

June 4, 2009

Statement on President Obama's Historical Cairo Speech on Islam and Muslims

The Islamic Educational Center applauds and collaborates with President Obama's "new beginning" remarks given at Cairo University, in Cairo on June 4, 2009.

Addressing the Muslim world, the President's remarks were delivered with respect, a message of acknowledgement of Islamic history and Muslim contribution, understanding of Muslims, and ways of reaching out and resolving issues within the Muslim world and the United States. The President's speech justly brought on a "new" sound in the United States policy and relationship with the Muslim nations.

We stand by President Obama's first key issue, which is to confront violent extremism in all forms (group and state sponsored). Islam and God-fearing Muslims oppose any form of violence and terrorism, and we join in to voice our support to any coalition that opposes violent extremism. Muslims are required to uphold justice and peace, for the Holy Quran says, "O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor." (4:135)

We share President Obama's hope that the American effort heralds the opening of a new and genuine epoch that will end the conflict in the Middle East. We welcome that the President recognized the Palestinian plight and bravely sounded off for an ending of the settlement activities. Recognition of the sovereignty of Iraq and the willingness to work mutually with Iran are also saluted. We hail Obama's statement that cooperation of nations, leaders, and its people are critical components for a peaceful and prosperous world.

Admiration for a new approach by the United States not to impose U.S. values or standards on Muslim nations is much welcomed; what's more, to respect the tradition and values of Muslims nations to self-govern accordingly is also commended. We affirm the President's remarks that Muslims leaders must serve its people equally and respectfully. It is our hope that the United States desists in supporting oppressive and corrupted regimes that intimidate, imprison, and crushes the voices of its peaceful citizens who call for fair and equal treatment. However, we are apprehensive of the President's remarks of certain Middle Eastern countries who are heading the international efforts of dialogue and reconciliation between civilizations and religions while blatantly violating domestic human rights.

Having quoted the Holy Quran and using Arabic phrases several times throughout his speech, Obama stressed the importance of securing the rights of American Muslims to practice their faith accordingly in America. That the hejab attire of a Muslim woman does not diminish her human value, in addition to, ensuring the practice of charity by American Muslims. And highlighting the contribution of American Muslims.

Obama's speech has become an unprecedented public declaration of hope and cooperation ever made by an American president to the Muslim world. It is our wish for our fellow American citizens to

recognize the sentiments made by our president about Islam's historical advancements and contributions towards civilizations, and its sanctity in preserving humanistic values. We commend President Obama's call for a "new beginning" with the Muslim world and we are relying on the president to assert his stated principles through action. We hope that all conscience citizens, nations, and leaders worldwide will welcome and support the Presidents profound and brave statements, and work towards the betterment of the Muslim world.

Islamic Educational Center