



## UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

An independent institution established by Congress to strengthen the nation's capacity to promote peaceful resolution to international conflicts

*EGL in Collaboration with the U.S. Institute of Peace presents:*

# ***Building Bridges of Understanding & Peace with the Muslim World.***

***October 11-13, 2007 –a three part program***

The dynamics of political, ethnic, and religious relations in the 21st century have demanded that Americans search for effective approaches to understanding the “other” both at home and abroad. As a result of the events since 9/11 including the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, heightened tensions with Iran and the ever-present violence between Israelis and Palestinians, there is an increasing awareness of the need to bridge divides with those from the Muslim world. Better appreciation and insight into the peoples who practice Islam is critical to ensuring a future of peace in the region, and a sense of community in the U.S.

**October 12, 2007**

**8:30 – 4:30 p.m.**

**Century College**

**White Bear Lake, MN**

For details and registration visit:

[www.CenturyGlobalEd.Project.mnscu.edu](http://www.CenturyGlobalEd.Project.mnscu.edu)

**Sponsored by:**

-U.S. Institute of Peace, Washington, DC

-Education for Global Learning: A Consortium of  
Minnesota State Colleges & Universities

-The Institute for Global Studies at the University  
of Minnesota

**8:00- 8:45 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast**

**8:45 -9:00 a.m. Welcome Remarks**

**-Dr. Larry Litecky, President Century College**

**-David Smith, Senior Program Officer, U.S. Institute of Peace**

**9:00 -10:15 a.m. Plenary**

**“Religious Faith, Pop Culture & Terrorism”**

**John Voll**

Professor of Islamic History and Associate Director of the Prince  
Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at  
Georgetown University, Washington, DC

Muslim communities exist in every society in the world and manifest their faith in many different ways. This presentation will discuss the wide range of ways that Muslims in history have defined and expressed their faith, with special attention being given to the current expressions that range from pop culture stars to

important innovative intellectuals to headline-grabbing terrorists. In this context, the great conflicts do not represent a clash of civilizations but rather a struggle between extremists and those who accept the pluralism of the contemporary world. The challenge becomes finding ways to build bridges that will bring diverse peoples together through a better understanding of their similarities and differences.

**10:15 - 10:30 a.m. Break**

**10:30- 11:45 a.m. Break Out Sessions**

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**Session One:**

**“Engaging Moderate Islamists: Democratic Promise or Political Peril”**

**Mona Yacoubian**

Special Adviser to U.S. Institute of Peace’s Muslim World Initiative

While U.S. engagement of moderate Islamists remains a hotly debated question, American democracy promoters have been busy working with legal Islamist parties and their leaders over the past decade. Far from the exception, engagement has become the rule in Morocco, Yemen and Jordan. What have been the benefits and costs of engagement? In her presentation, Yacoubian will assess the experiences of U.S. democracy promoters in three Arab countries: Morocco, Yemen and Jordan. She will also offer broader insights into how moderate Islamist parties might contribute to broader U.S. strategic goals such as promoting democracy in the Middle East and combating Islamic extremism.

**Session Two:**

**“Teaching about Islam in a Secular Pluralist Society**

**John Voll**

Professor of Islamic History and Associate Director of the Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University, Washington, DC

Building on the plenary discussion of the pluralistic world in which we live, this session will offer a discussion of some of the general issues involved in teaching about religious traditions in religiously pluralistic societies. In particular, we will discuss ways to teach about Islam in the secular and pluralistic contexts of American public education.

**Session Three:**

**“Voices of American Muslim Youth”**

**Safiya Ghori and Aalaa Abuzaakouk**

Muslim Public Affairs Council in Washington, DC.

In July the Muslim Public Affairs Council launched its first annual National Muslim American Youth Summit. Held in Washington, DC this 2 day event brought together 27 young leaders to engage in face to face dialogue with members of Congress, officials from the administration and a host of other policy makers. MPAC used methods of direct engagement with officials to dispel stereotypes and myths about young American Muslims and focused on strategies for engaging youth in U.S. civic and political life. This session will address the challenges and opportunities of working with Muslim American students in the college classroom.

**Noon to 12:30 Lunch**

**12:30 – 1:30 p.m. Lunch Keynote**

**“Authoritarian Political Regimes in the Muslim World”**

**Dina Shehata**

Al Ahram Center for Political & Strategic Studies, Cairo, Egypt.

**1:45-2:45 p.m. Break Out Sessions**

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**Session One:**

**“U.S. and Iranian Misperceptions: ‘Evil Empire’ vs. ‘Mad Mullahs’**

**William Beeman**

Professor and Chair, Department of Anthropology,  
University of Minnesota

**Session Two:**

**“Beyond Muslim Binaries: From Orlando to Jerusalem”**

**Kaldoun Samman**

Professor, Department of Sociology,  
Macalester College

**2:50 –3:45 p.m. Break Out Sessions: MnSCU Campus Initiatives in the Muslim World**

**“Developing Institutions of Higher Education & Collaboration in Somalia”**

**Abdurashid Ali**

Director, Somali Family Services, Minneapolis, MN

**Deborah Johnson**

Communications Faculty, Inver Hills

**“Exchanges and Collaborations with Egypt”**

**Ahmed El Afandi**

Professor Political Science, Winona State University

**Mary Pevos**

Professor Economics, Winona State University

**“Exchanging Higher Education Perspectives between Minnesota & Turkey”**

**Robert Ley**

Professor and Chair Economics Dept. and

Director International Studies, Bemidji State University

**David Kingsbury**

Professor Dept. of Technological Studies, Bemidji State University

**3:45-4:30 p.m. "U.S. Institute of Peace & Its Work with American Colleges and Universities"**

**David Smith, Senior Program Manager, USIP**

Founded in 1984, the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) is a congressional-funded entity with a mission to promote international conflict resolution peace-building. This session will provide an introduction to the many projects and initiatives of USIP and the opportunities that institutions of higher education have for collaboration with USIP including grants, fellowships and faculty seminars.

(For Thursday, October 11 and Saturday October 13 programs, see next page.)

**Thursday, October 11**

**Pre Conference Program:**

***Front Porch Forum "Courageous Conversations"***

**3-5 p.m. (reception follows)**

**Minneapolis Community & Technical College**

**Minneapolis, MN**

Presented by the MCTC Center for Civic Engagement. The Front Porch Series gathers people to the MCTC campus from a variety of communities to discuss urgent issues. This Forum will explore the relationships and tensions that occur in diverse cultural, ethnic, racial and religious settings and foreground issues that can arise when Muslim students participate in American college life. The Courageous Conversations Troupe, an MCTC student group that uses Theatre of the Oppressed techniques, will address concerns that matter to them and their peers.

**Saturday, October 13**

**Post Conference Workshop:**

**"Simulations & USIP Approaches: Tools for Learning about World Conflicts"** (facilitated by David Smith, U.S. Institute of Peace)

**9 a.m. to noon.**

**Century College**

**White Bear Lake, MN**