

THE CIA HATES US FOR OUR FREEDOM

As I've noted a couple of times, there's the suggestion that the CIA likes the NYPD's CIA-on-the-Hudson because the NYPD, unlike the CIA, is diverse enough to have people with the linguistic and cultural background to infiltrate Muslim communities.

So how stupid is this?

Three weeks ago, The Arab American News published a story written by The Associated Press about the CIA and the NYPD cooperating in a massive spying operation on the entire Muslim community in the New York/New Jersey area.

The following week, we published an article detailing the CIA's denial of that activity.

As we went to press last week, Thursday, September 8, 2011, we received an email from the advertising agency which handles the CIA's account. "The government agency for the CIA has just contacted us and wants us to remove the banners from your website for undisclosed reasons," the agency said in its email. A representative from the advertising agency haunted our advertising director all afternoon, repeatedly asking to immediately remove the four ads that the agency just ordered eight days ago. Another email three hours later from the same agency: "Sorry to keep bothering you but the client is giving me a headache." The CIA has canceled all advertising in The Arab American News.

Not only was this outlet a place the CIA advertised to the Arab community (presumably including recruitment ads), but the paper, as it describes, served as an entree into the community.

This newspaper was instrumental in inviting the CIA into the community, introducing its

employees to community leaders and helping to forge good relations between the force and local organizations. The CIA has sponsored many events in the community and generally been welcomed with open arms.

So now the newspaper is drawing one of the most obvious conclusions: that the CIA hates us—rather, a newspaper serving the Arab American community—for our freedoms.

But the evidence shows that perhaps that was a mistake. We treated the CIA like an American institution that believes in American values, like freedom of speech, freedom of worship and the freedom to peaceably assemble. At least in America.

However, if displeasure with one story the newspaper publishes causes a government agency to pull all its ads in retribution, then we assume everyone should be afraid of the CIA – and maybe the whole government – because it's obviously "my way or the highway" with them. For us they can pull advertising and satisfy their thirst for revenge.

There is, though, one other (not mutually exclusive) possibility. Presumably the CIA wants Arab-Americans it recruits to imagine that they will be targeting actual terrorists if they go to work for the CIA. But the AP series shows that, in the CIA-assisted NYPD program, Arab-Americans will be spying on the innocent activities of their own community. Arab-Americans who read the AP series in this newspaper, then, might be less pliable recruits for the CIA.

So, instead, they'll just have to rely even more on the NYPD to infiltrate these communities, I guess, having pissed off key figures in the community it needs to reach out to to do its job.