

Activate

2008



MPAC's Policy Guide to the 2008 Election



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OPEN LETTER TO MUSLIM AMERICAN VOTERS

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Islam,

Our divine message is to serve humanity by enjoining the right, forbidding the wrong and believing in good. This puts a responsibility upon the Muslim American community to act for the betterment of society. This philosophy should guide the 2008 presidential election. Our community should consider the following:

- Every eligible person should register to vote. A person who is not registered to vote is politically non-existent and has no voice.
- We should vote based on our conscience as shaped by the principles of Islam, in order to seek what is best for all people.
- While many of the candidates are distancing themselves from Muslims in order to appeal to the powers of prejudice and hate, our community should spare no effort in exposing the un-American nature of this attitude.
- We should never support or donate to any candidate who is not willing to engage with Muslims, or likewise, not working for all citizens on an equal footing. Muslims who donate to promote their individual agenda are allowing themselves to be manipulated and used against the best interest of their community. We must remember that we are answerable to God for our actions.

As we make our way to the ballot box in November 2008, we must be mindful of, and practice these principles. The Muslim American community must remind presidential candidates to refrain from highlighting differences between Muslims and other religious communities. Only then can presidential candidates expect to secure the Muslim American vote.

Sincerely,



Dr. Maher Hathout. MPAC Senior Advisor

INTRODUCTION

The Muslim Public Affairs Council's (MPAC) Policy Guide to the 2008 Election is designed for the engaging voter. MPAC has determined five key issues to address in this presidential election cycle in order to provide Muslim Americans with the candidates' position in their own words. The issues include: national security, healthcare, civil rights/civil liberties, the Iraq war, and U.S.-Muslim world relations.

MPAC offers information to Muslim voters without any endorsements. We believe that the best way to gain recognition from candidates is to engage them on important issues and not provide them blanket endorsements based on their popularity. We provide information to our community on election issues so that they can make the best decisions once they are in the voting booth.

This year, Muslim voters will play a key role in several important states for both the primary and general elections. Candidates will seek our money and our votes. They have already done so, as millions of dollars have been raised by Muslim Americans for presidential hopefuls. The question is how to translate that participation into access at the policymaking level for our community.

In recent months, there has been an alarming increase in Islamophobic comments made by presidential candidates who want to exploit an anti-Muslim atmosphere. Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney's recent comment in which he ruled out the possibility of hiring a Muslim to a U.S. Cabinet level position are just the latest in a disappointing and offensive track record among presidential hopefuls. Unfortunately, Mr. Romney is certainly not the first candidate to express concern about Muslim Americans' participation in the political process or in public life.

Senator John McCain (R-AZ) recently told BeliefNet.com that the prospect of a Muslim in the White House makes him "uncomfortable." Prior to that, Mayor Rudy Giuliani's political advisor Congressman Peter King (R-NY) said "unfortunately, there are too many mosques in this country" and accused Muslim Americans of not fully cooperating with law enforcement. In addition, Republican presidential candidate Congressman Tom Tancredo (R-CO) reiterated his support for considering "taking out Muslim holy sites" if another terror attack were to take place on American soil. MPAC seeks to ensure that the rhetoric against Islam and Muslims does not alienate the Muslim American community in this election cycle.

MPAC believes that every candidate who asks for money from Muslims should be able to publicly stand with Muslims and not shy away from doing so because of the current culture of fear of Muslims, which has polarized our nation and disenfranchised many in the Muslim American community. Candidates who choose not to publicize their relations with Muslims now cannot be expected to do so once in power. Powerful lobbies and special interest groups will have a detrimental effect on any presidential contender who fears retaliation for simply saying that Muslim Americans have the right to participate, financially and otherwise, in our society. As Muslim Americans, it is important that we support candidates who share our political views and more importantly, will protect the interests of all people. It is crucial that Muslim Americans reach out to candidates of all political parties to help address the issues facing our community today.

MPAC POLICY PAPERS: A Look at 5 Defining Issues in the '08 Election

#1 NATIONAL SECURITY

Summary

President Harry S. Truman enacted the National Security Act of 1947 after World War II, which became the official guiding principal of United States foreign policy. Since then, we have seen the creation of the Department of Defense, the National Security Council and, after 9/11, the Department of Homeland Security. Measures taken by the U.S. government to ensure national security include using diplomacy to rally allies and isolate threats, as well as implementing civil defense and emergency preparedness measures, including anti-terrorism legislation. We have also seen the use of intelligence services to detect threats and espionage, and to protect classified information. In turn, many of these policies have had a negative impact on the Muslim American community and adversely affected the civil rights of all Americans.

Although national security measures are imposed to protect society as a whole, such measures have restricted the rights and freedoms of individuals. When the exercise of national security laws and powers lacks good governance, and develop in the context of loose checks and balances, flawed policies create troubling results for all Americans. Some of these policies include the controversial USA Patriot Act, as well as the authority of governments to detain and spy on individuals. This issue is of extreme importance to the Muslim American community, and voters must be asking candidates, to what extent, for the sake of national security, should individual rights and freedoms be restricted? Furthermore, can the restriction of civil rights for the sake of national security be justified?

The Democratic Presidential Candidates on National Security

Joe Biden: “Continuing with his assault on individual rights and liberties in the name of national security, the President has also deprived terrorism detainees of the most cherished right in our constitutional system -- *habeas corpus*. “*Habeas corpus*” is a Latin term, meaning to render the body. The President responded to September 11, in an effort to make us safer, by cutting deeply into Americans’ most cherished rights and liberties and running roughshod over constitutional limitations on Presidential power. But as the Supreme Court recently held, “a state of war is not a blank check for the President when it comes to the rights of the Nation’s citizens.” (*Drake University School of Law, 4/3/07*)

Hillary Clinton: “The first obligation of the president of the U.S. is to protect and defend the U.S. That doesn’t mean that it is to the exclusion of other interests. After 9/11, Bush had a chance to chart a different course, both in Pakistan and in Afghanistan, and could have been very clear about what our expectations were. We are now in a bind. It is not completely, but partly, a result of the failed policies of the Bush administration.” (*2007 Democratic debate in Las Vegas, Nevada, 11/15/07*)

Christopher Dodd: “We’re not safer today [than after 9/11] even though we have not had an attack on our own soil. Tell that to the people in Iraq, tell that to the people in Afghanistan, tell that to the people around the world. Terrorism’s a real issue. It’s going to require a collective effort on behalf our nation working with others to make a difference. Terrorism is a tactic, it’s not a philosophy, and it’s going to require an inordinate amount of cooperation to solve that. Having the kind of first responders at home like the firefighters and police and EMS services that have the tools and the ability to stand up and defend our country has not been funded. While we haven’t been attacked, I think we’re vulnerable today more so than we were right after 9/11.” (*2007 AFL-CIO Democratic primary forum, 8/8/07*)

John Edwards: “We need the president to say to the American people, that the president is not above the law. The president will not spy on you illegally. The president himself will follow the law. But it’s about more than stopping the damage. It’s also about America meeting its responsibility to humanity. We have an enormous responsibility. We’re the most powerful, richest nation on the planet, and we know what the world thinks about us now, right? They think we’re a bully. They think we’re selfish. They think the only thing that America cares about is the expansion of American power. This has to change. The president has to travel the world and speak to the people of the world about the things that we really are, that we are a country that embraces equality. We are a country that embraces diversity: ethnic diversity, cultural diversity, faith diversity, because the world believes that we’re at war with the Muslim world, and that has got to change. It has got to end.” (*Take Back America 2007 Conference, 6/19/07*)

Mike Gravel: “We are mischaracterizing terrorism. Terrorism has been with civilization from the beginning. And it will be there to the end. We’re going to be as successful fighting terrorism as we are fighting drugs with a war. It doesn’t work. What you have to do is to begin to change the whole foreign policy. This invasion brought about more terrorists. Osama bin Laden must have been rolling in his blankets how happy he was over our invading Iraq.” (*South Carolina 2007 Democratic primary debate, on MSNBC, 4/26/07*)

Dennis Kucinich: “My vision of national security ties together not only military but diplomatic, economic, and human rights policies, and views the use of military force as a last resort. Building the link between domestic and defense issues, I believe that this country is more secure when the largest possible number of its citizens have a stake in its success, when decent education, healthcare, and housing contribute to productive lives for everyone.” (*Dennis4president.com*)

Barack Obama: “Five years after 9/11, our country is still unprepared for a terrorist attack. From improving security for our transit systems and chemical plants, to increasing cargo screening in our airports and seaports, the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission have been underfunded and ignored. The 9/11 Commission gave the government five F’s and 12 D’s on the implementation of its recommendations. Senator Obama is a member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and has supported efforts to base homeland security spending on risk rather than pork-barrel politics. He has also introduced legislation to strengthen chemical plant and drinking water security and to enhance disaster preparedness.” (*BarackObama.com*)

The Republican Presidential Candidates on National Security

Rudy Giuliani: Former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani has come out swinging against the Democratic-led filibuster that prevented a reauthorization vote on the USA Patriot Act. Giuliani said the Senate action “represents a grave potential threat to the nation’s security. Americans must use every legal and constitutional tool in their arsenal to fight terrorism and protect their lives and liberties. The attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, made clear that the old rules no longer work.” (*NewsMax.com, excerpt from New York Times op-ed by Giuliani, 12/18/05*)

Mike Huckabee: “I would never want to sacrifice one particle of America’s power. Ronald Reagan had it right when he led this country to unprecedented military strength. Our best defense is a military so well equipped and so well trained that no one wants to challenge it. Strength is a far more effective deterrent to war than is weakness, and the U.S. should never be apologetic for the development of the strongest military forces on the face of the earth. But with the development of strength and unprecedented power there must also be unprecedented restraint.” (*From Hope to Higher Ground, 2007*)

Duncan Hunter: “I’ve been chairman of the Armed Services Committee for the last four years. I’ve helped to rebuild national defense. We have worked hard to make sure that our people have enough pay, that they’ve got the ammunition and equipment, while at the same time looking over the horizon to look at the new threat of an emerging China and an Iran that is pursuing nuclear weapons and a Korea that already has some and is moving to get the means for delivery. So a strong national defense is what I would pursue.” (*2007 GOP primary debate at the Ronald Reagan Library, 5/3/07*)

John McCain: “I don’t think that’s the time to call in the lawyers, when we’re in a national security crisis. Those are the last people I’d call in. I’d call in my wisdom, my knowledge, my background, my experience, and my ability to lead this nation.” (*2007 GOP primary debate in Orlando, Florida, 10/21/07*)

Ron Paul: On eliminating FBI and DHS: “Well, you might ask a better question. Before 9/11, we were spending \$40 billion a year, and the FBI was producing numerous information about people being trained on airplanes, to fly them but not land them. And they totally ignored them. So it’s the inefficiency of the bureaucracy that is the problem. So, increasing this with the Department of Homeland Security and spending more money doesn’t absolve us of the problem. Yes, we have every right in the world to know something about intelligence gathering. But we have to have intelligent people interpreting this information.” (*2007 GOP debate at the University of New Hampshire, 9/5/07*)

Mitt Romney: On wiretapping mosques: “But use the law to follow people who are teaching doctrines of terror & hate, and make sure that if they’re doing that in a mosque, in a school, in a playground, wherever it’s being done, we know what’s going on. There’s no question but that we’re under threat from people who want to attack our country in this global effort. We need to know about that, track them, follow them, and make sure that in every way we can, we know what they’re doing and where they’re doing it. And if it means we have to go into a mosque to wiretap or a church, then that’s exactly where we’re going to go. I hear from time to time people say, hey, wait a second. We have civil liberties we have to worry about. But don’t forget, the most important civil liberty I expect from my government is my right to be kept alive, and that’s what we’re going to have to do.” (*2007 GOP debate at the University of New Hampshire, 9/5/07*)

Tom Tancredo: “You say that nuclear devices have gone off in the U.S., more are planned, and we’re wondering about whether waterboarding would be a bad thing to do? I’m looking for ‘Jack Bauer’ at that time, let me tell you [referring to the counterterrorism agent in TV’s “24”, who uses any methods needed to achieve desired results]. We are the last best hope of Western civilization. And so all of the theories that go behind our activities subsequent to these nuclear attacks going off in the U.S., they go out the window because when we go under, Western civilization goes under. As president you should make sure 1) it doesn’t happen, but 2), you better respond in a way that makes them fearful of you because otherwise you guarantee something like this will happen.” (2007 Republican Debate in South Carolina, 5/5/07)

Fred Thompson: “The first responsibility of government is to protect the American people, the homeland, and our way of life. Today we face the urgent threat of radical Islamic terrorists. Al Qaeda is committed to attacking us here at home, and wants to use weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to kill millions. We must never give them that opportunity. We must defeat the terrorists abroad, and that begins in Iraq and Afghanistan --the central fronts in this global war. We must show the world we have the will to fight and win. A weakened America -- or an America that appears weaker - will only encourage further attacks. We must persevere. As Commander-in-Chief, the president must ensure the United States has the means to achieve victory. Presidential leadership requires talking to the American people about these stakes, mapping out a clear vision for success, and devising a comprehensive strategy for achieving it.” (fred08.com)

#2 HEALTHCARE

Summary

With nearly 47 million Americans uninsured -- including 9 million children -- and millions more facing bankruptcy due to medical costs, few issues will be as important to Americans in the 2008 presidential election as health care coverage. America is facing a healthcare crisis, and American citizens are in dire need for the next president to address healthcare costs and insurance, prescription drug costs, drug benefits for seniors, the uninsured, Medicare, and health care quality.

Muslim Americans should be asking presidential candidates their plan for providing affordable healthcare coverage for all Americans. Beyond just controlling healthcare costs, voters must ask candidates how the candidates will guarantee Americans have a choice in doctors and health plans. Finally, Muslim Americans must demand that presidential candidates make preventative healthcare a national priority in order to improve the long-term health of Americans.

The Democratic Presidential Candidates on Healthcare

Joe Biden: “I think the thing that will get us to total health coverage -- health insurance for everybody the quickest -- is to do what we did on welfare reform. What we did was we allowed the states considerable flexibility and leeway in reorganizing the system and we underwrote the cost of the poor states in doing it to get work programs going. Do the same exact thing with health care. You have a dozen states, including big ones, that are now passing legislation requiring universal insurance, just like liability insurance. Once you get to a critical mass of 30 to 35 states, you’ve established a national consensus. Cherry-pick those

elements of the plans. Maybe even give them localized flavor rather than one simple standard that exists that require that there be total complete coverage across the board.” (*In New Hampshire, 4/14/07*)

Hillary Clinton: “While I will be requiring all Americans to have health care, I will be calling on employers to do their part as well...Under my plan, large companies will be required to help pay for their employees’ health care. Those that do so can simply maintain their current policy that they choose. Those that don’t, will need to contribute towards the cost of covering their employees on a sliding scale based on their size and average wages...We won’t require small businesses to cover employees. Instead we will provide tax credits to ensure that many of them do...The government will provide tax-credits to insure that every single American can afford health insurance.” (*HillaryClinton.com*)

Chris Dodd: “Everyone participates, everyone benefits. All the stakeholders -- individuals, employers, the government -- are involved in coming up with a system here that would make it possible to reduce those numbers of 47 million of our fellow citizens who have no health care to make sure they’ll be included. Second is prevention alone. Minimum we try to do is see to it to reduce the cost by stopping people from getting ill in the first place. Thirdly is building upon the good things we’ve done already: Forty years of Medicaid and Medicare. I would extend Medicaid to poorer families, 100 percent of poverty; the ones with children, 300 percent of poverty. Last is the fourth principle, dealing with technology. Some \$80 or \$90 billion could be saved, not to mention the morbidity rates by doing a far better job and utilizing the technology that exists today.” (*Presidential Forum on Health Care, 3/24/07*)

John Edwards: “What we’re going to do is cover every single American, including the 47 million who don’t have coverage. We’re going to bring down costs for everybody. And for most Americans, we’re going to help them pay the cost. It’s based on a concept of shared responsibility. In the case of employers, we’re going to ask them to do more to either insure all their employees or to contribute to their being insured. The government will help subsidize the health care and create health care markets so we have more competition and deal with issues like preventative care, mental health care, to make sure those kind of things -- chronic care -- are, in fact, being done. And then, finally, for individuals, we’re going to make sure they have insurance. They have to have insurance so that everybody has health insurance.” (*“Meet the Press,” 2/4/07*)

Mike Gravel: “Under the plan we would issue vouchers to every single American. And the vouchers, you don’t pay for them, they’re issued to you. You sign up every year for them. And the vouchers will have a very modest co-pay, a very modest deductible, but that’s it. Everybody gets the same product universally in the United States of America. And then if you want more than the product you got, you pay for it. The vouchers are set up for risk on an individual basis, not on a collective this fits all, because if you’re young, you probably don’t have a cost of more than \$3,000. When you’re my age, it could be \$150,000-\$180,000 in one year. One of the facets of the plan would be to keep in place Medicare and Medicaid and phase them out over time. Because plans to put everybody on Medicare aren’t going to fly financially and just can’t be met.” (*Presidential Forum on Health Care, 3/24/07*)

Dennis Kucinich: “A not-for-profit health care system is not only possible, but H.R. 676, a bill that I introduced, and a number of Congressmen, the Conyers-Kucinich bill, actually establishes Medicare for all, a single-payer system and it’s a not-for-profit system. It’s time we ended this thought that health care is a privilege. It is a basic right, and it’s time to end this control that insurance companies have not only over

health care but over our political system. I'm talking about a real deal for the American people, a universal single-payer not-for-profit Medicare for all." (*Presidential Forum on Health Care, 3/24/07*)

Barack Obama: "The main disagreement with John [Edwards] and I is John believes that we have to have mandatory insurance for everyone in order to have universal health care. My belief is that most families want health care but they can't afford it. And so my emphasis is on driving down the costs, taking on the insurance companies, making sure that they are limited in the ability to extract profits and deny coverage -- that we make sure the drug companies have to do what's right by their patients instead of simply hoarding their profits. If we do those things then I believe that we can drive down the costs for families. In fact, we've got very conservative, credible estimates that say we can save families that do have health insurance about a thousand dollars a year, and we can also make sure that we provide coverage for everybody else. And we do provide mandatory health care for children." (*CNN debate for Democratic candidates, 6/3/07*)

Bill Richardson: "Our main responsibility should be to insure all children under five. We've done that in New Mexico and we should do that nationally. Secondly, we should insure all working adults, all working families. The third phase would be the chronically unemployed. The way you do that is by improving efficiencies and costs. The way you do that is not have Medicare and Medicaid covering seniors and disabled, it should be one. We should expand the S-Chip [State Children's Health Insurance Program] to cover children." (*A.F.S.C.M.E. forum, 2/21/07*)

The Republican Presidential Candidates on Healthcare

Rudy Giuliani: Provides no estimate of cost. Mayor Giuliani proposes an income tax credit of up to \$7,500 for individuals and \$15,000 for families, allowing that money to be directed toward the purchase of health insurance and other medical spending. He also opposes any government mandates that would require people or businesses to buy insurance. He criticizes Democrats' plans, saying they should leave the important decision of choosing insurance to individuals, not the government. He does not promise that all the uninsured would be covered under his proposal. He would expand health savings accounts by simplifying the rules and regulations to participate in them. He wants to increase the efficiency of the evaluation process for new drugs. He says the current process is too heavily regulated. (*joinrudy2008.com*)

Mike Huckabee: "We don't need universal health care mandated by federal edict or funded through ever-higher taxes. We do need to get serious about preventive health care instead of chasing more and more dollars to treat chronic disease, which currently gobbles up 80% of our health care costs, and yet is often avoidable. The result is that we'll be able to deliver better care where and when it's needed. I advocate policies that will encourage the private sector to seek innovative ways to bring down costs and improve the free market for health care services. I also value the states' role as laboratories for new market-based approaches, and I will encourage those efforts." (*mikehuckabee.com*)

Duncan Hunter: "I am not for universal health care. If everything is paid for by the government, you'll have companies trying to get in and trying to overcharge. And you'll lose what I call a consumer interest, in keeping the cost of health care down." (*WMUR-TV, 4/13/07*)

John McCain: Provides no estimate of cost. Senator McCain would provide \$2,500 refundable tax credits for individuals, and \$5,000 tax credits to families, if they have health insurance. He opposes universal

health care mandates, and believes in limited government intervention, and wants to give individuals freedom to choose their own health care. He would allow people to have portable insurance that could be purchased across state lines. He wants to bring greater competition to drug markets by safe reimportation of drugs and streamlining the process for introducing generic drugs. (*johnmccain.com*)

Ron Paul: “It’s time to rethink the whole system. The rise of HMOs has created a harmful collusion between politicians, drug companies, and organized medicine that raises the price of health care by stifling competition between providers. And all this in favor of moving us towards universal health care! I believe strongly that patients are better served by having an element of choice in the matter, which is why I support letting the free-market determine health care costs. This won’t happen, however, until we unravel the HMO web and change the tax code to allow individuals to fully deduct health care costs from their taxes, as employers can.” (*Muckraker Report, 6/28/07*)

Mitt Romney: “The cost would depend on what kinds of plans states propose. He wants to allow people who buy their own health insurance to be able to deduct premiums, deductibles and co-payments from their income. He is against individual or employer health care mandates, but said he wanted to get everybody “in the system” by driving down costs with market reforms. His plan would assist low-income Americans in buying private health insurance plans of their choice. He has not specified a way to change the current process of regulating drugs.” (*mittromney.com*)

Tom Tancredo: “As for the uninsured: as many as 25 percent of them are illegal aliens and should be deported or encouraged to leave. For citizens and legal residents who are employed by businesses which cannot afford coverage, I favor association health plans which band small businesses together to access lower-cost insurance. For those out of work, state governments should be the primary source of relief, although I would not rule out federal incentives or limited subsidies to make sure families who have fallen on hard times are not without coverage.” (*teamtancredo.org*)

Fred Thompson: “Those who propose a one-size-fits-all Washington-controlled program ignore the cost, inefficiency, and inadequate care that such a system offers.” (*fredthompson08.com*)

#3 CIVIL RIGHTS & CIVIL LIBERTIES

Summary

The Declaration of Independence, issued on July 4, 1776, stated “We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal...” Over the century, almost every minority group from African Americans to women have struggled and fought for equal treatment against discriminatory action in the fields of education, housing, employment and voting. Similar to many of these minority groups in the United States, the Muslim community, particularly in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, is seeking to ensure legal protections under the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

The PATRIOT Act and new immigration laws primarily aimed at Muslims and Arabs have greatly expanded federal powers and eroded longstanding civil liberties. The U.S. government has used its expanded powers to detain, deport, and prosecute individuals, who at times are without access to lawyers

or full disclosure of evidence and charges used against them. With an increase in hate crimes and racial profiling, the Muslim American community should pose questions to presidential candidates regarding their role in restoring the constitutional principles that were abolished by the USA PATRIOT Act as well as ensure that the politics of fear do not undermine civil liberties.

The Democratic Presidential Candidates on Civil Rights/Civil Liberties

Joe Biden: “Declares that, in the quest to identify, locate, and bring to justice the perpetrators and sponsors of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, the civil rights and liberties of all Americans, including Sikh-Americans, should be protected. Calls upon local and Federal law enforcement authorities to: (1) work to prevent hate crimes against all Americans; and (2) prosecute to the fullest extent of the law all those who commit hate crimes.” (*House Resolution Sponsored by Biden, 01-HR255 on 10/4/01*)

Hillary Clinton: “It is abundantly clear that race and racism are defining challenges not only in the United States but around the world. We have made progress. You can look at this stage and see an African American, a Latino, a woman contesting for the presidency of the United States. But there is so much left to be done. And for anyone to assert that race is not a problem in America is to deny the reality in front of our very eyes. You can look at the thousands of African-Americans left behind by their government with Katrina. You can look at the opportunity gap. So, yes, we have come a long way, but, yes, we have a long way to go. The march is not finished, and I hope that all of us, the Democratic candidates, will demonstrate clearly that the work is yet to be done. And we call on everyone to be foot soldiers in that revolution to finish the job.” (*2007 Democratic Primary Debate at Howard University, 6/28/07*)

Chris Dodd: “Chris Dodd is appalled by the current administration’s assault on our constitutional rights. That is why Senator Dodd introduced the Restoring the Constitution Act, which would restore *habeas corpus* and require the U.S. to live up to the Geneva Conventions. It would remedy much of the harm done to our nation’s commitment to due process rights by the misguided Military Commissions Act.” (*chrisdodd.com*)

John Edwards: “We must protect our country, but we cannot sacrifice the rights and freedoms that define America. We have a right to self-defense, but we must always recognize the larger framework of international law when we make decisions about defending ourselves.” (*Presidential 2004 National Political Awareness Test, 11/1/04*)

Mike Gravel: “What is the essence of this country that we are being patriotic about? A real love of America -- an authentic patriotism -- must be based on more than a moralizing grumph, a smug assertion, a bumper-sticker slogan. We’ve all heard the phrase, ‘my country right or wrong.’ I think we can all agree, this leaves something to be desired. No, I think a true patriotism -- a truly MacArthuresque love of country -- can leave some room for loving the sinner, but hating the sin. The American who calls a critic or doubter to task as un-American is -- himself -- in that instant, the true anti-patriot. It is the American who defends the right to disagree, and who hears and sees and embraces the voices of diversity, who is the truest and greatest lover of America.” (*The Gravel Report, “Real Patriotism for Americans,” 8/18/06*)

Dennis Kucinich: “The PATRIOT Act has undermined civil rights in this country, and as the U.S. president, one of my first acts in office would be to move forward to have the Justice Department overturn the

PATRIOT Act as unconstitutional. We have to remember that 9/11 led us down a cul-de-sac. Americans need to reconnect with our deeper sense of self here. The courage that it took to form this country is still within us, and I want to have the 9/10 Forum to help us reconnect with a deeper sense of who we are as Americans.” (2007 Democratic debate at Saint Anselm College, 6/3/07)

Barack Obama: “What we cannot continue to do is operate as if we are the weakest nation in the world instead of the strongest one, because that’s not who we are and that’s not what the U.S. has been about, historically. It is starting to warp our domestic policies, as well. We haven’t even talked about civil liberties and the impact of that politics of fear --what that has done to us, in terms of undermining basic civil liberties in this country, what it has done in terms of our reputation around the world.” (2007 Democratic debate at Drexel University, 10/30/07)

Bill Richardson: “Here’s what I would do. I would do what I did as governor of New Mexico. One, I would move in the Congress for a hate crimes law. I would have domestic partnerships. I would have civil unions. I would initiate laws that practice non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. I would get rid of ‘don’t ask, don’t tell.’ I voted against it as a congressman.” (2007 Democratic debate at Saint Anselm College, 6/3/07)

The Republican Presidential Candidates on Civil Rights/Civil Liberties

Rudy Giuliani: “The most fundamental of civil rights is the guarantee that government can give you a reasonable degree of safety.” (New York Post, 2/18/07)

Mike Huckabee: “Well, I want to be president of the United States, not just president of the Republican Party. Frankly, I’m embarrassed. I’m embarrassed for our party and I’m embarrassed for those who did not come, because there’s long been a divide in this country, and it doesn’t get better when we don’t show up. Quite frankly, for a lot of people, there’s a perception that Black Americans don’t vote for Republicans. I proved that wrong in Arkansas, with 48% of African Americans voting for me. But I want to make sure that the people of this country recognize that we’ve come a long way, but we have a long way to go. And we don’t get there if we don’t sit down and work through issues that are still very deep in this country, when it comes to racial divide. I’m honored to be here. I wish all of the candidates had come. (2007 GOP Presidential Forum at Morgan State University, 9/27/07)

Duncan Hunter: “In the past, Congress has considered legislation that would allow the federal government to assist local authorities in the investigation and prosecution of crimes motivated by a person’s race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, or religion. I have always voted against this type of legislation because I firmly believe that the use of violence against any innocent person is wrong, regardless of that individual’s race, religion, nationality or sexual orientation. The idea espoused in so called ‘hate crime’ legislation that some murders are less serious than others rebukes common sense.” (gohunter08.com)

John McCain: “As a result of Congressional mandates and court actions, the government [may be] unable to routinely monitor organizations that foment hate and violence. Certainly, protecting civil rights must remain sacrosanct. However, we must not allow the First Amendment to be abused as a shield for those who advocate or conspire to commit acts of violence. Organizations who are legitimately suspected of criminal or violent activities should not be shielded from legitimate and vigorous investigation and monitoring. (Letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee, 8/13/99)

Ron Paul: Congressman Paul criticizes the United States' intervention in Iraq and what he charges is the use of the war on terror to curtail civil liberties. He also endorses a non-interventionist foreign policy and de-federalization of the healthcare system, opposes the death penalty and abortion, and is strongly opposed to a military draft. He has also broken with his party by voting against the PATRIOT Act in 2001 and again in 2005. He is strongly opposed to a military draft. (*SourceWatch.org, 1/22/07*)

Mitt Romney: "We remind people that this is a nation that recognizes the equality of all individuals. We also want to make sure that our nation is kept safe. And we're going to pursue any avenue we have to, to assure that people who might be preaching or teaching doctrines of hate or terror are going to be followed into a church or into a school or a mosque or wherever they might be." (*2007 Republican debate in Dearborn, Michigan, 10/9/07*)

Tom Tancredo: Voted "yes" to make the USA PATRIOT Act permanent. (*USA PATRIOT and Terrorism Prevention Reauthorization Act, House Resolution 3199, vote number 2005-627, 12/14/05*)

Fred Thompson: "I think that we ought to be a tolerant nation. I think we ought to be tolerant people. But we shouldn't set up special categories for anybody. And I'm for the rights of everybody, including gays, but not any special rights." (*Fox News Sunday, 2007 presidential candidate interviews, 3/11/07*)

#4 IRAQ WAR

Summary

Nearly two years after the Saddam Hussein regime was toppled and major combat operations ended, U.S. and coalition troops are still fighting an Iraqi insurgency. The war in Iraq has remained the threshold issue of the 2008 presidential election. Even though violence in Iraq is abating and other issues are consuming more of the presidential debates, this war continues to be the defining issue for both Democrats and Republicans. Polls show clearly that most Americans have soured on the war, causing Bush's second-term approval ratings to plummet, and increasing Republican anxiety in the current election. On this issue, the candidates are divided between supporting the president's strategy to surge more troops into central Iraq versus establishing a timetable, complete with benchmarks, to eventually pull out U.S. forces and possibly withhold funding for the war effort.

Amidst the challenges that the next president could face in Iraq, Muslim Americans should ensure that presidential candidates have a plan of action that works to save Iraqi lives if genocide erupts in Iraq. Furthermore, voters must assess each candidate's plan if chaos in Iraq threatens to engulf the Middle East region in a wider war. While the overwhelming majority of Americans want to bring the troops home, questions that should be posed to candidates in relation to the Iraq war should probe beyond that.

The Democratic Presidential Candidates on the Iraq War

Joe Biden: Voted "yes" to the invasion in 2002, but is now opposed. "It was a mistake to assume the president would use the authority we gave him properly...We gave the president the authority to unite the

world to isolate Saddam. And the fact of the matter is, we went too soon. We went without sufficient force. And we went without a plan.” (*Meet the Press*, 11/27/05)

On withdrawal: phased redeployment with decentralization: “[T]he real question is, are we going to be able to leave Iraq, get our troops out and leave behind something other than chaos? In order to do that, the president should start off by not vetoing the language...saying begin to draw down American troops right now, and move toward a political solution. Look, there’s only one way. You got to change the fundamental premise of this engagement, and that is, you got to decentralize Iraq, you got to give the regions control over their own destiny, give them control over their own police forces, their own identity, and have a limited central government and share their oil wealth.” (*Democratic Candidates Debate*, 4/26/07)

Hillary Clinton: Voted “yes” to the invasion in 2002, but is now opposed. “If I had been President in October of 2002, I would have never asked for authority to divert our attention from Afghanistan to Iraq, and I certainly would never have started this war.” (*On the Senate floor*, 2/7/07)

On withdrawal: phased redeployment. “[T]rying to withdraw is not something you snap your fingers and tell people, do it tomorrow. It has to be done in a thoughtful, orderly, careful way that defends our troops on these routes they’re going to have to take to get men and equipment out of Iraq.” (*New York Times*, 3/14/07)

Chris Dodd: Voted “yes” to the invasion in 2002, but is now opposed. “Had we known before the war what we know today -- that there were no weapons of mass destruction; that there were no links between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda; that there was no imminent threat from Iraq to America’s security or vital interests -- Congress would never have considered, let alone voted to authorize, the use of force in Iraq.” (*Providence College*, 10/12/06)

On withdrawal: phased redeployment. “We must begin immediately to reposition our troops from Baghdad, Fallujah, and other large urban centers to Kurdistan, where there is relative law and order, and where they would be more accepted; to other, less populated areas of Iraq, where their training of Iraqi forces can continue; and to border areas, where they can protect the territorial integrity of Iraq until Iraqi forces can do so themselves.” (*Providence College*, 10/12/06)

John Edwards: Voted “yes” to the invasion in 2002, but is now opposed. “I was wrong...The argument for going to war with Iraq was based on intelligence that we now know was inaccurate. The information the American people were hearing from the president -- and that I was being given by our intelligence community -- wasn’t the whole story. Had I known this at the time, I never would have voted for this war.” (*Washington Post*, *op-ed by Edwards*, 11/13/05)

On withdrawal: withdrawal within 18 months. “We have to take the next step and cap funding to mandate a withdrawal. We don’t need debate; we don’t need non-binding resolutions; we need to end this war, and Congress has the power to do it.” (*johnedwards.com*, 2/14/07)

Mike Gravel: Opposed the war from the beginning. “Given the extreme importance of any decision to go to war, and I am anguished to say this, it’s my opinion that anyone who voted for the war on October 11 - - based on what President Bush represented -- is not qualified to hold the office of President.” (*gravel2008.us*, 2/5/07)

On withdrawal: withdraw now. “I got to tell you, we should just plain get out. Just plain get out. It’s their country. They’re asking us to leave, and we insist on staying there...” (New York Times, 4/27/07)

Dennis Kucinich: Voted “no” in 2002, and is still opposed. “This attempt to foment a war is really against the best interests of America, it is against the spirit of the country, it is against the economic interests of the people.” (New York Times, 9/21/02)

On withdrawal: de-fund and withdraw now. “I think it’s inconsistent to tell the American people that you oppose the war, and yet you continue to vote to fund the war, because every time you vote to fund the war, you’re reauthorizing the war all over again.” (New York Times, 4/27/07)

Barack Obama: Opposed the war from the beginning. “I know that invasion of Iraq without a clear rationale and without strong international support will only fan the flames of the Middle East and encourage the worst rather than best impulses in the Arab world and strengthen the recruitment arm of al Qaeda. I am not opposed to all wars, I am opposed to dumb wars.” (*Chicago anti-war rally, 10/26/02*)

On withdrawal: phased redeployment. “I’m proud of the fact that I put forward a plan in January that mirrors what Congress ultimately adopted, and it says, there’s no military solution to this. We’ve got to have a political solution, begin a phased withdrawal, and make certain that we’ve got benchmarks in place so that the Iraqi people can make a determination about how they want to move forward.” (*Democratic Candidates Debate, 4/26/07*)

Bill Richardson: Is opposed, knowing what he knows now. “I have struggled for a long time over Iraq. Like most Americans, I am saddened by the horrific violence that takes dozens, scores of innocent lives every day. And like most Americans, I believe that our country has a moral obligation to do what we can to help the Iraqis end that violence. And because of that belief, it has not been easy for me to come to this conclusion: that the best thing we can do for them as well as for ourselves is to leave.” (*richardsonforpresident.com*)

On withdrawal: withdrawal by end of 2007. “I would withdraw all of our troops, including residual troops, by the end of this calendar year. I would use the leverage of that withdrawal, coupled with intensive diplomacy in three areas: One, a political framework led by the United States where the three religious entities in Iraq have a coalition government....Number two, I would convene a security conference, and I would invite Iran and Syria...And thirdly, I would have a donor conference. I would have other countries take over the reconstruction responsibility and the security of Iraq.” (*Democratic Candidates Debate, 4/26/07*)

The Republican Presidential Candidates on the Iraq War

Rudy Giuliani: Supportive of decision to invade. “I think it’s quite appropriate to go back and explain, ‘Well, I might have done it this way, or I might have done it with more troops, or I might have done it some other way.’ But here’s the reality of it: We’re at war. And we’re at war because they’re at war with us. They want to come here and kill us so we’ve got to put Iraq in the context of a much broader picture than just Iraq.” (*Hannity and Colmes, 2/6/07*)

On withdrawal: maintain troop levels. “I detect in the Democrats a kind of attempt to go back to a pre-September 11 mentality in which we’re not anticipating. And I also believe that they would not have made the mistake of wanting to force us to give our enemies a timetable of our retreat I’ve never heard of an army in the history of the world being required, if it’s going to retreat, to give its enemy a timetable of that retreat.” (*Fox News Sunday*, 5/14/07)

Mike Huckabee: Supportive of decision to invade. “We need to understand that this is, in fact, World War III. Unlike any other world war we’ve ever fought, this one is one we cannot afford to lose.” (*Concord Monitor*, 2/10/07)

On withdrawal: gradual responsibility to Iraqis. “It’s like a baseball game, not a football game. You can’t put on a specific clock...We have to tell them, look, we’re not going to be here indefinitely. What we’re going to expect of you is you’re going to have to get control of the sectarian violence, the civil war that is just ripping this whole thing apart because the American people are not going to stay indefinitely It all depends on how things go over the next year.” (*This Week with George Stephanopoulos*, 2/11/07)

Duncan Hunter: Voted “yes” in 2002, and is still supportive. “The greatest protection of human rights in this decade has been the overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in Iraq.” (*gohunter08.com*)

On withdrawal: gradual responsibility to Iraqis. “There is a right way to leave Iraq and that is to continue to rotate Iraqi battalions that we’ve trained and equipped into the fight.” (*New York Times*, 1/10/07)

John McCain: Voted “yes” in 2002, and is still supportive. “I agreed with the President’s difficult decision to go to war in Iraq. I remain fully supportive of his determination not to leave Iraq until the freely elected government of that country and its armed forces are able to defend their country from foreign and domestic enemies’ intent on thwarting the will of the Iraqi people to create a civil society in which the rights and security of all Iraqis are protected.” (*In a statement*, 8/25/06)

On withdrawal: maintain troop levels. “I have no Plan B...I cannot give you a good alternative because if I had a good alternative, maybe we could consider it now. Every alternative that I know of that is keyed to a date for withdrawal, which that would dictate, is chaos in the region. And genocide.” (*New York Times*, 4/14/07)

Ron Paul: Voted “no” in 2002, and is still opposed. “Many of the same voices who then demanded that the Clinton Administration attack Iraq are now demanding that the Bush Administration attack Iraq. It is unfortunate that these individuals are using the tragedy of September 11, 2001 as cover to force their long-standing desire to see an American invasion of Iraq. Despite all of the information to which I have access, I remain very skeptical that the nation of Iraq poses a serious and immanent terrorist threat to the United States.” (*On the House floor*, 10/8/02)

On withdrawal: withdraw now. “I think we should come home as quickly as possible. There were a lot of -- a lot of false information on the reasons we went in there, and there’s no good reason to stay right now. They say that the main reason for staying now, after given numerous reasons, we’re supposed to stay now, because if we leave there will be chaos. My argument is there’s plenty of chaos right there now, and a lot of

Americans are being killed. And it was never in our national security interest to go over there.” (*Low Dobbbs Tonight*, 2/26/07)

Mitt Romney: Supportive of the decision to invade. “It is critical for us to remember that Iraq has to be considered in the context of what’s happening in the Middle East and throughout the world. There is a global jihadist effort. Violent, radical jihadists want to replace all the governments of the moderate Islamic states, replace them with a caliphate. And to do that, they also want to bring down the West, in particular us.” (*Republican Candidates Debate*, 5/15/07)

On withdrawal: maintain troop levels. “Well, I’m certainly not going to project failure, and those kind of circumstances that you would suggest would be projecting failure. It is critical for us to remember that Iraq has to be considered in the context of what’s happening in the Middle East and throughout the world. There is a global jihadist effort. Violent, radical jihadists want to replace all the governments of the moderate Islamic states, replace them with a caliphate. And to do that, they also want to bring down the West, in particular us.” (*Republican Candidates Debate*, 5/15/07)

Tom Tancredo: Voted “yes” in 2002, and is now opposed. “Given the fact that [weapons of mass destruction] have not been found and perhaps were not there, we all wonder what we would have done in those circumstances had we known that. If I knew that was not the threat that had been posed to us...I think I would have voted no. I do not know right now that that (no vote) would have been the right vote because this thing hasn’t played out.” (*Rocky Mountain News*, 15/5/05)

On withdrawal: phased withdrawal. “I think that we have to understand that we are going to be in Iraq or at least in the region for a long time. Our national interests dictate that. We are not going to be removing our troops from the area. We can’t, for all the reasons that have been identified here. The question is, in what capacity we will be there and what capacity those troops will be there? Will they be a constabulary force, which I do not believe they should be? Will they be a supporting force for the Iraqi government and for the Iraqi forces themselves, which I believe they should be?” (*Republican Candidates Debate*, 5/15/07)

Fred Thompson: Voted “yes” in 2002, and is still supportive. “I think we got to remember what it would be like if we had not done what we did. Saddam would still be there, having defeated the United Nations, all the resolutions. It would have defeated the United States in effect. It would have been in a position to continue its nuclear weapons program. His two sons would still have been doing what they were doing -- putting people in human shredders and attacking their neighbors. And I think, especially in light of what Iran is doing right now, they certainly would have been in a nuclear competition in that part of the world, sitting on those oil reserves.” (*The Tonight Show With Jay Leno*, 9/5/07)

On withdrawal: phased withdrawal. “Well, I think we ought to stay on the course that we’re on. The scenario that’s planned, as I understand it, involves a withdrawal of troops next, next spring or summer as a part of the success scenario. But I don’t think that we ought to, to be armchair generals and say that a few more or few less ought to be the, the way to go when we’ve got people on the ground who apparently now know what they’re doing.” (*Meet the Press*, 11/4/07)

#5 U.S.-MUSLIM WORLD RELATIONS

Summary

There are over a billion Muslims in the world, and they are able to access an increasing stream of satellite channels, online news outlets and traditional media sources. Like Muslims in the United States, Muslims abroad are conscious of world affairs, and as many of the world's most contentious regions and issues involve the United States, these Muslims are developing long-lasting, sometimes negative opinions about the United States, its goals and, fundamentally, its people. At the same time, distrust among Muslims abroad spurs frustration from the side non-Muslim Americans, creating tensions and suspicion that can undermine so many of the gains made by American Muslim community over the past few decades.

As the candidates debate key international issues, American Muslims must give careful consideration to how the candidates perceive Muslims -- both abroad and in the United States -- so they can evaluate each candidate's ability to portray America to the international Muslim community. There may well be significant differences between the policies that the candidates support and those desired by many people, including Muslims living abroad, and the American Muslim community must look to see which candidate could face the difficult task of bringing relations to a level where Muslims can disagree with American policy, but ultimately understand and trust American intentions. American Muslims have much to offer both other Americans and other Muslims, but their credibility with both of these groups hinges on how these groups regard each other. Accordingly, the key questions include: Which candidate has the best vision for future relations between the American people and the Muslim world? And do any candidates reach out to the Muslim world by relying on the American Muslim community for ideas, support and credibility?

The Democratic Presidential Candidates on U.S.-Muslim World Relations

Joe Biden: "I voted against the amendment to designate Iran's Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist organization because I don't trust this administration not to twist its words into a justification for war. Do you think this president abided by the spirit of the 1998 Iraqi Liberation Act? What did he use it for? He used it to justify taking down Saddam. Do you think he abided by the spirit of the legislation authorizing use of force in Iraq? He did not. He just leap-frogged over the conditions in the legislation to go to war. Do you think this President believes the Constitution places any limits on executive power? Now, you're telling me we can trust this President and this Vice President not to use legislation that declares roughly a third of the entire Iranian military a terrorist organization as a justification to use force against Iran?" (*joebiden.com, 10/26/07*)

Hillary Clinton: "I will do everything I can to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear power, including the use of diplomacy, the use of economic sanctions, opening up direct talks. We haven't even tried. That's what is so discouraging about this. We need a concerted, comprehensive strategy to deal with Iran. We haven't had it. We need it. And I will provide it." (*2007 Democratic primary debate at Dartmouth College, 9/6/07*)

Chris Dodd: "I believe the President should seek authority from Congress in advance of taking military action against Iran or any other state for that matter. Now, under extreme circumstances, unforeseen

circumstances, emergencies, I think it would be appropriate for the President, any President, to act to repel an attack in our country or armed forces that are legally positioned around the world. But even after that it seems to me, after the emergency, any President ought to come back to the Congress and succeed in getting that authority. It's going to be critically important for a number of reasons: constitutionally, under war powers resolutions it requires that. But also it's important to have the American public be engaged in these decisions, or you run the risk of these policies [losing] support during difficult times." (*Virtual Town Hall on Iraq, sponsored by MoveOn.org, 4/10/07*)

John Edwards: "We have got to restore our respect in the world to bring our allies to us and with us. It is how we won the Cold War. It is how we won two world wars. And it is how we will build a stable Iraq. With a new president who strengthens and leads our alliances, we can get NATO to help secure Iraq. We can ensure that Iraq's neighbors, like Syria and Iran, don't stand in the way of a democratic Iraq. We can help Iraq's economy by getting other countries to forgive their enormous debt and participate in the reconstruction. We will bring the world to our side, and with it a stable Iraq, a real chance for freedom and peace in the Middle East, including a safe and secure Israel. We'll bring the world together to face the most dangerous threat we have: the possibility of terrorists getting their hands on a chemical, biological, or nuclear weapon." (*Acceptance speech to the Democratic National Convention, 7/28/04*)

Mike Gravel: "Stop and think here. Why do we think that we can rule that country? This is American imperialism you're hearing up here. And that hasn't worked and it will never work. We're trying to make the Iraqis the fall guy, not our stupid mistakes. Oh, it's the Iraqis won't stand up. I'll tell you what. Pull everybody out and turn to the Iranians, who helped us defeat the Taliban initially. So if we don't bring the Iranians to help us, or the Syrians, or Saudi Arabia, of course it's going to be a disaster." (*2007 Democratic primary debate, 8/19/07*)

Dennis Kucinich: "We need to have an initiative not only to go to Syria and Iran to help us put together an international peacekeeping force that would move in as our troops leave, but we need to go to all the nations of the region to create a design for peace in the region. I believe that the path to peace runs right through Jerusalem, and it's time a president had the ability to approach things in the Middle East with an even hand, with an understanding of the suffering of the Palestinians and of the desire of the Israelis for dealing with the existential threat. We need a president who understands that peace in the Middle East requires this even-handed approach. We need a president who has compassion for both sides, who has the understanding that a healing hand is needed." (*Take Back America 2007 Conference, 6/20/07*)

Barack Obama: "We are committed to Iran not having nuclear weapons. We have been governed by fear for the last 6 years. Bush has used the fear of terrorism to launch a war that should have never been authorized. We are seeing the same pattern now. It is very important for us to draw a clear line and say, "We are not going to be governed by fear. We will take threats seriously and take action to make sure that the U.S. is secure." (*Democratic debate at Drexel University, 10/30/07*)

Bill Richardson: "[The war on terror] is a clash between civilization and barbarity. We need to present the Arab and Muslim worlds with a better vision than the apocalyptic fantasy of the Jihadists. For this to be credible, we need to live up to our own ideals. Prisoner abuse, torture, secret prisons, renditions, and evasion of the Geneva conventions must have no place in our policy. If we want Muslims to open to us, we should start by closing Guantanamo." (*richardsonforpresident.com*)

The Republican Presidential Candidates on U.S.-Muslim World Relations

Rudy Giuliani: “I believe that is an option that should remain open. We should encourage Musharraf to allow us to do it if we thought he couldn’t accomplish it...I would take that action if I thought there was no other way to crush Al Qaida, no other way to crush the Taliban, and no other way to be able to capture bin Laden. I think Pakistan has, unfortunately, not been making the efforts that they should be making.” (2007 GOP Iowa Straw Poll debate, 8/5/07)

Mike Huckabee: “The threat we face is one a lot of Americans don’t fully comprehend or understand. This isn’t a typical geo-political war. It’s a war against an enemy that has no national borders or boundaries. It’s a theological war. It’s not politically correct to say that. It’s just the truth. We are fighting people whose religious fanaticism will not be satisfied until every last one of us is dead, until our culture, our society, is completely obliterated from the face of the earth. It is the perfect marriage of religion and state, and that’s why it is so incredibly dangerous, more so than any enemy we face. And here’s the reality. War is about will. Whoever chooses to leave loses. We can’t afford to lose, because this is not a war about Iraq, it’s not a war about Afghanistan, it’s a war about our survival as a civilization and as a people, and every effort must be made to defend this great country against it.” (2007 GOP Values Voter Presidential Debate, 9/17/07)

Duncan Hunter: “I think that you do have a dialogue with everybody, whether they’re adversaries or friends. 1) They are moving deadly equipment across the border that is killing Americans in Iraq. We have license to utilize anything that we want to use -- special operations, intelligence, whatever it takes--to stop that, and we don’t give that up with these talks. 2) They’ve got about 1,000 centrifuges now working, enriching the materials that can make at some point a nuclear device. The U.S. reserves the right to preempt that nuclear weapons program. We cannot allow them to have a nuclear device. With those two caveats, talk to your enemies.” (2007 GOP debate at Saint Anselm College, 6/3/07)

John McCain: “We’re dealing of course with hypotheticals. If the situation is that it requires immediate action to ensure the security of the United States of America, that’s what you take your oath to do when you’re inaugurated as president of the United States. If it’s a long series of build-ups, where the threat becomes greater and greater, of course you want to go to Congress; of course you want to get approval if this is an imminent threat to our security. So it obviously depends on the scenario, but I would, at minimum, consult with the leaders of Congress because there may become a time where you need the approval of Congress, and I believe that this is a possibility that is maybe closer to reality than we are discussing tonight.” (2007 Republican debate in Dearborn, Michigan, 10/9/07)

Ron Paul: “Why don’t we just open up the Constitution and read it? You’re not allowed to go to war without a declaration of war. Now, as far as fleeting enemies go, yes, if there’s an imminent attack on us, we’d never had that happen in 220 years. The thought that the Iranians could pose an imminent attack on the U.S. is preposterous. There’s no way. This is just continual war propaganda, preparing this nation to go to war and spread this war, not only in Iraq but into Iran, unconstitutionally. It’s a road to disaster if we don’t read the Constitution once in a while.” (2007 Republican debate in Dearborn, Michigan, 10/9/07)

Mitt Romney: “Yes, I think Barack Obama is confused as to who are our friends and who are our enemies. In his first year, he wants to meet with Castro and Chavez and Assad and Ahmadinejad. Those are our enemies. Those are the world’s worst tyrants. And then he says he wants to unilaterally go in and

potentially bomb a nation which is our friend. We're trying to strengthen Musharraf. It's wrong for a person running for the president to get on TV and say, 'We're going to go into your country unilaterally.' Of course, America always maintains our option to do whatever we think is in the best interests of America. But we keep our options quiet." (2007 GOP Iowa Straw Poll debate, 8/5/07)

Tom Tancredo: "Yes, the State Department -- boy, when they start complaining about things I say, I feel a lot better about the things I say, I'll tell you right now. My task as president is primarily to do one thing -- not to make sure everybody has health care or everybody's child is educated--my task is to do one thing: to protect and defend this country. And that means to deter -- and I want to underline 'deter' -- any kind of aggression, especially the type we are threatened with by Al Qaida, which is nuclear attack. I read the national intelligence estimate. I see what they are planning. And I'm telling you right now that anybody that would suggest that we should take anything like this off the table in order to deter that kind of event in the United States isn't fit to be president." (2007 GOP Iowa Straw Poll debate, 8/5/07)

Fred Thompson: "We need to use every means at our disposal, starting with serious and painful international sanctions, to prevent Iran's rulers from becoming the nuclear-armed blackmailers they want to be. Unfortunately, we are hearing demands that we abandon the people of the Middle East who have stood up to Islamo-fascism because they believed us when we said we would support them. If we retreat precipitously, the price for that betrayal will be paid in blood and freedom by the Iranian people [and then others]. And America's word may never be trusted again. Right now, the pirate Ahmadinejad is clearly more confident about the outcome of the Global War on Terror than we are. That ought to give us pause." (*The Fred Factor*, 2007)

MPAC'S QUESTIONNAIRE TO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

MPAC sent the following questionnaire to all 16 Democratic and Republican presidential candidates. We received responses from four of the candidates, which we have included in the pages that follow.

1. **Torture** | The appointment of Michael Mukasey to be the United States Attorney General saw a heightened scrutiny into his opinion of torture methods utilized on persons detained by this country. In light of America's leading efforts in the war on terror, what is your opinion of the use of torture as a means of obtaining information that may or may not be vital to national security?
2. **Nat'l Security & Civil Liberties** | The six years that have transpired since 9/11, Americans have seen the enactment and renewal of the USA PATRIOT Act, which has been cited as both a protection measure against terrorism but also as the reason for weakened civil liberties. Furthermore, this Act has set a national tone which finds minorities, Muslims in particular, as the subject of legal and social scrutiny. Taking this into consideration, how would you work to balance the need for national security while preserving to preserve the civil liberties of all Americans?
3. **Democracy** | The United States has formed allies with many democratic countries around the world. Under U.S. auspices, the governments of Pakistan and Palestine have promoted democratic principles in holding free and fair elections, but the results of which have not been met with positive response from American leadership. In light of the U.S.'s current policy in promoting democratic principles around the world, what type of relations do you envision having with a country in which the outcome of free and fair elections do not result in a leadership favorable to the United States?
4. **Nuclear Weapons** | The U.S. has recently confronted North Korea and Iran about their respective nuclear development programs and has been vocal about the disarmament of these two countries. In the current security environment, there have been serious questions about the intended uses of nuclear technology by nuclear weapon states, and also strong arguments that such weapons, despite any limited benefit, can only serve to harm masses of individuals. As president, how will you guarantee that the U.S. will not utilize its nuclear arsenal and instead employ rigorous diplomacy efforts?
5. **Global Warming** | Confronted with the Iraq War, Hurricane Katrina, rising gas prices and the "inconvenient truth" about global warming, Americans are looking for leadership on energy independence and the threat posed by catastrophic climate change. Seeing as how a Center for American Progress poll in April stated that 60 percent of Americans supported bold action on global warming, what are your initiatives for promoting energy independence and addressing the issue of global warming?

CANDIDATES' RESPONSES TO MPAC'S QUESTIONNAIRE

SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS



1. **Torture** | America must never torture. We must aggressively gather intelligence in accordance with proven methods, but torture is not a viable interrogation strategy. Valuable information can be gained through interrogation, both about past and future attacks, and we must do everything we can to gather this information to keep us and our allies secure.

At the same time, we must avoid actions that will give terrorists or even other nations an excuse to abandon international law. I reject the Bush administration's twisted logic justifying torture, including the practice of waterboarding. I will release the legal opinions justifying it, and end the abuse of classification and legal privilege to hide un-American legal judgments. I also believe that detainees in places like Guantanamo Bay cannot continue to be held without charge and without access to lawyers.

2. **Nat'l Security & Civil Liberties** | America must do whatever it takes to defeat terrorism, but lasting victory will take moral as well as military strength. President Bush has used the "Global War on Terror" doctrine like a political sledgehammer to justify the worst abuses and biggest mistakes of his administration from Guantanamo to the war in Iraq and illegal spying on American citizens. And the worst thing about the "Global War on Terror" approach is that it has backfired -- our military has been strained to the breaking point and the threat from terrorism has grown.

Our government should protect the privacy, communications, and personal records of Americans -- not spy on them without court supervision as the Bush administration has done. I will end the warrantless wiretapping of Americans' phone calls and e-mails and the data-mining of Americans' communications and personal records, restoring judicial review to surveillance of American citizens. I will also fix the PATRIOT Act by restoring important safeguards to the provisions most susceptible to abuse: the "sneak-and-peek" delayed-notice searches, National Security Letters, and the business and library records provisions. Finally, I will end racial profiling by law enforcement.

As president, I will close the prison at Guantanamo Bay, which has become a symbol that galvanizes our enemies and alienates our allies. I will protect our troops and our values by upholding the Geneva Conventions anywhere American security forces -- military or civilian -- are engaged. And I will restore the right of *habeas corpus* and bring all accused detainees to justice.

3. **Democracy** | Rather than alienating the rest of the world through assertions of infallibility and demands of obedience, as the current administration has done, U.S. foreign policy must be driven by a strategy of reengagement. We must reengage with our history of courage, liberty, and generosity. We must reengage with our tradition of moral leadership on issues ranging from the killings in Darfur to global poverty and climate change. We must reengage with our allies on critical security issues, including terrorism, the Middle East, and nuclear proliferation. With confidence and resolve, we must reengage with those who pose a security threat to us, from Iran to North Korea.

We also need to renew our commitment to engagement and diplomacy in order to solve problems before they occur, rather than scrambling to deal with crises after they have erupted. With engagement comes far greater knowledge and the potential for progress and even trust. Presidents Kennedy and Reagan talked with Soviet leaders at the height of the Cold War, in both cases turning back major threats to our national security. When deciding whether to work with foreign leaders, I believe the first concern must be whether the diplomacy has been done to ensure the meeting will be productive, and that it will actually accomplish something -- and that the meeting won't be used as a political ploy to bash the United States of America.

4. **Nuclear Weapons** | While I do not think it is responsible for a presidential candidate to talk specifically about when he or she would or would not use nuclear weapons, I strongly believe the world will be a better place without nuclear weapons and without nuclear strikes. We should aspire to a nuclear-free world. The very existence of nuclear weapons and the possibility that new states might acquire them presents one of the greatest threats to international peace and stability.

The U.S. must abide by our commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and set an example for others to follow. Working with the international community to reduce nuclear weapons stockpiles will be one of my top priorities as president. This means opposing any plans to build new nuclear weapons and gradually reducing existing stockpiles in conjunction with other nations such as Russia.

5. **Global Warming** | Our generation must end our nation's dependence on oil from unstable parts of the world and halt global warming pollution. To do this, I will cap the emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases as determined by climate science and reduce emissions by 20 percent by 2020 and by 80 percent by 2050. Because we need all nations to join the effort, I will share clean energy technology with cooperating nations and, if necessary, require minimum climate-change commitments in our trade deals.

Renewable energy sources like wind, solar power, biomass and ethanol are cleaner and often cheaper than traditional sources of energy. I will require their use to generate 25 percent of the nation's electricity by 2025, expand the use of ethanol in cars, and invest more resources in researching and encouraging these clean forms of energy. To cut oil imports by 7.5 million barrels a day by 2025, I will raise standards fuel economy to 40 miles per gallon by 2016, a step that could single-handedly reduce

oil demand by 4 million barrels per day and invest far more in developing more fuel-efficient technologies.

To jumpstart our investment in the future, I will create the \$13 billion-a-year New Energy Economy Fund. The fund will be financed by greenhouse gas polluters through the sale of emission permits and by ending taxpayer giveaways for big oil companies, including special tax subsidies and sweetheart terms in offshore drilling leases. The resources will double the Department of Energy's budget for efficiency and renewable energy, accelerate new energy technologies to market and help new businesses get started, encourage consumers to buy efficient products, and provide transition assistance to workers in carbon-intensive industries.

There are large opportunities for Americans to use power more efficiently, typically at half the cost of producing more power. However, most power companies earn profits from selling more power, not using it more efficiently. I will reform utility payments to encourage efficiency rather than more production, as California has already done. I will also invest in more efficient buildings and appliances, help families weatherize their homes, and use "smart thermostats" to help families monitor and reduce their energy. I believe we need a president who asks the American people to be patriotic about something other than war.

SENATOR MIKE GRAVEL



1. **Torture** | Since announcing his candidacy in April 2006, Senator Mike Gravel has been unequivocal in his views on the practice of torture. He has called upon Congress to outlaw the abhorrent act. In a public letter dated March 1, 2007, Gravel said: "The Constitution is very clear that prisoners of war are the responsibility of the Congress. The Bush administration has unlawfully taken that power without constitutional justification.

The Congress has been derelict in its duty to see that enemy combatants are treated humanely within the guidelines of the Geneva Conventions, and has been equally neglectful in its response to the president's unlawful use of torture." He has pledged that if elected President he would "vanquish" the Military Commissions Act of 2006, by which the writ of *habeas corpus* has been suspended for detainees designated "unlawful combatants."

2. **Nat'l Security & Civil Liberties** | Senator Gravel has called on Congress to repeal the PATRIOT Act on the grounds that it is unconstitutional and violates the rights of US citizens. He believes that terrorism should be handled as a criminal act, rather than a declaration of war. Americans' civil liberties cannot be compromised. The United States should work with Interpol and other countries to bring terrorists to justice. By both addressing the root causes of terrorism, and solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the United States will be more able to fight terrorism, its advocates and its financiers with far greater success.
3. **Democracy** | Senator Gravel believes we must begin to treat other countries as equals. This means respecting the will of the people in those countries. He advocates unilateral talks with all foreign governments -- including Iran, Syria, and North Korea. Gravel says the U.S., its allies, and regional actors should sponsor direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, including Hamas, to forge a two-state solution.
4. **Nuclear Weapons** | Senator Mike Gravel has been steadfast in his opposition to using nuclear weapons. Today, the US stands as the world's greatest proliferator of nuclear weapons. His position is that if we are to move toward global disarmament, we must set an example by first eliminating our own nuclear weapons. The Senator has pointed to the Bush administration's hypocrisy of threatening Iran over nuclear weapons while continuing to provide nuclear technology to Israel, Egypt and India.

In his own words, Senator Gravel stated at the April 26 MSNBC debate in South Carolina: "When you have mainline candidates that say that there's nothing off the table with respect to Iran, that's code for using nuclear devices. When I'm president of the United States, there will be no preemptive wars with nuclear devices. To my mind, it's immoral, and it's been immoral for the last 50 years as part of American foreign policy."

5. **Global Warming** | Senator Mike Gravel believes there has never been a more critical time for instituting a comprehensive environmental policy capitalizing on our global leadership for a global environmental policy that focuses upon the three seminal pillars of the environmental threat: Global warming, fresh water scarcity and loss of biodiversity. As a result, he advocates an environmental policy based upon reducing green house gases; protecting and cleaning up fresh water resources; and protecting and enhancing ecosystems that are significant "carbon sinks."

He also supports capping global warming with a Global Carbon Tax, which would be used to fund international research and development to develop commercially viable energy technologies. As for transportation, he supports Euro IV-CAFÉ standards and increased hybridization; a crash program for hydrogen-powered vehicles; mass-transit, high-speed intercity rail (maglev); and electrification of rail trunk lines for freight. Finally he supports the creation of a Super Grid to distribute hydrogen and electricity; to connect solar, wind, geo-thermal generators to the grid, and to explore nuclear fusion with China's Tokomak.

CONGRESSMAN DENNIS KUCINICH



1. **Torture** | We cannot hope to end terrorism by killing terrorists. Hatred feeds on violence and killing. I understand this and am here to offer a more practical approach: to reduce poverty worldwide with bold changes in current U.S. policy. NAFTA and the World Trade Organizations have only served to increase global poverty, thus deepening one of the most virulent causes of terrorism. This is why I am calling for immediate cancellation of NAFTA and U.S. withdrawal from the WTO. For the sake of justice and wellbeing, it is time we established bilateral fair trade agreements that contain strict provisions for workers' rights, human rights, and environmental principles.

The roots of terrorism lie in desperation. People with no hope resort to acts of indiscriminate violence. People with futures don't typically strap on bombs to kill others. We must all refrain from condoning some acts of violence as justified while similar actions by others are dismissed as "terrorism." Torture is not only morally abhorrent but is also against the Geneva Conventions and United States law. In other words, torture is a war crime and is a grave violation of international and national law. Violating national and international law does not make the United States safer. The reality is that the United States has employed torture and has transported people to certain torture -- and perhaps death. Torture is not an American value, and the President's signing statement reserving the right to torture is a clear violation of international and U.S. law that makes all of us -- and especially our soldiers -- less safe. In fact, some of the "intelligence" obtained by torture that there were WMDs in Iraq demonstrates that people who are being tormented will say anything to make the pain go away. We know of at least 28 prisoners that were killed during interrogation during our recent wars. One was a high-ranking Iraqi officer who, apparently, was not providing enough "actionable intelligence" on WMDs.

Torture degrades us as a people. History has shown that when torture is employed, interrogators become lazy and brutal, and many, many innocent people die or are destroyed for life. Our humanity is the first death in the process.

2. **Nat'l Security & Civil Liberties** | Look at my past record. I was the only candidate to repeatedly vote against the war, and funding for the war, against the PATRIOT Act, and I am the only candidate that wants it fully repealed, not just a well intended modification to it. I have never voted for the PATRIOT Act, and I have led to fight in repealing it. It is a grave violation of our constitutional rights of which threatens our democracy itself. The PATRIOT Act violates the First, Fourth and Sixth

amendments by denying freedom of association, freedom from unreasonable searches, the right to a speedy and public trial, the right to legal representation, and the right to liberty.

Along with 20 other members of Congress, I have introduced the Benjamin Franklin True Patriot Act, which would repeal several major sections of the law. It would eliminate the PATRIOT Act's subjective search-and-seizure provision, unwarranted incarcerations, and the authority of federal officials to search our private records without probable cause. The act would restore the fundamental right of attorney-client privilege, revoke various Department of Justice secrecy orders, and repeal provisions harmful to the rights of immigrants. In addition, it would restore transparency to Department of Justice and Department of Homeland Security administrative procedures by revoking Freedom of Information Act secrecy orders. These are the things that our country is founded on. The ends do not justify the means. Racial profiling and denial of human rights and decency is not a path any country should be on, above all the what is supposed to be a land of the free.

3. **Democracy** | The time of America as a nation above nations is over. America needs to send aid to other countries, not armies. In 1953 the United States helped coup Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq. Iran had a democratic government which was overthrown because of oil. This is partly why I am a skeptical of democracy promotion efforts in the Middle East. I opposed the 2006 Iran Freedom Support Act, which would toughen sanctions on Iran and grant the president the authority to "provide financial and political assistance (including the award of grants) to foreign and domestic individuals, organizations, and entities that support democracy and the promotion of democracy in Iran." This act is a thinly veiled way for the Bush administration to build up to war with Iran. That bill passed and was enacted in September 2006. The time of America as a nation above nations needs to end. We should be giving aid to help these countries in humanitarian efforts, not threatening war.
4. **Nuclear Weapons** | One thing that a lot of politicians don't seem to understand is that the United States needs to disarm as well. There are around 6,000 nuclear weapons in the United States alone, with about 27,000 worldwide. The goal of the United States should be complete nuclear disarmament. Any use of nuclear weapons is a grave violation of international law because of the indiscriminate effects on both civilian and the lasting effects on the surrounding environment. The use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity.

The first thing that needs to be done is to renounce the First Strike policy. The second is to cancel all U.S. nuclear weapons programs. We need to stop the use of all depleted uranium munitions and ban all nuclear weapons testing by the United States. The United States also needs to sign and comply with the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty and Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. The United States needs to open up dialogs, as well as showing that we are complying with internationally agreed upon standards. Then, America needs open talks with all nuclear powers. The U.S. must begin new talks with Russia, China, Britain, France, India, Israel, and Pakistan to develop a plan aimed at the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The first step should be to suspend all "readiness" levels of nuclear weapons systems, including those of the United States.

Pakistan wants a deal with the US on nuclear technology, but the U.S. has refused. Instead, Pakistan has turned to China for this technology. To add fuel to the fire, it was just reported that Pakistan has begun building a powerful new reactor for producing plutonium, signaling a major expansion of the

country's nuclear weapons capabilities. Instead of giving India more uranium to develop nuclear weapons, the United States should take leadership in preventing an arms race in the region.

In 1996, the World Court of the United Nations issued an Advisory Opinion condemning the use of nuclear weapons. The Court maintained that "states must never make civilians the object of attack and must consequently never use weapons that are incapable of distinguishing between civilian and military targets." Further, the use of nuclear weapons would violate principles of international law that forbid military tactics that cause serious environmental harm. The United States has a moral, as well as legal, obligation to lead the way to a world free of nuclear weapons. This can be accomplished without negatively impacting the military preeminence of the United States. There is no conceivable international crisis for which nuclear weapons are a viable solution. This is why as President I would work towards dialogs, not destruction.

5. **Global Warming** | Clean air and water, as well as an intact ozone layer, are not luxuries, but necessities for our children's future. The U.S. must toughen environmental enforcement; support the Kyoto Treaty on global climate change; reduce oil dependence; and spur investment in alternative energy sources, including hydrogen, solar, wind, and ocean. Clean energy technologies will produce new jobs. Tax and other incentives will favor sustainable businesses that conserve energy, retrofit pollution prevention technologies, and redesign toxins out of their manufacturing processes. The right to know (for example, when food is genetically engineered) must supersede corporate secrecy. Globally, the U.S. should become a leader in sustainable energy production and a partner with developing nations in providing inexpensive, local, renewable energy technologies

All of the governmental departments need to work together to making collaborative efforts to reduce our dependence on oil, from transportation departments advocating mass transit, to the department of energy creating jobs, money and sustainability through renewable resources.

CONGRESSMAN RON PAUL



1. **Torture** | I would never support the use of torture as a means of obtaining information. I recently introduced the American Freedom Agenda, H.R. 3835, in the House of Representatives. In addition to restoring a host of other civil liberties usurped by the current administration, this bill would prohibit any civilian or military tribunal of the United States from admitting as evidence statements extracted from the defendant by torture or coercion.

2. **Nat'l Security & Civil Liberties** | I do not believe that Americans should have to sacrifice any of their liberty for the promise that they might have greater security. As we know, the Constitution itself was constructed in a time of great crisis. The founders intended to place inviolable restrictions on what the federal government could do even in times of great distress. As president, I would certainly prioritize our own security needs over those of any foreign country. I would make securing our borders against a possible terrorist threat a top defense priority. I would re-focus the efforts of our intelligence services and military on locating those individuals who planned the terrorist attacks on the US and who remain at large. It must be made clear that the United States cannot be attacked with impunity. At the same time, I would pursue a new direction in foreign policy that would focus on reducing the incentives that some may have to act on ill-feelings toward the United States. We have seen that our presence in Iraq has greatly improved the recruiting possibilities for al-Qaeda, as our earlier military presence in Saudi Arabia was exploited by Osama bin Laden to inflame hatred toward the United States.
3. **Democracy** | I seek to follow the foreign policy of our Founding Fathers, which advises peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, and entangling alliances with none. We must respect the right of each nation to elect its own political leadership without our interference in the process. We can certainly lead by example, so that in our resulting prosperity and freedom other nations might try to emulate us. But should we attempt to implement our own style of government overseas by force or fraud, we would find our efforts ultimately unsuccessful. A century of failed foreign interventionism, from Wilson to Baghdad, has shown us the folly of the latter approach.
4. **Nuclear Weapons** | As a congressman, I have introduced legislation calling for the president to hold direct talks with Iran and Syria. I have participated in the Congressional Dialogue Caucus, which emphasizes the need for renewed diplomatic efforts overseas. Direct discussion should always take precedent over saber-rattling and threats. Our goal should be to reduce ill-will toward the United States through a new foreign policy that stresses diplomacy, trade, exchanges over militarism and coercion.
5. **Global Warming** | Government regulations, taxes, and corporate subsidies have distorted the energy market, causing some prices to rise above what they would be in the free market, while artificially lowering other prices and thus discouraging conservation. We must remember that, as in all matters, our energy needs are best met by a free market system that values private property above all.

As president, I will work to restore a free-market in energy. In particular, I will work with Congress to repeal federal regulations and taxes that impede the development of new energy sources. Our current policies give government bureaucrats the power to pick winners and losers, which causes resources to be devoted to those producers with the most political clout rather than the producers who are best able to meet the needs of consumers. In Congress, I am a co-sponsor of legislation designed to encourage the development of alternative and sustainable energy. H.R. 550 extends the investment tax credit to solar energy property and qualified fuel cell property, and H.R. 1772 provides tax credits for the installation of wind energy property. I am also a member of the Congressional Green Scissors Coalition, a bipartisan caucus devoted to ending taxpayer subsidies of projects that harm the environment for the benefit of special interests.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE MUSLIM AMERICAN ELECTORATE

Like other immigrant communities, most Muslims immigrated to the United States to pursue educational and economic opportunities, or to seek refuge from conflict or persecution. Muslims began arriving in large numbers in the 1960s, establishing themselves in cities and towns across America. They integrated themselves into the local community and maintained their faith and cultural traditions in such institutions as the mosque and Muslim community centers.

Despite having lived in the United States for at least three generations and having been successful participants in the American dream, little was known about Muslim Americans and their values, experiences, and attitudes on various issues until recently. While the U.S. Census Bureau is legally forbidden from inquiring about an individual's religious affiliation, several other independent surveys have been able to estimate the number of Muslims in America. The Pew Research Center approximates that there are 1.5 million adult Muslim Americans, while the oft-cited 6-7 million is based on a 2001 survey conducted by researchers from Hartford Institute for Religious Research.

It is often thought that most Muslims are Arabs, but actual numbers indicate that the largest ethnic majority of American Muslims are in fact African American, constituting 35% of the native-born Muslim American population. South Asians comprise 18%, while Arabs make up 24% of Muslims in America.

According to a February 2006 Gallup poll of Muslim Americans, most individuals are in support of the idea that religion and democracy are compatible, an attitude that results from religion playing an important part in their life. With regard to governance, 65% of Muslim Americans believe that religious leaders should not have a direct role in the policy-making process, and 28% believe that the role of those leaders should be limited to advising government officials who hold this responsibility. Therefore, it is a misconception that for Muslims, religion is not compatible with democracy. Instead, Muslim Americans value democratic principles to the same extent that they do their religious beliefs.

In general, Muslims feel more integrated into American society, which has resulted in an increasing trend of political and civic participation at the mosque and university level.

WHO ARE MUSLIM AMERICANS?

Below is data from the 2007 Pew Research Center study entitled "Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream" which provides insight into the composition and attitudes of the Muslim American electorate.

Who Are Muslim Americans?

Foreign-born Muslims	65%
Arab region	24
Pakistan	8
Other South Asia	10
Iran	8
Europe	5
Other Africa	4
Other	6
Native-born Muslims	35
African American	20
Other	15

Employment Status

Employed full-time	41%
Employed part-time	16
Not employed	43

Household Income

\$100,000+	16%
\$75-\$99,999	10
\$50-\$74,999	15
\$30-\$49,999	24
Less than \$30,000	35

Education

Graduate study	10%
College grad	14
Some college	23
HS graduate	32
Not HS grad	21

Ideology

Conservative	19%
Moderate	38
Liberal	24
Don't know	19

Party identification

Democrat/lean Democratic	63%
Republican/lean Republican	11
Indep/other/no preference	26

Voter Registration and Turnout

Registered to vote?	
Yes	63%
No	30
Don't know/refused	7

Vote in 2004 election?

Yes	58%
No	39
Don't know/refused	3

U.S. Muslims See Hard Work Leading to Success

All U.S. Muslims	71%
18-29	76%
30-39	68%
40-54	71%
55+	64%
U.S. general public	64%

Muslim Religious Attendance

Native-born	45%
Foreign-born	37

GET INVOLVED

To continue your activism in the 2008 presidential election campaign,
contact the MPAC offices to help you organize
an election forum in your local community.

LOS ANGELES

3010 Wilshire Blvd, Ste. 217
Los Angeles, CA 90010
(213) 383-3443

WASHINGTON, DC

110 Maryland Ave, NE, Ste. 210
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 547-7701



MPAC is an American institution which informs and shapes public opinion and policy by serving as a trusted resource to decision makers in government, media and policy institutions. MPAC is also committed to developing leaders with the purpose of enhancing the political and civic participation of American Muslims.

Washington, DC

110 Maryland Ave NE, Ste. 210
Washington, DC 20002
202.547.7701

www.mpac.org

Los Angeles, CA

3010 Wilshire Blvd, Ste. 217
Los Angeles, CA 90010
213.383.3443