

CAIR: “Do Nothing Till You Hear From Me”

by Hugh Fitzgerald (June 2016)



The Council on American-Islamic Relations, or CAIR, the Hamas-linked Muslim organization which in 2007 was named as one of the unindicted co-conspirators in a case against the Texas-based Holy Land Foundation, describes itself as a civil rights organization: “CAIR is America’s largest Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization. Its mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding.” Sounds good. But CAIR does not “enhance the understanding of Islam” when it claims that “Jihad” means “struggle, struggle for a good cause,” and when Nihad Awad, the National Political Director of CAIR, further misinforms: “[Jihad] is a concept, a noble concept, within Islam that emphasizes a personal struggle within yourself to be a better person, a better husband, better wife, better worker, better neighbor.” In 2013, CAIR took this one step further, with its comical “My Jihad” campaign, consisting of bus ads where a fetching young Muslimah declares what *her* Jihad is about:

“My jihad is to stay fit despite my busy schedule,” says a woman in a headscarf lifting weights. “What’s yours?”

Your very own Jihad could be anything at all in the personal self-improvement line, from vowing to use the elliptical machine more often, to cutting down your binge-watching of *Seinfeld*, or even to laying off the Cherry Garcia. All of these jihads turn out to be preposterously peaceful, and none of them has anything to do with the authentic Jihad of the Qur’an, which – as CAIR would prefer that Infidels not comprehend – has to do with a very different “struggle” against the enemy, involving lots of striking at Infidel throats and removal of Infidel heads, with no self-improvement needed and nothing personal about it.

As for encouraging “dialogue,” CAIR is happy to participate in those treacly interfaith gatherings where non-Muslims are given a chance to apologize for the

mistreatment of Muslims by “islamophobes,” and CAIR gets a chance to generously accept the apology on behalf of Islam. CAIR also offers, in the same dialoguing spirit, “diversity and sensitivity training” to non-Muslims who, for a price, can learn what they have been doing wrong in interacting with Muslims and are instructed in how to set things right.

CAIR’s “advocacy” for Muslims includes strenuous efforts to silence, through vilification and intimidation, the most prominent critics of Islam. CAIR’s targets have included individuals, such as talk show hosts (Bill Maher), radio commentators (Michael Savage), writer/bloggers (Robert Spencer), columnists (Cal Thomas), apostates (Nonie Darwish), and groups such as Anti-CAIR, the Thomas More Law Center, and the Clarion Project. CAIR also monitors, and complains about, television and movie depictions of Muslims, especially those that might for some bizarre reason suggest a connection between Muslims and terrorism. One example of CAIR’s success in this line was the on-air disclaimer it managed to extract from the star of “24,” a fictional drama about terrorists:

“Hi. My name is Kiefer Sutherland. And I play counter-terrorist agent Jack Bauer on Fox’s 24. I would like to take a moment to talk to you about something that I think is very important. Now while terrorism is obviously one of the most critical challenges facing our nation and the world, it is important to recognize that the American Muslim community stands firmly beside their fellow Americans in denouncing and resisting all forms of terrorism. So in watching 24, please, bear that in mind.”

Instead of encouraging Muslims in America to “stand firmly beside their fellow Americans” in “denouncing and resisting all forms of terrorism,” CAIR tries to persuade American Muslims not to collaborate with the security services. On the website of its California chapter, for example, CAIR posted a picture of “a sinister-looking FBI agent” under the headline “Don’t Talk To The FBI” and “Build A Wall of Resistance.” It has distributed pamphlets in Florida entitled “What to do if the FBI comes for you.” And CAIR’s head in San Francisco advised Muslims that they had no obligation to talk to the F.B.I. CAIR wants to be the intermediary between Muslims and the F.B.I., advising American Muslims on when to talk, and when to remain silent, and what to say to whom and how to phrase or feign things for maximum impact and innocence. It views its relationship with the F.B.I. not as cooperative but as adversarial, and depicts American Muslims as “innocent victims” of an endless “islamophobic” campaign. For CAIR, the

F.B.I. – which has gone out of its way to treat CAIR with kid gloves – should be seen by Muslims as an organization to be regarded with deep suspicion, rather than to be enthusiastically aided in its inquiries.

The other day I ran across a [“six-months-after-San Bernardino” article about CAIR](#) and the shootings in December 2015. You may remember that as soon as it was known who the Muslim killers were, the head of CAIR’s Los Angeles chapter, Hussam Ayloush, held a news conference saying CAIR would “advise” the family of the suspected killer and terrorist Syed Rizwan Farook. In other words, CAIR would act as intermediary between the family and the world, preparing family members for the questions they would likely be asked, counselling the relatives on when, and what, to respond. Anyone who hoped CAIR would say forthrightly “Tell the F.B.I. everything you know. They’re not out to get you,” was disappointed. CAIR did receive criticism for its behavior at the time; nearly six months later, CAIR’s Ayloush was still unrepentant:

“It is not about what is popular or convenient. We wanted to make sure that no one is punished for the sins of others.”

Thus does CAIR’s attempt to inject itself into a terrorism investigation, but not for the purposes of furthering that investigation, become a ludicrous example of Standing Up For What’s Right, Whatever The Cost: “It is not about what is popular or convenient.” Precisely what noble principle is being upheld by getting in the way of the F.B.I. is entirely unclear. But we are expected to believe that precisely because it is “not about what is popular or convenient,” it must therefore be admirable. And there is more from this theatre of the absurd: “We wanted to make sure that no one is punished for the sins of others.” This is CAIR’s way of saying: “We wanted to make sure that *no Muslims* are punished for the acts of other Muslims.” It would be especially horrific to “punish” the Muslim community by tarring it with the brush of suspected ties to terrorism, since we know – because CAIR keeps telling us – that such attacks as those at San Bernardino and Fort Hood, like all attacks by Muslim terrorists, “*have nothing to do with Islam*,” but are the result of “*a twisted mind-set*” (repeat both *ad libitum*).

One wonders if Hussam Ayloush can adduce a single example of the F.B.I. or any other government agency attempting to punish a Muslim “for the sins of others.” The egregious Mark Juergensmeyer, “an expert in religious studies at the

University of California" and a defender of CAIR, claims that CAIR is criticized because there is "strong public perception that being Muslim leads to terrorism." Really? Only in CAIR's grotesque caricature of an "islamophobe." Surely CAIR's many links to Hamas, CAIR's involvement with the Holy Land Foundation, CAIR's campaign to misinform the public about the nature of Jihad, CAIR's attempt to keep Muslims from cooperating with the FBI, CAIR's efforts to intimidate and silence those who know too much about Islam and share that knowledge, are sufficient to explain criticism of CAIR, and not that putative, or rather non-existent, "public perception that being Muslim leads to terrorism." And channeling Ayloush, Juergensmeyer maintains that it's "CAIR [that has] a concern that the family [of Farook] not be tarred with public perception, that innocent victims not be deprived of their liberties because of the acts of a few." But no "innocent victims" have been, or could be, deprived of "their liberties" – all the F.B.I. wanted to do was to talk to family members to find out as much as they could about the killers, both of whom were dead and thus unavailable for questioning. It is no different from the procedure they follow with relatives when *non-Muslim* killers are unavailable for questioning.

Hussam Ayloush asked Farook's brother-in-law a series of questions: "Was there anything unusual about Farook's life? Did he have a gun? Was he a member of the Islamic State?" The answers are not given in the article, but Ayloush does report, in friendly-colloquial-innocuous fashion, that he learned from Farook's brother-in-law Farhan Khan that Farook had made the hajj and that his wife was born in Pakistan. (Ayloush: "His wife was born in Pakistan? Great, that's going to be mentioned" [so be ready to talk about that].) Why would he be asking these questions, if not to help prepare Khan and his wife for their meeting with the F.B.I.? "I was looking at what to expect," said Ayloush, meaning by this: "I was *preparing* them [Farook's relatives] for what they should expect." But why should CAIR feel the need to "prepare" them at all?

The "innocent victim" theme is played for all it is worth. All through December, Ayloush says he would frequently call or stop at Khan's house "to make sure the family wasn't being harassed." But there are no reports of the family being harassed, or threatened with harassment, by anyone. Ayloush's expressed fears usefully contribute, however, to CAIR's "victimization" script. If you need to "make sure the family wasn't being harassed," this implies the existence of that worrisome possibility; it creates a phantasmagoric fear that can only be

assuaged by Ayloush's solicitous "checking up on" the family.

Then there is this maudlin masterpiece: on one of Ayloush's visits (to check on the "innocent victims"), he noticed Khan's "children on the floor eating candy." Why? he wondered. Their mother told him "that they had run out of food because they didn't feel comfortable leaving the home to shop for groceries." The clear implication is that they lived in such fear of islamophobes that they dared not leave the house, not even to shop for milk and eggs. The story sounds doubtful. But suppose it were true. Was such a worry reasonable? Has there been a single case in the U.S. of attacks by maddened Infidels on relatives of Muslim terrorists? The touching aspect of the tale, the one that is supposed to tug at your heartstrings, is that suffer-the-little-children theme, with the Khan children reduced to sitting "on the floor eating candy." Ayloush exclaims: "Oh, my God, at the end of the day, this is a family. This is not a media center; this is a family that actually has been unable to conduct their normal life." But there was no "media center" disruption: during the first week after the killing (let's not forget about those killings, in all of our concern for the Khan family), a few "reporters stood watch outside" – no frenzied paparazzi mob – and after that week, they apparently left. The family, Ayloush says, "has been unable to conduct their normal life." Why? No threats of any kind were made against the family (how do we know? we know because had there been any such threats, CAIR would certainly have proclaimed them *urbi et orbi*). If the parents were too fearful to go grocery shopping, despite the absence of any threats, that is their problem. Or more exactly, that is the problem they have with CAIR itself, which for its own purposes stokes the very fears it claims to want to quell. CAIR, after all, exploits the victimisation narrative it has created to make non-Muslims feel ashamed of their "suspicion" of "innocent Muslims" and, as always, to divert attention from Islam itself.

Meanwhile, somewhere in this land of ours, sinister F.B.I. agents are hovering, frightened Muslim children are enduring having to eat candy on the floor, and CAIR is girding its loins for battle – once more unto the breach! – against the security services and islamophobes on behalf of innocent Muslim victims, having long ago adopted as its theme song Duke Ellington's "Do nothing till you hear from me."

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