

## World diplomats at Islamabad conference ‘Future of Change’ commit to changing Western perceptions of Islam

### Iranian Envoy Recounts Major Muslims Concerns

TEHRAN, Feb. 4 (FNA)—Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Mashaallah Shakeri Wednesday pointed to the West’s biased stance towards the world of Islam as among the Muslims’ major concerns.

Criticizing some Western countries’ stance toward Muslims and linking them to terrorism, Shakeri said in a seminar dubbed as ‘Future Agenda of Change, Role for the Muslim World’ in Islamabad, that Muslims believe that the war on terror is for crushing them.

He noted that another reason for Muslims’ concern is that the West resists against recognition of Islamic countries’ changes, including what happened in Iran’s Islamic Revolution.

He also described major powers’ unilateralism in South Asia and the Middle East as another cause for Muslims’ concerns.

The Iranian diplomat also expressed hope that US President Barack Obama’s policies regarding Muslims would be different from those of Bush, and said Iran would positively respond to any change by the new US administration.



Reminding the world nations’ hatred for war and bloodshed, he urged the new US administration to work on democracy and peace and respect Muslims.

In international relations, war is not the solution to problems, the Iranian diplomat reiterated.



Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall visit Masjid Dawoodi Bohra, Northolt, England: Feb. 4 (AP Photo/Shawn Curry, pool)

### Ambassadors of Islamic countries ask Obama to address root causes of terrorism

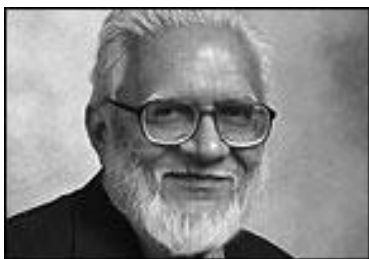
Islamabad, Feb. 4 (APP)—Muslim world is hopeful of a change in US policy towards the Islamic world with arrival of the Obama administration, said ambassadors of

prominent Islamic countries. Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Ali S. Awadh Assery, Ambassador of Syria Riad Hussain Ismat, Ambassador of Iran Masha’s Allah Shakeri, Ambassador of Iraq Kais Shbhi Al-Yacoubi and diplomats of Morocco and Nigeria agreed that election of President Obama points towards long desired change.

They were speaking at a roundtable conference on “Islam and the West and future agenda of change” held under the auspices of Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) here on Tuesday.

Diplomats of Germany, USA, Russia and Japan also spoke on the occasion.

They expressed optimism that President Obama would see the Islamic world with a different perspective and the practice to bracket Islam with terrorism would be stopped. They stressed that the new US administration should seek to root out the real causes of terrorism.



Khalid Masood, Chairman of the CII

The Saudi Ambassador said the international community should give more funds to Pakistan so that it can be in a better position to counter terrorism and extremism. He said Saudi Arabia has adopted a soft anti-terror policy by integrating and rehabilitating those who got misled and went on the path of terrorism.

The Iranian ambassador spoke about the policies of previous US administration which proved counterproductive. "President Bush spoke enough to the world now the US requires to listen prior to talking," he added.

He said Iran is waiting to see what change President Obama will bring in its policy towards his country.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has stated that if Iran witnessed any substantive change in US policy it will be replied positively.

The Iraqi ambassador said miracles should not be expected of Obama administration. He pointed out that Israel has always wasted opportunities to secure permanent peace in the Middle East.

He said Islam is about peace and co-existence and the Muslims want that when they extend the hand of cooperation, the outside world should reciprocate in a spirit which promotes unity and harmony.

Speaking on the occasion, a representative of embassy of Japan said idea of co-existence should be promoted to strengthen relations between Islam and the West. He said quest for achieving peace in the world is a laudable initiative taken by the Council of Islamic Ideology.

A representative of Russian embassy said today's world is interdependent and there is a need for understanding each others point of view on issues.

He said, "Russia as observer at OIC, wants to build good relations with OIC and its member countries including Pakistan."

He said Russia gives due respect to Muslim Ummah and its proof is that in Russia there are 4750 mosques among 10,000 places of worship.

Katrina, representative of the embassy of Germany appreciated the role of participants in pointing out the problems faced by the Muslim countries and said the issues needed to be addressed in a spirit of reconciliation. She said more than six million Muslims are living a peaceful and respectable life in Germany. She underlined the need for resolving issues through negotiations and by giving due respect to each other.

A representative of the US embassy said people in America believe in the idea of change, adding "America is a land of Christians and Muslims. We need to work together and understand each others point of view." More than eight million Muslims are living in America.

Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Hamid Saeed Kazmi said Islam is a religion of peace and it does not believe in taking lives of innocent people.

“Bloodshed and suicide attacks have nothing to do with Islam,” he said and added there are some hidden hands who are carrying out such activities to defame Muslims. He said religious seminaries have vital role in Muslim society as these are source of producing useful citizens.

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Minister of State for Religious Affairs Shagufta Jumani expressed the hope that the conference will prove to be a good effort to bridge gap between civilizations and religions.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, who conducted the conference, said such interaction would help bridge gap between Islam and the west.

He said recommendations of participants of the meeting would be compiled and forwarded to the government.

He said the election of US President has created cautious optimism and there is hope of reversal of wrong policies of the past.

Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) Dr. Khalid Masood in his welcome address said CII is a constitutional body which reviews legislation, presents reports to the

government and proposes amendments in laws.

He said the Council had almost completed the process of reviewing all existing laws in the country to bring them in line with the Holy Quran and Sunnah.

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