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Great Idea, Ibrahim Hooper!

IPT News

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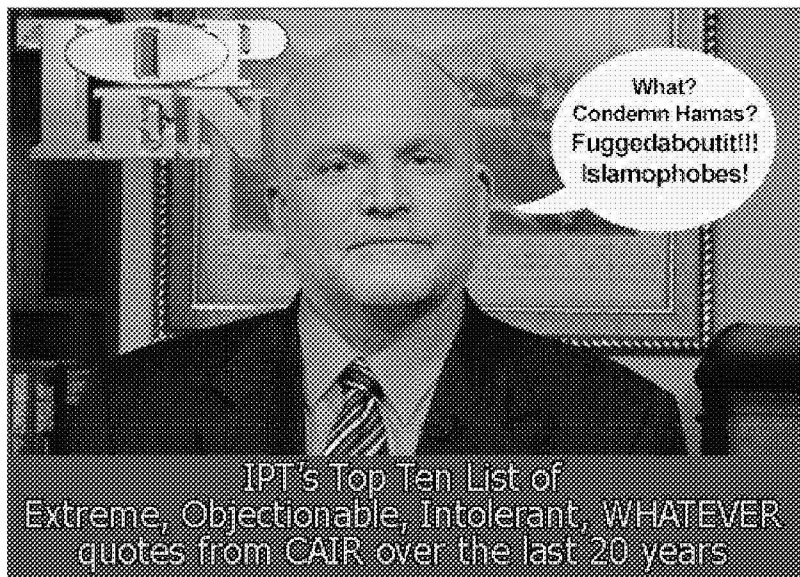
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In a heated exchange last week, Ibrahim Hooper – national spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) – issued a put up or shut up kind of challenge to his organization's critics.

Hooper was pressed by Fox News host Megyn Kelly about CAIR's record of failing to condemn terrorist groups like Hamas and Hizballah and other questionable positions. Hooper tried to deflect, blaming "Internet hate sites" for fueling "hate-filled smears against CAIR, which was founded in 1994.



"Please find something that CAIR has done or said in those 20 years that you find either

extreme, objectionable, intolerant, whatever," Hooper said.



Don't mind if we do.

We've documented CAIR's dubious record for years, noting in a 2009 report that the group responds to the very kind of specific examples Hooper demands to see by issuing ad hominem attacks against the messenger.

So, in a decidedly-less funny tribute to Late Show host David Letterman's pending retirement, here are the IPT's top 10 examples of "extreme, objectionable, intolerant, whatever" actions by CAIR. Together, they undermine CAIR's credibility as a mainstream, reliable arbiter in the debate about terrorism, extremism and the treatment of Muslims in America:

You'll have to provide your own drumroll.

10. Using civil rights instruction to scare the daylights out of Muslims and drive a wedge between the community and the FBI.

CAIR officials say their "Know Your Rights" seminars simply are meant to educate people that they have a right to have counsel present for questioning if the FBI approaches.

That would be fine if that's all they were. But CAIR's message is wrapped in paranoia, casting the FBI as an out-of-control monster whose agents will do everything and anything to set up innocent Muslims.

"They will do anything, anything within their power and oftentimes beyond their power to get you to talk," CAIR-New York board member Lamis Deek said at a 2011 seminar. "They will threaten you. OK? I've had one case where they tried to blackmail my client, I mean blackmail, seriously blackmail; that's illegal. But they'll do it."

This came two months after CAIR's San Francisco chapter posted a flyer online urging Muslims to "Build a Wall of Resistance. Don't Talk to the FBI." In response, Hooper tried to minimize the incident as a misinterpretation. The problem wasn't the flyer and its message. Instead, he told Fox News – surprise! – it was an "attack by the Islamophobic hate machine."

9. False Accusations of FBI Shootings

It has not happened often, but FBI agents have shot and killed Muslim suspects in separate episodes. In each case, CAIR immediately cast the shooting as unjustified, and demanded independent investigations. In each case, those wishes were granted. But when the reviews reached the opposite conclusion, that the shootings were justified based upon the suspect's actions, CAIR refused to accept that the suspect may have escalated the situation. This emphasis on blaming law enforcement no matter what should be viewed in the context of CAIR's campaign against the FBI illustrated in #10 above.

In 2009, agents shot and killed Detroit Imam Luqman Abdullah. Abdullah fired first as agents moved in to arrest him for conspiracy and weapons charges. A Justice Department Civil Rights Division investigation concluded that agents opened fire "only after Imam Abdullah brandished a concealed handgun and shot toward them and that they legitimately feared that Imam Abdullah was in a position to cause death or significant injury to another."

Even though the report made a point of showing that audio recordings, ballistics and other evidence all corroborated the agents' accounts, and even though "[a] Glock 9mm handgun was found next to Imam Abdullah after the shooting and it had been fired," CAIR officials continued to cast the shooting as "an overblown military type raid." CAIR dismissed the findings, along with similar conclusions from the Dearborn Police Department and Michigan attorney general, as "superficial and incomplete."

Last month, CAIR again took issue with an independent investigation for failing to agree with their spin. Ibragim Todashev, a friend of Boston Marathon bomber Tamerlan Tsarnaev, was shot and killed by an FBI agent after hours of questioning in his Florida apartment. Todashev, a "skilled mixed-martial arts fighter," implicated himself in a triple murder in Massachusetts. Witnesses say he grew anxious and agitated before heaving a coffee table at the FBI agent, hitting him in the head. He grabbed a five-foot-long metal pole over his head "with the end of the pole pointed toward [the FBI agent] as if intended to be used to impale rather than strike," the investigation found.

CAIR's Tampa director said the report raised "several concerns and key inconsistencies and ... many important unanswered questions." The failure to bring charges hurts the FBI's credibility, he wrote on Twitter.

8. Refusing to Condemn Hamas and Hizballah as Terrorist Groups.

CAIR officials are great about condemning "all forms of terrorism and religious extremism." But try to drill down and ask about specific terrorist groups and CAIR does everything but give a straight answer. They'll stick with the universal rejection of anyone who engages in political violence as spokesman Corey Saylor did in 2008. Or, they'll refuse on principle, as Hooper did in 2002 when he told the *Pittsburgh Post-*

Gazette that "We're not in the business of condemning."

That's consistent with Hooper's dodge in the weeks after 9/11. Challenged by journalist Jake Tapper, Hooper hedged when it came to Osama bin Laden, saying "If Osama bin Laden was behind it, we condemn him by name." Tapper was surprised — "why qualify the response?" he asked.

"Hooper said he resented the question."

Or, they'll go to bluster.

In that 2001 interview with Tapper, Hooper rejected the question about Hamas as "word games from the pro-Israel lobby."

This past November, CAIR-Los Angeles chief Hussam Ayloush reacted angrily to the very question. Simply being asked to condemn Hamas was "not acceptable," he said, and "proves that you have nothing but bigotry in you."

The group had no reservations condemning Israel, however, especially after it struck Hamas targets. CAIR condemned the killing of Hamas founder and spiritual leader Ahmed Yassin. The statement didn't mention his role in Hamas, but cast him as "a 67-year-old quadriplegic and the most prominent Palestinian Islamic figure."

In 2008, CAIR called reporters to a news conference to condemn Israel's 2008 "Cast Lead" incursion into Gaza aimed at stopping rampant Hamas rocket attacks targeting Israeli civilians. CAIR co-founder and Executive Director Nihad Awad demanded "that our government, the U.S. government, take immediate steps to end the immoral and illegal Israeli bombardment of Gaza and its population."

He said nothing about the Hamas rocket fire.

For CAIR officials, attacks on Israeli civilians may not be seen as terrorism, but as a form of "resistance."

7. Lying About it to Megyn Kelly and Fox viewers.

In his appearance on Fox last week, Hooper misled the audience.

"We've condemned Hamas, we've condemned every Hezbollah, we've condemned -- we've condemned every organization that's on the list of terrorist designated by the U.S. government," he said.

6. Standing by Accused Terrorists and Terror Supporters

Our 2008 dossier on CAIR featured an entire section devoted to CAIR's consistent behavior in casting doubt on terrorist and terror financing prosecutions. In each case, it was more than reminding people that, in our system, a person is innocent until proven guilty. To CAIR, these cases were inherently flawed, driven by politics, and unfair to Muslim Americans.

Among the examples:

- The conspiracy case against 11 Northern Virginia men who trained and planned to travel to wage jihad against American troops in Afghanistan after 9/11 was draconian and an example of "selective prosecution of Muslims since the 9/11 terror attacks."
- The 2008 conviction of five men tied to the Texas-based Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLF) "was based more on fear-mongering than on the facts," CAIR said in a statement. "It is particularly troubling that the government chose to use testimony from an anonymous witness, which deprives the defendants of their full right to confront their accusers. We expect the defendants to appeal this verdict and believe that it will eventually be overturned."

It wasn't.

- The 2011 arrest of Manssor Arbabsiar for plotting to kill Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Washington, which was tied to elements inside the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps's Quds Force was dismissed by key CAIR leaders as a trumped up entrapment case.

A year later, Arbabsiar pleaded guilty, admitting that "he conspired with officials in the Iranian military who were based in Iran, to cause the assassination of the Saudi Arabian Ambassador while the Ambassador was in the United States." CAIR said nothing about that.

But that position is consistent for CAIR, which casts virtually all arrests of terror suspects in FBI sting operations as inherently suspect. CAIR-San Francisco representative Zahra Billoo told a local television "that the FBI was looking for a sensational story" rather than stopping a threat when it arrested a man who believed he was about to blow up a packed Christmas tree lighting ceremony in Portland, Ore. Walid, the Michigan director mentioned earlier, has said that the FBI "has recruited more so-called extremist Muslims than al-Qaida themselves."

CAIR officials also have claimed that the war on terrorism had become a war on Islam, a statement considered significant in radicalizing young Muslims. When we wrote about it in 2011, Hooper demanded a correction. CAIR officials, he argued, merely said there was a *perception*. Their emphasis on this issue, he argued, somehow had nothing to do with accepting or reinforcing that perception.

5. Working to silence/marginalize critics, especially fellow Muslims

This one is fresh from the headlines. CAIR helped pressure Brandeis University last week into withdrawing plans to bestow an honorary degree on author Ayaan Hirsi Ali. She renounced Islam, and is dedicated to combating abuse of women in Muslim societies, especially the incidents of female genital mutilation. It is driven from her personal experiences.

But CAIR likened the original Brandeis plan to honor Hirsi Ali "to promoting the work of white supremacists and anti-Semites."

CAIR has twice failed in attempts to get Zuhdi Jasser, a fellow Muslim who opposes CAIR's Islamist political agenda, removed from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. Most recently, CAIR believed Jasser should be disqualified because they don't like people who have supported his work financially. Jasser was appointed to a new term a week ago.

CAIR even tried to intimidate Somali Americans who were trying to stem the flow of young men in the Minneapolis area who returned to Somalia to fight with the al-Shabaab terrorist group. It called two men "anti-Muslim" for participating in a seminar which included a discussion about al-Shabaab.

4. Trying to stifle any discussion radical Islam plays in terror attacks and plots.

When Army psychiatrist Nidal Hassan opened fire on his fellow soldiers at Fort Hood in 2009, CAIR argued that Hassan's religious motivation should not be part of the ensuing debate. Hassan, however, self-identified as a "Soldier of Allah" on his business card and gave a presentation called, "Why the War on Terror is a War on Islam." But Hooper went on a radio show to speculate that perhaps Hassan "just snapped ... when these things happen and the guy's name is John Smith nobody says well what about his religious beliefs? But when it is a Muslim sounding name that automatically comes into it."

CAIR officials downplay religious motivation in other terror plots and say terms like *jihad* and radical Islam should not be used in discussing terrorist plots and attacks by Muslims. In that vein, CAIR conspired with a political scientist in 2010 to gin up sales of a book which claimed that religious extremism was a minimal factor in suicide bombings.

3. Soliciting dictators for donations.

CAIR directly asked the late-Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi to underwrite a program to distribute Qurans. Awad praised Gaddafi as "the world Islamic popular leader." Law enforcement sources told the IPT that Awad met with officials representing Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir in November 2009, months after Bashir was charged with crimes against humanity.

State Department records show that a CAIR delegation sought millions of dollars during trips to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in 2006.

2. Appearing on Iranian and Hamas television to criticize the treatment of Muslims in the United States.

Though the practice has waned, CAIR officials from throughout the country have proven more than happy to appear on Iran's Press TV and Hamas's Al-Quds television. The CAIR representatives rarely spoke about the freedom Muslims enjoy in America. Rather, they painted pictures of Muslims being demonized in America and unfairly targeted by law enforcement. The one time Hooper did say something positive, he followed it by saying, "there is also a sense of being under siege from these hate mongers that are constantly trying to demonize our faith."

When violent, anti-American protests broke out in Muslim countries in 2012, a CAIR official told Press TV that, "People have had enough of what is seen by them, what looks to them like America's war on Islam."

And the No. 1 example of CAIR being "extreme, objectionable, intolerant, whatever..."

The Palestine Committee.

Although it is a Muslim advocacy organization, CAIR was born from an original sin. It was part of something called the Palestine Committee, a Muslim Brotherhood umbrella organization created to support Hamas politically and financially. The evidence for this comes not from "Internet hate sites," as Hooper is fond of saying, but from internal documents seized by the FBI and admitted into evidence in the HLF trial.

Here's a Palestine Committee meeting agenda listing CAIR among its member organizations. Here's the committee's telephone list, including CAIR founders Awad and Ahmad (listed as Omar Yehya). Here's a federal judge's opinion that the government produced "ample evidence to establish the associations of CAIR with Hamas."

CAIR has never acknowledged this history. They even tried to argue that the Palestine Committee never existed.

It didn't work.

This evidence is the reason that the FBI cut off relations with CAIR outside of official investigations in 2008.

"[U]ntil we can resolve **whether there continues to be a connection between CAIR or its executives and HAMAS**, the FBI does not view CAIR as an appropriate liaison partner," an FBI assistant director explained in a 2009 letter. [Emphasis added]

The policy remains in effect, meaning the question has not been resolved.

Yet, in his interview with Kelly, Hooper tried to make relations between CAIR and the FBI seem fine, saying "we have relations, we're on a daily contact with the FBI on civil rights issues –on a variety of things."

Rather than acknowledge their record and try to claim things have changed, Hooper and CAIR engage in denial and deflection. Read through this Top 10 again. The examples cited come from the mouths of CAIR officials themselves or from court documents.

CAIR must fear what would happen if the broader public understands that, thus the emphasis on "Internet hate sites."

Ibrahim Hooper issued a challenge. We thank him for it.

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