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# **Jamaat al-Fuqra Dossier**

**CENTER FOR POLICING TERRORISM**  
"CPT"

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FOR THE CENTER FOR POLICING TERRORISM

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## Executive Summary

Members own government-contracted security agencies. Through twenty-five years of existence, followers have planned and executed dozens of faith-based firebombings and assassinations. One member was convicted of plotting with the first World Trade Center bombers. Other adherents are employed in toll booths and kiosks at sensitive New York City landmarks. On multiple occasions members have defrauded state governments of millions of dollars and sent the proceeds to finance terrorist operations abroad. Firing ranges, gun smuggling, and an aircraft landing strip are the norm in the thirty-some isolated rural compounds throughout North America. The group is Jamaat al-Fuqra, (“Community of the Impoverished”) and it has been left off of the State Department’s annual *Patterns of Global Terrorism* since 1999.<sup>1</sup> Vice Admiral Lowell E. Jacoby, Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, delivers his annual testimony on current and projected threats to the United States without mentioning the group.<sup>2</sup> A Professor at New York University argues al-Fuqra’s non-profit fronts should be freed of government interference.<sup>3</sup> Overshadowed by a world of al-Qaeda and weapons of mass destruction, Jamaat al-Fuqra may be the best positioned group to launch an assault on the United States, or more likely, help al-Qaeda to do so.

Jamaat al-Fuqra is an extremist Islamic organization largely composed of African-Americans recruited from United States prisons. Al-Fuqra formed in 1980 when an ammunition-belted Sheikh Mubarak ali Gilani preached at a Brooklyn, New York mosque. Gilani is part of a holy Muslim family that traces their lineage to Muhammed. Gilani, who became revered by a loose-knit Islamic community in Brooklyn, recruited from the existing ranks of domestic organization Dar ul Islam by advocating for a holy war against the Soviet oppressors in Afghanistan. The recruits, who signed documentation transferring the majority of their income to help foreign Islamic organizations, quickly set to work waging terrorist assaults against Jewish, Hindu, and even moderate Muslim clerics and temples in the United States. Exceptional members fought against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and received extensive terrorist and guerilla training while overseas.

Gilani preaches a Wahabbist, anti-Western worldview that ordains violence as the only means of purifying Islam. Members of Jamaat al-Fuqra are Allah’s soldiers in a battle against the cultural and religious taint of the Western world; and al-Fuqra documents and speeches are inundated with references to Zionist conspiracies and a call to arms. Al-Fuqra and Sheikh Gilani have been linked to al-Qaeda and other international terrorist organizations.

Composed of American and Canadian citizens, Jamaat al-Fuqra has established a wide ranging network throughout North America centered around four primary compounds in York, South Carolina; Red House, Virginia; Hancock, New York; and Baladullah, California. Individual compounds have earned a place on local law enforcement radar following arrests for illegal weapons possession, arms smuggling, and high-profile fraud investigations. Suspicions of a relationship between Jamaat al-Fuqra and the Virginia snipers, as well as with Richard Reid the notorious shoe bomber, have served to keep

national authorities vigilant. Nonetheless, the compounds of Jamaat al-Fuqra remain relatively free of government oversight and interference: all the better to serve as a capable, seamless, wide-spread terrorist network.

### **Possibility of Attack in the Next Five Years: High**

Jamaat al-Fuqra has not conducted any documented fire-bombings or assassinations since the early 1990s. Recently, Sheikh Mubarak ali Gilani issued statements asking Muslims in America to exercise caution, to wait, and to trust in Allah. Nonetheless, as an extremist terrorist organization perfectly positioned to provide support to a foreign operation, Jamaat al-Fuqra cannot be discounted as a viable threat in the United States. As the State Department indicates, Jamaat al-Fuqra is “an Islamic sect that seeks to purify Islam through violence...Fuqra members have attacked a variety of targets that they view as enemies of Islam, including Muslims they regard as heretics and Hindus. Attacks during the 1980s included assassinations and firebombings across the United States. Fuqra members in the United States have been convicted of criminal violations, including murder and fraud.”<sup>4</sup> With that history behind them, Fuqra must be considered a dangerous domestic threat.

Members of al-Fuqra were recipients of munitions, explosives, guerilla, communications, and related terrorist training in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Middle East. Members have fought for Islamic causes around the world. Others, under the guise of studying Islam, have joined the international Islamist movement. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police report “Members of the Fuqra are taught there is a Satanist-Zionist conspiracy to destroy Islam and that the Fuqra is God’s chosen instrument to defeat the enemies of Islam.”<sup>5</sup> In practical and spiritual matters, Jamaat al-Fuqra is well versed to coordinate an assault against the United States. Their prolonged spell of silence has confounded intelligence experts. Perhaps al-Fuqra waits for another terrorist organization to assist in a domestic plot.

But on the surface, Jamaat al-Fuqra’s connection to other terrorist organizations is tenuous. Rodney Hampton-El, convicted in the New York City landmark bomb plot shortly after the first world trade center bombings, was a member of Jamaat al-Fuqra. In the plot, Hampton-El associated with a number of other terrorists, including the prominent Egyptian Islamic Jihad leader Omar Abdel-Rahman. His association with the Abdel-Rahman suggests Fuqra members are not only in touch with other terrorist organizations, but also willing to work with them. Additionally, in the 1989 murder of an Arizona imam, Fuqra members were assisted in their reconnaissance by a member of al-Qaeda, Wadih el-Hage.<sup>6</sup> Dig deeper, and you discover founder Sheikh Mubarak ali Gilani has concrete links with many international Islamist organizations operating throughout the world, having attended a ‘terror’ conference with many of them, including Osama bin Ladin. United States authorities have feared, since the first world trade center attack, that Jamaat al-Fuqra is connected to al-Qaeda.

An official in the Indian government recently suggested Jamaat al-Fuqra would be highly likely to play an important role in any encore of the September 11, 2001 bombings.<sup>7</sup> His argument has merit: Sheikh Gilani, a respected and well-connected cleric in Pakistan, is

well positioned to contact terrorist organizations. Recruits to Jamaat al-Fuqra sign documentation when they join indicating they are willing to allow their income to be directed toward the furtherance of Islam in the international world. Large chunks of funds stolen by al-Fuqra members from the California and Colorado state governments quickly disappeared. United States intelligence believes those funds were directed toward the support and furtherance of terror efforts in Pakistan and the Middle East.

Jamaat al-Fuqra's leadership, based in Pakistan, is well placed ideologically and strategically to enter into an association with another major terrorist group. Jamaat al-Fuqra's physical capital, located throughout the United States and at sensitive national security locations, is just as well placed to put a plan in action.

Jamaat al-Fuqra's attacks traditionally consist of:

- Fire and pipe bombings at temples or places of religious worship anathema to al-Fuqra, such as Hindu or Jewish temples.
- The assassination of clerics preaching religious interpretations unacceptable to al-Fuqra, like Tucson, Arizona, cleric Rashid Khalifa.

With another terrorist organization involved, the level of destruction increases. A Fuqra member, working in concert with foreign elements, plotted an attack to:

- Destroy several New York City landmarks with simultaneous, coordinated explosions.

Prosecutors unearthed chilling documents in a trial of Fuqra members caught plotting to bomb a Hindu temple in Toronto. The documents described a plot to kill as many people, Hindu or otherwise, as possible. There is no question multiple al-Fuqra members would consider participating in a large scale terrorist assault, whether domestically or internationally. Given the religious bias and mores of the group, al-Fuqra members would have little pause about using indiscriminate violence to accomplish what they consider the cleansing of their religion.

## **Chapter 1: Background**

### **Section 1.1: Jamaat al-Fuqra Overview**

Jamaat al-Fuqra (“Community of the Impoverished”) is an extremist terrorist organization founded by Sheikh Mubarak ali Gilani in Brooklyn, New York, in 1980. Gilani’s followers gained military experience in Kashmir, against the Russians in Chechnya and Afghanistan, and against the Serbs in Bosnia. He has established training camps in Abbotabad, Pakistan, and other parts of the country, and al-Fuqra has developed significant training facilities in America as well.<sup>8</sup>

Sheikh Gilani initially plundered the ranks of an existing American Islamic organization, Dar ul Islam, by preaching a message of violence against the corruption-spreading western establishment. Jamaat al-Fuqra members gained national attention in the early 1980s when Stephen Paster, one of the few white members of the group, blew his own hand off while destroying a Seattle hotel owned by the followers of a prominent Indian guru. It was not until the Colorado Attorney General’s office investigated a massive worker’s compensation fraud operation that greater depths of al-Fuqra were uncovered. A 1989 raid of a storage locker uncovered semi-automatic weapons, 30 pounds of explosives, target dummies with vests marked “FBI” and “Zionist Pig”, detailed plans of a 1984 Hare Krishna Temple firebombing, plans to assassinate a Tucson Muslim cleric, papers linking al-Fuqra to the non-profit front Muslims of the Americas, and a series of training manuals on guerilla warfare, communications equipment, terrorist operations, and explosives.<sup>9</sup> Four months later, the Tucson, Arizona cleric was assassinated in the same manner described by the detailed plan confiscated in Colorado. A widely publicized report released in 1993 by the Anti-Defamation League also did a great deal to make known the operations of Jamaat al-Fuqra.

Since 1993, when the first world trade center bombing turned the attention of American intelligence to terrorism and toward al-Fuqra in particular, Jamaat al-Fuqra's silence has been notable. No documented firebombings or planned assassinations have been attributed to al-Fuqra in that time. High profile cases involving al-Fuqra in the years since include arms smuggling, charter school fraud, and an unplanned homicide. Ramadan Abdur Rauf Abdullah shot and killed a deputy sheriff who stopped him in the act of breaking and entering. It was not a terrorist act. Abdullah had lived in Muslims of the Americas compounds in New York, Virginia, and California, and was only 17.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, even the organization’s founder has been quiet domestically. In 1995, Mubarak ali Gilani made the last of his frequent trips to the United States, and has since employed the internet to maintain close contact with his operatives in America. Recent statements from Gilani lack the original invective that characterized his earlier pronouncements.

Jamaat al-Fuqra members live on rural compounds spread throughout the United States, on plots of land owned by two non-profit entities, or by officers within the group. The compounds are usually marked by a sign representing one of the two non-profits at the entrance, white-robed residents, and firing ranges.

## **Section 1.2: Jamaat al-Fuqra and the Orthodox Black Muslim Religious Movement in America**

Jamaat al-Fuqra is in many ways an offshoot of the orthodox African-American Muslim religious movement in America, but is in no way affiliated with Louis Farrakhan or his Nation of Islam. In fact, members of the Nation of Islam were reportedly named in al-Fuqra hit lists recovered during investigations in the early 1990s. Nonetheless, many early recruits to al-Fuqra may have joined the organization because of the groundwork laid by the Nation of Islam among the African-American community.

The Nation of Islam (NOI) was created by founder Wallace Fard Muhammad in 1930. Among the tenets of the NOI is the belief that black people were the only nation to have been denied knowledge of their past history, language, culture, and religion. One of the most famous figures in Nation of Islam history is Malcolm Little, also known as Malcolm X, who was introduced to the religion while incarcerated.

By the 1970s, Wallace Fard Muhammad's son Warith Deen Muhammad had taken up control of the organization. Through a series of renamings and re-orientations W.D. Muhammad systematically drew the Nation of Islam toward mainstream Sunni Islam, and away from the black separatist rhetoric that drove his father. A young member of the NOI named Louis Farrakhan walked away from the organization before returning with heavy support in 1978 to re-establish what W.F. Muhammad had accomplished.

Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam remains under his control, and differs from mainstream Islam in several significant respects. For example, W.D. Muhammad is believed to have been an incarnation of God while mainstream Islam holds that no man can be God. In another example, the Nation of Islam teaches that the black man was the original man of the Planet Earth and Caucasians were created by a devious scientist named Yakub, a belief not matched anywhere in the Koran. The important aspects of the Nation of Islam, however, are linked to the paranoid distrust of other races and the placement of the Muslim, particularly the black Muslim, on a pedestal above all others.

## **Section 1.3: Origins of Jamaat al-Fuqra**

Al-Fuqra took root at the height of the Soviet Union's conflict with Afghanistan, when Sheikh Mubarak ali Gilani delivered a number of incendiary sermons at a mosque in Brooklyn.

Gilani described Islam as a path to a better life and found a number of willing converts in the poverty stricken, urban African-American community. Among the converts were several, including a man named Abu Talat, who had served in Vietnam.

American students began visiting Sheikh Gilani in Pakistan in the early 1980s. The register of the library of Jamia-e-Neemia, a prestigious madrassa, lists the names of 11 of his first visitors. The American converts wore long beards and robes and brought

prestige to Gilani, who used his American connections to become a person of note within his already distinguished family.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Section 1.4: Jamaat al-Fuqra Ideology**

The United States State Department put it most succinctly when they declared Jamaat al-Fuqra was dedicated to purifying Islam through violence. This is evident not only in the group's actions, but in their words. Recruits sign an oath saying "I shall always hear and obey, and whenever given the command, I shall readily fight for Allah's sake."<sup>12</sup> Segments from Gilani's poems, published by the Open International Quranic University's Press and seized in a 1991 investigation, read "We pray to the beat of a submachine gun" and another advised "Come join my troops and army/Says our Sheikh Gilani/Prepare to sacrifice your head/A true believer is never dead/Say 'Victory is in the air'/The infidel's blood will not be spared."<sup>13</sup>

The Fuqra worldview holds that Western culture, and particularly America at its head, is the enemy of those who would protect Islam. Every significant interaction between the West and Muslims is viewed hostilely, such as the 1999 NATO airstrikes in Yugoslavia where Muslims of the Americas officer Abu Talut writes: "The reason for their attack on the KLA is none other than the KLA intends to establish an Islamic state. All of this is none other than an attack on Islam, from both ends. A young man on an Albanian newsgroup has said rightly that evil cant save us from evil."<sup>14</sup> Gilani, the ubiquitous founder, directs his followers with quotations like the following: "We are fighting to destroy the enemy. We are dealing with evil at its roots and its roots are America."<sup>15</sup> Another text published by the Open International Quranic University instructed his cadres that their foremost duty was to wage *Jihad* against the 'oppressors of Muslims'.<sup>16</sup>

The Fuqra worldview is also profoundly conservative. Rashid Khalifa, a Tucson, Arizona cleric, was assassinated because he supported a moderate reading of the Koran. Abu Talut provides a window into more pragmatic conservative Fuqra beliefs: "Islam prohibits all forms of intoxicants and gambling, fornication and adultery, usury (interest, doubled and multiplied on loans such as car notes and house mortgages). In most un-Islamic societies, these social maladies are lawful. Yet, the damage and misery done to people's lives are incalculable."<sup>17</sup>

Conservative and violent, al-Fuqra is capable of committing violence toward any proponent of a belief set that does not match their own.

#### **Section 1.5 Jamaat al-Fuqra Organization**

A 1991 raid of an al-Fuqra storage locker discovered documents referring to "Muhammed Commandos Sector 5".<sup>18</sup> Al-Fuqra members, who believe themselves to be soldiers of Allah, are organized into cells. The 1991 raid indicates at least 5 cells, called "Muhammed Commados" exist. One five-person cell was captured at Niagara Falls in a chance search by customs agents. Inside the Fuqra vehicle were documents and materials

for a planned bombing of a Hindu temple in downtown Toronto. Each individual cell trains, plans, and acts together, in order to avoid undue interaction with other cells.

Fuqra cells are hidden within the structures of two non-profit front organizations, Muslims of the Americas and the International Open Quranic Universities. Both were founded by Sheikh Gilani, and a definitive money link was established between al-Fuqra and Muslims of the Americas by the Colorado attorney general's office.

### **Section 1.5a Muslims of the Americas**

Muslims of the Americas (MOA) is a tax exempt group that operates communes of African-American Muslims throughout the United States and Canada. The compounds are for the most part located in largely rural, undeveloped areas. Compounds are known to exist in Hancock, New York; York, South Carolina; Baladullah, California; Red House, Virginia; and a number of other locations, possibly including sites in the Caribbean. The Colorado Attorney General's office suggested as many as 30 'jamaats' were in existence. Founded by Sheikh Gilani, residents of MOA compounds profess to be seeking peace, isolation from Western corrupting influences, and at the same time have a desire to rejoin mainstream society. Commune spokesman, in the pages of American newspapers, repeatedly deny accusations of terrorism in the midst of the organization.

However, Muslims of the Americas officers are not immune from criminal activities. In 1998, the leader of the Balladullah, California compound, Khadijah Ghafur, received from Fresno County a charter to operate Gateway Academy Charter School. In the fall of 2000, Gateway Academy opened its doors for classes. The school received \$1 million in state funding in its first year of operation. In the fall of 2001, an additional 13 schools opened throughout the state on Gateway's original charter. By exploiting a loophole in California's charter school law, Khadijah Ghafur added schools in several different counties in California, all on the authority of Fresno County. Fresno County officials were unable to inspect the additional schools due to a lack of funding. In that year, Gateway reported 1,200 students under its charter. \$5.5 million dollars in state aid poured in. Meanwhile, Gateway and its affiliated schools charged their pupils tuition, hired ex-convicts as teachers, and educated their students in Islam. Parents believed their children were attending private religious institutions. By the time the state caught on, millions of dollars had left Gateway's coffers and been sent overseas. The final destination is unknown, but Muslims of the Americas residents all sign documentation that might provide a clue.

Residents of MOA compounds pledge tithes to the organization. 70% of money received from welfare by the residents goes directly to Muslims of the Americas. Other documents pledge income of residents toward the advancement of Islam around the world. Investigations of the Colorado Attorney General's office revealed the al-Fuqra money stream was directly tied into the MOA money stream. And all of it was traced back to Sheikh Gilani. Shiekh Gilani maintains ties with terrorist organizations, used to host a guerilla training ground, and advocates for violent opposition to western

civilization. The money stolen from the state of California likely found its way to the founder of Jamaat al-Fuqra. In 2004 Khadjiah Ghafur and two other MOA officers were arrested on tax fraud and grand theft charges. In the meantime, spokesmen of affiliated Muslims of the Americas compounds maintain their worldly innocence, and speak of al-Fuqra violence as a thing of the past.

However, documented links between Muslims of the Americas and al-Fuqra are many. Not the least of the links was established by the Colorado state Attorney General's Office, whose lead investigator said of the group "Muslims of the Americas is, in reality, only a front organization. It's just a cover for the fact that they carry out terrorist activities."<sup>19</sup>

An entity located on MOA sites is the *Islamic Post*, a newspaper founded by Gilani whose annual subscription costs \$24.<sup>20</sup> Incidentally, the York, South Carolina, community recently renamed itself Holy Islamville after an alleged series of miracles centered around a fax machine at the site.<sup>21</sup> Sheikh Gilani has consecrated the community as the first Muslim shrine in North America.

### **Section 1.5b International Open Quranic Universities**

The International Open Quranic Universities, a network of schools founded by Sheikh Gilani, are located on Muslims of the Americas compounds. The Universities publish al-Fuqra texts and Islamic educational materials. Schooling in the system is profoundly slanted to the al-Fuqra worldview. One woman, a spokeswoman for the York, South Carolina compound, attended the International Open Quranic Universities. Her thesis topic, for which she received her advanced degree, detailed every facet of the Satanist-Zionist conspiracy to blame Muslims for the World Trade Center bombings.<sup>22</sup>

The link between the Open Quranic University and al-Fuqra is never more clear than in a video found in the early 1990s. A recruitment video seized in 1992 and used in a Toronto bombing trial shows Sheikh Gilani declaring "We give [recruits] highly specialized training in guerrilla warfare... We are at present establishing training camps... You can easily reach us at Open Quranic University offices in upstate New York or in Canada or in Michigan or in South Carolina or in Pakistan."<sup>23</sup>

### **Section 1.6 Jamaat al-Fuqra and American prisons**

Jamaat al-Fuqra is adept at acquiring recruits from American prisons. Due to a growing trend of Islamic charities funding the preaching of radical Islam in American prisons, the incarcerated and recently converted have become easy targets for an organization promising a welcoming community and a better life.<sup>24</sup>

### **Section 1.7 Jamaat al-Fuqra's Fraudulent Operations**

Jamaat al-Fuqra's attempt to provide charter school educations was not the group's only effort to defraud American governments. The 1989 raid of a Buena Vista, Colorado storage locker was predicated by a five-years long defrauding of the Colorado state department of labor and employment through fraudulent worker's compensation claims. Ultimately, Colorado law enforcement agencies convicted five al-Fuqra members in 1993 for defrauding the Colorado government of nearly \$350,000. Prosecuting agencies indicated the amount had been laundered through Professional Security International (PSI), a security firm owned by members of Jamaat al-Fuqra, and Muslims of the Americas. Departed funds were tracked through PSI to couriers who traveled to Pakistan. The security firm enabled al-Fuqra operatives to obtain federal licenses to buy weapons. The Fuqra is also suspected of having two more security firms located in New York.

There is a similar fraudulent operation allegedly underway at a compound in Red House, Virginia, where an array of Muslims of the Americas residents have been convicted since 2001 of arms smuggling and illegal weapons possession.

### **Section 1.7a Jamaat al-Fuqra, Finances, and for-Profit Organizations**

Jamaat al-Fuqra has made a great deal of money smuggling arms, defrauding state governments, and tithing its members of the majority of their income. Laundered funds regularly flow from Canada and the United States to Lahore, though money laundering activity has supposedly been blocked following American fiscal efforts post-September 11<sup>th</sup>.<sup>25</sup>

The Colorado workers compensation fraud operation funneled funds through a Fuqra-owned security organization, Professional Securities International. Colorado investigators tracked the funds from Colorado through to Pakistan. Not only did the security firm allow Fuqra members to obtain federal licenses to purchase weapons, but the firm had won contracts from the Defense Department, the Veterans Administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Department of Health and Human Services. Fuqra maintains two other security firms today, Dagger Investigating Services, and 786 Security Company Inc. Intelligence sources believe the firms represent new money laundering opportunities for Fuqra members.<sup>26</sup>

### **Section 1.7b The Money Trail to Pakistan**

Al-Fuqra recruits sign documentation pledging percentages of their income to Islamic efforts abroad. Those efforts include charitable organizations that fund extremist Islamic terror organizations.

An Indian who served in the Indian army and in the country's primary intelligence agency recently published a book suggesting Pakistan's ISI was directly funding Kashmiri and Sikh extremists. When the United States became involved, the ISI passed on those responsibilities to private contractors, including Jamaat al-Fuqra.<sup>27</sup>

### **Section 1.7c Arms Smuggling**

A stream of arrests by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms yielded three Red House, Virginia residents in 2001. Felon Vincente Paul Pierre used his wife to purchase firearms. Both were convicted. Pierre had been convicted in the Colorado workers compensation scam eight years before. It was his handwriting, prosecutors revealed, that had marked the Colorado target dummies with the phrases “FBI” and “Zionist Pig”.

### **Section 1.8 al-Fuqra and al-Qaeda**

Al-Fuqra and al-Qaeda were recently linked in a Royal Canadian Mounted Police Report of April, 2003 that cites a document from 1998.<sup>28</sup> In addition, there are a number of close contacts that are difficult to ignore. Not only has Sheikh Gilani been present at a terrorist conference also attended by Osama bin Ladin, but the ideological and theological similarities between the two have brought them into accord many times in their history.

Osama bin Ladin got his start fighting the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, precisely where Sheikh Gilani brought his first American followers. In later years, bin Ladin and al-Qaeda turned their attention toward the United States. Sheikh Gilani and his followers were already there, conducting faith-based violence. By that time, the core of al-Qaeda’s leadership was composed of former members of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, formerly headed by the now incarcerated Sheikh Rahman.

The cadre of Mohammad Commandos 5 included a large poster of Rahman among their munitions<sup>29</sup>, and a member of al-Fuqra worked with Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman during the first World Trade Center attack. Al-Fuqra members were not only admirers of Rahman, but they were his associates. Rahman’s followers now form the core of al-Qaeda’s leadership. Those connections, and others like them indicate there is a great deal of room for accord and communication between al-Fuqra and al-Qaeda.

### **Section 1.8a Popular Arab Islamic Conference**

Sudanese terrorist Hassan Abdullah al-Turabi created the Popular Arab Islamic Conference as a way to bring together Sunni, Shiite, and secular terrorist groups. The 1993 PAIC conference in Khartoum hosted mullahs from Iran and Afghanistan and members of Hamas, Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Two generals, one of them a former chief of Pakistan’s intelligence agency, and an adviser to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto led the Pakistani delegation. Osama bin Laden, early in his terrorist career was there. Sheikh Gilani was also present, identified by foreign journalists in the company of Pakistani government officials.<sup>30</sup>

### **Section 1.8b Jamaat al-Fuqra and Other Terrorist Organizations**

Al-Fuqra members, individually and collectively, have shown a willingness to work with other violent organizations to achieve common goals. Rodney Hampton-el assisted the Blind Sheikh in planning a sequel assault to the first World Trade Center Bombing. But as a group, al-Fuqra has shown itself equally interested in forging strong collective ties.

As al-Fuqra grew in numbers, it is believed a working relationship was established with the El Rukn, a violent Chicago street gang. In 1987 El Rukn, a black Muslim organization, may have received \$2.5 million from the Libyan government to act as a fighting force on call to serve the Libyan government against the United States. When a large portion of the El Rukn leadership was incarcerated, many of the members sought sanctuary with Jamaat al-Fuqra.<sup>31</sup>

Also, al-Fuqra members attempted to smuggle explosives into the United States via the Canadian border in cooperation with Hamas members in 1993. Five were arrested.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, al-Fuqra members are known to have assisted the domestic branch of the Islamic Jihad, also called the Al Kifah network, in establishing and utilizing a paramilitary camp in Pennsylvania. The alleged purpose of the camp was to provide recruits and training to assist Muslims in Bosnia.<sup>33</sup>

From the beginning, al-Fuqra members relied on other organization's in order to get their fill of *jihad*. The original cadre of exceptional recruits received a military education fighting against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, as members of the "Islamic Party" guerilla force funded by Iran and headed by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The first mention of Black Americans fighting for the Afghanistan mujahideen was in 1985.<sup>34</sup> More recently, Vincent Paul Pierre, arrested for having his wife purchase guns for him, testified that the Red House, Virginia compound had hosted foreign Muslims and Arabs from Pakistan.<sup>35</sup>

### **Section 1.9 Jamaat al-Fuqra Leadership and Notables**

Jamaat al-Fuqra's leadership rests solely in the hands of Sheikh Mubarak ali Gilani in Pakistan. Gilani himself is a charismatic character, the scion of a noted family in the Islam world. He has four wives, and has not returned to the United States since 1995. He has old and well maintained contacts with Pakistan's intelligence agency, the Interservice Intelligence Agency (ISI),<sup>36</sup> and has made the acquaintance of Osama bin Ladin and a number of other terrorist figures.

Numerous other individuals have made themselves notorious or exceptional through their actions. These include those who have conducted operations, trained their fellows, or served the cause as civilian criminals. The stories of the following individuals offer insight into the makeup of Jamaat al-Fuqra.

#### **Section 1.9a Stephen Paster**

In 1983, Stephen Paul Paster, one of the few whites in al-Fuqra and the organization's chief explosives expert, blew off his hand while planting a pipe bomb at a hotel owned by supporters of a prominent Indian guru. Paster was also suspected of two Seattle bombings in 1984 but never charged. He was arrested in Colorado and served four years for the 1983 bombing. Following his release, Paster left for Lahore, Pakistan where he has since spent his time training Fuqra recruits in explosives. He lives today with the

woman who raised a man recently arrested in Red House, Virginia, for illegal arms possession.<sup>37</sup>

### **Section 1.9b Khadijah Ghafur**

Khadijah Ghafur is the spokeswoman for the Balladullah, California compound and former superintendent of the Gateway Academy school system that bilked the state of California of over \$6 million dollars. Ghafur joined the chorus of Muslims of the Americas spokespersons pledging her community's innocence<sup>38</sup>, and didn't let up until her lawsuit for defamation was summarily rejected by the court.

### **Section 1.9c Abu Talut**

A technical advisor to the *Islamic Post*, Abu Talut has a number of his articles posted on an Irish general news website. His voice, though at times moderate, nonetheless suggests a paranoid worldview that holds great distrust of Western governments. Talut, who fought in Vietnam, presumably for America, and Afghanistan, presumably for Gilani and the "Islamic Party" against the Soviet Union, looks at the NATO airstrikes in Bosnia as a direct assault upon the aspirations of the Muslim population there, who had sought to establish their own country. Evil, he laments, cannot save one from evil. Every western operation in regards to Muslims, he tells his reader, is conducted solely for the sake of the western government's interests and at the direct cost of the Muslim.

### **Section 1.9d Suhir A. Ahmad**

This woman, a spokeswoman for the Hancock, New York community, received a graduate degree from the Open Quranic Universities that showcases the worldview of Muslims of the Americas adherents. Her thesis 'proved' the vast Satanist-Zionist conspiracy to place blame for the World Trade Center Towers attack of September 11, 2001 on followers of Islam.<sup>39</sup>

### **Section 1.9e Rodney Hampton-el**

Rodney Hampton-el is currently serving a life sentence in federal prison for his role in the planning of the New York City landmarks bombing immediately after the first World Trade Center attack. Hampton-el was one of a number of individuals working with Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, the blind sheik, who was a member of the leadership of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. Hampton-el's willingness to work with the leader of an entirely separate extremist Islamic terrorism indicates al-Fuqra members will not discriminate when the ultimate goal is the cleansing of Islam. Hampton-el was among the first of Gilani's American followers to fight for the "Islamic Party" in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union.<sup>40</sup>

### **Section 1.9f Max Lon Fongenie**

His son still lives in a Muslims of the Americas compound near Toronto, but Max Lon Fongenie has not been seen in North America since he disappeared following the arrests of his co-conspirators for a plot to destroy a Hindu theater and temple in downtown Toronto in 1991. Fongenie, who was wanted by investigators prior to the arrest of his companions, is believed to have fled to Pakistan and the shelter of Sheikh Gilani.

### **Section 1.9g James D. Williams**

James D. Williams, later arrested, convicted, and sentenced to 69 years in prison, was the chief of the Buena Vista, Colorado Fuqra cell. Williams was convicted in 1993 but jumped bail and remained free until his arrest in Virginia in 2000.

## **Chapter 2: Modes of Attack**

### **Section 2.1 Bombings**

Al-Fuqra's first notable bombings were carried out by Stephen Paul Paster in Seattle in the early 1980s. Al-Fuqra bombings tend to target Hindu, Jewish, and Hare Krishna religious centers. Usually, bombs are placed near gas lines or high population areas in an attempt to cause as much damage as possible. Since a foiled bomb plot in Toronto in 1991, al-Fuqra has not conducted any further known bombings. Stephen Paul Paster, who served four years in prison in the 1980s, went to Pakistan upon his release where he remains, an able explosives trainer for al-Fuqra recruits.

### **Section 2.2 Assassinations**

Members of al-Fuqra conduct assassinations of Muslim clerics whose interpretations of the Koran are too liberal. In 1983, a moderate Muslim cleric was assassinated in his home near Detroit, Michigan. His two assailants, who set fire to the nearby Mosque, died of smoke inhalation before they could escape.<sup>41</sup> The 1989 Colorado investigation turned up detailed plans to assassinate a cleric in Tucson, Arizona. The cleric was warned his life was in danger, but four months later he was stabbed in exactly the manner described by the Colorado documents.

### **Section 2.3 Attack Structure**

Fuqra members form classic terrorist cells when conducting violent operations, composed of three to six persons. Active cells refer to themselves as "Soldiers of Allah" and employ carefully planned and sophisticated methods to communicate. Law enforcement officials arrested a three-person cell in Virginia in December of 2001, cuffing the Fuqra members for illegal transport of ammunition for AK-47 rifles.<sup>42</sup>

### **Section 2.4 Training and Materials**

Susan M. Fenger, the chief investigator of the Colorado case, described documents and videos detailing the meeting of Muhammad Commandos of Sector 5 meeting for training in weapons, hand to hand combat, intelligence gathering, explosives, incendiaries, and booby traps. A documents headed “incogs” instructed commandos on how to blend in with infidels.<sup>43</sup>

The 1989 raid of the storage locker in Colorado yielded a trove of surveillance information on targets, both people and places, throughout Los Angeles, Arizona, and Colorado. Among those packets were documents tying al-Fuqra to firebombings of Hare Krishna temples in Denver and Philadelphia.<sup>44</sup> The breadth of information compiled by the Commandos in Colorado, and similar documentation found on the plotters of the Toronto bombing, indicate members of al-Fuqra were recipients of significant surveillance training.

Initially, exceptional al-Qaeda recruits were sent to Pakistan for additional religious indoctrination<sup>45</sup> and military training.

Fuqra members receive extensive training in the use of weaponry. Even children are educated in firearms. Estimates of ammunition expended per year per person have gone up to 10,000 rounds.<sup>46</sup> In comparison, the average non-SWAT police officer fires around 360 rounds a year. Additionally, promising students receive explosive and incendiary production, as well as surveillance and counter-surveillance training.

### **Chapter 3: Signatures and Recruiting**

#### **Section 3.1 African American**

The creation of al-Fuqra was almost accidental in nature. Members of a loose-knit Muslim brotherhood in Brooklyn, New York, took Gilani in as their spiritual advisor.<sup>47</sup> Most of the brotherhood were African Americans loosely affiliated with Dar ul Islam and the orthodox black Muslim movement in America.

Gilani appealed to African-Americans because he did not distinguish between blacks and whites (a practice described by the “Open” Universities of Gilani), and because he preached against the oppression of the government. Pressed by his students, he married the daughter of an African-American follower to prove he did not discriminate.<sup>48</sup> To this day, the majority of al-Fuqra members are African American, or blacks from the Caribbean.

#### **Section 3.2 Ex-Convicts**

Many al-Fuqra members were introduced to radical Islam in prison, primarily by mullahs there for ‘religious guidance.’<sup>49</sup> A number of ex-convicts were employed by the Gateway Academy Charter school, and its sister schools, as teachers.

### **Section 3.3 Recruitment**

Recruiting occurs primarily in prison. Agreements signed by Fuqra members and discovered in the Colorado raid included pledges to tithe to the organization, to donate welfare checks to the organization, and to pledge their funds, whenever needed, for the advancement of Islam throughout the world. Individuals selected to live on Muslims of the Americas compounds signed agreements to abide by the rules of Jamaat al-Fuqra.<sup>50</sup>

### **Section 3.4 American Citizens and Identification**

Followers of Wahhabist Islam are difficult to identify through their appearance. Though ritual dress is required, if acting on a mission to fight the enemy they may wear whatever necessary. Thus, identifying al-Fuqra members is a difficult task.

The vast majority of al-Fuqra members are American citizens, and they will be granted the protection of the United States government in any criminal trial. Members of the sect speak fluent English, know how to move throughout America, and have safe-houses in nearly every state. Additionally, al-Fuqra members are well-versed in the use of aliases,<sup>51</sup> and are proficient in the creation of false identification papers. Moreover, the raid of the Mohammad Sector Number 5 found training materials on how to blend in with the native, (infidel) population.

With the ability of al-Fuqra members to assimilate with local populations, it will probably be local law enforcement that first encounters al-Fuqra, as occurred in the Colorado investigations.

## **Chapter 4: Will Jamaat al-Fuqra attack?**

### **Section 4.1 Jamaat Al-Fuqra's Capability**

Al-Fuqra has the know-how to conduct terrorist operations, the ability to blend into the rest of the American population, the capability of organizing detailed missions, and little difficulty acquiring the necessary funding. As a bonus, al-Fuqra members work in extremely sensitive transportation centers in and around one of the foremost cities of the world. Furthermore, they control excellent training facilities and are willing to work with other terrorist organizations.

### **Section 4.2 Terrorists Working Together**

Terrorist organizations around the world have begun, more and more, to work with each other in accomplishing a common goal. Former CIA Director George Tenet agreed that the mixing and matching of capabilities, the swapping of training, and the use of common facilities among terrorist organization is common in the modern world.<sup>52</sup>

Already, al-Fuqra has shown its willingness to work with a domestic gang, the El Rukn, in addition to smuggling weapons with Hamas and working, on an individual level, with

members of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. With ever closer associations developing between international terrorist networks, it is only a matter of time before al-Fuqra assists an organization in an assault on United States soil.

### **Section 4.3 Gilani : Peacemaker**

Sheikh Gilani responds innocently to criticism. “Once people join our University, they become real good citizens. They stop smoking, they stop stealing, they stop living on welfare. That is what I teach them.”<sup>53</sup> Fuqra researcher Mira L. Boland:

That benign face is the one Gilani’s current American followers seek to present to the world. Several Fuqra compounds boast signs at their gates for the Quranic Open University or Muslims of the Americas. Residents have told reporters they came seeking refuge from the mean streets. Law enforcement and intelligence officials, however, suggest the drop-off in Fuqra violence in recent years may be due to its sponsors’ “tightening the leash” after the earlier attacks drew police scrutiny without advancing Islamist objectives. Fuqra’s core of trained operatives in the United States, according to this view, have been directed to lie dormant until needed to support a “cost effective” strike.<sup>54</sup>

This is perhaps why Sheikh Mubarak ali Gilani’s 2005 *New Year’s Message* to the Muslim faithful cautioned the Muslim population of America to wait, to avoid anti-American rallies, and to trust in Allah.<sup>55</sup> He may anticipate a pending ‘cost effective strike’ or al-Fuqra’s decade of silence could be the result of a professional shift on the part of Fuqra members towards organized crime and away from terrorism. As Harvard fellow Jessica Stern suggests, “[t]errorism can become a career as much as a passion. In professional terrorist groups, objectives can evolve if circumstances change.”<sup>56</sup> Perhaps al-Fuqra has turned to a life of organized crime. Then again, it is doubtful Gilani would choose a secular rather than a religious incentive for his organization, given his familial background as religious icon in the Islamic community.

### **Section 4.4 The Scales**

There are certain events that might tip Jamaat al-Fuqra toward violence, and other events that might convince al-Fuqra otherwise. On the one hand, continued vigilance by United States authorities with regard to known al-Fuqra members and compounds might go a long way toward reducing the effectiveness of the group as a support organization. An educational program for local law enforcement authorities describing Jamaat al-Fuqra and similar domestic terrorist organizations might help when and if those public safety officials do encounter the group.

Additionally, international decisions, such as war or peace with Iran, might serve to sway Jamaat al-Fuqra sentiments. Ultimately, it is difficult to imagine the paranoid sensibilities of current Fuqra members finding good within any action of the United States at the international level. A more effective approach might be to take measures to offset the education offered by extremist madrassas in the Middle East. More pointedly,

a closer look at the religious education offered to convicts in our prison system might be in order.

## **Appendix: Case Study and Miscellany**

### **A.1 Case Study: The Toronto Bombing**

The Canadian prosecution of a foiled plot by a five-person al-Fuqra cell is notable for the details it reveals about al-Fuqra's attack methods. It also provides insight into the people who make up Jamaat al-Fuqra.

A well dressed couple enter the India Theatre at 7:30pm. The woman carries a large shoulder bag with two charges, and when seated, places them under the theater's balcony seats. A third man places three additional charges in the men's bathroom, beneath the main-floor seating. Simultaneous charges are placed by the final two men along the gas lines of the Vishnu Temple. In "cold-blooded, calculating and callous" words the five plotters laid out the details of a plan to murder hundreds, perhaps thousands of Toronto's citizens.<sup>57</sup> Robert Junior Wesley, Caba Jose Harris, Khidr Ali, Tyrone Junior Cole, and Glen Neville Ford were the five al-Fuqra members who were arrested at the United States-Canadian border near Niagara Falls when an impromptu search of their vehicle turned up suspicious documents.

The documents included hand-scrawled bomb plans with assignments for a "hit team", "recon team", and "guard team". There were lists of materials needed to make bombs, an attack plan, aerial photos and floor plans of the target sites, and videotaped footage of the exteriors and interiors of the building. Three of the men produced false identification at the border. The owner of one of the cars, a Brooklyn, New York, man, was arrested when a search of his home in connection with the case turned up an illegal cache of weapons and 2,000 rounds of ammunition. A book confiscated from one of the men's homes, written by Sheikh Gilani, partly explains the motivation for the attack. "The mission of this Jamaat al Fuqra is to lead Muslims to their final victory over Communists, Zionists, Hindus, and deviators."<sup>58</sup>

A money trail was established between Tyrone Junior Cole and Sheikh Gilani, with Cole sending a \$2,000 bank transfer to Gilani. Glen Neville Ford testified that Cole sent the money to the sect's founder in order to assist Muslims under siege in Kashmir.<sup>59</sup> The five men were all born in the Caribbean, and had moved to the United States before entering Canada. A sixth man, Max Lon Fongenie, was wanted for his involvement in the plot but fled. An *America's Most Wanted* segment featured Longenie, who is strongly believed by the intelligence community to have fled to Pakistan with Gilani's assistance.

Lastly, documents left behind by the plotters indicate a strong and abiding paranoia. For example, the men believed the Persian Gulf conflict would inevitably lead to the persecution and oppression of Muslims living in the West.

As their defense, the five's lawyers argued the materials confiscated were simply props for a humanitarian training video for oppressed Muslims in Kashmir, and they explained their clients were deeply religious men.<sup>60</sup>

Three of the men, Harris, Cole, and Ford, were convicted on a lesser charge and sentenced to 13 years in prison. During their incarceration they have been repeatedly denied parole by skeptical Canadian judicial authorities. The two other men were acquitted, with the jury deciding they were innocent associates of the three other, more dangerous, men.

In this one, aborted episode are described a variety of the elements that give Jamaat al-Fuqra its identity. First, the physical elements: a five person cell prepared to carry out a well planned, researched, and detailed simultaneous bombing; a money trail leading from Jamaat al-Fuqra members to foreign, Islamic organizations; and a physical trail leading to a Brooklyn, New York man where an additional investigation turned up a sizable weapons cache, and the written ideological doctrine of the group's founder, present as always to remind his adherents of their duties on earth. Next, the spiritual elements: religious men dedicated to cleansing Islam; and a viable target preaching a doctrine which they would kill over. Organizational elements: the Canadian jury decided two men were simply keeping the wrong company. It is probable that a majority of Muslims of the Americas members are unaware of the terrorist history and future of their organization. Lastly, the distorted worldview: a paranoid understanding of the Western world to govern and sanctify the men's actions.

## **A.2 Jamaat al-Fuqra Brief Timeline**

### **1980**

Sheikh Mubarak ali Gilani founds Jamaat al-Fuqra among a loose knit community of Muslims in Brooklyn, New York.

### **1980-82**

Muslims of the Americas is founded, members intermittently use the name Jamaat al-Fuqra. Members are composed primarily of African-American converts to Islam.

### **1983**

Muslims of the Americas members begin purchasing rural pieces of land.

Mozaffar Ahmad shot to death at home near Detroit by al-Fuqra members who perish in the act of destroying Ahmad's mosque.

Stephen Paster bombs a Portland, Oregon, hotel owned by followers of a noted Indian guru.

### **1984**

A Hare Krishna temple in Denver is firebombed by al-Fuqra members

Colorado Fuqra members begin defrauding state department of labor and employment with fraudulent workers compensation claims.

Stephen Paster is suspected but not charged in the bombing of two more sites in Seattle.

**1989**

Police investigating workers compensation fraud in Colorado Springs discover a great deal more than expected when they raid an al-Fuqra storage locker. A large weapons cache, training materials, and detailed assassination plans are discovered.

**1990**

Tucson Cleric Rashid Khalifa is stabbed to death, in the manner detailed in the Colorado plans.

**1991**

Five admitted Fuqra members arrested in Niagara Falls as they try to enter Canada. Local authorities discover a detailed plot to bomb a Hindu temple and theater in downtown Toronto.

**1992**

SWAT teams raid 101 acre mining claim near Buena Vista, Colorado. Discover money trail linking Muslims of the Americas to al-Fuqra.

**1993**

Three of the five Toronto conspirators are convicted and sentenced to 13 years in prison.

New York City Landmark bomb plotter Rodney Hampton-el is arrested, along with the Blind Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman. United States law enforcement begins to worry al-Fuqra is affiliated with al-Qaeda.

al-Fuqra members are arrested attempting to smuggle explosives into the United States through the Canadian border.

James D. Williams, the head of the Colorado cell, is convicted for the murder of Tucson cleric Rashad Khalifah. Williams skips bail, is later re-arrested in 1990 and given 69 year prison term.

Louis Freeh named director of the Federal Bureau of Intelligence. Freeh requests funds to thwart terrorism in his first budget, rather than funds to investigate acts of terror.

**1995**

Mubarak Gilani makes final visit to the United States. Jamaat al-Fuqra is, for the first time, included by the State Department among "Other Terrorist Organizations".

**1998**

Fresno County grants Gateway Academy Charter school a charter to operate.

## **2000**

Jamaat al-Fuqra is dropped from the State Department report for a lack of activity.

Gateway Academy Charter School opens for classes. Begins defrauding California government of millions of dollars. \$1 million received in first year alone.

## **2001**

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms charges the leader and another resident of a Red House, Virginia compound with illegal weapons possession.

James Hobson of Balladullah, California, is arrested for smuggling weapons between South Carolina and New York.

Ramon Abdullah kills a Fresno County sheriff who interrupts him breaking and entering.

San Francisco Papers report something amiss with the Gateway Charter Schools

## **2002**

Gateway system schools receive \$5.5 million in funds from the state for an inflated roll of 1,200 students.

State agents raid Gateway offices, discovering inflated rolls, convict teachers, the teaching of Islam, and missing funds.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police issue report listing Jamaat al-Fuqra as one of the nation's top security concerns.

Indian government official suggest Jamaat al-Fuqra would be likely to play a role in any sequel to the September 11<sup>th</sup> assault.

As of a 2002 investigation, Jamaat al-Fuqra's Balladulah, California, compound houses 440 residents.<sup>61</sup>

## **2003**

*Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl abducted while en route to what he thought was an interview with Sheikh Gilani. Pearl was investigating alleged links between Gilani and Richard Reid, the shoe bomber. Gilani is arrested but quickly cleared of suspicion.

## **2004**

Muslims of the Americas spokeswoman Khadijah Ghafur and two others convicted on charges of tax fraud and grand theft.

## **A.3 Images**



**Figure 1** His Eminence, Sultan Muhyiddin Syed Mubarak Ali Shah Gilani Hashimi, Al-Hasani wa'l-Husaini.<sup>62</sup>



**Figure 2** Inside the holy shrine of Baitan Noor, the first Muslim shrine in North America.<sup>63</sup>

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- <sup>63</sup> Picture of the Baitan Noor shrine of Holy Islamville, South Carolina. Available at [www.holyislamville.org](http://www.holyislamville.org)