



UNITED STATES

Quick Facts

Population: 332,639,102 (July 2020 est.)

Area: 9,833,517 sq km

Ethnic Groups: white 72.4%, black 12.6%, Asian 4.8%, Amerindian and Alaska native 0.9%, native Hawaiian and other Pacific islander 0.2%, other 6.2%, two or more races 2.9% (2010 est.)

GDP (official exchange rate): \$19.49 trillion (2017 est.)

Source: CIA World FactBook (Last Updated July 2020)

INTRODUCTION

The United States remains committed to countering Islamist terrorism abroad and thwarting violent acts by Islamic extremists at home. The Trump administration's counter-terrorism strategy, issued in 2018, arguably broadened the scope of U.S. counterterrorism efforts by enshrining a need to counter Islamist ideology – although such an approach is not yet in evidence.

In the meantime, non-violent political Islam in the country continues to grow. While commentary and investigations by media, academia and political organizations have focused overwhelmingly on jihadist networks and extremist activities, other movements and manifestation of Islamism have flourished quietly. The most active Sunni non-violent Islamist forces in America today include the Muslim Brotherhood, Jamaat-e-Islami, Salafis, and Deobandis, along with growing networks representing Qatari and Turkish state Islamism. Shi'a Islamists, aligned with the Iranian regime and the Lebanese terror group Hezbollah, also operate across North America.

ISLAMIST ACTIVITY

While American Islam is extraordinarily varied, the dozens of religious sects and movements that constitute American Sunni Islam have distinctly little say in how their own views are represented; the lack of a hierarchical clergy within Sunni Islam and the sheer diversity of Islam – its competing schools of theology, schools of jurisprudence, sects, ethnicities, cultures and mysticisms - produce a natural political vacuum. Islamist groups that fill the political gap are non-violent, with most embracing the idea of introducing an Islamic state through gradual political transition.¹

Muslim Brotherhood

Of all the nonviolent Islamist movements across the globe, the Muslim Brotherhood is perhaps the best known. It was certainly the one best prepared to assume the leadership of American Islam.

In the United States, Muslim Brotherhood activists who studied in America during the 1960s founded the Muslim Student Association (MSA). The MSA functioned as the organizational beachhead of Muslim Brotherhood activism in the U.S. Through conferences and events, publications, websites, and other activities, the MSA promoted Islamism on university campuses throughout North America. It was the predecessor to American's most prominent Muslim organizations, including the Muslim American Society (MAS), Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), Muslim Public Affairs Council, North American Islamic Trust, and the Islamic Society of North America.²

In 2007, federal prosecutors named many of these Islamist groups or their officials as “unindicted co-conspirators” in the Holy Land Foundation terrorism financing trial. America's (self-proclaimed) Muslim leadership groups, the government discovered, were part of a network working to fund terrorism abroad and advance extremism at home.³ These activist organizations are among the most prominent Islamic groups in American civil society; they are influential in politics at all levels and have established relationships with media outlets, academics, charities, and other faith groups throughout the country.

Publicly, these groups are professionally-led activist organizations concerned with civil rights, religious education, political awareness, grassroots organization, and other benign activities.⁴ However, internal Brotherhood documents revealed that these groups promote “the main goal of Islamic activism,” which is “establishing the nation of Islam, the rule of God in the lives of humans, making people worship their Creator and cleansing the earth from the tyrants who assault God's sovereignty, the abominators in His earth and the suppressors of His creation.”⁵

A new set of Muslim Brotherhood-linked organizations have gained prominence since the 2008 Holy Land Foundation trial. The most prominent of these is Islamic Relief, one of the largest Islamic aid charities in the world. Since 2008, Islamic Relief's American branch, Islamic Relief USA, has become the largest Muslim charity in the United States. Islamic Relief maintains branches and offices in over 20 countries and reports hundreds of millions of dollars per year in income, which include sizeable grants from Western governments. The charity was founded in 1984 by Brotherhood activists Hani El Banna and Essam El Haddad (who also served as Egyptian President Morsi's foreign policy advisor). In recent years, Islamic Relief has openly partnered with and funded several Hamas fronts.⁶

Islamic Relief USA is chaired by Khaled Lamada, who is also the founder of Egyptian Americans for Democracy and Human Rights, one of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's American lobbying groups. Lamada has praised the “jihad” of the “Mujahidin of Egypt” for “causing the Jews many defeats”. He has shared social media posts that praise Hamas for inflicting a “huge defeat” against the “Zionist entity.”⁷

Jamaat-e-Islami (JI)

Founded in British India in 1941 by the prominent Islamist theorist Abul Ala Maududi, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) today is active across the Indian subcontinent and within the South Asia diaspora in the West.⁸ Maududi popularized the idea of Islamic revolution, writing that “the objective of the Islamic ‘Jihad’ is to eliminate the rule of an un-Islamic system and establish in its stead an Islamic system of state rule.”⁹

In the United States, the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) has long operated as the chief U.S. representative body of JI. Originally named Halaqa Ahabab-e Islami, its self-described mission was “to strengthen the Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan.”¹⁰ In 1977, Halaqa Ahabab-e Islami formally changed its name to ICNA.¹¹ The organization's charter calls for the “establishment of the Islamic system of life” in the world, “whether it pertains to beliefs, rituals and morals or to economic, social or political spheres.”¹² ICNA's curriculum promotes the teachings of Islamist scholar and JI founder Maududi.¹³ The organization's 2010 *Member's Handbook* lists five stages that involve going through the individual, family, societal, state,

and global levels “to establish (a) true Islamic society” that “will lead to the unity of the *Ummah* (global Muslim community) and towards the establishment of the *Khilafah* (Caliphate).”¹⁴

Twice a year, ICNA hosts conferences in Chicago and Baltimore, in collaboration with the Muslim American Society (MAS). These conventions – which are known to host Salafi clerics with histories of inciting hatred against Jews, women and homosexuals – also include Jamaat representatives from South Asia.¹⁵

JI has long operated in partnership with the Muslim Brotherhood. Qazi Ahmad Hussain, a former head of Jamaat in Pakistan, has declared: “We consider ourselves as an integral part of the Brotherhood and the Islamic movement in Egypt.... Our nation is one.”¹⁶ In the West, JI and the Brotherhood often work in tandem – an alliance sometimes referred to as the Ikhwan-Jamaat duopoly.¹⁷

ICNA has established two prominent aid charities: ICNA Relief, which works within the United States, and Helping Hand for Relief and Development (HHRD), which operates overseas. HHRD funds and partners with Jamaat-e-Islami’s welfare arm in South Asia, Al Khidmat Foundation, whose president is closely involved with the designated Kashmiri *jihadist* group Hizbul Mujahideen.¹⁸ JI’s own website reports that Al-Khidmat has also funded Hamas.¹⁹ In 2017, HHRD openly partnered with an arm of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the Pakistani terrorist organization responsible for the 2008 Mumbai attacks.²⁰

Salafism

Salafism in America takes four forms: quietists, activists, modernists and *jihadists*.

Quietists and Activists

Most of the quietists have long been strongly supportive of the Saudi regime, and have opposed political participation and involvement in *jihadist* causes. Consequently, the quietists have been staunchly opposed to many other Islamist movements.²¹

Activist Salafis, meanwhile, primarily operated through the Islamic Assembly of North America (IANA) in the 1990s. Salafi commentator Umar Lee notes in his memoir of Salafism in America that IANA was opposed to the Saudi regime but “in favor of a global Islamic movement to bring about an Islamic state.”²² Prominent Islamic figures involved with IANA included the notorious American Islamic leader Ali Al-Tamimi, who would later be convicted for supporting and encouraging *jihad*.²³

Separate from IANA, a new generation of Salafi clerics and activists grew out of the Nation of Islam and Warith Deen Muhammad organizations. Some – including prominent clerics such as Siraj Wahhaj – were enticed to study in Saudi Arabia; others were entranced by new charismatic leaders such as Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin (formerly known as H. Rap Brown), along with movements such as Darul Islam.²⁴ Some of these new clerics and movements fused activist Salafi ideas with various elements of black nationalism and consciousness.

While activist Salafis shared goals with political Islamist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, the alliance was not fruitful because of religious dogma and competition among adherents. Different Islamist ideas competed for relevance in prominent East Coast institutions such as Dar ul Hijrah in Virginia (whose *imams* later included Anwar Al-Awlaki, who went on to lead Al Qaeda in Yemen).²⁵ Umar Lee recounts that “the ‘Ikhwanis’ [Muslim Brotherhood] and Salafis fought in the area like the Bloods and Crips.”²⁶

Quietists Salafis now have little influence and few supporters.²⁷ A new modernist Salafi network was subsequently born, leading to an enormous collection of different clerical and activist organizations. The most prominent Salafi groups in America today are either the original activist Salafis, who continue to mostly reject collaboration with political Islamist movements; and a new generation of modernist Salafis, who support an “intersectional” political Islam that has produced alliances with other movements.

Modernists

Modernist Salafis, best known by organizations such as the Al-Maghrib Institute, no longer fight the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood or JI. Modernists have partly embraced the Muslim Brotherhood with modish mainstream political trends, cementing alliances with leading Brotherhood community organizations. Clerics such as Yasir Qadhi and Omar Suleiman regularly partner with leading Muslim organizations such as CAIR, MAS and Islamic Relief. They have also embraced the idea of mixing old world Salafism with some elements of new world progressivism, mingling sermons about the ostensible evils of homosexuality and feminism with praise of the Black Lives Matter movement and protests against the Trump administration’s immigration policies.²⁸ MAS-ICNA and ICNA-MAS, two annual conferences organized by American Muslim Brotherhood and JI activists, rely heavily on modernist Salafi clerics to fill its speaker rosters.²⁹

Quietists and activists share concerns over the purported dilution of Salafism – and of Islam – by the modernists. Some clerics preach that “Islam in the West is a resistance movement against totalitarian liberal ideology,” and have looked at the activities of modernist Salafis with alarm.³⁰ Activist and quietist Salafis accuse the modernists of trying to “westernise Islam” by appealing to progressive impressions of Islam.³¹

Modernist Salafis have been remarkably successful, earning the trust of other politically-savvy Islamist movements. They have established seminaries, schools, mosques, lobby groups, and even think tanks to feed their growing presence.³² Previously subservient to the agendas of Muslim Brotherhood and JI community organizations, modernists now represent a distinct, media-savvy, politically-astute movement.

Jihadists

There are a number of small U.S.-based formal and informal Salafi groups and networks that support violent *jihad*, but do not necessarily engage in violence themselves. Most of their activities consist of provocative public statements and demonstrations.

Following the June 2017 London Bridge terror attack, Western media briefly turned their attention to an American cleric. The BBC reported that one attacker was radicalized by Ahmed Musa Jibril, a prominent Salafi preacher in Michigan.³³ Jibril has reportedly been a source of inspiration for a number of other Western terrorist operatives. But since his exclusion from several mosques in Michigan, Jibril and his network of supporters have primarily operated online. His YouTube videos and social media accounts attract tens of thousands of supporters from around the world.³⁴ One study found that 60 percent of foreign fighters in Syria at that time followed Jibril on Twitter.³⁵

There have been other attempts to form Salafi-*jihadist* networks that skirt the line between ideological support for *jihad* and direct incitement to violence. Revolution Muslim [RM] was a New York-based *jihadist*-activist group that grew out of al-Muhajiroun, a prominent British Salafi *jihadist* movement.³⁶ Founded in 2007 “to invite people to proper Islam... and command the good... while forbidding the falsehood,” RM’s mission “is to one day see the Muslims united under one Khalifah [caliph] and under the commands of Allah.”³⁷ RM maintained an active blog and website, which served as a forum for a dissemination of its views and support for violence. In April 2014, Revolution Muslim co-founder Yousef al-Khattab was sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison for advocating violence against the Chabad Jewish organization’s headquarters in Brooklyn.³⁸

Deobandis

Adherents of Deobandi Islam follow the Hanafi *maddhab* [school of jurisprudence], and most are of South Asian ethnicity. In a similar vein to Salafi networks in America, Deobandi Muslims in America are split over whether followers should embrace civil society or isolate oneself from it. Broadly, most American Deobandis can be found in three camps: conservatives, modernists and Tablighi Jamaat (TJ).

Conservatives

Conservative Deobandis primarily operate through mosques and seminaries. Darul Uloom Al-Madania in Buffalo and the Institute of Islamic Education in Chicago operate the two longest running and largest Deobandi madrassas in the United States, wherein “strict gender segregation is a norm ... as is a general pattern of social isolation from the broader American society.”³⁹

While some conservative Deobandis eschew political participation, condemn music and dancing, and avoid proselytization efforts outside their own communities, not all isolate themselves from American society.⁴⁰ An increasing number of conservative Deobandis can be found involved with interfaith activities, establishing television channels, participate in political Islamist organizations linked to the Muslim Brotherhood and JI.⁴¹

Even forward-facing Deobandi institutions, however, maintain ties with hardline Pakistani *madrassahs* and clerics, and have had a number of congregants turn to terrorism. Adnan Shukrijumah, a former prayer leader at the Darul Uloom Institute in Florida, for instance, became one of Al Qaeda’s highest-ranking officials.⁴² Other congregants of the Darul Uloom Institute have included: Jose Padilla, who plotted to detonate a radioactive bomb in the continental United States, as well as Imran Mandhai and Shueyb Mossa Jokhan, who used the Darul Uloom Institute to plot a bombing campaign.⁴³ While the *imam* of the Institute, Shafayat Mohamed, has been praised by the media as a moderate – citing his interfaith dialogue efforts – in 2005 he wrote an article attacking Jews and claiming the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami was punishment for homosexuality.⁴⁴ Other institutions with terrorist congregants and students have included Dar Al Uloom Al Islamiyah, where the San Bernardino shooters prayed and married; and the Flagler Mosque in Miami, whose *imam*, Hafiz Khan, was convicted in 2013 of funding the Taliban.⁴⁵

A number of conservative Deobandis in the United States are involved with *Khatme Nubuwwat* (Finality of the Prophecy), an international movement headquartered in Pakistan that encourages violence against Ahmadiyyah Muslims, whom many Islamic movements consider heretical. *Khatme Nubuwwat* refers to the tenet held by most Islamic sects that there can be no prophet after Muhammad. Most Ahmadi Muslims, however, believe there was in fact another prophet. This belief, Canadian *imam* Usman Ahsan claims, is “enough to wage war” against them.⁴⁶ *Khatme Nubuwwat* offers a rare example of collaboration between Barelvi and Deobandi Muslims. In the United States, the *Khatme Nubuwwat* movement is run predominantly by Deobandi clerics. In 2017, conservative Deobandi clerics from across America gathered in Virginia for a *Khatme Nubuwwat* conference, which was sponsored by several American Deobandi mosques.⁴⁷

Missionaries

Conservative Deobandis have a lot in common with Tablighi Jamaat, a missionary movement linked to dozens of terror plots. TJ is active along the East Coast of the U.S., as well as in Houston, Los Angeles and San Francisco.⁴⁸ Its most prominent hub is the Al Falah Mosque in Corona, NY, which openly acknowledges its affiliation with TJ.⁴⁹ A 2009 document seemingly authored by the New York Police Department states that dozens of the mosque’s congregants and visitors have been linked to jihadist operatives and terror plots, and claims that several congregants are members of Sipah-e-Sahaba, a designated Pakistani Deobandi terrorist organization.⁵⁰

Modernists

Modernist Deobandis work closely with Muslim Brotherhood and JI, and partner closely with modernist Salafis. The most prominent example of a modernist Deobandi institution is the Qalam Institute. Founded in 2009, the Qalam Institute established a full-time seminary in 2013. Its two leading officials, Hussain

Kamani and Abdul Nasir Jangda, were both trained at traditional Deobandi seminaries: Kamani studied at Darul Uloom Bury, a U.K. seminary which British newspapers have reported “preaches contempt for non-Muslims and warns of the ‘repulsive qualities’ of Christian and Jewish women”; while Jangda studied at Jamia Binoria in Karachi, which Pakistani officials have linked to terror groups.⁵¹

Both Jangda and Kamani are regular speakers at conferences organized by ICNA, the MAS and prominent mosques such as the Islamic Society of Boston.⁵² Qalam Institute officials rely heavily on social media platforms and have amassed hundreds of thousands of followers. Clerics like Jangda take a more liberal approach to the question of watching movies or listening to music, which conservative Deobandi clerics generally teach is forbidden.⁵³ Despite these flashes of liberalism, Qalam officials have expressed support for female sex slavery, encouraged the killing of adulterers, expressed virulent anti-Semitism, and excused violent misogyny.⁵⁴

Shi'a Islamism

Iranian Regime Network

An important component of the Iranian regime network in the United States is the Alavi Foundation. Established as the Pahlavi Foundation in 1958, it was seized by the new Islamic regime following the 1979 revolution and renamed the Alavi Foundation in 1992. Since the early 1980s, the Alavi Foundation has built and funded a number of prominent Shi'a centers, including the Islamic Education Center in Houston, the Islamic Education Center in New York, the Islamic Education Center in Maryland and the Qoba Foundation in California. All four institutions openly advocate for the Iranian regime and commemorate Ayatollah Khomeini.⁵⁵ The Alavi Foundation has also given financial donations to other Khomeinist Shiite institutions across North America.⁵⁶ In 2017, a federal jury found the Alavi Foundation guilty of funding the Iranian regime's activities.⁵⁷

There have also been several attempts by American Shi'a to establish counterpart organizations to national Sunni groups like CAIR, ISNA and ICNA. In 2005, the Islamic Education Center of Houston founded the Muslim Congress, a hardline alternative to the Sistani-leaning Universal Muslim Association of America, which, as reported by the Associated Press, openly promotes a virulent anti-Semitic and pro-Tehran narrative.⁵⁸ The Muslim Congress does not hide its Islamist links: the group organizes marches for Al Quds Day, its annual events feature hardline pro-regime Shiite clerics, and its website distributes the writings of Ayatollah Khamenei.⁵⁹

Several organizations active in the U.S. lobby and campaign in support of the Iranian regime and against sanctions and U.S. military action. These groups include:

- The National Iranian American Council (NIAC), which partners closely with the Iranian regime, and is referred as the U.S. “Iranian lobby” by regime media.⁶⁰
- The Campaign Against Sanctions & Military Intervention in Iran (CASMI), whose members and board comprise leading regime supporters and officials.⁶¹
- The American Iranian Council, whose officials have reportedly referred to the organization as an Iranian regime lobbying group. Its staffers have included NIAC founder Trita Parsi.⁶²

With the exception of the institutions listed above, however, most of the Iranian regime's network operates through local religious organizations. This contrasts with Sunni Islamism in America, which initially sought to establish far-reaching national organizations and umbrella groups. The Islamic Institute of New York, for example, reportedly serves as Ayatollah Khamenei's liaison office in the United States, and regularly hosts events with Iranian regime officials.⁶³ Moreover, Khomeinism is preached openly in a number of mosques in Dearborn, Michigan. The Islamic House of Wisdom, for example, was founded

in 1995 by prominent Iranian regime supporter Ali Elahi.⁶⁴ According to a report published by the U.S. Institute of Peace, Elahi first came to the United States to “inspect American branches of [Hezbollah] and to reinforce Tehran’s influence on Shi’ite communities.”⁶⁵ Elahi is also a member of the Ahlulbayt World Assembly (a globally important institution for the regime), speaking at its general assembly in Tehran in 2015.⁶⁶

Hezbollah

The violent enmities of Lebanese politics have also long affected Lebanese American Twelver communities. In Dearborn, Michigan, for example, “it is commonly said that the [Islamic Center of America] is more sympathetic to the Harakaat Amal of Lebanon; [while] the institute generally is seen as being closely aligned with the [Hezbollah] movement.”⁶⁷ The Islamic Institute’s founder and *imam*, Abdul Latif Berry, studied under Ayatollah Fadlallah – Lebanon’s late leading Shiite cleric, frequently referred to as Hezbollah’s “spiritual advisor.”⁶⁸ In 1995, the Treasury Department designated Fadlallah as a terrorist, referring to him as a “leading ideological figure” of Hezbollah.⁶⁹ Mosques and other institutions that support Hezbollah in America tend to be aligned with two *maraji*: Iran’s Supreme Leader and Ayatollah Fadlallah.

While there have a few examples of violent Shiite Islamist plots in North America, including a 2011 effort to assassinate the Saudi ambassador, Hezbollah’s activities on the continent are mostly relegated to propaganda and fundraising.⁷⁰ Dozens of American Shiites have been indicted or convicted on charges relating to Hezbollah activity, and numerous Hezbollah cells have been involved with money laundering enterprises.⁷¹ The DEA reportedly believed that Hezbollah was amassing \$1 billion a year through drug and weapons trafficking, bank fraud, and other criminal pursuits.⁷²

ISLAM AND SOCIETY

In 2017, the Pew Research Center, in one of the more extensive polls of the topic conducted, estimated that 3.45 million people who identify as Muslim live in the United States.⁷³ Sixty-five percent of these people identify as Sunnis, 11 percent as Shi’a, and 24 percent as having no specific affiliation (describing themselves as “just a Muslim”).⁷⁴ 58 percent of Muslims in the U.S. are first generation immigrants while 42 percent are native-born. Ethnically, 41 percent of American Muslims identify as White (which includes Arab and other Middle Eastern origins), 28 percent as Asian (mostly South Asian), 20 percent as black, and 8 percent as Hispanic.⁷⁵

Surveys of American Muslim opinion remain relatively shallow because they often do not consider movements, sects, or schools of thought. Rather, they focus on broader groups like ethnicity and denomination. Unsurprisingly, then, surveys on Muslim attitudes towards society and extremism are typically inconsistent. Notwithstanding, the 2017 Pew survey found that 76 percent of American Muslims believe that political or religious violence can never be justified. Previous surveys found that 21 percent of Muslim Americans believe there is either a great deal or a fair amount of support for extremism within their community, with 48 percent saying that Muslim community leaders are not doing enough to challenge extremists.⁷⁶

There is no good estimate for the number of Islamists within American Muslim communities; however, some analysts argue that, because leading Islamist organizations do not publish membership numbers, they have little popular support.

Islamist networks have recently established their own research bodies that poll American Muslims. The Yaqeen Institute, for example, is part of the modernist Salafi network, and mixes polls of American Muslims, studies of anti-Muslim sentiment, and the efficacy of counter-extremism initiatives with analyses of Islamic theology.⁷⁷ Another group, the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) was founded in 2002 to “[empower] American Muslims to develop their community and fully contribute to democracy and pluralism in the United States.”⁷⁸ As part of its annually published “American Muslim Poll”, ISPU

concluded that, in 2018, 80 percent of Muslims believed individual attacks on civilians is never justified and 84 percent opposed a ban on visas to Muslims wishing to enter the United States. Muslim respondents stated that they believe 12 percent of other American Muslims are hostile to the United States and another 18 percent believe that they are prone to violence.⁷⁹ A 2019 “American Muslim Poll” conducted by IPSU focused on the attitudes of different religious and ethnic groups toward the American Muslim community.⁸⁰

Another ISPU report states that someone perceived to be Muslim and accused of a terror plot will receive seven and half times the media coverage as someone not perceived to be Muslim.⁸¹ However, over the last decade, perhaps as a response to claims of Islamophobia, investigative reporting of trends within American Islam has mostly disappeared. Peter Skerry notes that “Boston’s media, academic, and political elites have refused to acknowledge any concerns about, much less the existence of, ties between the [Islamic Society of Boston (ISBCC)] and the Brotherhood.” Skerry adds that despite the implication of numerous American Islamists in the 2008 Holy Land Foundation trial, groups like the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and their spokespersons continued to be treated as representatives of American Muslims: “The FBI’s rebuke of CAIR has gone largely unnoted. In fact, most major media outlets continue to seek out CAIR spokespeople for comments...without ever mentioning CAIR’s history and provenance.”⁸² However, Skerry makes it clear that while Islamist elements like the Muslim Brotherhood do exist, they ultimately do not pose an existential threat to the United States.

ISLAMISM AND THE STATE

The U.S. government has moved aggressively to disrupt homegrown terror plots; since March 2014, 177 individuals have been charged in the U.S. with offenses relating to the Islamic State.⁸³ A report released in January 2018 by the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security found that a majority of terrorists convicted of “international terrorism-related charges” in the U.S. since 2001 were foreign-born. Out of 549 convictions for international terrorism-related charges in U.S. federal courts between September 11, 2001 and December 31, 2016, approximately 402 were foreign-born.⁸⁴

The Trump administration’s *National Strategy for Counter-Terrorism* (NSCT) is closely in line with other the counterterrorism strategies of other Western governments. Alongside the usual promises to defeat terrorism using the military, law enforcement, and security services, the administration pledged to “prevent and intervene in terrorist recruitment, minimize the appeal of terrorist propaganda online, and build societal resilience to terrorism. This includes leveraging the skills and resources of civil society and non-traditional partners to diminish terrorists’ efforts to radicalize and recruit people in the United States.”⁸⁵ The NSCT explicitly names Islamist ideology as the underlying cause of Islamist violence: “To defeat radical Islamist terrorism, we must also speak out forcefully against a hateful ideology that provides the breeding ground for violence and terrorism.” Strategy architects do not elaborate further, however, and avoid mentioning lawful Islamist movements active in the United States. Nonetheless, this is a marked change from previous administrations, under which government documents deliberately avoided mentioning Islam or Islamism.

Soon after assuming office, President Trump signed an executive order which immediately barred entry of individuals into the U.S. from seven Muslim-majority nations—Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. Dubbed “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States,” the order also put a hold on the U.S. refugee program for 120 days and indefinitely barred Syrian refugees from entering the country.⁸⁶ The travel ban generated widespread controversy among the American public, resulting in President Trump issuing Executive Order 13780, which considered certain legal objections and removed Iraq from the list of targeted countries.⁸⁷ On September 24, 2017, Presidential Proclamation 9645 superseded Executive Order 13780, adding North Korea and Venezuela to the list of designated countries.⁸⁸ The Supreme Court upheld President Trump’s controversial travel ban on June 26, 2018.⁸⁹

The “Muslim Ban,” as it is popularly known, remains controversial among both secular and Islamist organizations.⁹⁰

Under the Obama administration, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) had set up the Terrorism Prevention Partnerships (TPP) “to address the root causes of violent extremism by providing resources to communities to build and sustain local prevention efforts and promote the use of counter-narratives to confront violent extremist messaging online.”⁹¹ Part of TPP included a Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) program to “build prevention programs that address the root causes of violent extremism and deter individuals who may already be radicalizing to violence.”⁹² Despite widespread criticism of CVE pilot programs, Congress approved \$10 million for CVE grants to “community partners” in 2016. Since then, however, these grants have been either cancelled or returned under the Trump administration.⁹³

Meanwhile, in Congress in 2018, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform opened an investigation into the 2014 decision of Obama administration to give \$115,000 to the Islamic Relief Agency, which the U.S. government had designated as a terrorist organization in 2004.⁹⁴ Also in 2018, members of Congress wrote to federal agencies demanding more information on an alleged investigation by the FBI, IRS and Office for Personnel Management into Islamic Relief’s activities.⁹⁵

The federal government continues to give millions to Islamic organizations controlled, or linked, to radical Islamist movements. ICNA, for instance, received over \$10 million for disaster relief work in 2016 and 2018. Among many other examples, branches of CAIR and the MAS collectively received over \$310,000; \$31,000 was handed to the Islamic Center of Passaic County, whose *imam*, Mohammad Qatanani, is accused by federal agencies of coordinating with Hamas.⁹⁶

The distribution of federal funds continued in October 2019 when President Trump granted an additional \$100,000 to CAIR as “the product of the DHS’s Nonprofit Security Grant Program.” MAS also received \$57,000 in federally allocated funds. In 2019, it was discovered that these funds contribute to the grand total of “over \$41 million of federal grants... since 2007.”⁹⁷

ENDNOTES

1. That is not to say that adherents of groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood never commit violent acts, and, internationally, it has certainly produced violent offshoots, such as the designated terrorist organization Hamas. Non-violent Islamism is also referred to in the West as lawful Islamism.
2. “Muslim Student Association,” Investigative Project on Terrorism, n.d., <http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/misc/84.pdf>
3. “Attachment A,” *United States of America vs. Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development et al.*, No. 3:04-CR-240-. G, United States District Court for the Northern Division of Texas, Dallas Division.
4. See, for example: Esam Omeish, “MAS President Letter to the Washington Post,” Muslim American Society Website, September 16, 2004, http://www.unitedstatesaction.com/documents/omeish/www-masnet-org_pressroom_release-asp_nycmexs4.pdf
5. “Exhibit 0003918-0003919,” (Letter from “The Political Office” re: the founding of the Islamic Association for Palestine by “the Group”), *U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation et al.*, 5.
6. Zeid al-Noman, as quoted in “Elbarasse Search 2,” *U.S. v. Holy Land Foundation et al.*
7. *Islamic Relief: Charity, Extremism & Terror*, Middle East Forum, July 2018.
8. Ibid.
9. Nadeem F. Paracha, “Abdul Ala Maududi: An existentialist history,” *Dawn*, January 1, 2015, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1154419>.
10. Paulo Casaca, “Maududi: The founder of modern Jihadism,” *New Delhi Times*, March 3, 2017, <http://www.newdelhitimes.com/maududi-the-founder-of-modern-jihadism123/>,

11. Zaheer Uddin, "ICNA: A Successful Journey and a Promising Road Ahead." *The Message International* 23, no. 8 (1999), 24.
12. "The Charter And By-Laws," Islamic Circle of North America, n.d., https://web.archive.org/web/20101227052638/http://www.icnasisterswing.com/charterbylawfiles/ICNA_CBL.pdf.
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15. "Member's Hand Book," *Islamic Circle of North America*, n.d., 9-10, <https://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/misc/475.pdf>.
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