



THE INVESTIGATIVE PROJECT ON TERRORISM

JAMAL BARZINJI



Biography

Jamal Barzinji is founding member, trustee and vice president for research and publications at the **International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT)**.¹

IIIT was incorporated in 1980 in Pennsylvania², but its roots can be traced back to a 1977 Islamic conference in Lugano, Switzerland sponsored by the American Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS), where attendees discussed the idea to create IIIT.³ According to one source, the conference was held at the house of Youssef Nada,⁴ a prominent member of the Muslim Brotherhood and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT).⁵ Soon after its establishment, IIIT moved to Herndon, Va., and the institute was officially authorized to transact business in the state of Virginia in 1985.⁶

Exhibits released by the U.S. District Court in the 2007-2008 Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLF) trial in Dallas, Texas reveal an unprecedented inside look at the inner-workings of Muslim Brotherhood in the United States. The documents

¹ "Dr. Jamal Barzinji-Biography."

<http://iiit.org/Research/ResearchersResources/ScholarsCVs/DrJamalBarzinjiBiography/tabid/338/Default.aspx>

² Articles of Incorporation for IIIT, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, December 1981.

³ Lee Steinberg, The Islamization of Science: Four Muslim Positions Developing an Islamic Modernity, Cornet Books: New York, 1996 <http://www.cis-ca.org/reviews/4-pos.htm>, p.5; See also <http://www.softchww.com/iiit/Achievements.asp>

⁴ Report of ICE Senior Special Agents Kane's and Moldowan's interview of Soliman Biheiri, June 15, 2003, page 19.

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<http://web.archive.org/web/20031230003155/http://www.ustreas.gov/offices/eotffc/ofac/actions/20011107.html>

⁶ Commonwealth of Virginia, Corporate Records for IIIT, 1985.

paint the picture of a semi-secretive organization determined to expand and to transform the United States into an Islamic state.⁷

Ties to Muslim Brotherhood Groups

Muslim Students Association (MSA)

Barzinji has helped found some of the leading Muslim Brotherhood groups in North America. In 1963, Barzinji became a founding member of the **Muslim Students Association (MSA)**.⁸ He also served as president of MSA in 1972.⁹ With nearly 600 chapters (including roughly 150 chapters directly affiliated with MSA National) located in the United States and Canada, MSA is the most visible and influential Islamic student organization in North America. Through conferences and events, publications, websites and other activities, MSA disseminates and promotes militant Islamic ideologies.¹⁰

North American Islamic Trust (NAIT)

In 1973, Barzinji became the founding general manager of the **North American Islamic Trust (NAIT)**.¹¹ Experts estimate that NAIT “has physical control of most mosques in the United States.”¹² In addition, NAIT “is reported to own between 50 and 79 percent of the mosques on the North American continent.”¹³

NAIT mosques rank among the most radical in the United States. Two of the 9/11 hijackers, Khalid al-Mihdhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi, had close ties with members of the

⁷ *USA v. Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, et al*, 3:04-CR-240-G (TX ND), <http://www.investigativeproject.org/case/65>

⁸ Larry Poston, *Islamic Da'wah in the West*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 79, 102.

⁹ “ISNA Recognizes IIIT VP Dr. Jamal Barzinji for Pioneering Service,” *IIIT Press Release*, September 8, 2008,

<http://www.iiit.org/NewsEvents/News/tabid/62/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/90/Default.aspx>

¹⁰ IPT Profile on the Muslim Students Association,

<http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/misc/84.pdf>

¹¹ “ISNA Recognizes IIIT VP Dr. Jamal Barzinji for Pioneering Service,” *IIIT Press Release*, September 8, 2008,

<http://www.iiit.org/NewsEvents/News/tabid/62/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/90/Default.aspx>

¹² Testimony of Michael Waller Before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security. “Terrorist Recruitment and Infiltration in the United States: Prisons and Military as an Operational Base.” October 14, 2003,

http://www.judiciary.senate.gov/hearings/testimony.cfm?id=4f1e0899533f7680e78d03281ff19bc6&wit_id=4f1e0899533f7680e78d03281ff19bc6-2-1

¹³ Testimony of Michael Waller Before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security. “Terrorist Recruitment and Infiltration in the United States: Prisons and Military as an Operational Base.” October 14, 2003,

http://www.judiciary.senate.gov/hearings/testimony.cfm?id=4f1e0899533f7680e78d03281ff19bc6&wit_id=4f1e0899533f7680e78d03281ff19bc6-2-1

NAIT-funded Islamic Center of San Diego (ICSD).¹⁴ In 2001, al-Hazmi visited the NAIT-affiliated Dar al-Hijrah mosque in Falls Church, Virginia.¹⁵ This was the period when the late Anwar al-Awlaki¹⁶, who subsequently became a top terrorist operative in al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, served as imam at the mosque.¹⁷

Other terrorists who have attended Dar al-Hijrah include current federal prison inmates Ahmed Omar Abu Ali¹⁸, who was convicted of joining al-Qaida while overseas and plotting to assassinate President George W. Bush, and Abdurrahman Alamoudi¹⁹, convicted of participating in a plot by Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi to assassinate Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. Senior Hamas operative Mousa Abu Marzook²⁰, deported to Jordan in 1997, also worshipped there.²¹

The Department of Treasury's Enforcement Communications System (TECS) records allege Dar al-Hijrah operates "as a front for Hamas operatives in U.S.," and "is associated with Islamic extremists."²²

Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)

Barzinji has also served as a member of the **Islamic Society of North America's (ISNA) Majlis Al-Shura** or Board of Directors.²³ ISNA was founded in 1981 by Muslim Brotherhood members in the U.S. and grew out of the MSA.²⁴ Federal prosecutors included ISNA on a list of unindicted co-conspirators in the Hamas-financing prosecution of the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development (HLF). ISNA is listed among "individuals/entities who are and/or were members of the US Muslim Brotherhood."²⁵ The trial ended with guilty verdicts on 108 counts in November 2008.²⁶

¹⁴ Sarah Downey and Michael Hirsh, "A Safe Haven?" *Newsweek*, September 30, 2002, <http://hvk.org/archive/2002/1002/69.html>

¹⁵ "The Constitution and By-Laws of the Dar al-Hijrah Islamic Center," <http://web.archive.org/web/20070114002210/http://www.hijrah.org/constitution.html>

¹⁶ "The Awlaki Effect," *IPT News*, November 15, 2010, <http://www.investigativeproject.org/2323/the-awlaki-effect>.

¹⁷ *The 9/11 Commission Report*, p. 221, <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report.pdf#page=238>

¹⁸ <http://www.investigativeproject.org/case/101>

¹⁹ <http://www.investigativeproject.org/case/147>

²⁰ <http://www.investigativeproject.org/case/88>

²¹ <http://www.investigativeproject.org/1301/state-department-site-features-radical-mosque>.

²² IPT Profile on Dar al-Hijrah Mosque, <http://www.investigativeproject.org/case/417>

²³ "ISNA Recognizes IIIT VP Dr. Jamal Barzinji for Pioneering Service," *IIIT Press Release*, September 8, 2008,

<http://www.iiit.org/NewsEvents/News/tabid/62/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/90/Default.aspx>

²⁴ Office of the Secretary of State of Indiana, "Articles of Incorporation, Islamic Society of North America," filed July 14, 1981.

²⁵ *USA v. Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, et al.*, 3:04-CR-240-G (TX ND), List of Unindicted Co-Conspirators and Joint Venturers, p. 8,

http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/423.pdf

²⁶ *USA v. Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, et al.*, 3:04-CR-240-G, Guilty Verdict, (N.D. Tex. November 24, 2008), http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/741.pdf

ISNA conferences have featured rhetoric in support of terrorist groups and other radicalism.²⁷

SAAR Network

The origins of the SAAR Network reside with a group of Muslim scholars, businessmen, and scientists from the Middle East and Asia who gathered in the United States in the early 1980s.²⁸ The network was officially born with the incorporation of the SAAR Foundation, Inc., in Herndon, Virginia, as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit on July 29, 1983.²⁹

Barzinji served on the initial board of trustees of the Virginia-based **SAAR Foundation, Inc.** in 1983.³⁰ Federal investigators have alleged that the SAAR Foundation is a network of 100 nonprofit and for-profit organizations that “are interrelated through corporate officers and holding companies—subsidiary relationships, to facilitate the funding of terrorist operations.”³¹ Barzinji held leadership positions in a number of SAAR organizations, among them posts as director and vice president for research and publications of IIIT, director of Safa Trust, president and chairman of Mar-Jac Poultry, and member of the Board of Trustees of Amana Mutual Funds Trust.³²

Records obtained from a closed FBI investigation through a Freedom of Information Act request show that IIIT board members Jamal Barzinji and Yaqub Mirza are listed among “members and leaders of the IKHWAN.”³³ Barzinji was identified as the secretary general for the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) at that time.³⁴ The Ikhwan is an Arabic reference to the Muslim Brotherhood.

American Muslim Council

²⁷ IPT profile on ISNA, <http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/misc/275.pdf>

²⁸ *In the Matter Involving 555 Grove Street, Herndon, Virginia, and Related Locations*, 02-MG-114, “Affidavit of SA David Kane” (EDVA, March 2002),

http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/891.pdf

²⁹ Virginia Secretary of State, 1983 SAAR Foundation, Inc., Articles of Incorporation, July 29, 1983.

³⁰ Articles of Incorporation for SAAR Foundation, 1983.

³¹ *In the Matter Involving 555 Grove Street, Herndon, Virginia, and Related Locations*, 02-MG-114 “Affidavit of SA David Kane” (EDVA, March 2002),

http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/891.pdf

³² The Forum Monthly, Vol, 1, Issue 1, March 1, 2003; World Economic Forum Knowledge Navigator; Corporate Records. See also *In the Matter Involving 555 Grove Street, Herndon, Virginia, and Related Locations*, 02-MG-114, “Affidavit of SA David Kane” (EDVA, March 2002),

http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/891.pdf

³³ “Forgotten Investigation, Emails Offer Insight into IIIT Probe,” *IPT News*, August 3, 2008, <http://www.investigativeproject.org/737/forgotten-investigation-emails-offer-insight-into-iiit-probe>

³⁴ “Forgotten Investigation, Emails Offer Insight into IIIT Probe,” *IPT News*, August 3, 2008, <http://www.investigativeproject.org/737/forgotten-investigation-emails-offer-insight-into-iiit-probe>

An article titled “Muslims Must Get Involved in U.S. Politics” in the summer 1994 issue of the *AMC Report*, quotes Barzinji saying American Muslims need to enhance their participation in public life to guarantee their “survival here” in the country. The article describes Barzinji as a “principal patron” of the American Muslim Council (AMC).³⁵

In 2003, Abdurahman Alamoudi, the founder and former executive director of the American Muslim Council (AMC), was sentenced to 23 years in jail for illegal financial dealings with Libya. Alamoudi also confessed to taking part in a Libyan plot to assassinate the then Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia.³⁶

Support for Palestinian Islamic Jihad

IIIT was used as a front to fund and support the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), a U.S. designated terrorist organization³⁷ known to have carried out hundreds of attacks in Israel.³⁸ Barzinji’s name was mentioned in a letter written by Taha Jaber al-Alwani, founding member and president of IIIT³⁹, to PIJ operative Sami al-Arian⁴⁰ on November 6, 1992. In that letter, al-Alwani referred to the payment of monies from IIIT to PIJ, and wrote that he, his colleagues, and their organizations considered themselves to be indistinguishable from al-Arian, Ramadan Abdullah Mohammad Shallah (current secretary-general of Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Specially Designated Terrorist)⁴¹ and other founders and members of PIJ. Specifically, al-Alwani stated in his letter to Al Arian:

“Honorable brother, I think we do not need to affirm that we consider you as a group, you and brother Mazen [al-Najar], brother Khalil [Shikaki, brother of PIJ founder Fathi Shikaki], brother Bashir [Nafi], Brother Ramadan [Shallah] and Sheikh Abdel Aziz , a part of us and an extension of us. Also, we are part of you and an extension of you. We have had no doubts of this since we’ve known you and we will continue as such. The matter of financial support was never at any time the basis of our relationship, as our relationship, in addition to being a brotherhood of faith and Islam, is an ideological and cultural concordance with mutual objectives. For us, we deem all of your institutions our own, and they receive widespread attention. I explained to you the circumstances that your brothers’ institutions are going through, despite which we can truthfully say that we gave your institutions or our institutions that you manage more attention than institutions we manage by ourselves. Because, without a doubt, you are in an important position, and you deserve from us and our like all cooperation, God willing.

³⁵ “Barzinji: Muslims Must Get Involved in U.S. Politics,” *The AMC Report*, Vol. 4, No. 6, Summer 1994.

³⁶ Abdurahman Alamoudi Sentenced to Jail in Terrorism Financing Case,” *Department of Justice Press Release*, October 15, 2004, http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/168.pdf

³⁷ <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2011/195553.htm>

³⁸ <http://www.investigativeproject.org/profile/119>

³⁹ “Interview with Sheikh Taha,” *Muslim Democrat*, 4, No. 1, January 2002, http://www.islam-democracy.org/documents/pdf/md_january2002.pdf

⁴⁰ *USA v, Sami Al-Arian*, 03-CR-77 (MD FL), <http://www.investigativeproject.org/case/41>

⁴¹ Rewards for Justice Profile on Ramadan Abdullah Mohammad Shallah, <http://www.rewardsforjustice.net/index.cfm?page=shallah&language=english>

I would like to affirm these feelings to you directly on my behalf, and on the behalf of all my brothers, Drs. Abdel-Hamid [Abusulayman], **Jamal [Barzinji]**, Ahmad [Totonji], and Hisham [Al-Talib]. . . .”⁴²

Al Alwani also stated that it didn’t matter how Al Arian characterized the \$45,000 Al Arian received from the Safa Group (another name for the SAAR Network), as part of its total contribution of \$50,000:

“And I would like to affirm these feelings to you directly on my behalf and on the behalf of all my brothers, Dr. Abdel Hamid, **Dr. Jamal [Barzinji]**, Dr. Ahmad, Dr. Hisham, and at the same time, affirm to you that when we make a commitment to you, or we try to offer, we do it for you as a group, **regardless of the party or the facade you use the donation for . . .** What is left is to remind you that what is mentioned in your letter is that what you already received is forty thousand, and what we have in the records for you is forty-five thousand. I will inquire about the matter with the brother accountants so I can send you what will complete the amount of fifty thousand, God willing, whether it be five or ten thousand.”⁴³

In another letter seized during the 1995 raid on another PIJ front group, the World and Islam Studies Enterprise (WISE), Shallah identifies IIIT as the WISE’s primary funding source.⁴⁴

Based out of Tampa, WISE purportedly operated as a think tank and an academic research center organized entirely for the purpose of education, research, and analysis.⁴⁵ Shallah was WISE’s director of administration until he left for Damascus in October 1995 to lead PIJ.⁴⁶

Questioning Role of Muslims in 9/11 Attacks

At a 2002 ISNA convention, in response to a question from the audience that cast doubt on the fact that Muslims perpetrated 9/11, Jamal Barzinji supported the skepticism: “It is not only that we don’t have any proof, but the FBI doesn’t have any proof. They are still looking.”⁴⁷

⁴² *USA v, Sami Al-Arian*, 03-CR-77, “Exhibit 325,” (MD FL), <http://www.investigativeproject.org/redirect/Exhibit325.pdf>

⁴³ *USA v, Sami Al-Arian*, 03-CR-77, “Exhibit 325,” (MD FL), <http://www.investigativeproject.org/redirect/Exhibit325.pdf>

⁴⁴ Letter dated December 11, 1991 from Ramadan Abdallah Shallah, Director of Administration of WISE, to Dr. Mark Orr, Director of International Affairs Center. Seized by federal officials from the offices of WISE in 1995.

⁴⁵ “Articles of Incorporation of World and Islam Studies Enterprise, Inc. (WISE),” Florida Secretary of State, January 1, 1991.

⁴⁶ Ramadan Abdullah Shallah Curriculum Vitae; *U.S. v/ Al-Arian, et al.*, 03-CR-77, Exhibit 309 (MD FL April 14, 2006).

⁴⁷ Jamal Barzinji, ISNA 39th Annual Convention, Washington, DC, September 1, 2002.