



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on January 23, 2010

## CAIR Leader in Los Angeles Al-Awlaki Disciple?

There has been no shortage of media coverage of Anwar al-Awlaki, the American-born Yemen-based al-Qaeda associate who is purportedly the preacher that inspired Nidal Hasan to kill a dozen of his fellow soldiers at a Fort Hood processing center and convinced Umar Abdulmutallab to strap explosives to himself and try to blow up a crowded plane over Detroit on Christmas Day. If al-Awlaki's message is that mesmerizing and his methods so pervasive, then it stands to reason that there are other, equally devout disciples eager to obey their master's voice and carry out the deadly dictates of his twisted dogma.



According to [reports published online Monday](#), the leader of the Southern California branch of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) has blogged recently about his admiration of the writings of al-Awlaki and how, after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, he began "listening to" the controversial cleric's message.

Affad Shaikh is the civil rights manager of CAIR-Los Angeles, the largest chapter of the organization in California. He has held this influential post since April 2006. Shaikh wrote that after 9/11 he began the process of converting from a devout Muslim to a fundamentalist, devoted to searching out and studying the works of several influential and radical Islamic preachers. "I just went from one book to another, started with Espisito and Armstrong, went to Kotob and reading classical translations of Ghazzali and Ibn Taymiyya and listening to people like Anwar Awlaki and Suhaib Webb," Shaikh records.

Shaikh's roster of mentors read like a who's who of Islamic fundamentalism. The "Kotob" listed by Shaikh is Sayyid Qutb, an Egyptian infamous for being the spiritual and intellectual father of the Muslim Brotherhood (a transnational and reportedly terrorist political organization dedicated to the codification of their violent and oppressive interpretation of the Quran as the law in Muslim countries) and considered by many to be a martyr after he was executed by the government of Egypt.

Suhaib Webb (born William Webb) is a former DJ and Christian from Oklahoma who converted to Islam at age 20 and has become a favorite of radical Islamic groups across the country, being asked to be the keynote speaker at numerous gatherings of Muslim muckrakers. Webb currently serves as a freelance imam, as well as a student at the College of Shariah at Al-Azhar University in Cairo.

As it stands today, the most notorious of the guiding lights being followed by Affad Shaikh is Anwar al-Awlaki. Awlaki's ties to both Major Nidal Hasan, the army psychiatrist who brutally murdered 13 people and injured 32 others in a hail of gunfire on November 5, 2009, and Umar Abdulmutallab, the young Nigerian who, but for a malfunctioning detonator, would have blown up Northwest Airlines Flight 253 en route from Amsterdam, Netherlands, to Detroit on Christmas Day 2009.

In an interview with al-Jazeera, Awlaki proudly confirmed the e-mail exchange he carried on with Hasan



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beginning in December 2008, nearly a year prior to the Army officer's murderous rampage. Specifically, Awlaki, who once mentored Hasan in his role as prayer leader at the Ft. Hood shooter's mosque in northern Virginia, told the Arab news agency that Hasan asked him whether the killing of U.S. soldiers was justified under Islamic law.

While Awlaki did not answer the reporter's question as to whether or not he encouraged Hasan to carry out his apparently pre-meditated assassination of soldiers preparing to deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan, he brazenly admits that in his opinion, "The operation had a military target inside America, and there's no dispute about that." He goes on to proclaim that "working in the U.S. military to kill Muslims is a betrayal to Islam." Curiously, the American expatriate does not comment on whether or not his proven association and advocacy of the terrorism perpetrated by al-Qaeda is faithful to Islamic principles.

Given the fanatical actions taken by two members of the al-Awlaki fan club (until recently he maintained a Facebook fan page) and the reputed sponsorship of those activities by the cleric himself, it is a matter of national security that those officials charged with protecting Americans from future terrorist attacks pay particular attention to the behavior and words of other al-Awlaki acolytes.

Among those al-Awlaki admirers who merit increased attention by law enforcement is Affad Shaikh. Three and a half years ago Shaikh wrote a blog entry entitled, "Five Years Ago an American Muslim was Born." In this entry, Shaikh describes his metamorphosis from passive, casual "token Muslim" to activist, taking leadership roles in radical groups such as CAIR, an organization associated intimately with the leadership of Hamas and a confederate of the equally terroristic Muslim Brotherhood's Palestine Committee.

It was while living in San Diego that Shaikh transformed into the religious firebrand he is today. Curiously, it was in San Diego that al-Awlaki began his association with two of the 9/11 hijackers while serving as imam at the Masjid Ar-Ribat al-Islami mosque where the two are supposed to have worshipped.

There is another nexus between San Diego and al-Awlaki. Frontpagemag.com reports that Edgar Hopida, the director of public relations for the CAIR office in San Diego, attended al-Awlaki's mosque and sought out the counsel of al-Awlaki and turned to the imam for further insight and instruction in the gospel of the religion he recently adopted. Hopida called al-Awlaki a "respected imam" and chided those who were "jumping to conclusions" regarding his affiliation with terrorists.

When it comes to protection the national security of the United States, the current intelligence and security establishment has been woefully inept. They ignored the flares of fanaticism shot off in advance of Nidal Hasan's shooting spree, as well as similar warnings about the questionable movements and associations of Umar Abdulmutallab months before he boarded a plane loaded with enough powdered explosives to kill all 300 of his fellow passengers. Both these men reportedly progressed along their respective paths from fervent seeker of religious instruction to homicidal perpetrators of terror.

If the American security apparatus has any chance of redeeming itself and atoning for the lives of 13 at Ft. Hood and the missteps that nearly resulted in the death of hundreds more on Christmas Day, then they must "jump to conclusions" and actively investigate the strength of the ties between al-Awlaki and Affad Shaikh and any others who maybe imbibing from the steady stream of hate flowing from al-Awlaki's Yemeni hideout.

*Photo: Anwar al-Awlaki*



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