

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

THE 9/11 GENERATION:
9/11'S IMPACT ON CIVIC ACTIVISM IN THE U.S. AND ABROAD

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Introduction and Moderator:

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MR. GRAND: I am Steve Grand, and I'm the Director of Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World. We have Lena Khan, a young director to thank for that lovely video which I think in a nice way frames our discussion for today.

In my role as Director of the Project on U.S. Relations for the Islamic World, I've really been struck over the last couple of years just how many young, impressive, energetic, smart Muslim Americans that I meet and how engaged they are in the world -- in their nation and the world. We thought this was an apt moment to really look at that phenomenon. Is there a 9/11 generation of young American Muslims? How have they engaged? How do they look upon the gap that has emerged between the United States and Muslim communities around the world? What vision do they have for the future of that relationship and their role in it? What challenges do they believe lie ahead? So I'm really pleased that you were able to join us today and I'm pleased to have three very wonderful individuals to join us up on stage today, one who will arrive momentarily, to help us introduce this subject today.

To my immediate left is a friend and long-time colleague Farah Pandith. For those of you who don't know, Farah is Secretary Clinton's Special Representative to Muslim Communities. Her office is the one responsible for executing Secretary Clinton's vision for engagement with Muslims around the world at the level of person to person and also at the level of organizations. To her left is Kofi Rashid. Kofi spent over a decade in the United Arab Emirates where for much of that time he worked in the Executive Office of the Prime Minister and he brings many interesting perspectives from that experience. He is now partner at Interculture, a consulting firm that assists businesses and organizations that are trying to diversify culturally. In a moment we hope to have Imam Mohamed Magid join us as well. Imam Magid as many of you know is the President of the Islamic Society of North America, one of the largest membership organizations of

Muslim Americans, and he is also Executive Director of the All Dulles Area Muslim Society, and because his mosque is in Dulles, he's having some traffic problems which you can all relate to probably in getting here today, but he should be with us momentarily.

Let me start with a few questions for you, Farah, if I could. Where were you on 9/11 and what did it mean for you and your career?

MS. PANDITH: First of all, I want to thank Brookings for this wonderful panel. I'm looking forward to the question-and-answer section because I really am eager to get into the heart of this. I was working in the private sector on 9/11. I was vice president for international business for a company in Boston, and it profoundly affected my life. I wouldn't be sitting in this chair if I had not gone through on a personal and on a professional level shift. Though I have always been very interested in what's happening in Muslim communities around the world and certainly my work in graduate school was around some of these issues, I remember very distinctly on 9/11 looking out, I was on the forty-first floor of a building in Boston, Massachusetts which was just across the water from Logan Airport. And we were getting news as everybody was in real time and we were hearing that a plane had left Logan, and I was looking out and I remember very much thinking -- my heart is sinking and thinking who is responsible for this and just knowing that the world would never be the same and it contrasts greatly to the night before. On September 10 in Boston I was with Senator Kerry and Senator McCain, with them because they were receiving an award in Boston. I had just come out of this glowing experience of both parties coming together talking about world events, having some really great conversations with them, to hours later feeling this sense of dread. Very soon after 9/11, Steve, I went to my boss. I approached him, and I was working in an organization that was a law firm but my consulting affiliate was part of it. It was predominantly Jewish. It was a law firm that started because the Boston Brahmins did

not accept Jews in that law firm and so they started their own and it's a wonderful place. I remember going to Steve, my boss, and saying I have to serve my nation and some guy in some cave in Afghanistan is defining my country and defining my religion and I can't sit here and do nothing.

I will say for me it was a very pivotal moment because the predominant feeling at the law firm both with the Jews and the Christians that were part of this, and I say this not because I particularly care, but because it's a very poignant fact, Republican and Democrat, Christians and Jews, all were part of the process of getting me to Washington. And when I made it clear that I wanted to serve my nation, they all stood up and said how can we get Farah to Washington? That was a profound lesson for me in terms of what we can do together. And I will never forget how much they cared about making sure that if I wanted to serve I could find a way to do it. I came to Washington in 2003 to try to do my bit if I could in some way to help our nation. So in the course of the last 8 years I have served in the Bush Administration and I'm serving in the Obama Administration in three different capacities. I've worked at USAID which I think helped me understand how things happen on the ground with development aid. Certainly in my 3 years at the White House at the National Security Council helped me understand how presidents look at policy and how we think about things. But my experience at the State Department both in my role as Special Representative right now, a position that was created for me and created 2 weeks after President Obama gave his speech in Cairo where he put forward clearly a really incredibly important framework that we want to engage with one-fourth of humanity. That has been the course and the trajectory of what we have been doing for the last 2-1/2 years.

So how has 9/11 affected me? It's affected me on a personal level as an American and as a Muslim, but it clearly has affected me professionally as well because this is not a career that I ever would have imagined for myself.

MR. GRAND: Or would have existed.

MS. PANDITH: Or would have existed. Correct.

MR. GRAND: Give us a sense though of what your day-to-day life looks like. I don't like military analogies, but you're really on the frontlines of our engagement with Muslim communities around the globe.

MS. PANDITH: I want to urge those of you who are on Facebook and Twitter to follow me because you will get a very good sense of how we do our work as diplomats on the ground. The majority of my work is overseas and it is very rare that I'm in Washington. In the last 23 months I've been to nearly 50 countries around the world, Muslims in Muslim-majority countries and Muslims that live as minorities, and I say that because it's very important. A Muslim in Suriname is as Muslim as a Muslim in Stockholm or a Muslim in Solo, Indonesia. The dignity we must give to all Muslims around the world is incredibly important. If in fact we are trying to engage and to try to build partnerships and dialogue and open up perspectives, you cannot just do it from one framework and you cannot just do it with one region. You must understand that this is a generation, and I'm very specifically focused on those people under the age of 30, because most Muslims in the world are in fact under 30.

So what do I do day to day? When we go on the ground to these countries, you talked about my job as being people to people. What does that mean? Most of the time senior-level people at the Department of State do work at a very high. You're working at a government-to-government level; you're talking about things that are around tables and in very formal settings. That's not the majority of the work that I do. I

am in community centers. I am in mosques. I'm in NGOs. I'm outside of the capital. I go far out to talk to people who make up civil society. Secretary Clinton has talked very much about the power of diplomacy on a citizen level and this is what we're doing.

The reason why I talked about Facebook and Twitter is because being transparent in that, the good and the bad, having conversations like this that become -- this is far more formal, actually. I generally like to have a little bit more of a back and forth. It's not always easy, Steve. You get some unbelievably difficult questions, but it is important to open up that dialogue. 9/11 comes up in every conversation I have and I have had thousands of conversations with young people around the world.

MR. GRAND: Every conversation?

MS. PANDITH: Every single conversation, because it has been a pivot point in terms of the way we think about who this generation is, who they are, what they're doing. And one of the things that's most inspirational for me in the work that I'm doing is to take the stories that I hear from young people, the initiatives that they're doing, the innovative approaches that they have, the localized things that are happening, and connect them to each other around the world. So the guy that I meet in Oslo that's working on the ground using hip-hop and video to work with Somali immigrants in Oslo to give them a new narrative can be connected to the incredible person in Jakarta that's doing something very similar but they didn't know each other, so you put them together and you walk away. It's what anybody does in a classroom. Smart people put together, the professor takes them away and lets them work. It's what we do in business. You put smart people together and you let them work. Why would we not do that in diplomacy?

So building these networks of smart people around the world, these change makers, is the work that I do. And it helps on another level too because it is important for us to change the narrative. What does it mean to be Muslim and to debunk

the false narrative of an us and a them. So that's what I do day to day and I do that with our embassies around the world. And if we do our job right we will over time, this is a long-term investment that our country is making, have invested in the next generation to not -- and this is really important. My job is not to win hearts and minds. I want to say that again. My job is not to win hearts and minds. It is to life up the narratives of those people around the world to understand them, to listen to them, to reconnect with them, to offer an opportunity to talk with them about key issues that are happening in the world. And I will go back to what the President said in Cairo. When he talked about building relationships, he talked about mutual interest and mutual respect. Mutual interest means things that people as humans want to work on together. Health care, education, technology, science. If you are not talking to people, you cannot know what their perspective is. You cannot understand how we can actually work together. That's what my job is.

MR. GRAND: Sounds like a fascinating one and really, really unique.

MS. PANDITH: I have the best job in Washington. Do not tell anyone.

MR. GRAND: I'm sure a lot of caffeine goes along with that job too.

How many suitcases have you worn through?

MS. PANDITH: My gosh, you don't want to know. I have a lot of valuable information for airlines and airports around the world. I should have a consultancy after I'm done with this job.

MR. GRAND: I'm sure. Kofi?

MR. RASHID: Yes?

MR. GRAND: Where you on 9/11 and did it in any way change your career trajectory or have a pivotal effect on your life?

MR. RASHID: In reflection, definitely it did. I was in an Arab country on 9/11 and maybe I'll just talk a little bit about how I got to that country. I grew up in California. My mother's family is Jewish. My father's family is African American and Christian. I went to Howard University and converted to Islam. Actually, I can't wait for Imam Magid to get here because he was one of the imams that helped to teach me after I became a Muslim, so we have a very strong bond. After I became Muslim and graduated from Howard University, I decided that I wanted to go and work overseas and work in a Muslim country because I really became exposed to the thinking that there's a bigger world out there and that the Muslim countries had opportunities that I wanted to use my talents and my ideas and work with them and help them. I got an opportunity to work in Malaysia, so that was the first Muslim country that I went to and I worked on a project with the Prime Minister's office in Malaysia. Then a year later I went to the UAE and was working for the Dubai government and in particular on 9/11 working on a Dubai government initiative to emulate what we were doing here in the U.S. which was a venture capital incubator. This was during the dot-com era obviously.

Most people in American were going to work or on their way to work. I was coming home from work because of the time difference. I remember getting a text message. Someone from the office had said that a plane had hit the Towers. I'd just gotten home. My wife was 2 weeks away from giving birth to our fourth child and the first one that would be born in a foreign country. I went upstairs, turned on CNN and was absolutely stunned. I didn't know what to think. I didn't know what to do. I think I sat in a trance for probably the first 24 hours just trying to think if it was real or not.

I didn't go to work for the next couple of days not because I was afraid to go to work or afraid of my colleagues that were mostly Arab or local, but because I knew I wouldn't be able to focus and so I took some time off. It was interesting. A friend of mine

who was a white American was also working for the same company and when 9/11 happened he left. He got on a plane and got out immediately. He didn't tell anyone where he was going. He apparently had gone to Europe and just went into hiding I guess. He was very afraid. It was interesting for me because I never felt at any point in time that even though I'm in a foreign country, an Arab country, a Muslim country, a country where I believe one of the hijackers was from or reportedly from, I at no point felt insecure or felt like I needed to come back home. But he left and ended up staying away and not coming back to the UAE.

It was a very surreal experience for me because I wasn't here. I wasn't home. I saw my fellow Americans in this tragic, horrific event and I couldn't bond with them. I couldn't be there and support my own family that was feeling afraid. We did get together, the Americans in the UAE. The Consul General had called all the Americans together and had a forum and talked to everyone and answered some questions, but that was about it. So it was a very surreal experience.

MR. GRAND: Talk a little bit about your trajectory from there.

MR. RASHID: Sure. I continued to work for the Dubai government. I worked on both the private and the public side in terms of helping them to create organizations and institutions. Interestingly enough, 9/11 informed a lot of my work working for a foreign government, a foreign Arab Muslim government, because one of the things that we were trying to do was show the world that the entire Muslim world is not like this. I was working for the most progressive, moderate, open, diverse Muslim country you could ever imagine and no one really knew anything about the UAE. Dubai at that point in time was still under the radar. We created an investment promotion agency to promote what was there which was a fascinating place and opportunity for investment. 9/11 actually helped to develop Dubai and in fact a lot of the Arab world because at that

time if you recall, the Patriot Act and a lot of the things that were being implemented by the previous administration was very anti-foreign investment in terms of Arab and Muslim money. So when the Arab money which was used to coming to the U.S. to spend in terms of real estate and lots of other safe assets couldn't go to the U.S. anymore because it was being stopped or it was being scrutinized, it came back to the Arab world. So Dubai and the GCC countries and Tunisia and Morocco and Egypt benefited from 9/11 from the investment standpoint because the Arabs wanted to invest their money where it would be appreciated. And I think this is a lesson to be learned by our own government which is: don't paint everyone with a board brush.

There are challenges in our community and in the world, but there are others in the majority which are not like this. So my work really was accelerated by what happened on 9/11 and helping the Dubai and UAE government. And I would say toward the latter part of my career there, the last few years I really started to think about coming home and what I could do coming home and wanting to use my experience in the Muslim world to benefit my own country and what's the best way to do that and trying to bridge relationships and break down cultural barriers. A lot of the problems that we have country to country or individual to individual is because of misunderstanding. I think instead of having a war on terrorism, our government should have had a war on ignorance and really try to engage more. A lot of the work that Farah is doing, the work that she's doing is outstanding and it's amazing and it's brought our government and our country and the perception of the people of American so much further along than what it was. The previous administration set us back a generation in terms of the perception of people of American.

This may be something a lot of people don't know. The Arab and the Muslim world actually loves American. The Arabs street that everyone talks about on Al

Jazeera and CNN -- these are young kids and they love America. They watch our movies, they love our actors, they love our musicians, they eat our food, they wear our clothes. They want to come and they can't get visas, and when they do get visas, they get harassed at the airport. They want to invest but their money gets scrutinized. I'm not saying we shouldn't have protective measures. We should. But God's sake, if you want to change the way people think, engage them. Talk to them on a mass level. Farah is only one person. I wish we had a thousand Farahs. They should add a few a zeros to her budget.

MS. PANDITH: I like you.

MR. RASHID: Because the work that she's doing is 100 times more valuable than any military, any plane, any drone. The work that she's doing is really going to make the difference and it has to be done and it needs to be expanded. I'm sure Imam Magid would agree that there are Muslim Americans, people that are in this country, that would happily go overseas and have these conversations and I know they're doing it because I've met a lot of them in Dubai when they came out, but would volunteer their time to serve their country in that way. Not all of us can join the military, but a lot of us can serve our country in building relationships and talking to people and showing the Muslim world this face that we saw on the video. This is the face of Muslim America. It's now what they think. And the more that we can go out there and engage and talk to people and communicate and explain to them what America is really like, the more that we can break down these barriers and build relationships and long-lasting relationships and really make a big difference.

MR. GRAND: Great. Imam Magid, welcome.

IMAM MAGID: Thank you.

MR. GRAND: I was saying that one of the disadvantages of having the honor of running a mosque in Dulles is that you have to confront the traffic between Dulles and Washington, D.C.

IMAM MAGID: That's true. Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely.

MR. GRAND: We're really pleased to have you with us.

IMAM MAGID: Thank you. It's my pleasure.

MR. GRAND: We've been talking as you know a little bit about the 9/11 generation of young American Muslims who have become civically engaged after 9/11. I'm curious about where you were on 9/11, how it shaped your career and how it shaped the careers of many of the young people you work with.

MR. RASHID: On 9/11 I remember very well that I was in one of the rooms in my apartment at the time and my wife was in the living room and they said, Mohamed, come and see this and when the plane hit the second tower. And just so many things went to my head, what are the consequences of this? What kind of impact it will have on all of us? And I remember that what we've come to know is really it was an attack on America in more than one place. We closed the mosque. We closed the mosque. We used to have children come into the mosque. That day we asked them to leave. And I walked into the mosque the next day and there the mosque was vandalized. Go home and so forth.

But something amazing happened. "The Washington Post" published an article about what happened to the Adams Center. Next day Jewish Americans came with big posters -- have signed, "We Welcome Your Children Here. We Want You to be Here." Christians brought checks and said we'll have to fix the damage. The Sikh community brought roses and flowers. And that was the turning point. And Jewish

American women decided to wear scarves and to go outside with Muslim women for shopping. The best of America had come out.

For me that was very transforming. People don't just say you are here, but they say we're going to do everything. Actually on this anniversary of 9/11 I reminded my wife about what happened. At the time we were a very small family. We now have five daughters. I chose to live next to the Adams Center which is a 5-minute commute. But I do come to Washington how after 9/11 almost every day and my wife said maybe we should have two homes, and one family, by the way. It's really a changing of what the imam does. Preside over funerals, getting people married, counseling people, and I did have all -- work, but it's not like the way it is now before 9/11. Now the imam has to speak to the media, has to respond to all of these questions about Islam and Muslims.

But I'm very optimistic of the amount of resilience that the nation has shown at the community level and as well the Muslim community. To give an example of that, the faith community decided to spend a night in the parking lot of the Adams Center on one of the anniversaries of 9/11. They said we would like to send a message loud and clear that we will not accept discrimination and bigotry against Muslims. There for all night long they were praying and talking, praying and talking all night long. Those are the things that Americans need to know and the world needs to know. Those are the things that really highlight how American society's welcoming and protecting of people. As Kofi said, all the other negative things that people say about America, but people-to-people diplomacy, engage in young people and have them to talk. It changed my career. It changed my job descriptions. I counsel people why I'm coming to work at Brookings and stuck in traffic.

MR. GRAND: I hope I don't end up next to you on 66 at some point as you're multitasking. You're being modest. You do a tremendous amount of interfaith

work at the local level in Dulles but also at the national level with your hat as President of the Islamic Society of North America. Talk about some of the exciting work that you're doing in that area.

IMAM MAGID: One of the things that you have seen is the shoulder-to-shoulder organization being born out of the controversial issue of burning the Koran, for example, in Florida. I really want people to know this, that Christian and Jewish Americans come to a Muslim and say we would like really to stand with you but in a very meaningful way. Therefore they had a press conference last year on September 7 and 26 organizations, every major organization from Catholic to Protestant to Presbyterian, Jewish Reformed, Conservative, everyone came. And they spoke in a very loud voice that attacking one religion is attacking all religions. I visited the Holocaust Museum many times, but the last time I visited there's a big statement saying "When Books are Burned, People are Burned." Therefore I think there's a moral obligation for people of faith to stand with one another. If there's a denial of the Holocaust, Muslims have to speak up to say we will not accept that. If there is anti-Semitism, say we are not going to accept that. If a Christian church has been burned or destroyed in a place in part of the world, we have to rebuild it as we did with our mosque. We rebuilt two churches in Pakistan. We have to stand for our moral values and principles and that's what really comforts me. Those 26 organizations decided to make this an organization. They created the organization called Shoulder to Shoulder standing for American Muslims. They paid money to do so, and they just had the press conference also and activities on the anniversary of 9/11.

Therefore I think there's a movement worldwide of people coming together and that's why I'm saying that the terrorists who attack America or try to divide the world, they didn't realize that the world has come together more than ever before

completely. We did not follow their agenda. I'm talking about the community. Governments around the world have to catch up with the momentum that we have now. There is interfaith sponsored by Saudis, Qataris, the King of Jordan. It's all over the place. I think there's a new wave on the world stage of solidarity and understanding that we need to respect each other's humanity and we cannot afford -- one family. The family might fight sometime or disagree, but we have to find a way to reconcile our differences and talk to one another.

MR. GRAND: Peace in the family.

IMAM MAGID: Yes.

MR. GRAND: Family being a metaphor for --

IMAM MAGID: Yes. I do counseling with families all the time.

MR. GRAND: I think we as a nation could still use some counseling, but it's a very nice analogy. Farah, in your work you just encounter a number of young Muslim Americans. Do you feel there is a 9/11 generation of civically engaged young Muslim Americans? If so, how do they differ from generations past, and what are some of the more exciting things that you've seen that they've been doing.

MS. PANDITH: That's a very important question. Like many of you I'm sure over the weekend saw many conversations about this quote, the 9/11 Generation. I talk about the generation that I have seen around the world which obviously includes Americans as well as a generation, and here I'm speaking specifically about Muslims, who have grown up every single day since September 12, 2001 with the word Islam or Muslim on the front page of papers online and offline. How has that shaped them? How has that made them think about themselves and how the world looks at them?

There has been no other generation in history that has had this pressure and it has profoundly affected the way in which they have been called to action in some

ways. I want to say something before I go any further. There was a world before 9/11 in which Muslims were active and participating and it was just normal. It was just normal. I want to go back to that place where we can normalize our conversations. But if you're asking specifically what has happened, of course there is a generation that has -- it is important to understand because when I look at these issues I think about identity and that is the singular issue that has evoked change in people that I meet around the world and here in America because of this saturation of attention and conversations about Muslims and Islam and what does it mean and the construct that we have set up of an us and a them. You talked about this and you did too in another way, and I think about a young woman that I met in Auckland who said to me: there is no clash of civilizations. There's a clash of ignorance. I smiled when she said it because it is something that when I think about how we frame these conversations, these young people are doing a lot. It's not as though nothing happened before. Of course they were doing a lot. But there is a different framework. There is a different attention. We as Americans and we as the world are paying more attention to say what are doing and what are these initiatives? Whether you're talking about the Shoulder to Shoulder Initiative or you're talking interfaith things or you're talking about community service or you're talking about NGOs that have been formed or social entrepreneurs, whatever we're talking about, it carries its own special flavor now in a post-9/11 world.

I would not be doing the job I'm doing if I did not see inspiration in the generation that I see. There would be nothing to do. But there are so many remarkable initiatives that have started, individuals that have done things that have said I can do more. And whether they're building coalitions with each other as the imam talked about or they're reframing and recalibrating conversation in a really effective way using tools of 21st century statecraft or in fact doing old-fashioned kind of marches and pledge drives

and initiatives that we know very well as Americans, I'm very inspired by this generation because they have understood how important it is that they be heard. I've been talking about the fact that there is a youth quake around the world.

MR. GRAND: Youth quake. That's nice.

MR. RASHID: We've seen it in a really profound way in the Middle East of course, but when I think about it globally, this generation of young people have come into their own and they have power that no other generation before them has had with. With 140 characters on Twitter they are making us listen to what they have to say.

MR. GRAND: We can't always understand it.

MS. PANDITH: Right, but it's important for us to get that and when I think about Muslims themselves, they are connecting those stories. So it is important that that person that I met in Brussels is speaking to that person in Tajikistan not necessarily because I put them in touch, but because they're seeing what each other is doing. They're copying great stories. They're sharing best experiences. They're understanding how to leverage their voice and how to do more to redefine who they are, and that is so central to how we have to think about it. Normalizing what it means to be young and Muslim on this planet is so important for us not only as a government but as people in America and around the world that we understand that this is a generation that is doing a whole lot to make our world safer, to make our world more effective in terms of strategies to solve human problems whether it's poverty or it's job creation or the environment, whatever the issue is that you care about, I've met those young people who are active all day, every day trying to do that, and recalibrating our narrative here in America is important to that as well.

On the American Muslim side, what I've been trying to do is to bring the stories that I hear around the world, the people that I've met, to mainstream America

because I've been hearing from a lot of young people, Muslim and non, how can we do more? How can we be effective in the conversation that's happening globally? So if I don't tell the stories of people who are outside of our country, you can't pair them up. Much of what I do is connecting as well initiatives that are happening here in America with others in other parts of the world so that they can as I said connect and I walk away. This is not some sort of structured thing that I need to tell them what to do but, rather, you guys are working on the same thing, you ought to know each other.

MR. GRAND: Great. Kofi, is there any truth to the label 9/11 generation and if so how does it differ from generations past and what are some of the more impressive things you're seeing young people doing?

MR. RASHID: There's a lot of truth to it in the fact that it was a watershed event that realized a paradigm shift in how we see each other and interact with each other and think about things. I'm a very optimistic person by nature and for me I think it's going to bring out the best of people, of the Muslims of the world, because God is forcing our hand. In the Koran I'm going to paraphrase, it says that the Koran being a book for all of humanity and not just for Muslims that God could have created us all the same, all one tribe or one nation, but he created us different for the specific purpose that we actually get to know each other and interact and learn from each other and 9/11 is forcing us to do that. I see that as a great opportunity and it must be done. So the 9/11 generation at least for Muslim Americans is such that we have to do something. We will never be comfortable again in the sense that there will always be a level of suspicion out there especially if you have a Muslim name or you have a beard or you wear a hijab and you have to deal with that, but that's a great thing because it forces the conversation out there. So the previous generation before 9/11 got a pass. It was much more comfortable to be in America and for people to know you had a weird name but didn't really know

what that meant or who you prayed to or what did you do. Now people are actually reading the Koran and trying to find out for themselves what are these people really about? And then when they do that they realize they're not that much different than us. Our book tells us the same exact things. They have the same values that we do. And so these things would have never happened or they would not have happened as quickly without 9/11. So I think it's a fantastic thing.

When I came back to the U.S., I joined an international firm called Interculture and our work is to help bridge businesses and organizations that want to do things across cultures and in particular internationally. But something that we're doing here in the U.S., one of our clients is called One Nation and it was started by George Russell who has a foundation and he created the One Nation Foundation. George Russell is a Jewish American, and after 9/11 happened he said I see what my people went through not only in the Holocaust but also in their experience here in the U.S. in terms of being isolated and being ostracized, and I don't want that happen to another community so let me create a foundation so that Muslims can be more engaged. So he's pushing the civic engagement of Muslims as a Jewish American and he's pushing the civic engagement of Muslims because he's saying you guys have to get out there and talk to people. Don't put yourselves in a corner and say that it's us versus them. Get out there and talk to people and get engaged in the society and the community now more than ever because the community needs to see you. It needs to hear from you, so we're helping them to do that. But I think it's a great opportunity and we should seize it and make the most out of it.

MR. GRAND: Imam Magid, you have this wonderful panoramic view of the American Muslim community. Do you buy into the label 9/11 generation? If so, how

are they different and what are the most vibrant things you're seeing coming out of the young Muslim American community?

IMAM MAGID: I think the young American Muslims are now really more involved and Muslim organizations realize that the old guard should make space for second generations because they sound more American and they understand American culture more. Now on boards of national organizations and mosques you see the second generation now. They are in the front. Just in Adams we have four second generation born resident Americans now who are members of the board and more of them are coming. I do believe if I have a message to the Muslim community, empower those young people. Let them have their space in the Muslim organizations and Muslim community. I do believe that 9/11 as Kofi said has opened the conversation that those young people do not have thought that this would be the conversation, who are you? What do you represent? What's your identity? The identity issue. The sense of pressure that you get sometimes from the larger community, can you be an American and Muslim at the same time.

I do believe the young people are serving this country in many ways, some of them in the armed services, law enforcement, all over the place, they assert their identity more as Americans and I do believe that they are the best ambassadors. Farah in her great job is using young people really American young people to speak to the world about their experiences and so forth. I do believe that the best way to present America is having young Americans to speaking about their experiences of being an American and that's what the people are doing in the diplomacy I was talking about.

But there is something also very important I think in this conversation, that American Muslims whether young are old are talking to their fellow Americans in their neighborhoods. Now the Adams Center for example has two branches in the

synagogue. If that would happen from 9/11, it would have not made the news, but 100 news agencies have covered the fact that Muslims are praying in a synagogue. I witnessed Saudi TV talking about praying in synagogues all over the place. Therefore I think there is more focus now in the Muslim community with second-generation Muslims and so forth.

Then you find yourself that you ought to be able to work with the larger community to address the issue of discrimination, misunderstanding and misconception and I think we've made some progress in that regard and I'd like to see more of it.

MR. GRAND: I want to talk about that piece. I want to do one last round of questions and then really engage the audience and ask all of you to ask questions of our panelists so we can have a back and forth going. It's 10 years after 9/11. Where are we in terms of trying to bridge this divide between the U.S. and Muslim communities abroad and where do we need to go? And as we think about moving forward, what is the role of young American Muslims in that process?

MS. PANDITH: I think that for us to be very frank about the progress that we have made and not look at sound bites and quick assessments of where we are; we've come a very long way as a country in 10 years in several areas. One is maximizing our capacity to tell a story about who we are as Americans and I don't want to undersell that. That is unbelievably important overseas when there is so much misunderstanding about what our country is all about. And I'm not talking about Muslims in America; I'm talking about our country, what we were founded on, what our Constitution provides for all of our citizens. The importance -- and this is so central, because there are so many inflamed conversations that are happening in other parts of the world where people who are Muslim in the West, there is a different kind of pressure here in America. You can build a synagogue and a mosque and a temple and a church

because our Constitution provides that. You can wear a yarmulke and a turban and a cross and a head scarf because our country is a country that believes in freedom of expression and our Constitution provides some very central things. I'm not giving you an American history lesson. I'm just simply saying that we have been able I think to do a better job. We are getting smarter about how we talk about who are as a country.

This again is not to sell America, but it is to tell in accurate story of what it means to be an American in 2011 because when you have the one-of preacher in Florida with 50 people in his church that sells a story and we get oxygen all over the world where people think that that is what America is, he was one man with 50 people in his church. We know what America is, we know what the strength of our country is and I think that's a very important thing that we have learned.

Secondly, I would echo what the imam said about the education curve. We are finding more and more that people of many different faiths are reaching out to learn more. I would hope too that that generates an interest by Muslims themselves in other parts of the world about other faiths as well. I think we have to be very clear that we are not at a perfect place yet, but I think what's very important about the work that we're doing both on a civil society level and on government level is that we understand the long-term. This is a long-term investment in terms of how we're building those bridges and that partnership. You cannot just flick the switch in a different direction, that this is really important.

I am an optimistic person as a person. I always have been. But I am unbelievably optimistic in our ability to narrow the divisions and the misunderstandings because we are seeing far more initiatives that are out there that are trying to tell a new story. I want to bring up one point that we haven't discussed and I want to be very clear that I obviously understand and so has our nation and has been very clear about this,

that those that would use the name of Islam for violent means does not represent the religion of Islam. We clearly understand that. But in the context of terrorism and the conflation for many and misunderstandings for many, I think we have come a long way in terms of articulating that the crazies are over here and that they do not represent Islam and the vast majority of Muslims on the planet do not buy in to that ideology. On the tenth anniversary of 9/11 you're seeing far more communities in the world who have been unbelievably articulate about pushing back against that foreign ideology that's saying not in my back yard. And what I see happening with young Muslims around the world is that they're very vocal. They don't represent us. They have nothing to do with us and not in my back yard, and the initiatives that I have seen around the world in our country and around the world that are taking back the microphone and not giving the microphone to the loudest voices that would try to create and us and them, that would try to create the sort of world of people who believe in violence and extremism. That is a positive thing that we have seen so much movement in that direction. One of the things that I think is very important that we think about, Steve, as we look at the 10-year anniversary and where we are, what are we going to be saying on the twenty-fifth anniversary of 9/11 about how the world has moved forward? That must be our focus and that must be our direction and we must all whether we are in government or we are not leverage the capacity for people who have authenticity to push back against the nonsense and to give respect to the normal voices of people in the world that are articulate, peace loving and citizens of the world that are contributing in very good ways. I think that's why I feel we have made progress. We are not there yet, but we have made progress.

MR. GRAND: And we need to continue to uplift those ordinary voices.

MS. PANDITH: We must continue. Exactly.

MR. GRAND: Kofi?

MR. RASHID: Yes?

MR. GRAND: Your perspective.

MR. RASHID: I believe we still have a ways to go only because I think we've only been able to make progress in the last 3 years. As I mentioned earlier, I think in the first couple of years after 9/11 we lost a generation of time in terms of the actions that we engaged in around the world and we lost people's hearts and minds. I think the election of President Obama brought us back maybe 10 years and then probably the work that Farah and her team have been doing have brought another 10 years. But we need to do a lot more and there will be enormous benefits of doing a lot more.

We need to realize that we have such huge assets here in America in terms of content and individuals. Again going back to the whole public diplomacy space to engage our athletes and our artists and our imams and people from our civil society that really are revered overseas and using them to have those conversations. They're treated like rock stars when they go overseas in these Muslim countries. Imagine when you go overseas and you send Kobe Bryant or you send a musician like Beyoncé or someone like this, the people that pay lots of money, millions of dollars, just to see these individuals, what would they do if these same individuals went and filled an auditorium or a stadium for free just to have a session and talk about America and had panel of other Americans there talking about America and engaging? These types of things would go very far. And we have all these assets throughout all facets of our society and we should lose them.

And vice versa, the Muslim world has lots of assets that we don't know about and they should come here and they should come and talk to our communities so our Americans can see what is life like over there and that people are normal as well. They have the same values and the same thoughts and ideas and they want their

children to be successful the same way do. So we're really not that different, but we have to engage. So I think that we just have to force the interaction as much as possible and provide the platforms. Institutions like Brookings are obviously doing a great job of that. We need more institutions to do that to allow people to talk and to mix up the crowd and broaden the conversation and allow for a frank conversation.

I think that one of the things that really resonates when you talk to people from other countries whether here in America or overseas, and I'm sure Farah has experienced this as well, is that when you're honest and frank about America, people really appreciate that. We don't have a perfect democracy here. We don't have a perfect society here. We have lots of baggage in our history, but that's okay. We are a growing, evolving society that wants to do better, that wants to become more perfect, and you can never be perfect, but you want to try. And I think if we communicate that message, people respond a lot better than just saying have a democratic society because that's the best thing to do. You just can't force these things on people. You can't present America as if it's an ideal because it's not an ideal today. We're trying to become that ideal and people will engage you more and have a much more productive conversation if we talk to them from a perspective of an America that's trying to learn and get better but the fact is we have the institutions and the mechanisms to get better, and that's part of the things that they need to understand is you guys need to build institutions and you need to accept the fact that everything is not going to be perfect, but at least know where you're trying to go to. So I think the conversation and the messages need to evolve in this way and we need to broaden the audience and the people that are talking to that audience as well.

MR. GRAND: Imam Magid?

IMAM MAGID: There are some of the aspects of the islamophobia and negative things about Islam and Muslims in this country that we need to address as well. After 9/11 there were about 12 books written, all of them bestsellers, against Islam and Muslims on the internet. When I read those books, it reminds me of the protocol of the -- pure racism. People want to control the world and want to do this. This kind of literature is very poisoning to the social fabric of any society. I take this opportunity to say if somebody will hear me in the Muslim world that the books of the protocols should be off the shelves in every Muslim country. This is a racist book and is propaganda that should not be accepted at all.

The same thing that I see in America, the Muslim mafia and this and that and people try to scare the society. About 20 states have sharia issues. Who said that Muslims will impose sharia on America? I had a conversation with one of the candidates who has really apologized after talking to me for 2 hours and 15 minutes at the Adams Center about those whole thing. He said I really misunderstood all of the things -- 4 to 6 million Muslims will impose their will on America overnight in the solid democracy that so many people have issues that they wanted to see be part of the government, but this is a government of the people, by the people. It is not a group of people who will take over the United States. Therefore there is an industry being created unfortunately that's funded and so forth saying all of these things about Muslims.

Therefore the beautiful picture I give you a response to this. That's why I want America Muslims around the world to understand although we have this picture here that there is some -- America, and America is a country of the market of ideas. People say the most horrible things, but it doesn't go just in a black hole. Somebody will respond to it as well and decide. But it is very important for us really to address this issue of the voices that we hear in the media and so forth. The talk shows around the country

for 3 hours do nothing but bash Islam and Muslims. That is really horrible and we need to address those issues.

But I'd like just to say one thing about this whole thing, that I think the media can do a lot by showing the great work of the interfaith, that Muslims and Christians and Jews are feeding the homeless. That will inspire generations and young people when they see those kinds of pictures. As people might talk about mosques being allowed to be built in one place, look at the big signs from churches that say, I forget the name of the church, "Welcome our Muslim Neighbor" on a board. Those kinds of pictures also have to be seen. And I want my children to see both sides because I don't like them to hear the negative side because of the fact that the psychology and the emotional state and so forth.

Therefore I think there is a lot to be done, but it requires moral leadership for people to stand for what is right and to speak against the bigoted and the haters we see in the community and transform the community by bringing people together to do great work that I've seen around the United States.

MR. GRAND: Thank you. We're going to go to questions. If you have a question, please raise your hand. We're probably going to take two at a time to start. We're going to start right up here. If you could identify yourself and keep your questions short and to the point if you could.

MS. DRUTZ: Thank you. My name is Helena Drutz. I'm from SWP Berlin, a Berlin-based foreign policy think tank. I have two questions. The first one is what role do you see for the political engagement of Muslim Americans in U.S. domestic politics in order to overcome prejudice? And the second question would be, and this follows-up on what Farah was saying about what you called the youth quakes in the Arab

world, what is the impact of the revolutions in the Arab world on the Muslim American community and on the image of Islam in America? Thank you.

KARIM: Thank you for being here. My name is Karim. I'm an R.A. here at Brookings at the Global Economy Program. My question -- already asked the second part of her question was what I wanted to bring up and that was the effects of the Arab Spring. We know the Arab Spring is not necessarily a Muslim phenomenon, but these countries are 90 percent Muslim at least so there is definitely a link. I wanted to get your thoughts on what the reaction has been and how those who are trying to engage and do all the things that you've been speaking of so clearly use the Arab Spring as momentum while on the other hand there was 9/11 which kind of a barrier that people are trying to break down, now there is the Arab Spring and the revolution which has shocked the world in a positive way and how we can use that as momentum forward as opposed to using 9/11 to break down barriers.

MR. GRAND: Imam Magid, do you want to maybe start on the domestic political challenges and then we'll move to the Arab Spring?

IMAM MAGID: I think Muslims are very engaged now in politics in many ways and it's part of the routine of every mosque, voting registrations. After every Friday sermon people are registered to vote. And candidates come into the mosque after every Friday to speak about who they are and they want to engage the Muslim community. But also that you have more young people who really feel a sense of service, serving their country and being there volunteering in many places. I'll give you an example that one of the largest -- program in Virginia is in the mosque at the Adams Center. It's now some sort of North America the youth program having all of this work of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts across America where you see young people have the American flag on their shoulder standing in a pair. This is the scene that we've seen often now in many places.

Now only that. You will see Muslims now having a young man running for office for the board of supervisors. One of the youngest candidates in the county. There is no one younger than him that has run for that office. But he was inspired because he said I want to serve my country. I want to do something. There's a lot of energy of serving the country and engaging in being a public servant. I've seen that.

The issue of the Arab Spring, I do believe that it does impact the narrative of the violent extremists. They thought that they have to use violence to change governments and they've been installing this kind of narrative to many people. But look what happened in Egypt where the birth of the -- group -- using violence for years have been defeated publicly. My message to young people, do not ever listen to the violent extremists and their narrative saying these horrible things happened in the world, let's blow something or do something crazy. Political discourse. Talk to people. Islam as Farah has said will never accept violent extremism or suicide bombing or killing oneself. This is not the way to express your political view. Islam is a religion for life and not for death.

MR. GRAND: Kofi, do you want to add to that?

MR. RASHID: Sure. Just quickly on the political engagement domestically, absolutely Muslims need to be politically engaged. We now have two Muslim Congress people and I think a few mayors and I'm sure city councilmen as well. But it's important that Muslim Americans don't run for office as Muslims. They should run as Americans who happen to be Muslim. We care about the same issues as everyone else cares about. We just go to a different building to pray in and have different things that we do as rituals, but we're still Americans. Our communities need to understand this and not be afraid to run, not be afraid to put themselves out there and talk about the issues that everyone cares about, and I think you're starting to see this a lot more.

Regarding the Arab Spring, I think it's a fantastic opportunity for us, maybe this is the wrong phrase, but to help nations build. I believe in nation building in the sense that we should help them rebuild their nation the way that they want it to be built in the best fashion using our American system as an example. You can use other countries as examples. I believe in this country and I believe we have the best example which is why the U.S. has been so successful over the last few hundred years. And all of these countries which have had these uprisings, we have these individuals, the immigrants from those countries, here and they're PhDs and they're experts and they are the best in our society. Why can't we help send them over to those countries whether they're from that country or not, but I'm sure a lot of them would love to go because a lot of them came to America because the dictator that was running that country ran them out and they came here because we protected their freedoms. So why can't they go back and use all the things that they've learned here in America and about the American institutions and systems and the beautiful way that we engage each other in the democracy that we have and help their countrymen build up their own country? Why not? I think it's a fantastic opportunity for us and I think this really should be a big calling for an America opportunity.

MR. GRAND: Farah?

MS. PANDITH: Just a couple of quick things. First of all on the issue of Americans who are Muslim in our country getting into the field of politics, I'm 43 years old. I grew up in Massachusetts. I wasn't born in this country. So my peer group was not as active in terms of thinking about a career in policy or politics for a whole lot of reasons that we don't have time to get into today, countries from which our parent came, legacies in terms of what kind of careers they want to into. But for me it's been very interesting to watch this new generation of Americans who are really interested, how do you serve?

What are the many different ways you can serve in the public sector and not just politics? I've seen from my perch in government many more American Muslims who have asked me how do I join government? How do I get involved? How do I become somebody in the Civil Service? How do I become in the Foreign Service? What does it mean to have a career? And I think that's great thing. It's great to see that.

I said when I started the conversation today going back to normal. We weren't really paying attention to Muslims who happen to be Muslims serving in the public sector before 9/11. Nobody really paid that much attention. We have Foreign Service officers, we have ambassadors, we have all kinds of folks across our nation who have been serving just because they're Americans and they have run for office but we haven't calibrated it in that way. There is a more energized motion for folks who are young to get involved and to pay attention to where they want to be and what their careers might look like in the field of policy or politics.

Sir, on your question of the Arab Spring, one of the things to echo what my colleagues said today, but one of the things I think is really central here, this wasn't about religion. The people that stood up whether we're talking about in Tunisia or we're talking about Egypt or anything else that's been percolating across the region has not been about religion. It's about people who want rights to be able to represent themselves, who want freedoms that we hold dear in our country and I think that there is something really powerful in that and something really important in that as well.

It is true. You framed your question by saying these are Muslim-majority nations. That is true. But when people were marching and were in the squares, they were not a Muslim or a Christian or a Jew. They were people who wanted the right to represent themselves and wanted greater freedom and I think that's a really important thing that we have to really focus on.

MR. GRAND: It's what made the Arab Spring so remarkable.

MS. PANDITH: Right. In terms of the piece of how does that make Americans think about let's perhaps call it Arabs because we're talking about that part of the world, I think that they saw obviously a very different view of what the imam was saying. There is no contradiction between being a Muslim and democracy and I think that was a very important thing for the world to see, not just America but the world at large.

MR. GRAND: Other questions?

MS. BUCK: My name is Noha Buck and I live in Maryland and I do some cultural consulting.

MR. GRAND: Talk a little bit into the microphone.

MS. BUCK: Can you hear me?

MS. PANDITH: Yes.

MS. BUCK: Now yes? My name is Noha. I live here in the area. My background is in Islamic law and Islamic studies. I work along the same lines of cultural consulting and trying to make that education gap close.

My question comes in light of a question I had yesterday at USIP and I wanted to pose it to all of you. I'm invigorated by all the positive that's happened in the past 10 years and I think the trajectory for the next 15 years is the sky is the limit. When we were at USIP yesterday we talked a little bit about the funding for the United States Institute of Peace and I wanted to get a sense of the delegation from Alazhar University, the foremost Muslim academic institution that was being hosted by USIP yesterday. I wanted to give them a sense of scale of funding for peace initiatives like those represented by USIP and war efforts going on. The gentleman that was hosting us said that the budget of USIP is equivalent to 1 hour's warfare in Afghanistan. I'm wondering,

the question finally, is when you're traveling around the world and when you're dealing with different communities of Muslims, does the issue, I'm sure it does -- when the issue comes up of how do you reconcile this peacemaking effort and these noble efforts that we're doing with the very concrete and tangible face of American military presences and the consequences in terms of lives?

MR. GRAND: Good question.

MS. NADLER: My name is Rina Nadler. I work with Neal Howe who is CSIS and also at his generational research and consulting company Life Course Associates. We've been studying the millennial generation in America and around the world and civic research within that generation. My question is about the larger context of the Muslim community in the West. In many ways America's political ideology is particularly friendly to interfaith dialogue and to intercultural dialogue. Everybody here was, almost everybody, was at one point an immigrant and we have a feeling that it's a very American thing to bring people from different backgrounds together and integrate them into the pursuit of happiness, the pursuit of economic advancement and that's a big part of our political ideology as a nation.

In looking at European countries particularly in France and in Germany which have very large Muslim communities well, their struggle over the role of those communities in their nations, looks pretty different from America. So I was wondering what you think about the role of America in interacting with Europe about their Muslim minority communities, what is our role and how do the differences in ideology not just between Islamic countries and America, but also between America and European countries with large Muslim minorities? Basically, what is America's role in that in the world?

MR. GRAND: A perfect question to start with you, Farah.

MS. PANDITH: You set me up. That was a softball. Thanks. The job that I had before this one was from right after the Danish cartoon crisis. I'll put it in context. I was at the White House during the Danish cartoon crisis and right after that a job was created for me at the Department of State and I left the White House to serve as Senior Adviser to the Assistant Secretary for Europe to build strategies from our country, our embassies in Europe with Muslims in Europe. So I did that for 2 years. There is so much I could say about that question.

I want to say a couple of things that are really important though in the way in which you're thinking about this. Europe is not a monolith and the conversations that we have about Muslims in different parts of Europe really differ and the things that are taking place not just between a Netherlands and a Norway, but between communities in a country, I often talk about the fact that Muslims in Madrid have very different experiences than Muslims in Barcelona. And if you are to just say Muslims in Spain you're in big trouble because the texture and the history of these immigrant populations across Europe really, really varies. So we need to give dignity to that. We need to understand those differences, a Dusseldorf versus a Berlin, a Madrid versus a Barcelona. What generation of Muslim are we talking about? Are we talking about countries in which they were colonized? There are lot of conversation. It's very complex. So it's not just some simple thing of what can we as Americans do to help out these really horrible and difficult conversations that might be happening in Europe? We talk about the minaret ban and we talk about the burkha ban and we think we get it about what's happening in Europe. It's far more complex than that.

America has a very important role to play generally in terms of talking about the ways in which we can build coalitions. It is one of the strengths of our country. Kofi talked about the challenges our nation has had, whether we are talking about

socioeconomic challenges we've had among populations in America, the rich and the poor, whether we're talking about racial conversations in America that still are extremely difficult in our nation. We are not some perfect place that we can trot around the world and say if you could just do it like America, everything would be great. But there is humility in being able to share experiences, to talk about what's worked, and one of the things that is most powerful I have found is the ability to talk about how different communities in America on a localized level have talked about some of these issues in an important way and how local governmental influences can make a difference to how a community talks about their fear around a particular issue. And that isn't just Muslims versus non-Muslims. There is a lot that must take place within Muslim communities themselves about learning about the other, about not being fearful, about understanding how to balance their identity.

We have a very, very special narrative here in America because as you said we come from an immigrant culture. We all at some point -- I grew up outside of Boston. The Irish narrative is very much my own when I think about the experience of what happened to Catholics in America. Let us not forget the pain of that journey here in the United States. It has not just been today we're having a very complex and difficult conversation about Muslims. But other faith groups in America have gone through this. Other immigrants have gone through this. Talk to the Irish, talk to the Polish, talk to the Germans in our country. They will tell you the stories of their grandparents. They will talk about how they have changed the way they dress so that could feel like they could assimilate. Our nation has gone through a lot.

Europe is having many of those conversations now. So in my view, one of the best things we can do is talk about experiences that we've had in our country in terms of how we've done this, do as much as we can to offer that connectivity, but to be

respectful in that we do not have the right to run around saying do it our way because our way is the best way. Each of these European countries has a dignified history and a dignified culture and we must give them respect on the context of very powerful and very difficult conversations. But I will underscore this by saying the values that we share in the West, whether we're talking about Australia or New Zealand or Europe or the United States, issues of freedoms, freedoms of individuals, freedom of expression and the right for people to practice their faith freely are very central components to who we are in Western culture.

MR. GRAND: Kofi, do you want to add anything to that?

MR. RASHID: Absolutely not. No.

MR. GRAND: What about the question of we spend so much money on war.

MR. RASHID: Right.

MR. GRAND: How are these peace initiatives or these dialogue initiatives welcomed when there is so much else going on?

MR. RASHID: Right. I think it's a rhetorical question. You can't justify it. Obviously we have a military and our government makes certain decisions, and we have the largest by far defense budget in the world I think of the top three countries combined and there is a military industry that is trying to survive. But I think the larger point should be how much more can we do and how much further can we advance if we just spend a bit more money on peace initiatives and on the engagement on public diplomacy, because the return on investment is significant. It's exponential. The investment in military spending is negative. And I think this is just something that the more that we have success stories to talk about what's happening and how it's working with the merger funds that are being spent today, maybe the politicians and our representatives will hear

this and start to change their minds about budgets. I doubt it, but we still need to talk about it.

MR. GRAND: Imam Magid?

IMAM MAGID: I do agree that we have to spend more money in peace building. When Brookings had this forum, the U.S.-Muslim World Forum, in Qatar, the religious leaders said we would like to build an international interfaith Peace Corps. I just want to tell you that I have -- and the same leaders in that group said we're going to do it because they do believe that people of faith have to work in peace building. One of the things that I heard yesterday from -- she was saying that if we'd like to win the people's minds and hearts, we have to know what is in their minds. We got to have to have some money to see what's in their minds first before you win their minds. Therefore you need really to have a very constructive I think effort through engagement of people to talk to them. I was a counselor and I told a couple the more you wait in your problems the more the problems you may have. You need to have dialogue and talk about them. And I told them it's going cost you a lot when you divorce. Really. You have to learn conflict resolution and how to resolve conflict. I think it is crucial and important

I would like to say something about Europe. I think as Farah and the others who introduced me to European issues. I went to Denmark after the cartoons and so forth, and wherever I went, although Kofi did a good job, but people talk about I've been there and talking to European Muslims and especially really. I do believe that they have to differentiate between the culture where the people are homogeneous as one type of thing and America is the country of immigrants. Therefore the homogeneous country when they see their culture being changed and they see in the public square people wearing different clothing and so forth, they get scared quoting Karen yesterday also. But when Europeans went to Muslim countries during the colonization period, they also

brought their clothing, they brought their language also and people were at first threatened at the time as well. Therefore we have to remember that in Europe this issue of the debate of identity and culture is very healthy with people saying what can we live with?

One thing I would like to say is that Muslim Europeans they have to understand the debate also in that context. You have to put yourself always in the other person's shoes. Europeans have to put themselves in the shoes of the people that they welcome to their countries. They brought them as laborers and now they're part of the society. They want to be comfortable in their space. As she said, in America there is a lot of interfaith work. America is a very religious country. For Europeans it is not Islam versus Christianity. It is Islam or any religious secularism everywhere you can imagine. There's a very strong sense of it. I went to Denmark and I was told that by the Danish and others that this is about cultural issues. It's not about religion. Not Christians versus Muslims. It's not that at all. But I think that as you said the conversation is a little bit different than in the United States.

MR. GRAND: Thank you. We have just under 10 minutes left before we need to wrap so let me quickly collect any last questions that we might have.

MS. SMITH: Thank you for being here. Mallory Smith. I'm with the World Affairs Council of Washington, D.C. My question was going back to you mentioned Facebook and Twitter. What challenges as well as advantages are there to this explosion of global media and the internet and social networking in this interfaith dialogue that you're trying to create in this community of understanding?

LOUIE: My name is Louie. I'm a PhD candidate at American University. From the discussion today I think it's very clear that there is a 9/11 Muslim American generation that is growing up and coming of age before our eyes and in the spotlight and

in doing so they're also building bridges. But by being thrust into the spotlight, how do you think that affects their sense of place, identity and belonging in this country?

MR. GRAND: Does anyone want to take that on?

MS. PANDITH: I'll do the Facebook, Twitter thing. You asked what the challenges are. This is a game right now. It's who has the largest microphone, loudest microphone, who can populate the space with their narrative. For a very long time, too long, the largest and the noisiest voices, the most robust voices in the world, were those of AQ and its affiliates trying to define what it meant to be Muslim which is ridiculous, the idea that they had that much momentum to be able to do this. What you have seen, and I talked about this in terms of why I'm optimistic, far more of an opportunity now using YouTube, using other social media forums where regular people can express themselves in real ways. The challenge is that we cannot decrease our foot on the gas pedal. We have got to continue to see those new voices come forward to recalibrate everything, to push back the nonsensical voices out there.

Often time when the things that I have seen happen is the most sophisticated media voice. The sexiest story that is out there becomes the narrative of the day and that is very troublesome because sometimes the people that are not really as well educated about a particular issue get the fanfare online because they've said something very particular. We believe in freedom of expression, we want to populate the airwaves with as much across the board. But I think the challenge must be we need to open up that space, we need to do as much as we can to bring those voices forward.

The imam was talking about the fact that there were 12 books out there. There are far more videos and really difficult things to watch that are preying upon young people who are vulnerable. I find that in my work day to day that it is heartbreaking to hear a 16-year-old, a 14-year-old, refer to some video or some song that they heard that

is idolizing something really bad. What I have tried to do in my work is to understand where the spaces are where we can see organic, credible movements that are online that make a difference. You look at movements.org, you look at what Google Ideas has tried to do with their YouTube to counter violent extremism. You see initiatives that are happening now, almost 10 years later they're happening, so for a very long period of time the people that were populating the space were not the voices that were not the most helpful. So that is the greatest challenge in my view at this moment.

IMAM MAGID: Regarding Muslims being in the spotlight, it is true that Muslims are being held in some ways to different standards. There is no imam in this country that does not believe that this sermon is not local. When he speaks he's speaking to the world. And there is somebody taping the imam somewhere. Not our government by the way.

MR. GRAND: Could you say a little louder?

IMAM MAGID: Not by our government. But then my stand on this issue, I've been telling the Muslims this forces Muslims to have one conversation. Private and public will be the same which is good. But you don't have the same thing. How many churches and synagogues and so forth have sermons are not being heard on the internet. That's one thing. The second, I think whatever happens in the Muslim world now, Muslim Americans are responding to it. Say if somebody does something in Iraq or in Sudan, I've been asked about it. What is my response about this issue? Before 9/11 they don't ask you that. They call you and say, did you hear what happened in Iraq? Sometimes I have not seen the news myself so I didn't hear about it. What do you think? I said I told you I didn't think about it yet.

MR. GRAND: You've become a foreign policy expert.

IMAM MAGID: But it's really very interesting. It makes you think about so many issues yourself as a Muslim and makes me have a sense of understanding what's happening in the world. It did affect us when the two churches in Pakistan were burned because members of my community went to school in those churches and are Muslims who came and said we're like to rebuild them. So it is a global village now. When there's a denial of the Holocaust somewhere in a part of the world, Muslim Americans have to take a stand on this issue because we know this is morally unacceptable and Muslim leaders have to say something about it.

Therefore I do believe that being in the spotlight helps us to have an opportunity to speak about the Islamic narrative about tolerance and understanding that has not been heard about before. At the same time with our children -- difficult time because there is voting in school as well. Everything instantly happening around the world, the Muslim kids in the schools will be noticed. It used to be like if your name is Mohamed you're just sitting in the fifth grade and on one knows about you, but now if something happens in Afghanistan and the teacher says, What do you think about what happened? Now the fifth grader becomes the spokesman of Islam. It is putting a lot of pressure on us.

MR. RASHID: I think quickly in terms of the two questions, one in terms of social media and technology, what maybe a lot of Americans didn't realize before the Arab Spring was how much technology has penetrated the Arab and Muslim world. I can talk specifically about the UAE. There are 2.1 cell phones per individual in the UAE. Everyone has a cell phone. The house maids have cell phones. The drivers have cell phones. So obviously the other people in the society have multiple cell phones. Now that the platforms are being more mobile, everyone has access to these platforms and the technology. So they may not necessarily be large producers or creators of the

platforms, but they certainly know how to use it and they use it very well, the technology, and it's only going to increase. So I think it's a huge opportunity for America and for American Muslims to recognize that and to use it. We need to be more sophisticated in terms of how we communicate our messages and the things that we want the world to hear because they can pick up on it in so many different formats. But it's definitely out there and it's going to stay out there and that's an opportunity for us.

Regarding the question about Muslim Americans and being put into the spotlight and I think something about where do they stand as Americans, for me personally living overseas for 11 years, it had a huge impact in the sense that like Imam Magid said, you have to take a stand some place and I really became more appreciative and more enamored with my own country because of my overseas experience. I realized all the things that I took for granted growing up here in terms of our culture and in terms of our history, our great diverse history, in terms of all the things that we have here and our institutions. So when I came back I really began to reflect on this and I felt more American. So even though I'm a Muslim American, I felt more American and I felt like and I feel like we have not only as Americans but as Muslim Americans a lot to offer the world which we are not giving the world and we need to find opportunities to engage the world and to communicate to them and to show them the best of what America is really all about. We really have a lot to talk about which is right now it's mostly talking about war and the political elections that are coming up, but we have so many things to talk about which sometimes have nothing to do with religion or Islam or all the heated things. We can just talk as human beings and we have a lot to offer.

IMAM MAGID: Welcome back home.

MR. RASHID: Thank you.

MR. GRAND: Please join me in thanking our panelists. And thank you all for coming and being with us today, and a special thanks to my colleagues at the Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World current and former for all their work and support. Thanks.

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CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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