

CAIR

Council on American-Islamic Relations

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September 9, 2003

The Honorable Senator John Kyl
Chairman
Senate Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security
c/o Daniel Saterlee
325 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kyl and Subcommittee Members:

On behalf of our organization and the American Muslim community, I would like to thank you for inviting me to testify at your subcommittee hearing entitled "Two Years After 9/11: Connecting the Dots" on September 10, 2003.

As you know, the hearing in question is one day before the anniversary of the September 11 attacks on America. I will not be able to personally attend the hearing on September 10 because CAIR is the organizing sponsor for an interfaith memorial vigil to be held at the Capitol reflecting pool the same day.

I would like to make it perfectly clear that CAIR is a national civil rights organization and we do not claim to be experts on terrorism. However, I realize the importance and timeliness of such a hearing and because the American Muslim community has not been adequately represented at congressional hearings in the past, I felt obligated to present written testimony to be submitted for the record. **For the record, I would also like this letter submitted as part of my testimony for the hearing.**

Looking at the witness list and theme for this hearing, I can say with great confidence that this hearing will be used to vilify and defame the American Muslim community. Because CAIR and the American Muslim community have nothing to hide, we happily submit this testimony dealing with many of the predictable fallacies that will be advanced by the Investigative Project, headed by Steven Emerson.

Regardless, I would like to thank you for this opportunity and please let me know if we can be of any assistance in the future.

Most Sincerely,

Nihad Awad
Executive Director, CAIR

Written Testimony of

Nihad Awad

Before the

Senate Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security

“Terrorism: Two Years After 9/11, Connecting the Dots”

“American Muslim Community under Siege”

September 10, 2003

Nihad Awad
Executive Director
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
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Regarding Dr. Abu-Marzuk's trial, CAIR quoted his attorney, Stanley Cohen, as saying that he thought "...the case against his client is political rather than criminal."⁶⁸ The only mention of Sheikh Abdul-Rahman was that the "...lawyers defending Shaykh Omar Abdel Rahman complain that his trial was far from free and fair."⁶⁹

Nowhere in the report does it refer to these cases either as a "travesty of justice" or a "hate crime." Mr. Emerson's reliance on his friend Daniel Pipes' false statements show the veracity of his journalistic scholarship.

To prove that this is an outright lie, CAIR would be happy to provide a copy of the page in question from the 1996 CAIR civil rights report to any interested parties.

MYTH: In a recent congressional hearing, Mr. Emerson proclaimed that, "...[CAIR] received some of its initial seed money from the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLFRD)..."⁷⁰

FACT: This is an outright lie. Our organization did not receive any seed money from HLFRD. CAIR raises its own funds and we challenge Mr. Emerson to provide even a shred of evidence to support his ridiculous claim. In fact, it is known that our DC headquarters was funded largely by a loaned grant mortgage from the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), a multinational financial institution similar in nature to the World Bank.

MYTH: "... [CAIR] has disseminated Hamas communiqués..."⁷¹

FACT: This may be one of the most ridiculous charges ever made by Emerson. This is a *prima facie* defamatory statement and since our incorporation in 1994, CAIR has never voiced support for Hamas, let alone "disseminate" its "communiqués."

CAIR's communications director contacted James Taranto of *The Wall Street Journal* editorial page to demand that the *WSJ* and Emerson produce evidence of these absurd claims. Not surprisingly, no evidence or explanation was ever provided

Although this is not a comprehensive documentation of all the fallacious claims made by Islamophobes, it was meant to show that The Investigative Project, led by Mr. Emerson, is part of a greater problem. The continuous slander of American Muslim organizations by so-called "experts" will do nothing to improve our country or the international political arena. There only goal is to make certain that their myopic worldview is not challenged by anyone; and anyone who does challenge their political beliefs will be dishonored by any malicious means necessary.

⁶⁸ See Council on American-Islamic Relations 1996 Report, "The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in the United States," 1996 at 8-9.

⁶⁹ *Id.*

⁷⁰ See Testimony of Steven Emerson with Jonathan Levin before United States Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, "Terrorism Financing: Origination, Organization, Prevention: Saudi Arabia, Terrorist Financing and the War on Terror," July 31, 2003 at 39 available at <http://www.senate.gov/~govt-aff/files/073103emerson.pdf>

⁷¹ See *supra* note 43.