

Term Limits

During the week of Oct. 22-26, David Horowitz and an alliance of conservative organizations sponsored a series of lectures and protests at universities around

the United States to draw attention to “Islamofascism.” Just in time for this “Islamofascism Awareness Week,” Christopher Hitchens penned a defense of the term. This is ironic, given Hitchens’s stated admiration for George Orwell, who said in his 1946 essay “Politics and the English Language” that fascism “has now no meaning except in so far as it signifies ‘something not desirable.’”

The word “Islamofascism” never had any meaning, except as a catch-all for whatever regimes and groups the word’s users wished to make targets for military action. Hitchens is also well known for his tendentious misunderstandings of all forms of religion, likening theism to a supernatural totalitarian regime and attributing all of the crimes of political totalitarianism to religion. It was therefore appropriate that he should promote the term “Islamofascism” since it defines a religious movement in the language of secular totalitarianism.

The key problem with the label is its stunning ignorance of both fascism and jihadism. Fascism was a specific, secular, modernizing ideology—what historian Stanley Payne has called “revolutionary hyper-nationalism”—that emerged out of Europe’s ruins in WWI. It was focused above all on exalting the nation. Search in vain for any resemblance to a transnational, religious movement that claims to seek the restoration of a theocratic state. In art and architecture, fascists were champions of modernism; jihadists clearly have no such interests. The valorization of war and death that Hitchens cites in his

defense as proof of the similarity between the two is common to all armed revolutionary movements.

In addition to its rhetorical and historical errors, the designation reveals interventionists’ monomania about the lessons of WWII. Every threat must be likened to Nazism as much as possible, and every crisis must be another Munich 1938. Historical myopia of this sort leads to strategic blindness, as the endless use of WWII analogies to rationalize the Iraq War has abundantly shown.

Like the pejorative term from which it derives, Islamofascism means whatever the person deploying it wants it to mean. It is ultimately not an attempt at description or explanation but a demon word designed to generate visceral, irrational reaction. This is precisely the opposite of the careful, deliberate, and informed responses we need to cultivate. And since it obscures the actual nature of jihadism, it is not simply a crime against the English language but a dangerous source of misunderstanding.

As Marxists once used the term “fascist” to vilify everyone to their right as a means of wielding influence, Horowitz and his allies use “Islamofascist” to group together the many regimes and groups they wish to cast as a cohesive, united enemy, conflating mutually hostile forces into a single, undifferentiated mass.

The campus protests against Islamofascism Awareness Week have been no less absurd, with critics flinging charges of racism and “Islamophobia.” As intellectually vacuous moral bludgeons go, Islamophobia is almost in a class by

itself. Those deploying the term try to make any attempt to criticize any aspect of Islam taboo. Like Islamofascism, the charge is meant to confuse listeners, chastise opponents, and end discussion.

“Islamophobia” is a word favored by both jihadist apologists and the conventional enforcers of “tolerance” and opponents of “hate speech.” Attributing acts of violence to Islam, criticizing practices in Islamic countries, or even associating the name of Islam with crimes carried out in its name draw the charge. It, like other thought-policing labels, is a tool for defining the limits of speech and shutting down critical thinking while securing select groups from reasonable inquiry and political opposition. The term implies irrational fear and loathing and classes an entire perspective as nothing more than hatred, denying to critics of jihadism their rationality and so denigrating them as being less than fully human. Control of debate, indeed, control over whether there will even be a debate, is the goal.

The proper use of names and words is essential to rational argument, and the proliferation of nonsense terms and thought-policing labels is fatal. Use of propagandistic terms like “Islamofascism” and “Islamophobia” is an attempt to wield power through confusion and intimidation: they aim to mislead about the nature of our actual enemies on the one hand and invent new heresies against “tolerance” on the other. The debasement and cheapening of language are assaults on the quality of thought and discourse, and they are intended to prevent the proper, sober understanding of the realities of the Islamic world and our policies overseas. ■

Osama's Man in America

His job: keep the Viagra and the gossip flowing while praying for a Giuliani victory.

By Leon Hadar

The following document was obtained by a small private intelligence company, located at a (secret) address in Chevy Chase, Maryland, that monitors Islamic terrorist groups. It followed a year-long surveillance operation that intercepted (secret) messages within a (secret) al-Qaeda communications network. Dr. Leon Hadar, a world-renowned terrorism connoisseur, who has written The Osama bin Laden I Don't Know, translated this somewhat historic document, and it was authenticated by a panel of outside veteran amateurs, including retired analysts from the Office of Strategic Services.

IN THE NAME OF GOD, the Merciful, the Compassionate. From *Abdullah men Amreeka* (the Slave of God from America) to the honorable brother, Osama bin Laden, *Imam al-Ummah* (leader of the Islamic community). Peace and the mercy and blessings of God are upon you. *Aslam-o-Alaikum* (Hi there). *Keef Halak, Sheik?* (What's up, boss?). BTW, you looked great in your last video that I watched on television here. I especially liked the groomed beard and see that you are using the Just for Men Haircolor I sent you. So who is the lucky new bride? *Mabrook!* (Congratulations!) And apropos, let me know if you need more of the "blue."

I also hope you enjoyed the DVD with the final "Sopranos" episode that I put in the package at the last moment. I was a bit disappointed that we never got to

find out whether Muhammad and Ahmed, who Tony befriended in the last season of the show, were "brothers" or just pistachio salesmen. This subplot resulted in an AP story headlined, "Osama and the Sopranos," about alleged FBI worries over "al-Qaeda ties to the Mob." Next thing you know, the Olive Garden will be serving *Halaal* food and Rudy Giuliani will be campaigning out of the local mosque in Trenton, New Jersey, in the *Dar al-Kufr*, the land of non-Islam of North America. I know, I know. You're probably saying, "Yallah. Get out of here."

I don't know if you remember me. But we met in the Khyber Pass café in Quetta in 1999 (1420 according to the Muslim calendar), and I bombarded (oops ... sorry!) you with my schtick about dying to meet those virgins in heaven, and you looked deep into my blue eyes (Bosnian dad) and stroked my blond curly hair (German mom) and said, "Ya, *Habibi*. The bottom line is, you look less like Omar Sharif in 'Lawrence of Arabia' and more like Robert Redford in 'The Way we Were.' We need you here. To study. To become an American. Perhaps even run for office. In any case, I want you to write me regular reports about political developments. Some movie reviews. Think about yourself as al-Qaeda's own Frank Rich. Also obtain a credit card and do some shopping for me. The mole in the mall, if you will. Are you familiar with Davis' Big & Tall? I like their stuff."

So here I am with another of my monthly reports, as well as a copy of that new book by Chomsky that you requested. We are entering now into the last year of the rule of the *Rayyis* George W. Bush. I know that many of our brothers curse him as a *Fajir*, a wicked evildoer or a sinner by action. I beg to differ. If anything, he reminds me of the biblical character of Balaam. As retold by Persian historian Abi J'afar Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, Balaam was instructed by Balak, the king of Moab, to curse the children of Israel. But then God "turned his tongue" so the cursing ended up falling upon Balaam's own people and the blessing upon the Israelites. From that perspective, Bush could be described as the Balaam of our time and we as the Israelites he cursed. Bush is certainly a *Kafir*, a sinner by disbelief in Allah. But the results of his actions advance the work of God. Bush leads the world's "only remaining superpower," the most powerful military force that the infidels have acquired since the time of the Romans. And not only has he failed to defeat us—as you know, he depicts us as "Islamofascists," the term he borrowed from that *Dahri* (atheist) and *Sakran* (drunk) from England, Christopher Hitchens. In fact, as that celebrated Catholic *Warrag* (scribe)—or to apply the Indian term used by the Americans, "pundit"—Andrew Sullivan has pointed out on his blog, Bush has become "Al Qaeda's enabler." The *Luti*