



Universal Muslim Association of America

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For Immediate Release

The Universal Muslim Association of America (UMAA), held its 8th annual convention this past Memorial Day weekend in Tyson's Corner, Virginia. The theme of the convention was "Changing the Perception of Islam in the West". Participants traveled from across the continent to attend this annual event. The convention was highlighted by banquet keynote speaker, Farah Pandith, US State Department Special Representative to the Muslim Communities. She expressed her gratitude to the Shia Muslim community for their efforts in promoting dialogue and the efforts of UMAA in particular.

Additionally the convention speakers included world renowned scholars such as Dr. Seyed Hosein Nasr who delivered the keynote address entitled "Changing the Perception of Islam in the West". Dr. Seyed Hosein Nasr is considered the world's leading expert on Islam. Dr. Hassan Abbas, one of the leading experts on terrorism and extremism in Pakistan, a former Professor of International Relations at Harvard University, and currently Quaid-e-Azam Professor at the South Asia Institute of Columbia University, delivered a riveting speech on the topic "Combating Terrorism". In his speech he reiterated the sentiment of Islam that terrorism has no place in its religion.

Speakers were brought in from across the world to address this year's gathering. Sayed Mahdi Modarresi, a young rising scholar, came from Sydney Australia, and Abbas Virjee flew in from the UK. This year's convention concluded with an interfaith dialogue between the Jewish Islamic Dialogue Society and UMAA. The theme of the interfaith session was "A Unified Social Agenda for the Interfaith Community". In this session, the speakers highlighted the similarities between the Muslim and Jewish communities and their need to work together on social issues of mutual interest.

UMAA is non-profit organization formed in 2002 to provide a platform for Shia Muslims of America. This organization strives to build bridges between the Shia Muslim community of America and governmental agencies, media outlets and interfaith organizations. The organization is based out of the Washington DC metropolitan area and has been serving the needs of the Shia Muslim community of America for the past 8 years. UMAA looks forward to having its 9th annual convention May 27th – 30th, 2011.

For statements and media equerries, please contact UMAA Spokespersons Dr. Ehtisham Abidi and Dr. Parvez Shah. Both can be contacted by emailing info@umaamerica.net. or by calling 240-441-6106.