



BRAD SHERMAN
UNITED STATES CONGRESS

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December 1, 2009

Chancellor Michael V. Drake, M.D.
University of California, Irvine
Irvine, CA 92697

Dear Chancellor Drake:

Over the last year, we have been in correspondence concerning the activities of the Muslim Student Union (MSU) on your campus. Recently, it has been brought to my attention that an organization known as Viva Palestina USA, headed by Mr. George Galloway, solicited funds for Hamas, a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, as a part of an MSU event on your campus. It is my current understanding that the University is cooperating with local authorities on the matter and conducting an internal investigation.

While I urge you to conduct a thorough internal investigation, I wanted to highlight the facts of which I am aware and find most alarming.

Viva Palestina USA is not a 501(c)(3) entity, and my staff could not determine whether the organization has any legal status in the United States. Viva Palestina USA uses a 501(c)(3) conduit, the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizations/Pastors for Peace (IFCO), to accept charitable donations.¹ According to Viva Palestina's website, it seeks fundraising to "plan and execute a North American Aid Convoy to Gaza".²

Viva Palestina USA's sister organization Viva Palestina, which is also run by Mr. Galloway has already organized convoys to Gaza. During a March 10, 2009 convoy, Mr. Galloway made the following statement to what appears to be a delegation of Hamas officials:

Just in case the British government or European Union want to face me in any court, let me tell them live on television, I personally am about to break the sanctions on the elected government of Palestine. By Allah, we have carried a lot of cash. You thought that we were all fat. We are not fat. This is money that we

¹ <http://www.vivapalestina-us.org/donate> (accessed on October 20, 2009); "In order for [the donor] to have the maximum benefit for [his or her] contribution, we have formed a fiduciary partnership with the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizations/Pastors for Peace (IFCO). . . . [The] donation to Viva Palestina - IFCO is fully tax deductible under IFCO's 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status."

² <http://www.vivapalestina-us.org/about> (accessed on October 20, 2009)



when the inspectors' backs were turned, they put back on the vehicles that which the inspectors had taken off the vehicles. Some of the inspectors were happy to turn their backs.

We are giving you now 100 vehicles and all of the contents and we make no apology for what I am about to say. We are giving them to the elected government of Palestine, to Prime Minister Ismail Haniya.³ Here is the money. **This is not charity. This is politics.** The government of Palestine is the best people where this money is needed. We are giving this money now to the government of Palestine. If I could, I would give them 10 times, 100 times, more. [emphasis added]⁴

This statement, which is widely available to the public on YouTube, is compelling evidence that the major purpose of Viva Palestina USA is to provide material support to Hamas.

In addition, the Zionist Organization of America has provided to my office a videotape of Mr. Galloway soliciting funds at UCI on behalf of Viva Palestina USA during the May 21, 2009, MSU event. In this tape Mr. Galloway states:

The convoy is the first thing . . . If you can't come, then help those who are fundraising to send others. There are many ways that you can do it . . . Please take it. It's a small colored leaflet, Viva Palestina USA, which tells you how you can raise the funds, how you can help this great cause.⁵

Taken in context with Mr. Galloway's statement discussed above, this evidence of fundraising is alarming.

I strongly urge you to review this evidence in your investigation. I believe your investigation will confirm that the UCI MSU has solicited funds for a terrorist organization (or knowingly aided and abetted such solicitation). After you confirm these facts, I believe you will, at a minimum, prevent the MSU from operating on campus unless and until its leadership is purged of those responsible.

In the past we have discussed the actions of the MSU in the context of First Amendment rights; soliciting funds for terror organizations is a far different matter. Students using a public university's resources to provide material assistance for terror are in clear violation of federal law.

³ According to the United States Department of State, Mr. Haniya is not a Prime Minister of any government. He is considered a high-ranking official of Hamas, a Foreign Terrorist Organization.

⁴ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYFGIbaabTU> (accessed on October 20, 2009)

⁵ You may obtain a copy of the video by contacting Marc Berkman of my staff.



Please have your staff contact Marc Berkman of my staff at (202)225-5911 or at marc.berkman@mail.house.gov to keep him and me updated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brad Sherman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

BRAD SHERMAN
Member of Congress