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02/17/2006 01:15 PM

To: CaryleMurphy <murphyc@washpost.com>  
cc:  
Subject: New USIP report on the diversity of American Muslims

Dear Caryle -

I am writing to inform you about a new USIP Special Report, "The Diversity of Muslims in the United States: Views of Americans," by Qamar-ul Huda. As a writer on issues of religion in the United States, I hope you will find it useful.

The report focuses on the diversity of Muslim-Americans in the United States and how they have expressed themselves in the post-9/11 world. Huda finds that American Muslims, unlike Muslims in Europe, do not feel marginalized, isolated, or locked out of political participation. They do not see contradictions between Islam and such ideals as democracy, pluralism, or political activism, and often collaborate with the White House and law enforcement authorities on public policy.

Huda also finds that the majority of American Muslims favor political involvement, and in the aftermath of 9/11 have created a number of new organizations to confront widespread suspicion and challenges to civil liberties, as well as to form a Muslim-specific response to Muslim radicalism and the war on terrorism. The report provides descriptions of the membership, goals, and reputations of sixteen religious, political, and legal organizations.

The full report is available online at  
<http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr159.html>.

About the Author:

Qamar-ul Huda is a senior program officer in USIP's Religion and Peacemaking program, where his research focuses on Islamic thought and Islamic philosophy on violence, nonviolence, and conflict resolution. Prior to joining USIP, he was a professor of Islamic studies and comparative religion at Boston College's theology department (1997-2005). He also serves as adviser on interfaith relations to the archdiocese of Boston. Huda can be reached at [qhuda@usip.org](mailto:qhuda@usip.org) or 202-429-4707.

If you have any questions or would like to schedule an interview with Qamar, please feel free to contact me at 1-202-429-3828. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Erin

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## **Special Report**

February 2006 | Special Report No. 159

**Qamar-ul Huda**

### **The Diversity of Muslims in the United States: Views as Americans**

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#### **Summary**

- There are approximately 6 to 7.5 million Muslims in the United States who identify themselves as Americans. The community consists of a combination of immigrants and second- and third-generation Arab, Latino, Asian, European American, and African-American Muslims.
- The growth of the American Muslim community has fostered the development of a variety of religious, civic, political, cultural, economic, social, ethnic, feminist, artistic, and professional organizations.
- The diversity of American Muslim organizations provides a vast number of voices addressing such issues as terrorism, democracy, peacemaking, and human rights.
- American Muslims do not see contradictions between Islam and such ideals as democracy, pluralism, or political activism; rather, in recent years several national groups have made it their primary mission to reconcile all three Islamic values.
- Some leaders see the blending of Islamic values with the American experience as a solid bridge to mutual understanding between the United States and the Muslim world.
- American Muslim advocacy organizations often collaborate with the White House and law enforcement authorities to devise strategies on public policy, civil rights, the war against terrorism, and other related issues.
- Many organizations emphasize the importance of self-scrutiny and education in relation to the larger Islamic heritage.
- Interfaith dialogue has taken the forefront on the agendas of many American Muslim organizations, demonstrating a belief that building trust, peace, and reconciliation will ultimately lead to harmonious interfaith relations in the United States.
- American Muslim scholars advocate greater involvement by Muslims in the political, social, economic, and cultural spheres of American society.
- American Muslim scholars believe Muslims have an enormous responsibility and talent for resolving conflict and being agents for peace.

#### **About the Report**

With the war against terrorism and an increased attention on the Muslim world, this report analyzes ways Muslims in the United States understand their roles as Americans in combating terrorism and their unique contributions toward conflict prevention and peacemaking. The assimilation and integration of American Muslims has effectively enabled the flourishing of dozens of national and regional organizations to work in areas of civil rights, human rights, interfaith dialogue, education, charity, public diplomacy, political activism, and other religious and secular activities. Despite the post 9/11 scrutiny of the Muslim community, American Muslim groups have devised sophisticated grassroots campaigns on counter-terrorism and anti-extremist ideology.

Qamar-ul Huda is the Senior Program Officer in the Religion and Peacemaking program at the United States Institute of Peace. Formerly a professor of Islamic Studies and Comparative Theology at Boston College, he examines ethics, violence, conflict resolution and nonviolence in juristic and nonjuristic Muslim authorities in contemporary Islam. This report is part of a larger book project on American Muslim identity formation and Islamic approaches toward mediation and peacebuilding.

The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect views of the United States Institute of Peace, which does not advocate specific policy positions.

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