

SBIA MEDIA COMMITTEE

MEDIA AND ISLAM

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1 MAY 18, 2007

PRESIDENT CARTER SPEAKS AT U.C. BERKELEY CAMPUS

IRFAN RYDHAN

Former U.S. President, Jimmy Carter, spoke to a packed crowd at Zellerbach Hall on the campus of U.C. Berkeley on May 2, 2007. The event was not open to the general public except for a limited amount of tickets made available for friends and family of the Berkeley students and faculty. Carter was invited to speak by students Ali Ansari and Aidan Ali-Sullivan, who are both senators of the Associated Student Union (ASU) of U.C. Berkeley.

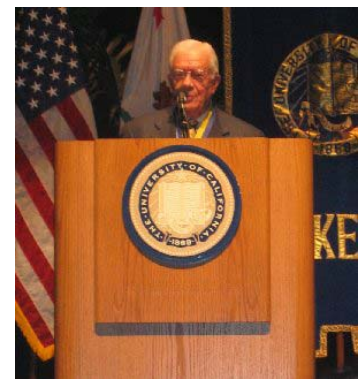
Carter, who has been invited to speak at several colleges and universities across the country, is promoting his latest book *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*. The book does not really state anything

new for Arabs and Muslims in regards to the situation of the Palestinians, but for the general American public, it is considered controversial merely because of the use of the word 'Apartheid' in the title. Carter discussed why he chose the word, because there is no better word than 'Apartheid' to describe the treatment of the Palestinians at the hands of the Israeli occupation forces and to provoke some interest and spark a debate about the U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East.

Carter went on to describe some of the facts which are stated in his book. Namely that the West Bank consists of only 22% of Palestinian's land, while Israel controls 77%. The Gaza Strip is the

remaining 1%. Carter, who has visited the Holy Land many times over the past 30 years, also stated that there are over 200 Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian land and approximately 500 checkpoints, most of which Palestinians cannot pass through. He also described the so-called "security fence" (a concrete wall which ranges from 20' to 40' tall) built by Israel, which originally was to be built along the border between Israel and Egypt during the government of Yitzhak Rabin. According to President Carter, after Rabin was assassinated, the government of Israel decided to build the wall along the border with Palestinian territories. However, it also goes deep into the Palestin-

ian side and often surrounds small Palestinian towns.



Carter spoke for about 45 minutes after which he took written questions from the

(Continued on page 3)

LITTLE MOSQUE ON THE PRAIRIE: SMART & SHARP

BIZHAN KHALEELI

The Canadian situational comedy, *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, provides a much needed dose of comedy to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Surprisingly daring, the series delves into the everyday challenges facing first and second generation Muslims in the Western frontier.

The plot is familiar--a small minority community seeks to gain a foothold into a hostile environment, here, the insular town of Mercy in Saskatchewan, Canada. Couched in the premise of the authentic immigrant experience, *Little Mosque* sets its characters against the townspeople without ill will nor the confrontational

hatred so prevalent in past representations of Muslims. Rather, the majority of townspeople innocently perform traditional stereotypes, yet they soon realize that the stereotypes themselves are faulty.

Comedy is Universal

The writing and personali-
(Continued on page 2)

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 6/9 Fundraiser for Evergreen Islamic Center at Wyndham Hotel
- 8/11 Muslim Unity Day at Great America

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

MC DVD SCRIPT	2
AMA EVENT	4
ABOUT INFO	4

THE MEDIA COMMITTEE CREATES DVD FOR MASJIDS

FARRUKH SHAH KHAN

The Media Committee created a DVD for other masjids to aid in creating their own media committee. The following is the script of the DVD:

The Muslim Ummah is facing a great struggle throughout the world and most critically, right here in the United States of America. This struggle is a battle for the hearts and minds of public opinion and public perception. It is a campaign of words and images and the weapons and tools used in this campaign are that of the Media. In order to be able to defend Muslims and spread the true message of Islam, which is peace, brotherhood, and justice for all people, we must learn to properly and effectively use these tools of the Media.

Media is used in a clever and crafty way to build prejudices and stereotypes in people's minds against Muslims. It has been used to portray Muslims as extremists and terrorists. We can sense it but we do not know what to do about it: how to fight back, how to correct the misinformation that is put out by the main stream media, and how to respond to the attacks in the Media on our character, our Ummah and most importantly, our Deen.

The first step towards defending Islam and Muslims against these attacks is to engage the enemy. We cannot be sitting on the sidelines while war of words rages on all around us and the only casualties of these precise smart bombs are us, the Muslims.

Second, we have to learn the rules and the art of Media Activism. This is where the SBIA media training workshops come in.

The SBIA Media Committee was formed to promote our community's participation and interaction with the Media. Our charter is to train and empower our community to deal effectively with the various forms of the Media: Film, Television, Radio, Print, and the Internet. We are on the forefront of Muslim Media Activism and are looking to recruit and train those who are able and ready to help us win this campaign of words and images, using the Media tools available to us.

SBIA Media Committee regularly conducts media training workshops and

works with such organizations as AMICC, CAIR, MCA, World Alliance for Humanity (WAH) in offering collaborative seminars.

Members of Media Committee have following expertise and accomplishments:

- Over 50 years of accumulated Television/News production experience.
- Executive Producer of Universal News Cable Television.
- Executive Producer of Life Force Jazz Records.
- Producer of World Business & Technology Television show.
- Producer of Muslim Roundtable Television show (now on Bridges TV).
- News Director for KSJS Radio.

(continued on Page 3)

LITTLE MOSQUE ON THE PRAIRIE

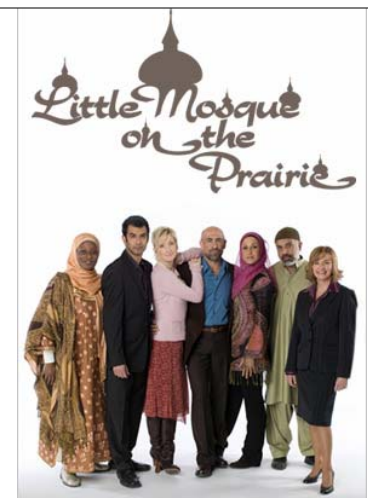
(Continued from page 1)

ties in *Little Mosque* are accessible to all viewers. The characters are more than Muslims, they are fathers, mothers, daughters, and friends. *Little Mosque* proves that if anything is universal, it is the ability of humans to laugh at themselves and their oftentimes absurd situations - something that all of us (at one time or another) can relate to.

Run Amuck

The Canadian creator of the series, Zarqa Nawaz, has run amuck in the very freedom we Americans blabber so much about. She is kind enough to share a glimpse of it through her ground breaking comedy. There has been some talk about *Little Mosque on the Prairie* broaching the American market. In the cause of freedom and liberty, let's hope so.

Bizhan Khaleeli is an architect practicing in Southern California, a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley and a Muslim-American



Picture from fundamentalist-films.com

PRESIDENT CARTER IN UC BERKELEY

(continued from Page 1)

audience. He was asked if he thought Israel was just responding to acts of violence and terrorism by building the wall, etc. Carter responded that the Israeli occupation and oppression precipitates the violence and terrorism against them.

He gave the example of the three Israeli soldiers abducted by Hamas. In comparison, Israel is holding 9,800 Palestinians; 300 of which are women and over 100 are children under the age of 14! President Carter hopes that Israel is willing to trade some of the prisoners with the Palestinians to diffuse the situation.

Another question asked was, "What are the main challenges for the next President of the U.S.?"

Carter responded by saying that the United States needs to address the following issues for the future:

1. End pre-emptive war.
2. Make the U.S. as the "protector" of human rights around the world, as it was in the past.
3. Preserve the environment and battle against global warming. (Interesting to note that President Carter had installed Solar Panels in the White House during the late 70's, but they were quickly removed when President Reagan came into power!).
4. Address the growing chasm between the rich and the poor across the world.

According to President Carter, poverty leads people to extremism and to use

violence. He also noted that over half the people in the world live on less than \$2.00 per day.

One of the last questions asked by the audience, was "How can we help you (Carter), do what you do?"

Carter's response was summarized in two points:

1. Ask the Presidential candidates and other politicians running for Congress if they are willing to make peace in the Middle East a high priority and if they are willing to not only support Israeli security, but also the rights and freedom of the Palestinian people. If they do not agree, then do not support them.
2. Go and visit the Palestinian territories and witness for yourselves the plight of the Palestinians living under occupation.

After reading *Palestine Peace Not Apartheid* and hearing President Carter speak, I have a greater respect for him and his ideals. He is a genuine Human Rights Hero (he said his hero is Nelson Mandela), who is willing to stand up and fight for the rights of the Palestinians, even though it may be considered unpopular or misunderstood by the general public in this country. I also have greater hope that someday soon the American public will finally realize that Peace in the Middle East will only be achieved once the Palestinians are relieved of Israeli occupation and are given the justice and freedom they have been fighting for the past 50+ years.

MEDIA COMMITTEE CREATES DVD FOR MASJIDS

(Continued from Page 2)

The various types of media training seminars that the SBIA Media Committee has conducted over the years include :

- Writing Workshops for Print Media.
- Public Speaking Workshops.
- Television Interview Techniques Workshop (including how to handle Tough Interview Questions).
- Youth Leadership in Media workshop.

Please contact us for more details on how to get involved with the media, how to setup your local Masjid media committee, or information about types of training programs and packages. Contact us at 408.947.9389 or mediarelations@sbia.info.

Farrukh Shah Khan

Chairperson,

SBIA Media Committee

AMA INAUGURATES GLOBAL FORUM TV STUDIO

FARAH KHAN

American Muslim Alliance successfully inaugurated its Global Forum TV Program & Studio last March with an impressive assembly of speakers and attendees. GFT was founded by Dr. Agha Syed in September 2006 to celebrate a consortium of top international alternative medias, all determined to raise the standards of journalism worldwide by offering balanced global perspectives on issues traditionally distorted by mainstream media. The program united media and political figures, all of whom offered encouraging words of support. Congressman Pete Stark of Fremont, Congressman Pete McCloskey, both expressed their commitment to the organization along with Navito Lopez, President of the Mexican American Political Association, who pledged to work with the Muslim community so that it would not take us three generations to reap the benefits and find our home in America as it did his community.

The program featured two live panels with representatives of Al-Jazeera, Bridges TV, ARY, LinkTV, Washington Report on Mideast Affairs, and the New America Media. The guests engaged in roundtable discussions covering trends in the new Muslim media and the new International media, conceding that tastes of viewers worldwide have now become more sophisticated. The birth of satellite TV has empowered ethnic media and as ethnic media creates a better informed citizen, they are able to powerfully contend with mainstream news media. Individuals can now reject the "infotainment" hearsay and ethnocentric perspectives corporate media offers and opt for news media committed to restoring integrity to journalism. Audiences are yearning for the truth, the unfiltered and uncensored truth, and ethnic media is delivering it. Ethnic medias are undeniably leaving a footprint around the world but are also thriving to create culture of accountability internally. By setting the agendas within their own borders, there is now less reliance on foreign media. News no longer needs to go through the New Yorks or Londons of the world to be considered noteworthy by their constituents. Ethnic media is effectively challenging the perceptions of the world and succeeding.

The gap is closing between alternative ethnic media and mainstream corporate media. Out of 1500 ethnic adults surveyed, 1 in 4 accounted they preferred ethnic news to mainstream news. However, there is still a problem, alternative media is not seen in enough households within the US. The competitive environment in America is still driven by commercial factors, something that AMA's Global Forum TV is working to alleviate by granting this form of media additional exposure. As Imam Zaid Shakir so eloquently stated in his closing remarks of the program: "Positive messages can dispel layers of ignorance and a program such as Global Forum TV is working to provide a view to the entire US that doesn't currently exist".

The SBIA Media Committee is proud to present:
The SBIA Media Scholarship Program

Up to \$1,000 available for any student interested in pursuing an education in a Media field (Journalism, Radio/TV, Film/Video, Public Relations, Mass Communications, etc.). Download the SBIA Media Scholarship requirements and application form from the SBIA website at www.sbia.info. For more questions/comments, please email: mediarelations@sbia.info

ABOUT

SBIA MEDIA COMMITTEE

Contributors

Bushra Burney and Farah Khan
Editors

Irfan Rydhan

Farrukh Shah Khan

Bizhan Khaleeli

Media Committee Officers

Chair—Farrukh Shah Khan

Co-Chair—Dawan Muhammad

Secretary—Farah Khan

Finance Director—S Reshma Yunus

Media Training Director—Imam
Bilal Ibn Muhammad

Public Relations—Nasir Ahmad

Recruitment—Mertze Dahlin

Board Liaison—Irfan Rydhan

For general inquiry:
Media Committee
South Bay Islamic Association
325 N. Third St.
San Jose, CA 95112
mediarelations@sbia.info

If you would like to submit an article or have any general questions pertaining to the newsletter, contact the editors at:

newsletter@mediaandislam.com

Presenting. . .

Media and Islam

www.MediaAndIslam.com

Media and Islam is the blog of Muslim Media Activists. We strive to promote media interaction with the Muslim community in the Bay Area.