

John Esposito
Defending Radical Islam

An IPT Investigative Report



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Background

John Esposito is a Georgetown University professor of Religion and International Affairs, and Islamic Studies.¹ Georgetown's School of Foreign Service recognized him in 2003 with its Award for Outstanding Teaching.² He previously served as a Loyola Professor of Middle East Studies and Director of the Center for International Studies at the College of the Holy Cross.³ Esposito has also acted as the President of the Middle East Studies Association of North America and of the American Council for the Study of Islamic Societies.⁴ He is the editor-in-chief of *The Oxford History of Islam* and the author of more than thirty books.⁵

Esposito, a Catholic, is also the founding director of Georgetown's Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (CMCU),⁶ now named for Saudi Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal⁷ (ACMCU) after the prince donated \$20 million to Georgetown in 2005.⁸ The CMCU was founded in 1993 with the intention of building a "stronger bridge of understanding between the Muslim world and the West as well as between Islam and Christianity."⁹

In addition to his academic work, Esposito consults for the Gallup polling company. He also has been called upon often to brief government agencies about Islam, including the State Department, FBI, CIA, Homeland Security and various branches of the military.¹⁰

Esposito's outspoken defense of radical Islam calls his reliability as an objective academic and impartial educator into question. As the examples that follow show, Esposito's academic standing provides him an opportunity to defend radical Islam and promote its ideology – including defending terrorist organizations and those who support them, advocating for Islamist regimes, praising radical Islamists and their apologists, and downplaying the threat of Islamist violence and involvement with Muslim Brotherhood legacy groups in the U.S.

Perhaps nothing illustrates this point more clearly than Esposito's intimate working relationship with two organizations considered Muslim Brotherhood fronts by federal prosecutors. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the United Association for Studies and

¹ John L Esposito, University Professor & Director, Department, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center For Muslim-Christian Understanding. <http://explore.georgetown.edu/people/jle2/> (Accessed August 12, 2008).

² *Ibid.*

³ Carnegie Council Bio for John Esposito, http://www.cceia.org/people/data/john_esposito.html (Accessed August 12, 2008).

⁴ John L Esposito, University Professor & Director, Department, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center For Muslim-Christian Understanding. <http://explore.georgetown.edu/people/jle2/> (Accessed August 12, 2008).

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Carnegie Council Bio for John Esposito, http://www.cceia.org/people/data/john_esposito.html (Accessed August 12, 2008).

⁷ Alwaleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, <http://cmcu.georgetown.edu/> (Accessed August 12, 2008).

⁸ Alwaleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, "About ACMCU." <http://cmcu.georgetown.edu/about/> (Accessed August 13, 2008).

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Testimony of John Esposito, *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G (ND TX November 4, 2008).

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Research (UASR) each appear in court evidence detailing a Hamas support operation in the United States.¹¹

According to exhibits in the trial of the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLF), the Brotherhood created a committee in America to help Hamas politically and financially.¹² Esposito has worked with, or defended, three entities which comprised the “Palestine Committee,” including his November 2008 appearance as defense expert witness in the HLF trial.¹³

In addition, Esposito repeatedly appears at CAIR fundraisers and banquets.¹⁴ Two CAIR founders participated in a secret 1993 meeting called to discuss ways to derail the new Oslo Peace Accords and how to sell that opposition to Americans without appearing to support the Hamas terrorist group.¹⁵ Those founders, Nihad Awad and Omar Ahmad, also are listed individually on a Palestine Committee telephone list in evidence.¹⁶

Finally, Esposito co-sponsored a conference with a third Palestine Committee entity, the UASR.¹⁷ As detailed later in this report, the UASR was created by Hamas deputy political director Mousa Abu Marzook and run by a man who now serves as the Hamas spokesman in Gaza.

In addition to his work with, or support of, three entities in a U.S.-based Hamas support network, Esposito remains a close friend and defender of Palestinian Islamic Jihad board member Sami Al-Arian. Al-Arian pled guilty in 2006 to conspiring to provide goods and services to the PIJ.¹⁸ In addition, evidence presented in court shows the former University of South Florida professor served on the terrorist group’s board of directors during the early to mid 1990s.¹⁹

Esposito continues to defend Al-Arian publicly and laud him as “an extraordinarily bright, articulate scholar and intellectual-activist.”²⁰

¹¹ See *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G, “List of Unindicted Co-conspirators and Joint Venturers,” pp. 5-6.

¹² *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G, “Government’s Second Supplemental Trial Brief,” (ND TX September 12, 2008).

¹³ Those entities are the Holy Land Foundation (HLF), the United Association for Studies and Research (UASR) and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). Esposito testified as a defense expert at the HLF trial November 4, 2008.

¹⁴ Testimony of John Esposito, *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G (ND TX November 4, 2008).

¹⁵ *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G, “Government Exhibits Philly Meeting 1-18” (ND TX September 29, 2009).

¹⁶ *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G, “Government Exhibit Ashqar Search 1” (ND TX September 25, 2009).

¹⁷ Testimony of John Esposito, *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G (ND TX November 4, 2008) and Government Exhibit Elbarasse Search 19.

¹⁸ *USA v. Al-Arian*, 8:03CR77, “Plea Agreement” (MD FL April 14, 2006).

¹⁹ See, for example, Government Exhibit T878, *USA v. Al-Arian*, 8:03CR77, a transcript of an April 4, 1994 conversation between Al-Arian and his brother-in-law Mazen Al-Najjar regarding a proposal by Al-Arian to resolve a dispute among PIJ board members.

²⁰ Esposito letter to U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema, July 2, 2008.

Esposito has yet to explain how he, as an academic, could remain unaware of the extremist and terrorist links of the groups and individuals with whom he consistently works. A look at his statements, however, shows he does not find their activities or objectives to be problematic.

Defending Terrorist Organizations

Esposito has made statements defending the terrorist organizations Hamas and, Hizballah. He has also defended radical Islamist organizations including the Muslim Brotherhood and the Tunisian political group An-Nahda, also known as the Renaissance Party. An-Nahda is outlawed in Tunisia for its use of violence.²¹ In his statements, Esposito seeks to portray them as political groups with legitimate goals without addressing their terrorist activity. For example, in a 2006 news report on a one-day conference in Scotland on “Political Islam and Democracy” published in the international Arabic daily newspaper *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*,²² Esposito advocated negotiating with Hamas and Hizballah, the article reported, saying, “**some object to sitting at the same table to engage in a dialogue with Hamas or Hizballah but I see no problem with that.**”²³ [emphasis added] It is important to note that Esposito has repeatedly made statements to paint Hamas and Hizballah as legitimate political parties with whom the United States should reason and negotiate, *after* they each were designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) by the U.S. State Department.²⁴

In *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, for which Esposito served as editor-in-chief, contains a definition of terrorism as the “deliberate use of violence against noncombatants for political ends.”²⁵

Yet, the word appears nowhere in Esposito’s entries for Hamas,²⁶ Hizballah²⁷ and even Al Qaeda,²⁸ not even to say they have been designated as terrorist groups by governments including the U.S.

Hamas

In a 2000 interview in The United Association for Studies and Research’s (UASR) *Middle East Affairs Journal*, Esposito refused to condemn Hamas, which at the time was already designated a

²¹ “Tunisia Profile,” U.S. Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/t/9621.htm> (Accessed August 19, 2008).

²² *Al Sharq Al Awsat*: International Arabic daily Newspaper,” <http://www.allied-media.com/Arab-American/asharq.htm> (Accessed November 21, 2008).

²³ Mina al-Uraybi, “Conference in Edinburgh calls for dealing with political Islam and for getting rid of misconceptions; conference on Islam and democracy focuses on Middle East,” *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, May 6, 2006.

²⁴ “Background Information on Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Released by the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism,” U.S. Department of State, October 8, 1999, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rpt/fto/2801.htm> (Accessed August 20, 2008).

²⁵ *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, John Esposito, editor in chief, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 318.

²⁶ *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, John Esposito, editor in chief, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 106.

²⁷ *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, John Esposito, editor in chief, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 115.

²⁸ *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, John Esposito, editor in chief, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 252.

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Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by the U.S. State Department.²⁹ He was asked whether there were “differences between acts of pure terrorism and resistance? For instance Hizbollah and Hamas contend that they are national liberation movements and are resisting occupation. Are they terrorist organizations?” Esposito answered, “One can’t make a clear statement about Hamas. One has to distinguish between Hamas in general and the action of its military wing, and then one has also to talk about specific actions. Some actions by the military wing of Hamas can be seen as acts of resistance, but other actions are acts of retaliation, particularly when they target civilians.”³⁰

In an article in the September 2006 edition of *Harvard International Review*, Esposito criticized the U.S. and Europe for condemning Hamas writing that, “**despite HAMAS’ victory in free and democratic elections, the United States and Europe failed to give the party full recognition and support.**”³¹ Esposito goes on to criticize the U.S. for, “**failure to respect the democratic choice of Palestinians, whatever its reservations.**”³² [emphasis added]

Hizballah

In the same 2000 interview with the *Middle East Affairs Journal*, mentioned above, Esposito is again reluctant to distinguish terrorism from resistance when referring to Hizballah, another organization that had been designated a FTO by the State Department.³³ According to Esposito, “If we look at Hezbollah, there were times when it engaged in aggressive actions that clearly could be seen as terrorist actions, but Hezbollah in recent years has shown that it operates within the Lebanese political system functioning as a major player in parliament. But when it comes to the south it has been primarily a resistance movement. This is different from some actions committed by Hezbollah and other groups during the civil war in Lebanon, but in recent years Hezbollah’s actions in the south have been of a resistance movement. Hezbollah has made it clear that such actions would not exist if the Israelis would pull out of the south. Many outsiders refuse to see the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon as an occupation and as illegal.”³⁴

The Muslim Brotherhood (MB)

In 2004, John Esposito co-authored a letter with CMCU director John Voll to the editor of the *Washington Post* in which they criticized a *Post* article entitled “In Search of Friends Among the

²⁹ “Background Information on Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Released by the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism,” U.S. Department of State, October 8, 1999, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rpt/fto/2801.htm> (Accessed August 20, 2008).

³⁰ “Identifying Challenges to US/Muslim/Arab Relations: An Interview with Prof. John Esposito,” *The Middle East Affairs Journal*, Summer/Fall 2000.

³¹ John L. Esposito, “It’s the Policy Stupid: Political Islam and US Foreign Policy,” *Harvard International Review*, September 21, 2006. <http://hir.harvard.edu/articles/1453> (Accessed August 21, 2008).

³² *Ibid.*

³³ “Background Information on Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Released by the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism,” U.S. Department of State, October 8, 1999, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rpt/fto/2801.htm> (Accessed August 20, 2008).

³⁴ “Identifying Challenges to US/Muslim/Arab Relations: An Interview with Prof. John Esposito,” *The Middle East Affairs Journal*, Summer/Fall 2000.

Foes.” The article was flawed, Esposito and Voll wrote, for “present[ing] the [Muslim Brotherhood] as a single, relatively clearly structured organization rather than a complex cluster of groups and individuals identified from time to time with the broader movement.”³⁵

Esposito and Voll specifically tried to separate the Egyptian philosopher Sayyid Qutb from the Muslim Brotherhood by saying the *Post* “presented a flawed picture of the Brotherhood, which is based in Egypt. Readers might think that Sayyid Qutb - described as a ‘Brotherhood leader’ in the 1960s who ‘advocated militant jihad against nonbelievers’ represented the position of the organization. In fact the Brotherhood rejected his extremism.”³⁶

As journalist Douglas Farah notes, Qutb’s seminal work, *Milestones*, has remained in print since 1964 and continues to be “taught as part of curriculum of various Islamist groups here [in the U.S.], and has been one of the best selling books of all time in Arabic.”³⁷

The claim that Qutb is not a Brotherhood ideological leader contradicts Esposito’s own words. In a 1999 article written for the *Oxford History of Islam*, Esposito identified Qutb as both a Brotherhood leader and an ideologue: “thousands were arrested and Brotherhood leaders – among them the militant ideologue of Islamic revolution, Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) were executed.”³⁸

As mentioned earlier, Esposito testified as a defense expert witness in the 2008 re-trial of the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLF) in Dallas, Texas. During the testimony, he downplayed the threat of the Muslim Brotherhood, saying that the MB aspires to establish Islamic law in “only those places where you have Muslim populations.”³⁹ Any radical motivation ascribed to the group is misguided, he said.

“The proof actually runs directly against that. If you look historically of the track record of the Muslim Brotherhood, not only its statements but what it does, in most countries, certainly in Egypt, in Jordan, it participates within government and within society, usually as a major social movement.”⁴⁰

Under cross examination, Esposito was shown an internal 1991 Palestine Committee memo which detailed the Muslim Brotherhood’s role in America. As mentioned earlier, the Muslim Brotherhood created the Palestine Committee to help Hamas politically and financially. The memo described the Brotherhood’s role in America as:

³⁵ John O. Voll and John L. Esposito, “Misjudging the Muslim Brotherhood,” *The Washington Post*. September 22, 2004 (Accessed August 13, 2008).

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Douglas Farah, “The Amazing Deception in the Muslim Brotherhood’s Charm Offensive,” May 7, 2007, <http://www.douglasfarah.com/article/197/the-amazing-deception-in-the-muslim-brotherhoods-charm-offensive.com> (Accessed September 21, 2009).

³⁸ “Contemporary Islam: Reformation or Revolution?” *The Oxford History of Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito, 1999, p. 654.

³⁹ Testimony of John Esposito, *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G (ND TX November 4, 2008).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

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“.. a Civilization-Jihadist process...eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and ‘sabotaging’ its miserable house by their hands and the hand of the believers so that it is eliminated and God’s religion is made victorious over all other religions.”⁴¹

Esposito initially indicated that “we do not know the source” who wrote the memo, but stopped his objections when federal prosecutor James Jacks pointed out that the author, Mohamed Akram, was identified on the document. Jacks pointed out that Akram was a member of UASR, an organization with which Esposito has been cozy.⁴² Akram also appears on a list of Palestine Committee members.⁴³ Confronted with the document from a Brotherhood committee, Esposito denied it reflected Brotherhood thinking:

“If it is authentic, it would be made by a radical or terrorist organization. That is not something that I would associate with the Muslim Brotherhood. As I said, if it is authentic, it would represent, it would seem to me, a terrorist comment, an individual or a group. It wouldn't represent a Muslim Brotherhood -- You wouldn't guess that it was a Muslim Brotherhood statement.”⁴⁴

The HLF defendants were convicted on 108 counts related to the organization’s support for Hamas.⁴⁵

An-Nahdah

In addition to making statements in defense of well-known groups such as Hamas, Hizballah, and the Muslim Brotherhood, Esposito offers a “mainstream” image of the outlawed Tunisian Islamist party An-Nahdah and its leader Rashid Ghannoushi.⁴⁶

The An-Nahda party is dedicated to overthrowing the Tunisian Government and establishing an Islamic Republic, similar to the Islamic Republic of Iran.⁴⁷ Ghannoushi serves as the chairman of An-Nahda from London, where he has been living as a political refugee since 1991.⁴⁸ He has been sentenced in absentia to life in prison by Tunisian courts for planning terrorist attacks.⁴⁹ Ghannoushi initially was jailed for a series of attacks on Tunisian resorts in 1987 and was later

⁴¹ *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G, “Government Exhibit Elbarasse Search 3: An Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal for the Group in North America,” (ND TX September 28, 2008).

⁴² Testimony of John Esposito, *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G (ND TX November 4, 2008).

⁴³ *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G, “Government Exhibit Ashqar Search 1,” (ND TX September 25, 2008).

⁴⁴ Testimony of John Esposito, *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G (TX ND November 4, 2008).

⁴⁵ *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G, “Verdict,” November 24, 2008.

⁴⁶ Marshall Breger, “The New Republican Majority and the Terrorist Threat,” *Ethnic News Watch*, November 2, 1995.

⁴⁷ “MP seeks explanations from government over asylum for bomber,” *Agence France Presse*, November 14, 1993 (Accessed August 19, 2008).

⁴⁸ Chris Heffelfinger, “Jailed Extremists Pardoned in Tunisia,” *Terrorism Focus*, Vol. 3, Issue 8, February 28, 2006. <http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2369914> (Accessed August 19, 2008).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

granted asylum.⁵⁰ Ghannoushi has augmented his extremist record with jihadist comments. At a conference sponsored by the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP) in 1989, Ghannoushi said:

“O brother and sister mujahideen... Humanity has surrendered to the Zionist project today, and there is no hope for the civilization of man, there is no hope for goodness and mercy and justice except the vanguards of the Islamic Ummah lift away the damage forever. What you are embarking on is not just a regional project. It is not merely the liberation of one land of the many well-known lands. Rather you are embarking on the salvation of man, by the salvation of Islam, the salvation of the civilization of humanity, because the Zionist project is a danger to all goodness in the entire world.”⁵¹

Additionally Ghannoushi has espoused extremist anti-Semitic rhetoric, including the following quote at a 1992 Conference in Chicago sponsored by the Islamic Committee for Palestine (ICP) saying, “Every evil in the world, the Zionists are behind it. This is no exaggeration. There are so many evils in this world, and behind which are the Children of Israel.”⁵²

Despite this radical past, Esposito testified at a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing in the fall of 1994 that Ghannoushi was a moderate and that the United States was wrong not to grant him a visa to come speak here. Ghannoushi is an Islamist, but one who believes in democracy, Esposito said. Islamist groups resort to violence when their governments repress and abuse them, leaving them with no viable alternative.⁵³ Despite the charges against him, Ghannoushi had advocated “political liberalization, political pluralism and human rights,” Esposito said.

“We know what he says, but do we know what he or his colleagues would do if they came to power[?] This is the risk of the democratic process.”

The U.S. was forfeiting an opportunity to press him about his views on pluralism while sending a bad signal internationally:

“The delay in granting Ghannoushi a visa or a subsequent failure to issue a visa has a symbolic and practical significance, signaling that the U.S. views Ghannoushi among the radicals. Many will draw the conclusion that for the United States, there are no moderate Islamists, that the U.S. only functions with two categories – secular Muslims or extremists.”⁵⁴

Though their ultimate objectives for an Islamic state may be the same, Esposito emphasized their means to an end among violent and politically-oriented Islamist groups, describing the Ghannoushi’s An-Nahda organization as a group working within the system. Still, Esposito acknowledged that guaranteed little.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Islamic Association for Palestine Conference. Kansas City, Missouri, December 1989.

⁵² Rashid Ghannoushi. “Islam, Palestine and the West,” Chicago, Illinois, December 27-29, 1991.

⁵³ Testimony of John Esposito, “Recent Developments in North Africa,” House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, September 28, 1994.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

“Concerns that Islamic movements might use the ballot box to come to and then in effect seize power (‘hijack democracy’) are rooted in a realistic possibility. Certainly the examples of the Islamic republics of Iran, Pakistan (under Zia ul-Haq) and the Sudan (under Numiri and currently under Omar al-Bashir) offer little reassurance.”⁵⁵

Defending and Working with Terrorist Supporters

Sami Al-Arian

Esposito has been an outspoken defender of admitted terrorist supporter Sami Al-Arian, whom he describes as “a good friend” and “one of the most impressive people I have met under fire.”⁵⁶ Al-Arian was indicted on February 20, 2003, for allegedly serving as the North American leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ).⁵⁷ PIJ is a designated terrorist organization by the U.S. government⁵⁸ and has taken responsibility for the deaths of both Americans and Israelis.⁵⁹ Evidence presented at his trial showed Al-Arian was a member of the PIJ Shura Council, or its governing board.⁶⁰

After jurors in his 2005 trial acquitted him on eight counts but failed to reach unanimous verdicts on nine others, Al-Arian pleaded guilty in 2006 to “conspiracy to make or receive contributions of funds, goods, or services to or for the benefit of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.”⁶¹ In his plea, Al-Arian acknowledges being associated with the PIJ and knowing that it “achieved its objectives by, among other things, acts of violence.”⁶²

Al-Arian was again indicted in June of 2008 on two counts of criminal contempt for refusing to testify before a grand jury investigating terror financing by a Virginia-based think tank.⁶³ The indictment came after Al-Arian continued to defy a grand jury subpoena despite a grant of immunity from prosecution and the rulings of two U.S. District Court judges and the 4th and 11th

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ John Esposito, CAIR-Dallas Banquet, Renaissance Dallas Hotel, August 18, 2007.

⁵⁷ *USA v. Al-Arian*, 8:03-CR-77, “Indictment,” (MD FL February 20, 2003). See also: “Members of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad Arrested, Charged with Racketeering and Conspiracy to Provide Support to Terrorists.” U.S. Department of Justice, February 20, 2003.

⁵⁸ “Background Information on Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Released by the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism,” U.S. Department of State, October 8, 1999. <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/rpt/fto/2801.htm> (Accessed August 20, 2008).

⁵⁹ “Members of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad Arrested, Charged with Racketeering and Conspiracy to Provide Support to Terrorists,” U.S. Department of Justice, February 20, 2003.

⁶⁰ U.S. District Judge James S. Moody noted this when he sentenced Al-Arian on May 1, 2006: “The evidence was clear in this case that you were a leader of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. You were on the board of directors and an officer, the secretary. Directors control the actions of an organization, even the PIJ; and you were an active leader.”

⁶¹ *USA v. Al-Arian*, 8:02-CR-77, “Plea Agreement,” (MD FL February 28, 2006).

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *USA v. Al-Arian*, 1:08-CR-131, “Indictment,” (ED VA June 26, 2008).

Circuit Courts of Appeal.⁶⁴ He maintains that his plea agreement ruled out any testimony, either voluntary or compelled.

Despite a documented history with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Esposito wrote a letter in support of Al-Arian's successful motion to be released on bond pending his contempt trial, telling U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema:

“He is an extraordinarily bright, articulate scholar and intellectual-activist, a man of conscience with a strong commitment to peace and social justice.”

The case has not yet gone to trial, with Brinkema considering a defense motion to dismiss since March 2009.

Other examples of Esposito's support for Al-Arian include:

- A CAIR Dallas banquet in August 2007, more than a year after Al-Arian pled guilty to supporting PIJ, Esposito described Al-Arian as “a very good friend of mine... And you know, God help Sami Al-Arian in terms of this administration and many others who have to live through this,” and “one of the most impressive people I have met under fire is Sami Al-Arian.”⁶⁵
- A November 2008 interview with WMNF Radio in Tampa, in which Esposito described a recent dinner he and his wife had with Al-Arian and plans to do so again that week. He expressed hope that “with a change of administration and I would hope clearly with the change in some of our government agencies that not only will Sami's case be resolved, but that other cases and other situations” would be resolved as well. He ended the interview saying that “the issue of Muslim civil liberties, the right to due process, those are the things that it seems to me that not only every American, but the Muslim community has to be more vocal about, so I'm certainly hoping that the Al-Arian situation will be turned around.”⁶⁶

Azzam Tamimi:

Esposito has engaged in a series of academic partnerships with Azzam Tamimi, a known member of Hamas since at least 1999.⁶⁷ In a November 2001 interview with a Spanish newspaper, Tamimi stated, “The Israelis stole our houses, which are today occupied by Jews from Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Morocco, Ethiopia, Brooklyn. They should return to their homes,

⁶⁴ In re Grand Jury Subpoena, *USA v. John Doe*, A01-246, 07-1155, (4thCir. March 23, 2007). and *USA v. Al-Arian*, 06-16008, (11thCir. January 25, 2008).

⁶⁵ John Esposito, CAIR-Dallas Banquet, Renaissance Dallas Hotel, August 18, 2007.

⁶⁶ John Esposito, Interview with WMNF 88.5, CAIR-Tampa 6th Annual Banquet, Tampa Convention Center, Tampa, Florida, November 15, 2008, http://www.wmnf.org/news_stories/6390 (Accessed September 21, 2009).

⁶⁷ Muhammad Muslih, “The Foreign Policy of Hamas,” p. 14, 1999.

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and give ours back to us!.. That's non-negotiable. Therefore I support Hamas.”⁶⁸ He also is the author of the 2007 book *Hamas: A History From Within*. At a lecture in South Africa in July 2002, Tamimi praised suicide bombings saying, “Do not call them suicide bombers, call them shuhada [martyrs] as they have not escaped the miseries of life. They gave their life. Life is sacred, but some things like truth and justice are more sacred than life.”⁶⁹ Tamimi has also claimed that he would become a suicide bomber if he had the opportunity; In a November 2004 television interview with BBC News Tamimi said “Not a single person of those who bomb themselves, bomb themselves because they are desperate or poor. It doesn't happen because of this. They do it because they want to sacrifice themselves for a cause after all avenues have been closed before them...I would do it...If I can go to Palestine and sacrifice myself I would do it.”⁷⁰

The following examples reveal the close working relationship between Tamimi and Esposito:

- Esposito and Tamimi have co-edited a book in 2000, *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East*.⁷¹
- Esposito sits on the Board of Advisors for the Institute of Islamic Political Thought, which is run by Tamimi.⁷²
- Tamimi was a featured speaker at CMCU's April 2000 conference “America, Islam & The Millennium.”⁷³

Praising Radical Islamists and Their Apologists

Yusuf al-Qaradawi

Qaradawi is a spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood and is known for his militant religious rulings and political commentary in support of terrorism and suicide bombings, as well as his fatwa stating that Muslims killed while fighting American forces in Iraq are martyrs.⁷⁴ In April 2001, commenting on suicide bombings, Qaradawi said, “they are not suicide operations...these

⁶⁸ Martin Kramer, “Ask Professor Esposito,” Sandstorm, September 26, 2002.

http://www.geocities.com/martinkramerorg/2002_09_26.htm (Accessed August 18, 2008).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Azaam Tamimi, “Hardtalk,” BBC News 24 TV Programme, November 2, 2004.

<http://www.geocities.com/martinkramerorg/Documents/TamimiHardtalk.htm> (Accessed September 21, 2009).

⁷¹ Azzam Tamimi and John Esposito, *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East*, Amazon Online Reader http://www.amazon.com/gp/reader/0814782612/ref=sib_dp_pt#reader-link (Accessed August 19, 2008).

⁷² Institute of Islamic Political Thought, “IIPT Board Members,”

<http://web.archive.org/web/20060818175540/http://www.ii-pt.com/web/advisors.htm> (Accessed February 19, 2009).

⁷³ UASR-CMCU, “America, Islam & The Millennium,” Conference at CMC, Washington, DC, April 26-28, 2000.

⁷⁴ Nur Eddin Al-Uwaydidi, “Those Who Die Fighting U.S. Occupation Forces Are Martyrs: Qaradawi,” *IslamOnline*, January 27, 2003 <http://www.islamonline.net/english/news/2003-01/28/article08.shtml> (Accessed August 17, 2007).

are heroic martyrdom operations.”⁷⁵ Criticizing religious rulings against suicide bombings, Qaradawi stated, “I am astonished that some sheikhs deliver fatwas that betray the mujahideen, instead of supporting them and urging them to sacrifice and martyrdom.”⁷⁶ Regarding one of these fatwas issued by the Imam of Mecca’s Grand Mosque, Qaradawi said, “It is unfortunate to hear that the Grand Imam has said it was not permissible to kill civilians in any country or state, even in Israel.”⁷⁷

In a 2003 article Esposito wrote for the *Boston Review*, Esposito included Qaradawi among a list of religious scholars with a “reformist interpretation of Islam and its relationship to democracy, pluralism and human rights.”⁷⁸

In his 1999 book *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* Esposito wrote that Qaradawi is a Muslim intellectual who “recognizes the need to open up prevailing one-party or authoritarian political systems as well as face the multireligious and multicultural demographic realities of [his society, has] both reinterpreted Islamic principles to reconcile Islam with democratization and multiparty political systems and recast and expanded traditional doctrine regarding the status (dhimmi) of non-Muslim minorities.”⁷⁹

As an additional example of Esposito’s recognition of Qaradawi as a legitimate source is that in September 1995, Esposito’s CMCU invited Qaradawi to speak in a colloquium entitled “Islam: A Way of Life.”⁸⁰

During his 2008 testimony at the HLF trial, Esposito acknowledged Qaradawi had “been supportive” of Palestinian suicide bombings since the mid 1990s. He made a point of saying he was describing Qaradawi’s views, not necessarily agreeing with them:

“If you look at Qaradawi’s work – I actually just finished working on him for a new book that I have – he goes out of his way to say that he is not anti-Jewish, but he is anti-Israeli, anti-Israel occupation of Palestine, and that that is what he is talking about. So he will talk about Jews again as people of the Book, et cetera, but when it comes to Palestine he defines that situation politically.”⁸¹

⁷⁵ Al Raya, April 2001, quoted in Michael Slackman, “Islamic Debate Surrounds Mideast Suicide Bombers,” *The Los Angeles Times*, May 27, 2001.

⁷⁶ Haim Malka, “Must Innocents Die? The Islamic Debate Over Suicide Attacks,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2003.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ John L. Esposito, “Practice and Theory: A Response to “Islam and the Challenge of Democracy,” *Boston Review*, April/May 2003 <http://www.bostonreview.net/BR28.2/esposito.html> (Accessed Aug. 13, 2008).

⁷⁹ John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 247.

⁸⁰ CMCU, Report on Activities, 1995-1996, 2.

⁸¹ Testimony of John Esposito, *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G (ND TX November 4, 2008).

Tariq Ramadan

Tariq Ramadan, a Swiss national, is Professor of Islamic Studies and serves on the Faculty of Theology at the University of Oxford.⁸² Ramadan's maternal grandfather Hassan al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928.⁸³

In a September 22, 2001 interview with a Swiss newspaper, Ramadan argued that investigators "have no definitive and clear proof" that bin Laden was behind the 9/11 attacks.⁸⁴ Ramadan made financial contributions to French charities linked to Hamas between 1998 and July 2002, the charity "Comite de Bienfaisance et de Secours aux Palestiniens" (CBSP) and the "Association de Secours Palestinien"⁸⁵ which both were added to the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC)'s listing of Specially Designated Global Terrorists one year later in 2003.⁸⁶ These transactions are among the justifications given by U.S. officials for denying Ramadan's visa request.⁸⁷

Still, Esposito chose to speak against the decision to revoke Ramadan's visa.

In an August 2004 article in the Toronto Star Esposito defended Tariq Ramadan saying that the U.S. government's decision to revoke Ramadan's visa was a "**major step backward in intellectual exchange between the Islamic world and the West.**"⁸⁸ [emphasis added]

In September 2004, Esposito wrote in the New York Sun that "Ramadan is a scholar recognized throughout the world for his labors on behalf of interfaith understanding and the building of peace."⁸⁹

In the same 2004 article, written soon after Ramadan gave up his visa fight (he was denied a work visa to enter the United States and assume a joint teaching appointment at Notre Dame)⁹⁰ by resigning from his tenured teaching post, Esposito claimed that "Ramadan's resignation silences a moderate Muslim voice."⁹¹

⁸² Tariq Ramadan Biography, <http://www.tariqramadan.com/spip.php?article11> (Accessed August 19, 2008); see also: University of Oxford Theology Faculty Members List

<http://resources.theology.ox.ac.uk/staffindex.phtml?start=M&finish=R> (Accessed August 19, 2008).

⁸³ David Goodhart, "In Defence of Tariq Ramadan," *The Guardian*, June 26, 2006.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2006/jun/26/indefenceoftariqramadan> (Accessed Aug. 19, 2008).

⁸⁴ Niciolas Geinoz, "Ben Laden, coupable ideal?" *La Gruyere*, Sept. 22, 2001

<http://www.lagruyere.ch/archives/2001/01.09.25/article4.htm> (Accessed August 19, 2008).

⁸⁵ *Tariq Ramadan v. Chertof*, 06-CV-588, "Opinion and Order," (SD NY June 23, 2006).

⁸⁶ "Office of Foreign Assets Control: Recent OFAC Actions," August 21, 2003,

<http://www.treas.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/actions/20030821.html> (Accessed August 25, 2008).

⁸⁷ Tariq Ramadan, "Why I'm Banned in the USA," *Washington Post*, October 1, 2006.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/09/29/AR2006092901334.html>.

⁸⁸ "America must respect law at home, abroad," *The Toronto Star*, September 26, 2004.

⁸⁹ John Esposito, "Tariq Ramadan's Visa," *New York Sun*, September 14, 2004.

<http://www.nysun.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor-2004-09-14/1690> (Accessed August 12, 2008).

⁹⁰ Geneive Abdo, "Muslim Scholar Has Visa Revoked," *The Chicago Tribune*, August 24, 2004.

⁹¹ John Esposito, "Tariq Ramadan's Visa," *New York Sun*, September 14, 2004.

<http://www.nysun.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor-2004-09-14/1690/> (Accessed August 12, 2008).

Tariq Ramadan's latest attempt to obtain a visa to the United States was denied on September 24, 2006.⁹² In July 2009, the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals ordered new hearings on the application after determining Ramadan was not given a chance to prove he was unaware the CBSP, to which he gave money, was tied to Hamas.⁹³

Downplaying the Threat of Al Qaeda

Esposito frequently makes comments downplaying the threat posed to the West and the world by the terrorist organization Al Qaeda.

In a 2005 article in the *New York Times* Esposito first acknowledges Al Qaeda's plan for establishing a global caliphate saying, "It is certainly correct to say that [al Qaeda has] a global design."⁹⁴ But he then diminishes the significance of that plan, saying Al Qaeda has no means of accomplishing this goal. "[T]he administration ought to frame it realistically. Otherwise they can actually be playing into the hands of the Osama bin Ladens of the world because they raise this to a threat that is exponentially beyond anything that Osama bin Laden can deliver."⁹⁵

Focusing attention on the inabilities of Al Qaeda falsely lowers the perceived risk of attack. Esposito's 2005 comments are similar to those he made prior to 9/11 suggesting that bin Laden posed no risk.

In a paper published during the summer of 2001, Esposito criticized those who focused on the threat posed by bin Laden:

"Bin Laden is the best thing that has come along, if you are an intelligence officer, if you are an authoritarian regime, or if you want to paint Islamist activism as a threat. There's a danger in making Bin Laden the poster boy of global terrorism and not realizing that there are a lot of other forces involved in global terrorism. Bin Laden has become the new symbol, following in the footsteps of Qaddafi, Khomeini, and Sheikh Omar Abdur Rahman. Bin Laden is a perfect media symbol: He's tall, gaunt, striking, and always has a Kalashnikov with him. As long as we focus on these images we continue to see Islam and Islamic activism through the prism of ayatollahs and Iran, of Bin Laden and the Afghan Arabs."⁹⁶ [emphasis added]

⁹² Tariq Ramadan, "A Closed Door," Tariq Ramadan Website, September 25, 2006, <http://www.tariqramadan.com/spip.php?article788> (Accessed August 20, 2007).

⁹³ *American Academy of Religion, American Association of University Professors, Pan American Center and Tariq Ramadan v. Janet Napolitano*, 08-0826-CV, July 17, 2009.

⁹⁴ Elisabeth Bumiller, "21st-Century Warnings of a Threat Rooted in the 7th," *The New York Times*, December 12, 2005 <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/12/politics/12letter.html> (Accessed August 21, 2008).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ John L. Esposito, "The Future of Islam," *Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, Summer 2001, p. 19, p. 32.

Downplaying the Threat of Islamist Violence

Esposito frequently makes misleading statements indicating that the Islamist threat is derived primarily from U.S. foreign policy and misunderstandings that offend Muslims rather than acknowledging the fundamentalist religious justifications used by many terrorists.

In May 2006, as reported by *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, Esposito said, “**some hold the Muslims guilty until proven innocent. It is also possible to use words and terms that offend Muslims but that are unacceptable about others, such as Jews or Americans of African origin.**”⁹⁷ [emphasis added] The same conference report paraphrased Esposito saying these uses of words and terms are “offenses [that] exacerbate the problem that has arisen between some in the West and the Muslims.”⁹⁸

Additionally in 2006, Esposito wrote in the *Harvard International Review* that Islamist anti-Americanism is caused by U.S. policy claiming that “**most fundamental and important is the recognition that widespread anti-Americanism among mainstream Muslims and Islamists results from what the United States does- its policies and actions.**”⁹⁹ [emphasis added]

In a 2007 op-ed piece by Esposito published in the *Washington Post*, he attempted to downplay the religious aspect of Islamist violence:

“My years studying those attitudes suggest that **Muslim hostility toward the West is mostly political, not religious**, and that Muslims hope the West will show their faith more respect. In our post-9/11 world, the ability to distinguish between Islam itself and Muslim extremism will be critical. Only thus will we be able to avoid pushing away mainstream Muslims around the world, marginalizing Muslim citizens at home and alienating the allies we need to help us fight global terrorism.”¹⁰⁰ [emphasis added]

Again in 2007, at a lecture at Tufts University entitled “The War on Terror” Esposito attempted to downplay the threat posed by radical religious ideology such as Wahhabism – an austere and literalist interpretation of the Quran – attributing the threat to political grievances. Esposito spoke to his audience saying:

“...these are issues of more political participation and democratization, issues of Israel and Palestine, issues of how we view Islam and the Muslim world, the issue of learning to distinguish between the root cause of terrorism- which are more often than not political grievances like occupation, power, and powerlessness, and seeing religion as the way in which one frames and legitimates- but not the primary cause. **If I hear one more person**

⁹⁷ Mina al-Uraybi, "Report on One-day Conference in Scotland on 'Political Islam and Democracy'," *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, May 6, 2006.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ John L. Esposito, “It’s the Policy Stupid: Political Islam and US Foreign Policy,” *Harvard International Review*, September 21, 2006 <http://hir.harvard.edu/articles/1453> (Accessed August 21, 2008).

¹⁰⁰ John Esposito. “Want to Understand Islam? Start Here.” *The Washington Post*. July 22, 2007, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/20/AR2007072002137_pf.html (Accessed August 21, 2008).

say, because I've heard in some fairly sophisticated environments, 'Wahabbi.' There is no Wahabbi problem."¹⁰¹ [emphasis added]

In Esposito's own book *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, however, he writes that a key ideological component of the Wahabbi movement is that "all who resisted, Muslim or non-Muslim, were enemies of God. Members of the community, like the early Muslims of the seventh century, were trained in piety and military skills as these movements spread God's rule through preaching and jihad."¹⁰²

Involvement with Muslim Brotherhood Legacy Groups in the U.S.

The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR)

Federal authorities have tied CAIR to Hamas in two federal cases since 2007.¹⁰³ In the HLF's Hamas support trial, internal documents admitted into evidence showed CAIR was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood's "Palestine Committee"¹⁰⁴ after an internal Palestine Committee document from 1994 listed CAIR as one of its "working organizations."¹⁰⁵ Muslim Brotherhood records also reveal that the Palestine Committee was created by the Brotherhood to advance Hamas' agenda within the United States.¹⁰⁶ CAIR was incorporated by three leaders of the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP) – Nihad Awad, Omar Ahmad, and Rafeeq Jaber.¹⁰⁷ Muslim Brotherhood documents also list IAP as the leading organization representing the Palestine Committee in the U.S.¹⁰⁸

In his testimony at the HLF trial, Esposito acknowledged speaking at several CAIR banquets and fundraisers. "CAIR is a religiously-oriented group. You can tell from its title. It has the word Islamic in there. And it is concerned with issues of discrimination with regard to Muslims in the workplace and in society. And I believe and am concerned about issues of ethnic discrimination across the board. So if an organization is engaged in that work and if I can if they invite me to speak, and that somehow is, you know, is a positive for them in terms of pulling in an audience, I am happy to do that."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰¹ John Esposito, "The War on Terror," Tufts University, January 25-26, 2007.

¹⁰² John Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, 3rd. Ed., (Oxford University Press: 1999), p. 48.

¹⁰³ *USA v. Sabri Benkahla*, 07-4778 and *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G.

¹⁰⁴ *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G, "Attachment A: List of Unindicted Co-conspirators and/or Joint Venturers" (ND TX July 30, 2007). See also: Government Exhibit 3-78, a Palestine Committee agenda from 1994.

¹⁰⁵ *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G, "Government Exhibit Elbarasse Search 19" (ND TX September 29, 2008).

¹⁰⁶ *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G, "Government Exhibit Elbarasse Search 5" (ND TX September 25, 2008).

¹⁰⁷ Government of the District of Columbia, *Certificate of Incorporation*, Council on American-Islamic Relations, September 15, 1994.

¹⁰⁸ *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G, "Government Exhibit Elbarasse Search 7" (TX ND September 25, 2008).

¹⁰⁹ Testimony of John Esposito, *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G (ND TX November 4, 2008).

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At a 2007 CAIR banquet, Esposito said:

“Let me begin by saying that CAIR is a phenomenal organization....The main reason I decided to come was because of how I see the situation with regard to both the Holy Land Fund and the way government recently handled the situation and also to show solidarity not only with the Holy Land Fund, but also with CAIR.”¹¹⁰

The United Association for Studies and Research (UASR)

Hamas Deputy Political Director Mousa Abu Marzook founded the UASR in 1989.¹¹¹ It was run by Ahmed Yousef,¹¹² now a Hamas spokesman in Gaza.¹¹³ Internal Muslim Brotherhood records also show that UASR was a member of the Palestine Committee,¹¹⁴ whose articulated goal, as stated above, was to promote Hamas’ political agenda in the U.S.¹¹⁵

In his HLF testimony, Esposito said he was unaware any UASR people were tied to Hamas when he worked with it:

Q. Did you consider UASR, when you were meeting with him, to be a Hamas organization?

A. No. I mean, I had no way of knowing whether they were or they weren’t.¹¹⁶

Ample information existed in the public domain long before Esposito joined its advisory board in 2000. Questions about Yousef’s Hamas connections date back at least to August 1995, when the *Washington Post* asked about it.¹¹⁷ The *Post* was reporting on the arrest of Hamas political leader Mousa Abu Marzook by U.S. authorities:

“One of Marzook’s few professional associations was to serve on the board of the United Association for Studies and Research, a Springfield think tank that has been branded by Israelis as a Hamas front.

Ahmed Yousef, the association’s executive director, who met Marzook while also studying engineering at Colorado State, said he knew Marzook as a successful businessman who agreed to promote the think tank during his Middle East travels. But

¹¹⁰ John Esposito, CAIR-Dallas Banquet, Renaissance Dallas Hotel, August 18, 2007.

¹¹¹ Office of the Secretary of State of Illinois, Articles of Incorporation, File No. 5566-789-6, United Association for Studies and Research, September 18, 1989.

¹¹² Secretary of State of Illinois, 1991 Annual Report, United Association for Studies and Research, July 29, 1991.

¹¹³ Ahmed Yousef, “Engage with Hamas,” *Washington Post*, June 20, 2007.

¹¹⁴ *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G, “Government Elbarasse Search 7” (ND TX September 25, 2008).

¹¹⁵ *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G, “Government Elbarasse Search 5” (ND TX September 25, 2008).

¹¹⁶ Testimony of John Esposito, *USA v. Holy Land Foundation*, 3:04-CR-240-G (ND TX November 4, 2008).

¹¹⁷ Charles W. Hall, Robert O’Harrow Jr, “Virginia Man Suspected of Terrorism Known for Anonymity,” *Washington Post*, August 8, 1995.

Yousef, who said his think tank has no ties to Hamas, was unable to describe the nature of Marzook's business."¹¹⁸

Esposito served on the Board of Advisory Editors for the *Middle East Affairs Journal*, published by UASR, which since has closed down.¹¹⁹ He is listed on the Winter/Spring 1995 issue, meaning he was working with the UASR when the *Post* inquired about Hamas ties and when Marzook was in a New York jail, arrested and identified as a leader of Hamas in court papers.¹²⁰ Virginia corporate records indicate the UASR filed its last annual report in November 2003.¹²¹

In 2000, Esposito's CMCU helped to bestow legitimacy upon UASR by holding a joint conference with UASR at Georgetown University.¹²²

The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT)

The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) is part of a complex web of companies, charities and not-for-profit corporations known as the SAAR Network or the Safa Group, which has been under investigation since 2002.¹²³ IIIT has been under grand jury investigation for suspected terrorist financing.¹²⁴ In addition to this, recently declassified FBI documents identify leaders of IIIT and the SAAR Foundation "as being members of the Ikhwan Al-Muslimeen (Muslim Brotherhood)."¹²⁵ The documents also note that "all the subsidiary and sponsoring Muslim organizations under the control of the IIIT and the SAAR Foundation are in fact Ikhwan organizations."¹²⁶

At a 1995 CMCU Academic Council meeting, Esposito "announced that the International Institute of Islamic Thought has proposed an affiliation with the Center through a graduate-level Islamic Studies degree program.¹²⁷ Dr. Esposito noted that he will explore the proposal further with IIIT and obtain additional information which he will distribute to Council members prior to the next Council meeting in November."¹²⁸

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ "Board of Advisory Editors," *Middle East Affairs Journal*, Vol. 2 No.2-3; United Association for Studies and Research: Winter/Spring 1995.

¹²⁰ *In the Matter of the Extradition of Mousa Muhammad Abu Marzook*, 95-CR-Misc. 1, (USDC-SDNY, August 7, 1995, Sealed Complaint); Neil MacFarquhar, "Terror Suspect Freed by US; Flies to Jordan," *The New York Times*, May 6, 1997.

¹²¹ UASR 2003 Annual Report, Commonwealth of Virginia, F127196-6, November 13, 2003.

¹²² UASR-CMCU, "America, Islam & The Millennium," Conference at CMCU, Washington, DC, April 26-28, 2000.

¹²³ "In the Matter Involving 555 Grove Street, Herndon, Virginia and Related Locations, 02-MG114," affidavit of Special Agent David Kane, sec. X 111 (ED VA March 2002).

¹²⁴ Federal Bureau of Investigation, FOIA Documents, Case ID: 1111944-000, April 29, 2008.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Academic Council Meeting, Meeting Minutes, April 6, 1995.

¹²⁸ Academic Council Meeting, Meeting Minutes, April 6, 1995.

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Esposito continued to express his interest in working closely with IIIT the following year: “The Director suggested the creation of a chair, based in the Center [CMCU], with a teaching agreement for half time in the Center and half-time at IIIT. This proposal is being presented at IIIT’s next Board Meeting in November.”¹²⁹

It is not clear what became of this proposed academic partnership.

Esposito’s coziness with terrorist supporters, and his frequent criticism of U.S. policy as a cause of terrorism has not hurt his standing with government officials. The U.S. State Department repeatedly turns to Esposito to address international audiences about life for Muslims in America and to advance his argument that better understanding of religious and cultural differences is a key to a more peaceful world, records show.¹³⁰

In October 2001, he addressed a University of Western Australia audience that included local students, academics and senior diplomats from Saudi Arabian and Indonesian embassies. According to an evaluation of Esposito’s presentation, the program originally was designed “to promote wider understanding of the U.S. commitment to multiculturalism, respect for Islam and religious diversity.” After the 9/11 attacks, however, the focus changed to trying to show that the U.S. is not hostile toward Islam as it fought against terrorism.¹³¹

Esposito won high marks as “a convincing speaker whose scholarship is well known and respected ... Esposito said that one of the main problems contributing to the present situation is a lack of understanding of the different cultures. In this context, he said the U.S. needed to address the broader Middle Eastern issues such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, democracy and our relations with countries in the regions such as Saudi Arabia.”¹³²

In 2003, the State Department paid \$1,200 for airfare, and \$4,000 for presentation books to send Esposito to Bosnia and Croatia for a series of lectures on Muslim life in America, fundamentalism and political Islam and other topics. “His message of ‘modern tolerance,’ meaning not just tolerating others’ existence but rather to learn about, understand and respect each other through education and leadership by religious figures, is vitally important.”¹³³

Esposito’s lecture in Zagreb prompted 150 copies of his book to be sold at Zagreb’s mosque within days, the State Department reported.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Memorandum from John L. Esposito to Academic Council Members, Oct. 25, 1996, p. 2.

¹³⁰ State Department records obtained by the Investigative Project on Terrorism show Esposito was called upon at least seven different times between 1997 and 2007, including trips to Pakistan, Bosnia and Croatia in addition to teleconferences.

¹³¹ State Department Cable, “DVC on ‘Islam and the West’ – Evaluation,” October 18, 2001.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ State Department Cable, “Evaluation of Speaker John Esposito, Expert on Inter-Religious Dialogue,” October 8, 2003.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*