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Press Conference  
**Office of the Spokesman**  
Benjamin Franklin Room  
March 10, 2008

## Reception in Honor of the Member States of the OIC

### Remarks by U.S. Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Sada Cumber

(5:21 p.m. EDT)

**MR. CUMBER:** Good evening and thank you for joining us this evening and Madam Secretary, thank you for the kind words. My appointment as the Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference is part of my country's efforts to improve the quality of dialogue between the United States and the Muslim communities around the world. Over the past ten years, this relationship has become one of the most dominant themes of the world affairs.

The creation of a Special Envoy to the OIC is another opportunity for America to facilitate dialogue and build bridges between our communities. As the world's largest organization of Muslim nations, the OIC can play a vital role in dialogue for the benefit of every one of us. The OIC presents an important way for America to very quickly access fifty-seven Islamic nations and where fifty-seven member nations can rapidly access to the U.S.

As Special Envoy, I will represent America and can act as a channel to communicate OIC member state's ideas and perspective back to the U.S. U.S. views on important policy matters that may come before the OIC, I will use my background and experience as well as all the resources of the U.S. Government to create momentum in areas of shared focus for the OIC and the United States. These areas of shared focus include young people, cultural affairs, economics, science and technology, trade, as well as human rights, humanitarian assistance and, above all, peace.

As an American Muslim myself, I believe that I am in a unique position to advance this dialogue and promote greater understanding, respect and trust between my country and the Muslim communities around the world. I plan to leverage the experience of millions of successful Muslims like myself as I look forward to new ways to establish links and promote understanding. There is common grounds between all communities and while we may, sometimes, define terms differently, we are all dedicated to civilization, rule of law, justice, compassion for the less fortunate, prosperity and ultimately, as I said earlier, peace. We all share a deep respect for the power of faith and the communities of faith.

By acknowledging this common ground is important and I will help advance a respectful dialogue, I do not expect my role, as a U.S. Envoy to the OIC to be an easy one. I will be advocating American interest on a range of hard issues from Iraq to Palestinian issue to nuclear issues. It is my commitment, however, to conduct these discussions in a respectful, thoughtful and constructive manner. While I do not expect to always reach consensus on every issue, but I do hope and pray and desire that we can foster a climate of mutual respect and trust. I look forward to working with you all, individually and collectively, as we build stronger bridges between all communities around the world. (Applause.)

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 [BACK TO TOP](#)

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