

Testimonials

What friends, colleagues, and professors say about Hassan Diab...

“My friend Hassan Diab is well liked, respected, and appreciated by his colleagues and students. He has many Jewish friends, academic mentors, and collaborators who will vouch for his character. He is an engaging and motivated teacher who encourages his students to think critically and to excel as intellectuals. He gives clear, organized, well thought-out presentations that make for a lively and enriching classroom experience. As an international scholar who has lived and worked in a variety of nations, he is sensitive to the needs of students from different cultures and backgrounds. If a former terrorist wanted to hide his past, he would not lead the socially engaged lifestyle of Hassan Diab.”

*- Dr. Daniel B. Lee, Associate Professor of Sociology, CSU Channel Islands, USA
(friend and colleague), November 16, 2008*

“I had the opportunity to see how Hassan Diab interacted with students, teaching assistants and other colleagues, sometimes in situations of conflict. He was unfailingly constructive, courteous and conciliatory, sometimes in the face of significant provocation from others. I was shocked to learn of the charges against him and cannot see any sign of the alleged actions in so thoroughly decent and peaceful a man. Judging by student feedback and his syllabi, in no way is the content of his courses consistent with the allegations against him. I strongly believe that this is an instance of mistaken identity.”

*- Dr. Peter Gose, Chairperson, Department of Sociology, Carleton University, Canada,
November 18, 2008*

“Hassan was always a serious student who never expressed in my presence any signs of either anti-Semitism or any interest in what can be called the “Palestinian national struggle.” Indeed, he was exercised much more by the character of Lebanese politics and how this affected the relative economic development of different regions within that country... So, it is a total mystery to me how he can be accused of the crimes with which he is charged by the French government... He never had any interest in Palestinian politics, and he never ever indicated any signs of the anti-Semitism that bombing a synagogue in the name of Palestine would presumably require.”

*- Dr. John A. Agnew, Department of Geography, University of California at
Los Angeles, USA, November 18, 2008*

“I was the graduate director in the Sociology Department at Syracuse University in 1987 when Hassan started his graduate studies here... I talked to him many times over the course of his studies at Syracuse University. He was always friendly with people of all religions (including Jewish people), and I never heard him express any particular strong religious beliefs... I also never heard him express any interest in participating in fighting for any causes. The news of his recent arrest does not make any sense to me. It is inconsistent with everything I know about Hassan.”

*- Dr. Susan Borker, Associate Professor of Sociology, Emerita, Syracuse University,
USA, November 18, 2008*

“Hassan enjoys contact with people from all backgrounds. He’s very social, a people person, and enjoys substantive debate and discussion on all topics, from all viewpoints. Discussions of politics are analytical, not emotional... He is a non-violent person and a humanist. He is not a racist or a bigot.”

- Dr. Rachel Anjorin (classmate and friend), December 2, 2008

“Hassan is not the kind of person who would engage in terrorist activities. In all the time I have known him, he has never been active politically, he is against religious conflict of all types, and he is most definitely secular. He is a peace loving man, a devoted teacher, a good friend. I am in no doubt that this is a case of mistaken identity. I am shocked at the accusation. He does not deserve the disruption and hardship that this arrest will have in his life.”

- Dr. Sue Widdicombe (family friend and colleague), November 19, 2008

“Hassan Diab is an intelligent and lively person. In my experience with him, I have found him to be knowledgeable about developments in Lebanon and able to convey that knowledge dispassionately. I enjoyed the information he shared with me, as a dissertation advisee and in many other conversations. I never discerned any extremist or radical views or engagements on his part, nor prejudicial sentiments. He possesses a good intellectual and cosmopolitan spirit of interest in many matters, and views those matters with detachment and independence.”

*- Dr. Louis Kriesberg, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, Syracuse University, USA
(mentor and dissertation advisor), November 18, 2008*

“I am writing to assert my complete confidence in the innocence of Hassan Diab... I met Hassan when he was a new graduate student in the Sociology Department in 1987. We typically have fewer than ten students a year, so by the time they complete their degrees we have all spent many hours with them. Hassan was also a teaching assistant, so his work in the classroom was observed regularly for three years. Hassan was engaging and outgoing, able to get along with everyone. He was also an independent thinker, well-read and ready to listen. If Hassan had expressed, publicly or privately, any anti-Semitic views, either as a student or teacher, I would have known about it. If he had treated any student or faculty member without respect, someone would have told me. The department culture was very sensitive to racial, ethnic, or religious prejudice.”

*- Dr. Julia Loughlin, Professor Emerita of Sociology, Syracuse University, USA,
November 19, 2008*

“We have always known Hassan Diab to be a very pleasant, lively and intelligent person, very friendly and helpful... Hassan was certainly not politically nor religiously engaged; just a young man who enjoyed life and who was a serious student of Social Sciences at the Lebanese University. Knowing his character and his mild nature, we cannot imagine that Hassan Diab ever could have been involved in any sort of terrorist activities or inhuman acts.”

- Ed and Angele Nieuwland (long-time family friends), December 11, 2008
