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Charles Farr,
Director General,
Office for Security and Counter Terrorism,
3rd Floor, Peel Building,
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London,
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Monday 29th March 2010

Dear Mr Farr,

I am writing to you in respect of the report published by the Quilliam Foundation last Friday entitled 'Reprogramming British Muslims: A study of the Islam Channel' as the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism, which you head, is one of the main funders of the Quilliam Foundation.

The QF report resorts to the dubious tactic of singling out select quotations and sentences uttered by some Islam Channel presenters and guests and criticising them for their interpretation of Islamic teachings while slyly conflating these with the threat of violent extremism.

This sort of weak analysis and reasoning, in order to establish linkages where none such exists, pervades throughout the entire report. It is incredulous that from a scholar's denunciation of practices which are considered unIslamic according to the doctrine, QF should surmise that these scholars are somehow advocating intolerance, excommunication and violent extremism.

The Islam Channel has consistently spoken out against violent extremism and has repeatedly hosted key figures in the Metropolitan Police on their programmes in order to help disseminate key counter-terrorism messages to its audience. As well as hosting a plethora of individuals and organisations who advocate full Muslim participation in society and politics.

You will be aware that this is not the first time the Quilliam Foundation have tried to smear and undermine key independent British Muslim institutions. The Quilliam Foundation – since its formation two years ago – has also attacked the Markazi Jamiat Ahl-e-Hadith and the organisers of Islam Expo amongst others.

You have very commendably visited a number of Muslim communities around the country to hear first-hand their views and concerns relating to our counter-terrorism efforts. You will no doubt therefore, be aware of whether this type of mischievous activity by the QF – an organization with negligible credibility amongst British Muslims - is contributing to helping or hindering the building of trust between Muslim communities and the government.

As the Muslim Council of Britain noted in their latest press release it is worth reflecting on the fact that the most vocal supporters of the Quilliam Foundation are often Zionist extremists and those with an explicit anti-Muslim agenda.

What the OSCT and the Foreign Office, who fund the QF, surely need to now ask themselves in response to this latest smear campaign is whether their association with a body that British Muslims find abhorrent for its half-baked analysis and laughable policy prescriptions, and which derails the other benign efforts by government departments to fully engage British Muslims in debates on integration and belonging, is a price worth paying?

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss these concerns further.

Yours sincerely,

Mohammed Asif
CEO
ENGAGE