

**CHANGING COURSE: A NEW DIRECTION FOR  
U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE MUSLIM WORLD**

Report of the Leadership Group on U.S.-Muslim Engagement

**What is at Stake**

Violent extremism in the name of Islam poses a serious security threat to the U.S. Yet the much-publicized divide between the U.S. and the Muslim world is not as deep or irreconcilable as many believe. Policies and actions – not a clash of civilizations or conflicting religious beliefs – are at the root of U.S.-Muslim tensions. **To prevent the next 9/11 and enhance U.S. and global security, no task is more important and urgent than improving U.S. relations with the Muslim world.**

**Changing Course: A New Direction for U.S. Relations with the Muslim World**

**On Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the U.S.-Muslim Engagement project will release the Report of its Leadership Group.** This Report presents the first senior leadership consensus on a comprehensive **new strategy for U.S. policy and action in the Muslim world, aimed at reversing the drivers of Muslim extremism and enhancing U.S. international security.**

**The Report is titled *Changing Course: A New Direction for U.S. Relations with the Muslim World*. It represents the consensus of an exceptionally diverse, senior, bipartisan and inter-faith group of 34 American leaders (list attached) who have worked together over the last 18 months.** Their work was supported by Search for Common Ground and the Consensus Building Institute, two organizations that specialize in building consensus on controversial public issues.

**Many of the Leadership Group's members will be available on September 24<sup>th</sup> to offer their enormous wealth and diversity of insights and perspectives for media interviews. Among those who may be available are Madeleine Albright, Richard Armitage, Vin Weber, Richard Land, Steve Bartlett, Dennis Ross, Stephen Heintz (President of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund), Imam Feisal Rauf, Dalia Mogahed of the Gallup Organization, Ingrid Mattson, and Tom Dine (former Exec. Director of AIPAC).**

The Report begins with the premise that improving U.S. relations with Muslim countries and communities is critical for U.S. and international security. It argues that the Global War on Terror has been an inadequate and sometimes counterproductive framework for improving our security, because it has not dealt effectively with the drivers of extremism. **It then highlights actions the U.S. can take, in partnership with Muslims committed to non-violent political and economic development, to reverse extremism, increase U.S. and international security and improve relations.**

### **Direct Call to Action for the New Administration**

The Report will be released immediately before the Presidential candidates' September 26<sup>th</sup> foreign policy debate. **The Leadership Group calls on the next President and the new Administration to:**

- Speak to the critical importance of improving U.S.-Muslim relations in his inaugural address
- Immediately re-affirm the U.S. commitment to prohibit all forms of torture
- Within the first three months of the Administration, initiate a major effort to resolve regional conflicts in the Middle East, giving top priority to engagement with Iran and permanent resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
- Within the first six months of the Administration, co-convene a business-government summit on economic reform, growth, and job creation in the Middle East, to create jobs and trade for the U.S. and Muslim countries
- Organize and lead an ongoing whole-of-government effort to improve U.S.-Muslim relations
- Create and fund, with private and international partners, a global initiative for teaching, learning, and exchange among citizens in the U.S. and Muslim countries

### **New Perspective & Recommendations for Familiar Challenges**

In addition, the Report provides a great deal of fresh thinking on specific challenges in U.S.-Muslim relations, moving beyond current deadlocked debates. Among the highlights, the Report:

- Puts Muslim extremism into perspective by presenting the global diversity of Muslim views, using the best and most comprehensive research available on Muslim public opinion
- Proposes a strategy for diplomatic engagement with Iran that goes well beyond the “preconditions/no preconditions” debate
- Addresses the Iraq “timetable” debate by highlighting the interests and principles that should drive U.S. decisions on future military and diplomatic involvement
- Reframes the debate on whether the U.S. should try to promote democracy, by showing how the U.S. can invest in improving governance and civic participation, without imposing a particular set of institutions, parties or leaders
- Highlights the massive employment challenge that the Middle East youth bulge presents, and argues for new partnerships for economic reform, using new financial sources like sovereign wealth funds
- Goes well beyond the current strategy for public diplomacy, by proposing major new government-civil society partnerships and investments in mutual education, people-to-people exchange, and cultural engagement

**For more information and to arrange an interview with members of the U.S.-Muslim Engagement Project, please contact:**

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### LEADERSHIP GROUP MEMBERS\*

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<b>Ziad Asali</b>	President and Founder, American Task Force on Palestine
<b>Steve Bartlett</b>	President and Chief Executive Officer, Financial Services Roundtable; former U.S. Representative; former Mayor of Dallas, Texas
<b>Paul Brest</b>	President, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
<b>Red Cavaney</b>	President and Chief Executive Officer, American Petroleum Institute
<b>Daniel Christman</b>	Lt. General (ret.), U.S. Army; Senior Vice President for International Affairs, U.S. Chamber of Commerce
<b>Stephen Covey</b>	Co-Founder and Vice Chairman, FranklinCovey; writer, speaker, and academic
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<b>Stephen Heintz</b>	President, Rockefeller Brothers Fund
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<b>Daisy Khan</b>	Executive Director, American Society for Muslim Advancement
<b>Derek Kirkland</b>	Advisory Director, Investment Banking Division, Morgan Stanley
<b>Richard Land</b>	President, The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, Southern Baptist Convention; Member, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom
<b>Robert Jay Lifton</b>	Lecturer on Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School; author of <i>Superpower Syndrome</i>
<b>Denis J. Madden</b>	Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore; former Associate Secretary General, Catholic Near East Welfare Association
<b>John Marks</b>	President and Founder, Search for Common Ground
<b>Susan Collin Marks</b>	Senior Vice President, Search for Common Ground; author of <i>Watching the Wind: Conflict Resolution during South Africa's Transition to Democracy</i>
<b>Ingrid Mattson</b>	President, The Islamic Society of North America; Professor of Islamic Studies, Director of Islamic Chaplaincy, and Director, Duncan Black Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Hartford Seminary
<b>Sayyeda Mirza-Jafri</b>	Strategic Philanthropy Consultant
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<b>Vali Nasr</b>	Professor of International Politics, The Fletcher School, Tufts University; Adjunct Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies, Council on Foreign Relations
<b>Feisal Abdul Rauf</b>	Imam, Masjid al-Farah in New York City; Founder and Chairman, Cordoba Initiative; author of <i>What's Right with Islam Is What's Right with America</i>
<b>Rob Rehg</b>	President, Washington, DC office, Edelman
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\* Organizational affiliations are listed for identification only. Leadership Group members endorse this Report in their personal capacities.