

GUIDE TO WAHHABI ORGANIZATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA

Center for Policing Terrorism

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I. HISTORY OF THE WAHHABI MOVEMENT

The contemporary Wahhabi movement is the modern outgrowth of a 250-year-old schism within Islam that was sparked by a radical evangelist named Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792). Ibn Abdul Wahhab believed that Islam had been corrupted by countless errors and innovations, which he set out to purge with puritanical zeal.¹ He and his followers denounced intellectualism, mysticism and traditional Islamic spirituality. They declared most of the Islamic scholars, thinkers and clerics that preceded them heretics and rejected the classical schools of Islamic jurisprudence that were the guarantors of moderation in traditional Muslim society. This is significant because it allowed the Wahhabis to interpret Islam according to their own whims – accepting those elements that supported their aims and ambitions, and rejecting whatever stood in their way. Anyone who failed to embrace Ibn Abdul Wahhab’s new doctrine was declared an “unbeliever.” Along with Jews, Christians and people of other faiths, they were declared “enemies of Islam” and became the target of a vicious crusade aimed at “purifying the faith.” Ibn Abdul Wahhab believed that Islam could be reformed through violence. By opening the entire faith to reinterpretation, he was able to provide a theological justification for this call to arms.²

Contemporary Muslim jurists immediately branded Ibn Abdul Wahhab and his followers heretics. The group was outlawed. Ibn Abdul Wahhab’s father – a respected, mainstream Muslim scholar – denounced him, and his own brother wrote a book refuting his doctrine.³ But Ibn Abdul Wahhab soon found other allies. In 1744, he forged an alliance Muhammad ibn Saud, a powerful tribal chief in what is now Saudi Arabia. It was a “merger of religious legitimacy and military might”⁴ that helped both men realize their dreams of power. Together, they launched a bloody rebellion against the Ottoman Empire, then the central authority in the Islamic world. The initial revolt ultimately failed, but the alliance between the two families continued. As the twentieth century dawned, the Wahhabis, still led by the descendents of Ibn Abdul Wahhab⁵ and the al-Saud family, launched a new insurrection against Ottoman rule. With British backing, they ultimately won control of the region now known as

¹ Talip Küçükcan, “Some Reflections on the WahhABIyah Movement,” *Hamdard Islamicus*, 18, no. 2 (1995).

² Ibid.

³ Sulayman ibn Abdul Wahhab al-Najdi, *Divine Lightning in Refuting the Wahhabis*, ed. Ibrahim Muhammad al-Batawi (Cairo: Dar al-Insan, 1987).

⁴ Gwenn Okruhlik, “Understanding Political Dissent in Saudi Arabia,” *Middle East Research and Information Project Press Information Note*, 73 (October 24, 2001).

⁵ They are today known as the Al-Sheikhs, or “Family of the Sheikh.”

Saudi Arabia, establishing theocratic monarchy there that persists to this day – a nation that has used its vast oil wealth to export this extremist ideology around the globe.⁶

As the traditional institutions of Islam collapsed with the last Islamic empire, a dangerous void was created that the Wahhabis quickly moved to fill.⁷ Donning the mantle of Salafism, the modern Wahhabis were soon transforming their radical religious reform movement into a powerful political force.⁸ Having rejected classical Islamic jurisprudence, most of the traditional institutions of authority in Islamic society and most of Muslim history, they began building a new socio-political paradigm – one that drew heavily on modernist notions of nationalism and Marxist conceptions of class struggle and world revolution.

The flexibility inherent in Salafism's rejection of traditional Islam made it easy for these would-be rebels to formulate a religious pretext for their anti-imperialist aspirations. Salafism also allowed revolutionaries to overcome traditional Islamic prohibitions against civil insurrection. While Islamic law categorically forbids uprisings against Muslim rulers, the Wahhabi doctrine allowed Salafi "scholars" to declare the leaders of countries like Egypt and Algeria "unbelievers," thereby providing a religious pretext for popular revolt against them. This has led to Salafi-inspired opposition movements or outright insurrections in Algeria, Yemen, Libya, Jordan, Syria, Egypt and elsewhere. It has also led to something of a split in the movement, with some Salafi leaders urging immediate rebellion and others calling for a more evolutionary approach to societal change.⁹

Contemporary Salafism has spawned a dizzying array of political groups and revolutionary organizations. It provides the theological justification for terrorist armies such as **HAMAS**, with its legions of suicide bombers, and **Algeria's Armed Islamic Movement**, which has a penchant for wiping out whole villages with machetes. At the same time, Salafism is the motive force behind groups like **Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front**, which tried to take power through polls, and the **Jamaat-e-Islami**, one of the most powerful popular political forces in Pakistan. While these groups may use different methods and tactics, they share a common aim: They want to establish an Islamic theocracy based on their own narrow, puritanical interpretation of the Muslim faith.

The Salafis are responsible for many of the negative practices commonly associated with contemporary Islam, such as the administration of severe punishments for violations of religious law and the oppression of women.¹⁰ They are also responsible for the terrorist violence that has so regrettably become associated with Islam in the modern world. While classical Islam rejects the tactics of terror, the Salafis still believe violence is an acceptable means for reforming religion, society and the world as a whole.¹¹ Indeed, while the majority of classical Muslim scholars ruled

⁶ Stephen Schwartz, "Wahhabis in America: A Saudi Export We Can Do Without," *Weekly Standard* 7, no. 8 (5 November 2001).

⁷ Küçükcan, op. cit.

⁸ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man*, rev. ed. (Chicago: ABC International Group Inc., 2001), 134.

⁹ Quintan Wiktorowicz, "The New Global Threat: Transnational Salafis and Jihad," *Middle East Policy* 8, no. 4 (December 2001): 22.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Warnock Fernea, *In Search of Islamic Feminism* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 336.

¹¹ Schwartz, op. cit.

that waging *jihad* against non-Muslims was only justified if they posed a direct threat to Muslims, the Salafis view war against the West as a religious obligation.¹²

II. THE WAHHABI STRATEGY IN NORTH AMERICA

The tactics used by Salafis in America are the same ones employed throughout the world, in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries. They rely on the creation of a series of organizations and institutions, each with its own unique role, controlled by a complicated web of interlocking directorates. Some of the groups are fronts for illegal or subversive activities, while others conduct legal and legitimate operations. Most of the time, many of the officers and employees of the organizations are unaware of the nefarious dealings among the inner core of leaders. Their strategy is similar to that used by the Communists to organize dissent and win control of trade unions and peace movements. In this case, however, the targets are mosques, religious schools and Islamic centers.

Their approach is focused and well organized, using many apparently distinct entities to launch a concerted, multi-pronged attack against the traditional practice of Islam. One set of organizations focus on Islamic educational institutions, attempting to replace classical Islamic scholarship with a program of indoctrination promoting the Wahhabi ideology. Another targets the Muslim community as a whole, establishing umbrella organizations that claim to speak for all Muslims and seek to control the institutions of their faith. These groups control what is, and is not, preached from the pulpit and represent Islam to the broader society, attempting to deflect suspicion and influence the political processes of the country in support of the Wahhabi agenda. To the untrained observer, some of the Islamists appear like well-adapted “Westerners,” but underneath the surface, they are loyal to the revolutionary doctrines of politicized Islam. A third group, composed of charities and shell companies, is set up to manage the movement’s finances and raise money to support its extremist agenda overseas. The whole process is designed to create a rapid ideological change, one that effects entire communities and, in some cases, whole societies. It represents nothing less than the politicization of religion itself, changing the way people think, the way they see the world and the way they interact with it.

This complex edifice is funded and supported by the vast oil wealth of Saudi Arabia. At its center are two organizations that coordinate and direct much of the work of the global Wahhabi movement: the Muslim World League (MWL), also known as Rabita, and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, or WAMY. Both are based in Saudi Arabia, where they enjoy quasi-official status and strong governmental support.

III. PRINCIPLE WAHHABI ORGANIZATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA

The following organizations represent the principal groups devoted to spreading the extremist ideology of Wahhabism in the United States and Canada. A distinction must be made

¹² Wiktorowicz, op. cit., 22-23.

between these organizations – which function primarily within the mainstream socio-political space and are chiefly concerned with influencing policy and promoting the Wahhabi ideology – and terrorist organizations that operate underground and are primarily concerned with carrying out paramilitary attacks. However, many of these groups are actively engaged in raising funds for terrorist organizations, and they are all engaged in spreading the doctrine of Wahhabism, which provides the ideological impetus for all of the major Islamist terror groups.

1. THE MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE (MWL)

A.K.A.: Rabita

This group was founded in 1962 in Saudi Arabia and is the most important and influential Wahhabi organization in the world, effectively serving as the ideological headquarters for Islamic extremists worldwide. The MWL conducts its work through branch offices and affiliate organizations established in countries all over the world, including the United States. Many of those groups have direct links to the al-Qaeda terrorist network and other terrorist organizations. In fact, the US Treasury Department has already frozen the assets of several League affiliates. The League's North American headquarters is located in Herndon, Virginia where it was among the offices targeted by the Treasury Department's Operation Green Quest raids in March 2002. Together with its sister organization, WAMY, the MWL represents one of the primary vehicles through which the international Wahhabi movement exerts control over Islam in America.

2. THE WORLD ASSEMBLY OF MUSLIM YOUTH (WAMY)

As its name implies, Saudi-based WAMY is the youth arm of the transnational extremist movement, and it has played an important role in establishing and maintaining Wahhabi-oriented youth groups around the world. It boasts offices in 34 countries and has created some 450 affiliated organizations. The FBI identified WAMY as "a suspected terrorist organization" as early as 1996, though it never moved against the group.¹³ The group maintains offices in North America, where it helps coordinate the work of domestic groups like the MSA.

3. THE MUSLIM STUDENT ASSOCIATION (MSA)

The first national Islamic organization in the United States, the Muslim Student Association, was established in 1963 by young Muslim activists drawn largely from the ranks of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Jamaat-e-Islami and the followers of the Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini. Like the organizations that inspired it, most of the MSA's funding came from Saudi Arabia. Backed by Saudi petrodollars, the MSA began distributing Wahhabi literature and established local chapters at colleges and universities throughout North America. Today, the MSA has become more decentralized. Not all of its local leaders are aware of the group's extremist agenda, but that platform is still aggressively promoted through literature, conferences and Internet sites.

¹³ Greg Palast and David Pallister, "FBI and US Spy Agents Say Bush Spiked Bin Laden Probes Before 11 September," London Guardian, 7 November 2001.

4. THE ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA (ISNA)

ISNA was established in 1981 by leaders of the MSA, acting under the direction of the Wahhabi-run International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations. Like its predecessor, ISNA was provided with considerable resources – both financial and material – to pursue its mission of spreading the Wahhabi doctrine in North America. Today, it is the heart of the Wahhabi network in the United States and Canada. Its officers, board members and associates fill most of the important leadership positions in the American Muslim community, operating a cadre of educational institutions, political groups, religious organizations, mosques, charities and trusts. Indeed, no other organization has done more to further the Wahhabi agenda in the region than ISNA. Acting under the pretext of “Islamic unity,” ISNA aims to create “a unified platform of expression for Islam” in North America¹⁴ – one based solely on the extremist ideology of Wahhabism. While the group has been careful to conceal its ties to overtly terrorist organizations, its conferences have been used as recruiting events for militants and some of its leaders – like the group’s vice president, Siraj Wahhaj – have been tied to terrorist attacks against targets in the United States¹⁵

5. THE NORTH AMERICAN ISLAMIC TRUST (NAIT)

Originally founded by the MSA, NAIT is now operated jointly by the MSA and ISNA. The stated purpose of the Trust is to “provide protection for the assets of ISNA/MSA and other communities.”¹⁶ NAIT was the main mechanism used by the MSA and ISNA to win control of America’s mosques and Islamic centers. Armed with millions in Saudi petrodollars, NAIT financed the construction of new Islamic institutions and bought control of existing ones.

6. THE ISLAMIC CIRCLE OF NORTH AMERICA (ICNA)

Founded in 1971, this umbrella organization’s members are primarily immigrants from the Indian Subcontinent. In essence, ICNA is the North American arm of the **Jamaat-e-Islami** organization, the South Asian Wahhabi group that takes its inspiration from the teachings of the militant revolutionary leader Mawlana Mawdudi. Though lacking ISNA’s resources, it too has done much to spread Wahhabi teachings to North American mosques and Muslim community centers.

7. THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ISLAMIC THOUGHT (IIIT)

¹⁴ ISNA – *Official Web Site of the Islamic Society of North America*, Islamic Society of North America, 2002. <<http://www.isna.net>>.

¹⁵ *United States v. Omar Ahmad Ali Abdel Rahman, et al.*, (S5) 93 Cr. 181 (MBM) (1995).

¹⁶ *The North American Islamic Trust – NAIT*, North American Islamic Trust, 1999 <<http://www.nait.net/nait.html>>.

The IIIT was established in late 1980 by leaders of ISNA¹⁷ and WAMY.¹⁸ Over the next two decades, IIIT leaders erected a complex network of front organizations, trusts and charities, shell companies and private businesses that would ultimately be used to finance the Wahhabi movement in the United States and to control the education of Muslim clerics in North America. The group also carried out the Wahhabi movement's biggest coup in America, becoming the U.S. Government's primary certifying agency for Muslim chaplains in the military and federal prison system. On March 20, 2002, federal agents raided the headquarters of IIIT and several of the organizations and businesses connected to it, as well as the homes of many of its leaders. According to the Treasury Department, the agency that led the operation, all are suspected of laundering money for al-Qaeda and other international terrorist organizations.¹⁹

8. THE COUNCIL ON AMERICAN-ISLAMIC RELATIONS (CAIR), THE ISLAMIC ASSOCIATION FOR PALESTINE (IAP) AND THE HOLY LAND FOUNDATION (HLF)

These three organizations were established by HAMAS operatives in the United States in the early 1990s. Each group was tasked with a different objective in furtherance of their common aim of building support for the Palestinian cause in North America. HLF was assigned the task of raising money for the Palestinian movement, channeling those funds to HAMAS-led charities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as to the terrorist organization itself. The IAP was set up to build support for the Palestinians in general and HAMAS in particular amongst North American Muslims. To CAIR fell the most important and challenging assignment –propagandizing the non-Muslim population of the United States and Canada on behalf of the Palestinian cause and other Islamist campaigns around the globe. CAIR was so successful that it grew to become the leading civil rights organization for Muslim-Americans, but it has retained its ties to HAMAS even while moving into the Muslim mainstream.

9. TABLIGI JAMAAT (“Missionary Party,” TJ)

A.K.A.: Nizam, Tanzim, Tehrik-I-Iman

Founded in 1926 in India, the TJ is a proselytizing organization that recruits young Muslims to travel in groups around the country on revival missions to Muslim communities. Though not overtly political, the TJ does emphasize elements of Wahhabi doctrine and members of the group often move from the TJ to more openly extremist organizations. As such, it has become something of a gateway for recruiting young cadres for extremist organizations.

¹⁷ “Application for a Certificate of Authority to Transact Business in Virginia,” filed with the Commonwealth of Virginia, State Corporation Commission, by the International Institute of Islamic Thought, June 1985.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Judith Miller, “The Money Trail: Raids Seek Evidence of Money-Laundering,” New York Times, 21 March 2002.

IV. TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA

The following organizations are the Islamist terror groups that pose the most immediate and credible threat to the domestic security of the United States and Canada. All of these organizations are active internationally. The numeric threat assessment (between 1 and 10) assigned to each group represents is the threat posed by that organization in North America.

1. AL-QAEDA (“The Base”)

A.K.A.: The World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders, Islamic Army for the Liberation of the Holy Places

Threat Level: 10

This umbrella terrorist organization was established by self-proclaimed Wahhabi leader Usama bin Laden in the late 1980s. Originally made up of veterans of the Afghan war against the Soviet Union, Al-Qaeda has evolved into a global terrorist network coordinating the work of extremist organizations and individuals around the world. Al-Qaeda aims at nothing less than inciting a world war between Muslims and the West, a war it believes will lead to the establishment of a global Islamist state in which Wahhabism will be the only accepted faith. In 1998, the group issued a religious edict declaring that it was the duty of all Muslims to kill U.S. citizens and their allies everywhere. Most infamous for plotting the September 11 attacks against New York and Washington, al-Qaeda was also behind the 2000 attack on the USS *Cole* in the port of Aden, Yemen, the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and other terrorist attacks against U.S. interests around the world. Al-Qaeda is also playing a role in armed resistance to the U.S. occupation forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Though arrests and assassinations have decimated its leadership cadre and thwarted a number of planned terrorist operations, al-Qaeda is still believed to be plotting future attacks against targets in North America.

2. HIZB UT-TAHRIR (HT)

A.K.A. Hizb-ut-Tahrir al-Islami.

Threat Level: 5

Claiming to represent the “proletarians of Islam,” Hizb-ut-Tahrir was founded in Jerusalem in 1953 with the goal of uniting all Islamic countries under the Islamist banner. Though essentially a Wahhabi organization and adhering to that doctrine in its philosophy and tactics, HT nonetheless actively recruits members from more traditional Muslims groups, claiming to accept all sects and divisions within Islam. Because of this more subtle approach, it has spread around the world by appealing to young, disenfranchised Muslims with a platform that combines local issues with an overarching call for Islamist revolution. HT’s activities vary widely from country to country. In European nations like Great Britain, it has been limited to incendiary rhetoric. In the former-Soviet republics of Central Asia, however, its members have taken up arms

against their own governments. Though it has a limited presence in North America, HT's rhetoric has become increasingly threatening towards the United States and its allies.

3. JEMAAH ISLAMIYA ("Islamic Party," JI)

Threat Level: 3

A Southeast Asian terrorist organization with links to al-Qaeda, the JI is the group responsible for the Bali bombings in 2002. It is also believed to have been behind a foiled plot to destroy the U.S. embassy and other diplomatic targets in Singapore in 2001, and it has been linked to other terrorist attacks in the Philippines and Indonesia. The group's aim is the creation of single Wahhabi state uniting the Muslims of Southeast Asia and the Pacific. While not operating in North America, its ties with al-Qaeda mean that JI agents could play a role in future terrorist attacks here.

4. HAMAS (Arabic acronym for "Islamic Resistance Movement")

Threat Level: 5

HAMAS was created in 1987 as a spin-off from the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. HAMAS is at once a political and a terrorist organization, fielding candidates in Palestinian elections, running a variety of social programs on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and carrying out suicide-bomb attacks against Israeli military and civilian targets. While some of these attacks have killed U.S. citizens, HAMAS has – to date – maintained a strict policy of targeting only Israeli targets in Israel and the Occupied Territories. However, the group maintains an extensive fundraising and propaganda network inside the United States and Canada. If HAMAS ever decides to broaden its war to include Israel's allies, these front groups and individuals could pose a serious threat to domestic security. The group's growing ties to al-Qaeda make this an increasingly real possibility.

5. ISLAMIC JIHAD (IJ)

A.K.A.: Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Jihad Group,

Threat Level: 9

This Egyptian terrorist organization is another spin-off from the Muslim Brotherhood. Active since the late 1970s, it recently merged with the al-Qaeda network. Though it originally aimed at inciting a Wahhabi revolution in Egypt, this reorientation has shifted its focus to international operations. The IJ was responsible for the attack that killed Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981. It has not carried out an attack in Egypt since 1993. Instead, it has taken its fight abroad. It was behind a thwarted attack on the U.S. embassy in Albania in 1998.

6. HEZBOLLAH ("Party of God")

A.K.A.: Islamic Jihad, Revolutionary Justice Organization, Organization of the Oppressed on Earth, and Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine.

Threat Level: 7

Hezbollah is a radical Shi'a group formed in 1982 after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Based in that war-torn country, the group receives much of its inspiration and support from Iran and seeks to create an Islamic state in Lebanon and Palestine modeled along Iranian lines. However, it also received support and direction from Syria. While fielding an irregular army and engaging in terrorist attacks, Hezbollah is also a major player in what passes for Lebanon's mainstream political system. Extremely anti-American in its rhetoric, Hezbollah was responsible for the 1983 attack on the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, as well as a subsequent attack on the U.S. embassy in there in 1984. The group was also responsible for the 1985 hijacking of TWA Flight 847, during which an American sailor was murdered, as well as the kidnappings of a number of Westerners in Lebanon in the 1980s. In the 1990s, the group expanded its operations to the Americas, carrying out terrorist attacks against Israeli targets in South America. It is known to have cells operating in North America at this time.

7. IKHWAN AL-MUSLIMIN ("Muslim Brotherhood")

A.K.A.: Ikwan, the Muslim Brothers, the Brotherhood.

Threat Level: 5

A radical revolutionary movement founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, a poor elementary school teacher and advocate for the resurgent Wahhabi school of Islamic thought. Al-Banna was at once fascinated and repelled by the modernization of Egyptian society. As a result, he began formulating a new ideological approach that rejected Westernization while at the same time embracing a new, modernist vision of Islam itself. As it developed, the Brotherhood became increasingly political in its orientation, portraying itself as the voice of the disenfranchised masses. After Al-Banna was killed in 1949, the movement found a new leader in Sayyid Qutb – an American-educated intellectual. He became the Brotherhood's chief ideologue and transformed the already radical movement into a militant revolutionary force. The Muslim Brotherhood became the standard-bearers of the so-called Salafi movement and a primary propagator of this new iteration of the extremist Wahhabi ideology. The Brotherhood has also spawned a number of other violent organizations including HAMAS in Palestine and al-Jihad in Egypt. It now boasts a presence in more than 70 countries and has established a variety of front organizations to facilitate its legal activities in the Middle East, as well as in Europe and North America.

8. AL-GAMA'A AL-ISLAMIYYA ("The Islamic Group," IG)

Threat Level: 9

The most powerful of Egypt's militant organizations, the IG was founded in the 1970s. While most of its terrorist activities have been confined to Egypt, it has also attacked Americans and America itself. The group's spiritual leader is Shaykh Umar Abd al-Rahman, who was sentenced to life in prison in January 1996 for his involvement in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing plot. Because of their leader's arrest and subsequent

incarceration in the United States, the IG has become increasingly anti-American in its focus. In fact, the group is not believed to have carried out any actions within Egypt since August 1998. Several of IG's senior leaders signed Usama Bin Ladin's fatwa in February 1998 calling for attacks against the United States. The group is now split into two factions, one of which has renounced violence as a means to winning political power and which has returned to an Egyptian focus, the other of which is still advocates a terror war against the West, though still claiming Egypt revolution as main goal. The group has sympathizers, if not active agents, in the United States and is tied to al-Qaeda.

9. AL-FUQRA ("The Poor")

A.K.A.: Jamaat al-Fuqra, Jihad Council for North America, Muhammad Commandos, Muslims of the Americas, Soldiers of Allah.

Threat Level: 10

This terrorist organization was formed in New York in 1980 with the stated aim of waging a "jihad" against its perceived enemies in North America. Though the group is led by a Pakistani shaykh, but most of its members are African-American converts – many of whom live in rural compounds established by the organization. Since its creation, al-Fuqra waged a campaign of terror against Hindus, members of other religious minorities and against other Muslims that do not accept its radical beliefs. Outside North America, its operatives have participated in attacks against Indian forces in Kashmir and elsewhere. It has ties to Hizb ul-Mujahedin in Kashmir and other international terrorist organizations. Al-Fuqra has bombed Hindu temples and Muslim mosques from Seattle to New York and its members are believed to have been responsible for as many as a dozen murders in the United States since 1979. A group of al-Fuqra operatives was arrested in 1991 as they prepared a series of terrorist attacks against Hindu targets in Toronto. They are also suspected of aiding other international terrorist organizations in planning attacks against targets in New York City, including the 1992 attacks against the World Trade Center. Some members of the group have received terrorist training overseas. Many work as security guards, particularly in New York where a number of security companies are owned by members or supporters of the group.

V. MEANS OF IDENTIFYING WAHHABIS

One of the greatest challenges facing law enforcement agencies today is that of identifying terrorists before they strike. This task is made even more challenging by the fact that Wahhabi extremists have become adept at blending in with the larger immigrant communities in the countries in which they operate. While their belief system includes specific rules of dress and conduct, it also allows them to break these rules whenever necessary to further the movement's political aims – a tactic which was employed all too successfully by the September 11 hijackers.

Because of this, there is little law enforcement officials can glean from a suspect's outward appearance. In North America, a Muslim wearing a turban and long beard is much more likely to be a traditionalist moderate than a radical extremist. By the same token, it is impossible to distinguish a clean-cut, alcohol-drinking hijacker from any other assimilated immigrant from the Middle East. However, experience has shown that there are other ways of screening suspects.

The nature of extremist zealots is such that they often have a difficult time concealing their feelings about those issues about which they are most passionate. In the case of the Wahhabis, these are issues that divide them from the majority of mainstream Muslims. Recognizing this, some investigators have successfully identified Wahhabi operatives by closely examining their statements on these sensitive topics.

As mentioned earlier, the Wahhabis reject the traditional schools of Islamic jurisprudence. Consequently, they often denounce other Muslims for following the four traditional schools of Islamic law: the Hanafi, the Maliki, the Shafi'i and the Hanbali. Instead, they will argue, Muslims should follow a strict literalist interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith.²⁰

The Wahhabis also reject traditional Islamic spirituality, more commonly known as Sufism, as well as the existence of saints, which has always been a part of traditional Islamic theology. They also strongly oppose any religious practices associated with Sufism, such as the traditional practice of Islamic meditation, known as dhikr. It is not uncommon, for example, to see signs posted in Saudi-funded mosques reading "No Dhikr."

These beliefs will manifest themselves in Wahhabi literature, in speeches delivered by Wahhabi activists and in the everyday conversations of Wahhabi adherents. Some investigators have even succeeded in baiting interrogation subjects by raising these issues (asking, for example, what school of Islamic law a suspect follows). Of course, holding these beliefs do not make one a terrorist, but it does suggest that one has been influenced by the terrorists' ideology.

Another effective means of identifying Wahhabis and Wahhabi-inspired organizations is to look at their public rhetoric. Most traditionalist Muslims eschew politics, especially those who have come to North America to get away from the political intrigues of their own countries. If an organization is primarily religious, it will spend most of its time focusing on religious issues. If, on the contrary, an organization claims to be religious, but instead focuses on political issues (such as the conflict between Israel and Palestine, the occupation of Iraq, or the Patriot Act), it is likely that the group in question is actually a front for Wahhabi activists.

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APPENDIX A: MAJOR WAHHABI THINKERS

1. MOHAMMED IBN ABDUL WAHHAB

The Wahhabi movement began some 250 years ago as a relatively obscure schismatic sect based among the Bedouin tribes of eastern Arabia. It was founded by Mohammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703-1792 CE), a theological firebrand who believed that Islam had been corrupted by innumerable errors and innovations that he set out to purge with puritanical zeal. He and his followers denounced many aspects of the religion, including mysticism and traditional Islamic jurisprudence. Ibn Abdul Wahhab was quickly branded a heretic by the mainstream scholars of his day. However, he forged a political alliance with Muhammad ibn Saud, a powerful tribal chief in the Najd region of Arabia. Together, they launched a bloody insurrection against the Ottoman Empire in 1744. The rebellion was soon crushed, but the descendents of the two men continued to work together to promote Wahhabism and undermine the authority of the Ottoman state. With the help of the British, the Wahhabis launched a new revolt on the eve of World War One. This time, they were more successful, helping to destroy the Ottoman Empire and ultimately establishing the new Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

2. ABUL A'LA MAWDUDI

Abul A'la Mawdudi was the leading Wahhabi scholar and revolutionary Islamist leader in pre-independence India, as well as the most prolific Wahhabi writer in the Urdu language. As such, Mawdudi was chiefly responsible for spreading the radical doctrine to the Indian Subcontinent. Born in South India in 1903, Mawdudi embraced Wahhabism as a response to the powerlessness of Indian Muslims in the face of British colonialism. Whereas Muslims had traditionally lived in relative harmony with India's Hindu majority, Mawdudi advocated severing all ties between the two communities. In 1941, Mawdudi founded **Jamaat-e-Islami** in Lahore. This party was to become the primary voice of Wahhabism in South Asia. From this platform, Mawdudi called for a worldwide Islamist revolution. He died in 1979, but his writings remain extremely popular among Pakistani and Indian extremists.

3. SYED QUTB

Though the Muslim Brotherhood was founded by Hassan al-Banna, it was Syed Qutb – an American-educated intellectual and one-time member of Egypt's literary elite – that transformed it into a powerful revolutionary force and one of the leading promulgators of the Wahhabi ideology in the modern world. After al-Banna's death in 1949, Qutb became the Brotherhood's chief ideologue and transformed the already radical movement into a militant revolutionary force. The Brotherhood initially supported, then rejected the Nasserite revolution of 1952. Qutb was arrested and the Brotherhood banned after an unsuccessful attempt on Nasser's life in 1954. With the exception of a few months, he spent the rest of his life in prison, writing polemics against the "ignorant culture" of the West and calling for a

modern-day “jihad” to reestablish Islamic authority. He was ultimately executed in 1966, providing the Islamist cause with one of its most famous martyrs. His prison writings remain the primary text studied by young extremists throughout the Muslims world, including North America.

4. NASIR AL-ALBANI

Nasir al-Albani was the most influential and prolific author of the contemporary Wahhabi movement. Though trained as a watch repairman – not a religious scholar – the self-taught al-Albani claimed to be an expert on Islamic law and theology. He achieved fame by attacking the great traditionalist scholars and penning polemics against the four schools of orthodox Islamic jurisprudence. He was especially vociferous in his diatribes against Sufis. Al-Albani was expelled, first from Syria then from Saudi Arabia, and ultimately settled in Amman, Jordan, where he lived under house arrest until his death in 1999. During his lifetime, al-Albani edited and rewrote many of the seminal books of the orthodox Islamic canon to make them conform to Wahhabism. Many Muslims study these works without realizing how much they deviate from the original texts. Thus, al-Albani remains one of the most popular authors of Wahhabi literature, and his texts can be found in mosques across North America – as well as on the Internet, where he enjoys a strong following.

5. `ABD AL-`AZIZ IBN `ABDULLAH BAZ (a.k.a. Bin Baz)

`Abd al-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah Ibn Baz was the leading mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the official hierophant of the Wahhabi movement until his death in 1999. Under his guidance and leadership, the Wahhabi hegemony over theology in Saudi Arabia was secured, and the kingdom became the chief exporter of Wahhabism worldwide. He was a tireless critic of traditionalist thinkers and wrote numerous books attacking them. Ibn Baz helped usher in a new era of Islamist extremism while, at the same time, taking great pains to protect the Saudi royal family from criticism or insurrection. In the late 1960s, he issued a famous fatwa prohibiting any cooperation with non-Muslims. However, that did not stop him from endorsing the Saudi government’s decision to allow U.S. troops into the country in 1991 when it was threatened by an Iraqi invasion. Similarly, he declared that the earth was a flat disk, that the sun revolved around it and that anyone who believed Neil Armstrong had actually set foot on the moon was a heretic – a view he held until a Saudi astronaut orbited the earth on the American space shuttle. Like al-Albani, his pamphlets are still widely published and translated, and they can be found in mosques throughout the U.S. and Canada.

APPENDIX B: OVERVIEW OF SELECTED FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS (FTOs)

Algeria: Armed Islamic Group (GIA)

The Armed Islamic Group is an exceptionally violent Wahhabist organization. It sprang onto the Algerian political landscape with a wave of terrorist attacks and massacres in 1992 after that nation's secular authorities refused to accept the electoral victory of the affiliated Islamic Salvation Front in 1991. Since then, the group has been notorious for its bloody attacks against Algerian civilians, many of which have wiped out entire villages. In 1993, the GIA began a new campaign of terror attacks targeting foreigners that culminated in the hijacking of an Air France jet in 1994 and a series of bomb attacks in France in 1995. Never a popular movement in Algeria, the group's numbers have dwindled in recent years and its activities have largely ceased, though some members have probably transitioned to the GSPC.

Algeria: Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC)

The Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC) evolved out of the GIA, which it surpassed to become the leading armed Islamist group in Algeria. Today, the group has taken over many of the GIA's operations – both inside Algeria and abroad. This has extended its reach throughout Africa and the Middle East, as well as into Western Europe. The GSPC enjoys more popular support among Algerians than the GIA, largely because it has promised to avoid the attacks on Algerian civilians that became the hallmark of the latter. Though it has not adhered strictly to this pledge, the group has generally focused its attacks on government and military targets. The group is known to be at least sympathetic to al-Qaeda. In late 2002, Algerian security forces killed a Yemeni al-Qaeda agent who had been meeting with members of the GSPC inside Algeria.

Iraq: Ansar al-Islam

This terrorist militia was established in northern Iraq on the eve of the Second Gulf War by veterans of the fighting in Afghanistan who managed to escape through Coalition lines and regroup in Saddam Hussein's Iraq. They were soon attacking anti-Saddam forces in the northern Kurdish areas outside of Baghdad's direct control. Radical Wahhabis, they also set about destroying Sufi shrines and other holy sites that were important to the moderate, traditional Muslims of the region. The group remains part of the al-Qaeda terrorist network. Since the end of the war in Iraq, it has shifted its focus to attacking Coalition forces. Ansar al-Islam is rumored to possess small quantities of chemical weapons.

Iraq: Mujahideen-e-Khalq Organization (MEK or MKO)

a.k.a. The National Liberation Army of Iran (NLA), the People's Mujahideen of Iran (PMOI), National Council of Resistance (NCR), the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), Muslim Iranian Student's Society

The Mujahideen-e-Khalq Organization is a particularly problematical terrorist group for the United States, because it was – for a time – supported by this country. Established in the 1960s, the organization was originally part of the Shi'a revolutionary movement in Iran. As such, it carried out attacks against Westerners working in that country prior to the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The MEK also supported the takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. However, the group was cut out of the revolutionary government of Iran and its members were expelled from the country. It reestablished itself in neighboring Iraq and used that country as a base for launching terrorist attacks against government targets in Iran. Towards the end of the war between Iraq and Iran in the 1980s, Saddam Hussein armed the MEK in exchange for a pledge to join the fight against Iran alongside regular Iraqi forces. Following the First Gulf War, Baghdad unleashed the MEK on its own civilian population, using it to help crush the Shi'a and Kurdish uprisings. In 1992, the MEK resumed its crusade against Iran by launching simultaneous attacks on Iranian embassies in 13 countries. Since then, it has waged a terror campaign involving assassinations, guerilla attacks and bombings in Iran. Since the end of the Second Gulf War, the group's activities have been largely disrupted by Coalition forces and what remains of it is engaged in fighting against the U.S. and its allies in Iraq.

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Malaysia: Parti Islam seMalaysia (PAS)

Parti Islam seMalaysia, or the Islamic party of Malaysia, is a Wahhabist political party that seeks to establish an Islamist state in Malaysia through the ballot box. The group has also lobbied for a more thorough implementation of Islamic law in the country. It is extremist in its ideology and sympathetic to terrorist groups, but it is not itself a terrorist organization.

Malaysia: Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM)

The Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia aims to overthrow the government of Malaysia and establishing a single Wahhabist Islamic state unifying Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Muslim islands of the Philippines. Malaysian authorities say the group is responsible for numerous

assassinations, bombings and robberies. It has also accused KMM members of plotting attacks against American citizens. Some KMM members are known to have received military training in Afghanistan and it likely maintains ties with the al-Qaeda terrorist network, as well as to other Wahhabist terrorist organizations in Southeast Asia and the Philippines through its alliance with the Indonesian-based Jemaat Islamiyah.

Morocco: Salafi Jihad

The Salafi Jihad is a militant Wahhabi organization founded in the early 1990s by returning veterans of the war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Initially made up of a few dozen former fighters, the group boasted some 400 activists by 2003, all organized into three- or four-member cells following the typical communist model. These cells have become increasingly active over the past couple of years. In January 2004, Moroccan security forces thwarted three attempted terror attacks by the group in Casablanca, allegedly involving female operatives. It is not clear whether the group was directly responsible for the all-too-successful Casablanca suicide bombings in May 2003. Local law enforcement officials have described the perpetrators of those attacks as belonging to a splinter group known as As-Siraat al-Mustaqeem, or The Righteous Path. Those attacks targeted nightspots popular with Western tourists, a tactic consistent with Salafi Jihad's ideological program.

Pakistan: Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HUM)

The Harakat ul-Mujahideen is the terrorist organization that recruited American convert John Walker Lindh to fight with al-Qaeda forces in Afghanistan. The Kashmiri guerilla group has strong ties to Usama bin Laden's terrorist network, as well as to other terrorist organizations in Asia. Before the being put out of business by the U.S. invasion in 2001, HUM operated a network of training camps in Afghanistan, recruiting cadres from the *madrassas* of neighboring Pakistan. However, its primary area of operations is Kashmir, where it has been engaged in a guerilla war against Indian forces for a number of years.

Pakistan: Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LT)

The Lashkar-e-Tayyiba is a terrorist organization affiliated with Markaz-ud-Dawa-wal-Irshad (MDI), a Wahhabi "religious" organization that has called for attacks against Western missionary groups in Pakistan. The LT is the largest terrorist group operating in Indian-controlled Kashmir, where it has carried out attacks against both military and civilian targets. The Indian government blamed the group for the December 2002 attack against the Indian Parliament. The LT is known to have links to the al-Qaeda terrorist network, as well as other terrorist organizations, and may aiding al-Qaeda militants in Pakistan. The group's cadres include many veterans of the wars in Afghanistan, where it operated training camps until the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001.

Pakistan: Tanzeem-e-Islami

Tanzeem-e-Islami is a Pakistani Islamist organization that was founded in that country in 1975 by Wahhabi leader Israr Ahmad, who split from the larger Jamaat-e-Islami because he did not think it was revolutionary enough. Though Tanzeem-e-Islami supports extremist causes, it is not actively engaged in terrorist activities. In recent years, it has realigned itself with the JI and other Wahhabist organizations in Pakistan to form a broad Islamist front. The group has established branches in North America.

Pakistan: Sipah-e-Sahaba/Pakistan (SSP)

The SSP is a Pakistani terrorist group that follows the Deobandi school and is primarily engaged in attacks against Shi'a Muslims. It was established in the wake of the Iranian Revolution in the 1980s as a response to the growing politicization of Pakistan's Shi'as. Since then, the SSP has attacked Shi'a worshipers at mosques and carried out assassinations of Shi'a leaders. It was banned by the Pakistani government in 2002.

Palestine: Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad was established in the 1970s with the goal of destroying Israel and establishing a Palestinian state along Wahhabi lines. Initially based in the Gaza Strip, the movement is now headquartered in Syria. The group is responsible for a number of suicide bombings against military and civilian targets in Israel. Although some U.S. citizens have been killed in those attacks, the group has not specifically targeted Americans or American interests. The PIJ receives support from Iran and, according to some intelligence sources, also receives limited logistical support from Syria.

Philippines: Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)

Originally more of a bandit gang than an Islamist separatist organization, the Abu Sayyaf guerillas have developed ever-stronger ties with the al-Qaeda terrorist network over the past couple of years, making the group a more serious threat. The ASG split from the more mainstream Moro National Liberation Front in the early 1990s. Its leaders espoused a Wahhabi version of Islam and some claimed to have fought against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. However, the group primarily concerned itself with kidnappings for ransom and other acts of extortion. Initially focused on Filipino targets, the ASG began targeting foreigners in 2000. Again, these attacks were primarily motivated by financial considerations. However, since September 11, the Abu Sayyaf guerillas have increased their contacts with al-Qaeda agents in the Philippines and have effectively become an arm of that movement in the region. They also maintain strong ties with other Southeast Asian terrorist groups through the Jemaat Islamiyah.

Philippines: Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)

Though the Moro Islamic Liberation Front was originally established by members of the Moro National Liberation Front who wanted to pursue a more moderate approach to Muslim independence in the Philippines, it has since evolved into the more militant of the two organizations. In 1987, the MILF refused to accept the agreement signed between Manila and the MNLF that outlined a plan for granting limited autonomy to the Muslim provinces. Instead, it launched a short-lived military offensive that devolved into a low-intensity conflict between MILF guerillas and the Philippine military. After a round of peace talks with the government broke down in 2000, the MILF began launching terrorist attacks against both military and civilian targets in the southern Philippines. A cease-fire with the MILF collapsed in 2003, leading to renewed conflict. There is strong evidence linking the MILF and other Southeast Asian terrorist groups through the Jemaat Islamiyah.

Philippines: Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)

The Moro National Liberation Front was born of the centuries-long conflict between the Muslim minority of the southern Philippines and the predominantly Christian central government. Its roots stretch back to the 1960s. By the 1970s, the MNLF was engaged in full-scale guerrilla war with the central government aimed at establishing an independent Muslim state in the southern islands. Ultimately, through the intervention of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, talks began with Manila aimed at reaching a peaceful solution to the conflict. In 1987, the MNLF formally relinquished its goal of an independent Muslim state and signed an agreement with the central government that established the predominantly Muslim provinces as an autonomous region of the Philippines. However, the failure of Manila to honor fully the terms of that agreement has prompted sporadic clashes. At present, a cease-fire continues to hold, but it is threatened by growing frustration with the lack of basic infrastructure and Christian settlement in the autonomous region.

Thailand: Gerakan Mujahideen Islam Pattani (GMIP)

a.k.a.: Pattani Islamic Mujahideen Movement, Pattani Islamic Holy Warriors Movement

The Gerakan Mujahideen Islam Pattani is an armed Wahhabist movement based in the predominantly Muslim regions of southern Thailand. A separatist movement, its stated goal is winning the independence of those provinces from Bangkok. However, the group has waged an aggressive and often violent campaign against traditional Muslim leaders and institutions in Thailand with the aim of eliminating opposition to its radical Wahhabi version of Islam. GMIP is known to be receiving support from the al-Qaeda terrorist network, as well as Malaysian militant groups.

Tunisia: Tunisian Combatant Group (TCG)

The Jama'a Combattante e-Tunisienne, or Tunisian Combat Group, is a militant Islamist organization that has repeatedly targeted U.S. and Western interests in the region. Founded in 2000 by Tunisian Wahhabis, the group is now believed to have become part of the al-Qaeda

terrorist network. It also has ties to other terrorist groups operating in North Africa. The TCG's members have aided other international terrorist organizations and recruited Tunisians to attend terrorist training camps in Afghanistan. The group has also been linked to attacks against U.S. and Arab diplomatic missions in Rome in January 2001 and is assumed to be capable of carrying out attacks in Europe. This is significant because one of the group's founders, Tarek Maaroufi, is currently being held in Belgium.

Turkey: The Islamic Great Eastern Raiders-Front (IBDA-C)

The Islamic Great Eastern Raiders-Front is a quasi-Wahhabi terrorist group that advocates Islamist rule in Turkey and has declared Turkey's secular government illegal. The group was founded by members of the youth arm of the Islamic Salvation Party who wanted to pursue a more militant approach. The IBDA-C espouses a rather bizarre ideology that blends Wahhabist Islamism with Trotskyism. It seeks to implement this political philosophy through violent means. The group was suspected of masterminding the 1997 bombing of the Ecumenical Patriarchate Cathedral in Istanbul, and has taken responsibility for other terrorist attacks over the years. Along with the Turkish Hezbollah, the IBDA-C claimed responsibility for a series of suicide bombings of synagogues and British targets in 2003. It has also boasted of a new affiliation with Usama Bin Laden's al-Qaeda terrorist network.

Turkey: Turkish Hezbollah

Turkish Hezbollah is an Islamist terrorist group that was set up in the late 1980s to combat Marxist Kurdish separatists fighting in Turkey. Though the group's stated aim is to establish an independent Islamic state, it was primarily concerned with fighting the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and other leftist forces until the mid-1990s, when it began targeting Turkish businesses it deemed to be un-Islamic. Since the beginning of 2000, Turkish Hezbollah has been on the defensive against Turkish security forces, which have arrested many of its leaders. As a result, the group began attacking Turkish government targets in 2001. Its activities have abated over the past couple of years, but some intelligence sources believe it may have ties to the newly active Islamic Great Eastern Raiders Front. It is not connected with the Lebanese-based Hezbollah guerillas.

United Kingdom: Jama'at al-Muhajirun

Jama'at al-Muhajirun is another organization founded by Wahhabi leader Omar bin Bakri, head of the Hizb al-Tahrir and self-described spokesman for Usama bin Laden's International Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews and Crusaders, the predecessor to al-Qaeda. The group is known to have raised money for terrorist groups like HAMAS and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Its activities are largely secondary to those of its sister organization, HT.