

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 11, 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI 

SUBJECT: Letter on the Fourteenth Centennial
of Islam

The National Committee to Honor the Fourteenth Centennial of Islam is having its formal opening on Thursday afternoon, June 12. The Committee invited you to attend the opening at the Hirshhorn Museum (Tab B), but your schedule did not permit. Instead, Hedley Donovan will meet with the Ambassador Battle and members of the National Committee in the Roosevelt Room at 1:00 on Thursday for a report on their activities and to present the attached letter to the Committee. We anticipate that Ambassador Battle will read your letter to the meeting later in the afternoon.

RECOMMENDATION: That you sign the letter at Tab A. It has been approved by the Department of State and the speechwriters.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 12, 1980

To Ambassador Battle

Thank you for your letter of May 23. Observance of the Fourteenth Centennial of Islam is an important undertaking, and the progress being made by the National Committee is impressive.

Promoting better understanding between Muslim cultures and our own is a noble objective, made all the more crucial by the recent international developments you refer to in your letter. You, the other members of the Committee, and all those who are contributing to this effort can take pride in your continuing achievements.

During the past year I have had occasion to emphasize my own commitment, and that of my Administration, to the cause of mutual respect and understanding between the United States and the nations of the Muslim world. As I stated in my 1980 State of the Union Address to the 96th Congress:

We believe that there are no irreconcilable differences between us and any Islamic nation. We respect the faith of Islam, and we are ready to cooperate with all Muslim countries.

One of the foundations on which the greatness of our Nation rests is our almost unique ability to accept and to cherish diversity in culture and faith. Our increasingly interdependent world demands that tolerance, understanding and respect guide the attitudes and actions of all nations and peoples if we are to achieve peace, security, and well-being for mankind.

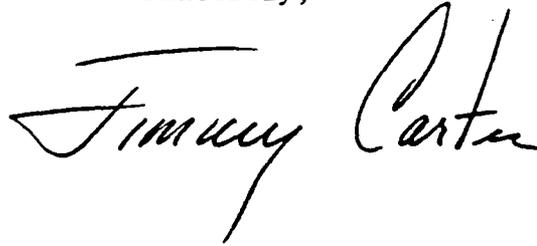
It is important that your Committee's programs enjoy the support and participation of as many Americans as possible. I congratulate you on the caliber of the many dedicated individuals of all faiths who have already joined your undertaking, and I want you to know that I will encourage involvement by appropriate governmental agencies as well as by individual citizens.

Sick's office picked up
the original of the letter
and will get to the appropriate
party for delivery

6/12/80

The National Committee's activities will increase the American people's knowledge of Islam and demonstrate to Muslims all over the world that we want to learn more about their religion, culture and aspirations. You have my continued interest and support as, together, we honor the Fourteenth Centennial of Islam.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jimmy Carter". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

The Honorable
Lucius D. Battle, Chairman
National Committee to Honor the
Fourteenth Centennial of Islam
1516 P Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

Islam Centennial Fourteen

May 23, 1980

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

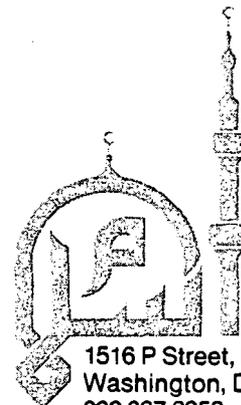
Dear Mr. President:

In your letter of May 7, 1979 you kindly gave warm endorsement to the National Committee's objective of fostering in this country an improved understanding of the Muslim world in conjunction with the commemoration of the Fourteenth Century of Islam. You also asked to be kept informed of the progress of the Committee's work, which is the purpose of this letter.

In the months that have passed since last spring, developments in the Muslim world have underscored the importance of Islam as a significant factor in the lives of all Americans. We continue to be deeply concerned at the seizure of American hostages in Iran, the recent invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union, and other disturbing events in the Islamic world. We share your belief that these developments pose fundamental challenges to our nation.

These challenges, in our view, heighten the importance of the National Committee's purpose of improving American understanding of a vast area of the world that is undergoing rapid, and often confusing, change.

I am pleased to report that the National Committee has undertaken a number of programs to respond to greatly increased American curiosity about the diverse world of Islam. In the summer of 1979, as originally intended, the National Committee supplanted the Preparatory Committee created the year before. Parallel and supportive Academic and Diplomatic Advisory Committees were formed. As you will see from the enclosed, all three bodies are composed of individuals of national prominence, who represent all elements of our society, and who share a conviction of the importance of this undertaking in improving intercultural understanding.



Current and projected programs are also described in the enclosures. These include:

- Support for the C.B.S. (T.V.) series "Fourteen Centuries of Islam," 45 half-hour lectures on the "Sunrise Semester" series.
- A conference on Islam from Morocco to Indonesia, sponsored jointly with the Middle East Institute and the Asia Society, to be held at The Johns Hopkins University School for Advanced International Studies. (Funded by U.S.I.C.A. and N.E.H.)
- Full cooperation with P.B.S. (T.V.) in their forthcoming three-hour series on Islam.
- A documentary film of our own on Islam.
- A traveling museum exhibition on the Cultural Heritage of Islam.

While we expect to finance our programs essentially from private sources-- corporate, foundation, and individual--we are also seeking further funds from the National Endowments for the Humanities and Arts. The National Committee's policies preclude acceptance of financial contributions from any foreign government.

In the immediate future, we will be convening the National, Academic, and Diplomatic Advisory Committees in a formal meeting in Washington on June 12th at 2:00 p.m. in the auditorium of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. We would like to invite you and Mrs. Carter to attend and briefly address the meeting. If other responsibilities preclude your attending, we would hope that you could be represented by Secretary of State Muskie or another appropriate senior official.

We appreciate your continued interest and support and hope that the National Committee's objectives and programs can make a meaningful contribution to furtherance of international understanding.

Sincerely,

Lucius D. Battle

Lucius D. Battle
Chairman

Enclosures

cf

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SCHEDULE PROPOSAL
DATE: June 7, 1980
FROM: Zbigniew Brzezinski }
VIA: Phil Wise

MEETINGS: Drop-by with the National Committee to Honor the Fourteenth Centennial of Islam.

DATE: Morning of June 12, 1980.

PURPOSE: To express your support for the Centennial and present the Committee with a letter to be read at their official reception that afternoon.

FORMAT: --Roosevelt Room
--Chairman Lucius D. Battle and approximately 35-40 members of the National Committee.
--15 minutes.

CABINET PARTICIPATION: Hedley Donovan will greet the Committee and get a report on their plans and activities.

SPEECH MATERIAL: Talking points will be provided for a few opening words recognizing the importance of the work the Committee has been doing, and a letter will be prepared which could be read to the Committee as an expression of the President's support.

PRESS COVERAGE: Meeting to be announced. White House photographer for courtesy photos.

STAFF: The NSC Staff will provide the letter and talking points in coordination with State.

RECOMMEND: Secretary Muskie; Dr. Brzezinski; Hedley Donovan.

OPPOSED: None.

PREVIOUS PARTICIPATION: You have never met with this group, although you may be acquainted with some of the very distinguished group of participants.

BACKGROUND: You wrote to the Committee last year expressing support for their efforts. The hostage crisis intervened with their schedule, and they postponed some of their activities from last fall to this summer. They have invited you to attend their reception on the afternoon of June 12 at the Hirschhorn Museum. In lieu of your attendance, this meeting would provide an opportunity to associate yourself with their efforts, to underscore the fact that the Iran crisis should not be interpreted as a conflict between the U.S. and Islam, and to personally present a letter which the Chairman could read at the opening meeting in the afternoon.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____