

منتدى أمريكا والعالم الإسلامي

U.S.–ISLAMIC WORLD FORUM

DOHA, QATAR

Erdogan, Clinton, Kerry and Ibrahim Address the 2010 U.S. Islamic World Forum

February 13-15, 2010

Doha, Qatar

Among this year's speakers and participants were prominent Muslim leaders and Obama Administration and other U.S. officials, including Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan; U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton; White House Senior Director for Global Engagement Pradeep Ramamurthy; U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke; and U.S. Senator John Kerry, chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

During his [videotaped message](#) to the forum, President Obama used the opportunity to reaffirm his commitment to continuing U.S. outreach to the Muslim world. The President used the opportunity to announce his appointment of Rashad Hussain as the new U.S. Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The President went on to say to the forum's participants:

“As leaders in government, academia, media, business, faith organizations and civil society, you understand that we are all bound together by common aspirations—to live with dignity, to get an education, to enjoy healthy lives, to live in peace and security, and to give our children a better future. Yet you also know that the United States and Muslims around the world have often slipped into a cycle of misunderstanding and mistrust that can lead to conflict rather than cooperation. That is why in Cairo last year I called for a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect. I laid out a vision where we all embrace our responsibilities to build a world that is more peaceful and secure. It has only been eight months since Cairo, and much remains to be done. But I believe we've laid the groundwork to turn those pledges into action.”



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In her [address](#) during the forum’s main plenary, Secretary of State Clinton followed up on President Obama’s Cairo speech and addressed the key challenges in U.S.-Islamic world relations: the advancement of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East; Iran’s pursuit of nuclear weapons; violent extremism; opportunity for young people; and respect for human rights and support for greater religious understanding and tolerance.

Secretary Clinton went on to acknowledge that many in the Muslim world worry:

"...that the U.S. commitment is insufficient or insincere, that we have not fully embraced the spirit of mutual respect and partnership that the President described, or that we will fail to translate that spirit into the concrete steps needed to achieve real and lasting change in the world. I understand why people might be impatient. Building a stronger relationship cannot happen overnight or even in a year. It takes patience, persistence and hard work from us all."

During another plenary session, Director of Foreign Policy at Brookings Martin Indyk thanked His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, prime minister and foreign minister of Qatar, for his government’s role as co-convenor of the conference. Foreign Minister Al-Thani, in turn, welcomed the participants of the U.S.-Islamic World Forum to Doha, and emphasized the importance of the dialogue that takes place at the annual meeting. In his keynote [address](#), U.S. Senator John Kerry (D-MA), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, focused on the current tone and substance of U.S. relations with the world’s Muslim communities. He noted that repairing long-standing rifts would take patience and determination. Senator Kerry said:

“We gather at a time when many have serious doubts about whether real progress has been made since President Obama’s historic speech in Cairo. We can’t speak honestly at a forum like this without recognizing the widespread frustration many people feel. Much of it is justified. Some of it is not. But it is important to remember where we began. For a decade, our relationship was framed by trauma and terrorism, by two ongoing wars and political conflict—and the fallout only polarized us further.”

Senator Kerry also spoke of challenges that currently exist throughout the Muslim world

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that require shared efforts in order to maintain international security and improve prosperity across nations. The Senator pointed to Iran’s nuclear program as an area of primary concern:

“It is especially important that we remain united in preventing Iran’s nuclear program from setting off an arms race in the region. Make no mistake. Iran is not being singled out -- it has chosen to defy an international nonproliferation regime that is in all of our interests to enforce.”

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan delivered a passionate address focusing on the need for the West to rein in fear and misunderstanding of Islam. “The values of Islam and the Islamic world are being misinterpreted,” the Prime Minister told the Forum audience, adding, “Racism is dangerous, anti-Semitism is dangerous, and Islamophobia is just as dangerous.”

Prime Minister Erdoğan argued that "Islamophobia" was a grave danger that spread from the fallacy of equating of Islam with terrorism. “All Abrahamic religions condemn terrorism,” he said. The prime minister called on foreign heads of state and the media to take a more responsible role in educating the people of the West about the difference between Islam and terrorism, saying they needed to publicly and explicitly address the real threats of terrorism instead.

In another plenary session focusing on the dangers posed by fragile states around the world, U.S. Special Representative Richard Holbrooke spoke about the need to achieve long-term stability and security within these challenged nations. In particular, Ambassador Holbrooke focused on the need for long-term U.S. commitment to Afghanistan in particular, saying that “[U.S.] commitment to civilian programs (in Afghanistan) must be longstanding” and that the United States “cannot repeat the disastrous mistakes of 1989” following the Soviet withdrawal.

During his address to the forum, Malaysia opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim focused on the need for great human rights and freedom of speech protections around the world. Speaking on behalf of all political dissidents facing persecution, Ibrahim called on the United States and other nations to protect fundamental human rights.

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In the closing session, the heads of the five Forum working groups summarized the work and the outcomes of their meetings. In particular, the Right Reverend John Chane of the Religious Leaders working group called for a commitment by all governments to promote greater tolerance among peoples and religions. To that end, the religious leaders called for the creation of a Peace Corps focusing on the promotion of understanding among religions. The leaders called on all of the forum's participants to work toward those ends as they return to their home countries.