

**IMPACT:** Tom Trento is an American conservative activist who has a history of making anti-Muslim statements, including promoting a narrative that constructs Islam as a major threat to America. He is the founder and executive director of The United West, described by the Southern Poverty Law Center as an organization “stoking anti-Muslim hate for over a decade.”

- Tom Trento is a conservative activist from New Jersey who resides in Florida. A 2012 piece from Mother Jones revealed that while attending Florida Atlantic University, **Trento was taught by Walid Phares, “a onetime political adviser to a Lebanese Christian paramilitary group” who also served as a foreign policy advisor during the first Trump administration.**
- In **2006, Trento formed the Florida Security Council, which was described as a council of “highly skilled national security experts.”** The Florida Security Council was joined early on by longtime conservative activists and a GOP state representative named Adam Hasner.
- In 2011, the Florida Security Council was renamed The United West when the organization determined that its activity “had expanded beyond the borders of Florida” and wished to reflect a more widespread influence and expansion of their values and ambitions. In a **March 2011 study, sociologist Ed Pertwee noted that, “Trump attended the launch of Tom Trento’s group, The United West, ... where he posed for a photograph with Frank Gaffney and Austrian counterjihad activist Elisabeth Sabbaditsch-Wolff.”**
- As an organization, **The United West aims to “halt the expansion of Shariah law,” process “Islamic terrorists as military combatants,” and inform the West of the “clear and present danger” Islam poses. The United West website also notes that the organization has “regular national security missions to Israel and the Middle East”,** which began in 2012 and are intended to train Americans in understanding “Islamic terrorism.” The organization presented one such mission on the PR Newswire website, stating that their 2019 expedition to Israel would be useful in helping members understand how security walls surrounding Israel combated terrorism and prevented “illegal immigrants.”
- In **2008, Trento assisted in distributing 28 million DVD copies of the 2005 documentary *Obsession: Radical Islam’s War Against the West*, which was produced by the Clarion Fund ahead of the 2008 presidential election. A summary of *Obsession* states that the film covers the “threat of Radical Islam to Western civilization” and features interviews with various individuals from anti-Muslim organizations, such as Daniel Pipes and Steven Emerson. Trento distributed copies of the DVDs at Democratic and Republican nominating conventions, and stated that the documentary is “the single most powerful piece of media over the past five years in persuading average Americans to the Islamist threat.” ***Obsession* promoted Islamophobic narratives, particularly in that it “depicts Muslims as inherently violent and anti-Western, and Islam as analogous to Nazism.”****
- Trento also **served as one of 19 co-authors for the 2010 book, *Shariah: The Threat to America*, the publication of which was sponsored by the Center for Security Policy,** which is described as an anti-Muslim hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). The book is an analysis compiled by Team B II, named as such because the analysis is modeled after a 1976 “Team B” report that challenged U.S. government intelligence (“Team A”) analyses of the dangers posed by the Soviet Union. *Shariah: The Threat to America* fulfills this same goal but instead discusses the dangers of “violent extremism” and “the totalitarian socio-political doctrine that Islam calls shariah.” Trento’s precise contribution to this work is unknown, but he is listed as an associate, meaning he likely assisted with research and some aspects of the writing.
- In 2013, during a 9/11 memorial in Venice, Florida, Trento used his position as a speaker to promote a political platform. **During his speech, Trento claimed that the “Muslim Brotherhood has infiltrated America” and that “their [Muslims’] goal is to get every single one of us [Westerners] to convert to Islam.” Many of those who heard Trento’s speech were disgusted with the sentiments he expressed,** with Tom Murphy, another speaker at the event, commenting that

he “thought it [Trento’s speech] was absolutely outrageous.” Still others did not find the speech offensive, with City Council Member Emilio Carlesimo saying that he “had a mixed review of the speech, but it didn’t offend me [him] and it certainly roused the crowd.”

- According to the SLPC, **“in 2013, Trento’s web show spread an Islamophobic conspiracy theory claiming that John Brennan, former President Obama’s then-nominee to run the CIA, was a secret Muslim.”**
- A report by SPLC reveals that Trento wrote in 2016 an email to his supporters with the following content: “There is no doubt that, for those with eyes to see, we are at war with devout Muslims who follow the jihad teachings of doctrinal Islam ... Therefore, it is essential that all Americans adopt a ‘war-footing’ mentality and are constantly prepared for any threat, any situation, any problem.”
- In 2022, **the SPLC reported that Trento collaborated with Tom Homan, a former acting director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and a prominent advocate for both the border wall and deportation.** Homan’s organization, Defend the Border and Save Lives, had an address for donations in 2022 that matched the address of The United West. The United West organized a fundraising event for Homan’s organization on November 1 at former President Trump’s Mar-a-Lago resort, with ticket prices said to range from \$1,000 to \$25,000. Trento’s readiness to collaborate with Homan was remarked on by Zachary Mueller, the political director at America’s Voice. **Mueller stated that “It is unsurprising but still deeply concerning that the ‘intellectual father’ of family separation (Tom Homan) is working with the anti-immigrant zealot Trento to fundraise for their venture by peddling the absurd conspiracy theory that asylum seekers and migrants constitute an ‘invasion.’”**
- A March 2024 message from Trento provided on The United West’s website states the following: “If the Muslim Brotherhood is true to its manifesto, engaging in a ‘civilization jihad,’ against the West, then it is the height of foolishness to think as though we are not engaged in a knock-down-drag-out, battle for the American way of life.” The idea of a “civilization jihad” or “civilizational jihad” is based on an anti-Western memo written by Mohamed Akram Adlouni, a memo that has never even been referenced by the Muslim Brotherhood and thus only reflects – as the SPLC said – a “fantasy” of a single member, albeit an ominous one.” **As a 2016 Bridge Initiative piece notes, claims of “civilization jihad” are a “baseless” conspiracy theory that “mischaracterizes the nature and use of the memo, and exaggerates the impact it has had.” Trento promoted these views via The United West in March 2024, arguing that “the Islamic system” is a “set of principles that are completely opposite the values of Western culture.”** Trento and The United West are committed to continually advancing their goals of preventing the spread of Islam and encouraging Americans and other citizens of the West to see Muslims as the opposing side of a “war.”
- **Trento’s anti-Muslim sentiments are also apparent on The United West’s YouTube channel, where he produces a variety of videos that promote Islamophobia.** In one August 2024 video, Trento discusses FBI associate deputy director Paul Abbate, showing a clip from a speech Abbate gave along with leaders of the Dar Al Hijrah Mosque in Fairfax, Virginia. Within the first 30 seconds of the video, Trento asserts that “this mosque is loaded historically with all-star terrorists.” After showing Abbate’s speech clip, in which Abbate hugs a leader of the mosque, **Trento states that “Once you get the ‘As-salamu alaykum hug’ by the Muslim brotherhood, you are owned. You are compromised.”** In the final two minutes of the video, Trento links Abbate to the assassination attempt on President Donald Trump, implying that Abbate’s connections to the Dar Al Hijrah Mosque and Muslims in general will change how the investigation into the assassination attempt plays out. **The video, in sum, showcases how Trento constructs Muslims to be a major threat and uses his platform to promote the message that they are a danger to America.**
- The **Canadian Broadcasting Service concluded in 2012 that Trento “considers himself a soldier battling the Muslim menace in the U.S.”** In his March 2024 letter on The United West website, Trento states, “They [Muslims] are at war. We better be too.” **In an October 2023 YouTube video, Trento not only stated that his organization, The United West, was “preeminent” in fighting**

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**Islamic influence, but also stated that “There is a psychosis that goes on in the Islamic world. Now thankfully, not every Muslim is a jihadi but by definition, every jihadi is a Muslim. And that’s based upon their theological, analytical, cultural, and political doctrines.”** Another statement from Trento, spoken while he was on Wendy Bell Radio in January of 2024, went: “They [Muslims] believe that the war that is going on started by the Hamas is a definitive, eschatological, end-times moment, where finally, Islam will launch a jihad worldwide, destroy the Jews, then come and destroy America the Christians.” This statement demonstrates Trento’s strong anti-Muslim views and rhetoric and his belief that Islam needs to be fought.

Bridge Initiative Factsheet