



DID YOU KNOW?

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AT HOME AND IN EUROPE



President Bush addresses guests at White House Iftar. [White House photo, Chris Greenberg]

PRESIDENT BUSH HOSTS WHITE HOUSE IFTAR, OCTOBER 4, 2007

“Ramadan is also a good time for Americans of all faiths to reflect on the values we hold in common -- including love of family, gratitude to the Almighty, devotion to community, and a commitment to religious liberty. The freedom of worship is central to the American character. It's the first protection in the Bill of Rights. It holds together the fabric of American society -- supporting every individual's right to practice his or her beliefs without fear.”

Excerpt from Iftar speech by President George W. Bush, October 4, 2007.



Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice speaks as she hosts the Annual State Department Iftar. [AP/Wide World Photo]

SECRETARY RICE HOSTS IFTAR DINNER, OCTOBER 5, 2007

“I am told that the first word that was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad was ‘Iqra’, which means to read or recite. I am also told that Iqra is an essential word in the Muslim faith. As the first revelation that came before the five pillars of Islam, Iqra is a duty. Iqra motivates Muslims to seek knowledge and learning opportunities and while it is a word that has tremendous meaning in the Muslim community, it is one with which all can resonate. You see, learning bridges gaps between religions and cultures. Education allows us to enhance opportunities for dialogue and to transcend borders. Put simply, education opens our doors to one another, and especially to humanity, and I am pleased that we are joined tonight by some of the modern-day educational bridge-builders. I am proud to acknowledge that several Fulbright and Hubert Humphrey Scholars from Muslim communities around the world are with us tonight.”

Excerpt from Iftar speech by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, October 5, 2007.

CELEBRATING IFTAR AT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Take a look at Senior Advisor Farah Pandith's [blog](#) about the State Department Iftar. [State Department photo]

HOUSE PASSES RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING RAMADAN

Resolution 635 states that the U.S. House of Representatives recognizes the Islamic faith as one of the great religions of the world, expresses friendship and support for Muslims in the U.S. and worldwide, and acknowledges the onset of Ramadan. (October 2, 2007)



U.S. EMBASSIES IN EUROPE HOST IFTARS

More than 25 U.S. Embassies throughout Europe hosted Iftars to celebrate the end of Ramadan. Guests included Muslim and non-Muslim contacts, friends, and government officials. Below are highlights of these Iftars.

FRANCE: U.S. AMBASSADOR HOSTS IFTAR AT RESIDENCE

U.S. Ambassador Stapleton hosted 85 guests, including representatives from the government, media, and academia for an Iftar at his residence on October 4. Participants saw ongoing U.S. Embassy interest in intercultural dialogue and were pleased to see an event that brought together a truly diverse cross-section of the French Muslim community.

The imam of the grand mosque of Paris says a prayer to open the Iftar at Ambassador Stapleton's residence.
[With permission from Mr. Alain Apaydin, Iftar guest]



GERMANY: U.S. CONSUL GENERAL ADDRESSES LARGE AUDIENCE AT IFTAR IN MOENCHENGLADBACH

U.S. Consul General (CG) Matt Boyse spoke to an audience of 500 at an [Iftar](#) dinner on October 4. The Iftar was hosted by the Moenchengladbach Integration Council, together with Diyanet, the Turkish-Islamic Cultural Association, the Islamic Center, the Arrahman Mosque Association, and the Association for Afghan Cultural Development. CG Boyse spoke about President Bush's tradition of hosting Iftar dinners at the White House and the U.S. Ambassador William R. Timken Jr.'s hosting of Iftar evenings at the Residence in Berlin and around Germany. The event was an opportunity to inform a new audience about the Mission's efforts to engage with Muslim communities.



(Left-right) Nuray İnönütepe, Deputy Turkish Consul in Duesseldorf; U.S. Consul General Matt Boyse; Moenchengladbach Integration Commissioner Guelistan Yueksel; Moenchengladbach Lord Mayor Norbert Bude. [Integrationsrat Moenchengladbach]

BRUSSELS: IFTAR DINNER AT U.S. AMBASSADOR RESIDENCE CHANGES ATTITUDES



U.S. Ambassador Sam Fox and his wife hosted 50 guests for an [Iftar](#) at the Residence in honor of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The focus was on young adults and sharing experiences as members of diverse societies. The guests included politicians, journalists, exchange program alumni, student and community leaders from Belgium's Moroccan and Turkish communities. After prayers by the Imam, the Ambassador, key embassy officers and a group of 40 Muslim guests from all over Belgium broke the fast together. The evening ended with traditional music played by a Belgian ensemble of Moroccan origin.

Guests listen to Ambassador Fox's remarks. [Laurens Vermeire, U.S. Embassy Brussels]

RUSSIA: U.S. CONSULATE GENERAL HOSTS IFTAR IN URALS VILLAGE



An Iftar dinner celebrated in the Bashkir and Tatar village of Ufa-Shigiri brought together more than 150 guests from U.S. Consulate Yekaterinburg and area Muslim communities. School children organized a concert and performed Bashkir and Tatar traditional songs, dances, and poetry. The show was enriched by singing and dancing elders in their national costumes.



The children's orchestra and the elders' dance. [Slavyana Sagakyan, U.S. Consulate Yekaterinburg]

SPAIN: U.S. AMBASSADOR HOSTS ANNUAL IFTAR

At an [Iftar](#) dinner for some 50 guests, U.S. Ambassador Eduardo Aguirre Jr. hosted many of Spain's key Muslim leaders, clerics, and community organizers. Invitees traveled from Sevilla, Granada, and Barcelona to join their colleagues in Madrid. Guests also included key Muslim Ambassadors to Spain. In his remarks, which included the President's Ramadan message, the Ambassador emphasized the importance of rejecting destructive messages of hate that use religion to destroy innocent people.

Ambassador Aguirre greets the Imam of Madrid's Islamic Cultural Center Mosque. [Sandra Sanchez, U.S. Embassy Madrid]



KOSOVO: U.S. OFFICE PRISTINA HOSTS IFTAR DINNER



U.S. Chief of Mission Tina Kaidanow and the U.S. Office Pristina hosted members of the Islamic Community of Kosovo at an Iftar dinner September 21. Guests included Mufti Naim Ternava, his Chief of Cabinet Ejup Ramadani, members of the Faculty of Islamic Studies, and representatives of the Pristina Islamic Council. In his remarks at the start of the dinner, Mufti Ternava noted the strong relationship between the U.S. Office and the Islamic community of Kosovo, particularly mentioning his visit to Washington and his warm reception at the State Department last March.

Chief of Mission Kaidanow (standing) addresses Kosovo Islamic Community representatives, including Mufti Naim Ternava (seated, left). [Mazllom Shala, U.S. Office Pristina]

AUSTRIA: U.S. AMBASSADOR HOSTS IFTAR

U.S. Ambassador Susan McCaw hosted an Iftar at her residence on October 2 with the entire leadership of the Austrian Islamic Community. Also in attendance were Austrian politicians of the Muslim faith and important contacts from Muslim non-governmental organizations. In welcome remarks, Ambassador McCaw highlighted the shared values of Muslims and non-Muslims while the President of the Islamic Community in Austria underscored the need to reject anti-Americanism and intolerance.

NORWAY: U.S. EMBASSY OSLO HOSTS FIRST IFTAR

U.S. Embassy Oslo organized the first U.S. Ambassador-hosted Iftar in Norway with Oslo's diverse and burgeoning Muslim community. U.S. Ambassador Benson K. Whitney hosted 25 guests including Norwegian first generation Muslims from Bosnia, Pakistan, India, Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan and Morocco and Ambassadors from Afghanistan, Morocco, and Sudan. The guests represented a wide variety of organizations dealing with immigrant or minority integration issues, including Oslo City Council Members, Islamic Council members, and leaders of major NGOs. The Head Imam of the Islamic Council said a prayer and the Moroccan Ambassador spoke of the close and historic ties between the countries.



Ambassador Whitney welcomes Norwegian Muslims and Muslim Ambassadors in Norway to Iftar dinner. Imam Senaid Kobilica at his right. [Stephanie Darnell, U.S. Embassy Oslo]

ITALY: U.S. AMBASSADOR'S IFTAR INAUGURATES "MUSLIM LIFE IN AMERICA" EXHIBIT



Guests look over the poster exhibit. [Marco Iacolla, U.S. Embassy Rome]

U.S. Embassy Rome used the occasion of Ambassador Ronald P. Spogli's September 27 Iftar dinner to launch a poster exhibit entitled "Muslim Life in America." U.S. Embassy Rome culled photos and added text from speeches by President Bush and Ambassador Spogli, as well as facts and figures on American Muslims to create a snapshot of Muslim communities, youth activities, mosques, and prayer time in the everyday lives of American Muslims. Seventy guests, including young Muslim participants of the State Department's International Visitor Program, Muslim diplomats, Rome's Imam, and Italian officials admired the colorful exhibit, listened to remarks by

Ambassador Spogli and broke their fast while enjoying the sounds of a Moroccan oud and drum trio.

DENMARK: U.S. AMBASSADOR HOSTS EMBASSY IFTAR AND ATTENDS DANISH ISLAMIC ASSOCIATION IFTAR

U.S. Ambassador James P. Cain hosted an October 4 Iftar for 45 religious, political and civic leaders from Denmark's Muslim community. Guests included five imams, seven exchange program alumni sponsored by the U.S. State Department, and several partners in the Mission's youth exchange and sports initiatives. Islamic Association of Denmark imam Dr. Mohammad Albarazi delivered the call to prayer. The week before, Dr. Albarazi hosted Ambassador Cain and Senior Advisor Farah Pandith at the Islamic Association of Denmark's own Iftar at their mosque in northwest Copenhagen.



Ambassador Cain at Danish Islamic Association Iftar. [Richard Johannsen, U.S. Embassy Copenhagen]

TURKEY: U.S. CONSUL GENERAL HOLDS IFTAR FOR MEDIA, NGOs, AND ACADEMICS

U.S. Consul General Sharon Wiener opened her residence to twenty members of the media, NGOs, and academia for an Iftar dinner. The guests learned more about freedom of religion in the U.S. and that Islam has a significant place in U.S. society.

ROMANIA: U.S. AMBASSADOR REACHES OUT TO MUSLIM COMMUNITY



U.S. Ambassador Nicholas Taubman surprised and delighted local Muslim students in two schools in Romania when he stopped in on October 4 to donate books to the school libraries in honor of Ramadan. The Ambassador also visited the town of Medgidia, home to a large Muslim minority and the bilingual Romanian-Turkish Kemal Ataturk National School, and Castelu, a nearby village that is predominantly Muslim. On the evening of October 5, the Ambassador attended an Iftar in Bucharest organized by the Mufti of Romania and attended by Romanian President Basescu, leading members of the Muslim community and the diplomatic corps.

Ambassador Taubman is greeted at Kemal Ataturk National College by a student, Murat Iosif, the Mufti of Romania, and a recent International Visitor grantee. [Ana Maria Popa, U.S. Embassy Bucharest]

GERMANY: U.S. AMBASSADOR HOSTS IFTAR IN COLOGNE

U.S. Ambassador William R. Timken Jr. and his wife hosted a traditional [Iftar](#) dinner on September 25 in Cologne attended by leading members of Muslim, Kurdish and Alevite communities in Germany, as well as senior government officials, local political and community leaders involved in integration and interfaith dialogue issues. The Ambassador stressed that tolerance and the acceptance of different ethnic and religious groups are bedrock elements of American society. He also reiterated his respect for Islam as a world religion.



Ambassador Timken welcomes guests at Iftar in Cologne. [Bernd Herbert, U.S. Consulate Duesseldorf]

CYPRUS: U.S. EMBASSY NICOSIA SPONSORS WELL ATTENDED IFTAR



U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission Jane Zimmerman led a group of U.S. Embassy officials in serving food to approximately 800 at an [Iftar](#) sponsored by the U.S. Embassy. In a televised speech in Turkish at the event, Counselor for Public Affairs Thomas Miller welcomed the participants, describing how Iftars have become a custom in the U.S. and how America's multicultural nation has been enriched by Muslims and that the generosity and compassion of American Muslims have made the U.S. a more hopeful country. In addition to serving food, Embassy personnel exchanged views and engaged in warm discussions. This is the third consecutive year that the Embassy has sponsored Iftars.

U.S. Embassy intern Andrew Hand and Political Officer Amy Dahm serve Iftar meals to both young and old. [Tom Miller, U.S. Embassy Nicosia] U.S. Embassy Nicosia also held a [second Iftar](#) which was attended by 400 guests.

AZERBAIJAN: U.S. EMBASSY CELEBRATES RAMADAN

As a token of respect for the Muslim tradition of Ramadan, U.S. Ambassador Anne Derse invited local community leaders and Muslim scholars to share the Iftar with her. Before the meal the Ambassador read the Ramadan greeting by President Bush. Two weeks before, a similar event was held for the leaders of the main religious denominations -- Muslim, Jewish, Christian Orthodox and Catholic.

U.S. Ambassador Derse receives Muslim and Community leaders for Iftar. [Mehdi Huseynquliyev, U.S. Embassy Baku]



TURKEY: UNDER SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS' VISIT TO TURKEY SENDS POSITIVE MESSAGE

During his one-day [visit](#) to Istanbul, September 18, Under Secretary for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns paid respect to the Islamic community in Turkey during the holy month of Ramazan by visiting the famous Süleymaniye Mosque. Calling it “one of the great mosques of the world,” U/S Burns toured the structure with its Imam Ekram Nalbant. That evening Under Secretary Burns was the guest of honor at an Iftar dinner hosted by U.S. Consul General Sharon Anderholm Wiener, attended by two Members of Parliament and influential civic leaders, including the heads of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce and the Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association.



Under Secretary Burns visits Sulemaniye Mosque. [Aydan Yurdakul, U.S. Consulate Istanbul]

SENIOR ADVISOR FARAH PANDITH ENGAGES EUROPEAN PUBLIC

Farah Pandith, Senior Advisor for Muslim Engagement to the Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs has had the opportunity to engage with a wide variety of Muslims in Western Europe. Whether talking about issues of integration, identity, Islam in America, or the role of civil society, the discussions have been frank and interesting. Many Muslims in Europe want to understand more about the choices American Muslims make in terms of their identity and many ask for more information about the diversity of America. Ms. Pandith has focused her efforts on what is taking place in Europe with regard to the younger generation of Muslims -- visiting community centers, holding roundtables, visiting mosques, learning from civil society leaders and talking with young people. She has visited more than 40 cities in Europe in the last eight months sharing more about America and its traditions of freedom of religion, the importance of civil rights and civil liberties, and the texture of diversity within the United States.



Farah Pandith visits the World Islamic Mission mosque along with Secretary General of the Islamic Council Shoji Mohammad Sultan, Oslo. [Marit Andersen, U.S. Embassy Oslo]



Farah Pandith (middle-left), President and Founder of the Inter-Knowing Foundation Nemat Mardan-Bey (middle-right), Geneva. [Shari Taylor]



Left-right: Imam Muhammad Fouad Albarazi, Ambassador Cain and Farah Pandith at Iftar hosted by The Muslim Association of Denmark in Copenhagen on September 26, 2007. [Richard M. Johannsen, U.S. Embassy Copenhagen]



Farah Pandith with Jang News interviewer Murtaza Ali Shah, London. [David Hartnoll, U.S Embassy London]

DENMARK: U.S. AMBASSADOR SPEAKS AT 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF NUSRAT DJAHAN MOSQUE

U.S. Ambassador to Denmark James P. Cain spoke about religious freedom and tolerance at a celebration of the 40th anniversary of the first mosque built in Scandinavia. The Ambassador joined Danish Minister of Education and Church Bertel Haarder, and Danish Member of Parliament Kamal Qureshi, as guest speakers at the Nusrat Djahan Mosque in Hvidovre. The celebration was attended by over 150 guests, which included Scandinavia's first imam, Dyed Kamal Yousaf.



Ambassador Cain with Scandinavia's first imam Dyed Kamal Yousaf. [Richard M. Johannsen, U.S. Embassy Copenhagen]

SERBIA: U.S. AMBASSADOR STRESSES CIVIC VALUES OF EQUALITY, TOLERANCE AND PLURALISM



U.S. Ambassador Cameron Munter spoke at the opening of the 10th Annual International Summer School for Democracy, the topic of which was "Transition, Islam, and Democracy." He emphasized U.S. commitment to ethnic and religious diversity, both at home and abroad, and noted that U.S. Embassy Belgrade is proud to support the rebuilding of the Islamic Community Center in Belgrade and the historic Mehteb in Novi Pazar.

From left to right: Rasim Ljajic, Minister of Labor and Social Policy; U.K. Ambassador to Serbia Stephen Wordsworth; Dr. Vukasin Pavlovic, Director of the International Summer School for Democracy; U.S. Ambassador to Serbia Cameron Munter participate in the opening of the 10th Annual International Summer School for Democracy. [© Fonet, Serbian news agency]

NORWAY: U.S. AMBASSADOR AND STAFF DISCOVER JOY OF CRICKET WITH PAKISTANI-NORWEGIAN COMMUNITY

A dozen members of the U.S. Embassy Oslo community, including Ambassador Benson K. Whitney, joined cricket players from the Oslo Cricket Club for a friendly match on September 22. The cricket team players invited the Americans to come to their future professional matches. Through engaging in the joys of cricket, the Pakistani-Norwegian cricket players and the Americans found common ground. Playing sports is a great way of informally communicating across cultural boundaries, and was a positive way of reaching out to the Pakistani-Norwegian community.



Ambassador Whitney (middle) and cricket group. [Colin Sullivan, U.S. Embassy Oslo]

GREECE: U.S. CONSUL GENERAL SUPPORTS MUSLIM NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION

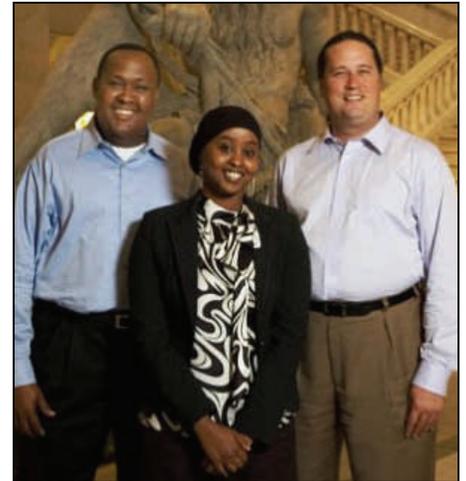


U.S. Consul General (CG) Hoyt Brian Lee of U.S. Consulate Thessaloniki met with the Cultural and Family Women's Branch of the Association of University Muslim Graduates of Western Thrace to discuss economic and social challenges faced by the Muslim minority in northern Greece on September 3. Association members (mostly Turkish Muslim women) briefed the CG on their activities, which ranged from pre-school education to fundraising for needy Muslim university students. The CG reaffirmed the U.S. Consulate's interest in strengthening cooperation with the Association.

Consul General Lee discusses with Association members. [Stelios Tsitsios, U.S. Consulate Thessaloniki]

SWEDEN: VISITING MINNEAPOLIS DELEGATION DISCUSSES SOMALI INTEGRATION IN AMERICA

Two American Somalis and a city council member from Minneapolis visited Sweden's three largest cities the week of August 27 to explain how Somali refugees have succeeded in Minneapolis and discuss best practices of American Somali integration. U.S. Embassy Stockholm sponsored the visit in cooperation with the think-tank Zufi and a Swedish professor who conducted research comparing the two groups of refugees. Speaking to crowds numbering more than 100, the American Somalis argued that entrepreneurship, education and willingness to assimilate are keys to success in a new land. Most of the Swedish guests came from the Somali community, but audience members also included the State Secretary for the Integration Ministry and business leaders.



Left to Right: Executive Director, African Development Center of Minnesota (ADC) Hussein Samatar; ADC Project Coordinator Nimo Farah; Minneapolis City Council Member Robert Lilligren. [Paula Keller, African Development Center of Minnesota]

U.K.: ALAN WOLFE DISCUSSES RELIGION IN AMERICAN LIFE



Sidney Shipton (center left) of the Three Faiths Forum welcomes Professor Alan Wolfe (center right) to a discussion on American religion at U.S. Embassy London with Christian, Muslim and Jewish leaders. [Christopher Dunnett, U.S. Embassy London]

Professor Alan Wolfe, a leading expert on relationships between religion and American culture, society, and politics has enlightened audiences from London to Belfast. At a discussion forum, hosted by U.S. Embassy London in association with the U.K.-based interfaith organization The Three Faiths Forum, Prof. Wolfe discussed religion with prominent Christian, Islamic, and Jewish leaders as well as supporters of interfaith dialogue. Professor Wolfe, Director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College, also gave a lecture to an audience of over 130 at the British Library as part of the Library's outstanding "Sacred" exhibition, which brings together for the first time rare sacred texts from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Prof. Wolfe then traveled to Belfast where he delivered a lecture on religion in the U.S. at the Irish School of Ecumenics and engaged in a discussion forum hosted by U.S. Consulate Belfast.

ITALY: MOROCCAN-AMERICAN FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR SHARES THOUGHTS ON MUSLIM INTEGRATION

Moroccan-American author Laila Lalami conducted a seminar for over 50 students, academics and the general public, including members of the local Muslim community, at the University of Cagliari on October 8. She followed the seminar with a reading from her book "Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits" which deals with illegal immigration from Morocco to Spain. Lalami offered thoughts on her American immigration experience, her choice to write in English, and how cultural vestiges of the French occupation of her native Morocco led her to rebel against the ensuing "colonization of the imagination." During the question and answer session, Lalami's description of how well Muslims are integrating in the U.S. and a comparison with opposite trends in Europe generated a lively debate among participants.

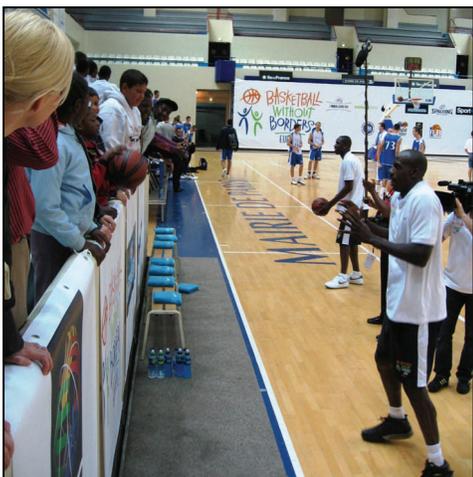


DENMARK: ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA TV STATION HIGHLIGHTS DANISH YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Sixteen ethnically diverse Danish high school students from predominantly Muslim immigrant neighborhoods traveled to the U.S. in July on a three-week "Window on America" program organized by the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen in collaboration with Youth for Understanding-Denmark (YFU). The young Danes lived with American host families in the Erie, Pennsylvania area for two weeks, and traveled to Washington, DC and New York City for cultural programs and visits that allowed them to learn more about American society and values. Local TV in Erie did an evening news story on the visit, airing interviews with several of the students in which they talked about how their pre-conceptions about the U.S. have changed and how they will return to Denmark with a more positive view of Americans and American society.



Danish exchange students pose while in Erie, PA, July 2007.
[Finn Balle Kjeldsen, National Director YFU-Denmark]



FRANCE: VISITING NBA PLAYERS INSPIRE DISADVANTAGED YOUTH

The U.S. Embassy in Paris took advantage of the visit to France of a group of NBA basketball players, coaches, and recruiters to organize a well-received outreach to French youth from the underserved suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois, a scene of unrest in fall 2005. The participating youth, ages 8-18, played with the athletes and spoke with them about their lives and careers. The vice-president of the Dallas Mavericks, himself originally from Senegal, led an inspiring discussion about overcoming obstacles, studying hard, and setting high goals.

Visiting NBA stars inspire disadvantaged youth, July 31, 2007.
[Fabienne Molle-Corazzi, U.S. Embassy Paris]

AUSTRIA: FIRST CHRISTIAN-JEWISH-MUSLIM PEACE CONCERT

The first ever "Christian-Jewish-Muslim Peace Concert" took place at the University of Vienna using music as an instrument to bring people and their religions together. U.S. Embassy Vienna and the Initiative "Future through Language" organized the event which was an especially fitting effort just before the Pope's visit to Austria. Green wrist-bands, especially designed for this concert, were distributed at the event to establish a sign of solidarity and commitment to world peace. Representatives of all three religions were present and gave speeches about the importance of language. Approximately 100 guests listened to four different musical performances, from pop to classical. The musicians all have different religious backgrounds; they performed for free in order to show their support for bringing religions and young people together.



The "Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Peace Concert" in University of Vienna music hall.
[Halley Brunsteter, U.S. Embassy Vienna]

For more information about public diplomacy efforts of the Bureau of European Affairs please visit our [website](#) and Public Diplomacy Monthly [newsletter](#).