

Why San Diego Unified should drop its plans to address "Islamophobia"

(Title used in print version: School No Place For Islamic Apologetics)

BY STUART H. HURLBERT, San Diego Union-Tribune, May 11, 2017, p. B21
<http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sd-utbg-islamaphobia-cair-schools-20170510-story.html>

In the age of Facebook and Twitter, kids have all sorts of ways to be mean to each other, to bully. And all sorts of ways to wander the internet free of oversight by their less techie parents. We just have to assume they can handle all this with aplomb and that, with good parenting and caring teachers, they will end up as compassionate, moral human beings.

But let's not impose on them the politically correct follies of our own generations. Case in point: the post-2001 notion of an "Islamophobia" crisis. The term is entirely political and unnecessary to clear communication or to fighting unjust discrimination. It serves only to divert our attention from real issues.

The Islam-sanctified discrimination against and occasional slaughter of Christians and Jews in many countries of the Middle East could be said to represent a "Christianophobia" and "Judeophobia" far more extensive, unjust, and barbaric than the "Islamophobia" now getting such exaggerated attention in the West. But we don't need those terms either to reduce discrimination or bullying on the basis of religious beliefs.

Politically loaded, imprecise language leads to careless thought and bad decisions.

An excellent example is the San Diego Unified School District's (SDUSD) caving in to demands by the Council for American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and planning to develop "a multi-tiered approach to combating Islamophobia," as reported in the Union-Tribune on April 6. That article contained much information on the issue and did so in such a clear way that SDUSD board members may already be questioning their earlier decision.

One incentive for the plan was 82 recorded incidents of bullying in the school district between July and December 2016, with religion the motivator in seven of these cases. There is no record though of what religions were involved. Where's the "Islamophobia"?

Under the proposed CAIR-SDUSD plan, students will "learn more about [Islam] in social studies classes," staff members and parents will receive letters "addressing Islamophobia and identifying resources to learn about the religion," and "schools ... will review and vet materials related to Muslim culture and history in media centers and provide resources and material for teachers ... and take steps to promote a more positive image of Islam."

The SDUSD is ambling into a tar pit here, going in a direction that will lead to unending headaches and costs for educators and all the rest of us.

If schools wish to offer survey courses comparing — side-by-side — the histories, doctrines and practices of the world's major religions, that would be fine.

But there are zero grounds for selecting Islam for special treatment. A narrow special interest group like CAIR mustn't be allowed to vet the materials used, censoring anything that did not "promote a more positive image of Islam." Such de facto Islamic apologetics would be unacceptable.

Many Muslims, ex-Muslims, and non-Muslim experts on Islam regard CAIR as a covert supporter of Islamic fundamentalism, not as a supporter of a reformed Islam compatible with the Constitution and laws of the United States.

Is CAIR willing to condemn publicly and in print not just terrorists but also the hundreds of millions of fundamentalist Muslims in the world who advocate a worldwide caliphate,

discrimination against non-Muslims, and capital punishment for apostates, adulterers and those who insult Mohammed? Will materials given to students include information from the Pew Research Center about how widespread such barbaric beliefs are? For a summary of Pew's findings, google Andrew Bostom's article "Sharia über Alles."

If CAIR or SDUSD teachers plan to exclude such information, that would signal that the objectives are not education but, rather, propaganda. Public schools have no business engaging in such apologetics on behalf of *any* religion.

How do we suppose parents and students will react to all this? Some will distribute information on CAIR, Sharia, and Islamic fundamentalism that CAIR would prefer students not see. They will challenge principals and teachers with this. Many will insist that, for balance, books by critics of Islam, such as Brigitte Gabriel, Pamela Geller, Daniel Pipes, Bernard Lewis, Irshad Manji, Wafa Sultan and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, be in every school library.

Surely SDUSD board members can now foresee these problems, even if they couldn't before. At its April 25 meeting, almost two dozen citizens spoke out against the plans for a CAIR-vetted program of Islamic apologetics. Not one audience member spoke in favor of such. Even without binoculars, the board should be able to see a tsunami developing.

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VIDEOS of school board meetings:

SAN DIEGO FIGHTS BACK: SAYS WE WILL NOT TOLERATE SHARIA LAW IN OUR SCHOOLS (Citizens speaking out on the CAIR-SDUSD collaboration at April 25 meeting)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zs6Z61QAK2U>

SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, BOARD MEETING, APRIL 25, 2017 (5 hours)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLZ6b4Ld6DE>

SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, BOARD MEETING, APRIL 4, 2017 (Detailed discussion of CAIR-SDUSD partnership and collaboration at 1:01-1:42)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRH64mH3Bxs>

ARTICLE by SDUSD leaders:

IN TAKING STAND AGAINST HATE, SAN DIEGO UNIFIED EXEMPLIFIES CIVILITY
By Richard Barrera (president) & Kevin Beiser (vice-president), SDUSD
San Diego Union-Tribune, May 11, 2017 <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/commentary/sd-utbg-muslim-students-bullying-20170510-story.amp.html> (Notable is the authors' failure to mention that a CAIR-SDUSD partnership even exists, let alone their objective of promoting "a more positive image if Islam")

Good, bad side of Islam should be presented
by Shell Medall, Letters, San Diego Union-Tribune, May 16, 2017, p. B5

Eva Perez ("Glad schools taking Islamophobia seriously," May 13) embraced the San Diego Unified School District's anti-Islamophobia initiative. Her idealism must be tempered by the principles that Islam teaches.

The Quran (3:118 and 4:144) states that Muslims cannot have nonbelievers as friends, advisers, consultants or protectors. Another instruction states that if unbelievers do not convert to Islam, they must also be fought. This was also Osama bin Laden's directive when quoted by an Associated Press writer in 2007 when he said if Americans want peace they should convert. The publication "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam" by Robert Spencer states there are more than 100 verses that encourage Muslims to fight unbelievers including "chopping their heads off" (Quran 47:4).

If the district wants to teach about Islam, both the good and the bad concepts must be presented. Turning the other cheek won't work when confronting a group whose beliefs are to kill unbelievers unless they convert.
