



DID YOU KNOW?

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AT HOME AND IN EUROPE

PRESIDENT BUSH SENDS GREETING FOR EID AL-ADHA

Presidential Message, December 8, 2008: “I send greetings to Muslims around the world celebrating Eid al-Adha, the Festival of Sacrifice. Eid al-Adha commemorates Abraham's devotion to God, and it reminds us of God's mercy and provision for his people. Abraham's deep faith was tested when God asked him to sacrifice his son. Although Abraham was set to faithfully obey, God provided an alternate sacrifice that spared his son. During this holiday, Muslims around the world honor Abraham's trust in God and celebrate God's love through acts of charity and joyous feasts with family, friends, and others in their community. Our Nation is blessed by vibrant Muslim communities. On this holiday, all Americans celebrate our religious liberty, and we remember that religious freedom belongs not to any one nation but to the world. Laura and I send our best wishes for a blessed holiday.”

PRESIDENT BUSH HOSTS WHITE HOUSE IFTAAR DINNER



President George W. Bush welcomes guests to the Iftar dinner in the State Dining Room of the White House, September 17, 2008, to celebrate the traditions of Islamic faith and culture. He honored American Muslim innovators. [Chris Greenberg, White House photographer]

are reminded of Islam's long and distinguished history. Throughout the centuries, the Islamic world has been home to great centers of learning and culture. Muslim thinkers and scientists have advanced the frontiers of human knowledge. People of all faiths have benefited from the achievements of Muslims in fields from philosophy and poetry to mathematics and medicine. [...] Americans practice many different faiths. But we all share a belief in the right to worship freely. We reject bigotry in all its forms. And over the past eight years, my administration has been proud to work closely with Muslim Americans to promote justice and tolerance of all faiths.” Read the President’s full remarks [here](#).

SECRETARY RICE HOSTS ANNUAL IFTAAR DINNER



Secretary Rice speaks at the Iftar dinner, September 8, 2008. [Michael Gross, U.S. Department of State]

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice hosted the State Department’s annual Iftar dinner for the diplomatic community, members of Congress, and representatives from civil society, religious, cultural, and academic communities in the Department’s Benjamin Franklin Room. In her remarks, the Secretary said, “our celebration tonight honors artists whose lives and work teaches the value of liberty, the good that comes from individuals having the freedom to express the ideas and values and influences that matter the most. The poetry that is written, the music that is composed, the history that is unearthed, the buildings that are designed – all of this generously shares Islam with the American people. It reminds us of Islam’s culture and scientific contributions to our lives, and it challenges us both as individuals and society to be better, to be more humble and to be more charitable, to think less about ourselves and to think more about others.” Read the Secretary’s full remarks [here](#).

UNDER SECRETARY GLASSMAN REACHES OUT TO YOUNG AMERICAN MUSLIMS AT IFTAAR DINNER

Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs James Glassman hosted an Iftaar for a cross section of young American Muslims, visiting exchange students and their host families, and members of the diplomatic corps. The event symbolized the mosaic of American society and the commitment by the U.S. Government to build bridges of understanding and friendship across cultures and faith traditions. The invocation was delivered by the Muslim Chaplain for the U.S. Marine Corp, Abu Hena Saiful Islam. Read more about Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs at the Department of State at <http://www.state.gov/r/>.



Under Secretary Glassman with young American Muslims, September 26, 2008. [Margaret Ann Thomas, U.S. Department of State]

STATE DEPARTMENT SUPPORTS YOUNG PEOPLE IN FIGHT AGAINST EXTREMISM



Youth gather at the MTV event.

Facebook, Google, YouTube, MTV, Howcast, Columbia Law School, the U.S. Department of State and Access 360 Media brought leaders of 17 pioneering organizations from 15 countries together with technology experts at Columbia Law School in New York for the first-ever summit to empower youth against violence and oppression using the latest online tools. These young leaders shared best practices and formed a new group, the **Alliance of Youth Movements**, which has produced a field manual for youth empowerment. Watch live video from the summit, join the conversation, and learn how to change the world at <http://youthmovements.howcast.com>. Or [watch](#) Under Secretary Glassman give a briefing on the summit.

FRANCE: EMBASSY GATHERS “THIRTY UNDER THIRTY”

The U.S. Embassy in Paris organized a full day of leadership training for 30 French social entrepreneurs all under 30 years of age at the ambassador's residence. Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Farah Pandith participated in this event, which demonstrated the U.S. Government's commitment to promoting best practices in the field of diversity. Three panels with top experts discussed communication with the press, the challenges facing the new generation of social entrepreneurs, and fundraising. Foundation and investment fund leaders and Professor Bruce Koguth of the Columbia University School of Business joined the young entrepreneurs. Through this training day, the embassy offered new tools to meet the goals of a new generation of leaders for social change. [Read Senior Advisor Pandith's bio.](#)



Senior Advisor Farah Pandith, Amb. Stapleton and the Thirty Under Thirty, October 23, 2008. [Patrick Maulave, U.S. Embassy Paris]

ITALY: PROGRAM FOR ITALIAN MUSLIM STUDENTS SETS BAR HIGH



Italian Muslim students in front of the White House during their trip to the U.S. September 12-28, 2008.

The U.S. Embassy in Rome sponsored seven Italian Muslim university students on a trip to learn about diversity, integration and American Muslim life in three U.S. cities (Dearborn, MI; New York City; and Washington, DC). The participants, student leaders from Milan, Reggio Emilia, Rome and Sicily, returned from their program energized and enthused about the U.S. and the American contacts they made. The program generated media and cultural interest. Influential centrist daily La Stampa (circ. 300,000) featured a link to the students' travel blog in its Web site; Italian Muslim youth-oriented weekly Yallah Italia published an article on their experiences (written by one of the students, who is an editor for the publication); Italy's second largest daily La Repubblica (circ. 600,000) published an article in its weekly immigrant-oriented magazine Metropoli; and the Muslim Cultural Center of Rome sponsored an event for the local Moroccan community featuring four of the students.

AZERBAIJAN: EMBASSY HIGHLIGHTS ASSISTANCE AND OUTREACH DURING RAMADAN

In addition to hosting a traditional Iftaar dinner, the U.S. Embassy in Baku held a number of assistance and outreach programs during Ramadan. U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan Anne Derse spoke about Ramadan and how Americans and Azerbaijanis share a tradition of tolerance and charity in her remarks at the opening of a new school for the internally displaced peoples of the Nagorno-Karabakh region built by the U.S. Embassy with support from the European Command. She echoed her comments in remarks at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)-backed Save the Children project outside of Baku. She also toured the recently rebuilt Bibi-Heybat Mosque.



Ambassador Derse tours the Bibi-Heybat Mosque in Baku with Imam Haji Hikmet, September 23, 2008. [Mehdi Huseynliyev, U.S. Embassy Baku]

USOSCE: PARTNERING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY TO HEAD OFF RADICALIZATION

In her appearance as an expert at the Public-Private Partnership against Terrorism forum in Vienna, Senior Adviser Farah Pandith delivered an important message to the 56-country Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The conference was one of a series of OSCE events that explore the relationships between civil society, media, radicalization and terrorism. Ms. Pandith emphasized that governments need to partner with the non-governmental sector to promote credible Muslim spokespersons whose views represent mainstream Muslim opinion. The media needs to become more aware of grassroots mainstream leaders because their views are supported widely in Muslim communities but have often been overshadowed by sensationalist coverage of extremists.

TURKEY: SPECIAL ENVOY CUMBER BRINGS MESSAGE OF COOPERATION TO ISTANBUL



Cumber presents İhsanoğlu with a Florida magnolia leaf painted with the Ottoman Crest, August 22, 2008. [Milliyet]

U.S. Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Sada Cumber participated in a press conference after his meeting with OIC Secretary General Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu. Special Envoy Cumber then went on to hold a more in-depth conversation with senior editors from the pro-government Zaman and centrist Milliyet newspapers and the news channel NTV. The Zaman and Milliyet articles discussed the U.S. interest in developing a relationship with the Muslim world based on dialogue and tolerance and Cumber's emphasis on what the U.S. and the OIC can do to promote women and children's health in OIC member states in Africa. Coming just before the start of Ramadan, Special Envoy Cumber's message was timely and warmly welcomed. [Read Special Envoy Cumber's bio.](#)

GERMANY: AMBASSADOR'S WIFE SUE TIMKEN RECEIVES GERMAN ORDER OF MERIT

Sue Timken, wife of U.S. Ambassador to Germany William Timken, has been awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Bundesverdienstkreuz, in appreciation of her philanthropic work with Germany's immigrant youth and Muslim communities. She was recognized for her tireless support of the "Windows on America" initiative and the "Streets of Wedding" project. Windows on America provides immigrant students and other underrepresented youth in Germany a chance to experience the U.S. firsthand. To date, over one hundred disadvantaged youths have benefited from the exchanges, gaining personal insight into American culture and returning home with more open minds and a greater sense of self. Similarly, the Streets of Wedding project, a musical, aimed to engage minority youths. The theatrical production examined Wedding (an economically depressed district in Berlin) through the students' eyes, countering negative images of Wedding and its residents. The Order of Merit is the highest honor that can be bestowed on individuals for their service and contribution to the German nation.



Mrs. Timken accepting her award on November 21, 2008.

GERMANY: SPECIAL ENVOY CUMBER MEETS WITH MUSLIM GERMANS

Sada Cumber, who was appointed earlier this year by President Bush as the first-ever U.S. Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), held a roundtable discussion at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin with Muslim German academics, politicians, business executives and community organizers to learn about the challenges facing Muslim integration in Germany and throughout Europe. Topics ranged from concern about the lack of education about Islam in Germany, to preventing Muslim extremism, to social, structural and identity issues at the root of the cultural divide between Muslim and non-Muslim Germans. Special Envoy Cumber mentioned that he was especially glad to hear a European perspective on the sensitive issue of integration, and stressed the “question of responsibility,” encouraging them to improve their own conditions by building diplomatic relations with the West and productive relations with their home societies. He also urged participants to engage on integration issues rather than waiting for the German government to take the lead.



Embassy Officer Ruth Anne Stevens-Klitz (R) introduces Special Envoy Cumber and Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs, Dr. Helena Kane Finn (L), July 18, 2008.

FRANCE: FARAH PANDITH PROMOTES UNDERSTANDING AMONG LYON'S MUSLIMS



Farah Pandith with teachers and administrators from Lyon's Islamic Al-Kindi High School, October 21, 2008. [Harry Sullivan, APP Lyon]

Senior Advisor Farah Pandith visited Lyon to foster understanding of the U.S. and learn about the challenges Lyon's Muslims face. Senior Advisor Pandith also visited five classes at the Islamic high school Al-Kindi, speaking to at least a hundred students about the U.S. and being an American Muslim. The school's director, Nazir Hakim, spoke about the only school in France for the training of imams, the European Institute of Human Sciences, which he also manages. School enrollment has increased tenfold since its inauguration, but only a small portion opt for the full training to become imams, meaning France will be dependent on imported imams for years to come. Lyon Grand Mosque Rector Kamel Kabtane discussed the financing and full scope of its proposed French Institute of Muslim Civilization, which would train imams, offer for-credit courses to local university students, promote interfaith dialogue, include a museum, and host cultural performances from the Muslim community.

SWEDEN: DELEGATION OF AMERICAN MUSLIMS VISITS SWEDEN

As part of the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm's Citizen Dialogue Program, a delegation of four American Muslims—a student, an Imam, a NGO-leader and a lawyer—came to Sweden for a four-day visit. Starting in Sweden's third largest city, Malmö, which has a large immigrant community, the visitors participated in discussions with university and high school students on American foreign policy in the Middle East, immigrant experiences in Sweden and the U.S., and Sept. 11. A stop in at the Islamic Center allowed the delegation to celebrate Iftaar with about 100 members of the Malmö Muslim community. In Stockholm, discussions were held with 20 members of the Somali community in the suburb of Rinkeby, followed by a discussion at Stockholm University. The delegation also visited two mosques and participated in Iftaar evenings at the embassy and at the Stockholm Islamic Center.



Hiba Arshad, Nausheen Hassan, Talal Eid, Muhammed Muslim and Khaled Paymoz during their visit to Sweden September 17-20, 2008. [Annelie Stiglund, U.S. Embassy Stockholm]

The U.S. Department of State's **Citizens Dialogue Program** sends small, diverse groups of American Muslim Citizens to deliver credible personal stories that underscore Islam's vibrant role in American society. If you would like to participate in a Citizen Dialogue Program, build international contacts and enhance your perspective on the issues facing Muslims in other parts of the world, please contact the **Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP)** at CDP@state.gov for more information.

SWITZERLAND: TAYYIBAH TAYLOR SPARKS DISCUSSION ACROSS SWITZERLAND AND FRANCE

Prominent American journalist Tayyibah Taylor, editor in chief of the Muslim women's magazine *Azizah*, traveled throughout Switzerland and across the border into France to address Swiss and Muslim perceptions about Islam and Muslim women in America. Her itinerary included attending U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland Peter Coneway's Iftaar dinner, where she wowed the interfaith crowd and sparked in-depth conversations. She was also guest of honor at an interfaith Iftaar in Geneva, hosted by a participant of the U.S. Embassy in Bern's International Visitors Leadership Program. Taylor gave talks at universities in Bern, Geneva, and Mulhouse, France, which attracted men and women, Muslims and non-Muslims, undergrad and graduate students, and professors of varying disciplines. One student said that before Taylor's talk she had never thought she could like Americans nor have any interest in America, but she could not believe how her world had changed in just a few hours. Following the talk, the student asked her professor about how to participate in the university's exchange program with a U.S. college.



American Speaker and guest of honor Tayyibah Taylor engages her audience at Ambassador Peter R. Coneway's Iftaar dinner, September 25, 2008.

UK: DEBUNKING 9/11 MYTHS IN BIRMINGHAM



Senior Advisor Farah Pandith sat down with government, non-governmental organizations and religious leaders in visits to London and Birmingham. Her first visit to the Birmingham Central Mosque led to debunking of persistent post-9/11 myths about the role of Muslims in the attacks. She also spoke to a group of Muslim women artists about U.S. government outreach programs. A Birmingham Post interview with Pandith described the U.S. government's efforts to combat violent extremism. She also had a wide-ranging interview with the Islam Channel, which aired throughout the U.K.

Farah Pandith speaking with the Islam Channel in the embassy's studio. [Claire Parvin, U.S. Embassy London]

GERMANY/DENMARK: CITIZEN DIALOGUE PROGRAM PROMOTES INTERFAITH UNDERSTANDING

The Citizen Dialogue program brought American Muslims to Hamburg and Copenhagen for cross-cultural and interfaith discussions on political, social and personal topics, including the importance of playing an active role in one's community, religious freedom, and Muslim life in the United States. The group, supported by the U.S. Consulate General in **Hamburg**, discovered that their counterparts in Northern Germany work on similar projects and face similar challenges, e.g. dealing with domestic violence, conflict resolution in schools, and helping the homeless. Their program included a reception hosted by U.S. Consul General Karen Johnson, visits with integration-focused NGOs, a trip to Hamburg's biggest mosque, and a roundtable with 22 guests who engaged the four Americans in a frank dialogue on the life of Muslim Americans before and after 9/11. The four American Muslims who visited **Copenhagen** as part of the same program got a sense of the Danish immigration debate and how, as suggested by an article in a leading Danish weekly, Danish Muslims are not as integrated as in the U.S. The group's busy program included meetings at the Islamic Christian Study Center and the Danish Institute for Human Rights, as well as an encounter with teachers and students at Gerlev Sports Academy in Slagelse. An in-depth interview with Danish weekly *Weekendavisen* (circulation 60,500) capped the pioneering visit: "We seek to build bridges of friendship" was how one participant, Kamel Shrek, a math teacher from Texas, summed up his experiences.



Imam Fateen Seifullah from Las Vegas with Kurdish Youth, October 17, 2008. [Martina Schulze, U.S. Consulate General Hamburg]

U.S. EMBASSIES IN EUROPE HOST IFTAARS

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

CYPRUS: AMBASSADOR URBANCIC LEADS IFTAAR DINNER FOR MUSLIM ORPHANS

U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus Frank Urbancic hosted an Iftaar dinner for SOS Children's Village for orphans at the Californian Restaurant in Nicosia. SOS Children's Village is an NGO that provides family-based care to orphans worldwide. A total of 70 people attended, including all of the children from the Village, house "mothers," SOS board members, print and broadcast journalists, and officials from the U.S. Embassy in Nicosia. The dinner celebrated the longstanding friendship between SOS Village and the U.S. Embassy in Nicosia. In a televised speech at the dinner, Ambassador Urbancic stressed the significance of Ramadan worldwide and emphasized how American Muslims have contributed to the diverse and multicultural fabric of U.S. society.



Orphans from the SOS Village wait for dinner to be served, September 16, 2008. [Juliette Dickstein, U.S. Embassy Nicosia]

AUSTRIA: US AMBASSADOR GIRARD-DICARLO'S IFTAAR IN AUSTRIA

Senior Advisor Farah Pandith was the guest of honor at U.S. Ambassador to Austria David Girard-diCarlo's Iftaar held at his residence. The entire leadership of the Austrian Islamic community, Austrian Muslim politicians and important contacts from Muslim NGOs attended the dinner. In his opening remarks, the ambassador highlighted the shared values of Muslims and non-Muslims, and the importance of religious freedom for Americans. In her after-dinner remarks, Farah Pandith explained why the U.S. is reaching out to Muslims worldwide, including European Muslims. The ambassador's Iftaar was instrumental in strengthening relations with Austrian Islamic leadership. Pandith's attendance underscored the importance Washington has assigned to positive dialogue with Muslim communities in Europe.

FRANCE: EMBASSY HOSTS IFTAAR WITH YOUNG LEADERS



Ambassador Stapleton greets guests, October 4, 2008. [Laura Berg, U.S. Embassy Paris]

U.S. Ambassador to France Craig Stapleton hosted the annual Iftaar for 120 embassy contacts in the Paris region, focusing his speech on the gifts of Islamic culture to the West. French musicians specializing in Arab-Andalus music that emphasizes intercultural understanding performed. This year's Iftaar was unique in bringing together a significant number of young leaders, such as newly elected deputy mayors, imams, artists, and community leaders, including several women. Media attention on the embassy's minority outreach program has increased visibility and helped to expand the embassy's network of young minority leaders.

ITALY: AMBASSADOR'S IFTAAR ENGAGES YOUNG EUROPEAN MUSLIMS

U.S. Ambassador to Italy Ronald Spogli held an Iftaar dinner for nearly 100 guests, including seven Italian Muslim students who participated in the Counter Terrorism Command Center-funded Voluntary Visitor program, as well as Muslim International Visitors Program alumni, and Muslim members of the diplomatic corps. Moroccan musical group Gnawa Bambara delighted guests with their rhythmic and gymnastic performance.



Ambassador Spogli welcomes former Edward R. Murrow Journalism Program participant, Karima Moual, to the Iftaar dinner, September 29, 2008. [Marco Iacoella, U.S. Embassy Rome]

SWEDEN: EMBASSY STOCKHOLM HOSTS ITS FIRST IFTAAR FOR MUSLIM LEADERS



Swedish-Tunisian Imam Mahmoud Khalfi and American-Lebanese Imam Talal Eid, September 18, 2008. [Annelie Stiglund, U.S. Embassy Stockholm]

Thirty-five leading members of the Muslim community in Stockholm participated in an Iftar hosted by the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm. The event, held in honor of four American Muslims participating in the U.S. State Department's Citizen Dialogue Program, started with a discussion on Muslim life in the West. The discussion focused on the perception of Muslims post-9/11 and prejudices in American and Swedish societies. The American guests also touched on U.S. foreign policy and how they respond to critiques of American policies when abroad. They expressed that there is no contradiction between being critical of U.S. policies and at the same time being patriotic. The discussion was followed by a sunset prayer led by American Imam Talal Eid and the breaking of the fast.

NORWAY: EMBASSY OSLO'S IFTAAR INSPIRES YOUTH

The U.S. Embassy in Oslo hosted 50 Muslim community members, State Department program alumni, university students, and a large group from an at-risk youth center for an evening of networking and conversation. The spectrum of attendees provided the students and youth with an opportunity to interact with role models and mentors and allowed NGO representatives to introduce initiatives to city council members and others working to support the growing number of immigrants in Norway. The program allowed the embassy to expand its contacts, and attendees appreciated the embassy's effort in reaching out to their communities.



Both younger and older guests enjoyed the Iftar at Ambassador Whitney's residence on September 23, 2008. [Hilary Olsin-Windecker, U.S. Embassy Oslo]

GREECE: US EMBASSY ATHENS MARKS MUSLIM HOLY MONTH



The Iftar dinner at the ambassador's residence September 16, 2008. [Brian Neely, U.S. Embassy Athens]

Joining U.S. diplomats around the world, U.S. Ambassador to Greece Daniel V. Speckhard and his wife Dr. Anne Speckhard offered a traditional sunset Iftar meal for 40 guests at their residence. Iraqi Ambassador to Greece Hatim Abdul Hassan Al-Khawam addressed the gathering following remarks on unity and religious diversity by the American host and the Most Reverend Bishop of Velestino Damaskinos of the Greek Orthodox Church. Other guests included high-ranking diplomats from Arab and Muslim countries and officials from Greece's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. In his remarks, Ambassador Speckhard said, "whether we

are talking about how interfaith dialogue can help diffuse the kind of religious intolerance and extremism that still inspires terrorist attacks around the world, or about how people of faith can help fight poverty and disease, we all must do our part—as diplomats, government officials, religious leaders, educators, journalists—and as citizens."

SPAIN: AMBASSADOR AGUIRRE HOSTS IFTAAR IN MADRID

U.S. Ambassador to Spain Eduardo Aguirre hosted an Iftar for members of the Muslim community, at which Dr. Mounir Mahmoud El Messery, Imam of the Islamic Cultural Center of Madrid, and Imam Alla Bachar from the Al-Saud Mosque in Marbella, presided over the breaking of the day's fast. Also present were several representatives from the Spanish government responsible for religious freedom issues and academic experts in Muslim affairs. In his remarks, the ambassador emphasized shared values, highlighting the importance of family and faith to Americans and noting our long tradition of respect for religious freedom, and the need to continue working together to counter extremists who misuse religion to justify violence.



(L-R) Mohammad Saleh Al Ali, Ambassador Aguirre, Dr. Mounir Mahmoud El Messery, Imam Bachar and Ahmed Kafed Loughreit, September 24, 2008. [Valerie O'Brien, U.S. Embassy Madrid]

GERMANY: MISSION BUILDS BRIDGES AND CELEBRATES DIVERSITY WITH MULTIPLE IFTAARS



Consul General Matt Boyse (right) talks to Tayfun Keltek, President of the NRW Integration Council, at an Iftaar hosted by the NRW Integration Ombudsman during the week of September 21, 2008. [Landtag Duesseldorf]

The U.S. Embassy in **Berlin** and U.S. Consulates throughout Germany held several Iftaar dinners. U.S. Ambassador to Germany William Timken's Iftaar dinner included a panel discussion among five International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) alumni, moderated by radio journalist Ms. Banu Baturay, herself an IVLP alumna. Participants described how their exchange experience helped change their opinions and impressions of the U.S. U.S. Consul General in **Munich** Eric Nelson hosted his annual Iftaar dinner at his residence—a tradition he began in 2005. A celebration not only of Ramadan but also of diversity and interfaith dialogue, the event was attended by representatives from Muslim and other religious communities, intercultural groups, local politicians, and the media. In an interview with daily newspaper Muenchner Merkur, one guest said, "Not everything that comes from American is good, but this is one tradition we should adopt." U.S. Consul General in **Dusseldorf** Matthew Boyse participated in three Iftaar evenings in one week in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), Germany. His hosts included State Parliament Vice President Oliver Keymis, Turkish civic organizations, and State Integration Ombudsman Thomas Kufen, who remarked that Boyse participates in almost as many Iftaars as he does, which "should make him almost an honorary Muslim." Active and frequent participation at Iftaars by officers from the U.S. Consulate General in Dusseldorf is especially important in NRW, the German state with the largest Muslim population. Also well-received were the 2009 "Mosques in America" calendars the consulate distributed at each event. U.S. Consul General in **Frankfurt** Jo Ellen Powell hosted an interfaith dinner at her residence. Among the guests were representatives from Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities; the City of Frankfurt; the Hessen Landtag newspaper; the Frankfurt police; the Interfaith and Intercultural Women's Network; Turkish and German media; and IVLP alum Imam Hibau. The comfortable atmosphere at Consul General Powell's residence enabled networking across religions and cultures, and numerous ideas for common interfaith and intercultural projects were developed.

The Department of State's **International Visitor Leadership Program** annually brings to the United States approximately 5,000 foreign nationals from all over the world to meet and confer with their professional counterparts and to experience America firsthand. For more information visit: <http://exchanges.state.gov/ivlp/ivlp.html>.

FINLAND: MAKING CONNECTIONS AT AMBASSADOR'S FIRST IFTAAR DINNER



(L-R) Raqib Wahabzada, an Afghan working at the International Organization for Migration in Helsinki; Ambassador Barrett; Imam Talal Eid from the Citizen Dialogue group; two Finnish Muslims and embassy staffer Donald Trammell, September 16, 2008. [Jamie Forseth, U.S. Embassy Helsinki]

U.S. Ambassador to Finland Barbara Barrett hosted the U.S. Embassy in Helsinki's first Iftaar in conjunction with a U.S. Department of State Citizens Dialogue exchange program visit. Iftaar arrangements were set up by Önder Durmus and Donald Trammell, two Muslim staff members at the U.S. Embassy. The ambassador and Nausheen Hassan (a member of the Citizen Dialogue group, a lawyer, and a Muslim American) spoke during the dinner. Guests included members of Finland's Muslim communities, officials from embassies of Muslim countries, and researchers and political figures with an interest in Muslim affairs. The unanimous reaction was one of appreciation and the wish that the U.S. Embassy in Helsinki would continue to hold Iftaar dinners in the future.

To learn more about public diplomacy activities of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs please visit our Web site at <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/c25341.htm>. To learn more about Muslim Engagement at the Department of State, visit <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rt/c24593.htm>.