

The Council on American-Islamic Relations

The benign public face of America's "Wahhabi Lobby"

by Daniel Pipes and Sharon Chadha

Editor's Note: The recent terrorist bombings in London remind us again of the ongoing threat to Western societies posed by violent Islamic fundamentalists—and their apologists. We are pleased to offer our readers this special, expanded report by Dr. Daniel Pipes, a prominent authority on Islamic fundamentalism, with author Sharon Chadha, probing one of the most influential institutional defenders of Islamic extremism in the United States. (The online version of this article, available at www.capitalresearch.org, contains embedded links to many reference sources available on the Internet.)

Summary: *Despite its mainstream and wholesome appearance, the Council on American-Islamic Relations is the leading Islamist apologist in the United States and, as such, is a major influence on the enemy's side in the war on terror.*

The Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) presents itself as an advocate for Muslims' civil rights. "We are similar to a Muslim NAACP," says its spokesman Ibrahim Hooper.¹ Likewise, its official mission suggests nothing problematic: "to enhance understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding."

CAIR has in fact enjoyed success in the decade since its founding, presenting itself as the spokesman for American Muslims. It claims to log five thousand annual mentions on newspapers, television and radio, including some of the most prestigious media in the United States. When the State Department seeks out Muslims to participate in official



CAIR executive director and co-founder Nihad Awad addresses an Ohio fundraising dinner. Upper right: CAIR buses in hundreds of Muslim voters in Florida. Lower right: the media interview a CAIR spokesman.

functions to welcome foreign dignitaries, journalists, and academics it often calls upon CAIR.² The organization has represented American Muslims before Congress.

When President Bush gave a press conference at the Islamic Center of Washington just days after September 11, 2001, to signal that he would not tolerate a backlash against Muslims, whom did he invite up to the podium? CAIR's executive director, Nihad Awad. Two months later, when Secretary of State Colin Powell hosted a Ramadan dinner, he too called upon CAIR as representative of Islam in America.

Law-enforcement agencies in Florida, Maryland, Ohio, Michigan, New York, Arizona, California, Missouri, Texas and Kentucky attend CAIR's sensitivity-training

sessions. The organization boasts such tight relations with the police that it has sometimes been invited to monitor police raids. In July 2004, as agents from the FBI, Internal Revenue Service and Homeland Security descended on the Institute for Islamic and Arabic Sciences in America, a Saudi-created

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school in Merrifield, Virginia, CAIR's legal director, Arsalan Iftikhar, was on hand to observe the raid. A local newspaper, *The Connection*, reported that a CAIR employee indicated the FBI had called that morning to inform him of the raid.

CAIR is widely accepted as a mainstream organization. It is regularly invited to give educational seminars on Islamic cultural issues to corporations. It is has been a guest speaker at America's leading universities, including Harvard, Stanford, Johns Hopkins and Columbia, and at many American high schools. CAIR even teaches Islam to America's elderly. NASA, the space agency, hosted CAIR's Sensitivity and Diversity Workshop in an effort to harmonize space research with Muslim sensibilities.

According to filed copies of its annual Internal Revenue Service Form 990, CAIR's U.S. chapters have more than doubled their combined revenues from the \$2.5 million they recorded in 2000 to \$5.6 million in 2002, though the number dipped slightly to \$5.3 million in 2003 (the most recent year for which figures are available). CAIR's filings indicate that the bulk of its funds come from "direct public support."³

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Address:

1513 16th Street, N.W.

Washington, DC 20036-1480

Phone: (202) 483-6900

Long-Distance: (800) 459-3950

E-mail Address:

rbidinotto@capitalresearch.org

Web Site:

<http://www.capitalresearch.org>

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These funds have made possible CAIR's geographic proliferation. Starting with a single office in 1994, CAIR now claims thirty-one affiliates, including a branch in Canada, and with more steadily added. In addition to its grand national headquarters located in Washington, it has impressive offices in other cities; the New York one, for example, is housed in the 19-story Interchurch Center located on Manhattan's Riverside Drive.

Another View

A large and growing number of critics have come to know CAIR better and criticize the group. For example:

- Not long after September 11, CAIR became conspicuously absent from White House functions.

- The Department of Homeland Security consistently stays away from CAIR.

- Sen. Charles Schumer (D., NY) describes CAIR as an organization "Which we know has ties to terrorism."⁴

- Senator Dick Durbin (D., IL) observed that CAIR is "unusual in its extreme rhetoric and its associations with groups that are suspect."

- Steven Pomerantz, the FBI's former chief of counterterrorism, noted that "CAIR, its leaders and its activities effectively give aid to international terrorist groups."⁵

- The family of John P. O'Neill, Sr., the former FBI counterterrorism chief who perished at the World Trade Center, named CAIR in a lawsuit as having "been part of the criminal conspiracy of radical Islamic terrorism" responsible for the September 11 atrocities.

- Steven Emerson, citing federal law enforcement sources and internal documents called CAIR "a radical fundamentalist front group for Hamas."⁶

Of particular note are the American Muslims who reject CAIR's claim to speak on their behalf.

- The late Seifeldin Ashmawy, publisher of the New Jersey-based *Voice of Peace*: CAIR is the champion of "extremists whose views do not represent Islam."⁷

- Tashbih Sayyed, Council for Democracy and Tolerance: CAIR is "the most accomplished fifth column" in the United States.

- Jamal Hasan, Council for Democracy and Tolerance: CAIR's goal is to spread "Islamic hegemony the world over by hook or by crook."⁸

- Kamal Nawash, Free Muslim Coalition Against Terrorism: CAIR and similar groups "condemn terrorism on the surface while endorsing an ideology that helps foster extremism," adding that "almost all of their members are theocratic Muslims who reject secularism and want to establish Islamic states."



Ibrahim Hooper, CAIR's highly visible National Communications Director, was employed by a front for the violent Palestinian group, Hamas.

- Stephen Schwartz, Center on Islamic Pluralism: "CAIR should be considered a foreign-based subversive organization, comparable in the Islamist field to the Soviet-controlled Communist Party, USA."

To sort out the contradiction between CAIR's presentation of itself and how others increasingly see it, we offer a close look at the organization.

Terrorists in Its Midst

No less than five of CAIR's employees and board members have been arrested, convicted, deported or otherwise linked to terrorism-related charges and activities.

Randall ("Ismail") Royer, an American convert to Islam, served as CAIR's communications specialist and civil rights coordinator; today he sits in jail on terrorism-related charges.

In June 2003, Royer and ten other young men, ages 23 to 35, known as the "Virginia jihad group," were indicted on forty-one counts of "conspiracy to train for and participate in a violent jihad overseas." The defendants, nine of them U.S. citizens, were accused of association with Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), a radical Islamic group designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the U.S. Department of State in 2001. After four of the eleven defendants pleaded guilty, the seven remaining ones, including Royer, were accused in a new, 32-count indictment of far more serious charges: conspiring to help Al-Qaeda and the Taliban to battle American troops in Afghanistan.

The group met covertly in private homes and at the Islamic Center in Falls Church, where its members prepared themselves for battle by listening to lectures and watching videotapes. As the prosecutor noted, "Ten miles from Capitol Hill in the streets of northern Virginia, American citizens allegedly met, plotted and recruited for violent jihad." According to Matthew Epstein of the Investigative Project, when Royer was working for CAIR in late 2000, he and another defendant recruited the others to the jihad effort. The group trained at firing ranges in Virginia and Pennsylvania; in addition, it practiced "small-unit military tactics" at a paintball war-games facility in Virginia, earning it the moniker the "paintball jihadis." Eventually members of the group traveled to Pakistan.

Five of the men indicted, including CAIR's Royer, were found to have had in their possession, according to the indictment, "AK-47-style rifles, telescopic lenses, hundreds of rounds of ammunition and tracer rounds, documents on undertaking jihad and martyrdom, [and] a copy of the terrorist handbook containing instructions on how to manufacture and use explosives and chemicals as weapons."

Royer admitted in his grand jury testimony that he had already waged jihad in Bosnia under a commander acting on orders from Osama bin Laden. Prosecutors also presented evidence that his father, Ramon Royer, had rented a room in his St. Louis-area home in 2000 to Ziyad Khaleel, the student who purchased the satellite phone used by Al-Qaeda in planning the two U.S. embassy bombings in East Africa in August 1998. Royer eventually pleaded guilty to lesser firearms-related charges and the former CAIR staffer was sentenced to twenty years in prison.

A coda to the "Virginia jihad network" came in February 2005, when another Virginia man, Ahmed Omar Abu Ali, was charged of plotting to kill President George W. Bush. Federal prosecutors alleged that Abu Ali had participated in the Virginia jihad network's paintball games and perhaps supplied one of his fellow jihadists with an assault rifle. Royer's possible role in this development is yet unclear.

CAIR chairman Omar Ahmad reportedly told a crowd of California Muslims, "Islam isn't in America to be equal to any other faith, but to become dominant. The Koran...should be the highest authority in America."

Ghassan Elashi, the founder of CAIR's Texas chapter, has a long history of funding terrorism. First, he was convicted in July 2004 with his four brothers of having illegally shipped computers from their Dallas-area business, InfoCom Corporation, to Libya and Syria, both designated state sponsors of terrorism.

Second, he and two brothers were convicted in April 2005 of knowingly doing business with Mousa Abu Marzook, a senior Hamas leader, whom the U.S. State Department had in 1995 declared a Specially Designated Terrorist. Ghassan this time was convicted of all twenty-one counts with which he was charged, including conspiracy, money laundering and dealing in the property of a designated terrorist; a third brother was convicted of only some charges.

Third, Elashi was charged in July 27, 2004 with providing more than \$12.4 million to Hamas while he was running the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Devel-

opment, America's largest Islamic charity. When HLF was shuttered by the U.S. government in late 2001, CAIR unsurprisingly characterized this move as "unjust" and "disturbing."

Bassem Khafagi, CAIR's community relations director. This Egyptian native pleaded guilty in September 2003 to lying on his visa application and passing bad checks for substantial amounts in early 2001, for which he was deported. CAIR claimed Khafagi was hired only after he had committed his crimes and that the organization was unaware of his wrongdoing. But that is unconvincing, for a cursory background check reveals that Khafagi was a founding member and president of the Islamic Assembly of North America (IANA), an organization under investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice for terrorism-related activities. CAIR could have even asked one of its Michigan chapter members, Homam Albaroudi, about Khafagi; according to a CAIR complaint filed in July 2003, Albaroudi

was another founding member of the IANA and its executive director until 1997.

CAIR surely knew that the IANA under Khafagi was in the business of (as prosecutors stated in Idaho court papers) disseminating "radical Islamic ideology, the purpose of which was indoctrination, recruitment of members and the instigation of acts of violence and terrorism." For example, IANA websites promoted the views of two Saudi preachers, Salman al-Awdah and Safar al-Hawali, well known in Islamist circles for having been spiritual advisors to Osama bin Laden. Under Khafagi's leadership, Epstein has testified, IANA hosted a conference at which a senior Al-Qaeda recruiter, Abdelrahman al-Dosari, was a speaker. IANA disseminated publications advocating suicide attacks against the United States, the Associated Press informs us.

Also, Khafagi was until 1998 co-owner of a Sir Speedy printing franchise with Rafil Dhafir,⁹ a former vice president of IANA and

a Syracuse-area oncologist convicted in February 2005 of illegally sending money to Iraq (as well as defrauding donors by using contributions to his “Help the Needy” charitable fund to avoid taxes and to purchase personal assets for himself). Dhafir is scheduled to be sentenced in August 2005; he faces up to 598 years in prison and fines of over \$20 million.

Rabih Haddad, a CAIR fundraiser, was arrested on terrorism-related charges and deported from the United States due to his

they clicked on their post-September 11 weblink, “Donate to the NY/DC Disaster Relief Fund.”

Secondly, CAIR was founded by two individuals, Omar Ahmad and Nihad Awad, who had been, respectively, the president and public relations director of the Islamic Association of Palestine (IAP). IAP was founded by Abu Marzook, the senior Hamas operative, according to Epstein. IAP functioned as Hamas’ public relations and recruitment arm in the United States. Ibrahim

“I wouldn’t want to create the impression that I wouldn’t like the government of the United States to be Islamic sometime in the future.” —Ibrahim Hooper

subsequent work as executive director of the Global Relief Foundation, a charity he co-founded¹⁰ which was designated by the U.S. Treasury Department in October 2002 for financing Al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations. According to a CAIR complaint, Albaroudi of its Michigan chapter was also a founder of the Free Rabih Haddad Committee.

Siraj Wahhaj, a CAIR advisory board member, was named in 1995 by U.S. Attorney Mary Jo White as a possible unindicted co-conspirator in the plot to blow up New York City landmarks led by the blind sheikh, Omar Abdul Rahman. In defense of having Wahhaj on its advisory board, CAIR described him as “one of the most respected Muslim leaders in America.” In October 2004, he spoke at a CAIR dinner.

This roster of employees and board members connected to terrorism makes one wonder how CAIR remains an acceptable guest at government events—and even more so, how it is permitted to conduct seminars for American law enforcement agencies.

Links to Hamas

Beside the Elashi connection, CAIR has other links to the terror organization Hamas.

First, the Holy Land Foundation, which has been charged with funneling millions of dollars to Hamas, gave CAIR its initial funding back in 1994. In the other direction, according to Joe Kaufman, CAIR sent potential donors to HLF’s website when

Hooper, CAIR’s director of communications, was also an employee of IAP. And according to Steve Emerson, IAP president Rafeeq Jabar was a founding director of CAIR.

Third, a couple of CAIR founders, Ahmad and Elashi, attended an important Philadelphia meeting in 1993. An FBI memo addressed to the Department of the Treasury, and cited in Mideast expert Matthew Levitt’s testimony before the U.S. Senate subcommittee on terrorism, characterizes this meeting as a planning session for Hamas, the Holy Land Foundation and IAP to find ways to disrupt Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy and raise money for Hamas in the United States.

Fourth, Awad publicly declared his enthusiasm for Hamas at Barry University in Florida in 1994: “I’m in support of Hamas movement more than the PLO.” As an attorney pointed out in the course of deposing Awad for a terrorism financing case, he asserted that he supported Hamas while acknowledging an awareness of its involvement in violence.¹¹

The Philadelphia meeting was deemed such strong proof of IAP’s relation to Hamas that a federal judge in Chicago in December 2004 ruled IAP liable for \$156 million in damages—along with the Holy Land Foundation, and Mohammad Salah, an Hamas operative¹²—for having aided and abetted Hamas’ murder of David Boim, a 17-year-old American citizen killed as he waited for a bus in Jerusalem.

Impeding Counter-Terrorism

A class-action lawsuit brought by the estate of the John P. O’Neill, Sr. charges CAIR and its Canadian branch of being, since their inception, “part of the criminal conspiracy of radical Islamic terrorism” with a unique role in the terrorist network:

both organizations have actively sought to hamper governmental anti-terrorism efforts by direct propaganda activities aimed at police, first-responders, and intelligence agencies through so-called sensitivity training. Their goal is to create as much self-doubt, hesitation, fear of name-calling, and litigation within police departments and intelligence agencies as possible so as to render such authorities ineffective in pursuing international and domestic terrorist entities.

It would be hard to improve on this characterization; under the guise of participating in counterterrorism, CAIR actually does its best to impede these efforts. This approach can be seen from several of its statements.

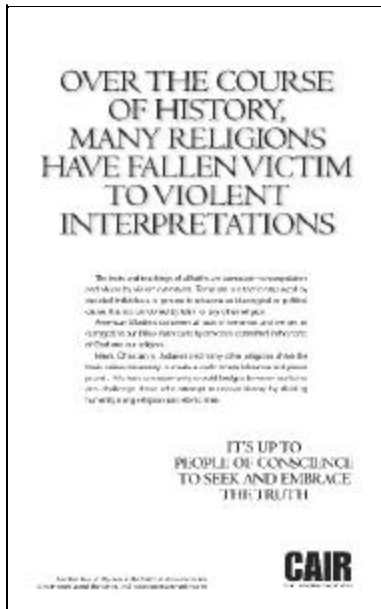
CAIR encourages law enforcement in its work—so long as it does not involve counterterrorism. Wissam Nasr, the head of CAIR’s New York office, explains: “The Muslim community in New York wants to play a positive role in protecting our nation’s security, but that role is made more difficult if the FBI is perceived as pursuing suspects much more actively than it is searching for community partners.” Nasr would have the FBI get out of the unpleasant business of “pursuing suspects” and instead devote itself to building social good will—through CAIR, naturally. Likewise, on the eve of the U.S. war with Iraq in March 2003, CAIR distributed a “Muslim community safety kit” that advised Muslims to “Know your rights if contacted by the FBI.” It tells them specifically, “You have no obligation to talk to the FBI, even if you are not a citizen. ... You do not have to permit them to enter your home. ... ALWAYS have an attorney present when answering questions.”

On the other hand, when it comes to protecting Muslims, CAIR wants an active FBI. The same “Muslim community safety kit” advised: “If you believe you have been

the victim of an anti-Muslim hate crime or discrimination, you should: 1. Report the incident to your local police station and FBI office IMMEDIATELY.”

Apologizing for Islamist Terrorism

CAIR has consistently shown itself to be on the wrong side of the war on terrorism, protecting, defending and supporting both accused and even convicted radical Islamic terrorists.



A CAIR newspaper ad argues that Islam is opposed to violence and terrorism

In October 1998—months after Osama bin Laden had issued his first declaration of war against the United States and had been named as the chief suspect in the bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa—CAIR demanded the removal of a Los Angeles billboard describing Osama bin Laden as “the sworn enemy,” finding this depiction “offensive to Muslims.” CAIR also leapt to bin Laden’s defense, denying his responsibility for the twin East African embassy bombings. CAIR’s Hooper saw these explosions resulting from “misunderstandings of both sides.”¹³ Even after the September 11 atrocity, CAIR continued to protect bin Laden, stating only that “if [note the “if”] Osama bin Laden was behind it, we condemn him by name.” Not until in December 2001, when bin Laden on videotape boasted of his involvement in the attack, did CAIR acknowledge his role.

CAIR has also consistently defended other radical Islamic terrorists. Rather than praise the conviction of the perpetrators of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, it deemed this “a travesty of justice.”¹⁴ The extradition order for suspected Hamas terrorist Mousa Abu Marook it labeled “anti-Islamic” and “anti-American.”¹⁵ CAIR has co-sponsored Yvonne Ridley, the British convert to Islam who became a Taliban enthusiast and al-Qaeda-denier. When four U.S. civilian contractors in Falluja were (in CAIR’s words) “ambushed in their SUV’s, burned, mutilated, dragged through the streets and then hung from a bridge spanning the Euphrates River,” CAIR issued a press release that condemned the mutilation of the corpses but stayed conspicuously silent on the killings themselves.

During the 2005 trial of Sami Al-Arian, accused of heading Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the United States, Ahmed Bedier of CAIR’s Florida branch emerged as Al-Arian’s effective spokesman, providing sound bytes to the media, trying to get his trial moved out of Tampa, commenting on the jury selection, and so on.

More broadly, TheReligionofPeace.com website points out that “From 9/11/01 to 7/12/05 there have been more than 2,587

Abusing the Legal System

The O’Neill complaint goes on to state that CAIR and CAIR-Canada “manipulate the legal systems of the United States and Canada in a manner that allows them to silence critics, analysts, commentators, media organizations, and government officials by leveling false charges of discrimination, libel, slander and defamation.” A number of examples demonstrate how this tactic works:

- A libel action against Shawn Steel and the *National Review* brought by the executive director of CAIR’s Los Angeles office concerned a mistake in an article that was promptly retracted.
- A libel action against Andrew Whitehead, a founder of Anti-CAIR (www.Anti-CAIR-net.org), sought \$1.35 million in compensatory damages for five anti-CAIR statements charging CAIR with connections to terrorism.
- A \$2 million defamation lawsuit against U.S. Rep. Cass Ballenger (R., NC) for calling CAIR “the fund-raising arm for Hezbollah” and suggesting that it might try to blow up the Capitol Building.

In October 1998 CAIR demanded the removal of a Los Angeles billboard describing Osama bin Laden as “the sworn enemy,” finding this depiction “offensive to Muslims.”

major Islamic terrorist attacks involving loss of life noted on this site. By our count, the number of attacks that CAIR has acknowledged and condemned is 6.”

Finally, CAIR discourages Americans from improving its counterterrorism efforts. Deedra Abboud, CAIR’s Arizona director, approves of police learning the Arabic language if that lowers the chances of cultural and linguistic misunderstandings. “However, if they’re learning it in order to better fight terrorism, that concerns me. Only because that assumes that the only fighting we have to do is among Arabic speakers. That’s not a long-term strategy.”

- A libel notice served on writer David Frum and the *National Post* of Canada for referring to CAIR as “an unscrupulous, Islamist, extremist sympathetic group in Canada supporting terrorism.”
- A libel action brought against radio station CFRA and David Harris by CAIR-Canada, because Harris—a former Canadian Security and Intelligence Service agent—had discussed on a radio program allegations that linked CAIR-Canada to terrorism.¹⁶

CAIR inaccurately claims to be “America’s largest civil rights group.” Not only is it not the largest, but aggressive legal encroachments make it more like a civil wrongs group than a civil rights group.

Other Forms of Intimidation

Besides legal actions, CAIR closes down public debate about itself and Islam in other ways. It has resorted to financial pressure in an effort to silence critics. One such case concerns ABC radio personality Paul Harvey, who on Dec. 4, 2003 described the vicious nature of cock fighting in Iraq, then commented: “Add to the [Iraqi] thirst for blood, a religion which encourages killing, and it is entirely understandable if Americans

came to this bloody party unprepared.” CAIR responded a day later with a demand for “an on-air apology.” CAIR then issued a call to its supporters to contact Harvey’s advertising sponsors to press them to pull their ads “until Harvey responds to Muslim concerns.” Not surprisingly, Harvey quickly and publicly retracted his remarks.

Another case of financial intimidation took place in March 2005, when CAIR campaigned to have *National Review* remove two books—Serge Trifkovic’s *The Sword of the Prophet* and J.L. Menezes’ *The Life and Religion of Mohammed*—as well as the positive reviews of those books, from its on-line bookstore. CAIR claimed the

books defame Islam and the Prophet Muhammad. When it did not get immediate satisfaction from *National Review*, it instructed its partisans to pressure the Boeing Corporation to withdraw its advertisements from the magazine. *National Review* briefly took down both books but then quickly reposted the one by Trifkovic. Trifkovic himself argued that CAIR’s success here “will only whet Islamist appetites and encourage their hope that the end-result will be a crescent on the Capitol a generation or two from now.”

CAIR resorted to another form of intimidation versus Florida radio show host and Baptist pastor Mike Frazier. Frazier had criticized local and state officials in September 2004 for attending a CAIR awards dinner because, as he put it, “If these people would have bothered to check CAIR out beforehand they would have seen that it is a radical group.” He termed what followed “absolutely unbelievable.” Within a month, he says, he received six death threats and 47 threatening phone calls, was accosted by strangers, was labeled an “extremist” and a “fundamentalist zealot” and accused of “propagating fear, terror and disunity” by the *St. Petersburg Times*. Several members of his church fled his congregation because, according to Frazier, “they were afraid.”

Other CAIR targets of intimidation have included the Simon Wiesenthal Center for juxtaposing a picture of the Ayatollah Khomeini next to Adolf Hitler, and the *Reader’s Digest* for an article, “The Global War on Christians,” which CAIR found “smears Islam” by citing well-documented cases of Christian persecution. CAIR’s Nihad Awad faulted the *Reader’s Digest* for leaving the impression that “Islam somehow encourages or permits rape, kidnapping, torture, and forced conversion.”

In December 2003, CAIR ruined the career of an army officer and nurse, Captain Edwina McCall, who had treated American soldiers wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan, but ended up resigning under a cloud of suspicion. Her crime? Using her military e-mail address on an internet discussion board concerning the Islamist agenda. CAIR sent the comments to the Secretary of Defense, calling attention to her allegedly “bigoted anti-Muslim comments” and demanding that her “extremist and Islamophobic views” be investigated and then followed by “appro-

The Politics of Peace

What’s Behind the Anti-War Movement?

By John J. Tierney

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appropriate action.” The Army immediately cast the officer under suspicion, leading her to resign from a career she had loved.

At times, CAIR inspires its attack dogs to make threats and sits back when they follow through. After Daniel Pipes published an article in July 1999 explaining the difference between moderate and radical Islam, CAIR launched fifteen separate attacks on him in the space of two months, attacks widely reprinted in Muslim publications. Dozens of letters followed to the newspapers that carried Pipes’ articles, some calling him harsh names (“bigot and racist”), others

Durán’s book “spreads anti-Muslim propaganda” through its “distortions of Islamic concepts.” A weekly in Jordan reported that ‘Abd al-Mun’im Abu Zant—one of that country’s most powerful Islamist leaders—had declared that Durán “should be regarded as an apostate,” and on this basis called for an Islamic ruling to condone Durán’s death. Days later, Durán’s car was broken into, and a dead squirrel and excrement were thrown inside. CAIR, far from apologizing for the evil results of its handiwork, accused the American Jewish Committee of fabricating the death edict as a “cheap publicity stunt to boost book sales.”

W. Baker, someone exposed in 2002 as a neo-Nazi. Since then, CAIR has invited Baker to speak at several of its events, for example in Florida on August 12, 2003 and New Jersey on Oct. 18, 2003. CAIR liked Baker’s work so much, it used the title of his book, “More in Common Than You Think,” in one of its ad campaigns published in five California community newspapers in March 2004 and then again as the title of an Elderhostel lecture.

Was it these hostings of William W. Baker that prompted the American Civil Liberties Union’s Ohio branch to select CAIR’s Ohio chapter to receive of its annual “Liberty’s Flame Award” for what it termed “contributions to the advancement and protection of civil liberties”? One can only speculate.

On the other side of the spectrum, CAIR enjoys extensive ties to far-left groups. Its “Interfaith Coalition against Hate Crimes” received funding from the Tides Foundation. CAIR endorsed a statement issued by Refuse & Resist, condemning detentions of terrorism suspects on immigration-related charges. Its New York chapter endorsed a “National Day of Protest ... to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation.”

CAIR supported the “Civil Liberties Restoration Act,” legislation drafted by Open Society Policy Center, an organization founded by George Soros. Introduced by Democratic Senators Ted Kennedy, Patrick Leahy, Russell Feingold, Richard Durbin and Jon Corzine, and Democratic Representatives Howard Berman and William Delahunt, the legislation, if enacted, will obstruct U.S. law enforcement from prosecuting the “War on Terrorism.” Far-left members of Congress such as Dennis Kucinich (D., OH) and Jim McDermott (D., WA) have turned up as featured speakers at CAIR fundraising events.

Foreign Funding

CAIR’s website explicitly denies that CAIR receives support from foreign sources: “We do not support directly or indirectly, or receive support from, any overseas group or government.” Ibrahim Hooper personally reinforced this stance in November 2001: “We do not support directly or indirectly or receive support from any overseas group or government.” However often repeated,

In December 2003, CAIR ruined the career of an army officer and nurse, Captain Edwina McCall, who had treated U. S. soldiers in Iraq. Her crime? Commenting via the Internet on the Islamist agenda.

comparing him to the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazis, or characterizing his writings as an “atrocious” filled with “pure poison” and “outright lies.” More alarmingly, the letter-writers accused the author of perpetrating a hate crime against Muslims or of promoting and abetting such crimes. One threatened: “Is Pipes ready to answer the Creator for his hatred or is he a secular humanist...? He will soon find out.”

CAIR metes out even worse treatment to Muslim opponents, as the case of Khalid Durán shows. Durán taught at leading universities and wrote about Islam for think tanks; he was commissioned by the American Jewish Committee to write *Children of Abraham: An Introduction to Islam for Jews*. Fourteen scholars of Islam endorsed the manuscript prior to publication; it won glowing reviews from such authoritative figures as Cardinal William Keeler of Baltimore, the eminent church historian Martin Marty and Prince Hassan of Jordan. Then, before the book was even released, CAIR issued two press releases insulting Durán personally and demanding that the *Children of Abraham* be withheld until a group of CAIR-approved academics could review the book to correct what it assumed (without having read the manuscript) would be its “stereotypical or inaccurate content.” Islamist publications quickly picked up CAIR’s message, with Cairo’s *Al-Wafd* newspaper announcing that

Ties to Extremists

The Council on American-Islamic Relations has distinct affinities to extremists of both the left and right, sharing features with both.

Its neo-Nazi side came out most clearly in CAIR’s early years. In 1996, according to testimony by Steven Emerson, Yusuf Islam—the Muslim convert formerly known as the singer Cat Stevens—gave a keynote speech at a CAIR event. The contents of the speech itself are not known but Islam wrote a pamphlet published by the IAP (which is connected to CAIR) which included these sentences:

The Jews seem neither to respect God nor his Creation. Their own holy books contain the curse of God brought upon them by their prophets on account of their disobedience to Him and mischief in the earth. We have seen the disrespect for religion displayed by those who consider themselves to be “God’s Chosen People.”

In 1998, CAIR co-hosted an event at which an Egyptian Islamist leader, Wagdi Ghunaym, declared Jews to be the “descendants of the apes.”¹⁷

CAIR continues to expose its fascist side by its repeated activities with William

this denial is flatly not true, for CAIR has accepted foreign funding, and from many sources.

A press release from the Saudi Arabian embassy in Washington indicates that in August 1999, the Islamic Development Bank—a bank headquartered in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia—gave CAIR \$250,000 to purchase land for its Washington, D.C. headquarters. (It bears noting that, among its other activities, the IDB has handled hundreds of millions of dollars as the fund manager of the Al-Quds and the Al-Aqsa Funds, established by twelve Arab countries in order to fund the Palestinian *intifada* and provide financial support to the families of Palestinian “martyrs.”)

According to records made public by Paul Sperry, CAIR purchased its national headquarters in 1999 through an unusual lease-purchase transaction with the United Bank of Kuwait. The bank was the deed holder and leased the building to CAIR; yet despite not owning the building, CAIR recorded the property on its balance sheet as a property asset valued at \$2.6 million. This arrangement changed in September 2002 when CAIR bought out the Kuwaiti bank with funds provided, at least in part, by Al-Maktoum Foundation, based in Dubai and headed by Dubai’s crown prince and defense minister, Gen. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum. The markings on the deed indicate that the foundation provided “purchase money to the extent of \$978,031.34” to CAIR, or roughly one-third the value of the property. One only wonders what a more complete investigation of its real estate transactions would turn up.

The UAE, as Sperry notes,¹⁸ makes for one interesting source of funds.

- During the Taliban’s years in power, it was one of only three states to formally recognize the regime in Kabul.
- UAE banks were used to finance the 9/11 plot and two of the 9/11 hijackers were Emirates nationals.
- Bin Laden is believed to have received treatment for his kidney disease at a Dubai hospital while on the lam.

• Two weeks after 9/11, the UAE crown prince warned Washington not to strike “innocent” Muslims in Afghanistan, but instead focus on “Israeli terrorism.”

In December 1999, the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), an organization benefiting from Saudi patronage,¹⁹ announced at a press conference in Saudi Arabia that it “was extending both moral and financial support to CAIR”²⁰ to help it construct its \$3.5 million headquarters in Washington, D.C. WAMY also agreed to “introduce CAIR to Saudi philanthropists and recommend their financial support for the headquarters project.” In 2002, CAIR and WAMY announced, again from Saudi Arabia, their cooperation on a \$1 million public relations campaign. The *Saudi Gazette*, which reported the story, said that CAIR’s leader, Nihad Awad, “had already met leading Saudi businessmen” in order to “brief them about the projects and raise funds.”



Nihad Awad, CAIR Executive Director and co-founder, was public relations director of the Islamic Association of Palestine, a front group for Hamas.



CAIR chairman Parvez Ahmed: Afghan constitution superior to America’s?

Later that week on the same fundraising trip through the Middle East, CAIR reportedly received \$500,000 from Saudi Prince Al Waleed bin Talal, reputed to be one of the world’s richest men. Al-Waleed also, in May 2005, stated that he is “more than prepared” to work with organizations such as CAIR, “and to provide needed support” to them.

CAIR has received at least \$12,000 from the International Relief Organization (also

called the International Islamic Relief Organization, or IIRO), which itself was the recipient of some \$10 million from its parent organization in Saudi Arabia. Not only is the IRO a Saudi-financed organization: a January 2004 letter from the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance indicates that the IRO/IIRO is being investigated in a terror-financing probe. Further, a Senate Finance Committee investigator told Sperry that the investigation into would eventually expand to include CAIR because of the funds it received from the IRO.²¹

The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) gave CAIR’s Washington office \$14,000 in 2003. According to a court-filed affidavit, David Kane determined that IIIT receives donations from overseas via its related entities. It also bears noting that IIIT is being looked at by law enforcement in connection with Operation Green Quest, the major investigation into the activities or individuals and organizations believed to be “ardent supporters” of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas and Al-Qaeda. CAIR, not surprisingly, has weighed in on the probe of its donor, telling the *Financial Times* of London that the investigation is an attack on “respected Islamic institutions” that contradicts President Bush’s “repeated assertions that the war against terrorism is not a conflict with Islam.”²²

Despite these many foreign sources, CAIR still claims to receive no funds from outside the United States.

Integral Part of the Wahhabi Lobby

CAIR is a key component of the “Wahhabi lobby”—the myriad of organizations, usually supported by donations from Saudi Arabia, whose aim is to propagate the especially austere version of Islam practiced in Saudi Arabia that the kingdom has actively been promoting for years using its wealth of petrodollars.

For one, the group sends money to other parts of the lobby. According to CAIR’s Form 990 filings for 2003, its California offices invested \$325,000 with the North American Islamic Trust. NAIT was set up in 1971 by the Muslim Student Association of the U.S. and Canada, which bills itself as the precursor to the ISNA, now the largest member of the Wahhabi lobby. According to *Newsweek*, authorities say that over the

years “NAIT money has helped the Saudi Arabian sect of Wahhabism—or Salafism, as the broader, Pan-Islamic movement is called—to seize control of hundreds of mosques in U.S. Muslim communities.” J. Michael Waller, a terrorism expert, testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee that NAIT is believed to own 50 to 79 percent of the mosques in North America. It was raided as part of Operation Green Quest in 2002, on suspicions of involvement in terrorist financing.

CAIR affiliates regularly speak at events sponsored by the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), an umbrella organization of the Wahhabi lobby. Nabil Sadoun, a director of CAIR-DC, spoke at ISNA’s regional conference in 2003. Ayloush and Fouad Khatib, CAIR-California chairman, spoke at an ISNA-sponsored event. Safaa Zarzour, president of CAIR-Chicago, was also an ISNA speaker, as was Azhar Azeez, a board member of CAIR-Dallas, who has spoken at several ISNA conferences. In January 2004, the Senate Finance Committee asked the IRS for its records on the ISNA and some two-dozen other “Muslim charities and organizations as part of an investigation into possible links between nongovernmental organizations and terrorist financing networks.”

In January 2003, the Saudi newspaper *Ar-Riyadh* reported that Nihad Awad appeared on a panel along with ‘Aqil ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-‘Aqil, secretary-general of the Saudi charity Al Haramain Foundation—despite that organization’s well-known ties to terrorism and the fact that already in March 2002, long before Awad’s visit with Al Haramain, the U.S. and Saudi governments had jointly designated eleven of its branches “financial supporter[s] of terrorism.” (The U.S.-based branch of the organization was subsequently so designated in September 2004.)

To fully appreciate what it means that more than half of U.S. mosques are promoting Saudi Islam, we refer to the Freedom House report, “Saudi Publications on Hate Ideology Invade American Mosques.” It explains that Saudi documents disseminated at U.S. mosques are telling America’s Muslims that it is a religious obligation for them to hate Christians and Jews and warning that Muslims should not have

Christians and Jews as friends, nor should they help them. The Freedom House report indicates that Saudi publications disseminated by American mosques:

- say it is lawful for Muslims to physically harm and steal from adulterers and homosexuals;
- condemn interpretations of Islam other than the strict “Wahhabi” version preached in Saudi Arabia;
- advocate the killing of those who convert out of Islam;
- assert that it is a Muslim’s duty to eliminate the State of Israel; and
- promote the idea that women should be segregated and veiled and, of course, barred from some employment and activities.

But not to worry; CAIR’s spokesman, Ibrahim Hooper, tells us, “The majority of the stuff they picked is in Arabic, a language that most people in mosques don’t read.”²³

That CAIR has recorded at least \$3.1 million on its year-end combined balance sheets since 2001, combined with its minimal grant-making (\$27,525 was the total that all CAIR chapters granted in 2003), suggests that CAIR is building an endowment and planning for the long term.

Muslim Supremacism

To gather some idea of what CAIR’s long-term agenda could possibly look like, it helps to look at materials the Saudis distribute at American mosques. As revealed by Freedom House, these instruct Muslims living in America that they are in enemy territory; the only justification for living in the United States is to acquire the skills or money for an eventual jihad against the infidels or to convert them.²⁴ For example, in a text published by the Saudi International Islamic Publishing House and found in the Al-Farouq Mosque in Houston, Texas, Muslims are told to “form a society that is committed to the Islamic way of thinking and Islamic way of life, which means to form a government that implements principles of justice embodied in the shari’a.... Until the nations of the world have functionally Islamic governments, every individual who is careless or lazy in working for Islam is sinful.”²⁵

CAIR’s chairman, Omar Ahmad, echoed these Wahhabi views in July 1998 when he reportedly told a crowd of California Muslims, “Islam isn’t in America to be equal to any other faith, but to become dominant. The Koran...should be the highest authority in America, and Islam the only accepted religion on earth.” Five years later Ahmad denied having said this and issued a press release saying he was seeking a retraction.²⁶ But the reporter stood behind her story and the newspaper that reported Ahmad’s remarks told WorldNetDaily it had “not been contacted by CAIR.”

Ibrahim Hooper on occasion lets slip his real goals for CAIR and the United States. In 1993, he told a reporter: “I wouldn’t want to create the impression that I wouldn’t like the government of the United States to be Islamic sometime in the future.”²⁷ On the Michael Medved radio show in 2003, he made the same point more positively: if Muslims ever become a majority in the United States, it would be safe to assume that they would want to replace the U.S. Constitution with Islamic law, as most Muslims believe that God’s law is superior to man-made law.²⁸ Along similar lines, Ihsan Bagby of CAIR’s Washington office has said that Muslims “can never be full citizens of this country,” referring to the United States, “because there is no way we can be fully committed to the institutions and ideologies of this country.”

Other CAIR personnel express their contempt for the United States, comparing it to Saddam Hussein or disdaining its Constitution. Hussam Ayloush, executive director of CAIR’s Southern California

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Terrence Scanlon, President

chapter, said that the war on terror has become a “war on Muslims” with the U.S. government the “new Saddam.” He concluded: “So let’s end this hypocrisy, this hypocrisy that we are better than the other dictator.” Parvez Ahmed, now CAIR’s chairman, touted the virtues of Islamic democracy in 2004, portraying the Afghan constitutional process as superior to the American:

The new Afghan constitution shows that the constitution of a Muslim nation can be democratic and yet not contradict the essence of Islam. During my meeting with a high-ranking Afghan delegation during their recent visit to the United States, I was told that the Afghan constitutional convention included Hindu delegates despite Hindus accounting for only 1 percent of the population. Contrast this with our own constitutional convention that excluded women and blacks.²⁹

Deceit

Even apart from its egregious efforts on behalf of Muslim extremism, CAIR has established a long record of unreliability and deceit even in relatively minor matters. Yet it continues to gain the respectful attention of uncritical media outlets.

In May 2005, CAIR published its annual report on the violations of Muslim civil rights in America which purported to document a significant rise in the number of hate crimes directed at Muslims. According to the report, “anti-Muslim hate crimes in the United States” have gone up dramatically: from 42 cases in 2002, to 93 cases in 2003, to 141 in 2004. The mainstream media dutifully recycled CAIR’s press release (for example, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*), effectively endorsing this study by reporting it as a serious piece of research. But closer inspection shows that of twenty “anti-Muslim hate crimes” for which CAIR gives information, at least six are invalid.

David Skinner points out a further problem with the 2004 report: its credulity in reporting any incident, no matter how trivial, subjective or unsubstantiated. One anecdote concerns a Muslim college student who encountered “flyers and posters with

false and degrading statements about the Qur’an and the prophet Muhammad”; another concerns a student at Roger Williams in Rhode Island who wrote that “a true Muslim is taught to slay infidels.” Also, any reluctance to accommodate Muslim women wearing a headscarf or veil was tallied as a bias incident, even in the case of genuine quandaries (such as veiled athletes or drivers applying for their licenses). Then there is this unique item, listed as a bias incident: “A Muslim woman shopping in a Brooklyn toy store was assaulted by a man who slurred Arabs and flung a Mr. Potato Head at her, police said yesterday. The suspect’s father later said his son apparently acted out of grief because a friend in Israel had been killed by a suicide bomber in Israel.”



CAIR co-founder Omar Ahmad:
“The Koran...should be the highest authority in America.”

Nor is this the first unreliable CAIR study. Referring to the 1996 version, Steven Emerson noted in congressional testimony that “a large proportion of the complaints have been found to be fabricated, manufactured, distorted or outside standard definitions of hate crimes.” Jorge Martinez of the U.S. Department of Justice dismissed CAIR’s 2003 report, *Guilt by Association*, as “unfair criticism based on a lot of misinformation and propaganda.”

CAIR’s manipulative habits assert themselves even in petty ways. For example, CAIR is not above conducting straw polls in an effort to forward its political agenda, and may even be willing to exaggerate its own outreach efforts. This seems to be the case in CAIR’s library project, where it claims to have sent thousands of packages of books and tapes to American libraries. An inquiry turned up the curious fact that while CAIR claimed the District of Columbia had received 37 such packages, records showed only one such copy being recorded. Maybe the mailmen lost the remaining 36?

The Media’s Failure

Despite its endless infractions and aggressions, the Council on American-Islamic Relations generally wins a pass from news organizations. Erick Stakelbeck documents how the mainstream media treat CAIR respectfully, as a legitimate organization, not choosing to raise the less salutary topics explored here. At the least, one might expect that the connection to terrorism of five persons in CAIR’s purview would stimulate media investigations, but apparently not. Instead, newspapers dutifully quote CAIR’s statistics, publish its theological views, report its opinions, rehash its press releases and generally dignify its existence as a routine part of the American and Canadian political scenes. Cable TV regularly features its spokesmen.

A telling example of media negligence in investigating CAIR occurred when Ghassan Elashi—a founding board member of CAIR’s Texas chapter—was indicted and convicted of supporting terrorism by sending money to the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas and to one of its leaders, Mousa Abu Marzook. Not a single mainstream media source mentioned Elashi’s CAIR connection. Worse, the media went to CAIR and quoted it on Elashi’s arrest, without noting their connection³⁰—as though CAIR were an unbiased source of opinion on its own board member.

The Washington Post seems particularly loath to expose CAIR’s unsavory aspects. For example, on January 20, 2005, it ran a story about the opening of CAIR’s new Virginia office on Grove Street in Herndon. The article not only passed up the opportunity to consider CAIR’s presence in a town notorious for Islamist organizational connections to Al-Qaeda and to the Wahhabi network, but it was also remarkably similar in tone and style to CAIR’s own press release on the same subject. This would have been a perfect lead-in for the *Post* to mention CAIR’s own links to terrorism, but predictably it declined the opportunity. (A later *Washington Post* article did mention that the new CAIR offices are located on the very street where federal agents had conducted a major raid in March 2002.)

There is much else for the press to look into. One example: CAIR-D.C. lists the Zahara Investment Corporation as a “related organization” on its IRS Form 990. Curiously, ZIC was listed as a tax-exempt entity in 2002;

in 2003, it suddenly becomes a nonexempt related-entity. This prompts several questions: How is a tax-exempt like CAIR related to an investment company, much less a corporation? How does an investment corporation become a tax-exempt? And how does it change itself into a non-exempt? The usual databases have nothing on ZIC; one wonders how all this takes place under the radar screen. And why did CAIR-DC invest \$40,000 of the public's money in 1998 in securities that it would have to write off less than three years later? Whose securities were these? An awake media would note such matters and look into them; but the media sleeps undisturbed.

The few exceptions where one can find hard-hitting analyses in the media generally turn up in the conservative press:

- Zev Chafets, "Beware the Wolves Among Us," *New York Daily News*, September 28, 2001.
- Editorial, "CAIR and terrorism," *The Washington Times*, July 24, 2004.
- David Frum, "The Question of CAIR," *National Post*, November 23, 2004.
- Eli Lake, "Me Rethinks A CAIR Event," *The New York Sun*, November 12, 2003.
- Daniel Pipes, "CAIR: 'Moderate' friends of terror," *New York Post*, April 22, 2002.
- Michael Putney, "Pressure May Smother Dialogue," *The Miami Herald*, September 10, 2003.
- Stephen Schwartz, "Not So Holy After All; The Bush administration takes on a Hamas front group," *The Weekly Standard*, December 17, 2001.
- Glenn Sheller, "Muslim Group's Conflict with Discrimination is Uphill Fight," *Columbus Dispatch*, August 31, 2004.

That the mainstream media have given CAIR a free pass, leaving the heavy lifting almost entirely to conservative outlets, is a significant dereliction of duty. And yet, there seem to be no signs of change.

Enemy In The Fold?

When confronted with criticism, CAIR airily brushes it aside, blaming it on "Muslim bashers" and asserting that they "can never point to something CAIR has done it in its 10-year history that is objectionable." By the lights of most Americans, the litany of activities provided here would indeed constitute "something objectionable."

How long will it be until the U.S. government, the mainstream media, educational institutions and others exclude CAIR from their counsels? One wonders: Will it take another catastrophe? **OT**

Daniel Pipes (www.DanielPipes.org) is director of the Middle East Forum. *Sharon Chadha* (sharon.chadha@verizon.net) is the co-author of two forthcoming books on the Middle East.

¹ *Columbus Dispatch* (Ohio), January 1, 2002.

² CAIR News Releases, CAIR-St. Louis Meets with Palestinian Journalists, July 27, 2004 and CAIR biography of Nihad Awad.

³ The IRS offers several choices under the item "Revenues," including direct public support, indirect public support, government contributions (grants), membership dues and assessments, and net income or (loss) from special events or rental properties—the categories in which CAIR has classified its revenues.

⁴ FDCH Political Transcripts, September 10, 2003.

⁵ *The Journal of Counterterrorism & Security International*, Spring 1998.

⁶ Prepared Testimony of Steven Emerson Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Near East and South Asia Re: Terrorism and the Middle East Peace Process, March 19, 1996.

⁷ *The Jerusalem Post*, March 5, 1999.

⁸ Personal communication from Jamal Hasan to Daniel Pipes, July 25, 2003.

⁹ *The Post Standard* (Syracuse, NY), January 23, 2004.

¹⁰ CAIR et al v. Ashcroft and Mueller complaint, p. 13.

¹¹ Deposition of Nihad Awad, October 22, 2003, In the Matter of: Stanley Boim, et al. v. Quranic Literacy Institute, et. al, p. 58.

¹² Mohammad Salah also appears to be the uncle of Abdullah Salah, vice president of CAIR's Chicago chapter.

¹³ 1998-08-21-aol-Hooper.126.

¹⁴ Jake Tapper, "Islam's Flawed Spokesmen," *Salon*, September 26, 2001.

¹⁵ *Newsletter of the Marzuk Legal Fund*, June 1996.

¹⁶ *Western Standard*, August 2, 2004.

¹⁷ *The Journal of Counterterrorism & Security International*, Summer 1998.

¹⁸ Paul Sperry, *Infiltration: How Muslim Spies and Subversives Have Penetrated Washington* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Current, 2005), pp. 256-257.

¹⁹ WAMY's relationship to Saudi Arabia was described this way by its secretary general: "The Kingdom provides us with a supportive environment that allows us to work openly within the society to collect funds and spread activities. It also provides us with protection abroad through Saudi embassies and consulates, in addition to financial support." Middle East Newsfile, WAMY Team in Afghanistan Risks Life to Deliver Aid, November 20, 2001.

²⁰ Middle East Newsfile, WAMY spends SR12m on new mosques, December 23, 1999.

²¹ Paul Sperry, *Infiltration: How Muslim Spies and Subversives Have Penetrated Washington* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Current, 2005), p. 251.

²² *Financial Times* (London), March 28, 2002.

²³ *Dallas Morning News*, February 5, 2005.

²⁴ "Saudi Publications on Hate Ideology Fill American Mosques," Center for Religious Freedom, Freedom House, 2005, p. 40.

²⁵ "Saudi Publications on Hate Ideology Fill American Mosques," Center for Religious Freedom, Freedom House, 2005, p. 58.

²⁶ *National Review*, April 8, 2003.

²⁷ *Star Tribune*, April 4, 1993.

²⁸ Personal communication from Michael Medved, Oct. 21, 2004.

²⁹ *Orlando Sentinel*, February 23, 2004.

³⁰ "4 Indicted in Texas Terror Probe," *The Boston Globe*, December 19, 2002; "5 Brothers Charged With Aiding Hamas," *The New York Times*, December 19, 2002; "Hamas arrests called unfair," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, December 20, 2002; "Aid Sought for 5 suspected of terror ties," Associated Press, February 15, 2003; "Muslim leader criticizes prosecution," United Press International, July 9, 2004; "Muslim leaders blast brothers' convictions," *The Dallas Morning News*, July 10, 2004.

BrieflyNoted

Property owners nationwide are up in arms over the recent 5-4 Supreme Court ruling that the U.S. Constitution allows local governments to take property from a rightful owner and give it to another private party for private gain. Last month's *OT* carried an article on the controversy by attorney **Scott Bullock** of the **Institute for Justice (IJ)**, who represented the property owners in the case (*Kelo v. New London, CT.*) Now IJ has announced the creation of the **Castle Coalition**, a grassroots effort to fight the abuse of eminent domain. The Institute's decision to pursue state-level litigation came just one week after the Supreme Court decided the case. For more information, contact the Institute at its website: www.ij.org.

Among the most enthusiastic defenders of the Court in its *Kelo* ruling was the Democratic House leader, California **Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi**. Well, it turns out that Pelosi has gotten lucrative contributions from **Forest City Enterprises, Inc.**, a real estate development conglomerate which exploits to the hilt "eminent domain" seizures of other people's property. According to information uncovered by blogger **Will Collier**, Forest City is run by **the Ratner family** of Cleveland. Its development projects in Pelosi's home town environs have included large seizures of private property in Oakland and San Francisco. Another prospective project involves a huge tract of land in Brooklyn, New York, to be turned into a condo-shopping-basketball-arena complex; it just so happens that **Bruce Ratner** owns the **New Jersey Nets**. "The Ratners are lobbying the city and state of New York to exercise eminent domain powers to seize properties in Brooklyn for this project," Collier reports.

And the Ratners have plenty of political chips to cash in. People named "Ratner" working for Forest City gave at least \$18,000 to the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee during the 2002 and 2004 cycles. The Ratners also are major contributors to such Democrat *prominenti* as **Hillary Clinton, Charles Schumer, Chris Dodd, Nita Lowey, Tom Daschle, Joe Lieberman** and **John Kerry**. The company hasn't neglected its media ties, either. It has partnered with the *New York Times* to build a new Manhattan headquarters...on a site that was seized especially for the *Times* by New York City. "Small surprise then that the *Times* is (thus far) second only to Nancy Pelosi in cheerleading for the *Kelo* decision," Collier notes wryly. Finally, and not coincidentally, **Michael Ratner**, Bruce's brother, runs the ultra-left **humanrightsnow.org**, is the president of the **George Soros-funded Center for Constitutional Rights** and is one of the major legal players trying to free terrorist prisoners at Guantanamo Bay.

Lee R. Raymond, CEO of **Exxon Mobil**, is an outspoken skeptic of the conventional wisdom that human activity is responsible for "global warming." His company backs oil and gas exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and also supports free market groups like the **Competitive Enterprise Institute**, which challenge alarmist projections about "climate change." Now a coalition of liberal and environmental lobbying groups is retaliating with a national boycott of Exxon Mobil products. According to July 11 *The Washington Post*, the participants in the effort include **U.S. Public Interest Group, Defenders of Wildlife, the Sierra Club, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Union of Concerned Scientists** and **MoveOn.org Political Action**. At a press conference they also announced a new Web site, www.exxposeexxon.com, part of their public relations campaign to brand the nation's biggest oil company, as an "outlaw."

Windmills are eco-friendly, right? Not so fast. The **Center for Biological Diversity** is suing wind farms in California's Altamont Pass because the rotating blades are killing thousands of birds, including bald eagles and endangered raptors. Operators have offered to shut down half their windmills during the winter and eventually replace them with more modern machines, if the Center drops the lawsuit. But the Center refuses, arguing that the operators' plan to reduce bird deaths doesn't go far enough. Instead, the environmentalist group wants 350 machines immediately scrapped...and operators to shell out a whopping \$6.5 million to preserve bird habitats.

