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**WHO SPEAKS FOR ISLAM?  
What a Billion Muslims Really Think**  
By John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed

**“In these fraught days of heightened tension and increasing hostility, few books could be more timely.”**

**—Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize winner**

**Years after 9/11, are we any closer to understanding what makes a radical?**

Gallup’s largest study of Muslim populations worldwide challenges conventional wisdom and the inevitability of a global conflict as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continue. Despite widespread media coverage of global terrorism from America and Europe to the Middle East and Asia, little is known about what majorities of the world’s Muslims really think and feel. What do Muslims say about violence and terrorist attacks? What do they say about democracy, women, and relations with the West? What are their values, goals, and religious beliefs?

*Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think* by John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed (Gallup Press; March 2008; hardcover) sheds new light into the “increasing hostility” that Archbishop Tutu characterizes.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks on 9/11, U.S. public officials seemed to have no idea whether or not many Muslims supported the bombings. This troubled Gallup Chairman and CEO Jim Clifton, who felt that “no one in Washington had any idea what 1.3 billion Muslims were thinking, and yet we were working on intricate strategies that were

going to change the world for all time.” Clifton commissioned his company to undertake the enormous job.

The result is *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think*, based on six years of research and more than 50,000 interviews representing 1.3 billion Muslims who reside in more than 35 nations that are predominantly Muslim or have sizable Muslim populations. Representing more than 90% of the world’s Muslim community, it makes this poll the largest, most comprehensive study of its kind.

What the data reveal and the authors illuminate may surprise you:

Muslims and Americans are equally likely to reject attacks on civilians as morally unjustifiable.

Large majorities of Muslims would guarantee free speech if it were up to them to write a new constitution AND they say religious leaders should have no direct role in drafting that constitution.

Muslims around the world say that what they LEAST admire about the West is its perceived moral decay and breakdown of traditional values — the same answers that Americans themselves give when asked this question.

When asked about their dreams for the future, Muslims say they want better jobs and security, not conflict and violence.

Muslims say the most important thing Westerners can do to improve relations with their societies is to change their negative views toward Muslims and respect Islam.

The research suggests that conflict between Muslims and the West is NOT inevitable and, in fact, is more about policy than principles. “However,” caution Esposito and Mogahed, “until and unless decision makers listen directly to the people and gain an accurate understanding of this conflict, extremists on all sides will continue to gain ground.”

*Who Speaks for Islam?* is an important book that challenges conventional wisdom and sheds greater light on what motivates Muslims worldwide. It is a must-read for anyone committed to creating peace and security in our lifetime.

**Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think**

Authors: John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed

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**About the Authors**  
**John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed**

**John L. Esposito, Ph.D.**, is a leading expert on the Muslim world. He is a university professor and a professor of religion and international affairs and of Islamic studies at Georgetown University and the founding director of Georgetown's Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding in the Walsh School of Foreign Service. He is also the past president of the Middle East Studies Association of North America and of the American Council for the Study of Islamic Societies and a consultant to governments and multinational corporations. He is editor in chief of *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* and Oxford Islamic Studies Online. His more than 35 books include *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam* and *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam*. He currently resides in Washington, D.C., with his wife, Jeanette P. Esposito, Ph.D.

**Dalia Mogahed** is a senior analyst and executive director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies. She leads the analysis of Gallup's unprecedented study of more than 1 billion Muslims worldwide. Mogahed also directs the Muslim-West Facts Initiative ([www.muslimwestfacts.com](http://www.muslimwestfacts.com)), through which Gallup, in collaboration with The Coexist Foundation, is disseminating the findings of the Gallup World Poll to key opinion leaders in the Muslim World and the West. She travels the globe engaging audiences on what Muslims around the world really think. Her analysis has appeared in a number of leading publications, including *The Economist*, the *Financial Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Foreign Policy* magazine, *Harvard International Review*, *Middle East Policy*, and many other academic and popular journals. She lives in Washington, D.C., with her husband, Mohamed, and two sons, Tariq and Jibreel.

## Counterintuitive Discoveries in *Who Speaks for Islam?*

### **Who Speaks for the West?**

Muslims around the world do not see the West as monolithic. They criticize or celebrate countries based on their politics, not based on their culture or religion.

### **Dream Jobs**

When asked to describe their dreams for the future, Muslims don't mention fighting in a *jihad*, but rather getting a better job.

### **Radical Rejection**

Muslims and Americans are equally likely to reject attacks on civilians as morally unjustified.

### **Religious Moderates**

Those who condone acts of terrorism are a minority and are no more likely to be religious than the rest of the population.

### **Admiration of the West**

What Muslims around the world say they most admire about the West is its technology and its democracy — the same two top responses given by Americans when asked the same question.

### **Critique of the West**

What Muslims around the world say they least admire about the West is its perceived moral decay and breakdown of traditional values — the same responses given by Americans when posed the same question.

### **Gender Justice**

Muslim women want equal rights *and* religion in their societies.

### **Respect**

Muslims around the world say that the one thing the West can do to improve relations with their societies is to moderate their views toward Muslims and respect Islam.

### **Clerics and Constitutions**

The majority of those surveyed want religious leaders to have no direct role in crafting a constitution, yet favor religious law as a source of legislation.

Adapted from *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think* by John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed; Copyright © 2007 Gallup, Inc. All rights reserved.

Advance Praise for  
*Who Speaks for Islam?*

“As our world spirals out of control with greater violence and misunderstanding between the West and the Muslim world, *Who Speaks for Islam?* cuts through the conflicting rhetoric of politicians and pundits and presents the often-silenced voice of Muslims everywhere. I cannot imagine a more important or more badly needed intervention.”  
—**Deepak Chopra**, author of *Peace is the Way*

“The data presented in this book are not only arresting, but indispensable. *Who Speaks for Islam?* should be required reading for policy makers, journalists, broadcasters, teachers, students, and scholars.”  
—**Karen Armstrong**, author of *A History of God*

“At once incisive and provocative, this book is brimming with valuable insights into what Muslims think about religion, democracy, women’s rights, extremism, and Muslims’ relations with the West. This is a must-read for pundits and policy makers, specialists and non-specialists, American or Muslim.”  
—**Vali Nasr**, author of *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future*

“*Who Speaks for Islam?* teaches us about one of the most important issues of our time. The book contains many surprises about how Westerners and Muslims view one another.”  
—**Jessica Stern**, author of *Terror in the Name of God* and Academic Director of the Program on Terrorism and the Law at Harvard Law School

“This is an important book. Years after 9/11, politics and quick judgments continue to stand in the way of a clear-eyed view of the Muslim world. Not so for Esposito and Mogahed. They provide powerful evidence and compelling logic that shows Muslims around the world have many of the same hopes and dreams, and face many of the same issues and concerns, as other people do.”  
—**Robert Pape**, author of *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* and Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago

“*Who Speaks for Islam?* could not be more timely. It provides essential insights into the thinking and attitudes of a large part of the global Muslim population on critical issues such as democracy, theocracy, extremism, jihad, women’s rights, and the prospects of cooperation or conflict between the West and the Muslim world.”  
—**Ambassador Edward P. Djerejian**, former assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs; founding director, James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University