October 19, 2011

The Honorable John Brennan
Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and
Counterterrorism and Deputy National Security Advisor
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Brennan,

The undersigned Muslim, Arab, and South Asian organizations write regarding the federal government's use of biased, false and highly offensive training materials about Muslims and Islam. The seriousness of this issue cannot be overstated, and we request that the White House immediately create an interagency task force to address this problem, with a fair and transparent mechanism for input from the Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities, including civil rights lawyers, religious leaders, and law enforcement experts.

While recent news reports have highlighted the FBI's use of biased experts and training materials, we have learned that this problem extends far beyond the FBI and has infected other government agencies, including the U.S. Attorney's Anti-Terrorism Advisory Councils, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the U.S. Army. Furthermore, by the FBI's own admission, the use of bigoted and distorted materials in its trainings has not been an isolated occurrence. Since last year, reports have surfaced that the FBI, and other federal agencies, are using or supporting the use of biased trainers and materials in presentations to law enforcement officials. Disclosures of materials through a Freedom of Information Act request by civil rights organizations and in-depth reporting by *Wired* magazine show just how prevalent this issue is throughout the federal government.

Recently disclosed materials, include:

- A 2006 FBI intelligence report stating that individuals who convert to Islam are on the path to becoming "Homegrown Islamic Extremists," if they exhibit any of the following behavior:[1]
  - "Wearing traditional Muslim attire"
  - "Growing facial hair"
  - "Frequent attendance at a mosque or a prayer group"
  - "Travel to a Muslim country"
  - "Increased activity in a pro-Muslim social group or political cause"

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[1] Spencer Ackerman, *New Evidence of Anti-Islam Bias Underscores Deep Challenges for FBI's Reform Pledge*, WIRED MAGAZINE, Sept. 23, 2011, *available at* http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2011/09/fbi-islam-domination/all/1.

- In 2007, William Gawthrop, a FBI intelligence analyst who has stated that the Prophet "Muhammad's mindset is a source for terrorism" taught a class at the National Defense Intelligence College, the professional education institution run by the Defense Intelligence Agency.[2]

- A January 2009 powerpoint presentation by the FBI's Law Enforcement Communications Unit, which trains new recruits, states that Islam is a religion that "transforms [a] country's culture into 7th-century Arabian ways."[3] A reading list accompanying the presentation includes books such as:

  - *The Truth About Mohammed: Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion*, by Robert Spencer, the co-founder of a group called Stop Islamicization of America—designated a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center—and a well-known Muslim-basher who was cited by the Oslo, Norway terrorist 65+ times in his manifesto "justifying" his attack.

  - *The Arab Mind*, by Raphael Patai (which contains such quotes as "In the Arab view of human nature, no person is supposed to be able to maintain incessant, uninterrupted control over himself. Any event that is outside routine everyday occurrence can trigger such a loss of control . . . Once aroused, Arab hostility will vent itself indiscriminately on all outsiders")

- A report, authored by Army Command and General Staff at the Fort Leavenworth School of Advanced Military Studies, dated May 21, 2009, includes statements such as:[4]

  - "Moderate Muslims are not exercising moderation; they are simply applying other means to accomplish the same goal of establishing global Islamic dominance."

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[2] Spencer Ackerman, *Justice Department Official: Muslim 'Juries' Threaten 'Our Values'*, WIRED MAGAZINE, Oct. 5, 2011, *available at* http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2011/10/islamophobia-beyond-fbi/2/; *see also Ex-official: Muhammad Reveals Key to Overcoming Jihadists*, WorldNetDaily, Oct. 31, 2006, *available at* http://www.wnd.com/?pageId=38575.

[3] Spencer Ackerman, *FBI 'Islam 101' Guide Depicted Muslims as 7th-Century Simpletons*, WIRED MAGAZINE, July 27, 2011, *available at* http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2011/07/fbi-islam-101-guide/.

[4] *See* Major David A. Strauss, *Global Insurgency to Reestablish the Caliphate; Identifying and Understanding the Enemy,* School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2009, *available at* http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA506224.

- "Islamic doctrine is based upon the establishment of its culture in dominance of all others. In essence, all other cultures must not only accept, but convert or submit, to Islam."

❖ A May 19, 2010, powerpoint presentation prepared by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, and delivered at a Defense Department conference, states that "Internal Islamic Failures/Collapse . . . Did NOT Start on 9/11," but instead date back "~1400 years" (to the birth of Islam and the death of the Prophet Muhammad)[5].

❖ In July 2010, Robert Spencer presented a two-hour seminar on "the belief system of Islamic jihadists" to the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) in Tidewater, Virginia. He presented a similar lecture to the U.S. Attorney's Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council, which is co-hosted by the FBI's Norfolk Field Office.[6]

❖ In January 2011, Stephen Coughlin, a former consultant on Islamic law for the Joint Chiefs of Staff who criticized ex-President George W. Bush's assurances that the U.S. is not at war with Islam for having a "chilling effect" on intelligence analysis, gave a presentation to the FBI's D.C. field office, during which, according to attendees, he claimed that Islamic law was incompatible with the U.S. Constitution and that there is no such thing as a loyal American Muslim.[7]

❖ A power point presentation from a March 21, 2011, FBI training, "Strategic Themes and Drivers in Islamic Law," included statements such as:[8]

- "Accommodation and compromise between [Islam and the West] are impermissible and fighting [for Muslims] is obligatory"
- "There may not be a 'radical' threat as much as it is simply a normal assertion of the orthodox ideology . . . [t]he strategic themes animating these Islamic values are not fringe; they are main stream"
- The Islamic practice of *zakat*, alms-giving, is characterized as a "funding mechanism for combat"

❖ An undated FBI powerpoint presentation titled "Militancy Considerations" shows a comparative line graph where the Torah, Bible, and Quran are charted on an axis showing a trajectory of the sacred texts from "violent" to "non-violent." The Torah and Bible are graphed until 2010, reaching the zenith of "non-violent," while the line

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[5] Ackerman, *supra* note 2.
[6] Ackerman, *supra* note 1.
[7] *Id.*
[8] Spencer Ackerman, *FBI Teaches Agents: 'Mainstream' Muslims Are 'Violent, Radical,'* WIRED MAGAZINE, Sept. 14, 2011, *available at* http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2011/09/fbi-muslims-radical/.

for the Quran stops at 622 AD and remains at the "violent" stage, with a parenthetical that "this moderating process has not happened."[9]

- During a June 8, 2011, presentation by FBI analyst William Gawthrop to Infragard, a partnership organization between the FBI and the private sector, Gawthrop stated that al-Qaida was "irrelevant" compared to the threat of Islam itself. He also compared Islam to the Death Star and stated that it needs to be shot with a "torpedo."10

- As recently as September 1, 2011, mandatory orientation material for all 4,400 members of the FBI's JTTF's stated:[11]

  > "Sunni Muslims have been prolific in spawning numerous and varied fundamentalist extremist terrorist organizations. Sunni core doctrine and end state have remained the same and they continue to strive for Sunni Islamic domination of the world to prove a key Quranic assertion that no system of government or religion on earth can match the Quran's purity and effectiveness for paving the road to God."

- The FBI's intranet features antiquated and offensive documents about Muslims and Islam, including:[12]

  - "The Personal Law of The Mahommedans." (19th Century text)
  - "Mohammed Or Christ: An Account Of The Rapid Spread of Islam In All Parts of The Globe, The Methods Employed to Obtain Proselytes, Its Immense Press, Its Strongholds, & Suggested Means to be Adopted to Counteract the Evil." (1915 text)

- The FBI's library at the FBI training academy in Quantico, Virginia holds books from a number of authors who have publicly defiled and maligned Islam and Muslims, including:[13]

  - *Militant Islam Reaches America*, by Daniel Pipes
  - *Islamikaze: Manifestations of Islamic Martyrology*, by Raphael Israeli, who equated "normative Islam" to "horrendous cruelty and inhumanity"

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[9] *Id.*
[10] Spencer Ackerman and Noah Shachtman, *Video: FBI Trainer Says Forget 'Irrelevant' al-Qaida, Target Islam, '* WIRED MAGAZINE, Sept. 20, 2011, *available at* http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2011/09/fbi-islam-qaida-irrelevant/.
[11] Ackerman, *supra* note 1.
[12] *Id.*
[13] *Id.*

- *Muhammad's Monsters*, by David Bukay, who wrote "Islam and democracy are totally incompatible, and are mutually inconclusive"
- *Onward Muslim Soldiers*, by Robert Spencer

The use of bigoted trainers and materials like those above is not only highly offensive, disparaging the faith of millions of Americans, but leads to biased policing that targets individuals and communities based on religion, not evidence of wrongdoing. Inaccurate and bigoted training materials also foster fear and suspicion of American Muslims amongst law enforcement and the general public, increasing discrimination, bullying, harassment and anti-Muslim violence.

In response to these recent disclosures, federal officials across the country—particularly FBI field offices—have been reaching out to local Muslim communities to state that the offensive training materials do not reflect the opinion of the FBI, its field offices or the federal government. Until the following steps are taken to remedy this problem and to prevent it from recurring, we will not be confident in these assertions. We urge you to create an interagency task force, led by the White House, tasked with the following responsibilities:

1. Review *all* trainers and training materials at government agencies, including all FBI intelligence products used such as the FBI intranet, FBI library and JTTF training programs; US Attorney training programs; U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of Defense, and US military intranet, libraries and training materials, resources and experts;
2. Purge *all* federal government training materials of biased materials;
3. Implement a mandatory re-training program for FBI agents, U.S. Army officers, and all federal, state and local law enforcement who have been subjected to biased training;
4. Ensure that personnel reviews are conducted and all trainers and other government employees who promoted biased trainers and training materials are effectively disciplined;
5. Implement quality control processes to ensure that bigoted trainers and biased materials are not developed or utilized in the future; and
6. Issue guidance clearly stating that religious practice and political advocacy are protected activities under the First Amendment, not indicators of violence, and shall not be the basis for surveillance or investigation.

The interagency task force should include a fair and transparent mechanism for input from the Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities, including civil rights lawyers, religious leaders, and law enforcement experts.

The gravity of this issue and the need for an independent, effective investigation into the federal government's training of its agents and other law enforcement is imperative. We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

AlMaghrib Institute
American Coalition for Good Government
American Muslim Association of Lawyers
American Muslim Voice
American Pakistan Foundation
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)
Arab American Association of New York
Arab American Institute (AAI)
Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)
Arab Muslim American Federation (AMAF)
Bay Area Association of Muslim Lawyers (BAAML)
Capitol Area Muslim Bar Association
Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago (CIOGC)
Council of Islamic Organizations of Michigan (CIOM)
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
DRUM - Desis Rising Up and Moving
EMERGE-USA
Florida Muslim Bar Association
Georgia Association of Muslim Lawyers
Houston Shifa Services Foundation
Indian Muslim Relief & Charities (IMRC)
Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA)
Islamic Information Center
Islamic Medical Association of North America (IMANA)
Islamic Networks Group (ING)
Islamic Relief USA
Islamic Shura Council of Southern California
Islamic Society of Greater Houston (ISGH)
Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)
KARAMAH: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights
Majlis Ash-Shura (Islamic Leadership Council) of Metropolitan NY
Michigan Muslim Bar Association
Muslim Advocates
Muslim American Civil Liberties Coalition (MACLC)
Muslim American Society (MAS)
Muslim Bar Association of Chicago
Muslim Bar Association of New York
Muslim Bar Association of Southern California

Muslim Congress/Justice360
Muslim Consultative Network (MCN)
Muslim Lawyers Association of Houston
Muslim Legal Fund of America (MLFA)
Muslim Peace Coalition USA
Muslim Progressive Traditionalist Alliance
Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)
National Muslim Law Students Association
National Network for Arab American Communities (NNAAC)
New England Muslim Bar Association
Northern California Islamic Council
Ohio Muslim Bar Association
Pakistani American Bar Association (PABA)
Pakistani American Leadership Center (PAL-C)
Pakistani American Public Affairs Committee
Somali Action Alliance
South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)
South Asian Network (SAN)
Women in Islam, Inc.

cc: The Honorable Eric Holder, Jr., U.S. Attorney General
The Honorable Leon Panetta, Secretary of Defense
The Honorable Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Homeland Security
The Honorable Robert Mueller, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigations
The Honorable Thomas E. Donilon, National Security Advisor
The Honorable Denis McDonough, Deputy National Security Advisor