

**AN ACTIVIST'S GUIDE
TO ARAB AND MUSLIM
CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY
ORGANIZATIONS
IN NORTH AMERICA**

By Suleyman Ahmad al-Bosnawi

Author's Note

TK

Will outline my background, use of Muslim name, etc., will be signed as:

Suleyman Ahmad al-Bosnawi [Stephen Schwartz]

Table of Contents

TK

Historical Background

Arab and Muslim community politics is a relatively new phenomenon in the U.S. and Canada, having first appeared at the end of the 1980s. The emergence of organizations claiming to represent ethnic Arab communities, as well as born Muslims, in the North American political and social context, reflected three new developments in society. The first was the growth in immigration from Arab countries, beginning in the 1970s. The second was the radicalization of the ethnic Arabs in North America under the influence of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. The third, which was also a consequence of increased immigration, was the arrival of a significant Islamic community on the western side of the Atlantic.

In this study I have distinguished between born Muslims, i.e. those originating in Muslim countries, and their descendants, from four groupings that had long been present in North America but which had never acquired meaningful political influence.

The first is composed of the spectrum of groups like the so-called “Nation of Islam” (NOI), which “convert” African-Americans to racial extremism in the name of Islam, although their theology has nothing whatever in common with the Islamic faith that comprises 2.3 billion followers worldwide. No real mosque in the Islamic global community, or *umma*, restricts entry to a single skin color. In addition, no real Muslim believes that the final revelation delivered to Muhammad the Prophet (peace be upon him) can be supplemented by the weird writings of an obscure racial crank, Elijah Poole, who renamed himself Elijah Muhammad. The NOI more resembles an African American version of the Masons or Shriners than a faith community, and just as Shriners do not become Muslims when they put on fezzes, the NOI are not Muslims, just because they have adopted that title. As a violent and marginal phenomenon, the NOI has never attained political power. Their leader, Louis Farrakhan, is one of the most irresponsible and provocative racial demagogues in America today.

The second group consists of African American “new Muslims” (many Muslims disdain the term “convert”) who departed the ranks of the NOI to become regular

adherents of Islam. These are associated with the legacy of Malcolm X, who forsook the Some of them, exemplified by a violent, criminal conspiracy called Jama'at ul-Fuqra, continued in an extremist direction, and remained on the fringes of American society. Others gained varying degrees of respectability, although their ranks continue to include alienated and anti-American radicals such as Jamal al-Amin, the former H. Rap Brown. As symbolized by Brown himself, they have retained authority with the '60s generation of radicals, although this has not given them much real prestige in the broader political system.

It should be noted that many African American radicals of the '60s adopted Islamic names, some of them fairly comical. The poet Leroi Jones became Imamu Amiri Baraka, which means "Prayer Leader and Commander of Blessings," although it is highly doubtful he ever prayed as a Muslim, much less led prayers, or that he ever commanded anybody aside from his small group of followers. Another such individual called himself "Maulana Ron Karenga" even though the term "maulana" or "maula" (the same as "mullah") indicates status as a distinguished teacher of religion, and is never adopted by an individual – rather, it must be conferred by the community of believers. That person never taught the Islamic faith anywhere. Instead, he muddied the waters of African American culture with such inventions as the Kwanzaa holiday.

The third such grouping consists of Sufis, or adherents of Islamic spirituality. Until recently, Sufism in America was mainly a "New Age" trend, members of which seldom went so far as to make the Muslim profession of faith or try to practice the religion throughout their lives. Most Sufis were of white middle-class origin and almost none ever sought broader media or political access for an Islamic message.

The fourth, and smallest group, consisted of academics and other serious intellectuals who had become Muslims after long periods of professional study and personal development. A few of them have come forward in the wake of the atrocities of September 11th, seeking to foster interfaith dialogue.

The remaining array consists of advocacy organizations that rose to prominence in the 1980s, and which assumed a particularly important role after September 11th. Many of them now target interfaith and peace groups for common activities, especially

demonstrations and other events against the Iraq war. Because so many of them are now active on campus and in other public affairs, each of them will be discussed separately.

American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)

[www.adc.org]

ADC was founded in 1980 by former U.S. Senator James Abourezk, Democrat of South Dakota (**ck**), as a non-religious civil rights group. It was clearly created in imitation of, and even as a rival or counterweight to, the Anti-Defamation League, the outstanding Jewish civil rights organization. It originally focussed its attentions on Christian Arab Americans, who make up at least two thirds (**ck**) of the Arab American population, and has established chapters around the U.S. Its current officers are Dr. Ziad Asali, its president, its executive vice president Khalil Jahshan and its flamboyant and controversial communications director, Hussein Ibish.

Until September 11th, ADC mainly focused its activity on paralleling the ADL, by mounting legal campaigns to defend Palestinian and other extremist political advocates. It frequently allied with leftist groups in campaigns against U.S. support for Israel.

After the beginning of the U.S. war against terror, a perceptible shift occurred in the orientation and activities of ADC. It became a strident voice promoting hysteria about alleged plans by the Bush administration to curtail the civil liberties of Arab Americans, even though Bush and Attorney General John Ashcroft have proceeded with extreme caution in investigating and sanctioning terrorist activities based in the Arab and Muslim environment. ADC distinguished itself by labelling every effort by the Justice and Treasury Departments, especially those directed against the “Holy Land Foundation,” a leading front in the U.S. for the terrorist group Hamas, which murders civilians in Israel, and against Sami al-Arian, a commanding officer of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), another terrorist group, who operated from American soil, as unfair persecution based on ethnic discrimination. (See discussion of HLF below.) ADC has also been

assiduous in fostering the specious claim that “ethnic profiling” has become rampant in official U.S. dealings with Arab and Muslim Americans.

Such issues fall within the legitimate purview of ADC as a civil rights group. But after 9/11, ADC underwent a visible transformation. It suddenly became a leading advocate for Palestinian terrorists, including Hamas, PIJ, and the Fatah al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades, in their atrocious bombing campaigns inside Israel, as well as for Saudi Arabia, whose role in funding global Islamic extremism had come under scrutiny after disclosure that 15 out of 19 suicide pilots on September 11th were Saudi subjects. It was difficult to imagine how such issues would have anything to do with discrimination against Arab Americans. Further, ADC began to speak in the name of Islam even though its original constituency was mainly Christian.

During the Afghan and Iraq interventions ADC was among the most voluble entities in spreading scurrilous charges, painting these military operations as conspiratorial intrigues controlled by Israel through Zionist-extremist “Likudniks” among the neoconservatives. ADC also engaged in extensive efforts to paint the regime of Saddam Hussein as innocent of terrorist associations. But ADC has long been emphatic in its claims that Zionists enjoy undue influence in American political life, and in demanding radical action to change the U.S.-Israel relationship.

In addition, Hussein Ibish, its communications director, quickly rose after 9/11 from obscurity as a minor ethnic functionary to status as a major national media figure. This is paradoxical for several reasons, above all because Ibish himself is an inveterate and publicly-declared enemy of Islam, as well as of religion in general. Ibish is a leftist and advocate of personal decadence, whose published statements include advocacy of homosexual affairs between college teachers and students, alcoholic intoxication, and other proclivities seldom celebrated by Muslim believers.

Ibish is also an intemperate, insulting and uncivil speaker whose debates on national media typically feature him shouting down his opponents, emitting wildly libellous charges, and otherwise breaching polite standards of public discourse. For this reason, many of his former adversaries now refuse to appear on TV with him.

ADC is active on many campuses and in many communities, and may be expected to inject itself into peace meetings, interfaith activities, and related events.

Traditional Muslim groups, Arabs committed to peace, and Jewish groups, as well as sincere peace activists, should be encouraged to boycott ADC, given the irresponsible nature of its rhetoric. ADC is also subject to internal conflict between its mainstream and ultraleftist members, which gives it an especially volatile character.

Arab American Institute (AAI)

[www.aaiusa.org]

AAI was organized in 1985, according to its website, “to represent Arab American interests in government and politics.” Its chairman is a prominent political operative in Washington, attorney George Salem, a partner in the Washington, DC office of Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, LLP. He was a leading supporter of President George W. Bush’s campaign.

AAI is much more identified with its cofounder, president and leading spokesperson, James Zogby, formerly executive director of ADC. In contrast with Salem, a Republican, Zogby is a major figure in Democrat party affairs. His brother John, who runs a polling business, is an AAI board member, along with AAI backup spokesperson Jean AbiNader, an international marketing executive.

AAI, like ADC, is based in community branches, and is extremely active on campuses. It is fascinating to realize that, prior to 9/11, AAI and Jim Zogby enjoyed immense credibility in U.S. media, and especially among liberal and peace-oriented American Jews, for his smooth, moderate position on Middle East issues.

Jim Zogby also underwent a striking change after 9/11. The man who once charmed all comers as an Arab American Christian, who admitted no knowledge whatever of Islam and a real commitment to peaceful solutions between Israel and the Palestinians, suddenly came out of the closet as a ranting demagogue, denouncing all

opponents as racist, extremist, Zionist agents. AbiNader adopted a similar manner in media encounters.

Unlike Hussein Ibish, Zogby had enjoyed enormous credibility, but as with Ibish, his surrender to an irreconcilable anti-Israel and, among other things, a pro-Saudi position was marked. Zogby also became a vehement denier of charges that Saddam supported terrorism, and violently denounced any suggestion that removal of the Ba'ath party state would advance the cause of democracy in the Middle East. And Zogby, like Ibish, soon became the object of a debate embargo by many of his former adversaries, who grew tired of his rude, confrontational allegations.

As with ADC, joint community and campus activities involving AAI represent a serious risk for groups sincerely committed to interfaith cooperation and peace. Their rhetoric, especially during the Iraq war, became so extreme that they moved from the center to the extreme left of the American public square.

The Muslim Students' Association Of the U.S. and Canada (MSA)

[www.msa-natl.org/]

This octopus-like entity has infiltrated numerous college and university campuses in North America, and took the lead in corralling young Muslims to defend the fascist dictator Saddam Hussein. According to MSA, the correct position for Muslims in America involved their marching alongside neofascists and Stalinists, with the legions of “useful fools” who flocked to bogus “peace” demonstrations.

When its leaders speak to mainstream media, MSA presents itself as a campus-service organization not much different from other collegiate faith groups. But the reality is very different, and deeply sinister. MSA has been a key element in the Wahhabi lobby,

the conspiracy by Saudi-backed extremists to control American Islam, as well the public discourse about Islam in America.

Above all, MSA seeks to present itself as moderate and opposed to terrorism, even though its chapters have distributed the propaganda of Osama bin Laden on its websites, along with publicity-recruiting campaigns for Wahhabi subversion of the Chechen struggle in Russia.

To best understand the MSA and its history one should turn to the work of Hamid Algar, a Western Muslim scholar of impeccable academic credentials, who also happens to be a ferocious critic of the U.S. and Israel. Algar, a member of the University of California-Berkeley faculty, is the biographer of Ayatollah Khomeini and among the leading historians of Islamic spirituality alive today.

But although he is no friend of President Bush or Ariel Sharon, Algar has described with stunning accuracy the nature of the MSA. In his brief work *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay*, published in 2002, he writes: “Some Muslim student organizations have... functioned at times as Saudi-supported channels for the propagation of Wahhabism abroad, especially in the United States. The Muslim Student Association of the U.S. and Canada was established in 1963, one year after the Muslim World League [MWL] with which it had close links.” Let us note here that the MWL was established by the Saudi regime as an extremist Islamic equivalent of the old Communist International or Comintern, and that its cadres included numerous Islamist “revolutionaries” from the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and from Pakistan.

Algar continues, “Particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, no criticism of Saudi Arabia would be tolerated at the annual conventions of the MSA... Its numerous local chapters would make available at every Friday prayer large stacks of the [MWL]’s publications, in both English and Arabic... Although the MSA progressively diversified its connections with Arab states, official approval of Wahhabism remained strong.” Algar notes that in 1980 the organization published a translation, which was actually a text puffed up to give it more substance, of writings by Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the 18th century founder of the dispensation named for him, which is presently the state sect in the Saudi kingdom.

With some sarcasm, Algar points out “it might appear at first sight puzzling that students pursuing a higher education should be attracted to a Wahhabi reading of Islam... they found in Wahhabism a ‘rationalized’ Islam, stripped of the niceties and ambiguities of juristic reasoning, the complexities of theology, and the subtleties of Sufism” [Islamic spirituality]. He calls attention to MSA’s role in the creation of the Islamic Society of North America, or ISNA, which is best described as a branch of the Saudi religious militia operating to impose Wahhabi conformity on all of American Islam.

In addition, the MSA has strong ties with the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), established in 1972 and directed from the Saudi capital, Riyadh. WAMY’s U.S. offices in Northern Virginia have been a central target of the federal investigation of terrorist funding and money laundering by Islamist groups following the horrors of September 11th.

The foremost aim of the Wahhabis is always to impose a single voice on Muslims. During the Iraq war, this meant projecting the image, in U.S. media as well as on campuses, that all right-thinking Muslim believers considered an attack on Saddam and his regime to be aggression against Islam. This was a lie, as the global public learned. Thousands of Iraqi Shi’as, Kurds, and other Muslims in the U.S. supported the Bush project for the liberation of Iraq from the fascist regime, and for the broader liberation of Islamic societies from the grip of tyranny and terrorism, leading to a new epoch of democracy, prosperity, and stability.

A month before the Iraq campaign began, Shi’a Muslims in the New York area used their commemoration of Ashura, the main Shi’a holiday, as an opportunity to express loyalty to America, support for the removal of Saddam, and opposition to Saudi-funded terrorism — which has always aimed first to kill Shi’a Muslims. But you would not have heard about that from MSA chapter leaders on our campuses — just as you would not hear from International ANSWER, the Stalinofascist cabal that organizes pro-Saddam marches, about the crimes of the Butcher of Baghdad. Like the new breed of out-front Jew-baiting Stalinists, and the revived isolationist Judeophobes who see the hand of Sharon pulling President Bush’s strings, MSA stands for the “peace” of the grave — surrender to tyranny abroad and promotion of treason here at home.

The poster boy for MSA could well be U.S. Army Sgt. Asan Akbar, an American Muslim, accused of a bloody terrorist attack, motivated by Islamist extremism, in the early hours of March 23, 2003. The incident occurred in the command area of Camp Pennsylvania, the rear base in Kuwait for the 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division. Army captain Christopher Scott Seifert, 27, was killed and 15 servicemen were wounded; a second serviceman, name **TK**, later died of wounds suffered at Camp Penn.

Akbar had attended the student mosque at the University of California, Davis, controlled by MSA. He also listed (under his original name, Mark Fidel Kools) an address at the Bilal Islamic Center in Los Angeles, a Saudi-funded institution. The Bilal Islamic Center and its Saudi-trained imams are known for venomous preaching of extremism. Given these facts Akbar could well be considered a “sleeper agent” recruited to al-Qaida.

Notwithstanding these damning facts, MSA branches should be treated with special consideration by campus and community activists. MSA is an umbrella organization in which many Muslim students become involved, without necessarily sharing its ideological extremism. Indeed, there is considerable evidence of turmoil within MSA as innocent, patriotic American Muslims who joined the group with the worthy motives of studying their faith or advancing their legitimate collective interests begin to resist Wahhabi dominance.

Campus and community groups approached by MSA branches for common activities should bear in mind that such events might offer opportunities to reach out to rank-and-file traditional American Muslims, and should therefore not exclude participation in them.

Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)

[website address TK]

CAIR is the most active and obnoxious promoter of Islamic extremism in the U.S. and Canada – an arm of the Saudi-Wahhabi establishment, partially funded by the Saudi government and rich Saudi subjects. In 1999, the Saudi embassy in Washington announced a grant by the Islamic Development Bank of \$250,000 to CAIR for the purchase of land in Washington, to be used in the construction of “an education and research center.” (CAIR is but a minor line item in the Wahhabi budget. The Saudi embassy statement announcing the grant to CAIR also reported gifts of \$395,000 for the construction of a school in Tanzania and \$30 million for “Islamic associations in India.”)

The Saudi/Wahhabis also use their control over Mecca and Medina as an opportunity for political shenanigans. In their hands, the *hajj* required of Muslims who can afford to perform it has frequently become a paid junket useful for recruitment purposes. In 2000, the Muslim World League (a provider of funds to Osama Bin Laden), hosted 100 prominent American Islamic personalities on *hajj*. They were accompanied by a delegation of 60 Latin American “academics and specialists.” All expenses for the latter were paid by Prince Bandar, Saudi ambassador to the United States. The same year the Saudis advertised their subsidy of 1,500 pilgrims from Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America. In 1999, the Saudis paid for 100 influential American Muslims to make *hajj*. The list of such expenditures seems limitless.

For Wahhabis everywhere, the party line is laid down in Riyadh, which simultaneously foments terrorist teaching and disclaims any responsibility for Wahhabi atrocities, as in the case of Bin Laden. Saudis corrupt Muslims abroad in exactly the way that the Soviet Union once bought the loyalty of foreign intellectuals, labor leaders, and guerrilla fighters, and for the same ends.

CAIR should be considered a foreign-based subversive organization, comparable in the Islamist field to the Soviet-controlled Communist Party, USA, and the Cuban-controlled front groups that infiltrated “Latin American solidarity” organizations in the

U.S. during the 1980s. It has organized numerous community branches and has had immense and alarming success in gaining position as an “official” representative of Islam in the U.S.

CAIR was originally established as a finance and action base for Hamas in the U.S., in an interlocking network with the Holy Land Foundation (HLF), based in Richardson, Texas. But while federal authorities have shut down HLF, they have allowed CAIR to continue functioning undisturbed.

The Holy War Foundation would be more like it. HLF, although headquartered in Texas, ran branch offices in Paterson, N.J., Bridgeview, Ill., and San Diego. Established in 1989, HLF took off when it received a \$200,000 cash infusion from Musa Abu Marzook, the external director of Hamas, who lived in the United States until he was deported in 1997. Marzook, brother-in-law of Ghassan Elashi, chairman of HLF, financed six terrorist attacks in Israel from his home in Falls Church, Va. In 1995, the U.S. authorities asked for the arrest and deportation of Marzook to Israel, where he had been indicted for involvement in terror attacks carried out while he resided in the U.S., and in which 47 people were killed. Although Israel then dropped its demand, because of “security concerns,” the U.S. deported Marzook to Jordan. His chief of military affairs was another U.S. resident, Muhammad Salah, of Bridgeview, Ill. Ordinary Americans would have been shocked and outraged to learn that Hamas was running its terror campaign from a sanctuary in the U.S.

Federal authorities had been watching the foundation since 1996, and concerned American Muslims had denounced its activities on numerous occasions. On September 5, 2001, less than a week before the World Trade Center atrocities, federal anti-terrorism agents raided InfoCom Corporation, the company that ran the HLF website. The InfoCom connection is crucial to understanding relations between the various components of the Islamic extremist conspiracy. According to defectors from Hamas, the HLF web server was also used by CAIR, MSA, the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP), and other terrorist apologists on our soil. All of these groups shared a single administrative and technical contact for the maintenance of the server. They had been erected as political shells around the Hamas hydra-head represented by HLF.

This enterprise closely resembled the front activities long maintained by the Communist party: separate groups, none of them directly identified with Hamas, each crafted to appeal to a particular constituency. Their methods and rhetoric are devious and deceptive. Further, they recognize no diversity within Islam; for them there is one Islam and they are it, and their goal is to make sure that any examination of Islamic issues, from the White House down, begins and ends with them. In the immediate aftermath of September 11th, they had extraordinary success in achieving this goal.

Even after the horrors unleashed in Israel in the aftermath of September 11, few Americans fully recognized what HLF represented. In addition to defending suicide bombers, the foundation paid annuities to the children of Palestinian “martyrs.” It also supported the Wahhabi clerics whose fatwas declared that, since all children are, by Islamic legal definition, innocent, Jewish children slain at the hands of the bombers are guaranteed entry into Paradise. These fatwas advance the same claim for other innocents, Muslim or Christian, accidentally killed in the September 11 attacks: these too are “involuntary martyrs” headed for paradise. This hideous doctrine rationalizing the murder of children is a pure expression of the Wahhabi totalitarianism emanating from Saudi Arabia.

CAIR was founded in 1994 by a Palestinian, Nihad Awad, and an American “new Muslim,” Cary “Ibrahim” Hooper, along with one Omar Ahmad. As befits a front group for Hamas, it engages in loud and verbose charges that American Muslims are the victims of wholesale repression, and that U.S. foreign policy is dictated by extreme Zionists.

CAIR was the main group to gain media access, after September 11th, and during the war in Afghanistan, the 2002 Israeli incursions into the West Bank, and the Iraq war, providing the “Muslim view” of these events. As self-appointed Muslim spokesmen, they typically refused to “simplify the situation” by blaming Osama bin Laden for the horrific attacks on America, following the Wahhabi line that no compelling proof had been offered by U.S. authorities. While they were eventually induced by wheedling journalists to condemn suicide terror in a pro forma manner, they hedged their disavowals by describing them as an understandable response to Israeli brutality. CAIR expressed condolences after the massacre of 16 Christians during a worship service in Pakistan on October 28, 2001, although the organization has never expressed regret over killings by

suicide bombers in Israel. But their loudest noise was made in their assertions that American Muslims faced widespread bias attacks and restrictions on civil liberties after September 11th. They were also full-throated in their opposition to the investigation and closure of Hamas- and *al-Qaida*-linked “charities” and other Islamic institutions.

Though the word “Islamic” appears in its title, authentic religious ends are clearly absent from CAIR’s activities. Rather than working to improve the training of imams and muftis, they mobilized them for political goals. In this way, they sought to introduce extremist activities based in the Middle East into the American heartland. Indeed, the functional center remained the Holy Land Foundation (HLF). But they did not run candidates in U.S. elections on a pro-Hamas ticket. Rather, they worked behind the scenes to demand special consideration for their agenda by media and government. They did not make open claims for Muslim causes. Rather, they stressed “sensitivity” to “Muslim feelings.” They did not propose meaningful political discussion or interfaith dialogue. Rather, they complained about injuries allegedly done to Muslims, which must be recognized and apologized for before any dialogue takes place. They purported to know the feelings and opinions of all Muslims, and arrogated to themselves the right to speak for all Muslims.

CAIR also engages in extensive campaigns of personal defamation and intimidation against dissenters against extremist control over American Islam. Its methods are anything but subtle, usually featuring peremptory demands and even threats to other public organizations, and until recently it was notably successful. Although its Islam is Wahhabi, it sought to represent all Muslims in their relations with America as if practicing religious diplomacy comparable to that of the Vatican.

In 1998, CAIR and the American Muslim Council (AMC) cosponsored a rally at Brooklyn College, which included an anti-Jewish diatribe by Wagdi Ghuniem, an Egyptian extremist. Ghuniem led 500 people in singing a ditty with the chorus: “No to the Jews, descendants of the apes.” Yet before September 11th, CAIR was amazingly good at influencing American media against using such terms as “Islamic fundamentalism.” CAIR and their associates understood that Americans wanted to be liked, and that our journalists want or need to be politically correct. Therefore they cleverly framed their assault on American public opinion in terms of sensitivity: it is

hurtful to Muslims for American media to describe anybody among them as fundamentalists and terrorists.

Early in June 2001, Khalid Durán, a shy, sensitive 61-year-old man living in Bethesda, Md., was threatened with death by a Jordanian Muslim cleric. According to Sheikh Abd-al-Mun'im Abu Zant, Durán had offended Muslims by writing a book seeking to introduce the essentials of Islamic faith to American Jewish readers. The book, along with a companion volume written by a rabbi to introduce Judaism to Muslims, had been published by the American Jewish Committee (AJC). Abu Zant was echoing polemics by CAIR, which had assailed Durán's book and the AJC for "stereotyping" Muslims; but the group's stated objections to the book were perfunctory and flimsy. CAIR made the egregiously un-American demand that the manuscript be submitted – before publication – to a group of Muslim experts of the group's own choosing, and echoed Abu Zant's assertion that Durán's blood could rightfully "be shed."

Although CAIR asserted that its objective was to prevent "stereotyping and inaccuracy" in the depiction of Muslims, its real aim was not to protect American Muslims from harmful prejudice but to prevent Islamic moderates like Durán from conducting an open religious dialogue with American Christians and Jews. The reason is simple: such a dialogue would reveal to the American public the important truth that the great majority of the world's more than one billion Muslims do not support Wahhabism.

To most sensible Americans, this AJC-inspired project would appear at first glance to be simply an example of Jewish liberalism seeking peace through understanding. It is extremely difficult to imagine that the AJC provided funds for this project with the objective of making life difficult for Muslims anywhere. Nevertheless, the reaction Durán's book provoked revealed the depth of the fracture within the Islamic world. The threat against Durán was just a single incident in the long-running war between Wahhabis and Muslim moderates.

The Wahhabi lobby understood and exploited the fact that the gullibility and ignorance of ordinary Americans, the generally pro-Palestinian bias of our media and academia, and the essential openness of American democracy could all be manipulated for ends totally at odds with the traditions, laws, and policies of the United States. The lobby publicly proclaimed its support for terror against Israel, assisted the funders and

organizers of terror to operate in the United States, and promoted the ideology of terror in American mosques. In the most infamous, and oft-cited examples, CAIR cofounder Nihad Awad declared in 1996, “I am in support of the Hamas movement.” In November 1999, his colleague Omar Ahmad told an audience in Chicago, “Fighting for freedom, fighting for Islam – that is not suicide. They kill themselves for Islam.”

Extremist claims were still to be heard in reaction to September 11th and the investigative efforts of the federal authorities. On October 20, 2001, Siraj Wahhaj, a New York imam, CAIR board member, and character witness for Omar Abdel Rahman in his trial for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, told a meeting of Muslim activists in Houston, “this government has already sent in every major [mosque], agent provocateurs. Most of you don’t know what that is. All you know is about spies. The government has spies, they have infiltrators. But there’s some difference from being a spy and an agent provocateur. What an agent provocateur does, he goes to a [mosque], he looks just like you. He’s got a beard just like your beard... And their job is to entrap you no different than the prostitute, the police women dressed as a prostitute, whereas he’s coming to the [mosque], dressed as a Muslim. And when they talk, their rhetoric, they are stronger than anyone else.”

Awad and Hooper, CAIR’s “media stars,” differ in their public personalities. Awad, a born Muslim, may express himself in a radical vocabulary, but maintains his composure and a respectful attitude toward his adversaries. Hooper, however, evinces the mentality of a thug, who, like Ibish and Zogby, specializes in insults, irresponsible allegations, and related smears. Like them, he should be boycotted as a participant in debates.

No responsible American campus or community organization should, under any circumstances, cooperate in any activities involving CAIR.

Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)

[website address TK]

MPAC was created in 1989, centered in Los Angeles. Even before September 11th, it occasionally presented itself as more inclusive and more open to real dialogue with Jews and Christians than other Arab and Muslim extremist groups, but nonetheless typically defends extremist violence and the aim of destroying Israel and undermining American power.

MPAC cofounder Salam al-Marayati maintained his reputation for irresponsible rhetoric when, on the very afternoon of September 11th, he used a Los Angeles talk radio show as a forum to accuse the Israelis of responsibility for the attacks on New York and Washington. The leadership of MPAC includes Maher Hathout, an aggressive supporter of Wahhabism. In a Friday sermon at the Islamic Center of Southern California on August 21, 1998, Hathout condemned U.S. retaliation in Afghanistan, after the bombing of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, as “illegal, immoral, unhuman, unacceptable, stupid, and un-American.” When a suicide terror bomber blew up a pizzeria in Israel on August 9, 2001, MPAC declared that Israel itself was “responsible for this pattern of violence.” Discussing extremist sermons in American mosques, Maher Hathout’s brother Hassan Hathout, confessed, “some people for example said America is evil.”

In the aftermath of September 11th and al-Marayati’s outrageous declarations, MPAC has shown signs of acute internal conflict, as its members try to sanitize themselves as community representatives. MPAC is a leading player in some communities but only a minor player on campuses. Interfaith and peace activists should treat MPAC with the same attitude applied to MSA: although it is prone to extremist rhetoric and should be treated with caution, joint activities might be useful to draw out those in its ranks who are growing disillusioned with the isolation and disapproval they have experienced because of their extremism. However, hardline Wahhabi apologists

like the Hathout brothers deserve to be confronted and exposed. Unfortunately, the task of debating such demagogues is not an easy one.

American Muslim Council (AMC)

[website address TK]

AMC was also created in 1989, as a Washington-based counterpart to MPAC. It has been especially active in spreading Wahhabi Islam to U.S. military personnel, as a partner of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), and to inmates in the federal and state prisons. More than any other such group, AMC has undergone ideological differentiation since 9/11, and seems to be undergoing a deep internal crisis.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the Wahhabi lobby in intimidating mainstream American opinion may be illustrated by a fawning letter issued in 1996 endorsing AMC, signed by the American Friends Service Committee, along with a leading body of the Methodist Church, the National Association of Catholic Bishops, the National Council of the Churches of Christ, the Presbyterian Church, and the United Church of Christ. The occasion of this letter was a protest over alleged unfair media scrutiny of AMC's activities. The absence of even the most peace-oriented or leftist Jews from this roster was noticeable; but far more eloquent was the very first line of the letter, which endorsed AMC as "the premier, mainstream Muslim group in Washington." Can one imagine such a coalition conferring this title on any Jewish group? Such an action would be enormously divisive. Similarly, can one imagine a roster of Jewish groups conferring the same status on, say, Evangelical Protestants? Obviously not.

American Christian leaders clearly had no idea of how to approach Muslims, how to distinguish among Muslims, or how to assist Muslims in finding a legitimate and proper place in American religious life. They implied in a patronizing manner that Muslims, rather than being fellow-believers in an Abrahamic revelation, were members

of a persecuted “minority” requiring political certification of their advocates. But it also reveals the naked power politics driving AMC’s agenda, for on what basis could any Christian or Jewish group extend such an honor to a Muslim institution? Deciding who, if anybody, is premier among American Muslims is a responsibility of Muslims. AMC, obviously, considered itself as premier, and by appealing to the conscience of politically-correct Christian leaders, they arranged for their narcissism to be validated. Christians who questioned this practice were told by the NCCB to take their complaints up with Abdulrahman Alamoudi, the godfather of AMC and a man with a well-known history of extremist incitements, including the statement: “O Allah, destroy America!” Alamoudi proclaimed at a White House demonstration in 2000, “We are ALL supporters of Hamas!” Such declarations did not involve mere support for Hamas social service networks in the West Bank and Gaza, as their apologists occasionally argued.

Campus and community activists should not avoid contact with AMC, especially given possible internal dissent in its ranks.

Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)

[www.isna.net]

ISNA enforces Wahhabi theological writ in the country’s 1,200 officially recognized mosques (out of a possible total of 4,000, including unrecognized and small congregations). ISNA president Muzammil Siddiqi, described by many of his critics as a power-hungry fanatic, appeared in an official ceremony at the National Cathedral in Washington directly following September 11. On October 28, 2000, at an anti-Israel “Jerusalem Day” rally sponsored by Grover Norquist’s Islamic Institute (see below), AMC, and other groups, Siddiqi asserted, “America has to learn... if you remain on the side of injustice, the wrath of God will come. Please, all Americans. Do you remember that?... If you continue doing injustice, and tolerate injustice, the wrath of God will

come.” Many of the main mosques in the U.S. were recently built with Saudi money and saddled with a requirement that they follow Wahhabi imams and Wahhabi dictates.

CAIR has publicly asserted that some 70 percent of American Muslims support Wahhabism, which they refer to under the politer title “Salafism.” Wahhabi domination of American Islam involves much more than control over money and the elected governing assemblies of mosques; it also means dictating the curriculum for the training of imams, setting the tone and content of sermons, deciding what books and periodicals may be read in mosque libraries or sold in mosque bookshops, and excluding or otherwise suppressing dissenters. According to one informant who requested anonymity, Wahhabi imams in American mosques until recently received salaries of between \$2,000 and \$4,000 a month from the Gulf states.

Testimony to this effect comes (among many others) from Kaukab Siddique, the radical editor of *New Trend*, an Islamic periodical of extremist views yet opposed to Wahhabi domination of American Islam, who charged: “ISNA controls most mosques in America and thus also controls: 1. Who will speak at EVERY [Friday prayer]. 2. Which literature will be distributed there... *New Trend* tried right from 1977 to warn the people about this danger of monopoly created by funds coming in from Saudi Arabia... the Ikhwan mafia, a group of six... were bringing in funds from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. The movement for reform was quashed by the mafia (who are the revered ‘elders’ of ISNA) who went from city to city.”

Islamic Horizons, based in Plainfield, Indiana, is the bimonthly organ of ISNA. Its web page includes the pathetic claim, “Access DENIED . . . Muslim Americans Must Demand Inclusion in the Political Process,” which complains of insufficient support from George W. Bush after Muslims voted for him. The site also promotes *Silent No More: Confronting America’s False Images of Islam*, a wretched book by professional Israel-basher Paul Findley, a former Republican congressman from Illinois. Findley’s book came out in the summer of 2001, which did not prove a propitious moment for a work that gushes over Osama bin Laden. Findley writes, “Outsiders do not seem to recognize that bin Laden is one of the pre-eminent heroes of Afghans, occupying a role similar to the Marquis de Lafayette, a Frenchman who fought at the side of the Colonials during America’s Revolutionary War.”

Neofascist agitator Bill Baker, previously introduced, has also been a fixture in the activities of ISNA. His book, *More In Common Than You Think*, intended to bring together fringe Christians and extremist Muslims, was endorsed as follows by Muzammil Siddiqi: “We Muslims and Christians together make up more than half of the world population today. Better understanding, communication, and peaceful relations between our communities are not only good, but they are essential. We have much more in common than you think or accept.” In the case of Baker and Siddiqi, the most significant common element is corrosive hatred of U.S. policies.

Involvement with ISNA should be avoided by sincere interfaith activists, although its annual national convention may be a useful place for independent, traditional, antiterrorist Muslims to seek contacts. In the past, however, as *New Trend*'s Siddique emphasized, “these well-funded groups [would] not allow any Islamic material other than their own to be distributed.”

Islamic Institute (II)

The Islamic Institute, which enjoys the backing of Republican party operative Grover Norquist, serves as a bridge to conservative Republicans. Indeed, Norquist, founder of Americans for Tax Reform, has claimed responsibility for the unfortunate fact that, when President George W. Bush stood up in a Washington mosque in the days after September 11th, Nihad Awad, national director of CAIR, stood beside him. In the same group, Yahya Basha, president of AMC, and representatives of MPAC were also to be found.

Describing himself as “a longtime advocate of outreach to the Muslim community,” Norquist has argued that Muslims had strong conservative and family values that made them a natural Republican constituency and declared that Bush had been elected “because of the Muslim vote,” which he had allegedly summoned. Unfortunately, Norquist has found it difficult to distinguish between ordinary and normal

political activities by Muslims and the defense of extremism. After September 11th, he repeatedly echoed hysterical charges by Arab and Muslim advocates who claimed that their communities were under siege and faced a wholesale curtailment of their civil rights. Norquist and the Islamic Institute have also served as lobbyists in the U.S. for the Wahhabi-dominated Gulf state of Qatar.

II remains aloof from community and campus activities.

Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences (GSISS) & International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT)

[website addresses TK]

In spring 2002, Federal law enforcement kicked over quite an anthill in Northern Virginia. A U.S. Treasury task force, Operation Green Quest, had been investigating the funding of Islamic terror. Raids on March 20, 2002, struck an extraordinary array of financial, charitable, and ostensibly religious entities identified with Muslim and Arab concerns in this country, most of them headquartered in Northern Virginia.

Reaction to the raids suggested that the Feds had inflicted serious injury on the Wahhabi lobby. Officials of the targeted groups as well as their non-Muslim apologists – notably Grover Norquist – condemned the raids as civil rights violations. Norquist declared, “There’s a great deal of disappointment that raids happened the way they did. And I don’t think the Muslim community is overreacting.”

The convoluted system of interlocking directorates, global banking transactions, and ideological activities exposed in Northern Virginia would take time to sort out. Meanwhile, however, Operation Green Quest drew attention to a previously overlooked aspect of support for Islamic extremism in this country: the principal threat comes not from the thousands of working-class Arab immigrants in places like New Jersey and Michigan who contribute modest sums to Islamic charities, but from the Arab elite, most

notably Saudis. The keystone of the Saudi-sponsored Northern Virginia network was the Saar Foundation, created by Suleiman Abdul Al-Aziz al-Rajhi, a scion of one of the richest Saudi families. The Saar Foundation is connected to Al-Taqwa, a shell company formerly based in Switzerland, where its leading figures included a notorious neo-Nazi and Islamist, Ahmed Huber. Subsequently moving to the United States, Al-Taqwa was shut down after September 11th and its assets frozen by U.S. presidential order. But operations continued, as the Wahhabi lobby shifted to its backup institutions here.

Saar has also been linked to Khalid bin Mahfouz, former lead financial adviser to the Saudi royal family and ex-head of the National Commercial Bank of Saudi Arabia. Mahfouz has been named by French intelligence as a backer of Osama bin Laden; Mahfouz endowed the Muwafaq Foundation, which U.S. authorities confirm was an arm of bin Laden's terror organization. Muwafaq's former chief, Yassin al-Qadi, oversaw the financial penetration of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania by Wahhabi terrorists in the late 1990s.

Men like al-Rajhi, Mahfouz, and al-Qadi are big players in the financing of Islamic extremism. And their paths repeatedly led back to Northern Virginia. They don't play for small stakes: Saar received \$1.7 billion in donations in 1998, although this was left out of the foundation's tax filings until 2000. No explanation has been offered for this bit of accounting sorcery. All details of these operations were reported in the main American media.

A major figure in the Virginia operation is an individual named Jamal Barzinji, whose office in Herndon was a target of the raids. Barzinji has functioned as a representative of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), an arm of the Saudi regime with offices in Virginia. WAMY has been deeply involved in providing cover for Wahhabi terrorism. The 2002 entry in the U.S. Business Directory listed the president of the WAMY office in Annandale, Va., as Abdula bin Laden – the terrorist's younger brother.

Barzinji served as a trustee and officer of the Amana Mutual Funds Trust, a growth and income mutual fund headquartered in Bellingham, Wash., conveniently near the Canadian border. Amana's board also included Yaqub Mirza, a Pakistani physicist who shares Barzinji's Herndon office address and who is widely described as a financial

genius. Another board member and tenant in the Herndon office was Samir Salah. He formerly ran a branch of Al-Taqwa in the Caribbean, heads a financial firm linked to Saar, and directed Dar al-Hijra, a mosque in Falls Church, Va., notable for hardline Wahhabi preaching. Salah was also deeply involved with Taibah International Aid Association, a Virginia charity with a Bosnian branch investigated by authorities in Sarajevo.

Front groups interfacing between the Wahhabi-Saudi money movers under federal suspicion and the broader American public included two institutions active in the religious field: the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences (GSISS), in Leesburg, Va., and the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), located in Herndon, Va. The involvement of GSISS with the financing of extremism was especially startling in that it alone is credentialed by the Department of Defense to certify Muslim chaplains for the U.S. armed forces. Barzinji has appeared on the boards of both.

Indeed, the entrenchment of Wahhabism in American Islamic affairs was demonstrated soon after September 11th, when a group of Islamic scholars in the Middle East issued a *fatwa* on the duties of Muslims serving in the U.S. armed forces. The story of this *fatwa* shows both the confused state of relations between American society and Islam and the nature of Muslim fundamentalism. It all began when the first-ever Muslim chaplain to American military personnel, U.S. Army Captain Abdul-Rashid Muhammad, sought an authoritative opinion as to whether Muslims could serve in a war against a Muslim enemy. By official count, there were some 4,100 Muslims in the U.S. armed forces (although Captain Muhammad has been quoted claiming 12,000) out of a total force of a million and a half.

Oddly, Captain Muhammad turned for help to the head of GSISS, one Taha Jabir Alwani. Alwani conveyed the request to a “moderate” Wahhabi cleric living in Qatar named Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who drafted the resulting document. Although he was presented as a mainstream and moderate figure, Shaykh Qaradawi is best known for his *fatwa* legitimating terrorist attacks in Israel; in April 2001, he defined suicide bombings as “martyrdom, not suicide,” suicide being forbidden by Islam. How such an individual could have been consulted officially about the religious life of American citizens is questionable to say the least.

However, the content of the fatwa, issued on September 27, 2001, was benevolent. Shaykh Qaradawi and his cosignatories (three Egyptians, a Syrian, and Alwani) held that, in the face of the recent attacks, American Muslims were obliged to support the United States, since Islamic law prohibits “terrorizing the innocent, killing noncombatants, and the destruction of property.” Further, the fatwa declared that American Muslims must fulfill the duties of citizenship, including conscientious service in the armed forces, lest their loyalty be doubted. Some American media seized on the fatwa to prove that all Muslims abhor terrorism. Sam Jaffe, for instance, writing in *Business Week Online*, characterized Qaradawi as one of those “Islamic thinkers . . . that will defeat Bin Laden.”

But the honeymoon was brief. The benign fatwa set off a firestorm in the Arab world, and Qaradawi changed course. For example, one professor of the Islamic law at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, argued, “it is not allowed for a Muslim who is currently recruited in the American army to fight against Muslims, either in Afghanistan nor anywhere else.” Curiously, a Hamas figure named Bassam Jarar noted in the Palestinian daily *Al-Quds* that soldiers refusing to serve in the U.S. forces in Afghanistan on Islamic religious grounds would be in a strong position before American law.

On October 11, 2001, Shaykh Qaradawi held a press conference in Qatar where he condemned American military action against Afghanistan. His wording was anything but mild: “We support the Afghans who stand firm against the American invasion,” he proclaimed, likening the U.S. campaign to the Russian occupation. He blamed the United States for September 11th because of American support for Israel and threatened that a thousand Bin Ladens would rise up unless U.S. policy changes. He incited the Pakistanis against their government and concluded with the claim that Bin Laden’s videotaped self-justifications could not be considered a confession of wrongdoing. He praised the terrorist chieftain as “a symbol of the world uprising against American hegemony.” Some Islamic websites reported that the original fatwa had been “misattributed,” others that it had been superseded. Qaradawi’s outburst of hatred, and his manifest self-contradiction, prompted inquiries from the press, but he declined to elaborate. On October 30, 2001, he brushed off the Associated Press, saying, “I wrote an explanation. I can’t tell you anything more.”

GSISS's Taha Jabir Alwani was named as an unindicted coconspirator of top Palestinian Islamic Jihad leader Sami al-Arian early in 2003.

The day of the raids, Barzinji appeared on television insisting he knew of no questionable behavior by the groups under scrutiny, and promising full cooperation with the authorities. But he expressed himself quite differently in the Islamic media. Barzinji told the Internet news service Islam Online he believed the investigations fulfilled the will not of the Bush administration, but of "elements within the government, media, and [academia] who were unhappy with the positive attention being given to Muslims." This tortured formulation, repeated in several variations, embodies the Islamist fantasy that every doubt cast on the activities of the Wahhabi lobby is the product of Jewish influence.

Speaking to Islam Online, Barzinji alleged that the real powers behind the raids were "self-styled Middle East 'experts,' " individuals "who do not want to see Muslims develop such excellent relations with the government, assuming political rights." This line echoed that peddled by CAIR, which condemns any challenge to the Wahhabi lobby as a product of "right-wing commentators."

Barzinji, CAIR, and their cohort gave the impression of living in their own conspiratorial world, divorced from reality. For them to imagine that the aftermath of September 11 has been anything but disastrous for the image and credibility of American Muslims is absurd, notwithstanding Barzinji's claims about "positive attention." The presumption that anybody outside government dictated policy to the Treasury, however, was only the classic supposition about alleged Israeli influence that preoccupies the Arab mind.

A flyer innocuously entitled "Q & A on Islam and Arab Americans" was recently mass-mailed to a list including journalists in Washington. Conspicuous at the top of the first page, the *USA Today* logo readies the reader to ingest bite-sized morsels of information, simple but reliable--and only then prompts him to scratch his head and wonder just why *USA Today* should be seeking to educate him about Islam.

The return address is unenlightening: "IIIT, P.O. Box 669, Herndon, VA 20172-0669." Only the eagle-eyed reporter will spot, in minuscule type at the bottom of the last

page, the copyright, by the International Institute of Islamic Thought. And at once, the enterprise comes clear.

The IIIT is among the innumerable, ostensibly cultural, educational, and religious institutions founded, controlled, and/or influenced by the Saudi-Wahhabi movement, which promotes Islamic fundamentalism worldwide. The most notorious of these institutions are the hundreds of Islamic schools the Saudis funded in Pakistan to propagate Wahhabism. Those *madrassas* have their well-camouflaged counterparts in the Western world.

One strategic purpose of these institutions is to seize control of the definition of Islam. If they can persuade the non-Islamic world that no element of Islam threatens them, they will have bought some cover for extremism. (Think of the old Communists defining themselves as “progressives.”) By inducing Westerners to avoid really learning about Islam, they hope to deflect attention from the crazies who strap suicide explosives onto teenagers or fly airplanes into office buildings or kill nosy reporters like Daniel Pearl. They certainly mean to deflect any questions about intolerant and corrupt regimes that blow up historic artifacts or stay in power by coercion.

Islam is one, and Muslims are uniformly peaceful – don’t get hung up on the excesses of the Taliban or believe what you hear about hate-spewing anti-Jewish literature sold in mosques. To show how the IIIT’s “*USA Today*” flyer serves the nice-and-bland message, consider its treatment of two questions about women.

Q: What is the role of women in Islam?

A: Under Islamic law, women have always had the right to own property, receive an education and otherwise take part in community life. Men and women are to be respected equally. The Islamic rules for modest dress apply to women and men equally.

In the first sentence of that reply, note the words “have always.” The record, we are told, is consistent on this point. Yet females were excluded from schooling in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. In some places heavily influenced by fundamentalists, women can’t so much as set foot in mosques to pray. “Men and women are to be respected equally,” we are told, but under the extreme interpretations of Islamic law introduced by Saudi agents in Africa and Asia, adulteresses are subject to death by

stoning, while adulterers go free. In Saudi Arabia, of course, women are not allowed to drive cars or to travel unaccompanied by males.

Q: Why do Muslim women cover their hair?

A: Islam teaches modesty for women and men. Women are required to cover their bodies so that their figure is not revealed and only their faces and hands are shown. The head scarf is called a hijab or chador. The long, robe-like garment is called an abayah, jilbab or chador. This requirement is designed to protect women and give them respect. The dress of Muslim women is similar to that of Christian nuns, who also cover their bodies and hair. Muslim women are not required to cover their faces as is done in some Middle Eastern countries.

Consider the premise of the question, that Muslim women actually do cover their hair. It implicitly rules out of order the millions and millions of Muslim women who do *not* cover their hair. In most Islamic societies, the decision to adopt this practice is a matter of local custom and personal choice. In the Balkans, Turkey, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia, Muslim women who cover their hair are rare. Similarly, although non-revealing clothing is here called a “requirement” of Islam, it is not the universal practice among Muslim women, as Western designers beholden to wealthy Middle Eastern clients can testify.

Speaking of revealing, the flyer’s handling of the question “What is jihad?” is a doozy.

A: Jihad does not mean ‘holy war.’ Literally, jihad in Arabic means to strive, struggle and exert effort. It is a central and broad Islamic concept that includes struggle against evil inclinations within oneself, struggle to improve the quality of life in society, struggle in the battlefield for self-defense or fighting against tyranny or oppression.

Here we have the money quote: “Jihad does not mean ‘holy war.’” A few lines later, however, jihad does include “struggle in the battlefield.” The truth is, military jihad cannot be written out of Islam. The prophet Mohammed himself led armies. This answer would be more honest if it said, “Jihad cannot be reduced to the idea of ‘holy war.’” But IIIT seeks only to escape responsibility for the Wahhabi “jihad,” which has been terroristic since the founding of the Wahhabi cult in central Arabia 250 years ago.

The back of the flyer contains a list of recommended websites and books on Islam. While most of the volumes embody the academic apologetics retailed by individuals like John Esposito and Karen Armstrong, the list also includes titles by Hassan Hathout, the inveterate apologist for extremism, and the sinister Bill Baker. The author of a virulent polemic against Israel, “Theft of a Nation,” Baker has been a guest on “Radio Free America,” a program backed by fascist agitator Willis Carto. There Baker offered this opinion: “The American people better wake up now and take a stand now so they won’t allow one American child to be sent to defend Israel.” As for the websites, they tend to be hospitable to the view of America as a rogue state bent on terrorizing its Muslim residents.

IIIT may be comfortable with all this. But *USA Today*, from whose website the Q & A is reprinted with permission, should beware lending respectability to Wahhabi institutions. And patriotic Americans, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, should recognize the IIIT’s flyer for what it is – junk mail.

GSISS and IIIT are not active in campus and community work, but maintain links with various academic programs. All such associations should be subject to close scrutiny.

Islamist Hate Media

When the shooter who chose July 4, 2003 to start a gun battle at Los Angeles airport’s El Al ticket counter turned out to be Hesham Mohamed Hadayet – an Egyptian native with a “Read Koran” sticker on his apartment door – many people not unreasonably wondered if he had picked up his hostility to America and Israel at an extremist mosque. No evidence of Hadayet’s mosque attendance has been reported. What’s gone unremarked is that he could just as easily have been incited by the steady diet of violent rhetoric served up by the American Muslim community media – periodicals with names like *The Minaret*, the

Weekly Mirror International, and the *Muslim Observer*, which toe the anti-American, anti-Israel line of Saudi Arabia's Islamofascist Wahhabi sect.

While the "mainstream" Islamic establishment – groups like CAIR, AMC, and ISNA – offers perfunctory support for the anti-terror war and hovers around President Bush for photo ops in mosques, the poison pens of its media produce an unceasing stream of insult and loathing directed against America. One expects appeals to the extremist jihad to be heard in the streets of Karachi, in the canyons of Tora Bora, as they were predictable in the government media of Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Some of the most strident voices, however, are here in the United States, directed not from the Middle East or South Asia, but from modern offices in Los Angeles, Chicago, and the Detroit suburbs.

These publications are widely distributed on campuses. They make no attempt to hide their attachments to international extremist groups. Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood – which preaches the classic neo-Wahhabi doctrine of the supremacy of Islam and condemnation of non-extremist Muslims as irreligious – receives support from *at-Talib* (The Student), published at UCLA by the Islamic Center of Southern California, and from *Islamic Horizons*. The Jamaat-al-Islami movement, which perpetuates the same extremist mentality in Pakistan, appears to enjoy the sympathy of the *Weekly Mirror International*, based in the Greenpoint section of Brooklyn, New York, and other papers. The *Muslim Observer* publishes anyone given to an exaggerated anti-U.S. idiom, and its contributors have included Osama bin Laden. Most of these media once defended the Taliban for refusing to surrender bin Laden, and most of them equivocated on his guilt last September. *The Minaret*, also published in Los Angeles by the Islamic Center of Southern California, is infamous for its anti-Jewish cartoons. Its May 2002 issue featured a tasteful headline: "Axis of Evil: The United States, Israel, and Arab governments," adorned by a graphic of a rattlesnake. In it, editor Aslam Abdullah accused Israel of pursuing "a policy adopted by Henry Kissinger in 1979 that called for a final solution of the Palestinian problem." If this is not the language of incitement, what is?

In the April 27-May 2, 2002, issue of the Michigan-based *Muslim Observer* (www.muslimobserver.com), we find an article titled "Eyewitness Account of Washington March," in which a Pakistani-American proudly describes how one of his companions, a 16-year-old boy, "put on a Palestinian scarf and truly gave the tingles to

the breakfast crowd, looking quite the epitome of the suicide bomber.” The website of the *Muslim Observer* offers its readers the following poll: “Our question for this week was: Do you think our country [the United States] is being manipulated by Israel?” The responses: Yes 95 percent, No 2 percent, Do not know 3 percent.

Meanwhile, in the March 27 issue of the *Weekly Mirror International* (www.readmirror.com), author Khalil Osman declaims, “The Bush administration has demonstrated unprecedented zeal in instituting draconian measures aimed mainly at Arabs and Muslims. . . . As more details became known, a chilling picture of a full-blooded campaign against Muslims and Arabs began to emerge.” The same periodical quotes Larry Holmes – not the boxer, but an American Communist extremist and supporter of the regimes of Iraq and North Korea as well as Slobodan Milosevic. Comrade Holmes thunders against “an ongoing campaign of anti-Arab racism and anti-Muslim bigotry Bush has whipped up in the United States to complement his non-stop war policies in the Middle East.” Many pious Muslims have complained about the infiltration of American mosques by Larry Holmes and his Stalinist group, on the pretext of “defending” Iraq, since they know the ideology he defends has destroyed more mosques than the Crusaders could have imagined leveling in their wildest fantasies.

It’s hardly a mystery how an Egyptian limo service operator could end up as a gun-toting terrorist at LAX. His native country has long been steeped in an extremist and violent political culture. That same culture has unfortunately taken root in the Islamic “community media” in this country. The only mystery is how long it will be before our home-grown hatemongers come under closer scrutiny.

Other Entities

A cluster of Hamas front groups in America comprised the Islamic Association of Palestine (IAP), the American Muslims for Jerusalem, and the Holy Land Foundation for

Relief and Development (HLF), constituted the financial and operational nerve center of the radical Islamic institutional network. At a meeting of the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP), a Muslim cleric from Kuwait, Tariq Suweidan, preached, “Nothing can be achieved without sacrificing blood.” These groups appear independent of one another, but nearly all of them drew from the common financial and technical pool at HLF. They do not disagree or compete; they are diverse “shops” offering identical ideological content. HLF has been effectively shut down by the Bush administration.

Other, less prominent groups within the Muslim extremist camp in America include the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), aligned with “neo-Wahhabi” extremists in Pakistan, and the American Muslim Alliance (AMA), which has conducted targeted political lobbying to advance the Arab Muslim agenda and distributes Holocaust denial literature at its annual convention. Various examples of intolerance and incitement in Friday sermons were publicized in the wake of September 11th. However, AMA’s founder-chairman Agha Saeed, even after September 11th, brushed off controversies about such rhetoric. He added that while he rejected Bin Laden, it was “simplistic” to condemn him. Saeed insisted, “Who trained him? Who taught him how to make these bombs?” This deliberate obfuscation sought to blame U.S. involvement in the Afghan struggle against Russian imperialism for Bin Laden’s terrorism.

Add AMA fusion

Conclusion

To experienced Washington journalists and political insiders, one thing was immediately clear about the Wahhabi lobby: it had been crafted in direct imitation of the leading American Jewish organizations. ADC and CAIR were modeled on the highly-effective Anti-Defamation League (ADL), AMC on the American Jewish Committee (AJC), ISNA on the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations, and AAI and MPAC on the American

Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). But the imitation embodied certain intrinsic flaws in Wahhabi and Palestinian politics, caused by their ideology. With their primitive, conspiratorial mentality, the Wahhabis assumed that the diverse American Jewish groups were all controlled and coordinated by a single, commanding power, i.e. the Israeli embassy. They had no conception of the considerable competition, and fundamental diversity in vision and practical affairs, between the Jewish groups. Nor could they permit the flowering of such differences within their own community. Their mentality was monopolistic and totalitarian, and they could only function in a rigidly disciplined structure.

None of these groups had behind them the hard work of political organizing and domestic activism pursued by other recently-arrived immigrant communities, such as Cuban Americans or Korean Americans. But Saudi money gave the Wahhabi lobby an artificially high level of influence and access. In addition, they had learned a crucial lesson from the activities of Irish Americans, even if they lacked their long history or large numbers in the country. The Irish Republican movement had long been financed and even directed from the United States, and domestic political influence had given Irish extremists virtual impunity to operate on U.S. soil against America's most important historic ally, Britain. Wahhabis have tried to create the same kind of operation, raising funds and coordinating their international operations largely from the U.S. In defending themselves against charges of terrorism, the Wahhabi lobby, as well as Osama bin Laden himself, frequently cite the Irish precedent. In addition, Arab terror suspects prosecuted in the U.S. have called on Irish radical groups for legal support.

Until September 11th, many radical Islamic activists remained convinced, with perfect confidence, that the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution protects them fully in their inciting language, and they were assisted in this presumption by numerous attorneys and judges who insisted on enforcing the letter, rather than the spirit, of the law. They believed, and far too many Americans agreed with them, that the presumption of innocence before the law meant absolute, unchallengeable innocence unless the very worst crimes could be proven beyond any doubt.

When the Wahhabi lobby came under American investigative scrutiny in the 1990s, their response and that of their defenders (including a considerable number of

ultrasecularist and leftist Jews) reproduced the effort mounted earlier in American history by Stalinist Communists and their protectors. Like the Communists of the 1940s, the Wahhabis claimed to be victims of slander while practicing it against their critics. Detailed, factual charges against them were denounced as mere allegations, when they were, without exception, based on publicly recorded, voluntary statements made before thousands of witnesses. Committed opponents such as Steven Emerson and Daniel Pipes were dismissed as Zionist agents and defamed as “unreliable” or “inaccurate.” When the Wahhabis were shown, by their own public declarations, to be terrorists and terror advocates, they insisted that their activities were benign and innocuous, involving only fundraising for the relief of children and refugees.

The Communists had used the same methods with extraordinary success. They claimed to be “progressives,” not Stalinists; they denounced their critics, including anti-Stalinist socialists and liberals, as “fascists” and “witch-hunters,” and when it was demonstrated that they did belong to Communist organizations, argued that they had only been engaged in programs of social uplift, defense of labor rights, and fighting against racism. In reality, their main tasks had not been in the field of trade unionism or civil rights, but rather involved the propagandistic defense of Stalin’s purges, pact with Hitler, and other atrocities.

Furthermore, years of wrongheaded decisions were handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court, which seemed to want to overlook Communist espionage and terrorism in America (the assassination of Leon Trotsky in Mexico in 1940 – the most famous terrorist act of the 20th century – was almost entirely organized in the United States by members of the domestic Communist Party). The Court held to the philosophy that suppression of Stalinism was only appropriate if it could be shown that the republic was in danger of immediate overthrow. That the American Communist party was an arm of the Soviet secret police, controlled in its entirety by Moscow, had not been “proven,” even though it was self-evident, because the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation were unwilling to produce testimony that would reveal to the Russians the extent of American success in decrypting secret KGB and related communications. So the courts, the lawyerly establishment, civil liberties lobbies, and assorted other sectors of the public adopted a hard line attitude: if treason, espionage,

and terrorism could not be proven in open court, with full right of cross examination by attorneys hired with Soviet money and intent on assisting the Soviet government, it did not exist. It was for this reason that so many potential codefendants in the infamous case of the Rosenberg couple were never even indicted, and some made their escape from the U.S. altogether.

The Wahhabis in America long enjoyed similar success in convincing American investigative agencies, judges, lawyers, civil liberties advocates, journalists, academics, and others that they were, in effect, prosecution-proof. Ludicrous mistakes were made because Americans were concerned to protect the freedom of the enemies of freedom. Sayyid Nosair, assassin in 1990 of Jewish extremist Meir Kahane, was only found guilty on a firearms charge. The FBI impeded the investigation of Zacharias Moussaoui, who was arrested before September 11 and later charged as a member of the conspiracy, because it lacked “sufficient” probable cause. The list of such errors could be greatly lengthened. But the traps of moral equivalence were deeper and more dangerous. America’s capacity to defend itself spiritually and intellectually had been deeply harmed by “anti-anti-Communism.”

The legacy of this deviation in American political life was audible whenever the claim was made that firm measures against terrorists – the use before September 11 of “secret evidence,” or, after that date, denying terror troopers status as prisoners of war, investigating extremist activities that sheltered under the cover of religion, more efficient standards for wiretapping, detention of aliens, higher levels of transportation and communications security, or the failure to provide “American Taliban” John Walker Lindh with a “dream team” of lawyers in the Afghan hinterland – threatened to put America on the terrorists’ level. America was told repeatedly it must fight for protection of the rights of its enemies if it was not to become indistinguishable from them. Similarly, apologists for Bin Laden and his accomplices insisted that evidence of his terrorist activities, satisfying absurdly high standards, must be produced before action could be taken against him.

There are many critics of Wahhabism among American Muslims, but few are willing to speak out by name for the record. Most have been intimidated into silence. But resentment of Saudi religious colonialism is rife among American Muslims, however

subdued its expression. This worldwide subversion can be combated only as fascist and Communist sedition were once fought: with courage and determination, and in full solidarity with the Muslim heroes in the forefront of resistance to it. One authoritative source who asked to remain nameless but who was long courted by the Islamic Society of North America told me, “American Muslims are getting real sick of Wahhabi domination.” Others, however, note that ISNA has recently feigned openness to non-Wahhabi Muslims, just as its leaders portrayed themselves as “anti-terrorist” to President Bush. Shi’a Muslims in America, however, are notable for their outspoken opposition to Wahhabi influence.

Sheikh Fadhel Al-Sahlani, an Iraqi American and president of the largest Shi’a Muslim congregation in North America, speaks perfect English. He sits with quiet dignity in his mosque, the Imam Al-Khoei Islamic Center in Queens, New York. Middle aged and slender, with a neat salt-and-pepper beard, he is draped in robes and wears a turban. Yet his words are anything but alien – rather, they are startlingly direct, articulate, and even familiar, at least to supporters of President George W. Bush and his vision for the future of the Middle East.

“The problem in Arab countries is simple,” Sheikh Al-Sahlani says. “We are ruled by dictators. We want this to end. I cannot trust any Arab regime,” he continues. “None of them has ever helped us. They did not accept Iraqi refugees after the [Gulf] war, except for some who were admitted to Syria. Only America helped us by taking in many refugees, and now there are thousands of us here. Only America really helped us,” he repeats. “If the United States removes Saddam’s fascist regime, I will support them. But also, we live here and we are loyal.”

I told Sheikh Al-Sahlani how much his comments resembled those of President Bush himself and of Paul D. Wolfowitz, deputy defense secretary and point man for the strategy of regional transition to democracy. He nodded, with a smile. “We understand them,” he said. He described the impact of Wolfowitz’s recent visit to Iraqis living in Dearborn, Michigan, and said, “Many believe a change in American policy has come.”

A week before, in a Manhattan restaurant, I’d heard a similar message from another Iraqi-American religious figure, Sheikh Kedhim Sadiq Mohammed of the Islamic Guidance Center, a Shi’a mosque in Brooklyn that serves a large Hispanic, African-

American, and Arab-American community. “I am telling all the Arabs the moment has come to support the United States, to see the end of this evil dictatorship in Iraq,” he said. “Many of them do not know how to react, but I am telling them to trust the Americans. I am an American citizen and I am loyal to President Bush.”

I interviewed Sheikh Al-Sahlani on the night of March 9, 2003, after the annual Shi’a religious procession in midtown Manhattan, called to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein ibn Ali, grandson of the prophet Muhammad, at the battle of Kerbala--the defining event in the history of the Shi’a sect. (I had been invited to address the gathering.) Following the procession, in the main hall of the Al-Khoei mosque, a Pakistani-American medical doctor and religious teacher of great eloquence, Sakhawat Hussain, described the events at Kerbala, in which Imam Hussein and a small party of his supporters were killed at the order of tyrants who had seized control of the Muslim community.

The battle of Kerbala occurred in the year 680. Yet as Dr. Hussain preached to a gathering of hundreds that evening in Queens, grown men wailed at the evocation of Imam Hussein’s death and the slaying of his infant son in his arms as if it had happened yesterday. Young men came forward bare to the waist, and began rhythmically beating their breasts in grief at the bloodshed so many centuries past.

Kerbala is located in Iraq, where the majority of the population – up to 65 percent – are Shi’a Muslims. For Shi’as, the drama that took place at Kerbala so long ago is emblematic of a struggle that persists throughout history, but never with greater resonance than now. In the Iraqi dictator Saddam, the Shi’as see the latest successor to Yezid, the evil ruler who ordered the murders of Imam Hussein and his partisans. The Iraqi Shi’as and their clerics again and again strive to defend truth, justice, and Islam cleansed of tyranny and terror.

The March 9 procession brought 10,000 Shi’a Muslims from New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut into the streets of the Big Apple, behind a banner denouncing Saudi-backed Wahhabism, the extremist dispensation that has encouraged the mass murder of Shi’a Muslims for two and a half centuries, and which underpins the hellish discrimination Shi’as suffer today in the Saudi kingdom. Shi’as are the majority in the

oil-bearing Eastern Province and the southern border region of Saudi Arabia. The banner named the cruelest enemies of innocent Muslims: Saddam, Mullah Omar, and bin Laden.

The parade ended at the Pakistani mission to the United Nations, on the East Side, where Istafa Naqvi, a Shi'a community leader, passionately denounced Saddam and proclaimed that U.S.-led forces would remove him. Naqvi invoked the American eagle, with its sharp claws, which he envisaged tearing the head off "the worst dictator in the world." Agha Jafri, the main Shi'a leader in New York, cried, "President Bush, why are you waiting? We want you to liberate Kerbala!"

(add material on Shi'a prison suit here)