Israel's American Detractors - Back Again

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James Zogby, president of the Arab American Institute (AAI) and over the years, one of Israel's foremost detractors in the United States, declared earlier this year that "the battleground for Middle East peace is as much here in Washington and Congress as it is in the Middle East." And indeed, keeping with this approach, various Arab-American and Muslim American leaders along with assorted other detractors of Israel have waged a campaign in the United States against Israel since its birth a half-century ago.

Then, in the euphoria that followed the signing of the Oslo Accords on September 13, 1993, this campaign against Israel came to a general halt. That was the moment when Arab-American, American Muslim and American Jewish groups issued joint statements; and when most American Jewish groups ended their opposition to U.S.-PLO ties. Jewish and Arab activists joined forces in "Builders for Peace," a group headed by Zogby and former congressman Mel Levine (Democrat of California) in an effort to garner aid and investment for the Palestinians.

But with the peace process faltering and foreign investment stagnating, joint statements are becoming a distant memory, American Jewish groups are increasingly critical of PLO actions and Builders for Peace has shut its doors. Where do the American organizations that represent the anti-Israel outlook now stand? Has the good will of 1993 left a residue or have they reverted to rhetoric of old? What effect has their position had on the American role for the search for peace?

PRE-OSLO

In the aftermath of Israel's founding, some of its antagonists in the United States made little effort to disguise their deep enmity to Israel's existence or their hope that Israel would soon disappear and some of these individuals and organizations have continued in this vein. For example, less than a decade ago, a full-page advertisement signed by hundreds of intellectuals, academics, and activists declared Israel to be "an apartheid state, founded on pillage and predicated on exclusivity" and called for "dismantling" the Jewish State and replacing it with a "democratic, secular Palestine." Most organizations, however, have adopted a more sophisticated, nuanced approach, that of highlighting Israeli failings and
portraying Arabs, especially Palestinians, as victims in the search for justice.

These organizations' long-standing objective was to drive a wedge between the U.S. government and Israel; to undermine public and government support for Israel in the United States, and (especially since the 1973 war) to bring about a halt in American governmental aid to Israel. This outlook explains the campaigns against loan guarantees and states' purchase of Israeli bonds; the repeated condemnation of Israeli human rights; and innumerable calls for U.S. government pressure on Israel. These messages were conveyed through advertisements of all sorts, including newspapers and direct mail, but also billboards and even advertisements aboard city transportation systems. The anti-Israel effort also included organizing anti-Israel protests and letter-writing campaigns; attempting passage of anti-Israel resolutions in state and national party platforms; offering anti-Israel testimony before Congress; attempting to sue Israel in U.S. courts; attacking Congressional supporters of Israel; and mounting assorted efforts against pro-Israel groups.

INITIAL POST-OSLO RESPONSES

Then, the world changed in September 1993 for Israel's detractors. If the Palestine Liberation Organization had reached an agreement with the Jewish state, who were they to continue to work against it? Their responses ran the gamut from strong approval to fierce condemnation of Oslo.

Approval. Two of the three preeminent Arab American organizations, Zogby's Arab American Institute (AAI) and Khalil Jahshan's National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA), warmly endorsed the accords. Zogby declared the signing to be "a great and historic moment." NAAA pronounced the accords to be a first step that "herald[s] a new era of peace and understanding."

Among the Arabist organizations, George McGovern's Middle East Policy Council (formerly the American–Arab Affairs Council) praised the accord while declaring that the Palestinians appeared to be settling for very little. Even the bitterly anti-Zionist Washington Report on Middle East Affairs and its offshoot, the Council for the National Interest (CNI) endorsed the accord, although CNI did so "only as first step" towards complete Israeli withdrawal from "all occupied Arab land and the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions."

The Washington Report, for its part, mused on the bizarre notion that Israel had acted in fear of an imminent revelation that would endanger the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Equivocation. A third prominent Arab-American organization, the American–Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) adopted a posture of skeptical neutrality; its president, Albert Mokhiber, declared "We went to the [White House] ceremony to witness [not to] celebrate." Maintaining that all the concessions "have been made by the Palestinians," ADC vowed to "continue putting daily pressure" on Israel to make future concessions. Hisham Sharabi, a prominent scholar and president of both the Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine (CPAP) and the Jerusalem Fund, called the accord "a horrible agreement," but he also found it the best agreement available and at least a "historic first step."

Condemnation. Edward Said, the best-known Palestinian-American intellectual, vociferously denounced the agreement as a "Palestinian capitulation" and a "Palestinian Versailles." He branded the Palestinian Authority "a Vichy Government." Many of the principal American Muslim organizations condemned the agreement, including the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP), Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), Islamic Committee for Palestine (ICP), Islamic Society for
North America (ISNA), Muslim Arab Youth Association (MAYA), Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC), and the Muslim Students Association (MSA). In a joint statement, they charged that Israel's establishment in 1948 "had involved the unjust and illegal usurpation of Muslim and Christian lands and rights," and declared that "to recognize the legitimacy of that crime is a crime in itself and any agreement which involves such recognition is unjust and untenable." Going even further, Sami al-Arian, editor of the ICP's publication Inquiry, declared, "No one has the right to deprive future generations from restoring their rights.... The Zionist-exclusivist state and institutions must be dismantled.

Whatever their response, the Oslo accords very much hurt several of these groups, as many of their supporters concluded that the Arab-Israeli conflict was being resolved. A number of organizations and publications experienced a sharp decline in membership and an even greater decrease in donations, with several going out of business and others drastically downsizing their operations and reexamining their agendas.

THE LABOR ERA

After a brief reduction in attacks on Israel, many of Israel's detractors soon reverted to their pre-Oslo posture; their denunciations then reached a crescendo following the Hebron massacre and Operation Grapes of Wrath. Three themes stand out: attacks on Israel, severe criticisms of Israel's supporters in the United States, and apologetics for Muslim terrorism.

Israel. Although Israel's detractors continued to differ sharply among themselves over the peace process, they did not let this prevent them from joining together to assail the Jewish state. Within weeks of the White House signing, the campaign against Israel resumed in force, even on the part of Oslo supporters, with a steady barrage of words against Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, and their American supporters. AAI and NAAA both criticized Congress for only passing temporary waivers to, rather than permanently repealing, U.S. legislation restricting relations with the PLO. Likewise, both groups condemned U.S. government pressure on the Arabs. For example, NAAA's President George Salem called efforts to end the Arab boycott of Israel "senseless" because it called on the Arab side "to surrender all its cards without requiring reciprocity from the other side." ADC declared its intention to continue opposing U.S. aid to Israel on the grounds of Israel's continuing abuse of the rights of Palestinians.

Maintaining its reputation as the most conspiratorially-minded of the anti-Israel forces, The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs suggested that Oslo might actually have been an Israeli "hoax" to get the Arab boycott lifted. It also queried whether Israel's labor government might "turn out to be just as fascistic" as its Likud predecessor. CNI asked rhetorically, "When will the United States help create a real Palestinian state, not a bantustan.... When will the ethnic cleaning that took place in 1948 be admitted?"

These early harbingers suggested that the old anti-Israel instincts had not been permanently transformed by Oslo; then their responses to Baruch Goldstein's February 1994 massacre of Muslim worshipers in Hebron (an act unequivocally denounced by Israelis across the political spectrum) confirmed this impression. ADC and the American Muslim Council (AMC) joined with a host of American Muslim groups in demanding "an immediate end to American financial and military aid to Israel" and "an international tribunal to investigate the massacre."
NAAA, CNI, and IAP similarly took advantage of the tragedy to demand the freezing of U.S. military aid to Israel.\(^{22}\)

The examples go on and on. The Islamic Association of Palestine refers to Israel as "Palestinian lands occupied since 1948," defends Hamas terror attacks, and characterized Rabin following his assassination as a "Zionist Arch-Terrorist."\(^{23}\) A senior IAP officer, Nihad Awad, berated another Muslim publication for using the term "Israel," on the grounds that Muslim organizations, "do not wish to indicate any sort of legitimacy" for the Jewish state.\(^{24}\)

At times, these groups found themselves in the position of urging the Palestinian Authority to adopt a tougher position vis-à-vis Israel. NAAA’s Jahshan urged Arafat in an April 1995 letter to take a "firm stand" and freeze peace negotiations with Israel until Israeli plans to build housing in Jerusalem were reversed.\(^{25}\) A year later, Jahshan criticized the Arab League for "failing to take any tangible measure [against Israel]" and urged "at least a freeze" in Arab contacts with Israel before a cease-fire was reached.\(^{26}\) Edward Said and other Palestinian Americans signed a statement declaring that "There can be no peace while the Palestinians are deprived of the right... of return," and urged that there be no amendment of the Palestinian Covenant until Israel met Palestinian demands.\(^{27}\)

Americans. ADC, AAI, AMC and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) were also among those who engaged in intense attacks on American journalists, news organizations, terrorism experts, and academics who reported on radical extremist activity, labeling them "anti-Muslim" or "apologists" for Israel.\(^{28}\) AMC accused Steve Emerson, investigative journalist and producer of the television documentary *Jihad in America*, of seeking "to ferment interfaith hatred in America."\(^{29}\) ADC characterized Emerson and the eminent Arab-American scholar, Fouad Ajami as "well known for their anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bigotry."\(^{30}\) Edward Said called Ajami "an Arab hater."\(^{31}\) Zogby characterized Princeton scholar Bernard Lewis as having "a long and disturbing history of stereotyping Muslims."\(^{32}\) CAIR accused CBS News of "smear[ing] Muslims."\(^{33}\)

*Terrorism.* These groups adopted a peculiar stance on the question of Palestinian and fundamentalist Muslim terrorism. Zogby charged in February 1995 that "Israel and pro-Israel U.S. Jewish groups" had launched a campaign "to identity U.S. opponents of the peace process with an international network of Islamic fundamentalists funding terrorism against Israel."\(^{34}\) AMC attributed administration proposals designed to counter radical Islamic extremist activity in the United States to "intense Jewish pressure on the White House" and White House desire "to secure Jewish political support."\(^{35}\) Jahshan denounced a Counter Terrorism Accord signed by Clinton and Peres as "the ultimate in political hypocrisy and election season pandering."\(^{36}\) Muslims for a Better America, AMC's self-described "sister organization," joined with CAIR and IAP to condemn a U.S. District Court judge ruling that Musa Abu Marzook, a Hamas leader, should be extradited to Israel, saying that this raised "the concern that our judicial system has been kidnapped by Israeli interests."\(^{37}\) Israel's Operation Grapes of Wrath in April 1996 elicited a virtual exculpation of Hizbullah, the Lebanese fundamentalist group. Zogby characterized it as nothing other than "the Lebanese armed resistance."\(^{38}\) ADC also justified Hizbullah actions as "legitimate resistance activities."\(^{39}\)

This vigorous opposition by Israel's detractors to antiterrorist measures stood in stark contrast to their eagerness for U.S. government measures against Jewish
terrorists. A wide range of groups issued a statement demanding that Kach, the anti-Arab movement, established in Israel by the late Rabbi Meir Kahane (and subsequently banned), be added to the State Department's list of terrorist organizations; that terrorist members of Kach and other Jewish terrorist organizations be denied entry into the U.S.; and that there be "a thorough and public FBI investigation into the criminal activities of pro-Israeli terrorist organizations and Kahane followers in the US."

THE LIKUD ERA

The election of Binyamin Netanyahu in May 1996 offered Israel's detractors an opportunity further to intensify their attacks against Israel. The ballots had hardly been counted before Zogby characterized Netanyahu's election as a "failure of the Israeli electorate to choose to continue the path toward peace." Accordingly, he declared, "The Arabs can freeze all relations with the Likud until these basic conditions are met. There should be... no business as usual." Using almost the same words, Jahshan urged Arab countries to "Freeze, for a specific period of time, all normalization with Israel."

Once again came repeated demands for U.S. pressure on Israel. The American Committee on Jerusalem, an umbrella organization of several Arab-American groups, urged the U.S. government to apply "public, sustained, and unmistakable pressure on Israel" to modify its settlement policy. In the aftermath of the decision to build housing at Har Homa, a number of organizations combined forces to urge the U.S. government to "use its leverage with Israel" to achieve "a complete halt to all settlement-building"—as well as the usual "immediate cut in U.S. aid to Israel." MPAC, accusing Israel of practicing "religious persecution," called on the world to isolate Israel "by discontinuing normalized trade relations." Zogby demanded U.S. "pressure on and sanctions against" Israel ADC came up with the singular notion of calling for a boycott of the department store chain Neiman Marcus for promoting a special "Jerusalem 3000" trip to Israel.

RADICAL RHETORIC

Beyond the criticism of Israel, what stands out is the continuing strong antipathy towards Israel and its supporters. Operation Grapes of Wrath prompted Zogby to vilify Israel what he called Israel's "aggression," "state terrorism," and "atrocities." ADC described Israeli actions at that time as an "atrocity" and as such groups have done before, sought to draw parallels between the Jewish victims of the Holocaust and Arab victims of Israel, declaring that Lebanese were dying even "as Israelis commemorate the Holocaust." AMC demanded that Israel stop its "Genocide."

In their condemnation of Israeli plans at Har Homa, a coalition of groups referred to "Israel's racist policies;" its "policies of apartheid," and its "plan of ethnic cleansing." NAAA accused Israel of attempting to make Jerusalem "Arabrein." Ray Hanania, former president of the Palestinian American Congress (PAC), called Hebron settlers "reminiscent of the Nazis" and Netanyahu "a fanatic, Arab hating maniac"; more than that, he charged that Israel "longs for a war." The Washington Report characterized Zionism as "either racism or bigotry" and a "Jewish variety of [and]... siblings [with] German Nazism [and] Italian fascism."

The words used against supporters of Israel and their political allies also grew increasingly strident. Zogby repeatedly called them (and the congressional
supporters of Israel) "enemies of peace." NAAA condemned "Congressional troublemaking," and Jahshan denounced what he termed the "total Zionist domination of U.S. policies in the Middle East." NAAA's President Ibrahim Hawatmeh referred to pro-Israel newspaper columnists as the "Amen Corner." ADC's President Hala Maksoud claimed that "Zionist organizations" have a "stake in dehumanizing Arabs or Moslems." AMC's executive director, Abdurahman Alamoudi denounced President Clinton as "irresponsible" for permitting "the extraordinary influence of the Israeli lobby... to take root inside his administration." The Washington Report described the U.S. government and Congress as "Israeli occupied territory."

CONCLUSIONS

The hoped-for metamorphosis of Israel's detractors into full partners for peace and reconciliation proved to be largely ephemeral. The campaign against Israel resumed after an interlude in the immediate aftermath of Oslo. In its core elements—the vilification of Israel, the advocacy of pressure on Israel, and the strident criticism of Israel's supporters—it came closely to resemble the pre-Oslo efforts against Israel. The election of Netanyahu merely led to a further escalation of an already ongoing campaign. Given an increasingly regressive record over the past four years, there is little reason to expect the revitalized campaign against Israel to moderate any time soon.

No one expected Israel's detractors to stop criticizing Israel. But the organizations that supported the Oslo peace process were expected not to advocate positions diametrically opposed to such goals. Groups that portrayed themselves as part of the American political mainstream were not supposed to return to the intemperate language of an earlier era. Nor were they expected to embrace and even honor extremists such as The Washington Report, CNI, and IAP, much less to attack those who spoke out about extremism.

Ironically, this reversion towards their old patterns of frequent reluctance to condemn extremists, making intemperate statements and demonizing their opponents moves Israel's detractors further away from their goal of garnering influence in Washington. Some leaders of these groups (such as Zogby and Hanania) actually acknowledge that they have not exerted much influence on American policy makers or public opinion, for which they blame others as much as themselves. This lack of clout at home then translates into a lack of influence in the Arab world.

If Israel's detractors truly want to acquire influence, they should end their strident attacks on Israel; refrain from denigrating those with whom they disagree; and cease apologizing for or associating with extremists.

1 We use the term "Israel detractor" rather than pro-Arab because injuring the Jewish state, not aiding Arabs, defines the core agenda of most of these individuals and groups, as shown by the small portion of their efforts devoted to combating genuine discrimination in the United States, working for democracy in the Arab countries, human rights abuses of Arabs (outside of Israel), or the persecution of Christians throughout the Middle East. For a brief explanation of AAI and other of Israel's leading detractors, see the box on pp. 28.

2 The Jordan Times, Apr. 30, 1997. This is hardly a new idea. Mohammed Mehdi of
the American-Arab Relations Committee stated in the immediate aftermath of Oslo that "the real battleground for the liberation of Palestine is in America" (Al-Hiwar, Oct. 1993.)


9 The ADC Times, Sept. 1993

10 Jerusalem Fund appeal, Nov. 4, 1993.


15 Including the Palestinian Solidarity Committee, the Palestine Human Rights Information Center, Israeli Foreign Affairs, and New American View (a Liberty Lobby offshoot).

16 Including the ADC, NAAA, and the Association for Arab American University Graduates.


18 The ADC 1993 Activity Report.

19 The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs, Feb./Mar., 1994. The magazine's yet more bizarre conspiracy theories included the idea that the Mossad was the most likely suspect in President Kennedy's assassination (Apr./May 1992) and President Nixon's downfall (Oct./Nov. 1995).


21 "Unified Statement on the Feb. 25 Al-Ibrahim Mosque Massacre," The Muslim World Monitor, Mar. 17, 1994. Muslim groups that signed included the IAP, ICP, ICNA, and ISNA.

22 Flyer distributed by a Coalition in Memory of the Victims of Al Ibrahimi Mosque in Al-Khalil, Mar. 13, 1994.


24 The Message, Apr. 1994. Awad shortly afterward left IAP to founded the Council on American-Islamic Relations, CAIR.


26 UPI, Apr. 19, 1996.


28 James Zogby, Nota Bene, Apr./May, 1995.

29 AMC letter to senators, Oct. 28, 1994. For more on Emerson, see pp. 87-89 of this issue.


31 Keynote address to ADC Conference, Apr. 15, 1994.

CAIR press release, Aug. 4, 1997. (CAIR has also cited the trial of Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman and the detention of Musa Abu Marzook as two exemplars of "anti-Muslim" bias in the United States." (CAIR First Annual Report, Apr. 1996.)


The AMC Report, Apr. 1995. Although the AMC claims to reject and condemn terrorism, it has not once denounced such terrorist groups as Hamas and Hizbullah by name; in fact, it has been a strong public defender of their members, including Musa Abu Marzook.

The Arab–American Dialogue, Apr.–May 1996.

Joint press statement, May 7, 1996, released by the Marzook Legal Fund.

AAI Statement, Apr. 23, 1996.


Mideast Mirror, May 31, 1996.


American Committee on Jerusalem Letter to President Clinton, Dec. 18, 1996.


MPAC release, July 8, 1997.


ADC Alert, Nov. 22, 1996.

AAI Statement, Apr. 23, 1996.

ADC Release, Apr. 17, 1996

AMC Flyer, Apr. 1996. In contrast, MPAC charged Israel of nothing more than seeking "to siphon off the water of the Litany river" (MPAC release, Apr. 22, 1996).


The Arab–American News, Sept. 23–29, 1995


AAI appeal, July 1, 1996.


Ibid., June–July 1997

AAI has embraced The Washington Report, as when Zogby appeared with its national editor, Shawn Twing, at a press conference in July 1997 to promote a new AAI report that includes an appendix by Twing. CPAP and NAAA both have honored The Washington Report and CNI.


Israel’s Detractors Enumerated

Many Arab-American, American Muslim, and Arabist organizations are active on the Arab-Israeli conflict, only some of which are detailed below. For many of these organizations, Israel and U.S. policy towards Israel is a central concern. While they all have specific agendas unconnected to the Arab-Israeli conflict—fighting discrimination, increasing political involvement, or lobbying for Arab or Islamic
causes—the groups tend to work together or at least have a common agenda on issues concerning Israel and its supporters in the United States. But not all is harmonious; a strong element of rivalry exists between certain organizations, most notably ADC and AAI.

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC). Founded in 1980 by James Abourezk, a former one-term Democratic senator from South Dakota, and James Zogby, its current president (and de facto executive director) is Hala Maksoud. Characterizing itself as the "largest Arab-Arab American grassroots organization," ADC also describes itself as a "civil rights organization committed to defending the rights of people of Arab descent and promoting their rich cultural heritage." ADC also seeks to promote a "more balanced U.S. Middle East policy." Despite the ostensible purpose of countering anti-Arab discrimination, ADC devotes inordinate attention to Israel and its American supporters.

American Committee on Jerusalem (ACJ). Formed in 1995 and headed by Rashid Khalidi, a Palestinian academic, ACJ focuses on "educating the American public and policy-makers on the Palestinian and Arab viewpoints and perspectives on Jerusalem." It operates out of the offices of ADC; the heads of ADC, NAAA, AMC, and AAUG, among others, sit on its board.

The American Educational Trust (AET). Founded in 1982 by former foreign service officers Andrew Killgore and Richard Curtiss, its main activity is publishing a nine-times-a-year stridently anti-Israel publication, The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs. The Report offers a forum for anti-Israel activists (including Killgore, Curtiss, Paul Findley, and Eugene Bird) along with paeans to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. AET also publishes occasional studies (such as Stealth PACs by Curtiss, an ostensible exposé of pro-Israel PACs) and distributes a Middle East book and video club catalog.

American Muslim Council (AMC). Founded in 1990 by Abdurahman Alamoudi, AMC and its sister organization, "Muslims for a Better America PAC," headed by AMC deputy director Khalid Saffuri, focus on increasing American Muslim political and social involvement in the United States. AMC seeks to get out the American Muslim vote, to condemn anti-Muslim discrimination, and defend Islamist groups, including Hamas; in addition, it previously housed representatives Algerian and Sudanese Islamist organizations.

Arab American Institute (AAI). Founded in 1985 by James Zogby, who continues to be its president, AAI's mandate is to increase Arab-American political participation from the local level up to presidential campaigns. It also seeks to staff presidential administrations. This increased involvement is explicitly intended to change congressional and administration policies towards the Middle East in general, Israel in particular.

Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG). Founded in 1967 (and so one of the oldest Arab-Arab American organizations) AAUG is currently headed by Nadia Hijab. It describes itself as an "educational and cultural organization" that focuses on a variety of Arab issues beyond the Arab-Israeli conflict, such as the state of the Arab world and U.S. "imperialism" in the Middle East. Its activities seem geared primarily towards influencing Arab-American intellectuals and academics rather than seeking to influence public policy.

Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine. Founded as a part of The Jerusalem Fund (both headed by Hisham Sharabi), it is a Palestinian-American (as opposed to Arab-American) quasi-think tank. CPAP principally holds periodic symposia and
conferences to showcase speakers on the Arab-Israeli conflict, then later publishes the results.

**Council for the National Interest (CNI).** Founded in 1989 by Andrew Killgore and Richard Curtiss, CNI originally operated out of the offices of AET. CNI's chairman, former congressman Paul Findley, is the author of *They Dare to Speak Out*, a diatribe against the pro-Israel lobby; its vice chairman is former congressman Paul McCloskey. While CNI describes itself as daring "to speak out for a balanced US foreign policy in the Middle East," even more so than the other organizations, its focus is overwhelmingly on Israel, Israel's supporters, and foreign aid to Israel. Findley also continues in his other writings to attack Israel and supporters of Israel.

**Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR).** Founded in 1994 by Nihad Awad and Ibrahim Hooper. Awad was previously with the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP). CAIR describes itself as "dedicated to presenting an Islamic perspective" on various issues and seeking "to empower the Muslim community in America through political and social activism." CAIR depicts itself as a Muslim equivalent to the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, highlighting, combating and issuing reports on anti-Muslim discrimination in the United States. While it deals with some valid cases, CAIR also uses the charge of discrimination to criticize or delegitimize critics of Islamic extremism.

**Council of Presidents of Arab-American Organizations.** With a rotating head, the Council of Presidents includes some dozen Arab-American organizations including ADC, NAAA and IAP. AAI is limited to "observer" status. Unlike its ostensible Jewish counterpart—the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations—this council of presidents neither includes all the major Arab-American organizations, nor does it operate as a separate entity. Its main activity is occasionally to issue press releases or arrange meetings with top politicians.

**Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP).** Founded in 1981 and headed by Rafiq Jaber, IAP describes itself as "dedicated to working towards a fair, just and comprehensive solution to the problem of Palestine." In practice, IAP defends and advocates the views of Hamas.

**Middle East Policy Council.** Established in 1981, and for its first decade, called the American–Arab Affairs Council, the Council is headed by former senator George McGovern. Its board includes various business and oil executives, along with academics and former U.S. ambassadors to the Middle East. The Council describes its purpose as "to expand public discussion and understanding of issues affecting U.S. policy in the Middle East." The council publishes a quarterly journal (*Middle East Policy*) and sponsors "Teacher Workshops about the Arab World and Islam."

**Muslim Public Affairs Committee (MPAC).** The Los Angeles-based MPAC was initially founded in 1988 as the Muslim Political Action Committee and then changed to a "Public Affairs" committee. Headed by Salam Al-Marayati, MPAC seeks to increase the political influence of American Muslims. It recently opened an office in Washington, D.C. MPAC serves as a clearing house for the activities of other American Muslim groups. The organization initially focused its activities primarily on the West Coast but now has a national orientation.

**National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA).** Founded in 1972 to be the official Arab-American lobby on Capitol Hill, NAAA's current president (and de facto executive director) is Khalil Jahshan. NAAA's mandate is to lobby Congress and the administration towards "an objective and nonpartisan U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East" and "an evenhanded American policy." It also has a political action
Palestinian American Congress (PAC) Established in 1995 and headed by Fuad Ateyeh, PAC describes itself as "a political organization" whose "goal is to organize Palestinian Americans and empower them in the American political and social system." Ray Hanania, a journalist and activist who served as PAC's first president, remains the group's principal spokesman.

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