



ILLINOIS ISLAMIC RADICALISATION INDEX

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ABSTRACT

Since the September 11 attacks, terrorism prevention has taken center stage in American security policy. It is imperative that both the government and the populous have the tools to counter such attacks in the future, and it is for this reason that so many resources have been put to this front in recent years. From the perspective of the United States, domestic terrorism is of particular concern because it is more controllable than foreign terrorism. In this paper this problem will be explored with two specific constraints. First, radical Islam will be the cornerstone because of its prevalence in terrorism cases. Ties between radicalized Islamists and the terror that has plagued Americans will be revealed as comprehensively as possible. Second, the geographical avenue will be Illinois, a large state with a similarly large Muslim population. The ultimate aim will be to show how local groups and Muslim communities produce and have the potential to produce radicalized individuals.

* The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT).

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Introduction

Since the September 11 attacks, terrorism prevention has taken center stage in American security policy. It is imperative that both the government and the populous have the tools to counter such attacks in the future, and it is for this reason that so many resources have been put to this front in recent years. From the perspective of the United States, domestic terrorism is of particular concern because it is more controllable than foreign terrorism. In this paper this problem will be explored with two specific constraints. First, radical Islam will be the cornerstone because of its prevalence in terrorism cases. Ties between radicalized Islamists and the terror that has plagued Americans will be revealed as comprehensively as possible. Second, the geographical avenue will be Illinois, a large state with a similarly large Muslim population. The ultimate aim will be to show how local groups and Muslim communities produce and have the potential to produce radicalized individuals.

The paper's first section will chronicle the background of Muslims in Illinois, including a history, current profile, and case studies of selected communities with established ties to terrorism. The second section will detail organizations in Illinois with ties to terrorism and their domestic and international connections and influences. The third section will present a model of homegrown radicalization. The fourth section will describe a number of terrorist cases, some of which describe domestic radicalization and thus can be aligned with the aforementioned model, others which are tied to the organizations with radical agendas, and still others that have little domestic influence yet still occur on American soil (within Illinois). The fifth section will detail the reaction of radical Islam of the local and federal governments. The paper will conclude by tying together the findings of this research.

Background

Community History

The Muslims of Illinois have a rich and established history. The first Muslim settlers came to Chicago as early as 1885 and were largely uneducated and not religiously observant.[1] At this

time, they tended to be entrepreneurs: single men or married men who left their families for the economic prospects of the United States. Džemijetul Hajrije of Illinois was a Bosnian mutual aid and benevolent society established in the north side of Chicago in 1906, possibly making it the oldest Muslim society in the United States.[2] In 1921, Mufti Muhammed Saliq, the first missionary of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam moved to Chicago, where he established the first Ahmadi mosque.[3] Chicago would serve as the movement's national headquarters until 1950. Today, four Ahmadi mosques can be found in Chicagoland, two of which are African-American and two of which are Indo- Pakistani.[4]

Much of the Muslim immigrant population in recent years has come due to political events overseas. Following the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, there was a surge in immigration of Palestinian Muslims. The 1947 Partition of India also brought many Muslims from India and Pakistan to Chicago.[5] Much of the immigration after these events came following the change in immigration laws in 1965. Specifically, the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act eliminated the national quota system, leading to profound demographic changes throughout the United States.[6,7] That said, it was not until the 1980s and 1990s that Arabs had a visible presence in the Chicagoland area.[8] Always a popular destination for Bosnian Muslims, Chicago also became the major destination for Bosnian Muslim refugees as a result of the Bosnian War of 1992.[9] Today, Islam has the third-largest following in Illinois and is the fastest growing religion.[10] Since the 1960s, the number of Chicagoland mosques has grown from 5, all of which were in Chicago proper, to nearly 70 in the region.[11]

Concentration of Muslims

Illinois has the third largest Muslim population in the United States after California and New York.[12] The great majority of Muslims in Illinois, nearly 90%, live in the Chicagoland area.[13] Estimates of the total population of Muslims in Illinois vary widely, but a sampling of published estimates is provided here. There is no official data because the United States census does not ask questions regarding religious affiliations. The wide spread of estimates likely indicates differing interpretations of the definition of a Muslim. Some sources may describe a Muslim as an individual who is affiliated with a mosque, while others as an individual with a

Muslim name or history. The population is also difficult to assess because, as the fastest growing religion in Illinois, there is a constant influx of convert and new immigrants.

Source	Estimate
City-Data	125,203[14]
Ilyas Ba-Yunus	285,126[15]
Zahid Hussain Bukhari	381,155[16]
Aziz Sheikh and Abdul Rashid Gatrad	400,000[17]
<i>Illinois Issues</i>	400,000+[18]
CNN	400,000+[19]

These numbers reflect a range of approximately 1% to at least 3% of the total population.

Comparative Analysis to Other States

With nearly 13 million people, Illinois is the 5th most populous state in the United States. It has the third largest community of Muslims behind California and New York. The reason Illinois was chosen as a case study is threefold. First, Chicago is the national headquarters of the Nation of Islam, which is infamous for its radical rhetoric and ties to terrorism on multiple scales. Second, the city of Chicago is home to over 85,000 Palestinians, making it one of the largest communities of Palestinians outside the Middle East in the world.[20] This is particularly notable because much of the terrorism funded domestically is linked to Palestinian causes, particularly to Hamas, the most infamous case being the now-defunct Holy Land Foundation, which will be discussed in greater depth later in this paper. Third, compared to New York, a state with a more terrorist- scrutinizing establishment, authorities have done relatively little in Illinois in terms of monitoring radical behavior, and thus this report can be used to urge more prudent action in the future. For example, the government unknowingly hired a former Hamas operative as a state-ordained chaplain, only to discover his radical ties retroactively. Whereas in New York authorities have not shied away from monitoring specific Muslims, Chicago authorities have

refused to take similar preventative action, ostensibly under pressure from Muslim civil rights groups.[21] This reflects a fundamentally different attitude in Islam monitoring.

Ethnic Breakdown

Today, the Muslim population of Illinois can essentially be broken down into three blocs of approximately equal size: Southeastern Europeans, African-Americans, and West- Asians/North Africans.[22] The largest concentration of African-American Muslims in the United States is in Illinois.[23] African-American Muslims are also referred to as indigenous Muslims. It will be shown below that terrorist plots in Illinois also not devised by any one particular group, and the radicalization processes occur both domestically and abroad.

Religious Practices

Islam revolves around the Quran, the holy text that Muslims believe contain the revelations given to the Prophet Muhammad by Allah. Though Muhammad is not considered a deity by Muslims, his life was of grave importance to the foundations of the religion. Indeed, with any reading of the Quran, Muhammad is not judged by a standard, but rather he is the standard. The major forms of Islam, with the exception of the Nation of Islam, all emphasize the Five Pillars of Islam – the five obligations of every Muslim: faith, prayer five times daily, almsgiving, fasting during Ramadan, and the pilgrimage to Mecca.[24]

Shia and Sunni

The two major forms of Islam today are Shia and Sunni. Iran has a majority Shia population as does Iraq, but the majority of Muslims, approximately 75% worldwide[25], are Sunni. Terrorist organizations al-Qaeda and Hamas have Sunni ideologies whereas Hezbollah follows Shia Islam. Ilyas Ba-Yunus estimates that 5% of the Illinois Muslim population follows Shia Islam and 83% follow Sunni Islam.[26] Another source estimates a Shia population of 15,000 in 2004, which is nearly consistent with Ilyas' estimation from seven years earlier based on his total population estimate.[27]

Case Studies

Case Study: Bridgeview, Illinois

A village of just over 15,000 about 20 kilometers southwest of the loop, Bridgeview's population is approximately one third Arab-American, making it one of the most Arab areas in the country.[28,29] The overwhelming majority of these Arabs are both Palestinian and Muslim. Major waves of Arab immigration to the southwest suburbs of Chicago began in the late 1960s due to the political situation in the West Bank following the 1967 Arab-Israeli War as well as the change in American immigration policy.[30] As of 2001, the southwest suburbs as a whole contribute nearly 50,000 to the total Arab population of approximately 150,000 in Chicago (the nation's third largest).[31]

The Mosque Foundation, the first local Arab mosque established in 1954[32], is the center of Arab life in Bridgeview. An investigative report by the Chicago Tribune outlines the takeover of this mosque and community center from moderate, illiterate peasants by Islamic extremists "who have condemned Western culture, praised Palestinian suicide bombers, and encouraged members to view society in stark terms: Muslims against the world." [33] According to the Tribune, as many as 2,000 attend Friday prayers, easily exceeding the capacity of the mosque. Nearby but unaffiliated is the Universal School, a strict Islamic school of 638 students in which girls are required to wear the hijab after 5th grade and intermingling of boys and girls is highly discouraged.[34] The Times article reports that one student, while writing an essay about his American Dream, wrote that the Jews in the land of Palestine "should be left to suffer." The Sheik of the Mosque, Jamal Said, has spearheaded the radical transformation. He has extensive ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and has publically praised Muslim Brotherhood ideologies. In May 2003, he raised \$50,000 for the legal defense of Sami Al-Arian, a Palestinian activist accused of aiding members of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, a Palestinian terrorist group.[35] Al-Arian later pled guilty to the charges.[36] In 1995, while serving on the Mosque's Executive Committee, Muhammad Salah was sentenced to 5 years in an Israeli prison for funneling \$650,000 to radical Hamas activists.[37] The guilty plea was based on a confession, Salah telling authorities that in 1978 "he was initiated into the [Muslim] brotherhood at the hands of the sheik of Chicago's Arab community mosque." [38] He was referring to Jamal Said.

The Holy Land Foundation (HLF) for Relief and Development was an Islamic charity which was, according to their website, “a non-profit, non-political 501 C 3 humanitarian aid and disaster relief organization headquartered in Richardson, TX which [provided] support to those in need throughout the world.”[39] In 2007 the HLF was indicted, along with its leaders, for funneling millions of dollars to the terrorist organization Hamas.[40] The FBI designated it as the primary fund-raising institution for Hamas in the United States.[41] Following a lengthy legal battle, HLF and 5 of its leaders were convicted in 2008, the individuals being subjected to lengthy prison terms.[42] The organization was also shut down. Both Jamal Said and Kifah Mustapha, another imam at the Mosque Foundation, were named unindicted co-conspirators in the case.[43] In the United States District Court’s filing, they are classified as individuals “who are and/or were members of the US Muslim Brotherhood’s Palestine Committee and/or its organizations.”

Case Study: Nation of Islam

The Nation of Islam traces its beginnings to founder Wallace D. Ford, who led the movement until he disappeared in 1934. His successor, Elijah Muhammed, moved the organization from its former headquarters in Detroit to the South Shore neighborhood of Chicago, an almost uniformly African-American community where it still exists today. Muhammed grew the movement significantly. Following his death, many of the followers became mainstreamed to Sunni in faith and practice, but a smaller faction, lead by Louis Farrakhan, retained the teachings of Ford. Today, members of this group practice a stream of Islam that is fundamentally different than more mainstream forms of Islam such as Sunni and Shia. According to Ba-Yunus, approximately 10% of Illinois Muslims are followers, which indicates that there are approximately three times as many African-American Muslims who follow the more mainstream Sunni faith than those who belong to the Nation of Islam.[44] The Nation of Islam’s website states “WE BELIEVE that Allah (God) appeared in the Person of Master W. Fard Muhammad [the founder of the movement], July, 1930; the long-awaited “Messiah” of the Christian and the “Mahdi” of the Muslims.”[45] Followers of Sunni and Shi’a Islam are still awaiting the coming of the Mahdi. Moreover, follows of the Nation of Islam are not required to make hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca; do not fast during Ramadan; do not pray five times a day; and do not perform ritual bowings and

prostrations when they do pray.[46] The Nation of Islam maintains a paramilitary wing, the Fruit of Islam, which defends the interests of the organization.

Farrakhan, the current leader of the Nation of Islam is infamous for his anti-American, anti-Semitic rhetoric.[47] Ties between the Nation of Islam and Gaddafi-ruled Libya were well-documented. Farrakhan has claimed that he became acquainted with Gaddafi in the 1970s and 1980s and that Gaddafi lent him \$5 million over the years.[48] (Gaddafi had also lent Farrakhan's predecessor, Elijah Muhammed, \$3 million to convert a Greek Orthodox church into Mosque Maryam, the major mosque of the Nation of Islam movement in the South Shore neighborhood of Chicago.) Recently, he harshly criticized the killing of Gaddafi, and subsequently predicted the imminent demise of the United States in his statement.[49] Farrakhan's ties were not limited to Gaddafi. In January 1996, Farrakhan embarked on a 27-day worldwide trip during which he visited five countries described by the United States as sponsoring terrorism: Libya, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, and Syria.[50] Farrakhan called his trip the "World Friendship Tour." In Iran, he purportedly stated: "You can quote me: God will destroy America by the hands of Muslims. ... God will not give Japan or Europe the honor of bringing down the United States; this is an honor God will bestow upon Muslims." [51] In Libya, he and Gaddafi vowed to destroy "white America."

The Nation of Islam has been involved with its fair share of terrorist plots. Derrick Shareef, whose plot to blow up Cherryvale Mall in Rockford, Illinois was foiled by the FBI, was a Nation of Islam convert while in prison. John Allen Muhammad, who carried out the 2002 Beltway sniper attacks, was also a member, though Farrakhan refutes the notion that the attacks were religiously motivated.[52] However, jailhouse drawings of Muhammed's partner, Lee Boyd Malvo, do indicate an Islamic influence.[53]

Organizations and Community Infrastructure

Organizations within Illinois

There exist in Illinois numerous Muslim organizations with ties to resistance and terrorist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas. Despite the fact that many of these groups were

identified as unindicted co-conspirators in the successful prosecution of the Holy Land Foundation, which was convicted of funneling millions of dollars to Hamas, their local offices continue to operate with little resistance from the government, often pursuing radical agendas that run counter to the interests of both Illinois and the United States. Moreover, these groups ostracize the Muslims who do want to distance themselves from the negative stereotypes associated with Islam globally. For example, in a recent Gallup Poll, 55% of Muslim-American men and 42% of Muslim-American women stated that no American Muslim organization represents their interests.[54] In the poll, only 12% of men and 11% of women stated that the Council on American-Islamic Relations represents their interests, 4% of men and 7% of women stated that the Islamic Society of North American represents their interests, and 0% of men and 2% of women stated that the Muslim American Society represents their interests. These organizations will be discussed in greater detail below.

Council on American-Islamic Relations: Chicago

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) is an organization that, in its own words, challenges stereotypes of Islam and Muslims and dedicates itself to providing an Islamic perspective on issues of importance to the American republic.[55] It was founded in 1994 as an offshoot of the Islamic Association for Palestine (see below). On its website it outlines how it achieves these goals through lobbying, education, and media relations. Prior to 2007, it maintained close ties with the FBI. However, in the Holy Land Foundation case, CAIR was listed among the entities “who are and/or were members of the US Muslim Brotherhood’s Palestine Committee and/or its organizations.”[56] The Investigative Project on Terrorism reported that CAIR received financial support directly from the Holy Land Foundation, though CAIR leadership justified this by stating that this was before the organization was indicted.[57] Since this controversy, the FBI has cut all ties with the organization, a decision that was unsuccessfully appealed by CAIR leadership.[58] The Council on American-Islamic Relations Chicago chapter is, much like the national organization, a self-described Muslim civil rights and advocacy group that works to defend the civil rights of American Muslims in the region, fight bigotry, and promote tolerance.[59] Its website states: “Though [the Chicago chapter] leverages the resources, expertise, and knowledgebase of CAIR [national] (based in

Washington), it functions as an independent organization that sets its own strategy and goals.” The leadership of CAIR - Chicago has infamously supported many convicted terrorists. During the trial of Muhammad Salah, who was previously convicted of Hamas involvement in Israel and later convicted of lying under oath about such involvement by the United States judicial system, Ahmed Rehab, executive director of CAIR – Chicago, called Salah “a symbol of a larger Palestinian struggle.”[60] Rehab has likewise defended Kifah Mustapha, who was also an unindicted co-conspirator in the Holy Land Foundation case, calling him a man of “integrity” who only wished to serve his community and his country.[61] This was despite court documents from the Holy Land Foundation case that documented Mustapha lauding Hamas and jihad and providing an unambiguous call to arms. Mustapha, who was recently appointed the first State-employed Muslim chaplain, was dismissed shortly thereafter.

Muslim American Society

The Muslim American Society (MAS) is a self-described “dynamic charitable, religious, social, cultural, and educational organization” that offers “unique programs and services that seek to better the individual and in turn, the greater society by imparting Islamic knowledge, promoting community service, engaging in political activism, and much more.”[62] However, a 2004 investigate report by the Chicago Tribune states that, “In recent years, the United States Brotherhood (the local version of the Muslim Brotherhood) operated under the name Muslim American Society, according to documents and interviews. One of the nation's major Islamic groups, it was incorporated in Illinois in 1993 after a contentious debate among Brotherhood members.”[63] Shaker Elsayed, then the Secretary General of MAS, denied any connections to the Brotherhood, but did acknowledge that about 45% of the active members were also current members of the Brotherhood.

According to the Tribune report, MAS was originally based in Illinois, and the current MAS chapter of Chicago is located across the street from the Mosque Foundation in Bridgeview. The Tribune states:

At a summer camp last year in Wisconsin run by the Chicago chapter of MAS, teens received a 2-inch-thick packet of material that included a discussion of the

Brotherhood's philosophy and detailed instructions on how to win converts. Part of the Chicago chapter's Web site is devoted to teens. It includes reading materials that say Muslims have a duty to help form Islamic governments worldwide and should be prepared to take up arms to do so. One passage states that “until the nations of the world have functionally Islamic governments, every individual who is careless or lazy in working for Islam is sinful.” Another one says that Western secularism and materialism are evil and that Muslims should “pursue this evil force to its own lands” and “invade its Western heartland.”[64]

Global Relief Foundation

The Global Relief Foundation (GRF) began operating in Bridgeview, Illinois, as a nonprofit with the self-described goal of providing humanitarian and charitable relief to Muslims, particularly in conflict zones such as Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, Kashmir, and Lebanon.[65] Founded in 1992 at its office in Bridgeview, Illinois, it soon grew to include overseas offices in these conflict zones and elsewhere. GRF began operating with \$700,000 in cash, though it soon grew substantially, reporting over \$5 million in contributions by 2000.[66] At the time of its closing, GRF was the second largest American Muslim charity behind the Holy Land Foundation. According to its Internal Revenue Service (IRS) filings, GRF leadership sent over 90% of its donations abroad between 1994 and 2000.[67]

In 1997, the Chicago branch of the FBI started a formal full field investigation of GRF based on previous intelligence pointing to GRF travel in Afghanistan and Pakistan as well as communication with other terrorist-affiliated organizations.[68] The Chicago agents concluded, in a January 2000 memorandum, that:

Although the majority of GRF funding goes toward legitimate relief operations, a significant percentage is diverted to fund extremist causes. Among the terrorist groups known to have links to the GRF are the Algerian Armed Islamic Group, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, Gama'at Al Islamiya, and the Kashmiri Harakat Al-Jihad El-Islam, as well as the Al Qaeda organization of Usama Bin Laden... In the past, GRF

support to terrorists and other transnational mujahideen fighters has taken the form of purchase and shipment of large quantities of sophisticated communications equipment, provision of humanitarian cover documentation to suspected terrorists and fund-raising for terrorist groups under the cover of humanitarian relief.[69]

Despite the successful investigation, no criminal charges were made prior to the September 11 attacks. Afterwards, however, in 2002, the United States Treasury designated the GRF, noting that it “has connections to, has provided support for, and has provided assistance to Osama Bin Ladin, the al Qaida Network, and other known terrorist groups.”[70] With its assets frozen, the GRF shortly thereafter went out of business. However, no formal charges have been made against the GRF or its personnel. The leader of the organization, Rabih Haddad, however, was deported to Lebanon.[71]

Benevolence International Foundation

The Benevolence International Foundation (BIF) was incorporated in Illinois in 1992 as a self-described “organization devoted to relieving the suffering of Muslims around the world.”[72] Previously, the BFI operated in Saudi Arabia under the name Lajnat Al-Birr Al-Islami, supporting Afghani resistance against the Soviets as well as humanitarian aid to refugees of the same conflict. Though incorporated in the United States, the BIF operated around the world, with offices in Bosnia, Chechnya, Russia, Pakistan, and China, among others.[73] In 1999, the Chicago FBI opened a full field investigation against the BIF, but, as with the GRF case, was unable to bring criminal charges against the organization prior to the September 11 attacks. Though they believed BIF was tied to al Qaeda and was sending significant funding overseas, they could not actually trace the money, due in large part to a lack of support from the national FBI offices.

After the September 11 attacks, now with additional support from the federal government, the case took a turn. In November 2002, the United States Treasury designated BIF a terrorist organization, blocking its assets. Enaam Arnaout, the director of BIF, was indicted in October 2002 for allegedly funneling money to overseas al Qaeda cells. Arnaout pled guilty to a non-

terrorism linked charge of racketeering. He received a 10 year prison term for defrauding charitable donors of the BIF by directing nearly \$400,000 of the funds to supplies to Bosnian mujahedeen.[74]

Islamic Association for Palestine

The Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP) was founded in 1981 in Bridgeview, Illinois by Dr. Aly Mishal at the direction of Khalad Mishal, today the leader of Hamas.[75] IAP was a self-described “not-for-profit, public-awareness, educational, political, social, and civic, national grassroots organization dedicated to advancing a just, comprehensive, and eternal solution to the cause of Palestine and suffrages [sic] of the Palestinians.” In a May 1991 document published by the Muslim Brotherhood titled “An Explanatory Memorandum: On the General Strategic Goal for the Group,” IAP is named in the Brotherhood’s “list of our organizations and the organizations of our friends.”[76] Previously in the same document, the Brotherhood puts forth its goal – and the common goal of its friends – to destroy America and turn it into a Muslim nation. According to Matthew Levitt, former deputy assistant secretary at the United States Department of the Treasury:

Since the creation of Hamas in 1987, the IAP has published Hamas communiqués calling its followers to jihad. It published and distributed the Hamas charter [in English], which included the address of the Occupied Land Fund, HLFDRD’s [Holy Relief Foundation] former name. It also held conventions and conferences at which pro-Hamas speakers and singers rallied support for Hamas.⁷⁷

(Before its dissolution in 2005, the IAP was also known as the American Muslim Society (AMS) and the American Middle Eastern League for Palestine (AMEL).) Three members of IAP, Omar Ahmad, Nihad Awad, and Rafeeq Jaber, also founded CAIR in 1994.

Quranic Literacy Institute

The Quranic Literacy Institute was a non-profit that purportedly translated and published sacred Islamic texts.[78] It was incorporated in Illinois with offices in Oak Lawn. However, the government found the organization to also be involved with overseas terrorist financing,

specifically Hamas. In a June 1998 affidavit, the FBI claimed that the organization donated \$110,000 to Mohammed Salah, a convicted operative of Hamas.[79] That same month, the Quranic Literacy Institute was shut down and its assets seized.

American Muslims for Palestine

American Muslims for Palestine (AMP) is a Palos Hills, Illinois-based non-profit with the following mission statement:

The American Muslims for Palestine's mission is to educate the public about Palestine, allowing for increased dialogue, awareness, and understanding within the United States. The American Muslims for Palestine provides the Islamic perspective on all issues pertaining to Palestine and its rich cultural heritage. AMP provides regular educational training programs, workshops and seminars. AMP also is creating a Media Center, where data and information will be created and archived so its members can be proactive in getting the truth about Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine out to the American people.[80]

The AMP was founded in 2006 in Palos Hills and has chapters throughout the country. It holds an annual conference in Chicago. The most recent conference was Thanksgiving 2011, and featured speakers such as Jamal Said, who praised “the activists and freedom fighters who gave up their personal ambitions and their own lives so our cause may live” and Sarah Mufid Abdulqader, the daughter of convicted HLF member Mufid Abdulqader, who stated that it was an honor to have a father who was put in jail for supporting Palestine.[81] AMP has ties to Hamas. One of its national board members, Salah Sarsour, is a well-established fundraiser for Hamas.[82] Moreover, fellow member Osama Abu Irshaid was an editor of Al-Zaytounah, an Arabic newspaper published by the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP), the United States front of Hamas.

Influential Leaders

Rafiq Jaber

Rafiq Jaber was a founding member of CAIR, former National Chairman of the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP), former President of IAP's Chicago chapter, former President and board member at the Mosque Foundation, as well as founder of several other Muslim organizations in the Chicago area. Though his involvement has often been national, he has had a continued presence in Chicago, where he owns Jaber Financial Services in Palos Hills. Jaber has rejected a two-state solution in the Israeli-Arab conflict, voiced his support for Hamas and Hezbollah, and refused to acknowledge American designations of foreign terrorist organizations. Though he has never been formally charged in terrorism cases, his support for terrorist organizations in and around Israel is repeated and has influenced others to perpetuate terrorism on American soil. At the most recent AMP conference, Jaber stated that there are inherent risks in working for Palestine, adding "So the risks are imprisonment, which is that we talked about here [sic], the HLF, Sami Al-Arian, Dr. Ashqar, Mohammad Salah, and the list goes on and on and on for those people who worked here in the United States. And they suffer." [83]

Louis Farrakhan

Farrakhan revived the Nation of Islam in 1981, and has since then grew the organization to include approximately 50,000 members. [84] Farrakhan is known for his unwavering criticism of the United States and his anti-Semitic rhetoric. He had well-documented ties with Muammar Gaddafi and received significant financial assistance from the Libyan dictator prior to his death. He maintains the Fruit of Islam, the organization's paramilitary wing, as well as a strong community of followers within Illinois' prisons. Farrakhan has never been formally charged in terrorism cases, though followers of the Nation of Islam, including John Allen Muhammed, have been involved in such plots.

Mosques

The Mosque Foundation

The Mosque Foundation "serves the spiritual, religious and communal needs of area Muslims by means of nurturing their faith, upholding their values, and fostering the wellbeing of the community around it through worship, charity, education, outreach, and civic engagement." [85] According to their website, they serve over 50,000 Muslims in the area and have 5,000 regular

worshippers of varying ethnicities, though in actuality the majority of members are of Palestinian descent. The establishment of the Mosque has turned the community of Bridgeview into a large Muslim hotspot, with schools, community centers, and Muslim-owned businesses. The Mosque Foundation was subject to significant protests on 12 September 2011, the day after the September 11 attacks, as well as in the following days.[86] As previously mentioned, Jamal Said, head imam, has extensive ties to Hamas, as do numerous current and former members.

Mosque Maryam

Mosque Maryam, located in Chicago, serves as the headquarters and National Center for the Nation of Islam.[87] The Mosque was previously a Greek Orthodox Church until it was purchased in 1972 by Elijah Muhammed with financial help from Muammar Gaddafi. Adjacent to the Mosque is the Muhammad University of Islam, a preschool through 12th grade Islamic school that is affiliated with the Nation of Islam. All Nation of Islam mosques throughout the country also have such educational institutes. Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam, is based at Mosque Maryam.

Student Groups

Muslim Students Association

The Muslim Students Association (MSA) was founded in 1963 at the University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign as a self-described forum for Muslim students from diverse backgrounds.⁸⁸ Today, it consists of nearly 600 chapters – roughly 150 affiliated – and is decidedly the most visible Muslim association on college campuses in the United States and Canada.[89] Internal Muslim Brotherhood documents tie the Muslim Students Association to the parent organization.[90] According to a New York Police Department report:

Among the social networks of the local university population, there appears to be a growing trend of Salafi-based radicalization that has permeated some Muslim student associations (MSA's) [sic]. Extremists have used these university-based organizations as forums for the development and recruitment of likeminded individuals – providing a receptive platform for younger, American-born imams, to present a radical message in a way that resonates with the students. For example, one

book increasingly being cited for discussion by many of these associations is Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab's Kitab At-Tawheed, the foundational book for Wahhabi Islam.[91]

These statements are not unfounded, as various leaders of MSA chapters have been involved with terrorism financing as well as terrorist plots, including Anwar Al-Aulaqi, the infamous al-Qaeda member who was formerly President of the Colorado State University MSA.[92] MSAs have successfully operated in Illinois since the organization's founding. As of April 2012, the organization has 10 affiliated chapters, including the founding chapter at the University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign.

Students for Justice in Palestine

Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) is a collection of student groups across the country which are not formally unified but do foster a network of collaboration. According to the coalition of SJPs in Chicago, the group is steadfast in its support for a one-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; the single state would include current inhabitants of the area as well as all displaced Palestinians and their descendents as recognized by the United Nations.[93] The group rejects the notion of a Jewish state of Israel. They function through divestment campaigns, participation in the annual Israel Apartheid Week, and year-round anti-Israel programming.[94] There are 8 chapters of SJP in Chicagoland alone. Students for Justice in Palestine was co-founded by the chairman of American Muslims for Palestine (AMP), which is infamous for its connections to Islamic extremism, and maintains close ties to its parent organization today.[95]

Radicalization in Illinois

Foreign Influences

Palestinian Territories

Hamas is the most infamous of the Palestinian resistance/militant groups and has had the largest presence and influence in the United States and Illinois in particular. Hamas has served as the governing body of the Gaza Strip since its victory in the 2006 Palestinian parliamentary elections and subsequent military eviction of the opposing faction, Fatah. The United States has

designated Hamas a terrorist organization since 2006.[96] Hamas maintains leadership throughout the Arab world and receives funding from Iran, Palestinian expatriates, and private donors, particularly from Saudi Arabia.[97] Political activity and propaganda is also present in the United States. Financial support from the United States is illegal and has been prosecuted in the past.

A number of groups that have operated in Illinois have ties to Hamas. The Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP) was the main Hamas front in the United States until its dissolution. It was an outspoken supporter of Hamas's mission and distributed Hamas material. This included communiqués calling its followers to jihad as well as the Hamas charter translated to English.[98] The Council on American-Islamic Relations was also an offshoot of the IAP. The Holy Land Foundation, which was shut down after it was discovered to be funding Hamas, was formerly the largest Islamic charity in the United States. Finally, the Mosque Foundation in Bridgeview, Illinois is a base for such individuals as Jamal Said, Mohammed Salah, and Kifah Mustapha. These individuals have supported Hamas both financially and ideologically.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is a predominantly Sunni nation with a unique movement known as "Wahhabism." Wahhabism is essentially a revivalist movement; it supports a full return to the fundamentals of Islam as embodied both in the Quran and in the life of Muhammad.[99] There has been a close relationship between the Saudi ruling family and the Wahhabi religious establishment since the 18th century, and Saudis have financed the construction Wahhabi mosques, religious schools, and Islamic community centers all over the world.[100]

The influence of Wahhabism in the United States and Illinois in particular cannot be over-emphasized. Most of the mosques and other Islamic institutions in Chicagoland are Saudi-funded. Moreover, a large proportion of prison chaplains are Saudi-trained and preach Wahhabi ideology, which promotes militancy and perpetuates hatred of moderate Sunnis, Shias, and Sufis.[101] The Institute of Islamic Information and Education of Chicago, which has provided radical Islamic material to Muslim chaplains, also acknowledges Saudi support.[102] The United

States government has pressured the Saudi government to more closely monitor overseas financing, but overall Saudi efforts have been lackluster.

Pakistan

Although Wahhabism does not have quite the pull in Pakistan that it has in Saudi Arabia, it does have a presence in the volatile northwestern region. Following the Soviet invasion in 1979, the Saudis financed the construction of hundreds of religious schools in this area which indoctrinated locals with Wahhabism.[103] It is logically concluded that these schools were the breeding grounds for the al-Qaida and Taliban movements that have plagued Pakistan since. That said, it should be noted that not all of al-Qaida and the Taliban are Wahhabi. Whereas in Saudi Arabia there is a general trend of overseas support to the United States, generally the opposite has been true with Pakistan. Notably, organizations such as the Global Relief Foundation and the Benevolence International Foundation, which were both based in Chicagoland while they were still functioning, supporting mujahedeen overseas in countries such as Pakistan. Moreover, as the case with Raja Lahrasi Khan exhibits, these overseas organizations have recruited American citizens to support their cause.

Process of Radicalization

In 2007, the New York Police Department (NYPD) put out a report entitled *Radicalization in the West: A Homegrown Threat*, which puts forth a theoretical model detailing the transformation from ordinary individual to terrorist.[104] The model set forth henceforth is a condensed version of this model.

The first stage is pre-radicalization. At this stage, certain factors may make individuals more vulnerable to messages of radicalization. The environments that facilitate this process are often ethnically similar to the individual in question and contain like-minded individuals. According to the NYPD, the most common traits are: male, Muslim, residents of Western liberal democracies, middle-class environments (as opposed to destitution), educated, little criminal history, and arguably most notably, “ordinary.” Converts to Muslim are particularly vulnerable. The second stage is self-identification. This stage is characterization by the migration away from

one's former identity. This can be due to economic, personal, political, or social factors. Individuals at this stage will often gravitate towards Salafi Islam, and they typically become alienated from their former life, continue to associate with like-minded individuals, and begin to wear traditional Islamic dress and/or grow a beard.

The third stage is termed indoctrination. At this stage, individuals intensify their beliefs, often sacrificing personal causes for that of "the greater good." As with previous stages, individuals at this point will continue to associate with like-minded individuals, often virtually. Indeed, the Internet plays a key role in this radicalization, as extremist websites and chat rooms have and exercise the capacity individuals vulnerable to this process of radicalization. Imprisonment is an ideal environment for the continuation of this process at this stage.

The fourth stage is jihadization. During this stage, individuals decide to carry out jihad through a terrorist attack. By this stage, the group of individuals will be tight-knit, with each individual having to be committed to the cause. Target selection and operational planning proceed at this point. Jihadization can take place very quickly, differentiating it from the other stages which may take place over the course of years. Individuals often take a trip abroad at this point. It is important to note that every act of terrorism has two important prerequisites: motivation and capability.[105] Just as any individual without the desire to carry out an attack will not, any individual without the means will not be able to.

Prisons

Prison inmates are vulnerable targets for terrorism involvement because they are predisposed to commit violent acts, regard authorities with hostility, and feel alienated from society. As of 2010, approximately 3,000 of the 45,548 inmates incarcerated in Illinois state prisons identified as Muslim.[106] While this gives Islam one of the larger followings in prison, it lags significantly behind the groups of Baptists, Catholics, and atheists. That said, Islam is generally the fastest growing religion in Western prisons in recent years.[107] Moreover, radicalization of these inmates has been manifested in attempted terrorist plots, most notably that of Michael C. Finton. Officials fear that many Muslims, especially new converts who are more likely to be influenced,

are subject to radical outside organizations. The Institute of Islamic Information and Education (IIIE), based in Chicago, is a self-described dedicated organization “to the cause of Islam in North America by providing accurate information about Islamic beliefs, history, and civilization from authentic sources.”[108] The traditionalist institute sends material on Islam to Muslim prison chaplains and responds to over 3,000 letters from prison inmates per year inquiring about interpretations of Islam.[109] However, its deceased founder, Amir Ali, on his online website, called Osama bin Laden a “true Muslim” would did not hurt anyone and further says Israel committed the September 11 attacks so as to alienate American Muslims and curb immigration of Muslims to the United States. While all the material that IIIE sends to prisoners is monitored, officials concede that radical material makes its way through. Ali’s claims that his political and religious views are separate and distinct are difficult to assess. Another organization in Illinois is the Illinois Correctional Reunion Association. It is run by Mohammad Firdausi, a retired Illinois who continues to work with inmates. He has been sending prisoners pamphlets since 1979, when the organization was founded. While most of the samples he provided to the press are innocuous and merely explain fundamental Muslim teachings, there were also pamphlets that had been banned in prisons in other states. While the authors of these specific pamphlets condemn terrorism, they write that “sometimes violence is a human response of oppressed people as it happens in Palestine” and “although this is wrong, this is the only way for them to attract attention.” Firdausi asserted that Muslims have a right to defend themselves in places like Israel and Kashmir. He also stated, prior to bin Laden’s capture that he did not even think he existed. In light of the dangers posed to newly converted Muslims converts, the Justice Department’s United States Bureau of Prisons has opened two new Communications Management Units (CMUs) in Terre Haute, Indiana and Marion, Illinois. In these facilities, all telephone calls and mail are monitored and outside contact highly limited. Moreover, all conversations must be held in English, unless otherwise negotiated.[110] The overwhelming majority of inmates are Muslim, and includes individuals previously involved in infamous terrorist plots. Individuals have recently sued regarding the constitutionality of these conditions.[111]

Terrorist Plots

Case Study: Derrick Shareef

On 6 December 2006, Derrick Shareef was arrested in a store parking lot in Rockford, Illinois, for attempting to swap a stereo system for grenades, firearms, and ammunition for use in a terrorist plot against CherryVale mall in nearby Cherry Valley. Shareef's plot was foiled by his lone accomplice, who was working as an informant for the FBI. In November 2007, Shareef pled guilty to charges of attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction, and was sentenced to 35 years in prison in September 2008. He had no previous history of violence. Derrick Shareef, also known as Talib Abu Salam Ibn Shareef, converted to the Nation of Islam when he was 16; his father had also been a member of the organization and faith.[112] After converting, he took trips to Detroit and Arizona where his radicalization progressed.[113] At the time of his crime, he was working in a video game store.

Shareef's jihadist intentions can largely be attributed to the influence of Hassan Abu- Jihaad, born Paul Hall, whom he met in Arizona in 2003.[114] Shareef was 18 at the time. Abu-Jihaad was a former sailor in the United States Navy who was later convicted in 2008 of passing classified information regarding the upcoming information about his battle group to a terrorism cell in London.[115] Hassan Abu-Jihaad became close to Derrick Shareef before Shareef, accusing Abu-Jihaad of moving too slowly towards a terrorist plot, cut ties with him.[116] Concurrently, Shareef grew closer and closer to FBI informant William Chrisman, who established himself as a close friend and individual to be trusted. Shareef and Chrisman visited the mall several times before the attack.

Shareef's transformation from ordinary American to terrorist is startling, particularly because he never even left the country. Much of the information used in court case was provided by FBI informant Chrisman, whose testimonies reveal a number of expected (according to the process of radicalization outline above) characteristics. First, Shareef fit the mold of "ordinary" individual prior to his radicalization, with no criminal history save for traffic violations.[117] This fits with the pre-radicalization stage. Second, Shareef may have found his political motivation from overseas events. Specifically, he seemed to be frustrated by the Israel-Hezbollah War of 2006. The FBI informer noted that this war largely put him over the edge. This fits with the self-identification stage. Third, the internet played a pivotal role in the CherryVale plot, as it was an

avenue through which Shareef could find radical material. One site he frequented, 'kavkazcenter.com', provides news from a radical Islamist perspective.[118] Abu Jihaad also provided Shareef with other links to similar sites while they were still in contact. Shareef watched a martyrdom video from one of the London suicide bombers. He also started to wear traditional Islamic dress. In the final stage of the jihadization, Shareef had become close with the informant and they were committed to the attack. Shareef clearly had the motivation to carry out the bombing but his lack of resources made foiling the plot easy. Today, Shareef is the imam at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Chicago.[119]

Case Study: Raja Lahrasib Khan

Raja Lahrasib Khan was a Pakistani-American taxi based in Chicago, Illinois who, in February 2012, was found guilty of funding overseas al-Qaeda operatives. Additionally, FBI wiretaps document his plan to bomb a stadium, though this charge was dropped as part of Khan's guilty plea.[120]

Khan immigrated to the United States in the 1970s from Pakistan and became a naturalized citizen in 1988. According to FBI records, Khan claimed in 2008 to have known Ilyas Kashmiri, an established al-Qaeda member, prior to his targeted killing in June 2011, for approximately 15 years before discovering that he worked for al-Qaeda.[121] Upon learning that Kashmiri needed money for al-Qaeda related activities, Khan apparently joined the cause. His intent was to provide money for Pakistani resistance against India in the Kashmir region. Court records tell little about his radicalization process, instead jumping to documentation of his \$950 transfer to Kashmiri.[122] The investigation was led by the Chicago FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force with assistance from the Chicago Police Department, the Illinois State Police, and the Department of Homeland Security.[123]

Case Study: Michael C. Finton

On 23 September 2009, Michael C. Finton, a part-time cook and convert to Islam, was arrested in Springfield, Illinois and charged with attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction and attempted murder of a federal officer. Finton was accused of attempting to detonate a truck bomb

and destroy the Paul Findley Federal Building. Finton was unaware that the “bomb” was actually inactive material and he had been tracked and tricked by an undercover FBI agent. Finton was a prison convert. After exploring numerous religions with the hope of finding direction in his life, he settled on Islam. The FBI identified him as a threat as early as 2007 when, following an arrest for violating his parole, police found letters and notebooks in his possession containing material idolizing radical Islam, including correspondence with John Walker Lindh.[124] Acquaintances and colleagues characterized him as a constant critic of the United States.[125]

Like Shareef, Finton may have found his political motivation from events overseas. He seemed frustrated by the Gaza War, telling the FBI informant he wanted to go overseas and receive training to fight alongside the Palestinians.[126] He repeated this same claim on several occasions. As with other cases, the Internet also provided, at least in part, motivation. Finton mentioned reading about others who had gone to Islamic schools in western Pakistan, and that he was interested in doing the same.

Case Study: Shaker Masri

On 3 August 2010, 26-year-old Chicago resident Shaker Masir was arrested in Countryside, Illinois just before boarding a flight to Somalia and charged with attempting to provide material support to a designated terrorist organization and attempting to provide material support through the use of a weapon of mass destruction.[127] Masir was a United States citizen based on his birth in Alabama, though he was raised abroad. The complaint states that Masir first expressed his violent jihadist views to a friend (who was, unbeknownst to him, an FBI informant) in 2009 and progressively developed a plan to travel to the Middle East and fight among mujahedeen with al-Shabaab.[128] Masir stated that individuals who advocating for Palestinian causes were ineffectual, countering that only those taking up arms were truly fighting for Islam.[129] It is not clear who or what influenced his jihadist transformation. The FBI Chicago Joint Terrorism Task Force used a combination of hired undercover operatives and recorded telephone calls to track Masir and make the arrest. As of 4 April 2012, Masir is housed at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Chicago and his trial is ongoing.[130]

Case Study: John Allen Muhammed

John Allen Muhammed was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and was enlisted in the United States Army from 1986 to 1994. In 1987, he converted to the Nation of Islam. A former partner described him as a devout Muslim who attended the Million Man March in Washington D.C. in 1995.[131]

In October 2002, Muhammed and his friend and accomplice, Lee Boyd Malvo, killed ten and critically injured three others in Washington D.C., Virginia, and Maryland over a span of three weeks in what was known as the Beltway sniper attacks. Muhammed was sentenced to death for the killings and Malvo, a minor at the time, was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. At Muhammed's trial, Malvo stated that Muhammed, who led the spree, had grand plans to extort millions of dollars from the government and to set up camps to train terrorists, though he did not explicitly mention Islam in this description.[132] However, a number of trial exhibits indicate that they were motivated by Islamist jihad, including portraits hailing Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein and praising Allah. Investigators also found Quranic scripture in their possession.

Illinois Government

Legislation

In July 1996, Illinois enacted Article 5/29C in the criminal code which made it a class one felony to solicit or contribute material support with the intent to fund an act of international terrorism, making it the first state to enact such a law.[133] Although Illinois had not fallen victim to domestic terrorism cases to the degree of New York or Oklahoma at the time, it had been a major hub for foreign terrorist fundraising, particularly Hamas. Following the September 11 attacks, the Illinois government passed a comprehensive anti-terrorism law (Article 5/29D) in December 2001.[134] The bill was meant to complement federal anti-terrorism laws by punishing terrorists with appropriate severity. Though it had overwhelmingly bipartisan support, it has not been used successfully in a prosecution to-date.[135] Rather, the federal government usually handles domestic terrorism cases because it “seems to have virtually unlimited resources in those cases

and more familiarity with various law enforcement strategies,” according to New York defense lawyer Aaron Mysliwec.[136] Accordingly, local district attorneys tend to have little experience in terrorism cases.

Muslim Participation

As of 2009, Illinois did not have a single elected Muslim politician in its legislature.[137] There has been a growing movement of local political non-profits that work to augment the voice of the Muslim community. For example, Project Mobilize is a self-described “political action non-profit organization dedicated to the education, development, and political advancement of politically marginalized communities seeking to fully realize their rights and responsibilities at the local, statewide, and national level.”[138] At present its focus is on the Muslim-American community. Since its establishment there has been an increase in Chicago-area Muslim candidates for office.[139]

Infiltration

In August 2011, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn named members to serve on the Muslim American Advisory Council, which is to “advise the Governor on ways to advance the role and civic participation of Muslim Americans in Illinois.”[140] Among the appointees is the Islamic Society of North America’s (ISNA) secretary-general, Safaa Zarzour. ISNA has well-documented ties to both the Holy Land Foundation and what was the Islamic Association for Palestine.[141] Zarzour is also the President of the board at Chicago’s chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations.[142]

Kifah Mustapha, a top religious leader of the Mosque Foundation in Bridgeview, was appointed an Illinois State Police chaplain in December 2009.[143] Mustapha was named an unindicted co-conspirator in the Holy Land Foundation case. In his deposition, he admitted to soliciting money for the Holy Land Foundation as well as volunteering with the IAP.[144] In June 2010, authorities discovered these ties during a background check and rescinded their offer of the position.[145] This did not stop, however, the FBI from giving Mustapha a tour of sensitive United States buildings, a tour made possible by FBI Chicago spokesman Ross Rice.[146]

Law Enforcement

The following is a table detailing Illinois' preparedness in combating threats of terrorism and homeland security with respect to other states.

Category	Ranking (out of 50)[147]
Number of domestically focused counterterrorism and homeland security organizations	12
Number of organizations established or newly involved in counterterrorism after 9/11	20
Federal homeland security spending	5
Domestic preparedness and antiterrorism programs (dollar amount)	8
Federal government expenditures per capita	44

Roughly 1 in 5 counterterrorism organizations in Illinois were formed after 9/11. Of these organizations, approximately two thirds are in law enforcement and emergency management and the other third is roughly divided between homeland security and intelligence. Four out of every five organizations are federal.

The Chicago FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), comprised of FBI special agents, officers of the Chicago police department, and representatives from 20 different federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies[148] is the principal terrorism defense unit in Chicago. It was established in 1981 but strengthened following the September 11 attacks.[149] There are also

JTTFs in Moline, which is near the Illinois-Iowa border, and Springfield, the state's capital. These represent the principal counterterrorism units of Illinois.

Another notable organization is the Illinois Terrorism Task Force (ITTF), which serves principally as an advisory committee to the Governor, providing guidance for new measures to be written into law.[150] Its focus is on domestic preparedness and counterterrorism strategy. It was chartered in 2009 and represents a variety of different organizations at the federal, state, and local levels, both within and outside the government.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to provide a comprehensive review of radical Islam in Illinois, the fifth most populous state of the United States. The first part of the paper presented an overview of the Muslim population and the second part presented the dangers of Islamic radicalization. It became evident that these dangers are not one-dimensional. They exist in individuals who have been radicalized both in Illinois, other areas of the United States, and still other places in the world. Radical Islam also exists and can manifest itself in mosques, Islamic centers, and Islamic organizations that aid overseas terrorism financially and by perpetuating ideologies. Individuals with these dangerous political views have no specific ethnic or religious profile. It is for this reason that they are so difficult to monitor and control. The next part of the paper explored foreign influences, primarily in turbulent geographical arenas with little governance. This was followed by a theoretical framework of radicalization and a number of case studies of past terrorist plots attempted in Illinois and/or by Illinois residents. Finally, an overview of the government's response to Islamic terror was presented.

While federal authorities have taken a more proactive role in curbing radical Islamic activity since the September 11 attacks, it is evident that the state and municipal governments have not responded significantly enough to the threat. A comprehensive plan built from the citizens and localities up with active participation from moderate Muslims will reduce the potential for terrorism in the future.

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