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CAPE GIRARDEAU, Mo. (ABP)—Leaders from a prominent American Muslim group have denounced reported comments by the [Missouri Baptist Convention](#)'s executive director claiming "Islam has a strategic plan" to take over the United States.

Ibrahim Hooper, communications director for the Washington-based [Council on American-Islamic Relations](#), said David Clippard's assertions "are too bizarre to even comment on."

	
David Clippard	Ibrahim Hooper

According to two Missouri newspapers, Clippard, in his address at the opening session of the convention's annual meeting Oct. 30 in Cape Girardeau, said Muslims are trying to infiltrate North American schools and

take over U.S. cities in order to impose Islam and Islamic law on an unwilling populace.

“They have a plan to take over,” he said, according to Cape Girardeau’s [Southeast Missourian](#) newspaper.

“They are trying to establish a Muslim state inside America, and they are going to take the city of Detroit back to the 15th century and practice Shar’ia (Islamic religious) law there,” the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#) reported Clippard saying.

In his message, Clippard claimed there are now 300,000 Muslims in Detroit, which would comprise a majority of that city. However, in a 2000 survey, the [Association of Religion Data Archives](#) estimated that 46,492 Muslims lived in Wayne County, Mich., which includes Detroit. The largest religious body in the city in 2000 was the Catholic Church, with 451,069 adherents.

According to 2004 estimates by the American Religious Identity Survey, about 1.5 million adult Muslims live in the United States.

Hooper noted the Detroit metropolitan area long has been home to a large Arab-American community, but many of those are Catholics and other Arab-American Christians.

Clippard, reached via e-mail, cited multiple sources for the assertions and figures he quoted, including several books and research institutions. A “primary source” for the material, he said, was Jim Slack, an official with the Southern Baptist Convention’s International Mission Board in Richmond, Va.

Clippard claimed that Slack “has a primary Muslim scholar’s paper that documents the plans for Detroit,” but said he had not read it. Slack did not respond to a telephone message requesting comment by press time.

Clippard also reportedly said the Saudi Arabian government has funded more than 100 Islamic study centers and mosques in North America—including ones on or near the University of Missouri campuses in Columbia, Rolla and St. Louis.

According to the *Post-Dispatch*, a spokesman at the St. Louis campus said the Saudi government does not subsidize the university's Muslim Student Association or the school itself.

In addition, Clippard said, the Saudi Arabian government paid for 15,000 Muslim college students to come to North America to study with the intention, he claimed, of taking the continent for Islam.

"What they are after is your sons and daughters," Clippard said, according to the *Post-Dispatch*. "They are coming to this country in the guise of students, and the Saudi government is paying their expenses."

CAIR's Hooper said Clippard's claims about schools also are baseless.

"If he has evidence of that, I'd like to see it—but the Muslim Student Association has many chapters on college campuses around the country, just as other faith groups do," he said. "They're all just students trying to pass their courses like anybody else. Somehow to claim that they're (there to form an Islamic revolution), paid for by the Saudi government, is, again, too bizarre to even be commented on."

Clippard said the Muslim Students Association of the United States and Canada is the conduit for Saudi funding of campus Islamic centers.

A telephone number listed on the group's website was disconnected, and nobody from the group had responded to a message sent to the contact e-mail address listed on the site by press time for this story. But a statement on the site says: "We do not receive funding from overseas governments. We do not accept funding from any one source that might potentially seek

control of MSA National's agenda or affairs.”

Hadia Mubarak, a former president of the group who is currently a member of CAIR's board, echoed that statement. The MSA and its regional and campus affiliates “have absolutely no connection to Saudi Arabia or any foreign government, for that matter,” she said in an e-mail interview. “In fact, it is a policy of our organization to refuse any funding from foreign governments, as this is an indigenous organization created by American Muslims for American Muslims.”

Clippard, for his part, told the *Post-Dispatch* that his comments were not borne of hatred for Muslims. “I don't hate Islamic people,” he said. “We need to love these folks, go after them and love them, one at a time.”

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