



CAIR

A RUSH TO JUDGMENT

**A Special Report on Anti-Muslim Stereotyping,
Harassment and Hate Crimes Following the
Bombing of Oklahoma City's Murrah
Federal Building, April 19, 1995**

**Council on American-Islamic Relations
September, 1995**

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In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)

CAIR is a non-profit, grassroots membership organization dedicated to presenting an Islamic perspective on issues of importance to the American public.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Within hours of the April 19, terrorist attack on the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, media reports and self-proclaimed “terrorism experts” linked Muslims, Arabs and “Middle Eastern-looking men” to the blast. This unsubstantiated linkage prompted stereotyping, harassment and actual attacks on Muslims and Arab-Americans around America.

These incidents mainly took the form of: 1) numerous threatening phone calls, including bomb threats, to mosques and Islamic centers; 2) verbal abuse directed at Muslims who appeared in public; 3) harassing behavior by co-workers; 4) direct physical attacks such as rock-throwing, beatings and shootings. In addition, two mosques were set on fire; one of these incidents has been officially ruled arson by fire investigators.

From these reported incidents CAIR has identified two alarming trends: (1) A growing anti-Muslim prejudice has caused Muslims to experience an increased sense of alienation; and (2) numerous incidents of anti-Muslim violence that target highly visible Muslim institutions and easily recognizable Muslims, especially mosques and women who wear the traditional Islamic *hijab* (dress covering the head and the body, with the exception of the face and hands).

To reduce the anti-Muslim sentiment documented in this report, CAIR makes the following recommendations: (1) That Congress and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights hold hearings to investigate the extent and severity of the anti-Muslim sentiment in the country, the causes of such prejudice, and its implication for civil rights legislation. In particular CAIR urges Congress to add “persons targeted for their religious and/or ethnic attire” to the categories of persons and federally protected activities covered by the Civil Rights Statute. (2) That the media exercise restraint when reporting developments of emotionally-charged events. Much of the stereotyping and defamation of innocent Muslim citizens and residents could have been avoided if reporters had applied basic standards of journalism. (3) That police departments and Muslim communities establish better channels of communication so Muslims and Arabs feel comfortable coming forward to report their experiences of bias and hate crimes.

FORWARD

April 19, 1995, marks a substantive blow to American innocence. The World Trade Center bombing of February 1993 had already demonstrated that the United States was not immune to major acts of terrorism, but now the sobering recognition that the terrorists could well be American citizens slowly dawned.

Yet this recognition came only after many among the public and in the media reached for convenient stereotypes to express their outrage. Vague descriptions of "Middle Eastern" looking suspects would have been laughable had they not been accompanied by verbal and physical abuse and intimidation of Muslims and others. Violent attacks on Muslim places of worship also occurred.

A Rush To Judgment documents such incidents that occurred in the immediate aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing. To immense tragedy was added shameful intolerance. While it would obviously be wrong to impute intolerance to American society as a whole, hatred and violence directed toward individuals because of their group affiliation - race, ethnicity, language, gender, religion - are disturbing no matter who the victims are.

The American encounter with Islam has sadly cast Americans in the role of victim - victims of hijackers, suicide bombers, hostage-takers. Mindlessly, the perpetrators of such acts in the Middle East and elsewhere came to be seen as representative of all Muslims, and Islam itself came to be equated with acts of violence which the vast majority of Muslims would condemn.

But if this "us" against "them" mentality is delusional when it comes to international relations, it makes no sense at all when it is applied to domestic society. Millions of Muslims live permanently in the United States - many American-born, most citizens or indefinite residents. To draw boundaries around what is "American" and what is not is self-defeating, and attempts to do so reduce the humanity of individuals by making them cartoonish aliens. Thus, it would appear to some that Muslims bomb and do not donate blood, Muslim women are repressed and can not serve as doctors and educators. The reality, as the various Muslim responses to the Oklahoma bombing demonstrate, is far more complex.

The media, of course, bear a special responsibility for the misunderstandings that arose after the bombing. Many journalists and commentators, along with government spokespersons it must be said, demonstrated caution and restraint, eschewing conclusions until reliable evidence was in hand. But others took to the airwaves or the editorial pages to express unfounded suspicions or frank hostility to Muslims. It is one of the deleterious qualities of the "sound bite" and the "op-ed" piece in modern communications technology that rarely does anyone but those maligned or attacked remember misjudgments. A sense of responsibility for distortion or error is often as ephemeral as the expertise proffered, and the harm to those wronged or offended is only compounded. There will be no surprise in the pages that follow that many Muslims regard media

reporting as often biased or ill-conceived. Even though attention has now passed to other groups, they may well worry that it will return to them once the next act of terrorism is perpetrated.

This study effectively presents a side of the story that is rarely heard and is never irrelevant: the human consequences of turning people into scapegoats.

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GLOSSARY OF MUSLIM TERMS

Allah	The most commonly used name for “God” in Arabic, which is used also by Christian Arabs. Allah is not the “Muslim God,” but is the same God worshipped by Christians and Jews.
<i>hijab</i>	Islamic dress for females covering the head and the body, with the exception of the face and hands.
<i>jihad</i>	Literally, <i>jihad</i> means striving, struggle, or exertion of effort. The term does not mean “holy war.” It is a broad Islamic concept that includes struggle against temptations, struggle to improve one’s life, or fighting against tyranny or oppression. The equivalent of the term “holy war” in Arabic, the language of the Quran and prophet Muhammad, is “ <i>harb muqaddasah</i> ,” a term that can not be found in the Quran or the prophet’s sayings.
<i>masjid</i>	The Arabic word for mosque.
mosque	A place dedicated to worship.
<i>niqab</i>	Face veil.

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Arab American Institute (AAI)
Islamic Public Affairs Council (IPAC)
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INTRODUCTION

There are an estimated six million Muslims in the United States. The Muslim population is comprised of people from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds and national origins. According to demographers, Islam is the fastest growing religion in America. The Muslim world, including members of the Muslim faith in the U.S., is experiencing a grassroots religious revival that has often been misunderstood, and/or misrepresented to the public. As of 1990, there were more than 1,000 mosques, Islamic centers, and Islamic schools in the U.S.¹

Despite the domestic growth of Islam in America, some groups and individuals cling to the portrayal of Islam and Muslims as a foreign threat. Hours after the April 19 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, politicians, former officials, and self-styled "terrorism experts" rushed to lay the blame on Arabs and Muslims using unfounded reports linking men "with Middle Eastern background" to the incident. Stereotypical media reporting and special political interests converged to create an anti-Arab, anti-Muslim hysteria which spawned intimidation and violence across the country. As a result, Arab and Muslim individuals and community organizations became the secondary victims of the bombing.

Bias is not a unique experience to Muslims. However, the tragic experience of Muslims in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing is unique because they have suffered retribution for an act that neither involved their community nor implicated any one of its members.

In 1990, President George Bush signed the Hate Crimes Statistics Act requiring the Attorney General to collect data on crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on ethnicity or religion. This report is the first of its kind to be issued by an American Muslim organization. It is intended to educate members of the news media, government and law enforcement agencies about the seriousness of bias targeted at Muslims in America.

This report is also addressed to members of Muslim community in the U.S. It documents the U.S. Muslim community's reaction to the blast in Oklahoma City. Findings show that although they were subjected to acts of harassment, threat, and assault, Muslims did not submit to fear and helplessness. They acted, like other individuals and communities in the United States, by strongly condemning the bombing, praying for the innocent victims, and helping in the relief effort.

Because they realized their suffering in wake of this incident was the result of a general lack of understanding of Islam and Muslims, Muslim organizations decided that education and increased communication would be the best and most positive ways in which to deal with the aftermath of the tragic blast.

¹Houghton Mifflin Company, *The 1991 Almanac*, 44th edition; The American Muslim Council, *The Muslim Population in the United States: A Brief Statement* (Washington, DC: n.p., 1992), 15. For scholarly research on the Muslim population in the U.S. see: Yvonne Haddad, *Muslim Communities in North America* (Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press, 1994)

METHODOLOGY

Following Justice Department guidelines, each “operation” or act of harassment, assault, etc., is counted as one regardless of the number of victims or offenders.² For example, two teenagers phoned an Islamic school in Seattle, Washington, and threatened to bomb the building. Such communication was counted as one act because the two offenders spoke from the same phone at the same time with regard to the same building. In contrast when a mosque received four hate phone calls from different sources, these phone calls were counted as four acts of hate. However, a series of related offenses are counted as one if they were integral parts of a whole act. Furthermore, in keeping with Justice Department guidelines, this report distinguishes between bias and bias crime (also known as hate crime). Bias is a “preformed negative opinion or attitude toward a group of persons based on their race, religion, ethnicity/national origin, or sexual orientation.”³ A hate crime is a “criminal offense committed against a person or property which is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender’s bias against a race, religion, ethnic/national origin group, or sexual orientation group.”⁴

After reviewing reports received by CAIR, the author attempted to verify incidents whenever possible by contacting the victims directly, and obtained tapes of hate and threat messages as well as copies of police reports (See a copy of one police report regarding an offense in Richardson, Texas). Some reports received from individuals have been excluded here because the information was too vague or inconsistent. Examples of such reports include a message received from one organization citing numerous threats to Arab-American businesses in the New York City area. Other examples of excluded messages on bias and hate crimes include a report which contains very broad language such as “several incidents of beatings and physical assaults have been reported.” Reports that did not appear to have been linked to events in Oklahoma City have also been eliminated. However, in keeping with Department of Justice guidelines, incidents that seemed partially linked to the public atmosphere of anti-Muslim prejudice following the Oklahoma bombing have been included. One example of such incidents involves a handicapped sixty-three-year old citizen of Indian origin. He was allegedly pulled off a public bus and roughly searched by two policemen in connection with his attempt to report an arson crime in his residential building.

²The 1993 U.S. Department of Justice Hate Crime Statistics offers the following methodological guideline: “For counting purposes, one offense is counted for each victim of a ‘crime against person.’ One offense is counted for each distinct operation of ‘crime against property,’ regardless of the number of victims.” See: U.S. Department of Justice, *Hate Crime Statistics: 1993* (Revised edition) (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995), 5.

³U.S. Department of Justice, *Hate Crime Data Collection Guidelines* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993), 4.

⁴*Ibid.*

Of 250 reported incidents, the researcher rejected twenty-eight reports that were considered unreliable. The statistical data on the anti-Muslim prejudice and violence do not include the biased media statements which Muslims believe contributed to the public hysteria that gave rise to the violence.

While this report is indicative, it by no means includes all incidents of anti-Muslim violence and prejudice, primarily because many incidents may have not come to CAIR's attention. This report also does not include occurrences of racial slurs and violence that may have been directed at other ethnic and religious (especially non-European immigrant) minorities in wake of the Oklahoma City bombing. Indeed, some members of the Muslim community in Oklahoma reported that Buddhists and Sikhs in their neighborhoods were subjected to bias-motivated offenses. Such cases are not discussed in the report because the information on them was inadequate.

The researcher organized the reports according to region and type of victim. CAIR has maintained confidentiality in regard to the names of individual victims. No stated incident date means that the incident took place most likely between April 19 and April 21. Early undocumented reports show that most incidents occurred within forty-eight hours after the bombing (i.e., before the authorities televised sketches of the two suspects of European heritage).

To measure the level of apprehension and fear among Muslims following the Oklahoma City bombing, CAIR distributed a questionnaire to 1,600 individuals and Islamic institutions across the country. The questionnaire was made up of multiple choice and open-ended questions designed to learn how Muslims felt and acted following the bombing. As of June 15, CAIR had received 162 responses. Although not scientific (i.e., statistically non-random), the sample data provide a general idea of the emotions dominant among Muslims, especially in the few days that followed the bombing.

The body of this report consists of three main segments. First, media reports that may have contributed to anti-Muslim/anti-Arab violence are examined. Second, incidents of bias and bias-motivated violence are classified, described, and analyzed. Third, responses from the Muslim community to the bombing are discussed. The conclusion summarizes the findings and offers a set of recommendations which could help prevent similar tragic occurrences in the future.

SCAPEGOATING MUSLIMS

Media outlets rushed to broadcast rumors and speculations linking Arabs and Muslims to the bombing in Oklahoma City. Below are citations selected from media networks which Muslims believe have contributed to the atmosphere of anti-Muslim violence.⁵

Television

- CNN, April 19

Former Congressman David McCurdy made the following remark immediately after the blast in Oklahoma: "Well, my first reaction when I heard of the explosion was that there could be a very real connection to some of the Islamic fundamentalist groups that have, actually, been operating out of Oklahoma City." McCurdy also refers to the Steven Emerson documentary "*Jihad in America*."

- CBS Evening News, April 19

In a report by Anthony Mason, Steven Emerson said: "Oklahoma City, I can tell you, is probably considered as one of the largest centers of Islamic radical activity outside the Middle East."

- CBS Special Report, April 19

Interviewing James Fox, former head of the New York FBI office, John Roberts asked whether it was surprising that the bombing was carried out while the trial of the World Trade Center bombing suspects is underway. James Fox answered:

"Actually it does surprise me. We thought that we would hear from the religious zealots in the future, that they would be a thorn in our side for years to come. But that there would not be a direct terrorist act until after this trial was over and they saw how, for instance, the Sheik [i.e. Omar Abdul-Rahman] is being treated and whether he would be found guilty or not."

John Roberts then interviewed Steven Emerson, who pointed out that before considering a response to the bombing "the West and the U.S. in particular" must be prepared to "recognize that there is an extremist fringe within the Islamic community in the U.S....a minority fringe that sees the West and the U.S. as a target."

- ABC World News, April 19

John McWethy reported,

"Sources say that the FBI has been watching dozens of suspicious Islamic groups in cities in the Southwest and several in Oklahoma City. As a further indication where the

⁵This section is not intended to evaluate media performance in covering the Oklahoma bombing. Indeed, it would be a mistake to conclude from the following pages that the media is a monolithic entity. Muslims who followed media coverage noticed variation in the way different media sources performed. See below an examination of Muslim grassroots view of media coverage of the blast in Oklahoma City.

investigation is heading, ABC has learned that the FBI has asked the U.S. military to provide up to ten Arabic speakers to help in the investigation."

- NBC Nightly News, April 19

Jim Cumins stated that the bombing "resembled Beirut."

Commenting on the bombing in an interview with Tom Brokaw, Raymond Kelly, former New York police commissioner, remarked: "The genie is kind of out of the bottle after the World Trade Center bombing."

- CBS Evening News, April 19

Connie Chung states that "U.S. government sources told CBS News that it [the bombing] has Middle East terrorism written all over it."

CBS reporter Jim Stuart first suggested that the bombing may have been a revenge attack linked to Branch-Davidians. But the reporter quickly dismissed the possibility noting that: "Now, the bidding here, however, is on Middle East terrorists with a far bigger agenda."

Connie Chung stated: "Today's attack is similar to the World Trade Center in 1993 and similar to attacks on U.S. forces in Beirut in the 1980s. That has investigators looking at possible Middle East terrorists right here in the American Midwest."

Steven Emerson is featured stating that: "This (the bombing) was done with the intent to inflict as many casualties as possible. That is a Middle Eastern trait."

- ABC Nightline, April 19

Ted Koppel cited a clip from a local TV station in Oklahoma City which showed an anchorwoman stating that the police were looking for two Middle Eastern-looking men.

- ABC World News, April 19

John McWethy cites local police and FBI sources who said the police and the FBI were looking for three men believed to be of Middle Eastern origin driving in a brown pickup truck.

- CBS Evening News, April 20

Referring to the false arrest and return of Abraham Ahmad from London, Connie Chung described the pursuit of two suspects (i.e., the Caucasian male suspects) as only one of the leads, "some of them stretch overseas."

- PBS, April 20

In a PBS interview with Robert MacNeil, Larry Johnson, identified as an international security expert, insisted that pictures of the bombing site were similar to pictures of bombings in Beirut, and that

"the threat [of terrorism] has narrowed -- in that it is focused more on Islamic groups, increased activity on the part of Islamic groups in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Pakistan and the Philippines. This strike in the heart of America is probably the Pearl Harbor of terrorism. This one is going to resonate with us in ways that the take-over of the embassy in Tehran never did."

Robert MacNeil then refers to the former CIA director William Woosley as saying that the Oklahoma bombing was "the true globalization of the terrorist threat."

- CNN, April 20

Commenting on the official release of sketches of two Caucasian suspects, Wolf Blitzer insisted that: "There is still a possibility that there could have been some sort of connection to Middle East terrorism. One law enforcement source tells me that there's a possibility that they may have been contracted out as freelancers to go out and rent this truck that was used in this bombing..."

- CNN, April 21

Wolf Blitzer, backtracking on his previous speculation that the bombing suspects may have been contracted by Middle Easterners, explained that "...one of the assumptions is that Islamic fundamentalists do not normally hire white individuals...They don't trust them...."

Radio

- Excerpts from the Bob Grant Show (WABC), April 20

Grant: Tommy from Brooklyn, hello.

Caller: How you doing Mr. Grant?

Grant: What's on your mind, sir?

Caller: Well, I'd like to say that it's very amazing that... they're talking about Muslims and Mr. Salameh and all this, this is what you're saying, and no one ever saw anything. That's just as worse --

Grant: Now -- yeah -- we did see a lot of things.... In the Oklahoma case ... the indications are that those people who did it were some Muslim terrorists. But, a skunk like you, what I'd like to do is put you up against the wall with the rest of them, and mow you down along with them. Execute you with them. Because you obviously have a great hatred for America, otherwise you wouldn't talk the way you talk, you imbecile.

Grant: Gary you're on WABC, hello.

Caller: I'd like to be standing right beside you when you do it, Bob....

[two callers later]

Grant: Jacob, you're on WABC, hello.

Caller: Bob, in the book "The Islamic Invasion" by Robert [inaudible], he infiltrated mosques all over America. And (the) way they pray, is they pray for the destruction of America, destruction of Israel and Jews and even the children pray like this. So Bob, [laughs] we're going to have more bombings, and we can't stop it, because these people -- like you said, it's a violent religion.

Grant: It is violent. It is violent. We're supposed to be fake, phony frauds and say, 'oh, no, it's fine.' No it's not fine, cause they preach violence for heaven's sake!

Caller: Bob, they actually pray like this and he has tapes and I saw a documentary on Channel 13 that showed the same thing, so when the hell are we going to wake up?

Grant: I don't think we will. Because for every guy like you and every guy like me there's a guy like the jerk who was on two calls ahead [sic: behind]. And it's obvious what he's about.

Caller: He's probably a Black Muslim.

Grant: Yeah.

Caller: No question about it.

Grant: Yeah. Thank you, Jacob.

[Next caller suggests taking the culprits and putting their bodies in pig skin so they won't be "going on to Allah."]

Newspapers

- *The Washington Post*, April 20

"The FBI has been aware of the activity of Islamic student groups meeting recently in Oklahoma City, Dallas and Kansas City.... Hamas and another militant group, Islamic Jihad, were among the speakers at an Islamic conference held in the Oklahoma Convention Center in 1992 (referring to the annual Muslim-Arab Youth Association conference)."

- *The New York Times*, April 20

"Some Middle Eastern groups have held meetings there (Oklahoma), and the city is home to at least three mosques."

- *USA Today*, April 20

The paper quoted Daniel Pipes, editor of *Middle East Quarterly*: "People need to understand that this is just the beginning. The fundamentalists are on the upsurge, and they make it very clear that they are targeting us. They are absolutely obsessed with us."

- *The Chicago Tribune*, April 21

The paper published an editorial written by the syndicated columnist Georgie Anne Geyer under titled "The 'no questions asked' country for terrorists." The columnist relies on Steven Emerson's erroneous information to assert that the Oklahoma City area is "one of the centers for Islamic radicalism outside the Middle East."

Findings

- Muslim bashing crossed the line from criticizing "Muslim extremists" and "Muslim fundamentalists" to outright defamation of Islam. The mere presence of Islamic religious institutions in a particular area (Oklahoma City) was sufficient to infer criminality. This is evident, for example in *The New York Times* attempt to correlate the bombing to the fact that Oklahoma City is home to three mosques. (See the above quote from *The New York Times*, April, 20).
- Some media outlets engaged in scapegoating of Muslims. Even after the possibility of Muslim or Arab involvement in the blast had been ruled out by the authorities, some media sources insisted on maintaining the link (See comments of Wolf Blitzer in p. 25 above; see also *The Cincinnati Post* cover story in Appendix).
- It must also be acknowledged that certain "terrorism experts" have a political agenda that includes demonizing Islam, Muslims and Arabs. Some of these "experts" did not even check the facts before making television statements that provoked viewers to act against Muslims in America.

Are hasty speculations about a Middle East connection justifiable? The facts suggest otherwise. The Oklahoma City Police Department has denied ever calling for the arrest or pursuit of "men with Middle Eastern appearance." The assignment desk editor for Channel 4, the local NBC affiliate in Oklahoma City, indicated that they heard the call for such suspects on the scanners of police officers and Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) agents. Thus rumors that were circulating in private communications were passed off as news of government moves by

local reporters. National reporters away from the scene did not care to check the credibility of their local affiliates.

Some argue that in the absence of evidence, analysts have to use the benefit of history. Muslim militants were convicted of bombing the World Trade Center. Instead of seeing this incident as an isolated attack by few extremists, Steven Emerson produced a film, which was broadcast by the PBS under the title "Jihad in America," warning of an "Islamic terrorist threat" on U.S. soil.

However, the history of domestic terrorism in the U.S. contradicts the mythical image of "Muslim terrorism." According to government figures, radicals from Muslim background carried out only one terrorist attack in the United States - the World Trade Center bombing. In contrast, the following figures on domestic terrorist attacks are reported by the FBI in the period of 1982-1992: Puerto Ricans, seventy-seven attacks; left-wing groups, twenty-three attacks; Jewish, sixteen attacks; anti-Castro Cubans, twelve attacks; right-wing groups, six attacks.⁶ The same conclusion can be made with regard to anti-U.S. terrorist attacks overseas. According to the U.S. Department of State "Patterns of Global Terrorism" report, a majority of forty-four anti-U.S. attacks in 1994 took place in Latin America. In contrast, only eight were carried out in the Middle East, five in Asia, five in Western Europe, and four in Africa.⁷

⁶Federal Bureau of Investigation, Terrorist Research and Analytical Section, 1995.

⁷U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995).

ANTI-MUSLIM BIAS AND VIOLENCE

This section documents incidents of bias and bias-motivated violence directed at Muslims immediately following the blast in Oklahoma City. First, incidents reported to CAIR are classified and described briefly. Second, findings are deduced from the incident data.

Shooting

- Drive-by shootings on April 19 and 20 shattered the windows of a mosque and community center in Stillwater, Oklahoma. Fortunately no individuals were hurt in the shooting. A 35-year old Caucasian male suspect has been apprehended by Stillwater police. According to a community report, the suspect told police he was venting frustration after a friend was injured in the Federal Building explosion.
- A Muslim woman in Chicago, wearing the *hijab*, was reportedly shot at while walking on the sidewalk in her neighborhood on May 1.
- A shot was reportedly fired at Al-Fajr Masjid (mosque) in Indianapolis, Indiana, on April 19. Later, a caller said, "I just prayed to your god that you have some repentance...you will pay for this."

Beating and Physical Assault

- Sahar Al-Muwsawi, an Iraqi refugee in her mid-twenties, miscarried her near-term baby after an April 20th attack on her home in Oklahoma City. The woman heard the screech of brakes and the breaking of a number of windows in her house. Unknown assailants also pounded on the woman's door screaming anti-Islamic epithets. The woman retreated to her bathroom with her two-year-old daughter and another child in her care. She then felt a pain in her abdomen and began bleeding uncontrollably. She miscarried a stillborn baby boy several hours later at a nearby hospital. The child was named "Salaam," or "peace," and buried after a simple funeral in accordance with Muslim practice.⁸
- The Community Gathering Committee, Oklahoma, reported an attempted knife attack in a Norman, Oklahoma, parking lot. An international student in Durant, a small college town in southern Oklahoma, was allegedly beaten in a supermarket parking lot.
- A 7th Grade Muslim student at the Richardson Middle School in Torrance, California, was slandered with words such as "camel jockey" and accosted physically in wake of the Oklahoma City bombing. Apparently, the English language arts teacher included the word, "bomb," in the vocabulary list and illustrated the term by using the sentence, "Muslims

⁸On this case see: *The Daily Oklahoman* and *Houston Chronicle*, April 25, 1995.

bombed Oklahoma City because Allah (God) told them to do so.” The remark led to the physical attack on the Muslim student by his peers.

- An African-American Muslim woman in Wilmington, Delaware reported that she was physically assaulted by an African-American man. As the attacker attempted to pull-off her *niqab* (face veil), he shouted: “Is this for real?” The assailant ran away when the woman fought him back.

Robbery

- The Islamic Society of Greater Houston reported that one member of their community was robbed while carrying flyers and posters about Islam on April 21.

Property Damage and Vandalism

- The Islamic Center of High Point, North Carolina, burnt to the ground in the early morning of April 26. Community members believe the fire was related to the Oklahoma City bombing. Prior to the Oklahoma City blast, the community had experienced incidents of harassment, including break-ins and stone throwings. (Fire inspectors do not confirm arson.)
- The Muslim community in Springfield, Illinois, reported a suspected attempted theft and arson attack on the Islamic Center during the early morning hours of June 6. The fire was first reported by neighbors of the mosque at 12:10 A.M. The blaze apparently began on the building’s exterior and worked its way inside. On June 14, Detective Mike Pennington of the Sangamon County Sheriff’s Department confirmed that the mosque fire was ruled arson, but said no suspects have been identified. Fire Marshall Cliff Garst said that the building suffered an estimated \$30,000 in fire and heat damage.
- A raw egg was broken on the driver’s side glass of a Muslim’s parked car in front of his house in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

Stalking

- A Kuwaiti student at the University of Oklahoma, reported that his wife was stalked for an hour at her apartment on April 20.

Police Abuse

- Abraham Ahmad, a U.S. citizen and long-time Oklahoma resident who happened to be traveling to the Middle East on the day of the bombing, was detained at London’s Heathrow Airport and then returned to Washington, DC. He reports suffering rough treatment, especially at the hands of British authorities. Despite the lack of any evidence, Ahmad was initially thought to be a suspect in the Federal Building bombing. Mr. Ahmad was placed under arrest and returned to Washington’s Dulles International Airport accompanied by federal agents. He was kept overnight in Washington on April 20, even as government officials were releasing the sketches of two Caucasian males suspected of having rented the

truck used in the bombing. After his name was leaked to the press, people dumped trash on his lawn and spit on his wife.⁹

- In a lengthy affidavit, a sixty-three-year-old, handicapped (uses a quad-cane to walk) Muslim from Richardson, Texas, who is of Indian origin, writes that he was forced out of a public bus and roughed-up on May 23 by two policemen. In the late afternoon, the old man took the bus after he met with detectives of the National Crime Intelligence Bureau to report his suspicion of an arson crime. The policemen reportedly jumped into the bus, grabbed the old man's arm and ordered him to get off the bus. Unaware of the fact that he had surgical metal in his leg due to an injury, the policemen reportedly pressed so hard on his legs as they searched him that they caused him great pain. One policeman asked the man where he was born and whether he carried a U.S. passport. Following the man's filing a report with the Internal Affairs, he reportedly received a threatening phone call from the same policeman who abused him earlier. The policeman told the old Muslim man that he would be held responsible should his name come up again in an arson report.
- A Muslim in Norman, Oklahoma, reported being pulled over by police. The police officer asked the man, "Where are you from?" and "What religion are you?" When the man said he was Muslim, the officer "smirked" and wrote three tickets, two of them allegedly unfounded.
- A Muslim student reported that he suffered police harassment on May 21. Apparently, the student was driving from Massachusetts to Connecticut when he was stopped by a Massachusetts state trooper. The police officer asked him for his driver's license. The student handed him his international driver's license. The police officer looked at it and said: "What is that? Is that a Lebanese driver's license?" The officer threw the license on the student's chest and walked back to his car saying: "Get the f--- out of here. You mother-----." The student was so shocked that he did not catch the name of the officer or his number.

Bomb Threat

- A fake bomb was thrown into the playground of a Muslim day care in the Dallas, Texas, area. The person who threw the black bag reportedly shouted, "It's a bomb."
- The North Gate Idris Mosque in Seattle received two bomb threats by telephone.
- Two boys called the Islamic School of Seattle on the morning of April 20. One caller said: "Why are you bombing our buildings?" The other sounded very threatening when he yelled: "Why (did) you f----- bomb our building? How would you feel if your building was bombed?" The police were notified and they patrolled the area for some time.
- The Islamic Society of Central New York reported two bomb threats, one on April 19 and the other on April 20. The threats were recorded on the mosque's answering machine. The callers used obscenities in their calls and said: "You'll die."
- The Islamic Center in Spokane, Washington, reported three recorded bomb threats.

⁹For further details on the case of Abraham Ahmad see: *The New York Times*, April 24, 1995.

- The Council on Islamic Education, located in Fountain Valley, California, received the following call on April 19:
 Caller (on answering machine): "You better not come to work tomorrow, or we'll blow up your f----- building."
- One bomb threat was reported by the Islamic Center in San Francisco.
- The *Arab-American News* in Dearborn, Michigan, received two threatening calls on April 20 and April 21. Both callers identified themselves as members of a "white supremacist group." They promised retaliation for "what you [Arabs] did in Oklahoma."
- The Islamic Society of Tampa Bay Area in Florida reported four threats. These threats were comprised of nasty messages on answering machines at the Islamic Center of Tampa Bay and the Islamic Society of Pinellas County. Muslims were accused of being child killers. The messages also contained threats to bomb the centers.
- The director of the Mosque of Riverside, California reported that the mosque received three threatening calls. One caller, on April 20 at 1:00 P.M. claimed that he planted a bomb in the mosque. The other two came reportedly the following day at 8:20 a.m. and 8:35 a.m. from a caller who said: "I will kill all the children."
- The Islamic Cultural Center in Tempe, Arizona, reported that the organization received six threatening phone calls on April 19 and 20. The messages contained phrases such as: "Stop bombing Americans," and "Leave--Go home!" The messages also included insults to Muslim women and threats to bomb the center. The answering machine tape has been handed over to the local authorities.

Death Threat

- The president of the Islamic Foundation of Central Ohio reported receiving the following messages on the foundation's answering machine:
 Wednesday, 5:35 EST
 "All Muslim terrorist bastards will die, all Muslim terrorist bastards will die. You all die. You are already dead. You do not know it. You are going to die. You Islamic bastards, you sons of b----es, murderers, you will die."
 Wednesday, 5:37 EST
 "You murderers of innocent women and children. Your mosque will be burned to the ground. You will all die and burn in hell."
- The South Bay Islamic Association, located in San Jose, California, received four hate calls and death threats. One caller said, "We are sick and tired of your bombs and your religion. You'll die a horrible death. Get out of our country."
- The Muslim Community Association, located in Santa Clara, California, received five hate calls and death threats after the Oklahoma bombing.

- An active member of the Islamic Foundation of Lincoln, located in Lincoln, Nebraska, reported that the local mosque and Muslim community members received five to ten anonymous phone death threats during April 20 and 21. The local police were contacted regarding these threats and responded by increasing their patrols in the area.
- Officials of the Islamic Society of Orange County, California, said that their organization received six threats.
- The Islamic Society of Milwaukee, based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, received six threats to the Islamic Center and reported that seven other threats were made against Muslim individuals.
- A Muslim community leader in Tulsa, Oklahoma, reported that, during the evening of May 27, a Caucasian man who was obviously intoxicated, drove his car around the mosque and made threatening gestures. He burned some rubber and threw it toward the mosque. When six Muslim men from the mosque went to talk to him he said: "Haven't you got the message? We don't want you here! If you haven't gotten the message, then I probably should go bring my gun and shoot you." When the man left, leaders of the mosque reported the incident to the police who identified the man.

Intimidation

- The *Muslim Community News*, located in Silver Spring, Maryland, received four faxes from Muslim individuals who were harassed and feared for their safety.
- The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) reported that a Muslim in Oklahoma City was met with hostility in her attempt to donate blood for the bomb victims.
- A member of the Islamic Center in Lafayette, Louisiana, reported that he was harassed in his political science class by a fellow student.
- An American Muslim woman in Corvallis, Oregon, was yelled at while driving in her car with her children several days after the bombing. Several men in a pick-up truck yelled at her, "Go home you, you..." (She didn't hear the rest of what they said.)
- The Great News-Islamic Information Resource Center, located in San Francisco, California, received a threatening phone call on April 19 around 6:30 p.m. The man who called told the store owner that Muslims would not get away with the bombing, and that she (i.e., the store owner) will pay for it. The owner promptly closed the store.
- The Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) in Los Angeles, California documented the following harassing calls on April 19:
 - 1:20 p.m.
 - Caller: "Did you guys support the bombing in Oklahoma?"
 - MPAC: "Sir, we had nothing to do with it."
 - Caller: "Well, we'll see you real soon."

5:09 p.m.

Caller: "What are you Muslims up to now, my God what else will you do. You all should be run out of town."

6:03 p.m.

Caller: "If it's discovered that you people are any way responsible for Oklahoma you will pay massively swift, severe retribution. Wind is starting to blow. Sweet dreams, Arabs."

The following day, April 20, the language of the calls became even more unpleasant. Tape transcript reports read as follows:

8:27 a.m.

Caller: "You should be exterminated. You people are animals. That's all I have to say."

9:20 a.m.

Caller: "Vengeance is coming."

12:04 p.m.

Caller: "Don't get too comfortable."

- A Muslim talk-show host in Seattle, Washington, reported ten cases of Muslim women being harassed verbally. Two incidents involved his mother, wife, and sister. On April 20, in a shopping mall, passers-by said to these Muslim women, "Why don't you Iranians go home?" and "Kill Muslims." In a separate incident on the same day in a grocery store, the same Muslim women were shouted at by someone who said, "F----- Iranians, go home!"
- In an English class at George Mason University, an American Muslim woman from Herndon, Virginia, was the target of many remarks regarding "Islamic terrorists." She said:
"When I tried to tell the people involved that Islam and Muslims are against such acts, one man in particular kept fueling the conversation by saying such comments as: 'I know it was you guys.' When I tried to clarify that I, as a Muslim, should not be classified as 'those guys,' he responded: 'When you join a group, you take on the whole group and their actions.' He was extremely angry and had convicted me in his mind (guilt by association)."
- A Muslim from Oaklawn, Illinois, reported that a woman who worked with him asked him, with suspicion, if his people had done the bombing.
- An American Muslim doctor from McLean, Virginia, reported that on April 20th, a contractor working for him yelled: "Go back to your f----- country!" In his report, the doctor said: "After I asked him to leave, he reacted by trying to instigate a fist fight with me. He said: 'Come and hit me, come on, come on!' After that, I left the place."
- The Director of the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, reported five acts of harassment against Muslims in the area. One act involved newspaper clippings of the Oklahoma City bombing accusing "Muslim terrorists" being mailed to a prominent Muslim doctor with obscenities marked across the articles. The clippings have been submitted to the police. Moreover, the organization reported four other acts of verbal assault against three Muslims.

- The president of the Islamic Unity Club at Montgomery College in Rockville, Maryland, reported that club flyers had been marked with the words: "Stop the Bombing" on April 20.
- A Muslim woman from Melbourne Beach, Florida, stated: "I was verbally attacked on my way to the grocery store by a teenager." The incident occurred on April 19. While she was dumping her trash in the neighborhood dumpsite, the Caucasian teenager (around 18 or 19) shouted: "This isn't f----- Saudi Arabia. Why don't you go back to your f----- country?"
- A Muslim student at Oklahoma City Community College reported being called "sand n--ger" and "camel jockey."
- A Muslim parent in Oklahoma reported that schoolmates called his son a "terrorist" and that the boy's teacher did not come to his defense.
- A Muslim woman in Tulsa, Oklahoma, reported being mocked in public following the Oklahoma bombing because she wore Islamic dress.
- The Islamic community in Houston, Texas, reported a Pakistani woman being harassed at work. When the woman complained to her supervisor, she was told, "Well, it [i.e., the World Trade Center bombing] happened in New York."
- The director of the Mosque of Riverside, California, reported: "A Muslim woman was booed in a shopping mall. Another was spat at in a Burger King restaurant. A third was verbally attacked by two men; one said: 'I hate these people'."
- The Islamic Center of Central Missouri, located in Columbia, Missouri, reported one threat and two acts of harassment. On April 19, a Muslim man received a call to his home. The caller said: "If it happened to be your people who did it, then you will not be safe tonight at your home." In addition, a Muslim family was harassed at the Megamarket grocery store on the early evening hours of April 20. Individuals shouted at them: "See the bombers." The next day a man in a car driving by the Islamic Center shouted "You the bombers" to Muslim children playing in the center's playground.

Harassing Call

- A Muslim man from San Francisco, California, received a phone call on April 19. The caller informed him that Muslims would not get away with the bombing, and that "you will pay for this."
- On April 19, the Islamic Society of Greater Houston reported receiving three harassing phone calls.
- The Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) reported a threatening call to the head of the Islamic Center in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and three dozen threatening calls to a New York Islamic advocacy group.
- The office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) in Northern California received six abusive and threatening phone calls. The organization states:

“We received half a dozen unidentified phone calls that were cursing and abusing our faith and values and blaming us for the bombing. A very abusive phone caller told us to ‘go to hell’ and ‘take your f----- religion’ out of the States.”

- The Islamic Association of North Texas received seventeen harassing phone calls.
- The Islamic Cultural Center, the main mosque in Tempe, Arizona, reported four threatening phone calls. The answering machine tape has been handed over to the local authorities. The center also reported that the Islamic Community Center in Phoenix, Arizona, received four phone threats. The messages carried the following theme: “We know where you are. We will destroy the mosque. We will get you.”
- The Islamic Society of Tulsa, Oklahoma, transcribed the calls they received:
 - Wednesday, 5:14 p.m.
“You baby killers, wife beaters, and little boy molesters. Be careful Friday crossing the street. You don’t own that public street, and if I’m there in my car, I’ll run your asses down. You need to get the f--- out of this country, now.”
 - Thursday, 7:27 a.m.
“Yes, I’d like to know what the Islamic Society is and why you’re here, and I think you need to take yourself and all your people and go back to where you belong, ‘cause you’ve done nothing but cause trouble in my country.”
- A Caucasian Muslim woman from Tulsa, Oklahoma, who serves as president of the Islamic Elementary School in the city, received more than twenty crank phone calls during the first forty-eight hours of the bombing. A person/persons would call every five minutes, stay quiet, and then hang up. Other unknown individuals placed five calls telling the Muslim family to go home. (The woman’s family came to the Boston area in the 1640s.)
- A Muslim activist in Carmel, California, reported receiving two threatening phone calls referring to her “terrorist friends.”
- The Islamic Center in Lafayette, Louisiana, reported receiving a “vulgar and threatening” phone call. In addition, leaders of this Muslim community center reported three other similar phone calls to individuals members of the center.

Bias

- A Muslim in Palo Alto, California, reported that a person or persons yelled: “Those Islamic people should go back where they came from.”
- The Muslim Community Center in San Francisco, California, received a disturbing message on its answering machine from a concerned mother, who angrily implored them to condemn those of the Islamic faith who would kill innocent people. In addition, she accused the Islamic religion of being a religion of “baby killers.” The call was received around 6:45 p.m. on April 19.
- A Muslim in Seattle, Washington, reported that he felt the discomfort of co-workers, and heard anti-Muslim and anti-Arab statements and remarks.

- A person from North Tonington, Connecticut, reported that unfounded assumptions were verbalized in his/her presence that the perpetrators were Arab/Islamic.
- An American Muslim from Indianapolis, Indiana, was intimidated when individuals said "bad words about Muslims and Arabs."
- The Council on Islamic Education, located in Fountain Valley, California, received the following calls on April 19:
 Caller: "Do you like being baby-killers?"
 Caller: "Did you guys do it?"
 The third caller mentioned that she called her Congressman and demanded that all non-Christians be deported from the United States.
- An American Muslim CEO/President of his company from Mt. Vernon, New York, reported that he was met with hostility by his own staff. He stated:
 "My purchasing manager, who works for me, refused to talk to me on Wednesday and Thursday (April 19 and 20), because she held me personally responsible for the bombing -- she risked being fired and was plainly mad at me!! I was also thoroughly searched and questioned at the airport upon my return from Europe."
- A Muslim man from Burtonsville, Maryland, said that co-workers and neighbors looked at him "with dirty looks" after the bombing.

Summary of the Incident Data

The following data tables summarize the incident reports in terms of frequency and percentage. In order to capture the magnitude and severity of the incidents, the summary focuses on the type of incident and victim, and the location and state of incident occurrence.

Table 1
Incidents by Type and Frequency

Type of incident	Number of incidents	Percentage of incident	Number of incidents reported to authorities	Percentage of incidents reported to authorities
Shooting	4	2	4	100
Beating and physical assault	5	2	1	20
Robbery	1	0.5	0	0
Property damage	3	1	2	67
Stalking	1	1	1	100
Police abuse	4	2	2	50
Bomb threat	28	13	7	25
Death threat	27	12	8	30
Intimidation	42	19	0	0
Harassing call	92	41	4	4
Bias	15	7	0	0
Total	222	100.5*	29	13

Note:

*Percentages are rounded off.

Table 2
Incidents by Type of Victim

Victim Type	Number of offenses	Percentage
1. Organization	149	67
1.1 Mosque/Islamic center	94	63
1.2 Other institution	55	37
2. Individual	62	28
2.1 Women wearing <i>hijab</i>	14	22
3. Family	11	5
Total	222	100*

Table 3
Incidents by Place of Occurrence

Place	Number of offenses	Percentage
Mosque/Islamic Center	100	45
Other organization owned or managed by Muslim	58	26
Home	13	6
Street	6	3
Workplace	5	2
School	4	2
Neighborhood	3	1
Airport	1	0.5
Other common place	32	14
Total	222	99.5

Note:

*Percentages are rounded off.

Table 4
Incidents by State

State	Shooting	Beating and physical assault	Robbery	Property damage and vandal- ism	Stalking	Police abuse	Bomb threat	Death threat	Intimi- dation	Hate calls	Bias	Total	%
California	-	1	-	-	-	-	7	17	10	9	6	50	23
New York	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	36	1	39	18
Texas	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	20	0	24	11
Oklahoma	2	3	-	-	1	2	-	1	3	8	-	20	9
Wisconsin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	13	-	18	8
Washington	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	10	-	1	17	8
Arizona	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	4	-	10	5
Nebraska	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	7	3
Maryland	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	5	-	1	7	3
Florida	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1	-	-	5	2
Louisiana	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	5	2
Missouri	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	3	1
Illinois	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	3	1
Virginia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	1
Indiana	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	1
Michigan	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	1
Ohio	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	1
Connecticut	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	0.5
Oregon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	0.5
North Carolina	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.5
Iowa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	0.5
Delaware	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.5
Massachusetts	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.5
Total	4	5	1	3	1	4	28	27	42	92	15	222	101*

Note:

*Percentages are rounded off.

Findings

- About two-thirds of the incidents took the form of bias, harassment, and intimidation. However, one-third of the incidents were much more serious: 28 percent took the form of stalking, police abuse, and bomb and death threat; and 6 percent, including shooting, beating, robbery and arson, resulted in physical injuries (See Table 1). Incidents of shooting and arson were reported to the police, but verbal threats and harassing remarks were not.
- Victims came from different backgrounds. Two-thirds of the victims are Muslim institutions, mosques in particular. About a quarter of the rest were individuals easily recognizable for their religious dress, i.e., Muslim women who wear the *hijab* (See Table 2).
- Seventy-seven percent of the offenses occurred in mosques, other Muslim-operated institutions, and homes (See Table 3). Muslims were pursued by their attackers in the sanctuary of their homes and places of worship rather than attacked at random during casual encounters.

- About two-thirds of the offenses occurred in four states: California, New York, Texas and Oklahoma (See Table 4). The first three states are home to publicly-felt Muslim presence. The disproportionate percentage of incidents that occurred in Oklahoma, a home to a small Muslim community of some 5,000 individuals, is explainable by the fact that the state is the site of the blast.
- Most attacks occurred within forty-eight hours of the blast in Oklahoma. Offenses dissipated after the authorities announced that the suspects were two Caucasian males. However, some of the most serious offenses took place weeks after the bombing. These include a suspected arson in High Point, North Carolina, and a confirmed arson attack in Springfield, Illinois, and a shooting in Chicago.

Comparison helps understand the extent of the anti-Arab, anti-Muslim sentiment in the US. In all of 1991, just 119 bias-motivated offenses against Arabs were recorded, even though the Gulf War occurred during this period.¹⁰ In the two days following the bombing in Oklahoma City, more than 220 offenses occurred against Arabs and Muslims (notwithstanding the fact that U.S. Muslims are approximately three times as many as Arab Americans).

¹⁰American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, *1991 Report on Anti-Arab Hate Crimes: Political and Hate Violence against Arab-Americans* (Washington, DC.: n.p., 1992), 5.

MUSLIM RESPONSES

Fear

The initial reaction among Muslims in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing was pain and fear. Approximately one-in-four respondents reported that female family members were afraid to appear in public during the crisis. Another one-fourth of the respondents said they feared for their children's safety (See Table 5).

Table 5
Reported Fear that Disrupted Daily Life of Muslims Following
Media Speculation of Muslim Involvement in
the Oklahoma City Bombing*

Effect on daily life	Number	Percentage
Felt afraid to go outside wearing <i>hijab</i> (for women)	39	27
Felt afraid for children at school	39	27
Felt going to the mosque or Islamic center might be dangerous	28	19
Mosque leader noticed a decrease in the number of people coming to the mosque.	16	11
Other	16	11
Noticed a decrease in the number of customers at business	8	5
Total	146	100

Note:

*This is a multiple choice question. Responses with more than one choice marked were excluded. CAIR sent out 1,600 questionnaires asking a non-random sample of Muslims throughout the country about the impact that media coverage of the Oklahoma City bombing had on their lives. As of June 15, 1995, 162 responses had been received.

Activism

Within hours of the first reports of the Oklahoma City blast, twelve Muslim organizations issued a joint statement condemning the bombing and asking for media restraint in reporting Muslim links to the incident. Other Arab and Muslim national and local organizations issued separate and/or joint statements condemning the bombing. The *Shura* Council (which consists of the Islamic Society of North America, the Islamic Circle of North America, The Ministry of Warith Deen Muhammad, and the National Community of Imam Jamil al-Amin) called on Muslims to offer supplication prayers during their weekly services on Friday April 21 (See a selection of such statements in the Appendix). Although Muslim leaders were not included in the official memorial service, Muslim delegations from around the country, especially from the South

Central region, attended the special memorial service organized by the Oklahoma Governor and his wife.

Material help followed words of condolences. Many of Oklahoma City's estimated 5,000 Muslims took part in the relief effort. The president of the city's American Muslim Association and his wife - a cardiologist and anesthesiologist - both volunteered at area hospitals the day of the explosion. From nearby Texas, Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, a national Muslim group based in Dallas, held a blood drive for explosion victims, donated \$2,500 to the Red Cross and \$5,000 to Oklahoma City's Disaster Recovery Scene. On April 23, some fifty foundation volunteers from different ethnic backgrounds flew to Oklahoma City to work with the Oklahoma City Food Bank and Feed the Children organization who accommodated families affected by the bombing.

Muslim contributions to the relief effort came from around the country. The International Islamic Relief Organization, headquartered in Washington, DC, opened a special fund for the bombing victims. A Muslim delegation met with the governor of Oklahoma and presented him with checks totaling \$21,000 for the Victims Relief Fund. Islamic community centers nationwide (Dar al-Hijrah, Falls Church, Virginia; Dar al-Fitrah, North Texas, among many others) organized blood drives on April 20 and April 21.

Some observers felt pity for Muslims who rushed to offer their blood after media reports blamed Middle Easterners for the bombing.¹¹ Muslims, however, have far greater concerns than defensive reactions. Condemning the bombing and praying for the innocent victims, Muslims wanted to participate in the public move to ostracize extremist elements from all backgrounds and to reaffirm their commitment to the path of peaceful reform. Participating in the relief effort, the Muslim community leaders reacted in a way similar to leaders of other communities who were horrified by the bombing. In other words, Muslim organizations wanted to guide members of their community toward mainstream social action.

The Muslim response to the Oklahoma crisis did not go unrecognized. Frank Keating, the Governor of Oklahoma, in a letter thanking Muslim groups for their efforts on behalf of bombing victims, said: "I am immensely proud of Oklahomans of all races, creeds and faiths. They have come together in shared anguish and shared pride...May Allah bless you always." (See copy of the letter in the Appendix.) The governor also apologized in a CNN interview to Abraham Ahmad, the American Muslim Oklahoman who was initially and irrationally treated as a bombing suspect. Other American leaders and citizens, some in conjunction with Muslims, sent letters to the editor in a number of cities publicly apologizing to Muslims for the early suspicions and hate crimes Muslims endured in wake of the bombing (See selected examples of such responses in the Appendix).

When the burden of blame was lifted, Muslims sought to learn from the experience. Their awareness of television coverage was heightened considerably. Muslims also started becoming

¹¹ See for example Lori Rodriguez, "Americans should never be enemies," *Houston Chronicle*, April 29, 1995. The reporter, commenting on a local Muslim organization's announcement of blood drive to bombing survivors, writes: "I felt pity. And I felt sorrow. It was a beautiful gesture, but that Muslims felt compelled to make it seemed just another tragedy in a season that already has seen far too much suffering."

openly critical of media portrayal of Arabs and Muslims. Questionnaire data reveal such openness. Those Muslims who responded to CAIR's questionnaire believed that:

- 1) CBS News offered the most biased coverage.
- 2) ABC News offered the most balanced coverage.
- 3) Steven Emerson made the most irresponsible statements.
- 4) Ignorance of Islam is a root cause of stereotyping (See Table 6).

Table 6
Muslim Grassroots Evaluation of Reasons for Hostile Atmosphere

The main cause of anti-Muslim/Arab feelings	Responses	Percentage
1. Unfounded media accusations against Muslims and Arabs	55	38
1.1 Name of most biased media outlet (open-ended)		
1.1.1 ABC	2	6
1.1.2 NBC	1	3
1.1.3 CBS	25	69
1.1.4 CNN	8	22
1.2 Name of the fairest media outlet (open-ended)		
1.2.1 ABC	14	
1.2.2 NBC	3	
2. Reckless statement by "terrorism experts"	36	25
2.1 Name of "terrorism expert" who made most irresponsible statements or allegations (open-ended)		
2.1.1 Steven Emerson	29	71
2.1.2 Fouad Ajami	3	7
2.1.3 Others*	9	22
3. General ignorance of Islam	38	26
4. Other	15	10
Total	144	99

Notes:

Percentages are rounded off.

* Seven others, mostly journalists, were named by respondents including Wolf Blitzer, Mortimer Zuckerman, Lisa Hoffman, Avi Lipkins, and David McCurdy.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At a time when Muslims and Arab-Americans believe they are being stereotyped and intimidated, research indicates that these same people give the benefit of the doubt to those who caused the damage to their communities. When asked what caused the climate of fear in the days after the Oklahoma bombing, a large segment of the Muslim and Arab communities blamed ignorance of Islam and Muslims. This fact offers an opportunity to use education and understanding to help prevent similar occurrences in the future. CAIR recommends the following actions:

1. Because the media played a role in fanning the flames of anti-Muslim bias, media sources are urged:
 - a. To use restraint in reporting unsubstantiated allegations.
 - b. To avoid the tendency to link criminal actions of individuals to a particular culture or religion.
 - c. To increase awareness of Islam and Islamic culture through education.
 - d. To seek advice from recognized Muslim and Arab-American leaders when reporting on those communities.
 - e. To avoid ill-defined terms such as "Muslim fundamentalist."
2. Because one-third of individuals subjected to offenses are women with *hijab*, Congress and legislative bodies in states that experienced the greatest number of incidents should add "persons targeted for their religious and/or ethnic attire" to the categories of persons and activities protected by the Civil Rights Statute.
3. Because the Justice Department appears to lack the benefit of officers who are well trained to deal the concerns of the Arab and Muslim community, and as a result, law enforcement agents who deal with members of the Arab and Muslim community are influenced by the same negative stereotypical notions portrayed by the media, the Justice Department should conduct sensitivity workshops and educational sessions at state and national levels. Such educational programs may be coordinated with Muslim community institutions and must aim to introduce Muslim culture and practices to law enforcement personnel. This would help to avoid participation by law enforcement agents in future anti-Arab, Anti-Muslim frenzies.
4. Because few incidents have been reported to the authorities and because the problem of anti-Muslim bias seems to be serious, state and city law enforcement officials, in conjunction with local community leaders, should make the collection and reporting of hate crimes a priority of high order. Outreach programs should be coordinated so that all citizens and residents can come forward to report their experiences of bias and hate crimes without fear for their safety or other forms of reprisals.

APPENDIX



State of Oklahoma
Frank Keating
Governor

April 26, 1995

Mr. Nihad Awad
Executive Director
Council on American-Islamic Relations
1511 K Street NW, Suite 807
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Awad,

On behalf of the people of Oklahoma, let me again thank you for the most generous contribution to the Victims and Families Relief Fund. I have this morning returned from the bombing site, where rescue workers continue to excavate the dead. On this sad day they are removing the bodies of children from the wreckage of the building's day care center -- and no one knows or cares what religion those children, or those rescuers, practiced.

I am immensely proud of Oklahomans of all races, creeds and faiths. They have come together in shared anguish and shared pride -- a togetherness your gift helped symbolize. I pledge its use for the benefit of the families of our victims in the same spirit.

May Allah bless you always.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Keating", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Frank Keating

----- JOINT STATEMENT -----

American Muslim Leaders Ask Media to Exercise Restraint in Bomb Reporting

WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 19, 1995) - We the undersigned American Muslim organizations condemn the criminal and immoral Oklahoma City terrorist attack in the strongest terms possible.

American Muslim leaders also ask media professionals to exercise restraint and to act responsibly when reporting on today's bombing in Oklahoma City.

In early media reports, unsubstantiated accusations were made against Muslims. To link this attack with the religion of Islam places millions of responsible American Muslims at risk. In the past, American Muslims have been the target of hate crimes each time their faith or culture was unfairly associated with criminal activity.

Until hard facts are available about the perpetrators of this horrible attack, it would be irresponsible for media outlets to apportion blame, even by quoting unofficial sources. Criminal acts by Christians, Jews, Buddhists, or members of any other religion are not blamed on those faiths. This is the accepted journalistic standard used when reporting on all types of crime. American Muslims ask that they receive the same consideration.

We ask law enforcement agencies to do their best to bring the perpetrators of this crime to justice. Until then, all reports about the incident should be accurate, restrained and non-sensational.

-END-

List of Endorsing Organizations

Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)	317-839-1812
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)	202-638-6340
American Council for Public Affairs (ACPA)	708-839-2200
Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)	213-383-3443
National Community of Imam Jamil Al-Amin	
Islamic Public Affairs Council (IPAC)	
Muslim Student Association of USA and Canada	
Muslim American Alliance	
Muslim Arab Youth Association (MAYA)	
Muslim American Voter's Association	
International Union of Muslim Women	
Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP)	



Islamic Shura Council of North America

April 20, 1995

The Oklahoma City bombing has stunned and distressed people of conscience all over the world. All Muslims of North America join other Americans in condemning this evil act of violence. We extend our heartfelt sympathy and support for the victims and their families. Islam stands against all such acts of violence against humanity. We hope the perpetrators of this act will be exposed and prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

The magnitude of this tragedy necessitates prudence. Unsubstantiated reports that link this attack with Islam could place millions of innocent and responsible Americans at risk. This past year, American Muslims have had their houses of worship fire bombed and their institutions vandalized when Islam was unfairly associated with criminal activity.

Additional lives should not be put in danger by media outlets that directly or indirectly apportion blame without evidence. The crime of any individual or group cannot be transferred to an entire racial or religious community. This is a universal journalistic standard that is practiced whenever crimes of any sort are reported. American Muslims ask that we receive the same consideration.

We are asking Muslims all over North America to make special supplications on Friday, April 21, 1995 for the victims of this catastrophe. We pray that Almighty God bestows His healing upon all those whose lives that have been changed forever by this act of cowardice. We also pray that He safeguards the citizens of our nation from such violence in the future. Amen.

Abdalla Idris Ali
President Islamic Society of North America

Jamil Al-amin
Imani National Community

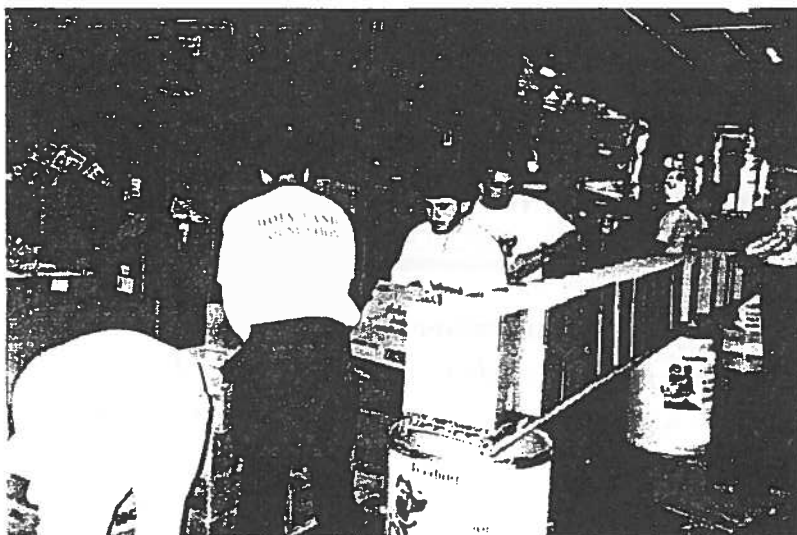
Abdul Malik Mujahid
President Islamic Circle of North America

Imam W. Deen Mohammed
Ministry of W. Deen Mohammed

Newspaper clips about HLF response to the Oklahoma tragedy

- a. Daily Oklahoman, 4-24-95.
- b. Dallas Morning News, 4-23-95.
- c. Dallas Morning News, 4-24-95

Photo - HLF volunteers at Feed The Children Site



a

the calls but employees told him orders have come from several of the 22 states in which the firm operates. ✓ The Holy Land Foundation in Dallas has donated blood and money to the disaster relief effort. Sunday, they sent 50 volunteers to help at the Oklahoma City Food Bank and Feed the Children.

b

H Sunday, April 23, 1995

DALLAS-FORT WORTH RESPONDS

Donations

- The Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, a national Muslim group based in Dallas, has held a blood drive for explosion victims, donated \$2,500 to the Red Cross and \$5,000 to Oklahoma City's Disaster Recovery Scene. On Sunday, about 50 foundation members will fly to Oklahoma City to attend the special memorial service. They also will work as volunteers with the Oklahoma City Food Bank and Feed the Children.
- The Texas Baptist Single Adult Conference raised \$3,600 Saturday in a special offering at Park Cities Baptist Church.

Religious observances

- Christ Episcopal Church will hold a prayer service at 4 p.m. Sunday. The address is 4550 Legacy Drive in Plano.
- The Chancel Choir of the First Presbyterian Church of Arlington will dedicate its Sunday concert to the memory of those who died in the Oklahoma City bombing. The concert, "Lord, Listen to Your Children," is scheduled for 3 p.m. at the church, 1200 S. Collins St.
- Dallas' Roman Catholic bishop, Charles Graham, has asked that all pastors and parishioners join him in a day of prayer on Sunday. "Pray especially for the children who died so innocently," he said.

c

Dallas Muslim community travels to Oklahoma City to aid victims

Continued from Page 15A.
er countries for years.

"Let us also be mindful that there are thousands dying senseless deaths throughout the world," Mr. DeYoung said. "In the worldwide sense, this is an ongoing thing. This is really nothing compared to the senseless deaths around the world."

Mr. DeYoung added that such tragedies inevitably lead to religious doubts. "It makes you think: 'How can these sort of things happen? How can you believe in a merciful God?'" Mr. DeYoung said. "I really don't know if I know the answer to that question."

Thomas Quigley, who is executive director of Greater Dallas Community of Churches and belongs to East Dallas Christian Church, said members were encouraged to pray for forgiveness because they helped create a society that breeds violence. Mr. Quigley also said Americans should question why so many people were so quick to blame Middle Eastern terrorists for the bombing.

Area Muslims held special services for the bomb victims on Friday, the Islamic Sabbath.

"But it's about time to reconsider the way they (the media) portray this community. The first few days were hell. We received a lot of threatening telephone calls and threatening letters."

— Shukri A. Baker, Holy Land Foundation executive director

"We said the teachings of Islam do not teach this even though we were stereotyped in the beginning," said Gulam Bakali, chairman of the Islamic Association of North Texas. "The theme was, the lives are gone, what can we do now to help the families put their lives back together."

On Sunday, 50 members of the Dallas-based Holy Land Foundation flew into Oklahoma City to do volunteer work and attend an afternoon prayer service for bombing

victims.

The volunteers of the predominantly Muslim relief and development organization were planning to relieve workers at Feed the Children and at the local food bank, said executive director Shukri A. Baker.

Mr. Baker said that he and others in the group were not angry that initial reports about bombing suspects focused on people from the Middle East.

"But it's about time to reconsider the way they (the media) portray this community," he said. "The first few days were hell. We received a lot of threatening telephone calls and threatening letters."

Mr. Roseberry, of Plano's Christ Episcopal Church, said Americans should deal with the tragedy through prayer.

"My hope is that the nation will not forget this," he said. "Hopefully we will learn from it, grow from it. The human spirit has been broken, but it is not crushed."

"That's how I know there's a God."

Staff writers Eric Garcia and Al Brunley contributed to this report.



LARRY JONES INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES, INC.

Post Office Box 36, Oklahoma City, OK 73101-0036 • 405/942-0228 • Larry Jones, President



May 8, 1995

**Mohammad Ibrahim
Holy Land Foundation
P. O. Box 832390
Richardson, Texas 75083**

Dear Mohammad:

I want to thank you for bringing a number of your colleagues to Oklahoma City during a time of great crisis and grieving. We appreciate you coming and helping us at Feed The Children.

It was a great disservice to you and to your people when word was first announced that it was possibly someone from the Middle East who had bombed the Federal Building. As you know, we Americans are sometimes too quick to judge. Forgive us!

If we can further work together on different projects, please give Feed The Children a call. Our world has become a very small place to live and life is too short to entertain judgement on groups whether it be from an ethnic, political, religious or racial point of view.

May we work together to make not only the world a better place ... but a safe place.

For the children,

Larry Jones

LJ: my

Blaming bombing on Muslims shows prevalence of prejudice



GHASSAN SALEH AND TOM QUIGLEY

GUEST COLUMN

Less than a week after the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, leaders of the Muslim and Christian communities of the Dallas area met to listen and respond to each other's experiences during those terrible days.

Our group of 30 persons representing two mosques and a number of Christian congregations has been meeting regularly for about 18 months, gradually becoming acquainted with each other as persons and growing in our understanding of our respective

faith traditions and cultures. Our Muslim-Christian Dialogue Group was convened by the Muslim Community of North Texas and the Greater Dallas Community of Churches.

We knew each other well enough that the Muslim members were willing to share something of the hurt which they felt immediately after the bombing.

Within 20 minutes of the first announcement that "Middle Eastern men" had been seen outside of the federal building, the Dallas mosques began to receive threats. Hateful messages were left on the Islamic Association's answering machine. Someone threw a bag into the child-care center operated by a mosque and hollered "Bomb!"

There was a quick and thoughtful response by the Muslim community. Instead of rightful anger, they went to work. A blood drive was organized the day after the bombing. A collection in all of the mosques was held, and a check was delivered to Oklahoma City officials. Later, a delegation traveled to Oklahoma City to help with a children's center and a feeding center and to participate in the memorial service.

When it became fairly clear that the bombing was not the work of "Middle Eastern terrorists," several unknown persons called or came to the mosque to apologize for having jumped to hurtful conclusions.

Our group decided to share our thoughts about these events with members of our respective communities. We also share them with our fellow citizens through this column.

It is time for public reaffirmation that we have all been created by the one God, that we are members of one human family and that we seek to live with one another in peace and to treat one another justly.

We all need to remember that we are a nation of

many peoples. Together we are the unique cultural mosaic that is the United States of America. Through our diversity we strengthen and enrich one another.

In the aftermath of this great tragedy that has touched all our lives and hearts, we need to recognize and deal with the prejudice which permeates our culture. It was reflected in some of the media reports which from the beginning — and even after emerging evidence pointed in other directions — made references to "Middle-Eastern men" and "Islamic terrorism." Those reports created a climate of fear and hysteria regarding recent immigrants, especially those from the Middle East and persons of the Muslim faith, making them an easy scapegoat when a villain was needed.

Islam is a religion which seeks peace, as does Christianity and all other genuine world religions. Religious names should not be used to describe terrorism. The word "terrorism" is too often used exclusively with respect to actions by persons or groups from other nations, while it is seldom used to refer to groups or individuals in our own nation who use force.

The media, government officials and all of us as citizens need to make a commitment to be slow in placing blame. Had our law enforcement agencies not been able to work as quickly as they did in this case, we fear that mosques all over the nation would have been vandalized and that persons who looked "Middle Eastern" would have been harassed in a frenzy of hatred.

If this tragedy has taught us anything, it is that we must come together in a spirit of love and support, without regard to national origin or religion. The rescue personnel and support groups from our own religious communities and elsewhere who traveled to Oklahoma City to offer their services to the wounded and bereaved set an example for all of us and demonstrated what can be achieved by good neighbors working together.

We are especially grateful for the large group of persons of the Islamic faith, many of Middle Eastern origin, who went from Dallas with willing hands and generous financial assistance for those in need. They helped us remember that in a time of tragedy like this, it is important to focus on the needs of the victims and their families.

We do regret that Muslim representatives were not included in the official memorial service in Oklahoma City, for whatever reason, and commend the citizens of Oklahoma City and Dallas who expressed their gratitude and apologies to the members of the Islamic community who offered their assistance to those in need.

Ghassan Saleh is general manager of the Islamic Association of North Texas. The Rev. Tom Quigley is executive director of the Greater Dallas Community of Churches.

Duluth News-Tribune

Opinion

Monday

May 29, 1995

11A

Muslim community felt hatred

Pain is still being suffered by those who lost relatives and friends in the Oklahoma City bombing. Although the event took place more than five weeks ago, we hope the perpetrators will be located and brought to justice.

Meanwhile, there is also pain suffered by people of the Muslim faith, all of whom are not in the Middle East but are many nationalities across the world, including in Duluth. They are families with children who felt ostracized when accusations of Muslim terrorism were immediately made.

Jumping to conclusions is something many of us do well. After the Oklahoma City bombing, which followed the World Trade Center bombing, an immediate assumption that this, too, was perpetuated by "Arab-Muslim terrorists" was inaccurately formed.

How easily the seed of hostility can grow when there is little knowledge of people who are different!

However, through education and interacting with each other on many levels, we have learned the negative effects of generalizing. As a community concerned with quality of life, we are challenged to be sensitive to those around us, avoiding an attitude of guilt by association of race, nationality or faith tradition.

We apologize to any member of our Muslim community who felt the pain of such insensitivity.

AVA CALBREATH, executive director
REV. JOHN H. KEMP, president
Arrowhead Interfaith Council
Duluth

THE DAILY OKLAHOMAN

Christians Meet Muslims at Mosque

By Pat Gilliland
Religion Editor

About 50 Christians visited the Oklahoma City mosque Sunday afternoon, to show support for neighbors whose culture and faith had initially been accused of bombing the federal building.

The Rev. John Benefiel, pastor of Church on the Rock in Oklahoma City, presented a plaque to representatives of the Muslim community at the Islamic Center of Oklahoma City, 3201 NW 48.

"Churches of Oklahoma City extend a hand of friendship to the Islamic and Middle Eastern

community of Oklahoma City. During this time of pain ... we recognize that we are all Oklahomans and neighbors mourning together for our families and our friends," Benefiel said.

Benefiel also presented drawings done by children of his church to offer encouragement.

"We just want you to know we are here ... We want to be friends," Benefiel said.

Benefiel noted that most Oklahomans and others responded with caring and generosity to the tragic bombing.

"Unfortunately, there are still those individuals who hold prej-

udices against people they do not even know," Benefiel said of the premature and incorrect assessments of blame.

"There isn't any excuse for unjust action against innocent lives," he added.

One Islamic woman had a miscarriage when she felt threatened by people outside her home on April 19, the day of the bombing. A couple not from Benefiel's church presented the woman's husband with a basket of fruit to show sympathy.

Dr. M.A. Shakir, president of the American Muslim Association in Oklahoma City, said,

"We understand that random acts of violence don't represent any faith."

Nizam Ahmad said, "I would like to quote Dr. Billy Graham and say, 'Let the healing begin.'"

Shakir and Ahmad said several Muslims attended the April 23 prayer service, even though they were disappointed not to be included on the program.

Benefiel said the idea for visiting the mosque came from a married couple in his church.

"This is the biggest opportunity we'll ever find to come together," he said.

The Cincinnati Post

FRIDAY, APRIL 21, 1995

FBI seeks two suspects in blast;
more bodies are found today

Manhunt widens

Compiled from Post news services



Asad R. Siddiqy



John Doe #1



John Doe #2

Face of terrorist?

Investigators are scouring the nation for two John Doe suspects who are believed to have rented the truck that carried the half-ton homemade bomb that blew up in Oklahoma City on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, CNN reported that three men of Middle Eastern background were arrested on immigration charges and were being questioned.

A law enforcement source in New York told AP that one man named by CNN, Asad R. Siddiqy, a cab driver from the New York City borough of Queens, arrived in Oklahoma City about an hour before the blast and is considered a suspect. More coverage: Pages 3A, 9A, 9A.

If you experience a hate crime, report it the local FBI office. When you call, ask to be connected to the complaint desk. Put your complaint in writing. Make sure to include all important details (exact date, time, location, accurate description of persons involved, and witnesses to the incident). Share your experience with community members and leaders. Also, make sure to send a copy of your complaint to CAIR. In addition, CAIR recommends that you send a copy of your complaint to your local civil rights authorities. If you do not receive a reasonable response from the local authorities send a copy of your complaint to:

U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
Criminal Section
P.O. Box 66018
Washington DC 20035

If you need any help in preparing your report, call CAIR.

