

# Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)

## Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

[https://www.cair.com/about\\_cair/cair-who-we-are/#Stands](https://www.cair.com/about_cair/cair-who-we-are/#Stands)

## Policy Issue Resources

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) was created as an organization that challenges stereotypes of Islam and Muslims (CAIR letter to Vice President Gore, 10/06/1995), a Washington-based Islamic advocacy group (Press release, 8/28/1995) and an organization dedicated to providing an Islamic perspective on issues of importance to the American public (Press release, 12/13/1995). Prior to establishing CAIR, its founders observed that the core challenge [in America], that of stereotyping and defamation, was having a devastating effect on our children and paralyzing adults from taking their due roles in civic affairs (The Link, a newsletter published by Americans for Middle East Understanding, February-March 2000). Within that understanding, they formed CAIR to challenge anti-Muslim discrimination nationwide.

Since being established in 1994, CAIR has a successful track record in its defense of civil liberties and tolerance. It is frequently seen as the go-to organization when bias is directed against Muslim individuals or institutions. Its status as the most frequently quoted American Muslim organization in our nations media also suggests success in providing an Islamic perspective on issues of importance to the American public.

CAIRs international reputation is substantial. In one manifestation of this reputation, Nihad Awad, the organizations national executive director, was listed among the 500 most influential Muslims in the world in a 2009 publication produced by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Center (Jordan) in concert with Georgetown Universitys Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding. In early 2010, *Arabian Business Magazine* ranked Awad #39 on its 2010 Arabian Business Power 100 list. In describing why Awad was named to the list the magazine said, CAIRs actions have forced many large outlets to be more tolerant of Muslim culture.

This document is the result of an initial review of 1,999 CAIR media advisories and press releases all the releases in CAIRs database as well as 671 action alerts issued from 1994 through the end of 2008. Some material from 2009 and 2010 is also included.

The document is intended to offer the reader a forthright overview of CAIRs actions and statements. It provides an insight into the extraordinary breadth and depth of the organizations work and public positions.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) was established in 1994 to challenge stereotypes of Islam and Muslims. Today, the organization has a nationwide presence and a headquarters on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

The vast majority of CAIRs work deals with civil rights and anti-defamation. These two categories alone account for 50 percent of the 1,999 news releases reviewed for this report.

CAIR has consistently won praise from elected officials and the media for its tenacious efforts to combat both discrimination against Muslims and defamation of Islam.

In addition to attacks on individuals, Islamic institutions are frequent targets of Islamophobic hatred. Since 1994, CAIR has detailed at least 64 acts of destruction and desecration of Islamic places of worship including shootings, vandalism, arson, and bombings.

CAIR has expended tremendous energy on educational efforts, including the production of public service announcements (PSA) introducing Americans to their Muslim neighbors and rejecting terrorism. We have published guides to Islamic religious practices for professionals such as doctors, law enforcement and educators who routinely interact with Muslims. We have also delivered books on Islam to thousands of American public libraries and offered free materials to individual citizens and public officials interested in learning more about the faith.

CAIR believes that Muslims worldwide must offer themselves as personal examples of the Islamic values of compassion, tolerance and moderation. We encourage members of the American Muslim community to work in public service.

CAIR puts this belief into action by hosting Muslim Youth Leadership Summits around the nation. CAIR has three main training events for the general community: Know Your Rights, Civic Participation and Media Relations. As a singular example of how widespread these training events are: CAIR conducted 42 civic participation training events for the community nationwide in 2008.

The centerpiece campaign to CAIRs call for public service is the Muslims Care campaign. Through this program, Muslim leaders are encouraged to give sermons about volunteerism and community members receive a step-by-step guide to participating in activities such as blood drives, health awareness fairs and student tutoring.

CAIR serves as an example to all Muslims that the American system affords everyone an opportunity to successfully redress their grievances in a non-violent, lawful manner. Though the organization is not theological in nature, CAIR is faith-based and its message to its own community has always centered on the middle way.

We have demonstrated that Islam advocates both freedom of religion and freedom of conscience through arguments grounded in the

faiths primary sources. (For example, a CAIR release issued 3/22/2006 contains the following conclusion: Religious decisions should be matters of personal choice, not a cause for state intervention.) CAIR has rejected so called death fatwas and the use of violence as a response to incidents like the Danish cartoons mocking the Prophet Muhammad. The organization supports political solutions to problems over the use of violence.

CAIR has always shown support for Americas founding principles and religious pluralism. CAIR affirms the right of free speech, on multiple occasions even defending its detractors right to free expression. CAIR strongly supports the Constitutional right to due process.

CAIR strongly opposes racial and religious profiling.

We have a well-established, very public record of denouncing terrorism and religious intolerance. CAIR has condemned attacks on and raised money to rebuild churches and has repeatedly repudiated anti-Semitism.

While supporting the nations strategic campaign to combat terrorism and to protect American citizens from attack whether or not we agree with particular tactics used to carry out that campaign CAIR has generally opposed U.S. invasions of foreign nations.

CAIR uses the international prestige earned through its domestic programs to make humanitarian appeals. In 2009, CAIR officials hand-delivered a letter to Iranian President Ahmedinajad requesting that he release three American hikers detained by that nation. Also at that meeting, CAIR delivered a letter to the Iranian leader from the family of former FBI agent Robert Levinson, who has been missing in Iran since 2007.

Similarly, in 2009, CAIR staff spoke directly to the Iranian President urging him to release journalist Roxana Saberi.

In early 2006, CAIR staff went to Baghdad to appeal for the release of a kidnapped American journalist. Later that year, CAIR called on the government of Afghanistan to release Abdul Rahman, a man facing the death penalty for converting from Islam to Christianity. In that release, CAIR offered a religious basis for opposition to apostasy laws.

In 2007, CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad joined 137 other Muslim leaders and scholars from around the world in sending a first-of-its-kind open letter designed to promote understanding between Muslims and Christians worldwide. The letter, entitled A Common Word Between Us and You, was sent to Pope Benedict XVI, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and more than 20 other Christian leaders. Awad is also an original endorser of the Amman Message and its three points of tolerance.

CAIR has challenged Frances policies toward its Muslim minority, as well as policies adopted by Tunisia and Turkey that targeted Muslim women. We worked to deny a visa to an Indian official associated with the massacre of Muslims in the state of Gujarat. CAIR has strongly criticized Israels occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and its persistent use of disproportionate force against civilians. We urged Pakistans military to return the country to civilian rule and asked Russia to withdraw from Chechnya.

CAIRs advocacy model is the antithesis of the narrative of anti-American extremists. Indeed, our track record of success solidly repudiates extremist arguments that Muslims cannot get justice or fair treatment in our nation.

A sampling of the wide array of support CAIR has received from elected officials, law enforcement, interfaith groups and others can be seen here: [will add link when available]

The first CAIR chapter was established in Californias San Francisco Bay Area in 1995. In late 2009, CAIRs newest chapter opened for operations in Iowa.

CAIR chapters are independently organized and operated. They come into being when a group of local advocates decide that the organizations vision and mission appeal to them. To start a CAIR chapter, community activists must present a one-year plan along with a list of people who will be affiliated with the chapter and sign an agreement to abide by all state and federal laws. New chapters must also form a local board of directors and demonstrate that they have sufficient local support to maintain the chapter. Funding is locally raised and is not provided by the national office.

While CAIR is fortunate to have paid staff at almost every one of its offices nationwide, a significant portion of the organizations work is the result of efforts by volunteers. Many of those involved with CAIR, such as the staff members below, have either faced or have close family members who have been subjected to faith-based discrimination.

Moein Khawaja of CAIR-Pennsylvania says:

After a childhood of vandalism to my home, my parents cars, and watching my local mosque burned by arsonists after the Oklahoma City bombing, I knew from a very early age that it was our time as Muslims for our own civil rights struggle. There were no organizations doing the work of CAIR at the time, and no other group represented Muslims so well with professionalism and dignity.

In high school I joined the CAIR listserv and became a member. I remember watching [CAIR National Communications Director] Ibrahim Hooper one day on CNN. I pointed to the screen and said, Im doing that. When I was an undergraduate, I chose to become a part of CAIR by starting the first college chapter of CAIR at the University of Illinois. It was a first baby step in advocacy for me and the Danish cartoons were my first major event.

A few years passed and I learned about the opportunity to become the Civil Rights Director for Pennsylvania, and I jumped at the chance. I love my job and the fulfillment it gives me. Being on the inside, its easy to lose track of the big picture, but every now and then Im able to step back and realize that Im a part of something big, something historical, something real.

I want to be able to tell my children one day that CAIR was the catalyst for justice in America, the facilitator for the acceptance of Islam in America, and the voice for Muslims in America during our most difficult time and I was a part of that journey every step of the way.

CAIR-New Jersey Board President Ahmed Al-Shehab echoes Khawajas experience with bias:

Post 9/11, [CAIR] was the only organization most Muslims could turn to for help against religious discrimination. One of my family members went through a similar ordeal which prompted me to reach out to CAIR.

CAIR-Iowa Executive Director Miriam Amer says:

My great-granddad, granddad, dad, uncles, brother and cousins have all proudly served this nation in the military. When the bombing happened in Oklahoma City, people immediately accused Muslims. This presupposition of guilt made me physically angry.

Although CAIR is attacked from the right-wing and certain political groups, CAIRs name evokes results, and in a sense, being attacked by these organizations is a transparent indication of its success. Its work is deliberate, its leadership is professional, and its message and mission are crystal clear: working toward and facilitating a better America for all.

CAIRs work brought teeth to the fight for Muslim and minority civil and human rights advocacy. The ground that CAIR has covered in such a short time is amazingly defined, garnering an impressive track record. Their name has become defined as the go-to organization when one needs results, and has earned a measure of respect from its partners, and occasionally its foes.

Lori Saroya of CAIR-Minnesota says:

My family was subjected to racism and religious intolerance while living as the only Muslim family in a small town in southern Iowa. The most difficult part of facing discrimination wasnt the acts themselves, but the feeling of disempowerment. When CAIR was founded, it educated us on our basic legal rights and afforded us, and the rest of the American Muslim community, a level of protection against hate and bigotry.

CAIR empowered me and now, as Co-Founder and Chairwoman of CAIR-Minnesota, I seek to empower others in my community who face discrimination and dont have the necessary resources or knowledge of their legal rights.

Ramzy Kilic of CAIR-Tampa says:

I was a student at the University of South Florida, majoring in International Relations. I was the Public Relations officer for the MSA when Dr. Sami Al-Arian was arrested. I was also a Senator in the USF Senate. Discussions about Islam were frequent in the classroom and publicly. There was a complete misunderstanding of my faith most of the time. It was mainly this reason I decided to volunteer for CAIR in 2006 after graduating.

Those involved with CAIR view their work as contributing to the long-running struggle for greater equality and protection of the liberties the Founding Fathers enshrined in the Constitution.

CAIR-Oklahoma Executive Director Razi Hashmi notes:

CAIRs work continues a long struggle for equal civil rights in America. Standing up for the rights of others who are unable to do so themselves is a truly American tradition. Being a grassroots organization CAIR demonstrates the need for such vocal expression in the community.

Continuing civic engagement by taking part in voter registration drives and civic participation workshops ensures the strength of our nations democracy and allows everyone a platform from which to have a voice.

Moein Khawaja of CAIR-Pennsylvania ads:

We are contributing to the betterment of our nation by reminding fellow citizens of our founding principles, that all are created equal and have the right to fair treatment. Nearly every positive social development in this country has happened because of the struggles of a minority group.

I strongly feel and believe that CAIRs work will be remembered in the future as a positive force for social change. By speaking out and challenging discrimination and abuse, the fabric of America, its attitudes and views towards people, slowly changes. Already, we are seeing it become more and more unacceptable to demonize Islam and Muslims, and I can only see it getting better.

Most importantly, CAIRs work symbolizes the beauty of Americas freedoms, how they create a self correcting system. Whenever the nation goes off course, an organization such as CAIR has the platform the freedoms to assemble, speak, and advocate to steer the nation back on course.

Ramzy Kilic of CAIR-Tampa echoes the same sentiments:

I feel I am a better Muslim and a better American being involved with CAIR, because it embodies the core principles of this great nation of ours: justice, mutual respect and understanding, civil rights, empowerment at a grass roots level, etc. This is what CAIR is about and what America is about. Working for CAIR is thinking globally and acting locally. I cannot think of a greater effort to be a part of.

CAIR uses a variety of traditional advocacy methods.

These methods include organizing demonstrations, filing complaints with the appropriate authorities, extensive use of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, leafleting, issuing press releases, media appearances, letter writing, running public awareness campaigns, producing public service announcements, launching educational campaigns designed to improve understanding about Islam, hosting panel discussions and town hall meetings, training the Muslim community in advocacy tactics, non-partisan voter registration drives, direct meetings with elected officials, and calls for Muslims to vote on election day.

From its beginning, CAIR focused its efforts on training American Muslims to be effective in their dealings with the media. This focus resulted in media training events across the nation in which Muslims learned how to write and issue press releases, how to formulate talking points and even what types of clothes to wear when going on television (for instance, avoiding clothes with stripes or wearing sunglasses). CAIR's Media Relations Handbook for Muslim Activists was published in 1996. It is an early example of CAIR's strong belief in providing community members tools with which to empower themselves. CAIR's 2008 Civic Participation Handbook similarly contains practical steps for community members who wish to work on government affairs issues.

In 2000, CAIR announced the opening of its Leadership Training Center, which was designed to offer instruction in faith-based political lobbying, grass-roots activism, public relations, community leadership, and organizational management, to Muslim activists, students and leaders.

To use one year as an example, 24 interns worked in CAIR's national office in 2008. CAIR interns from past years have gone on to serve on the staff of the White House, U.S. Congress, State Department, and other government agencies. During the summer of 2008, interns observed interviews at CNN and FOX, attended a national progressive youth conference, met with their congressional representatives to discuss racial profiling, attended Friday prayers at the U.S. Capitol building, and much more. In 2008, CAIR chapters in South Carolina, California, New Jersey, Washington and Illinois hosted Muslim Youth Leadership Programs (MYLP) to help train high school and college students in effective civil rights, media relations and government affairs strategies. CAIR plans to continue expanding the MYLP.

In 2009, CAIR conducted three primary areas of training for the Muslim community:

CAIR's civil rights coordinators, the caseworkers who intake, investigate, mediate and resolve complaints from the community, make extensive use of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VII of the Act prohibits employers from discriminating against individuals because of their religion or national origin in hiring, firing, and other terms and conditions of employment.

Most cases are resolved simply by contacting the employer and reminding them of Title VII. When this approach fails, complaints to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) frequently resolve the issue.

Ignorance is a major factor in many of these cases. Therefore, education is a key in preventing their occurrence. CAIR's guides to Islamic religious practices are an early example of prevention through education. (The first guide to Islamic religious practices was produced by CAIR in 1997 and co-sponsored by DePaul University's Islam in America Conference.)

Educational efforts have included asking mosques to host open houses, giving away free material about Islam and frequent presentations to interested groups, ad campaigns such as I am an American Muslim, and the placement of books about Islam in public libraries.

Since 1995, CAIR's annual report, called The Status of Muslim Civil Rights in America, has tracked the number of bias complaints reported to the organization. CAIR has commissioned surveys of American attitudes regarding Muslims, surveys of Muslim concerns and attitudes and election-day exit polls.

CAIR's advocacy toolbox includes its action alert network. Action alerts will typically inform recipients of an issue and ask them to contact the source of the concern, often a corporation or a public official. These alerts are known to generate an overwhelming volume of phone calls, faxes and e-mails.

If public advocacy does not obtain a just resolution to a particular case, CAIR will generally outsource legal action. However, CAIR does at times conduct its own litigation. In 2009, a jury awarded \$200,000 to an Arab-American correctional officer in a discrimination case litigated by CAIR-Chicago against the Cook County Sheriff's Department. Cook County officers had continuously and anonymously targeted the officer with racist slurs such as terrorist, Hussein, sand ni\*\*er, bin Laden, shoe bomber, and camel jockey verbally and via graffiti on his locker.

This was an unprecedented decision by jury trial in the state of Illinois, said CAIR-Chicago Staff Attorney Kevin Vodak. The case stands as a legal precedent and a symbol of hope for Arab-Americans to expect to be free of harassment in their workplace. The jury sent a clear message that no one is above the law in this matter, including the Cook County Sheriff.

This combination of advocacy tactics has won CAIR national recognition.

The organization has developed a reputation for being something of a pit bull in protecting the civil rights of Muslims, reported the *Indianapolis Star* (9/4/2005). Similarly, the *East Valley Tribune* said The Council on American-Islamic Relations has emerged as a vigilant force against discrimination against Muslims (1/19/2008).

It was overwhelming, their support, said HostGator President Brent Oxley after CAIR supporters swamped the web host with literally thousands of complaints about Right Wing Howler, a blog whose author expressed support for the sentiment we need to kill all Muslim kids. Starting now. HostGator shut down the website.

*PR Week* noted, Since 1994, CAIR has employed a well-rounded plan in its role as a top Muslim voice in the US (11/04/2002). Salon.com reported, The Council on American Islamic Relations [is] among the more effective lobbies for Muslim Americans civil liberties (7/10/2008).

CAIR is willing to conduct assertive advocacy campaigns that make use of all legal tools typical of American advocacy work.

Results that can be seen as a win for all are those CAIR's staff most prefer. Following a campaign concerning a NIKE shoe with a design on it that resembled the word Allah in Arabic, CAIR was able to get the product recalled and received an apology from the corporation. A CAIR news release on Nov. 21, 1998, stated:

Following extended discussions, CAIR and NIKE resolved these differences [over a shoe design the Muslims found offensive] on mutually agreeable terms.

The agreement includes a NIKE-sponsored community development project involving construction of playground facilities at several Islamic centers and Muslim schools nationwide. Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center in Falls Church, Va., was chosen to be the first recipient of such a facility.

Other provisions of the agreement include donations of NIKE products to Islamic charitable groups selected by CAIR, NIKE sponsorship of events in the Muslim community and the production of educational CDs and videos. In consultation with CAIR, NIKE also adopted sensitivity training for its design teams and made changes in the design process to help ensure that a similar incident would not occur in the future.

Today's announcement represents the ideal resolution of our differences with the Muslim community, said NIKE Vice President of Law and Corporate Affairs Lindsay Stewart. What began in controversy has now blossomed into opportunity. We thank CAIR for helping build this bridge of understanding, said Stewart.

Of the 1,999 CAIR press releases reviewed for this document, 678 dealt with issues relating to civil rights. Anti-defamation releases accounted for 328 of the documents surveyed. These two categories alone account for 50 percent of the releases. Only 10 percent of CAIR releases dealt with international issues.

The core of CAIR's work is, and always has been, ensuring that the rights guaranteed to everyone in this nation are enforced. If someone is discriminated against because of their Islamic faith that person can call CAIR and we will provide advocacy and sometimes legal services to help them obtain a satisfactory resolution to their concern. In the interfaith section of this document we also provide some of the numerous instances in which CAIR has defended members of other faith traditions. CAIR policy prohibits caseworkers from asking if the person is Sunni, Shia, Sufi or any other branch of Islam.

These services are provided free of charge.

**Civil Rights** In 1995, CAIR took on its first discrimination case involving an employer refusing to reasonably accommodate an employee's choice to wear the hijab, or Islamic headscarf.

CAIR's efforts have resulted in Muslim police officers (News release, 10/29/1999), and fire department employees (News release, 10/19/1999) not being forced to choose between service to their community and practicing their faith.

CAIR has addressed issues of profiling, torture, efforts intended to marginalize Muslim participation in American civil and political life, citizenship delays, denials of service or access, deportations, denial of due process, FBI harassment, unduly harsh sentencing, immigrants rights, overly intrusive government surveillance, double jeopardy, secret evidence, and workplace accommodation.

We have addressed Muslim concerns with major corporate entities such as Best Buy, Dell, FedEx, Nike, Greyhound, Hertz, Macys, Sears, Wachovia, Walmart, Western Union, Whirlpool, among a long list of others. The same applies to government entities including NASA, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Defense. **Targeting Individuals** Visible signs of an individual's Muslim faith—headscarves, prayer and beards in particular—number among the most frequent triggers of discrimination. CAIR has dealt with cases ranging from individual Muslims being killed, beaten, stabbed, fired for having an accent or fired for observing religious obligations to deeply troubling indications of widespread American public support for forcing the entire American Muslim community to register with the federal government.

While the groups annual status of Muslim civil rights report presents this reality in detail, we present a few specific examples here.

In 1998, seven men approached a Muslim husband and wife as they picnicked at the Cook County Forest Preserve in the Chicago area. The wife, who was wearing a headscarf, reported that one of the men stood approximately five to six feet away from her and began urinating. The men then allegedly began cursing the woman's religious attire and what they assumed to be her national origin (the woman is a European-American convert to Islam). According to the couple, these remarks included: F\*\*\*ing b\*\*ch has a towel on her head, and, to the arresting officer, You know they (Muslims) are over there bombing other countries. The men allegedly said: Im gonna kick your asses, and S\*\*k my d\*\*k. The men also reportedly threatened to sexually assault the woman (News release, 7/09/1998).

In Springfield, Virginia, a woman wearing an Islamic headscarf was attacked from behind in a K-Mart parking lot in 2003. The white male teenage attacker allegedly shouted, You terrorist pig, before running away. The 47-year-old woman, a convert to Islam, was treated at a local hospital for a 2-3 inch deep wound on her lower back. She was released from the hospital later that day (News release, 10/06/2003).

CAIR worked to reunite a Texas Muslim family whose two children were taken from their home following false accusations of child abuse against their father. The children had been adopted by a Christian family and were allowed no contact with their biological parents, despite the fact that the father was ultimately cleared of all charges. Sabahete Kathy Krasniqi, the children's mother, said that people of all faiths had offered her family moral support but added, I came (to this country) for freedom. I didn't find freedom for my family (News release, 1/19/1996).

A 2004 survey by the Media and Society Research Group in Cornell University's Department of Communication found that 44 percent of Americans believed the government should curtail the civil rights of American Muslims in some manner.

A Cornell University news release on the report stated:

About 27 percent of respondents said that all Muslim Americans should be required to register their location with the federal government, and 26 percent said they think that mosques should be closely monitored by U.S. law enforcement agencies. About 22 percent said the federal government should profile citizens as potential threats based on the fact that they are Muslim or have Middle Eastern heritage. In all, about 44 percent said they believe that some curtailment of civil liberties is necessary for Muslim Americans (News release, 12/17/2004).

**Destruction and Defilement of Places of Worship** Islamic sanctuaries are frequent targets of Islamophobic hatred. Since 1994, CAIR has detailed at least 64 acts of destruction and defilement of Islamic places of worship including shootings, vandalism, arson, and bombings. These cases include the following sample incidents.

Three men entered a mosque in Illinois, squirted lighter fluid on a worshipper, then began flicking matches at him. Shots were fired into a Maryland mosque and at a Miami mosque and Islamic school. Two explosive devices were set off outside a mosque in Ohio. A small explosive device was set off in the mailbox of a Texas mosque.

A bus used for an Islamic school was burned. Fire investigators say they found a container of gasoline at the site and another container some 200 feet away under a tree.

In Texas, firebombs were thrown at an El Paso mosque. Mosques in Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas have been burned.

Following two loud bangs, worshippers at a mosque in Illinois found two holes, which they assumed were made by bullets, in windows of the building. Islamic Foundation Director Abdul Hameed Dogar called the attack a deliberate attempt to kill worshipers because those praying were clearly visible to the attackers through the large windows of the mosque.

After a police sergeant noticed a suspicious vehicle outside a Colorado mosque, a car chase ensued. The suspect, Jack Merlyn Modig, was apprehended and said, I am an enemy against the Islamic nation and I was going to take care of business. When Modig's car was searched, officers found a loaded shotgun, a loaded high-powered hunting rifle with a scope and bipod, two 9mm semi-automatic pistols, hundreds of rounds of ammunition, large quantities of bomb-making components, two machetes, a 7-inch survival knife, a black ski mask, black military vest and a pair of tactical goggles.

In 2002, Robert Goldstein, 37, was arrested after authorities found a stash of explosives and weapons in his home. The arsenal included two anti-armor rockets, a .50-caliber sniper rifle, hand grenades, assorted guns and assault rifles and 20 homemade bombs. Police also discovered a list of some 50 Florida mosques and detailed plans for destroying an Islamic education center using bombs. Attached to the list were three pages that included a schematic drawing of an unknown Islamic center and instructions on what to wear and how to carry out an attack. The plan read: OBJECTIVE: Kill all rags at this Islamic Education Center ZERO residual presence maximum effect Set timers for approximately 15-20 minutes to allow for enough time to get out of the area, but to confirm explosions has [sic] been successful Hand to hand is unlikely but be prepared to liquidate [Muslims] up close.

**Anti-Defamation** Parallel with the need to provide a voice for victims of bias, bad policies or misunderstandings triggered by an individual's faith is the need to defend the good name of the Muslim community and faith from those who would smear it through a lack of understanding or more nefarious political agendas.

CAIR's first campaign against a corporation involved a greeting card that read, So you're feeling like Shiite. Don't Mecca big deal out of it. The card company apologized and retracted unsold cards after numerous civil rights and religious groups joined protests and rallies to denounce the card's message.

CAIR has challenged stereotyping in films such as Not without My Daughter, True Lies, Executive Decision and The Siege.

More serious attempts at pure anti-Muslim propaganda were seen in works such as Fitna, Obsession: Radical Islam's War Against the West and Jihad in America.

Anti-Islamic views have led an editor of the National Review and a Republican member of Congress to independently advocate nuking the Islamic holy city of Mecca.

CAIR has challenged a magazine editor who claimed the Prophet Muhammad did not uphold treaties, children's books that would have misinformed young people about the faith, websites that violate the internet service providers' guidelines regarding hate speech and a magazine ad calling the Islamic faith virulent.

**Defamation of Islam and Muslims in the Media** A number of media personalities engage in anti-Muslim rhetoric. Rev. Pat Robertson, Dr. Laura Schlessinger, Don Imus, Michael Savage, Jay Severin, and Michael Graham feature on any list of such people.

In Ohio, WLW-AM host Bill Willie Cunningham said on air: The great war of this generation's time is the war against Islamic fascists. They do not live for life, they live for death. Only through death can they believe they can be with those 72 virgins in heaven and have sex with children for eternity, which is the goal of that religion.

In Southern California on the Bill Handel show on KFI AM 640, a pretend Muslim allegedly reading from the new Iraqi constitution referred to hairy Iraqi women, lovely Japanese schoolgirls, the infidel custom of bathing on a regular basis, and civil unions between Iraqis and loving camels and goats. Throughout the skit, called The New Iraq Constitution Handelized, the mock Muslim repeatedly stated Allah be praised., Death to the Jews and Kill all Jews. Listeners also heard recordings of Islamic prayers in Arabic.

Controversial conservative pundit Ann Coulter wrote: Being nice to people is, in fact, one of the incidental tenets of Christianity (as opposed to other religions whose tenets are more along the lines of kill everyone who doesn't smell bad and doesn't answer to the name Mohammed). Immediately following the 9/11 attacks, she suggested that we should invade their [Muslim] countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity.

**Defamation of Islam and Muslims by Public Officials** Public officials have made numerous statements that trouble the conscience of people in reasonable society.

CAIR called on Sen. Joseph Biden, Jr., (D-DE) to clarify remarks made on CNN. In a discussion of possible American attacks on Iraq, Biden said bombing that country might embolden Islam to become more aggressive with the United States.

It is an unfortunate reality that much of the anti-Muslim rhetoric in the political sphere comes from members of the Republican Party. CAIR has on numerous occasions called on the leadership of the GOP to distance themselves from such rhetoric.

CAIR urged Republicans to repudiate two Washington state representatives who walked out of an opening session invocation that was offered by a Muslim religious leader. One of the representatives, Louise McMahan said she did not remain in the chamber because, Its an issue of patriotism The Islamic religion is so part and parcel with the attack on America. I just didnt want to be there, be a part of that My god is not Mohammed.

Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ) denounced Islamophobic sentiments expressed by the International Christian Concern (ICC), but pointedly refused a demand to repudiate the group itself and did not rule out future collaboration with the group. ICC listed Smith as an honorary board member.

On ICCs web site, the groups president claimed that African-Americans are attracted to Islam because of two primeval lusts: power and possessions.

Rep. Cass Ballenger (R-NC) claimed the stress of living near CAIRs headquarters in Washington, D.C., caused the breakup of his marriage. Ballenger said that proximity to CAIR bugged the hell out of his wife. He said his wife also objected to women wearing hoods going in and out of CAIRs Capitol Hill office.

Rep. Peter T. King (R-NY) claimed that the vast majority of American Muslim community leaders are an enemy living amongst us and that no (American) Muslims cooperate in the war on terror. In 2007, King said we have too many mosques in this country.

Rep. Tom Tancredo (R-CO) suggested bombing Mecca, Islams holiest site. Tancredo made the remarks during an interview on the Pat Campbell Show in Florida, discussing what should be done in response to an attack on this country by extremist fundamentalist Muslims. Tancredo said one possible response would be to take out their holy sites. When Campbell asked if the congressman was talking about bombing Mecca, Tancredo replied, Yeah.

CAIR also called on state and national leaders of the Republican Party, including then President Bush, to repudiate Tancredos Islamophobic stance on a 9/11 memorial issue. Extremist and anti-Muslim Internet bloggers had associated the designs semi-circular shape with Islam, despite the fact that the designer, the park service and relatives of crash victims said the shape represented a circle broken by the flight pattern of Flight 93 when it crashed near Shanksville, Penn. (The crescent itself has no religious significance in Islam, but is commonly associated with that faith.) In a letter sent to the National Park Service, Tancredo opposed the designs shape because of the crescents prominent use as a symbol in Islam.

CAIR called on Rep. Virgil Goode (R-VA) to apologize for anti-Muslim remarks he made in a letter to a constituent. Goodes letter to the head of the local Sierra Club chapter slammed the planned use of a Quran for the ceremonial swearing-in of Keith Ellison, the first Muslim elected to Congress. (In fact, no religious texts of any kind are used for the official swearing-in ceremony.) Goode wrote:

I do not subscribe to using the Koran in any way, wrote Goode. The Muslim Representative from Minnesota was elected by the voters of that district and if American citizens dont wake up and adopt the Virgil Goode position on immigration there will likely be many more Muslims elected to office and demanding the use of the Koran.

Goode also decried the growth of the American Muslim community. He wrote:

I fear that in the next century we will have many more Muslims in the United States if we do not adopt the strict immigration policies that I believe are necessary to preserve the values and beliefs traditional to the United States of America.

(Keith Ellison has traced his familys roots in America to the year 1742.)

In 2007, Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL) told the St. Petersburg Times, Its historically accurate that every terrorist has been a Muslim.

Similarly, in 2008 CAIR called on Rep. Paul Broun (R-GA) to add a balancing perspective to an upcoming congressional briefing on Islamic finance that featured a presentation by the head of a racist anti-Muslim group. Brouns invitation letter claimed that Islamic finance violates U.S. laws and has supported Islamist extremists and sponsors of terrorism.

One of the presenters at that briefing, David Yerushalmi, is the president and founder of the Society of Americans for National Existence (SANE), a group that has advocated imposing prison terms for adherence to Islam and questions whether women and African-Americans should be allowed to vote.

In February of 2007, Yerushalmis group offered a policy proposal that stated in part:

Whereas, adherence to Islam as a Muslim is prima facie evidence of an act in support of the overthrow of the U.S. Government through the abrogation, destruction, or violation of the U.S. Constitution and the imposition of Sharia on the American People It shall be a felony punishable by 20 years in prison to knowingly act in furtherance of, or to support the, adherence to Islam. (The final reference to adherence to Islam has since been changed to adherence to Sharia in the text.)

The New York Jewish Week reported in 2007 that Yerushalmi condemns democracy in the United States and, in comments that evoke classical anti-Semitic stereotypes, says he finds truth in the view that Jews destroy their host nations like a fatal parasite.'

Any fair presentation of Islamic finance should exclude those who hold racist or anti-Muslim views and include actual experts on Islam, said CAIR National Legislative Director Corey Saylor. Elected officials deserve accurate and unbiased information, not thinly-veiled bigotry.

**Defamation of Islam in Other Venues** Many advertisers have produced ads that run contrary to Muslim sensitivities. A singular

example was a print advertisement produced by aerospace giants Boeing Co. and Bell Helicopter Textron depicting U.S. troops attacking a mosque. The ad for the CV-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft, published in the September 24, 2005 issue of National Journal magazine, depicted soldiers rappelling onto the roof of a building, labeled Muhammad Mosque in Arabic. The building had a dome, crescent moon and minaret, all common features of a mosque.

Headlines on the ad read: It descends from the heavens. Ironically it unleashes hell. Ad copy states: The CV-22 delivers Special Forces to insertion points never thought possible.

In a letter to Textron Chairman Lewis B. Campbell, Boeing Company President James A. Bell and Bell Helicopter CEO Michael A. Redenbaugh, CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad wrote:

[The ad] clearly portrays special forces assaulting a mosque, a structure dedicated to civilian worship purposes. This gives the impression that the insertion points never thought possible are Islamic places of worship. This advertisement reflects poorly on Bell Helicopter, Textron and Boeing, and offers a questionable picture of your companies collective opinion of Islam and Muslims.

General William Boykin came under scrutiny when media reports revealed that in a public discussion of his efforts to capture a Muslim Somali warlord, he said, I knew my God was bigger than his. I knew that my God was a real God and his was an idol. Speaking in uniform before a Christian group, the general said Americas spiritual enemy will only be defeated if we come against them in the name of Jesus.

Following CAIRs intervention, Simon & Schuster, the worlds largest English language publisher, recalled a childrens book that offered inaccurate and inflammatory information about the Prophet Muhammad. The book, Great Lives: World Religions by William Jay Jacobs, included the following reference to Muhammad:

During his lifetime he was a man who loved beautiful women, fine perfume, and tasty food. He took pleasure in seeing the heads of his enemies torn from their bodies by the swords of his soldiers. He hated Christians and Jews, poets and painters, and anyone who criticized him. Once he had a Jewish prisoner tortured in order to learn the location of the mans hidden treasure. Then, having uncovered the secret, he had his victim murdered and added the dead mans wife to the collection of women in his harem.

**International** Many attacks on CAIR refer to foreign affairs issues, primarily the Israel-Palestine conflict. However, the following section allows readers to make an assessment on CAIRs positions for themselves. International releases account for a mere 10 percent of statements issued by CAIR.

They are listed in alphabetical order by country.

**Afghanistan:** After condemning terrorist attacks in Kenya and Tanzania, CAIR questioned the legality of an ensuing American missile strike. The organization joined the wider American Muslim community in issuing a 2001 statement saying, We believe the bombing in Afghanistan is not in the long-term interest of our country or the world at large. The bombing victimizes the innocents, exacerbates the humanitarian disaster and creates widespread resentment across the Muslim world. Before the war, CAIR worked behind the scenes to prepare a delegation to go to Afghanistan to call for the release of eight western aid workers.

**Bangladesh:** A statement was issued seeking information on the condition of an American Muslim who was reportedly detained in that nation.

**Bosnia:** CAIR issued an action alert calling on Muslim to pray for Bosnians. The organization supported Congressional efforts to lift an arms embargo on the legitimate Bosnia government as it sought to defend itself against brutal attacks by neighboring nations.

**Chechnya:** CAIR called for Russia to withdraw its forces from Chechnya, saying: For some 200 years, the Chechen people struggled to determine their own fate, free from the dictates of Russian and Soviet colonial masters. It is time the world community offered its support for the freedom and independence of Chechnya. Later, the organization called on President Bush to raise the issue of human rights abuses by Russian occupation troops in Chechnya when he meets with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on Friday.

**Egypt:** CAIR raised concerns about civilians being sentenced in Egyptian military courts and called on the Egyptian government to not only uphold the human rights of all of its citizens, but to grant them the right to participate peacefully in an open democratic process. In 2004, the organization called attention to the detention of an American in Egypt saying, We are concerned that an American citizen can be detained under mysterious circumstances by a close ally.

**Ethiopia:** CAIRs March 14, 2007 release reported that CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad met with President Girma Wolde-Giorgis of Ethiopia. The release states, The meeting was hosted by the Institute on Religion and Public Policy in coordination with the United States Institute of Peace and the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, and focused on inter-cultural, interreligious, and fundamental rights issues.

**France:** In 2000, CAIR described how it successfully worked with French consulates in the United States to allow French Muslim women to wear their headscarves in passport photos. The problem of consulates denying women visas over their headscarves repeated in 2004. In 2003 CAIR condemned a request by French President Jacques Chirac for a law banning Islamic head scarves in public schools. A nation cannot claim to uphold principles of liberty and equality while denying the religious rights of its citizens, said CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad of the request.

CAIR opposed riots in France in 2005 calling for an immediate and peaceful end to the violence and asking French authorities to employ dialogue and mutual respect in efforts to end rioting and violence in suburbs of Paris. In Washington D.C., CAIR held a panel discussion to discuss the riots. The panel featured Frances ambassador to the United States. The next year, CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad travelled to Paris to participate in a forum on Integration and the Sense of Belonging.

**India:** Calling for an end to rampant religious violence in Gujarat in 2002, CAIR said:



We urge the Indian government to take swift, sustained action to end mob violence in Gujarat and to prevent the spread of violence to neighboring areas. We demand that Indian law enforcement authorities ensure the safety of all citizens, regardless of religious affiliation. Perpetrators of violence must be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. And finally, we call for a just and comprehensive resolution to the Ayodhya mosque dispute. Concerted action must be taken immediately to deal with this inflammatory issue. The construction of a Hindu temple at the mosque site could serve as a spark to ignite a renewed cycle of violence.

Subsequently, CAIR worked to block the entry of Narendra Modi, an Indian official accused of complicity in the massacre of Muslim civilians in Gujarat, to the United States. The effort expanded following revelations that Modis administration distributed a social studies textbook praising Adolf Hitler.

**Iran:** CAIR welcomed the Clinton administrations decision to lift a ban on imports of Iranian goods such as carpets, nuts and caviar. The organization urged Iran to release detained American journalist Roxana Saberi in 2009, asked for help in locating an FBI agent missing in that country since 2007, and requested the release of three American hikers detained in 2009. CAIR also condemned a plan by an Iranian newspaper to solicit cartoons denying the Nazi Holocaust.

**Iraq:** In 1998, CAIR called on American policy makers to base decisions regarding Iraq on several key points: 1) There should be no bombing of innocent people in Iraq who have no say in what their government does or does not do. 2) The sanctions are a humanitarian disaster that themselves rise to the level of a weapon of mass destruction. They had little impact on Saddam Hussein. 3) Double standards with regard to implementation of U.N. resolutions are counter-productive to American interests. 4) Democracy and respect for human rights apply to all people, not just those who are currently in favor with any particular administration.

Later that year, the group condemned American bombing in Iraq, not because we support Saddam Hussein or his policies, but because it is innocent civilians who will suffer. CAIR supported a bipartisan letter signed by 42 Members of Congress calling for an end to sanctions on Iraq.

CAIR strongly opposed the 2003 invasion of Iraq in a release dated February 27, 2003, saying:

An American attack on Iraq would almost certainly lead to the death of many innocent civilians, further destabilize an already unstable region, harm international efforts to combat terrorism, drain much-needed financial resources from our struggling economy, and set a dangerous precedent for unilateral intervention in the affairs of other nations. Any American invasion and occupation of Iraq will fuel anti-American sentiment and would thereby harm our nations image and interests in areas outside the Middle East.

CAIR welcomed the capture of Saddam Hussein and hoped the death of terrorist leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi would help slow sectarian violence in Iraq. The council called on Sunni and Shia leaders in Iraq to help stop the cycle of sectarian violence in that nation.

The organization urged American forces to avoid attacking the Imam Ali Shrine in the Iraqi city of Najaf, a site revered by millions of Shia Muslims in Iraq and around the world, called for a probe into the Abu Ghraib abuses and called for the resignation of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld over reports that U.S. Marines had killed 24 Iraqi civilians in the city of Haditha.

In 2008, then CAIR National Director Tahra Goraya called for a U.S. withdrawal from Iraq saying, After the tragic deaths of 4,000 American military personnel and of uncounted thousands of Iraqi civilians, we are less secure and less respected as a nation. As we enter the sixth year of this war, it is time to finally withdraw our troops.

**Israel and Palestine:** CAIRs strongly-worded stance on Israels decades-long military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as that nations aggressive posture toward other Middle East nations, is well reflected in some ninety-nine media releases issued on the subject between 1994 and the end of 2008.

In May of 2009, in an open letter to President Obama and the Muslim World issued just prior to the Presidents speech in Cairo, Egypt, CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad wrote the following:

we should do what is necessary to resolve long-standing conflicts, and particularly the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that are the main source of anti-American feeling in the Muslim world.

Now is the time to tell Israeli leaders that we will no longer support the denial of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and that we will take concrete actions to back up that declaration. Israels wall of separation must come down, humiliating roadblocks must be removed, the illegal settlements must be dismantled, food and other essential supplies must flow freely, Palestinian rights must be restored, and a viable and independent Palestinian state must be created and supported.

The organization supported the Palestinian right of return to homes and lands from which they were expelled by Israel, a common position among those seeking justice for Palestinians. Of the issue, Executive Director Nihad Awad said, The ethnic cleansing that Palestinians have experienced, and continue to experience, is an affront to people of conscience worldwide.

CAIR has repeatedly questioned Israels apparent violations of Americas Arms Export Control Act of 1976, which requires that foreign governments receiving American weaponry use it solely for internal security and legitimate self-defense. For instance, CAIR condemned Israels use of American-supplied F-16 fighter aircraft in attacks on Palestinian targets that left at least eight dead and many more wounded and Israels use of American taxpayer-supplied weapons to massacre at least 11 Palestinians, including women and children, in an attack on a residential building in the Gaza Strip. The latest list of dead released by a nearby hospital included two babies ages 18 and 2 months, five children ages 3-5, an 11-year-old and three adults.

CAIR has opposed many of the congressional resolutions passed supporting Israels occupation policies. Following one congressional vote in support of Israels brutal invasion of Palestinian territory the impending vote had caused White House spokesman Ari Fleischer to note that President Bush was concerned that no foreign policy can survive 535 different secretaries of state a statement by CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad read in part:

It is truly disturbing to see American elected officials falling over themselves in an unseemly attempt to pledge allegiance to a foreign government and its domestic lobby. Perhaps these same politicians should be reminded that they were elected by American, not Israeli voters.

Americans should not offer unconditional support to a brutal invasion that even the Israelis admit involved killings of noncombatants, looting by soldiers, denial of relief supplies to entire population centers, and the use of Palestinian civilians as human shields in military operations.

CAIR supported President Bush's request that Israel end both its settlement activity and its ongoing assaults on Palestinian towns and villages. In a statement issued following the president's speech, CAIR Governmental Affairs Director Jason Erb said:

The operative aspects of today's remarks by President Bush, despite being couched in standard pro-Israel rhetoric, are a clear departure from the administration's one-sided support for that nation's brutal and illegal policies. The President has accurately identified the real sources of conflict in the Holy Land; the settlements, the occupation and the daily humiliation suffered by ordinary Palestinians.

While asking Muslims to contact the U.S. Department of State to demand an end to blind American support for Israel's brutal policies against Palestinian Muslims and Christians, CAIR noted that there are signs that efforts of this kind are paying off. United Press International reports that the United States has canceled a regularly scheduled live-fire training exercise with Israeli forces. A Pentagon spokesman said he wanted to make it clear that America does not endorse Israel's tactics against Palestinian populated areas.

CAIR applauded a ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the highest U.N. court, that Israel's wall in the occupied West Bank violates international law and should be torn down. Even the lone dissenting judge on the 15-member panel, American Thomas Buergenthal, acknowledged that Israel's wall might violate international law. (The other judges were from China, Madagascar, France, Sierra Leone, Russia, Britain, Venezuela, the Netherlands, Brazil, Jordan, Egypt, Japan, Germany, and Slovakia.) In its statement, CAIR said:

Today's ruling is a historic victory for international law and justice. Unfortunately, we once again see our own government swimming against the tide of world public and legal opinion to defend Israel's neo-Apartheid policies. How long will America's international image and interests be held hostage by a powerful domestic lobby for a foreign government?

CAIR has frequently called for America to do more to protect the lives of American civilians living in the Occupied Territories. This includes a call that President Bush demand that Israel stop bombing civilian areas in Lebanon at least long enough to safely evacuate some 25,000 U.S. citizens in that nation that noted, Israel's bombing campaign has made it too dangerous for many U.S. citizens, both diplomatic personnel and Muslim and Christian Lebanese-Americans, to leave the areas under attack.

At the time, CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad said:

If a call for the full cessation of attacks on the civilian population of an American ally is too much to ask for, at least we can demand that Israel stop its bombing campaign long enough to evacuate American citizens. The highest duty of any president is to protect the lives of Americans.

In 2006, CAIR held a news conference with a Dearborn Heights, Michigan mother and her two young sons who were wounded while fleeing Israeli attacks in Southern Lebanon. The 34-year-old mother and her 8 and 10-year-old sons, all of whom are U.S. citizens, came under attack while attempting to flee north in a convoy of civilian vehicles carrying many Christian families. All three family members were wounded by what was presumed to be Israeli sniper fire. When the victims were taken to a nearby hospital, the facility reportedly came under Israeli air attack. The family was then forced to walk eight miles to another hospital and ultimately left Lebanon on a Canadian ship that evacuated refugees from Tyre.

In 2007, the Tampa office of CAIR held a news conference with members of a Florida Muslim family who said they had been trapped in the West Bank by an Israeli policy that treats even U.S.-born citizens as Palestinians if their parents once lived in the Occupied Territories. According to family members, Israeli officials forced them to obtain Palestinian passports (with Israeli-issued passport numbers) before leaving the West Bank to Jordan. The mother of the Muslim family said she and her children were visiting the West Bank during a summer break. When they attempted to return through Tel Aviv airport on their scheduled flight, Israeli authorities denied travel to seven young family members. The mother was allegedly told that, despite her children's U.S. citizenship, they could not travel through the Israeli airport because they are of Palestinian heritage.

Also in 2007, CAIR hosted a delegation of Palestinian National Authority (PNA) religious leaders at its Capitol Hill headquarters. At CAIR's reception, Muslim community leaders met with Palestinian Chief Justice Dr. Tayseer Al-Tamimi and Palestinian Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs Jamal M. Bawatna, who were both visiting the Washington, D.C., area as guests of the United States government.

CAIR is not alone in its strong criticism of Israel, nor is the organization averse to offering potential steps to bring just and lasting peace to Palestinians, Israelis and all others who seek to stabilize the region. In an op-ed he co-authored in 2006, former National Board Chair Parvez Ahmed wrote:

The Bush administration can take some positive steps to bring us all closer to peace with justice in the Middle East.

1. Call for immediate and unconditional ceasefires in Lebanon and Gaza. This will not only facilitate the evacuation of the thousands of Americans trapped in Lebanon, it will also allow humanitarian aid to reach innocent victims of this disaster.
2. Cancel the unconscionable expedited delivery of bombs to Israel.
3. Implement all relevant UN resolutions without picking and choosing those we like and those we wish to ignore.

4. Seek the immediate establishment of a viable, independent and sovereign Palestinian state.

5. Send former Presidents George Bush and Jimmy Carter to mediate not just ceasefires and delivery of humanitarian aid, but to also bring all parties to the negotiating table.

In 2008, CAIR collected and delivered to Congress more than 12,000 letters calling for an end to Israel's collective punishment of Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip.

**Kashmir:** In 2000, CAIR requested a meeting with President Clinton to discuss, in part, independence for Kashmir. After India's Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee hinted that war with Pakistan over Kashmir may be imminent, CAIR said: The people of Kashmir also have the right to peace and freedom. The issue of Kashmir will only be resolved through a political solution that meets the legitimate needs of all parties to the conflict.

Shortly after that statement, CAIR issued an action alert calling on American Muslims to contact their elected officials to request that they do all they can to prevent war in South Asia by promoting an even-handed approach to the current conflict between Pakistan and India and supporting self-determination for the people of Kashmir.

**Kosovo:** CAIR endorsed a statement issued by the Kosovo Task Force, USA saying, American Muslims support NATO's effort to degrade Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic's ability to carry out aggression against the people of Kosovo.

Similarly, CAIR urged international leaders to arm the Kosovars so that they may defend themselves. The group later called for Slobodan Milosevic and his top commanders to be tried as war criminals.

**Pakistan:** CAIR called on the Bush administration to step up pressure on Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf to restore the constitution of his country and return to civilian rule in that nation. In a statement, CAIR said:

We call on President Bush to demand that Gen. Musharraf immediately return Pakistan to civilian control and to reverse the unconstitutional actions that he has taken since the declaration of the state of emergency. American taxpayer dollars should not be spent in support of such anti-democratic measures.

**Sudan:** After condemning terrorist attacks in Kenya and Tanzania, CAIR questioned the legality of ensuing American missile strikes in Sudan. Subsequently, CAIR announced that it had joined with more than 70 other faith-based, humanitarian and human rights groups in signing a Unity Statement and Call to Action in response to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Sudan.

It is important that Americans of all faiths first understand the misery felt by the people of Darfur and then act to help alleviate their suffering, said CAIR Communications Director Ibrahim Hooper. Hooper also cautioned against portraying the crisis in terms of ethnic stereotypes or allowing exploitation of the suffering to promote political or religious agendas.

The Council called for both the release of a British teacher jailed in Sudan for insulting Islam and for stepped up dialogue between the West and the Muslim world. In a statement, CAIR said:

We believe the complaint brought against Gillian Gibbons was an inappropriate use of Sudan's legal system to deal with what was in essence a disagreement between parents and a teacher. Ms. Gibbons should never have been charged and she should be released immediately. Even if there was intent to cause insult, which does not seem to be the case, Islamic traditions include a number of instances in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) had the opportunity to strike back at those who attacked him, but refrained from doing so.

**Tunisia:** The Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization called on the government of Tunisia to respect the religious rights of women in that nation who choose to wear an Islamic headscarf, or hijab. In a statement CAIR said: Freedom of religion should be a valued aspect of any society. People of all faiths must be granted the right to freely practice their religion without government interference or intimidation.

**Turkey:** In March 1999, CAIR announced that it had spoken with a representative of the U.S. Department of State about the organization's concerns regarding religious freedom in Turkey. Muslims in America take for granted rights routinely denied to their co-religionists in Turkey. Religious practices as simple as the wearing of a head scarf or going on pilgrimage to Mecca are viewed as acts of political subversion, said CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad, one of the participants in the discussion.

We ask that the United States use its considerable economic and diplomatic influence to promote basic religious and political rights in Turkey, said Awad.

The council later asked for the release of an American detained in Turkey saying, Turkey has a long history of human and religious rights violations, including banning Islamic attire in government offices and universities, and labeling normal religious activity as extremist.'

**Education** Recognizing that the more people know about Islam the less likely they are to discriminate against Muslims, CAIR has undertaken numerous educational efforts. The organization has issued surveys and reports, as well as hosted panel and town hall forums to increase knowledge and awareness of Islam. CAIR's educational efforts have also included developing a portrait of the American Muslim community.

CAIR has provided local police departments, the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Marines and other institutions first-hand training on Islam and those who practice the faith.

In the same vein, CAIR worked for years hosting Department of State sponsored delegations from dozens of majority and minority Muslim countries. The purpose of these delegations' visits to CAIR was to show the American Muslim experience as a useful civic model.

In 1996, the organization joined with the Islamic Media Foundation to begin Ramadan by launching a first-ever public service announcement campaign. The two PSAs focused on the importance of being kind to mothers and on hijab, the Muslim women's attire that is often stereotyped and misunderstood. Other PSAs have included 2004's I am an American Muslim campaign and a series of Muslim anti-terror PSAs launched in 2005.

In 1997, to counter the growing numbers of cases involving workplace discrimination, CAIR sought to educate the public about Muslim practices and to educate Muslims about their rights. The Employers Guide to Islamic Religious Practices booklet addresses issues employers of Muslims may face in the workplace. Topics discussed included Islamic attire in the workplace, minimum requirements for Islamic prayers, Muslim dietary laws and legal precedents for accommodating religious practices. This guide series now contains similar guides for educators, law enforcement officials, health care professionals and correctional institutions.

In April, 2001 CAIR's research department released *The Mosque in America: A National Portrait*. The study was the largest and most comprehensive survey of its kind to be conducted in the United States. It was part of a larger study of American congregations called Faith Communities Today coordinated by Hartford Seminary's Hartford Institute for Religious Research.

One of the most significant findings in this survey is that mosques are quite ethnically diverse, said Dr. Ihsan Bagby, the report's primary researcher and a member of CAIR's National Board of Directors. Bagby noted that 93 percent of all mosques are attended by more than one ethnic group. Some major findings contained in the survey included:

In 2002 CAIR launched a billboard campaign designed to promote tolerance, unity and kindness. The billboards had the message 'Even a smile is Charity' a message from your Muslim neighbor written on them. The 'We Are American Muslims' national ad campaign, launched in the New York Times in 2003, 2004's I am an American Muslim, 2005's Sharing Ramadan and Pray for Understanding campaigns were designed with a similar goal in mind.

CAIR's research department has released polls demonstrating that most Muslims in America experienced discrimination post 9/11.

In 2004 the research department published a survey that found that 1-in-4 Americans believes a number of anti-Muslim stereotypes and negative images of Muslims are 16 times more prevalent than positive ones. Two years later a follow-up survey showed that some one-fourth (23 to 27 percent) of Americans consistently believe stereotypes such as: Muslims value life less than other people, and 'The Muslim religion teaches violence and hatred.'

The organization also published a 350 page first-of-its-kind book guide titled *The North American Muslim Resource Guide: Muslim Community Life in the United States and Canada*.

CAIR's year-long campaign, launched in 2002, called Explore Islamic Civilization and Culture, encouraged Muslim individuals and groups to sponsor 18-item library packages of books, videos and audio cassettes about Islam and Muslims, which were then distributed to public libraries nationwide. (A pilot program by CAIR's Los Angeles office placed more than 2,500 books and videos in 166 libraries.)

The \$150 library packages contained materials such as the PBS documentary *Islam: Empire of Faith*, Prof. Jack Shaheen's *Reel Bad Arabs* and *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* by Prof. John Esposito of Georgetown University's Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding. Other library package materials included a copy of the Quran, Islam's revealed text; children's books on Ramadan and mosque architecture; and a book describing the experiences of African-Muslim slaves brought to America.

Launched in November 2007, CAIR's Beyond Stereotypes educational campaign aimed at members of the media raised awareness about Islam and Muslim through the publishing of *American Muslims: A Journalists Guide to Understanding Islam and Muslims*, over 40,000 copies of which have been distributed to members of the media.

Both the Explore the Quran and Explore the Life of Muhammad campaigns, in which free materials about Islam are given to people who request them, were launched as a way to turn a negative event into a positive. Explore the Quran was initiated following allegations that a Quran was flushed down a toilet at the Guantanamo Bay detention facility; Explore the Life of Muhammad came in the wake of cartoons published in Denmark that defamed Islam's prophet.

**Civic Engagement** Non-partisan voter registration drives and civic forums are a hallmark of CAIR's civic engagement campaigns. CAIR has called voting a civic duty.

CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad had this to say about Muslim civic engagement: Muslims have a duty to make a positive impact on this society, and voting is one of the most effective means to accomplish this goal. Awad added that Muslims must also use their votes to promote morality and to challenge legislation and policies that contradict Islamic values or threaten civil liberties.

In 1996, CAIR joined with the newly-formed group Muslim Women for America (MWA) to announce several initiatives designed to increase American Muslim participation in the political process. These initiatives included a groundbreaking MWA mobilization drive aimed at registering, educating and polling Muslim women voters and a CAIR-sponsored American Muslim Voter Registration Day.

In 1997, CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad joined Vice President Al Gore's Civil Rights Advisory Panel to the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security.

In 1999, CAIR declared September Voter Registration and Education Month. In an open letter to the Muslim community, CAIR's leaders encouraged their community members to come together and cooperate on several issues, especially registering more community members as voters and educating them as to how to get involved in the electoral process.

In 2000, CAIR asked Muslim prayer leaders, or imams, to encourage voting in their sermons during communal Friday prayers.

CAIR cited a number of reasons Muslims should vote, including:

In 2004, the Ohio office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-Ohio) announced the opening of Get Out the Muslim Vote election centers in Columbus, Cleveland and Cincinnati. The centers used phone banks staffed by volunteers to urge eligible Muslim voters to go to the polls on Election Day.

CAIR, with the indispensable assistance of individual Muslim activists, responded to the need for more proactive initiatives in the 2004 elections by:

CAIR also provided information about voter registration, polling station locations, and absentee ballots and issued voter guides detailing the candidates stances on issues of importance to Muslims.

The organization also produces surveys of the attitudes of registered Muslim voters.

CAIR's 2008 election website contained the most comprehensive picture of the successes and concerns of the Muslim community in the campaign season. The website included frequent updates on media reports, original content in the form of opinion articles, a list of Muslims who ran for public office and a record of anti-Muslim rhetoric throughout the primaries and general election.

The site also included a universal voter guide that provided general information about the election, such as candidate positions and biographies and voter guides specific to twenty states and the District of Columbia to inform citizens of polling times and locations, absentee voting, and voter rights in their places of residence.

Some other notable 2008 successes include:

CAIR conducted 42 civic participation training events for the community nationwide in 2008. These courses were intended to provide specific rollup-your-sleeves-and-get-involved information on participating in an election as well as advocating issues to officials once they are in office. Five additional youth-specific forums were held in California, Illinois, Washington, Texas and New Jersey.

The organization worked with like-minded groups to bring candidates to speak directly to the Muslim community in California, Florida, New Jersey, Ohio and Oklahoma.

One hundred twenty-three organized voter registration drives were held, along with an uncounted number of informal voter registration efforts at community functions.

One of CAIR's core messages to Muslims during election season was to volunteer for the campaign or party of their choice.

While the community as a whole should never permanently align with either party, your allegiance is to God, country and issues, not a specific party, individuals in the community should work with the party they feel best represents them, said CAIR National Legislative Director Corey Saylor.

**Public Service and Humanitarian Efforts at Home and Abroad** In 1995, CAIR empowered the community with easy-to-tailor proactive educational campaigns to prevent discrimination. CAIR began by releasing publicity kits about Islam. The Ramadan and Hajj publicity kits contained media relations tips, news release templates and creative ideas for events to assist local communities in publicizing and improving the understanding of Islamic holidays and practices.

CAIR continually urges Muslims nationwide to review security procedures using advice contained in its Muslim Community Safety Kit.

The organization joined with other Muslim groups in calling on Imam Jamil Al-Amin to turn himself in to federal authorities following news that a warrant for his arrest had been issued in Georgia. That statement noted: In order that all the facts in this case be known and that justice be allowed to take its course, we ask that Jamil Al-Amin surrender immediately to the FBI. A fair and impartial trial can then move forward based, as always, on the presumption of innocence. CAIR subsequently raised concerns about the evidence offered against the Imam and helped support his legal defense.

The Minnesota chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-MN) announced that Muslim employees of the Twin Cities Airport Taxi, Viking Airport Taxi, and Bloomington City Taxi would offer free cab rides to blind individuals (and their guide dogs) attending a one-day semiannual convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Minnesota. The release accompanying the announcement read, in part:

CAIR-MN facilitated the offer after inaccurate reports surfaced of cab drivers refusing to serve passengers with guide dogs. As Muslims, we believe that we must do all we can to assist those who have physical challenges and special needs, said CAIR-MN Communications Director Valerie Shirley.

Shirley quoted Islam's Prophet Muhammad, who said: There are many doors to goodness listening to the deaf (until you understand them), leading the blind, guiding someone to the object of his need, hurrying with the strength of one's legs to one in sorrow who is asking for help, and supporting the weak with the strength of one's arms all of these are (forms of) charity prescribed for you. (Fiqh-us-Sunnah, 3:98)

Muslim taxi drivers claim that they have been misunderstood and misrepresented in the media. This has never been an issue for us, said Abdinoor Ahmed Dolal, Owner of Twin Cities Airport Taxi. Islam forbids us to turn away a blind passenger, whether they have a guide dog or not. Their rights come first.

In 2007, CAIR ventured into anti-smoking efforts by calling on Muslims to use the month of Ramadan as an opportunity to quit smoking permanently.

**Promoting Volunteerism** The centerpiece campaign to CAIR's call for volunteerism is the Muslims Care campaign.

Muslims Care, an annual program designed to promote volunteerism in the Muslim community, was launched in 2005. Through the

program, Muslim leaders are encouraged to give sermons about volunteerism and community members receive ideas on suggested volunteer activities such as blood drives, health awareness fairs and student tutoring. Part of the program has included urging Muslims to participate in annual Komen Race for the Cure events, which raise breast cancer awareness.

**Humanitarian Efforts** CAIR called on Muslims to spend their charity to aid victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Charley. CAIR was among the organizations that helped mobilize more than 2,000 Muslims to serve food, work registration tables and provide solace to storm-displaced victims at the George R. Brown Convention Center following Hurricane Katrina.

The organization urged Muslims to donate to a fund created to aid victims of the 2002 DC sniper shootings. In making that call, CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad said, As Muslims, we have a duty to help those who have been so cruelly targeted. The Prophet Muhammad said, Whoever believes in God and the Last Day should be generous to his neighbor.

The organization has asked Muslims to spend their charity in aid of victims of many disasters. Among these are earthquakes in Turkey and Pakistan, the South Asian Tsunami, and the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Often during Ramadan, CAIR chapters will coordinate drives to provide clothes and food to the needy in their neighborhoods. CAIR asked Muslims to donate blood in the wake of tragedies such as the Oklahoma City bombing and the 9/11 attacks.

CAIR has also asked for Muslims to pray for rain following uncontrolled fires in California and a drought in the African nation Niger. CAIR also called on Muslims to pray for those who died as a result of an earthquake in Turkey and, along with New York Muslim leaders, coordinated a prayer service to memorialize those who died in the EgyptAir Flight 990 tragedy.

Muslims were also called upon to pray for miners trapped after a cave-in in West Virginia. We call on all people of faith to pray for the safe return of the trapped miners and for the health and safety of all those worldwide who are suffering as the result of natural or man-made disasters, said CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad in a release addressing that tragedy.

**Terror Condemnations** [Note: This subject is covered more fully in the document on [CAIRs persistent and consistent condemnation of terrorism](#)]

During the period from 1994-2008 covered by this review, CAIR issued 84 releases that condemn terrorism.

CAIRs formula on terrorism is simple and comprehensive: CAIR condemns terrorism whenever it happens, wherever it happens, whoever commits it.

In 1999, CAIR made the following statements in the wake of the arrest of an Algerian man who was allegedly attempting to smuggle bomb-making materials into the United States from Canada:

CAIR coordinated a fatwa, or Islamic religious ruling, against terrorism in 2005. The fatwa was issued by the Fiqh Council of North America and endorsed by more than 340 American Muslim organizations, mosques and imams. Among the statements in the fatwa are the following:

CAIR has condemned specific terrorist actions against Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Americans, Spaniards, Turks, Israelis, Saudis, Russians, Egyptians, Jordanians, Iraqis, British, and so on.

CAIR has condemned specific terrorist groups by name. As a single example, on [3/11/2009](#), the 5th anniversary of the tragic Madrid attacks, CAIR issued a statement saying, **We unequivocally condemn all acts of terrorism, whether carried out by al-Qaida, the Real IRA, FARC, Hamas, ETA, or any other group designated by the U.S. Department of State as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.** Condemnations have included state-actors such as Israel, as well as other groups like the Jewish Defense League, Islamic Jihad, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Kahane Chai and the Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of the Chechen Martyrs group.

CAIR called a 2002 attack on Israeli civilians of particular concern coming as it did during a religious observance in which the focus is remembrance of God.

In 2004, CAIR hosted a press conference at its Capitol Hill headquarters at which a number of Muslim religious leaders issued a statement saying, The targeting of civilians has always been prohibited in Islam. Those who kidnap and murder civilians are violating Islamic norms and deserve to be repudiated by Muslims in America, in Iraq and throughout the Islamic world. As it states in the Quran, Islams revealed text: If anyone slays a human being it shall be as though he had slain all mankind, and if anyone saves a life, it shall be as though he had saved the lives of all mankind. (5:32)

Following a series of bombings in Spain that left almost 200 people dead CAIR called on prayer leaders, or Imams, in mosques across America and the Muslim world to use sermons at Friday congregational prayers (Jumah) to convey the message that terrorists are destroying the image of their faith.

CAIR sent two of its senior staff to Baghdad, Iraq in 2006 to appeal for the release of Jill Carroll, an American journalist who was kidnapped and being held there.

Also in 2006, responding to the reported mutilation of two U.S. soldiers abducted and killed in Iraq CAIR condemned the killing and apparent mutilation of the soldiers as violations of universal moral principles.

In August of 2006 a CAIR representative took part in an FBI press conference dealing with the alleged plot to bomb airliners flying between the United Kingdom and America.

More recently, CAIR condemned attacks in Mumbai, India, the tragic murders at Fort Hood and the attempted bombing of an airliner on Christmas Day in 2009.

Commenting on CAIR's response to the Fort Hood murders, CNN's Anderson Cooper reported that CAIR reacted to the shooting spree, condemning the attack in the strongest terms possible. On MSNBC's Hardball, Chris Matthews noted that CAIR was quick to condemn the massacre.

## **Interfaith Work**

CAIR supported the state of Ohio in its court battle to use the motto With God, all things are possible. CAIR's statement on the issue read in part: Our society is suffering from many problems associated with a decline both in moral values and in respect for religious and family principles. These problems will not be solved by eliminating references to God from public discourse. The statement With God, all things are possible is not, as the court stated, a uniquely Christian thought. In fact, a similar phrase is used many times throughout the Quran, Islam's revealed text. For example, verse 106 of chapter 2 states: Know you not that God is able to do all things?'

CAIR was critical of a 2000 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that barred student-led prayers at high school sporting events. CAIR said the ruling would limit the free speech of students and could have a negative impact on Muslim students who are obligated to pray during the school day. CAIR's statement read in part:

As demonstrated by the increase in violence, sexual promiscuity and drug use at schools throughout the country, there is clearly a need for more student-sponsored spiritual guidance, not less. While we would not support school-imposed prayers, we agree with Justice Rehnquist's dissent in which he states that today's decision bristles with hostility to all things religious in public life.

This ruling could be used to prevent a Muslim student from saying the traditional Islamic invocation Bismillah, or in the name of God, before beginning an address.

Similarly, CAIR welcomed a Supreme Court ruling allowing after-hours meeting space for school religious groups saying, Equal treatment for people of faith is not government endorsement.

The organization supported a Christian bus driver's right to wear what she believed to be a religiously-mandated headscarf. The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority had announced its intent to fire driver Kim Harris because she would not wear a standard uniform cap. Harris cited 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 as saying that a woman must be covered. If she's not covered, it dishonors her head, which is God.

CAIR also criticized as tasteless and insensitive a television commercial promoting professional wrestling that shows Jesus gambling with the devil in a sports bar, condemned a political advertisement that attacked the Church of Christ of Latter-day Saints, or Mormons, and offered condolences and called for interfaith solidarity following the brutal murder of an Egyptian Coptic Christian family.

While condemning a 1999 attack on a California Jewish center, CAIR noted, Unfortunately, this incident is just the latest entry in a long list of attacks on Jewish, Christian and American Muslim houses of worship and, along with the other incidents, must be seen as a product of prejudice and stereotyping.

CAIR has condemned anti-Semitic incidents in Chicago, Houston, and Calgary, Canada. CAIR condemned an Iranian cartoon contest mocking the Holocaust, an anti-Semitic article published in a British Columbia Muslim newsletter and called on an Arab publication that printed excerpts of the protocols of the Elders of Zion to apologize.

The organization has also condemned an apparent bias attack on a rabbinical assistant in Brooklyn (in which the attackers were apparently Muslim), racist and anti-Semitic comments made by a Columbus, Ohio police officer, an apparently anti-Semitic attack on a Penn State Jewish student and the vandalism of a Chicago synagogue.

The council also called on the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) to accommodate Jewish basketball players whose faith prohibits playing games on their Sabbath, which is observed on Saturdays.

CAIR called on the government of Afghanistan to release Abdul Rahman, a man facing the death penalty for converting from Islam to Christianity, noting that the man's conversion is a personal matter not subject to the intervention of the state. In that release, CAIR offered a religious basis for opposition to apostasy laws. (See CAIR on Apostasy below.)

CAIR condemned the burning of churches in Nigeria by people angered over the publication of cartoons defaming Prophet Muhammad. The organization called on Muslims in America and worldwide to donate to help repair Palestinian churches that were damaged following remarks by Pope Benedict XVI perceived as critical of Islam and the Prophet Muhammad. This call culminated when CAIR-Tampa Executive Director Ahmed Bedier delivered a \$5,000 check to the Catholic community.

CAIR expressed concern to former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan over the declining Christian population in Jerusalem saying:

Muslim and Christian Palestinians are routinely barred by Israel from religious sites in Jerusalem. They experience apartheid-like policies such as: forced expulsions, home demolitions, land confiscation, massacres, discrimination, humiliation, harassment, torture, ethnic segregation, and denial of basic human and religious liberties. The Christian population of Jerusalem drops daily.

In 2007, CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad joined 137 other Muslim leaders and scholars from around the world in sending a first-of-its-kind open letter designed to promote understanding between Muslims and Christians worldwide. The letter, entitled [A Common Word Between Us and You](#), was sent to Pope Benedict XVI, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and more than 20 other Christian leaders. Awad is also an original endorser of the [Amman Message](#) and its three points of tolerance.

In April 2008, CAIR representatives met with Pope Benedict XVI at an interfaith gathering in Washington, D.C. The meeting, with the theme Peace: Our Hope, included leaders from a number of American faith communities.

In July 2008, CAIR representatives participated in the groundbreaking World Conference on Dialogue, convened by Saudi Arabia's King

Abdullah. Some 200 religious leaders and scholars engaged in interfaith and inter-civilization dialogue and discussed ways to use universally-accepted concepts of morality and ethics to promote world peace.

In December of that same year, representatives of CAIR joined leaders of other religious communities at a reception, hosted by Saudi Arabias King Abdullah in New York City, designed to promote interfaith understanding. The king was taking part in a Saudi-initiated United Nations interfaith meeting calling for a united front to combat terrorism and promote tolerance. President Bush had previously addressed the U.N. interfaith gathering.

In 2009, CAIR officials joined world religious leaders at a conference in Vienna, Austria, in agreeing to establish an International Center for Inter-Religious Dialogue to help promote world peace and reconciliation. Conference delegates agreed to set up a working group and steering committee to offer concrete proposals for the establishment of the dialogue center.

### **Supporting the Islamic Middle Way**

CAIRs work is an example to all Muslims that the democratic system of governance in the United States of America affords all people the opportunity to successfully redress their grievances in a non-violent, lawful manner. Though the organization is not theological in nature, CAIR is faith-based and its message to its own community has always centered on the middle way. In an open letter written to President Obama and Muslims worldwide in May 2009, CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad wrote:

Muslims worldwide must offer themselves as personal examples of the Islamic values of compassion, tolerance and moderation. Each individual and family should exemplify the verse in the Quran, Islams revealed text, which states: And thus have We willed you to be a community of the middle way, so that [with your lives] you might bear witness to the truth before all humankind. (2:143)

CAIR National Communications Director Ibrahim Hooper wrote the following in 2006 to highlight how violent responses to the publication of cartoons defaming the Prophet Muhammad reflected neither Islamic teachings nor the prophets own behavior:

As Muslims, we need to take a step back and ask ourselves, What would the Prophet Muhammad do?

Muslims are taught the tradition of the woman who would regularly throw trash on the prophet as he walked down a particular path. The prophet never responded in kind to the womans abuse. Instead, when she one day failed to attack him, he went to her home to inquire about her condition.

In another tradition, the prophet was offered the opportunity to have God punish the people of a town near Mecca who refused the message of Islam and attacked him with stones. Again, the prophet did not choose to respond in kind to the abuse.

A companion of the prophet noted his forgiving disposition. He said: I served the prophet for ten years, and he never said uf (a word indicating impatience) to me and never blamed me by saying, Why did you do so or why didnt you do so?" (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Even when the prophet was in a position of power, he chose the path of kindness and reconciliation.

When he returned to Mecca after years of exile and personal attacks, he did not take revenge on the people of the city, but instead offered a general amnesty

The Quran says: Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching, and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for thy Lord knows best who have strayed from His Path and who receive guidance. (16:125)

An earlier example of CAIR reminding the public and Muslims of Islams middle way of honoring treaties and preferring peaceful solutions to situations can be seen in this excerpt from a 1996 press release relating to an article that mischaracterized Muhammads adherence to the Treaty of Hdaybiah:

Islamic scholars provide the following outline for events surrounding that treaty:

The Quran, Islams revealed text, states: Yes, whoever fulfills his pledge and fears God much; verily, then God loves those who are the pious. (3:76)

Also: And fulfill (every) covenant. (17:34)

In 2002, Hooper discussed Islamically-sanctioned positions on defensive struggles, friendship with people of other faiths, and religious tolerance: The Quran permits defensive struggles but calls for peace when aggression ends. God teaches us, Let there be no compulsion in religion,' said Hooper. (2:256)

Hooper cited several other verses of the Quran, Islams revealed text, which call for peace once oppression ends: 1. God does not forbid you to be kind and equitable to those who had neither fought against your faith nor driven you out of your homes. In fact God loves the equitable. (60:8) 2. Fight in the cause of God with those who fight against you, but do not exceed the limits If they desist, let there be no hostility except against the oppressors. (2:190-193)

On the issue of a Muslims friendship with people of other faiths, Hooper cited other verses supporting cordial relations with anyone who does not attack their faith:

O you who believe! Take not for friends and protectors those who take your religion for a mockery or sport (5:57) 2. God only forbids you to make friendship with those who fought you on account of your faith and drove you out of your homes and backed up others in your expulsion. (60:9)

And dispute ye not with the People of the Book [Christians and Jews] except with means better (than mere disputation) unless it be with those of them who inflict wrong (and injury): but say, We believe in the Revelation which has come down to us and in that which came



down to you.' (29:46)

As a call to religious tolerance, Hooper quoted the Qurans Chapter 2, Verse 62, which states: Those who believe (in the Quran) and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures) and the Christians and the Sabians and who believe in God and the last day and work righteousness shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve.

CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad cited the same verse when he rebuked individuals who had burned down churches in Nigeria. Relating to the targeting of civilians, CAIR issued a statement in 2004 saying:

The targeting of civilians has always been prohibited in Islam. Those who kidnap and murder civilians are violating Islamic norms and deserve to be repudiated by Muslims in America, in Iraq and throughout the Islamic world. As it states in the Quran, Islams revealed text: If anyone slays a human being it shall be as though he had slain all mankind, and if anyone saves a life, it shall be as though he had saved the lives of all mankind. (5:32)

In a statement discussing nuclear tests conducted by Pakistan, Awad added that Islam forbids harming civilians even in times of war and that Muslim countries should consider nuclear weapons a deterrent to aggression that should be eliminated through negotiations and international treaties.

Responding to an article in the *Washington Post* that was critical of Islam, CAIR offered the following quotations from the Quran: Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error, (2:256) and, The believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another (9:71)

Discussing reports that Muslim men in Kosovo were blaming their wives for being raped by Serbian soldiers, Nihad Awad argued the following:

Rape is a traumatic experience. Its devastating for not only the woman but the family, loved ones In Islam Muslims should never blame the victim. The blame should only squarely be placed on the perpetrators of the crime .

When it happens [blaming a female for being raped by a member of an occupying army], it happens because of local customs. It happens because of their own ethnic traditions, but, again, there is no basis in the Islamic faith. Islam it places the crime on the perpetrator we are not focusing on the real issue here. The real issue is the perpetrator, the sick and sickening mentality that the Serbs have in the government, in the police stations, having rape camps prepared for women, women staked to the floor and being raped .

Writing in the wake of the brutal beheading of Nicholas Berg in Iraq, board member Parvez Ahmed and director of legal affairs Arsalan Iftikhar wrote the following:

Muslims are also bound by a hallmark ethical and moral code. A Muslim who violates the commandments of God in the Koran or those of the prophet Muhammad must also be held accountable.

When outlining the rules of engagement for wartime, the Prophet Muhammad said on numerous occasions: Do not kill any old person, any child or any woman; Do not kill the monks in monasteries; Do not kill the people who are sitting in places of worship; Do not attack a wounded person; and No prisoner should be put to the sword. Prophet Muhammad also prohibited the killing of anyone who is in captivity and also ordered people not to pillage residential areas or cultivated fields during war. He also outlawed the mutilating of the corpses of enemies. These clear and concise statements make any violation of these edicts during wartime a clear violation of core Islamic principles.

Islamic scholars also assert that war in Islam is purely defensive in nature (Koran 22: 39-40). Also, the Koran prohibits of killing noncombatants, (2:190-192), and it advocates kindness to people of other faiths who do not have open hostilities with Muslims (60:8).

Despite such clear injunctions, some Muslims who claim to be killing in the name of Islam are, in fact, completely defiling its essence. The extremists and militants who attempt to hide behind the veneer of Islam are in reality openly violating many of its core teachings. Just as their ends do not justify their criminal means, the same can be said of the criminal Americans soldiers and their commanders who consign human beings to leashed animals.

Just as the cruel torture of Iraqis has been universally condemned by people of all faiths, the overwhelming majority of Muslims worldwide are sickened and condemn the horrific death of Berg as inherently shocking, against all teachings of Islam and universally deplored by all spiritual, caring and decent human beings. Unspeakable and appalling acts perpetrated by followers of any religion should be unanimously condemned as fundamentally irreligious and unpatriotic crimes.

Condemning the mutilation of bodies in Iraq, CAIR, cited a tradition of the Prophet Muhammad that prohibits mutilating bodies (Hadith 654.3). In another tradition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, Do not kill women or children, or an aged, infirm person. Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees. Do not destroy an inhabited place.' (Al-Muwatta, Vol. 21, Hadith 9)

CAIRs 2004 Not in the Name of Islam petition stated:

We, the undersigned, wish to state clearly that those who commit acts of terror and murder in the name of Islam are not only destroying innocent lives, but are also devastating the image of the faith they claim to represent. No injustice done to Muslims can ever justify the massacre of innocent men, women and children, and no act of terror will ever serve the cause of Islam. We repudiate and disassociate ourselves from any Muslim group or individual who commits such brutal and un-Islamic acts. Islam must not be held hostage by the criminal actions of a few Muslims.

While calling on Muslims to sign the petition, CAIR reminded them:

As it states in the Quran: Oh you who believe, stand up firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even if it be against yourselves, or your

parents, or your kin, and whether it be against rich or poor; for God can best protect both. Do not follow any passion, lest you not be just. And if you distort or decline to do justice, verily God is well-acquainted with all that you do.' (4:135)

Individuals and organizations representing more than 700,000 Muslims worldwide signed the petition.

While condemning a tasteless and insensitive television commercial promoting professional wrestling that showed Jesus gambling with the devil in a sports bar, CAIR issued a statement that said in part:

Awad quoted the Quran, Islams revealed text, which states:

Behold! The angels said O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus the son of Mary, held in honor in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to God.' (3:45)

In another verse, the Quran states: Say ye: We believe in God and the revelation given to us and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and it is unto Him that we surrender ourselves.' (2:136)

He also quoted the Prophet Muhammad who said: Both in this world and in the Hereafter, I am the nearest of all people to Jesus, the son of Mary. The prophets are paternal brothers; their mothers are different, but their religion is one. (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Volume 4, Hadith 652)

In 2005, CAIR distributed a 28-page publication called Women Friendly Mosques and Community Centers: Working Together to Reclaim Our Heritage. The brochure was designed to educate Muslim community leaders about the right of Muslim women to equal access to and participation in community activities. It was published in a collaborative effort with the Islamic Social Services Associations (ISSA) and Women in Islam (WII).

CAIRs release supporting this effort said, in part:

Using references in the Quran, Islams revealed text, and the traditions (hadith) of the Prophet Muhammad, the publications authors call for improvements in womens access to mosque facilities, greater participation of women in mosque program planning and development of a mosque governance structure that allows women and youth to have input in decision-making. The Prophet Muhammad is also quoted as saying in his final sermon: The rights of women are sacred, so see that they are maintained.'

Specific recommendations in the Women Friendly Mosques guide include:

### **Where CAIR Stands on Important Issues**

The following is a series of quotations from CAIRs public statements over the years that shows the organizations stance on a number of issues.

### **Americas Founding Principles**

Islam made me a better citizen and patriot. The Prophet Muhammads teachings strengthened my belief in freedom and democracy. When I first read the Quran, Islams revealed text, and the traditions (hadith) of the Prophet Muhammad I expected to find something totally alien to American ideals. Instead, I found many of the same democratic principles that emerged from the Continental Congress in that summer of 1776. *National Legislative Director Corey Saylor, CAIR news release, 7/1/2005*

The issue of concern to me and many other Christians, Jews and Muslims is simply the upholding of our U.S. Constitutional requirement of separation of Church and State. Mayor Parris is not a private citizen anymore. He is a public official elected to public office serving Americans of diverse faith backgrounds. He is expected and required to uphold our Constitution. It is that simple. When he is not in office, he can call for a Christian community as much as he wants. I have no problem with that. I might even choose to take my family and live there (if I am tolerated). No government official or entity should be in the business of promoting or favoring any one specific religion from their official position as an elected public official. We have a secular government and a pluralistic nation whose Constitution respects the practice of religion (or lack of it for those who choose to). Pastors, Imams, Rabbis, churches, and all private citizens are welcome to work on building any religious community that they wish. (more power to them!) *Greater Los Angeles Area chapter Executive Director Hussam Ayloush, personal email reply to an inquiry about CAIRs stance on a Lancaster, California Mayor R. Rex Parris declaring during his State of the City speech that the mayor was growing a Christian community, 2/02/2010*

A core principle of American liberty is distrust of unchecked authority. This was true when the Founding Fathers objected to British writs of assistance; it remains true today. *National Legislative Director Corey Saylor, CAIR news release, 9/21/2007*

I also respect the Constitution and its support for religious pluralism. Just as I want my government to not establish a particular religion, I also desire that they not prohibit its free exercise. It is a delicate balancing act. Getting that balance right is what makes American freedom unique and enviable. *Former National Legal Director Arsalan Iftikhar, CAIR op-ed, 2/28/2005*

The right to challenge your detention before a judge is a cherished aspect of American liberty, what is good for American citizens should be good for everyone, and that is the standard we must project to the world. *National Legislative Director Corey Saylor, CAIR news release, 9/18/2007*

America is a pluralistic society, and it welcomes all different faiths, but its up to each of those different faiths to assert itself in the public sphere. *National Legislative Director Corey Saylor, CAIR news release, 10/3/2007*

Americas historic success in avoiding Europe and Asias religious conflicts has been based on our ability to uphold the Constitutional separation of church and state. *Los Angeles Chapter Executive Director Hussam Ayloush, personal e-mail to an inquiry about CAIRs*

stance on a Lancaster, California Mayor R. Rex Parris declaring during his State of the City speech that the mayor was growing a Christian community.

The Quranic order that there be no compulsion in religion (2:256) reverberates in James Madisons, The religion then of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man. *Former National Legal Director Arsalan Ifikhar, CAIR op-ed, 7/01/2005*

**Interfaith Relations** True peace and understanding will only come when we all Muslims, Christians, Jews, and people of other faiths and philosophies cast off the prejudices and preconceptions of the past to engage each other based on what we have in common, not on what has separated us for so long. *National Executive Director Nihad Awad, An Open Letter to President Obama and the Muslim World, 5/29/2009*

As forces of hate in this country and worldwide try to pull Muslims and Christians apart, we are in desperate need of a unifying force that can bridge the widening gap of interfaith misunderstanding and mistrust. That force could be the message of love, peace and forgiveness taught by Jesus and accepted by followers of both faiths. *National Communications Director Ibrahim Hooper, CAIR op-ed, 12/19/2009*

Like the Caliph Umar who refused to pray in a Jerusalem church because his followers might then be tempted to turn it into a mosque, Muslims have a religious duty to respect and protect all houses of worship. *National Executive Director Nihad Awad, CAIR news release, 2/19/2006*

It is time for the majority of Muslims, Christians and Jews to stand up and say they will not let the fringe of any faith group dictate how they view and interact with each other. *National Executive Director Nihad Awad, CAIR op-ed, 1/11/2005*

Islam does not only mean peace, Islam emphasizes peaceful coexistence as a supreme goal. Thus, Islamic ethos unequivocally condemns terrorism of any sort Each gruesome act that shocked Americans, from the murder of Daniel Pearl in Pakistan, to the bombing of a Jewish Seder party in Israel, to the beheading of Nick Berg in Iraq, to the massacre in Beslan to the subway bombings in London, has equally shocked Muslims and brought with it swift and unequivocal condemnations. American Muslim organizations also rallied behind a fatwa (Islamic juristic opinion) against terrorism . *Former National Board Chairman Parvez Ahmad, CAIR news release, 4/09/2007*

The Star of David is a sacred symbol of faith and Muslims are stressed by Islam to respect all symbols of faith . *Oklahoma Chapter Executive Director Razi Hashmi, The Oklahoman, 1/06/2009, on why a protestor, whose self-made sign depicted the religious symbol with a Nazi swastika at its center, was banned from future CAIR sponsored protests or demonstrations. The article also notes, [CAIR] distributed rules before the demonstration that no offensive signs or banners would be tolerated.*

**Religious Tolerance** CAIR-California condemns broad-brush attacks on any faith group. Regardless of where one stands on controversial issues, public discourse should remain civil, fair and respectful. It is unacceptable for any side in a political debate to promote religious intolerance. *CAIR news release, 11/05/2008*

The United States Holocaust Memorial is an important reminder of where indifference to intolerant and misinformed comments can lead. *National Legislative Director Corey Saylor, CAIR news release, 12/18/2006*

We request that unhelpful rhetoric targeting America or minimizing the suffering of the Jewish people in the Holocaust be avoided so as not to further inflame already tense relations between our two nations. *CAIR letter to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, hand delivered in New York, 9/21/2006*

It is our belief that the proper response to this situation is for Muslims and Catholics worldwide to increase dialogue and outreach efforts aimed at building better relations between Christianity and Islam. We oppose any language or action that tends to shake the friendship and alliance between our faiths. *CAIR letter to Papal Nuncio Archbishop Pietro Sambi in the wake of comments made by Pope Benedict XVI that many Muslims found troubling, 9/21/2006*

**Apostasy** Islamic scholars say the original rulings on apostasy were similar to those for treasonous acts in legal systems worldwide and do not apply to an individuals choice of religion. Islam advocates both freedom of religion and freedom of conscience, a position supported by verses in the Quran, Islams revealed text, such as:

Religious decisions should be matters of personal choice, not a cause for state intervention. Faith imposed by force is not true belief, but coercion. Islam has no need to compel belief in its divine truth. As the Quran states: Truth stands out clear from error. Therefore, whoever rejects evil and believes in God has grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks. (2:256) *CAIR news release, 3/22/2006*

**Separating Islam from Violent Extremists** Associating Islam with the actions of terrorists and religious extremists implies that we accept their argument that what they do is based on a legitimate interpretation of the faith. It is best to call them what they are criminals, terrorists, extremists without giving them the false religious justification they seek. *National Legislative Director Corey Saylor, CAIR news release, 1/29/2008*

**Jihad** Literally, jihad means to strive, struggle and exert effort. It is a central and broad Islamic concept that includes:

The equivalent of the term holy war in Arabic is harb muqaddasah, a term that cannot be found in the Quran or the Prophets sayings (hadith). There is no such thing as holy war in Islam, as some careless translators may imply. It is rather a loaded Medieval concept that did not arise within the Muslim community. Because of the frequent repetition of this myth, that jihad means Holy War, most people in the West accept it as if it were a fact.

The aspect of jihad that entails military action is what legitimate states carry out to defend the weak, to protect the society and to establish justice. In the Quran, Islams revealed text, it states, Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress limits (by beginning hostilities). God does not love transgressors. (2:190) Also, Dispute not with the people of the Book (Jews and Christians) except in the politest way, unless it is with those of them who do wrong. But say: We believe in the revelation which has come down to

us and in that which came down to you. Our God and your God is One; and it is to Him we submit. (29:46)

It is reported by Muslim scholars that when a man approached the Prophet Muhammad asking to join his troops in battle, the Prophet asked if his parents were alive. The man said they were. The prophet told the man, Then strive in serving and providing for them (fa fihima fa jahid). Another tradition quotes the Prophet as saying, the mujahid (one who carries out jihad) is he who strives against himself for the sake of obeying God. The Prophet also said one of the best forms of jihad is a word of truth in front of an oppressive ruler.

Anyone, even a Muslim, who translates jihad as holy war, is making a linguistic and historical error. *CAIR Letter to Vice President Al Gore, 10/06/1995*

**Race and Racial Profiling** In the Quran, Islams revealed text, God states: O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. (49:13)

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also clearly stated Islamic principles of racial equality when he said: A white (person) has no superiority over a black (person) nor does a black have any superiority over a white except by piety and good action.' (The Prophet Muhammads [PBUH] last sermon delivered on the 9th day of Dhul Hijjah, 10 A.H.) *CAIR press release expressing support for the principles of economic and social justice, individual responsibility and political empowerment outlined by organizers of the Million Man March' but opposing the views espoused by Minister Louis Farrakhan.*

Everyone is in favor of airline safety. But security plans should not use stereotypes, race, religion, national origin, or political opinions as a basis to determine who will be subjected to heightened security measures. *CAIR Executive Director Nihad Awad, CAIR press release 9/23/1996*

**Womens Rights** Were very pleased, of course, and I think that its important that competent women are advanced in our community. But I do not think it is an anomaly. There have been four women presidents or prime ministers of Muslim-majority nations, and we have yet to have a woman president in the United States. *Cleveland, Ohio Executive Director Julia Shearson, commenting on a woman being elected as president of a mosque in Toledo, Ohio, Toledo Blade, 6/09/2009*

Under Islamic law, women have always had the right to own property, receive an education and otherwise take part in community life. The Islamic rules for modest dress apply to women and men equally. (Men cannot expose certain parts of their bodies, wear gold or silk, etc.) If a particular society oppresses women, it does so in spite of Islam, not because of it. *CAIR news release, 2/12/1996*

Denying Muslim women the right to vote violates both Islamic and Canadian norms. We call on the [British Columbia] Muslim Association to grant women the rights they are guaranteed by Islam. *CAIR Canada Executive Director Riad Saloojee, CAIR press release, 10/31/2005*

Using references in the Quran, Islams revealed text, and the traditions (hadith) of the Prophet Muhammad, the publications authors call for improvements in womens access to mosque facilities, greater participation of women in mosque program planning and development of a mosque governance structure that allows women and youth to have input in decision-making. The Prophet Muhammad is also quoted as saying in his final sermon: The rights of women are sacred, so see that they are maintained.' *Citation from 2005 CAIR Release supporting the religious rights of Muslim women to mosques throughout the United States, CAIR Media Release, 6/22/2005*

If someone mistreats women they should not seek refuge in Islam. *CAIR National Communications Director Ibrahim Hooper, New York Times, 2/21/2009*

**First Amendment Free Speech** As a matter of principle, we dont support such bans. They tend to be selective, in that only popular speech is allowed and unpopular speech is not allowed. *National Communications Director Ibrahim Hooper, San Francisco Chronicle, 5/06/2009, commenting on news that conservative radio commentator and frequent CAIR critic Michael Savage was banned from entering Britain for allegedly fostering extremism and hatred.*

You are of course free to hold any views you choose on issues of importance to the American public, but these views should not be presented in a way that stereotypes one religious minority in America. *Letter to Vice President Al Gore, 10/06/1995*

The First Amendment protects even bigoted speech, but those who value mutual understanding should have an equal right to speak out and be heard. *National Legislative Director Corey Saylor, CAIR news release, 2/5/2008*

Muslims are not in favor of censorship. We only ask that media outlets adhere to journalistic standards of fairness, accuracy and objectivity. *Executive Director Nihad Awad, CAIR news release, 7/07/1998*

legitimate expression of political opinions by community members should not lead to criminal investigations. *Executive Director Nihad Awad, CAIR Media Release, 10/7/1998*

We believe strongly in freedom of speech and support Ann Coulters right to hold even bigoted and hate-filled views. *Former Communications Coordinator Rabiah Ahmed, CAIR news release, 3/10/2004*

**Freedom of Worship** Islam guarantees freedom to and freedom from religion . [We] reject as un-Islamic any extremist interpretation that sanctions the killing of any individual because she decided to leave Islam.' *Former South Florida chapter Executive Director Muhammed Malik, Miami Herald, 4/16/2010*

The Islamic teachings call for the right to free worship. A verse in the Quran states, There is no compulsion in religion, and highlights the spirit of tolerance in Islam. *Los Angeles chapter spokeswoman Munira Syeda, Daily Breeze, 4/25/2009*

As American Muslims, we value the right to freely practice ones faith. *National Executive Director Nihad Awad, CAIR news release,*

7/5/2001

Unfortunately the right to freely practice ones faith is not universally applied. I bring your attention to the denial of religious freedom now taking place in the Republic of Turkey. *National Executive Director Nihad Awad, CAIR news release, 5/06/1999*

Freedom of religion should be a valued aspect of any society. People of all faiths must be granted the right to freely practice their religion without government interference or intimidation. *CAIR news release, 10/18/2006, criticizing a ban on headscarves in Tunisia*

**Due Process** Secret evidence is a legal short-cut that does not lead to justice. An unconstitutional measure that is today used against Muslims and Arabs could one day negatively impact the legal rights of anyone in our society. *National Executive Director Nihad Awad, CAIR news release, 5/19/1999*

**Religion in the Public Sphere** Muslims believe there is no contradiction between allowing children and teachers to observe their faith and maintaining state neutrality on religion. They also believe that arrangements can be made so that children performing their prayer do not miss significant instructional time, leave the classroom unsupervised or disturb the use of school space. *Former Director of Research Dr. Mohamed Nimer, CAIR news release, 5/21/1998*

**Death Fatwas** Khalid [Duran] has the absolute right to write whatever he wants if there was a fatwa [containing a threat against Duran], we would condemn it utterly. *National Communications Director Ibrahim Hooper, Associated Press, 6/30/2001*

**Public Service** We have to serve the public. Allah (swt) described the Prophet (s) as a public servant to mankind: We have not sent you except as a mercy to mankind. It is a strategic obligation on Muslims in the West to prove that they are a mercy and blessing to Australia, to America, to Europe because you are there and you have to touch peoples hearts through your service. We say in the West if you would like to be a leader, you have to be a servant because leadership is service. We cannot just ask people to be sympathizers and understanding of Islam if we ourselves do not live Islam and touch peoples hearts as a neighbour, as a classmate, as a co-worker, as friends around us. *National Executive Director Nihad Awad, speech presented at FAMSYS 20th Annual Conference, RMIT University Melbourne, July 13-14, 2002*

**Terrorism and Suicide Bombings** As Muslims and as Americans, we will never let terrorist groups or terror leaders falsely claim to represent us or our faith. The legitimate grievances of Muslims in many areas of the world can never serve as an excuse or a justification for attacks on civilian populations. *CAIR news release 11/19/2008*

We condemn terrorism whenever it happens, wherever it happens, whoever commits it. Period. *Dispelling Rumors About CAIR, April 2009*

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 or forbidden and those who commit these barbaric acts are criminals, not martyrs. *A 2006 fatwa, or religious edict, coordinated by CAIR and issued by the Fiqh Council of North America (FCNA) and endorsed by hundreds of U.S. Muslim groups, leaders and institutions.*

We condemn this attack and all other attacks on innocent civilians. Illegitimate and counterproductive tactics must not be used in the legitimate struggle to end Israels occupation. This attack is of particular concern coming as it did during a religious observance in which the focus is remembrance of God. *CAIR news release, 3/28/2002, condemning a Hamas attack on a Jewish Passover celebration*

I dont support Hamas today. My position and CAIRs position is extremely clear: we condemn suicide bombings. We are mainstream American Muslims. *National Executive Director Nihad Awad, Associated Press, 11/22/2006*

National American Muslim groups have condemned attacks on civilians, including last weeks Passover bombing, the murder of journalist Daniel Pearl and the recent killings at a Pakistani church. Where are the voices of national Jewish organizations in condemning Israels brutal military assaults now being carried out against Muslim and Christian Palestinian civilians? *Former National Government Affairs Director Jason Erb, CAIR news release, 4/01/2002*

While reaffirming its continued condemnation of terrorism on the third anniversary of the Madrid train bombings, CAIR released a statement saying, Our position is clear. We unequivocally condemn all acts of terrorism, whether carried out by al-Qaida, the Real IRA, FARC, Hamas, ETA, or any other group designated by the U.S. Department of State as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.' *CAIR news release, 3/11/2009*

**Pluralism** We are dedicated to reaching out to the re-elected President and his administration, advancing the twin causes of pluralism and diversity in American society. *CAIR open letter to Muslims on the November 2 elections, 11/05/2004*

With a sense of God-consciousness, the AMPCC believes American Muslims must defend our country intellectually, spiritually, and physically. We must defend America against terrorism and violence. We must defend its civil liberties, its religious pluralism, and coalesce the Islamic and American spirit of respect and tolerance. We must do so in the best of forms through kindness, care, harmony, healing, and love. *CAIR endorsed statement issued by the American Muslim Political Coordinating Council, 9/01/2003*

Fortunately, our constitution and political culture are on the side of pluralism. Our laws protect all religions and our culture teaches us to look to ourselves as a religiously-diverse nation that should set an example for the rest of the world. It is up to us to stand firm and united in the face of any intolerant forces that may seek to divide our nation. Failure to do so will jeopardize our role as a model for tolerance and human rights. *Former researcher Alaa Bayoumi, CAIR op-ed, 1/12/2006*

CAIR embraces the cultural and religious pluralism that is a hallmark of America and repudiates any misuse of Islam to falsely justify violence or intolerance. *National Board Chairman Sen. Larry Shaw, CAIR news release, 3/03/2009*

I have no problem with my Christian brothers and sisters praying to God or mentioning His name any time of the day. As a person of

faith, I do so many times a day and I am proud and happy to see others do so to. Los Angeles Chapter Executive Director Hussam Ayloush, personal email to an inquiry about CAIRs stance on a Lancaster, California Mayor R. Rex Parris declaring during his State of the City speech that the mayor was growing a Christian community, 2/02/2010

**Seeking Political Solutions Rather than Pursuing Violence** Dialogue and mutual respect, rather than senseless violence or repressive tactics, are the only answers to social, political and economic grievances. Islam seeks just and stable societies and condemns the wanton destruction of lives and property. *CAIR statement, 11/08/2005*

To break this cycle of violence and counter-violence, all parties must focus on a political solution based on justice and equality, not force of arms. *CAIR news release, 3/28/2002*

American Muslims support President Bushs effort to cut off funding for terrorism and we call for a peaceful resolution to the Middle East conflict. *CAIR news release, 12/04/2001*

**Human Rights** Muslims must always stand for truth and justice and resist falsehood and oppression even when committed by Muslims *Michigan Chapter Executive Director Dawud Walid, as cited in the Houston Chronicle, 1/26/2009*

As an American Muslim, I ask leaders, governments and individuals in the Islamic world to make similar changes and to implement similar reforms. First, government, civic and religious leaders must foster a culture of respect for human and minority rights, political and religious dissent, freedom of expression, and the rule of law. Governments in the Muslim world must encourage full political participation in systems of government that abide by the separation of powers and are held in check by independent judiciaries. Leaders and individuals in Muslim nations must also respect the results of free and fair elections. *Executive Director Nihad Awad, An Open Letter to President Obama and the Muslim World, 5/29/2009*

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