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FYI. Published by the US Attorney and FBI SAC in Chicago; two of our most effective interagency partners in community engagement in the field.

Kareem.

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Opinion: Bigotry toward Chicago Muslims won't defeat terrorists

Zachary T. Fardon and Michael Anderson

In Chicago, we face many urgent challenges – ending gun violence, protecting civil rights, combatting heroin, curbing corruption.

So when terrorism strikes – abroad, as with Brussels and Paris, or at home, as with San Bernardino – it's a reminder of why, despite those other challenges, law enforcement in Chicago must continue investing resources to counter terrorism and prevent attack.

ISIS is an evil group. It murders, tortures, defames religion, and abuses women and children. It is also formidable. ISIS' use of social media and propaganda to lure supporters and facilitate attacks around the globe is unprecedented.

When ISIS strikes, there are far-flung repercussions. Innocents die. Commerce and economies are disrupted. Fear grows, and it travels. Fear is insidious and drags distrust and hate with it, which breeds bad acts and destructive rhetoric – xenophobia – and sometimes bigotry against Islam and people of Muslim faith.

Chicago is home to over 200,000 Muslims. Our Muslim communities are strong, diverse and law-abiding. They are parents, educators, children, colleagues and friends. They are civic leaders, intellectuals, philanthropists and history makers. The Chicago skyline is a bold testament to the contributions made by the Muslim community, as two of our Chicago landmarks – the John Hancock Center and Willis Tower – were designed by a Muslim architect.

From our perspective in law enforcement, we enjoy excellent relationships with Chicago's Muslim communities. In our jobs, we meet routinely with Muslim leaders, and in those interactions without fail we encounter warmth, humility and grace. Our Muslim neighbors, no different than most citizens, abhor violence and cherish safety and security.

ISIS presents a threat to our security and our fundamental values. In partnership with the Muslim community, we continue to develop proactive strategies to defeat ISIS and repel its efforts to radicalize young people in the United States and other countries. We are grateful for the role that the Muslim community is playing in this effort and look forward to continuing cooperation on the most effective approaches to accomplish this goal. ISIS will be defeated, but it will not be through ostracizing the Muslim community; it will be through a collaborative effort that demonstrates our unity in rejecting the violence, hatred and divisiveness that ISIS embodies.

Our democracy stands on principles of freedom and equality. Diversity is a hallmark of freedom, and equal treatment fosters diversity. Our differences, religious and otherwise, make us stronger and better as a people.

While ISIS trades on fear, here at home, through the love and mutual respect of all our citizens, we stand strong. On behalf of the United States Attorney's Office and the FBI in Chicago, we are grateful for that.

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