

September 17, 2003

The Honorable John Ashcroft
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Ashcroft:

It has come to my attention that there is substantial evidence suggesting that the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, an Islamic organization that operates out of Virginia, participates in terrorist financing. Given the threat this poses to our national security, I request that you open a criminal investigation immediately into this matter.

Over the past year, reports indicate that WAMY has hosted fundraisers at which Khalid Mishaal, a senior Hamas leader, praised Saudi officials, including de facto Saudi leader Crown Prince Abdullah, for continuing to fund Hamas through civilian and popular channels, despite all the American pressure. Just last month, Hamas' spiritual leader, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, publicly thanked WAMY for its continued support in a speech he delivered in Gaza. Reports show that WAMY serves as a major conduit for Saudi Arabian financing of the terrorist group Hamas. An estimated \$5 million annually – approximately 50% of Hamas' budget – comes from Saudi Arabia. Arab press reports indicate that WAMY spends \$2.7 million annually in support of the Palestinian Intifada in addition to \$70 million it has collected in donations for this purpose at WAMY offices worldwide.

News of WAMY's involvement in terrorist financing is not surprising. Its American office was incorporated by Abdullah Bin Laden, the nephew of Osama Bin Laden, the head of al Qaeda. It has written numerous inflammatory pamphlets condemning non-Muslims as infidels, and its affiliates, the Muslim World League and the International Islamic Relief Organization, have been named on search warrants executed by the federal government in terrorist financing investigations.

Cutting off funding to Hamas, undermining its ability to attack Israeli civilians, would do wonders to push the Middle East peace process forward and, in turn, improve American national security. This is why it is essential that the United States crack down on organizations like WAMY as well as countries such as Saudi Arabia which, public statements aside, permit financial support for extremist groups like Hamas.

If we are to win the War on Terror, we must do all that is in our power to end the flow of money to organizations like Hamas whose actions threaten our national security. Accordingly, I strongly urge you to open a criminal investigation into WAMY's activities and to prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law.

Sincerely,



Charles Schumer
U.S. Senator