

ISIS and Hamas Welcome on US Campuses? Cornell Says No Problem

It is no secret that getting into an Ivy League school can be tough. The Ivies are among the most competitive schools when it comes to not only accepting students but also hiring educators. But it seems at least one Ivy League school may be welcoming known terrorists seeking to train others in the finer points of how to conduct jihad—holy war.

At a time when Jewish students are feeling increasingly unwelcome on U.S. campuses, Cornell University Assistant Dean of Students Joseph Scaffido has offered to practically roll out the red carpet for ISIS militants and Hamas jihadis, two terrorist organizations whose aim includes exterminating Christians and Jews alike.

Asked whether a student organization would be permitted to invite “freedom fighters” not just to speak on campus but to actually conduct training camps, Scaffido gave the green light, without hesitation, saying that it would be no different from a coach holding a training session for student athletes. Sure, that makes sense, because of course instruction in the fundamentals of basketball is really no different from Genocide 101.

While university officials may sometimes find it difficult to navigate the sea of issues involving equal access on campus, nowhere on the spectrum of political correctness does extending a speaking invitation to mass murderers bent on the destruction of Western civilization appear.

Not only should this attitude evoke outrage from all advocates of democracy (and common sense), but Cornell financial supporters should be especially concerned about the use of

their money, as Scaffido went so far as to suggest that the whole endeavor could be funded by the University itself. (I'm betting Cornell's online giving doesn't include a box to check for "Funding Terrorism.")

If Mr. Scaffido truly believes university campuses should be welcoming terrorists, the appropriate response is obvious: American institutions, including those of higher education, have no business supporting those who abhor democracy and seek to subjugate and/or eradicate dissenters. But even if he was just concerned that the University might appear to be discriminating by rejecting the request, his statements evidence a serious problem. There is nothing unlawful or improper about acknowledging ISIS, Hamas and other terrorist organizations for what they are and refusing to be associated in any way with them or their missions. It is time for reason—and reality—to prevail on our campuses. To identify, punish and seek to prevent actual discrimination (for example, vetting student leadership candidates on the basis of religion and ethnicity and painting swastikas on Jewish fraternity houses) rather than placating those who spew hatred and perpetrate acts of violence based on some ill-conceived notion of political correctness.

At the ACLJ we are concerned about our nation's campuses and are working to protect the right of students and professors to enjoy a campus environment free from discriminatory and hostile treatment based on religion, ethnicity and national origin. This requires, as a crucial step, that we as a nation be willing to identify enemy forces as such and stand up in defense of the populations that are the primary targets of those enemies and their sympathizers.