

OIC focuses on US Muslim issues



By SULTAN AL-TAMIMI | ARAB NEWS

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JEDDAH: The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), along with the American Islamic College, is organizing a three-day conference on Islam and Muslims in Chicago, US.

The objective of the event, to be held on Sept. 28-30, is to "discuss the issues of Muslims living in the US, seeking solutions to their problems, discussing possible contributions of the OIC to Muslims in the US, and creating ties between the OIC and Muslims and Islamic organizations in the US."

OIC Secretary-General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu will make the keynote speech along with John Esposito, professor of religion and international affairs and of Islamic studies at Georgetown University; Safa Zarzour, ISNA secretary-general; Rashad Hussain, special envoy of the White House to the OIC; and S. Abd Al-Hakim Jackson, professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Michigan University.

Ihsanoglu will have a special meeting with Islamic leaders in the US on Sept. 29 and in the evening Sami Yusuf will sing at a concert at the newly restored Auditorium of the American Islamic College, which has a capacity to hold 1,000 people.

Meanwhile, ministers of foreign affairs of OIC member states delivered a declaration countering Islamophobia at the UN in New York on Thursday. "While considering the importance of dialogue among civilizations and expansion of relations and cooperation between the Islamic world and other cultures and civilizations, we reiterate our commitment to continue efforts in engaging with the West in projecting the true tenets of Islam, and countering common challenges," said the ministers who attended the meeting under the motto "Countering Islamophobia."

"However, we express profound regret and deep concern at the increasing acts of Islamophobia, growing trend of intolerance and hatred towards Muslims, and mounting number of acts of violence against Muslims in some Western societies."

The ministers added that peaceful coexistence and the inter-communal and inter-religious tolerance that the international community is trying to achieve is "under threat from marginal and extremist fanatics and from the pervasive xenophobic discourse of a minority of extremist politicians."

The statement also rejected "all acts and attempts of distortion to associate Islam with terrorism." "Nothing could have been farther from the truth. Islam is a religion that implies peace by its very nomenclature. Such stereotyping leads to discrimination and poses grave and multidimensional challenges to global as well as regional peace, security and stability," it added.

The ministers further called on the international community to make collective efforts to prevent incitement of hatred and discrimination against Muslims and to take effective measures to discourage negative stereotyping of people on the basis of

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religion, faith or race.

They further called on the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to set up an observatory at her office to monitor and document acts that lead to the incitement of religious hatred, hostility and violence.

"With reference to the recent unfortunate episode pertaining to the "Burn a Koran Day", we express our appreciation for the strong and principled statements made by the US authorities as well as community and religious leaders and world leaders. We emphasize that inter-civilizational dialogue based on mutual respect and understanding amongst peoples should be effectively used for promoting human welfare and progress and for strengthening international peace and security, tolerance and global harmony."

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JAVED

Sep 27, 2010 19:24

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First focus on the issues in muslim countries and make muslim world united and strong.

WAQASUDDIN AL-AMERICANI

Sep 27, 2010 19:39

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Forgive me brothers, for although I have great respect for the scholars present and I'm sure their intentions are valiant, I think this whole outreach endeavor is futile. Islamophobia/Ameriphobia are present because of multiple reasons pertaining to America's military presence and occupation of many parts of the Muslim world, their financial and diplomatic support for many autocratic regimes which have just squeezed the life out of their peoples and rendered them destitute (many of them without even the most basic rights of participation, of protest, of speech, etc.), for its nuclear double standards, and of course for America's blind support for Israel's barbaric occupation of Palestine (not to mention anything about India). This problem is not just rooted in a misperception of reality, but also rooted IN reality itself. Until a powerful ("core") Muslim nation emerges out of the mess we are in right now we cannot ask for respect or understanding from anyone. Weaklings just don't have that right! Once a Muslim nation, which can hold its own, has emerged and we can stand on our own two feet without begging anyone for anything, then you will see for yourself that America will begin to change its foreign policy pertaining to the Ummah and bend over backwards if necessary to make sure we are not distressed by their actions or words. Until then all of this is futile, a waste of effort. The fact that they have their sons and daughters fighting and dieing in the Muslim world almost precludes any chance of a meaningful change in their perceptions of us. This will in all likelihood end up being a catcall from the peanut gallery made up primarily of other fellow Muslims and intellectuals with most people living in the vacinity of this "conference" being totally oblivious of its occurrence. And even for those middle class "white folks" who just happen to hear about it, I'm afraid I know all too well what they will be thinking "bout these people comin' to town tellin' us what ta think". Fix the Ummah brothers, the rest will follow...

N AMEEN

Sep 27, 2010 22:17

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I agree totally with Br. (sister?) Al-Americani. Nice name by the way! I want to add, that unification of the of the disparate Muslim nations into one Ummah will go a long way towards creating a powerful Muslim nation. This unification is not as hard to achieve. What one needs is a single Islamic currency and a single Islamic passport for all nations who are member OIC countries. The Islamic passport will allow for optimal reallocation of human resources across the boundaries of Islam by eliminating artificial boundaries created by nation-states along ethnic lines. Of course, all issues will not be solved, but it will certainly reduce the disparity between the haves and have-nots in the Islamic world. Additionally, it will reduce (but not eliminate) the unjust labor practices perpetrated by Arab nations on migrant workers in the Middle East. Finally, the global Islamic currency will also alleviate wealth disparity and allow all Muslim nations to compete on an equal footing with industrialized nations in the global economy. Easier said than done.

HINDOON

Sep 28, 2010 10:48

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I agree first two people ,we us muslim need to wake up and fix our problems.

SYED NEAZ AHMAD

Sep 28, 2010 10:51

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Oh I see! The OIC now intends to do a good turn, great!

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