



# THE INVESTIGATIVE PROJECT ON TERRORISM

## ALEJANDRO BEUTEL



*Alejandro Beutel visited the White House at least 10 times. He met with Quintan Wiktorowicz, Senior Director for Global Engagement at the National Security Council, on November 4, 2011 twice, March 13 2012, March 9, 2012 and July 18, 2011. Beutel met with Paul Monteiro, Associate Director, White House Office of Public Engagement on May 30, 2012, June 29, 2011, July 14, 2010, July 16, 2010 and July 28, 2011.*

### ***Biography***

Alejandro J. Beutel was MPAC's Government & Policy Analyst from July 2009 until July 2012<sup>1</sup>. He attended nine meetings at the White House while he served in this position: with Paul Monteiro, on May 30, 2012, June 29, 2011, July 28, 2011, July 16, 2010, July 14, 2010; and with Quintan Wiktorowicz on March 13, 2012, March 9, 2012, November 4, 2011 and July 18, 2011.

He states that currently he is an independent analyst, “conduct[ing] specialized research on ... public policy issues including CVE [countering violent extremism], religious freedom, and democratization.”<sup>2</sup> In April 2009 he served as a “Graduate Fellow with the Maryland State Assembly of Delegates [sic - House of Delegates], focusing on health care, religious liberty and constituent relations.”<sup>3</sup>

### ***Statements Critical of U.S. Counterterrorism Efforts***

- In November 2009, Beutel authored an MPAC report with the stated mission of offering guidance on how to counter radicalization and increase cooperation between the American-Muslim community and law enforcement.<sup>4</sup> Although some of the report is dedicated to counter-radicalization efforts, the remainder focuses on criticizing investigative techniques used by of federal and local law

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.linkedin.com/pub/alejandro-j-beutel/5/3a9/1b0>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.linkedin.com/pub/alejandro-j-beutel/5/3a9/1b0>

<sup>3</sup> <http://web.archive.org/web/20100728221727/http://www.mpac.org/about/staff-board/alejandro-beutel.php>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.mpac.org/news/2009/beutel-discusses-radicalization-on-npr.php>

enforcement.<sup>5</sup>

- Calling for a shift towards a "community-policing model,"<sup>6</sup> MPAC asserts that under this revised system: "Law enforcement works on clamping down on terrorist firms' ability to operate within the market for martyrs—terrorists' 'entrepreneurial activities'—while Muslim communities work on drying up the market itself."<sup>7</sup>
- The report calls for "**leav[ing] the counter-radicalization to Muslim communities** - law enforcement should focus on terrorists' criminal activities; Muslims have been and must continue to be at the forefront of the ideological issues."<sup>8</sup>
- The report states that "many (but not all) Muslim communities...have negative perceptions of the police" and it takes **particular issue with the use of informants** in counterterrorism investigations. The report concedes that "informants are an extremely important tool that can be used to great effectiveness in various kinds of criminal investigations, including counterterrorism ones," but then **argues that their use has been ineffective and counterproductive.**
- In February 2010, **Beutel criticized the FBI's handling of the case of Imam Luqman Abdullah**,<sup>9</sup> who opened fire on law enforcement officers as they moved in to arrest him the previous year. Abdullah led a radical separatist movement called "the Ummah," preached a violent jihad, and pledged not to go quietly if police ever came for him.
  - "The FBI's tactics and actions in the case of Imam Luqman Abdullah have **exacerbated tensions between our communities and law enforcement** and undercut the fragile trust needed for effective partnerships to keep America safe ... The public deserves answers, which requires a thorough investigation by an independent party."<sup>10</sup>
- In a "[r]eport and data originally researched and directed by" Beutel,<sup>11</sup> MPAC "claims ... that 'almost 1 out of 3 al-Qaida-related terror plots threatening

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<sup>5</sup> Alejandro J. Beutel, "Building Bridges to Strengthen America," November 2009, <http://web.archive.org/web/20091217004240/http://www.mpac.org/publications/building-bridges/MPAC-Counter-Radicalization-Paper.pdf>. For analysis of this publication, see IPT News, "MPAC's Flawed Prescription for Fighting Homegrown Terror," <http://www.investigativeproject.org/1583/mpacs-flawed-prescription-for-fighting-homegrown>

<sup>6</sup> Alejandro J. Beutel, "Building Bridges to Strengthen America," November 2009, <http://web.archive.org/web/20091217004240/http://www.mpac.org/publications/building-bridges/MPAC-Counter-Radicalization-Paper.pdf>, page 14.

<sup>7</sup> Alejandro J. Beutel, "Building Bridges to Strengthen America," November 2009, <http://web.archive.org/web/20091217004240/http://www.mpac.org/publications/building-bridges/MPAC-Counter-Radicalization-Paper.pdf>, page 16.

<sup>8</sup> Alejandro J. Beutel, "Building Bridges to Strengthen America," November 2009, <http://web.archive.org/web/20091217004240/http://www.mpac.org/publications/building-bridges/MPAC-Counter-Radicalization-Paper.pdf>, page 17.

<sup>9</sup> IPT News, "Fear and Loathing in Detroit," <http://www.investigativeproject.org/1774/fear-and-loathing-in-detroit>.

<sup>10</sup> MPAC Action Alert, February 1, 2010, <http://www.mpac.org/issues/national-security/action-alert-urge-congress-to-call-for-independent-investigation-into-shooting-of-detroit-imam.php>

<sup>11</sup> "Data on Post-9/11 Terrorism in the United States," originally released in late 2010.

America since 9/11/01' were thwarted in part because of help from the Muslim community. However, the MPAC study is full of mistakes, faulty data, contradictions, selective use of information, and demonstrably dishonest analysis."<sup>12</sup>

- Most recently, Beutel co-authored an op-ed with Haris Tarin, Director of the MPAC DC office, in which the two MPAC officials **criticized NYPD surveillance** of Muslim student groups across the Northeast: "The NYPD's surveillance of an entire community based on their faith -- with no evidence of criminal activity -- is a blow against democracy and an ineffective and counterproductive offense to its mandate to 'protect and serve.'" <sup>13</sup>
- Beutel was also acknowledged for his "substantive feedback" in a March 2011 study released by the "progressive" Political Research Associates (PRA) <sup>14</sup> aimed at discrediting what it perceives to be **unqualified and biased counterterrorism trainers**. The report claims that "[t]he Holy Land Foundation case is used by Islamophobic trainers to impugn the entire Muslim-American community."<sup>15</sup> The study, which focused on just three training providers during the course of nine months of research, concluded that there have been widespread instances of abuse in the private counter-terrorism training industry.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Selectively Defining Terrorism***

- In September 2010, Beutel criticized FBI raids in Chicago and Minneapolis targeting supporters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), both U.S.-designated terrorist organizations. "Warrants suggest the agents were searching for links between the anti-war activists and terrorist groups in Colombia and the Middle East."<sup>17</sup> Calling the searches "**fishing expeditions**," Beutel argued that "[t]he FBI cannot continue to tell the American people that harassing antiwar activists falls under the rubric of counterterrorism and a fight against al-Qaeda ... They

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<http://www.mpac.org/assets/docs/publications/MPAC-Post-911-Terrorism-Data.pdf>, page 15, endnote 1: "1 Report and data originally researched and directed by Alejandro J. Beutel, former MPAC Government and Policy Analyst (2009-2012). As of June 2012, Beutel is no longer involved in the development of this project."

<sup>12</sup> IPT News, "An IPT Investigation: Islamic Group's Database Found to be Fraudulent," December 9, 2010

<http://www.investigativeproject.org/2390/mpac-stats-not-supported-by-facts>

<sup>13</sup> Alejandro J. Beutel and Haris Tarin, "NYPD Spying On College Students Is Counterproductive," *Huffington Post*, March 26, 2012, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alejandro-j-beutel/nypd-spying-on-college-st\\_b\\_1376201.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alejandro-j-beutel/nypd-spying-on-college-st_b_1376201.html)

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Cincotta, "Manufacturing the Muslim Menace," Public Research Associates 2011.

[http://www.publiceye.org/liberty/training/Muslim\\_Menace\\_Complete.pdf](http://www.publiceye.org/liberty/training/Muslim_Menace_Complete.pdf). Others thanked for their feedback on the report include John L. Esposito (Professor & Founding Director, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown), and Aziz Huq (University of Chicago Law School).

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Cincotta, "Manufacturing the Muslim Menace," page 44. Public Research Associates 2011.

[http://www.publiceye.org/liberty/training/Muslim\\_Menace\\_Complete.pdf](http://www.publiceye.org/liberty/training/Muslim_Menace_Complete.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.investigativeproject.org/2680/npr-story-distorts-counter-terrorism-training>

<sup>17</sup> Jenel Nels, NBC Chicago, "Anti-War Activists Protest Against FBI," September 27, 2012.

<http://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/Anti-War-Activists-Protest-Against-Chicago-FBI-103852019.html>

have absolutely nothing to do with each other. The **FBI is undermining the trust** that has been built between communities and law enforcement.”<sup>18</sup>

### ***Whitewashing Jihadist Threat***

- At an MPAC forum challenging the House Homeland Security Committee hearings on Islamic radicalization in America, chaired by Rep. Peter King, Beutel told the audience: “Our heads aren't in the sand. The threat clearly exists, but I also want to put it in perspective. The threat exists, but it is not a pandemic.”<sup>19</sup> To prove his claims, Beutel relied on misleading data, including MPAC's own study, which claimed that Muslim Americans thwarted one-third of terrorist plots since 9/11; that study has been thoroughly debunked by an IPT analysis, as noted above.<sup>20</sup>
- Beutel also touted a report by the Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security – a collaboration including Duke University and the University of North Carolina – that concluded that the number of Muslim Americans named as suspects or convicted of committing terrorist acts domestically or abroad fell from 47 in 2009 to 20 in 2010.<sup>21</sup> However, while Beutel claims the report is evidence that Muslim-related terrorism is not a significant problem, the Triangle report also states that “with Muslims comprising about 1 percent of the population, it is clear that Muslims are engaging in terrorism at a greater rate than non-Muslims.”<sup>22</sup> Although the number of incidents did decrease in 2010, the year still saw a higher number of terrorist plots than every year since 9/11 but one.

### ***Contributing to Iranian Propaganda about the Victimization of Muslims in the U.S.***

- Beutel appeared in a March 11, 2011 broadcast on an Iranian government English-language outlet (Press TV) criticizing a House Homeland Security Committee hearing on radicalization in American Muslim communities: “It spoke to a lot of the feelings that I think many Muslim Americans have with respect to their position here in America post-9/11 .... We are loyal citizens to this nation and we are trying to do everything we can to keep it safe and secure. And yet even when we're doing the right things and in many cases, laying our lives down on the line for our nation, we still get stigmatized.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> “MPAC Raises Concern Over FBI Raids on Non-Violent Protesters in Chicago,” September 29, 2010.

<http://www.mpac.org/programs/government-relations/mpac-raises-concern-over-fbi-raids-on-non-violent-protesters-in-chicago.php>

<sup>19</sup> IPT News, “On Capitol Hill, MPAC Panel Seeks to Whitewash Jihadist Threat,” February 9, 2011

<http://www.investigativeproject.org/2578/on-capitol-hill-mpac-panel-seeks-to-whitewash>.

<sup>20</sup> IPT News, “An IPT Investigation: Islamic Group's Database Found to be Fraudulent,” December 9, 2010.

<http://www.investigativeproject.org/2390/mpac-stats-not-supported-by-facts>

<sup>21</sup> Charles Kurzman, “Muslim-American Terrorism Since 9/11: An Accounting, February 2, 2011, page 2.

[http://tcths.sanford.duke.edu/about/documents/Kurzman\\_Muslim-American\\_Terrorism\\_Since\\_911\\_An\\_Accounting.pdf](http://tcths.sanford.duke.edu/about/documents/Kurzman_Muslim-American_Terrorism_Since_911_An_Accounting.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> Charles Kurzman, “Muslim-American Terrorism Since 9/11: An Accounting, February 2, 2011, page 4.

[http://tcths.sanford.duke.edu/about/documents/Kurzman\\_Muslim-American\\_Terrorism\\_Since\\_911\\_An\\_Accounting.pdf](http://tcths.sanford.duke.edu/about/documents/Kurzman_Muslim-American_Terrorism_Since_911_An_Accounting.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> “Anti-Muslim hearing draws backlash,” March 11, 2011, <http://www.presstv.com/detail/169384.html>