



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on February 2, 2009

## President Obama's Militant Muslim Connections

Mattson was also a guest speaker later that evening at the first Muslim Inaugural Celebration at the Thurgood Marshall Center in Washington, D.C. This was not the first time Mattson had been so honored at Obama shindigs; she was also given center stage at the Democratic Convention's opening interfaith prayer service last August in Denver.



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In selecting Dr. Mattson for these high-profile events, Obama has pointedly chosen to disregard the fact that the organization she heads, the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), and its subsidiary foundation, the North American Islamic Trust (NAIT), have long-standing ties to terrorist organizations such as Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and the Muslim Brotherhood. The U.S. government lists ISNA and NAIT as "unindicted co-conspirators" in the terrorism-funding trial of the Holy Land Foundation (HLF). The foundation was charged with conspiracy and providing millions of dollars to the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas. In November of 2008, a jury in Dallas, Texas, delivered guilty verdicts on 108 separate charges against HLF and seven of its officers.

ISNA and NAIT were not charged in the Holy Land Foundation case, and they (along with the ACLU, which is defending them) have accused the government of carrying out a smear campaign and a political vendetta against the organizations and the larger Muslim community.

The federal prosecutors vigorously denied these claims in a July 10, 2008 filing in federal court. "During last year's trial, numerous exhibits were entered into evidence establishing both ISNA's and NAIT's intimate relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood, the Palestine Committee, and the defendants in this case," the prosecutors asserted. "They were intimately connected with the HLF and its assigned task of providing financial support to HAMAS.... That ISNA and NAIT appeared in these documents and share a common history with these defendants is a reflection of the evidence, not any attempt to 'disparage' or 'vilify.' "

Ingrid Mattson was not personally named in the indictment or charged with any crime. According to her



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many defenders, she is the voice of moderate Islam in America. According to her critics, she is the voice and face of "stealth jihad" or "soft jihad" in America, perpetrating a deceptive ruse of false moderation that uses ballots instead of bullets, words instead of bombs — but aimed at the same ultimate objective: the defeat and gradual Islamification of America.<

### **Militants Masquerading as Moderates**

Dr. Ingrid Mattson is a professor of Islamic studies and director of the Macdonald Center for Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut. In this capacity, she is one of the main trainers of Muslim chaplains for state and federal prisons, the U.S. military, and American universities. ISNA has also served as the main organization relied on by the federal government to certify chaplains for federal prisons, which have become hotbeds for Muslim militancy and recruitment. Moreover, the ISNA vets and certifies imams for many American mosques, and, according to government and media reports, controls (through actual ownership) 50-80 percent of the mosques in the United States. ISNA has achieved this lock on so many mosques, reportedly, through the North American Islamic Trust, with funding provided by the Muslim Brotherhood and the government of Saudi Arabia. All this considered, concern about Mattson's close ties with, and newfound stature in, the Obama administration is certainly justified.

ISNA and NAIT are indeed closely tied to Hamas and its Egyptian-based parent, the Muslim Brotherhood, both of which are well known for simultaneously carrying out dual political and terrorist programs. This dual application was made very clear in a 1991 Muslim Brotherhood presentation entitled "[An Explanatory Memorandum on the General Strategic Goal for the Brotherhood in North America](#)," by Mohamed Akram.

[Akram told the Brotherhood faithful](#) that they "must understand that their work in America is a kind of grand Jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and 'sabotaging' its miserable house by their hands and the hands of the believers so that it is eliminated and Allah's religion is made victorious over all other religions." Akram laid out a comprehensive plan for "settlement" in the United States to attain social, political, educational, and economic influence and power.

The final page of the 32-page official text version of Akram's presentation lists the Muslim Brotherhood's chief friends in the United States. Leading the list (at number 1 out of 29) is ISNA; NAIT is listed as number 8 on the same list. Akram also praises ISNA's magazine, *Islamic Horizons*, which has been a fountainhead of militant jihadist propaganda. One of the magazine's 2001 articles, for example, featured an interview with radical Sudanese political and spiritual leader Sheikh Hassan al-Turabi, an early supporter of al-Qaeda. Al-Turabi, the leader of the Sudanese branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, told ISNA readers: "I do not think that it is only a dream, but there is a possibility not only for America to be Islamized, but also in fact to develop as the role model of Islam."

Are Mattson, ISNA, and NAIT following the Muslim Brotherhood's plan of "sabotaging" the "miserable house" of Western civilization from within? Some self-described Muslim moderates insist that is the case. A letter signed last year by leaders representing the American Muslim Congress, the Aafaq Foundation, the Center for Islamic Pluralism, the American Islamic Forum for Democracy, and the International Quranic Center charges that ISNA "has a long history of association with extremist trends in Islam."

According to these Muslim scholars and leaders: "ISNA has served as a front group for Wahhabism, the



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official sect in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia; the jihadist ideologies originating in Pakistan with the writings of a certain Mawdudi and the Deoband schools in that country — the latter of which produced the Afghan Taliban, and the Ikhwan al-Muslimun, or Muslim Brotherhood."

Dr. Mattson does indeed promote the militant jihadist teachings of Mawdudi (also spelled Maududi). In an Internet chat session with Muslim students ([www.youngmuslims.ca](http://www.youngmuslims.ca)) Mattson was asked: "Please suggest any comprehensive work of Tafseer (Qur'anic commentary) for us Muslim youth." She responded: "There are different kinds of Tafseers.... So far, probably the best work of Tafseer in English is by Maulana Abul A'la Maududi."

Who is Maulana Abul A'la Maududi? On page 9 of the Maududi text recommended by Mattson, we find this teaching on jihad: "Islam wishes to destroy all States and Governments anywhere on the face of the earth which are opposed to the ideology and programme of Islam regardless of the country or the Nation which rules it. The purpose of Islam is to set up a State on the basis of its own ideology and programme, regardless of which Nation assumes the role of the standard bearer of Islam or the rule of which nation is undermined in the process of the establishment of an ideological Islamic State. It must be evident to you from this discussion that the objective of Islamic 'Jihad' is to eliminate the rule of an un-Islamic system and establish in its stead an Islamic system of State rule. Islam does not intend to confine this revolution to a single State or a few countries; the aim of Islam is to bring about a universal revolution."

Maududi, in the same text (page 28), has this to say on the denial of rights to non-Muslims: "Islamic 'Jihad' does not recognize their right to administer State affairs according to a system which, in the view of Islam, is evil. Furthermore, Islamic 'Jihad' also refuses to admit their right to continue with such practices under an Islamic government which fatally affect the public interest from the viewpoint of Islam."

[Professor Mattson's website](#) for her course, "The Qur'an and Its Place in Muslim Life and Society," at Hartford Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut, also recommends Maududi's text, *The Meaning of the Qur'an*, along with *In the Shade of the Qur'an* by Sayyid Qutb, an intellectual founder of the Muslim Brotherhood and often described as the man whose ideas would shape al-Qaeda.

### **More Terror Ties**

In addition to promoting the Muslim Brotherhood/Hamas agenda, Mattson and the ISNA/NAIT "moderates" have many documented concrete ties to terrorists. During the course of the HLF trial, documents were presented, for instance, showing the payment of funds by ISNA and NAIT to Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzook and his wife, Nadia Elashi. When Marzook was arrested and imprisoned in the United States during one of his illegal fundraising tours, he publicly thanked ISNA for standing by him and supporting him in an open letter that Hamas ran as an advertisement in Arabic and Muslim publications.

Marzook, now operating out of Damascus as Hamas' deputy political leader, recently confirmed to reporters that Hamas is executing fellow Palestinians it suspects of collaborating with Israel in its current conflict in Gaza. Marzook, who is listed by the U.S. government as a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist," and is under a federal indictment, is not the only notorious terrorist connected to ISNA. Sami al-Arian, the convicted leader of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), was one of the founders of ISNA and a regular speaker at ISNA conferences. Like Dr. Mattson, al-Arian posed for many years as a peaceful professor, adamantly denying any connection to terrorism and publicly denouncing violence



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and terrorist acts. All the while, he was a top official of the terrorist PIJ in the United States, along with fellow Florida professor Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, who is now openly running PIJ's terror operations — and is a top fugitive [on the FBI's "Most Wanted Terrorists" list](#).

Still another notorious ISNA colleague is Aldurahman M. Alamoudi, now serving a 23-year sentence for money laundering and conspiracy in an assassination plot cooked up with Libyan dictator Col. Moammar Qadaffi.

Robert Spencer of Jihad Watch summarizes some other relevant ISNA terror connections: "Members of ISNA's board include controversial New York imam Siraj Wahaj, named as an unindicted co-conspirator in the federal case last decade against terrorist Omar Abdel Rahman, a.k.a. the Blind Sheikh. ISNA's secretary-general, Sayyid M. Syeed, is the former director of academic outreach at the International Institute of Islamic Thought, a Northern Virginia think tank raided in 2002 by federal authorities on suspicion of terror-financing. ISNA board member Bassam Osman is also president of an organization that owns the Islamic Academy of Florida. This group has been described as a criminal enterprise in a federal indictment handed down by government after the school founder, Sami Al-Arian, was arrested for ties to terrorism."

### **Double Talk and Double Standards**

Al-Arian, Shallah, Rahman, the 9/11 hijackers, and many other terrorist leaders and operators worked through long-established "sleeper cells" that included "peaceful" co-conspirators along with the trigger pullers and bomb throwers. But according to Mattson, these networks are a figment of overactive imaginations propelled by prejudice and hate. In an interview with *Islam Today*, she said: "There's a prejudgment, a collective judgment of Muslims, and a suspicion that well "you may appear nice, but we know there are sleeper cells of Americans," which of course is not true. There aren't any sleeper cells."

The Investigative Project on Terrorism, like many other critics, has noted that despite ISNA's periodic condemnations of terrorism in general, it "has never condemned terrorist groups like Hamas or Hizballah by name." In fact, Mattson and other ISNA leaders have made many statements that seem to justify or rationalize terrorism by these groups, and even by al-Qaeda and the Taliban, because of the "oppression" under which members of these organizations must operate.

However, Mattson and her ISNA colleagues are not so easy on those they see as purveyors of "hate" like, say, Pope Benedict XVI. In 2006, when the pope's brief quote of 14th-century Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Paleologus' disdain for Islam touched off Muslim riots worldwide and the murder of a Catholic priest and nun, Mattson and the ISNA imams seemed equally (if not more) upset with the pope's statement as with the destructive rampages of their religious brethren. Likewise, when Dutch Parliamentarian Geert Wilders released his documentary movie *Fitna* (Arabic for "ordeal," "division among people," or "seduce, tempt") in 2008, the violent reaction in the Islamic world was fast in coming. The 17-minute film shows quotations from the Quran and other Islamic sacred scripture exhorting the faithful to violence, juxtaposed with images of 9/11, the London subway bombing, and other terrorist acts. While Mattson argued against Muslims taking violent action against Wilders, she did charge him with being "racist" and advocated that he be prosecuted under the "hate speech" laws that her militant co-religionists have helped pass in the Netherlands and throughout the European Union.

The government initially rejected calls by Muslim activists and their left-wing allies to prosecute Wilders, citing the long-enshrined right to freedom of speech. However, in an odd coincidence of



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timing, on January 21 (the day after Mattson's inaugural prayer) a Dutch Court of Appeal ordered the criminal prosecution of Wilders.

Could Americans face a similar fate under the new Obama administration? Will those who support terrorists be protected, while those who denounce terrorists or criticize Islam are prosecuted? The official promotion of Dr. Mattson and similarly minded activists points ominously in that direction.

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