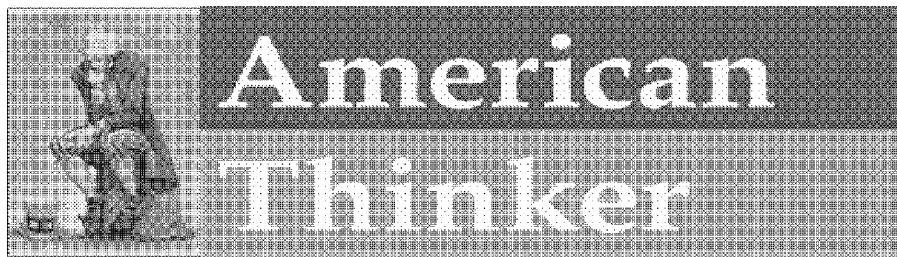


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The Muslim Brotherhood: Islam's Global Challenge to the West

By Moshe Dann

The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) is one of the most dangerous Islamic groups in the world today, not only because it supports terrorism – *providing political and financial support for its Palestinian branch, Hamas, for example* – but because it is part of a global Islamist network and promotes an ideology that encourages extremism and terrorism.

With branches in seventy countries and linked to major Islamic organizations, the MB has an extensive and well-financed network of educational, social, and cultural institutions which promote a strategic MB plan for Islamic dominance – not through violence, but integration, becoming part of the national social and political life, and the application of Shariah law. These connections give it access to political power and explain why it and the organizations it supports are courted by governments and NGOs. Jean-Pierre Filiu of the Hudson Institute:

The Muslim Brotherhood ... has for reasons both ideological and tactical tended in recent decades to embrace a more limited conception of jihad combined with missionary activity and organized political struggle.

Hillel Fradkin, director of the Hudson Institute's Center on Islam, Democracy and the Future of the Muslim World, notes that the MB, founded in Egypt in 1928, is the source of modern radical Islamic movements and an important part of Muslim communities around the world. The takeover of the Gaza Strip by Hamas changed the picture. For the first time, the MB had its own territory, a virtual state, and an army. Filiu:

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The Brotherhood-offshoot Hamas, which since 2006 has officially ruled over the Gaza strip, is the first Palestinian militia to consistently limit its activities to the territory of pre-1948 Palestine-meaning Israel, the West Bank and Gaza... In the process of consolidating its power, [it] subsequently repressed Gaza's al-Qaeda-inspired groups. Nowadays, al-Qaeda's ongoing conflict with Hamas has become one of the main liabilities to al-Qaeda's propaganda and its efforts to establish itself as the leader of the worldwide jihadist movement.

According to an MB document written in 1991, its role in host countries is a process of settlement called "Civilization-Jihad," which will "eliminate and destroy Western civilization from within" and establish a "global Islamic state." To accomplish this, through mosques and Islamic centers, the MB engages in "coalitions," "absorption," and civic "cooperation," building parallel social, political, and cultural organizations. Its guiding principles are those of Hasan al-Banna, who established the Egyptian MB movement and was closely allied with the Nazis.

The North American Connection

The most comprehensive study of the Muslim Brotherhood in the United States is Steven Merley's monograph published by the Hudson Institute (April 2009). He concludes:

[The MB's] extensive history of support for Islamic fundamentalism, anti-Semitism, and support for terrorism ... includes ideological, financial, and legal support, particularly for Hamas and other Palestinian terror organizations.

MB affiliate organizations like the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) – which grew out of the Islamic Association of Palestine (IAP), a front group fund-raising for Islamic jihad and Hamas terrorist organizations – are not outgrowths of popular or communal expressions, like Christian and Jewish organizations, but instead are self-appointed representatives, combining a volatile mix of religion and politics. Most MB organizations are funded by Saudis and Gulf States, representing non-American, predominantly Arab Muslims.

With over thirty branches in North America, CAIR presents itself as the largest "Muslim civil rights organization," seeking to "enhance understanding of Islam, encourage dialogue, protect civil liberties, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding." A few years ago, CAIR was included in a list of unindicted co-conspirators alleged by prosecutors to have participated in

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a conspiracy to funnel money to Hamas through the Holy Land Foundation.

Daniel Pipes and Sharon Chadha write,

Perhaps the most obvious problem with CAIR is the fact that at least five of its employees and board members have been arrested, convicted, deported, or otherwise linked to terrorism-related charges and activities ... CAIR has a key role in the 'Wahhabi lobby' – the network of organizations, usually supported by donations from Saudi Arabia, whose aim is to propagate the especially extreme version of Islam practiced in Saudi Arabia ... CAIR has consistently shown itself to be on the wrong side of the war on terrorism, protecting, defending, and supporting both accused and even convicted radical Islamic terrorists.

The Muslim Student Association (MSA), the largest Muslim campus organization, with more than 250 chapters at nearly every university, was also initiated by the Muslim Brotherhood. Although the MB's current involvement is unclear, the agenda is similar. Engaged in protests against Israel and disrupting pro-Israel speakers and forums, assisted by left-wing student organizations, and, of course, tolerated by administrators, this explains the upsurge of hostility towards Israel; opposing America's involvement in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan; and "American imperialism." Not limited to campus activities, however, in 1981, the MSA and MB morphed into the Islamic Society of North America to carry on its "after-school" activities.

Saudi prince Alweed Bin Talal is a major financier of Muslim Brotherhood fronts in the U.S. via his Kingdom Foundation, which supports the American Society for Muslim Advancement and the Cordoba Project, backers of the "Ground Zero Mosque."

In the early 1990s, following the Oslo Agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, the MB formed several organizations which opposed any peace agreement. The Muslim American Society describes itself as a civic group, involved in "religious, charitable, social, cultural, and educational" affairs, working to improve "family and society" and "move people to strive for God consciousness, liberty, and justice and to convey Islam with utmost clarity." Its vision is a "virtuous and just American society."

Its fundamentalist ideology and political activities, however, don't fit its lofty words and ideals. According to reports, the Muslim American Society's goal is the radical transformation of America into a Muslim society under strict Shariah law.

The Islamic American University, a MAS project, is a training center for the MB philosophy, associated with Sheikh Yousef al-Qardawi, who promotes jihad, proclaims that Muslim forces fighting American troops are “martyrs,” and supports Arab Palestinian terrorist organizations, like Hamas.

MAS publishes a magazine, The American Muslim, which supports suicide bombings as “martyr operations” sanctioned by the Qur’an, and portrays Asian Muslim terrorists as “freedom fighters.”

With all of this information available, one would think that U.S. government officials would be concerned about the activities of these MB-supported organizations. Instead, they are feted by the White House and supported by the State Dept and CIA, according to www.globalmbreport.com, which systematically tracks the MB.

“Their allure,” according to counter-terrorism researcher Steve Emerson, “to governments and non-Muslim agencies in foreign countries is that these MB groups have a monopoly on the leadership and representation of most Muslims, due to the fact that the MB in the Muslim world occupies the center of political and religious gravity and does not tolerate dissent.” And it can, when necessary, call upon its adherents to act, using “soft power,” rather than “hard power,” to influence.

Take over the world

The MB is a critical part of a vast Islamic movement that uses a *religious* identity to mask its *political* agenda. Represented by hundreds of social, political, and cultural organizations and banks and financial institutions in the United States alone, the MB is able to infiltrate and exert influence on every aspect of national and international affairs.

According to Islamic expert Bat Ye’or, the MB (through its Muslim World League) is involved with the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), a religious and political organization representing 56 countries (and “Palestine,” which they consider a state under the PA) with a permanent delegation at the U.N. Like the MB, the OIC supports Islamist rule, which in other words is the establishment of Shariah (Islamic) Law and the rule of a Caliphate – i.e., Islamic political and cultural takeover of the world. Because of their political and diplomatic role, however, they use a more subtle, incremental approach.

In Jordan, the main opposition party, the Islamic Action Front, represents the MB’s “political wing.” Islamists, they call for a boycott of elections, hoping to topple the current government and assume control of Parliament. Although banned from politics in Egypt and Syria and accused

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of being behind terrorist attacks, the MB runs networks of social and charity organizations, giving itself a firm popular basis.

The MB is also a major opposition group in Egypt and will be decisive when Egyptian President Mubarak dies. Egyptian Brotherhood leader Mohammed Badie recently declared that “waging Jihad is mandatory.”

The MB is also expanding in Canada, where they recently hosted “the largest Islamic conference in Montreal’s history.”

A recent Pew Report on the Muslim Brotherhood in Western Europe documents its extensive network. Yet little or nothing is done to monitor and restrict these organizations and their influence in growing Muslim communities. The presence of so many MB organizations explains the widespread demonstrations against Israel and violent reactions to what are perceived as “insults to Islam.”

Lorenzo Vidino provides an excellent study of the MB in Europe:

The Brotherhood has long served as a key financial node for different Islamist groups, and the intelligence officials say that ... the Brotherhood has expanded its financial network of holding companies and bank accounts in almost every European country.

How it happened

The growth and spread of the global MB network appears to be the result of a carefully planned organizational strategy:

(1) Funded by Saudi Arabia, Gulf States, and wealthy Arab Muslim families, the MB promotes a strict interpretation of Shariah and Islamic rule through educational, social, and religious organizations; in schools, campus organizations, and study centers; and in Muslim professional and “civil rights” organizations. Their extremist brand of Islam in the West, based on Wahhabism and jihadism, however, is rarely exposed.

(2) Focusing attention on the Palestinian issue, they joined with “liberal,” “progressive,” and anti-Jewish elements around the world, especially in the media, and now use their influence in the U.N. and international bodies and agencies to demonize, delegitimize, isolate, and boycott Israel.

Through a carefully planned strategy of deception – masking their sources of support, activities, philosophy, and goals – MB-sponsored organizations are able to present themselves as religious and/or civil rights groups and thereby avoid scrutiny. Numbed by words like “peace” and “justice,” unable to understand Arabic used by clerics and in printed material,

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non-Muslims have little or no understanding of what goes inside mosques and Muslim social and cultural centers and are unaware of the threat posed by the Muslim Brotherhood.

Though some academics and government officials try to portray the MB as “moderate,” the facts prove differently. “The MB actively seeks to destroy America’s status as a world power and to replace it with an Islamic power whose foreign policy will be based on *jihad* and the spread of Islam.”

What can be done?

The first step in countering the MB is identifying their organizations. In addition to those cited above, here are some of the most prominent in the U.S. that have been linked to MB:

Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)

Fiqh Council of NA (FCNA) (formerly American Muslim Council)

North American Islamic Trust (controls most mosques)

Muslim Youth of North America

Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers

PAC’s and Muslim chaplains programs (in prisons, military and schools)

Islamic Medical Association

American Trust Publications

Islamic Circle of North American

International Institute for Islamic Thought (IIIT)

Association of Muslim Social Scientists

Charity foundations, like Kind Hearts, and Holy Land Foundation (now closed), The Union of Good, which assisted the IHH, a Turkish “charity” that backed the “Gaza flotilla,” and supports terrorism, Islamic Relief USA and Mercy USA, and thousands more.

Follow the money

With thousands of affiliated organizations in America, and perhaps millions around the world – well-organized, accepted as part of the academic community and by religious and political leaders, operating

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within democratic systems, financed by radical jihadists, and supported by many in the international community – the MB is a formidable threat. It [is] vulnerable, however, when exposed – and that is a task which everyone can share.

Global jihadist groups

In the late 1970s, as the Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement was taking shape, a new terrorist organization was formed by members of the MB in Egypt: *Islamic Jihad*. The name was chosen to justify terrorism in the name of Islam – not only as a PLO tactic, but to attack anyone, anywhere, including one's own family, without approval from any authority. Like other totalitarian movements, it was intended to break traditional discipline and encourage terrorism as a religious obligation.

Islamic Jihad (IJ) was declared a terrorist organization by the United States in 2005, and later by the EU, U.N., and other countries despite the fact that it had been carrying out terrorist attacks for more than a decade – primarily against Jews in Israel.

IJ is reported to receive funding from Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries; it is currently based in Syria, but today it is funded mostly by Syria and Iran. Members of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad work with Hamas and Fatah (PA); it has no direct ties to MB. IJ is also active in Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, and other areas in the region.

American Muslims need to take seriously why their non-Muslim neighbors are suspicious, just as those neighbors must be careful of prejudice. Hiding agendas and intentions are as bad as bigotry.

Underestimating the message and influence of the Muslim Brotherhood is a threat to global, and especially Western, security. That is the message of 9/11 and terror attacks in London and Madrid. It is a message we ignore at our peril.

The author, a writer and journalist, taught history at CUNY.