

Center for Security Policy

- The Center for Security Policy (CSP) is a **Washington, D.C. think-tank** that describes itself as “promot[ing] national security.” It **warns of a “stealthy” takeover of the United States by Muslims who have supposed ties to terrorism.**
- The Southern Poverty Law Center considers CSP an **anti-Muslim hate group** and a “conspiracy-oriented mouthpiece for the growing anti-Muslim movement in the United States.” The Center for American Progress identifies CSP as one of the “main organizations **fueling the Islamophobia network**.”
- CSP is **led by Frank Gaffney**, a former Reagan administration official who, as the *New York Times* has reported, “has long advanced baseless conspiracy theories, including that President Obama might be a closet Muslim.” (See our factsheet on Frank Gaffney for more information.)
- With Gaffney as its primary mouthpiece, **CSP falsely claims that American Muslims and their liberal allies are working to institute *sharia* in the United States** and to “destroy western civilization from within” by means of “stealth jihad” or “civilization jihad.” Like other anti-Muslim groups, CSP staff mischaracterize sharia as a “political program” and a “totalitarian, supremacist Islamic doctrine” that Muslims are required to impose on all others. Working with other anti-Muslim groups in 2011, **CSP and Gaffney worked to generate a “national debate” about sharia’s supposed threat to the Constitution** and pushed state legislatures to pass bills against sharia or “foreign law.”
- **CSP claims that major American Muslim organizations have the “same goals” as terrorist groups.** They argue that virtually all American Muslim organizations and leaders are secret supporters of or “fronts” for the Muslim Brotherhood, which CSP considers a terrorist group. CSP points to the construction of mosques, Muslims’ involvement in politics, and refugee resettlement in the United States as evidence of “infiltration” by the Muslim Brotherhood. CSP staff have also nurtured speculations that former President Barack Obama is Muslim, claiming that the Obama administration had a “pattern” of “enabling” terrorist groups, and that government officials had ties to them.
- **Numerous politicians, including now-President Donald Trump, have adopted CSP’s views and policy proposals.** As a presidential candidate, Trump praised CSP and cited their misleading poll on American Muslims’ attitudes as justification for his proposal for a “total and complete shutdown on Muslims” in December 2015. The poll, which the Bridge Initiative has debunked, was conducted by a polling firm run by Kellyanne Conway, who worked with CSP frequently before being appointed to work for the Trump campaign and White House.
- **Gaffney reportedly advised the Trump transition team**, and two authors of CSP’s report “Sharia – The Threat to America” are now national security advisors to the president. Trump administration officials like Sebastian Gorka, Michael Flynn, Jeff Sessions, and Mike Pompeo have also worked with or praised CSP.
- Gaffney and his colleagues have also advocated an ideological and religious “extreme vetting” test for refugees and immigrants to “ensure they are not creating this sharia agenda,” a position also adopted by the Trump campaign and administration.
- **CSP also maintains relationships with other Republican politicians** many of whom have attended or spoken at CSP summits and adopted their positions. CSP’s conspiratorial claims about “civilization jihad” and *sharia* were picked up by several of the 2016 Republican presidential candidates. Ben Carson echoed Gaffney’s claims about “civilization jihad” on the Republican primary debate stage in 2016. Ted Cruz, who has defended Gaffney and echoed his claims about American Muslim organizations and Democratic politicians being “in bed” with

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the Muslim Brotherhood, appointed numerous CSP employees, including Gaffney, to advise him on national security during his presidential run in 2016.

- CSP staff, including Gaffney, Clare Lopez, Fred Fleitz, and Jim Hansen, have frequently appeared in conservative media to promote their views. Fox News host Judge Jeanine Pirro, who has hosted CSP staff and others who work for anti-Muslim groups on her show, received CSP's Freedom Flame award in 2014. Breitbart, the media outlet formerly headed by now White House strategist Steve Bannon, has also given CSP staff a platform. CSP's own radio show, Secure Freedom Radio, broadcasts on local and national stations, and online.
- In addition to their "anti-sharia" work, **CSP has initiated and supported platforms including a website to "stop" the so-called Ground Zero Mosque in 2010**; a site called CounterJihad, "dedicated to safeguarding the country from the danger posed by Islamic Supremacists;" and Faith Leaders for America, a coalition of Christian and Jewish leaders that seeks to "become an authoritative counterweight to Islamic supremacism." Like CSP, the groups speaks out against the supposed "civilization jihad" of Muslim organizations with alleged ties to the Muslim Brotherhood.
- Weapons manufacturers, including Lockheed Martin, have given large corporate donations to CSP, and executives from these companies have served on CSP's board.
- Phillip Bump of the *Washington Post* has **dismissed CSP as a "hack organization"** for its promotion of conspiracy theories about Muslim "infiltration." Will McCants, who is a scholar at the Brookings Institution, criticized the work of CSP and similar organizations, saying "[They] sell a lot of books and scare the hell out of Americans, but their policy recommendations range from vague to downright harmful."

IMPACT: A prominent anti-Muslim think-tank criticized by rights groups, the Center for Security Policy has promoted conspiratorial claims about an impending Muslim takeover of the United States and the "threat" of *sharia*. Although debunked by mainstream scholars, CSP's work and views have been praised, cited, and adopted by some major politicians, including Republican presidential candidates and the Trump administration.

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