

June 27, 2006

Press Release

On the first anniversary of the London bombings: Young Muslim Leaders Discuss Identity and Ways to Bridge Gap with West

One hundred dynamic young Muslim leaders from 15 countries will be meeting in Copenhagen on 7 to 9 July to discuss the identity of Muslims in the world and their relations with the West.

Coming from the US, UK, Canada, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Denmark and other countries, these diverse young Muslim leaders, varied in religiosity, ethnicity, culture and individual politics will discuss key issues such as Muslim integration in the West, struggles surrounding identity, marginalization of immigrant communities and Islamic reaction to secularism.

Scheduled on the first anniversary of the London bombings, The Muslim Leaders of Tomorrow (MLT) forum emerges amidst a tense global environment when many around the world feel there is a historic need for dialogue and debate on issues of religion and identity, especially as it pertains to the enormous challenges faced by them.

The MLT forum seeks to meet an urgent need for a constructive movement amongst young Muslims to reject and marginalize extremism. The MLT aims to bring together diverse Muslim voices to strategize and work toward this goal while communicating this message widely. The purpose in doing so is also to put forth a leadership committed to fostering healthy Muslim identities and to have these leaders work together as change agents in their respective communities.

Among the participants are prominent Western Muslim scholars such as Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, author of *What's Right with Islam* who will moderate a very special to-be-watched-out-for roundtable entitled "**Imam's Circle**". The Imam's Circle will be comprised of young Imams from Italy, Denmark, UK, and US who will candidly debate the challenge living Islamically in secular society. Other special event include: the unveiling of acclaimed **Turkish cartoonist** Salih Memecan's cartoons in response to the Danish cartoons. Also, on the lighter side, Azhar Usman, a popular **Muslim comedian**, will be performing at the conference .

About The Muslim Leaders of Tomorrow Forum

The American Society for Muslim Advancement (ASMA) and the Cordoba Initiative have organized the MLT forum to address the acrimony and mutual mistrust that have now permeated the deepest levels of both Western and Muslim societies.

The MLT forum aims to address issues such as:

- What is Islam and how is it perceived as part of identity?
- When is religion transformative and when is religiosity a reflection of insecure identity?
- What do Muslims as a collective body mean to you? Do you think that Muslims need to be unified and what would it mean to be unified?
- What breeds alienation in Muslim communities?

- Do you think that Islam is in crisis or in decline? What does it mean for a religion to be in crisis?
- What is religious knowledge? Who does one turn to for religious knowledge and guidance?

The ASMA Society, a not-for-profit 501(c) 3 founded in 1997 in New York City, is an Islamic cultural and educational organization dedicated to fostering an American-Muslim identity and building bridges between American Muslims and the American public.

The Cordoba Initiative is a multi-faith organization whose objective is to heal the relationship between the Islamic world and America/ West, working through civil dialogue, policy initiatives, education and cultural programs.

For more information, contact:

Daisy Khan, Executive Director, American Society for Muslim Advancement
at tel no: 917 492 8690 or 212 362 2242, or e-mail: daisy@asmasociety.org ASMA
Society, 175 East 96th Street, Suite 21T, NYC 10128