



## Council on American-Islamic Relations

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June 12, 2013

Honorable Mike Pompeo  
107 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-1604  
Fax: (202) 225-3489

Dear Rep. Pompeo:

We are writing to address your June 11, 2013, remarks on the House floor alleging that Muslim leaders have failed to condemn or act against terrorism. These remarks are false and irresponsible.

### **Boston Aftermath**

You opened your comments by saying, "Mr. Speaker, it's been just under 2 months since the attacks in Boston, and in those intervening weeks, the silence of Muslim leaders has been deafening."

In the hours after the Boston bombings on April 15, which occurred at approximately 2:49 p.m., a number of Muslim institutions issued statements whose themes included prayers for the victims, calls for Muslims to assist humanitarian efforts, and condemnations of terrorism.

These included, but were not limited to, the Universal Muslim Association of America (5:17 p.m.), the Muslim Public Affairs Council (5:53 p.m.), the Council on American-Islamic Relations (7:46 p.m.), the Muslim Peace Coalition (8 p.m.), the Muslim American Society Public Affairs and Engagement (10:52 p.m.), and the Islamic Society of North America (12:09 a.m. on 4/16).

The Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center (ISBCC) issued a release noting, "As Bostonians, and inspired by the values of mercy and justice central to our faith, the American-Muslim community stands ready to help. We have close to 40 ISBCC volunteers on site who are committed to assist in relief efforts and also donate blood. Should the City call upon us, we are also ready to transform the ISBCC into a disaster relief center." That center and other mosques also urged congregants to call the FBI's tip line should they have any information on attacks.

ISBCC's Imam William Webb offered to open his home to Marathon runners who needed a temporary place to stay. Webb told a reporter, "We're Bostonians - we mourn with the city. We stand in support with the city, with the victims. We're hurt, equally shocked and equally pissed off." <sup>i</sup>

The Muslim group Mercy to all Mankind also held a blood drive at Boston's Dana Farber Cancer Institute. <sup>ii</sup>

On Friday, April 19, 2013, while a massive manhunt was being conducted in Boston, leaders of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), Masjid Muhammad (Washington, D.C.), and the Muslim Public Affairs

Council (MPAC) held a press conference. During that event they reiterated strong condemnations of violent extremism and anyone who justifies terrorism in the name of Islam.

This event was covered by media including CNN,<sup>iii</sup> PBS,<sup>iv</sup> and USA Today.<sup>v</sup> Additionally, numerous regional publications covered this and similar events all conveying the exact message you assert Muslim leaders need to convey.

CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad's statement—"As God tells us in the Quran, if you murder one person it is as if you murdered all humanity. And if you saved one person, one innocent life, it is like you saved all of humanity"—was featured in numerous print and TV media outlets.

It is difficult to understand how an elected official with the resources available to any Member of Congress missed such an overwhelming amount of material.

### **General Condemnations of Terror**

In 2005, the Fiqh Council of North America issued a fatwa, or Islamic religious ruling, re-iterating Islam's prohibition of terrorism. That religious ruling clearly states, "Islam strictly condemns religious extremism and the use of violence against innocent lives."<sup>vi</sup>

It also states the following:

In the light of the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah we clearly and strongly state:

1. All acts of terrorism targeting civilians are haram (forbidden) in Islam.
2. It is haram for a Muslim to cooperate with any individual or group that is involved in any act of terrorism or violence.
3. It is the civic and religious duty of Muslims to cooperate with law enforcement authorities to protect the lives of all civilians.

Since including primary evidence of Muslim leaders' extensive condemnations of violent extremism would be overwhelming to your office, we will simply point you to the following three web pages:

Collected Muslim Statements Against Terrorism

<http://kurzman.unc.edu/islamic-statements-against-terrorism/>

CAIR's Anti-Terrorism Campaigns

<http://www.cair.com/about-us/cair-anti-terrorism-campaigns.html>

Fatwas & Statements by Muslim Scholars & Organizations

[http://theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/muslim\\_voices\\_against\\_extremism\\_and\\_terrorism\\_part\\_i\\_fatwas/0012209](http://theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/muslim_voices_against_extremism_and_terrorism_part_i_fatwas/0012209)

### **Praise for Zuhdi Jasser**

Finally, your decision to praise Dr. Zuhdi Jasser is troubling. In 2010, Jasser's American Islamic Forum for Democracy "applauded" an amendment to Oklahoma's state Constitution that would have implemented state-sponsored discrimination against Islam.<sup>vii</sup> Both a federal district court and the U.S. Court of Appeals 10th Circuit have held the amendment likely violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment by clearly favoring all other religions over Islam.<sup>viii</sup> Your support of Jasser leaves the impression that you endorse his support for unconstitutional legislation targeting Islam.

Jasser narrated *The Third Jihad*, a film created by the Clarion Fund that falsely depicts Muslims as inherently violent and seeking world domination. Following revelations that the film was shown as part of training at the New York Police Department, Police Commissioner Ray Kelly called it “wacky” and “objectionable.” Deputy Commissioner Paul Brown said, “[The Third Jihad] was reviewed and found to be inappropriate.”<sup>ix</sup>

## Conclusion

Muslims serve in our nation’s armed forces and in law enforcement. According to information released by the Pentagon to the U.S. House Homeland Security Committee in 2011, at least 6,024 U.S. service members who declared Islam as their faith have served honorably in overseas war deployments since the 9/11 attacks, and 14 Muslim-American troops have been killed in action, all in Iraq. Muslim allies have served honorably alongside our forces in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Muslims and their leadership are allies in our nation’s war against the corruption of Al-Qaeda and its ideological allies. After reviewing a 2009 report titled *Deadly Vanguard: A Study of Al-Qaida’s Violence Against Muslims*, Ralph Peters, wrote in New York’s *Daily Post*, “Al-Qaeda does one thing extremely well: killing Muslims.”<sup>x</sup> President Obama echoed this conclusion at a White House Ramadan fastbreaking reception in 2010 when he noted, “In fact, al Qaeda has killed more Muslims than people of any other religion — and that list of victims includes innocent Muslims who were killed on 9/11.”

It is our sincere hope that you will return to the House floor, correct your remarks, and acknowledge the strong messaging coming from American Muslim leadership that states clearly there is never any justification for terrorism, that denounces violent extremist leadership and is a reliable partner in pushing back against the ideology of Al-Qaeda and its allies.

Sincerely,

Corey Saylor  
Director  
Department to Monitor and Combat Islamophobia

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<sup>i</sup> Shahien Nasiripour. “Boston’s largest Mosque; “We’re Bostonians —We mourn with the city,” Huffington Post, April 16, 2013.

<sup>ii</sup> Jaclyn Reiss “Muslim group to host blood drive today” *BostonGlobe.com* (2010, April) Retrieved from BostonGlobe.com website: <http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/2013/04/30/muslim-group-host-blood-drive-today-response-boston-marathon-bombings/1B3kEduQDJuDUgofEEAWMN/story.html>

<sup>iii</sup> Eric Marrapodi. “Muslim leaders condemn bombing suspects,” CNN, April 20, 2013.

<sup>iv</sup> Author not named. “Muslim Leaders Denounce Boston Marathon Bombing,” PBS, April 26, 2013. Available at:

<sup>v</sup> “Boston Mosque cancels Friday prayer, condemns terrorism, USA Today, April 19, 2013.

<sup>vi</sup> Full text of the fatwa, along with endorsing individuals and organizations is available at:

[http://theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/fiqh\\_council\\_of\\_north\\_america\\_issues\\_fatwa\\_against\\_terrorism/](http://theamericanmuslim.org/tam.php/features/articles/fiqh_council_of_north_america_issues_fatwa_against_terrorism/)

<sup>vii</sup> M. Zuhdi Jasser, “AIFD Press Release: American Muslim Organization Applauds Oklahoma Anti-Shariah Law,” *American Islamic Forum for Democracy* (blog), November 5, 2010, available at: <http://aifdemocracy.org/aifd-press-release-american-muslim-organization-applauds-oklahoma-anti-shariah-law/>.

<sup>viii</sup> *Awad vs. Zirrax*, U.S. Court of Appeals Tenth Circuit 10-6273 (2012), available at: 2013, <http://www.ca10.uscourts.gov/opinions/10/10-6273.pdf>.

<sup>ix</sup> Tom Robbins, “NYPD Cops’ Training Included an Anti-Muslim Horror Flick,” Village Voice, January 19, 2011, available at: <http://www.villagevoice.com/2011-01-19/columns/nypd-cops-training-included-an-anti-muslim-horror-flick/>.

<sup>x</sup> Peters, Ralph, “Killing Muslims, America needs to publicize Al-Qaeda’s main ‘Achievement,’” New York Daily Post, January 23, 2010.