



Is the Government Now Monitoring “Right-wing” Conservatives?

“A U.S. Army training instructor listed Evangelical Christianity and Catholicism as examples of religious extremism along with Al Qaeda and Hamas during a briefing with an Army Reserve unit based in Pennsylvania,” [wrote](#) Fox News’ Todd Starnes in 2013. It was reminiscent of how the British government banned radio host Michael Savage from entering the UK, placing him on a list with terrorists and criminals. It just seems as if Western statisticians must have had trouble with those primary school categorization questions and now, even as adults, could think that “bomb, cannon, mortar, rifle, pistol, and pen” all belong together.



Speaking of pens, there may be another man who is on a government watch list just for wielding one: anti-jihadism crusader Robert Spencer. “I’ve been informed that someone certainly is keeping tabs on me,” [wrote](#) Spencer last week at *PJ Media*. It’s a reality that prompted him to ask, “**Is the U.S. Government Now TRACKING ‘Right-Wing Extremists’?**”

Some might chalk Spencer’s claim up to paranoia, except that he, like Savage, has also been banned from Britain. His sin? He’s the proprietor of Islam-awareness website Jihad Watch and frequently gives speeches and makes television appearances warning of the dangers posed by Islam. And this, apparently, has now also captured the attention of our government.

Spencer travels almost weekly, and he never had any problem with airline security — until last summer. Since that time, however, he has been unable to check in online. And things really get interesting when he shows his identification at the airport. He tells us what then generally transpires:

- The clerk types a great deal, frowns at the screen, types some more, asks me what my middle name is, types still more, looks at me quizzically, and gets on the phone.
- They’re very secretive about these calls, sometimes even moving to a different desk to make them. They refuse to tell me anything about them afterward, including who they called or why.
- The call usually takes around ten minutes. The whole process takes fifteen or twenty minutes. Then I am checked in and allowed to go to my gate.

Spencer says that after this occurred five or six times running, an FBI agent he knows looked into the matter for him and reported that it had nothing to do with him. The agent claimed there’s another Robert Spencer, who just happens to be on the watch list — and just happens to share Jihad Watch Spencer’s birth date. Coincidences never cease.

Yet two later incidents cast doubt on the FBI agent’s claim. While traveling again, writes Spencer, “the



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clerk finished the long, mysterious phone call, [and] he told me he was breaking the rules to tell me the following: the person on the other end had asked if I was planning on traveling to the UK.... Another time, a different clerk broke the rules again. He told me that the mysterious person he called had remarked: 'He sure travels a lot.' Notably, he did not say anything that might confirm what the FBI agent had told me, like, say: 'Let him go, that's not the same Robert Spencer.'"

This prompted Spencer to file a "Redress Inquiry" with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which investigated and echoed the FBI agent: It's a case of mistaken identity. The DHS recommended he provide his redress control number when making reservations, but doing so was fruitless; Spencer still encountered the long delay and strange behavior when flying.

As for strange behavior, none of this is surprising from a government that could label mainstream Christian groups terroristic. And while the Department of the Army said that the Pennsylvania Army Reserve case was an "isolated incident" that was the handiwork of one individual and would not occur again, Spencer makes a good point, writing, "The implications of this are quite ominous. If evangelical Christianity, Catholicism and 'Islamophobia' [also on the list] were forms of 'Religious Extremism' on par with al-Qaeda and Hamas, how long would it be before the Obama administration went to war against **them**?"

Yet, in a way, our government already has. For instance, the Obama administration has been [trying to ram](#) its "Affordable Care Act" contraception mandate down the throats of Christian chain Hobby Lobby and even a group of nuns, the Little Sisters of the Poor. And state governments have been persecuting Christian bakers who refuse to service faux weddings, [driving them out of business and into poverty](#). In one case, two Oregon bakers were fined \$135,000 by an administrative judge, with another state official saying that he wanted to "rehabilitate" them because their beliefs do not conform to the state's ideas. Meanwhile, government and activists made not a peep when video was shot last year of [Muslim bakers refusing](#) to handle faux weddings.

In fact, the war against anything viewed as conservative is intensifying. As *FrontPage Mag's* Matthew Vadum [reported](#) in 2013, "Conservative organizations are 'hate groups' and Tea Party supporters are potentially dangerous extremists, according to educational materials the Obama administration is using to indoctrinate members of the nation's armed forces."

Vadum also pointed out that a Defense Department diversity training center guide entitled "Extremism" actually stated, "Instead of 'dressing in sheets,' radicals today 'will talk of individual liberties, states' rights, and how to make the world a better place.'" Moreover, the Defense Department guide had this to say about our nation's founders: "In U.S. history, there are many examples of extremist ideologies and movements. The colonists who sought to free themselves from British rule and the Confederate states who sought to secede from the Northern states are just two examples."

Speaking of extreme, Spencer tells us the FBI uses as a resource the far left-wing activist group the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). This could explain his presence on a government watch list, as the SPLC has labeled him a "hate group leader." And his presence on the SPLC's list is easily explainable: bias. Just consider that the organization [put someone](#) on their "Hatewatch" page merely for using the word "lynched," metaphorically, in an article.

That person is me.

This happened in 2009, after I used the term while defending radio host Rush Limbaugh from what I believed to be unfair media criticism. Interestingly, though, it also occurred not that long after I [wrote](#)



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[an exposé](#) on how the SLPC was using deception and fear-mongering about “right-wing” militias to raise money. In fact, the Hatewatch attack article on me was written by the organization’s Larry Keller, who I’d named specifically in my piece and accused of “duplicity.” More coincidences? Doubtful. According to *Harper’s* [2000 exposé](#) “The Church of Morris Dees” (Dees is the SPLC’s founder), skullduggery is the organization’s stock-in-trade.

And that’s perhaps the point. Placing Spencer on a watch list says one of two things, neither good:

1. Either some within government are wasting resources using the watch list to persecute political opponents; or
2. The government is out of touch with reality and can’t tell the difference between pens and petards.

Of course, since the Obama administration apparently doesn’t fully understand the difference between a boy and a girl, perhaps it also can confuse journalists with jihadists.



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