



*The new name of the Sikh Mediatewatch and Resource Task Force (SMART)*

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**VIA FACSMILE (715.698.4394) & EMAIL ([info@paulnelson.com](mailto:info@paulnelson.com))**

August 28, 2006

Paul R. Nelson for Congress  
PO Box 273  
Woodville, WI 54028

Dear Mr. Nelson,

We are writing to you in response to your outrageous statements regarding racial profiling you made on Tuesday August 15, 2006 during an interview with the Wisconsin Radio Network. In the interview, you expressed your support for racial profiling and in response to the question of how you would spot a Muslim male, you are quoted as responding, "Well, you know, if he comes in wearing a turban and his name is Mohammed, that's a good start!"

We are appalled at your recent statements implicating that anyone with a turban or with a particular sounding name should be considered suspects for terrorist activity. First, the vast majority (99%) of Americans living in the United States who wear turbans are adherents of the Sikh faith. Sikhism is a distinct religious faith and is the fifth largest religion in the world with over 25 million adherents; of which over 500,000 reside in the United States. Sikhs have had nothing to do with the September 11, 2001 attacks, the Spain or London bombings, or even the recent UK terrorist plot. Any consideration to the contrary is flagrantly wrong and is extremely dangerous to the safety and wellbeing of innocent Sikh Americans across the country.

Furthermore, your "characterization" of a Muslim is incorrect and would flagrantly misuse the limited national security resources of the United States. Muslims transcend racial, ethnic, and national origin divides. Muslims range from ethnic Arabs and Southeast Asian's to Caucasians with blond hair and blue eyes. Your position on racial profiling only seeks to vilify the entire Muslim community, which number's close to 1.5 billion, due to the heinous crimes and plots of a small number of individuals

Your statement is highly reprehensible and characterizes an entire demographic, as criminals and potential security threat. To allege that terrorism could be deterred by questioning men with turbans or the name "Mohammed" is an irresponsible statement from an individual seeking public office. Further, such statements only add to the stereotype that in the past has resulted in the murder and assault of innocent American citizens.

Profiling solely based on race is a form of discrimination which has been shown to be an ineffective policing technique. Additionally, advocates conveniently leave out recent terrorist

activity relating to anti-government and extremist right-wing organizations where the perpetrators do not fit into the convenient racial classification above.

- Timothy McVeigh, a Caucasian male murdered 168 people including 19 children.
- Eric Rudolph, a Caucasian male, responsible for murdering a nurse at an abortion clinic, killing another woman and injuring more than 100 innocents in the Atlanta Olympics bombing, and detonated devices at gay night clubs.
- Dennis Rader, the self-proclaimed BTK killer, terrorized residents of Wichita, Kansas for more than 31 years.

Proponents of racial profiling offer a dangerous view of law enforcement and only seek to humiliate a select group of society due to the actions of an even smaller number. Furthermore, seasoned law enforcement and terrorist experts, including the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have denounced racial profiling as ineffective and a waste of government resources. Racial profiling as a policy would spread National Security resources thin and force officials to investigate innocent civilians while possibly allowing credible security threats, who do not conform to government stereotypes, to go unchecked.

In an interview last Thursday (the day of the arrests in the UK in the recent foiled terrorist plot), DHS Secretary Chertoff explained why religious/racial profiling does not make strategic sense: "I don't have any doubt that those who are masterminding this kind of terrorist activity are particularly interested in finding converts who don't fit the, kind of, ordinary prejudiced profile and then getting them brainwashed or persuading them to become operatives and obviously you have got to have somebody who is receptive for doing that but that poses the danger. If we focus only on those who we think fit an obvious prejudice, what we are doing is we're opening the door for those who don't fit that obvious profile and what we have to do is be alert, not only to the threat that we have seen yesterday, but to the threat that we might see tomorrow."<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, Assistant Secretary of the Transportation Security Administration Kip Hawley reiterated the TSA's policy of not using racial profiling: "[W]e believe that you can't stereotype what a terrorist looks like, and there are certainly terrorists who would look as somebody other than what you just mentioned. We use behavior observation which goes to involuntary muscle movements. That will betray someone who is there on a mission, such as terrorism. That's what we're interested in doing. It is built on a privacy foundation, and it's compatible with our values and our laws, but will detect terrorists way far away just by virtue of the way they're behaving."<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, efforts to legitimize racial profiling as a viable method has also resulted in misguided citizens conducting their own policing operations and exacting revenge on

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<sup>1</sup> *Hardball with Chris Mathews on MSNBC, August 10, 2006;*

[http://web2.westlaw.com/result/documenttext.aspx?blinkedcitelist=False&rs=WLW6.07&ss=CNT&rp=/Welcome/NewsAndBusiness/default.wl&origin=Search&sv=Split&cfid=1&fn=top&cxt=RL&clvl=RCC&n=1&fcl=False&sskey=CLID\\_SSSA58557168&mt=NewsAndBusiness&eq=Welcome/NewsAndBusiness&cnm=Search\\_1&method=TNC&query=SO\(MSNBC\)+&+CHERTOFF+&+CALIPHATE&scxt=WL&db=allnewsplus&vr=2.0&service=Search&cnt=DOC&docsample=False&rlt=CLID\\_QRYRLT1567168&rltdb=CLID\\_DB5517168#I%231](http://web2.westlaw.com/result/documenttext.aspx?blinkedcitelist=False&rs=WLW6.07&ss=CNT&rp=/Welcome/NewsAndBusiness/default.wl&origin=Search&sv=Split&cfid=1&fn=top&cxt=RL&clvl=RCC&n=1&fcl=False&sskey=CLID_SSSA58557168&mt=NewsAndBusiness&eq=Welcome/NewsAndBusiness&cnm=Search_1&method=TNC&query=SO(MSNBC)+&+CHERTOFF+&+CALIPHATE&scxt=WL&db=allnewsplus&vr=2.0&service=Search&cnt=DOC&docsample=False&rlt=CLID_QRYRLT1567168&rltdb=CLID_DB5517168#I%231)

<sup>2</sup> *Scarborough Country on MSNBC, August 15, 2006.*

innocent individuals across the country. Members of the Muslim, Arab and Sikh American communities have been subject to thousands of reported hate crimes and bias related incidents since the tragic attacks of 9/11.

Reflecting a range of national and local civil rights organization, we respectfully call on you to offer a public apology to Sikh, Muslim and Arab American communities for willfully considering all individuals in the communities terrorists by **Sept. 7, 2006**.

If you have any questions, on behalf of the signatories, please contact Rajbir Singh Datta at 202-393-2700 extension 27.

Sincerely,

American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)  
American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee – District of Columbia  
American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee - New Jersey  
American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee - Wisconsin  
Applied Research Center  
Arab American Forum  
Arab American Institute  
Arab Community Center for Economic & Social Services (ACCESS)  
Asian American Justice Center (AAJC)  
Asian Law Caucus  
Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC)  
Bay Area Sikhs  
California Sikh Council  
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)  
Discrimination and National Security Initiative (DNSI)  
Hate Free Zone Washington  
Hispanic Coalition  
Latino Family Services  
Legal Momentum  
National Council of La Raza  
National Network for Arab American Communities  
PRIME - Ecumenical Commitment to Refugees  
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)  
Sikh Educational and Charitable Trust  
South Asian American Leaders of Tomorrow (SAALT)  
The Arab American Community Coalition  
The Interfaith Alliance (TIA)  
United Sikhs  
Wing Luke Museum  
YWCA - USA

CC: The Honorable Ron Kind, United States House of Representatives  
The Honorable Russ Feingold, United States Senate