



Healing the Nation

The Arab American
Experience After
September 11





James Zogby
President

Jean AbiNader
Managing Director

Helen Samhan
Executive Director,
AAI Foundation

Jennifer Salan
Communications Director

Text: Michael S. Lee

Design: Sarah Sullivan

Contributors: Abdallah Al-Zuabi,
Sean Brooks, Jeff Curley, Majed
Jafari, Karim Shaaban

Special thanks to the Arab
American community leaders
around the country who shared
their stories with us.

This report was published by the
Arab American Institute
Foundation with the generous
support of the Atlantic
Philanthropies (USA) Inc.

The Arab American Institute
1600 K St. NW, Suite 601
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: (202) 429-9210
Fax: (202) 429-9214
www.aaiusa.org

Healing the Nation

The Arab American Experience after September 11

a first anniversary report by the Arab American Institute

I. Arab American Response to the September 11 Attacks

Rescue and Recovery ♦ Fundraising ♦ Vigils, Rallies, and Blood Drives
♦ Individual Efforts

II. Backlash and the Nation's Response

Government Response ♦ Community Response ♦ Individual Response

III. Arab Americans Reach Out to Educate and Inform

Organizations' Efforts ♦ Individual Efforts

IV. Civil Rights Issues in the Wake of September 11

The USA PATRIOT Act and Civil Liberties ♦ Executive Branch Orders
♦ Investigation and Individual Rights ♦ Impact on Immigration Policy
♦ Dangerous Directions at the Department of Justice ♦ Committed to
Dialogue and Advocacy

V. Appendices

- A. Submission to The United States Commission on Civil Rights:
Testimony of James J. Zogby, October 12, 2001.
- B. "Arab American Perspectives on the International War Against
Terrorism." Remarks to the Secretary's Open Forum by James J. Zogby,
December 5, 2001. United States Department of State.
- C. Commissioners Meeting Open Session: "Employment Discrimination in
the Aftermath of September 11." Remarks by AAI Managing Director
Jean AbiNader, December 11, 2001. U.S. Equal Employment
Opportunity Commission
- D. Arab American Institute Materials:
 - I. Select AAI Press Releases
 - II. AAI Publications and Reports
 - III. AAI Educational Packet
- E. Other Resources

September 11, 2001 will forever be remembered as the day the American spirit was tested to a greater degree than at any time since World War II.

For Arab Americans, the deep shock and anger over this national trauma and grief over lost relatives and friends were compounded by a rush by some to blame Arabs collectively for the attacks. Arabs and Muslims in this country were suddenly confronted with the double pain of mourning an attack on their country and simultaneously having to defend themselves, their families, and their stature as Americans.

But in the aftermath of that tragic day, and despite acts of misguided hatred and violence, September 11 has also reminded us of the best of the American spirit. For every story of heartache on September 11, there is a story of heroism. For every act of violence or hatred that came in the wake of the attacks, there are dozens of examples of selflessness, compassion, and kindness.

The first anniversary of the attacks is an appropriate time to document the Arab American experience in the days, weeks, and months following the terrorist attacks and to tell some of the stories of the past year that have yet to be told: the Arab American firefighters and doctors who rushed to Ground Zero to help in the recovery efforts. The hundreds of thousands of dollars raised by Arab and Muslim groups to aid victims. The Americans across the nation who lent assistance and support when their Arab and Muslim neighbors were threatened. Blood drives, interfaith prayer vigils, and fundraisers that brought together Americans from all backgrounds and faiths. The many Americans who sought to learn more about Arab culture and the Muslim faith, and the many Arabs and Muslims who stepped forward to promote greater understanding.

This anniversary is also an opportune time to look toward our nation's future, to some of the challenges in balancing a fight to defend ourselves with the need to protect the rights and freedoms we all hold dear. Arab Americans have, out of necessity, been in the vanguard of those fighting to safeguard civil and constitutional rights - not just for the sake of those of Arab origin, but for all Americans.

While it would be impossible to chronicle the entirety of these moving stories, this report endeavors to serve as a record of how Arab Americans responded to and were affected by the momentous events of September 11, 2001.

ARAB AMERICAN RESPONSE TO THE SEPT. 11 ATTACKS

“We are in the midst of a national nightmare of unimaginable proportions.”

“Arab Americans, like all Americans, are transfixed by this tragedy. We have family and friends who worked in the World Trade Center. We mourn for those who lost their lives and those who were injured. We mourn, as well, for our country in this time of national trauma.

“We urge our fellow citizens not to rush to judgment and point fingers at their Arab American neighbors and colleagues who are suffering, like all Americans, from these despicable acts.

“Regardless of who is ultimately found to be responsible for these terrorist murders, no ethnic or religious community should be treated as suspect and collectively blamed.”

from an Arab American Institute press release, Sept. 11, 2001

This press release touches on the horror that Arab Americans shared with the rest of the country as news of the events in New York City, Washington DC, and Shanksville, Pennsylvania thrust themselves into the national consciousness. Arab Americans were consumed by all of the same emotions so familiar to all of us: disbelief and shock, anger, grief, and a deep sense of violation. And they perished alongside their fellow citizens and those of some 80-plus countries on that Tuesday morning.

For Arab Americans, it was not just a violation of nation and citizenry, but also of heritage and, for some, of faith. The attacks were a particular affront to Arab Americans, striking as they did at their collective sense of cultural pride and religious belief. From the very first moments after the attacks, the Arab American community joined fellow Americans in channel-

ing this hurt and anger into dedicated efforts to help the victims and their families. It would be impossible to chronicle the full extent of the Arab American contribution to relief and healing efforts; what follows are but a few examples.

Rescue and Recovery

The ranks of law enforcement personnel and firefighters who were involved in the initial, heroic minutes after the World Trade Center attacks included Arab Americans. Arab American physicians joined those who tended to the wounded in hospitals throughout the New York metropolitan area. Among the crowds that descended onto Ground Zero in the days and weeks after September 11 were Manhattan's deli owners, including Arab Americans, to distribute sandwiches to the crews working to save people at the World Trade Center site and recover the remains of those who did not survive.

Ali Taqi, a firefighter from Troy, Michigan, drove to New York City the afternoon of the attacks, along with seven other firefighters from Troy and nearby Bloomfield. Taqi felt a deep sense of purpose in what he and his fellow firefighters were about to do, as an American and particularly as an Arab American. "We're Americans, we're trying to do as much as we can to help...We're grieving also." Taqi's group unloaded supplies, carried buckets of debris, and searched for victims at the site of the World Trade Center. (1)

Iraqi-born Ron Kuley, a member of the Fairfax County, Virginia Fire Department, also joined a team of relief workers that traveled to New York and spent seven weeks at Ground Zero. And an Arab American served as a grief counselor to support the families of Pentagon crash victims.

Dr. Taufik Kassis, a medical resident at Jersey City Medical Center across the Hudson River from the World Trade Center site, treated many of those wounded on September 11. "It's important to speak out so people understand there is a huge difference between the terrorists who committed these attacks and other Muslims and Arabs or Arab Americans," he said.

Fundraising

The American Red Cross was the recipient of the largest concentration of funds nationwide in the months after the tragedies of September 11, and this was reflect-

ed in the giving patterns of Arab Americans.

Among those giving to the Red Cross were many members of the Arab American community of Orlando, Florida, under the leadership of the Arab Community Center. They raised \$50,000 by the 15th of September - 21 percent of the total donations received by the



photo: Max Ortiz,
The Detroit News

Orlando Red Cross up to that point. The National Arab American Medical Association brought in \$100,000 in support of national and local American Red Cross 9/11 relief efforts. In Tarrant County, Texas, the Arab American and American Muslim communities raised \$20,000, while the Al Aqsa Mosque of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania donated \$15,000 to the Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund.

Arab American restaurateurs hosted numerous fundraisers across the country for 9/11 disaster relief funds. Talal Chahine, owner of the ten-restaurant La Shish chain in Dearborn, Michigan, donated the

October 3 profits from all of his restaurants to a relief fund for the families of firefighters and police officers killed in the World Trade Center attack. Helping is "our duty as American citizens," Mr. Chahine said, and "a way to demonstrate that I'm an Arab American, I love this country, and I'm committed to this country." (2)

Andy Shallal, owner of three Washington DC-area eateries, hosted an event at his Mimi's American Bistro in Washington that raised \$14,000, the entirety of the day's profits, for the Twin Towers Relief Fund. Shallal challenged fellow members of the Restaurant Owner's Association of Washington to do the same thing.

The Casablanca Restaurant of Alexandria, Virginia, in partnership with a number of groups in the Washington DC area, raised money in late September to be used in support of Pentagon families who lost loved ones in the attack on the Pentagon.

In a show of fraternal support, the police officers and firefighters of heavily Arab American Dearborn, Michigan, raised \$125,000 for the families of the almost 350 firefighters who lost their lives working as part of the rescue effort at the site of the World Trade Center.

The Southern Federation of Syrian Lebanese American Clubs raised \$20,000 for their September 11 Fund, which was donated to the Twin Towers Orphan Fund.

Bassam Amin of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn coordinated a fundraiser at his mosque, the Beit El Maqdis

“We as Americans express in the strongest manner possible our utmost outrage at the senseless and barbaric act of terrorism that occurred today around our nation.

We condemn this act of violence.

We express our grief for the loss of life that has taken place as a result of this cowardly act of terrorism.

Our deepest sympathy goes out to all the victims and their families. In a sense, we as a nation are also victims of this tragedy...

We urge our community to join in volunteering in every possible way, including by participating in blood drives and other humanitarian needs to help reduce the suffering.”

Statement from the Coalition of Chicago Arab Organizations, September 11, 2001

Islamic Center, which raised close to \$5,000.

The Arab Bankers Association of North America (ABANA) was able to raise \$100,000 in the Arab Bankers Association of North America Disaster Relief Fund. Contributions, which came from dozens of Arab American individuals and companies, were donated to the New York City Firefighters 9/11 Relief Fund. Geoffrey Milton, ABANA Vice President and General Manager of Arab Banking Corporation, said the funds were collected through “the efforts of dozens of individuals and organizations in the Arab American business world who

are dedicated to aiding those families in their community suffering losses resulting from these horrible events.” (3) As ABANA President Dr. Hani Findakly said, “This effort is part of our responsibility to our community and larger family.” (4)

Vigils, Rallies, and Blood Drives

Many groups held candlelight vigils, rallies and blood drives to demonstrate their support for the victims of the attacks and their families.

The American Muslim Political Coordination Council (AMPCC) organized its national membership to donate blood for the wounded in Washington, DC and New York. “We are here to first of all give our condolences to the families of the victims of this heinous crime and to give our support. This is the time to give our charity and help those in need because we are feeling the pain of everybody,” said Aly Abyzaakouk, Executive Director of the American Muslim Council. (5)

The Iraqi Center of Nashville, Tennessee held a rally on September 22 in front of the U.S. Courthouse in Nashville to condemn the terrorist attacks as well as to show solidarity with their fellow Americans. The group collected donations, held a blood drive, and made other plans to join in the relief effort.

Dearborn, Michigan community leaders sponsored a prayer vigil on September 12 to remember the victims, and the Muslim community of

“We are here to first of all give our condolences to the families of the victims of this heinous crime.”

Greater Chicago conducted a special prayer service at the Mosque Foundation in Bridgeview, Illinois for the victims of the

attacks and their families.

And for Arab Americans living in New York, the grief and fear in the weeks following the terror attacks were overwhelming. Like all New Yorkers, shock and anger were palpable. In the heavily Arab neighborhood of Brooklyn's Atlantic Avenue, a candlelight vigil brought together generations of mourners, some holding the photos of their sons on duty at Ground Zero.

Thanks to the steady leadership and stamina of the Brooklyn-based Arab American Family Support Center, hundreds of immigrants were able to find counseling and legal services to cope with trauma of the attacks, as well as the detentions and the extra scrutiny placed on Arabs and Muslims. Despite modest resources and staff, the AAFSC under the direction of Emira Habiby Browne stayed on the front line as a vital link to the media, government, and the general public.

Individual Efforts

Individual contributions towards the healing of the nation were often



Arab American members of the New York City Police Department who took part in the rescue effort were honored at the Arab American Institute Foundation's 2002 Kahlil Gibran "Spirit of Humanity" Awards gala.

the most powerful and uplifting.

Even as the fires continued to burn at the Pentagon, Kamal Nawash, an attorney in private practice in the Washington, DC area, enlisted the help of Arab American attorneys to assist the families of those who did not survive the Pentagon attack.

Author Ray Hanania set up a special section on his website where Arab Americans could post messages of support for the families of those who died in New York City, in order to demonstrate that "we are not responsible for the killings, we do not support the murder of innocent people and we do not support the terrorists who were behind this act." (6)

One of the largest providers of American flags is the Alamo Flag Co. in Falls Church, Virginia. The owner and founder of Alamo is Fawaz "Tony" Ismail, an American of Palestinian descent. Ismail's company has sold millions of American flags since September, with a portion of the company's earnings going to assist the families of the vic-

tims of the terrorist attacks. "It's not all about the money," Ismail said. "The freedom that we have here, you can't take it for granted." (7)

The Utah National Guard, home to the 300th Military Intelligence Brigade, was in need of Arabic and Farsi translators after September 11. After soliciting the help of Arab American groups to get the word out to their communities, the Guard was "overwhelmed" by the number of Arab Americans volunteering as translators, according to Capt. Chris Patterson. "We are getting an outpouring of support from Arab Americans everywhere, one that I've heard has been duplicated at recruiting centers throughout the country." (8)

Similarly, the response to the FBI's appeal for Arabic translators was enormous. FBI Director Robert S. Mueller said that after the initial call for linguists on September 17, "the Arab American community and others immediately overwhelmed our telephone switchboard." (9) ♦

"We condemn in no uncertain terms the horrifying attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11. We are shocked and angered by such brutality and share all the emotions of our fellow citizens against these attacks, which targeted all Americans without exception."

Statement from a meeting of Arab American and American Muslim leaders in Washington, DC, September 12, 2001

"[We] condemn the horrifying series of attacks on the World Trade Center towers in New York and government buildings, including the Pentagon in Washington, DC...Arab Americans view these attacks as targeting all Americans without exception."

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)

BACKLASH AND THE NATION'S RESPONSE

“Be it resolved that the Congress-

1) declares that in the quest to identify, bring to justice, and punish the perpetrators and sponsors of the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, that the civil rights and civil liberties of all Americans, including Arab-Americans, American Muslims, and Americans from South Asia, should be protected; and

(2) condemns any acts of violence or discrimination against any Americans, including Arab-Americans, American Muslims, and Americans from South Asia.”

Concurrent Resolution of the U.S. Congress, September 12, 2001

Phoenix, Arizona: On Sept. 15th, Frank Silva Roque shot to death Balbir Singh Sodhi. Roque allegedly killed Sodhi as part of a multiple-incident shooting rampage that included shootings at a Lebanese-American clerk who escaped injury, at another gas station in Mesa, and at the home of an Afghan family. (Arizona Republic, Sept. 18)

Reedley, California: Abdo Ali Ahmed, a Yemeni grocer, was shot to death in his shop over the weekend. Family members said the day before he was killed, death threat that included anti-Arab statements was found on windshield of Ahmed's car. It is being investigated as a hate crime. (Washington Post, Oct. 3)

Fresno, California: Rien Said Ahmed was shot and killed while at work. Witnesses saw four males speed from the store in white sedan. No money or merchandise was stolen. Ahmed had received threats since mid-September. (The Fresno Bee, Oct. 2)

Cleveland, Ohio: Ford Mustang driven through entrance of Ohio's largest mosque. Mosque unoccupied at time; only driver injured. (Estimated damages: \$100,000) (AP, Sept. 13)

Within hours of the September 11 attacks, the tragedy and violence of that terrible day was compounded by personal attacks on Americans of Arab, Muslim, Sikh, and South Asian heritage. Even Hispanic Americans were singled out for attack because of their physical similarities to Arabs.

But it was just a tiny minority of Americans who carried out these actions; the vast majority was disgusted by and ashamed of such acts of hatred and misdirected anger. Americans of all persuasions took proactive steps to come to the aid of Arab and Muslim Americans and offer their sympathy and support at a time when all Americans were dealing with the shock and trauma inflicted upon the nation.

From government officials to community and religious leaders to ordinary citizens, Americans rallied to

support those of Arab heritage in the United States.

Americans from all walks of life made sincere and sustained efforts to stand in solidarity with their Arab American neighbors. Dialogues were started, various faiths emphasized their common principles, and funds were donated to assist in the repair of damage from acts of vandalism. The point was repeatedly made that the diversity of America is what makes it strong and the fostering of such diversity will only make the United States stronger.

Government Efforts

Early and forceful statements by President Bush put the federal government on record that acts of violence against any Americans because of their skin color, religious affiliation, or ethnicity would not be tolerated and would be punished to

the fullest extent of the law.

On the day of the terrorist attacks, Arab American and Muslim American leaders were already in Washington, DC for a previously scheduled meeting with President Bush to discuss the use of “secret evidence” in certain immigration proceedings and racial profiling of Arab Americans at the nation’s airports and security checkpoints.

In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, these leaders set two goals: to give President Bush clear support for his response against the terrorist attacks, and to stave off the backlash against Arab and Muslim Americans.

“As soon as the event happened, we kicked into action,” said AAI Chairman George Salem. “We anticipated the inevitable.” From the White House to the FBI to the Justice Department, it was emphasized early and often that hate crimes and discrimination would not be tolerated.

Congress also helped reassure the Arab American population that the country stood with them and supported them after the attacks. The U.S. Senate Democratic leadership invited Arab American and Muslim American leaders to the Capitol in October to discuss ways to promote tolerance and acceptance of diversity and to ensure the security of the United States. The meeting was also an opportunity to show that just as all Americans were united against punishing those responsible for the terrorist attacks, Americans are also united against acts of hate against innocent Arab and Muslim Americans.

The United States Capitol building was also the site for a Bipartisan Interfaith Event held ten days after the terrorist attacks. The ceremony included speakers from the Muslim,

Sikh, Christian and Jewish faiths, as well as the Speaker of the House, the Minority Leader, and the Minority Whip and was attended by members from the House of Representatives.

Among the federal agencies that took early and proactive steps to deal with the backlash was the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice. Assistant Attorney General Ralph F. Boyd Jr. stated that “Any threats of violence or discrimination against Arab or Muslim

“Our nation should be mindful that there are thousands of Arab Americans who live in New York City, who love their flag just as much as [we] do, and...that as we seek to win the war, that we treat Arab Americans and Muslims with the respect they deserve.”

President George W. Bush, in a telephone conversation with New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, September 12, 2001

Americans or Americans of South Asian descents are not just wrong and un-American, but are also unlawful and will be treated as such.” (10) The Civil Rights Division established a special initiative to combat post-9/11 backlash, headed by Joe Zogby, which facilitates referral of civil rights complaints, educates communities about hate backlash, and coordinates efforts with other government agencies.

The Department’s vigilance in combating backlash has affected AAI directly. It tracked down and prosecuted a man who had threatened AAI President James Zogby and his family. This is just one example of the numerous cases in which guilty pleas have been obtained in the wake of the Department’s increased focus on 9/11-related abuse.

Other cases involve the conviction of a individuals telephoning a bomb threat to a family in

Wisconsin, setting fire to a restaurant in Utah, attempting to set fire to a mosque in Seattle, assaulting managers of a hotel in Tennessee, among many others. Also, Irving David Rubin and Earl Leslie Krugel of the Jewish Defense League have been indicted for conspiring to bomb a mosque and the California office of Rep. Darrell Issa, an Arab American member of the U.S. Congress. In Des Moines, Iowa, the Midwest Federation of American Syrian-Lebanese Clubs was prohibi-

ted from holding a convention at a Marriott hotel. Marriott agreed to pay a fine and develop a training program to educate employees about Arab Americans.

In all, about 70 state and local criminal civil rights cases have been initiated, and ten more on the federal level.

Among the penalties for these crimes are time in jail, probation and community service; some of those convicted were ordered to do service for the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) in Dearborn, Michigan.

Within weeks of the September 11 attacks, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) Chair Cari Dominguez initiated meetings with leaders of major Arab American and Muslim organizations to receive community feedback on how the backlash was impacting the workplace. By the summer, over 600 complaints had been filed by workers alleging mostly religious discrimination, predominantly discharges and harassment.

Given the serious increase in backlash related complaints, the EEOC issued in May fact sheets for both employers and employees that address frequently asked questions about the employment of Muslims,

“Vigilante attacks and threats against Arab-Americans will not be tolerated. Such acts of retaliation violate federal law and, more particularly, run counter to the very principles of equality and freedom upon which our nation is founded. The FBI and the Department of Justice are committed to aggressively investigating and prosecuting violations of the federal hate crime laws. We, to date, have initiated 40 hate crime investigations, involving reported attacks on Arab American citizens and institutions.”

FBI Director Robert Mueller,
September 17, 2001

Arabs, South Asians and Sikhs. The commission also posted as special “September 11 Information” section with materials and resources on its website.

Secretary of Education Rod Paige called on educators to take a leading role in the prevention of harassment and violence directed at students perceived to be Muslim or Arab American. “We are all committed to making sure our children across America can attend school in a safe and secure environment free from harassment and threats,” Paige said. The Secretary also stressed to educators that when assemblies, classroom discussions, and other school activities to honor victims of the tragedy are held, they do not inadvertently foster targeting Muslim or Arab American students for harassment. (11)

State governments as well made it clear that all citizens are equal under the law and that any unlawful acts directed against fellow citizens would be dealt with promptly and appropriately.

The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC), which enforces Pennsylvania's civil rights laws, played a major role in looking after the rights of Arab Americans in that state after the September 11 attacks. The Pennsylvania Inter-Agency Task Force on Civil Tension, a body within the PHRC, has focused specifically on bias- or hate-related incidents in Pennsylvania. In much demand since September 11, the PHRC had logged sixty hate-related incidents in Pennsylvania as of late October.

The State of California created a hotline to aid targets of harassment and hate crimes after September 11. Staff members answering the calls, including interpreters, took reports and helped callers fill out forms to aid criminal investigators.

Community Efforts

Local communities came up with many ways not only to denounce hate crimes, but also to demonstrate that Arab Americans are an integral part of their social fabric.

In the northern Virginia suburbs, county officials in Arlington and Fairfax counties moved swiftly to confront the backlash by holding emergency press conferences that featured the board of supervisors, police chief, chairman of the school board, and human rights commissioners.

Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and Illinois Governor George Ryan declared November to be Arab Heritage Month as a salute to the community's contributions to society. More than 500 Arab Americans joined Mayor Daley and the Chicago Human Relations Commission at the inaugural celebration. Marwan Amarin, Advisory Board Chairman of the Advisory Commission on Arab Affairs, thanked Mayor Daley, “who was one of the first elected officials to formally recognize in public the cultural uniqueness of the Arab American community in Chicago...We are proud Americans. We will continue to be proud Americans even in the most challenging of moments that we face.” (12)

In Paterson, New Jersey, Mayor Martin G. Barnes and other officials joined local Arab American leaders for a joint press briefing on September 14. The briefing followed a series of meetings in which the Arab and Muslim community reported incidents of harassment. All Paterson officials present emphasized that the community would not tolerate any discrimination or hate crimes.

The Human Rights Commission of the City and County of San Francisco adopted a resolution two days after the attacks that had been

introduced by the Arab American community there. The resolution condemned “all discrimination and racism directed against Arab Americans, Muslim Americans, and people of Middle Eastern descent,” and “supports the use of all legal authority, and release additional resources as necessary, to prevent and respond to discrimination, hate crimes, and harassment in all forms.” (13)

Redford Township, Michigan, hosted a three-day diversity workshop in October entitled “Different People, Common Ground,” part of a series of workshops that have taken place throughout Michigan since 1999. The discussion sessions included origins of stereotyping, effects of prejudice on the community, subtle ways prejudice is practiced, and creating inclusive communities. “This program is a great way to strengthen relationships and build new ones,” said Redford Township Supervisor Kevin Kelley. (14)

In Philadelphia, the human relations commission worked with Marwan Kreidie of the Arab American Community Development Corporation to set up an Arab American “control center” on the day of the attacks to monitor the needs of the community. They made sure the police knew where Arab American areas were located and that mosques would be protected. They held meetings with the FBI and the Attorney General's office, offering assistance and making sure that Arab Americans weren't going to be targeted.

The Orange County, California Commission on Human Relations adopted a plan entitled “Orange County Together: United We Stand” to respond to the increase in hate crimes after September 11. The plan involved responding to hate

crimes, building understanding, and raising awareness.

In Indiana, Pennsylvania, posters and flyers in several languages were distributed stating: “Our community is a hate-free zone.” And: “Every language on this poster is spoken by members of the Indiana County community, as are many other languages. We have posted this sign to show our commitment to keeping

“We have posted this sign to show our commitment to keeping Indiana a community that treats all its members fairly and with respect, regardless of race, nationality, or religion.”

Indiana a community that treats all its members fairly and with respect, regardless of race, nationality, or religion.” (15)

A direct response to fears of backlash in the Louisville, Kentucky, area was the implementation of the Green Armband Project, which brought together volunteers who agreed to escort people who were afraid to venture out in public, to speak out against harassment and to patronize businesses owned by Arabs or Muslims. Similarly, the Mennonite Church in Boise, Idaho offered to accompany members of the Muslim community, particularly women who wear *hijab*, to shop, to school, or to pray.

Organizations

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), in addition to its fundraising and public education efforts post-September 11, expanded its network of attorneys doing pro bono work to aid victims of hate crimes and discrimination, in cooperation with the National Lawyer's Guild and the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

In an effort to promote racial and religious tolerance, the Afghan-American community in the Washington, DC area, in collaboration with several other organizations and the American Red Cross, organized an Interfaith Memorial on September 23 to show support for the victims of the attacks and for America itself. Speakers included Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, Hindu, and Christian leaders.

The Korean American Coalition (KAC) lent its support to Arab Americans, encouraging its members to support the ideals of American democracy by contacting mosques or Islamic schools to offer support. As the KAC National Executive Director, Charles Kim, stated,

“Any attack on someone of perceived Arab ancestry is not only an attack on his or her civil rights, but also an attack on our country's sense of justice and equality.”

A lunchtime rally organized by a grassroots group of South Asian and Asian Pacific Americans was held at the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism in Washington, DC on September 13. The gathering drew around 200 people to show solidarity with Arab and Muslim Americans.

Antonia Hernandez, president and general counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, stressed that it “remains incumbent on all Americans to ensure that no ethnic or religious group is targeted” and that “our communities, the Arab American and the Latino, would stand to suffer a great deal if any widespread xenophobic reaction is not checked.”

The Asian American Journalists Association urged the news media to maintain responsible news reporting of Arab Americans. In a press release issued by the AAJA, they reminded the media that “Arab

Americans, along with all of us, are victims of this attack.”

One aspect of the response to the September 11 attacks was the creation of new organizations. One of these is Solidarity USA, based in Washington, DC, which is a civil liberties and human rights advocacy task force. It monitors human rights and civil liberties violations of Muslims, Arabs, South Asians and anyone else who has been affected by the post-September 11 backlash. The group has also worked to refer those in need of humanitarian aid and legal consultation to appropriate legal and humanitarian organizations.

Neighbors for Peace, too, was founded in response to the September 11th tragedies by a group of concerned citizens in the Chicago area. Stirred to action by escalating hate violence, the group, under the leadership of Anya Cordell, formed the Campaign for Collateral Compassion, a grassroots movement petitioning the major September 11th charities to include as beneficiaries families of victims of the racist backlash. Amber Amundson, whose husband was killed at the Pentagon, and five others who also lost family in the attacks, endorsed the group's efforts, saying that “As members of September Eleventh Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, and friends and relatives of 9/11 victims, we support ways of helping those who have been victims of 9/11 hate crimes. They too are victims of terrorism, just like those who died on September 11.”

Several philanthropic organizations awarded grants to support the victims of the backlash and the communities most affected by it.

The California Endowment of Southern California focused on granting millions of dollars in funding to grassroots organizations throughout the region that were committed to combating intolerance. “One of the things we wanted to do was reach into communities and support programs that focus around reducing hate and increasing understanding - particularly understanding the culture of Arab

“It has been a difficult time... feeling pain with the rest of the nation and at times feeling ostracized. But when we began feeling like we didn't belong, our community embraced us with love and support.”

Americans and Muslims,” according to Gwen Foster, program director for the California Endowment. (17)

The Open Society Institute made grants to 29 frontline organizations nationwide to meet the post-9/11 challenges to civil rights and liberties. More than \$2.5 million was donated in April to promote the safeguarding of civil liberties and immigrant rights and monitor hate crimes and racial profiling. Several Arab American organizations, including AAI and ADC, were among those awarded by OSI. The Atlantic Philanthropies also funded work to support affected communities, and in January the New York-based Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrant Rights cosponsored a briefing for funders on policy changes and direct needs in the aftermath of the attacks.

In February, the Maryland-based AmeriDream Charity, Inc. awarded

\$25,000 to assist families and organizations who were victims of hate crimes in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. Partnering with the Arab American Institute Foundation, AmeriDream established the Arab American Rebuilding Fund to assist Arab Americans and others who were victims of bias attacks.

“All Americans were deeply affected by the attacks in New York and Washington last September. It is unfortunate that certain Americans were further victimized by hate crimes simply as a result of their heritage,” said Steve Smith of AmeriDream. The Fund provided grants to those who suffered property damage on or after September 11. Eight Arab, Muslim, and Sikh American

families and two religious institutions from ten cities across the United States were assisted by this program.

One recipient of the AmeriDream grants was the Islamic Center of Greater Toledo, after an unknown assailant fired one shot on September 12th at the Center's stained glass window. Center Property Chair Mr. Hider Naserdin, in accepting a \$1,000 AmeriDream grant, commented: “It has been a difficult time for a lot of Muslim Americans, feeling pain with the rest of the nation and at times feeling ostracized. But when we began feeling like we didn't belong, our community embraced us with love and support.”

The Sikh Cultural Society of Washington, DC was another one of the grant recipients. The society was attacked with spray paint and eggs in late October. A flag and

Sikh banner were also vandalized. AmeriDream awarded \$2,750 to the society. An appreciative Satwant Kaur Bell, board member of the society, stated that “We must work in unity, we are all Americans, together we become one. United we are one.”

“While a few have chosen to use violence to drive Americans apart, many more have decided that our diversity is the basis of America's strength. The partnership between AmeriDream and the Arab American Institute in the Rebuilding Fund is one that proves that, in the aftermath of September 11, when we come together, we can turn adversity into prosperity,” said AAI President James Zogby. (17)

Media Efforts

Some of the widest-reaching efforts to stem the tide of hate violence and intolerance after September 11 came from dedicated media professionals. Taking a leading role, the New York-based Ad Council launched a powerful series of print, radio, and television public service announcements against hate, their largest single advertising campaign since World War II.

The campaign against hate began with a series of “I am an American” television spots that featured faces representing the diversity of America's racial and ethnic backgrounds, including Middle Eastern, South Asian and other groups most victimized by the backlash.

The Ad Council then collaborated with the Arab American Institute to produce a series of four radio spots that spoke forcefully and

frankly against hate violence. Mary Berry, Chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Attorney General John Ashcroft, Arizona Senator John McCain, and pop music superstar Mandy Moore acted as the spokespersons for the four spots, which were also promoted on AAI's website.

Meanwhile, in the Cleveland, Ohio offices of advertising agency Brokaw, Inc., Bill Brokaw and his staff were trying to come up with a way to contribute to the nation's healing. After hearing from a Pakistani employee that his wife was so afraid of being attacked as a Muslim that she refused to leave the house, Brokaw knew the direction his agency would take. The agency created a print ad entitled “Twin Towers,” featuring the anti-hate message of the ad forming the image of the fallen World Trade Center towers.

In an effort to gain a wider audience, Brokaw submitted his idea to the Ad Council which, in coopera-

tion with AAI, ran it as a print public service announcement in over 10,000 newspapers and 1300 magazines across the United States. AAI converted the ad to a full-color poster (see box on the next page) and began distributing it to schools and community groups as part of its own public information campaign. The powerful message of the poster resonated so well that AAI has made it available for shipping costs only via Amazon.com.

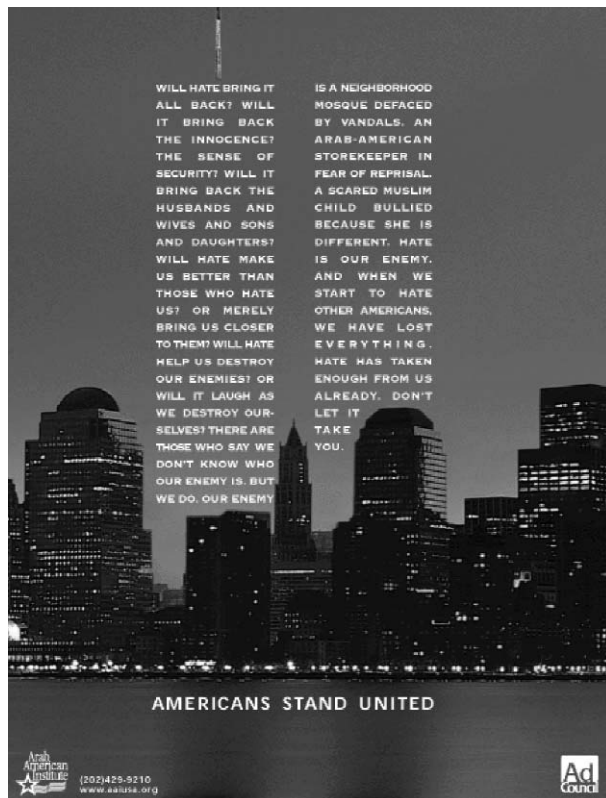
Meanwhile, Starz Encore Group, the leading provider of cable and satellite delivered premium movie channels in the United States, was also looking for a way to help the victims of intolerance. Its founder and president, John Sie, himself an immigrant, empathized deeply with those being targeted for hate since September 11.

They decided to produce a television spot conveying the message of “Tolerance” and working with AAI and Brokaw, a version of the “Twin



Members of the Islamic House of Wisdom in Michigan held a special prayer for the victims of the Sept. 11 attacks. They invited members of local Christian churches, shown here seated in the background, to attend. (photo: Millard Berry, Dearborn Press & Guide)

"I wish to extend my apologies to Arab Americans everywhere for the unconscionable acts committed by some against you at this sad time in our country." - Arlene Rosso-Baron



The Brokaw Inc./Ad Council/Arab American Institute anti-hate poster "Twin Towers." The text reads:

"Will hate bring it all back? Will it bring back the innocence? The sense of security? Will it bring back the husbands and wives and sons and daughters? Will hate make us better than those who hate us? Or merely bring us closer to them? Will hate help us destroy our enemies? Or will it laugh as we destroy ourselves? There are those who say we don't know who our enemy is.

"But we do. Our enemy is a neighborhood mosque defaced by vandals. An Arab-American storekeeper in fear of reprisal. A scared Muslim child bullied because she is different. Hate is our enemy. And when we start to hate other Americans, we have lost everything. Hate has taken enough from us already. Don't let it take you."

Towers" print ad was converted into a television spot featuring the narration of "Family Ties" star Michael Gross.

In addition to airing the spot on its own ten cable channels, Starz Encore enlisted the support of the six largest cable operators in the nation, among them Comcast and Time Warner, to run the public service announcements in all of their markets. The total number of households exposed to the ads was 64 million.

The campaign was announced in December at the largest Arab American press conference ever, which was held at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. The press conference featured Starz Encore CEO John Sie, Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences President Jack Valenti, Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham, and Secretary of Transportation Norman Minetta.

Individual Efforts

Sometimes it is the smallest acts of support and friendship that make the biggest statement.

In the small town of Ephrata, Pennsylvania, two Egyptian brothers, Osama and Muhamad "Mike" Mansour, immigrated to the United States in 1987 and opened a new diner at a location that had seen two other eateries come and go. They found success, until Sept. 11. Shortly after the attacks, rumors began to circulate that the two were somehow connected to the attacks, and business plummeted. After a local newspaper reporter wrote of their plight, business not only picked up, but exceeded its previous brisk pace. "The people who started these rumors should be man enough to come in and apologize," said Dave Brossman, a regular. Another longtime customer, Elroy Stauffer, said, "these are just two great guys. The rumors got out of

control, and it hurt them." (18)

Adisra Jittipun, a Muslim woman who wears a headscarf, and two non-Muslim friends had just sat down to eat at the Chason's Country Buffet in Winchester, VA when a waitress approached them. The three expected trouble, but instead the waitress returned their money, explaining that the restaurant wanted to give them a free meal. "She knelt by our table and was very sympathetic," said Jittipun, "saying that she didn't want us to go to war" and that "she was very proud that I had the strength to wear the Islamic attire." (19)

An attorney from Columbus, Mississippi offered his legal assistance to Arab Americans living in Mississippi and Alabama. In Rockville, Maryland, Linda Jasper, an English teacher at Rockville's Magruder High School, and some friends stood guard at night for a week outside the Islamic Center of Maryland to make sure it was undisturbed. "The idea of someone being

afraid to pray is crazy to me," she said. The Islamic Center in Athens, Ohio, reported being mailed a \$100 check from a non-Muslim couple who wrote that "we are all one people." (20)

In Falls Church, Virginia, Patricia Morris organized a candlelight vigil outside the Dar al-Hijrah mosque the Friday after the attacks to show neighborhood support. In appreciation, Muslims who had been at evening prayers distributed white roses to the vigil's participants.

George Chiplock, principal of Corpus Christi, a Catholic elementary school in Falls Church, Virginia, brought more than 450 cards made by students to the nearby Dar Al-Hijrah mosque. "We teach respect, tolerance, and love of neighbor here," he said, "and thought it would be a good idea to contact our neighbors and let them know we are thinking of them." (21)

Houses of worship across the religious spectrum including Muslims, Christians, Jews, Sikhs, Hindus, and others participated in ecumenical services across the nation in support of tolerance and diversity. In Orlando, Florida, religious leaders held such a service a week after the attacks to express solidarity with Arab Americans of all faiths. "There's a feeling among a group of religious leaders that we need to make a public witness of solidarity with our Arab American brothers and sisters," said the Rev. Fred Morris, executive director of the Florida Council of Churches.

In Berkeley, California, Inkworks Press created window signs with the captions "Justice, not Vengeance/Let us not become the evil that we deplore," and "Hate-Free Community/Stop Racist Attacks," for free distribution.

A group of Chicago businessmen pledged \$7000 to the families of those who were murdered in hate crimes after September 11, after consultations with the Campaign

for Collateral Compassion.

After severe damage to Columbus, Ohio's oldest mosque and only Islamic school at the hands of vandals, the First Congregational Church volunteered its facilities as the new temporary home of the Islamic school. It was chosen by the Islamic Center's leaders due to its size and proximity to the school's regular home. A number of other houses of worship offered their sites, including a synagogue. The Rev. Tim Ahrens, First Congregational's senior minister, noticed how similar the children were to his own students, remarking that when he asked if they liked being back in school, all the girls said 'yes' and all the boys said 'no', "just like my school." Mahmudur Rahman, the Islamic school's director, felt comfortable holding classes in the church, pointing out that Muslims believe in Jesus as a prophet. (22)

A number of people set up solidarity websites where web surfers could post messages of support for the Arab American community. Among the most immediate gestures extended to the Arab American community were the thousands of personal email messages sent to AAI and to other organizations.

A fitting close to this focus on the compassion of Americans towards Americans in the face of hate is the experience of Pakistani-born Richmond, Virginia doctor Abid Khan. Upon seeing members of a Presbyterian church outside his mosque one Friday holding up banners of unity, he encapsulated the beauty of the American spirit when he said: "You have to give the credit to the people who are keeping a positive, friendly attitude. That's what makes America great. It's not its military or its advances in science. It's the kindness, affection, helpfulness, and tolerance which is found in the large majority of people here." (23) ♦

AAI received an outpouring of support, in the form of emails, from individuals around the country in the days and weeks following September 11:

"I know that you are suffering with all America because of the events of the past few days, and are being forced by some to endure even more sorrow because of your ethnicity. Please know that your pain is not going unnoticed and that the whole country is not against you."

- Joe Borghi

"What is done to any American, regardless of their background, is done to all of us, and those who persist in expressing their ignorance and hatred only help those that mean to do us harm. We are deeply sorry that you have to have such burdens added to an already overwhelming sense of violation."

- Gregg Ferencz and Barbara Taylor

"My heart and thoughts are with you and all Arab and Muslim Americans. I am sickened at the misdirected anger of our fellow citizens." - Alison Locke

In Their Own Words

From a poem by Suheir Hammad:

fire in the city air and i
feared for my sister's life in
a way never before. and
then, and now, i fear for the
rest of us.

first, please god, let it be a
mistake, the pilot's heart
failed, the plane's engine
died.
then please god, let it be a
nightmare, wake me now.
please god, after the second
plane, please, don't let it be
anyone who looks like my
brothers.

i do not know how bad a life
has to break in order to kill.
i have never been so hungry
that i willed hunger
i have never been so angry
as to want to control a gun
over a pen.
not really.
even as a woman, as a
palestinian, as a broken
human being.
never this broken.

thank you to the woman
who saw me brinking my
cool and blinking back tears.
she opened her arms before
she asked "do you want a
hug?" a big white woman,
and her embrace was the
kind only people with the
warmth of flesh can offer.
i wasn't about to say no
to any comfort.
"my brother's in the navy,"
i said. "and we're arabs."
"wow, you got double
trouble."

Naomi Shihab Nye, the acclaimed Arab American author and poet, heard from a man who said that he was afraid for his daughter to admit that she is half-Arab.

Her response was: "never deny it. Maybe Arab Americans are twice as sad as other people. But we are still proud of everything peaceful and beautiful that endures. Then speak beauty if we can - the beauty of culture, poetry, tradition, memory, family, daily life.

"Because men with hard faces do violent things, because fanaticism seizes and shrinks minds, is no reason for the rest of us to abandon our songs. Maybe we need to sing louder."



Dearborn, Michigan,
September 2001
(photo: Millard Berry,
Dearborn Press &
Guide)

"In My Own Skin: The Complexity of Living as an Arab in America," a documentary film directed by Jennifer Jajeh and Nikki Byrd, sheds light on the complexities of the Arab American experience through candid, in-depth interviews with five young Arab American women living in post-September 11 New York:

"In high school, my friends who think it's just a joke or they don't mean to hurt my feelings say, 'You Arab terrorist,' in a joking way. But to me it was always hurtful because it's what a lot of people believe - it's the general perception that Americans have of who an Arab is."

"Recently, because of what happened on September 11th, I was afraid to walk out on the street with my regular headwear. So I tied it around the back, so I don't look Muslim or Arab or I don't get too many stares." - Rabyaah

ARAB AMERICANS REACH OUT TO EDUCATE AND INFORM

It was not only the support of the American people that kept the Arab American community strong in the face of hate crimes, but also the proactive stance taken by the community itself. Both individuals and groups recognized the need to educate fellow Americans about Arab culture and the Muslim faith and recognized the desire of many Americans to learn more about their Arab and Muslim neighbors.

An editorial in *The Economist* remarked that “Rather than railing against the Islamic world, most Americans are desperate to understand it. The best-seller lists are full of books on Islam, the Taliban and the Middle East. University students are crowding into courses that touch on the current crisis. Washington's Middle East Institute reports that applications for Arabic courses have doubled.” (24)

Arab Americans, both organizations and individuals, have helped their fellow countrymen better understand what being Arab American means.

The surge in public interest about Arab Americans, Islam, and the Middle East is exemplified by the

volume of requests for information that hit every major Arab American and Muslim organization and academic center with expertise in the region. AAI, for example, dedicated on September 12 a special section of its website that offered resources, made referrals, and kept track of breaking news about the fallout from September 11. On September 10, AAI had projected reaching five million hits on the website by the end of the year; instead the number was ten million.

Media interest in the Arab American viewpoint was obviously at its peak after 9/11, and requests for interviews from the electronic and print media (local, national and international) were heavy and steady throughout the fall. For AAI's part, staff members participated in more than 400 broadcast interviews including television networks such as ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN, CNNI, BBC, Unavision, Al-Jazeera, FOX News, MBC, MSNBC, Abu Dhabi TV, CNBC, Nile TV, LBC, Court TV, Telemundo, Future TV, CBC, and ANN. In the months following September 11, AAI responded to more than 1,500 print interviews

Immediately after the September 11 tragedy, Nour Naciri and his wife Zainab A. Elberry of Nashville, Tennessee, received calls and visits of concern, friendship, and support from many members of their community. Both saw not only a tremendous need for understanding and tolerance, but also a desire among those in their community to learn and come together in a time of crisis.

On October 23, Nour delivered an address entitled "Islam: An Overview in Context" to around 500 members of the Nashville chapter of the Exchange Club, a national business social and volunteer organization, by invitation of a local church. The gathering spawned further visits and meetings with church and interfaith groups.

Zeinab, who is a board member of the Women's Fund of the Nashville Community Foundation, helped organize the Foundation's annual fundraiser for women and children. Mavis Leno, wife of late-night talk show host Jay Leno, was the guest speaker at the event, and spoke in support of the rights of Afghan women and children. In May, Zeinab was asked to organize the annual fundraiser for The Links, Inc., an African-American civic organization. The event, attended by many members of the local Muslim community, became an opportunity for intercultural and interfaith understanding.

with publications like the New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times and countless others across the nation and around the world.

AAI also responded to regular invitations for speakers from federal and local government agencies, civic groups, and universities. Not only did AAI staff deliver keynote speeches to conferences and gatherings regarding Arab Americans and the impact of September 11, AAI also addressed numerous public appearances ranging from testimony before members of Congress to panels sponsored by the EEOC, Department of Justice, FAA, Department of Transportation, Department of State, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, state and local agencies, the National Association of Attorneys General, the National Newspaper Publishers Association, the American Federation of Teachers, National Immigration Forum, and similar professional associations. AAI President James Zogby participated in President Clinton's forum on Islam

and the West featuring many prominent scholars and analysts. (See appendices.)

Perhaps the most intense appetite for information came from the nation's educators, who needed to take advantage of the critical teaching moment brought about by tragedy and its aftermath. AAI's Foundation quickly compiled a resource packet for use in classrooms that answered questions about Arab Americans, Muslims, and the Arab world, using its own demographic profiles and handouts from other publishers. Since the early fall, several thousand schools nationwide have received resource packets and poster reprints of the "Twin Towers" anti-hate PSA message (see page 12). (A complete list of materials available from AAI appears in the appendices to this report.)

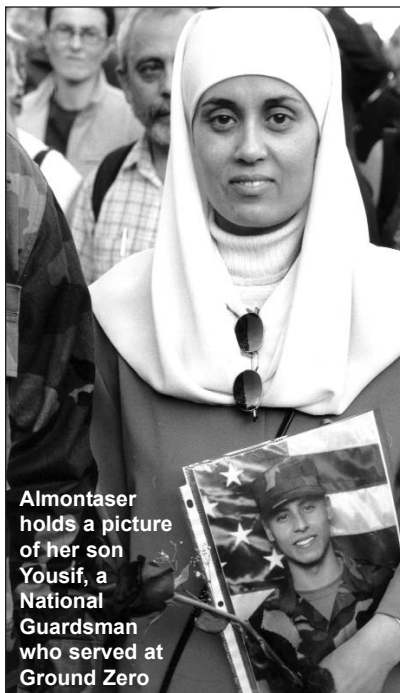
The Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS), based in Dearborn, Michigan, embarked upon an ambitious program of educating Americans about the Arab world

and the Arab American experience in the aftermath of the attacks. The program will over the next two years offer "cultural competency" training and education to those in positions to influence the attitudes and behavior of others, such as state legislators, teachers, and law enforcement personnel in major cities throughout the state of Michigan.

Jamal Baadani, a Marine Corps staff sergeant and Gulf War veteran, decided to form an organization to highlight the contributions Arab Americans have made in the armed forces of the United States, dating back to World War I. "We want to close that gap by educating Americans about our service, because the more Americans understand what we do, the more they'll say, OK, they are Americans." Baadani's group, the Association of Patriotic Arab Americans in the Military (APAAM), has over 300 members from all of the US armed services. (25)

Various Muslim organizations opened their doors to the public in an effort to bridge the gaps in understanding. The mosque in Birmingham, Alabama hosted an open house to educate Americans about Islam. The Prince George's County, Maryland Muslim Association is involved in an ongoing effort to educate the public about Islam.

The Dar Al Hijrah Islamic Center in Falls Church, Virginia has undertaken a program entitled "The Peaceful Inter-Community Project" (PIP). PIP's main objective is to improve relationships among members of the community near the Islamic Center, across lines of race, ethnicity, class, and age through workshops, a youth forum, guest exchange speeches, and a continuous mentoring program. The Center stressed that this undertaking is particularly important in the aftermath of September 11.



Almontaser holds a picture of her son Yousif, a National Guardsman who served at Ground Zero

New Yorker Debbie Almontaser, a Yemeni who came to the US at the age of three, was deeply struck by the Sept. 11 tragedy. A teacher with the NYC Board of Education, she was overwhelmed with requests by community groups to help foster interfaith dialogue after the attacks, and has discussed her faith and heritage in countless classrooms and panels.

Debbie co-founded Brooklyn Bridges, a program in which volunteers escorted students of Arab and South Asian origin who feared for their safety. With the help of the Christian Children's Fund, she established the Sept. 11 Curriculum Project, a group of educators who developed materials and workshops to educate other teachers about Arab and Muslim culture. And in February, she put together a multicultural festival and fundraiser with Arab, Jewish, and South Asian performers.

The Power of Individual Action

Individuals across the country spoke with religious groups, schools, businesses, and community organizations about the impact of September 11 on Arab Americans as well as what Islam is really about. A prime example of individuals making a difference is the case of Dr. Ahmad Abul-Ela of New Castle, Pennsylvania. Besides speaking about Islam to large groups at various churches, he started a group called Conflict Resolution with a professor of theology from Westminster College. The group sponsored a student-faculty talk at the college, which drew 400 people, discussing Islam and the terrorist attacks.

Mona Ismail of Washington, DC posted events organized by Arab American organizations on her website. "Educating Americans and guiding them to find the best source of information was a priority in my view, as a lot of damage was done to our community and our children from the bias in the media," said Ismail.

Mary Kamalick, an Arab American from Houston, Texas, has been providing information on the customs and traditions of the Arab world, focusing on language, religions, food, customs and traditions. She takes her program to middle school and high school students, church and civic groups, and companies.

Diversity trainer Lobna Ismail has spoken on the impact of September 11 on Arab and Muslim Americans and on Islam to a wide range of groups, including the Jewish Community Center, an Episcopal Church, and the Fairfax County Virginia Schools. Virginia activist and educator Sharifa Al-Khateeb has also made dozens of presentations on Islam to government and school groups. ♦



Samira Hussein and her family lost their West Bank home in the June 1967 war and emigrated to America five years later.

Growing up in America, Samira observed that few people truly understood Arab and Muslim culture. During the Gulf War, her family experienced acts of hatred due to this lack of understanding. Samira volunteered to share her culture and religion at her daughter's school in Montgomery County, Maryland. Soon her work became a full time job in educating both students and teachers about the Arab and Muslim worlds.

held a conference for over 400 high school students to discuss Islam and oversaw the establishment of Arab Heritage Month in July 2002.

For her work as a cultural liaison, Samira has been awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the Montgomery County Board of Education, and in February 2002 she was recognized in *Rosie* magazine as one of Rosie O'Donnell's "Extraordinary People." In March 2002 she was inducted into the Human Rights Hall of Fame of the Montgomery County Human Rights Commission.

On the morning of September 11, Marwan Kreidie, executive director of the Arab American Community Development Corporation, was busy making phone calls. Even before the second plane had struck the World Trade Center towers, Marwan was networking with the police and the Human Relations Commission of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to establish an Arab American "control center" made up of volunteers who called schools, mosques, and area leaders to console them and calm fears.

At 2 pm that same day, Marwan held a press conference with Tawfiq Barqawi to mourn the country's loss and call on residents of Philadelphia to avoid hate-related violence against the Arab community. He met with the FBI and Pennsylvania Attorney General Mike Fisher to offer assistance and gain assurance that Arab Americans would not be targeted in backlash after the attacks. To increase awareness and understanding, Marwan organized a community forum at a Philadelphia mosque which was attended by many local government officials.

Since September 11, Marwan has turned his attention to long-term outreach and education. He distributes action alerts about Arabs and Islam to public school teachers, and recently received over \$100,000 in grant money from the Samuel S. Fels Fund and the William Penn Foundation to expand his educational program. He is planning to develop a permanent curriculum guide for public schools on Arab and Muslim culture.



CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUES IN THE WAKE OF SEPT. 11

Arab American groups have been in the vanguard of those fighting to balance the nation's need for security with protection of fundamental rights and freedoms. Many actions taken since September 11 in the name of the "war on terrorism" have far-reaching implications not just for those of Arab or Muslim descent, but for all Americans.

The USA PATRIOT Act and Civil Liberties

When the USA PATRIOT ("Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism") Act passed by an overwhelming majority in Congress and was signed by President Bush in October, it provided a legal framework for much of the Administration's war on terrorism and raised immediate alarms within the civil rights and civil liberties communities. This act gave the government broad new investigative powers as well as the power to detain and deport, based on little or no information, those who are believed to pose a special threat.

While recognizing some merits of the new legislation, a number of groups, including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the National Council of La Raza, the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC), the Sikh Coalition, and major Arab American and Muslim American organizations, raised concern about the "guilt by association" the Act promulgates as well as the tenuous terms used to define groups supporting terror. The ACLU's Timothy Edgar warned of the "measures that would allow for detention of immigrants on the basis of lawful political associations and suspicion for a potentially

indefinite period of time; expand the ability of the government to conduct secret searches; minimize judicial supervision of federal telephone and Internet surveillance by law enforcement authorities." (26)

Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI) cast the sole vote against the Act in the Senate, saying that it did "not strike the right balance between empowering law enforcement and protecting civil liberties." (27) Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-CA) echoed this sentiment by saying that "the Bill of Rights, civil rights and civil liberties must not be the 'other victim' of terrorism. As the domestic war against terrorism continues, my concern is that increased police power will encroach on our liberties." (28)

Executive Branch Orders (29)

The USA PATRIOT Act was the launching pad for a series of Department of Justice initiatives and executive orders that gave the government even more investigative power and changed immigration rules to make them more restrictive to those coming from Middle Eastern countries.

A growing number of ethnic and religious groups, immigrant advocates, and supporters of civil liberties have coalesced to raise awareness to the serious threats to American rights and interests posed by these initiatives. These groups have worked to ensure that the requirements of security are reconciled with the demands of liberty, and have warned against enacting proposals in the mistaken belief that anything that may be called anti-terrorist will necessarily provide greater security.

These coalitions have stood by their Arab and Muslim American partners in defending constitutional liberties and working to ensure that the United States does not

repeat historical mistakes of the Japanese internment camps or of the McCarthy era. Wade Henderson, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, warned that "History has shown us that, in past times of national calamity, civil rights and civil liberties fall victim to the crisis just as surely as the human victims whose loss we all grieve. We must not compound this tragedy by infringing on the rights of Americans or persons guaranteed protections under the Constitution."

The detention of hundreds of men of Middle Eastern origin shortly after the attacks was another source of serious concern. The Department of Justice justified the detentions through the use of often questionable legal tactics. On September 20,

2001, the Department published an interim regulation allowing the detention without charge for 48 hours or "an additional reasonable period of time" in the event of an "emergency or other extraordinary circumstance." This led to the detention and often rough treatment of over 1,100 individuals in the wake of September 11, some of whom are still held to this day, unable to gain regular access to their attorneys or families.

The day after this detention ruling, Chief Immigration Judge Michael Creppy added another level of secrecy when he issued a memo stating that "the Attorney General has implemented additional security procedures for certain cases in the Immigration Court." These procedures "require" immigration judges "to close the hearing to the public..."

The Arab American community continues to work diligently as advocates for the civil rights of those who

have been held in indefinite detention since September 11. Working with the ACLU and other civil rights advocacy groups, Arab Americans are closely monitoring the activities of the federal government regarding the welfare of the several hundred individuals still being held.

In addition, the questioning by the FBI of many thousands of individuals due to their country of origin caused much unease.

On November 9, 2001, the

Many actions taken since September 11 have far-reaching implications not just for those of Arab or Muslim descent, but for all Americans.

Attorney General issued a memo authorizing interviews with a list of 5,000 men, ages 18-33, who entered the United States legally on nonimmigrant visas since January 2000, and who came from countries where al-Qaeda has a "terrorist presence or activity."

Said one of those who received the letter requesting a meeting with the FBI, a Lebanese chemistry student at the University of Michigan, "I was shocked. I was asking myself, 'Why?' There's no reason to have this letter." AAI President James Zogby expressed concerns that "the kind of broad net-casting that was done right after September 11 may have been excusable, but at this point there has to be a better way of conducting this investigation...I don't want to give up our freedoms."

From the outset, some local law enforcement agencies took issue with the mass questioning. According to Chief Richard Williams of the Madison,

Wisconsin Police Department, the force "will not engage in random interviews of any person solely based on their country of origin, race, religion, or any other characteristics unless there is specific evidence linked to that person for a criminal act." (30) Many police departments, who have since been asked to also track down visa violators, object to the strain those functions place on relations of trust they have built with immigrant communities.

Uncomfortable comparisons have been made to the treatment of Japanese Americans after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC) has pointed out that the "solidarity between communities identified as 'the enemy' has in some cases forged a new alliance between Japanese Americans and Arab Americans and

Muslims." In the words of NAPALC President Karen Naranski, "Let us take to heart the lessons of WWII when ... Japanese-American families were herded behind barbed wire simply because they looked like the enemy...No one should be presumed to be any less loyal to our country just because of the color of their skin, their national origin, their immigration status or the religion that they follow." (31)

Investigation and Individual Rights

Arousing particular alarm in the legal profession was the October 31, 2001 Bureau of Prisons interim regulation that allowed eavesdropping on attorney/client conversations wherever there is "reasonable suspicion...to believe that a particular inmate may use communications with attorneys to further or facilitate acts of terrorism," with the

regulation requiring written notice to the inmate and attorney, "except in the case of prior court authorization." Further constitutional questions arose when President Bush issued an executive order in November authorizing the creation of military tribunals to try non-citizens alleged to be involved in international terrorism.

While the rights of foreign nationals remained of primary concern throughout this period, the treatment of American citizens and organizations added a new dimension to the impact on the community of the government's investigation. U.S. Muslim charities legally operating in Texas, Chicago and Michigan were the first to be targeted for scrutiny, resulting in freezing of assets, seizure of records and in some cases charges filed against officers accused of aiding, even indirectly, groups defined by the U.S. as terrorist.

In mid-March, the offices and homes of individuals related to fourteen U.S. Muslim organizations were raided. In the latter cases, none of the offices were closed, no arrests were made, and no assets were frozen. As victims of those raided are prominent members of their communities, the shock was severe. Federal officials entered homes at gunpoint, handcuffed residents during the raids, carted off boxes of materials, and destroyed some property, all the while using affidavits which were "secret and sealed," giving the victims no idea why these events happened, what was taken, and what

they were hoping to find.

An announcement in August 2002 that the FBI would target small businesses owned by persons of Arab or Muslim descent to search for money trails to terrorist groups was another chilling reminder of how widely the government's dragnet is being cast. The ramifications of this investigative strategy, both on the affected business communities



11, and that close to two-thirds are very or somewhat worried about the long-term effects of discrimination.

Airline passenger profiling has become a common complaint of Arab and Muslim Americans, ranging from extra security screening to removal from commercial flights. Among those removed from flights have been a U.S. Congressman and a U.S. Secret Service agent on the President's detail, as well as others who have filed discrimination suits against the airlines. Community leaders continue to bring these concerns to the attention of the Department of Transportation and other agencies charged with protecting passenger rights. Leaders stress that while all Americans, including those of Arab and Muslim descent, support increased airline safety, profiling measures that rely on ethnic or religious attributes alone, rather than suspicious conduct, do not promote security.

Impact on Immigration Policy

and on the credibility of the anti-terror investigation, remain to be seen.

Although racial profiling against Arabs was a concern well before the terror attacks, its scope and impact have expanded dramatically. A May 2002 poll commissioned by the AAI Foundation found that 78 percent of Arab Americans surveyed think there has been more profiling of Arab Americans since September

Immigration has long been a contentious issue in the United States, and following September 11, some lawmakers began using immigration policy as a scapegoat for the terrorist attacks. Members of Congress introduced legislation that restricts admissions, particularly from Arab countries. The Administration has followed suit with a string of policies designed to screen and keep closer

tabs on those entering the country.

Among the more troubling changes to immigration policy is that visitors from certain countries or those designated "threats" for other reasons must register at the point of entry, thirty days after entry, and at one-year intervals thereafter. As of September 11, 2002, the government will begin to take fingerprints, photographs, and other information from selected nationals upon arrival in the U.S. These policies have a particular impact on those from Arab and Muslim countries.

Commenting on the potential repercussions of this regulation, Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) said, "This is a troubling and poorly thought-out regulation. It was proposed without any consultation with Congress. It does little to provide real protection against terrorism. I fear this proposal will open a shameful chapter in our history that we as a nation will come to regret." (32)

Other measures against immigrants include the State Department's November 2001 decision to impose new security checks on visa applicants. Those applying for visas from such countries as Afghanistan, Bahrain, Indonesia, Qatar, Tunisia, and Yemen among others received a statement saying: "Effective immediately, the State Department has introduced a 20-day waiting period for men from certain countries, ages 16-45, applying for visas into the United States." And in April 2002, the Immigration and Naturalization Service issued a proposed regulation establishing a presumptive limitation on visitors to the United States of 30 days, or a "fair and reasonable period" to accomplish the purpose of the visit.

Of all visa holders impacted by post-September 11 regulations, foreign students are on the front lines. As mentioned, the lion's share of

persons approached by the FBI for questioning in the fall of 2001 were Arab and Muslim students in American universities. Some students, particularly those from Gulf countries, were so intimidated in the weeks following the attacks that they returned home in the middle of the school year. It is expected that the strong preference by Arab elites for American higher education, a trend that has persisted since the 1960s, will be diminished by the current barriers and climate.

One of the procedures imposed by the Attorney General is a new student reporting system, SEVIS, which will require schools to report on foreign students such data as enrollment, start date of next term, failure to enroll, disciplinary action by the school, and early graduation. Schools are required to notify authorities if a foreign student drops under full-time status, at which time the student is deportable. Like many of the tracking measures proposed since September 11, those tasked with collecting the data are questioning its efficacy. Some college administrators recall a similar tracking system set up in the 1970s that was abandoned as cumbersome and unproductive.

Beyond the burden and questionable value of some of the visa-related restrictions was the highly publicized announcement in January that the INS would begin to locate the more than 300,000 persons who have overstayed their visas or otherwise qualify for deportation under existing law, under a new program known as the "Absconder Apprehension Initiative." The INS stated that the priority for location would be persons from "Al-Qaeda harboring countries" - estimated at about six thousand people - whose names would be entered first into the National Crime Information Center database.

Immigrant rights supporters have

been alarmed at the government's conflated message to the public that places all immigrants, especially those from the Middle East, under suspicion in the anti-terrorism campaign.

Dangerous Directions at the Department of Justice

The Attorney General's decision to lift guidelines on FBI operations, placed by Congress in the 1970s to curb widespread abuses by agents in the Hoover era, has been criticized by politicians and civil libertarians alike. Safeguards against the infiltration and harassment that characterized surveillance practices during the McCarthy era and against civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr. and others engaged in lawful political dissent are now being removed, and activists in the Muslim and Arab American communities are not alone in their alarm.

"These new guidelines say to the American people that you no longer have to be doing something wrong in order to get that FBI knock at your door," said Laura Murphy, director of the Washington national office of the ACLU. (33) The ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee, John Conyers (D-MI), commenting on the plan to use the new guidelines to target mosques and Islamic organizations, said, "Threatening the private practice of religion constitutes a war on freedom, not a war on terror. I hope it is clear to all that taking it upon himself to institute new rules to wiretap religious organizations, including places of worship, the Attorney General will do little to help us battle terrorism. Instead it will simply further alienate the American Muslim community, a crucial ally in our efforts." (34)

Immigrants from the Arab and Muslim worlds are “the weakest link in the civil rights chain,” and that places them squarely on the front line in the defense of civil liberties.

Another initiative of the Attorney General is the Terrorism Information and Prevention System (TIPS) program, that would ask Americans with access to private property, such as mail carriers and utility workers, to become informers on “unusual events.” As envisioned, it would have opened up the door to “prying, racial profiling and subtle violations of the Fourth Amendment.” (35) TIPS has been scaled back to involve truckers, dock workers, bus drivers, and others who are in positions to monitor places and events that are obviously public.

In an even more blatant appeal to citizen vigilance, the FBI issued an advisory this spring that warned property owners, public housing officials and landlords to watch out for terrorists renting apartments. This warning has Arab Americans understandably worried about discrimination. In the words of Aslam Abdallah with the Islamic Center of Southern California, “I fear these terrorist warnings will only make matters worse, mostly for Middle Eastern people because of their appearance. The community is really scared. Today it’s apartments, tomorrow it’s the neighborhood where people won’t sell their houses to us.” (36)

Committed to Dialogue and Advocacy

In spite of grave civil liberties concerns and diminishing confidence of Arab Americans in the government’s commitment to protecting

their rights, community leaders are in regular contact with federal agencies, law enforcement, and civil rights commissions to keep open channels for dialogue and feedback. They are also informing their community members of expanding opportunities for participation, as linguists and analysts, in the unfolding investigation.

Whereas early deliberations with officials were dominated by issues of hate crimes and discrimination, the focus has since shifted primarily to the treatment of people of Arab descent by the government itself. One response to community concerns has been the Department of Justice’s decision to streamline complaints of civil rights violations by government entities via a hotline administered by the US Commission on Civil Rights.

Arab American and American Muslim groups worked with the Department of Justice to set up monthly meetings hosted by Ralph Boyd, Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. The meetings sought to create a partnership between the major Arab and Muslim organizations in the United States and the federal government offices involved in the investigative aspects of the war on terror, primarily the Department of Justice and the FBI. Both agencies solicited community feedback on violation of rights that might occur in interviews and investigation practices. In several cases, local field offices of the FBI met regularly with community representatives who provided advice on cultural sensitivities and

how to minimize the intimidating aspects of the government’s information gathering.

While the concerns raised in this chapter illustrate how Arab and Muslim Americans have been deeply affected by government scrutiny since September 11, these matters threaten to fundamentally change the civil rights and freedoms of all Americans.

Recent immigrants to the United States from the Middle East have been especially vulnerable to security policies enacted by the federal government in the wake of the terror attacks.

Newly arrived immigrants from the Arab and Muslim worlds are, in the words of AAI President James Zogby, “the weakest link in the civil rights chain,” and that places them squarely on the front line in the defense of civil liberties and freedoms that have defined the United States for centuries. How the nation responds to this continuing struggle between security and constitutional rights will be a lasting legacy of September 11.

As Anthony Lake, former National Security Adviser to President Bill Clinton, observed, “If we are fighting for freedom - and we are - then we need to respect the freedom of all Americans to believe and live as they wish. As we are fighting for our civilized values, we need to be civil to all of our citizens. If we are fighting against those who live and act on their hatred, and we become like them - then we are losing the war.” (37) ♦

One year later, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 are still at the forefront of the nation's mind as we continue to overcome grief, remember those who were lost, and fight to ensure the safety and well-being of the nation.

"Healing the Nation" is one small part of the history of this past year - a year that has been among the most difficult many Americans have experienced. This title was chosen because, from those first terrible moments of this tragedy, Americans stepped forward to help each other in any way they could. September 11 will forever be remembered not just as a tragedy, but as an example of how the country can pull together in a time of crisis.

Arab Americans not only joined in the rescue efforts, but have been able to start to heal some of the deeper wounds that became apparent in the days and weeks following the attacks. They have joined fellow Americans in developing bonds of education and understanding, combating stereotypes, and taking messages of cooperation into classrooms, community centers, and places of worship. And just as the response of the Arab American community was immediate and strong, the response of Americans of all backgrounds toward the community was, overwhelmingly, one of support.

One year later, as the nation continues its healing, we look back at the experiences of the Arab American community not just to honor their contributions to the recovery efforts and remember those who were lost, but also as a reminder that the strength of the United States lies in our ability, be it in personal interactions or government policy, to fight hatred and suspicion with understanding and inclusion. As the country continues to deal with the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, we must ensure that we fight for both the safety of the country as well as to protect the civil and constitutional rights of all Americans.

Notes

- (1) MSNBC, September 15, 2001
- (2) "Loyalty at La Shish: Owner of the Popular Restaurant Chain Expresses Concern for Terrorism's Victims and Love for His Adopted Homeland," by Sylvia Rector, Detroit Free Press, October 10, 2001
- (3) ABANA press release, March 6, 2002
- (4) ibid
- (5) American Muslim Council press release, September 12, 2001
- (6) mass e-mail from Ray Hanania
- (7) "Hail to The Flag," Arab American Business online, October 12, 2001
- (8) "Arab-Americans Use Language Skills in Terrorism War," by Judy Peet, The Star-Ledger online, September 18, 2001
- (9) "Arabic Speakers Answer FBI Call for Translators," Richard Willing, USA Today online, April 24, 2002
- (10) Department of Justice press release, Sept. 13, 2001
- (11) U.S. Department of Education News, Sept. 19, 2001
- (12) "Arab Heritage Month Salutes Community's Achievements," Arab News
- (13) The Human Rights Commission of the City and County of San Francisco, CA, press release, September 13, 2001
- (14) "Redford to Host Diversity Workshop," by Delores Patterson, The Detroit News, October 5, 2001
- (15) Report entitled "Positive Community Response to Bias Incidents Directed Toward The Middle Eastern and Muslim Community Since September 11"
- (16) "Peace: In Reaction to 9/11 People Are Reaching Out to Diverse Groups," by Scott Martelle, The Los Angeles Times, April 21, 2002
- (17) Arab American Institute press release, "AmeriDream Fights Hate with Arab American Rebuilding Effort," February 21, 2002
- (18) "Ephrata Rallies to Egyptians' Restaurant Hurt by Rumors," by Timothy D. May, the Associated Press, October 20, 2001
- (19) "For Muslims, Benevolence Is Prevailing Over Backlash," by Caryle Murphy, The Washington Post, October 6, 2001
- (20) ibid
- (21) ibid
- (22) "Support Buoy City's Displaced Muslims," by Dave Ghose, The Arab-American News, January 19-26, 2002
- (23) "For Muslims, Benevolence Is Prevailing Over Backlash," by Caryle Murphy, The Washington Post, October 6, 2001
- (24) "America the Sensible: The Country is More Rock-Ribbed than Outsiders Think," the Economist, October 27, 2001
- (25) "Up in Arms Against Bigotry: Arab-American Marine Forms Group to Send Patriotic Message," by Jeannette Steele, San Diego Union-Tribune, July 4, 2002
- (26) <http://www.aclu.org/congress/l101201b.html>
- (27) See <http://thomas.loc.gov/>
- (28) See <http://thomas.loc.gov/>
- (29) Much of the information in this section comes from the American Immigration Lawyers Association; see www.aiala.org
- (30) "Madison Cops Won't Screen Muslims," by Steven Elbow, The Capital Times (Madison, WI), December 12, 2001
- (31) "Asian Pacific Americans Display Support for Arab, Sikh Americans: Praise Bush, Others for Denouncing Profiling, Hate Crimes," by Rita M. Gerona-Adkins, Asian Fortune, October 2001
- (32) "100,000 Foreign Visitors to Face Fingerprinting," by Wayne Washington and Robert Schlesinger, the Boston Globe, June 6, 2002
- (33) "In Terror Fight, FBI Eases Domestic Spying Rules," by Don Van Natta Jr., the International Herald Tribune, May 31, 2002
- (34) See www.cair-net.org
- (35) "Just the Facts, Mr. Ashcroft," by Jean AbiNader and Kate Martin, The Washington Post, July 25
- (36) "Arab Americans Wary of Warnings," the Detroit News, May 28, 2002
- (37) "Bigotry's High Price," by Anthony Lake, USA Today, September 19, 2001

APPENDICES:

Resources on Arab Americans and the September 11 Aftermath

A. Submission to The United States Commission on Civil Rights, Testimony of Dr. James J. Zogby, October 12, 2001 (excerpt)

With an Appendix of Selected Hate-Based Incidents Sept. 11 to Oct. 10, 2001, October 12, 2001

B. Arab American Perspectives on the International War Against Terrorism (excerpt)

Remarks to the Secretary's Open Forum by Dr. James J. Zogby, December 5, 2001. United States Department of State

C. Commissioners Meeting Open Session, "Employment Discrimination in the Aftermath of September 11"

Remarks by AAI Managing Director Jean AbiNader, December 11, 2001. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

D. Arab American Institute Materials:

I. Select AAI Press Releases

II. AAI Publications and Reports

III. AAI Educational Packet

In light of the high demand for information after Sept. 11, AAI put together a resource packet on Arab Americans, Islam, and the Middle East. The packet is available in electronic format on the AAI website at www.aaiusa.org/educational_packet.htm, where there is also an order form to request print copies.

E. Other Resources

Links to information from the US Department of Justice, Department of Transportation, EEOC, and other sources

A. Submission to The United States Commission on Civil Rights, Testimony of James J. Zogby, October 12, 2001 (excerpt)

(With an Appendix of Selected Hate-Based Incidents September 11 - October 10, 2001)

Full transcript of this testimony, as well as the hate crimes appendix, is available on the Arab American Institute website at www.aaiusa.org/publications.htm

In the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon (even before it became clear that the perpetrators were from Arab countries), Arab Americans found themselves the targets of incidents of hate and bias. It was something that we had come to expect.

For a number of decades now, Arab Americans have experienced similar "backlashes".

During the Iranian hostage crisis, for example, despite the fact that Iranians are not Arabs, Arab Americans were targeted. The same was true in the days following the terrorist bombing in Oklahoma City and the tragic explosion of TWA flight 800.

Part of the reason why Arab Americans have come to be scapegoated in times of crisis is because for many decades, my community has been defined by negative stereotypes propagated by the popular culture. Arab Americans are not known as the complex and diverse community that we are.

Compounding this is the fact that, in recent years, these destructive stereotypes have been fed by the outrageous and condemnable acts of terror committed against the United States by some extremist groups with roots in Arab countries.

The result of this confluence of preexisting negative stereotypes with actual terrorist acts has created, with each of these crises, a dangerous situation where, in the minds of some, blame was generalized and collective guilt was assigned to the entire Arab American community.

In just three days after the Oklahoma City bombing, for example, more than 200 serious hate crimes were committed against Arab Americans and American Muslims. The same was true in the days following September 11.

I have attached to this statement a selection of such instances of hate crimes and acts of bias that were reported to my organization and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) during the period of September 11 to October 10, 2001. The list is not complete, but represents a state-by-state selection, organized by type.

Let me review, for a moment, the types of cases we are reporting.

First, there have been assaults. Among them, there have been seven deaths which may be the result of hate crimes. We also list about 90 other physical assaults, either shooting, beatings, or stabbings that have been reported. Next we list over 85 incidents of vandalism to property. Special targets for vandalism include mosques and Arab-owned businesses that have Arab signage out front. Threats and harassment are next. These include death threats or personal threats. Although we list a large number of these types of incidents, I believe that the numbers must be much higher. While direct assaults and acts of vandalism are reported to law enforcement, most victim communities hesitate to report threats. They all too frequently accept this form of hate crime as expected behavior and are afraid to create more problems by reporting the offense and offenders.

We also have had a few job-related acts of discrimination, though not as many as I might have feared. So far, six cases have been reported to us where people have been fired and been told the specific reason for their dismissal was that their fellow employees didn't want "an Arab in the workplace." This is an area of concern that bears watching, since there are signs that it may grow in the future.

Another area of discrimination that is very troubling is the matter of airplane profiling. We've had 11 specific instances reported to us involving over 20 passengers where people have either been taken off a plane or not allowed to board a plane because of their ethnicity. Since there is no provision, in law, for a cooperating passenger who has passed security screening to be removed from a flight because "the pilot won't fly with someone named Mohammed", or "because other passengers are nervous to fly with you on board" (these were actual reasons given), we feel that there is a very dangerous form of vigilantism at work here. It must be stopped. We have raised this matter with the Secretary of Transportation and have pressed the Department of Transportation to issue a clear policy statement to the airlines.

The key to understanding the gravity of this entire situation for Arab Americans is that no segment of my community has been exempt.

An Arab American Congressman was excluded from a flight. Arab American churches as well as mosques were attacked. And, in many instances, bigots struck out at anyone whom they suspected was Arab, victimizing Sikhs, South Asians and Hispanics.

My own family, for example, has been dramatical-

ly impacted. The morning after September 11, I received a harrowing death threat at my office. The caller left this message: "Jim, you towelhead, all Arabs must die. We will slit your throats and kill your children." My daughter, a college student, received two threatening phone calls. My nephew, also a college student, was affected. My brother, John, received two bomb threats at his office.

The problem was widespread. A poll of Arab Americans we conducted from October 6 to October 8, 2001, showed that while 32% of Arab Americans reported having been subjected to some form of ethnic-based discrimination during their lifetimes, 20% reported having experienced an instance of ethnic-based discrimination since September 11. Most affected were the vulnerable parts of my community. Of special concern, for example, is the fact that 45% of students and 37% of Arab Americans of the Muslim faith report being targeted by discrimination since September 11.

Let me note here that however serious this period has been, I dread to think how much worse it might have been had our nation's leadership not acted as quickly and proactively as they did.

The President took the lead in cautioning against this backlash and was joined by the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, and the Director of the FBI. Their repeated statements, I believe, helped to stem the wave of backlash.

Also worthy of note were the actions of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives who passed resolutions decrying hate crimes against Arab Americans and American Muslims. Individual Senators and Representatives also took immediate action to shine a light on this problem.

Equally impressive was the effort by the Ad Council which worked with us to produce public service radio and newspaper ads that focused on warning against anti-Arab and anti-Muslim hate and bias.

The constant repetition of this positive message on TV and radio and in print media has helped restrain the hands of the bigots. The hate has not gone away, but the hate crimes have been greatly reduced. Now we must begin the long and difficult task of addressing the negative stereotypes. And in this area we have also been blessed by the support of several national organizations and parts of the Administration. The Community Relations Service of the Department of Justice has assisted us in reaching school districts that have asked for materials on Arab Americans, Arab culture, and Islam. The Department of Education and school boards across the U.S. have also been helpful, as have the nation's unions representing America's teachers.

While noting the role of the Department of Justice, I must single out, for special commendation, the Civil

Rights Division and the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, Ralph Boyd. He has brought us together, early on and frequently, to discuss both the problem of backlash and our concern with various law enforcement agencies. Mr. Boyd has also made himself available to us in several important outreach efforts to the Arab American community.

Finally, I want to mention the support we received from the FBI. From the Director on down, the FBI has responded to each and every complaint of hate we have brought to them. They have met with our community's leadership in Washington and in several centers across the US.

While we still have some concerns with some reports we have received of overzealous investigative techniques used by some FBI agents, we have had the opportunity to raise each of these concerns with officials from the Bureau.

At the same time, we are gratified that the FBI has aggressively pursued our reports of hate crimes. At the time of this testimony, they have opened 130 investigations and actually brought 3 federal indictments against perpetrators. I understand that they have already identified the individual who made the death threat against my family.

I would like to close with a few recommendations. The first deals with the problem of reporting hate crimes. Immigrants, especially those from some Arab countries, have a fear of law enforcement. For example, if the FBI is investigating hate crimes, recent immigrant Arabs may fear reporting a hate incident because they are concerned that it may compromise their stay in the US. This fear is compounded by the fact that the past history of the FBI's relationship with our community has not always been the kind that encourages people to go to them and report a problem. I therefore believe that there is a need for not just an improved system for hate crime reporting but also for a mediating presence between victim communities and law enforcement so that victims can have more confidence in reporting problems.

Since this Civil Rights Commission is receiving reports of hate crimes, I recommend that you seek a role in suggesting how those hate crimes actually then become investigated. I have noted that while the FBI Director and the community relations side of the FBI have been very responsive, there still is a fear. And many people remain afraid to report hate crimes.

There have been recommendations that the U.S. Attorney's offices be involved, or that the Civil Rights Division at the Justice Department be involved, or that the FBI set up a special Hate Crimes Unit that is only involved in hate crime investigations. These are only some suggestions, but I do urge you to look into this matter and help us address this concern.

B. "Arab American Perspectives on the International War Against Terrorism" (excerpt)

Remarks to the Secretary's Open Forum by James J. Zogby, December 5, 2001. United States Department of State

The first time I addressed the Open Forum was in 1978. I was a wee lad who was very concerned with how my message would be read, whether it would come through. It's funny, many years later, and after many years of this work, I'm just as concerned as I was the first time I spoke here. I appreciate this forum; it's an opportunity that I certainly know is a useful and important one. I hope to communicate to you as best I can the Arab American perspective on the international war on terror.

I'll begin with a personal note. September 11 and its immediate aftermath produced complex emotions in me and I know in many in my community. First of all was the horror and the shock. There was something quite unique about what happened on September 11, possibly because of the magnitude, possibly that we saw it in real time, possibly that it happened in New York, as opposed to another American city. We don't know what it was exactly, but unlike other tragedies, both domestic and international, that we have seen and followed, this was really quite different because we didn't merely watch it, we lived it. We didn't just suffer for the victims, we suffered with the victims. It became our tragedy, it affected us all. There was not only horror and shock, as planes that we were so used to seeing in the sky all of a sudden became weapons of mass destruction. And the consequences of it, of the attack, left none of us untouched.

It affected us in very different ways, but we were all affected. There was grief, of course. Grief, as we watched, in the days after the attack, family members holding pictures of loved ones whom we knew in our heart of hearts they would never find. We were touched by that, and some of us even felt guilty because we had not lost anyone. My daughter, I'll never forget, cried one night because she was getting married in two weeks and felt a tremendous sense of guilt because she was feeling joy at a time when she was also really feeling enormous sadness and had just heard a young woman talking about losing her fiancé. Universes were lost and destroyed and would never be the same, not only those who lost families would never be the same but in a very real sense, none of us will. I still can't look up, see a plane, and think of it in quite the same way as I did before September 11.

But for Arab Americans, while all of this was true, something quite different also happened and happened within hours. I was in my office and we were

ordered to evacuate. Because our office is a block away from the White House, they closed our building down. I said we couldn't leave because we were receiving phone calls from people around the country and I didn't want to leave. Then the first death threat came and was followed by others. By the next morning they had reached a rather frightening pitch. Actually it had become quite gruesome and frightening. Even before the perpetrators of the terror attacks were identified as Arabs, we were pulled away from the collective mourning. This was very similar to what happened to us after Oklahoma City. In effect, we were told that we couldn't suffer with the rest of America because there was an assumption of collective guilt.

This backlash intensified as it became clear that it was in fact Arabs who perpetrated these acts. But then as the expected hate came, something quite surprising and extraordinarily gratifying also occurred and that was statements of compassion and concern. I used the word gratuitous at one point to describe these statements of support. I used it in a theological sense, as an act of grace, an unearned benefit. So it was surprising and quite stunning when [Senator Edward] Teddy Kennedy called me within 36 hours of the attack to ask what can he do to help. And then [Senator Joseph] Joe Lieberman called, then [former Congressman] Jack Kemp called and became quite emotional over the phone and told me if my wife and I needed protection that we could stay with his family. Then Senator Feingold and Senator Edwards and others called... By 48 hours after the terrorists attacks more than a dozen members of the U.S. Senate had called. Governor Jeb Bush of Florida also called and the President issued a very strong message followed by Attorney General Ashcroft and the director of the FBI. Extraordinary as they were, those statements of protection, those statements of concern, were, in fact, very American.

I said to myself at one point, only in America does that kind of immediate and almost spontaneous protection and support come at that kind of time. It actually reminded me of the story that one hears in grade school of the barn that blows down and the neighbors come over with potluck dishes. My office had police protection because of the death threats we received, neighbors in the building started making us lunches. A woman came by the very first day after the attacks with brownies and said, "I think I burnt

them but I hope they are okay." I was very touched and continued to be touched although I did gain some weight because Ben & Jerry's gave us a party and Mrs. Fields brought over a box of cookies. As I said it was gratuitous.

Then after the unexpected kindness and graciousness came the anger, our anger. We had been brought back into the fold, we were embraced by the President on down, told to come mourn with the rest of the country and it sunk in. It sunk in just as it became clear to us that the perpetrators were Arab. We shared not only the national outrage but felt anger in a very special way because they had come from Arab countries and taken advantage of the opportunities and the openness of America, taken advantage of the American people, and murdered our fellow Americans. In the process they created such enormous pain, such enormous loss, and created fear of Arab Americans. For that I will never forgive them. My daughter called me one day to tell me that I was quoted in Newsweek referring to them as 'those bastards who did this.' She said does that mean that we can say "bastard" now? I said in certain special instances you can, this is one of them.

By the time the President launched the war, the attack against al-Qaida we were in the field polling Arab Americans to find and get an accurate measure of their attitudes. When I give you the results you will see that my personal stories are not just anecdotal but actually are a measure of the way the community felt. But before I give you those results, let me give you a bit about the Arab American community, its demographics, which I think are important. It is an emerging community; it is of recent vintage. Arab Americans have been here for a hundred years but have only recently, within the last three decades, begun to organize on a national level. It is a very diverse community. Our members have roots in more than twenty countries. We are diverse not only based on country of origin, the first waves were Lebanese and Syrian but have been followed in the last fifty years by large groups of Palestinians, Egyptians, Iraqis, Lebanese, and now Gulf Arabs, North Africans and Jordanians, etc. The fact is that you can't go to a restaurant here in town without finding among the wait staff or valets very recent immigrants. The service trades are stepping-stones for many immigrants. We're continually being refreshed and revitalized by new immigrants who work their way very quickly into the economic mainstream of the country and have become involved in the activities of the community.

There is also diversity in political outlook. We have Democrats and Republicans, we have Social Conservatives and we have Social Liberals. We have the very assimilated and the not so assimilated.

There are differences based on generation. Eighty percent of Arab Americans are born here but even within the generation born here there are still differences, particularly between the children of very recent immigrants and the children of those who arrived from the 1920's. There's a difference based on religion. There are Arab Americans who are Christians and Arab Americans who are Muslim and different Christian denominations and Muslim varieties.

In polling, we say that if the answer to a question is in the range of 70%, we consider that a consensus, because if the numbers are that high then all the subgroups will also be in a majority. So what we see in the polling is that that a clear consensus exists on many issues. There are some issues on which consensus doesn't exist. For example, on the question of Iraq, there is no consensus among Arab Americans on what our policy should be. There's a split. On the question of Palestinian statehood, there is no split; the numbers are well over 90% supporting a state. It may be surprising to some but support for recognition of the right of Israel to exist is also over 90%. There is a consensus, in other words, on many key policy issues that shows the emergence of this community. Despite differences internally within the generations or the countries of origin or religion or political outlook, there are many things on which we agree. Just one day after the war was launched, we asked Arab Americans the question, "do you support an all out war against countries that harbor the terrorists who attacked America," and 69% agreed.

Now, to understand that number, on the same day, the national poll asking the very same question of the country as a whole showed 67% agreed. So the fact is that Arab Americans were slightly more supportive than the country as a whole. When asked the question did we support the President's handling of the war on terror, we got 88% support, 11% opposed -- again, identical to the country as a whole. When we asked if Arab American's were reassured by the President's support for Arab Americans and Muslim Americans, 90% said yes.

When we asked the question, had they experienced personally discrimination since the 11 of September (this was again done on the 10th of October just one month later), 20% said they had, 45% said they knew someone who'd experienced discrimination based on ethnicity since September 11. Of the 20% who experienced discrimination, 49% were between 18 and 29 and 37% of the Arab Americans were of Muslim faith. When we asked if they were proud of their Arab heritage, 88% said that they were. That number is identical to the number that existed before September 11.

C. Commissioners Meeting Open Session, "Employment Discrimination in the Aftermath of September 11"

Remarks by AAI Managing Director Jean AbiNader, December 11, 2001. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

The Arab American Institute represents the political and civic aspirations of our community by promoting its full involvement in the electoral life of our country at all levels. AAI is also a key voice in the community for promoting domestic and international policies that we believe best serve America's interests at home and in our relationships abroad, particularly with the Arab world.

We are pleased to have the opportunity to present our perspectives on how the tragic events of September 11th have impacted the Arab American community. You will hear many cases from our colleagues that illustrate the kinds of challenges that we have encountered. Overall, we must state that the impact on the community has fallen most heavily upon those with the least experience and awareness needed to defend themselves.

One of the most interesting phenomena that I have experienced since the events of September 11th is the largely ignorant level of knowledge about Arab Americans in this country.

So I'd like to just briefly point out two things. One is that I've brought some materials that we've placed outside that talk about who the Arab American community is, our experience in this country since the immigration started in the 1880s in large numbers, and who we are today in terms of some of the personalities that many of you will recognize.

Some of the factors about the community that are interesting is that when you look at the stereotype of who Arab Americans are, the first two things you hear from people are that we're Muslims, we're immigrants, and we're largely from Palestine or Egypt. The reality is over 65 percent of us are Christians. We're mostly from Lebanon and Syria. And most of us are second and third generation Americans whose parents and grandparents and great-grandparents came to this country.

So it's extraordinary that people say to us, "Well, then, why do you bother? Why are you bothering with these immigrants? Why are you bothering with Muslims?" in terms of their issues, in terms of the workplace. Because they're part of who we are. They're part of the culture that we come from, and they're part of the legacy that we bring to this country and contribute to the diversity of this country.

Second and third generation Arab Americans have not noticed significant changes in their work environments. The taunts, jeers, inappropriate political and racial slurs, that some encountered have

largely disappeared, although we note that there is an upsurge in complaints immediately following each of the warnings issued by the Federal Government over the past five weeks.

Yet by and large, those who were born in this country have encountered fewer obstacles than those who are immigrants, some of whom have been in this country for more than 30 years.

The situation is also more difficult for Arab Americans who are immigrants or are Muslims and publicly affirm their faith through adherence to guidelines regarding dress, daily prayers, fasting, and similar responsibilities that impact the work environment. Just as the Commission has been instrumental in protecting the rights of Americans of the Jewish religion to dress, dietary restrictions, and observances of holy days, it is now time to act aggressively to obtain these same protections for Muslims.

It is ironic that Muslims are being singled out by their co-workers for practicing their religion faithfully, reminding me how it was when I first worked in an office and was kidded for having ashes on my forehead on Ash Wednesday.

If we could remember our own encounters with work discrimination, perhaps it might make us pause before we reach out to strike verbally at a fellow employee because we feel a need to personally remedy the horrors of September 11th.

The larger question, however, is dealing with the discrimination, bias, bigotry, and disrespect that have become more visible since September 11th. I say more visible because we must be honest and admit that there is the latent anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States that is reflected in the labels that co-workers use when they taunt Arab Americans and American Muslims.

Ranging from the innocuous "sandscratcher" and "raghead" to "terrorist," "freak," and "Christian-hater," this brand of anti-semitism is no more acceptable than its older sibling. We are Americans. And when it is acceptable for these jeers to dominate the workplace environment, then we are marginalized as members of this society.

Cases you will hear about today, whether the source is Arab American, American Muslim, Sikh American, or anyone else, are all concerned with eliminating the sense of intimidation and fear that is routinely felt whenever events in the Middle East or elsewhere raise the ire of the American public.

Although government leaders, specifically the

President and Secretary and the Attorney General, have cautioned against backlash. Conditions in the workplace where people are in daily contact with one another require a more forceful and long-term solution.

Respect for diversity must move beyond platitudes and formulas to a spirit of tolerance and understanding that recognizes that we are all from somewhere else, and that is the source of America's vitality.

Arab Americans are ready to be part of the solution. Through educational materials available on our websites, participation in panels and seminars, multi-ethnic and interfaith programs, volunteerism, meetings, and discussion groups, we have reached out in the workplace after workplace to raise the level of discourse beyond stereotypes and rancor.

The shop floor, trading floor, restaurant, Wal-mart, manufacturing plant, and service industries are aware the struggle is taking place, and we need allies in management, labor, on state commissions, and the federal level to ensure that we will, as a society, rise beyond the prejudice of the moment to

achieve a better understanding of ourselves and that which makes the United States so singular. We encourage the Commission to reaffirm its long-standing policies against discrimination and bias, particularly toward Arab Americans, American Muslims, and others affected in the aftermath of September 11th.

By strengthening your database for collecting and collating complaints nationally, the Commission can help identify trends locally that should be dealt with forcefully. More extensive coordination with state and local commissions can help create outreach opportunities for training and information dissemination while gathering incidents of best practices that can be offered throughout the country.

While there is no short-term remedy to workplace discrimination toward Arab Americans and American Muslims, this hearing is an important indicator that Chair Dominguez is committed to ensuring that the Commission continues its vital role in defense of equal employment.

D. Arab American Institute Materials:

I. Select AAI Press Releases

available at www.aaiusa.org/pr/press_releases.htm

Arab American Statement on Terror Attacks. September 11, 2001

Joint Arab-American, Muslim American Statement. September 12, 2001

Justice Department Joins with Arab Americans to Combat Hate Crimes. September 13, 2001

Arab Americans Support President Bush's Approach. September 25, 2001

Arab American and American Muslim Leaders Meet with President Bush. September 26, 2001

Media Campaign Encourages Tolerance in Response to American Tragedy: "Hate is Our Enemy." October 1, 2001

AAI Issues Statement in Support of Administration's Focused Anti-Terrorism Campaign. October 8, 2001

James Zogby Testifies Before the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. October 12, 2001

Support Grows for Civil Rights: AAI Addresses State Dept., EEOC, Rainbow-Push and State Legislators. December 11, 2001

AmeriDream Fights Hate with Arab American Rebuilding Effort. February 21, 2002

Sikh and Arab American Communities Fight Bias and Celebrate American Diversity. May 21, 2002

II. AAI Publications and Reports

available on the AAI website at www.aaiusa.org/publications.htm

“Profiling and Pride: Arab American Attitudes and Behavior Since September 11.”

A report based on a May 2002 poll commissioned by the Arab American Institute Foundation. The survey found that Arab Americans are concerned about ethnic profiling and the long-term effects of discrimination, but that the aftermath of Sept. 11 did not affect their sense of ethnic pride.

“Arab American Attitudes and the September 11 Attacks,” by Dr. James J. Zogby, President, Arab American Institute; October 15, 2001

A survey conducted one month following the terrorist attacks, examining how Arab Americans perceive Pres. Bush’s actions following the Sept. 11 attacks, their attitudes toward law enforcement policies following the attacks, and their concerns about personal discrimination and backlash.

III. AAI Educational Packet

In light of the high demand for information after Sept. 11, AAI put together a resource packet on Arab Americans, Islam, and the Middle East. The packet is available in electronic format at www.aaiusa.org/educational_packet.htm, where there is also an order form to request print copies.

Contents:

American Leaders Speak Out Against Backlash in Wake of September 11 Tragedy (Excerpts of speeches by President Bush, members of Congress, and national organizations) (4pg)

Arab Americans: Making a Difference by Casey Kasem (12 pg brochure)

Quick Facts About Arab Americans and Arab American Population Highlights (2pp)

Demographic Chart on Country of Origin and Religious Affiliation (1p)

Who Are Arab Americans? (from Groliers Multimedia Encyclopedia)(4pp)

Arab Americans: A Century of Political and Cultural Achievement (4pp)

Notes on Anti-Arab Racism (2pp)

Select Bibliography on Arab Americans (2pp)

Select Websites on Arab Americans, the Middle East and Islam (1p)

"Are Arab Americans: People Like Us?" Foreign Service Journal (May 2000) by James J. Zogby
"Arab Americans Attitudes and the September 11 Attacks," by James J. Zogby

"Arab Stereotypes and American Educators," by

Marvin Wingfield and Bushra Karaman, from Social Studies for the Young Learner (Mar/Apr 1995), courtesy of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (4pp)

"Teaching About Islam and Muslims in the Public School Classroom" by the Council on Islamic Education (1995) (10pp)

"Discover Islam" color brochure

AMIDEAST 2001 Educational Resources information card

AWAIR 2002 Catalog, from Arab World and Islamic Resources and School Services

"Who are the Arabs?" Center for Contemporary Arab Studies Teaching Module No. 5, 1999 (12 pg booklet)

"Arab Contributions to Civilization" from The Arab World Studies Notebook, reprinted by permission of Audrey Shabbas, ed.

Cobblestone children's magazine, May 2002, "Arab Americans"

E. Other Resources

Links to the following US government agency resources are also available on the AAI website at <http://www.aaiusa.org/aftermath.htm>, in the section titled "Information about Discrimination and Tolerance."

"Federal Laws Prohibiting Job Discrimination: Questions And Answers"

<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/qanda.html>

From The United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division:

- How to File a Complaint
- Statements of Federal Agencies
- Your Rights and What You Can Do to Prevent or Respond to Discrimination
- Other Post-9/11 Information,

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/nordwg.html>

Advice to Travelers of Middle Eastern Descent,
From the United States Department of
Transportation. November 19, 2001

The Immigration and Naturalization Service's Detention Operations Manual, which contains

information about the rights of INS detainees:
<http://www.ins.gov/graphics/lawsregs/guidance.htm>.

The Pro Bono (For Free) Program in the Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR)
works to link volunteer legal representatives with INS detainees who lack legal representation:
<http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/probono/probono.htm>.

Brochure on federal protections against national origin discrimination:
<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/legalinfo/natlorg-eng.htm>

Information about the U.S. Department of Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control, which administers and enforces terrorism sanctions: <http://www.treas.gov/ofac>.

Links of Interest

selections from a list which is available on the AAI website at <http://www.aaiusa.org/links.htm>

Arab Americans

100 Questions and Answers About Arab Americans: Journalist's guide from the Detroit Free Press. Contains background on Arab American culture, language, and religion.
<http://www.freep.com/jobspage/arabs.htm>

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee: Civil rights organization committed to defending the rights of people of Arab descent and promoting their rich cultural heritage.
<http://www.adc.org/>

Arab American Business Journal: A magazine for Arab American businesses.
<http://www.arabamericanbusiness.com/>

Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS): Includes cultural arts, employment and training, public health, and education.
<http://www.accesscommunity.org>

Cafe Arabica: A place for Arab Americans to discuss issues of common interest and find out about resources and services available to them.
<http://www.cafe arabica.com>

The Middle East

Planet Arabia - Arab directory of news, entertainment and women of Arabia, in the Middle East and Arabic world.
<http://www.planetarabia.com/>

Arab Culture & Identity: Articles and links relating to Arab culture and the Arab people. Covers history, language, art, music and literature.
<http://www.suite101.com>

Arabji: Pan-Arab Internet guide covering 22 Arab countries. Arabic portal, search engine and directory, searchable in Arabic and English.
<http://www.arabji.com/>

Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University - Devoted to the study of the modern Arab world. <http://www.ccasonline.org/>

Middle East Policy Council: Non-profit organization whose purpose is to contribute to an understanding of current issues in U.S.-Middle East relations.
<http://www.mepc.org/>

Middle East Institute - Founded in 1946, the Middle East Institute's principal objective is to increase Americans' knowledge and understanding of the region. <http://www.mideasti.org/>



1600 K St. NW, Suite 601, Washington, DC 20006
Phone: (202) 429-9210 Fax: (202) 429-9214
www.aaiusa.org



Profiling and Pride:

Arab American Attitudes and Behavior Since September 11

Contents:

Executive Summary

Methodology

Demographics and Characteristics of Sample

**Disparate Impact: Arab Americans
and Personal Discrimination**

- ◆ Discrimination Before and After 9/11
- ◆ Where Discrimination is Experienced

Discrimination and Public Policy

- ◆ Perceptions of Profiling Since Terrorist Attacks
- ◆ Long-Term Effects of Discrimination
- ◆ Attitudes Toward President Bush's Handling of the Response to 9/11

**In the Public Square: Display of Ethnicity
and Political Discussion Since 9/11**

- ◆ Changes in Habits Since 9/11
- ◆ Disclosing Ancestry on US Census

Impact of 9/11 on Ethnic Identity and Pride

- ◆ Pride in Ethnic Heritage
- ◆ Pre- and Post-9/11 Comparisons of Strong Ethnic Identity
- ◆ Importance of Ethnic Heritage
- ◆ Emotional Ties to Country of Origin

Solidarity with the Victims of 9/11

Conclusion

In May 2002, the Arab American Institute Foundation (AAIF) commissioned a survey of Arab American attitudes and behavior since September 11. The May survey is compared to a similar poll commissioned by AAIF in October 2001, in the immediate aftermath of the terror attacks. On some variables a three-way comparison is made, including findings of a survey of Arab American attitudes taken in 2000.

Executive Summary

The findings of the May 2002 survey reveal that Arab Americans have increased their concern about how the aftermath of September 11 has affected their community, but continue to maintain strong attachments to their ethnic identity and pride.

Among the findings:

- ◆ Nearly one in three Arab Americans (30%) say they have personally experienced discrimination in the past because of their ethnicity, nearly identical to the October 2001 survey.
- ◆ Forty percent of those surveyed know someone who was discriminated against since 9/11. Roughly one-fifth of respondents reported discrimination against themselves. Those who are young, Muslim and/or foreign born are more likely to have experienced discrimination.
- ◆ Compared to October 2001, Arab Americans feel discrimination since 9/11 is more prevalent at work

(31%), less at school (21%), about the same among neighbors and friends (25%); discrimination, they say, is more likely to happen in other places (20%) than it did last year.

- ◆ Seventy-eight percent of Arab Americans feel there has been more profiling of Arab Americans since September 11. About two-thirds of those surveyed expressed concern about the long term affects of discrimination.

- ◆ Two in five respondents feel the events of 9/11 have impacted the public display of their heritage, while nearly three-quarters (73%) say their pride in being Arab American has not changed, similar to results reported in 2001.

- ◆ Since September 11, about two-fifths of respondents say they are more likely to speak to their friends and acquaintances about events in the Middle East, while another 43% were doing so to the same degree as before. Only 14% indicated they were less likely to engage in public discussion now. Roughly one in five who speak Arabic say they feel less comfortable speaking Arabic in public.

Eight out of ten Arab Americans surveyed responded to 9/11 by contributing to a victims' fund, hanging a flag, or donating blood.

- ◆ When asked if they were reassured by President Bush's comments and conducts since the September 11 attacks, 54% of Arab Americans say they are reassured, while 35% say they are not reassured. This ratio is down sharply from the results of the October 2001 poll, when 90% of Arab Americans surveyed said they were reassured by the president's response.

- ◆ Eight out of ten Arab Americans surveyed said they responded to September 11 by either contributing to a victims' fund, hanging out a flag, or donating blood.

- ◆ Overall 89% of Arab Americans professed to be either extremely or very proud of their ethnicity. This is virtually the same as the percentage (90%) who claimed strong attachment in a January 2000 survey and up slightly from the 87% recorded in the October 2001 poll.

Methodology

Zogby International conducted interviews of 505 Arab Americans nationwide who have a Middle Eastern or Arabic-speaking background, chosen at random. All calls were made from Zogby International headquarters in Utica, N.Y., from Wednesday, May 1 to Saturday, May 4, 2002. The margin of error is +/- 4.5%. Slight weights were added to country of origin, born/not born in U.S., religion, and gender to more accurately reflect the Arab American population. Margins of error are higher in subgroups.

Demographics and Characteristics of Sample

Three-fourths of those surveyed were born in the United States and 89% hold American citizenship. Eighty-one percent speak English at home. Sixty-three percent reported a Christian affiliation, 24% Muslim, and 13% of other or no religious affiliation (Figure 1).

Occupation breakouts are similar to census-based characteristics, with 36% reporting some form of professional or managerial job. Able to ask even more detail than available in the census, the survey revealed that 10% of the respondents are teachers and 7% are homemakers. Twenty-two percent of those surveyed reported membership in a union, and thirty-four percent own or operate a business. Close to two out of three respondents reported household income in excess of \$50,000, compared with 16% with annual incomes under \$25,000 (Figure 2).

The ZI/AAIF survey probed the issue of primary self-identification by asking, How are you most likely to describe yourself?

By nearly a two-to-one margin, more respondents describe themselves as Arab American (39%) than by their country of origin (21%). Approximately one in eight (12%) describe themselves as both Arab American and by country of origin. One in four uses neither choice to describe themselves.

Those who were born in the U.S. (36%) are less likely than those born elsewhere (49%) to describe themselves as Arab Americans. Half of American citizens not born in the U.S. (51%) describe themselves as Arab American, while more than two in five permanent residents (44%) refer to themselves by their country of origin (Figure 3).

Disparate Impact: Arab Americans and Personal Discrimination

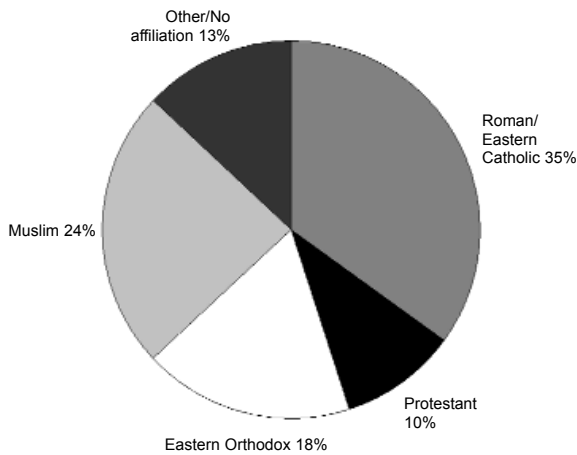


Figure 1: Religious Affiliation

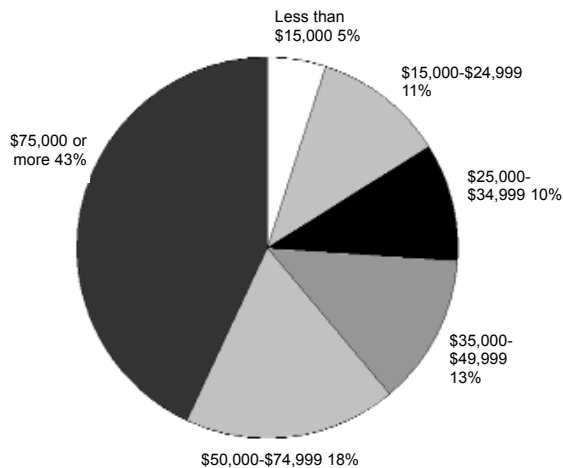


Figure 2: Income

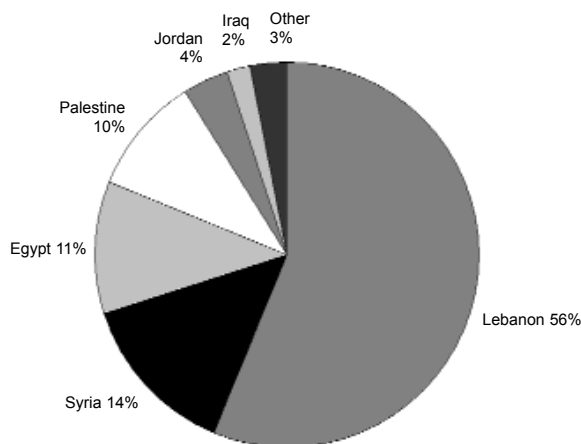


Figure 3: Country of Origin

Discrimination Before and After Sept. 11

Overall, nearly one in three Arab Americans (30%) say they have personally experienced discrimination in the past because of their ethnicity. The overall percentages are nearly identical to a previous survey conducted in October 2001, shortly after the terrorist attacks (Figure 4).

Since September 11, one in five has personally been discriminated against because of their ethnicity, and over the same time, a nearly equal 20% say their children or a member of their household has experienced discrimination.

A plurality of respondents (40%), however, says they know someone of Arabic ethnicity or an Arabic-speaking background who has experienced more discrimination since the terrorist attacks.

U.S.-born Arab Americans and those born elsewhere have been discriminated against equally in the past (30% each). Since September 11, however, Arab Americans born outside the U.S. (27%) say they have experienced more personal discrimination than those born in the U.S. (17%).

The number of 18- to 29-year-olds who have experienced discrimination since the terrorist attacks (54%) is equivalent to those in this age group who were discriminated against previously (55%). However, a substantial majority of adults age 30 and older (including 94% of those 65+) are likely to say they have not experienced personal discrimination since September 11, nor did they face ethnic discrimination in the past (77% of those 65+).

From a religious standpoint, Arab American Protestants and Muslims (43% average) are much more likely than Eastern Orthodox or Catholics (24% average) to have experienced personal discrimination in the past. Their opinions have dramatically changed since the events of September 11, with Arab American Muslims (46%) likely to say they have experienced personal discrimination more often than Arab Americans of any other religion (including 14% of Protestants and 10% of Catholics).

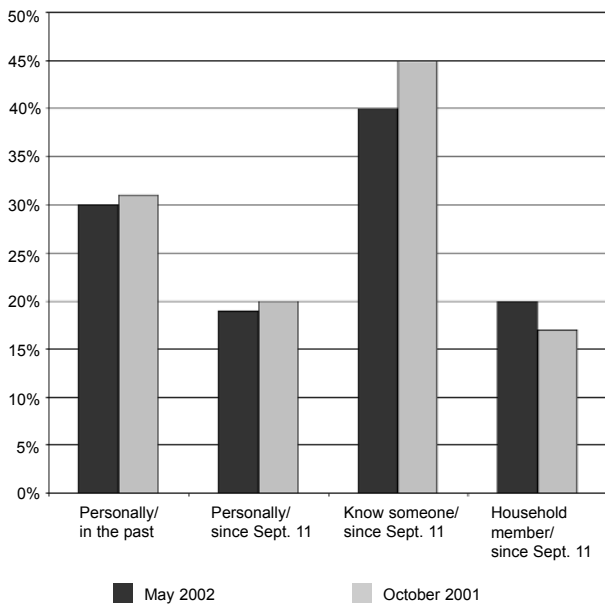


Figure 4: Ethnic Discrimination Before and After September 11

Questions on Discrimination:

- ◆ Have you personally experienced discrimination in the past because of your ethnicity?
- ◆ Since the terrorist attacks on the U.S. on Sept. 11, have you personally experienced discrimination because of your ethnicity?
- ◆ Do you know anyone of Arabic ethnicity or with an Arabic-speaking background who has experienced discrimination since the terrorist attacks on September 11?
- ◆ Have any of your children or any member of your household experienced discrimination since the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11?

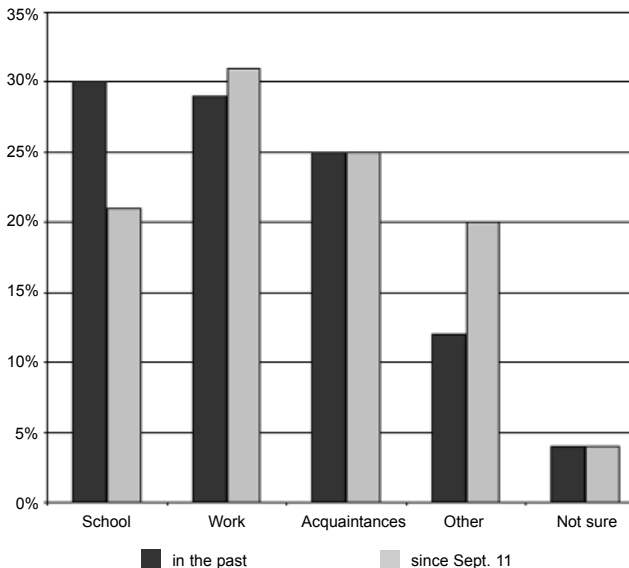


Figure 5: Where Discrimination is Experienced

- ◆ Have you experienced such discrimination (in the past) in any of the following? (At school; at work; from friends, acquaintances, neighbors; other; not sure).
- ◆ Have you experienced such discrimination (since the terrorist attacks on the U.S. on Sept. 11) in any of the following? (At school; at work; from friends, acquaintances, neighbors; other; not sure).

Where Discrimination Is Experienced

Arab Americans feel that in the past, discrimination occurred nearly equally at work (29%) and at school (30%), while fewer instances occurred among friends, acquaintances, and neighbors (25%) (Figure 5). Since September 11, the respondents have a sense that discrimination is less prevalent at school (21%), and it has remained virtually the same at work and among friends, acquaintances, and neighbors. They feel discrimination is more likely to happen in “other” places since 9/11 (20%) than it did in the past (12%). The occurrence of disparate treatment or discomfort post-9/11 in public places, like airports or shopping malls, may account for this shift.

Those who say they have experienced more discrimination since September 11 in school are 36% of respondents aged 18-24. Meanwhile, Arab Americans who are business owners and those not born in the U.S. (37% average) feel they have been discriminated against at work.

Discrimination and Public Policy

Concern for discrimination experienced at home, work, or school is extended to the broader arena of public policy, where Arab Americans continue to struggle with the practice of “profiling” used by law enforcement and other government agencies.

More than three-quarters of respondents believe there has been more profiling of Arab Americans since the terrorist attacks, and this belief has increased 9% since last year (Figure 6). One in eight feels that profiling has remained about the same (12%). Three percent feel there has been less profiling of Arab Americans, and 7% are not sure.

Two-thirds or more in almost every sub-group in 2002 feel there has been more profiling of Arab Americans since September 11. Among the most likely to agree are nine in ten 18- to 29-year-olds, and more than eight in ten U.S.-born respondents.

Long-Term Effects of Discrimination

Close to two-thirds of respondents (63%) are very or somewhat worried about the long-term effects of discrimination against Arab Americans, again little change since last year. More than one-third are not worried about the long-term effects (37%) (Figure 7).

The 2002 respondents who are very or somewhat worried about the long-term effects include four in five Muslims and a 73% average of 18- to 49-year-olds

and Arab Americans not born in the United States.

Attitudes Towards President Bush's Handling of the Response to 9/11

In the month after September 11, Arab Americans were reassured that President George W. Bush was defending and protecting their civil rights. This confidence has diminished significantly in the past six months (Figure 8).

When asked in May 2002 if they were reassured by President Bush's comments and conduct towards Arab Americans since the Sept. 11 attacks, fifty-four percent of Arab Americans said they have been reassured, while 35% said they were not reassured. This ratio is down sharply from the results of the October 2001 poll, when 90% of the Arab Americans surveyed said they had been reassured by the president's response.

While the plurality of Arab Americans regardless of place of birth is still reassured by the president's conduct towards the community, the rising percentage of those not reassured is evident among both those born in the U.S. (33%) and the foreign-born (39%). Among the groups most likely to find the president's response to Arab Americans not reassuring in 2002 are the young (an average of 45% of those 18-34) and Muslims (58%).

In the Public Square: Display of Ethnicity and Political Discussion Since 9/11

A majority (59%) of Arab Americans say their public display of their heritage has been neither positively nor negatively affected by the aftermath of Sept. 11, but nearly two in five (37%) say their habits have changed (Figure 10). Factors impacting the degree of effect on subgroups include age, occupation, and religious affiliation.

Those who have been most affected include 63% of Muslims, 70% of 18- to 24-year-olds, as well as 48% of people not born in the U.S. Seventy-nine percent of students report an effect on their public display of ethnicity, and 61% of those who work in sales. Among the subgroups who feel their heritage has not been affected are a 69% average of those 50-64 and 65+, and 64% of those born in the U.S.

Nearly three-quarters (73%) say their pride in being Arab American has not changed. This includes majorities of people in all subgroups. Fifteen percent of respondents are prouder of their Arab American her-

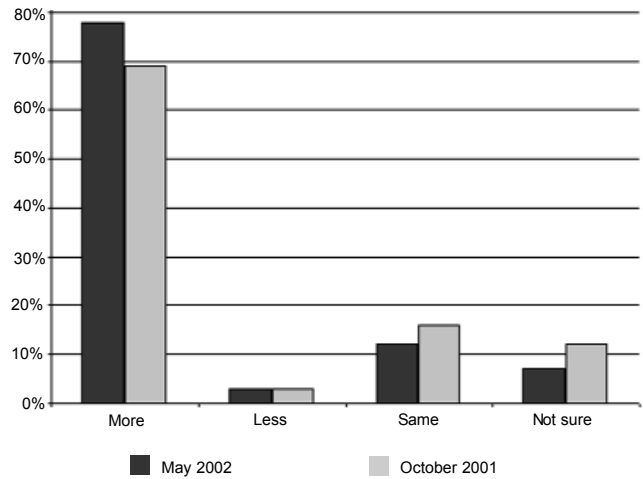


Figure 6: Perceptions of Profiling Since Sept. 11

Do you think that there has been more profiling, less profiling, or about the same amount of profiling of Arab Americans since the terrorist attacks?

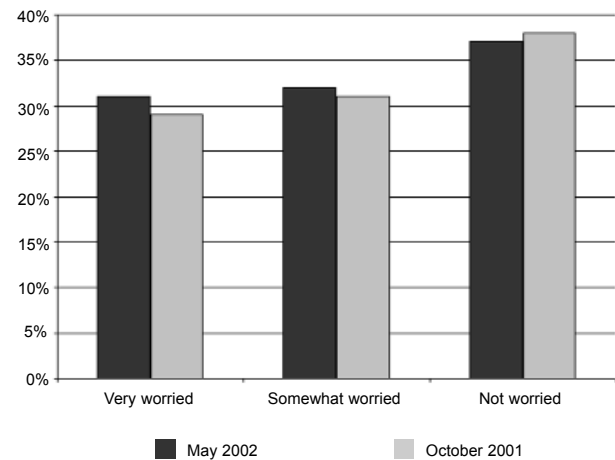


Figure 7: Long-Term Effects of Discrimination

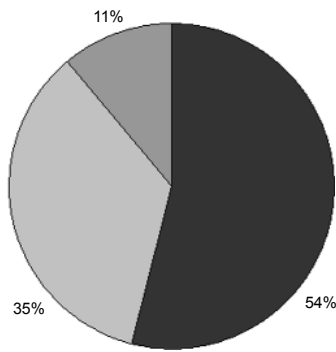
How worried are you about the long-term effects of discrimination against Arab Americans: very worried, somewhat worried, or not worried?

itage since the events of September 11. For 8%, their pride is diminished.

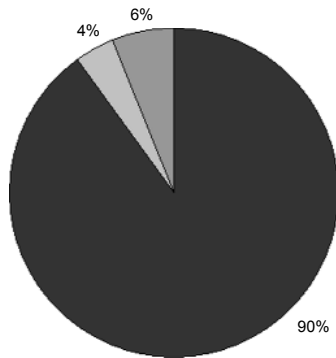
The most likely to say their pride has increased are Muslims (32%) and Arab Americans not born in the U.S (25%). The respondents who are likely to say they have the same amount of pride are an average 78% of seniors 65+ and those born in the U.S.

Changes in Habits Since September 11

Since September 11, approximately two-fifths of respondents have engaged more in discussions about events in the Middle East (42%) and have expressed their opinions about the Middle East more freely to



May 2002



October 2001

Figure 8:
Reassured by
President Bush's
Conduct Towards
Arab Americans

■ Reassured
■ Not reassured
■ Not sure

their friends and acquaintances (40%) (Figure 10). The influence of intense media coverage of the Israeli siege of Palestinian towns in the months prior to the poll may partially account for this spike.

Ten percent of all respondents say they feel less comfortable speaking Arabic in public around non-Arabs, which is closer to 20% of those who speak Arabic. Still, pluralities of respondents find themselves doing the same of each activity since September 11.

Respondents who engage in more discussions about events in the Middle East since the terrorist attacks include a majority of 18- to 29-year-olds (58%); forty-three percent of those born in the U.S. report discussing Middle East events more, similar to 40% of their foreign-born counterparts.

A majority of Muslims (53%) also say they express their opinions more freely since September 11, as do about half of 18- to 29-year-olds and 30- to 49-year-olds, and those not born in the U.S.

Muslims (51%) and 30- to 49-year-olds (42%) are among those most likely to say they speak Arabic in public around non-Arabs the same amount of time as previously. Yet these same subgroups, 30- to 49-year-olds (19% average) and Muslims (15%), are also among the most likely to feel less comfortable speaking Arabic in public.

Disclosing Ancestry on U.S. Census

Nearly half of respondents are more likely to disclose their Arab ancestry on a census form today, while 10% are less likely to do so. Two in five (42%) say their likelihood to disclose their Arab ancestry is no different today than it was before.

Respondents not born in the U.S. (59%) are more likely than those born here (45%) to disclose their Arab ancestry. Furthermore, U.S. citizens (60%) are more likely than permanent residents (48%) to disclose their ancestry.

Impact of 9/11 on Ethnic Identity and Pride

The results of the May 2002 survey show that despite the Arab American community's anger at the terrorists who attacked the U.S. and the resultant discrimination experienced in the aftermath of September 11, Arab Americans as a whole continue to maintain strong pride in their ethnicity and heritage.

Overall, eighty-nine percent of Arab Americans professed to be either extremely or very proud of their ethnicity (those answering 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale, Figure 11). This is virtually the same as the percentage (90%) who claimed strong attachment in a

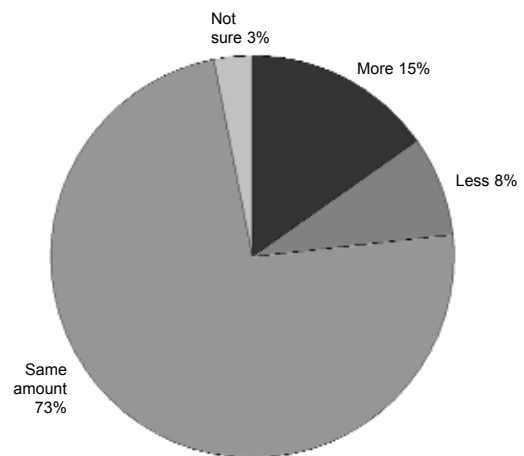


Figure 9: Difference in Pride Since 9/11

Would you say you are more proud, less proud, or have the same amount of pride in being an Arab American since Sept. 11?

January 2000 poll and is up slightly from the lower 87% recorded in the October 2001 survey. This includes more than three in four overall who are “extremely” proud of their heritage (78%). Note there is no change in their views since October 2001.

Only 4% have little or no pride in their heritage (combined 1 and 2).

Importance of Ethnic Heritage

Nearly half of respondents (49%) in May 2002 say their ethnic heritage is very important in defining themselves, a decline of 10% since October 2001. The May responses approach the levels measured (52%) in January 2000. There has been little change in those who say their ethnic heritage is somewhat important (33% in May 2002 versus 25% in October 2001) or not important (17% in May, 16% in October).

Among the most likely 2002 respondents to say that ethnic heritage is very important are Palestinians (80%) and a 76% average of Muslims. People not born in the United States (70%) and a 73% average of 18- to 34-year-olds tend to agree. An average one-fifth of Arab Americans born in the United States say that ethnic heritage is not important in defining themselves.

Emotional Ties to Country of Origin

More than two-fifths of Arab Americans (42%) have strong emotional ties to their families' countries of origin (Figure 12), a slight increase since October 2001, but a decline since the January 2000 survey in which 56% reported strong emotional ties. An additional three in ten in May 2002 say they have somewhat strong emotional ties (31%), and a nearly equal amount says the emotional ties to their families' countries of origin are not strong (27%).

Respondents who say their ties are very strong include majorities of people not born in the United States (66%); the age cohort of 18- to 34-year-olds (62% average) also demonstrates very close emotional ties, levels that have grown from 49% in October 2001. Among the subgroups, the respondents of Palestinian origin had the highest majority (72%) reporting very strong ties, followed by Egyptian Americans (61%).

A 38% average of adults 50 and older are among Arab Americans whose emotional ties are somewhat strong. The most likely to say their emotional ties are not strong include seniors 65 and older and Arab Americans born in the United States.

Figure 10: Changes in Habits Since Sept. 11

Since Sept. 11, would you say you do more, less, or about the same of the following?

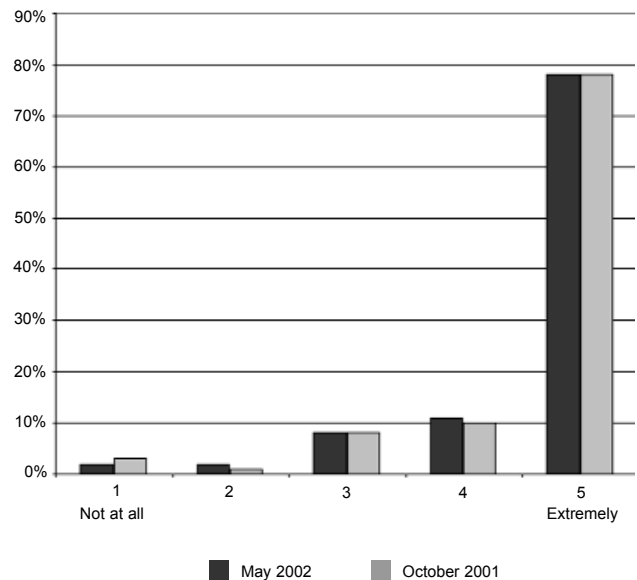
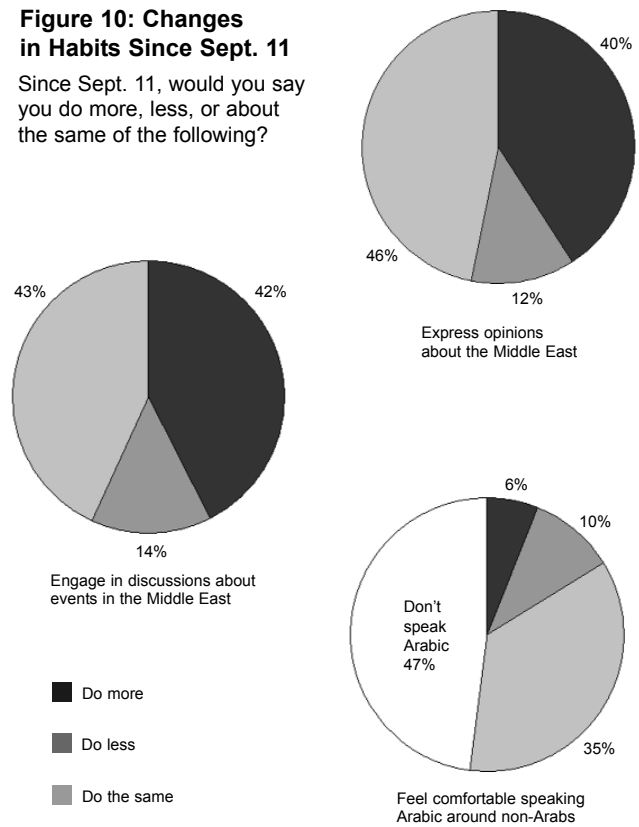


Figure 11: Pride in Ethnic Heritage

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not at all and 5 being extremely, how proud are you of your ethnic heritage?

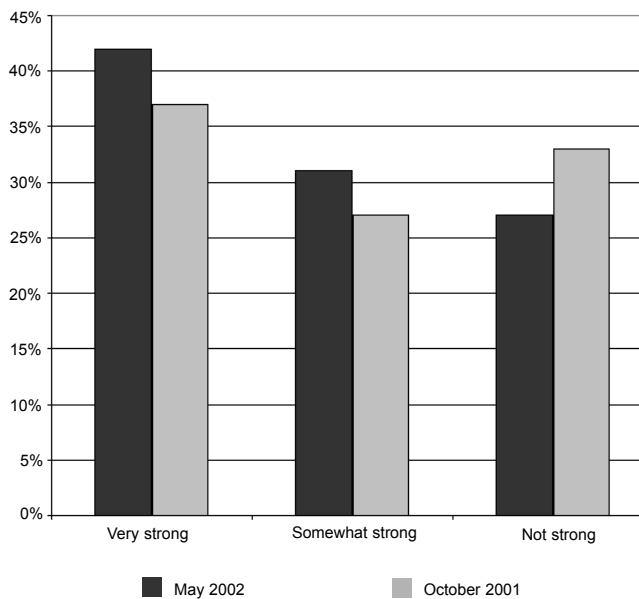


Figure 12: Emotional Ties to Country of Origin

Solidarity with the Victims of 9/11

In an effort to measure the response of Arab Americans as Americans in the immediate aftermath of the terror attacks, the respondents were asked if September 11 led them to (1) hang out or purchase an American flag; (2) contribute to a victims' relief fund, or (3) donate blood. Nearly eight out of ten Arab Americans surveyed said they took part in one or more of these activities. More than half said they hung out a flag (54%) and contributed to a relief fund (53%), while 24% reported that they gave blood.

Conclusion

The May 2002 poll shows that Arab Americans, across the spectrum, retained strong pride in their ethnicity after Sept. 11 but have become increasingly concerned about the policies of the Bush administration.

The most significant shift in Arab American opinion between the October and May polls was a 36% decline, from 90% in October to 54% in May, in those who say they feel reassured by the Bush administration's conduct toward Arab Americans. While the poll did not examine in detail the reasons behind the

drop in confidence, the numbers indicate that Arab Americans would like to see a return to what was perceived last October as positive leadership from the administration toward the Arab American community, and that Arab Americans have concerns with the Bush administration's foreign and domestic policies.

The May 2002 poll shows other indications, too, that Arab Americans are less confident in the U.S. government's response toward the community than they were in October. While the numbers of Arab Americans who say they have experienced ethnic discrimination, or know someone who has, remained virtually unchanged between October 2001 and May 2002, the number of those who believe Arab Americans have been victims of ethnic profiling rose by 9%. A majority of those surveyed remain concerned about the long-term effects of discrimination.

Arab Americans are demonstrating heightened concern over the U.S. government's response toward the community

The poll demonstrates, too, that while some Arab Americans were concerned about public display of their ethnicity since Sept. 11, the vast majority reacted to the terrorist attacks in the same ways that their fellow Americans did: by hanging flags, contributing to funds, and donating blood.

The aftermath of Sept. 11, though, did not affect Arab Americans' sense of pride in their ethnicity. While the numbers of those indicating ethnicity as a major factor in defining themselves dropped 10% in May - perhaps reflecting heightened awareness of ethnicity in October, immediately following the attacks - the numbers of those saying they are very proud of their heritage remains high. ♦



1600 K St NW, Suite 601
 Washington, DC 20006
 Phone: (202) 429-9210
 Fax: (202) 429-9214
 Web: www.aaiusa.org

Arab American Attitudes & the September 11 Attacks

By Dr. James J. Zogby ©
 President, Arab American Institute
 October 15, 2001

Arab Americans are proud and committed Americans, who give strong support to President Bush's efforts to combat the terrorists who struck the United States. At the same time, Arab Americans are very concerned about the backlash that occurred after the September 11 terrorist attacks. The community, however, has remained committed to its beliefs and heritage.

These are some of the results of a Zogby International (ZI) poll of Arab American attitudes commissioned by the Arab American Institute (AAI). The ZI/AAI poll surveyed 508 randomly selected Arab Americans from October 8-10 and had a margin of error of +4.5%. The poll results can be grouped under three main headings.

I. Arab American Attitudes Toward President Bush and the War on Terror

Arab Americans give strong support to President George W. Bush's performance in office. Eighty-three percent of Arab Americans give the President a positive rating, as opposed to only 15% who give him a negative rating (See Figure 1). Additionally, eighty-eight percent of Arab Americans approve of Bush's handling of the response to the September 11 attacks.

While much of this positive attitude reflects the general mood of all Americans, some of it may also be the result of the President's many outreach efforts to the Arab American community since September 11. In fact, the ZI/AAI poll shows that 90% of Arab Americans strongly approve of "Bush's conduct and comments" toward the community during the past month (See Figure 2).

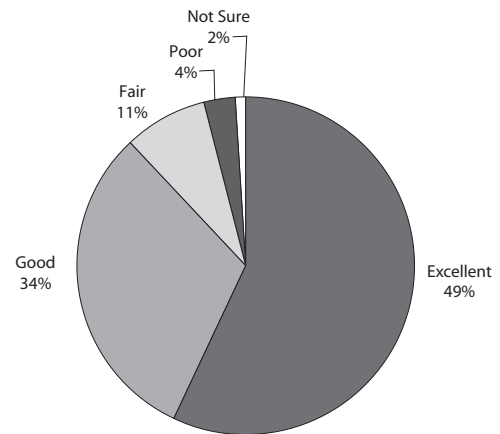


Figure 1: Rate President Bush's handling of the response to the terrorist attack.

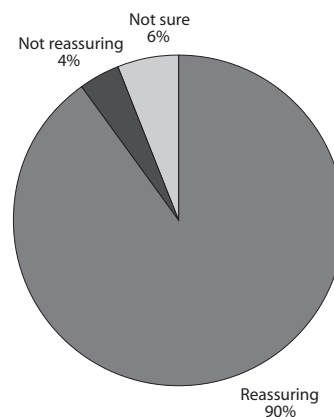


Figure 2: Has President Bush's conduct and comments toward Arab Americans since the September 11 terrorist attacks been reassuring or not reassuring?

When asked if they would "support or oppose an all-out war against countries which harbor or aid terrorists who have attacked the United States", sixty-nine percent of Arab Americans indicated they would support such a move (Exhibit 3). Only 23% are opposed. And 63% of Arab Americans indicate that they are afraid that the September 11 attacks will damage the economy (See Figure 4).

It is imperative to note that in most of the above cases, there is uniform concern among most of the subgroups within the broader community. For example, the support for the war effort is shared by Arab Americans who are native-born, immigrants to the US, young and old, Christian and Muslim, and male and female.

II. Fear of Discrimination

One of the by-products of the September 11 attacks has been a backlash against Arab Americans. The ZI/AAI poll highlights this reality and the concern that it has generated within the community.

A. Discrimination

Sixty-one percent of those polled indicate that they are "worried about the long-term effects of discrimination against Arab Americans" caused by this situation (See Figure 5). And a surprisingly large 20% note that they have "personally experienced discrimination because of their ethnicity" since September 11 (See Figure 6). Additionally, forty-five percent of all Arab Americans state that they know someone who has experienced such discrimination (See Figure 7).

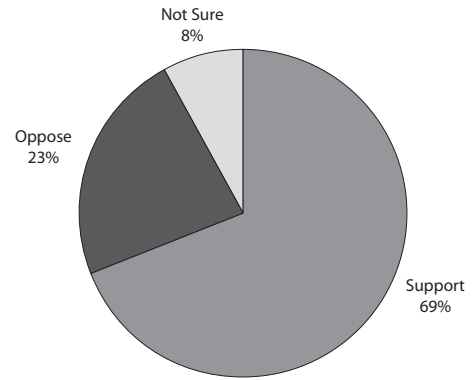


Figure 3: Would you support or oppose an all-out war against countries which harbor or aid terrorists who have attacked the U.S.?

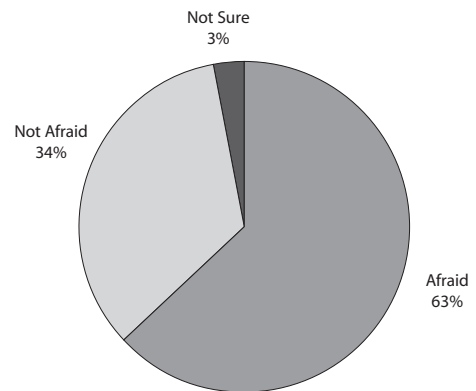


Figure 4: Are you afraid or not afraid that the terrorist attacks will damage the U.S. economy?

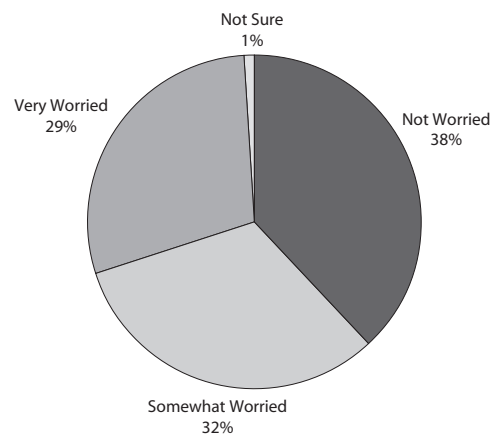


Figure 5: Degree of worry about the long term effects of discrimination against Arab Americans.

A closer look at how the various subgroups of Arab Americans responded to this question is telling. It is the most vulnerable and visible groups of Arab Americans who are at risk. For example, forty-nine percent of all young Arab Americans between the ages of 18-29 report that they have suffered ethnic-based discrimination since September 11. This includes 45.5% of those who are students. And 37% of all Arab Americans who are Muslim report having experienced such problems.

While almost one-third of all Arab Americans complain that they have experienced some form of ethnic-based discrimination in their lifetime, clearly the September 11 attacks have exacerbated the problem.

B. Profiling

The community's concern extends beyond the random acts of bias that have occurred to the practice of "profiling" used by law enforcement agencies. Profiling refers to the practice in which all members of a group who share the characteristics of criminal suspects are stopped or detained for investigation by law enforcement. This practice has been used in the past by airlines who, for a number of years in the mid-1990s, singled out Arab passengers for special security before they were allowed to board planes.

The ZI/AAI poll shows that 69% of Arab Americans believe that profiling of Arab Americans has increased since September 11 (See Figure 8). When asked whether they agreed with the notion that "Arab Americans or Arabic-speaking citizens be detained for profiling by investigators", fifty-eight percent

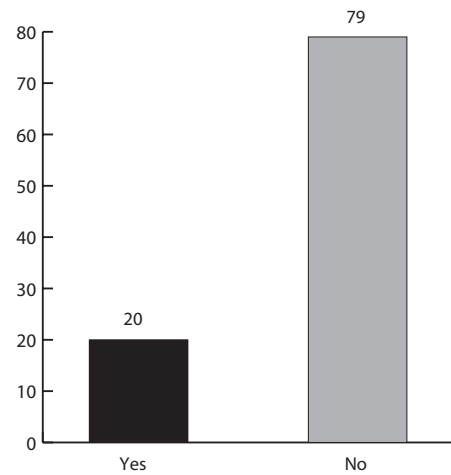


Figure 6: Personal experience with discrimination since September 11.

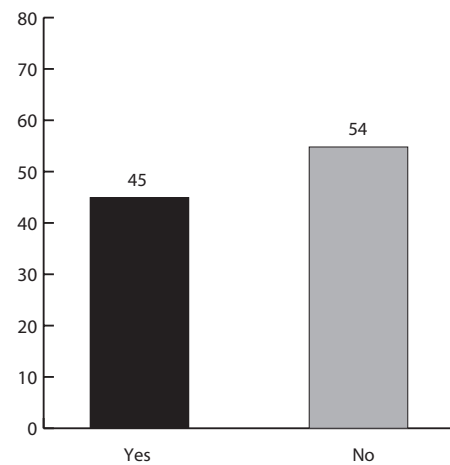


Figure 7: Know someone of Arab ethnicity who has experienced discrimination since September 11.

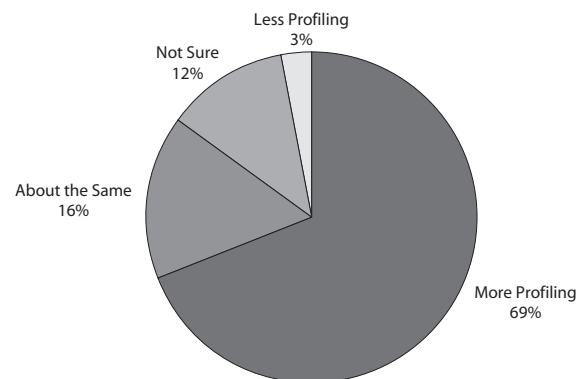


Figure 8: More profiling, less profiling, or about the same amount of profiling of Arab Americans since September 11?

of those polled indicated their disagreement (See Figure 9). A surprisingly large 36% agreed. This may be due to the fact that 54% of Arab Americans apparently feel that while they may disagree with the practice of profiling, they believe that it is justified in the present circumstances (See Figure 10).

All of this may be due to the fact that Arab Americans feel at risk following the terrorist attacks and feel a need to establish their "bona fides". Indeed, by a margin of 65% to 30%, the Arab Americans polled indicate that they have been embarrassed by the fact that the terrorists who committed the September 11 attacks were of Arab descent (See Figure 11).

III. Arab Americans and Ethnic Pride

What the ZI/AAI poll clearly establishes is that despite their fears and their embarrassment, Arab Americans retain a strong sense of pride in their ethnic heritage. By a margin of 88% to 4%, those polled say that they are proud of their heritage (See Figure 12). Those numbers are virtually identical to the numbers recorded in a similar poll taken over one and one-half years ago.

Eighty-four percent of Arab Americans state that their ethnic heritage is important in defining their identity. This number is higher than the 79% recorded in the January 2000 ZI poll. Interestingly, the difference is due to a sharp increase in ethnic pride among the native born Arab Americans.

At the same time, Arab Americans continue to display a strong commitment to issues.

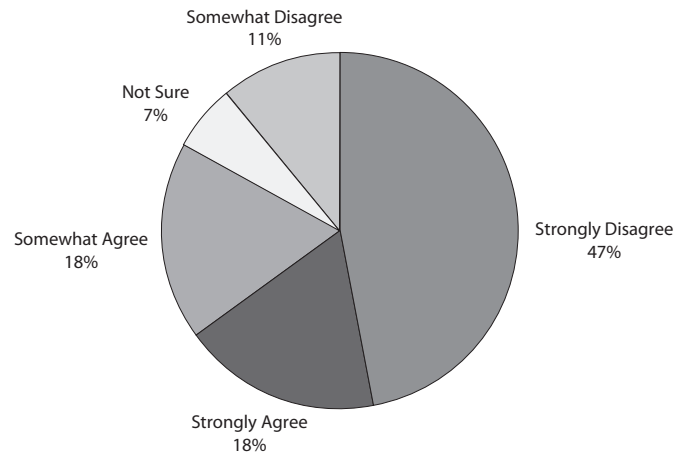


Figure 9: Some people have suggested that Arab Americans or Arabic speaking citizens be detained for profiling by investigators due to the September 11 attacks. Agree or disagree?

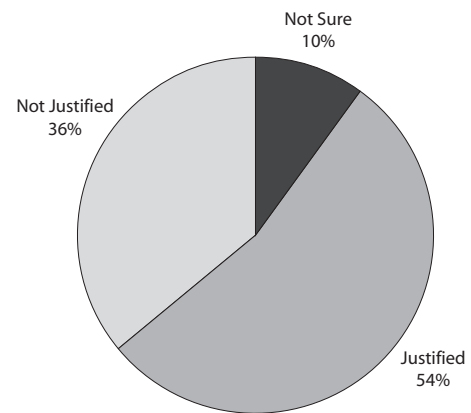


Figure 10: Justified or not justified for law enforcement to engage in extra questioning and inspections of people with Middle-Eastern accents or features?

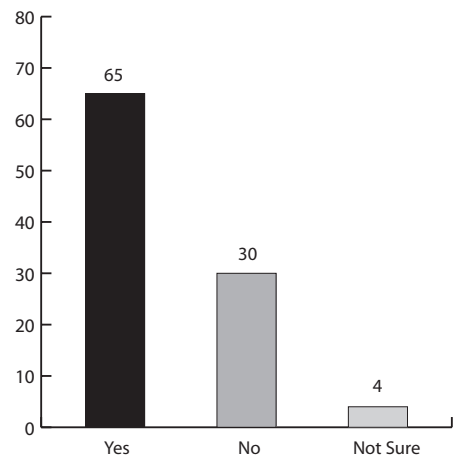


Figure 11: Are Arab Americans embarrassed because of the attacks were apparently committed by people from Arab countries?

Eighty-three percent of Arab Americans indicate that securing Palestinian rights is personally important to them (See Figure 13). And when asked whether "a US commitment to settling the Israeli-Palestinian dispute would help the war against terrorism", seventy-eight percent of those polled agreed. Only 15% disagreed (See Figure 14).

Conclusion

This long awaited poll provides an insight into Arab American attitudes at this critical time in US history. It reveals how Arab Americans have reacted to the crisis created by the September 11 attacks. It shows that Arab Americans have responded as Americans, supportive of their President, committed to his goals, afraid for their personal rights and status and, at the same time, strengthened in their attachment to their heritage and their issue concerns as Arab Americans.

For comments, contact jzogby@aaiusa.org.

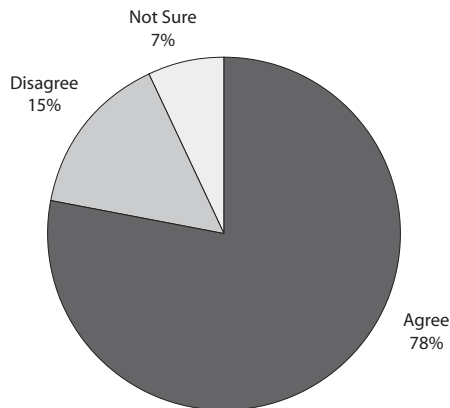


Figure 14: Agree or disagree that a U.S. commitment to settle the Israeli-Palestinian dispute would help the President's efforts in the war against terrorism?

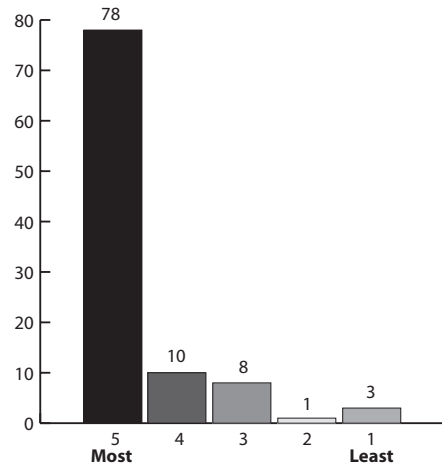


Figure 12: Degree of pride in your ethnic heritage.

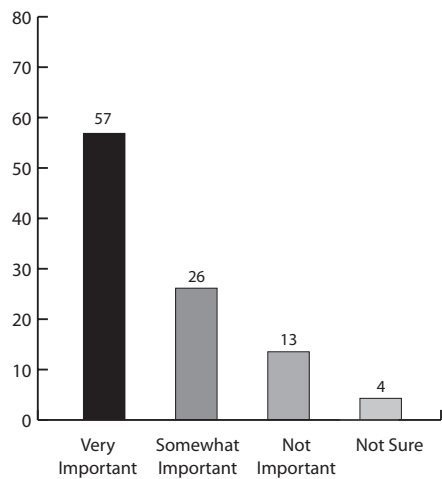


Figure 13: Importance of securing the rights of Palestinians.

American Leaders Speak Out Against Backlash In Wake of September 11 Tragedy

President George W. Bush

remarked in a telephone conversation with NY Mayor Rudy Giuliani, September 12, 2001

"I know I don't need to tell you all this, but our nation should be mindful that there are thousands of Arab Americans who live in New York City, who love their flag just as much as the three of us do, and we must be mindful that as we seek to win the war, that we treat Arab Americans and Muslims with the respect they deserve. I know that is your attitude as well, certainly the attitude of this government, that we should not hold one who is a Muslim responsible for an act of terror. We will hold those who are responsible for the terrorist acts accountable, and those who harbor them."

And he said further in remarks at the Islamic Center in Washington, DC, on September 17, 2001

"The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam. That's not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace. These terrorists don't represent peace. They represent evil and war. When we think of Islam we think of a faith that brings comfort to a billion people around the world. Billions of people find comfort and solace and peace. And that's made brothers and sisters out of every race - out of every race."

U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft, September 12, 2001

"[O]ur nation calls on us in times like this to be at our best. If we are to prevail in difficult times like this, we must be at our best. Since Tuesday, the Justice Department has received reports of violence and threats of violence against Arab-Americans and other Americans of Middle Eastern and South Asian descent. We must not descend to the level of those who perpetrated Tuesday's violence by targeting individuals based on race, religion, or national origin. Such reports of violence and threats are in direct opposition to the very principles and laws for which the United State of America stands, and such reports of violence and threats of violence will not be tolerated."

Robert Muller, Director of the FBI, September 17, 2001

Since the horrific attacks on September 11, dozens of retaliatory hate crimes have been directed at members of the Arab-American community, including assaults, arson, threatening communications and possibly-and I say "possibly"-ethnically motivated murders. Many of these criminal acts have been directed at Muslim houses of worship and at Muslim community centers.

I want to make it very clear: Vigilante attacks and threats against Arab-Americans will not be tolerated. We are all saddened by the recent acts of terrorism against our nation. Such acts of retaliation violate federal law and, more particularly, run counter to the very principles of equality and freedom upon which our nation is founded.

The FBI and the Department of Justice are committed to aggressively investigating and prosecuting violations of the federal hate crime laws. We, to date, have initiated 40 hate crime investigations, involving reported attacks on Arab American citizens and institutions.

Concurrent Resolution of the U.S. Congress, September 12, 2001

That the Congress—

1) declares that in the quest to identify, bring to justice, and punish the perpetrators and sponsors of the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, that the civil rights and civil liberties of all Americans, including Arab-Americans, American Muslims, and Americans from South Asia, should be protected; and

(2) condemns any acts of violence or discrimination against any Americans, including Arab-Americans, American Muslims, and Americans from South Asia.

Senator Tom Daschle, September 14, 2001

“We will be fierce in the defense of our ideals. We will make whatever material or physical sacrifice that is required of us to punish those who attacked our nation and to prevent future attacks. But we will not sacrifice the ideals that built this nation and have sustained us for more than two centuries. Just as we are united against the terrorists and their co-conspirators who carried out the attacks on our nation, we must also be united against acts of hate against innocent Arab- Americans and Muslims.”

Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Massachusetts, September 12, 2001

“I know that the American Muslim and Arab communities share the nation’s horror and outrage over yesterday’s terrorist attacks. They have issued strong statements unequivocally condemning these vicious atrocities and expressing their condolences to the families of the innocent people killed...there is understandable anger across the nation. But it is wrong and irresponsible to jump to conclusions and make false accusations against Arabs and Muslims in our communities. Above all, we must guard against any acts of violence based on such bigotry.”

Senator Russ Feingold, Wisconsin, September 12, 2001

“As we look for answers and we look for solutions and we look for things we must do, domestically as well as externally, we must continue to respect our Constitution...this should not be an occasion for ill treatment of Arab Americans, Muslim Americans, South Asians, or others in this country. It is wrong. They are as patriotic as any other Americans and are feeling extremely stressed as a result of this situation...we must stand together, all Americans of all background, to condemn these actions.”

Senator Dick Durbin, Illinois, September 12, 2001

“As we identify the sources of terrorism, it is possible we will look to an Arab person, or a group of Arab people, or those of the Muslim faith. We should never allow those facts, if they turn out to be true, to cloud our judgment when it comes to our fellow Arab Americans and those who believe and practice the Muslim faith. Many of them share with us the pain and sorrow of yesterday’s tragedy.”

Representative John Conyers, Jr., Michigan, September 12, 2001

“Just as this horrendous act can destroy us from without, it can also destroy us from within. Pearl Harbor led to internment camps of Japanese-Americans, and today there is a very real danger that this tragedy could result in prejudice, discrimination, and crimes of hate against Arab-Americans and others. The lesson Oklahoma City taught us was the perpetrators of these acts of terror can be evil men of every race, nationality and religion as are the victims. We must ensure that these acts of terror do not slowly and subversively destroy the foundation of our democracy: a commitment to equal rights and equal protection.”

Representative Hilda Solis, California, September 12, 2001

"I am heartened by the American people's extraordinary display of kindness and cooperation. I have been moved by how our diverse Nation has come together in a united show of support — men and women, children and adults, Christians and Muslims, Jews and Buddhists, Hindus and Catholics, Latinos and Caucasians, Asian and African Americans. However, I am concerned about reports of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim acts committed by some in our communities. American Muslims and Arab Americans share our commitment to the American ideals of freedom, justice, and democracy. . . Acts of discrimination only serve to divide our Nation and weaken our strength. Our Nation is made stronger when we embrace our diversity."

Cari M. Dominguez, Chair of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Urges Workplace Tolerance, September 14, 2001

"In the midst of this tragedy, employers should take time to be alert to instances of harassment or intimidation against Arab-Americans and Muslim employees. Preventing and prohibiting injustices against our fellow workers is one way to fight back. . . against the evil forces that assaulted our workplaces Tuesday morning. . . Our laws reaffirm our national values of tolerance and civilized conduct. At this time of trial, these values will strengthen us as a common people . . . the nation's workplaces are fortified by the enduring ability of Americans of diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and nationalities to work together harmoniously and productively."

Paul Steven Miller, Commissioner, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, September 12, 2001

"In light of the events this week, I recognize discrimination and harassment against Arab Americans and Moslems have become a much greater and more immediate threat today. I want you to know that I and the EEOC are committed to combating any illegal discrimination against Arab Americans and Moslems that occurs in the workplace."

Robert A. Destro, Director, Interdisciplinary Program in Law & Religion, The Catholic University of America, September 12, 2001

"As we turn to the task of identifying those who supported the perpetrators of this callous murder of our fellow citizens, we must remember that Justice, not vengeance, is the basis for global solidarity and domestic tranquility. We must not, however, permit our righteous anger to lead us to forget the lessons of the past. Targeting any person — citizen or visitor — on the basis of his or her religion, nationality, or culture is evil, and at the root of our present crisis. Islam is not the enemy. Neither are our fellow Americans who are of Arabic origin or adherents of Islam. We must join together in this time of tragedy."

Union of American Hebrew Congregations, September 12, 2001

"We are concerned, in particular, with reports that some in our nation have directed their understandable anger at Tuesday's carnage at individual Arab Americans and Muslim Americans. We are outraged at reports of attacks on Arab Americans, Muslim Americans, and their mosques and businesses and condemn all such acts of lawlessness."

Korean American Coalition, September 12, 2001

"All of us remember the terrible mistakes we made as a country when thousands of innocent Japanese Americans were placed in internment camps during WWII in the hysteria following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Any attack on someone of perceived Arab ancestry is not only an attack on his or her civil rights, but also an attack on our country's sense of justice and equality."

Asian American Journalists Association, *September 12, 2001*

"Already, there is much concern within Arab American communities in our nation about the backlash that might result from Tuesday's attacks. We can help ensure that the devastating events in New York, Washington, DC, and Pennsylvania do not lead to further injustices against other Americans." —

AFL-CIO, *September 12, 2001*

Even as we denounce this act, we must remember that this was an act of terrorists, not an Arab attack, and reject anti-Arab retaliation or discrimination. Now is the time to renew the values that bind us together as a nation.

Seniors USA, *September 15, 2001*

"Of more importance, in keeping with one of our most important cornerstones when our country was formed, we adhere to the principle to provide justice to all . . . In keeping with these beliefs, we must remember America's 7 million Muslims and 6 million Arab-Americans are Americans just as much as we are and are not to be viewed as a lesser American or any way different in our love for America."

Leroy D. Baca, Sheriff, County of Los Angeles, *September 13, 2001*

"Unfortunately, there are those who would use this calamity as an excuse to blame a particular race or those practicing a specific religion. As a result, there have already been hate crimes committed against the Arab-American and Muslim-American communities. . . The terrorists, who attacked our nation, did so to divide us and create a climate of fear. If we allow prejudice and hate to separate our multicultural country, the cowards who planned and implemented this horror will have succeeded. We cannot allow history to repeat itself and make the same mistakes that were made following Pearl Harbor against loyal Americans of Japanese descent. Our nation is facing a grave challenge to our way of life and it is time to unite, as we have done time and again throughout our history."

Rod Paige, U. S. Secretary of Education, *September 19, 2001*

"In response to last week's events specifically, I urge you to make sure that assemblies, classroom discussions, and other school activities held to honor victim of the tragedies, do not inadvertently foster the targeting of Arab-American students for harassment or blame. Encourage students to discuss diversity constructively and to express disagreement over ideas or beliefs in a respectful manner. . . Through our words and the example of our own conduct, we must remind our children that harassment of and violence toward any individual because of his or her race or national origin is never acceptable. In addition, we must emphasize during this difficult time in our nation's history that our feelings of anger and sadness must not be directed at innocent Arab Americans, or other individuals having no connection to last week's events. Working together, we can make sure that our children get a good education in a safe environment that does not tolerate violence and hatred."

David Broder, *The Washington Post*, *September 18, 2001*

"This struggle will test the temperament of the American people for a long time. But one thing needs to be done right now. I have been talking with my friend Jim Zogby, the president of the Arab American Institute, about the assaults and threats members of that community have experienced since September 11.

Vile words have been uttered on the street and on talk shows. Bullets and fist have flown. That cannot be condoned. The statements of condemnation from the Bush administration and the Senate have been strong. But they need to be echoed in local communities. It is not enough to remain silent. The bigots must be condemned, and gestures of support given to Arab American families. This too is part of our national character test."



Arab Americans: Making a Difference

By Casey Kasem



There are about 3 million

Arab Americans, and as a community, we've been demonstrating loyalty, inventiveness, and courage on behalf of the United States for over 100 years. Here are just a few of the famous and accomplished ones—people you may know!

Military Service



George Mitchell
Former Senate Majority
Leader

You talk about courage ... How about America's and the world's first jet ace? He was the Korean War hero, U.S. Air Force **Col. James Jabara**. In World War II, Army officers like **Maj. Gen. Fred Safay** fought alongside Gen. Patton, and **Brig. Gen. Elias Stevens** served on Gen. Eisenhower's staff.

And in 1944, one of our Navy's ships, the destroyer escort USS Naifeh, was named in honor of an Arab American hero,

Navy Lt. Alfred Naifeh of Oklahoma. More recently, West Point graduate and retired four-star **Gen. George Joulwan** was the NATO Supreme Allied Commander of Europe, where he commanded both European and U.S. troops. **Brig. Gen. William J. Jabour** is the Director of the Air Force Program Executive Office for Fighter and Bomber programs in charge of the F-22 System Program Office (SPO).

Political

Some of us work in our nation's capital, like veteran Congressmen **Nick Joe Rahall II** (West Virginia), **Ray LaHood** (Illinois), **John Baldacci** (Maine), **John E. Sununu** (New Hampshire), **Chris John** (Louisiana), and **Darrell Issa** (California).



Nick J. Rahall II
Dean of the Arab
American Congressional
Delegation



Spencer Abraham
Secretary of Energy

There are two Arab Americans in President George W. Bush's Cabinet: U.S. Secretary of Energy **Spencer Abraham** and Director of the Office of Management and Budget **Mitchell Daniels**. The first Arab American ever appointed to a Cabinet secretary post was **Donna Shalala**, the nation's longest

serving Secretary of Health and Human Services, and now president of the University of Miami. Former Governor of New Hampshire **John H. Sununu** became the White House Chief of Staff under Pres. George Bush Sr., and later a political commentator on CNN.



John H. Sununu
Former New Hampshire
Governor & White House
Chief of Staff

America's longest-serving White House Chief of Protocol, serving seven and a half years under President Reagan, was Ambassador **Selwa Roosevelt**.

Thomas A. Nassif, her assistant, and **Edward Gabriel** also served as U.S. Ambassador to Morocco. Our Ambassador to Syria is **Theodore Kattouf**, and **Marcelle Wahba** is Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates.

The late ambassador **Philip C. Habib** served as Special Presidential Envoy to the Middle East and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Feisty **Helen Thomas**, who served for 57 years as a correspondent for United Press International and was dean of the White House press corps, is a Hearst newspaper syndicated columnist. In a class by himself, the late, warm-hearted **Robert George** portrayed Santa Claus year-round for nearly 50 years and was a Presidential Santa at the White House through seven administrations.



Helen Thomas
Former Dean of White
House Press Corps



Donna Shalala
Former Secretary of
Health & Human Services

Others who have served in high elected office are: former U.S. Senate Majority Leader **George Mitchell**, who brokered a peace deal in Northern Ireland and led a peace commission to the Middle East; former U.S. Senators **James Abourezk** and **James Abdnor**, both of South Dakota; and former Congressional members **Pat Danner** of Missouri, **Mary Rose Oakar** of Ohio, the late **George Kasem** of California, who was the first Arab American elected to the U.S.

Congress, **Abraham Kazen, Jr.** of Texas, and **Toby Moffett** of Connecticut. **Victor Atiyeh** was the popular governor of Oregon.

Arab Americans are grocers and governors, physicians and farmers, Indy 500 champs and taxicab drivers, financiers and factory workers, bakers and bankers, salesmen and senators, TV stars and TV repairmen, teachers and preachers, Heisman Trophy-winning quarterbacks and neighborhood sandlot heroes. Name it, and an Arab American has probably done it.

Sports

San Diego Chargers quarterback **Doug Flutie**, who threw the “miracle-touch-down” pass for Boston College, won the Heisman Trophy in 1984. He previously played with the Buffalo Bills and was a superstar in the Canadian Football League. There’s also NFL player **Jeff George**, who quarterbacked several NFL teams, and former NFL coach **Rich Kotite**. Don’t forget former Chicago Bears linebacker and NFL Hall of Famer **Bill George**, or former Cleveland Brown **Abe Gibran**. Another NFL player is **Drew Haddad** of the Indianapolis Colts. The former owner of the Miami Dolphins was **Joe Robbie**.



Doug Flutie
Heisman Trophy
Winner



Rony Seikaly
NBA Basketball Star

In basketball, there’s former NBA center **Rony Seikaly**. UCLA’s fiery coach **Jim Harrick** took his team to the NCAA playoffs eight years in a row, winning the national championship in 1995; he’s now coaching at the University of Georgia. The late **George Maloof, Sr.** owned the NBA’s Houston Rockets; today his sons, **Joe and Gavin Maloof**, own the Sacramento Kings.

Major League baseball player **Joe Lahoud** played with the Boston Red Sox and **Sam Khalifa** played for the Pittsburgh Pirates. And **Fred Saigh** once owned baseball’s St. Louis Cardinals.

In auto racing, **Bobby Rahal** won the Indy 500 in 1986, later becoming the all-time earnings champ among Indy car racers. The founder of the Professional



Bobby Rahal
Race Car Champion

Bowlers Association was the late **Eddie Elias**. In the ring, **Petey Sarron** won the world featherweight championship in 1936-1937. **Zuhair “Steve” Mansour** was weightlifting’s Grandmaster of the World in 1990. And a four-time U.S. National Chess Champion and Grandmaster is Seattle’s **Yasser Seirawan**. Women’s International Chess Master **Jennifer Shahade** won the 2002 U.S. Women’s Chess Championship. The late **Dr. Elias Ghanem**, former chairman of the Nevada Athletic Commission and Las Vegas’ own physician to the stars, once treated celebrities like Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson, Johnny Cash, Kenny Rogers, and Paul Anka. In track and field, the world record holder for the marathon is Arab American **Khalid Khannouchi**.

Activists

Among America’s activists, can you think of two people who have saved more lives than America’s foremost consumer advocate and Green party presidential candidate **Ralph Nader** and the founder of MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) **Candy Lightner**. MADD is the largest crime victims’ assistance organization in the world, with more than 3 million members and supporters.

Back in 1960, **Ralph Johns**, an active participant in the civil rights movement, encouraged the famous Woolworth “sit-in” at a lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. And today **Dr. Rabih Aridi** works to promote human rights as treasurer and board member of Amnesty International USA.

Business

The founder of an international, billion-dollar engineering firm, Jacobs Engineering Group, is **Dr. Joseph Jacobs**. A former chemist with dozens of patents became Armand Hammer’s successor as chairman of the board, president, and chief executive officer of Occidental Petroleum — **Dr. Ray Irani**.

Najeeb Halaby, former head of the Federal Aviation Administration, was CEO of Pan-American Airlines. His daughter, Lisa, married King Hussein of Jordan and became the only Arab American to be queen of a foreign country, **Queen Noor**.

Jacques Nasser was formerly the president and CEO of Ford Motor Company. The chairman of the board of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company is **Samir G. Gibara**. The late **Stephen Yokich** served five terms as vice president of the

International United Auto Workers union, then became its president. **Ned Mansour** was formerly the president of Mattel, Inc., maker of Barbie dolls and other toys.

John Mack is the CEO of Credit Suisse First Boston and was formerly the president of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, one of America's largest investment banking firms. **Dr. Raymond Jallow** is an internationally respected economic advisor to governments and institutions, lecturing in financial capitals around the world. **Youssef A. Nasr** is the president and CEO of HSBC USA, a leading financial services organization and the third largest depository institution. **William Hanna** is the founding president and CEO of Cedars Bank, a wholly Arab American owned commercial bank headquartered in Los Angeles. The chairman of the board and CEO of Fresh Del Monte Produce, Inc. is **Mohammed Abu-Ghazaleh**.

Farouk Shamie is the CEO and founder of Farouk Systems USA, a premier hair and skin care company that introduced environmentally safe products for hairdressers. Lebanese-American **Richard E. Rainwater** built his reputation managing investments for Texas' wealthy Bass family and earned millions for himself as a result. He recently set up a \$120 million trust for Stanford and the University of South Carolina.

George Shaheen is credited with founding Andersen Consulting, now called Accenture, and served as CEO and managing partner as part of a 30-year career at the world's biggest consulting firm. **Roger Farah** is president and chief operating officer of Polo Ralph Lauren and previously served as chairman of the board of Venator Group, Inc., the parent company of Footlocker. The "new economy" has its share of Arab American heroes as well: **Simon Assad** is the co-CEO of Heavy.com, a music site that was nominated for a Webby, the Internet's highest honor. One of America's preeminent pollsters, keeping tabs on public opinion and other statistics, is **John Zogby** of Zogby International.

Paul Orfalea founded the world's biggest international chain of copying service stores, Kinko's; while **Waleed and Malik Ali** founded MPI, the world's largest home-video distributor of documentaries. Entrepreneur **Tony Ismail** founded the Alamo Flag Company in Dallas and built it into the largest retailer of flags and related items in the U.S. today.

Law

The Texas lawyer who won the biggest business settlement in U.S. history, on behalf of Pennzoil (\$10 billion dollars!), is one of this country's most successful attorneys, **Joseph D. Jamail**. In the famous "zoot suit" trial of the 1940's, **George Shibley** defended unjustly accused Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles. In the late 1990s, **Edward Masry** and Erin Brockovich filed a direct action lawsuit against Pacific Gas and Electric for polluting the drinking water of Hinkley, CA. Their efforts secured the largest toxic tort injury settlement in U.S. history, \$333 million in damages, and was chronicled in the blockbuster film starring Julia Roberts and Albert Finney.

Entertainment

Canadian-born singer-songwriter **Paul Anka** became one of America's first pop teen idols. The late ukelele-plucking, falsetto-singing **Herbert Khaury** became famous as "Tiny Tim." And in the world of rock, there was the late, legendary **Frank Zappa**. On the West Coast, **Dick Dale** is the "King of the Surf Guitar." Singer-dancer-choreographer **Paula Abdul** has had two number-one albums, six number-one singles, a



Paul Anka
Singer and Songwriter



Shakira
Award-Winning Singer

Grammy award, and worldwide album sales exceeding 30 million records. And the first teenage singer ever to have her first two singles both hit number one is **Tiffany**, born Renee Darwish. Pop star **Shakira**, of Colombian and Lebanese descent, has scored on the U.S. charts and is a multiple Grammy winner.

Speaking of music, two of America's landmark music shows on radio were created by two Arab Americans, **Don Bustany** and me — "American Top 40" and "American Country Countdown." **Diane Rehm** is host and executive producer of "The Diane Rehm Show" on National Public Radio (NPR). The man who pioneered the concept of a radio programming consultant in 1958 is **Mike Joseph**, who's helped organizations like ABC, CBS, and NBC, among others. On Broadway, playwright **Fred Saidy** wrote two classics, "Finian's Rainbow" and "Bloomer Girl." Opera prima donna **Rosalind Elias** hit the high notes at the Met. And for avant-

garde “Dancer of the Year” in 1992, the New York Times picked a 20-year Broadway veteran with the Paul Taylor Company — **Elie Chaib**. Tony Award-winning costume designer **Julie Taymor** was the creative mastermind behind the Broadway version of Disney’s “The Lion King.” She also directed the films “Titus” and “Frida.” And **David Yazbek** wrote the lyrics and score for “The Full Monty.”

Turning to television, **Lucie Salhany** became the first woman to head a television network, as chair of Fox Broadcasting Co., then of United Paramount Network. Among TV directors, two Arab Americans have each helmed over 300 episodes for the networks. **Asaad Kelada** has done numerous series like “Family Ties” and episodes of “The Facts of Life,” “Who’s the Boss?,” “WKRP in Cincinnati,” etc. After directing Broadway hits like “Sweet Charity,” “Mame,” and “The Unsinkable Molly Brown,” **John Bowab** switched to TV and has directed episodes of “Soap,” “Benson,” “Bosom Buddies,” “The Facts of Life,” and “The Cosby Show.”

Did you know...

that the highest-rated episode in television history was the last episode of “M*A*S*H”? And who played the role of not-so-crazy Corporal Klinger for its entire 11-year run? A talented Arab American from Toledo, Ohio, **Jamie Farr**.



Jamie Farr
Corporal Klinger on
“M*A*S*H”

On NBC, “Saturday Night Live’s” band-leader for many years was guitarist **G.E. Smith**. (His family’s Lebanese name, Haddad, means blacksmith). And **Susie Gharib** is co-anchor of New York’s Nightly Business Report, the most watched daily business news program, and is a winner of the coveted Gracie award for best anchor.

The best-known Lebanese in America was also the founder of St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital — the late, great comedian and actor **Danny Thomas**. His son is a television and film producer and multi-Emmy winner for “The Golden Girls” and other TV shows — **Tony Thomas**.



Danny Thomas
Comedian, Actor, and
Humanitarian



Marlo Thomas
Award-Winning Actress

Danny’s daughter, Emmy Award-winning **Marlo Thomas**, was the first actress ever to play a single, independent young woman in the TV series, “That Girl.” She currently appears on TV’s “Friends” as Rachel’s mother and published a book, “The Right Words at the Right Time.” **Wendie Malick** plays Nina Van Horn on NBC’s hit show “Just Shoot Me.”

The leading man who starred in the movies “Flashdance” and “Finding Forrester” was **Michael Nouri**, who also starred in TV’s “Love and War” sitcom. **Tony Shalhoub**, now starring in USA Network’s series “Monk,” and **Amy Yasbeck** appeared in the hit sitcom “Wings” — the first time two Arab Americans have been featured in the same TV series. Amy has also starred in films including Mel Brooks’ “Robin Hood: Men in Tights.” Tony has moved to the big screen as well, in both “Men in Black” films, “The Siege,” “A Civil Action,” and “Thirteen Ghosts” (with fellow Arab Americans F. Murray Abraham and Shannon Elizabeth).



Michael Nouri
Actor (“Flashdance” and
“Love & War”)

Crusty but soft-hearted Mel in TV’s “Alice” was portrayed by the late **Vic Tayback**. One of the co-stars of the series “Empty Nest” was **Kristy McNichol**. A star of TV’s “Head of the Class” was once picked by People Magazine as one of the “50 most beautiful people in the U.S.” — **Khrystyne Haje**.



Vic Tayback
Mel on “Alice”

Other Arab American television actors include **Yasmine Bleeth**, who starred in “Baywatch” and “Nash Bridges,” and **Tige Andrews**, who spent years with the “Mod Squad.”

Two other fine movie and television actors who also starred in popular TV dramas are **James Stacy**, who played the main role in “Laramie,” and **Michael Ansara**, who played Cochise in “Broken Arrow.”



Kathy Najimy
Award-Winning Actress-Comedian ("Sister Act" and "Veronica's Closet")

An award-winning comic actress from San Diego, **Kathy Najimy**, played a fun-loving nun in the "Sister Act" films. She co-starred as Olive, a Lebanese-American, in NBC-TV's "Veronica's Closet" with Kirstie Alley. Kathy is the voice of Peggy Hill on Fox-TV's animated hit "King of the Hill." Lovely **Salma Hayek**, who is of Lebanese and Mexican descent, is another actress who has lit up the small screen (in cable TV's movie "The Hunchback," as the gypsy Esmeralda) and the big screen (Oscar-winning "Traffic," "Desperado," "Wild Wild West," and "Frida," about Mexican artist Frida Kahlo). **Shannon Elizabeth** of "American Pie," "Scary Movie," and "Tomcats" is of Lebanese and Syrian ancestry.



Salma Hayek
Actress

The former head of Carolco Pictures, handling the "Rocky," "Rambo," and "Terminator" films, was "billion-dollar producer" **Mario Kassar**. The producer

of the epic "The Message: The Story of Islam" (a biography of the Prophet Mohammed) and "Lion of the Desert," not to mention all the blockbuster "Halloween" chillers, is **Moustapha Akkad**.

The director of Jim Carrey's loony comedy hits "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" and "Liar, Liar," Eddie Murphy's "The Nutty Professor," and Robin Williams' "Patch Adams" is **Tom Shadyac**. Together, these films have grossed more than \$1 billion worldwide.

The Pulitzer Prize for biography ("Jackson Pollack: An American Saga") was shared by the author of three other national best-sellers: writer-publisher **Steven Naifeh** of South Carolina. The book was later adapted into an Academy award-winning film (best supporting actress).

Elie Samaha is chairman and owner of Franchise Pictures, which produced such films as "The Heist," "Angel Eyes," "The Whole Nine Yards," and "Battlefield Earth." Academy Award-winning film producer **Ronald Schwary** is best known for his work with "Tootsie," "Meet Joe Black," and "Scent of a Woman." **Jehane Noujaim** co-directed and co-produced "Startup.com."

One of show business' legendary talent managers was the late **George "Bullets" Durgom**, who, through the years, managed Jackie Gleason, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Marilyn Monroe, to mention a few. Two of today's top recording stars' husband-managers are of Arab descent: **Rene Angelil**, discoverer and manager of wife Celine Dion, and Cuban-born **Emilio Estefan**, manager and producer of wife Gloria Estefan.

Emmy Award-winning cinematographer-director **George S. Dibie** is president of the International Photographers Guild. **Fouad Said** was the cinematographer who designed Cinemobile, the first customized van for filming on location, while working on the TV series "I Spy." For this achievement, he received a Technical Academy Award in 1970.

Other Arab American Oscar winners include **F. Murray Abraham**, who won Best Actor for the movie "Amadeus." Screenwriter and novelist **William Peter Blatty** won an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay for "The Exorcist," a huge box office hit based on his novel of the same name. Recipient of an Oscar for Best Original Screenplay for "Thelma and Louise" and director of the "Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood" is **Callie Khoury**. The late composer **Paul Jabara** won an Oscar award for Best Song, Donna Summer's "Last Dance" from the movie "Thank God, It's Friday." Set decorator **Emile Kuri** won two Oscars for his splendid work on "The Heiress" and "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea." He received a total of eight Academy Award nominations and later designed many exhibits at Disneyland.

Education

Columbia professor **Edward Said** is a well-known literary and social critic, as well as a respected music reviewer, whose column appears in "The Nation." Professor Said has authored more than a dozen volumes on everything from the Middle East to English literature. **Jack Shaheen**, emeritus professor of mass communications at Southern Illinois University and author of books like "The TV Arab" and "Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People," has also been CBS News' consultant for the Middle East. **David Adamany** was the longest-serving president of Wayne State University in Detroit.



Edward Said
Literature and Music Critic and Author

For an inspiring success story, try that of writer-lecturer on business and success, **Nido Qubein**. When he came to the United States as a teenager, he could barely speak English. He went on to become president of the National Speakers' Association and the youngest member inducted into the International Speakers' Hall of Fame.

Fashion

The prestigious CFDA Menswear Designer of the Year Award for 1989 and 1990 went to Arab American **Joseph Abboud** of New York. He's the only designer to win the award two years in a row.

Supermodel **Yamila Diaz-Rahi**, who is of Lebanese and Spanish descent, landed the coveted Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue cover in 2002. She has also graced the covers of "Marie Claire," "Elle," "GQ," and "Shape."

One of America's most sought-after hairstylists, **Frederic Fekkai**, boasts clients such as Claudia Schiffer, Kim Basinger, and Renee Zellweger.

Lebanese immigrant **J.M. Hagggar** started Hagggar Clothing Co. in 1926. It became one of the world's best-known brands in men's apparel. The company is now a multi-million dollar enterprise that is headed by **J.M. Hagggar III**, who serves as chairman and CEO. In addition, **Farah Brothers** manufactures men's and women's slacks, and **Malooof Brothers** manufactured Mod-O-Day women's dresses. **Norma Kamali**, who designs everything from clothing and cosmetics to eyeglasses, is of Arab ancestry. **Reem Acra** is one of the world's preeminent designers of bridal fashions and is known for her elaborate embroideries. Hair accessories and jewelry designer **Colette Malouf** began her rise to the top in 1987 with the "Malouf Poof." She is known for her innovative use of exotic materials and her celebrity clientele.

Art

Arab Americans also have made significant contributions to the art world. America's most honored woodworker, **Sam Maloof** is an award-winning artisan whose creations have appeared in the White House, the Smithsonian Institution, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Vatican, and other renowned



Sam Maloof
Award-Winning Artisan

exhibit halls. Retired heart surgeon **Dr. Hussam A. Fadhi** is an award-winning sculptor whose work is displayed around the world, including the Bush Presidential Library. Prolific industrial designer **Karim Rashid** is among the major talents of 21st-century design with work in New York's Museum of Modern Art.

The first woman to design a major American art museum, Cincinnati's \$34 million Contemporary Art Center, is Iraqi-born **Zaha Hadid**. Artist **Ghada Amer's** hand-embroidered paintings were selected for the Whitney Biennial 2000 and the Venice Biennale in 1999. **Naomi Shihab Nye** is an award-winning poet and author of children's literature.

Science and Medicine

One of America's most famous pioneers is Houston surgeon **Dr. Michael DeBakey**, who invented the heart pump. Today he's chancellor of Baylor University's College of Medicine. Algerian-American **Dr. Elias Zerhouni** is the director of the National Institutes of Health.

Two winners of the Nobel Prize for Chemistry are Arab American. **Dr. Ahmed H. Zewail**, a professor of physics at the California Institute of Technology (CIT), is the 1999 winner. The 1990 winner is Harvard's **Dr. Elias Corey**. Also at CIT is **Dr. Charles Elachi**, who was selected to head up the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. A pioneer in the field of electrical engineering, inventor **Hassan Kamel Al-Sabbah** worked for the General Electric Company (GE) in the 1920s and 30s. His research led to 52 patent applications, among them innovations in solar energy and television tubes.

Geologist **George A. Doumani's** explorations helped prove the theory of continental drift; he has a mountain peak named after him in Antarctica. Another American geologist, **Dr. Farouk el-Baz**, born in Egypt, helped plan all the Apollo moon landings and later pioneered the use of space photography to study the Earth.

Finally, the courageous astronauts who lost their lives aboard the space shuttle Challenger represented several racial and ethnic groups: African-American, Hispanic-American, Asian-American, Anglo-American, Jewish-American — and Arab American: schoolteacher **Christa McAuliffe**.

We've all heard this quote before:

"Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country" — a famous quote by an Irish-American president, John F. Kennedy, that inspired an entire generation.



These words were first written by, among others, the Arab American author of "The Prophet," **Kahlil Gibran**. And that sentiment, so beautifully expressed by Gibran more than 70 years ago, has inspired Americans of all heritages.



We Arab Americans are proud of our heritage and proud to be Americans. It's this pride that keeps us all asking, "What can we do for our country?"— the good old U.S.A.

About the Arab American Institute Foundation

The AAIF sponsors and supports programs that promote awareness of Arab American contributions to life in the United States. AAIF priorities include research and education on Arab American demographics, cultural heritage, and leadership development.

Ongoing programs include the Kahlil Gibran "Spirit of Humanity" Awards program honoring individuals and organizations that promote ethnic and racial understanding and inclusion, and youth leadership awards for outstanding public and community service. AAIF also sponsors events for visiting dignitaries from the Arab world and other forms of U.S.-Arab professional exchange.

Incorporated in 1996 as a 501(c)(3) educational organization by the founders of the Arab American Institute, AAIF is based in Washington, DC.



1600 K Street NW, Suite 601
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 429-9210 * Fax (202) 429-9214
aaif@aaiusa.org * www.aaiusa.org

★ Who are we?

Eighty-two percent of persons of Arab ancestry residing in the U.S. are citizens; sixty-three percent were born in the U.S. About 51 percent speak a language other than English in their homes. About 18 percent speak little or no English. Families are larger than the national average, with 32.6 percent of households home to four or more persons.

★ Where do we live?

Arab Americans live in all 50 states, but two-thirds reside in 10 states; one-third of the total live in California, New York and Michigan. Twenty metro areas are home to 48 percent of Arab Americans; the top five are: Los Angeles, Detroit, New York/NJ, Chicago and Washington, DC. About 90 percent live in urban areas.

★ How educated are we?

Arab Americans with high school diplomas number 82 percent. Those with a bachelor's degree or higher are 36 percent; and 15 percent of the population have graduate degrees.

Of the school-age population, 7% are in pre-primary school, 53% are enrolled in elementary or high school; 39.5% are enrolled in college.

★ Where do we work?

About 66 percent of adults are in the labor force; 5.9 percent of them are unemployed. Nearly 73 percent of working Arab Americans are employed in managerial, professional, technical, sales or administrative fields. Most Arab Americans work in the private sector (77 percent), while 12.4 percent are government employees.

★ What is our family income?

Median income for Arab American families in 1990 was \$39,580 compared with the \$35,225 level for all families. Mean income measured even higher at \$53,337, compared with the national average of \$43,803. Less than 11% of Arab American families live below the poverty level, however the percent is slightly higher than the national average taken in the 1990 census.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing, CP-3-2, Ancestry of the Population of the United States, 1990.

It is estimated that three million Americans trace their heritage to the Arab World. The U.S. Census identifies a portion of this population through a question on "ancestry" from the census long form. Because it is believed that census figures undercount the Arab American population, 1995 estimates based on research and survey data from Zogby International are also included below.

Top 20 Counties by Arab American Population

	<i>Census 1990</i>	<i>Estimated Population 1995</i>
1. Los Angeles County, Calif.	56,345	197,205
2. Wayne, Mich.	31,274	109,460
3. Kings, New York	27,209	95,231
4. Cook, Illinois	23,532	82,360
5. Oakland, Mich.	15,495	54,230
6. Orange, Calif.	15,662	46,985
7. Macomb, Mich.	12,627	44,190
8. Cuyahoga, Ohio	12,507	43,750
9. Harris, Texas	13,925	41,775
10. San Diego, Calif.	13,055	39,165
11. Fairfax, Va.	9,976	34,910
12. Queens, N.Y.	9,938	34,780
13. Dade, Fla.	11,344	34,030
14. New York County, N.Y.	9,339	32,685
15. Middlesex, Mass.	9,709	29,100
16. Bergen, N.J.	7,340	25,690
17. Montgomery, MD	6,873	24,055
18. Santa Clara, Calif.	7,085	21,255
19. Alleghany, Pa.	6,994	20,980
20. Norfolk, Mass.	6,850	20,550

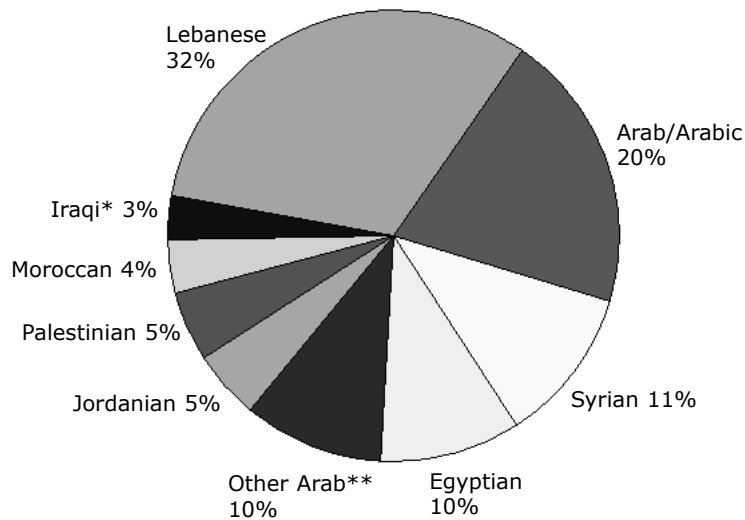
Arab American populations by largest metropolitan area (1995 estimates)

<i>Metro Area</i>	<i>Estimated Pop.</i>	<i>Counties Included</i>
Los Angeles	283,355	Los Angeles, Orange counties
Detroit	219,765	Wayne, Oakland, Macomb
New York*	162,692	Kings, Queens, Manhattan
Northeastern NJ	92,080	Bergen, Hudson, Middlesex, Essex, Monmouth
Chicago	91,260	Cook, DuPage
Washington, D.C.	69,350	D.C., Fairfax, VA, Montgomery, MD

*Does not include Long Island or Yonkers

Zogby International is a nationally recognized public opinion research organization based in Utica, New York. www.zogby.com

Ancestry of Arab Americans by Primary Identification

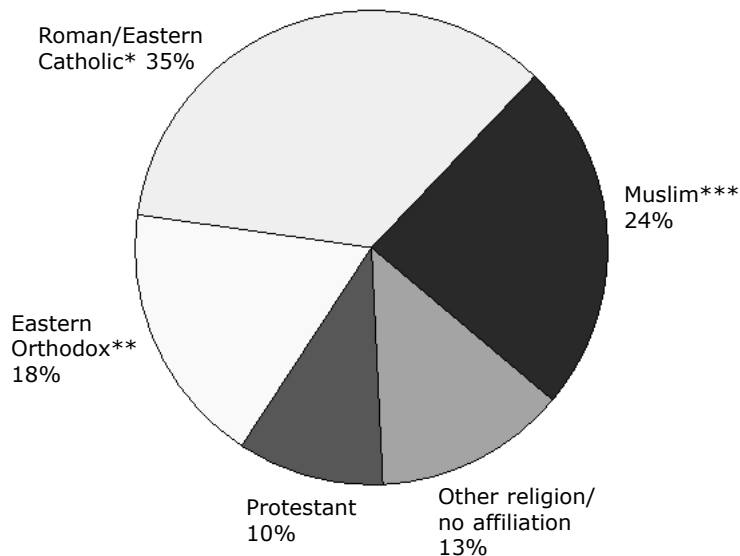


From US Census 2000
Supplementary Survey

* Excludes persons who identify as Chaldeans, Assyrians or other Christian minorities from Iraq.

**Includes those from Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Does not include persons from Sudan, Somalia, or Mauritania.

Religious Affiliations of Arab Americans



Based on a 2002 Zogby
International Survey

*Eastern Catholic includes Roman Catholic, Maronite, and Melkite (Greek Catholic) rites.

**Orthodox includes Antiochian, Syrian, Greek and Coptic rites.

***Muslim includes Sunni, Shi'a, and Druze.

Who Are Arab Americans?

By Helen Hatab Samhan

Arab Americans constitute an ethnicity made up of several waves of immigrants from the Arabic-speaking countries of southwestern Asia and North Africa that began arriving in the United States during the 19th century. Their regional homeland includes 22 Arab countries, stretching from Morocco in the west to the Arabian (Persian) Gulf in the east. Although a highly diverse U.S. group, Arab Americans descend from a heritage that represents common linguistic, cultural, and political traditions.

Identity and Values

Arab Americans are as diverse as the national origins and immigration experiences that have shaped their ethnic identity in the United States, with religious affiliation one of the most defining factors. The majority of Arab Americans descend from the first wave of mostly Christian immigrants. Sharing the faith tradition of the majority of Americans facilitated their acculturation into American society, as did high intermarriage rates with other Christian ethnic groups. Even though many Arab Christians have kept their Orthodox and Eastern Rite church (Greek Catholic, Maronite and Coptic) affiliations, which have helped to strengthen ethnic identification and certain rituals, their religious practices have not greatly distinguished them from the Euro-centric American culture. Roughly two-thirds of the Arab population identifies with one or more Christian sect.

Due to the steady increase of immigration since the 1950s, Arab Muslims represent the fastest growing, albeit still minority, segment of the Arab American community. Muslim Arabs in America have many more religious traditions and practices that are unique to their faith and may compete with prevailing American behavior and culture. The beliefs of Islam place importance on modesty, spurn inter-faith marriage, and disapprove of American standards of dating or gender integration. Religious practices that direct personal behavior - including the five-times-daily prayers, the month-long fast at Ramadan, beards for men, and the wearing of the *hijab* (hee JAB or headcover) - and that require accommodation in such places as work, schools, and the military, make Muslims more visible than most religious minorities and often vulnerable to bigotry. Concern for retaining customs among their mostly U.S.-born children has prompted Arab Muslims in large communities to open private Islamic schools.

Another strong motivation for private schooling is so that the Arabic language can be incorporated into the curriculum. Since the retention of any foreign language beyond the first U.S.-born generation is a challenge, and since Arabic is required to study the Qur'an, Muslim families look to private schools or weekend programs to keep the language alive. In 1998, the public school system in Virginia's Fairfax County joined Dearborn, Michigan, in offering Arabic as an accredited foreign language.

This is a version of an article originally published by © Groliers Multimedia Encyclopedia, 2001



Print and broadcast media that carry Arabic or bilingual material are expanding in such large population centers such as Detroit, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C. In 1991, the Arab Network of America (ANA) became the first to produce and nationally broadcast Arabic programming. While bilingualism is disappearing in the most assimilated subgroups, nearly half of Arab American households report some Arabic use.

“Arab Americans have served in the cabinets and other high offices of Republican and Democratic administrations, including Chief of Staff John H. Sununu, Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, and most recently, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham and Office of Management and Budget director Mitchell Daniels.”

Politics is another area where Arab Americans are diverse. Party affiliation is roughly evenly divided among Republicans, Democrats, and independents. Voter registration and education efforts in recent years have improved participation, with polls showing Arab Americans more likely to vote (69%) than the citizenry as a whole. Recognition of the Arab bloc vote is recent. Clusters in key battleground states such as Michigan and Ohio have brought attention to an otherwise invisible constituency. In 2000, both major presidential candidates held meetings with Arab American community leaders, and the Democratic and Republican parties each sponsored appeals to Arab voters in key states.

Arab Americans hold public office at all levels. Four have served in the U.S. Senate, including George Mitchell (1980-1995) of Maine, and six currently serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. Arab Americans have served in the cabinets and other high offices of Republican and Democratic admin-

istrations, including Chief of Staff John H. Sununu under President George Bush, Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala under President Bill Clinton, and most recently, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham and Office of Management and Budget director Mitchell Daniels under President George W. Bush. Arab Americans have been governors of Oregon and New Hampshire and have served in state legislatures. More than thirty have been mayors of U.S. cities, among them Bridgeport, Conn., El Paso, Tex., and St. Paul, Minn. Most of the Arab Americans in public office, including scores on city councils and school boards, descend from the earlier wave of Lebanese/Syrian immigrants.

The shape and intensity of ethnic identity varies widely between the first and second waves of Arab Americans. For all generations, ethnic affinity is resilient in food, extended-family rituals, and religious fellowship. Those immigrating since the 1950s and most Muslim families are likely to relate less with the white majority culture and more with subcultures in which religious, national-origin, and language traditions are preserved. For those who live in ethnic enclaves, intra-group marriages, and family businesses often limit outside social interaction.

Although the U.S. census classifies Arabs as white along with the European majority, a sizable number believe they are not treated as whites, but more like such other minorities as Asians Americans and Hispanic Americans. Not surprisingly, there is no consensus among all generations of Arab Americans on this question, nor is there yet a move in the federal government to measure Arabs separately. In some arenas, however, such as higher education, some health agencies, and even in market research, Middle Eastern ethnicity is classified separately, a trend that is likely to expand to other institutions.

Contributions to American Culture

Despite these challenges in the areas of political and civil rights, Arab Americans continue to make lasting cultural contributions. Among prominent writers, the Lebanese-born poet-artist Kahlil Gibran is perhaps the most widely read and appreciated by American readers, and



William Blatty (*The Exorcist*), children's author and poet Naomi Shihab Nye, and Edward Said are also noted in literary circles. Dean of the White House press corps Helen Thomas and consumer advocate Ralph Nader are legends in public affairs.

In the field of entertainment, Arab American stars have included the actor-comic Danny Thomas, actress Kathy Najimy, and Tony Shalhoub, singers Paul Anka and Paula Abdul, and Casey Kasem, "America's Top 40" disc jockey. Sports icons include Doug Flutie and Jeff George of the National Football League. Such business giants as J.M. Haggar (the clothing manufacturer) and Paul Orfalea (founder of Kinko's photocopy stores) are also among the many Arabs who have made their mark in America.

Stereotypes and Civil Rights

Some of the divergent identity options chosen by Arab Americans can be traced to the treatment of Arabs and their culture in the United States. In both popular culture and government policy, anti-Arab stereotypes since the 1970s have affixed a stigma on Arab ethnicity in America. The first wave of immigrants did confront nativism, ignorance, and anti-foreign sentiments of the prewar period, but they were rarely singled out. This changed with the development of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which created a highly-charged political arena in which the United States became a strategic player and a strong supporter of the state of Israel. Because public exposure to Arab history and culture was often shaped only by old stereotypes of Arab sheiks, harems, and camels, it was not difficult for this cultural bias to deepen in direct proportion to U.S. interests in the Middle East.

New negative stereotypes emerged in and permeated advertising, television, and movies, particularly those of the nefarious oil sheik and the terrorist. The Arab as villain has been a favorite scapegoat of popular American culture, thereby setting the stage for acts of discrimination and bigotry that have affected Arab Americans at home and resulted in a range of reactions. In the most assimilated circles, personal pride in Arab heritage did not always reach the public realm, where the stigma of unpopularity and controversy motivated some to mask their ethnicity, particularly in such arenas as the entertainment, media, and academic fields.

“Organizations to educate and to advocate the Arab point of view laid the groundwork for the first publicly engaged movement to represent the needs and issues of Arab Americans and to create a national sense of community and common purpose.”

Stereotypes also seeped into public policy. Beginning in the 1970s a number of government investigations, executive orders, and legislative provisions aimed at combating terrorism had an impact on Arab American activism and violated the rights of some Arabs living in the United States. A more activist response emerged as Arab-born intellectuals, students, and professionals coalesced to counter the bias they saw in American policy and culture. Organizations to educate and to

advocate the Arab point of view laid the groundwork for the first publicly engaged movement to represent the needs and issues of Arab Americans and to create a national sense of community and common purpose. Organizations such as the National Association of Arab Americans, the Association of Arab-American University Graduates, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, the Arab American Institute were founded to respond to these political, civic, and cultural challenges.

Recent anti-terrorism policies of airline-passenger profiling and the use of secret evidence by immigration judges have disproportionately affected Arabs and Muslims and have raised the concern of selective prosecution. The secret-evidence provisions of the Illegal Immigration



Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1996, have been challenged by constitutional-rights advocates and through bipartisan legislation slated to reverse this policy that was introduced in the 106th Congress in 2000.

When the relative invisibility of the broader Arab American community is contrasted with highly volatile political events, the most visible members and their institutions can be vulnerable to scapegoating. One prominent example was the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing tragedy in which initial suspicions of a Middle-Eastern link prompted incidents of anti-Arab backlash.

Population Highlights

Arab immigrants began arriving in sizable numbers during the 1880's. It is estimated that nearly three million Americans trace their roots to an Arab country. The 1990 U.S. census identified just under one million persons who indicated one or more lines of Arab "ancestry," but it is believed that this figure underestimates considerably the actual population. In 2000, Arab Americans were among the populations identified by the U.S. Census Bureau for a special outreach effort, using promotional materials in the Arabic-language to improve the response rate and thus the ethnicity count.

Arab Americans are found in every state, but more than two thirds of them live in just ten states. The three metropolitan areas of Los Angeles, Detroit, and New York are home to one-third of the population. Since the late 19th century, New York has been a port of entry for Arabic-speaking immigrants, and for decades that city remained the community's cultural and commercial center. While New York and neighboring New Jersey (particularly Paterson and Jersey City) remain a focus for new arrivals, southern California has become the preferred destination for new Arab immigrants.

By far the most concentrated areas Arab American settlement, however, are in southeastern Michigan, especially the distinctly Arabic neighborhoods in the city of Dearborn. Michigan's vibrant expanse of ethnic, civic, and religious institutions have made it the new cultural and political magnet for the community nationwide. Unlike anywhere else in the country, Arab Americans make up 20% of Dearborn's population and more than 40% of the students enrolled in public schools.

Arab Americans are employed in all major occupation groups, but 72% work in managerial, professional, technical, sales, or administrative jobs. As an ethnic group, they value education and have a higher-than-average percentage (36%) who hold bachelor's degrees. The propensity of Arab Americans to be business owners and professionals translates into a corresponding median income (\$39,580 in 1990) that also surpasses the national average. However, some new arrivals struggle economically, resulting in a poverty rate of some 10%.

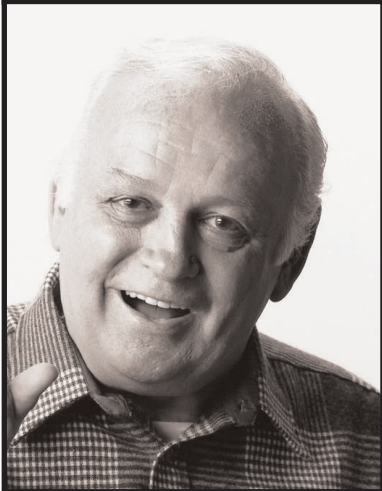
Contrary to popular assumptions or stereotypes, the sizable majority of Arab Americans are native-born, and nearly 82% are citizens. While all Arab countries have sent emigrants to the United States, the majority of the U.S. Arab community traces their roots to five major national groups - the Lebanese, Syrians, Palestinians, Egyptians, and Iraqis.

This is a version of an article originally published by © Groliers Multimedia Encyclopedia, 2001



Arab Americans

A Century of Civic and Cultural Achievement



We are a diverse people, 3 million strong, coming from all areas of the region that make up the Arab World. We are Christians and Muslims. We are Syrians, Lebanese, Egyptians, Palestinians, Iraqis, Jordanians, and Yemenis - from North Africa to Southwest Asia.

Today, we are a part of the American success story. The Arab American community is an example of the contributions an ethnic group can make when it has access to the economic and political life of this country.

From our earliest settlements in the industrialized Northeast and Midwest to those in the Southwest and West, Arab Americans have played an important part in building communities and institutions in most of the major cities of this country.

We excel in the professions and in public service. Most importantly, we play a significant role in the small business sector of many cities. Arab Americans are doctors, lawyers, teachers, elected officials, and entertainers. We are autoworkers in Detroit, grocers in Chicago, investment bankers in New York, and petroleum engineers in Texas.

Since the onset of Arab immigration to America over one hundred years ago, most in our community have assimilated into the mainstream of U.S. life. Although Arab Americans are economically and socially diverse, we share common treasures brought with us from our native lands - a rich heritage and culture, a strong extended family network, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a creative drive for excellence - that have enabled us to enrich America and its people.

It is against this backdrop and in this spirit that Arab Americans seek to make their mark in national politics.

We want to discuss civil and political rights in America from the perspective of a people who cherish these rights and want to safeguard them for ourselves and those who will come after us.

We want to present proposals on economic priorities and education policy from the vantage point of an ethnic community that has benefited from the American experience and wants to enhance the opportunities for our fellow citizens and new immigrants to our shores.

Finally, Arab Americans want to continue participating in the debate on U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. As an American ethnic community, we want to provide a bridge of understanding between the American and Arab people. We want to help forge new relationships between them based on mutual respect, concern for human rights and self-determination, and the establishment of normalized productive ties in all areas - political, economic, and cultural.

It is our hope that discrimination and political exclusion are a part of our past. Political empowerment has come thanks to the hard work of Arab Americans across the country and to the open mindedness of those who have understood that political participation is a basic right and responsibility of all Americans.



We are keenly aware of profound challenges facing this country and the Arab American community both domestically and internationally.

At the dawn of a new century, America faces new responsibilities and burdens. At a time when some call on the United States to come home, we believe our community still has a vital role to play in fostering peace and justice at home and abroad.

Arab Americans want to play a part in focusing attention on these challenges and in stirring a national debate on such key issues of concern. And today, after many years of political involvement, we feel empowered and ready to play this role. We have, through hard work, accomplished a great deal in overcoming political exclusion.

During the past two decades, Arab American organizations - including the Arab American Institute - have sought to tap the best in our community in order to realize our full political and cultural potential. In the political arena, the path to empowerment has been long and arduous, but a decade of work has established Arab Americans on both the national and local levels as a political constituency of note.

The Arab American Leadership Council, organized by AAI in 1989, has grown to include more than 400 Arab American elected or appointed political officials, over 40 elected state officials, 25 mayors and scores of local political party leaders around the United States. These include U.S. Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham, OMB Director Mitch Daniels, former HHS Secretary Donna Shalala, and former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell. Members of Congress of Arab descent are Nick J. Rahall (D-WV), Ray LaHood (R-ILL), John E. Sununu (R-NH), John Baldacci (D-ME), Chris John (D-LA) and Darrell Issa (R-CA). We are equally proud of those who served our country in the past, such as former Governor Victor Atiyeh of Oregon, former Governor John H. Sununu of New Hampshire, and former Ambassadors Ed Gabriel, Tom Nassif, Sam Zakhem and Selwa Roosevelt.

One century after the Arab immigrants first arrived in this country hoping to realize the American dream of being able to raise their families, run their businesses, and attend their churches and mosques in a free country -- we, as a community, have arrived -- proud of our heritage and proud of our achievements.

It is our hope that discrimination and political exclusion are a part of our past. Political empowerment has come thanks to the hard work of Arab Americans across the country and to the open-mindedness of those who have understood that political participation is a basic right and responsibility of all Americans.

Photos below: courtesy of *Arab Americans: Making a Difference* by © Casey Kasem

Arab Americans are immigrants and the descendants of immigrants who came to the United States seeking political liberty and economic opportunity.





Selected Web sites on Arab Americans, the Middle East and Islam

On Arab Americans

Arab American Institute
www.aaiusa.org

American Arab Anti-Discrimination
Committee
www.adc.org

Arab Community Center for
Economic and Social Services
www.accesscommunity.org

Cafe Arabica
www.cafearabica.com

Detroit Free Press (*See 100 Questions
and Answers About Arab Americans*)
www.freep.com

Planetarabia.com
www.planetarabia.com

The Union of Arab Student Associations
www.angelfire.com/or/uasa

On Arabs and the Middle East

Amideast
www.amideast.org

About Arab Culture
www.arabculture.about.com

Center for Contemporary Arab Studies
www.ccasonline.org

League of Arab States
www.leagueofarabstates.org

Middle East Institute
www.mideasti.org

On Arabs and the Middle East (cont.)

Middle East Policy Council
www.mepec.org

Middle East Studies Association
www.mesa.arizona.edu

Middle East/North Africa Internet Resource Guide
www.cc.utah.edu/~jwr9311/MENA.html

Saudi Arabian Embassy
www.saudiembassy.net

Saudi Aramco Magazine
www.saudiaramco.com

4Arabs Search Engine
www.4arabs.com

On Islam

Center for Christian-Muslim Understanding
www.cmcu.net

Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy
www.islam-democracy.org

Council on Islamic Education
www.cie.org

Islamic Society of North America
www.isna.net

Muslim Public Affairs Council
www.mpac.org

About Islam
www.islam.about.com

Introduction

Racial stereotypes against Arabs, Muslims and people from the Middle East have certain commonalities with other minority groups, but also distinct roots and manifestations that merit attention. Anti-Arab and Muslim stereotypes remain persistent in American popular and political culture, fueled by foreign policy attitudes and assumptions, competing domestic constituencies and public ignorance about this population.

Anti-Arab stereotypes do share some foundations with attitudes towards other non-European immigrants. As people of color with non-Western customs, language, names and in some cases religious affiliation, Arabs present a cultural and historical tradition unfamiliar to most Americans. While the majority of Arab immigrants have historically been of the Christian faith, the association of Arab culture with Islam has also resulted in a cultural disconnect between the Middle East and America's Judeo-Christian foundations.

Orientalism

This historical tension between the West and the East predominantly Islamic roots of Arab civilization gave play to portrayal in popular western culture of the Arab as the barbarian, the villain, the seducer of women, or the passive backdrop (Casablanca-style) to European or American adventures. "Orientalism," where eastern culture and history are presented through the eyes of western values and assumptions, was the predominant venue that informed America and Europe about the Middle East and its people.

Terrorists and Sheikhs

Cross cultural awareness and scholarship no doubt has minimized stereotypes of the orientalist persuasion, but popular images of the Arab in recent decades have probably deepened them. Two interlocking themes emerged in the 1970s to create a public association with Arabs as the "enemy". The most prevalent one to this day is the Arab as terrorist. The other, the greedy oil sheikh, was especially dominant during the oil crisis of the 70s and 80s. Cartoons were not uncommon depicting fat men in headscarf conspiring to disrupt the U.S. economy. A study of these cartoons revealed disturbing similarities to European anti-Jewish propaganda of the 1930s, prompting the observation that this represented "the other anti-Semitism".

Stereotypes and Policy

The dangerous intersection of popular stereotypes and official policy is perhaps the greatest concern of the Arab and Muslim communities in America. Without discounting for a moment the scourge of terrorism or security needs of our society, our constituencies have been alarmed by disparate treatment they have received by government agencies in the name of counter-terrorism. In several cases, programs and policies targeting our communities in the attempt to monitor terrorist activity have themselves contributed to deepening the association and create negative bias in the public eye. The rush to judgement in Oklahoma City or the anti-Arab backlash when a crisis occurs in the Middle East brings to light the ramifications of these associations.

Loyalty in Question

Perhaps the most grating stereotype for any American ethnic constituency to deal with is when their loyalty is put into question. Not unlike the Asian American experience with campaign fundraising in 1996, donors with Arab surnames were similarly questioned and ethnic fundraisers scrutinized. It was not long ago that candidates returned donations from citizens of Arab descent fearing a reaction from Jewish supporters. Similarly, crises involving American interests in the Middle East have historically invited backlash against mosques and Arab-owned stores, and occasional bigotry. Even native born Americans of Arab descent who are vocal on political issues have been asked, "why don't you go back where you came from?" Further, during the Gulf War, prominent activists and even elected officials of Arab descent were targeted by the FBI to inquire if they knew of pro-Iraqi terrorism being planned in the U.S.

Antidotes to anti-Arab Stereotypes

In many ways, the mission of our Institute has been to reverse the negative stereotype of Arabs in America by promoting programs of inclusion: through voting, electoral politics, civic initiatives and community work. While involvement in the local affairs of the community does not eliminate prejudice, it serves to introduce civic and community leaders to the concerns and assets of the ethnic constituency and reinforces the values and priorities shared by all ethnic and racial groups.

Education and public information are also key to eliminating stereotypes. Textbook review and the extra curricular materials can challenge misconceptions and biased information about Arabs and Muslims. During the recent standoff with Iraq, a member of a local human relations board, in response to concerns of Iraqi-American families about bias in the classroom, prepared a fact sheet about the history and civilization of Iraq for social study teachers throughout the school system. Similarly, providing journalists, teachers and policy makers accurate information about our population's demographics and contributions to American society has been one way to challenge negative stereotypes.

Challenging media typecasting of Arabs in villain roles, especially with Hollywood movie producers, has been a priority for the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee which has monitored this phenomenon for 15 years. Incremental victories have included replacing inflammatory lyrics in the Disney movie "Aladdin" and receiving a pledge from Warner Brothers to consider a positive role model in a future feature film.

Lastly, it is important to widen the circle in existing programs that promote diversity and reduce stereotypes to include representatives of communities who may not qualify as protected minorities, but who face similar intolerance and exclusion. Ensuring our place at the diversity table, and offering the benefit of our experience and research, has been a special focus of our attention in recent years, and one that we wish to develop in forums like these across the country.

Prepared by Helen Hatab Samhan for the President's Initiative on Race, February 1998

Select Bibliography on Arab Americans

Abraham, Nabeel and Andrew Shryock (eds.). **Arab Detroit: From Margin to Mainstream.** Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000.

Abraham, Sameer Y. and Nabeel Abraham (eds.). **Arabs in the New World: Studies on Arab-American Communities.** Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983.

Abu-Laban, Baha and Faith T. Zeady (eds.). **Arabs in America: Myths and Realities.** Wilmette, Illinois: Medina University Press International, 1975.

Abu-Laban, Baha and Michael W. Suleiman (eds.). **Arab-Americans: Continuity and Change.** Belmont: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, 1989.

Ameri, Anan and Dawn Ramey (eds.). **Arab American Encyclopedia.** Detroit: Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Service (ACCESS), 2000.

Ashabranner, Brent. **An Ancient Heritage: The Arab-American Minority.** New York: Harper Collins, 1991.

Aswad, Barbara C. (ed.). **Arabic Speaking Communities in American Cities.** New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1974.

Aswad, Barbara, and Barbara Bilgé. **Family and Gender Among American Muslims: Issues Facing Middle Eastern Immigrants and Their Descendants.** Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996.

Castronova, Frank V. **Reference Library of Arab America.** Four volumes. Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Group, Inc., 1999.

El Guindi, Fadwa. **Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance.** Oxford: Berg Publications, 1999.

Hagopian, Elaine C. and Ann Paden. **The Arab Americans: Studies in Assimilation.** Wilmette, IL: Medina University Press International, 1969.

Hooglund, Eric J. (ed.). **Crossing the Waters, Arabic-Speaking Immigrants to the United States before 1940.** Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987.

Kadi, Joanna (ed.). **Food for our grandmothers. Writings by Arab-Americans & Arab Canadian Feminists.** Boston: South End Press, 1994

Kayal, Philip M. and Joseph M. Kayal. **The Syrian-Lebanese in America: A Study in Religion and Assimilation.** Boston: Twayne, 1975.



McCarus, Ernest. **The Development of Arab-American Identity.** Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994.

Naff, Alixa, **The Arab Americans.** New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988.

Naff, Alixa, **Becoming American: The Early Arab Immigrant Experience.** Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985.

Orfalea, Gregory, **Before the Flames: A Quest for the History of Arab Americans.** Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988.

Samhan, Helen. **Arab Americans. Article in Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia.** www.grolier.com. Available Spring 2001.

Samhan, Helen. **Arab American Organizations and Political Activism. In Arab American Encyclopedia.** Detroit: Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Service (ACCESS), 2000.

Samhan, Helen. **Not Quite White: Race Classification and the Arab American Experience.** In *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*, Michael Suleiman, ed. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999.

Sawaie, Mohammed (ed.). **Arabic-Speaking Immigrants in the United States and Canada: A Bibliographical Guide with Annotation.** Lexington, KY: Mazda, 1985.

Shakir, Evelyn. **Bint Arab: Arab and Arab American women in the United States.** Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997.

Suleiman, Michael W. editor. **Arabs in America: Building a New Future.** Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999.

Waugh, Earle H., Baha Abu-Laban, and Regula B. Qureshi (eds.). **The Muslim Community in North America.** Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1983.

Wormser, Richard. **American Islam; Growing up Muslim in America.** New York: Walker and Company, 1994

Younis, Adele L., **The Coming of Arabic-Speaking People to the U.S.** New York: Center For Migration Studies, 1995

Zogby, James (ed.). **Taking Root, Bearing Fruit: The Arab-American Experience.** Washington, DC: American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, 1984.

Zogby, John. **Arab America Today: A Demographic Profile of Arab Americans.** Washington: Arab American Institute, 1990.



COUNCIL ON
ISLAMIC EDUCATION

*Teaching About
Islam and Muslims*
in the Public School Classroom

3rd Edition

© Copyright 1995 Council on Islamic Education
9300 Gardenia Street #B-3
Fountain Valley, California 92708 U.S.A.
tel: 714-839-2929 • fax: 714-839-2714 • cietrc@earthlink.net

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publications Data

Council on Islamic Education
Teaching About Islam and Muslims in the Public School Classroom.

- 1 - Islam - - Study and teaching.
- 2 - Civilization, Islam - - Study and teaching.
- 3 - World History - - Study and teaching.
- 4 - Multicultural Education.

Third Edition, 1415 A.H./October, 1995 C.E.
Third Printing, February 1998

Research/Compilation/Typesetting: Munir A. Shaikh
Cover Design: Behzad Tabatabai

To the reader:


Muslims pronounce a blessing upon Prophet Muhammad whenever they mention him by name. The Arabic blessing *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ* means “may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him.” Although this formula is not printed within the text of this book, it is intended that it be inserted in any reading by a Muslim.

The section on usage of terms in *Part 2 – Teaching with Sensitivity* is excerpted from the Council on Islamic Education’s curriculum guide *Strategies and Structures for Presenting World History, with Islam and Muslim History as a Case Study*.


Arabic terms associated with Islam, with the exception of names of people and places, and a few other words, have been set in *italic* type. Most of these terms may be found in the *Quick Reference Glossary*.

Dates are given in terms of the common era (C.E.), a convention referring to the common human experience, devoid of specific religious connotations.

This handbook for educators is listed on the State of California’s *Instructional Materials Approved for Legal Compliance* list. Thus, each California school district may use up to 30% of its Instructional Materials Fund (IMF) allocation to purchase this resource.



About Islam and Muslims



INTRODUCTION

What is Islam?

The term *Islam* derives from the three-letter Arabic root *s-l-m*, which generates words with interrelated meanings, including “surrender,” “submission,” “commitment” and “peace.” Commonly, *Islam* refers to the monotheistic religion revealed to Muhammad ibn (son of) Abdullah between 610 and 632 of the common era. The name *Islam* was instituted by the *Qur’an*, the sacred scripture revealed to Muhammad. For believers, Islam is not a new religion. Rather, it represents the last reiteration of the primordial message of God’s Oneness, a theme found in earlier monotheistic religious traditions.

Though Islam can be described as a religion, it is viewed by its adherents in much broader terms. Beyond belief in specific doctrines and performance of important ritual acts, Islam is practiced as a complete and natural way of life, designed to bring God into the center of one’s consciousness, and thus one’s life. Essentially, by definition Islam is a worldview focused on belief in the One God and commitment to His commandments.

What does the term “Allah” mean?

The Arabic word *Allah* is a contraction of the words “al” and “ilah,” and literally means “The God.” Believers in Islam understand *Allah* to be the proper name for the Creator as found in the *Qur’an*. The name *Allah* is analogous to *Eloh*, a Semitic term found in the divine scriptures revealed to Muhammad’s predecessors Moses and Jesus (may peace be upon them all).

The use of the term *Allah* is not confined to believers in Islam alone — Arabic-speaking Christians and Jews also use *Allah* in reference to God, demonstrating thereby that followers of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism believe in a common monotheistic Creator, a fact that many people are surprised to learn. One reason for this may be that English-speaking persons are accustomed to the term *God*, whereas believers in Islam, regardless of their native language, use the Arabic word *Allah*. This difference in usage may cause people to view the term *Allah* with reticence and uncertainty, preventing them from making the connection between the Arabic name and the accepted English equivalent term. In other words, *Allah* means “God,” like *Dios* and *Dieu* mean “God” in Spanish and French, respectively.

Who are Muslims?

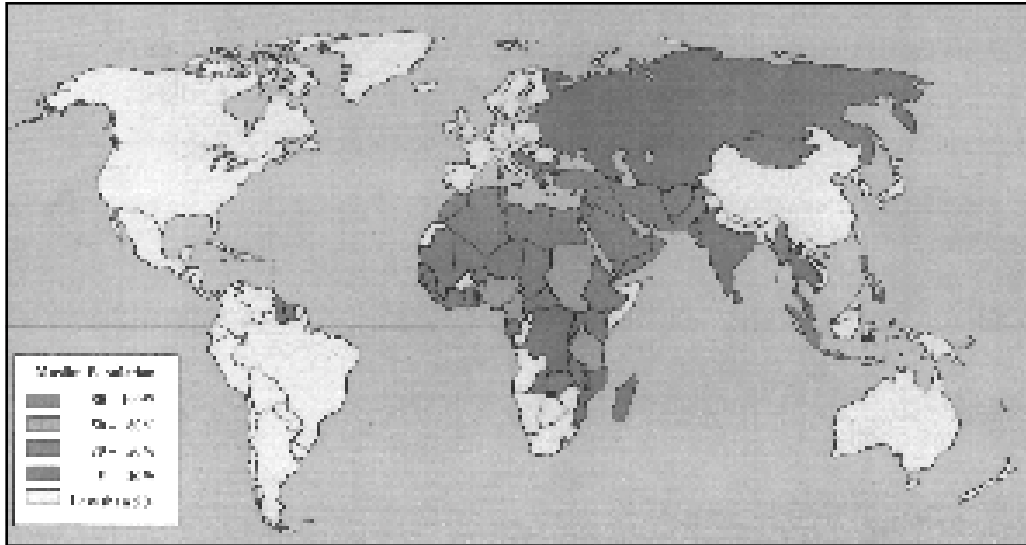
The word *Muslim*, like *Islam*, comes from the three-letter Arabic root *s-l-m*, and literally means “one who willfully submits (to God).” Islam teaches that everything in Creation — microbes, plants, animals, mountains and rivers, planets, and so forth — is “muslim,” testifying to the majesty of the Creator and submitting or committing to His divine laws. Human beings, also, are considered fundamentally “muslim” (submitters to God) in their original spiritual orientation, but being unique creations endowed with abilities of reason, judgement, and choice, they may remain on a God-conscious, righteous path towards divine reward, or may veer away as a consequence of upbringing and life-choices.

More commonly, the term *Muslim* refers to one who believes in the *Shahadah* (the declaration of faith containing the basic creed of Islam) and embraces a lifestyle in accord with Islamic principles and values. Anybody may be or become a Muslim, regardless of gender, race, nationality, color, or social or economic status. A non-Muslim who decides to enter Islam does so by reciting the *Shahadah*, (pronounced *La-Ilaha Ila Allah, Muhammad-un Rasool Allah*) witnessing that “there is no deity but Allah (God), and Muhammad is His Messenger.”

Where do Muslims live throughout the world?

Over 1.2 billion people throughout the world are adherents of Islam. In other words, one out of every five human beings on the planet is a Muslim. Islam is the religion of diverse peoples living in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Central, East, South and Southeast Asia, Japan, Australia, and North and South America. The global spectrum of races, ethnicities and cultures finds representation in the worldwide Muslim community.

While Islam is often associated almost exclusively with the Middle East, Arabs comprise only about 15-18% of all Muslims. Interestingly, the country with the largest population of Muslims (over 160 million) is Indonesia, an island nation in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, the Muslim peoples of the South Asian subcontinent (living in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka) constitute about 25% of all Muslims, while those of Africa comprise close to 20% of the total. Surprisingly to some, there are nearly as many Muslims in China as there are in Iran, Egypt or Turkey (over 50 million). Moreover, Muslims constitute sizeable minorities in many Western European countries, including England (over 2 million), France (over 2 million - about 10% of the French population), and Germany (about 2 million). See the chart on the following page for more details.



Do Muslims share a single culture?

Muslims throughout the world share the same essential beliefs, values, and God-centered approach to the world. Furthermore, all Muslims look to the *Qur'an* and the lifestyle and traditions of Prophet Muhammad for guidance in their daily affairs. In this respect, since Muslims the world over try to implement *Qur'anic* and Prophetic guidance, it may be said that Muslims share a common Islamic culture, focusing on shared principles and values. As a result, Muslims typically feel at home among their co-religionists anywhere in the world.

The Worldwide Muslim Population		
Country or Region	Est. Population	Percentage
South Asia (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh)	275 million	23%
Africa	200 million	16.7%
Arab Countries	180 million	15%
Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore...)	170 million	14.2%
Central Asia	50 million	4.2%
China	50 million	4.2%
Iran	50 million	4.2%
Turkey	50 million	4.2%
Europe	20 million	1.7%
Afghanistan	15 million	1.3%
North America	6 million	0.5%
South America	3 million	0.25%
Australia	1 million	0.08%
Total	1,200,000,000	100%

Sources:
 Fareed Numan, American Muslim Council, Washington D.C. (1992)
 Islamic Affairs Dept., Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington D.C.
 World Almanac (1995)

Teaching About Islam and Muslims in the Public School Classroom

At the same time, the ethnic, regional or material cultures of Muslims vary tremendously across the globe. Muslims exhibit different styles of clothing, different tastes for food and drink, diverse languages, and varying traditions and customs. American Muslims fall within this panorama and are in many ways culturally distinct from Muslims living in other societal contexts. Little League baseball, apple pie, and jazz music are as natural to American Muslims as they are to other Americans. Even so, certain aspects of popular American culture (such as pre-marital relations, consumption of alcohol, and certain styles of dress) do not accord with Islamic principles.

Muslims view the diversity found throughout the *ummah* (worldwide Muslim community) as a natural part of God's plan for humanity and believe it contributes to Islam's continued vitality and universal ethos. Consequently, rather than imposing arbitrary cultural uniformity, diverse cultural practices are encouraged and supported. So long as a given cultural practice or tradition does not violate teachings of Islam as found in the *Qur'an* and traditions of Prophet Muhammad, it is considered legitimate and possibly even beneficial. Using this approach, Muslims throughout history have been able to retain in large part their own distinct cultures, discarding only those elements contrary to the basic moral and ethical principles of Islam.

How many Muslims live in the United States?

An estimated five to six million Muslims live in North America, and of these, two and a half million are Americans who have embraced Islam (i.e. they were not born into the faith). Dr. John R. Weeks, Director of the International Population Center, San Diego State University, a noted demographer and author, states: "There can be no question that the Muslim population in this country is large and is growing at a fairly rapid pace." It is projected that by the turn of the century, Islam will be the second largest religion in the United States. Even today, Muslims outnumber Episcopalians, Lutherans, Presbyterians, the United Church of Christ and many other Christian denominations, and almost as many Muslims as Jews call America their home.

The United States Department of Defense reports that there are currently more than 9,000 Muslims on active duty in the U.S. armed services. A number of leading American scientists, physicians, sports figures, and scholars are Muslim. Clearly, Muslims are part of the diverse fabric of the United States, playing a productive role in our society as neighbors, co-workers, colleagues, schoolmates, and friends. Most American Muslims share in the effort to make this nation, as well as the world, a more moral, just and peaceful place in which to live, worship and prosper.

What is the Muslim community in North America like?

Muslims from various walks of life live in every state of the union. The ten states with the largest Muslim populations, listed in order, are California, New York, Illinois, New Jersey, Indiana, Michigan, Virginia, Texas, Ohio, and Maryland. Muslims in these ten states constitute 3.3 million (more than 50%) of the American Muslim population.

There are more than 1,200 *masjids* (mosques) throughout the United States, as well as over 400 Islamic schools (126 full-time), three colleges, 400 associations, an estimated 200,000 businesses, and over 200 publications, journals, and weekly newspapers.

The number of houses of worship serves as one measure of the growth of the Muslim community in the United States. In 1930, there were 19 *masjids* in America. By 1960 there were more than 230; by 1980 over 600; and as noted above, by 1995 over 1,200.

The diversity of Muslims in the United States is a hallmark of the community — virtually every race, ethnicity and culture is represented among American Muslims, making for a unique experience not found anywhere else in the world.

The Muslim Population of North America		
Ethnic Group or Origin	Est. Population	Percentage
African-American	2,100,000	42.0%
South Asian	1,220,000	24.4%
Arab	620,000	12.4%
African	260,000	5.2%
Iranian	180,000	3.6%
Turkic	120,000	2.4%
Southeast Asian	100,000	2.0%
Caucasian	80,000	1.6%
Undetermined	280,000	5.6%
Total	5,000,000	100%

Source:
Fareed Numan, American Muslim Council, Washington D.C. (1992)

What is the history of Islam in America?

The history of Islam in the New World in some sense precedes that of the United States itself. Some researchers claim that certain artifacts, found in the Mississippi delta and other locales, antedating the European “voyages of discovery,” lend credence to the possibility of Arab or African expeditions into the as-then-uncharted Ocean Sea, as the Atlantic Ocean was commonly known. Arab scientists and astronomers knew the earth to be round long before the concept gained currency in European circles. When it did, European sailing vessels, including those under Christopher Columbus’ command, that crossed the Atlantic in search of an alternate passage to Asia often enlisted Muslim crew members, due to their expertise in maritime navigation. Also, since European explorers, who spoke little Arabic, expected to reach India (hence the term “Indian” for Native Americans) and the Indian Ocean basin (where Arabs were heavily involved in maritime trade and commerce), taking along Arabs/Muslims as translators made sense.

Milestones in American Muslim History	
1500s	Arrival of Hispano-Arab Muslims (Mudejars) from Spain in Spanish-occupied territories of the New World.
1539	Moroccan guide Estephan participated in exploration of Arizona and New Mexico for the viceroy of New Spain.
1717	Arrival of enslaved Africans who professed belief in Allah and Prophet Muhammad and curiously (to their captives) refused to eat pork.
1856	Hajji Ali hired by United States cavalry to experiment in raising camels in Arizona.
1869	A number of Yemenis arrived after the opening of the Suez Canal in Egypt.
1908	Muslim immigrants from Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, other Arab lands.
1922	Islamic Association formed in Detroit, Michigan.
1933	Nation of Islam formed.
1934	First building designated as a masjid established in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.
1952	Muslim servicemen allowed to identify their religion as Islam by Federal government.
1963	Muslim Students’ Association (MSA) founded.
1965	El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X) assassinated in New York.
1975	Warith Deen Muhammad renounced teachings of Nation of Islam and led large segment of African-American community into mainstream Islam.
1982	Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) formed.
1983	Islamic College founded in Chicago, Illinois.
1991	Imam Siraj Wahhaj of Brooklyn, New York offered the invocation to the United States House of Representatives.
1991	Charles Bilal became the first Muslim mayor of an American city, Kountze, Texas.
1992	Imam Warith Deen Muhammad offered the invocation to the United States Senate.
1993	The first Muslim chaplain is hired by the United States Armed Forces.
1993	Islamic Shura Council, a coalition of four major Muslim organizations, established.

Later on in American history, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as many as 20% of the slaves brought to the United States from Africa were Muslims (before being forcibly converted to Christianity). Another group of Muslims, Spaniards known as *Mudejars*, established roots in the New World after the conquest of Granada in 1492 and the expulsion of Muslims and Jews from Spain resulting from the Inquisition. The influence of these highly-skilled Hispano-Arab Muslim craftsmen and artists has had far-reaching effects in American architecture and design, which are still in evidence today, especially in the American Southwest.

In the modern era, since the late 1800s, Muslims from all over the world, along with people of other faiths, have immigrated to the U.S. to make a better life for themselves and to contribute their unique talents and sensibilities to the ever-evolving American social matrix. In the last fifty years, a dramatic increase in native-born American Muslims and converts to Islam has taken place as well, providing new generations of Muslims prepared to interact fruitfully with fellow Americans and raise the contributions of the community to higher levels.

BASIC BELIEFS

What are the beliefs of Muslims?

The central concept in Islam, reflected in the *Shahadah*, is *tawheed*, or Oneness of God. For Muslims, there is but One God who is Lord and Sovereign of Creation, and devotion, allegiance, and obedience must first of all be to Him. This view serves as the foundation from which the basic beliefs of Islam emanate, since God is recognized as *the* Source for all knowledge and understanding. More specifically, the beliefs of Muslims are delineated and described in the *Qur'an* and in the sayings and traditions of Prophet Muhammad. The practice of Islam is based upon belief in One God (*Allah*), creations (whether humanly perceivable or not) of God, prophetic leadership, revealed guidance, and a Day of Judgement. Details are provided below.

Is there a Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition?

Important doctrinal differences exist between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Even so, each of the three faiths proceed from a monotheistic worldview interconnected with that of the other two. The three world religions share belief in successive prophets and revealed scriptures — in fact, the three faiths trace their religious history back to the patriarch Abraham, and earlier to the first human, Adam (considered a prophet in Islam), demonstrating a common history and outlook. Thus, for Muslims Islam culminates what can be described as the *Judeo-Christian-Islamic* tradition of monotheism.

ALLAH

How is God viewed in Islam?

The *Qur'an*, the divinely-revealed scripture of Islam, contains numerous verses describing the nature of God. The role of human beings as creations of God upon the earth and their relationship with God are also discussed extensively in the sacred text.

"Say: He is God, the One, the Eternal, Absolute. He does not beget, nor is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him." (Qur'an, 112: 1-4)

"It is He who brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers when you knew nothing, and He gave you hearing and sight and intelligence and affections that you may give thanks." (Qur'an, 16:78)

"No vision can grasp Him, but His grasp is over all vision. He is above all comprehension, yet is acquainted with all things." (Qur'an, 6:103)

Muslims believe that God has no partners or associates who share in His divinity or authority. Muslims also believe that God is transcendent and unlike His creations, and thus has no physical form. Nor is God believed to exist in (or be represented by) any material object. A number of divine attributes or "names," which serve to describe God, are found in the *Qur'an*. Some commonly known attributes include the Most Merciful, the Most Forgiving, the Most High, the Unique, and the Everlasting, among others.

In Islam, human beings, like other creations, are seen as completely unlike God, though they may aspire to exhibit various attributes manifested by God, such as justice or mercy. Furthermore, even while God is believed to be beyond traditional human perception, the *Qur'an* states *"He is with you wherever you may be"* (57:5). For Muslims, God's Oneness heightens the awareness that ultimately all life is bound by Divine Law emanating from a singular source and that life has a meaning and purpose which revolves around the consciousness of God's presence.

Moreover, belief in a singular Creator compels conscientious Muslims to view all humanity as one extended family, and treat others with justice and equity. Respect for the environment and natural resources also follows from the Muslim view of God.

Basic Beliefs of Muslims

Muslims believe in...

Allah	The One God
Angels	(and the world of the Unseen)
Prophets	(and Muhammad as the final prophet)
Divine Scriptures	(and the Qur'an as the final scripture)
Day of Judgement	(and reward in Heaven and punishment in Hell)