



ADVANCING FAITH, FAMILY AND FREEDOM

December 16, 2015

The Honorable Robert Goodlatte
United States House of Representatives
Chairman, Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael McCaul
United States House of Representatives
Chairman, Homeland Security Committee
Ford House Office Building H2176
441 D Street, South West
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chairman Goodlatte and Chairman McCaul:

We, the signers of this letter, are a group of individuals and organizations concerned with domestic security issues. We whole-heartedly support lawful efforts to thwart terrorist activities in the United States, whether foreign or domestic. However, we are writing to express our concerns regarding the association of federal law enforcement agencies and officials with an organization, the Southern Poverty Law Center (“SPLC”), which appears to be misdirecting federal anti-terrorism efforts.

For example, Assistant Attorney General for National Security, Jonathan P. Carlin, spoke at a forum on domestic terrorism held at George Washington University’s Center for Cyber and Homeland Security on October 14, 2015.¹ Significantly, this highly publicized event was “co-sponsored” by the SPLC.

Mr. Carlin discussed a range of terror threats to the United States. However, both his individual focus and the event’s focus were on threats unrelated to international jihadist ideologies. Mr. Carlin also took the occasion to announce the creation of a new national security position, the Domestic Terrorism Counsel, to help combat *homegrown* terror threats. He did not give the name of this new counsel at the GW event. We also note that Mr. Carlin frequently lauded the SPLC, even referring to their staff as “our Southern Poverty Law Center colleagues.” Given the SPLC’s connection to an act of domestic

¹ Mr. Carlin’s remarks and the Q&A session that followed were aired on C-SPAN. See: “National Security and Domestic Terrorism,” C-SPAN (event date: Oct. 14, 2015) (<http://www.c-span.org/video/?328731-1/assistant-attorney-general-john-carlin-domestic-terrorism-threat&start=2189>).

terrorism fueled by the hostility its website creates and fosters, we find Mr. Carlin's remarks to be uninformed about the true nature of his co-hosts.

The ideological and political biases of the SPLC are well known, and given its prejudices, it is unfitting that high-ranking officials in the Department of Justice should speak at one of their events. In fact, one signer of this letter notified the Homeland Security Committee of such concerns following testimony at its July 15, 2015 hearing by an SPLC official.² Furthermore, a group of prominent individuals recently wrote to the Associated Press concerning that organization's careless reliance on the SPLC's highly-politicized list of "hate groups."³ The FBI has likewise dropped the SPLC from its source list, and no longer utilizes it as a "partner in outreach" because of the patent bias in its classifications.⁴

A larger problem posed by the SPLC's influence on the federal government is the misdirection of resources and efforts by the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security in assessing terrorist threats. It is certainly true that "homegrown" terrorism exists, but the SPLC pushes a narrative arguing that the threat to this country from Islamic-jihadist terrorism is overblown, and that the greater terror threat to the American public arises from domestic actors and ideologies.

As the terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015 made clear, this is simply not true. The international terrorist threat inside the United States is clearly of a different order of magnitude than that presented by any indigenous organization. A just-released study on the "unprecedented" level of ISIS activity in America observed that "[a]s of the fall of 2015, U.S. authorities speak of some 250 Americans who have traveled or attempted to travel to Syria/Iraq to join the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and 900 active investigations against ISIS sympathizers in all 50 states."⁵ Additionally, Sebastian and Katharine Gorka have pointed out that from March 2014 to November 2015, "82 individuals in the United States affiliating with ISIS have been interdicted by law enforcement, whether traveling to fight, recruiting, fundraising, planning to travel, promoting ISIS, or initiating or carrying out attacks (including 7 unnamed minors and 4

² Letter, Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin (USA-ret.) to Chairman Michael McCaul and Rep. Bennie Thompson regarding the hearing titled, "The Rise of Radicalization: Is the U.S. Government Failing to Counter International and Domestic Terrorism"(July 27, 2015) (<http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF15K55.pdf>).

³ Letter, Concerned individuals and groups to Gary B. Pruitt, President and CEO, The Associated Press (Nov. 9, 2015) (<http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF15K36.pdf>).

⁴ Paul Bedard, "'Shocked' Anti-Defamation League Claps FBI 'Diss' on Hate Crimes," *Washington Examiner* (March 26, 2014)(<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/article/2546305>)("The Southern Poverty Law Center, which has labeled several Washington, D.C.-based family organizations as 'hate groups' for favoring traditional marriage, has been dumped as a 'resource' on the FBI's Hate Crime Web page, a significant rejection of the influential legal group.").

⁵ Lorenzo Vidino and Seamus Hughes, "ISIS in America: From Retweets to Raqqa," Program on Extremism, Center for Cyber and Homeland Security, George Washington University (December 2015). See also: Letter, County Sheriffs of Colorado to President Barack Obama, p. 1 (Nov. 9, 2015) (<http://www.judicialwatch.org/document-archive/coloradosheriffs/>)(cited by Judicial Watch in an 11/13/15 blog post).

killed in the course of an attack.”⁶) Additionally, they noted that 29% of those arrested indicated that they had no intention of leaving the United States, but that they wished instead to serve ISIS by killing Americans here on U.S. soil.⁷

Therefore, we were greatly surprised that Mr. Carlin appeared to affirm the SPLC’s dangerously misguided view that domestic, non-jihadist threats pose a greater danger to the American public than do those that are international or jihad-based.⁸ The ISIS-inspired terrorist attack that killed 14 and wounded at least that many in San Bernardino on December 2, 2015⁹ proves otherwise.

With this in mind, we are troubled by the negative influence the SPLC may have on Department of Justice’s anti-terrorism policies in general, and the activities of this new Domestic Terrorism Counsel, in particular. Accordingly, we would appreciate Congress’s assistance in obtaining answers from DOJ on the following questions concerning their relationship with SPLC. First, how did this GW-SPLC conference come to have the Department of Justice’s participation? Second, before the GW forum took place on October 14th, was Congress notified that the position of Domestic Terrorism Counsel was being created, and was it told who would be appointed to fill that position? Third, did the SPLC provide any guidance or information to DOJ regarding the selection of the person named Domestic Terrorism Counsel? Finally, what is the relationship between DOJ and SPLC, its employees, publications, and events and has it contributed financially to SPLC?

We thank you for your time and consideration.

Please send any reply to this letter to: Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin (USA-retired), Executive Vice-President, Family Research Council, 801 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001.

⁶ Sebastian L. Gorka, Ph.D., Katharine C. Gorka, “ISIS: The Threat to the United States,” p. 8 (ThreatKnowledgeGroup: Washington, D.C., Nov. 2015)(<http://threatknowledge.org/isis-threat-to-usa-report/>).

⁷ Id. at 11.

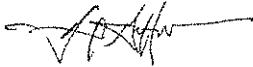
⁸ In the posted text of his address, which differed from his actual remarks delivered at GW, Mr. Carlin stated, “According to one 2014 study, state, local and tribal law enforcement officials considered sovereign citizens to be the top concern of law enforcement, ranking above ISIL and Al Qaeda-inspired extremists.” He did not name the study. He also observed that “[w]e recognize that, over the past few years, more people have died in this country in attacks by domestic extremists than in attacks associated with international terrorist groups.” “Assistant Attorney General John P. Carlin Delivers Remarks on Domestic Terrorism at an Event Co-Sponsored by the Southern Poverty Law Center and the George Washington University Center for Cyber and Homeland Security’s Program on Extremism,” Department of Justice website (Washington, D.C., October 14, 2015) (<http://www.justice.gov/opa/speech/assistant-attorney-general-john-p-carlin-delivers-remarks-domestic-terrorism-event-co>).

⁹ Editorial, “The Terror This Time,” *Wall Street Journal* (Dec. 4, 2015)(“FBI Director James Comey said Friday that his agency is now investigating Wednesday’s massacre of 14 people as an act of terrorism and that the two Muslim killers showed ‘indications of radicalization.’”)

Sincerely,



Lt. General (Ret.) William G. Boykin
Executive Vice President
Family Research Council



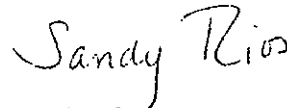
Frank J. Gaffney, Jr.
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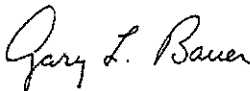
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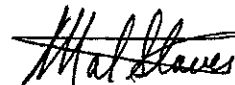
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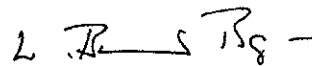
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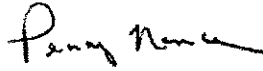
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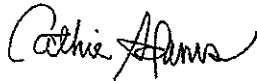
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