

Frank Gaffney

- Frank Gaffney is a former Reagan administration official and is the founding director of the **Center for Security Policy (CSP)**, a “national security” think-tank that has promulgated falsified claims about Muslims. The Southern Poverty Law Center considers CSP an anti-Muslim hate group. (See our related factsheet for more details on the organization.)
- As the *New York Times* has reported, Gaffney “has long advanced baseless conspiracy theories, including that President Obama might be a closet Muslim.” In its reports on Islamophobia, Center for American Progress (CAP) identifies Gaffney as **one of the leading “misinformation experts” of the “Islamophobia network.”** Gaffney has appeared as a frequent commentator in major media outlets like Fox News and CNN, where he has been called an “analyst.”
- Like others who work with anti-Muslim groups, Gaffney advances **conspiratorial claims that American Muslims are working to infiltrate and “penetrate” the government and “destroy western civilization from within,”** by means of “stealth jihad” or “civilization jihad.” Gaffney claims that American Muslim leaders and organizations have “same global supremacist objectives” as violent terrorist groups, but that they work to achieve their aims through “stealthy,” “pre-violent” means.
- Gaffney believes that “virtually any Muslim American organization in this country of any prominence is a Muslim Brotherhood front.” Gaffney claims the Muslim Brotherhood is a terrorist group, and that nearly all American Muslim leaders and organizations are secret supporters of terrorism and “sharia supremacism.” On this basis, he opposed the construction of a mosque in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and helped spark the controversy around the so-called “Ground Zero Mosque” in 2010, along with like-minded activists Pamela Geller, Robert Spencer, and Brigitte Gabriel.
- Gaffney also claims that liberal politicians like President Obama have “enabled” the “sharia agenda” of the Muslim Brotherhood and allowed them to “infiltrate” the U.S. government. In 2012, Republican representative and presidential candidate Michele **Bachmann** adopted and popularized Gaffney’s claim that Hillary Clinton aide Huma Abedin was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Gaffney also gave rise to speculation about the U.S. Department of Defense’s Missile Defense Agency logo, which he said featured an “Islamic” crescent symbol and claimed was evidence of “submission to Shariah by President Obama and his team.”
- Gaffney mischaracterizes sharia as a “seeditious” “political program” and a “totalitarian, supremacist Islamic doctrine” that Muslims are required to impose on all others. In his own words, Gaffney worked to “engender a national debate about the nature of Shariah and the need to protect our Constitution and country from it.” **Gaffney campaigned for the passage of anti-sharia or “foreign law” bills, as did his colleagues at anti-Muslim groups.**
- As NPR has reported, “[Gaffney’s] views have gained traction in the Trump administration.” **Gaffney was reportedly an advisor to President Trump’s transition team**, which, according to the *New York Times*, “relied on” him for advice for building his national security team. Gaffney told the *Washington Post* that “a number of these folks are friends of mine. I’ve had conversations with them, [and] the opportunity to provide input [to the campaign], at least informally.” **Gaffney and CSP have long-running relationships with Trump campaign and administration personnel** like Kellyanne Conway, Michael Flynn, Sebastian Gorka, and Mike Pompeo.
- During the 2016 presidential campaign, **Donald Trump cited a debunked CSP poll (which was administered by Conway’s polling company) to justify his call for a “total and complete shutdown of Muslims.”** Gaffney has 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.
- While he was the head of *Breitbart*, now-White House advisor Steve Bannon hosted Gaffney on his radio show at least 34 times. **Bannon has praised Gaffney as an expert, calling him** “one of the senior thought leaders and men of action in this whole war against Islamic radical jihad...doing amazing work, doing God’s work, sir. Just fantastic.” For a time, when Gaffney and his organization were banned from the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) for their views, Bannon moderated “CPAC Uninvited” panels that featured Gaffney and other heads of anti-Muslim groups.

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- **Gaffney maintains positive working relationships with numerous other Republican politicians**, including [Newt Gingrich](#), Rep. Steve King, Bobby Jindal, many of whom have [attended or spoken](#) at CSP conferences and summits. Gaffney **served as a foreign policy advisor to Republican candidate Ted Cruz**, who has [defended](#) Gaffney and [echoed](#) his claims about American Muslim organizations and Democratic politicians being “[in bed](#)” with the Muslim Brotherhood. In 2016, presidential candidate **Ben Carson gave voice to Gaffney’s “civilization jihad” plan to take over America in a nationally-televised Republican primary debate**. As the *New York Times* has reported, Gaffney serves as a [link](#) between government leaders and grassroots groups who have sought to engender concern about [sharia](#).
- In speaking about Muslim student groups and other organizations in a 2016 interview, Gaffney [said](#): “They essentially, like termites, hollow out the structure of the civil society and other institutions for the purpose of creating conditions under which the jihad will succeed.” Academics who study media portrayals of Muslims [note](#) that the use of animal or insect metaphors contributes to the dehumanization of Muslims.
- The Jewish NGO, the **Anti-Defamation League (ADL)** has [criticized Gaffney’s work and his “undue influence” on politicians](#) compared to other “right-wing figures” who share his views. Journalists have [referred](#) to Gaffney as a “[professional islamophobe](#),” “[one of the country’s leading anti-Muslim conspiracy theorists](#),” and “[an important cog](#)” advancing the notion that a Muslim takeover of America is underway.

IMPACT: Like his colleagues at other anti-Muslim groups, Center for Security Policy head Frank Gaffney sees [Islam as a national security threat](#) and has advanced falsified claims about [sharia](#), Muslim “infiltration,” and “civilization jihad.” Many of his views have been adopted by Republican politicians, as well as President Trump and his administration, including the director of the CIA.

Last updated July 26, 2017