

Post-Hearing Questions for the Record

Hearing Date: 10 July 2008

Committee: SHSGAC

Member: Senator Coburn

Witness: Zeyno Baran

Question: In December 2007, a grant of nearly \$500,000 was awarded by the U.S. State Department to a University of Delaware project managed by a leader of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS)¹. As you know, the Muslim Brotherhood considers the AMSS a partner organization. The grant is meant to foster dialogue with clerics in Muslim countries. In early 2008, the Islamic Society of North America, also considered a partner organization by the Muslim Brotherhood, received State Department funding for a similar program through a sub-grant to the National Peace Foundation². Are these the kinds of organizations the U.S. government should employ to conduct these types of programs?

Answer: There are two interrelated questions here on which my answer will focus. First, what is the goal the State Department hopes to achieve with these projects? And second, are these groups best suited to deliver the desired outcomes?

The State Department has established a number of exchange programs that include many promising political, business, cultural and social leaders of other countries. These are intended to provide these current and future leaders with a better understanding of US policies and values, as well as of American life in general. The hope is that once these people meet Americans who are in the same professional field or who share similar interests, they will have a much deeper understanding—and thus, it is assumed, a more positive understanding—of America and Americans. Subsequently, they will share their positive experiences and views with others in their communities, furthering a better image of America.

Since 9/11, the State Department has paid special attention to improving the US image in the Muslim world, focusing in particular on clerics. Though trying to stay away from the specifics of religious teachings, the US government does recognize the importance of winning over these clerics so that they are less likely to preach in anti-American or hate-filled ways. Most importantly, the goal is to help them understand that the US is not at war with Islam or Muslims—just the opposite: Muslims in America can practice their religion as they wish, they are not discriminated against or mistreated; and in fact, Muslims in America enjoy more rights and freedoms in the US than do Muslims in almost all other countries (including, especially, Muslim-majority ones).

¹ Grant details are posted on USAspending.gov:
http://www.usaspending.gov/faads/faads.php?reptype=r&database=faads&record_id=11414195&detail=3&datatype=T&sortby=i

² Grant details are posted on USAspending.gov:
http://www.usaspending.gov/faads/faads.php?reptype=r&database=faads&record_id=11414134&detail=3&datatype=T&sortby=i

Investing in clerics in Muslim countries so they are likely to preach positively about America and Americans clearly is a worthwhile goal. However, just who is put in charge of these exchange and dialogue programs is as important as what the programs are about—especially given the sensitive nature of this issue in the post-9/11 environment. The people and groups involved in such projects need to be proud Americans who themselves share these goals in order for these programs to have the desired outcome. They certainly do not need to agree with US policies or practices in all realms; in fact, as citizens, they are likely to have complaints and concerns as most Americans do. The key, however, is that they believe in America and in the need to work constructively in all areas for the benefit of the country.

The questions the State Department then needs to ask in evaluating applicants who are interested in running such projects include: What is the outlook of the applicant group—does it seek to further American interests and values? What is the group's track record, especially in terms of which other groups it associates with? If it has done similar projects before (fostering dialogue or exchanges with Muslims outside the US), with whom did it interact, what did it do and what was the outcome? What criteria will it use to select the participant clerics? What messages will it want to impart on the clerics it chooses for the programs?

These and other necessary questions would make clear that the above-mentioned groups—The Association of Muslim Social Scientists of North America (AMSS) and The Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)—are not the appropriate ones to conduct such programs. ISNA has been named as an unindicted co-conspirator in the ongoing Holy Land Foundation trial. Both of these groups have direct and indirect ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, which is a political Islamist network that considers Islam a “civilization alternative” to America (and to liberal democracy in general), and is thus fundamentally anti-American. The Muslim Brotherhood’s mission statement is “Allah is our objective. The Prophet is our leader. The Qur'an is our law. Jihad is our way. Dying in the way of Allah is our highest hope”. Hamas is a wing of the Muslim Brotherhood.

It is not possible for groups founded to further the goals and messages of the Muslim Brotherhood to convey instead the kind of messages the State Department would wish to be conveyed. Ultimately, it is likely that these groups would take advantage of such programs to further expand their own international networks. In short, the money of American taxpayers will not benefit American interests in the hands of groups affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Question: In your testimony, you quoted from the following section of the Muslim Brotherhood’s strategic plan for its affiliates in the U.S.:

Understanding the role of the Muslim Brother in North America: The process of settlement is a “Civilization-Jihadist Process” ... the [Muslim Brotherhood affiliates] must understand that their work in America is a kind of grand Jihad in

eliminating and destroying the Western Civilization from within and “sabotaging” its miserable house by their hands and the hands of unbelievers so that it is eliminated and God’s religion is made victorious over all other religions.³

This strategic plan lists several Muslim groups such as the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) and the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS) as Muslim Brotherhood partners to carry out the “grand jihad.” What tactics are taken by the Muslim Brotherhood leaders and the groups listed as Muslim Brotherhood U.S. affiliates to reach the goals of this strategic plan?

Answer: Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood are engaged in a **long-term social engineering** project. The eventual “Islamization” of the world is to be enacted via a bottom-up process. Initially, the individual is transformed into a “true” Muslim. This Islamization of the individual leads that person to reject Western norms of pluralism, individual rights, and the secular rule of law. Next, the individual’s family is transformed; then the society; then the state; and finally the entire world is expected to live, and be governed, according to Islamic principles.

To achieve this goal, different tactics are used in different countries. In the US, Islamist groups have taken full advantage of social and political liberties and of an environment tolerant of religious diversity. Hence, over the past four decades they have established various institutions to spread their ideology and exert their influence. A primary focus has been on **indoctrination**—especially of youth—as the critical first step of their bottom-up approach. Spreading political Islam as a “civilization alternative” to the liberal democracies of the West, they have created a **fifth column of activists** who work to undermine the very foundations of America by challenging its constitution and religious plurality.

Given their **sedition goals**, they **maintain secrecy regarding their objectives and employ deceptive methods**. They have created, as one leader suggested some “neutral-sounding” organizations, such as a “Palestinian-American Friendship Association -...This will be done in order to...put some honey a little bit at a time with the poison they’re given. But if from the first night you ...call it ‘The Islamic Society for Youths’ Welfare,’ they will shut the door in your face.”⁴

The Brotherhood has identified the media as “stronger than politics,” and highlighted the importance of training activists to **present their view in a way that would be acceptable to Americans**. One leader of a Brotherhood-linked organization explicitly suggested the need for “infiltrating the American media outlets, universities

³ “An Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal for the Group in North America,” Government Exhibit 003-0085, *U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation, et al.*

⁴ Transcript of October 1993 meeting of U.S. Palestine Committee leaders in Philadelphia, available at http://nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/HLF/93Philly_12.pdf.

and research centers.”⁵⁴⁹ And according internal Brotherhood documents, its leaders suggest that they should speak about “democracy and freedom of expression” to influence American public opinion; “When you tell an American individual that, ‘...this person is not elected. He is an oppressor...This is a dictatorial regime...’ bring up Saddam Hussein’s name...”⁶ They seem have realized how **concepts such as “democracy” and “freedom of expression” can be used in America to win over audiences.**

When questioned, at first these groups deny any links to the Brotherhood. If this deception fails and connections to the Brotherhood are disclosed, they downplay these links as associations they have had only in the past. At the same time, **they adopt the role of the victim, charging their accusers with “McCarthyism” and “Islamophobia.”** This intimidation, sometimes taken all the way to anti-defamation lawsuits, has silenced many journalists and researchers, as well as other Muslims.

They denounce virtually every terrorism indictment, detention, deportation, and investigation as a religiously-motivated attack on Islam. Instead of considering whether the individual in question has actually broken any laws, they instinctively blame the legal accusations on bigotry or anti-Muslim conspiracy.

Islamists may furthermore **provoke incidents** intended to make the American Muslim community feel under siege, presumably in an attempt to compel them to unite. Such tactics are increasingly used to drive a wedge between Muslims and non-Muslims in America.

In fact, in accordance with the Brotherhood’s long-term plan to **instill an “us vs. them” mentality**, Islamists are beginning to push for the creation of self-segregated societies—a process that has been labeled **“voluntary apartheid.”** The purpose is to **avoid cultural assimilation** and hence to increase the number of Muslims who would consider themselves **Muslims first, and Americans second.**

These groups make **tactical alliances.** For example, some groups claim to be interested in “civil rights,” and partner with leading American civil rights organizations that are eager to assist in any cases of real or perceived religious discrimination. Others engage in interfaith activities, mostly for the purpose of establishing links to Christian and Jewish groups, who would, in case of any problems with law enforcement, vouch for them being “good Muslims”. Often they partner with non-Muslim groups that are critical of US government policies, especially regarding Israel and the Iraq war, and offer them platforms to speak. Through such partnerships, the Islamists portray themselves as victims who are understandably and legitimately angry so that they can win the sympathies of both Muslim and non-Muslim audiences.

⁵ ibid

⁶ ibid