

## How Israel partisans have worked to create fear and hatred of Muslims

"Chernick has provided funding to groups ranging from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and CAMERA, a right-wing, pro-Israel, media-watchdog outfit, to violent Israeli settlers living on Palestinian lands and figures like the pseudo-academic author Robert Spencer, who is largely responsible for popularizing conspiracy theories about the coming conquest of the West by Muslim fanatics.... Together, these groups spread hysteria about Muslims into Middle American communities..."

"[A] network of Jewish groups, ranging from ADL and the American Jewish Committee to AIPAC, gathered to address what they saw as a sudden rise in pro-Palestinian activism on college campuses nationwide. That meeting gave birth to the David Project, a campus advocacy group led by Charles Jacobs, who had co-founded CAMERA, one of the many outfits bankrolled by Chernick. With the help of public relations professionals, Jacobs conceived a plan to "take back the campus by influencing public opinion through lectures, the Internet, and coalitions!..."

"Geller had never earned a living as a journalist. She supported herself with millions of dollars in a divorce settlement and life insurance money from her ex-husband. He died in 2008, a year after being indicted for an alleged \$1.3 million scam he was accused of running out of a car dealership he co-owned with Geller. Independently wealthy and with time on her hands, Geller proved able indeed when it came to exploiting her strange media stardom to incite the already organized political network of Islamophobes to intensify their crusade."

IF AMERICANS KNEW

## How Israel partisans have worked to create fear and hatred of Muslims

The funders, organizations, and propagandists behind this orchestrated campaign

*"The Great Islamophobic Crusade"*  
by Max Blumenthal

and

*A Profile of Steven Emerson by Right Web*



WWW.IFAMERICANSKNEW.ORG • 202.631.4060  
CONTACT@IFAMERICANSKNEW.ORG

**If Americans Knew  
Mission Statement**

In a democracy, the ultimate responsibility for a nation's actions rests with its citizens. The top rung of government – the entity with the ultimate power of governance – is the asserted will of the people. Therefore, in any democracy, it is essential that its citizens be fully and accurately informed.

In the United States, currently the most powerful nation on earth, it is even more essential that its citizens receive complete and undistorted information on topics of importance, so that they may wield their extraordinary power with wisdom and intelligence.

Unfortunately, such information is not always forthcoming.

The mission of If Americans Knew is to inform and educate the American public on issues of major significance that are unreported, underreported, or misrepresented in the American media.

It is our belief that when Americans know the facts on a subject, they will, in the final analysis, act in accordance with morality, justice, and the best interests of their nation, and of the world. With insufficient information, or distorted information, they may do the precise opposite.

It is the mission of If Americans Knew to ensure that this does not happen – that the information on which Americans base their actions is complete, accurate, and undistorted by conscious or unconscious bias, by lies of either commission or omission, or by pressures exerted by powerful special interest groups. It is our goal to supply the information essential to those responsible for the actions of the strongest nation on earth – the American people.

Association, BooklistOnline.com, November 15, 2006, <http://booklistonline.com/Jihad-Incorporated-A-Guide-to-Militant-Islam-in-the-U-S-Steven-Emerson/pid=1805571>.

[25] Daniel Pipes, "How Dare You Defame Islam," Commentary, November 1999, <http://www.danielpipes.org/321/how-dare-you-defame-islam>.

[26] Hannity & Colmes, "Are Leftists, Islamic Extremists Linked?" Fox News Network, October 13, 2006.

[27] Eric Boehlert, "The Prime-Time Smearing of Sami Al-Arian," Salon.com, January 19, 2002, <http://www.salon.com/technology/feature/2002/01/19/bubba>.

[28] Steven Emerson, "Exposing jihad within our borders," WorldNetDaily, March 21, 2002, <http://www.wnd.com/?pageId=13212>.

[29] Jonathan Vankin, "Steven Emerson Issues Apology For Fox News Gaffe – But he has a History Of Similar Mistakes," Inquisitr, January 12, 2015, <http://www.inquisitr.com/1748915/steven-emerson-issues-apology/#dOgIcrLyIWgTZITU.99>.

[30] Steven Emerson, "The American Islamic Leaders' 'Fatwa' Is Bogus," Counterterrorism Blog, July 28, 2005, <http://www.investigativeproject.org/343/the-american-islamic-leaders-fatwa-is-bogus>.

[31] CAP, Fear Inc, page 48.

[32] Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting, "Press Release: Extra!'s Report on Steven Emerson: Setting the Record Straight," Extra! February 2, 1999, <http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=1920>.

[33] CounterPunch Wire, "Steve Emerson Withdraws Defamation Suit," CounterPunch, May 19, 2003, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2003/05/19/withdraws-defamation-suit/>.

## The Great Islamophobic Crusade

*Inside the Bizarre Cabal of Secretive Donors, Demagogic Bloggers, Pseudo-Scholars, European Neo-Fascists, Violent Israeli Settlers, and Republican Presidential Hopefuls Behind the Crusade*

By Max Blumenthal

Nine years after 9/11, hysteria about Muslims in American life has gripped the country. With it has gone an outburst of arson attacks on mosques, campaigns to stop their construction, and the branding of the Muslim-American community, overwhelmingly moderate, as a hotbed of potential terrorist recruits. The frenzy has raged from rural Tennessee to New York City, while in Oklahoma, voters even overwhelmingly approved a ballot measure banning the implementation of Sharia law in American courts (not that such a prospect existed). This campaign of Islamophobia wounded President Obama politically, as one out of five Americans have bought into a sustained chorus of false rumors about his secret Muslim faith. And it may have tainted views of Muslims in general; an August 2010 Pew Research Center poll revealed that, among Americans, the favorability rating of Muslims had dropped by 11 points since 2005.

Erupting so many years after the September 11th trauma, this spasm of anti-Muslim bigotry might seem oddly timed and unexpectedly spontaneous. But think again: it's the fruit of an organized, long-term campaign by a tight confederation of right-wing activists and operatives who first focused on Islamophobia soon after the September 11th attacks, but only attained critical mass during the Obama era. It was then that embittered conservative forces, voted out of power in 2008, sought with remarkable success to leverage cultural resentment into political and partisan gain.

This network is obsessively fixated on the supposed spread of Muslim influence in America. Its apparatus spans continents, extending from Tea Party activists here to the European far right. It brings together in common cause right-wing ultra-Zionists, Christian evangelicals, and racist British soc-

cer hooligans. It reflects an aggressively pro-Israel sensibility, with its key figures venerating the Jewish state as a Middle Eastern Fort Apache on the front lines of the Global War on Terror and urging the U.S. and various European powers to emulate its heavy-handed methods.

Little of recent American Islamophobia (with a strong emphasis on the “phobia”) is sheer happenstance. Years before Tea Party shock troops massed for angry protests outside the proposed site of an Islamic community center in lower Manhattan, representatives of the Israel lobby and the Jewish-American establishment launched a campaign against pro-Palestinian campus activism that would prove a seedbed

**“Besides providing the initial energy for the Islamophobic crusade, conservative elements from within the pro-Israel lobby bankrolled the network’s apparatus, enabling it to influence the national debate.”**

for everything to come. That campaign quickly -- and perhaps predictably -- morphed into a series of crusades against mosques and Islamic schools which, in turn, attracted an assortment of shady but exceptionally energetic militants into the network’s ranks.

Besides providing the initial energy for the Islamophobic crusade, conservative elements from within the pro-Israel lobby bankrolled the network’s apparatus, enabling it to influence the national debate. One philanthropist in particular has provided the beneficence to propel the campaign ahead. He is a little-known Los Angeles-area software security entrepreneur named Aubrey Chernick, who operates out of a security consulting firm blandly named the National Center for Crisis and Continuity Coordination. A former trustee of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, which has served as a think tank for the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), a frontline lobbying group for Israel, Chernick is said to be worth \$750 million.

Chernick’s fortune is puny compared to that of the billionaire Koch Brothers, extraction industry titans who fund Tea Party-related groups like Americans for Prosperity, and it is dwarfed by the financial empire of Haim Saban, the Israeli-American media baron who is one of the largest private donors to the Democratic party and recently matched \$9 million raised for the Friends of the Israeli Defense Forces in a single night. However, by injecting his money into a small but influential constellation of groups and individuals with a narrow agenda, Chernick has had a considerable impact.

Through the Fairbrook Foundation, a private entity he and his wife Joyce

[13] Steven Emerson, "President Obama Rewards The Hamas Lobby," *Forbes*, June 22, 2010, <http://www.steveemerson.com/7632/obama-rewards-hamas-lobby>.

[14] CAP, *Fear Inc*, page 48.

[15] Bob Smietana, "Steven Emerson of the anti-Muslim Movement has Millions of reasons to fear Muslims," *The Tennessean*, in *Loonwatch.com*, October 24, 2010, available at <http://www.loonwatch.com/2010/10/steven-emerson-of-the-anti-muslim-movement-has-millions-of-reasons-to-fear-muslims/>.

[16] CAP, *Fear Inc*, page 49.

[17] Zachary Lockman, "Critique from the Right: The Neoconservative Assault on Middle East Studies," *The New Centennial Review*, 2005, [http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/new\\_centennial\\_review/v005/5.1lockman.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/new_centennial_review/v005/5.1lockman.html).

[18] Steven Emerson, Testimony before Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology, and Government Information, February 24, 1998, <http://geocities.ws/johnathanrgalt/emerson.html>.

[19] Zachary Block, "One Man's War on Terror," *Brown Alumni Magazine*, November/December 2002, <http://www.brownalumni-magazine.com/content/view/1126/40/>.

[20] David Plotz, Julia Turner, and Avi Zenilman, "The Slate Field Guide to Iraq Pundits," *Slate*, March 13, 2004, <http://www.slate.com/id/2080099/>.

[21] John F. Sugg, "Sami Al-Arian Speaks," *CounterPunch*, November 16, 2005, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2005/11/16/sami-al-arian-speaks/>.

[22] John F. Sugg, "Steven Emerson's Crusade," *Extra!* January/February 1999, <http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=1443>.

[23] John F. Sugg, "Ties to Spies?" *Weekly Planet*, May 21, 1998.

[24] Brendan Driscoll, Review of *Jihad Incorporated*, American Library

2015, <http://thinkprogress.org/world/2015/01/12/3610608/fox-terrorism-expert-calls-britains-second-largest-city-totally-muslim-uk-prime-minister-calls-him-a-complete-idiot/>.

[7] BBC News, "Apology for 'Muslim Birmingham' Fox News claim," January 12, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-30773297>.

[8] BBC News, "Apology for 'Muslim Birmingham' Fox News claim," January 12, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-30773297>.

[9] Dan Murphy, "#Foxnewsfacts, fiction, and hysteria in the wake of Paris terrorist attacks (+video)," *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 12, 2015, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Security-Watch/Backchannels/2015/0112/Foxnewsfacts-fiction-and-hysteria-in-the-wake-of-Paris-terrorist-attacks-video>.

[10] In contrast to the dire warnings about CAIR issued by the likes of Pipes and Emerson, the generally moderately conservative Center for Strategic and International Studies characterized CAIR in a 2010 report thusly: "Some critics have charged that CAIR maintains ties with global terrorist groups. The organization was listed as an unindicted coconspirator in a 2007 case against the Holy Land Foundation, a group charged with providing funds to Hamas; the trial ended in a mistrial. In 2008, the FBI ended its formal relationship with CAIR. Despite these recent developments, the group has indicated that it seeks to play a positive role in mitigating domestic extremism. U.S. officials should remain wary of illicit activity by CAIR or any other advocacy group. But this should not prevent federal officials from working with these groups toward productive ends." See: Rick Nelson and Ben Bodurian, *A Growing Terrorist Threat? Assessing "Homegrown" Extremism in the United States*, CSIS, March 2010. Available at: <http://csis.org/event/growing-terrorist-threat-assessing-homegrown-extremism-united-states>.

[11] Steven Emerson, "It's Radical Islam, Stupid," *Hudson New York*, November 2, 2009, <http://www.steveemerson.com/6512/its-radical-islam-stupid>.

[12] Steven Emerson, "Emerson on Fox News – Justice with Judge Jeanine," *The Investigative Project on Terrorism*, September 6, 2014, <http://www.investigativeproject.org/4559/emerson-on-fox-news-justice-with-judge-jeanine>.

control, Chernick has provided funding to groups ranging from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and CAMERA, a right-wing, pro-Israel, media-watchdog outfit, to violent Israeli settlers living on Palestinian lands and figures like the pseudo-academic author Robert Spencer, who is largely responsible for popularizing conspiracy theories about the coming conquest of the West by Muslim fanatics seeking to establish a worldwide caliphate. Together, these groups spread hysteria about Muslims into Middle American communities where immigrants from the Middle East have recently settled, and they watched with glee as likely Republican presidential frontrunners from Mike Huckabee to Sarah Palin promoted their cause and parroted their tropes. Perhaps the only thing more surprising than the increasingly widespread appeal of Islamophobia is that, just a few years ago, the phenomenon was confined to a few college campuses and an inner city neighborhood, and that it seemed like a fleeting fad that would soon pass from the American political landscape.

### Birth of a Network

The Islamophobic crusade was launched in earnest at the peak of George W. Bush's prestige when the neoconservatives and their allies were riding high. In 2003, three years after the collapse of President Bill Clinton's attempt to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian issue and in the immediate wake of the invasion of Iraq, a network of Jewish groups, ranging from ADL and the American Jewish Committee to AIPAC, gathered to address what they saw as a sudden rise in pro-Palestinian activism on college campuses nationwide. That meeting gave birth to the David Project, a campus advocacy group led by Charles Jacobs, who had co-founded CAMERA, one of the many outfits bankrolled by Chernick. With the help of public relations professionals, Jacobs conceived a plan to "take back the campus by influencing public opinion through lectures, the Internet, and coalitions," as a memo produced at the time by the consulting firm McKinsey and Company stated

In 2004, after conferring with Martin Kramer, a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, the pro-Israel think tank where Chernick had served as a trustee, Jacobs produced a documentary film that he called *Columbia Unbecoming*. It was filled with claims from Jewish students at Columbia University claiming they had endured intimidation and insults from Arab professors. The film portrayed that New York City school's Department of Middle East and Asian Languages and Cultures as a hothouse

of anti-Semitism.

In their complaints, the students focused on one figure in particular: Joseph Massad, a Palestinian professor of Middle East studies. He was known for his passionate advocacy of the formation of a binational state between Israel and Palestine, as well as for his strident criticism of what he termed "the racist character of Israel." The film identified him as "one of the most dangerous intellectuals on campus," while he was featured as a crucial villain in *The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America*, a book by the (Chernick-funded) neoconservative activist David Horowitz. As Massad was seeking tenure at the time, he was especially vulnerable to this sort of wholesale assault.

When the controversy over Massad's views intensified, Congressman Anthony Weiner, a liberal New York Democrat who once described himself as a representative of "the ZOA [Zionist Organization of America] wing of the Democratic Party," demanded that Columbia President Lee Bollinger, a renowned First Amendment scholar, fire the professor. Bollinger responded by issuing uncharacteristically defensive statements about the "limited" nature of academic freedom.

In the end, however, none of the charges stuck. Indeed, the testimonies in the David Project film were eventually either discredited or never corroborated. In 2009, Massad earned tenure after winning Columbia's prestigious Lionel Trilling Award for excellence in scholarship.

Having demonstrated its ability to intimidate faculty members and even powerful university administrators, however, Kramer claimed a moral victory in the name of his project, boasting to the press that "this is a turning point." While the David Project subsequently fostered chapters on campuses nationwide, its director set out on a different path -- initially, into the streets of Boston in 2004 to oppose the construction of the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center.

For nearly 15 years, the Islamic Society of Boston had sought to build the center in the heart of Roxbury, the city's largest black neighborhood, to serve its sizable Muslim population. With endorsements from Mayor Thomas Menino and leading Massachusetts lawmakers, the mosque's construction seemed like a *fait accompli* -- until, that is, the Rupert Murdoch-owned *Boston Herald* and his local Fox News affiliate snapped into action. *Boston Globe* columnist Jeff Jacoby also chimed in with a series of reports claiming the center's plans were evidence of a Saudi Arabian plot to bolster the influence of radical Islam in the United States, and possibly even to train underground

inability to differentiate between criticism of U.S. policies and endorsement of the targets of those policies. FAIR, of course, has never defended the actions of Saddam Hussein or supported terrorism of any kind. As for the 'known anti-Semite,' FAIR (whose founder and executive director is Jeff Cohen) has no idea whom the Journal is talking about." The "conspiracy," said FAIR, was nothing more than a typical reporting investigation, involving interviews with various supporters and critics of Emerson. FAIR highlighted a number of inaccuracies in the Journal's accusation, including that fact that CAIR was not involved in the production of the article, but merely released its own comments about the article after the fact.[32]

Emerson went on to sue Sugg and his employer at the time of the 1999 Extra! article, the Weekly Planet, for defamation. The lawsuit, which sought \$11 million in damages, contended that Sugg and the Weekly Planet "maliciously and repeatedly published false and defamatory utterances" in an "ongoing campaign to undermine Emerson's credibility and damage his professional and personal reputation." [33] According to CounterPunch, in May 2003, Emerson decided to file for dismissal of the lawsuit.

### Sources

[1] Steven Emerson biography, <http://www.steveemerson.com/about/>.

[2] Zachary Lockman, "Critique from the Right: The Neoconservative Assault on Middle East Studies," *The New Centennial Review*, 2005, [http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/new\\_centennial\\_review/v005/5.1lockman.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/new_centennial_review/v005/5.1lockman.html).

[3] Matthew Champion, "That Steve Emerson #foxnewsfacts interview is even worse than you think," *Independent*, January 12, 2015, <http://i100.independent.co.uk/article/that-steve-emerson-foxnews-facts-interview-is-even-worse-than-you-think--lkO4fdUh5x>.

[4] Steven Emerson biography, <http://www.steveemerson.com/about/>.

[5] BBC News, "Apology for 'Muslim Birmingham' Fox News claim," January 12, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-30773297>.

[6] Jack Jenkins, "UK Prime Minister Shames Fox News 'Expert' For Making Things Up About Muslims In England," *ThinkProgress*, January 12,

Oklahoma City, where I had first encountered such militant groups in 1992. Several Hamas operatives were known to be living in the Oklahoma City area. At first, federal law enforcement officials were suspicious themselves." [28]

Emerson also received criticism for claiming the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings were conducted by "a Saudi national." Once it became clear this was not the case, Emerson insisted the Saudi role in the bombing was being covered up and the "Saudi national" was being deported to Saudi Arabia. [29]

Emerson has contributed to the CounterterrorismBlog.org, which describes itself as "a unique, multi-expert blog dedicated to providing a one-stop gateway to the counterterrorism community." In a July 28, 2005, entry titled "The American Islamic Leaders' 'Fatwa' Is Bogus," Emerson derided the well-intentioned "fatwa" against terrorism and extremism announced by a number of American Islamic groups, including the Fiqh Council of North America and CAIR. "The fatwa is bogus," Emerson argued. "Nowhere does it condemn the Islamic extremism ideology that has spawned Islamic terrorism. It does not renounce nor even acknowledge the existence of an Islamic jihadist culture that has permeated mosques and young Muslims around the world. It does not renounce Jihad let alone admit that it has been used to justify Islamic terrorist acts. It does not condemn by name any Islamic group or leader. In short, it is a fake fatwa designed merely to deceive the American public into believing that these groups are moderate." [30]

Emerson and his supporters have gone to great lengths to defend his reputation. Responding to the 1999 Extra! article penned by John Sugg about Emerson, the Journal of Counterterrorism and Security International (now the Journal of Counterterrorism and Homeland Security International) published a press release accusing AIR, CAIR, and Sugg of having "collectively fabricated evidence in manufacturing a conspiracy against investigative journalist and terrorism expert Steven Emerson." The press release also opined that FAIR was "an ultra-left wing group that has defended Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, supported Islamic and Middle Eastern terrorists, and even promoted a known anti-Semite." The journal, which has featured articles by Emerson, is published by the International Association of Counterterrorism and Security Professionals, the for-profit entity connected to Emerson's Investigative Project on Terrorism. [31]

In response the press release, FAIR said: "The press release features the same kind of inaccurate and reckless charges that Extra! said were characteristic of Emerson's work. [T]he Journal seems to share Emerson's chronic

terror cells.

It was at this point that the David Project entered the fray, convening elements of the local pro-Israel community in the Boston area to seek strategies to torpedo the project. According to emails obtained by the Islamic Society's lawyers in a lawsuit against the David Project, the organizers settled on a campaign of years of nuisance lawsuits, along with accusations that the center had received foreign funding from "the Wahhabi movement in Saudi Arabia or... the Moslem Brotherhood."

In response, a grassroots coalition of liberal Jews initiated inter-faith efforts aimed at ending a controversy that had essentially been manufactured out of thin air and was corroding relations between the Jewish and Muslim communities in the city. Jacobs would not, however, relent. "We are more concerned now than we have ever been about a Saudi influence of local mosques," he announced at a suburban Boston synagogue in 2007.

After paying out millions of dollars in legal bills and enduring countless smears, the Islamic Society of Boston completed the construction of its community center in 2008. Meanwhile, not surprisingly, nothing came of the David Project's dark warnings. As Boston-area National Public Radio reporter Philip Martin reflected in September 2010, "The horror stories that preceded [the center's] development seem shrill and histrionic in retrospect."

### The Network Expands

This second failed campaign was, in the end, more about movement building than success, no less national security. The local crusade established an effective blueprint for generating hysteria against the establishment of Islamic centers and mosques across the country, while galvanizing a cast of characters who would form an anti-Muslim network which would gain attention and success in the years to come.

In 2007, these figures coalesced into a proto-movement that launched a new crusade, this time targeting the Khalil Gibran International Academy, a secular Arabic-English elementary school in Brooklyn, New York. Calling their *ad hoc* pressure group, Stop the Madrassah -- *madrassah* being simply the Arab word for "school" -- the coalition's activists included an array of previously unknown zealots who made no attempt to disguise their extreme views when it came to Islam as a religion, as well as Muslims in America. Their stated goal was to challenge the school's establishment on the basis of its violation of the church-state separation in the U.S. Constitution. The true aim of

the coalition, however, was transparent: to pressure the city's leadership to adopt an antagonistic posture towards the local Muslim community.

The activists zeroed in on the school's principal, Debbie Almontaser, a veteran educator of Yemeni descent, and baselessly branded her "a jihadist" as well as a 9/11 denier. They also accused her of -- as Pamela Geller, a far-right blogger just then gaining prominence put it, "whitewash[ing] the genocide against the Jews." Daniel Pipes, a neoconservative academic previously active in the campaigns against Joseph Massad and the Boston Islamic center (and whose pro-Likud think tank, Middle East Forum, has received \$150,000 from Chernick) claimed the school should not go ahead because "Arabic-language instruction is inevitably laden with Pan-Arabist and Islamist baggage." As the campaign reached a fever pitch, Almontaser reported that members of the coalition were actually stalking her wherever she went.

Given what Columbia Journalism School professor and former New York Times reporter Samuel Freedman called "her clear, public record of interfaith activism and outreach," including work with the New York Police Department and the Anti-Defamation League after the September 11th attacks, the assault on Almontaser seemed little short of bizarre -- until her assailants discovered a photograph of a T-shirt produced by AWAAM, a local Arab feminist organization, that read "Intifada NYC." As it turned out, AWAAM sometimes shared office space with a Yemeni-American association on which Almontaser served as a board member. Though the connection seemed like a stretch, it promoted the line of attack the Stop the Madrassah coalition had been seeking.

Having found a way to wedge the emotional issue of the Israel-Palestine conflict into a previously New York-centered campaign, the school's opponents next gained a platform at the Murdoch-owned *New York Post*, where reporters Chuck Bennett and Jana Winter claimed her T-shirt was "apparently a call for a Gaza-style uprising in the Big Apple." While Almontaser attempted to explain to the *Post's* reporters that she rejected terrorism, the Anti-Defamation League chimed in on cue. ADL spokesman Oren Segal told the *Post*: "The T-shirt is a reflection of a movement that increasingly lauds violence against Israelis instead of rejecting it. That is disturbing."

Before any Qassam rockets could be launched from Almontaser's school, her former ally New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg caved to the growing pressure and threatened to shut down the school, prompting her to resign. A Jewish principal who spoke no Arabic replaced Almontaser, who later filed a lawsuit against the city for breaching her free speech rights. In 2010, the Equal

be among hardline neoconservatives and rightists who frequently cite Emerson as one of the country's foremost experts on Islamic terrorism. Daniel Pipes of the Middle East Forum, who has collaborated with Emerson on numerous occasions since the 1990s, once wrote of Emerson: "While Emerson remains doggedly on the trail of Islamists, especially those among them who support terrorism, he has for four years been forced to live at a clandestine address, always watching his movements. Like the case of Rashad Khalifa, murdered in Tucson for his views, the case of Steven Emerson suggests that, despite the Constitution's guarantees of freedom of religion and freedom of speech, when it comes to Islam, unapproved thinking can lead to personal danger or even death." [25]

In October 2006, the Fox News program *Hannity & Colmes* featured Emerson during a show highlighting the purported connections between leftists in the United States and Islamic extremists. Asked whether there was a "quasi-alliance" between radical Islamists and radical left academics, Emerson said: "You're 100 percent right." [26]

Among some of his more notorious claims, Emerson told a reporter shortly after the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing that he believed the perpetrators were likely Islamic terrorists. The reporter, Tampa Tribune's Michael Fechter, wrote: "More and more, terrorism experts in the United States and elsewhere say Wednesday's bombing in Oklahoma City bears the characteristics of other deadly attacks linked to Islamic militants." Describing the incident, Eric Boehlert of Salon.com wrote: "Fechter seemed to be an odd choice to write the piece, since at the time the county news reporter had virtually no experience covering religion, politics, or terrorism for the Tribune. Instead, he wrote crime stories, covered local city council politics, and monitored neighborhood action groups. But what readers didn't know was that Fechter had recently befriended controversial terrorism expert Steve Emerson—who has been accused of sloppy journalism and with having a pervasive anti-Arab bias—and behind the scenes was remaking himself into a self-styled authority on terrorism." [27]

In an effort to downplay his claims, which he repeated to a number of journalists other than Fechter, Emerson later wrote that criticism of his allegations, especially from the likes of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), was misplaced. In an article for the conservative WorldNetDaily, Emerson wrote: "Less than six hours after the bombing I was asked on television whether I thought militant Islamic groups were involved. There was good reason for thinking they might be. The bombing, after all, was in



Despite its awards, Jihad in America was criticized by some observers as mere "agit-prop," as journalist John Sugg termed it.[21] In a 1999 article for *Extra!*, a publication of the watchdog group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), Sugg documented how the film's apparent efforts to target certain Middle Eastern professors resulted in a rash of inflammatory articles published by the Tampa Tribune that were later heavily criticized for lacking fairness and balance. According to Sugg, the Miami Herald undertook a lengthy investigation into the Tribune's reporting, concluding that "the Tampa newspaper had ignored 'perfectly innocent' interpretations of activity, giving vent only to characterizations that suggested 'extremely dark forces were on the prowl.'"[22]

Sugg also contested Emerson's claims that he was targeted for assassination because of his film and challenged the accuracy of his 1998 congressional testimony. In a 1998 article for the *Weekly Planet*, Sugg said that when he queried FBI spokesman John Russell regarding Emerson's claims about being notified by the agency of a hit squad that was targeting him and the possibility of being put in the witness protection program, Russell responded: "You pushed the right button asking about your friend Steve Emerson. We've never given any thought to putting him in the witness protection program." Regarding whether there was any truth to the claims of an assassination squad, Russell said: "No, none at all." [23]

In 1995, Emerson founded the Investigative Project on Terrorism. The project's website has been an important promotional tool plugging Emerson's various books, including *Jihad Incorporated: A Guide to Militant Islam in the United States* (Prometheus Books, 2006). In a review of the book posted on the American Library Association's Booklist web site, Brendan Driscoll wrote: "Emerson matter-of-factly names and catalogues a host of organizations and narrates each group's specific activities, footnoted to news articles and government reports. Given the nature of the topic, it is difficult to tell which of Emerson's many claims are credible and which err on the side of overstatement (something Emerson has been accused of before). This book will be most sought after by readers hungry for factual specifics about possible threats rather than for more nuanced theoretical or historical approaches to the topic." [24]

Although some of Emerson's supporters include the likes of former antiterrorism czar Richard Clarke, who told *Brown Alumni Magazine* that he saw Emerson "as the Paul Revere of terrorism," his biggest boosters seem to

Employment Opportunity Commission ruled that New York's Department of Education had "succumbed to the very bias that the creation of the school was intended to dispel" by firing Almontaser and urged it pay her \$300,000 in damages. The commission also concluded that the *Post* had quoted her misleadingly.

Though it failed to stop the establishment of the Khalil Gibran Academy, the burgeoning anti-Muslim movement succeeded in forcing city leaders to bend to its will, and having learned just how to do that, then moved on in search of more high-profile targets. As the *New York Times* reported at the time, "The fight against the school... was only an early skirmish in a broader, national struggle."

"It's a battle that has really just begun," Pipes told the *Times*.

### From Scam to Publicity Coup

Pipes couldn't have been more on the mark. In late 2009, the Islamophobes sprang into action again when the Cordoba Initiative, a non-profit Muslim group headed by Feisal Abdul Rauf, an exceedingly moderate Sufi Muslim imam who regularly traveled abroad representing the United States at the behest of the State Department, announced that it was going to build a community center in downtown New York City. With the help of investors, Rauf's Cordoba Initiative purchased space two blocks from Ground Zero in Manhattan. The space was to contain a prayer area as part of a large community center that would be open to everyone in the neighborhood.

None of these facts mattered to Pamela Geller. Thanks to constant prodding at her blog, *Atlas Shrugged*, Geller made Cordoba's construction plans a national issue, provoking fervent calls from conservatives to protect the "hallowed ground" of 9/11 from creeping Sharia. (That the "mosque" would have been out of sight of Ground Zero and that the neighborhood was, in fact, filled with everything from strip clubs to fast-food joints didn't matter.) Geller's activism against Cordoba House earned the 52-year-old full-time blogger the attention she apparently craved, including a long profile in the *New York Times* and frequent cable news spots, especially, of course, on Fox News.

Mainstream reporters tended to focus on Geller's bizarre stunts. She posted a video of herself splashing around in a string bikini on a Fort Lauderdale beach, for instance, while ranting about "left-tards" and "Nazi Hezbollah." Her call for boycotting Campbell's Soup because the company

offered halal -- approved under Islamic law (as kosher food is under Jewish law) -- versions of its products got her much attention, as did her promotion of a screed claiming that President Barack Obama was the illegitimate lovechild of Malcolm X.

Geller had never earned a living as a journalist. She supported herself with millions of dollars in a divorce settlement and life insurance money from her ex-husband. He died in 2008, a year after being indicted for an alleged \$1.3 million scam he was accused of running out of a car dealership he co-owned with Geller. Independently wealthy and with time on her hands, Geller proved able indeed when it came to exploiting her strange media stardom to incite the already organized political network of Islamophobes to intensify their crusade.

She also benefited from close alliances with leading Islamophobes from Europe. Among Geller's allies was Andrew Gravers, a Danish activist who formed the group Stop the Islamicization of Europe, and gave it the unusually blunt motto: "Racism is the lowest form of human stupidity, but Islamophobia is the height of common sense." Gravers' group inspired Geller's own U.S.-based outfit, Stop the Islamicization of America, which she formed with her friend Robert Spencer, a pseudo-scholar whose bestselling books, including *The Truth About Muhammad, Founder of the World's Most Intolerant Religion*, prompted former advisor to President Richard Nixon and Muslim activist Robert Crane to call him, "the principal leader... in the new academic field of Muslim bashing." (According to the website Politico, almost \$1 million in donations from Chernick has been steered to Spencer's Jihad Watch group through David Horowitz's Freedom Center.)

Perfect sources for Republican political figures in search of the next hot-button cause, their rhetoric found its way into the talking points of Newt Gingrich and Sarah Palin as they propelled the crusade against Cordoba House into the national spotlight. Gingrich soon compared the community center to a Nazi sign next to the Holocaust Memorial Museum, while Palin called it "a stab in the heart" of "the Heartland." Meanwhile, Tea Party candidates like Republican Ilario Pantano, an Iraq war veteran who killed two unarmed Iraqi civilians, shooting them 60 times -- he even stopped to reload -- made their opposition to Cordoba House the centerpiece of midterm congressional campaigns conducted hundreds of miles from Ground Zero.

Geller's campaign against "the mosque at Ground Zero" gained an unexpected assist and a veneer of legitimacy from established Jewish leaders like Anti-Defamation League National Director Abraham Foxman. "Survivors of

Osama bin Laden," the Taliban, "and support groups of mujahideen (holy warriors) in Bosnia, Philippines, Chechnya, and other places." According to Emerson, "These groups have created large networks of supporters from whom they have raised tens of millions of dollars for their movements, recruited and trained new followers, underwritten their brethren organizations in the Middle East and elsewhere, and even remotely directed terrorist operations back in the Middle East or Europe." [18]

Earlier, in 1994, Emerson produced the Frontline piece "Jihad in America," which won the George Polk Award for best TV documentary. The film was also credited in part with leading to the Patriot Act: "Congressman Christopher Smith told the Washington Post in November 2001 that Jihad in America, which was distributed to members of Congress after September 11, 2001, 'played a real role in the House passage of the Patriot Act antiterrorism legislation.'" [19] This is a dubious honor, as parts of the act were ruled unconstitutional and several states and cities have passed laws condemning what they see as the act's infringement on civil liberties. Despite that, in his 1998 testimony, Emerson said: "The film included previously unknown videos of the clandestine activities of radical Islamic terrorist groups operating in the United States and featured interviews with moderate Muslims and federal counterterrorism officials speaking for the first time about the magnitude of the threat posed by militant Muslim groups on U.S. soil. I was gratified by the fact that the film served as the impetus for the counterterrorism legislation passed by Congress, and that it became a standard part of federal law enforcement education and training."

Emerson also claimed during his 1998 congressional testimony that the media attention generated by the film made him a target of terrorism: "I became the target of radical fundamentalist groups throughout the United States (and internationally) who fiercely denied the existence of 'Islamic extremism' and accused me of engaging in an 'attack against Islam.' For this 'transgression,' my life has been permanently changed. One morning, in late 1995, I was paged by a federal law enforcement official. I found out why I had been summoned: I was told a group of radical Islamic fundamentalists had been assigned to carry out an assassination of me." [20]

Emerson has turned the claims about threats to his life into a signature aspect of his professional persona, one that he has highlighted in his promotional materials and interviews. As Slate.com reported in 2003, "People who visit Emerson's DC office must be blindfolded en route, and employees call it 'the bat cave.'"

CTSERF, and Richard Scaife foundations contributed \$1,575,000." [14]

Commenting on the creative accounting of these various institutions, Ken Berger, president of Charity Navigator, a nonprofit watchdog group, said that "basically, you have a nonprofit acting as a front organization, and all that money going to a for-profit." [15]

According to the CAP report, in his capacity as head of the Investigative Project on Terrorism, Emerson—who was cited twice in Anders Breivik's manifesto—"frames Islam as an inherently violent and antagonistic religion." It quotes Emerson as saying: "The level of vitriol against Jews and Christianity within contemporary Islam, unfortunately, is something that we are not totally cognizant of, or that we don't want to accept. We don't want to accept it because to do so would be to acknowledge that one of the world's great religions, which has more than 1.4 billion adherents, somehow sanctions genocide, planned genocide, as part of its religious doctrine." [16]

### Trajectory and Track Record

Discussing the trajectory of Emerson's career, Zachary Lockman, a scholar at New York University, wrote in 2005: "[Emerson's] main focus during the 1990s was to sound the alarm about the threat Muslim terrorists posed to the United States. By the end of that decade Emerson was describing himself as a 'terrorist expert and investigator' and 'Executive Director, Terrorism Newswire, Inc.' Along the way, critics charged, Emerson had sounded many false alarms, made numerous errors of fact, bandied accusations about rather freely, and ceased to be regarded as credible by much of the mainstream media. The September 11 attacks seemed to bear out Emerson's warnings, but his critics might respond that even a stopped clock shows the right time twice a day." [17]

Among his claims to fame is Emerson's February 14, 1998 testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee in which he stressed the growing threat from a host of Islamic extremists, including Osama bin Laden. Testified Emerson: "In the five years since the [1993 World Trade Center] bombing, intelligence officials and law enforcement agents have discovered that militant Islamic extremists have established extensive networks throughout the United States. Although there is no established hierarchy that centrally coordinates the activities of the myriad militant networks, the intelligence and law enforcement communities agree that the entire spectrum of radical groups from the Middle East has been replicated in the United States." Among the groups Emerson highlighted were Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, "followers of

the Holocaust are entitled to feelings that are irrational," he remarked to the *New York Times*. Comparing the bereaved family members of 9-11 victims to Holocaust survivors, Foxman insisted, "Their anguish entitles them to positions that others would categorize as irrational or bigoted."

Soon enough, David Harris, director of the (Chernick-funded) American Jewish Committee, was demanding that Cordoba's leaders be compelled to reveal their "true attitudes" about Palestinian militant groups before construction on the center was initiated. Rabbi Marvin Hier of the Simon Wiesenthal Center of Los Angeles, another major Jewish group, insisted it would be "insensitive" for Cordoba to build near "a cemetery," though his organization had recently been granted permission from the municipality of Jerusalem to build a "museum of tolerance" to be called The Center for Human Dignity directly on top of the Mamilla Cemetery, a Muslim graveyard that contained thousands of gravesites dating back 1,200 years.

### Inspiration from Israel

It was evident from the involvement of figures like Gravers that the Islamophobic network in the United States represented a trans-Atlantic expansion of simmering resentment in Europe. There, the far-right was storming to victories in parliamentary elections across the continent in part by appealing to the simmering anti-Muslim sentiments of voters in rural and working-class communities. The extent of the collaboration between European and American Islamophobes has only continued to grow with Geller, Spencer, and even Gingrich standing beside Europe's most prominent anti-Muslim figure, Dutch parliamentarian Geert Wilders, at a rally against Cordoba House. In the meantime, Geller was issuing statements of support for the English Defense League, a band of unreconstructed neo-Nazis and former members of the whites-only British National Party who intimidate Muslims in the streets of cities like Birmingham and London.

In addition, the trans-Atlantic Islamophobic crusade has stretched into Israel, a country that has come to symbolize the network's fight against the Muslim menace. As Geller told the *New York Times'* Alan Feuer, Israel is "a very good guide because, like I said, in the war between the civilized man and the savage, you side with the civilized man."

EDL members regularly wave Israeli flags at their rallies, while Wilders claims to have formed his views about Muslims during the time he worked on an Israeli cooperative farm in the 1980s. He has, he says, visited the coun-

try more than 40 times since to meet with rightist political allies like Aryeh Eldad, a member of the Israeli Knesset and leader of the far right Hatikvah faction of the National Union Party. He has called for forcibly “transferring” the Palestinians living in Israel and the occupied West Bank to Jordan and Egypt. On December 5th, for example, Wilders traveled to Israel for a “friendly” meeting with Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, then declared at a press conference that Israel should annex the West Bank and set up a Palestinian state in Jordan.

In the apocalyptic clash of civilizations the global anti-Muslim network has sought to incite, tiny armed Jewish settlements like Yitzar, located on the hills above the occupied Palestinian city of Nablus, represent front-line fortresses. Inside Yitzar’s state-funded yeshiva, a rabbi named Yitzhak Shapira has instructed students in what rules must be applied when considering killing non-Jews. Shapira summarized his opinions in a widely publicized book, *Torat HaMelech*, or *The King’s Torah*. Claiming that non-Jews are “uncompassionate by nature,” Shapira cited rabbinical texts to declare that gentiles could be killed in order to “curb their evil inclinations.” “There is justification,” the rabbi proclaimed, “for killing babies if it is clear that they will grow up to harm us, and in such a situation they may be harmed deliberately, and not only during combat with adults.”

In 2006, the rabbi was briefly held by Israeli police for urging his supporters to murder all Palestinians over the age of 13. Two years later, according to the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, he signed a rabbinical letter in support of Israeli Jews who had brutally assaulted two Arab youths on the country’s Holocaust Remembrance Day. That same year, Shapira was arrested as a suspect in helping orchestrate a rocket attack against a Palestinian village near Nablus.

Though he was not charged, his name came up again in connection with another act of terror when, in January 2010, the Israeli police raided his settlement seeking vandals who had set fire to a nearby mosque. One of Shapira’s followers, an American immigrant, Jack Teitel, has confessed to murdering two innocent Palestinians and attempting to kill the liberal Israeli historian Ze’ev Sternhell with a mail bomb.

What does all this have to do with Islamophobic campaigns in the United States? A great deal, actually. Through New York-based tax-exempt non-profits like the Central Fund of Israel and Ateret Cohanim, for instance, the omnipresent Aubrey Chernick has sent tens of thousands of dollars to support the Yitzar settlement, as well as to the messianic settlers dedicated to

unnecessary.” Misleadingly claiming that there is no humanitarian crisis in Gaza, Emerson added that “the president blurted out his real agenda when he criticized the Israelis for their blockade of Gaza: ‘you’ve got a blockade up that is preventing people in Palestinian Gaza from having job opportunities and being able to create businesses and engage in trade and have opportunity for the future.’ Here, [the president] joined the world Hamas lobby—Islamic and European countries—in piling on Israel for creating such a humanitarian mess in Gaza, which in reality does not exist.”[13]

In a widely noted 2011 report about U.S. actors who promote anti-Muslim views, the Center for American Progress (CAP) included Emerson on a short-list of individuals who have been instrumental in demonizing Islam and generating fear about the purported existential threat this religion poses to the West. Among the other figures highlighted in the report, titled *Fear Inc: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in the United States*, were Daniel Pipes, David Horowitz, Frank Gaffney, Brigitte Gabriel, Pamela Geller, and Zuhdi Jasser.

According to the CAP report, Emerson’s Investigative Project on Terrorism (IPT)—which claims to be “the world’s most comprehensive data center on radical Islamic terrorist groups”—has been the beneficiary of considerable largesse from a small group of donors who have propped up a tightly networked group of Islamophobic institutions in the United States. CAP also reports how IPT has apparently turned its anti-Islam work into a lucrative, for-profit enterprise:

Reports Fear Inc.: “Emerson’s nonprofit organization IPT received a total of \$400,000 from Donors Capital Fund in 2007 and 2008, as well as \$100,000 from the Becker Foundation, and \$250,000 from Daniel Pipes’ Middle East Forum, according to our research. Emerson’s nonprofit organization, in turn, helps fund his for-profit company, SAE Productions. IPT paid SAE Productions \$3.33 million to enable the company to ‘study alleged ties between American Muslims and overseas terrorism.’ Emerson is SAE’s sole employee. Even more intriguingly, a review of grants in November 2010 showed large sums of money contributed to the ‘Investigative Project,’ or ‘IPT,’ care of the Counterterrorism & Security Education and Research Foundation. An examination of CTSERF’s 990 forms showed that, much like the Investigative Project, all grant revenue was transferred to a private, for-profit entity, the International Association of Counterterrorism and Security Professionals. Emerson did not respond to requests for comment by time of publication. The Russell Berrie Foundation has contributed \$2,736,000 to

in not doing his "homework." [8]

Wrote Dan Murphy of the Christian Science Monitor: "If Emerson knows this little about Britain, what can he possibly know about Egypt and Iraq and Syria and all the other nations he regularly opines on?" Murphy added: "His efforts on Fox yesterday put him squarely in the middle of a know-nothing community of analysts whose careers are built on sounding the shrillest alarms, and encouraging the most drastic actions, in response to Islamist terrorism." [9]

Since the 9/11 attacks and the onset of the "war on terror," Emerson has played a key role in promoting what some observers describe as "Islamophobic" rhetoric, arguing that civil rights groups like the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) are terrorists sympathizers and that liberals like President Barack Obama coddle Middle East terrorists.

In a 2009 article for the Hudson Institute-New York, Emerson repeated discredited [10] claims made by the likes of Daniel Pipes that CAIR—which has repeatedly denounced violent extremism—supports radical Islamic groups. Pointing to CAIR's purported beginnings in the early 1990s as a front group for funneling money to violent Palestinian groups, Emerson wrote: "For 14 years, CAIR got away with lying to us about who they are, justifying Islamic terrorist attacks, legitimizing suicide bombings, presenting speakers who had been Holocaust deniers, making incendiary presentations about the United States and urging Muslims not to talk to the FBI." [11]

Emerson has claimed that the Obama administration has prevented the FBI from monitoring U.S. members of the so-called Islamic State (or ISIS) who have returned to the United States. "The FBI has been handcuffed in terms of investigating religious extremists in mosques, as a result of guidelines put out by the attorney general earlier this year," Emerson told Fox News in September 2014. "And so therefore, there is ... a definite problem now in investigating those militants in the United States who are either recruiting for ISIS or have returned from Syria or Iraq having fought for ISIS, and are ready to carry out freelance or directed terrorist attacks on behalf of ISIS against the United States." [12]

After President Obama added his voice to the international condemnation of the Israeli raid on a Gaza aid flotilla in early 2010 that resulted in the deaths of several pro-Palestinian activists, Emerson wrote in Forbes: "Appearing on CNN's Larry King show on June 3, [Obama] repeated his demand for an Israeli investigation. But this time, Obama revealed his own biased predisposition when he told King, 'You've got loss of life that was

"Judaizing" East Jerusalem. The settlement movement's leading online news magazine, *Arutz Sheva*, has featured Geller as a columnist. A friend of Geller's, Beth Gilinsky, a right-wing activist with a group called the Coalition to Honor Ground Zero and the founder of the Jewish Action Alliance (apparently run out of a Manhattan real estate office), organized a large rally in New York City in April 2010 to protest the Obama administration's call for a settlement freeze.

Among Chernick's major funding recipients is a supposedly "apolitical" group called Aish Hatorah that claims to educate Jews about their heritage. Based in New York and active in the fever swamps of northern West Bank settlements near Yitzar, Aish Hatorah shares an address and staff with a shadowy foreign non-profit called the Clarion Fund. During the 2008 U.S. election campaign, the Clarion Fund distributed 28 million DVDs of a propaganda film called *Obsession* as newspaper inserts to residents of swing states around the country. The film featured a who's who of anti-Muslim activists, including Walid Shoebat, a self-proclaimed "former PLO terrorist." Among Shoebat's more striking statements: "A secular dogma like Nazism is less dangerous than is Islamofascism today." At a Christian gathering in 2007, this "former Islamic terrorist" told the crowd that Islam was a "satanic cult" and that he had been born again as an evangelical Christian. In 2008, however, the *Jerusalem Post*, a right-leaning newspaper, exposed him as a fraud, whose claims to terrorism were fictional.

Islamophobic groups registered only a minimal impact during the 2008 election campaign. Two years later, however, after the Republicans regained control of the House of Representatives in midterm elections, the network appears to have reached critical mass. Of course, the deciding factor in the election was the economy, and in two years, Americans will likely vote their pocketbooks again. But that the construction of a single Islamic community center or the imaginary threat of Sharia law were issues at all reflected the influence of a small band of locally oriented activists, and suggested that when a certain presidential candidate who has already been demonized as a crypto-Muslim runs for reelection, the country's most vocal Islamophobes could once again find a national platform amid the frenzied atmosphere of the campaign.

**“Critics charged [that] Emerson had sounded many false alarms, made numerous errors of fact, bandied accusations about rather freely, and ceased to be regarded as credible by much of the mainstream media.”**

By now, the Islamophobic crusade has gone beyond the right-wing pro-Israel activists, cyber-bigots, and ambitious hucksters who conceived it. It now belongs to leading Republican presidential candidates, top-rated cable news hosts, and crowds of Tea Party activists. As the fervor spreads, the crusaders are basking in the glory of what they accomplished. "I didn't choose this moment," Geller mused to the *New York Times*, "this moment chose me."

**Max Blumenthal** is an award-winning journalist whose work has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Daily Beast*, the *Nation*, the *Huffington Post*, the Independent Film Channel, Salon.com, Al Jazeera English, and other publications. He is a writing fellow for the Nation Institute and author of *Goliath: Life and Loathing in Greater Israel* (Nation Books).

## Profile of Steven Emerson [full name: Steven Abram Emerson]

By Right Web, which is dedicated to "Tracking militarists' efforts to influence U.S. foreign policy"

Steven Emerson, founder of the Investigative Project on Terrorism, is an author and media pundit who has made a career of issuing warnings about purported terrorist threats to the United States and the West.[1] A former freelance journalist, Emerson emerged as a terrorism "expert" in the 1990s when he began writing sensationalist pieces about the purported activities of Islamic terrorists operating on American soil.[2]

Although he has been repeatedly criticized for producing faulty analyses and having a distinctly anti-Islamic agenda, Emerson is a frequent guest commentator on news programs, particularly right-wing outlets like Fox News, and he has been invited to give testimony to Congress.[3] His work has also been lauded by a number of public figures. His personal website quotes Andrew McCarthy, a former federal prosecutor now with the neoconservative Foundation for Defense of Democracies, saying: "[Emerson] is a valuable source of information and knowledge. And in terms of trying to find places to look for evidence, he's a very good person to talk to. He's got a lot of insight." Emerson's website also quotes the hawkish Republican Sen. Jon Kyl, who describes Emerson as "the most authoritative expert on Middle Eastern terrorism in the United States today." [4]

Emerson was widely ridiculed after his appearance on a Fox News segment in January 2015 discussing attacks on the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, during which he described the city of Birmingham, England, as a "Muslim-only city" where non-Muslims "don't go." [5] British Prime Minister David Cameron called Emerson "a complete idiot" [6] and Birmingham's member of Parliament described his statements as "stupid." [7] In light of the outrage, Emerson issued an apology, saying he had "relied on sources he had used in the past" and that he had made an "egregious error"