, the Department of Defense, and the Conservative Political Action Committee (described in more detail below). As the "smoking gun" evidence, Gaffney cites a single 20-year-old document titled "An Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal for the Group in North America" written by one member of the Muslim Brotherhood.¹² That document has been thoroughly discredited as a strategy document of the Muslim Brotherhood, and revealed instead to be a piece of hapless propaganda.

Nathan Brown, professor of political science and international affairs, and director of the Institute for Middle East Studies at The George Washington University, was interviewed recently by investigative journalist Sarah Posner regarding the document. He says that “nobody has ever produced any evidence that the document was more than something produced by the daydream of one enthusiast.” Regarding Gaffney’s allegations, Professor Brown added, “Gaffney is a self-parody. I have better things to do with my time than investigating the veracity of his raving.”¹³ And yet Gaffney’s ravings now have considerable influence on mainstream political discourse.

The patterns evident in these targeted myths by Gaffney and others is perhaps best exemplified by their greatest public relations triumph—the obfuscation of President Obama’s Christian religious identity as a potential Muslim or former Muslim. After the president’s historic 2009 Cairo speech to Muslim communities, Gaffney wrote an article titled “America’s first Muslim president?,” in which he incorrectly alleged there is “mounting evidence that the president not only identifies with Muslims, but actually may still be one himself.”¹⁴ And on an April 2009 episode of “Hardball,” Gaffney said President Obama uses secret Muslim “code for those who adhere to Sharia,” as evidenced by his waist-bow greeting to the king of Saudi Arabia.

In the past two years, no evidence has been found to prove that a “waist bow” is secret code for Sharia adherents, or that President Obama intended a gesture of diplomatic respect as such. In 2005, George W. Bush held hands with Saudi Arabia’s Prince Abdullah and even kissed his cheek. No evidence suggests he is a closet or open Sharia adherent, either.¹⁵

Gaffney also believes President Obama has an “openness (to put it mildly) to bringing the [Muslim] Brotherhood to power.” He mistakenly conflates, for example, the president’s pledge to support Egypt’s new foray into democracy following the ouster of dictator Hosni Mubarak with “his embrace of the ascendant Muslim Brotherhood.”¹⁶ Gaffney is out of step with many conservatives. “The Arab Spring deserves to be greeted with enthusiasm and support,” writes William Kristol, respected neoconservative analyst, director of the conservative think tank Foreign Policy Initiative, and editor of the conservative political magazine *The Weekly Standard*. “Decades of ‘stability’ in the Middle East had produced a waste land of brutal authoritarianism, Islamic extremism, and corrosive anti-Americanism.... No more. The Arab winter is over.”¹⁷

Kristol also criticized Fox News' Glenn Beck's theory that Communists and radical Muslims were causing chaos in Egypt to start a Muslim caliphate that could dominate the world. Gaffney dismissed Kristol's statements as being "ill-informed."¹⁸

Here, we profile the key ideologues who are the nerve center of the Islamophobia network, responsible for originating and manufacturing the intellectual arguments, rhetoric, and talking points used by members of this deeply interconnected network.

Frank Gaffney, founder of the Center for Security Policy

Gaffney, 58 years old, holds a master of arts degree in international studies from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies and a bachelor of science in foreign service from the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. From August 1983 until November 1987, he was deputy assistant secretary of defense for nuclear forces and arms control policy under Assistant Secretary Richard Perle. In April 1987, Gaffney was nominated by President Reagan to become the assistant secretary of defense for international security policy.

In 1988 he founded the Center for Security Policy as a not-for-profit, nonpartisan think tank. Most of CSP's staff and fellows lean neoconservative, among them Richard Perle, Douglas J. Feith, and the former secretary of education in the Reagan administration, William Bennett.¹⁹ Gaffney, though, stands out at the institute for his increasingly strident anti-Muslim views. As the head of CSP and its most public face, this fact cannot be lost on its funders.

In 2009, CSP's annual revenue was nearly \$4 million, and Frank Gaffney's annual salary was nearly \$300,000 as president of the organization.²⁰ Over the past decade, the Scaife foundations gave CSP nearly \$3 million, the Bradley Foundation more than \$800,000, the Becker foundations about \$375,000, and the Anchorage and William Rosenwald funds about \$437,000, with the Fairbrook Foundation contributing smaller amounts. All told, CSP received about \$20 million in revenue between 2002 and 2009.

Gaffney and CSP use this money to promote an increasingly paranoid misrepresentation of the threats posed by Islam in America. The baseless accusations peddled by Gaffney and his think tank echo the tactics of Sen. Joseph McCarthy

in the 1950s, who claimed that communists had thoroughly infiltrated the federal government of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. But Gaffney's tactics take a page from the radical religious right as well, conflating all of the followers of a non-Christian religion as enemies of the state and society and then providing talking points that marry the two nonexistent threats. Anders Breivik, the confessed Norway terrorist, cited Gaffney and CSP seven times in his manifesto.²¹

Several examples of how Gaffney and the Center for Security Policy develop and deploy their incorrect academic research using the foundation's money to spread an increasingly shrill message of hate and fear prove these points.

Seeing mosques as Trojan horses

Mosques, like churches, synagogues, temples, and other places of worship, are constitutionally protected houses of worship in America, but Gaffney sees them as "Trojan horses"²² used by Muslims to promote "sedition." He then conflates mosques with the Park51 community center in New York City, declaring on Fox News that it is a "mosque that is used to promote a seditious program, which is what Sharia is... that is not a protected religious practice, that is in fact sedition."²³ And then CSP almost simultaneously created and funded stop911mosque.com—the official website of the Coalition to Honor Ground Zero and a who's who of radical right-wing leaders, organizations, and notable anti-Muslim advocates.²⁴

These allies working through stop911mosque.com were responsible for manufacturing the 2010 hysteria around the construction of the Park51 community center. The website repeats many of Gaffney's unsubstantiated claims about "stealth jihad," the "imposition of Sharia law," and the proliferation of "radical mosques."²⁵

In 2010, Gaffney also carried his anti-mosque campaign to Tennessee, where he testified against the construction of a mosque in Murfreesboro. "I'm here to warn this community of seditious acts of Sharia Law," Gaffney told a local court. "I have not determined this is happening here, but that it is present in mosques like this."²⁶ He further testified that 80 percent of mosques in America are financed by allies of the Muslim Brotherhood, a claim that has been readily debunked by academic experts.²⁷ Armed with Gaffney's "evidence," the plaintiffs in the case argued that Islam is not a real religion deserving of constitutional protections. In November

Gaffney makes unsubstantiated claims about "stealth jihad," the "imposition of Sharia law," and the proliferation of "radical mosques."

2010, Chancellor Robert Corlew III disagreed, ruling that “Islam is in fact a religion,” and denied the emergency injunction blocking the project’s construction.²⁸

Creating the Sharia threat

Despite his testimony in Tennessee, Gaffney is upfront about his lack of expertise in Sharia. “I don’t hold myself out as an expert on Sharia Law... but I have talked a lot about that as a threat.”²⁹ Yet he is one of the lead engineers of the “anti-Sharia” movement sweeping the nation. His think tank released the 2010 report “Shariah: The Threat to America,” which reframed Sharia, or Islamic religious law followed by any practicing Muslim, as a “totalitarian ideology” and “legal-political-military doctrine.”³⁰

The American Civil Liberties Union summed up this nonexistent threat best in its concise, six-page report, “Nothing to Fear: Debunking the Mythical ‘Sharia Threat’ to Our Judicial System,” in which it states that these claims of a Sharia infiltration are “wrong” and “based both on misinformation and a misunderstanding of how our judicial system works.” The report adds, “There is no evidence that Islamic law is encroaching on our courts. On the contrary, the court cases cited by anti-Muslim groups as purportedly illustrative of this problem actually show the opposite: Courts treat lawsuits that are brought by Muslims or that address the Islamic faith in the same way that they deal with similar claims brought by people of other faiths or that involve no religion at all.”³¹ The ACLU report points to the insidious purpose behind the crusade to ban Sharia: “Prohibiting [U.S.] courts from considering Islamic law serves only one purpose: to bar Muslims from having the same rights and access to the courts as any other religious individuals.”

Gaffney’s Sharia report also erroneously suggests that every practicing Muslim engages in “taqiyya,” which CSP incorrectly defines as religiously mandated lying. This assertion suggests all practicing Muslims as unreliable and potential threats to America. In fact, taqiyya is an Arabic word that means concealing one’s faith out of fear of death and is practiced by only a minority of Muslims.³² This practice equips Muslims past and present with a faithful “precautionary denial of religious belief in the face of potential persecution.”³³

Warning: Radical Islam has infiltrated the Department of Defense and the Conservative Political Action Conference

Gaffney put his center's funding to a new purpose in 2011, incorrectly documenting extremist Islamist infiltration anytime Muslim American individuals or organizations exercise their right to participate in civic and political society. Gaffney warns that "most of the Muslim-American groups of any prominence in America are now known to be, as a matter of fact, hostile to the United States and its Constitution."³⁴

His think tank commissions papers to make these exaggerated and incorrect conclusions. CSP-funded research by David Gaubatz, a former federal agent in charge of special investigations for the U.S. Air Force and a U.S. State Department-trained Arabic linguist who referred to President Obama as "our Muslim leader,"³⁵ and writer Paul Sperry, the author of the 2005 book *Infiltration: How Muslim Spies and Subversives have Penetrated Washington*.³⁶ They attempted to document in their "expose" *Muslim Mafia: Inside the Secret Underworld That's Conspiring to Islamize America* the allegation that Muslim spies have posed as interns and infiltrated Capitol Hill with a nefarious Islamist agenda.³⁷

Nonetheless, the book found an outlet, getting published in June 2011 by the right-wing, conspiracy-minded online magazine WorldNetDaily, founded by Joseph Farah, who in the past admitted his website publishes "some misinformation by columnists."³⁸ Farah also gave "Walker, Texas Ranger" actor Chuck Norris his own week-long series to warn America about the threat of "creeping Sharia," in which he repeats most of Gaffney's groundless allegations.³⁹

Gaffney even charges that the conservative movement has been infiltrated. He insists the American Conservative Union, which hosts the annual Conservative Political Action Conference, has been successfully infiltrated by "Islamists" due to their associations with Grover Norquist and Suhail Khan.⁴⁰ Norquist is famous for his take-no-prisoners approach to tax increases, but he also was the Republican strategist central to the George W. Bush administration's outreach to Muslim and Arab Americans.⁴¹ Suhail Khan, a Muslim American senior political appointee in the George W. Bush administration, boasts a 20-plus-year record of service with the Republican Party. He is also a recipient of the prestigious Young Conservative Coalition's Buckley award for his grassroots leadership.⁴²

During the Bush administration, Gaffney led vicious smear campaigns against Khan and other Muslim staffers who worked in the White House. In 2003, Gaffney turned his sights on Ali Tulbah, an associate director of the White House's Office of

Cabinet Affairs, for similarly reaching out to Muslim groups. “The Islamists’ White House gatekeeper,” Gaffney said of Tullah in *The Washington Times* in 2003.⁴³

Gaffney also accused U.S. Army General David Petraeus of “submission” to Islamic Sharia law because he strongly condemned the burning of a Koran by radical Christian pastor Terry Jones, who heads the Dove World Outreach Center, a fundamentalist Christian church in Florida with a handful of followers. Jones first decided to burn the Koran on September 11, 2010, to protest “the brutality of Islamic law” because he believes “Islam is of the devil.” General Petraeus warned that such an act “puts our soldiers in jeopardy” and “images from such activity could very well be used by extremists here and around the world.”⁴⁴ When Jones finally did burn the Koran on March 20, 2011, violent protests in Afghanistan did indeed ensue, with the Taliban exploiting the sensationalistic act to justify its attack on a U.N. building that killed 20 people.

David Yerushalmi
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peoples.”

Gaffney also cited “proof” of Islamist infiltration in the Obama administration. His evidence? The creation of a new U.S. Missile Defense logo that “appears ominously to reflect a morphing of the Islamic crescent and star with the Obama campaign logo.”⁴⁵ Seeing mysterious symbols in logos is further evidence of Gaffney’s increasingly conspiracy-addled analysis. Missile Defense Agency spokesman Rick Lehne told *The Washington Post*:

This was a logo that was developed three years ago for our recruiting materials and our public Web site. It did not replace our official MDA logo, and of course it has no ties to any political campaign. It was done one year before the 2008 elections. So the whole thing is pretty ridiculous.

Lehne added that the insignia was chosen because it was “cheaper, because it’s three colors as opposed to the five colors on the official logo.”⁴⁶

David Yerushalmi, founder of the Society of Americans for National Existence

David Yerushalmi, 56, is the founder of the think tank the Society of Americans for National Existence, which first proposed legislation in 2007 to make adherence to Sharia “a felony punishable by 20 years in prison,”⁴⁷ and is the general counsel for many of the think tanks and grassroots organizations in the Islamophobia network. The Anti-Defamation League reviewed Yerushalmi’s activities and concluded that he has a “record of anti-Muslim, anti-immi-

grant and anti-black bigotry.”⁴⁸ In a 2006 essay titled “On Race: A Tentative Discussion,” Yerushalmi described “blacks as the most murderous of peoples.”⁴⁹

He is the general counsel for the Center for Security Policy and the co-author of CSP’s “Shariah: The Threat to America” report.⁵⁰ He also serves as legal counsel for the anti-Muslim group Stop Islamization of America, led by Robert Spencer, whom we profile below, and Pamela Geller, whom we profile in the media chapter of our report, along with her influential blog, Atlas Shrugs.

The Anti-Defamation League describes Stop Islamization of America as an “anti-Muslim group” that “promotes a conspiratorial anti-Muslim agenda under the guise of fighting radical Islam.”⁵¹ The organization was recently listed as a “hate group” by the Southern Poverty Law Center.⁵²

Yerushalmi also serves as general counsel for Stop the Madrasa: A Community Coalition, a New York City-based anti-Muslim right-wing grassroots organization that in 2007 attacked a New York City secular public school as a religious madrasa and Islamist front simply for teaching Arabic and the Arab culture.⁵³ In fact, the school, Khalil Gibran International Academy, strived to “offer a rigorous, interdisciplinary curriculum using project-based learning and integrates an international theme with the study of the Arabic language.”⁵⁴ In April 2011, the New York Department of Education announced the relocation of the school “due to long standing performance standards.”⁵⁵ Many supporters of the school expressed outrage at the news because they believed the decision was tied to ongoing attacks on the school.⁵⁶

Yerushalmi also represents right-wing Christian groups. In December 2008, Yerushalmi represented the Thomas More Law Center, a non profit public interest law firm “dedicated to the defense and promotion of the religious freedom of Christians,” in a case defending the notorious Koran-burning Pastor Terry Jones. Yerushalmi also filed a suit against the federal government claiming its loan to American International Group, Inc., as part of the bailout of the global insurance giant amid the 2008 financial crisis, was illegal since the company had financial products that allegedly promoted Islam and were anti-Christian.⁵⁷

Yerushalmi’s most useful contribution to the Islamophobia network was as the author of the model “anti-Sharia” legislation introduced in more than a dozen states—legal work premised on his work as co-author of influential policy reports framing Sharia, Islamic religious law, as a totalitarian threat infiltrating America.⁵⁸ He believes that “Muslim civilization is at war with Judeo-Christian civiliza-

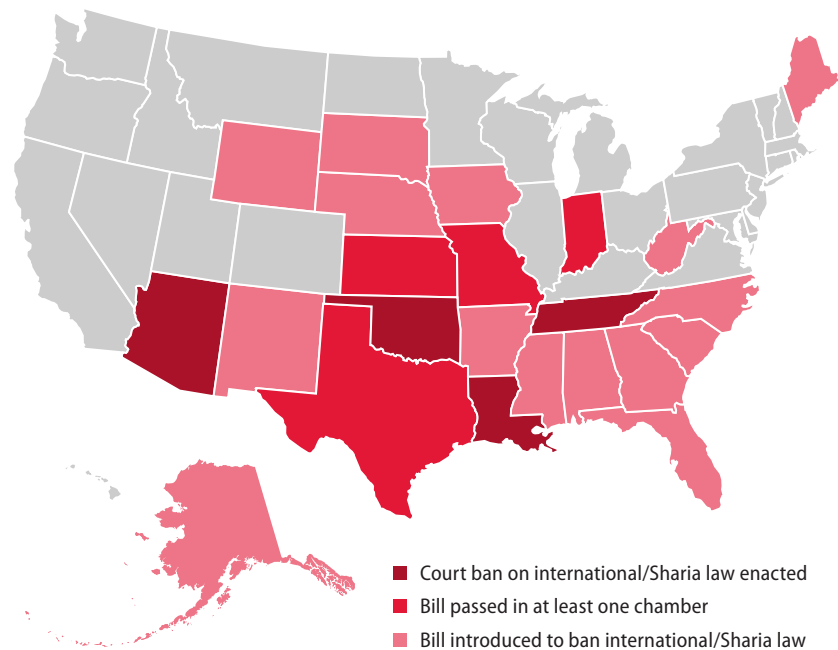
tion ... the Muslim peoples, those committed to Islam as we know it today, are our enemies.”⁵⁹ He says this is why he drafted anti-Sharia legislation that would deny American Muslims their constitutionally protected right to freely practice their religion.

Yerushalmi received \$274,883 from CSP for consulting services. His organization the Society of Americans for National Existence reported \$385,586 in revenue in 2007, \$389,841 in 2008, and \$310,479 in 2009, according to the organization’s latest tax filings.

Here’s what he does with that money.

Mapping the anti-Sharia bill

Twenty-three states have some kind of legislation or law that would ban the nonexistent threat of Sharia law being used in their courtrooms



Source: CAPAF Research.

Mapping the Sharia threat

Yerushalmi's obsession with Sharia law dates back to 2007 when his organization, the Society of Americans for National Existence, created the "Mapping Shari'a in America: Knowing the Enemy" campaign to determine what type of Sharia was practiced in every single mosque and advocated by Muslim American religious institutions.⁶⁰ The director of this campaign was David Gaubatz, who would later co-author the CSP-funded conspiracy book *Muslim Mafia: Inside the Secret Underworld That's Conspiring to Islamize America*.⁶¹

The press release for the Mapping Sharia campaign stated the initiative would "test the proposition that Shari'a amounts to a criminal conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. government."⁶² But the conclusion was never in doubt, for that same year Yerushalmi proposed legislation to make "adherence to Sharia" a felony punishable by 20 years in prison, falsely claiming that "Islam requires all Muslims to actively and passively support the replacement of America's constitutional republic with a political system based upon Shari'a."⁶³

Also that same year, Yerushalmi began developing the template for the current anti-Sharia legislation movement American Laws for American Courts at the behest of the American Public Policy Alliance, a right-wing-funded nonprofit advocacy group that claims "one of the greatest threats to American values and liberties today" comes from "foreign laws and foreign legal doctrines," including "Islamic Shari'ah law," which APPA claims is "infiltrating our court system."⁶⁴

He soon was working with other members of the Islamophobia network to introduce this legislation across the country. The American Bar Association recognized the sweep of Yerushalmi's "anti-Shariah initiative," noting that "many of the legislators sponsoring the anti-Shariah initiatives in other states are using model legislation drafted by the American Public Policy Alliance."⁶⁵ As we demonstrate in the graph on page 40, many of the bills were drafted with identical language to Yerushalmi's model legislation. We document that significant articles from the Alaska, South Carolina, and Texas bills appear to be nearly cut and pasted from Yerushalmi's model.

Promoting the threat of Sharia in American mosques

This year, Yerushalmi turned his attention to raising the threat of Sharia in American mosques to buttress the legislative efforts of the Islamophobia net-

Text from David Yerushalmi's model anti-Sharia law made its way nearly verbatim into legislation in three states—a pattern repeated in many other statehouses

**Excerpts from
state anti-Sharia bills**

– Alaska House Bill #88

– South Carolina Senate Bill #444

work at the state level. In June he released “Shari’a and Violence in American Mosques,” which speciously claims that more than 80 percent of U.S. mosques feature texts that promote or support violence. The report was published in June 2011 by *Middle East Forum Quarterly*, which is published by Daniel Pipes’ think tank Middle East Forum.⁶⁶ Almost immediately, CSP’s Gaffney endorsed and promoted the report’s findings in his *Washington Times* column, claiming, “This paper describes an ominous jihadist footprint being put into place across the nation.”⁶⁷ He referred to the report as proof that American mosques are “jihad incubators.”⁶⁸

In fact, a two-year study on American Muslims titled “Anti-Terror Lessons of Muslim-Americans” by academics David Schanzer and Charles Kurzman, with Duke’s Sanford School of Public Policy and the University of North Carolina respectively, concluded that contemporary mosques are actually a deterrent to the spread of militant Islam and terrorism.⁶⁹ Moreover, this claim has been categorically rejected by actual law enforcement experts⁷⁰ and counterterrorism officials, too, including FBI Director Robert Mueller,⁷¹ U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder,⁷² and National Counterterrorism Center Director Michael Leiter, who testified at a February 9 hearing before the House Homeland Security Committee, saying, “Many of our tips to uncover active terrorist plots in the United States have come from the Muslim community.”⁷³

Daniel Pipes, founder of the Middle East Forum

Daniel Pipes received his bachelor of arts degree (1971) and doctorate (1978) from Harvard University, both in history, and spent six years studying abroad, including three years in Egypt. Pipes, 61, speaks French and reads Arabic and German. He has also served in government roles, including two presidentially appointed positions: vice chairman of the Fulbright Board of Foreign Scholarships and board member of the U.S. Institute of Peace (2003-2005). Pipes sits on five editorial boards, has testified before many congressional committees, and worked on five presidential campaigns. Universities in the United States and Switzerland have conferred honorary degrees on him.⁷⁴

In 1990, Pipes founded the Middle East Forum, an independent non-profit organization. The Forum had more than \$3 million in revenue in 2009. Its mission is “promoting American interests” through publications, research, media outreach, and public education. It publishes the *Middle East Quarterly* and sponsors Campus Watch, Islamist Watch, the Legal Project, and the Washington Project.⁷⁵

Pipes and his think tank have become increasingly strident about the supposed threat posed by Islam and Muslims in America. Anders Breivik cited Pipes and the Middle East Forum 18 times in his manifesto.⁷⁶ At the same time, more and more money pours into his coffers. His think tank received millions of dollars in funds over the past decade, thanks to generous donors such as Donors Capital Fund, which gave \$2,300,000; the Bradley Foundation (\$305,000); the Russell Berrie Foundation (\$273,000); the Becker Foundation (\$355,000); the Anchorage Fund and William Rosenwald Family Fund (\$2,320,299).

Pipes has parlayed his prestigious academic credentials to great effect, but along with the source of his funding, he's become increasingly out of touch with the realities of the Muslim world at home and abroad, making more extreme and unfounded observations about Islam in the United States. Let's trace his journey from a respected academic to one of the linchpins of the Islamophobia network.

The academic turned anti-Muslim propagandist

Pipes boasts authentic scholarly credentials in Islam, having obtained his doctoral degree in medieval Islamic history from Harvard in 1973. But there are serious problems with his work, especially in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington.⁷⁷ As journalist Christopher Hitchens, a notorious critic of Islam, noted, "Daniel Pipes is not a man of Peace." Hitchens observes that Pipes is so consumed by dislike that he will not recognize good news from the Islamic world even when it arrives.⁷⁸

In 2002, Pipes launched Campus Watch to monitor professors and academics that deviate from Pipes' political ideologies.⁷⁹ This website inspired the creation of David Horowitz's Discover the Networks, established in 2003 to track the political left, and both sites have subsequently shared content.⁸⁰

Pipes' 2003 book, *Militant Islam Reaches America*, was one of the earliest to hype the threat of "militant Islam" infiltrating America.⁸¹ He observed that "all immigrants bring exotic customs and attitudes, but Muslim customs are more troublesome than most."⁸² A 2007 Pew Research Center report found just the opposite, concluding that "a comprehensive nationwide survey of American Muslims finds them to be largely assimilated, happy with their lives, and moderate with respect to many of the issues that have divided Muslims and Westerners around the world."⁸³

In 2006, Pipes launched Islamist Watch, which “combats the ideas and institutions of lawful Islamism in the United States and throughout the West.”⁸⁴ It then attempted to document the threats. His Middle East Forum published *CAIR: Islamist Fooling the Establishment*, in which he argues that a stealth movement of “the Wahhabi Lobby”⁸⁵ will take over our nation. Without corroborating evidence, Pipes smeared the Council on American-Islamic Relations, or CAIR, whose sole purpose as an organization is to “challenge the stereotypes of Islam and Muslims” and to “provide an Islamic perspective on issues of importance to the American public.”⁸⁶

Then, in 2007, he created the Legal Project as a subsidiary of the Middle East Forum, in response to a “suit brought by the Islamic Society of Boston against 17 defendants, including Steven Emerson” (the founder and executive director of the Investigative Project on Terrorism, whom we profile later in this chapter), and it now functions as a resource to limit defamation lawsuits brought by other aggrieved Muslim organizations.⁸⁷ Pipes refers to these Muslim American advocacy organizations, such as the Muslim Public Affairs Council—which is “a public service agency that has built a reputation as a consistent and reliable resource for government and media and is trusted by American Muslims as an authentic, experienced voice”⁸⁸—as “Islamists,” and describes their constitutionally protected right of using the legal system for redress as a “threat.”⁸⁹

His Islamophobia took a further turn when in 2008 he recommended increased racial profiling of Muslims and Arabs to cope with this impending exaggerated threat.⁹⁰ Then, in 2009, he relaunched the Legal Project website to function as “a source of information on ‘Islamist lawfare’—that is, attempts by supporters of radical Islam to suppress free discourse on Islam and terrorism by (1) exploiting Western legal systems and traditions and (2) recruiting state actors and international organizations such as the United Nations.”⁹¹

Supporting the Islamophobia echo chamber

Pipes writes prolifically on his site, www.danielpipes.org, where he repeats the falsehood that President Obama is a former Muslim who “practiced Islam.”⁹² He uses his website to echo the Islamophobia network’s alarmist rhetoric about the creeping Sharia threat posed by radical Islam.⁹³ Pipes has interviewed CSP’s Gaffney for his website and endorsed Gaffney’s CSP-funded book, *Muslim*

*Mafia: Inside the Secret Underworld That's Conspiring to Islamize America.*⁹⁴ Pipes also joined the campaign against the Park51 community center in New York City, writing that the planned building “will spread Islamist ideology”⁹⁵ and the endeavor “reeks of Islamic triumphalism,” a talking point that was echoed by Frank Gaffney⁹⁶ and Newt Gingrich.⁹⁷

Pipes also is willing to use his alarmist rhetoric when it serves the purpose of promoting Islamophobia. In 2008, for example, Pipes admitted to misleading the public by using the word “madrassa” referring to a New York City public school to “get attention.”⁹⁸ Why? Because the “Stop the Madrassa Community Coalition” wanted to shut down a secular New York City public school that taught Arabic and Arab culture. He told *The New York Times* that using the word “madrassa,” which could mean a secular school or religious Islamic school in Arabic, was “a bit of stretch.”⁹⁹

Robert Spencer
and his blog were
cited 162 times by
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confessed Norway
terrorist.

Pipes was critical of the school based upon his odd and bigoted belief that “Arabic instruction is inevitably laden with Pan-Arabist and Islamist language.”¹⁰⁰ Pipes posted an article on his website contending that “Arabized students show decidedly greater support for the Islamist movement and greater mistrust of the West” to justify his unsavory actions.¹⁰¹ Of course, this argument has no empirical foundation; even the U.S. Army encourages soldiers to study the Arabic culture and language in an effort to “help them build relationships” with locals without worrying the practice will lead to radicalization.¹⁰²

Nonetheless, the Islamophobia network’s campaign against the New York City school was successful. The founding principal of the school, Debbie Almontasar, was forced to resign due to the manufactured hate campaign against her. *The New York Times* suggested this controversy “was also the work of a growing and organized movement to stop Muslim citizens who are seeking an expanded role in American public life.”¹⁰³

Robert Spencer, co-founder of Stop Islamization of America and director of Jihad Watch

Robert Spencer, 49, received his master of arts degree in religious studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He says he has been studying Islamic theology, law, and history in depth since 1980.¹⁰⁴ He has led seminars on Islam and jihad for the U.S. Central Command, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, the U.S. Army’s Asymmetric Warfare Group, the FBI, the Joint Terrorism

Task Force, and the U.S. intelligence community. The FBI even listed one of his Islamophobic books, *The Truth About Muhammad*, as “recommended reading” about Islam in its 62-slide PowerPoint presentation used to train new bureau recruits for “successful interviews/interrogations with individuals from the M.E. [Middle East].”¹⁰⁵ The book is no longer on that reading list.

Spencer is the director of the website Jihad Watch, a program of the David Horowitz Freedom Center. The center’s mission is to “defend the principles of individual freedom, the rule of law, private property, and limited government.”¹⁰⁶ As a subsidiary of the Freedom Center, Jihad Watch’s primary purpose is to “track the attempts of radical Islam to subvert Western culture.”¹⁰⁷ Robert Spencer and his blog were cited 162 times in the nearly 1,500-page manifesto of Anders Breivik, the confessed Norway terrorist who claimed responsibility for killing 76 people, mostly youths.¹⁰⁸

Spencer has written 10 books, including the *New York Times* bestseller *The Truth About Muhammad*.¹⁰⁹ He also popularized fear-mongering claims in *Stealth Jihad: How Radical Islam is Subverting America without Guns or Bombs* and *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)*. These texts are heavily promoted by the Islamophobia network. Daniel Pipes praised *Stealth Jihad* as “a pioneering survey of the ‘stealth jihad’ whose ambition and subtlety threaten the continuity of Western civilization.”¹¹⁰ His next book, *Did Muhammad Exist?*, is scheduled to be published by ISI Books in spring 2012. In addition, he has written 11 monographs and well over 300 articles about jihad and Islamic terrorism.¹¹¹

He also is co-author, with radical right-wing blogger and anti-Islam activist Pamela Geller, of *The Post-American Presidency: The Obama Administration’s War on America*. And along with Geller (see page 89 for details), Spencer is co-founder of the groups American Freedom Defense Initiative and Stop Islamization of America.¹¹²

Spencer’s activities are funded in large part through the David Horowitz Freedom Center. Spencer’s salary at Jihad Watch was about \$140,000 in 2010, according to an investigative report by Politico’s Kenneth Vogel and Giovanni Russonello.¹¹³ Donations to Stop Islamization of America appear to be collected by Jihad Watch’s PayPal account. In 2005 and 2006, the Fairbrook Foundation contributed a total of \$253,250 to Jihad Watch.

Here’s how Robert Spencer uses these funds to spread his anti-Muslim attacks.

Misrepresenting Islam

A prolific blogger, author, and commentator, Spencer is “the principal leader... in the new academic field of Islam bashing,” according to Robert Crane, a former deputy director of the U.S. National Security Council and former adviser to President Nixon.¹¹⁴ Spencer is the primary driver in promoting the myth that peaceful Islam is nonexistent and that violent extremism is inherent within traditional Islam. “Of course, as I have pointed out many times, traditional Islam itself is not moderate or peaceful,” Spencer said in June this year. “It is the only major world religion with a developed doctrine and tradition of warfare against unbelievers.”¹¹⁵

Spencer’s views on Islam—and his credibility in discussing Islam at all—are challenged by scholars at his own alma mater. He has “no academic training in Islamic studies whatsoever,” according to Islamic scholar Carl W. Ernst, distinguished professor of religious studies and director of the Carolina Center for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.¹¹⁶ Instead, Professor Ernst says Spencer selectively uses textual, religious evidence to mainstream the claim that “Islam is not a religion of peace.”¹¹⁷ Indeed, Spencer gives misplaced credence to the “Sharia threat” argument that is then mainstreamed by the Islamophobia network.¹¹⁸

In November 2010, Spencer and Gaffney participated in the panel “After the Mosque: Jihad on the Home,” where they parroted each other’s fear-mongering about radical Islam’s infiltration of America.¹¹⁹ They routinely appear alongside each other on panels and mainstream media outlets, such as the February 2009 Fox News panel discussion on “stealth jihad” titled “Terror From Within.”¹²⁰

In reality, recent statements from moderate, mainstream Muslim religious authorities, such as the 2004 Amman Message, issued by the King of Jordan and reaffirmed in 2005 by Islamic scholars from more than 50 countries, show the dynamic, interpretive tradition of Islam in practice. The Amman Message, and the three-point ruling that followed, was issued by 200 Islamic scholars, a moderate Muslim proclamation aiming to publicize and unify Islamic scholars around a few key points regarding Islam in practice today. Today, more than 200 top Muslim scholars have endorsed the Amman Message,¹²¹ demonstrating a widely shared Sharia-based condemnation of violence from the world’s leading Islamic authorities.¹²²

Indeed, in recent years, Spencer's comments criticizing Islam have become so loathsome that fellow conservative Charles Johnson, founder of the popular, right-leaning blog Little Green Footballs, believes he has "crossed the line from simply criticizing radical Islamists to relentlessly demonizing all Muslims."¹²³

Suggesting President Obama endorses Muslim Brotherhood

Spencer supports Gaffney's conspiratorial claims that President Obama's religious identity and his support of Egyptian democracy are endorsement of the Muslim Brotherhood and its alleged "Islamist" agenda.¹²⁴ Spencer has posted a video on his blog where he explains why he thinks President Obama may still be a Muslim, claiming, "ultimately only he knows the answer as to what he really believes. But certainly his public policies and his behavior are consistent with his being a committed and convinced Muslim."¹²⁵

Steven Emerson, founder and executive director of the Investigative Project on Terrorism

Steven Emerson's Investigative Project on Terrorism is a nonprofit organization and website dedicated to exposing the dangers of Islamist infiltration in America gleaned through investigative journalism. Emerson, who received a bachelor of arts degree from Brown University in 1976 and a master of arts in sociology from Brown in 1977, worked on staff as an investigator for the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee until 1982, and as an executive assistant to the late Sen. Frank Church of Idaho.¹²⁶ He left Capitol Hill in 1986 to become a journalist for *U.S. News & World Report*, where by 1988 he rose to become a senior editor specializing in national security issues.¹²⁷ In 1990, he joined CNN as an investigative correspondent and continued to write about terrorism.

In 1991, he published *Terrorist: The Inside Story of the Highest-Ranking Iraqi Terrorist Ever to Defect to the West*, detailing how Iraq spread and increased its terrorist network in the 1980s with U.S. support. In 1994, Emerson left CNN and produced the 1994 documentary film "Jihad in America," which allegedly "exposed clandestine operations of militant Islamic terrorist groups on American soil."¹²⁸ Emerson's film received the George Polk Award for best television documentary, a renowned journalism award that puts a "premium on investigative and enterprise

Spencer is "the principal leader... in the new academic field of Islam bashing."

work that is original.”¹²⁹ But reviews were mixed. *The Nation*, for example, said Emerson was “creating mass hysteria against American Arabs” in a review of his documentary.¹³⁰

In 1995, Emerson left journalism and founded the Investigative Project on Terrorism, which claims to be “one of the world’s largest storehouses of archival data and intelligence on Islamic and Middle Eastern terrorist groups.”¹³¹ Subsequently he has written six books on terrorism and national security issues. Emerson and his staff frequently provide briefings to U.S. government and law enforcement agencies, members of Congress, and congressional committees.¹³²

For funding, Emerson turns to a number of the top seven foundations described in Chapter 1, but with several twists. Emerson’s nonprofit organization IPT received a total of \$400,000 from Donors Capital Fund in 2007 and 2008,¹³³ as well as \$100,000 from the Becker Foundation, and \$250,000 from Daniel Pipes’ Middle East Forum, according to our research. Emerson’s nonprofit organization, in turn, helps fund his for-profit company, SAE Productions. IPT paid SAE Productions \$3.33 million to enable the company to “study alleged ties between American Muslims and overseas terrorism.” Emerson is SAE’s sole employee.¹³⁴

Emerson is the
sole employee of
SAE Productions, a
for-profit company.

Even more intriguingly, a review of grants in November 2010 showed large sums of money contributed to the “Investigative Project,” or “IPT,” care of the Counterterrorism & Security Education and Research Foundation. An examination of CTSERF’s 990 forms showed that, much like the Investigative Project, all grant revenue was transferred to a private, for-profit entity, the International Association of Counterterrorism and Security Professionals.

Emerson did not respond to requests for comment by time of publication. The Russell Berrie Foundation has contributed \$2,736,000 to CTSERF, and Richard Scaife foundations contributed \$1,575,000.

While neither the IPT, CTSERF, or IACSP websites make any mention of a link between CTSERF and the IPT, Ray Locker, the Investigative Project’s managing director, told the LobeLog blog that a relationship “exists” and “it’s all above board and passes muster with the IRS.” But in 2008, when Emerson was asked why the IACSP’s Web address was listed at the bottom of an IPT press release on LexisNexis, he told LobeLog, “[I have] no idea how the IACSP website address got listed on the LexisNexis version of our press release. We are not a project of IACSP although we have frequently published material in their magazine.” He

went on to say that “as for funding questions, other than what we have stated on our website, that we take no funds from outside the U.S. or from governmental agencies or from religious and political groups, we have a long standing policy since we were founded not to discuss matters of funding (for security reasons).”¹³⁵

Steven Fustero, chief executive of CTSERF, told LobeLog, “The research and education designated funds are [...] transferred to IACSP, which in turn makes the research grants,” but would not discuss the relationship between CTSERF and IPT. An examination of CTSERF tax documents from 1999 to 2008 shows the group receiving \$11,108,332 in grant revenue and transferring \$12,206,900 to IACSP.¹³⁶

This kind of action enrages Ken Berger, president of Charity Navigator, a nonprofit watchdog group. He argued that “basically, you have a nonprofit acting as a front organization, and all that money going to a for-profit.”¹³⁷

The increasing influence of Islamophobia donors to Emerson’s nonprofit and for-profit work has focused more recently on anti-Islam, anti-Muslim expertise.¹³⁸ Indeed, according to an investigation by *The Tennessean* newspaper, the Investigative Project now solicits money by telling donors they’re in imminent danger from Muslims.¹³⁹

In this capacity, Emerson frames Islam as an inherently violent and antagonistic religion. “The level of vitriol against Jews and Christianity within contemporary Islam, unfortunately, is something that we are not totally cognizant of, or that we don’t want to accept,” says Emerson. “We don’t want to accept it because to do so would be to acknowledge that one of the world’s great religions, which has more than 1.4 billion adherents, somehow sanctions genocide, planned genocide, as part of its religious doctrine.”¹⁴⁰ Emerson was twice cited in Anders Breivik’s manifesto.¹⁴¹

Such wildly over-the-top portraits of Islam as inherently radical require some creativity on Emerson’s part. Proving he’s up to the challenge, Emerson boasts a history of fabricating evidence that perpetuates conspiracies of radical Islam infiltrating America through Muslim civil rights and advocacy organizations. In 1997, Emerson presented the Associated Press with a purported FBI dossier showing ties between Muslim American organizations and radical Islamist groups. The AP reporters concluded the dossier was created by Emerson and “[Emerson] had edited out all phrases, taken out anything that made it look like his.”¹⁴² Another AP reporter stated, “[Emerson] could never back up what he said. We couldn’t believe

that document was from the FBI files.” A ranking AP editor in Washington said, “We would be very, very, very, very leery of using Steve Emerson.”¹⁴³

Emerson early on began to see Muslim extremism in America—even where it didn’t exist. For example, in 1995, without any substantiating evidence, Emerson famously predicted on “The CBS Evening News” that the Oklahoma City bombing—perpetrated by Timothy McVeigh—was done by Muslim, Middle Eastern extremists. “This was done with the attempt to inflict as many casualties as possible. That is a Middle Eastern trait,” he asserted, even before law enforcement officials and the FBI had developed any leads and suspects.¹⁴⁴ Daniel Pipes, founder of the think tank Middle East Forum, publicly endorsed Emerson’s research and repeated Emerson’s incorrect claim that Muslims were responsible for the bombing.¹⁴⁵

Pushing misleading statistics on Muslim terrorism

Emerson has a history of peddling questionable facts. Through IPT, Emerson pushed misleading statistics on “Muslim terrorism” meant to hype the domestic Muslim threat leading up to Rep. Peter King’s (R-NY) March 2011 hearing on the alleged radicalization of Muslim American communities.¹⁴⁶ On Fox News, Rep. King agreed with host Sean Hannity that 80 percent of mosques in America were “ruled by the extremists,” citing research by Steven Emerson and Daniel Pipes.¹⁴⁷

Steven Emerson also bolstered the manufactured hysteria surrounding the construction of the Park51 community center in New York City as a sign of a radical Islamist infiltration. On August 20, 2010, Emerson announced that his “team of investigators had spent the past four weeks going through the newly found material,” allegedly proving the center’s Imam Rauf is a “radical extremist cleric who cloaks himself in sheep’s clothing.”¹⁴⁸ Emerson stated that he had found “thirteen hours of audio tape” that contained information that is “shocking” and “explosive.”¹⁴⁹ In the end, though, the tapes did not offer any new “radical” information against Rauf.¹⁵⁰

Emerson has also accused both Republican and Democratic administrations of empowering radicals by simply seeking outreach and conciliation with Muslim American communities. In 2007, he lashed out against President Bush’s initia-

tive¹⁵¹ aimed at mending fences with the Muslim world. Emerson accused New Jersey’s Republican Gov. Chris Christie of having a “strange relationship with radical Islam”¹⁵² after he nominated a Muslim, Sohail Mohammed, for a state judgeship. By simply nominating an American who happens to be Muslim, Emerson believes Gov. Christie has a “tin ear for radical Islam” because of a client Mohammed represented—a New Jersey imam.¹⁵³

He also accused Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL), the Senate Majority Whip, of being “in bed with radical Islam for the last eight years” because Durbin has allegedly “aligned himself with CAIR [Council on American-Islamic Relations], sent them letters of congratulations, [and] agreed to speak to their banquets.”¹⁵⁴ And on MSNBC, Emerson said President Obama’s outreach to Muslim communities is proof that Islamists have been given “free reign for them with influence of the administration. They think that they are going to have influence over the policies of financial constraints over terrorist activities. And, they think that they are going to be included now in policy deliberations.” Norah O’Donnell, the TV anchor, concluded his suggestions were “ridiculous.”¹⁵⁵

The influence of the Islamophobia misinformation experts

The five leading misinformation experts profiled in this chapter boast an outsized influence in American society and politics today. This is not because of the scholastic persuasiveness of their hate-filled research, as we have amply demonstrated, but rather due to the rising amount of funding they receive from seven foundations to propagate their increasingly paranoid, fear-mongering myths about Islam and American Muslims.

The funding and the research work, though, would probably be wasted for the foundations, except for the symbiotic relationships that Gaffney, Yerushalmi, Spencer, Pipes, and Emerson enjoy with other even less reputable validators of their views (See Box on the next page) as well as anti-Islam grassroots groups and religious right organizations. We detail those relationships—and the money that occasionally flows between them—in the next chapter of our report.

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The validators

To help buttress the extreme views of Islamophobia misinformation experts such as Gaffney, Yerushalmi, Spencer, Pipes, and Emerson, the right-wing media enablers and anti-Muslim politicians often turn to a select group of individuals who claim inside knowledge about the realities of radical Islam. Most of these individuals are neither experts nor Muslim, but rather of Middle Eastern descent. Nonetheless, they help validate and authenticate manufactured myths about Muslims and Islam, contributing to the small echo chamber of men and women committed to promoting Islamophobia in the United States. We take a brief look at several of these so-called validators in this box.

Zuhdi Jasser

Zuhdi Jasser is a former U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander and practicing private physician in Phoenix, Arizona, specializing in internal medicine and nuclear cardiology. He served as the president of the Arizona Medical Association until June 2007.¹ Jasser also is president of the American Islamic Forum for Democracy in Phoenix.² AIFD, founded in 2003, is a think tank and activist Muslim organization that “provides a platform for an American Muslim movement to separate spiritual Islam from the political.”³

At first glance, Jasser appears to be a moderate Muslim. He was one of five Muslims who met with Admiral Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to discuss the “Contest of Ideas with the Muslim World” at the Hudson Institute on December 5, 2007.⁴ In January 2008, Jasser was presented with the 2007 Director’s Community Leadership Award by the Phoenix office of the FBI. Jasser has also been an adviser on Islamic affairs to the U.S. Embassy in the Netherlands.

But Jasser not only lacks any policy or academic expertise, he also promotes conspiratorial claims that America is infiltrated by radical Muslims.⁵ “America is at war with theocratic Muslim despots who seek the imposition of sharia and don’t believe in the equality of all before the law, blind to faith. They detest the association of religious freedom with liberty,” he wrote in response to criticism of the recent House hearings on supposedly widespread Muslim American radicalism.⁶

Jasser also repeats Frank Gaffney’s assertions that mainstream Muslim groups are fronts for Islamist groups wishing to advance Sharia and political Islam within America.⁷ He attacked Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN), a Muslim American, as being in league with the Islamist agenda simply because Ellison appeared as a keynote speaker for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, or CAIR, a Muslim American advocacy association.⁸

Jasser also goes after President Obama. He repeats the Islamophobia scholars’ fictitious claim that the Obama administration “pander[s] to groups that are clearly Islamist.” Jasser’s evidence includes then-White House adviser Valerie Jarrett appearing as a keynote speaker at the Islamic Society of North America’s 2009 annual conference. The event was also attended by evangelical titan Rick Warren, whose participation Jasser conveniently ignores.⁹

Jasser also dangerously and incorrectly labels mainstream Muslim American organizations as subversive, disloyal proponents of a radical-Islam takeover. He claims their “patriotism involves taking the American flag and adding a little crescent—and, of course, turning America into an Islamic state.”¹⁰ His attacks earned him the favor of Gaffney and the CSP, which awarded Jasser its 2008 “Defender of the Home Front” award.¹¹

Indeed, Jasser has emerged as the Muslim validator for Islamophobia propaganda. Rep. Peter King (R-NY) invited Jasser as a witness for his March 2011 hearings on the radicalization of Muslim communities, based on Jasser’s assertion that Muslim leaders do not cooperate enough with law enforcement.¹² This claim has been categorically rejected by actual law enforcement experts and counterterrorism officials.¹³

Featured in ‘flawed,’ fear-mongering documentaries

Jasser also appears frequently in fear-mongering documentaries portraying Islam and Muslims as potential threats. He appears in Newt Gingrich’s 2010 documentary “America At Risk: The War With No Name,” warning of the impending threat of radical Islam and enforcement of Sharia in America. Gingrich called Jasser a “courageous, moderate Muslim.”¹⁴

Along with Frank Gaffney and Daniel Pipes, Jasser also sits on the advisory board for the anti-Muslim organization Clarion Fund, which releases inflammatory documentaries warning of radical Islam.¹⁵ He narrated its film “The Third Jihad,” which claims that radical Muslim extremists have infiltrated America with the nefarious purpose of establishing a theocracy.

A New York Police Department officer who saw the documentary at the Coney Island training facility remarked, “It was so ridiculously one-sided. It just made Muslims look like the enemy. It was straight propaganda.”¹⁶ This sentiment was also echoed by the deputy commissioner, Paul Browne, who commented that it was “a wacky movie” and that it should never have been shown to the officers.¹⁷

Jasser has appeared in other films, too. In 2007, Gaffney recruited Jasser to star in his documentary propaganda “Islam vs. Islamists,” which was rejected by PBS.¹⁸ The network explained the rejection by stating the film was “flawed,” had “a limited focus that does not adequately corroborate the film’s conclusions,” and possessed “a general lack of attention to the obligation of fairness.”¹⁹

Jasser has made friends with the leaders initiating the most hateful misinformation about Islam and Muslims. He’s written articles for Daniel Pipes’ *Middle East Forum Quarterly*.²⁰ And anti-Muslim activist Brigitte Gabriel invited him to attend an ACT! for America grassroots event in Florida to help tar mainstream Muslim American organizations they both deem “Islamist fronts.”²¹ (see next chapter for details)

Walid Shoebat

Walid Shoebat touts himself as an expert on Muslim terrorism and is a self-described “former Islamic terrorist,” even though there is hardly any credible evidence to support his sensational tale of “Palestinian ‘terrorist’ turned Zionist,” as *The Jerusalem Post* phrased it.²² Shoebat, age 50, has since converted to an apocalyptic form of Christianity, suggesting Islam is the fake religion of the “anti-Christ” and implying that Muslims bear the “Mark of the Beast.”²³ Shoebat has ominously warned, “Islam is a revolution and is intent to destroy all other systems. They want to expand, like Nazism.”²⁴ Shoebat was cited more than 15 times in Norway terrorist Anders Breivik’s manifesto.²⁵

Daniel Pipes officially promotes the fraudulent Shoebat, who cites Pipes’ endorsement of his contested biography as “evidence of my credentials.”²⁶ So, too, does Gaffney, who, referring to Shoebat said, “In the 25 years I have been in Washington I have never heard anything so extraordinary and the truth told so eloquently by someone like this.”²⁷ Shoebat is also one of the many prominent “experts” from the Islamophobia industry featured in the Clarion Fund’s anti-Muslim documentary film “Obsession: Radical Islam’s War Against the West.”

Shoebat appears to relish controversy. He recommends that Muslims be monitored and their phones be tapped.²⁸ Following the tune of the Islamophobia scholars, he also says President Obama is “definitely” Muslim.²⁹

According to “Top Secret America,” a two-year investigative effort by *The Washington Post* exposing America’s intelligence apparatus post-9/11, Shoebat is still being paid for his “expertise,” despite being labeled as one of the “self-described experts whose extremist views are considered inaccurate and harmful by the FBI and others in the intelligence community,” and whose training of law enforcement officers and published views about Islam are considered “inaccurate and counterproductive” by government terrorism experts.³⁰

In spite of all this, Shoebat was recently paid \$5,000 in public funds by the Department of Homeland Security to once again speak at a South Dakota law enforcement conference.³¹

Walid Phares

Walid Phares is currently a senior fellow and the director of the Future Terrorism Project at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies in Washington, D.C.³² Phares, age 53, also acts as an “expert” lecturer on “Islamist Jihadism” for the Centre for Counterintelligence and Security Studies.³³ Phares is touted as an authentic expert on Muslims and political Islam despite being a former militiaman and foreign affairs spokesman for the mostly Christian Lebanese Front, which was responsible for the Sabra and Shatila massacres of Muslims during the September 1982 Lebanese Civil War.³⁴

The validators (continued)

Phares promotes the conspiracy theory of mainstream Muslim organizations posing as radical Islamist cells. He warns that “jihadists within the West pose as civil rights advocates” and patiently recruit until “[a]lmost all mosques, educational centers, and socioeconomic institutions fall into their hands.”³⁵ He was originally scheduled to testify at Rep. King’s criticized hearings on the alleged radicalization of the Muslim American community but was dropped at the last moment after his sordid history with the Lebanese Forces was uncovered.³⁶

When Phares was asked about his connection to the leadership that allowed the atrocities to occur, he simply replied, “Everybody did silly stuff, on both hands. . . but amazingly enough, the Guardians of the Cedars [a right-wing Christian religious group within the Lebanese Forces] have been the most moral fighters.”³⁷

Nonie Darwish

Nonie Darwish, an Egyptian raised in the Gaza Strip, immigrated to the United States in 1976 and in 2009 started the group Former Muslims United, which believes that “since Islam’s apostasy laws condemn former Muslims to death and allows vigilante violence against apostates, Islam itself has opened itself to criticism.”³⁸ Darwish, age 62, also is affiliated with the group Arabs for Israel, which describes itself as “an organization of Arabs and Muslims who respect and support the State of Israel and welcome a peaceful and diverse Middle East.”³⁹

Darwish famously predicted that Islam “will destroy itself because it’s not a true religion.”⁴⁰ She validates this view through her own books, *Now They Call Me Infidel: Why I Renounced Jihad for America, Israel and the War on Terror*, and *Cruel and Usual Pun-*

ishment: The Terrifying Global Implications of Islamic Law. Both books were endorsed and supported by Daniel Pipes, Robert Spencer, and David Horowitz. And she is featured as an expert on “radical Islam” in the Clarion Fund’s fear-mongering documentary “Obsession.”

She has promoted the Islamophobia network’s fictitious claim that President Obama’s outreach to Muslim communities and foreign policy is evidence of his support of Islamist organizations: “Whoever takes office after Obama will have to weed out from our government the Sharia lovers bearded Islamists [sic] who refuse to call Hamas a terrorist organization and who sympathize with the Brotherhood. This must be done if we are to protect ourselves from getting sucked into Islam’s orbit of no return.”⁴¹

On April 8, 2011, she appeared alongside Frank Gaffney to testify on the sub-issue of the “culture of Jihad” at the New York Senate Standing Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs hearing titled “Reviewing our Preparedness: An Examination of New York’s Public Protection Ten Years after September 11,” led by Sen. Greg Ball (R-Putnam County).⁴² In her testimony, Darwish stated that “the education of Arab children is to make killing of certain groups of people not only good, it’s holy.”⁴³

Nonie Darwish and Walid Phares are members of the Centre for Counterintelligence and Security Studies, which proclaims itself “the nation’s leading counterintelligence training, education and knowledge company.”⁴⁴ The center serves as a vital node connecting several of the individuals we profile in this report. The for-profit company “posits radical Islam as a new global ideological menace on the order of the old communist threat from the Soviet Union.”⁴⁵

Other misinformation experts

Centre for Counterintelligence and Security Studies

The following counterterrorism “experts” are associated with the Centre for Counterintelligence and Security Studies:

- Clare Lopez
- Stephen Coughlin
- Walid Phares
- Tawfik Hamid
- Nonie Darwish

Here’s a brief look at those we haven’t already profiled.

Clare Lopez

Clare Lopez is a strategic policy and intelligence expert with a focus on the Middle East, homeland security, national defense, and counterterrorism issues. Lopez, age 57, began her career as an operations officer with the Central Intelligence Agency, serving domestically and abroad for 20 years.⁴⁶

Now a private consultant, Lopez is a professor at the Centre for Counterintelligence and Security Studies, where she warns the intelligence community of the impending Islamist infiltration of America, echoing the memes mainstreamed by industry scholars such as Frank Gaffney. Lopez is a co-author of the CSP’s “Shariah: The Threat to America” report along with fellow Centre for Counterintelligence and Security Studies faculty member Stephen Coughlin.⁴⁷

On Andrew Breitbart’s right-wing Big Peace blog, she defended the report’s allegations, concluding that practicing Muslims who follow Sharia are essentially “antithetical” to U.S. values. She argues that “it is not ‘fear-mongering’ to point out that mainstream, orthodox Islamic doctrine, law, and practice are antithetical to the U.S. Constitution and our way of life in a democratic, free, liberal, pluralist, and tolerant society.”⁴⁸

Lopez is also vice president of the Intelligence Summit, a forum for “experts” to discuss counterterrorism.⁴⁹ Victoria Toensing, who headed the Terrorism Unit as deputy assistant attorney general for the Reagan administration and now is a partner with her husband, Joseph DiGenova, in the Washington law firm DiGenova and Toensing,⁵⁰ demonstrates how out of the mainstream these security conferences are. Speaking of the Intelligence Summit, Toensing said, “This is not a mainstream conference with recognized names in the field. I’ve been in the intelligence and terrorism world a long time, and I would not

suggest going to this conference for intelligence or terrorism information.”⁵¹

Along with Frank Gaffney, Daniel Pipes, and Zuhdi Jasser, Lopez also sits on the advisory board for Clarion Fund, the group responsible for producing and disseminating the inflammatory anti-Muslim movie “Obsession” to 28 battleground states in 2008.⁵²

Tawfik Hamid

Tawfik Hamid is a self-described “Muslim reformer” and alleged former member of an Egyptian terrorist organization, al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya, or “The Islamist Group.” In his capacity as a Centre for Counterterrorism Strategic Studies faculty member, Hamid, age 50, has given lectures stating that Muslims “prefer this violent traditional teaching of Islam.”⁵³

His lectures, “The Mentality of Terror: Understanding Why and How Terrorists Are Proliferating in the West” and “The Roots of Jihad: What Americans Need to Understand to Save America,”⁵⁴ focus on the threat of radical Islam infiltrating America. He also sits on the Intelligence Summit advisory board with Clare Lopez and ACT! for America founder Brigitte Gabriel.

Stephen Coughlin

Stephen Coughlin holds a master’s degree in strategic intelligence, with a focus on global terrorism and the jihadist movements, and a law degree from the William Mitchell College of Law in Minneapolis. His master’s thesis, “To Our Great Detriment: Ignoring What Extremists Say About Jihad,” argued that Islamic law advocates violent terrorist ideology and strategy.⁵⁵

Coughlin worked as a Joint Chiefs of Staff intelligence analyst, leaving the Pentagon in 2008 after superiors did not renew his contract.⁵⁶ Robert Spencer, cofounder of Stop Islamization of America, defended Coughlin as “the leading expert on Islamic Doctrinal drivers of Jihad within the U.S. Government, and likely, in the United States.”⁵⁷

Coughlin spoke alongside Spencer and Pamela Geller at the 2010 Conservative Political Action Conference, where he implied “that moderate Muslims are not good Muslims.”⁵⁸ Coughlin is also one of the co-authors of CSP’s “Shariah: The Threat to America” report along with colleagues Clare Lopez and Nonie Darwish.⁵⁹

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Chapter 3

The grassroots organizations and the religious right

“Take your Sharia and go home, you terrorist lovers. Your hands are bloody! Your money is bloody! Get out! Terrorists! Terrorists! Terrorists!”

These statements were shouted by protestors at Muslim American children walking into a fundraiser event in Yorba Linda, California, in February of this year. The Muslim American families moved briskly into the building as some parents shielded their children from the men and women in the crowd, who were waving flags, carrying homemade signs, and barking obscenities. The taunts and howls of the mob were captured on video and later circulated online.

The YouTube video left many observers around the country outraged at the visceral display of hatred toward a minority group.¹ But it was just the latest in a string of events that have included vandalism at mosques, Koran burnings, and street protests against American Muslims.

Our nation is witnessing a rising tide in anti-Muslim sentiments. A *Washington Post*-ABC News poll last September showed that nearly half of Americans (49 percent) hold an unfavorable view of Islam, which is a 10 percent increase from October 2002.² Yet the Yorba Linda rally did not occur in a vacuum. Nor was it spontaneous. Some of the people involved are members of national organizations dedicated to targeting the Muslim American community. One of the largest such hate groups, ACT! for America, was involved in both the Yorba Linda incident and similar hate rallies in Tennessee, Florida, and other states, as this chapter of our report will demonstrate. This national movement builds on the success of their “Ground Zero mosque” hysteria over the planned Park51 community center in Manhattan—fueled in part by a team of paid organizers bent on stirring hatred.

Indeed, as the previous chapters of this report detail, the steady increase in demonstrations and other forms of harassment toward American Muslims is part of a calculated strategy that is paid for by a small clutch of foundations that fund some select Islamophobia network think tanks that in turn provide a wide array of mis-

characterized facts about the threat of Islam and Muslims in America. These think tanks in turn provide the incendiary rhetoric employed by ACT! for America and other grassroots groups promoting anti-Muslim hate.

Now these groups—the muscle of the Islamophobia network—are enjoying a boost in fundraising, thanks to their scare-mongering, often with the seed funding provided by the think tanks featured in the previous chapter. And they are hiring experienced political operatives to exploit the fear and hatred they peddle in the run-up to the 2012 national elections.

Notably, the anti-Muslim, anti-Islam grassroots network in America is increasingly successful because its members borrow tactics from the most innovative political movements of the last two decades. They use online strategies akin to those deployed by the progressive presidential campaigns of former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean and then-Illinois Sen. Barack Obama to recruit volunteers and keep them engaged. Some of these grassroots groups also hire talented evangelical organizers who built much of the conservative faith-based political movements that were prominent in the 1990s. And many of the groups tap into the growing force of the Tea Party as well as more established conservative political organizations.

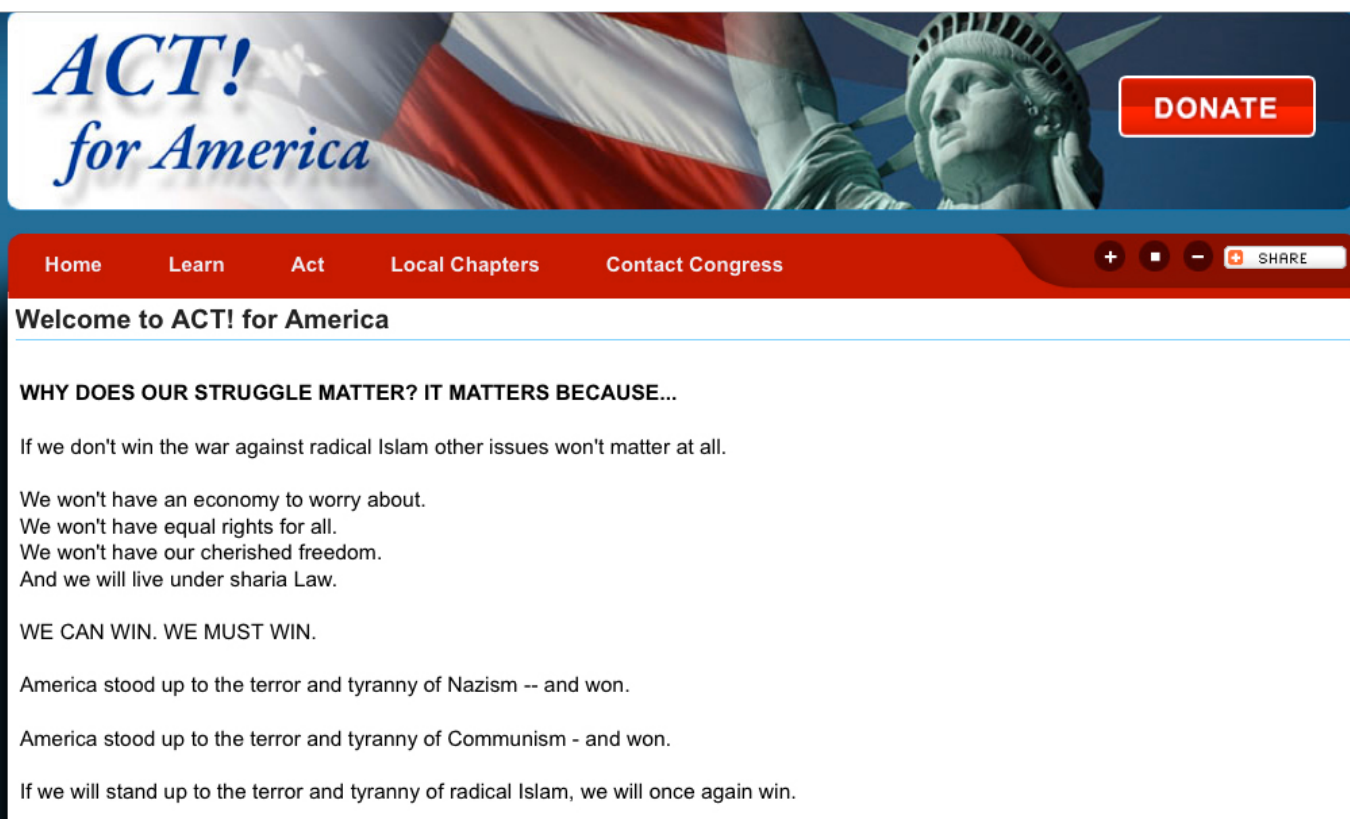
To understand the ability of the grassroots network to take messages to millions of Americans, this chapter will explore the leading groups responsible for developing grassroots organizations and anti-Muslim campaigns. These dedicated grassroots organizers have built lists and established local citizens groups they later rely on to turn out at rallies, make phone calls, testify on behalf of legislation, and donate money. In this section, we will look specifically at three types of anti-Muslim grassroots groups:

- Single-minded Islamophobia groups, exemplified by ACT! for America, one of the largest grassroots group dedicated to targeting Muslims
- Religious-right groups such as the American Family Association and the Eagle Forum, and anti-Muslim organizations such as Stop Islamization of America, which increasingly lead massive public information campaigns with myths and misinformation about Islam and Muslims
- State-based, local, and Tea Party organizations, including the Tennessee Freedom Coalition, the North Orange County (California) Conservative Coalition, the Patriot Action Network, and the First Coast Tea Party in Florida

We turn first to ACT! for America, a grassroots organization with membership chapters across the country.

ACT! for America: Single-minded, anti-Muslim focus

A right-wing pundit with boundless ambition, Brigitte Gabriel, age 46, founded ACT! for America in 2007 as a citizen action network to “inform, educate, and mobilize Americans regarding the multiple threats of radical Islam.”³ ACT! for America was crafted with the intention to replicate the success of the National Rifle Association as a single-issue group that can drive legislation, political races, and the national discourse. But instead of pushing gun rights, Gabriel’s group hopes to make fear of Islam a pillar of the Republican Party and a galvanizing force in politics. ACT! for America’s world view is laid out in this statement from its website:⁴



ACT!
for America

DONATE

Home Learn Act Local Chapters Contact Congress

Welcome to ACT! for America

WHY DOES OUR STRUGGLE MATTER? IT MATTERS BECAUSE...

If we don't win the war against radical Islam other issues won't matter at all.

We won't have an economy to worry about.
We won't have equal rights for all.
We won't have our cherished freedom.
And we will live under sharia Law.

WE CAN WIN. WE MUST WIN.

America stood up to the terror and tyranny of Nazism -- and won.

America stood up to the terror and tyranny of Communism - and won.

If we will stand up to the terror and tyranny of radical Islam, we will once again win.

Called a “radical Islamophobe” by *The New York Times*,⁵ Gabriel travels the country giving talks about how she endured persecution in Lebanon as a Christian at the hands of radical Muslim terrorists.⁶ She says that Americans must unite to “defeat radical Islam,” and explains that any tolerance toward the religion will allow for the destruction of Western society.⁷ She is promoted as a valuable insider and expert on radical Islam due to her “first-hand account of her experiences in the opening salvos of Islamic Jihad towards the Western world in the Middle East.”⁸ Much of her rhetoric is riddled with crude bigotry.

For instance, she routinely says that every “practicing Muslim who believes in the teaching of the Quran cannot be a loyal citizen to the United States of America.”⁹ The fight against “radical Islam” for Gabriel apparently includes all Arabs as well. At a 2004 Duke University counterterrorism speakout, she explained the difference between Arabs (and Muslims) and Israelis: “It’s barbarism versus civilization. It’s democracy versus dictatorship. It’s goodness versus evil.”¹⁰

Gabriel informed the Christians United for Israel convention audience in 2007 that Arabs and Muslims “have no soul. They are dead set on killing and destruction. And in the name of something they call ‘Allah’ which is very different from the God we believe.”¹¹ Blending her personal story with anecdotes about the dangers of Islamic terror, Gabriel is a favorite of conservative conferences, Fox News, and Tea Party rallies. In this capacity, she validates the Islamophobia network’s manufactured fears and hate campaign directed against Muslims. And she validates and repeats the anti-Muslim memes promoted by Frank Gaffney, Daniel Pipes, and Robert Spencer, such as “President Obama was born into the Islamic faith,”¹² radical Muslims have “infiltrated” our government and “are being radicalized in radical mosques,”¹³ and that Muslims engage in *taqiyya*,¹⁴ which she describes as religiously mandated lying. She bases this last charge on the Center for Security Policy’s inaccurate definition of the Arabic word.

The Anti-Defamation League reviewed Gabriel’s activities and concluded, “Gabriel’s views are in line with a growing field of groups that use community concerns about Islamic extremism to stoke fear toward the Muslim community at large.”¹⁵ Discussing Gabriel and the network she is a part of, Brian Fishman, a research fellow at both the New America Foundation and the Combating Terrorism Center at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, said, “When you’ve got folks who are looking for the worst in Islam and are promoting that as the entire religion of 1.5 or 1.6 billion people, then you only empower the real extremists.”¹⁶

Her general theme—that Americans must wake up and confront the threat of Islam in every corner of society—is found throughout ACT!’s literature and training materials. The ACT! website, for example, features a 52-slide PowerPoint detailing the typical ACT! training seminar, which claims Muslims are seeking to “conquer America” and “spread Sharia.”¹⁷ But what makes Gabriel’s organization unique is the sophistication with which it has applied its organizing goals.

The brain behind the anti-Muslim operation is former Christian Coalition strategist Guy Rodgers, who served as a consultant to the 2008 presidential campaign of Sen. John McCain (R-AZ).¹⁸ During his tenure as national field director at Pat Robertson and Ralph Reed’s Christian Coalition, Rodgers “planted and tended chapters across the country” and helped the organization become the Christian right’s “most potent political organization.”¹⁹ Rodgers, the national executive director of ACT!, runs an organization today that boasts 573 chapters and 170,000 members worldwide, according to Chris Slick, director of online operations for ACT!²⁰

ACT! pursues a multipronged strategy for building its activist base. The organization hosts a series of meetings to bring interested activists together and train them with best practices. Its most high-profile event is an annual conference to gather speakers from the anti-Muslim movement’s think tank core, among them *National Review* columnist Andrew McCarthy and Frank Gaffney of the Center for Security Policy. Outspoken politician Rep. Allen West (R-FL) and the Christian Broadcast Network’s Erick Stakelbeck were among the speakers at ACT!’s national conference in 2011.²¹

To ingratiate itself with the larger conservative infrastructure, ACT! participates in many leading conferences and Tea Party events. It maintained a booth at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference,²² and can be found at events sponsored by other religious-right organizations.

But ACT!’s less visible but perhaps more important effort is its focus on local seminars. The group conducts roving training meetings, called “Citizen in Action training conferences,” for its grassroots members to learn the best way to communicate persuasive anti-Muslim messages, root out “suspicious activity in your community,” and “expose political correctness in your local media.”²³ The events are hosted by ACT!’s team of professional trainers, who have set up official local chapters in states from Hawaii to South Carolina.²⁴ Training meetings have occurred in Columbia, South Carolina; Bakersfield, Texas; Delray Beach, Florida;

The brain behind ACT! for America is former Christian Coalition strategist Guy Rodgers, who served as a consultant to the 2008 presidential campaign of Sen. McCain.

Denver, Colorado; and other locations since 2009.²⁵ Local chapters, such as the one in Memphis, Tennessee, have their own website, email listserv, and Facebook or a Ning-based social media platform.²⁶

ACT! not only relies on the echo chamber of anti-Muslim hate websites but also works to create its own content. In 2011, Gabriel launched a weekly television show on a Christian cable network to highlight the work of her group and to better broadcast the issue ACT!'s members are told to be outraged about each week.²⁷ The first show premiered with Rep. Peter King (R-NY), the influential chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security whom we profile in Chapter 5 of this report. Updates on ACT! campaigns and anti-Muslim propaganda are regularly distributed by ACT! organizers using its network of websites and local activist listservs.

Gabriel's weekly TV show on a Christian cable network tells members what to be outraged about each week.

Gabriel's relationship with lawmakers is pivotal to her group's success. While tending to her growing army of grassroots activists, Gabriel works with lawmakers on both the state and federal level to promote anti-Muslim legislation. She worked, for instance, with Rep. Sue Myrick (R-NC) to investigate the Muslim civil rights group Council on American-Islamic Relations and on state-based anti-Sharia bills.²⁸ She's hired a lobbyist to track bills in Congress, and she uses MeetUp.com and other social media websites to blast alerts to her active members.²⁹ These members write letters to the editor, call lawmakers, and rally in support of anti-Muslim politicians.

ACT!'s most successful effort to date is the 2009 launch of its Stop Sharia Now project to increase public awareness of the manufactured threat of creeping Sharia into America.³⁰ Since then, ACT! introduced David Yerushalmi's "anti-Sharia" bill to elected officials in several states,³¹ spearheaded by ACT! official Chris Slick, who is a GOP operative who served as a regional field director for Mitt Romney's presidential campaign in 2008.³²

In an interview with ThinkProgress.org, Slick detailed how "ACT! for America plays a major role in providing information about Sharia Law to lawmakers through our volunteers nationwide. We work with dozens of allies in this effort, including the APPA (American Public Policy Alliance that hired CSP's attorney to write the 'anti-sharia' bill)." He also said CSP's "Gaffney is one of dozens of allies in this effort. We welcome his help with our projects."³³

ACT!'s organizing strategy in South Carolina provides a window into the group and how it operates. After hosting an ACT! training session in Columbia, two local conservative bloggers joined the organization and set up a chapter. When state Sen. Mike Fair (R-Greenville) introduced anti-Sharia legislation in 2010, which was provided to him by Slick,³⁴ local ACT! chapter members were there to lend support. Brian Treacy, one of the ACT! chapter leaders, wrote a letter to *The Beaufort Gazette* to support state Sen. Fair's legislation, and others used the chapter's Facebook page to support the bill.³⁵

In 2010, Rodgers led the organization's fight against Muslim American Parvez Ahmed's nomination to serve on the Jacksonville Human Rights Commission.³⁶ Ahmed, a professor at the University of North Florida and a Fulbright Scholar, found himself mired in controversy following his otherwise routine appointment. Rodgers spearheaded ACT!'s effort to gin up controversy over Ahmed's appointment because of Ahmed's previous role as national chairman of the Council on American-Islamic Relations.³⁷ Rodgers says ACT!'s mission to oppose "the ideology of radical Islam is not hate. It's defending the security and freedom of our country."³⁸

Then there is the behind-the-scenes work of ACT! in the congressional anti-Muslim hearings led by Rep. Peter King (R-NY) earlier this year. In February 2011, just prior to the hearings, Gabriel told Think Progress about her work with Rep. King and how her organization had grown since its inception to be able to reach the center stage of Congress. Yet Gabriel said she had purposefully withdrawn from publicly participating in the hearings. She explained that her involvement would inflame liberals and discredit Rep. King's objectives.³⁹

This dedication to cause over embracing the limelight speaks to the serious nature of ACT!. Many Muslim-bashers such as former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich will trumpet hate in order to win short-term political battles, but ACT! is in it for the long haul. With a budget that grew to nearly \$1 million in 2009 (the most recently available numbers), ACT! has the resources to continue to grow.⁴⁰

Stop Islamization of America: Twisting free speech and religious freedom

In 2010, Pamela Geller co-founded the anti-Muslim group Stop Islamization of America with Robert Spencer to allegedly fight radical Islam.⁴¹

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.”⁴² The Anti-Defamation League, however, reviewed the group’s activities and concluded that SIOA:

*promotes a conspiratorial anti-Muslim agenda under the guise of fighting radical Islam. The group seeks to rouse public fears by consistently vilifying the Islamic faith and asserting the existence of an Islamic conspiracy to destroy ‘American’ values. The organization warns of the encroachment of shari’a, or Islamic law, and encourages Muslims to leave what it describes as the ‘falsity of Islam.’*⁴³

Geller, age 53, is seeking to train and indoctrinate like-minded, anti-Muslim sympathizers with her new book *Stop Islamization of America*, which is self-described as a “practical primer for patriots” and “guide to lawful and peaceful resistance to Islamization.” A press release for the book says it outlines ties between the DOJ [Department of Justice] and Islamic organizations that are connected to the Muslim Brotherhood.⁴⁴

In the summer of 2010, SIOA led protests against the Park51 community center in New York City, which Geller and the industry deliberately mislabeled the “Ground Zero Mosque.” These were some of the handmade signs at Geller-organized sponsored protests against the Muslim community center:

- “No Obama’s Mosque”
- “Islam = 1400 years of Aggression, Murder!”
- “Peace of Islam = Cutting Non-Muslims to Pieces!”
- “Never Submit to Sharia – Islam!”⁴⁵

At another SIOA-sponsored protest that year, the crowd surrounded two Egyptian men who were speaking Arabic and told them to “go home” and “get out,” oblivious that they were Coptic Christians who came to support the protest.⁴⁶

In February 2011, SIOA released the film “The Ground Zero Mosque: Second Wave of the 911 Attacks,” which chronicles the protest movements against the “mosque”

and features Pamela Geller, Robert Spencer, and radical conservative media mogul Andrew Breitbart. For Geller, the film is part of her larger effort to “halt and roll back the advance of Islamic law and Islamic supremacism in America.”⁴⁷

SIOA has also sponsored inflammatory bus ads encouraging people to leave Islam that asked “Fatwa on Your Head?” and “Leaving Islam?” which ran in New York City, Detroit, and Miami, referring readers to its website RefugefromIslam.com.⁴⁸

The religious right

The religious right’s relationship with the Islamophobia network grows increasingly tighter, particularly since the end of the George W. Bush presidency. Well-established groups, among them the American Family Association and Eagle Forum, broadened organizing efforts from traditional social values hot-button issues such as gay marriage and abortion to include spreading conspiracy theories about Muslims. And groups such as Stop Islamization of America, founded by bloggers Pamela Geller and Robert Spencer, have taken a lead role in shaping anti-Muslim propaganda.

As some overtly right-wing religious groups embrace the anti-Muslim cause, some right-of-center religious organizations have drifted in the same direction. So let’s take a look in more detail at four prominent leaders on the religious right, beginning with Pastor John Hagee.

John Hagee

John Hagee is a prime example of how the evangelical right has assimilated anti-Muslim messages. The founder of Christians United for Israel, Hagee, age 71, is also the CEO of Global Evangelism Television and the founder of a megachurch called Cornerstone. Hagee built a political power base by weaving Christian End Times theology with nationalistic pro-Israel organizations.

Hagee’s controversial views, including writing that praised the Holocaust, forced Sen. McCain, shortly after securing the Republican Party’s presidential

nomination in 2008, to reject his endorsement.⁴⁹ Hagee perpetuates several myths about Islam and American Muslims:

- “Ladies and gentlemen, America is at war with radical Islam Jihad has come to America. If we lose the war to Islamic fascism, it will change the world as we know it.”⁵⁰
- “They are trained from the breast of their mother to hate us. Radical Islam is a doctrine of death. It is their desire, it is their hope, it is their ambition, it is their highest honor to die in a war against infidels. And you are ‘infidels’ and there is nothing you can do to accommodate them. That’s what makes them so dangerous.”⁵¹
- “Radical sects, which include about 200 million Islamics, believe they have a command from God to kill Christians and Jews.”⁵²

Hagee draws on other members of the Islamophobia network to drive home his mistaken points. He featured Frank Gaffney at his Christians United for Israel conferences, and insisted that the United States intervene against Iran, which he believes is committed to destroying Western civilization.⁵³ In a recent fundraising appeal, Hagee repeats Gaffney’s alarmist rhetoric, arguing that “global Shari’ah means that every nation in the world will be living under Islamic Law. Never forget this is a theological war!”⁵⁴

Pat Robertson

Pat Robertson is another major evangelical figure who increasingly spews anti-Muslim rhetoric and puts his considerable resources into aiding the anti-Islam movement. Robertson, age 81, is able to promote his anti-Islam bigotry through his lucrative and influential Christian Broadcasting Network, which we profile in the next chapter of this report. In 1989, he created the Christian Coalition, the precursor to Ralph Reed’s Faith and Freedom Coalition, focusing on conservative Christian political advocacy. While the Christian Coalition has faded from the public view, Robertson’s other ventures, the Christian Broadcasting Network, Regent University, and the American Center for Law and Justice, have grown.

Robertson acts as co-host of “The 700 Club,” the Christian Broadcasting Network’s most popular and enduring program that serves as a multimedia pul-

pit for Robertson's right-wing political-religious ideologies. Less than two weeks after Anders Breivik's deadly attacks in Norway, for example, Pat Robertson and "The 700 Club" had Robert Spencer on to discuss the "cult" of Islam. Robertson didn't put any tough questions to Spencer about his role in inspiring Breivik's violence. Instead, Spencer went unchallenged in a rant against the media and repeated his tract demonizing all Muslims. "[The media] constantly gloss over and sometimes outright deny that fact that Islamic jihadists use the texts and teachings of Islam to promote violence and incite peaceful Muslims to commit acts of violence," said Spencer, completely sidestepping his own role in influencing Breivik's worldview.⁵⁵

We detail Robertson's anti-Muslim media strategies in our next chapter on the media, so here we concentrate on his grassroots influence, which centers on a grassroots think tank Robertson founded to defend religious freedom for Christians.

Created in 1990 to counter the American Civil Liberties Union, Robertson's American Center for Law and Justice claims to be a leading defender of religious freedom. Recently, that led ACLJ 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.⁵⁶

Jay Sekulow, executive director of ACLJ, argued in an opinion piece in *The Washington Times* that "the opposition to the ground-zero mosque reflects America's sacrosanct First Amendment ideals," essentially arguing that the freedom of speech to oppose the building of the mosque trumped freedom of religion.⁵⁷ ACLJ's attorney Brett Joshpe then elaborated on his organization's bias: "Would [we] be personally involved in this matter if this were a church? No.... And the reason why is because if it were a church it wouldn't be offending and hurting the 9/11 victims' families."⁵⁸

ACLJ also teamed up with Fox News and Patrick Poole, who writes for the right-wing Pajamas Media blog, to manufacture hysteria of a potential radical Islamist infiltration of the Congressional Muslim Staff Association.⁵⁹ Poole wrote in David Horowitz's *FrontPage Magazine* that the CMSA hosted speakers with "terror ties" at the weekly prayer service held on Capitol Hill.⁶⁰

Fox News published its report, and the Christian Broadcasting Network ran the headline "Calls Rise to Probe Capitol Hill Muslim Prayer Sessions,"⁶¹ with the

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only known call coming from Robertson's own ACLJ.⁶² The ACLJ then parroted Robertson's paranoia, stating that the "absurdity" of inviting "the very terrorists who want to destroy America" to Capitol Hill "raises a host of significant questions—including concerns about national security" and, based on Fox's "report," warrants a "thorough investigation."⁶³

In manufacturing the incident, Fox and the ACLJ missed one small, important fact—the Friday prayers have nothing to do with the Congressional Muslim Staff Association. Explaining what was really going on, investigative journalist Sarah Posner of *Religious Dispatches* details how CMSA hosts briefings on different issues as well as an annual *iftar* (an evening meal during the holy month of Ramadan), but not the weekly Friday prayers, which are held "under the auspices of the House chaplain."⁶⁴

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The ACLJ also is active on campus. One case in point: Robertson's group recently used its resources to assist Barry Sommer, president of ACT! for America's Oregon branch, in legal action against the state's Lane Community College, which dropped Sommer's class "What is Islam?" after it was alerted to his history of anti-Islam comments and his close association with ACT! for America.⁶⁵

The ACLJ threatened to sue the school for violating Sommer's First Amendment right to teach what ACT! believes—that it must save America from the "authoritarian values of radical Islam, such as the celebration of death, terror and tyranny."⁶⁶

The lawsuit provided more grist for ACT! and its grassroots activists to cast themselves as victims in the fight against Muslim groups pushing to "impose sharia law in America." And once again, ACLJ's legal efforts sparked outrage and provided cover for far-right elements of the Islamophobia campaign.

Ralph Reed and the Faith and Freedom Coalition

Ralph Reed was Pat Robertson's former protégé who galvanized the Christian Coalition before it was undone by corruption and his questionable partnership with convicted lobbyist Jack Abramoff. Reed, age 50, has resurrected his career with the Faith and Freedom Coalition, which he deems a "21st-century version of the Christian Coalition" designed to unite and mobilize evangelical and Tea Party voters to form a powerful and effective Christian Conservative voting bloc.⁶⁷ Reed seeks to duplicate his success with the Christian Coalition, which became one

of the premier organizations of the religious right and helped Republicans take control of the House and Senate in 1994.⁶⁸

Reed promised his supporters that the Faith and Freedom Coalition in 2012 “will register an estimated one million new faith-based voters and make tens of millions of voter contacts in what may be the largest conservative get-out-the-vote effort in modern political history.”⁶⁹ As stated on its website, one of the organization’s goals is to “influence legislation and enact sound public policy at every level of government.”⁷⁰

Another stated goal of the organization is to “protest bigotry and discrimination of people of faith.”⁷¹ Yet at its recent annual conference, the Faith and Freedom Coalition featured CSP’s Frank Gaffney, who gave a talk on “Defeating Terrorism and Jihad” with co-panelists and frequent allies Erick Stakelbeck of CBN News and David French of the American Center for Law and Justice, both employees of Pat Robertson’s vast evangelical empire. At the conference, Gaffney suggested “it is certainly possible we’d have a Muslim flag flying over the White House,” and hoped FFC would “take up the fight against shari’ah.”⁷²

Franklin Graham

Franklin Graham is an American Christian evangelist, missionary, and son of the world’s most recognizable and influential evangelist, Billy Graham. The 59-year-old Graham is the president and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Samaritan’s Purse, an international Christian relief organization.⁷³

Franklin Graham called Islam “a very evil and wicked religion” in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington. On CNN, he boldly declared “true Islam cannot be practiced in this country” since “You can’t beat your wife. You cannot murder your children if you think they’ve committed adultery or something like that, which they do practice in these other countries.”⁷⁴

He has echoed Frank Gaffney’s paranoid talking points regarding a Muslim infiltration. Graham says the Muslim Brotherhood has infiltrated the Obama administration and is shaping U.S. foreign policy.⁷⁵ Graham also believes President Obama was “born a Muslim.”⁷⁶ He has protested the construction of the Park51 community center, suggesting that Muslims “will claim now that the World Trade

Center property ... is Islamic land.”⁷⁷ On April 22, 2010, the Pentagon rescinded his invitation to speak at the National Day of Prayer event in response to his anti-Islam, fear-mongering comments.⁷⁸

On October 2010, Graham participated in ABC’s Town Hall debate asking “Should Americans Fear Islam?”⁷⁹ One of his fellow co-debaters was Robert Spencer, director of the Jihad Watch. On the show, Graham asserted Muslims “want to build as many mosques and cultural centers as they possibly can so they can convert as many Americans as they can to Islam. I understand that.”⁸⁰

American Family Association, Eagle Forum, and Tennessee Freedom Coalition

While Robertson’s ACLJ and Hagee’s Christians United for Israel can draw audiences to their anti-Muslim diatribes, they lack sustained bonds with a right-wing grassroots movement. Longtime Christian right-wing groups such as the Eagle Forum and the American Family Coalition, fill the void, alongside a new organization, the Tennessee Freedom Coalition.

First let’s examine the Eagle Forum and American Family Coalition. Both organizations are older, and have roots in harnessing backlash movements. The Eagle Forum, founded by Phyllis Schlafly, gained prominence by helping to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970s and 1980s.⁸¹ The American Family Association has harnessed many social right crusades, particularly the anti-gay activism among evangelicals.⁸² Today, both organizations boast an additional calling—Islamophobia.

Bryan Fischer, the director of issues analysis for the American Family Association, is a prominent hate radio talk show host (we profile him and his actions in the next chapter of the report) who increasingly peppers his shows with anti-Islam, anti-Muslim diatribes. Fischer, age 60, and his organization also spread this rhetoric through its large email listserv and local chapters across the country.⁸³

The Eagle Forum, which caters mostly to the home-school movement and to women who identify as social values activists,⁸⁴ touts its legacy of protesting feminist values.⁸⁵ Increasingly, though, Eagle Forum is entwining itself with the Islamophobia network. At its 2009 How to Take Back America conference, for example, the Eagle

Forum held multiple sessions on the threat of radical Islam.⁸⁶ And the group now partners with Gabriel's ACT! for America and Gaffney's Center for Security Policy to push anti-Muslim issues, particularly anti-Sharia hysteria.⁸⁷

At its 2011 Eagle Forum conference in St. Louis, Missouri, for example, Gabriel, Gaffney, and others in the network revealed a new supposed threat: Muslim Gulen schools, which they claim would educate children through the lens of Islam and teach them to "hate Americans." Worse, the speakers alleged that President Obama's support for charter school reforms was a back-door strategy for using taxpayer money to fund the schools.⁸⁸ Of course, Gulen schools are nothing of the sort. They are the product of moderate Turkish Muslim educators who want "a blend of religious faith and largely western curriculum."⁸⁹

The Tennessee Eagle Forum chapter works closely with the Tennessee Freedom Coalition, created in March 2011 by Lou Ann Zelenik.⁹⁰ She galvanized anti-Muslim hysteria in 2010 by leading the protest of the proposed Islamic center in Murfreesboro during her failed campaign for the Sixth District Republican congressional nomination.⁹¹ Zelenik claimed some in the Muslim community "want to destroy our civilization" and cited it as a reason she opposed the mosque.⁹² She relied on Frank Gaffney's expertise to justify her unsubstantiated and incorrect allegations.⁹³

The Tennessee Freedom Coalition recently produced a 16-minute video with another grassroots organization from Boston, Americans for Peace and Tolerance, in which they "expose" the radical Islamist preachers in Nashville who allegedly indoctrinated Vanderbilt students and Nashville mosque members with anti-Americanism.⁹⁴ The specious claims and smears in the video were roundly debunked,⁹⁵ but that did not stop Tennessee State Sen. Bill Ketron from giving the biased video to fellow senators to garner support for his anti-Sharia bill, the Material Support to Designated Entities Act, which passed both houses of the state legislature on May 21, 2011. The bill was co-sponsored by the Tennessee Eagle Forum, Tennessee Freedom Coalition, and ACT! for America Middle Tennessee Chapter.⁹⁶

State-based, local, and Tea Party grassroots groups

Across the country, many grassroots conservative organizations have championed causes pushed by the Islamophobia network. Although most national Tea Party groups identify closely with libertarianism and eschew social crusades, various local Tea Parties have pushed anti-Muslim campaigns just as vigorously as such groups as ACT! for America.

This year, for example, Tea Party Fort Lauderdale is protesting to shut down a mosque in Florida whose imam, Izhar Khan, is charged with sending money to the Taliban.⁹⁷ City Commissioner Lesa Peerman said the mosque has peacefully co-existed in the community for many years, adding, “I don’t believe in holding an organization responsible for the actions of one individual.”⁹⁸ But Tea Party Fort Lauderdale activist Danita Kilcullen doesn’t see it that way, arguing that “after this mosque’s imam was found to be involved in financing a terrorist group, how can this mosque be allowed to remain open?”⁹⁹

Leading the protest alongside Tea Party Fort Lauderdale is O’Neal Dozier, who serves on the board of Ralph Reed’s Faith and Freedom Coalition.¹⁰⁰ Dozier, age 62, believes, “The Muslim people we believe are beautiful people... They’re beautiful people, we just believe that the Muslim people are victims of a very dangerous and evil religion and that religion is Islam.”¹⁰¹

Dozier also runs the publication *Judeo-Christian View*, which pushes pastors to talk more about “Islamofascism” from the pulpit.¹⁰² The group distributed 325,000 copies of the anti-Islam DVD “Obsession,” produced by the Clarion Fund, to clergy members.¹⁰³ Dozier himself has called Islam a “cult.”¹⁰⁴ And in 2007 he filed a lawsuit to stop construction of a mosque nearby the Worldwide Christian Center in Pompano Beach where he serves as pastor.¹⁰⁵

Many Tea Party leaders claim their movement is simply libertarian, taking a hands-off approach to social values, yet many Tea Party members and local chapters hold nationalistic, right-wing beliefs and are drifting into anti-Muslim campaigns. Because the Tea Party is decentralized, various groups will act independently of one another and in some cases work hand-in-glove with Islamophobic grassroots organizations. The online social networks cultivated by the Tea Party provide a large springboard for massive demonstrations.

Case in point: William Federer, a member of Florida's First Coast Tea Party, is teaching members "What Every American Needs to Know About the Koran" using his video and slideshow presentation.¹⁰⁶ Federer teaches that the only difference between moderate Muslims and radicals is that "moderate Muslims believe the world will submit to Allah later... Fundamentalist Muslims, on the other hand, think the world is in the process of submitting to Allah now."¹⁰⁷ Federer has a PowerPoint presentation that he uses to disseminate anti-Muslim views among Tea Party circles in Florida.

According to Julie Ingersoll, a reporter who has covered Federer's presentation, he depicts a "caricature of Muslims and Muhammad as illiterate, perverted, sexist, and responsible for slavery."¹⁰⁸ More traditional right-wing social conservatives are spreading Federer's hate, too. The American Family Association, for example, is selling "Islamic Conquest," a five-part series by Federer, who is also associated with the Eagle Forum.¹⁰⁹

Tea Party leaders, though, seem to be most focused on sliming President Obama with their anti-Islam, anti-Muslim conspiracy theories. In February, for example, Phillip Dennis, leader of the Texas Tea Party, continued to parrot the deliberate obfuscation of President Obama's religion to simultaneously taint the intentions behind his administration's outreach to Muslim communities and also paint Islam as a religion of violence. Appearing on MSNBC, when asked by host Chris Matthews if President Obama was a Muslim, he replied:

I don't know.... President Obama certainly has a soft spot in his heart for Islam. His first speech was in Egypt. He's reached out to the Muslims more so than any other president in the history of the world. He's even changed our history, saying that Islam has always played a major part in this country when everyone knows that's not true... this is that type of things he's done, bowing to the leader of Saudi Arabia... To those people [who believe President Obama is a Muslim] [they] have a right, certainly it's understandable that they might have a problem that our president might be Muslim. Absolutely.¹¹⁰

Judson Phillips, age 51, the president of the Tea Party Nation Corporation, does his fellow believer Dennis one better. He says President Obama is "a corrupt, unpopular President from the party of treason" whom he believes received campaign contributions from Hamas in 2009.¹¹¹

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The growing clout of the Islamophobia grassroots organizations and religious-right groups

The most vivid reminders that the rising tide of anti-Muslim hate is catching fire with the American public are constant examples of well-attended demonstrations against American Muslims. These incidents are tethered to a machine that is designed to orchestrate such protests as part of a larger campaign of hatred. In some cases, these grassroots groups are part of a new network of targeted hate at Islam and American Muslims, while others reflect a realignment of priorities in the conservative movement.

Regardless, the highly motivated interests driving the anti-Muslim organizing campaign are an important and often neglected part of the Islamophobia phenomenon. These groups harness paranoia and hate spread in society by a multitude of other actors in the anti-Muslim sphere. They couldn't exist, however, without a propaganda machine that provides constant ammunition for these captains of hate to spur networks of activists into action alongside willing media enablers—the subject of our next chapter.

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Chapter 4

The right-wing media enablers of anti-Islam propaganda

Spreading anti-Muslim hate in America depends on a well-developed right-wing media echo chamber to amplify a few marginal voices. The think tank misinformation experts and grassroots and religious-right organizations profiled in this report boast a symbiotic relationship with a loosely aligned, ideologically-akin group of right-wing blogs, magazines, radio stations, newspapers, and television news shows to spread their anti-Islam messages and myths. The media outlets, in turn, give members of this network the exposure needed to amplify their message, reach larger audiences, drive fundraising numbers, and grow their membership base.

Some well-established conservative media outlets are a key part of this echo chamber, mixing coverage of alarmist threats posed by the mere existence of Muslims in America with other news stories. Chief among the media partners are the Fox News empire,¹ the influential conservative magazine *National Review* and its website,² a host of right-wing radio hosts, *The Washington Times* newspaper and website,³ and the Christian Broadcasting Network and website.⁴

They tout Frank Gaffney, David Yerushalmi, Daniel Pipes, Robert Spencer, Steven Emerson, and others as experts, and invite supposedly moderate Muslim and Arabs to endorse bigoted views. In so doing, these media organizations amplify harmful, anti-Muslim views to wide audiences. (See box on page 86) In this chapter we profile some of the right-wing media enablers, beginning with the websites, then hate radio, then the television outlets.

The websites

A network of right-wing websites and blogs are frequently the primary movers of anti-Muslim messages and myths. The two most influential are:

- David Horowitz Freedom Center websites and online magazines, including FrontPage Magazine,⁵ Jihad Watch,⁶ NewsReal Blog,⁷ and its various conferences
- Pamela Geller's Atlas Shrugs blog⁸

Let's look at each in turn.

Perpetuating the myth that most U.S. mosques are radical

Members of the Islamophobia network published articles or hit the airwaves this year and in 2010 to misinform our nation about Muslim American congregations. Here's a sampling.

- David Yerushalmi in *Middle East Quarterly* misinforms America that more than 80 percent of U.S. mosques advocate or promote violence.¹
- Frank Gaffney of the Center for Security Policy writes in *The Washington Times*:

*"Most mosques in the United States are actually engaged in—or at least supportive of—a totalitarian, seditious agenda they call Shariah. Its express purpose is undermining and ultimately forcibly replacing the U.S. government and its founding documents. In their place would be a "caliph" governing in accordance with Shariah's political-military-legal code."*²

- Islamophobia grassroots organizer Pamela Geller says that "4 out of 5 mosques preach hate" on CNN Sunday Morning.³
- Fox News commentator Bill O'Reilly, in an interview with Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN) on the O'Reilly Factor, cites Frank Gaffney to charge that "violent extremism and sharia law is being condoned in 75 percent of the American Muslim mosques."⁴
- Rep. Peter King (R-NY) says that "over 80 percent of the mosques in this country are controlled by radical Imams" on the Laura Ingraham Show.⁵

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David Horowitz Freedom Center

The David Horowitz Freedom Center is a well-funded key player in amplifying the alleged threats of Muslim extremism in America. Founded in 1988 by Horowitz, age 72, a former New Left radical of the 1960s turned radical-right enthusiast,⁹ the Freedom Center is one of the main organizations that “helped spread bigoted ideas into American life,” according to the nonpartisan Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks hate groups in America.¹⁰ Norway terrorist Anders Breivik cited a number of anti-Muslim U.S. players in his manifesto, including Horowitz.¹¹

The Freedom Center allegedly “combats the efforts of the radical left and its Islamist allies to destroy American values and disarm this country as it attempts to defend itself in a time of terror.”¹² From 2002 to 2009, the center had \$36 million in revenue to do this work.¹³ Horowitz’s claims are spurious and familiar. He echoes many Islamophobia voices in warning that mainstream Muslim American organizations “are all fronts of the Muslim Brotherhood” and that 80 percent of U.S. mosques are filled with hate against Jews and Americans.¹⁴

In a speech at Brooklyn College, Horowitz said that Islam is a religion that “middle eastern Muslims are ‘Islamic Nazis’ who ‘want to kill Jews, that’s their agenda,’ and he added that ‘all Muslim associations are fronts for the Muslim Brotherhood.’”¹⁵ Horowitz has gone even further than his conspiracy-minded colleagues by alleging that Islamic extremism has infiltrated our education system, beginning in kindergarten.¹⁶

Here are his main promotional vehicles.

FrontPage Magazine and Jihad Watch

Horowitz boasts two online magazines, FrontPage Magazine and Jihad Watch, directed by Robert Spencer.¹⁷ Through these vehicles, Horowitz gives an amplified voice to a cadre of fellow anti-Muslim bigots and their schemes of conspiracies and threats. Frank Gaffney, Daniel Pipes, Robert Spencer, and other familiar names use the magazine and website to promote their latest litany of over-hyped dangers.

For instance, they used FrontPage Magazine to promote their overhyped Stop the Madrasa Community Coalition, which aimed to shut down a New York City public school simply because it taught Arabic language and culture.¹⁸ The school was the Khalil Gibran International Academy, named after the Lebanese Christian poet.

Horowitz and his
colleagues claim
that President
Obama's outreach
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The magazine and website also frequently target President Barack Obama. Robert Spencer uses the website to deliberately misconstrue President Obama's support of Egyptian democracy as an endorsement of the Muslim Brotherhood and their Islamist agenda,¹⁹ and Pipes used the magazine to promote the lie that President Obama was once a practicing Muslim.²⁰ On top of that, Horowitz and his colleagues claim that President Obama's outreach to global Muslim-majority countries is proof of his radical Islamist agenda.

In a pamphlet titled "Obama and Islam," Horowitz and Spencer say that, "In fact, Obama's statement represents something far more disturbing than naivete: a conscious effort to appease Islamic supremacism in Iran and elsewhere in the Middle East, and an energetic willingness to pander to the Islamic world in general."²¹

And finally, no anti-Muslim magazine or website would be complete without the predictable attacks on Sharia. It's no surprise that Pipes used these vehicles to support Oklahoma's Sharia ban in 2010. According to Pipes, such bans are "neither discriminatory nor superfluous," since "laws that ban the Sharia are essential to preserving the constitutional order."²²

NewsReal Blog

The David Horowitz Freedom Center also operates its own blog, NewsReal, which, among other things, promotes the myth that an array of political organizations on both the left and the right have been infiltrated by Muslim extremists. For instance, the blog repeats Frank Gaffney's discredited and outlandish conspiracy theory that the Conservative Political Action Conference has been infiltrated by the Muslim Brotherhood.²³

One of Horowitz's strategies is to frame his arguments in terms of constitutional protections and freedoms, especially those of the First Amendment. Earlier this year, he wrote on NewsReal Blog that "The frontline battle against Islamic totalitarianism is the battle to defend the First Amendment—the right of assembly and free speech."²⁴ Never mind the fact that Horowitz's First Amendment defense against "Islamic totalitarians" denies First Amendment rights to Muslims to build houses of worship²⁵ and pray according to their faith.

Islamofascism Awareness Week

Horowitz also uses his websites to promote the center's Terrorism Awareness Project. Built on the fear of an Islamic crusade against the West,²⁶ the center and Horowitz have been organizing Islamofascism Awareness Week programs on

hundreds of campuses across the country.²⁷ They have an online guide²⁸ for student organizations to host the week-long event and provide speakers. The guide peddles myths and conspiracy threats, including one that mainstream Muslim groups and organizations are actually fronts for Islamist extremists. Speakers including Robert Spencer, Daniel Pipes, and Nonie Darwish echo and amplify these myths and threats.

Wednesday Morning Club and Restoration Weekend

Horowitz's center also pushes out anti-Muslim messages and threats through his Wednesday Morning Club, a lunch forum that provides a platform for conservative politicians, media personalities, and others.²⁹ He recently hosted right-wing activist Andrew Breitbart, whose media site houses Frank Gaffney's blog, peddling Breitbart's alarmist Sharia fears.³⁰

In addition, Horowitz hosts Restoration Weekend,³¹ an annual elite conference in Palm Beach, Florida, whose participants have included Rep. Michele Bachmann and former Speaker of the House and Fox News commentator Newt Gingrich, along with the usual anti-Muslim suspects, including Frank Gaffney, Robert Spencer, Pamela Geller, and Rev. John Hagee, a leader of the religious right.³²

Because his media outlets give Horowitz power and influence, he is often invited to voice his views through other conservative media outlets. He has appeared in the pages of *The Washington Times* and on Fox News. Here's an example from Fox News of his raw bigotry and unsubstantiated conspiratorial views about mainstream Muslim student groups. "The point here is that there are 150 Muslim students' associations," Horowitz said, "which are coddled by university administrations and treated as though they were ethnic or religious groups, when they are political groups that are arms of the Muslim Brotherhood, which is the fountainhead of the terrorist jihad against the West."³³

Pamela Geller

Pamela Geller began her publishing career at *The New York Daily News* and then became associate publisher of *The New York Observer* from 1989 to 1994. She quit that job to stay home with her four children³⁴ and a decade later founded her blog, *Atlas Shrugs*.³⁵ The blog is named after novelist and philosopher Ayn Rand's, *Atlas Shrugged*. *The Fountainhead*, *Atlas Shrugged*, and other Rand novels promote an extreme philosophy of selfishness and undiluted libertarianism, and are wor-

shipped by the right wing—and by Geller, who calls Rand “the greatest philosopher in human history” and says the goals of her blog are “clearly defined by Rand’s philosophy.”³⁶ In addition to being a media player, Geller is an active grassroots organizer for anti-Muslim causes (as detailed in Chapter 3 of our report).

Geller’s many commentaries, blog posts, and media appearances promote a slew of conspiratorial claims. They include: President Obama is a Muslim;³⁷ Arabic is not just a language but actually a spearhead for anti-Americanism;³⁸ radical Islam has infiltrated our government, which is being run by Islamic supremacists;³⁹ and Muslims are engaged in stealth cultural jihad by wearing their head scarves at Disneyland.⁴⁰

Geller, however, is best known as the public face of the protest against the Park51 community center in lower New York City, which she named “Mega Mosque at Ground Zero”⁴¹ and referred to as “the ultimate flag of conquest” and “a shrine to the very ideology that inspired the jihadist attacks at ground zero.”⁴²

More recently, Geller has been linked in the news to confessed Norway terrorist Anders Breivik, since he cited her 12 times in his manifesto.⁴³ Geller quickly defended herself against any connection, but then went on to condemn the Norwegian Labour Party summer youth camp, whose children had been attacked by Breivik. Geller called the camp part of an anti-Israel “indoctrination training center.”⁴⁴

She further claimed that the children and young people who were killed by Breivik would have grown up to become “leaders of the party responsible for flooding Norway with Muslims who refuse to assimilate, who commit major violence against Norwegian natives including violent gang rapes, with impunity, and who live on the dole.”⁴⁵ Not yet done with her slanderous attacks, Geller posted a camp picture of the children, likely featuring many of the victims. The caption read: “Note the faces which are more Middle [sic] Eastern or mixed than pure Norwegian.”⁴⁶

So let’s review some of Geller’s outrageous and racist claims.

Muslims and Islam, Nazism and Communism

Geller reinvigorates disbanded right-wing rhetoric about communist infiltration and fascist dangers. One of her most extremist claims is that Adolf Hitler

and Nazism were inspired by Islam.⁴⁷ Because of this, Geller warns that “devout Muslims should be prohibited from military service.”⁴⁸

Geller’s replacement villain for communism is the Muslim Brotherhood.⁴⁹ Like Gaffney, she claims that the Conservative Political Action Conference has been “corrupted and compromised” because one of its members is Suhail Khan, a Republican who served in the George W. Bush administration, has been part of CPAC for 20 years, and happens to be Muslim American.⁵⁰

Geller also sees the enemy Islam infiltrating President Obama’s administration.⁵¹ Beyond that, Geller is convinced that President Obama has been, or continues to be, a practicing Muslim.⁵² Geller says President Obama is a “muhammadan” who “wants jihad to win.”⁵³ And she claims that he is “essentially backing Al Qaeda in Libya.”⁵⁴ Basically, according to Geller “everything this president has done so far has helped foster America’s submission to Islam.”⁵⁵

Geller’s ties to the network

Pamela Geller is deeply connected to the major players in the Islamophobia network. Her personal attorney is David Yerushalmi,⁵⁶ who has provided legal counsel for two of her organizations: Stop Islamization of America and Stop the Madrasa Community Coalition,⁵⁷ profiled in the previous chapter. For her part, Geller has promoted Yerushalmi’s anti-Sharia legislation in a number of state campaigns.⁵⁸ On March 2011, for example, Alaskan Representative Carl Gatto (R-Palmer) invited both Yerushalmi and Geller to testify before the House State Affairs Committee on the necessity of banning Sharia and foreign law to protect the state and the U.S Constitution.⁵⁹

Due to her prolific activities, Geller won the 2010 Annie Taylor Award, given by the David Horowitz Freedom Center. Geller said the award represented the “culmination of years of work that defines me.”⁶⁰

In addition to these connections, Geller supports Brigitte Gabriel, founder of ACT! for America. After Gabriel had a confrontational appearance on comedian Bill Maher’s TV talk show, Geller came to her defense, writing a piece, “Standing Up For Brigitte.”⁶¹ Subsequently, several ACT! for America chapters invited Geller to speak. In February of this year, Geller gave a speech to ACT!’s Omaha chapter and erroneously spread the word that the American Bar Association has decided to fight for Sharia law in America.⁶²

Hate radio

Anti-Muslim websites work in tandem with popular radio talk-show hosts who repeat and amplify the alarmist threats and conspiracy theories promoted by the blogs and their supporters. The industry of “hate radio” includes nationally known personalities such as Rush Limbaugh, Michael Savage, Glenn Beck, and others. Together, they use their programs as bully pulpits to preach anti-Muslim messages of intolerance and hate.

‘The Rush Limbaugh Show’

Rush Limbaugh hosts the most popular radio talk show in America. “The Rush Limbaugh Show”⁶³ is carried by more than 600 radio stations nationwide and is broadcast to more than 15 million listeners a week.⁶⁴ Limbaugh, age 60, calls himself “America’s anchorman” and “America’s truth detector.” He uses his highly influential radio pulpit to spread the word, and one of his favorite messages is casting suspicion on President Obama’s religious identity. Limbaugh has called Obama “Imam Obamadinejad,”⁶⁵ said the president is into caliphate building, and that he might think of himself as the 12th imam.⁶⁶

Such claims have an effect. In 2010, nearly 18 percent of Americans incorrectly believed that President Obama was a Muslim, due in no small part to the media orchestration of such claims.⁶⁷

Limbaugh joins Pamela Geller and others as a vociferous critic of the Park51 community center in New York City. During the protests last summer, he compared Muslims building the community center to the Klu Klux Klan establishing a “memorial at Gettysburg.”⁶⁸ Limbaugh also charged that the community center was a “recruiting tool for foreign extremists,” and repeated the talking point that organizers want the center to be a “victory monument at Ground Zero.”⁶⁹ Unfortunately Limbaugh’s microphone will stay on for years to come. In 2008, he signed an eight-year, \$400 million renewal contract with Clear Channel.⁷⁰

‘The Sean Hannity Show’

The nation’s second most popular talk show is “The Sean Hannity Show,” a nationally syndicated talk-radio show that airs on Premiere Radio Networks

and is hosted by Sean Hannity.⁷¹ Hannity, age 49, also hosts a cable-TV news show, “Hannity,” on Fox News. Nearly 14 million listeners tune into Hannity’s radio show each week⁷² to hear guests repeat the same talking points and conspiracy theories that can be heard on Limbaugh, Fox News, and other places. Questions abound about President Obama’s religious affiliation,⁷³ the Muslim Brotherhood infiltrating the Conservative Political Action Committee,⁷⁴ and threats of homegrown terrorism in our midst.⁷⁵ Listening to Hannity, one could hear Rep. Peter King (R-NY) agree with his host that 85 percent of mosques in America are run by Islamic fundamentalists after Hannity cited Steven Emerson and Daniel Pipes to prove his point.⁷⁶

‘The Savage Nation’

Mike Savage hosts “The Savage Nation,” another top-rated national radio program, which is syndicated through Talk Radio Network.⁷⁷ More than 350 radio stations broadcast his show to nearly 9 million weekly listeners, putting him just behind Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity in ratings.⁷⁸ Savage, 69, is known for his angry diatribes against minorities, including Muslims. On April 17, 2006, for example, he told listeners that Americans should “kill 100 million” Muslims.⁷⁹ In October 2007 he said, “I don’t wanna hear one more word about Islam. Take your religion and shove it up your behind. I’m sick of you.” He then suggested that American Muslims be deported.⁸⁰

Mike Savage once told listeners that Americans should “kill 100 million” Muslims.

Along with Limbaugh, Savage promotes the myth that President Obama could be a secret Muslim. Before Obama was elected, Savage called him “Senator Barack Madrassas Obama.”⁸¹ During the 2008 campaign, Savage said, “Now we have an unknown stealth candidate who went to a madrasa in Indonesia and, in fact, was a Muslim.”⁸² Seeking to get “the facts,” Savage insisted that “[w]e have a right to know if he’s a so-called friendly Muslim or one who aspires to more radical teachings.”⁸³

‘The Glenn Beck Program’

Glenn Beck also has a popular radio show that is broadcast by more than 400 stations and syndicated by Premiere Radio Networks.⁸⁴ Beck’s show ties with Savage’s show for third place for national radio talk shows with more than 9 million listeners weekly.⁸⁵ Beck, 47, conjures fears equating Muslims with terrorists and brings religion into the mix. Last December, he speculated on his show

Middle East Media and Research Institute

The Islamophobia network's go-to place for selective translations of Islamist rhetoric abroad

The Middle East Media and Research Institute is a Middle Eastern press-monitoring agency created by former members of Israeli Defense Forces that supplies translations relied upon by many members of the Islamophobia network. The translation service was created in February 1998 as an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization “to inform the debate over U.S. policy in the Middle East.”¹

MEMRI offers research on media in the Arab world, which those in the Islamophobia network depend on to make the case that Islam is inherently violent and promotes extremism. Jihad Watch's Robert Spencer hails MEMRI as “a goldmine of translated material from the Arabic speaking world which really gives one some amazing insights into what our opponents in the war on terror are thinking.”² Frank Gaffney at the Center for Security Policy calls MEMRI “indispensable” and relies on its translations to exaggerate the threat of the Muslim Brotherhood and radical Islam's infiltration of America.³ And the anti-Muslim grassroots organization ACT! for America uses a MEMRI-supplied video of a Muslim woman being stoned in Sudan as evidence of the brutality of Sharia law.⁴

The Middle East Forum's Daniel Pipes also relies on MEMRI for his propaganda,⁵ as does Steve Emerson, executive director of The Investigative Project, who also serves as a director at MEMRI.⁶ Norwegian terrorist Anders Breivik cited MEMRI 16 times in his manifesto.⁷

MEMRI was founded by Israeli-born, American academic Meyrav Wurmser, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, and Col. Yigal Carmon, who spent more than 20 years in the Israeli intelligence and served as a terrorism adviser to two of Israel's prime ministers, Yitzhak Shamir and Yitzhak Rabin.⁸ Wurmser co-authored the 1996 report, “A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm,” prepared for then-incoming Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, which suggested reshaping Israel's strategic environment in the Middle East by abandoning the traditional “land for peace” negotia-

tions with Palestinians and proposing the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.⁹

MEMRI is respected in some circles for its work to combat hate language and anti-Semitism,¹⁰ but it is also criticized for its selective translations. The institute contends that it highlights moderate Muslim voices on its Reform blog.¹¹ Yet MEMRI's selective translations of Arab media fan the flames of Islamophobia. MEMRI's editorial bias in its selection of media sources creates the impression that Arab media is full of anti-Western bias and urges Muslims in the West to commit acts of violence and terrorism.

One case in point: A sample of the videos on the front page of MEMRITV.org's “Islamists in the West”¹² section shows 19 new videos with topics ranging from “Belgian Islamist Abou Imran, of Shariah4 Belgium: We Will Conquer the White House, Europe Will Be Dominated by Islam”¹³ to “American Jihadist Operating From Somalia, Abu Mansour Al-Amriki, Calls to Attack America, in Two New Jihadi Songs – ‘Send Me A Cruise,’ and ‘Make Jihad with Me.’”¹⁴ Problem is, 12 of the 19 videos—including the two listed above—list “The Internet” as the source, instead of any verifiable news source.

Or consider George Washington University Professor Marc Lynch's response to MEMRI's 2004 report that Osama bin Laden promised to only attack American states that voted for George W. Bush.¹⁵ Lynch wrote that “MEMRI is cherry-picking a couple of statements on fringe websites to support its own, highly partisan, interpretation. Actually, to be totally clear, they are relying on ONE statement on ONE radical website, which could have been posted by ANYBODY.”¹⁶

Indeed, MEMRI is plagued by accusations that it selectively translates television news clips from the Muslim world. Former CIA case officer Vince Cannistraro has said that “they (MEMRI) are selective and act as propagandists for their political point of view, which is the extreme-

right of Likud.”¹⁷ Laila Lalami, writing in *The Nation*, states that MEMRI “consistently picks the most violent, hateful rubbish it can find, translates it and distributes it in e-mail newsletters to media and members of Congress in Washington.”¹⁸

Most disturbingly, the translations found in the inflammatory, anti-Muslim documentary “Obsession: Radical Islam’s War Against the West” were provided by MEMRI.¹⁹ The film’s website also features MEMRI as a resource under the link for “Radical Islam and Terrorism Today,”²⁰ which demonstrates once again how important MEMRI’s translations are for Islamophobic propaganda in the United States. The Clarion Fund was responsible for producing and disseminating the anti-Muslim movie to 28 battleground states in 2008.²¹

Endnotes

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about the number of American Muslims who might be terrorists, saying: “Let’s say it’s half a percent of the U.S. population. That’s being generous. What’s that number? What is the number of Islamic terrorists, 1 percent? I think it’s closer to 10 percent.”⁸⁶

In February, one of Beck’s guests was Joel Richardson, the apocalyptic author of the book *The Islamic Antichrist*. Richardson was on the show to discuss “Islam’s Mahdi, the Antichrist, the Middle East and Bible prophecy.” According to Richardson, the “Antichrist” will be a Muslim and Islam will be Satan’s “primary vehicle” to usher the end of times.⁸⁷

Levin, Fischer, and Gaffney

Then there’s Mark Levin, who hosts the syndicated radio program “The Mark Levin Show.” Levin has frequently contributed legal opinions to “The Rush Limbaugh Show” and “The Sean Hannity Show,” where Hannity nicknamed him “The Great One.”⁸⁸ Levin, age 54, is the fourth most popular radio host in America, averaging more than 8.5 million listeners weekly.⁸⁹ Levin joins the line-up of talk show hosts giving the microphone to biased voices against Islam, such as Zudhi Jasser, who repeated talking points and conspiracy theories that the Park51 community center in New York City is an example of Islamic extremism that seeks to “create Islamic states.”⁹⁰

The religious right boasts virulent anti-Muslim radio host Bryan Fischer, the director of issues analysis for the American Family Association and host of “Focal Point” on American Family Radio. Fischer is also a blogger for the AFA-sponsored blog *Rightly Concerned*.⁹¹ Some of Fischer’s rants are filled with raw hate. For instance, he says that Muslim Americans have no First Amendment rights,⁹² are stupid due to inbreeding,⁹³ and should be deported and halted from immigrating to this country.⁹⁴ Fischer also supports banning mosques.⁹⁵

Fischer adds his voice to the chorus of those who insist that “President Obama cannot possibly be a Christian.”⁹⁶ He is adamant in his belief that practicing American Muslims cannot adopt American “values,” and says we should “only admit to our shores those who will strengthen our nation and assimilate themselves into it, adopting our flag, our history, our heroes, and our values. This is something that devout Muslims simply cannot do.”⁹⁷

Frank Gaffney has influence not only through his think tank and his Big Peace⁹⁸ blog, but also through his radio show, “Secure Freedom Radio.” Promising to “find innovative ways to secure our homeland from threats, foreign and domestic,” the show promotes the usual anti-Muslim conspiracy theories and beats the drum against the impending threat of Sharia.⁹⁹

Last November Gaffney invited Rep. Michele Bachmann to discuss ways to fight the impending onslaught of Sharia in America.¹⁰⁰ That same month, he invited then-Rep.-elect Allen West, of Florida’s 22nd district, to examine “whether or not the new Congress will get right on the threat posed by Sharia.”¹⁰¹ In June, Gaffney invited David Yerushalmi to talk about the threat of Sharia infiltrating American courts.¹⁰²

The right-wing mainstream news enablers of Islamophobia

Fox News has one of the biggest and most influential megaphones in TV news.¹⁰³ It uses this megaphone to amplify anti-Muslim alarmist threats and conspiracy theories on a regular basis. Virtually all the leading Islamophobia players have made recurring appearances on popular Fox News programs, such as “Hannity,”¹⁰⁴ “The O’Reilly Factor,”¹⁰⁵ and “Fox & Friends.”¹⁰⁶ The cable news network also featured former Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich as a commentator, which he uses to promote his increasingly Islamophobic opinions, such as his call for curbs on freedom of speech to keep terrorists from spreading their message after six imams were mistakenly removed from a Minneapolis flight in 2006.¹⁰⁷

On these shows, players echo one another’s warnings and repeat with serious certainty the same threats they warned about on radio shows and in blogs, newspapers, online magazines, and more. Their staple threats include: Muslims imposing Sharia in America, Muslims establishing a global caliphate, Muslims engaging in homegrown jihad, and Muslims infiltrating President Obama’s administration to promote dangerous Islamist agendas.

Gingrich in particular has made Sharia law his hobby horse. In September last year, for example, he told the audience at a Value Voters Summit in Washington, D.C., “We should have a federal law that says sharia law cannot be recognized by any court in the United States.” Such a law will let judges know, Gingrich went on, that “no judge will remain in office that tried to use sharia law.”¹⁰⁸ These words prompted a standing ovation from the crowd.

Gingrich, age 68, is helping shift this once-fringe conspiracy about Sharia into the mainstream. He's doing so not just by spouting the network's talking points but also by endorsing their products: For instance, Gingrich narrated the fearmongering documentary "America at Risk," produced by the conservative Citizens United Productions, which warns of the threat of Sharia and Islamic extremism infiltrating America.¹⁰⁹ Unsurprisingly, the documentary features Center for Security Policy's Frank Gaffney. Gingrich screened the movie at David Horowitz's Restoration Weekend in November 2010.¹¹⁰

Gingrich's rhetoric has escalated to levels to where it is no longer logically consistent. In March, Gingrich bizarrely worried aloud that his two children would grow up in a "secular atheist country, potentially dominated by radical Islamists," suggesting that the country would be simultaneously run by Islamists and atheists.¹¹¹

Gingrich bizarrely worried aloud that his two children would grow up in a "secular atheist country, potentially dominated by radical Islamists."

Sadly, these scare tactics are working. It is not surprising that when alarmist threats are repeated with enough frequency through multiple outlets to millions of people with no rebuttal by like-minded leaders, that those threats become conventional wisdom. And so, the nonpartisan Public Religion Research Institute found in a recent poll that there was a strong correlation between holding erroneous views about Muslims and Islam and watching Fox News.¹¹² These are correlative, not necessarily causative findings, but they are striking.

Specifically, the poll found that:

- Americans who most trust Fox News are more likely to believe that Muslims want to establish Sharia law, have not done enough to oppose extremism, and believe investigating Muslim extremism is a good idea.¹¹³
- Nearly twice as many Republicans as Democrats believe that Muslims want to establish Sharia law in America, 31 percent to 15 percent. One-third of white evangelical Christians believe this compared to 20 percent of white protestants and 22 percent of white Catholics.¹¹⁴
- More than three-quarters of those who most trust Fox News believe that Rep. Peter King's congressional hearings on Muslim radicalization were a good idea, compared to just 45 percent of those who most trust CNN, and 28 percent of those who most trust public television.¹¹⁵

The Christian Broadcasting Network

The Christian Broadcasting Network has less national influence than Fox News, but great influence among conservative religious viewers. CBN is a powerful amplifier of anti-Muslim views to Christian audiences, promoting in some cases even more extreme views than Fox News.

Multimillionaire televangelist Pat Robertson founded the network in 1961, and since then has promoted wild claims against Muslims and Islam. On his “700 Club” TV show, Robertson compared Muslims to Nazis and called Islam “a violent political system bent on the overthrow of the governments of the world and world domination.”¹¹⁶ Robertson recently joined the anti-Sharia forces, asking, “Why can’t we speak out against an institution [Islam] that is intent on dominating us and imposing Sharia law and making us part of a universal Caliphate?”¹¹⁷

Another on-air personality at the Christian Broadcasting Network is Erick Stakelbeck, who hosts a show, “Stakelbeck on Terror.”¹¹⁸ Stakelbeck once worked as a senior writer and analyst at Steven Emerson’s Investigative Project on Terrorism,¹¹⁹ and he uses his show to repeat Emerson’s fear-mongering claims, including quoting Emerson and using misinformation from his organization.¹²⁰ In June, Stakelbeck invited Frank Gaffney and Lt. Gen. William G. “Jerry” Boykin onto his show to discuss “Sharia’s Threat to America.”¹²¹

In June 2003, while in uniform, Lt. Gen. Boykin violated Department of Defense regulations by publicly stating that the military was recruiting a “spiritual army” to fight Islam,¹²² and that Muslims hated America. He also bragged that his God was “a real God” while the Muslim God was “an idol.”¹²³

Not surprisingly, Frank Gaffney appeared on Bryan Fischer’s American Family Association radio show to defend the general when he was reprimanded by the military. Gaffney claimed that Boykin “clearly put his finger on the truth when he said his God is bigger than the god of Islam.”¹²⁴ Gaffney later appointed Boykin as a “Team Leader” and co-author of his organization’s report, “Sharia: The Threat To America.”¹²⁵

National Review

National Review is a biweekly magazine founded in 1955 by influential conservative William F. Buckley Jr. It calls itself “America’s most widely read and influential magazine and website for conservative news, commentary, and opinion.”¹²⁶ While *National Review* speaks to a more mainstream conservative audience than many of the media outlets described in this chapter, it also features writers and articles that raise alarmist warnings and threats about Muslims and Islam, though often in less apocalyptic language.

The magazine publishes Andrew McCarthy, the author of *The Grand Jihad: How Islam and the Left Sabotage America* and co-author of the Center for Security Policy’s report on the threat of Sharia to America. In his columns for the magazine, McCarthy perpetuates claims of a Sharia threat.¹²⁷

National Review also publishes pieces by Daniel Pipes in the magazine and on the website. In 1990 Pipes wrote: “Western European societies are unprepared for the massive immigration of brown-skinned peoples cooking strange foods and maintaining different standards of hygiene ... All immigrants bring exotic customs and attitudes, but Muslim customs are more troublesome than most.”¹²⁸

The Washington Times and the Clarion Fund

Then there is *The Washington Times*—a conservative daily newspaper and website created by Sun Myung Moon, founder of the Unification Church.¹²⁹ *The Washington Times* promotes socially and politically conservative views and often features members of the Islamophobia network profiled in this report.¹³⁰ Despite its small readership, *The Washington Times* punches well above its weight in the national media because many of the views it raises and voices it carries are picked up by media outlets with powerful megaphones, such as Fox News and conservative talk-radio shows, helping spread anti-Muslim messages into the larger public sphere. *The Washington Times*, for example, helped promote a flawed study about U.S. mosques written by David Yerushalmi.¹³¹ The newspaper’s editorial page added to attacks against Park51 in August of 2010.¹³² And columnists from *The Washington Times* have contributed to the myth that President Obama is a Muslim.¹³³

The Clarion Fund is a New York City-based nonprofit organization that aims “to educate Americans about issues of national security” by focusing on “the threats of Radical Islam.”¹³⁴ The organization was founded by Canadian-Israeli film pro-

ducer and Rabbi Raphael Shore.¹³⁵ Although very little is known about its funding sources,¹³⁶ evidence suggests that Chicago businessman Barre Seid may have contributed \$17 million to the Clarion Fund to help bankroll the production and dissemination of the inflammatory anti-Muslim movie, “Obsession: Radical Islam’s War on the West.” The film “reveals an ‘insider’s view’ of the hatred the Radicals are teaching, their incitement of global jihad, and their goal of world domination,” according to the movie’s own website.¹³⁷ During the 2008 presidential campaign, 28 million DVDs of the movie were sent to 28 swing states.¹³⁸ In addition, the film was cited in Breivik’s manifesto.¹³⁹

The Clarion Fund also produced a documentary, “The Third Jihad,” narrated by Zudhi Jasser and briefly used to train NYPD officers on counterterrorism. After seeing the video, a police officer said, “It was so ridiculously one-sided. It just made Muslims look like the enemy. It was straight propaganda.”¹⁴⁰

How the anti-Muslim media work together

These right-wing media outlets play a major role in pushing out a playlist of nonexistent Sharia threats, Islamic takeovers of the world, extremist Muslim infiltration into society and government, and more. As we demonstrate in the next chapter of this report, politicians at the national, state, and local levels rely on these media enablers to spread their anti-Muslim messages to conservative grassroots and religious-right groups, helping them to raise campaign funds and get voters to the polls.

By taking extreme anti-Islam views from fringe blogs to radio shows all the way to national television shows, anti-Muslim voices and views gain legitimacy and credibility. In Chapter 2 of this report, we detailed how a network of anti-Muslim forces created a set of false facts to raise a national controversy over the establishment of a Muslim community center in lower New York City—the so-called Ground Zero mosque. Here we detail the way in which the Islamophobia network’s media outlets so successfully manufactured hysteria surrounding the community center in the summer of 2010.

Pamela Geller introduced the controversy on December 8, 2009, in her blog, *Atlas Shrugs*.¹⁴¹ Within two weeks Geller was calling the community center the “mosque at Ground Zero,” even though it was not a mosque and was not located at Ground Zero.¹⁴²

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Interestingly, Fox News was not initially opposed to the project. On Dec. 21, 2009, Fox News host Laura Ingraham invited Daisy Khan, the wife of Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, one of the center’s lead organizers, to discuss the proposed community center. Ingraham said, “I can’t find many people who really have a problem with it.” She added, “I like what you’re trying to do.”¹⁴³

Even so, Geller continued to manufacture hysteria around the center and its alleged proximity to Ground Zero. At a May 2010 Tea Party convention in Tennessee, Geller called the center “the ultimate flag of conquest” and “a shrine to the very ideology that inspired the jihadist attacks at Ground Zero.”¹⁴⁴ A few days later, she posted “Vote on Mega Mosque at Ground Zero” on her blog.¹⁴⁵

Geller claimed the Park51 organizers planned to “leverage” the mosque’s proximity to Ground Zero to proselytize and “grow the Muslim community.”¹⁴⁶ She also said that Imam Rauf “embraced” Sharia, which she described as “brutal policies that discriminate against women, gays, and religious minorities.”¹⁴⁷

Throughout the summer, the Islamophobia network was amplifying Geller’s accusations and pushing them out via radio shows and other outlets. On his radio show in August, Glenn Beck called the Park51 center “the 9-11 mosque.”¹⁴⁸ That same month, Rush Limbaugh told millions of listeners that the community center was a “recruiting tool for foreign extremists,” and a “victory monument at Ground Zero.”¹⁴⁹ And Geller went on Hannity’s Fox News show to declare the center a “provocative mega mosque” that aimed to “trample on the grief of 9-11 families and all Americans.”¹⁵⁰

Islamophobia leaders added to the frenzy, appearing on mainstream TV news channels to hold forth about the community center. Brigitte Gabriel, founder of ACT! for America, did her part when she appeared on Sean Hannity’s Fox News show and said the center was a “project to advance Islam” and a “slap in the face.” Gabriel also claimed that the “Muslim world operates on symbols, everything has to be symbolic. And this—they chose this place in particular because of the symbol it represents to the Arabic world.”¹⁵¹

In December 2010, well after the summer had ended and plans for the community center were being revised, Frank Gaffney went on Fox News and scolded the network for underestimating the threat of “stealth jihad” that mosques were introducing in America. Gaffney linked the “Ground Zero Mosque” to his favorite threat, Sharia, claiming that “a mosque that is used to promote a seditious program, which is what Sharia is... that is not a protected religious practice, that is in fact sedition.”¹⁵²

This example of how the Islamophobia network’s leaders and media enablers turned a local zoning case into a national controversy provides a reason as to why many right-wing politicians are so eager to parrot anti-Muslim attacks: They raise funds and get conservative voters to the polls. But as we show in the next chapter of this report, political opportunism is not the only reason for the popularity of Islamophobia among some politicians on the right.

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Chapter 5

The political players

The success of the Islamophobia network in tarring Islam and all Muslims with calculated misinformation would not be possible without the individuals and their organizations profiled in earlier chapters. Messages can spread far and wide because of the small but effective groups of funders and think tanks, right-wing grassroots and religious groups, and their right-wing media enablers on cable TV, radio, and the Internet.

But the ability of this tightly knit network to drench the public with misinformation is greatly enhanced by elected officials at the state and national level—politicians who push these myths as “facts” and then craft political fundraising campaigns and get-out-the-vote strategies based on debunked information about Muslims and Islam.

Here is one illustration of the network in action: Rep. Peter King (R-NY) held congressional hearings this spring on the alleged threat of Muslim extremism in the United States, parroting the debunked claim that 80 percent of mosques in America are radical. Rep. King is a hero to many anti-Muslim bigots. In 2010 he received the annual American for National Security Patriot Award from Brigitte Gabriel’s activist group, ACT! for America. Accepting the award, Rep. King expressed gratitude for the group’s support, saying, “We are engaged in a brutal war with a brutal enemy, the enemy of Islamic terrorism.”¹

Across the country, anti-Muslim grassroots groups and individuals promote elected officials like Rep. King. These officials in turn endorse and push into mainstream discourse a steady supply of manufactured “facts” that are basically talking points that come from a few “experts.”

This chapter focuses on the elected officials and political leaders who play a key role in reaching the public with deeply misinformed or completely untrue stories about Islam and Muslims. As we will demonstrate, this select group of politicians relies on a familiar handful of “experts”—and employs three basic strategies that harness the power of the political pulpit to shift public opinion:

- Elected officials and political leaders promote anti-Muslim messages through legislative actions, legislative oversight hearings, and electoral debates. Many of these efforts make the news.
- They launch fundraising appeals and campaign commercials based on the misconceptions and myths about Islam.
- They appear on like-minded media outlets and at conferences to repeat their talking points and argue their case.

Let's first take a look at how the following elected representatives at the state and national level use these strategies with undeniable success. Then we'll look at how this well-honed political meme is likely to be put in play in the 2012 elections. Here are the key players profiled in this chapter—men and women who are misdirecting the public debate about Islam in Congress and in State Houses across the country:

- Rep. Peter King (R-NY)
- Rep. Sue Myrick (R-NC)
- Rep. Paul Broun (R-GA)
- Rep. Allen West (R-FL)
- Rep. Renee Ellmers (R-NC)
- Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN)

Let's examine each of them in turn.

Rep. Peter King (R-NY)

Ten-term congressman Peter King is chairman of the Select Committee on Homeland Security in the House of Representatives. Years ago, King defended terrorism when the perpetrators were members of the Irish Republican Army. King claimed that the IRA was a “legitimate force” fighting the British.²

More recently, King has become known for casting suspicion on entire Muslim American communities.³ In March, he held congressional hearings titled “Extent of Radicalization in the American Muslim Community and that Community's Response.” Rep. King's singular targeting of the Muslim community ignores the facts. For instance, research shows that the majority of terrorist plots in America since 9/11 have been committed by non-Muslims, particularly right-wing extremists and white supremacists.⁴ In fact, Rep. King gives away his bias with his own state-

ments. “There are too many mosques in this country,” he said in a 2007 interview with *Politico*. “There are too many people sympathetic to radical Islam. We should be looking at them more carefully and finding out how we can infiltrate them.”⁵

Many law enforcement officials, counterterrorism professionals, civil rights organizations, and interfaith leaders called Rep. King’s hearings misguided.⁶ And a veteran’s group, VoteVets.org, issued a statement saying that Rep. King was not doing any favors for the troops with his hearings.⁷ Mayor Jack O’Reilly Jr. of Dearborn, Michigan, which has one of the country’s largest Arab and Muslim populations, cautioned that Rep. King’s hearings ignored the threat of extremism from non-Muslim groups.⁸

Aided by false facts, skewed studies, and talking points that came from several of the experts and scholars profiled in Chapter 2 of this report, Rep. King used the hearings to promote debunked myths about Muslim American communities. He relied on Steven Emerson for many of his outlandish claims. Using Emerson as his source, Rep. King insisted that “80 to 85 percent of mosques in this country are controlled by Islamic fundamentalists. I’ll stand by that number of 85 percent. This is an enemy living amongst us.”⁹

When Rep. King was questioned by Sean Hannity about this assertion, he said, “I can get you the documentation on that from experts in the field. Talk to a Steve Emerson, talk to a [Daniel] Pipes, talk to any of those. They will tell you. It’s a real issue.”¹⁰ Emerson, though, is infamous for prematurely declaring that the Oklahoma City bombing was committed by Muslims even before the FBI or Oklahoma City Police Department had any leads.¹¹ The actual culprit, Timothy McVeigh, was a white supremacist.¹²

Tainted witnesses

One of the most influential witnesses at Rep. King’s hearings was Zuhdi Jasser, the founder of the American Islamic Forum for Democracy who was profiled on page 56 of this report. In addition to Jasser, Rep. King invited other misinformation experts to testify at the hearings, but he had to withdraw invitations to some because of their extremist views. One of those dropped was Walid Phares, a Lebanese Christian, after his history with the Lebanese Forces, a Christian militia, was uncovered.¹³ Phares is popular among those in the Islamophobia network for his view that “jihadists within the West pose as civil rights advocates” and

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patiently recruit until “[a]lmost all mosques, educational centers, and socioeconomic institutions fall into their hands.”¹⁴

Although he didn’t get to testify at the hearings, Phares did participate in an anti-Muslim webinar conference in 2009 sponsored by ACT! for America. The conference was called “Radical Islam’s Threat to America,” and was aimed at elected officials who are “concerned about the rising threat of radical Islam and what can and must be done to defeat this threat.”¹⁵ Other conference participants included Frank Gaffney, Nonie Darwish, and Brigitte Gabriel.

Immediately after Rep. King’s hearings, Gaffney hit the airwaves to praise the congressman. “The real story is that Mr. King began a conversation about an issue that has long been deemed politically untouchable,” Gaffney said, adding that through the hearings, the congressman established that there is, indeed, a problem of ‘extremism’ within the American Muslim community.”¹⁶

The claim that 80 percent of mosques in America are radicalized was debunked during the King hearings. Even so, anti-Muslim bigots continued to pump life into it. For instance, David Yerushalmi, author of the “anti-Sharia” legal template discussed in Chapter 2 of this report, released a study in June¹⁷ that repeated the claim. The study was published by *Middle East Forum Quarterly*, a journal on Middle Eastern affairs founded by Daniel Pipes and released through his think tank, the Middle East Forum. Yerushalmi’s study was condemned by the Southern Poverty Law Center.¹⁸

And to make the connection complete, Rep. King is one of the members of the Coalition to Honor Ground Zero, which urges supporters to take “a public stand either opposing the [Park51 Community Center] or calling for a halt in the building of the Ground Zero Mosque until there has been a thorough review of the facts.”¹⁹ The coalition’s website, stopthe911mosque.com, is registered to Frank Gaffney’s Center for Security Policy.²⁰

Rep. Sue Myrick (R-NC)

Rep. Sue Myrick is an eight-term term congresswoman from the 9th congressional district surrounding the city of Charlotte, North Carolina—a large metropolitan area that includes six mosques. In January 2007, Rep. Myrick claimed to be concerned that President George W. Bush and other officials were not taking the

threat of “Islamofacism infiltration” seriously enough—and so she founded the Anti-Terrorism Caucus.

Today, she is a leading opponent of Muslims and Islam on the Hill. During the King hearings, she correctly noted that “there are no buildings on K Street with ‘Muslim Brotherhood’ in the lobby directory,” but then went on to claim that “this allows the Muslim Brotherhood to muddy the water when it comes to foreign funding and influence and to hide behind groups that have plausible deniability of their involvement with the Brotherhood when necessary.”²¹ Rep. Myrick even saw a threat posed by the number of Muslims running convenience stores throughout the United States.²²

Relying on the network

Rep. Myrick relies heavily on the views and talking points of the misinformation experts profiled in Chapter 2. Indeed, she wrote the foreword for a conspiratorial book, *Muslim Mafia: Inside the Secret Underworld That’s Conspiring to Islamize America*. According to *Muslim Mafia*, Muslim spies have posed as interns and infiltrated Capitol Hill with an Islamist agenda.²³ The book’s author, David Gaubatz, at one time directed David Yerushalmi’s Society of Americans for National Existence, a group that proposed criminalizing those who practice Sharia with a 20-year jail sentence.

Frank Gaffney’s Center for Security Policy funded research for the book.²⁴ And Gaubatz’s son spent six months in 2008 as an intern at the Washington, D.C. offices of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, or CAIR, pretending to be a Muslim.²⁵ While there, he allegedly stole 12,000 pages of documentation and 300 hours of video.²⁶ The publisher of *Muslim Mafia* is WorldNetDaily, a right-wing online magazine that peddles conspiracy theories. When the book came out, CAIR denounced its claims as racist, and a judge ordered David Gaubatz and his son to turn over the documentation that was taken.²⁷

Nonetheless, Rep. Myrick used the book’s misinformation to call for a congressional investigation of CAIR. She was joined by Rep. Trent Franks (R-AZ), then-Rep. John Shadegg (R-AZ), and Rep. Paul Broun (R-GA). Rep. Myrick now chairs the House Intelligence Subcommittee on Terrorism, Human Intelligence, Analysis and Counterintelligence. In April she held her own hearings on the threat of the Muslim Brotherhood and their influence and ties with Muslim American

Rep. Myrick
even saw a
threat posed by
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Muslims running
convenience
stores throughout
the United States.

organizations.²⁸ Rep. Myrick even launched a YouTube video series to warn the American public of Muslim extremists among us who “are now in positions in our government.”²⁹ In February, Rep. Myrick lost her longtime chief of staff, Hal Weatherman, when he resigned to join the staff of ACT! for America.³⁰

Rep. Paul Broun (R-GA)

Rep. Paul Broun is a fourth-term representative from Georgia’s 10th congressional district, representing both the progressive college town of Athens, and Augusta, home of Fort Gordon. The son of a highly respected lawmaker,³¹ Rep. Broun has made a name for himself by espousing radical beliefs.³² For instance, he has compared President Obama to Hitler, claimed that clean energy legislation would kill senior citizens, and avowed that his Democratic Party opponents want to take over “all of society.”³³

Candidate West
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theocratic political
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Yet Broun has reserved some of his most outrageous remarks for American Muslims and the wider Muslim world. He joined Rep. Myrick and other colleagues at a press conference in 2009 to amplify the claim of *Muslim Mafia* that interns from the Council on American-Islamic Relations were “running influence operations or planting spies in key national security-related” congressional offices.³⁴

Most recently, Rep. Broun complained during an appearance on C-SPAN’s “Washington Journal” that he was at an airport recently and witnessed an elderly woman and a child patted down but not a “guy in Arabian dress who just walked right through.”³⁵ He neglected to mention that the 9/11 hijackers wore Western clothing.³⁶

Rep. Allen West (R-FL)

Rep. Allen West is a first-term representative from Florida’s 22nd congressional district, an African American representing a majority-white urban area along a stretch of Atlantic beach communities between Fort Lauderdale and Palm Beach. In the spring of 2004, then-U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel West retired after being given administrative punishment and fined \$5,000 for performing a mock execution on an Iraqi detainee.³⁷ In his campaign for Congress, candidate West declared “Islam” the enemy and claimed it is not a religion but a “totalitarian theocratic political ideology.”³⁸

As a member of Congress, Rep. West has an amplifier for his anti-Muslim rhetoric.³⁹ He told a television interviewer in January that Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN), an American-born convert to Islam, represents the “antithesis of the principles upon which this country was established.”⁴⁰

When later asked for a response, Ellison said: “Contrary to the views expressed by Congressman West, I work to represent the highest ideals of our great nation—ideals like freedom of worship and respect for all faiths, equal protection under the law as well as a civil and open public discourse.”⁴¹

Rep. West is equally combative with Muslim constituents. At a town hall meeting in his district, he shouted at a constituent, “You attacked us!”⁴²

Promoting debunked myths

Since his election, Rep. West has appeared on Frank Gaffney’s radio station and at events sponsored by the Center for Security Policy. Rep. West has publicly thanked Gaffney for mentoring him⁴³ and has become a loyal foot soldier in the misguided campaign against Sharia.

In fact, Rep. West has recommended that Congress focus on the “infiltration of the shari’ah practice into all of our operating systems in our country as well as across Western civilization.”⁴⁴

Rep. West is also connected to ACT! for America and Brigitte Gabriel, who invited him to give the keynote speech at the organization’s national conference in June. In his speech, Rep. West joked, “I like Irish Spring, but I don’t much care for Arab Spring,” and warned that “on the 21st century’s battlefield, radical Islam is the enemy.”⁴⁵

In July, Rep. West held a briefing where he promised to reveal a list containing thousands of names of individuals and organizations of Muslim Brotherhood sympathizers and members. The briefing was called “Homegrown Jihad in the USA: Culminating of the Muslim Brotherhood’s 50-year History of Infiltrating America.”⁴⁶ The organization, Citizens for National Security, helped to compile the database list. Despite his promises, Rep. West did not unveil the list at the briefing.

On September 7, Rep. West will host a screening of a film, “Sacrificed Survivors: The Untold Story of the Ground Zero Mosque,” about the 9/11 tragedy and efforts to stop construction of the so-called Ground Zero Mosque.⁴⁷ The film’s producer, the Christian Action Network, has already released another inflammatory documentary, “Homegrown Jihad: Terrorist Camps around U.S.,” which allegedly exposes the militant radicalization of American Muslims.⁴⁸ The City of New York has refused to grant the Christian Action Network a permit to screen “Sacrificed Survivors” in public parks, but the group and Pat Robertson’s American Center for Law and Justice are threatening a lawsuit against the city.⁴⁹

Rep. Renee Ellmers (R-NC)

First-term GOP Rep. Renee Ellmers is a product of the Tea Party. She represents North Carolina’s 2nd congressional district,⁵⁰ which is the state’s first majority black district.⁵¹ In her campaign against seven-term incumbent Democrat Bob Etheridge, Ellmers made an issue of the “Ground Zero Mosque” in New York, running a campaign ad and accusing Rep. Etheridge of not taking a stand.⁵²

Ellmer’s campaign was stridently anti-Muslim. For instance, she regurgitated Frank Gaffney’s claim that the Park51 community center was actually a “victory mosque.”⁵³ And she suggested in an appearance on CNN that President Obama supported terrorists by using foreign aid to build mosques.⁵⁴ In fact, the initiative was started by President George W. Bush to rebuild all houses of worship.⁵⁵

With the Park51 community center ad, Rep. Ellmers is jumping on a trend—raising money with Islamophobic rhetoric.⁵⁶

Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN)

Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN) is the founder of the House Tea Party Caucus and one of the radical right’s most consistent anti-Muslim voices. She repeatedly raises the specter of a homegrown Islamic threat, as well as threats from Islamic countries such as Iran.

While running for a seat in the House of Representatives in 2006, Bachmann said that we should keep the nuclear option on the table concerning Iran.⁵⁷ More recently, she conflated Sharia with terrorism in responding to Osama bin Laden’s death, writing “may this be the beginning of the end of Sharia-compliant terrorism.”⁵⁸

Sharia has also randomly turned up in a marriage vow pledge that Bachmann signed and was sponsored by the right-wing group The Family Leader. The pledge contains a provision to oppose Sharia law.⁵⁹

Relying on the Islamophobia network

Rep. Bachmann relies on Frank Gaffney to advise her on national and international matters. The congresswoman, says Gaffney, is “a friend and a person I admire. I hope she is getting the best counsel she can.” He added, “We are a resource she has tapped, I’m assuming among many others.” When asked whether Rep. Bachmann had been briefed on CSP’s anti-Sharia report, Gaffney replied, “We’ve spent hours, over several days with her. I think she’s got the bulk of what we would tell her in one of the more formal presentations.”⁶⁰

When the Sharia report was released in the fall of 2010, Rep. Bachmann issued a statement praising it: “The [Sharia] Team B II authors and contributors [Gaffney and CSP] are to be commended upon the release of their systematic and thorough piece of research, which will highly add to the discussion of sharia law’s impact on the United States.”⁶¹

Her biased views of Muslims and Islam should not be surprising, considering the company she keeps. For instance, she gave the 2010 keynote address at David Horowitz’s Restoration Weekend, an annual, elite conference in Palm Beach, Florida. Other participants included Frank Gaffney, Daniel Pipes, Robert Spencer, and Pamela Geller.

Rep. Bachmann also appeared alongside right-wing media personality Bryan Fischer. Fischer is the longtime radio host of “American Family Radio” and a blogger for Rightly Concerned, profiled in Chapter 4. Fischer is probably most controversial for arguing that the religious practice of Islam is not protected under the First Amendment,⁶² that Muslims⁶³ are stupid due to inbreeding,⁶⁴ and that they should be deported and halted from immigrating to this country.⁶⁵ Fischer also supports the banning of mosques.⁶⁶

Despite such incendiary remarks, Rep. Bachmann continues to appear on Fischer’s radio programs.⁶⁷ Indeed, because of the direct and indirect support of foundations to the Islamophobia network, Rep. Bachmann can repeat and amplify baseless charges and bigoted opinions within the right wing-media echo chamber, and into the world at large.

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“Ground Zero Mosque” timeline

How members of the Islamophobia network created their most enduring myth

The “Ground Zero Mosque” controversy of 2010 catapulted the construction of a multicultural center with a pool, dance studios, art space, and a prayer room into a national crisis. Here’s a timeline of the controversy.



December 8, 2009

The New York Times published a front-page feature on the Cordoba Project, the original name of the Park51 community center. Two Jewish leaders, two city officials, including the mayor’s office, and the mother of a man killed on 9/11 all support the initiative.

December 8, 2009

Pamela Geller, co-founder of the hate group “Stop Islamization of America,” introduces the “controversy” about the proposed center on her blog Atlas Shrugs. She later refers to the center as the “Mosque at Ground Zero,” even though the building is neither a mosque nor at Ground Zero.

May 6, 2010

After a unanimous vote by a New York City community board committee to approve the project the *New York Post* runs a story under the inaccurate headline, “Panel Approves ‘WTC’ Mosque.”

May 7, 2010

Stop Islamization of America launches “Campaign Offensive: Stop the 911 Mosque!”

May 8, 2010

Geller announces first protest against what she calls the “911 monster mosque.”

May 10, 2010

New York Post columnist Andrea Peyser argues in a note at the end of her column that “there are better places to put a mosque.”

May 13, 2010

Peyser follows up with an entire column devoted to “Mosque Madness at Ground Zero,” framing the project in the way that Geller has been framing it for months.

June 6, 2010

Geller and her organization organize a protest attended by 200 to 300 people.

September 11, 2010

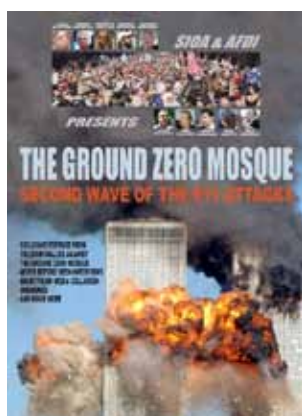
Geller and her organization hold a rally in New York City on the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

December 2010

Frank Gaffney scolds FOX News for underestimating the threat of “stealth jihad,” pointing to the community center to explain that a mosque “used to promote a seditious program, which is what Sharia is . . . that is not a protected religious practice, that is in fact sedition.”

February 2011

SIOA releases the film “The Ground Zero Mosque: Second Wave of the 911 Attacks.” The documentary chronicles the protest movements against the “Mosque” and features Pamela Geller, Jihad Watch’s Robert Spencer, and radical conservative media personality Andrew Breitbart.



Source: Justin Elliot, “How the ‘Ground Zero Mosque’ fear mongering began,” Salon, August 20, 2010, available at http://www.salon.com/news/politics/war_room/2010/08/16/ground_zero_mosque_origins; Media Matters for America, “Timeline: Nine months of the right’s anti-Muslim bigotry,” September 10, 2010, available at <http://mediamatters.org/research/201009100042>; Joe Walker, Douglas Montero, Amber Sutherland, and Kathianne Boniello, “Thousands rally for, against mosque on tragic day,” *New York Post*, September 11, 2010, available at http://www.nypost.com/p/news/local/man_burns_koran_pages_near_ground_8s6OKcRfcZ0Ztz9y07ZoL.

The influence of Islamophobic members of Congress

This kind of incendiary rhetoric is filtering down into congressional races. At a recent town hall forum, Republican congressional candidate Lynne Torgerson asked Rep. Keith Ellison (D-MN), one of two Muslim American members of Congress, if he thought the U.S. Constitution or Sharia “should be supreme in the United States.”⁶⁸ Not surprisingly, Ellison responded that the Constitution was supreme. But even raising the issue of Sharia as a specter to be feared advances the goals of the Islamophobia network.

Twenty-three states have considered bills banning Sharia, though only a few have passed. Raising fears about Sharia helps whip up public fear about national security issues. Anti-Sharia initiatives could be a way to mobilize anti-Muslim sentiment and increase conservative voter turnout.

There were similar efforts in 2004 with anti-same sex marriage ballot initiatives that aimed to increase voter turnout among the religious right. According to Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council, a key organizer and strategist on culture war issues, same-sex marriage was “the hood ornament on the family values wagon that carried the president to a second term.”⁶⁹

In 2012, however, anti-gay ballot initiatives and rhetoric are less effective in driving the conservative base to open its wallets and get to the polls. While the actual vote-driving impact of anti-Sharia ballot measures remains questionable, when these measures are combined with pending legislation, they can have “educative effects”⁷⁰ among citizens and political organizations. David Yerushalmi, the drafter of the model legislation, is transparent about his aims being public attitude not legal substance. In an interview with *The New York Times*, he said, speaking of the anti-Sharia legislation, “If this thing passed in every state without any friction, it would have not served its purpose.... The purpose was heuristic—to get people asking this question, ‘What is Shariah?’”⁷¹

Fearmongering drives controversy and forces candidates to take positions on issues such as Sharia, which have been painted as dangerous to America. And so elements of the Islamophobia network are focusing efforts on key battleground states such as Florida, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. For instance, in March, the *St. Petersburg Times* reported that “two Republican legislators want to make sure Florida courts aren’t tainted by what one of them calls foreign ‘shenanigans’: Muslim sharia or legal codes from other nations.”⁷² While the lawmakers insisted

they weren't specifically targeting Sharia, the newspaper noted that the legislation they introduced was "copied almost word-for-word from the 'model legislation' posted on the website of a group called the American Public Policy Alliance."⁷³ These connections are detailed in Chapter 4 of our report.

In April, an anti-Sharia bill was introduced in North Carolina. As with virtually all other states considering such laws, the sponsors of the legislation could not come up with an example of Sharia infiltrating their state courts.⁷⁴ In addition, Pennsylvania is now in the cross-hairs of anti-Islam activist Robert Spencer, who pointed to the disposition of an inheritance case based upon Islamic religious law (because the deceased was Muslim and had called for that in his will) as evidence of creeping Sharia.⁷⁵

Never mind that a recent American Civil Liberties Union report noted that anti-Sharia crusaders have failed to demonstrate a single case of Sharia infiltrating U.S. courts.⁷⁶ That is not the point, of course. The point is to create a distracting, fear-based political atmosphere in which conservatives are brave patriots and strong on defense, while liberals are weak and politically correct. Using such a frame has helped conservatives win.

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Conclusion

As the 10th anniversary of 9/11 approaches, the Islamophobia network will be working overtime. The anniversary could be manipulated to ratchet up the non-existent threat of Sharia and warn of apocalyptic dangers stemming from Muslims living in America.

We want this report to help create a resilient and secure America by providing the public with fact-based knowledge, rather than shrill, fear-based attacks. Violent extremism exists in America. But it does not lie solely within Muslim American communities. Across the globe, there are terrorists killing in the name of Islam, but a new study from the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point Military Academy shows that al Qaeda attacks kill eight times more Muslims than non-Muslims.¹ Extremist attacks need to be vigorously investigated and effectively thwarted, wherever they are found.²

In the past few years we have seen high-profile acts of violence perpetrated by American Muslims, such as the senseless murder of 13 soldiers at Fort Hood by Major Nidal Malik Hasan. We have seen violent attacks prevented, such as the failed New York City Times Square bombing by Faisal Shahzad.³

Such attacks need to be put in context. Since 9/11, authorities have identified 161 Muslim American terrorist suspects and perpetrators, according to a 2011 study by University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill sociologist Charles Kurzman. That's a lot; yet the study, "Muslim-American Terrorism Since 9/11: An Accounting," concludes that "out of the thousands of acts of violence that occur in the United States each year, an efficient system of government prosecution and media coverage brings Muslim-American terrorism suspects to national attention, creating the impression—perhaps unintentionally—that Muslim-American terrorism is more prevalent than it really is."⁴

These cases enable the Islamophobia network to peddle their myths and misconceptions about Islam. Their rhetoric and actions are deeply unfortunate because they threaten to isolate and alienate a growing portion of the American popula-

Across the globe, there are terrorists killing in the name of Islam, but a new study shows that al Qaeda attacks kill eight times more Muslims than non-Muslims.

tion. In 2010, there were an estimated 2.6 million American Muslims. That number is expected to more than double over the next 20 years, to 6.2 million.⁵

President George W. Bush, of course, drew a distinct line between radical Islamist groups abroad who seek to kill Americans and the overwhelming majority of peaceful Muslims at home and abroad.⁶ He also stood up to the Islamophobia network with his outreach to American Muslims during his presidency.⁷

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie is doing the same. He recently came under intense attack for his appointment of Sohail Mohammed, who defended Muslims who were wrongly detained after 9/11, to be a superior court judge. The conservative governor summed up the criticism in one word: ignorance. An Investigative Project on Terrorism report “Gov. Christie’s Strange Relationship with Radical Islam” declared that Gov. Christie’s appointment of Mohammed “shows the governor’s tin ear for radical Islam.” Pressed by reporters on the reason for attacks Christie said, “Ignorance is behind the criticism of Sohail Mohammed. They are criticizing him as a Muslim American.”⁸ Despite the efforts of this Robert Spencer⁹, Frank Gaffney¹⁰, and Andrew McCarthy¹¹ and their grassroots partners, Christie prevailed. On July 26, 2011, Mohammed was sworn in.¹²

Then there is businessman Herman Cain—once a favorite on the Islamophobia network for his outspoken views about Sharia law when he first launched his campaign for the Republican Party nomination for president. The former CEO of Godfather’s Pizza once was vocal in his anti-Muslim sentiments, stating in March, for example, that:

*There is this creeping attempt, there is an attempt to gradually ease Sharia law and the Muslim faith into our government. It does not belong in our government. [...] I said the role of Islam in America is for those that believe in Islam to practice it and leave us alone. Just like Christianity. We have a First Amendment. And I get upset when the Muslims in this country, some of them, try to force their Sharia law onto the rest of us.*¹³

Since then, Cain has walked back from such extremism—and in the process irked the Islamophobia network to no end. Most recently, he retracted and publicly apologized for a number of these views.¹⁴ Cain in July went to the ADAMS Center in Northern Virginia, where he broke bread with Imam Mohamed Magid, the executive director of the center, and other Muslims. After the meeting, he said he

was “humble and contrite for any statements I have made that might have caused offense to American Muslims and their friends.”

Furthermore, he said he was “truly sorry” for creating the impression that he was against the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion. “We discovered we have much more in common in our values and virtues,” he said about his meeting. “In my own life as a black youth growing up in the segregated South, I understand their frustration with stereotypes. Those in attendance, like most American Muslims, are peaceful Muslims and patriotic Americans whose good will is often drowned out by the reprehensible actions of jihadists.”¹⁵

Cain’s experience is instructive. Once he detached himself from the web of the Islamophobia network, he encountered American Muslims who shattered many of the false impressions and stereotypes he held. Cain also regained his place supporting American values of religious liberty, freedom, and equal justice under the law.

Of course, the Islamophobia network was utterly contemptuous of Cain’s efforts to reach out to moderate Muslims. At the Western Conservative Conference in Denver this summer, Frank Gaffney alleged that Cain had actually met with members of the “Muslim Brotherhood apparatus in Washington, D.C.” Gaffney added, “If, in fact, he’s now changed his position in ways that are being reported, that’s even more troubling than if he was spending time with Muslim Brothers.”¹⁶

Such unchecked bullying by the misinformation experts should not be tolerated. Our nation needs more responsible conservatives to stand side by side with progressives to safeguard our national security and uphold America’s core values of religious freedom and respect for ethnic diversity. A required first step is to expose the influence of the organizations, individuals, and groups who make up the Islamophobia network in America.

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