

# **Anti- Terror Lessons of Muslim-Americans**

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# Executive Summary

## PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

In the aftermath of the attacks on September 11, 2001, and subsequent terrorist attacks elsewhere around the world, a key counterterrorism concern is the possible radicalization of Muslims living in the United States. Yet, the record over the past eight years contains relatively few examples of Muslim-Americans that have radicalized and turned toward violent extremism. This project seeks to explain this encouraging result by identifying characteristics and practices in the Muslim-American community that are preventing radicalization and violence.

This objective was pursued through interviews of over 120 Muslims located in four different Muslim-American communities across the country (Buffalo, Houston, Seattle, and Raleigh-Durham), a comprehensive review of studies and literature on Muslim-American communities, a review of websites and publications of Muslim-American organizations, and a compilation of data on prosecutions of Muslim-Americans on violent terrorism-related offenses.

A review of these materials has led to recommendations on how the positive anti-terrorism lessons of Muslim-American communities can be reinforced.

## FINDINGS

This research resulted in a number of related findings:

**Increased Anti-Muslim Bias.** Since 9/11, there has been increased tension among Muslim-Americans about their acceptance in mainstream American society. Muslim-Americans perceive a stronger anti-Muslim bias from both their day-to-day interactions and the media, a bias that is confirmed in public opinion polling. While Muslim-Americans understand and support the need for enhanced security and counterterrorism initiatives, they believe that some of these efforts are discriminatory, and they are angered that innocent Muslim-Americans bear the brunt of the impact of these policies.

### **Low Numbers of Radicalized Muslim-Americans.**

Although the vast majority of Muslim-Americans reject radical extremist ideology and violence, a small number of Muslim-Americans have radicalized since 9/11. In the eight years following 9/11, according to our project's count, 139 Muslim-Americans committed acts of terrorism-related violence or were prosecuted for terrorism-related offenses that involve some element of violence. This level of approximately 17 individuals per year is small compared to other violent crime in American, but not insignificant. Homegrown terrorism is a serious, but limited, problem.

### **Practices of Muslim-American Communities Prevent Radicalization.**

Our research shows that a variety of practices of Muslim-American communities may be helping to prevent and address instances of radicalization. These practices include the following:

- **Public and private denunciations of terrorism and violence.** Muslim-American organizations and leaders have consistently condemned terrorist violence here and abroad since 9/11, arguing that such violence is strictly condemned by Islam. Our research found that these statements were not just for public consumption, but were supported by local Muslim religious and community leaders, who consistently condemned political violence in public sermons and private conversations. These statements represent powerful messages that resonate within Muslim-American communities.
- **Self-policing.** Muslim-Americans have adopted numerous internal self-policing practices to prevent the growth of radical ideology in their communities. The practices range from confronting individuals who express radical ideology or support for terrorism, preventing extremist ideologues from preaching in mosques, communicating concerns about radical individuals to law enforcement officials, and purging radical extremists from membership in local mosques. Muslim-Americans have also adopted programs for youth to help identify individuals who react inappropriately to controversial issues so they can be counseled and educated.

- **Community-building.** The creation of robust Muslim-American communities may serve as a preventative measure against radicalization by reducing social isolation of individuals who may be at risk of becoming radicalized. The stronger such communities are, in terms of social networks, educational programs, and provision of social services, the more likely they are to identify individuals who are prone to radicalization and intervene appropriately. Undermining radicalization is frequently not the primary goal of these community-building activities, which are generally aimed at strengthening community resources in response to the increased social and governmental pressure that Muslim-Americans have experienced since 9/11. However, our research indicates that these activities may have the positive side effect of reducing the likelihood of radicalization.
- **Political engagement.** Heightened political activity of Muslim-Americans since 9/11 is also a positive development for preventing radicalization. Political engagement channels grievances into democratic forums and promotes integration of Muslim-Americans into an important aspect of American life. At the national level, Muslim-Americans are following the example of other American minority groups by creating advocacy organizations to express their political goals. At the local level, community leaders work through political avenues to pursue community interests. These activities demonstrate to Muslims in the United States and around the world that Muslims are able to participate in the full range of American life and that their grievances can be effectively addressed through peaceful means. Like community-building, increased participation in democratic politics did not occur for the purpose of preventing radicalization, but it too may have had the same positive side effect.
- **Identity politics.** The expression of a Muslim-American identity has taken on an increasingly assertive tone in the years since 9/11. While some observers are concerned that heightened expressions of piety may be a sign of impending radicalization,

our research suggests otherwise. The assertion of Muslim-American identity follows the precedent of other racial, ethnic, and religious groups in the United States: they have embraced the compatibility of minority and American identities. Increased piety among Muslim-Americans also serves to undercut the radical message that American values and practices are hostile to Islam.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Research findings suggest that radicalization in the United States can be minimized by taking the following steps to reinforce successful anti-radicalization activities of Muslim-American communities and create a more positive environment for Muslim-Americans:

**1. Encourage Political Mobilization.** Increased political mobilization is the most important trend identified by this study, as it both stunts domestic radicalization and provides an example to Muslims around the world that grievances can be resolved through peaceful democratic means. We recommend that policymakers in the major political parties embrace this mobilization by including Muslim-Americans in their outreach efforts and by organizing them to gain their support, as they do with other ethnic and religious groups. Similarly, public officials should attend events at mosques, as they do at churches and synagogues. Muslim-American groups should also be fully included in American political dialogue.

**2. Promote Public Denunciations of Violence.** Denunciations of terrorism and violence are an important reflection of Muslim-American opinion and values. The Muslim-American community should disseminate these statements widely. Public officials should reference these statements whenever possible and the media should include them in their coverage of terrorism and security issues.

### **3. Reinforce Self-Policing by Improving the Relationship Between Law Enforcement and Muslim-American Communities.**

Muslim-American communities are taking a variety of measures to prevent radicalization. While there have been important achievements in building a cooperative, trusting relationship between Muslim-Americans and law enforcement, there have also been tensions due to controversial law enforcement techniques, lack of communication, and breakdowns in trust. Muslim-American communities and law enforcement agencies must make efforts to cooperate more closely to overcome mutual suspicions and achieve common goals. An important element of increased cooperation would be to initiate a candid dialogue between law enforcement and Muslim-American communities about the handling of criminal cases and the use of informants. Law enforcement agencies should develop policies on the appropriate use of informants in Muslim-American communities and discuss these policies openly with community leaders. Muslim-Americans, for their part, should understand that the use of informants is an accepted, long-standing law enforcement practice and may be necessary in appropriate cases to gather evidence on individuals who are a potential danger. In addition to addressing grievances about law enforcement tactics and operations, the relationship could be strengthened and solidified by hiring more Muslim law enforcement officers, increasing outreach to non-religious entry points to the community, and expanding the FBI's Bridges Program and Citizen's Academy.

**4. Assist Community-Building Efforts.** Strong communities can provide education to Muslims who may be uninformed about Islamic opposition to terrorism, provide guidance and positive experiences for youth, and identify individuals at risk of radicalization. We recommend that all levels of government make additional efforts to provide community-building resources such as youth centers, childcare facilities, public health clinics, and English as a Second Language courses in disadvantaged Muslim-American communities. These resources are especially important in isolated immigrant communities.

### **5. Promote Outreach by Social Service Agencies.**

Our research suggests that Muslim-American communities desire collaboration and outreach with the government beyond law enforcement, in areas such as public health, education, and transportation. Moving toward this type of engagement acknowledges that Muslim-American communities have needs and concerns other than contributing to the nation's counterterrorism efforts.

**6. Support Enhanced Religious Literacy.** This research reinforces the generally accepted observation that Muslim-Americans with a strong, traditional religious training are far less likely to radicalize than those without such training. Since it would be inappropriate for government to play a role in this area, the Muslim-American community should invest in developing seminars, leadership programs, and on-line educational courses. Foundations and universities should assist in these efforts.

**7. Increase Civil Rights Enforcement.** Enhanced civil rights enforcement will contribute toward addressing Muslim-American concerns about increased discrimination since September 11, 2001.

# Introduction

In his speech at Cairo University, President Obama proclaimed, “Islam has always been a part of America’s story.”<sup>1</sup> He noted that Muslim-Americans have “fought in our wars, they have served in our government, they have stood for civil rights, they have started businesses, they have taught at our universities, they’ve excelled in our sports arenas, they’ve won Nobel Prizes, built our tallest building, and lit the Olympic Torch.” Underneath links to the text of this speech, on the White House website, was a short video about three Muslim-Americans serving in the United States government. One of them, Afeefa Syeed, who moved to the United States as a young girl and now serves in the State Department, explained that she found “no contradiction between being a Muslim and being an American. ... [T]he comfort zone that I have is here in America, because of the simple seamless connection between the two identities that forge into one.”<sup>2</sup>

them here with I.E.D.s and stingers, it is equal.”<sup>3</sup> Massive media coverage of the arrests amplified what New York Police Department Commissioner Raymond Kelly described as “our concern about homegrown terrorism.”<sup>4</sup>

These two divergent examples of Muslim-Americans—the comfortably assimilated federal employee and the radicalized, anti-American jihadist—have dominated the national discourse about Muslim-Americans since 9/11, a discourse that has amplified since a spate of arrests and incidents involving Muslim-Americans in 2009, most notably, the shooting spree by Nidal Hasan at Fort Hood that killed 13 people and seriously wounded dozens more.

Despite the massive publicity that accompanies any instance of “homegrown terrorism,” it is widely acknowledged that the vast majority of Muslim-Americans are ordinary, hard-working citizens and legal immigrants who make up part of the American cultural tapestry while practicing their minority faith. At the same time, there are a small number of Muslim-Americans who

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“Islam has always been  
a part of  
America’s story.”

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In contrast, two weeks earlier, the nation focused on the foiled terrorist plot of four men from Newburgh, New York, who are accused of attempting to bomb two synagogues in the Bronx and shoot down military aircraft with surface-to-air missiles. The four were described by authorities as Muslim converts. According to the criminal complaint, each said he was willing to engage in “jihad,” and one of the plotters justified his action by saying that the military is “killing Muslim brothers and sisters in Muslim countries, so if we kill

have adopted extremist radical ideologies and engaged in illegal, and sometimes violent, conduct to advance those views.

Most research about Muslim-Americans since 9/11 has tried to explain what might prompt an individual enjoying all the advantages of living in the United States to adopt a radical, violent ideology.<sup>5</sup> Other research has examined governmental efforts to gain the assistance of Muslim-American communities in identifying potential terrorists and thwarting terrorist plots.<sup>6</sup>



This project addresses the topic from a different perspective. Instead of analyzing what has happened to the few Muslim-Americans who have radicalized and broken the law, we examine why so few Muslim-Americans have followed the path of radicalization and violence. Instead of trying to assess the effectiveness of the government's outreach efforts in Muslim-American communities as a means of preventing terrorism, this project examines what Muslim-American communities are doing themselves to prevent radicalization and acts of violence. The goal of the project is to learn how Muslim-American communities have been dealing with the threat—to themselves as well as the broader American community—posed by extremist ideologies. These insights provide the basis for recommendations about additional steps government agencies and Muslim communities should take to meet the threat of domestic terrorism.

In place of speculation, this project has generated social-science evidence about how and why Muslim-American communities have resisted radicalization and political violence. Why have there been relatively few examples of Muslim-Americans who have engaged in terrorist activity? What characteristics of Muslim-American communities have enabled them to counter the radical

Our research focused on Muslim-Americans in four communities: Seattle, Houston, Buffalo, and Raleigh/Durham (see **“Research Site Profiles,”** beginning page 12). These communities were chosen because they are moderate sized and have not been subject to prior research efforts. Members of our research team lived in each of these communities for two- to three-month periods and conducted more than 120 in-depth interviews with community leaders and other Muslim-Americans. Interviews probed how individuals, parents, and community organizations, including religious organizations, have dealt with the challenge of Islamic radicalism. Interviewees were asked about the steps their communities have taken to prevent radicalization and their views on governmental outreach efforts and counterterrorism policies. In addition to these interviews, data has also been drawn from an extensive review of Muslim-American publications and websites of major Muslim-American organizations.

We believe this collective research yields anti-terror lessons critical to the success of our national counterterrorism effort. Up to now, law enforcement efforts have effectively stymied most of the small number of homegrown terrorists that have planned or attempted to execute attacks in United States. Our national goal,

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## Our national goal ... must be to ensure that even fewer individuals head down the path of radicalization and political violence

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message that is being transmitted across the globe? What policies should be adopted to reinforce Muslim-American communities' successes? What can Muslim-American communities do to reinforce and extend these successes?

however, must be to ensure that even fewer individuals head down the path of radicalization and political violence. Understanding the factors within Muslim-American communities that are effectively stunting the growth of radicalization within the United States will be the key to achieving this important objective.



# Part 1.

## Homegrown Terrorism: Rhetoric and Reality

### 1. THE MUSLIM- AMERICAN EXPERIENCE SINCE 9/11

The attacks of September 11, 2001, were a national trauma for the United States, and they were especially traumatic for Muslim-Americans. Muslim-Americans were subjected to the same fears as other citizens regarding personal security and potential future attacks, and their lives as Muslim-Americans became severely complicated because the perpetrators identified themselves as Muslims.

shopping for their families; some don't want to go about their ordinary daily routines because, by wearing cover, they're afraid they'll be intimidated. That should not and that will not stand in America."<sup>9</sup> Bush commented that those who "take out their anger" against "our fellow citizens ... represent the worst of humankind ... and they should be ashamed of that kind of behavior."<sup>9</sup> Throughout his presidency, Bush made a point of visiting mosques and commemorating the contributions of Muslim-Americans with the nation.<sup>10</sup> Iftaar dinner has become an annual tradition at the White House.

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### The attacks of September 11, 2001, ... were especially traumatic for Muslim-Americans

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One form of backlash against Muslim-Americans expressed itself as social pressure, including hate crimes and widespread suspicion by other Americans. Hate-crimes against Muslims rose from 28 in 2000 to 481 recorded incidents in 2001, and current levels remain about five times higher than prior to 9/11.<sup>7</sup> A poll five years after 9/11 found that 39 percent of Americans believed that Muslims living in the United States were not loyal to the United States, 34 percent believed that they were sympathetic to al-Qaida, and 44 percent reported that Muslim-Americans were "too extreme in religious beliefs."<sup>8</sup>

To address the fears Muslim-Americans were experiencing, President Bush visited the Islamic Center of Washington, D.C., six days after the attacks. In his statements at the mosque, President Bush acknowledged these fears and noted the difficulties faced by women who exercised their religious freedom to wear a headscarf or other covering: "I've been told that some fear to leave [their homes]; some don't want to go

In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, Congress also expressed its support by enacting a resolution that condemned acts of violence and discrimination against Arab-, South Asian-, and Muslim-American communities, noting that they "are a vital part of the Nation."<sup>11</sup>

Law enforcement officials also made substantial efforts to reach out to the Muslim-Americans after 9/11. In June, 2002, FBI Director Robert Mueller spoke before the Muslim-American Council (AMC), despite protests by some commentators that the AMC had links with terrorist organizations.<sup>12</sup> Mueller said:

*I am here because we must all be in this war against terrorism together and because a sound and trusting relationship with the Muslim community can only bear the fruit of a safer nation for us all. I appreciate the help and support many in the Muslim-Amer-*

*ican communities have already given us, especially over the past nine months, and I call on you, as Americans, to continue working with us to defeat terror.*<sup>13</sup>

Mueller added that Muslim-Americans had cooperated with investigations, provided information, participated in community meetings with FBI agents, and even volunteered to quit their jobs to become translators for the FBI.<sup>14</sup>

A second form of backlash involved government anti-terrorism programs that had a severe impact on-Muslim-American communities, including:

- The FBI investigation of the 9/11 attacks resulted in the detention of at least 1200, mostly Muslim, citizens and aliens based on FBI investigative leads and “anonymous tips called in by members of the public suspicious of Arab and Muslim neighbors who kept odd schedules”;<sup>15</sup>
- The National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS), required registration, fingerprinting, and photographing of approximately 84,000 aliens from 25 Muslim and Arab countries;<sup>16</sup>

- Two Justice Department initiatives to interview 8,000 young Middle Eastern men for information relating to terrorism;<sup>17</sup>
- A secret program to conduct radiation monitoring at hundreds of mosques and other prominent Muslim sites in five cities; and<sup>18</sup>
- The closing of seven U.S.-based Muslim charities and the raiding of six others.<sup>19</sup>

These programs have resulted in thousands of detentions and deportations, hundreds of arrests, but only a handful of prosecutions on non-violent charges. At the same time, these policies have generated considerable fear among Muslim-Americans that they are being singled out for heightened scrutiny, and that their innocent conduct could be improperly construed as support for terrorist activities. While this was not the intended effect of the government’s policies, it is necessary to acknowledge that these fears are deeply felt among many Muslim-Americans. In the words of sociologist Louise Cainkar, who conducted hundreds of interviews in the Chicago area, Muslim-Americans suffer from a very real sense of “homeland insecurity.”<sup>21</sup> Engaging Muslim-Americans in future counterterrorism efforts must take this background into account.

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## 2. FEAR OF THE “HOMEGROWN THREAT”

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, America perceived the terrorist threat as having three potential sources: 1) al-Qaida or other extremist groups located abroad, 2) sleeper cells of al-Qaida members living secretly inside the United States, and 3) individuals living inside the United States who might radicalize and initiate attacks, either on their own or at the direction of foreign groups.

violent jihadist message. These homegrown terrorists may prove to be as dangerous as groups like al-Qaida, if not more so.”<sup>22</sup> Later that year, Mueller noted, “Among this world of threats, the prevention of another terrorist attack is our number one priority. We are particularly concerned about the threat of homegrown terrorist cells.”<sup>23</sup> He estimated that the FBI was investigating “certainly hundreds” of people within the country.<sup>24</sup>

Members of Congress also identified homegrown terrorism as a dangerous and growing concern. Representative Jane Harman commented, “Domestic radicalization that leads to violence in the American home-

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“We are particularly concerned about the threat of homegrown terrorist cells.”

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Concerns about the third source, so-called “homegrown terrorism,” have been prevalent since 9/11, but the concerns have grown in relation to the other categories as time has passed without any additional large-scale attacks inside the United States. The public’s fear of homegrown terrorism became especially acute after the July 2005 bombings in London, perpetrated by Muslims born in the United Kingdom. Many in the United States applied the logic that if young men born in a free and open society like the United Kingdom could be inspired by radical ideology to commit terrorism against their fellow citizens, then the same could happen here.

Similarly, some public officials have made statements identifying homegrown terrorism as a high level security threat. In a speech in 2006, FBI Director Robert Mueller claimed, “Today, terrorist threats may come from smaller, more loosely-defined individuals and cells who are not affiliated with al-Qaida, but who are inspired by a

land is one of the greatest emerging threats to the United States. In recent years, we’ve seen numerous cases of American citizens actively planning to murder their neighbors—including you, me, and our relatives and friends.”<sup>25</sup> Fear of radicalization within the United States led to the “Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007,” based on the premise that “[t]he promotion of violent radicalization, homegrown terrorism, and ideologically-based violence exists in the United States and poses a threat to homeland security.”<sup>26</sup> This anti-terrorism act passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 404-6, but the Senate did not take it up.

In September, 2006, the Senate Committee on Homeland Security launched a five-hearing investigation into the threat of homegrown terrorism, culminating in a 2008 report entitled “Violent Islamist Extremism, the Internet, and the Homegrown Terrorist Threat.”<sup>27</sup>

The report conceded that the radicalization process necessary to homegrown terrorism “has been less likely to occur in the United States than in other countries,” noting factors such as “the cultural influence of the ‘American experience,’” “the absence of a sympathetic audience in the United States,” and America’s “long-standing tradition of absorbing varied diaspora populations.”<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, the Committee warned that “radicalization is no longer confined to training camps in Afghanistan or other locations far from our shores; it is also occurring right here in the United States.”<sup>29</sup> The Committee cited a “recent rise in acts of homegrown terrorism planning and plotting” and hypothesized that this “may be an early warning that domestic radi-

authors noted, “is proliferating in Western democracies at a logarithmic rate.”<sup>33</sup> Starting the radicalization process does not mean that an individual will engage in a terrorist act, but radicalized individuals “may serve as mentors and agents of influence to those who might become the terrorists of tomorrow.” The study recommends increased investments in intelligence collection because “the subtle and non-criminal nature of the behaviors involved in the process of radicalization makes it difficult to identify or even monitor from a law enforcement standpoint.”<sup>34</sup>

In 2009, a confluence of events refocused attention on the homegrown threat. Authorities revealed that a group of young Muslims from Minneapolis had traveled

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## “Muslims in the U.S. are more resistant, but not immune, to the radical message.”

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calization, inspired by violent Islamist ideology, has become more likely in the United States.”<sup>30</sup>

In August 2007, the New York City Police Department issued a comprehensive study of radicalization and the homegrown threat, concluding, “Muslims in the U.S. are more resistant, but not immune, to the radical message.”<sup>31</sup> The study examined 11 case studies of individuals and groups that radicalized in the West and identified four stages of radicalization through which initially unremarkable individuals move to the point where they engage in planning or executing a violent attack. According to this study, the radicalization process is marked by an increasing commitment to the “jihadi ideology,” which “combines the extreme and minority interpretation [jihadi-Salafi] of Islam with an activist-like commitment or responsibility to solve global political grievances through violence.”<sup>32</sup> This ideology, the

to Mogadishu in 2007 and 2008 to join the radical organization Shabaab. One of them became America’s first suicide bomber, killing 30 in Northern Somalia.<sup>35</sup> In July, federal authorities announced the arrest and guilty plea of a Muslim-American convert from Long Island, who had received missile training in Afghanistan and had provided information to al-Qaida about the Long Island Rail Road system.<sup>36</sup> Later that month, the FBI arrested seven Muslims from North Carolina, who are accused of plotting to commit suicide attacks abroad and stockpiling a cache of weaponry. These events prompted federal authorities to issue a bulletin expressing concern “about the danger posed by little-noticed Americans traveling abroad to learn terrorism techniques, then coming back to the United States, where they may be dormant for long periods of time while they look for followers to recruit for future attacks.”<sup>37</sup>

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“[T]he whole notion of radicalization is something that didn’t loom as large a few months ago ... as it does now.”

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Commenting at the end of the eventful month of July 2009, Attorney General Eric Holder said, “The American people would be surprised at the depth of the [homegrown] threat,” adding that “the whole notion of radicalization is something that didn’t loom as large a few months ago ... as it does now. And that’s the shifting nature of threats that keeps you up at night.”<sup>38</sup>

The spate of events continued into the fall. Over the 9/11 anniversary, New York City was thrown into tumult by the investigation of former city resident Najibullah Zazi, who was eventually arrested and charged with planning a bombing plot. Later in September, two Muslims were arrested in plots to bomb buildings in Dallas and Illinois. In October, two other Muslims from Chicago were charged with plotting to murder employees of a Copenhagen newspaper that published cartoons of the Prophet Muhammed. Then, on November 5, Army psychiatrist Nidal Hasan opened fire on fellow soldiers at Fort Hood, Texas, killing 13 and wounding scores more. Reports have indicated that Hasan had communication with a radical cleric abroad and had expressed radical views to his medical colleagues. In December, David Headley, previously arrested in relation to the Copenhagen plot, was charged with assisting the 2008 terrorist rampage in Mumbai.

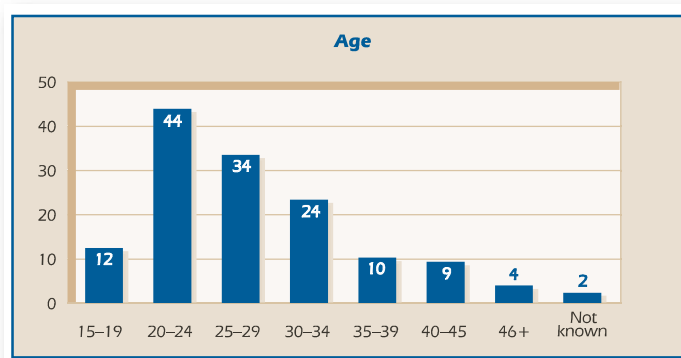
### 3. MUSLIM-AMERICANS AND TERRORISM-RELATED PROSECUTIONS

Projected through the lenses of politics and national security, intensive media coverage tremendously magnifies the terrorist threat. This is especially true of homegrown terrorism, where individual suspects are often known in their community and domestic arrests and incidents heighten the sense of vulnerability. A close look at the data on homegrown terrorism is necessary to put the magnitude of the threat in perspective.

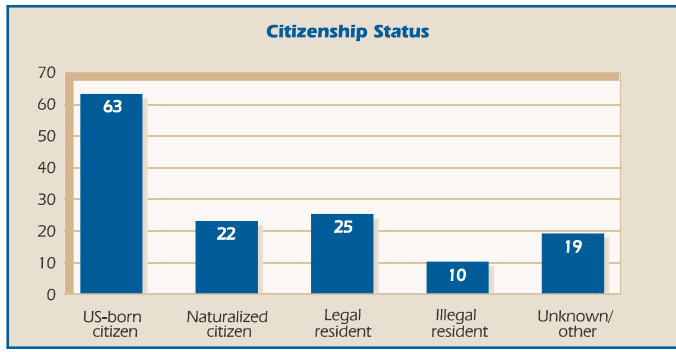
To measure the extent of the homegrown threat arising from violent jihadi extremism, this project created a dataset of Muslim-Americans who, since 9/11, have 1) perpetrated a terrorist act; 2) been convicted of a terrorism-related offense that involved some aspect of violence (including planning or directly supporting violence); or 3) been arrested or sought on such a charge. These criteria were selected to capture individuals who have moved to the later phases of the radicalization process, which, according to the FBI, requires both adoption of radical ideology and development of the willingness to engage in violent extremist activity.<sup>39</sup>

This study identified 139 Muslim-Americans with a linkage to terrorist violence between September 11, 2001, and December 31, 2009, an average of about 17 people per year. (See the Appendix for a list of these individuals and the criteria used to create this list.) Although many of these individuals did not actually commit acts of violence, the charges against them indicated that they were planning, or had a willingness, to do so.

The dataset contains information about both the offenders and the nature of their activity. All but one of the offenders are men. Their average age is 28. Almost two-thirds (65%) are under 30.

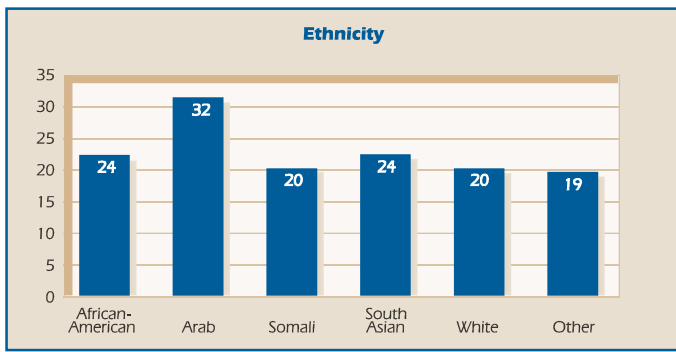






Almost two-thirds of the individuals are U.S.-born (63) or naturalized citizens (22). Twenty-five are legal residents and only 10 were in the United States illegally.

The ethnicity of the offenders is diverse: 32 are Arab, 24 are African-American, 24 are South Asian, 20 are Somali, and 20 are Caucasian. Just over one-third (47) of the individuals are converts to Islam. Twenty-four of the converts are African-American; ten are Caucasian; three are Latino.



There has been no pattern or trend in terms of the level of arrests and incidents per year since 9/11. Undoubtedly, there has been a spike of incidents and arrests in 2009. A great deal of this is attributable to the young Somali-Americans that left Minneapolis to join the Shabaab. Even without this troubling episode, there has been an abnormal amount of activity this year.

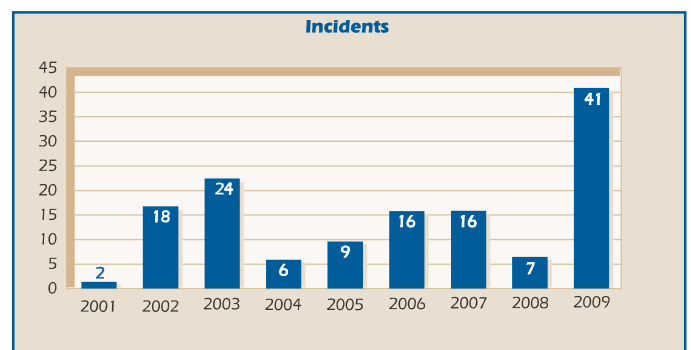
It is noteworthy that of the 139 individuals, only 40 (29%) were successful in executing attacks (15) or joining a foreign fighting force (25). Thus, seventy percent of the offenders were preempted by law en-

forcement before their plots came to fruition or had even matured to a dangerous state. Indeed, 33 of the individuals, most of whom were charged with material support for terrorism, were arrested before they had joined a specified terrorist plot.

The activities of most of these individuals were targeted abroad. Only 51 (37%) individuals executed or plotted actions with targets in the United States. The criminal activity of 47 offenders took place exclusively abroad, and for more than half the offenders, at least some aspect of their criminal conduct happened outside the United States.

Well over half (78) of the individuals were arrested as part of groups who appear to have radicalized together and either traveled abroad for training or began to plot attacks in the United States. These groups include the following:

- The Lackawanna group, which traveled to Afghanistan and attended an al-Qaida training camp;<sup>40</sup>
- The Portland group, which attempted to join forces fighting against the United States in Afghanistan;<sup>41</sup>
- The northern Virginia group, which engaged in military-style training domestically in support of mission to join Lashkar-e-Taiba. Some individuals traveled to training camps in Pakistan;<sup>42</sup>
- The California prison group, which radicalized while in prison and plotted to attack domestic and international targets;<sup>43</sup>
- The group from Liberty City, Florida, which plotted to bomb the Sears Tower;<sup>44</sup>





- The Toledo/Chicago group, which trained and plotted to attack U.S. troops in Iraq;<sup>45</sup>
- The group from Cherry Hill, New Jersey, which plotted to attack Fort Dix;<sup>46</sup>
- The Minneapolis group, which includes young men who traveled to Somalia and appear to have joined the radical group Shabaab;<sup>47</sup>
- The group from Newburgh, New York, which is charged with attempting to bomb synagogues in the Bronx;<sup>48</sup>
- The North Carolina group, which is charged with plotting to engage in terrorist acts in Israel;<sup>49</sup> and

- The group from northern Virginia, which traveled to Pakistan to join a jihadi group.<sup>50</sup>

The existence of these groups supports the theory, promoted in the New York City Police Department report and by scholar Marc Sageman, that the radicalization process often relies to a great extent on group dynamics, where a bunch of disaffected young men are attracted to a charismatic leader and, as a group, isolate themselves from the mainstream and move towards violence.

The geographic diversity of the offenders also suggests that there is no single “hot-bed” of radicalism in the United States that is generating large numbers

*This research project focused on four mid-sized Muslim-American communities around the United States. We omitted the largest Muslim-American*

## Research Site Profiles

*communities, such as in Detroit or New York, and instead selected mid-sized communities where our researchers would be able to contact and interview leaders at most of these sites’ Islamic organizations. Furthermore, because each of these communities has had some experience with isolated instances of radicalization, each offers opportunities to examine how Muslim-American organizations have in general responded to the challenges surrounding radicalization and homegrown terrorism.*

## Seattle, Washington

*There are approximately 30,000 to 50,000 Muslims in Greater Seattle. Most are first-generation immigrants, with sizeable numbers from Somalia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The first mosque in the region, now known as the Islamic Center of Washington, was founded in 1981. For two decades, the Center was the focal point of Muslim cultural life and Islamic educational programs in Seattle. Today, there are more than 12 mosques in the greater Seattle*

*area representing a diversity of Islamic perspectives. Some, such as the Muslim Association of Puget Sound and the Ithna-Asheri Muslim Association of the Northwest, have adopted more liberal approaches, while others, such as the Islamic Center of the Eastside in Bellevue, Masjid Omar al-Farooq in Mountlake Terrace, and the Islamic Center of Kent, are more conservative. There are two full-time Islamic schools in the area: the Islamic School of Seattle and the Madina Academy in Redmond, Washington. There is also an active chapter of Council of American-Islamic Relations, a national civil-rights organization based in Washington, D.C.*

*The religious landscape of the city is buzzing with interfaith activities in which many Muslims participate. Most of our interview respondents identified strongly as Muslim-Americans and spoke fiercely against ideological or violent radicalization. They distanced themselves from the incidents of radicalization that have emerged in the region since the 1990s. The first of these incidents involved James Ujamaa, a civil rights leader turned Islamist who led a group of local Muslims—mostly converts—to practice target shooting in Blaine, Oregon; Ujamaa later pled guilty to material support for a foreign terrorist organization. A second case occurred in July 2006, when Naveed Haq, a Pakistani-American from Eastern Washington, shot and killed one person at the offices of a Jewish organization in Seattle.*

of homegrown terrorism cases. Only 14 percent of these individuals lived in the four largest Muslim-American communities in the United States: the Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, and New York metropolitan areas. (This relatively low percentage confirms our project's decision to focus on mid-sized Muslim-American communities.) There were 43 offenders from the South, 38

from the Northeast, 30 from the Midwest, 23 from the West, and 3 from the Southwest.

Of the 61 Muslim-Americans in the dataset who were not part of the major groups, there is no single pattern to how they radicalized. Only a few, like Ali al-Marri, had close enough connections to al-Qaida to be considered a member of a "sleeper cell." Some, like Kobie Diallo Williams and Adnan Mirza—two men from

*The Buffalo metropolitan region is home to approximately 20,000 to 30,000 Muslims. Major ethnic communities include African-Americans and African refugees in Buffalo proper; Yemenis and Palestinians in Lackawanna, South Asians throughout the suburbs, and a small Arab community in Niagara Falls. The African-American Sunni community is one of the oldest in the United States, and the Yemeni community, which arrived in the area after World War II to work in the steel and automo-*

## **Buffalo, New York**

*bile industry, is one of the most significant Arab groups in the country. Many of them arrived after the 1965 Immigration Act, as in other areas in the country. Much of the community lives in working-class neighborhoods, while some of the more recent and more highly-educated immigrant families live in wealthier suburbs.*

*There are 10 active mosques in the area, with two more due to open soon. Most of the mosques are ethnically based. The Islamic Society of the Niagara Frontier (ISNF), perhaps the best-attended mosque in the region, is predominantly South Asian but also includes a significant number of Arab and other congregants. The next largest congregation in the area is Masjid Zakariya, part of the Darul-Uloom al-Madania, the largest Deobandi seminary in the United States. This seminary operates a grade school that combines religious education with a standard New York State public-school curriculum, as well as a bachelor's-level program that trains imams and other religious scholars. ISNF also operates an Islamic school, which prides itself on its innovative approach that stresses preparation of stu-*

*dents for professional success in American society. In addition to these two full-time schools, most mosques in the area run weekend classes and a variety of programs for children. Sports play an important role in youth work. ISNF holds midnight basketball games; Lackawanna has soccer clubs for younger and older youth.*

*Several organizations now connect different ethnic groups within the Muslim community. The most prominent of these is the Muslim Political Action Committee of Western New York (MPAC-WNY), which grew out of activism in the 1980s when a group of local Muslims began to reach out to Buffalo's civic and religious institutions. In recent years, this group affiliated itself with MPAC, a California-based organization that has sought to increase Muslim-Americans' political integration and representation. The Buffalo-area chapter is now the second most active branch of the national organization. The Imams Council was formed in 2008 as a way to link various mosques in the region. Almost all of the imams in the area are represented in the group. In addition, the Muslim Students Association at the University of Buffalo also serves to connect various ethnic communities, as well as to bridge liberal and conservative religious affiliations.*

*However, Muslim-Americans in Buffalo are most widely known for the case of the "Lackawanna Six," a group of young Yemeni-Americans that attended al-Qaida training camps in Afghanistan in early 2001. According to a book on the subject by journalist Dina Temple-Raston, there was little evidence that these men had plans to engage in terrorist violence in the United States, but their association with al-Qaida was a startling reminder of the possibility of radicalization among Muslim-Americans.*

Houston who trained to fight against the United States in Afghanistan—may have radicalized together in a small group. Others, like Hesham Mohamed Ali Hadayet, who opened fire at the El Al counter in the Los Angeles airport, were disturbed loners, whose motives for their actions remain unclear. Some, like Russell Defrietas, charged with plotting to blow up fuel tanks at JFK Airport, lived in the United States for decades, while others, like Ahmed Mohammed, the student who put an instructional bomb-making video on YouTube, were more recent arrivals. Nidal Hasan, accused of murdering 13 in a shooting rampage at Fort Dix, adopted a radical ideology, but there appears to have been a complex interaction of forces—some ideological, and some resulting from his position as a Muslim soldier about to be deployed to Afghanistan—that moved him toward violence.

There is no single profile or a common warning sign that signifies a “homegrown terrorist.” The diversity of the demographics, ethnicities, and life experiences makes the problem of detecting the homegrown terrorist an extremely difficult one for law enforcement.

Critics may claim that this dataset overstates the extent of the problem of homegrown terrorism in the United States. Cases are included in which the perpetrators are not American citizens, so long as there is evidence that they lived in the United States for an extended period and that they likely radicalized while in the United States. The dataset includes individuals for whom evidence indicates their violent action resulted from mental illness rather than adoption of a radical ideology. Cases are also included where there has been an arrest, but the trial is still pending. Finally, as noted above, the offenders have executed violent

*An estimated 70,000 to 100,000 Muslims live in the Houston metropolitan area. While most are of Pakistani origin, there are Muslims from elsewhere in South Asia, Iran, Arab countries, West Africa, Turkey, and Indonesia. African-American Muslims are also prominent in the community.*

## **Houston, Texas**

*The community has grown significantly since the 1960s, when the Islamic Society of Greater Houston (ISGH) was founded by Pakistani immigrants. The ISGH is the main umbrella organization for Muslims in the Houston area. It operates dozens of mosques, as well as several large, full-time Islamic schools. The ISGH also helped to establish the Shifa Clinic in Houston, where local Muslim physicians volunteer to do pro bono work for poor residents of the area, both Muslim and non-Muslim. Today, Houston is home to over 40 large Islamic centers, with numerous other places where Muslims congregate for daily or Friday prayers.*

*In addition to religious organizations, Muslims in Houston have established numerous ethnic associations, such as the Pakistani Association of Greater Houston, the Arab American Cultural Center of*

*Houston, and the Egyptian American Association of Houston. Educational institutions include youth groups such as Crescent Youth and more traditional seminaries such as the Arees Institute. The Pakistani community also has a weekly newspaper in Urdu and a 24-hour radio station in Urdu. The Pakistani community in Houston has been successful in engaging the local political process, represented by their own city council member, Masroor J. Khan.*

*Houston has experienced several isolated incidents of Islamic radicalization. Two local men, Kobie Diallo Williams and Adnan Babar Mirza, were indicted for providing support for the Taliban. Williams pled guilty, and Mirza’s case is still pending. Another Muslim-American, Daniel Joseph Maldonado, who had lived in Houston for several months, was arrested in East Africa for allegedly participating in terrorist acts in Somalia. Houston was also the site where Sarfaraz Jamal established an Internet chat room, ClearGuidance.com, which was shut down for allowing terrorist communications, though Jamal himself has not been indicted. The only instance of extremist violence in the Houston area was committed by Mohammed Ali Alayed, a college student who murdered an Israeli friend in 2004, though it is unclear to what extent the attack was religiously motivated.*

actions in only 30 percent of the cases. In many cases, plots were at such an early stage that it is not at all clear that the offenders would have engaged in violence.

Other critics might claim that the dataset understates the problem. Individuals who were charged with a terrorist crime but were acquitted at trial are, of course, excluded. The dataset also does not include cases involving exclusively non-violent activities, such as fundraising, even though these individuals provided forms of material support to foreign terrorist organizations. These cases are excluded because, in our view, individuals have not fully radicalized unless they are willing and have taken steps toward violent action to further their radical views. Further, this dataset does not include Muslims living in the United States for an extended period who were deported on suspicion of having links to terrorism. Complete data on these individuals are not available from open sources. Even if this data

could be compiled, deportation would be an extremely unreliable measurement of the extent of genuine radicalization. Most individuals suspected of a linkage to terrorism have been deported based on technical immigration violations. No proof of the validity of suspicion of terrorism has been required for deportation. For example, hundreds of Muslims, some of whom had longstanding ties to the United States, were deported in connection with the investigation of the 9/11 attacks. None of them were actually prosecuted for a terrorism crime. Some of them may have been violent extremists; some may be entirely innocent: it is impossible to know.

In sum, the dataset includes all cases in which a person 1) is reported to be a practicing Muslim, 2) has lived in the United States for an extended period, and 3) has engaged in terrorism, has been successfully prosecuted for a terrorist offense that involved an element of violence, or has been arrested on such a charge. We believe that this dataset of 139 cases—

*The Research Triangle, encompassing Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, is home to an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 Muslims. The*

## **Research Triangle, NC**

*community is proud to trace its roots back more than two centuries—North Carolina was home to many African Muslims enslaved in the United States. Most famous among them was Omar Ibn Said (1770-1864), the author of the only surviving Arabic slave autobiography written in the United States. Few of the slaves' Islamic traditions or identities survived, but the Triangle area later became a vibrant center for the Nation of Islam and the Sunni movement that emerged out of it. Another group of Muslims arrived in the 1960s, many of them international students at local universities. The largest Muslim institution in the area, the Islamic Association of Raleigh, was founded by students and graduates of North Carolina State University in Raleigh. With the help of donations from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, they built a mosque, the Islamic Center of Raleigh, in 1985. As the Islamic*

*Center's members became successful professionals, it became independent of foreign donations. While the initial leadership of the Center was primarily Arab, it now includes among its volunteers, leaders, and attendees Muslims from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, several African regions, African-Americans, white and Latino American converts, Malaysians, Chinese, and even some Tibetan Muslims.*

*The Center has grown to include two part-time and one full-time school. It has established a yearly health fair for the neighborhood, and it supported the founding of the Mariam Clinic, a full-time medical center for needy Muslims and non-Muslims. The Center also participates in and organizes interfaith events and dialogues with local politicians and law enforcement. In recent years, the Center has become active in voter registration and outreach to non-Muslim communities, including the predominantly African-American neighborhood in which the Center is located.*

*This increased involvement in public life is evident at most of the eight mosques in the Triangle. Two local African-American Muslims have been elected*

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while imperfect—provides the most accurate reflection of the the problem of homegrown violent jihadi extremism currently available from open sources.

When examining the data and discussing the extent of this terrorist threat, it is important to consider the context of overall security. That this many Muslim-Americans radicalized while living in this country and engaged in or plotted violence is discomfoting. Even more disturbing is the possibility that had they not been arrested, many of them may have perpetrated serious acts of violence here or abroad. Nonetheless, in terms of overall levels of violence in America, the amount of radicalization and violence that has been perpetrated by Muslim-Americans over the past eight years is quite small. To put this in perspective, there have been more than 136,000 murders in the United States since 9/11.<sup>51</sup> Thirty-one—a fiftieth of one percent—of these murders were committed by persons listed in the dataset.

The media attention that accompanies nearly every arrest or thwarted plot involving Muslim-Americans magnifies our perception of the homegrown terrorism threat. Homegrown terrorism is certainly a serious and potentially dangerous problem, but it is a limited problem. The recent spike of cases in 2009 is disturbing, but it is far too early to know if this is an aberration or a trend. Even if the levels of radicalization of Muslim-Americans do increase, it is important to emphasize that the numbers of individuals engaged in these activities are extremely small.

One possible reason for the small number of radicalized, violent Muslim-Americans involves the demographics of the Muslim-American population in the United States. Unlike Muslim minorities in many countries of Western Europe, Muslim-Americans have attained higher education and middle-class incomes at roughly the same rate as society as a whole. Their lives are less segregated than in Western Europe, and their political views on most issues are similar to other Americans.

*to public office—North Carolina State Senator Larry Shaw and Durham City Councilman Farad Ali—and immigrant communities encourage their members to become more active citizens. One notable example of this development is a 2008 intensive sum-*

## Research Triangle (cont.)

*mer course for young Muslims in the Triangle Youth Leadership Program, which was organized in partnership with Duke University's Hart Leadership Program by volunteers from Islamic Association of Raleigh, the Shaw University Mosque, the Islamic Association of Cary, and the Ibad ur-Rahman mosque in Durham. This program trained more than 20 Muslim high school and college students in political and civic activism, in what the organizers hope will be an ongoing event. Other Islamic organizations, such as the Raleigh chapter of Muslim American Society (MAS) and Muslim American Public Affairs Council of North Carolina—like many*

*similar Muslim advocacy groups—also engage in civic education.*

*Until this year, the Triangle has had only one incident of radicalization: Mohammad Reza Taheri-Azar, a recent graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, drove through a crowded part of campus in an attempt to run people over as a protest against U.S. foreign policy toward Muslim countries. Taheri-Azar pled guilty to nine counts of attempted murder, one for each of the people whom he hit. However, by his own account and reports from local Muslim-Americans, Taheri-Azar was not a member of any local Islamic organizations, and our interview respondents dismissed his actions as those of a psychologically unstable loner. The recent arrests of seven Muslim-Americans in the Raleigh area, on charges of preparing to engage in terrorism overseas, strike more directly at the heart of the Muslim-American community, since the suspects had formerly been active in local Islamic organizations. (See "North Carolina Terrorism Arrests," beginning next page.)*

Many immigrants—who, according to various estimates, compose about one-half to two-thirds of the Muslim-American population—came to the United States for educational or economic opportunities, and this population still retains an optimistic view of the United States as a land of opportunity. However, demographic differences are not the whole story. Surveys and other

studies have found significant pockets of poverty, segregation, discrimination, and resentment among Muslim-Americans.<sup>52</sup> Yet these phenomena have not led to violence on a large scale. The next section of this report examines what Muslim-American communities have done to ensure that this scale remains limited.

*The arrest of seven Muslim men on terrorism charges in August, 2009, in the Raleigh-Durham, NC, region—a community studied during this project—presents many of the issues regarding homegrown terrorism that confront law enforcement and Muslim-American communities across the nation.*

*The indictment charged that American Daniel Boyd—a Muslim convert—his two sons, and four*

*American Society (MAS), which called on the media to respect the presumption of innocence and asked Americans not to cast aspersion on the Muslim community as a result of the as yet, unproven charges. When asked about Boyd's alleged views that Muslims had a religious duty to engage in violence in defense of Islam, a MAS spokesperson responded, "there is no Islamic leader and no Islamic community in this country that would back that."<sup>5</sup> Outside the courtroom where the defendants' preliminary hearing was held, a community member, 37-year-old Shagufta*

*Syad, said, "Maybe there's some bad Muslims in there, but just because you have a head scarf and faith in your heart doesn't mean we're aliens. ... I just want justice to be served. I'm here concerned as a Muslim; as an American, I need to know what's going on."<sup>6</sup>*

*Although the indictment noted that the defendants stopped attending prayer services at the Raleigh masjids in 2009 "due to ideological differences,"<sup>7</sup> evidence that the defendants had attended the largest mosque in the region, the Islamic Center of Raleigh, raised questions about the mosque's level of cooperation with law enforcement. A Muslim graduate student who formerly attended the Islamic Center told CNN that two of the defendants, Omar Aly Hassan and Ziyad Yaghi, had said during discussions at the mosque that Osama bin Laden was a great scholar and fighter and that suicide bombings benefiting Muslims were permissible.<sup>8</sup> The student told mosque authorities about Hassan and Yaghi's radical talk. The Islamic Center later confirmed that it reported a person's "violent threatening action" to the FBI.<sup>9</sup>*

## North Carolina Terrorism Arrests

*other men, conspired to "advance violent jihad" by participating in and providing support for terrorist activities outside the United States, including murder and suicide bombing.<sup>1</sup> The government alleges that some of the defendants traveled to Israel, Jordan, Pakistan and Kosovo to commit violent acts and illegally stockpiled weapons and engaged in military style training in North Carolina to prepare for jihadi activities.<sup>2</sup> Boyd was allegedly recorded saying, "I love jihad. I love to stand there and fight for the sake of Allah. Muslims must be protected at all costs."<sup>3</sup> More than 27,400 rounds of ammunition, gas masks, and a handbook on how authorities respond to acts of terrorism were seized from Boyd's home.<sup>4</sup>*

*As with many homegrown terrorism cases across the country, the Muslim community initially expressed surprise and skepticism about the government's charges, worried that there would be a backlash against the community due to the arrests, and denied that any radicalization emanated from their mosques or the community in general.*

*Boyd's wife stridently proclaimed her husband's innocence and was supported by the local Muslim*

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## Part 2.

# Muslim-Americans’ Anti-Radicalization Activities

It is important for policymakers to understand the factors internal to Muslim-American communities that have helped to prevent violent radicalization of Muslim-Americans. Thus far, our law enforcement efforts have thwarted almost all of the small number of Muslim-Americans who appear to have been willing to perpetrate terrorist violence in the United States. In addition, this report highlights the preventative measures that have been taken, and continue to be taken, within Muslim-American communities. Our research has identified five significant ways in which Muslim-American communities have counteracted radicalization, ranging from statements to concrete actions:

- Public and private denunciations of terrorism and violence
- Self-policing
- Community building
- Political engagement
- Identify politics

Some of these steps were taken directly in response to concerns about radicalization; others were taken to pursue goals such as community-building or political empowerment, but may have had the side-effect of reducing the potential for radicalization.

After describing the project’s research methods, this section discusses each of these five steps in turn.

For each of the four research sites, the project compiled a list of all Muslim-American organizations in the metropolitan area, based on websites, directories, and personal contacts. The project reviewed as many print and electronic publications associated with these organizations as could be obtained. During the fieldwork portion of the project, the project’s research assistants—graduate students with advanced training in interview methods—contacted as many of these organizations as possible and requested interviews with organizational leaders and members, as well as with other individuals in the local Muslim-American community. Interviewees gave written consent for audio-recorded interviews and selected whether they wished to be named or re-

*Despite statements that mosque leaders contacted law enforcement about a community member, commentator Robert Spencer, without citing facts to support his view, insinuated that Boyd and his followers were exposed to radical ideology at the Is-*

### North Carolina Terrorism Arrests (cont.)

*lamic Center of Raleigh. Writing in the on-line publication Human Events, Spencer asked rhetorically: “What was taught to Daniel “Saifullah” Boyd in the Islamic Center of Raleigh that led him to embark upon a path of betrayal of his homeland and people?”<sup>10</sup> He then accused law enforcement authorities of “passivity” for not requiring mosque authorities to provide “a more honest and thoroughgoing confrontation of the jihad doctrine and Islamic supremacy [sic].”<sup>11</sup>*

*This is a typical pattern in many of the arrests of Muslim-Americans on terrorism charges since Sep-*

*tember 11. An arrest is announced, but because the case is at an early stage, there is often little direct evidence that the accused engaged in or had actively plotted violent activities. The Muslim-American community denounces terrorist violence, but voices skepticism about the charges and calls for impartial justice. Angry voices on the internet then use the unproven charges to lash out against the defendants and cast aspersion on the broader Muslim-American community.*

*As we have seen with the North Carolina case—and now the Fort Hood shootings—any new episode of suspected homegrown terrorism gains massive media attention and causes security concerns in the local communities and across the country, leaving Muslim-Americans frustrated and disillusioned, both by the actions of their fellow Muslims and how the specter of homegrown terrorism disrupts and complicates their lives as Muslim-Americans.*

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## “All Muslims ought to be united against all those who terrorize the innocents....”

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main anonymous in the research. All of the interviews were conducted at private locations chosen by the respondents.

The project sought to interview both men and women, members of different generations and major immigration and citizenship statuses, all of the major ethnicities and nationalities within the local Muslim-American community, and members of both religious and non-religious organizations. The project wound up with an imbalance in the gender of respondents (approximately two-thirds male and one-third female), but achieved its targets in other demographic characteristics, including approximately one-quarter of respondents of Arab descent, one-quarter of South Asian descent, one-quarter of African and African-American descent, and one quarter of other backgrounds, such as respondents of European, Iranian, Turkish, and Southeast Asian descent. Since the project involved in-depth interviews, rather than survey questionnaires, the number of interviews was limited to approximately 30 individuals in each of the four research sites. With this small sample size, the respondents were not intended to be statistically representative of Muslim-American communities.

The interview began with general questions about the respondent and the local Muslim-American community, including the respondent’s view of the major accomplishments and concerns of Muslim communities in the area? We then turned to the issue of radicalization: “Our research project is interested in learning about efforts within American Muslim communities to prevent radicalization. What efforts in this area do you think we should highlight?” We then asked: “Some Americans are clearly concerned about possible radicalization within Muslim-American communities. Some have referred to the potential for ‘homegrown terrorism.’ Do you share these concerns? Why or why not?” As a follow-up, the interview then asked whether the respondent had heard of alarming statements or activities in

the local community, and how the community had responded in these instances. The interview then asked what else the respondent suggested that local Muslims should do to make sure that radicalization does not occur in the future.

The interviews were not intended to probe for illegal activities, and none was disclosed. However, given the sensitivity of the issues in the interview, some respondents may have wished to provide an overly rosy image of the local Muslim-American community. To mitigate this possibility, the project cross-checked information with additional respondents and with digital searches of local newspapers. No significant discrepancies were discovered.

### **1. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DENUNCIATIONS OF VIOLENCE**

We have found that an important anti-radicalization activity of Muslim-American communities since 9/11 has been the active denunciation of terrorist violence. Muslim-Americans have done so in public and in private, drawing on both religious and secular arguments. Much of this has gone unnoticed in the mainstream press, and many Americans wonder—erroneously—why Muslims have been silent on the subject. New York Times columnist Thomas L. Friedman, for example, wrote in 2005, “The Muslim village has been derelict in condemning the madness of jihadist attacks.”<sup>53</sup> Such comments overlook the fatwa issued on September 27, 2001, by senior Islamic scholars in the United States and the Middle East, urging Muslims to support military action against the perpetrators of 9/11:

*All Muslims ought to be united against all those who terrorize the innocents, and those who permit the killing of non-com-*

*batants without a justifiable reason. Islam has declared the spilling of blood and the destruction of property as absolute prohibitions until the Day of Judgment. ... [It is] necessary to apprehend the true perpetrators of these crimes, as well as those who aid and abet them through incitement, financing or other support. They must be brought to justice in an impartial court of law and [punished] appropriately. ... [It is] a duty of Muslims to participate in this effort with all possible means.<sup>54</sup>*

This was one of numerous similar statements by many prominent Muslim leaders around the world.<sup>55</sup> In the United States, Muslim-Americans also expressed outrage at the attacks, then and later. One such document, drafted by the Fiqh Council of North America and endorsed by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), the Muslim American Society (MAS), the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), the Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers (AMSE), the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC), and more than 130 Muslim organizations, mosques and leaders in the United States, stated this forcefully:

*We have consistently condemned terrorism and extremism in all forms and under all circumstances, and we reiterate this unequivocal position. Islam strictly condemns religious extremism and the use of violence against*

*innocent lives. There is no justification in Islam for extremism or terrorism. Targeting civilians' life and property through suicide bombings or any other method of attack is haram—prohibited in Islam—and those who commit these barbaric acts are criminals, not 'martyrs.'<sup>56</sup>*

Muslim American websites and publications routinely repeat these views.

Muslim American Society:

*In the wake of a second series of blasts to hit London just two weeks after the July 7 bombing, the Muslim American Society renews its condemnation of such evil acts and commitment to exonerate Islam from such acts in order to deny terrorists any religious, ideological or political legitimacy. MAS categorically denounces all terrorism regardless of affiliation or national origin.<sup>57</sup>*

Islamic Circle of North America:

*These violent acts by those who claim to represent Islam are against the teachings of Islam and the practices of the prophet Mohammad.<sup>58</sup>*

Council on American-Islamic Relations:

*We, the undersigned Muslims, wish to state clearly that those who commit acts of terror, murder and cruelty in the name of Islam*

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**“These violent acts by those who claim to represent Islam are against the teachings of Islam and the practices of the prophet Mohammad.”**

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*are not only destroying innocent lives, but are also betraying the values of the faith they claim to represent. No injustice done to Muslims can ever justify the massacre of innocent people, and no act of terror will ever serve the cause of Islam. We repudiate and dissociate ourselves from any Muslim group or individual who commits such brutal and un-Islamic acts.*<sup>59</sup>

Muslim Political Action Committee:

*It is our duty as American Muslims to protect our country and to contribute to its better-*

*ment to peace, then we must go beyond words and rhetoric. The least that we can do is express our condemnation of the killing done in the name of religion regardless of the victims and perpetrators.*<sup>61</sup>

There is only one Muslim-American organization, a tiny group called the Islamic Thinkers Society, that openly espouses violence—abroad, not in the United States. It denounces all of the larger Muslim-American organizations as “so-called Muslim organizations and their spiritually impotent and politically retarded ‘leadership.’”<sup>62</sup>

Some observers fear that these denunciations are intended solely for public consumption by non-Muslims

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## Religiously conservative Muslim-Americans are just as vehement in denouncing violence

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*ment. Since September 11, 2001, intelligence reports indicate that international terrorist networks continue to plan attacks against the United States. In the face of such a frightening possibility, and being aware of the disastrous consequences that may befall the country as a whole and the Muslim community in particular, it is obvious that Muslims should be at the forefront of the effort to prevent this from happening.*<sup>60</sup>

The Minaret:

*Peace is not an alternative; it is a necessity for the true comprehension of the divine message. One does not attack those who are the intended recipient of the divine message. If we want to show our commit-*

and do not reflect Muslim-Americans’ true beliefs. Our fieldwork suggests that this is not the case. In North Carolina, for example, the local imam warned congregants against pamphlets that he considered “dangerous.” In Buffalo, a local group ran an anti-terrorism workshop for Muslim-Americans. In each of the four research sites, Muslim-Americans frequently characterized terrorists as mentally ill.

Among religiously liberal Muslim-Americans, denunciations of violence emphasized the themes that they viewed as the spirit of Islam, including tolerance of diversity, intercommunal coexistence, and support for democratic politics. Quotations from the Qur’an and the hadith—eyewitness reports of the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions—are common in discussions of these topics.

Religiously conservative Muslim-Americans are just as vehement in denouncing violence. Their critique

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## Even before 9/11, terrorist organizations considered Muslim-American communities to be unlikely collaborators

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often centers on the importance of ethical practices, with an insistence on the “middle path” (as opposed to extremism) and “correct” orthodox belief, which they understand to mean apolitical piety. Conversations on these topics often referred to Qur’anic verses and hadith reports that require obedience to the laws of the land, sober and modest comportment, and proper treatment of strangers. These themes are especially visible among Salafi communities in the U.S. The term Salafi, which means a follower of the first generations of Muslims (the salaf), has been adopted by some terrorist groups in the Middle East and elsewhere.<sup>63</sup> However, the term is far more commonly used to refer to an intense form of personal religiosity, with no political implications. With this understanding in mind, according to a survey of American mosques conducted in 2000, almost 70 percent of mosque administrators identified “the teachings of the righteous salaf” as an important source of authority.<sup>64</sup> This came to be misinterpreted in the American media as “Salafi teachings,” which supposedly provide “a lot of quiet help—as well as a hiding place [for] would-be terrorists.”<sup>65</sup> By contrast, the self-described Salafis that our project interviewed were among the most hostile to radical Islamic movements, which they considered haram, religiously impermissible. “We are not really concerned with politics, you know, those are affairs you can’t change,” one self-described Salafi imam told us. “Change really comes from Allah, you know. ... A lot of that stuff [politics] gets people distracted from what’s really important.”<sup>66</sup>

Our research indicated that Muslim-Americans do not support terrorism directed at the United States or

innocent civilians. At the same time, some of our interviewees were less quick to condemn other acts of violence outside the United States in instances where they considered the targets to be part of a genuine armed conflict. Because this project focuses exclusively on domestic terrorism, we did not attempt to gauge the extent of this support or probe interviewees on these issues.

### 2. SELF-POLICING

Our project finds that Muslim-Americans’ statements denouncing terrorism have been reinforced with concrete actions in their communities to monitor signs of radicalization. The rarity of terrorism in the United States means that few Muslim-Americans have ever encountered an actual terrorist, or even an individual who has expressed a willingness to engage in violence. Nonetheless, our research indicates that Muslim-Americans are engaged in a heightened level of self-policing against radicalization that may help to account for the infrequency of terrorist activities by Muslim-Americans.

Even before 9/11, terrorist organizations considered Muslim-American communities to be unlikely collaborators. Although a variety of radical Islamic movements sought to raise funds in the United States for their revolutionary campaigns abroad, there has been little recruitment of Muslim-Americans for domestic terrorism in the United States. In fact, according to interrogation summaries made available by the government, Khalid Sheik Mohammed forbade the 9/11 hijackers from



confiding in Muslim-Americans. He “explicitly told Mohammad Atta and the other pilots and muscle operatives not to speak with any Muslims once in the United States. The only exception to this rule was concerning Khalid al-Mihdhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi, whom he instructed to contact an Islamic Center or Mosque to help them get settled in the country since they did not speak English.”<sup>67</sup> To our knowledge, no Muslim-Americans have been indicted for knowingly aiding or abetting the 9/11 attacks.

Since 9/11, Muslim-Americans have been attentive to possible radicalization when it appears. In Houston, for example, a Muslim religious leader harshly scolded a man who “told me that he would’ve been proud if it was his sons [who were responsible for 9/11]. ... I whupped the hell out of him, afterwards he left with a

different disposition. Now, we don’t know where people come from, we don’t know what experiences they’ve had that have shaped them. So, I’m not going to judge him, because when he got the right information, his disposition changed.”<sup>68</sup> In North Carolina, another religious leader said he called the FBI when a young man in the community appeared to be on the verge of violence (see “**I Called the FBI,**” this page). Another man said he called the authorities when a friend of his started talking angrily about possibly avenging civilian casualties in Iraq:

*He was talking about how bridges are going to be blown up into the sky, and stuff, and I was really thinking, somebody is going to do something like this, the way this friend*

## I Called the FBI

*A young person who came from a broken family ... he had just finished high school and had come back to Raleigh, where he went to middle school. The one who really noticed his radical views was his roommate. And that was very good. When he came and met with me, he said, “I have to talk with you about some very important issues.” I said, “What is the problem?” He said, “One of my roommates, I feel like he has some radical views.” I said, “It’s good that you came.” He said, “Will this be confidential?” I said, “Don’t worry about confidentiality. Anything you say here, this is a trust with God, with Allah. We will never tell this person, but we will try to help, because if you don’t tell us, maybe it will turn into something worse.” He finally told me about the person, so I knew exactly what the issue was. Now that I had the information, what did I do with it? We have a youth counselor, and I talked to him, he is in charge of our youth programs, and so I said, “You know that person?” He said, “Yeah.” I said, “What is with him?” He said, “He is not from our community, he just came here a few months back.” I said, “I have some information about him*

*that worries me. He has some radical views.” He said, “No, he jokes sometimes.” I said, “No. Because sometimes people start joking, and nobody corrects them, and it becomes a fact—especially at that age. ...*

*We knew a person who worked with him—he was a construction worker. He [the youth counselor] talked to the person who hired him, at least he would know what is going on, if he noticed any of those issues, at least he can come and see me and we can talk to him. I said that I am ready to talk with that person, but not at the beginning, because of the age gap, he would say, “Why does that old man want to talk with me?” Let’s just give it time, but at the same time, we have to watch all of his actions and statements, maybe it would lead to things we can help him with. ...*

*The man who hired him came and said, “I have some news.” I said, “What is going on?” He said, “You remember the person we were talking about?” I said, “Yes.” He said, “His mom”—the mom of the youth, she doesn’t come to the masjid—she came to him, to his employer, from the masjid, and said, “Please help me—my son, I don’t have any control over him any more. He could become very radical.*

**concluded next page**



*of mine was talking. I was suspicious of the way he was talking with me. I called the FBI myself, and I told them this person, this name, this telephone number. ...*

*The way he talked, it wasn't comfortable for me. He wasn't saying, "I'm going to blow up and kill people," but the way he talked, from seeing what's going on in Iraq, he was so unhappy with all this killing in Iraq, all the children. And he was upset. I thought he would do something wrong.*

*But when I called the FBI, they laughed at me. They didn't even care about it. They wouldn't even take a name. They wouldn't even take a phone number. My friend, he's married with four children, and I don't think*

*anything about it now, but he was upset at that moment, and I thought, maybe he'll go too far.<sup>69</sup>*

Of the more than 120 interviews conducted for this project, only one respondent expressed hesitancy about reporting a potential act of terrorism to the authorities.

*In the African-American and African-American Muslim community, all we are concerned about is taking care of your family. That's all we're concerned about. ... We need to eat—we ain't got the time to be concerned doing the police's job. ...*

*It's like this, I'll tell you from the heart. If I knew of a plot that a thousand airplanes,*

*I saw that he doesn't even respect me. He doesn't talk to me about any of these issues, but I am starting to feel that he is a radical." This is his mom.*

## **I Called the FBI (cont.)**

*and maybe talk to the imam to see if he can talk to him." It came from Allah's heart, directly. Then, when we started talking about these issues, he left. A few days later, he just left for New York. His idea was to go and make an explosion, or to harm society, somewhere. And I said, "Now it's become serious, it's a threat, we should not take it lightly. I know we have no chance to fix the person, but at least we should call the authorities." And really, that's when I called the FBI. I said, that's it, this is the information we have. And they were very cooperative. They took down all the information, and they said, "Don't worry. We'll get all the information." ...*

*I don't know what the FBI did, because later, they said, "We took care of it, don't worry." And*

*"Please help me to save him,*

*the other FBI agent, he knows his father, from New York state. And somehow they approached the father. And they really took it seriously. ... I reached the point where I felt, I have to report this to the authorities, because if, Allah forbid, if he left and did something, even just harming himself, I would be liable before Allah, why didn't I tell the authorities so that they could stop him. ... They handled it very well, professionally. They talked to his father, and told him to be careful. We talked to his boss here, we asked him to come, because we didn't want him to go out of the region, because we didn't know in New York, who he is linked with. And he brought him back. He said, "We have work for you, inshallah." And I said, "At that age, you have a future"—because he is not studying at a university, he just finished high school. "At least he can work with me, I can give you a good salary, because working in the construction field, inshallah in the future you will work for yourself, you will find a wife." And he came back, with that kind of treatment. And now, he has become a very good person. Even the FBI called me after he came back and said, "With that procedure, he has become a better person."<sup>107</sup>*

*all at once, were to fall out of the sky—if I knew that there was another Timothy McVeigh was going to rise up, and I had absolute knowledge of it—I wouldn't care.*

*Interviewer: Really?*

*I wouldn't care. I say that as an African-American and as a Muslim.*

*Interviewer: But...*

*I wouldn't care.*

*Interviewer: What about saving human lives?*

*tell you right now that I'll call the police right now. And you can call me a snitch or a rat, but call me a Muslim.”<sup>71</sup>*

Other Muslim organizations have not waited passively to learn about possible radicalization, but have instead organized events with teenagers and young adults, raising controversial topics that might identify potential problems. In Seattle, for example, an Islamic Sunday school raised such issues in order to counsel students who overreact.

*[The teachers] bring up very, very critical issues that you see in the media, that you see out there, and they are doing it on purpose, to see the response of the youth, to see how they are reacting. Are they reacting in*

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**“I'll tell you right now that I'll call the police right now. And you can call me a snitch or a rat, but call me a Muslim.”**

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*Saving what? I'm concerned about me. I'm concerned about me and my family.<sup>70</sup>*

Other studies have found similar views among African-American Christians (i.e., not wanting to have anything to do with law enforcement officers, even some guilty pleasure about the victimization of white Americans),<sup>71</sup> but we saw no further evidence of it in our study. The other respondents in the area—including African-American Muslims—who were asked about this respondent's opinion, rejected it entirely. One of the community's leading Islamic scholars, an African-American man, said, “I would say that that individual does not understand Islam.”

*When I give khutbas, I tell people, “Look, don't come here with that foolishness. I'll*

*a very violent manner? If they see that, typically after class they pull the youth over to the side, not like in terms of, “Oh, you stay after class.” But afterwards, everyone gathers in the masjid, you know, they are playing around and doing different activities. Typically, the teacher takes them for a chai [tea], and starts talking about the topic, saying, “You know, Imam Ali said this [this means that the mosque is Shi'a, not Sunni], the Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him, said this.” and so on and so forth, trying to have them understand that these things are not really options. If it persists, I'm very sure that those teachers would be speaking to the parents, because there are*

*parent-teacher conferences every three months or so. I think they make it very, very clear, because they write extensive reports on the students.*<sup>73</sup>

In Houston, an organization that works with Muslim-American youths arranged what one of the group's founders called "venting sessions." (See "**Venting Sessions,**" this page.) These sessions encourage participants

to express feelings of anger, prejudice, and hostility about difficult issues in order to counteract them. This approach is controversial, since it raises raw emotions that could potentially instigate radicalization rather than calm it. However, the outcome seems to have been effective. While it is disturbing that negative attitudes exist, none of the participants in these sessions, to our knowledge, has ever been accused of terrorist activity. In addition, these sessions are pro-

## Venting Sessions

*In terms of directing their anger, that is something that is a part of our objective. ... We help them direct and vent their anger properly. Meaning, we'll have circles and we'll talk, "So what do you think about this killing of Jews?" Or, "Do we hate the Jews?" "Are we supposed to hate them?" When the firebombs in Gujarat [India] happened, we talked about that. ... Let's talk about it openly.*

*It would be done in a private setting. No parents allowed. No imams allowed. No administration allowed. No adults allowed. And we would just talk and vent. ...*

*That removes people spitting thoughts into their heads or Shaytan [Satan] coming into their heads and saying you need to do something, and you need to do X, Y, and Z. It removes them talking to their cousins or relatives in Gaza or Karachi or Lahore or Islamabad, saying "I hate this," and them saying, "Well, if you want to do something about it, come here and let's do something here." It removes any unnecessary anger that they might display in school. Any kinds of acts of racism that might come from them, whether it be vandalizing synagogues or churches. Whatever it may be, we don't want to fall into that trap. ...*

*We've never seen anyone that goes to these destructive measures. This is a prevention program. We have not seen anyone that has gone into it. We've seen people talking trash. ... They talk trash, but it's nothing substantial. You know, there are people at these rallies who are singing the Hezbol-*

*lah or Hamas songs and you are like, "What's going on?" But it's nothing substantial.*

*[At the sessions,] first we incite emotions from them. We say, "So what do you think about killing the Jews? ... I heard so and so talk about killing the Jews and started thinking about it, what do you think we should do?" Or, "We heard someone talk about Gujarat or Chechnya, these Russians?" And we'll get them to say, "Yeah, yeah." Okay, then they talk and once they're done, I mean they know why they are there, so we can properly vent. So, after that the first thing we do is to discuss why Allah causes destruction, why these things are meant to happen, why does Allah allow, you know, the people of New Orleans to be wiped out. So we go back and talk about the people of 'Ad and Lut and talk about why Allah allows these sort of things to happen because sometimes people lose hope and they're like, "Why does God do this?" "There is no God," so we talk about hope and fear, that there should be a balance between these two things. And then we talk about what the Prophet, peace be upon him, said about rebelling against the rulers. And that it's completely forbidden ... and then we talk about it's a pact in this country that you have to stay calm, and then we talk about patience. Everything that we have said to you, Satan still comes to you, you have to remain patient and see the bigger picture. Don't look at the smaller picture, look at the bigger goal. Then, we talk about how Muslims are guaranteed victory, how Imam Mahdi [the Messiah] is going to come. Jesus is going to come. We don't have to do anything, we have to wait. And that is the "greater jihad" to wait. To struggle against oneself.<sup>108</sup>*

active attempts in the community to address potential radicalization, not just responses to instances after they occur.

Muslim-Americans have also become more cautious about the content of messages delivered in mosques. In Seattle, one mosque reviews the texts of sermons in advance of Friday prayers:

*With our Juma [Friday midday prayer], we have a khutba [sermon] committee, and we screen our khateeb [lecturers] to make sure that the khutba is inspiring instead of mongering fear among the Muslims, so I think that helps with keeping us balanced. ... So far we haven't had to tell a khateeb that they are not welcome back, but we are willing to do that.<sup>74</sup>*

The Islamic Society of Greater Houston, which operates most of the mosques in the area, also screens prayer leaders.

*There is a khateeb committee which certifies local people who give them the training, what to say, what not to say, what is allowed, what is not allowed, educate them that the audience are from every school of thought. ... If there is somebody coming from out of town, who the community does not know, then they have to go through the screening from the executive body, from the president and the executive. They have a list from the State Department of blacklisted organizations and blacklisted people, so we do see that they don't belong to any of those, and then we get statements from them that they are not associated with any of those organizations that are blacklisted.<sup>75</sup>*

In Buffalo, where Muslim-Americans have been under intense scrutiny since the conviction of the Lackawanna Six, mosques perform significant background checks on proposed speakers. Even before the Lackawanna case, local mosques were uneasy about radical

*We monitor the groups that come through our masjids. There's no other way to say it. We monitor our masjids. If you want to speak at our*

## We Monitor Our Masjids

*masjids, we want to know who you are and what you're going to talk about. You're not just going to come in and speak to our youth and we're going to be disappointed with certain things after you start talking. That's not going to happen anymore.*

*Interviewer: Is this a result of Lackawanna? Yes, a direct result.*

*Interviewer: Are all the masjids in the area involved in this?*

*Yes. We told the imams, "Look, you have to know who comes and talks at your mosque, and we want to know what you talk about. We're not going to let somebody talk after the prayer and then you radicalize them. We're not going back to that—those are the old days, they are over." ...*

*Interviewer: Can you give me an example of a case when you monitored the masjids and you saw somebody who came in and you thought was not appropriate and you asked them to leave?*

*Yes, we did. We asked them to leave—peacefully. Let me back up. It was an individual. Before we could physically remove him, we had to find out what were our rights with law enforcement. So we talked to the law enforcement on what steps we should take. And we took those steps. They can go to another masjid, but they're going to be monitored there too. So we asked him kindly, saying we're not comfortable with this, and if not, we're going to forcefully remove this person.*

*There is no nice way about this [removing someone], I don't know how you can be nice about this. It's a problem because Muslims are very nice people, but there is really no nice way of removing a person out of the masjid. In a case like this, you have to confront the person and ask him to leave.<sup>109</sup>*



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## [S]elf-policing does not appear to be reducible simply to strategic calculations of self-interest

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imams who occasionally visited the area. One imam who came through in early 2001 and spoke of revolutionary jihad at the main Yemeni mosque was immediately banned from the premises. The militant who recruited six local youths to attend training camps in Afghanistan in early 2001 did not use the mosque for his meetings, but a nearby apartment instead.<sup>76</sup> Since then, Muslim-Americans in Buffalo have not left this to chance, as one community leader explained (see **“We Monitor Our Masjids,”** previous page).

On at least one occasion, self-policing by Muslim-Americans apparently interfered with law enforcement intelligence operations. In 2007, the Islamic Center of Irvine, California, won a temporary restraining order barring Craig Monteilh from the mosque. Monteilh had worried mosque officials by advocating violence and attempting to recruit congregants for potential terrorist plots. Monteilh subsequently claimed to have been an informant for the FBI. While the FBI did not confirm this claim, the Bureau relied on Monteilh’s testimony at a bail hearing for a Muslim-American from the mosque who was charged with immigration violations.<sup>77</sup> This case was publicized widely among Muslim-Americans in early 2009 when Monteilh went public with his claims, and it served to confirm suspicions among many Muslim-Americans that government informants are widespread in mosques around the country.

After another incident in 2009, in which a government informant recruited four Muslim-Americans in Newburgh, New York, and allegedly plotted with them to bomb a synagogue in the Bronx, the imam of the Newburgh mosque went on a national speaking tour to warn Muslims to be on the look-out for entrapment. A flyer advertising one of his appearances stated, “He is encouraging Muslims to avoid entrapment by reporting

any suspicious and radical talk heard in their presence to the authorities.”

While some of the motivation for self-policing by Muslim-Americans is clearly self-preservation—not wanting to be caught up in a sting operation or be associated with anybody who is causing trouble—self-policing does not appear to be reducible simply to strategic calculations of self-interest. In addition to anxiety that another act of terrorism in the U.S. could result in collective punishment against all Muslim-Americans, our respondents also cite ethical principles and sacred sources when speaking of self-policing, suggesting that this is simply proper religious comportment.

### 3. COMMUNITY-BUILDING

Of Muslim-Americans who have engaged in terrorist violence since September 11, 2001, there is no single pattern concerning the extent to which the were integrated into their communities. Some of them were loners who had little connection to any community at all; some had deeper connections abroad than locally; and some had stronger ties with a handful of buddies than with their community as a whole; and finally, some, like the Lackawanna Six, were well known and turned in by a community member. In the case of the Muslims from North Carolina indicted in 2009, it appears that the individuals were initially integrated into the community, but as they radicalized, they left their masjids and became more isolated.

In order for Muslim-American communities to bring collective pressure on individuals inclined to radicalize, they must draw those individuals into the organizations and social networks that counter radical beliefs, such as mosques, Islamic centers, religious bookstores, ethnic

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## The direct goal of these activities is not to prevent radicalization, though that appears to have been an unintended outcome

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institutions, civil rights organizations, and other communal associations that draw Muslim-Americans together.

This image runs counter to some of the concerns expressed by non-Muslim Americans about Islamic organizations in the United States, which they perceive are channels for radicalization. Our evidence suggests the opposite: Muslim-American community-building is a significant factor in the prevention of radicalization.

Muslim-American community-building includes a variety of activities, some openly religious and some not, such as the following:

- Religious: Mosques, Islamic centers, lectures.
- Athletic: Basketball tournaments, soccer leagues.
- Cultural: Fashion shows, religious festivals, ethnic festivals, national-heritage holidays such as Pakistan Independence Day and Iranian New Year.
- Social: Charity events, dances, mixers.
- Organizational: Local, regional, and national associations and conferences, training sessions.
- Political: Lobbying, media-relations, voter-registration, electoral campaigns.

Our interview respondents and almost all observers agree that Muslim-Americans have stepped up community-building in all forms over the past two decades, especially since 9/11.

The direct goal of these activities is not to prevent radicalization, though that appears to have been an unintended outcome. Instead, these activities are intended to strengthen Muslim-American communities and serve community goals, which include protecting

Muslim-Americans' rights, deepening community members' faith, and spreading the message of Islam to non-Muslims.

Of particular concern to Muslim-Americans in community-building activities are Muslim-American youth. Many Muslim-American adults, both immigrants and U.S.-born, express concern that Muslim youths may drift away from their Islamic identity due to immersion in mainstream American culture. One young man described this as an existential problem that threatens the survival of Muslim-American communities.

*For me, from my perspective, growing up in public school, you tend to lose your identity and assimilate, a lot of people assimilate, especially when you're a minority. I remember growing up, in school, there were some Muslims that didn't act like they're Muslims, it was like, you wanted to fit in. A lot of people wanted to assimilate and fit it and not act according to what their religion is. I've even seen some eat pork – eat pepperonis [on their pizza], wouldn't even pull them off. ...*

*You're dealing with a lot of ignorant people, a lot of people who don't grow up with mothers and fathers, a lot of people who don't even know their fathers. So the way they act, and the way that the media amplifies the ignorance—all of a sudden, you may have two parents who love you and treat*



*you with respect and show you how to be a man, but you want to be out there with your pants hanging down on your butt just so you fit in, you know.*<sup>78</sup>

According to another young Muslim-American, addressing these influences is a higher priority than addressing the potential of radicalization.

*I don't think in [our] community we'll have anything to worry about [radicalization]. As a matter of fact, their greater concern is people losing faith in religion. The young generation is getting hooked on drugs, getting drunk, getting in car crashes—that's happened a lot, so I think that's more of their concern. ... I think that our community*

At the same time, the student observed, these mosque-sponsored activities also serve to reduce alienation in rare cases of potential radicalization.

*The community is prepared to deal with [this], because there have been like two or three instances, and they would deal with it in the same way [as youths who are looking at porn sites]. They would try to take this person aside, talk to them, try to incorporate them into the community atmosphere, try to get them involved in more youth activities in the community.*

Muslim-Americans' community-building activities also focus on recent immigrants. Some long-time residents, as well as some American-born Muslims, view

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## These mosque-sponsored youth activities also serve to reduce alienation in rare cases of potential radicalization

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*is more trying to combat youth looking at porn sites than radical Islam sites. ...*

*What the mosque has been trying to do is really focus on the youth, really focus on letting them have a place where they can be, where people in this situation don't have to be in a particular socio-economic status, everything is open, everything is free—try to unite them on things that they can, like playing basketball, going on trips, things that the mosque pays for, so that they won't have to, [things like] youth centers.*<sup>79</sup>

recent immigrants as less educated and less familiar with American institutions than immigrants from a generation ago.

*We have disintegrated, unfortunately, as time went on, because, unfortunately, we were a lot better 50 years ago, 40 years ago. We were a small group, most of us were educated—we came here as students, going to universities. We understood that Islam, the community, was our insurance. When somebody [in your family] died, somebody was going to help you. When some-*

*body got married, when somebody got sick, you knew somebody was going to help you. Now, unfortunately, we've got a lot of—I'm not bad-mouthing them—but we've got a lot of uneducated people coming from countries which are divided, and when they came, they brought their problems to us.<sup>80</sup>*

*I feel that there are lots of children that come from low-income families [of immigrants]. ... Their parents have very little*

*mesh well with American Muslims, and whether that's American as in African-American or Caucasian-American, or whether that's even American-born Muslim, period, you see a clash. And I think we're trying to step outside the box, in terms of, for example, immigrant Muslims are suspicious of law enforcement. Well, we have to be a little more pro-active in terms of saying, well, these are the people that are brought in to serve us.<sup>82</sup>*

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**“I think we're trying to step outside the box ...  
[about how] immigrant Muslims  
are suspicious of law enforcement.”**

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*knowledge of the American system, of the language, of the culture, and they themselves have a very low education level, no matter what they may have signed [on the immigration forms saying] that they have a bachelor's [degree], but it's really nothing close to the bachelor's you achieve in this country. They are basically semi-literate. They work very long hours, and the children in the meantime are being neglected, they are facing dangers the parents have no idea about. They are going to a school system they don't understand they have a say in, they can question the problems. For example, a very simple example, many of them don't even know that there is something called a parent-teacher conference.<sup>81</sup>*

*A lot of immigrant Muslims—they have some habits and tendencies that don't always*

In a process of Muslim-led assimilation that aims to preserve religious faith, these respondents and others work to include newer immigrants in Muslim-American institutions and help them to navigate the legal system, the schools, and unfamiliar cultural phenomena. The case of the approximately 20 young men from Minneapolis who traveled to Somalia to join the Shabaab demonstrates how immigrant assimilation efforts have not always been successful and how those efforts need to be strengthened, especially in communities isolated by language, culture, and economics.

In addition to acculturating its youth and new immigrants, Muslim-American community-building also incorporates ex-convicts, especially men who converted to Islam while in prison. Since they have only experienced Islamic life while incarcerated, these new Muslims have never attended a mosque or joined a Muslim celebration, and they have little idea of what it means to maintain a Muslim identity outside of prison.<sup>83</sup> Muslim-Americans have worked to integrate these people into their com-

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“That kind of thinking—  
that America is a great satan ...—  
is not welcome.”

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munities. One national organization, the Muslim Alliance in North America, has made this one of its top priorities; this group runs workshops to help local groups train staff and develop programs that support Muslim-American prisoners before and after their release.<sup>84</sup> In the Buffalo area, a local organization has extensive experience with this work.

*We try to build in the whole idea of reentry throughout their incarceration, and when they come out, we try to continue it—in other words, how to be a good father, how to be a good husband, how to be a productive community member, how to obtain a job, how to prepare for employment, those are the kinds of things we try to teach. We try to hold them accountable for their Islam, most importantly, because as a prisoner, as an inmate, it’s easy to be a good Muslim in there, because if you don’t, the other guys, they might beat you up or something. There is social pressure on you. But when you come out here, nobody really cares if you don’t go to a jum’a [Friday prayer]. So if you’re not strong enough to be the Muslim that’s in your heart, that’s in your head, then you might become another statistic in terms of recidivism.<sup>85</sup>*

A Muslim-American leader in North Carolina said that he and his mosque directly confront the hostility that some African-American ex-convicts express toward white America.

*It’s mainly because of the black experience, not the Islamic experience, because they are relatively new to Islam—they think that America is against African-Americans, and they say, well, America is against Muslims, so they try to put those two together. They*

*try to use their feelings of being mistreated and discriminated against by America to say “Death to America,” that type of thing.*

*We’ve been very, very firm with people who come here, to this mosque. We make it very clear to them what our expectations are, this is the behavior we expect from you, and let it be known that that kind of thinking—that America is a great satan, because America is “the Beast,” as some black radical might say—is not welcome. Now you have a choice to come integrate into society, and we will help you.<sup>86</sup>*

The primary goal of this outreach is to encourage Islamic piety, but a side effect, as one Muslim-American leader in Seattle noted, is to counteract potentially radical visions of Islam that some prisoners may have been exposed to.

*Some of them are educated over the internet. ... They have their way of thinking and understanding things, so we have tried to tell them to work on the basics and the spiritual side. Some of them understand this. I think by visiting them, they appreciate that. Otherwise, they will become internet scholars, which is dangerous for the future.*

*I personally went for a haircut, and met this person who had been released from prison, telling people that you have to make hijra [emigrate] from this country. I said to him, “Why are you telling people this?” Then, after a few years, I met him again, and he said, “Now I know why you said that.” He had a pretty radical view. I tried to make him understand, but I don’t think at that time he understood me. Afterwards, he understood.<sup>87</sup>*

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## Their communities were reaching out to socially isolated individuals to ensure that they did not engage in negative behaviors

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Of special interest is this discussion of Muslim-American community building are the social isolates—loners, sometimes struggling with mental problems—who are not active participants in communal life. Some Muslim-Americans who have radicalized since 9/11 to become terrorists appear to fit this description. In North Carolina, for example, Mohammad Taheri-Azar—who drove his car through campus in March 2006, trying to run people over to avenge U.S. foreign policies toward Muslims—had almost no connection with other Muslim-Americans. He had occasionally attended meetings of the Muslim Students Association at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, but, according to a fellow student, he did not feel welcome there. As a result, Taheri-Azar “self-excluded himself.” “[Other Muslim-American students] thought he was crazy from the beginning. ... People would avoid him, but at the same time, he avoided others.”<sup>88</sup> The local police and the FBI interviewed a variety of people who had known him over the years, apparently concluding that none of them had any foreknowledge of his plot. According to Taheri-Azar himself, in letters written from jail while he awaited trial, he was so isolated at the time of his plot that he could not produce even three friends to attest to his good moral character on a handgun permit application.<sup>89</sup>

Several of our interview respondents said that their communities were reaching out to socially isolated individuals to ensure that they did not engage in negative behaviors. “When you don’t get engaged in positive stuff, you’re going to get engaged in self-defeating stuff,” a community activist in North Carolina told us. “A lot of messages were given out: Do your own thing, don’t get engaged, there is no hope. ... Disengagement—I don’t think it has led to much radical action, it has led mainly to self-defeating action, by making this

society or this community seem to be an unacceptable community.”<sup>90</sup>

More than a year prior to Taheri-Azar’s attack, one of the largest Islamic organizations in North Carolina had partnered with public-health students and faculty from the University of North Carolina to assess the major issues facing the local Muslim-American community, and had concluded, among other things, that one priority was the provision of more counseling services for community members who were struggling with social, financial, or psychological difficulties.<sup>91</sup> “Everything you see in American society is there [in Muslim-American communities],” the professor supervising the project told us. Four years after the report was completed, local Muslim American organizations now had several psychologists on staff, but there was more to be done. “We still as a community need to develop that competence.”<sup>92</sup>

It is worth noting a trend that runs counter to Muslim-American community-building efforts: the impulse to expel potential trouble-makers from community organizations. This trend grows out of the community’s desire to self-police, to protect its members from the actions of the troublesome individual or from suspicion or backlash if the individual were to break any laws. Several of our respondents noted that the recent climate of heightened security concerns has made some people wary of being associated in any way with individuals who might be the focus of law enforcement operations. These concerns undermine the social connections that might allow the community to moderate or, in worst case scenarios, monitor individuals who express radical views. In the words of one respondent, “I think the FBI needs to make it very clear that by you helping us combat terrorism, you will not be harmed.”<sup>93</sup>

#### 4. POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

A further set of efforts that Muslim-Americans have undertaken since September 11, 2001, involve participation in the democratic politics of the United States. As with other activities of Muslim-American communities, the primary goal is not preventing radicalization, but is, instead, the defense of the rights and interests of Muslim-Americans in a political environment that they experience as threatening. Nonetheless, this political mobilization has the effect of channeling grievances into democratic forums and integrating Muslim-Americans into the democratic system.

This pattern follows in the footsteps of other minority and immigrant groups in the United States, such as the Irish in the mid-19th century, Jews in the early 20th century, and African-Americans in the mid-20th century. Muslim-Americans often liken their current situation to the trajectory of these other groups. At times the analogy is with the African-Americans. “The civil rights movement succeeded because all African-Americans were united in their demand for constitutional rights,” one national Muslim-American organization emphasized in a call to Muslims to involve themselves in electoral politics. “Given our low level of political engagement preceding the 9/11 terrorist attacks, we found very few friends in the government in the aftermath of the 9/11, the legacy of which is still felt today.”<sup>94</sup> At other times, the analogy is with Irish-Americans, who are also classified as white by the U.S.

Census, but who have historically been considered non-white and suffered racial discrimination.<sup>95</sup> Some Muslim-Americans have also drawn an analogy with Jewish-Americans, who have achieved a significant role in U.S. politics despite their small numbers.<sup>96</sup>

One avenue for Muslim-American political participation draws directly on the model of civil rights activism of other groups, such as the NAACP. The most famous of this sort of organization, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), issues a steady stream of press releases and annual reports that publicize and denounce hate crimes and other instances of discrimination against Muslim-Americans.<sup>97</sup> The Council contacts government officials to make sure that anti-discriminatory laws are passed and enforced, works with attorneys to bring lawsuits on behalf of Muslim-Americans who have suffered discrimination, and holds workshops around the country to train Muslim-Americans to defend their rights. In a recent CAIR newsletter, leaders linked these activities directly to the legacy of other civil rights movements in the United States:

*Muslim-Americans recognize that the predicament they are in today is not isolated but lies within a larger context of civil rights struggles in America. Muslim-Americans are not the first group to face widespread prejudice and systemic discrimination. Jewish, Hispanic and Japanese-Americans have had their share of injustices leveled against them. And no other community has come close*

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Political mobilization has the effect  
of channeling grievances  
into democratic forums

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*to the long-standing suffering of the African-American community. Now, Muslim-Americans are among those at the forefront of the civil rights movement. This movement asks for a society subject to the rigor of law, governed by a system of transparency and accountability wherein the constitution applies to all equally.<sup>98</sup>*

In addition, Muslim-American organizations have become increasingly active in electoral politics. Several Muslim-American groups have followed the example of other minority groups, conducting voter-registration

drives and issue-advocacy campaigns at the state and national levels. Muslim-Americans engaged in an unprecedented level of political activity during the presidential election season of 2008.<sup>99</sup>

The efforts of national organizations are supplemented by those of local Muslim-American groups. In keeping with the quintessentially American pattern of civil-society associations, these groups have proliferated to the point that they must compete with one another for the support of Muslim-American communities. This sometimes leads to acrimony, but it also teaches pluralism and coalition-building. These groups have come together to support Muslim-American candidates,

*We asked the attorney, what can we do? And he said, "Listen, this society is built on the power of two things. Money and politics. You already have the money, because you hired me as an attorney and you pay me very well, and I will earn it. But*

*Interviewer: Just a few years ago, I used to hear some Muslims say that involvement in politics is not something they should do, because this is a non-Muslim country.*

*That is exactly what we used to say, but what we do today—theoretically, it is very easy to say [avoid political involvement], but practically, we consider Islam as a dynamic faith. You have no case in your life for which Islam doesn't have an answer. Even Ibn Taymiyya, one of the*

## What Will Harm Them, Will Harm Us

*the other thing, politics—the power of voters over the legislators—you don't have this." ...*

*It took us about one and a half years to go through this whole process, on that advice. And of course, we could not get involved, because we are a non-profit organization, so we established—the community, not me— ... a political organization to practice our voting process. And it was very successful, with the blessing of Allah. ...*

*The next voting process was in November, and both of those two guys [on the city council who had opposed the mosque expansion] were completely out, and the one who had really supported our project came into office. And now it was very clear. ... We are citizens. We pay the same taxes as other people, but our shortcoming was that we were not voting. But when we had that organized effort, it was very successful. ...*

*great Islamic scholars at the time of the Mongols ... gave a very good answer [to this question of political involvement in non-Muslim governments]. He said, "Of course, originally, you should not. But in this case, if you find yourself taking that position, reducing the harm to the public, now it has become not only lawful but an obligation, an Islamic obligation. ... I delivered a khutba [sermon] on these issues at that time, it was very good. Yes, this is not allowed in the beginning, but when we are facing some type of evil or harm, what can you do? And that is really the dynamic nature of our shari'a. ...*

*I still look at it like we still are in the beginning stages. We are not being organized properly in the political arena. Because really, we are part of this society, we are citizens. What will harm them, will harm us, and sometimes what will harm them harms us first. So how can I isolate myself from the entire society?<sup>10</sup>*

some of whom have been elected to office in non-Muslim-majority districts, including a state senator in North Carolina, a city councilor in Houston, and school board members in the Buffalo region and elsewhere. Perhaps more importantly, Muslim-Americans have mobilized around local issues that they consider serious grievances for their affected communities.

In North Carolina, for example, a mosque sought a building permit to expand to accommodate the growing Muslim-American population in the region. Two city council members blocked the permit. The imam did not believe that it was religiously justified for Muslims to participate politically in a non-Muslim country, but a conversation with the mosque's attorney changed his mind, and he later drew on Islamic jurisprudence to bolster this position (see **"What Will Harm Them, Will Harm Us,"** previous page). In the Buffalo area, where Muslim-Americans have been a significant presence for several generations, political participation has historically been limited, but that is changing. One young man, a third-generation Yemeni-American, described his Muslim-American identity and the beginnings of political involvement at the local level, where the most pressing issues involve potholes and schools (see **"We Are Not Against America,"** this page). In Seattle, as well, political involvement is only just emerging. One community leader identified lobbying as the primary outlet for these efforts.

*Most Muslims are scared stiff. Most Muslims are first-generation Muslims who come from the old country, wherever that is. We come from a country that is a dictatorship, that is a tyranny and a despotism. You raise your head in that country and they will whack your head off. And we come to this country and we still think that if we say anything, we'll get our heads whacked off. So most of us keep our heads down, we go to work, we come back, we pretend that nothing is happening, hoping that nothing will happen. A few of us make the noises. A few of us*

*We are not against the government. We are not against America. We look at ourselves as part of the American people. We want to help this country because this is the country we live in. ... My grandfather came to the United States in the 40s. I'm here because he came here. And believe it or not, there were two instances after 9/11 where somebody told me, "Go back to your country." I am in my country! If I want to go somewhere else, I have to get a visa from there. For example, if I wanted to go to Yemen. This is my country. Where do you want me to go? Once I heard this from a guy who got out of his car and wanted to fight me. "I'm probably more American than you. Probably you're second generation. I'm third generation!" But the*

## **We Are Not Against America**

*government is not helping—it's worsening the situation by fostering the impression that Islam is associated with terrorism. ...*

*Interviewer: Would you say that local government pays attention to your community's voices?*

*They do, but they don't respond to it. Like, we have a street here, if you drive down one these roads here, 90 percent of that street is Muslim-owned houses, working Americans, taxpayers, and we want that street fixed. I mean, it's like a roller coaster. We invited county authorities and housing people, and they say, "Oh yeah, we'll take care of it." But there is delay after delay after delay. However, you see in other places, where the majority are white, the streets get repaired over and over and over.*

*Interviewer: I wonder, somebody might say maybe it's time for you to elect a local politician from your community.*

*I don't know. We have currently two people that we elected to the school board last year, because we were concerned about education of our children. That was our focus. We pushed for these two people. We gathered behind them and elected them to the school board, one in the high school and one on the middle school. So we try to get involved.<sup>111</sup>*

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## While some observers are concerned that heightened expressions of Muslim-American piety may be a sign of impending radicalization, there is evidence to the contrary

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*are going around talking to decision-makers and saying, "You can't do this."*

*Interviewer: Do you think these voices are effective?*

*Oh, yes, absolutely. If they weren't effective, I would give it up. Just one major accomplishment we had was a meeting with the police chief. ... Our problem is: I don't mind if our law enforcement people are trained about religion, so long as that course is about religion and more than one religion is being discussed there. I don't mind if law enforcement is being trained about terrorism. They should be trained about terrorism and criminal behavior. Our problem is: You cannot be training any law enforcement, or anybody really, in criminal behavior and one race, religion, or national origin in the same class. Because without saying it, what you're saying is, "Let's talk about terrorism, and let's talk about Islam," and the connection is made. You don't have to say there is a connection. And he agreed completely. He issued a memo just a couple of weeks ago saying to his senior staff, Please don't approve courses that teach criminal behavior and a race, religion, or ethnic group at the same time.<sup>100</sup>*

These mechanisms for political representation enable the experience of discrimination and other grievances to be directed toward the government, where they can be addressed. Such political self-assertion treats democracy as part of the solution, not part of the problem. Some Muslim-Americans express impatience with these solutions, just as some African-Americans

expressed impatience with the civil rights movement in the 1960s. Now, as then, the question is whether political action will yield sufficient returns to keep militancy at bay.

### 5. IDENTITY POLITICS

The expression of a Muslim-American identity has taken on an increasingly assertive tone in the years since the 9/11 attacks. This trend has taken the form of young women wearing headscarves at political rallies, young men growing beards as an embodiment of their faith, workers in various industries claiming the right to take breaks for prayers; parents sending their children to Islamic schools, and other public expressions of Islamic piety.

While some observers are concerned that heightened expressions of Muslim-American piety may be a sign of impending radicalization, there is evidence to the contrary. The Pew Research Center's 2007 survey of Muslim-Americans found that respondents who said religion was very important in their lives were one-third less likely than other respondents to consider attacks on civilians to be sometimes or often justified "in order to defend Islam from its enemies."<sup>101</sup> (Justifications of these attacks were very unlikely—under 10 percent—among both sets of Muslim-American respondents. By way of comparison, according to a separate poll of a national sample, 24 percent of Americans considered "bombing and other types of attacks intentionally aimed at civilians" to be sometimes or often justified.)<sup>102</sup>

Muslim-American identity is itself a product of Americanization. For generations, Muslims in the United States were not "Muslim-American"—rather, they identified themselves by ethnicity, such as Arab or Tatar.

With the emergence of hyphenated American identities in the 1960s, many Muslims in the U.S. also adopted hyphenated identities along ethnic lines, such as Arab-American. Only since 9/11, spurred by national security programs, has “Muslim-American” become a popular self-designation. Like other recently invented pan-ethnic identities in the U.S., such as Hispanic-American and Asian-American, Muslim-American identity was promoted in part by a political movement that sought to aggregate sub-groups in order to increase visibility and influence. The organizations that have taken this name in their title or mission statements, such as the Muslim American Society, are among the leaders in mobilizing their constituency for political participation.

The assumption of a Muslim-American identity may have resonated in part because it reflects the new

*the youth have held on to their Islamic identity, and maybe—I don’t want to say abandoned—they have given their [ethnic] heritage or their lineage less importance. But at the same time many youth have given their Islamic identity more importance. So you’ll find a lot of youth who are good American Muslims, who are very American by their culture, by their norms, but who still at the same time hold on to their Islamic identities. ...*

*[Local institutions] play an important role in differentiating between what is something that we as Muslims can’t give up and what is something that is cultural and isn’t neces-*

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Only since 9/11, spurred by national security programs, has “Muslim-American” become a popular self-designation.

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social configuration of Islam in the United States. Over the past several decades, immigration and conversion have turned Muslim communities into far more multi-ethnic sites than the homogenous enclaves of a generation ago. According to a survey of more than 400 mosques in 2000, one third had no majority of participants from any single ethnic group.<sup>103</sup> Immigrants from numerous countries come to know one another far more than they would have in their home countries, creating a new Islamic identity that is distinct from the narrower sense of ethnic identity, as described by one young Muslim-American leader:

*I think the cultural traditions or the cultural norms largely have been almost dropped from the youth generation, but many of*

*sarily part of the religion. For me, as a Muslim, to give up part of my religion is unacceptable to me, but for me to give up a certain custom that my family has held or that people from Egypt do isn’t as big a deal.<sup>104</sup>*

An immigrant in Seattle noticed the same phenomenon with his American-born children:

*I can tell you about my kids, they like to think of [themselves as] mainstream Americans. They are American Muslims. I’m not sure about other families, but my family, that’s how I see them. They don’t want to*



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## Muslim-Americans are becoming more American, not less American, as they engage in identity politics

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*associate themselves with any ethnic group per se. They don't want to think of Muslims as ethnic people. Islam is a faith, it's a religion, there is no specific ethnic group that is associated with it. There are all kinds of Muslims. So they think of themselves as Americans and Muslims.<sup>105</sup>*

This pan-ethnic Muslim-American identity has deep-roots in Islamic history, originating in debates in the first generations of Islam over whether non-Arabs could be considered full Muslims. Today, many Islamic groups, including terrorist groups, claim to speak on behalf of the entire umma, the global community of Muslims. However, the pan-ethnic identity of Muslim-Americans serves to undermine terrorism by emphasizing the compatibility of Muslim-ness and American-ness. These are not two civilizations on a crash course, but instead two civilizations overlapping and melding. A recent book offers an outspoken vision of this double identity:

*This anthology is about women who don't remember a time when they weren't both American and Muslim. ... We wore Underoos and watched MTV. We know juz 'amma (the final thirtieth [chapter] of the Qur'an) and Michael Jackson's Thriller by heart. We played Atari and Game Boy and competed in Qur'anic recitation competitions. As we enter our twenties, thirties, and forties we have settled into the American Muslim identity that we've pioneered.<sup>106</sup>*

One of our respondents, a religiously conservative young man who was born and raised in New York State, echoed this double identity, drawing out its implications as a bulwark against radicalization:

*Muslims who grow up in this country, who know Americans and who know America, who consider themselves American—I consider myself American, my kid will be an American. Why would he hate himself? ...*

*See, people would look at me and they'd think, this guy is a radical, and I understand how they would come up with that conclusion, because they look at what they see on TV and they look at me and they put two and two together. So I hope to see a Muslim revival among Muslims and among non-Muslims in the United States. I hope to see more Muslims practicing Islam and proud of their Islam. ... I'd like to see a religious revival among American Muslims, but that doesn't mean radicalization, it doesn't mean that they are going to hate America and everything that we as Americans stand for.<sup>107</sup>*

Our conclusion is that Muslim-Americans are becoming more American, not less American, as they engage in identity politics. The formation of Muslim-American Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops is a powerful example of this process. On one hand, these groups are a form of separatism, marking Muslim-American youths as distinct from other American children. But the fact that these groups emerged within the American scouting movement is a sign that they are embracing, not rejecting, their American-ness. So far as we can find, no Muslim-American scout has ever engaged in an act of terrorism—and we feel it is a safe bet to predict that none ever will.



## Part 3. Conclusions and Recommendations

This research project found that Muslim-American communities strongly reject radical jihadi ideology, are eager to contribute to the national counterterrorism effort, and are fiercely committed to integration within the mainstream of American social and economic life. As explained in Part 2 of this report, Muslim-American communities are taking a variety of positive steps that help prevent radicalization within their communities: 1) they consistently denounce terrorism directed at the United States; 2) they engage in self-policing by prohibiting radical sermons in their mosques and taking action against radical views expressed by outsiders or community members; 3) they are building strong institutions within their communities to direct their youth in a positive direction; 4) they are addressing their grievances through political mobilization; and 5) they are emphasizing their identity as Muslim-Americans. In addition, Muslim-Americans have developed strong working relationships with federal and local law enforcement agencies.

hanced security measures, they also perceive many government counterterrorism, security, and immigration policies to be unfair and discriminatory in their application to Muslims-Americans. Finally, they have many disagreements with American foreign policy. These disagreements have been present for many decades, but due to 9/11 and subsequent events over the past eight years in the United States, the Middle East, and South Asia, these issues have become more relevant and the schisms more intense.

The presence of these tensions does not, in our view, imply widespread radicalization among Muslim-Americans or the potential for widespread radicalization in the future. However, isolated instances of radicalization may continue to occur in the corners of society because small groups or individuals who are vulnerable to radicalization or who are socially isolated may misinterpret and magnify the discontent and unease among mainstream Muslim-Americans.

Our recommendations, therefore, have two goals: building on the successes of Muslim-American com-

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### The most significant positive trend ... is the increased political mobilization of Muslim-Americans

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Nonetheless, there is an uneasy tension in the relationship between Muslim-Americans and other Americans that causes concern. Whether it is from public opinion polls, media coverage, commentary by angry voices on the Internet and talk radio, or portrayals of Muslims in popular culture, Muslim-Americans sense an element of hostility towards both Islam and Muslims emanating from at least a portion of American society. Also, while Muslim-Americans accept the need for en-

munities that are associated with low levels of radicalization in the United States and creating a more positive environment for Muslim-Americans so their anti-radicalization measures will continue to be effective.

#### 1. Encourage Political Mobilization

The most significant positive trend we have identified is the increased political mobilization of Muslim-Americans. Participation of Muslim-Americans in political life

has a number of positive impacts: 1) grievances are brought into the public sphere and clearly articulated so they do not fester and deepen, 2) disputes are resolved through debate, compromise, and routine political procedures, and 3) political mobilization leads to ever-increasing numbers of Muslim-American leaders speaking responsibly about difficult issues on both the national and international stages. The political mobilization of Muslim-Americans is not only a beneficial development in terms of stunting domestic radicalization, but it also demonstrates to Muslims around the world that Muslims do have a voice in America and are working to resolve their grievances through peaceful, democratic means.

We believe that public officials should encourage the continued political mobilization of Muslim-American communities and take steps to further integrate Muslim-Americans and Muslim-American organizations into American political life. Both major political parties should organize to actively seek the Muslim-American vote as they do with other ethnic and religious groups. Public officials should attend events at mosques as they do at churches and synagogues. Muslim-American community groups should be invited to participate in com-

President Obama has continued the tradition of holding an Iftar dinner at the White House which is a positive and important statement. He should make a special effort to hold other events with Muslim-Americans to address the disappointment many felt during the presidential campaign, in which the false claim that he is a Muslim was used by some as a political weapon and perceived as a political vulnerability.

Inclusion of Muslim-American organizations in our political system is also important and needs to be encouraged. We neither support nor oppose the agendas of Muslim-American organizations; we merely note that such groups play a valuable role in our political system and are one avenue for individuals to express themselves and gain representation for their views.

## 2. Promote Public Denunciations of Violence

Public opinion polls in the United States suggest that a significant minority of Americans are highly suspicious of Muslim-Americans and seemingly unaware of the consistent and strong public denunciations of violence by Muslim-American organizations and leaders.

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## Americans are ... seemingly unaware of the consistent and strong public denunciations of violence by Muslim-American organizations and leaders

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munity forums and events. It will be beneficial if these activities take place at both the national and local levels of government. We believe it is in our national security interest for members of both parties to appear publicly with Muslim leaders, attend events with Muslims, attend services at mosques, and promote Muslim candidates in elections.

We believe that these denunciations of violence are an important reflection of Muslim-American opinion and values. Muslim organizations at all levels should continue to issue these denunciations following incidents here or abroad, even to the point of redundancy, and vigorously publicize them. We recommend that local organizations and mosques do so as well. Public officials, who often comment on terrorism-related inci-

dents or arrests, should include these denunciations from Muslim-Americans in their commentary. The media should routinely include these denunciations as part of their coverage.

### **3. Reinforce Self-Policing Efforts by Improving the Relationship Between Law Enforcement and Muslim-American Communities**

This project identified initiatives by Muslim-Americans to police their own communities against radicalization. These efforts can take many forms. In one instance, mosque officials worked with law enforcement to identify a wayward youth vulnerable to radicalization, bring him back into the community, and assist him to-

For their part, Muslim-American communities must recognize that simply purging radicalized individuals from their communities is not sufficient. Such action may push these individuals even further away from mainstream thought, accelerate the radicalization process, and possibly lead to violence. Muslim-American leaders must promote a culture where cooperation with law enforcement is not only accepted, but perceived as a duty, to both the Muslim-American community and the broader American public. In order to foster such cooperation, law enforcement must demonstrate that it is capable of dealing with the problem of radicalization in a proportionate and sensitive manner that does not always result in arrest and prosecution. It is a far better result from all perspectives if individuals

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## **Law enforcement must demonstrate that it is capable of dealing with the problem of radicalization in a proportionate and sensitive manner**

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ward a stable, productive future. There are also examples, often underreported or ignored by the press, where Muslim-Americans provided information to law enforcement that led to surveillance, arrests, and prosecutions. On other occasions, individuals expressing radical ideas have simply been purged, thrown out of their mosques and rejected by the broader community.

The appropriate course of action to be taken when evidence is uncovered of possible radicalization will of course vary from case to case. There are costs and benefits to each of these different approaches. In general terms, however, we propose that Muslim-American communities and law enforcement agencies cooperate more closely to overcome mutual suspicions and achieve common goals. This will require affirmative steps by both Muslim-Americans and law enforcement, as well as renewed pathways for working together.

heading towards radicalization can be—rather than arrested and prosecuted—deterred from their actions and have their lives re-directed. Law enforcement and Muslim-American communities need to discuss the type of interventions that might lead to such results and develop guidelines for determining when community intervention might be appropriate.

A second source of tension is the perception by Muslim-Americans that law enforcement has aggressively and inappropriately used informants in their communities on counterterrorism cases. Law enforcement agencies should recognize that these tactics may be counterproductive if the use of informants causes long-term harm to their relationship with Muslim-American communities. Muslim-Americans, for their part, should understand that the use of informants is an accepted, traditional law enforcement practice and may be nec-

essary in appropriate cases to gather evidence on individuals who are a potential danger.

To address this issue, we propose a candid dialogue between law enforcement and Muslim-American communities about the handling of criminal cases and the use of informants. Law enforcement agencies should develop policies for when the use of informants in Muslim-American communities is appropriate and discuss these policies openly with community leaders. For this dialogue to be productive, Muslim-Americans must acknowledge that there is a continuing, albeit low level, problem of radicalization in their community. They need to be vigilant in their self-policing and continue to build a trusting relationship with law enforcement, which at times may require them to identify individuals within their community as deserving of law

Second, the FBI and local law enforcement agencies should increase their outreach efforts, which, in general, have been received positively. These agencies, however, must grasp the diversity of social groups within Muslim-American communities. Current efforts appear to focus centrally on mosques, but there is no single point of access to the Muslim-American community. Ethnic associations, neighborhood groups, youth groups, women's organizations, and other sorts of social organizations are also representatives of Muslim-American communities. These communities are not defined by their faith alone. Successful programs such as the FBI's Bridges Program and Citizen's Academy should be expanded. We found positive reactions to these programs in Buffalo and other locations, and we

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## [Muslim-American] communities are not defined by their faith alone

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enforcement scrutiny. Turning a blind eye towards potential problems is a counterproductive and potentially dangerous path. An open dialogue on a full range of issues will help to reinforce the positive self-policing efforts by Muslim-Americans that we have identified in this project.

Besides resolving grievances over use of law enforcement tactics, other positive steps can be taken to build a stronger relationship between law enforcement agencies and Muslim-American communities.

First, the relationship can be strengthened and solidified by hiring more Muslim law enforcement officers. A full range of affirmative steps need to be taken to accomplish this task, including recruiting at schools in predominantly Muslim areas and institutions.

recommend that similar programs be made available nationally.

Third, law enforcement agencies should recognize the diversity of ethnicities within Muslim-American communities, which ranges across many nationalities, from Arab, to African-American, to recent Chinese-Muslim immigrants. The continuous influx of Muslim immigrants not only adds to the size of the Muslim-American community, but also creates new challenges and opportunities. It is important not to approach Muslim-Americans with a single ethnic- and religion-driven template.

#### 4. Assist Community-Building Efforts

Our research suggests that building strong community institutions helps to prevent radicalization. Strong communities can provide educational outreach to Muslims who are uninformed about Islamic principles opposing terrorism; they can identify those whose lives have gone in the wrong direction and are in need of assistance; and they can provide positive experiences for youth. Many Muslim-American communities have the resources to build community institutions without assistance; others do not. We recommend that all levels of government make additional efforts to offer disadvantaged Muslim-American communities such community-building resources as funding for recreation centers, day care centers, public health clinics, and courses in English as a Second Language. There is a special need for these resources in isolated immigrant communities.

We also recommend specific attention to one particular need for preventing violence: training to identify signs of mental illness. Most of those who have radicalized and plotted or engaged in violence are perfectly healthy, but there are some notable instances of Mus-

#### 5. Promote Outreach by Social Service Agencies

Muslim-American communities desire collaboration and outreach with the government beyond law enforcement, in areas such as public health, education, and transportation. Moving toward this type of engagement acknowledges that Muslim-American communities have needs and concerns in addition to contributing to the nation's counterterrorism efforts.

We recommend greater efforts by government agencies at the federal and local level to direct resources toward Muslim communities to improve public health, education, and transportation. This kind of engagement is viewed as an opportunity for Muslim-Americans to become stakeholders in the general community. Recent immigrants, for example, may not be familiar with methods for accessing available social service resources. We believe that general engagement in these areas will contribute to counter-radicalization efforts by improving community integration and reducing the isolation of vulnerable populations.

Specific issue areas that could be addressed through education and other social services, with direct impli-

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**Muslim-American communities desire  
collaboration and outreach with the government  
beyond law enforcement**

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lim-Americans who were mentally ill and became violent. A number of the respondents for this project mentioned that the signs of mental illness were not well understood in Muslim-American communities and that it would be valuable to provide training to recognize signs of mental illness.

cations for the prevention of radicalization, include internet security (a major portal through which youth may become radicalized), identifying and diagnosing individuals with psychological and mental health issues, and integrating former prisoners into the community.



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**Our shared goals are to enhance trust, increase public safety, and create a positive social environment for Muslim-Americans. With capable leaders acting in good faith, we believe these goals are achievable**

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#### **6. Support Enhanced Religious Literacy**

This research confirmed what has been observed in other studies of Muslim terrorists: most of those who engage in religiously inspired terrorism have little formal training in Islam and, in fact, are poorly educated about Islam.<sup>112</sup> At the same time, we have observed, as have others, an increased religiosity among Muslim-Americans. This is to be welcomed, not feared. Muslim-Americans with a strong, traditional religious training are far less likely to radicalize than those whose knowledge of Islam is incomplete.

However, our research found a paucity of intellectual resources within the Muslim-American community to deal with a range of theological issues linked to violence, justice, and politics. Due to the levels of theological literacy among the religious and lay leadership of Muslim-American communities, Imams, leaders of community organizations, and professionals within the community were not always equipped to counter radical theologies peddled by more politicized members of the community.

It would not be appropriate for the government to play a leading role in this area. The Muslim-American community itself should invest in developing seminaries and programs for its own leadership. On-line education is a fairly inexpensive way to run courses that can be offered to Muslim leaders across the country. Foundations and universities may be willing to assist in the development of courses that address theological issues to assist in countering radical thought. Scholarship resources should be made available for graduate and doctoral work in these areas.

#### **7. Increase Civil Rights Enforcement**

There are already firmly institutionalized channels in place for addressing societal discrimination. Enhanced civil rights enforcement at local, state, and federal levels will contribute toward addressing Muslim-American concerns.

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In the eight years since the attacks of September 11, 2001, Muslim-Americans and government officials have acted to prevent radicalization and build a positive working relationship. Yet, there remains work to be done. Our shared goals are to enhance trust, increase public safety, and create a positive social environment for Muslim-Americans. With capable leaders acting in good faith, we believe these goals are achievable.

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41. Six individuals in the dataset are included in this group, popularly known as the Portland Seven. Five men were convicted. One successfully joined a fighting force and was killed. October Lewis was convicted of raising money to support her husband's travels to fight against U.S. forces, but was not included in the dataset because her offense did not involve a violent act.
42. Ten individuals in the dataset are part of this group, popularly known as the Northern Virginia Jihad Group. This includes nine of the eleven individuals initially indicted and Ali Al-Timimi, who was prosecuted for inciting the group to violence. Two of the individuals indicted were excluded; one was acquitted and one, a Yemeni national, was the son of a Yemeni diplomat who had not spent much time in the United States.
43. Four individuals in the dataset are part of this group.
44. Five individuals in the dataset are part of this group, popularly known as the Liberty City Seven. Two individuals initially indicted were acquitted at trial.
45. Five individuals in the dataset are included in this group.
46. Six individuals in the dataset are included in this group.
47. Nineteen individuals in the dataset are included in this group. Twelve of them are facing criminal charges. Three individuals are reported to have been killed. One of them, Shirwa Ahmad, likely committed the first suicide bombing by a Muslim-American, killing 30 people in an attack outside of Mogadishu.
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# Appendix: Muslim-American Terrorism Offenders, 2001-2009

## NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

An offender is included in this database if all of the following criteria are met:

1. the arrest or incident took place after September 11, 2001, and prior to the completion of this report on January 1, 2010;
2. the offender is Muslim-American; and
3. the offender
  - a. has been convicted on criminal charges for terrorism-related activity that includes some aspect of violence, which may consist of planning or directly supporting violence, or
  - b. has been arrested with a trial pending for terrorism-related activity that includes some aspect of violence, which may consist of planning or directly supporting violence, or
  - c. is currently being pursued by law enforcement for criminal activity according to public sources, or
  - d. was killed during a terrorist incident.

For criterion #2, individuals were considered to be Muslim-American if they lived in the United States for

more than a year prior to the arrest, regardless of their immigration status. Immigration status, if known, is reported in the dataset. Offenders are only included if the available evidence suggests that the offender became radicalized while living inside the United States. So, for example, an American citizen who spent most of his/her life in Saudi Arabia and then committed a terrorist offense would not be included in this dataset. Offenders are included if they are identified as being Muslim in public sources, or they described themselves as being Muslim.

For criteria #3a and #3b, offenders are included based on the charges upon which they were tried and convicted, or the official charges pending. Inclusion depends on the underlying conduct that constituted the basis for the charge. So, for example, individuals charged with material support for terrorism are included in the dataset if the conduct includes any element of violent activity, including attending a terrorist training camp, receiving weapons training, or stockpiling weapons. Individuals charged with material support for terrorism where the underlying conduct was exclusively the provision of financial support are not included. Offenders who were killed during an incident are presumed to have engaged in illegal conduct.

Name	Year of arrest or attack	Official charges	Status of case	Nature of offense	Location of criminal activity	Target of plot/location of violence	Engaged in violent act/joined fighting force	Age at time of arrest/attack	Age at arrival in US	Citizenship status	Convert to Islam	Ethnicity
John Walker Lindh	2001	Providing aid to the Taliban, carrying explosives	Pled guilty	Joined and fought with the Taliban.	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	20	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Caucasian
Ali al-Marri	2001	Conspiracy to provide material support to al-Qaida	Pled guilty	Attended terrorist training camp in Pakistan/Afghanistan; agreed to enter US to conduct terrorist activities.	US & Abroad	US	No	35	35	Legal resident	No	Arab
Mukhtar al-Bakri	2002	Providing material support to al-Qaida	Pled guilty	Attended terrorist training camp in Pakistan/Afghanistan. Lackawanna Six.	Abroad	None	No	22	Not known	Naturalized citizen	No	Arab
Sahim Alwan	2002	Providing material support to al-Qaida	Pled guilty	Attended terrorist training camp in Pakistan/Afghanistan. Lackawanna Six.	Abroad	None	No	29	US-born	Citizen	No	Arab
Kemal Derwish	2002	None	Killed by US in missile attack	Recruited Lackawanna Six. Left US in 2001. Killed in Yemen by US missile strike.	US & Abroad	None	No	24	US-born	Citizen	No	Arab
Jaber A. Elbaneh	2002	Providing material support to al-Qaida	Convicted in absentia	Attended terrorist training camp in Pakistan/Afghanistan. Member of Lackawanna group, but never returned to US from Afghanistan. Convicted in Yemen for conspiring to blow up an oil facility. Currently detained in Yemen.	Abroad	Abroad	No	35	Not known	Naturalized citizen	No	Arab
Faysal Galab	2002	Providing material support to al-Qaida	Pled guilty	Attended terrorist training camp in Pakistan/Afghanistan. Lackawanna Six.	Abroad	None	No	26	US-born	Citizen	No	Arab
Yahya Goba	2002	Providing material support to al-Qaida	Pled guilty	Attended terrorist training camp in Pakistan/Afghanistan. Lackawanna Six.	Abroad	None	No	25	US-born	Citizen	No	Arab
Shafiq Moses	2002	Providing material support to al-Qaida	Pled guilty	Attended terrorist training camp in Pakistan/Afghanistan. Lackawanna Six.	Abroad	None	No	24	US-born	Citizen	No	Arab
Yasein Taher	2002	Providing material support to al-Qaida	Pled guilty	Attended terrorist training camp in Pakistan/Afghanistan. Lackawanna Six.	Abroad	None	No	24	US-born	Citizen	No	Arab
Hesham Mohamed Hadayet	2002	None	Killed during incident	Opened fire at El Al ticket counter at Los Angeles International Airport.	US	US	Yes	41	31	Legal resident	No	Arab
Lee Boyd Malvo	2002	Capital murder	Convicted	Washington-area sniper.	US	US	Yes	17	14	Illegal	Yes	African-American
John Allen Muhammad	2002	Capital murder	Convicted	Washington-area sniper.	US	US	Yes	41	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Adham Hassoun	2002	Conspiracy to murder, kidnap and maim overseas; providing and conspiracy to provide material support for terrorists	Convicted	Operated as an al-Qaida support cell. Planned to send material support/commit attacks overseas. Convicted with Jose Padilla.	Abroad	Abroad	No	40	27	Illegal (over-stayed student visa)	No	Arab
Jose Padilla	2002	Conspiracy to murder, kidnap and maim overseas; providing and conspiracy to provide material support for terrorists	Convicted	Operated as an al-Qaida support cell. Planned to send material support/commit attacks overseas. Held as enemy combatant based on suspicion of dirty bomb plot—never charged on these activities.	US	None	No	31	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Latino
Semi Osman	2002	Indicted on weapons possession and immigration charges, though prosecution sought a sentence only appropriate in terrorism-linked immigration cases	Pled guilty, deported	Suspected as part of the cell that attempted to set up a terrorist training camp in Oregon at instruction of Abu Hamza al-Masri. Pled to lesser charge.	US	None	No	32	18	Legal resident	No	African
James Ujaama	2002	Providing material support to terrorists	Pled guilty	Set up a terrorist training camp in Oregon at instruction of Abu Hamza al-Masri, brought two fighters to camp, accompanied fighter to training camp in Afghanistan. Initially pled guilty to lesser charges in 2003; later violated parole and pled guilty to original charges.	US	None	No	36	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Charles Bishop	2002	None	Killed during incident	Flew Cessna aircraft into a downtown Tampa skyscraper. Suicide note praised bin Laden.	US	US	Yes	15	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Caucasian
Imran Mandhai	2002	Conspiracy to destroy property with explosives and fire	Pled guilty	Planned on bombing electric plants, National Guard armory, maybe Jewish sites in south Florida.	US	US	No	19	15	Legal resident	No	South Asian



Name	Year of arrest or attack	Official charges	Status of case	Nature of offense	Location of criminal activity	Target of violence	Engaged in violent activities	Age at time of arrest/attack	Age at arrival in US	Citizenship status	Convert to Islam	Ethnicity
Shueyb Mossa Jokhan	2002	Conspiracy to destroy property with explosives and fire	Pled guilty	Planned on bombing electric plants, National Guard armory, maybe Jewish sites in south Florida. Dropped out of conspiracy weeks into plot.	US	US	No	24	Not known	Naturalized citizen	No	Caribbean
Iyman Faris	2003	Providing material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization	Pled guilty	Planned to bomb Brooklyn Bridge.	US	US	No	34	25	Naturalized citizen	No	South Asian
Majid Khan	2003	None	Enemy combatant (at Guantanamo)	Alleged to have had linkages with al-Qaida; possible plot to attack US oil infrastructure and water reservoirs; possible plot to assassinate Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf.	US & Abroad	US	No	23	16	Granted asylum	No	South Asian
Uzair Paracha	2003	Providing and conspiracy to provide material and financial support to an foreign terrorist organization; conspiracy to make or receive contribution to/from al-Qaida	Convicted	Helped smuggle Majid Khan into US. Shuttled between US and Pakistan frequently, but spent most of his life in Pakistan.	US & Abroad	None	No	23	23	Legal resident	No	South Asian
Habis Abdulla al Saoub	2003	None	Killed fighting in Afghanistan	Part of "Portland Seven" cell; joined Taliban, killed fighting in Afghanistan.	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	38	28	Legal resident	No	Arab
Jeffrey Leon Battle	2003	Conspiracy to levy war against the US; conspiracy to contribute services to al-Qaida and Taliban; conspiracy to provide material support to al-Qaida	Pled guilty	Tried several times to join al-Qaida/Taliban in Afghanistan. Part of "Portland Seven" cell.	Abroad	Abroad	No	33	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Ahmed Abraham Bilal	2003	Conspiracy to levy war against the US; conspiracy to contribute services to al-Qaida and Taliban; conspiracy to provide material support to al-Qaida	Pled guilty	Tried several times to join al-Qaida/Taliban in Afghanistan. Part of "Portland Seven" cell.	Abroad	Abroad	No	25	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Muhammad Ibrahim Bilal	2003	Conspiracy to levy war against the US; conspiracy to contribute services to al-Qaida and Taliban; conspiracy to provide material support to al-Qaida	Pled guilty	Tried several times to join al-Qaida/Taliban in Afghanistan. Part of "Portland Seven" cell.	Abroad	Abroad	No	23	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Patrice Lumumba Ford	2003	Conspiracy to levy war against the US; conspiracy to contribute services to al-Qaida and Taliban; conspiracy to provide material support to al-Qaida	Pled guilty	Tried several times to join al-Qaida/Taliban in Afghanistan. Part of "Portland Seven" cell.	Abroad	Abroad	No	32	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Maher Mofeid Hawash	2003	Conspiracy to levy war against the US; conspiracy to contribute services to al-Qaida and Taliban; conspiracy to provide material support to al-Qaida	Pled guilty	Part of "Portland Seven" cell.	Abroad	Abroad	No	38	23	Naturalized citizen	No	Arab
Yassin Arif	2003	Conspiring to aid a terrorist group, provide support for weapons of mass destruction, money laundering, supporting a foreign terrorist organization	Convicted	Albany sting operation to assassinate Pakistani UN ambassador.	US	US	No	33	29	Legal resident	No	Kurdish
Mohammed Hossein	2003	Conspiring to aid a terrorist group, provide support for weapons of mass destruction, money laundering, supporting a foreign terrorist organization	Convicted	Albany sting operation to assassinate Pakistani UN ambassador.	US	US	No	47	27	Naturalized citizen	No	South Asian
Clifford L. Cousins	2003	Threats against president	Already convicted on other charges; not competent to stand trial	Paranoid schizophrenic who wrote threatening letters to President Bush from jail.	US	US	No	32	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Adnan el-Shukrijumah	2003	Material witness warrant issued	At large	Involvement with al-Qaida activities; suspected for role in numerous domestic plots.	US	US	No	28	1980s	Legal resident	No	Arab

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Hasan Akbar	2003	Premeditated murder; attempted premeditated murder	Convicted (court martial)	Killed two fellow soldiers in surprise grenade attack.	US	US	Yes	31	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Muhammed Aaitque	2003	Aiding and abetting others to conduct military operation; firearms	Pled guilty	Attended terrorist training camps abroad; trained by playing paintball. Northern Virginia "paintball" group.	US & Abroad	None	No	31	Not known	Legal resident	No	Arab
Ibrahim al-Hamdi	2003	Weapons and explosives charges	Pled guilty	Helped other northern Virginia "paintball" group gain access to terrorist training. Northern Virginia "paintball" group	US	None	No	26	Not known	Legal resident	No	Arab
Hammad Abdur-Raheem	2003	Conspiracy to provide material support to an foreign terrorist organization (Lashkar-e-Taiba)	Convicted	Attended terrorist training camps abroad; trained by playing paintball. Northern Virginia "paintball" group.	US & Abroad	None	No	35	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Ali Asad Chandia	2003	Material support to Lashkar-e-Taiba	Convicted	Attended terrorist training camps abroad; trained by playing paintball. Northern Virginia "paintball" group.	US & Abroad	None	No	27	17	Legal resident	No	South Asian
Seifullah Chapman	2003	Conspiracy to provide material support to an foreign terrorist organization (Lashkar-e-Taiba)	Convicted	Attended terrorist training camps abroad; trained by playing paintball. Northern Virginia "paintball" group.	US & Abroad	None	No	30	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Caucasian
Khwaja Mahmood Hasan	2003	Conspiracy to provide material support to an foreign terrorist organization (Lashkar-e-Taiba)	Pled guilty	Attended terrorist training camps abroad; trained by playing paintball. Northern Virginia "paintball" group.	US & Abroad	None	No	27	Not known	Naturalized citizen	No	
Masoud Ahmad Khan	2003	Conspiracy to provide material support to an foreign terrorist organization (Lashkar-e-Taiba)	Convicted	Attended terrorist training camps abroad; trained by playing paintball. Northern Virginia "paintball" group.	US & Abroad	None	No	31	US-born	Citizen	No	South Asian
Yong Ki Kwon	2003	Conspiracy to commit an offense against the US; weapons charges	Pled guilty	Attended terrorist training camps abroad; trained by playing paintball. Northern Virginia "paintball" group.	US & Abroad	None	No	27	Not known	Naturalized citizen	Yes	Korean
Randall Royer	2003	Weapons and explosives charges	Pled guilty	Helped other northern Virginia "paintball" group gain access to terrorist training camps.	US	None	No	30	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Caucasian
Donald Thomas Surratt	2003	Conspiracy to commit an offense against the US; weapons charges	Pled guilty	Attended terrorist training camps abroad; trained by playing paintball. Northern Virginia "paintball" group.	US & Abroad	None	No	30	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Unknown
Ali Al-Timimi	2004	Counseling and inducing others to use and carry firearms and explosives, wage war, aid foreign terrorist organization	Convicted	Cleric who incited members of northern Virginia group to take up arms, attend training camps.	US	None	No	40	US-born	Citizen	No	Arab
Mohammed Babar	2004	Conspiring to provide and providing material support to terrorists	Pled guilty	Provided bomb making material, night-vision goggles, funding to al-Qaida and Taliban. Provided support to U.K. fertilizer bomb plot.	Abroad	None	No	29	2	Naturalized citizen	No	South Asian
Shahawar Matin Siraj	2004	Conspiracy to damage or destroy a subway station by means of an explosive	Convicted	Planned on bombing Herald Square in Manhattan.	US	US	No	22	17	Illegal	No	South Asian
Nuradin Abdi	2004	Providing material support	Pled guilty	Helped Iyman Farris Brooklyn Bridge plot.	US	US	No	32	22	Illegal (obtained asylum by fraud)	No	Somali
Ryan Anderson	2004	Seeking to aid the enemy in time of war; attempted espionage	Convicted (court martial)	Attempted to pass intelligence about tanks on to al-Qaida.	US	None	No	26	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Caucasian
Ruben Shumpert	2004	Handgun, counterfeiting	Convicted	Seattle barber convicted of non-terrorism offenses, but allegations were that radical rhetoric pervaded his shop. He jumped bail prior to sentencing; ended up in Somalia; posed threats on phone calls; rumored to have been killed in Somalia.	US	None	Yes	27	Not known	Not known	Yes	African-American
Ahmed Omar Abu Ali	2005	Conspiracy to commit acts of terrorism	Convicted	Plotted with al Qaida while in Saudi Arabia to assassinate President Bush.	Abroad	Abroad	No	22	US-born	Citizen	No	Arab
Kifah Jayyousi	2005	Conspiracy to murder, kidnap and maim overseas; providing and conspiracy to provide material support for terrorists	Convicted	Operated as an al-Qaida support cell. Planned to send material support/commit attacks overseas. Convicted with Jose Padilla.	US	None	No	39	17	Naturalized citizen	No	Arab

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Hamid Hayat	2005	Providing material support to terrorists; false statements	Convicted	Received terrorist training in Pakistan, admitted returning to US to engage in violence.	US & Abroad	US	No	22	6	Naturalized citizen	No	South Asian
Mahmud Faruq Brent al-Mutazzim	2005	Providing material support to foreign terrorist organization	Pled guilty	Training with Lashkar-e-Taiba in Pakistan. Born in Akron, moved to DC in 2000.	Abroad	None	No	30	US-born	Citizen	Unconfirmed	Unknown
Tarik Shah	2005	Conspiring to provide material support to al-Qaida	Pled guilty	Agreed to train al-Qaida fighters in martial arts.	US	None	No	40	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Kevin James	2005	Conspiracy to levy war against the US	Pled guilty	Planned on attacking US military facilities, Israeli government facilities, and Los Angeles-area synagogues.	US	US	No	29	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Gregory Patterson	2005	Conspiracy to levy war against the US; conspiracy to kill foreign officials	Convicted	Planned on attacking US military facilities, Israeli government facilities, and Los Angeles-area synagogues.	US	US	No	22	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Hammad Sammana	2005	Conspiracy to levy war against the US; conspiracy to kill foreign officials	Urfit to stand trial; receiving psychiatric treatment	Planned on attacking US military facilities, Israeli government facilities, and Los Angeles-area synagogues.	US	US	No	22	Not known	Legal resident	No	South Asian
Lavar Washington	2005	Conspiracy to levy war against the US; conspiracy to kill foreign officials	Pled guilty	Planned on attacking US military facilities, Israeli government facilities, and Los Angeles-area synagogues.	US	US	No	26	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Adam Gadahn	2006	Treason	At large	Urged violence against the US on al-Qaida video tapes.	Abroad	None	Yes	26	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Caucasian
Muhammed Taher-Azar	2006	Attempted 1st-degree murder	Pled guilty	Drove van through University of North Carolina campus, injuring several students.	US	US	Yes	22	2	Naturalized citizen	No	Iranian
Naveed Haq	2006	Murder, attempted murder	Convicted	Opened fire at Seattle-area Jewish organization.	US	US	Yes	30	US-born	Citizen	No	South Asian
Syed Haris Ahmed	2006	Conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists; providing and attempting to provide material support to an foreign terrorist organization	Convicted	Cased sites in DC-area and sent information on to al-Qaida recruiters abroad.	US	US	No	21	12	Naturalized citizen	No	South Asian
Derrick Shareef	2006	Attempted use of a weapons of mass destruction against people and property inside US	Pled guilty	Plot to throw hand grenades in Chicago-area shopping malls.	US	US	No	22	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Patrick Abraham	2006	Providing material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization	Convicted	Plot to bomb the Sears Tower, Liberty City Seven.	US	US	No	26	Not known	Illegal	Yes	Haitian
Burson Augustin	2006	Providing material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization	Convicted	Plot to bomb the Sears Tower, Liberty City Seven.	US	US	No	21	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Haitian
Rothschild Augustine	2006	Providing material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization	Convicted	Plot to bomb the Sears Tower, Liberty City Seven.	US	US	No	22	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Haitian
Narseal Batisse	2006	Providing material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization	Convicted	Plot to bomb the Sears Tower, Liberty City Seven.	US	US	No	32	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Haitian
Stanley Grant Phanor	2006	Providing material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization	Convicted	Plot to bomb the Sears Tower, Liberty City Seven.	US	US	No	31	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Haitian
Ehsanu Islam Sadequee	2006	Conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists; providing and attempting to provide material support to an foreign terrorist organization	Convicted	Cased sites in DC-area and sent information on to al-Qaida recruiters abroad.	US	US	No	19	US-born	Citizen	No	South Asian
Mohammad Amawi	2006	Conspiring to kill or maim persons outside US; distributing information on explosives to terrorists	Convicted	Engaged in weapons training, discussed ways to support foreign fighters.	US	Abroad	No	26	US-born	Citizen	No	Arab
Marwan El-Hindi	2006	Conspiring to kill or maim persons outside US; distributing information on explosives to terrorists	Convicted	Engaged in weapons training, discussed ways to support foreign fighters.	US	Abroad	No	43	Not known	Naturalized citizen	No	Arab

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Wassim Mazloum	2006	Conspiring to kill or maim persons outside US	Convicted	Engaged in weapons training.	US	Abroad	No	25	19	Legal resident	No	Arab
Kobie Diallo Williams	2006	Conspiracy to contribute services to Taliban	Pled guilty	Had trained with and was sending money to Taliban with intent to fight US troops in Afghanistan.	US	Abroad	No	33	Not known	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Adnan Babar Mirza	2006	Conspiracy to contribute services to Taliban; weapons charges	Pending	Had trained with and was sending money to Taliban with intent to fight US troops in Afghanistan.	US	Abroad	No	29	24	Illegal (over-stayed student visa)	No	South Asian
Christopher Paul	2007	Conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction against US nationals and property overseas	Pled guilty	Plotted bombing of US tourist sites overseas.	US & Abroad	Abroad	No	43	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Sulejman Talovic	2007	None	Killed during incident	Opened fire in Utah shopping mall.	US	US	Yes	18	9	Legal resident	No	Bosnian
Russell Defelias	2007	Conspiracy to cause death, serious bodily injury and extensive destruction	Charged, awaiting trial	Planned to blow up fuel tanks at JFK Airport.	US	US	No	63	Not known	Naturalized citizen	Yes	African-American
Houssein Zorkot	2007	Possession of a loaded firearm; felony firearm	Charged, awaiting trial	Arrested for having an AK-47 under his coat. Had a Hezbollah-praising website with a post entitled "The Start of My Personal Jihad (in the US)."	US	US	No	26	Not known	Foreign student	No	Arab
Ahmed Mohamed	2007	Providing material support to terrorists	Pled guilty	Made videos showing how to assemble rockets.	US	None	No	24	Not known	Legal resident (student visa)	No	Arab
Tahmeed Ahmad	2007	Assaulting US government employee	Charged, awaiting trial	Charged a US Air Reserve base with crude explosives and butcher knives, chanting "Death to America. Was under supervision by psychiatric hospital at the time of the attack; had been on terrorist watch list.	US	US	Yes	22	Not known	Naturalized citizen	No	Arab
Agron Abdullahu	2007	Providing weapons to illegal immigrants	Pled guilty	Fort Dix terror plot. Convicted of weapons charges--letting his friends use his weapons at a firing range.	US	US	No	24	16	Legal resident	No	Albanian
Dritan Duka	2007	Conspiracy to murder members of the US military; weapons charges	Convicted	Fort Dix terror plot.	US	US	No	28	6	Illegal	No	Albanian
Ejvir Duka	2007	Conspiracy to murder members of the US military; weapons charges	Convicted	Fort Dix terror plot.	US	US	No	23	1	Illegal	No	Albanian
Shain Duka	2007	Conspiracy to murder members of the US military; weapons charges	Convicted	Fort Dix terror plot.	US	US	No	26	4	Illegal	No	Albanian
Mohamed Ibrahim Shnewer	2007	Conspiracy to murder members of the US military; weapons charges	Convicted	Fort Dix terror plot.	US	US	No	22	Not known	Naturalized citizen	No	Arab
Serdar Tatar	2007	Conspiracy to murder members of the US military; weapons charges	Convicted	Fort Dix terror plot.	US	US	No	23	Not known	Legal resident	No	Turkish
Daniel Joseph Maldonado	2007	Receiving military training from foreign terrorist organization; conspiring to use explosive device outside US	Pled guilty	Received terrorist training in Somalia.	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	27	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Latino
Khaleel Ahmed	2007	Providing material support to terrorists	Pled guilty	Sought military training. Wanted to join insurgency in Afghanistan or Iraq.	US	Abroad	No	23	US-born	Citizen	No	South Asian
Zubair Ahmed	2007	Providing material support to terrorists	Pled guilty	Sought military training. Wanted to join insurgency in Afghanistan or Iraq.	US	Abroad	No	24	Not known	Citizen	No	South Asian
Paul Hall	2007	Material support for terrorism; passing classified information; receiving military training	Convicted	Passed information on ship movements to group supporting terrorism. Former member US Navy; most conduct pre-9/11.	Abroad	Abroad	No	31	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American

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Abdikadir Ali Abdi	2008	None	Not applicable	Left Minneapolis for Somalia to join Shabaab.	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	Not known	Not known	Not known	No	Somali
Shirwa Ahmad	2008	None	Killed	Left Minneapolis for Somalia to join Shabaab; killed executing suicide bomb attack.	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	26	10	Refugee	Yes	Somali
Abdisalan Ali	2008	None	Not applicable	Left Minneapolis for Somalia to join Shabaab.	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	19	Not known	Not known	No	Somali
Jamaal Sheikh Bana	2008	None	Killed	Left Minneapolis for Somalia to join Shabaab.	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	19	7	Not known	No	Somali
Burhan Hassan	2008	None	Killed	Left Minneapolis for Somalia to join Shabaab.	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	17	5	Not known	No	Somali
Mahmoud Hassan	2008	None	Not applicable	Left Minneapolis for Somalia to join Shabaab.	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	22	Not known	Refugee	No	Somali
Troy Matthew Kastigar	2008	None	Not applicable	Left Minneapolis for Somalia to join Shabaab.	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	25	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Caucasian
Aafia Siddiqui	2008	Attempted murder of US military personnel in Afghanistan	Charged, awaiting trial	Went missing while visiting Pakistan in 2003; detained in Afghanistan in 2008; attacked US personnel at Afghan police station.	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	36	18	Legal resident	No	South Asian
James Cromitie	2009	Conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction within the US and to acquire and use antiaircraft missiles	Charged, awaiting trial	Plot to bomb Riverdale synagogues and shoot down Air Force planes in NY.	US	US	No	44	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Laquerre Payen	2009	Conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction within the US and to acquire and use antiaircraft missiles	Charged, awaiting trial	Plot to bomb Riverdale synagogues and shoot down Air Force planes in NY.	US	US	No	27	Not known	Not known	Yes	Haitian
David Williams	2009	Conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction within the US and to acquire and use antiaircraft missiles	Charged, awaiting trial	Plot to bomb Riverdale synagogues and shoot down Air Force planes in NY.	US	US	No	28	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Onta Williams	2009	Conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction within the US and to acquire and use antiaircraft missiles	Charged, awaiting trial	Plot to bomb Riverdale synagogues and shoot down Air Force planes in NY.	US	US	No	32	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Abdullahakim Mujahid Muhammad	2009	Murder and 15 counts of terrorist acts	Charged, awaiting trial	Shot military recruiters in Little Rock, AR.	US	US	Yes	23	US-born	Citizen	Yes	African-American
Bryant Neal Vinas	2009	Conspiracy to murder US nationals, material support to al-Qaida	Pled guilty	Joined al-Qaida; participated in rocket attack in Afghanistan.	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	26	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Latino
Daniel Boyd	2009	Conspiracy to murder abroad, material support, weapons charges	Charged, awaiting trial	Plotted to commit acts of violence in Israel, Kosovo. North Carolina group, fought in Afghanistan 1989-92.	US & Abroad	Abroad	No	39	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Caucasian
Dylan Boyd	2009	Conspiracy to murder abroad, material support, weapons charges	Charged, awaiting trial	Plotted to commit acts of violence in Israel, Kosovo. North Carolina group, son of Daniel Boyd.	US & Abroad	Abroad	No	20	US-born	Citizen	No	Caucasian
Zakaria Boyd	2009	Conspiracy to murder abroad, material support, weapons charges	Charged, awaiting trial	Plotted to commit acts of violence in Israel, Kosovo. North Carolina group, son of Daniel Boyd.	US & Abroad	Abroad	No	22	US-born	Citizen	No	Caucasian
Mohammad Omar Aly Hassan	2009	Conspiracy to murder abroad, material support, weapons charges	Charged, awaiting trial	Plotted to commit acts of violence in Israel, Kosovo. North Carolina group.	US & Abroad	Abroad	No	22	US-born	Citizen	No	Arab
Hysen Sherifi	2009	Conspiracy to murder abroad, material support, weapons charges	Charged, awaiting trial	Plotted to commit acts of violence in Israel, Kosovo. North Carolina group.	US & Abroad	Abroad	No	24	Not known	Legal resident	No	Kosovar
Anes Subasic	2009	Conspiracy to murder abroad, material support, weapons charges	Charged, awaiting trial	Plotted to commit acts of violence in Israel, Kosovo. North Carolina group.	US	Abroad	No	33	Not known	Naturalized citizen	No	Bosnian
Ziyad Yeghi	2009	Conspiracy to murder abroad, material support, weapons charges	Charged, awaiting trial	Plotted to commit acts of violence in Israel, Kosovo. North Carolina group.	US & Abroad	Abroad	No	21	Not known	Naturalized citizen	Yes	Arab
Omar Hammami	2009	Providing material support to terrorism	Charged, at large	Joined Shabaab in Somalia; made recruitment videos.	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	25	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Arab/ Caucasian



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Najibullah Zazi	2009	Conspiracy to use weapon of mass destruction	Charged, awaiting trial	Attended terrorist training camp, assembled bomb making materials in Colorado.	US & Abroad	US	No	24	7	Legal resident	No	Afghani
Hosam Maher Husein Smadi	2009	Attempted use of weapon of mass destruction	Charged, awaiting trial	Attempted to detonate fake bomb outside Dallas office building.	US	US	No	19	Not known	Illegal	No	Arab
Michael Finton	2009	Attempted use of weapon of mass destruction	Charged, awaiting trial	Attempted to detonate fake bomb in Decatur, IL.	US	US	No	29	US-born	Citizen	Yes	Caucasian
Betim Kaziu	2009	Conspiracy to provide material support for terrorism; conspiracy to commit murder abroad	Charged, awaiting trial	Attempted to join group related to al-Qaida, sought military training.	Abroad	Abroad	No	21	US-born	Citizen	No	Slavic
Unnamed Somali-American	2009	None	Not applicable	Left US for Somalia in 2007; killed executing suicide bomb attack. Somali-American from Seattle; attacked African Union base.	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	Not known	Not known	Not known	Not known	Somali
Tarek Mehanna	2009	Conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists	Charged, awaiting trial	Plotted to bomb mall in Boston, MA; targets abroad	US	US	No	28	US-born	Citizen	No	Arab
David Coleman Headley	2009	Conspiracy to murder and maim abroad; Conspiracy to bomb public place abroad; murder of US nationals abroad; material support to foreign terrorist organization	Charged, awaiting trial	Plot to kill Danish newspaper editors; Conspired to execute Mumbai attacks	US & Abroad	Abroad	Yes	49	US-born	Citizen	No	Caucasian/ South Asian
Tahawwur Hussain Rana	2009	Material support to terrorism	Charged, awaiting trial	Plot to kill Danish newspaper editors	US	Abroad	No	48	41	Legal resident	No	South Asian
Nidal Hasan	2009	Murder, attempted murder	Charged, awaiting trial	Ft. Hood shootings	US	US	Yes	39	US-born	Citizen	No	Arab
Khalid Abshir	2009	Providing material support to a terrorist organization and conspiring to kill, maim, kidnap or injure people outside the United States	Charged, at large	Left Minneapolis for Somalia; fought with Shabaab	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	26	Not known	Not known	No	Somali
Salah Osman Ahmed	2009	Material support for terrorism; conspiracy to kill, maim in foreign country	Pled guilty	Left Minneapolis for Somalia to join Shabaab.	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	26	Not known	Not known	No	Somali
Cabdullaahi Ahmed Faarax	2009	Providing material support to a terrorist organization and conspiring to kill, maim, kidnap or injure people outside the United States	Charged, at large	Recruited young Somalis in Minneapolis to join Shabaab; facilitated travel to Somalia	US	Abroad	Yes	32	Not known	Legal resident	No	Somali
Kamal Hassan	2009	Providing material support to terrorism	Pled guilty	Left Minneapolis for Somalia to join Shabaab.	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	24	Not known	Not known	No	Somali
Mohamed Hassan	2009	Providing material support to a terrorist organization and conspiring to kill, maim, kidnap or injure people outside the United States	Charged, at large	Left Minneapolis for Somalia; fought with Shabaab	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	17	Not known	Not known	No	Somali
Abdiweli Yassin Isse	2009	Providing material support to a terrorist organization and conspiring to kill, maim, kidnap or injure people outside the United States	Charged, at large	Recruited young Somalis in Minneapolis to join Shabaab; facilitated travel to Somalia	US	Abroad	Yes	24	Not known	Not known	No	Somali
Abdifatah Yusuf Isse	2009	Material support for terrorism; conspiracy to kill, maim in foreign country	Pled guilty	Urged violence against the US on al-Qaida video tapes.	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	25	Not known	Not known	No	Somali
Zakaria Maruf	2009	Providing material support to a terrorist organization and conspiring to kill, maim, kidnap or injure people outside the United States	Charged, at large	Left Minneapolis for Somalia; fought with Shabaab	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	30	Not known	Not known	No	Somali

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Omer Abdi Mohamed	2009	Providing material support to a terrorist organization and conspiring to kill, maim, kidnap or injure people outside the United States	Charged, awaiting trial	Left Minneapolis for Somalia; fought with Shabaab	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	24	Not known	Not known	No	Somali
Ahmed Ali Omar	2009	Providing material support to a terrorist organization and conspiring to kill, maim, kidnap or injure people outside the United States	Charged, at large	Left Minneapolis for Somalia; fought with Shabaab	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	24	Not known	Not known	No	Somali
Mahamud Said Omar	2009	Providing material support to a terrorist organization	Charged, awaiting trial	Recruited young Somalis in Minneapolis to join Shabaab; purchased weapons in Somalia for Minneapolis recruits	US & Abroad	Abroad	No	43	Not known	Legal resident	No	Somali
Mustafa Salat	2009	Providing material support to a terrorist organization and conspiring to kill, maim, kidnap or injure people outside the United States	Charged, at large	Left Minneapolis for Somalia; fought with Shabaab	Abroad	Abroad	Yes	19	Not known	Not known	No	Somali
Umar Chaudhry	2009	None	Detained by Pakistani authorities	Traveled to Pakistan, allegedly to join a foreign terrorist organization	Abroad	Abroad	No	24	4	Naturalized citizen	No	South Asian
Waqar Khan	2009	None	Detained by Pakistani authorities	Traveled to Pakistan, allegedly to join a foreign terrorist organization	Abroad	Abroad	No	22	Not known	Citizen	No	South Asian
Ahmad A. Minni	2009	None	Detained by Pakistani authorities	Traveled to Pakistan, allegedly to join a foreign terrorist organization	Abroad	Abroad	No	20	Not known	Naturalized citizen	No	Eritrean
Aman Hassan Yemer	2009	None	Detained by Pakistani authorities	Traveled to Pakistan, allegedly to join a foreign terrorist organization	Abroad	Abroad	No	18	Not known	Naturalized citizen	No	Ethiopian
Ramy Zamzam	2009	None	Detained by Pakistani authorities	Traveled to Pakistan, allegedly to join a foreign terrorist organization	Abroad	Abroad	No	22	Not known	Citizen	No	Arab