

"US Arabs and Moslems shoot themselves in the heart" is a response by Hanna Kawas (November 2000) to Arab and Moslem organizations in the U.S. who called for a block vote for George W. Bush during the last U.S. elections. Reply to cpr-News: Make Your Voice Heard in U.S. Elections! (see below)

We are outraged at your "analysis" and implied support for George Bush. The U.S. Republican platform is not any different from the Democrats in their unequivocal support for Israeli aggression and expansion (see ADC Election Update). For example, the Republican platform states on Jerusalem: "The United States has a moral and legal obligation to maintain its Embassy in Jerusalem."

We are even more outraged at the initiators of this Republican endorsement. How could any Palestinian, Arab or Moslem endorse a presidential candidate that supports the perpetuation of Israeli occupation? How could any pro-Palestinian person support the Party that under the leadership of George Bush Sr. reversed the historic UN resolution equating "Zionism with Racism" and set in motion the process that has murdered one million and a half Iraqi people, almost half of them children? How can any good Moslem or Christian accept the annexation of East Jerusalem? What human being would support the unequivocal US support to Israel while Palestinian blood is still flowing??? How could we support the US OIL interests in their quest to continue their control of the Middle East, its people and its natural resources??? We cannot comprehend the LOGIC behind such a shameful endorsement!!! Does Saudi money play a role in such a disgraceful position? Are we all carried away with election hysteria? How will we look our progressive supporters in the face, especially those who stood with us (at a cost to themselves) on issues of principle, when we take such an unprincipled position???

We are at a loss!!!

For the first time in US history, there is a chance to cast a bloc vote for our "hopes and dreams", for a candidate who opposes Israeli occupation and aggression, for a progressive member of our own community, Ralph Nader, who made us all proud with his humanist positions locally and internationally.

And what do we do???

WE ARE SHOOTING OURSELVES IN THE HEART!!! We regret that we cannot be part of this disappointing and depressing STUPIDITY. Please take us off your lists, We will support the right of return of the Palestinian people in our own ways. Even the Arafat way looks more principled and less dangerous. History will be our witness.

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October 2000 CPPR: Make Your Voice Heard in Coming U.S. Elections!

Make your voice heard! Help the CPRR Right of Return Campaign! On Election Day, please wear a sticker with the words "Right of Return for Palestinians!" or "I vote for the Palestinian Right to Return to their Homes!"

For this Election Day, purchase a roll of blank stickers and write the sentence on them or have your children write them out with crayons. Wear one and distribute as many as you can to your friends and

colleagues. Have students and volunteers distribute these at voting booths. Let everyone know that American citizens stand for justice for the Palestinians.

Please take with you a copy of the CPRR Right of Return Petition -- which you can print out from CPRR's [website](#) -- and have as many people sign it as you can, then mail it back to CPRR. Students, volunteers, please take with you the petition, set a table outside voting centers and ask people to sign it. Make a difference this year-VOTE!

CPRR Analysis: A Historic Event in U.S. Politics.

Thanks to the perseverant and gentle coaching by American politicians like Andrew Killgore and Richard Curtiss, Muslim parties are finally surging into American politics. With the Muslim American parties agreeing on a single candidate, Muslim and Arab Americans can now make a difference in a swing election. Their vote becomes crucial to the candidates--and therefore their concerns (including Jerusalem and justice in the Middle East) will henceforth be taken into account. As a result of the Muslim bloc endorsement of George W. Bush, candidates Gore and Lieberman have started reaching out to Arab and Muslim Americans. On Friday October 27 the Washington Post ran an article titled: "Lieberman 'Hurt' by Arab American Criticism". On Monday October 30, Farhan Memon wrote in a Washington Post editorial: "Mrs. Clinton's rejection of Muslim campaign donations may be politically expedient in New York, but politicians in other parts of the country are going to have to come to terms with America's Islamic reality. Today, at 6 million residents, there are more Muslims in the United States than Jews. With increased immigration and higher birthrates, the domestic Muslim population will continue to grow. This undoubtedly will have an effect in Muslim-heavy states such as Michigan, where in close races Muslims voting as a bloc can help decide the outcome. Message to politicians: Ignore us at your own peril." Both George W. Bush and Al Gore have intensified their campaigning with American Arab and Muslim communities. But this of course can happen only because the candidates now perceive that the Muslim and Arab vote is not divided and can therefore affect the outcome of the election. By creating a bloc vote, Muslim and Arab Americans can finally be represented and gain the attention of both parties and all future candidates.

From the News Room of the Washington Report:

(October 23, 2000): We thought the October/November special election issue of the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs would be our last chance to give readers the facts before the Nov. 7 presidential election. However, as the "peace process" falls apart and Israeli snipers fire live bullets at demonstrating youngsters and use American-made or -funded weapons against Palestinian civilians, we realized we had to seize this opportunity to inform you of some historic good news.

Oct. 23, 2000 marked the birth of an American bloc vote for peace and justice in the Middle East - after a gestation period of many years and the hard labor of many brave souls. The Washington Report is proud of its role in encouraging Muslim- and Arab-American leaders and readers to galvanize their communities for a bloc vote at this crucial time. They have succeeded in identifying an issue and uniting to deliver a bloc vote for a presidential candidate, putting themselves on the map as full participants in the American political process.

At an Oct. 23 press conference in Washington, DC, George W. Bush was endorsed for president by national and local Muslim-American leaders representing the American Muslim Political Coordinating Council Political Action Committee (AMPCC-PAC). AMPCC is a member coalition of the four major American Muslim political organizations: the American Muslim Council (AMC), the American Muslim Alliance (AMA), the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), and the Muslim Public Affairs

Council (MPAC).

The AMPCC-PAC endorsement was based on:

The level of accessibility provided by the candidate to the American-Muslim community. The candidate's track record, specifically on civil rights issues. Input from community groups via surveys, straw polls, and town hall meetings. "Governor Bush took the initiative to meet with local and national representatives of the Muslim community", said AMA chairman and AMPCC-PAC director Dr. Agha Saeed. "He also promised to address Muslim concerns" on domestic and foreign policy issues. As Muslims vote in a unified bloc, they may decide who is elected president in November. Candidates are sure to take notice and begin to listen to Muslim concerns.

AMC president and AMPCC-PAC member Dr. Yahya Basha cited Governor Bush's elevated level of concern in regard to secret evidence and airport profiling and bringing it to the national political debate.

Despite numerous requests, neither Vice President Al Gore nor his election staff would meet with American Muslim leaders. This perplexed MPAC national director Salam Al-Marayati, who noted that President Bill Clinton had set a precedent for accessibility for Muslims. Moments before the bloc vote announcement, Gore's campaign headquarters and the Democratic National Committee were on the phone, asking AMPCC to delay its endorsement.

Finally, just as the cameras began to roll, the bloc vote was getting the attention of American politicians. For the first time in U.S. history, American Muslims, and most Arab Americans, will be voting as a bloc in a race so tight they can make a difference in key states. There are an estimated six to eight million Muslims and an additional two million Christian Arab Americans in the United States today. With large concentrations in key battleground states such as California, Illinois and Michigan, American Muslims and Arab Americans represent a swing vote that candidates must acknowledge. By voting as a bloc, they can make their voice heard and, at the same time, give a great gift to their fellow Americans: the gift of a principled Middle East policy in the interest of America, not of Israel.

What does the birth of the bloc vote have to do with Palestinian children like 12-year-old Mohammed Al-Durra dying in the streets in Israeli-occupied Palestine? With the threat of even greater bloodshed looming, American lawmakers, including the president, may start listening to the voice of Muslim- and Arab-Americans and to citizens of conscience who care about the Middle East, if they have some political clout. This bloc vote will send a message to American leaders that this nation's Middle East policy must become even-handed for the first time in half a century.

When you go to the polls on Nov. 7, or when you demonstrate in solidarity with Palestinians, carry a sign or wear a badge or sticker people will notice, such as, "Muslims Vote," "Peace for Palestine," or "End Aid to Israel."

And Make a Difference This Year, Vote!