

## CDIE Summer Seminar, July 8, 2003

### MIDDLE-EAST PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES and OTHER EFFORTS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

"This session will cover the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and other initiatives in the broader Muslim World. Speakers will discuss the rationale, similarities and differences of the various initiatives. They will examine the relationships between the initiatives, the strategic and programming implications, and USAID's response to date. The session's target audience is USAID officers in Washington and Missions who are working on the Middle East region, as well as those with responsibilities involving countries with significant Muslim populations."

"Muslim World Initiative" – Thomas Johnson, Democracy Advisor, PPC/P

#### Objective of the Initiative:

- Support moderate and modernizing forces, empowerment of women, and political, economic and educational reform in the Muslim world

#### General Principles:

- Respond to the growing sense of alienation and anger discussed in a National Intelligence Council study (by Paul Jabber), driven by the gaps in **freedom, knowledge and opportunity** reflected in MEPI and documented in the UNDP's Arab Human Development Report.
- Create the foundation for a long-term, U.S.-led "partnership for progress" program in the Muslim World.
- Be indicative of American values and concern - and not perceived hypocrisy - and of sustained support to come in the years ahead (*"hang in there, help is on the way..."*)
- Whenever possible be "demand-driven." Listen and respond to the needs of people in an effective manner sensitive to national and religious culture. Respond to local values and priorities such as helping the poor, fighting corruption, taking care of the family (*"how we do "it" can be as important as what we do"*)
- Provide immediate improvements in the lives of vulnerable citizens. However, be aware that quick-impact programs, e.g., "temporary" employment, can be difficult to halt without protest on the part of beneficiaries
- Distinguish between countries that are already significantly radicalized and those that are not. Different approaches are needed in those countries where the objective is to sustain a moderate, if not secular political society, from those in countries where the U.S. is confronting an already significant radical Islamist environment.

- Be sensitized to regional and country-specific contexts (*"one size does not fit all"*)
- Adjust USG footprint according to the intervention
- Where "sensitive" use existing and/or new partners with local credibility and legitimacy (*"who to do "it" with can be as important as what we do"*)
  - Vet and use legitimate Islamic charities based in the U.S., Europe and the Muslim World
  - Private Sector Involvement
  - Alliances with other donors (e.g., UK, Australia, Japan) active in the regions, and possible new partners (e.g., Kuwait, Malaysia?)
  - Support "South-to-South" and Inter-Muslim exchanges
  - Attribute assistance to the "American People," not necessarily to the USG
  - Promote "people-to-people" connections