

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

For more information, please visit www.culturallyspeak.com

“Islam” and “Arab” are good words.
Cultural stereotypes must go.

Minneapolis: *Culturally Speaking: Promoting Cross-Cultural Awareness in a Post-9/11 World* by American author Mary Coons fits right into the news of the day by addressing the significant differences in religion, culture, marriage practices, foreign policy, and the Iraq war sentiments shared by Americans and Arabs in the Middle Eastern Gulf country of Bahrain.

Open any world newspaper today or listen to an international television news channel and you will be bombarded with headlines, commentary, and spin. It's what's making news in our tension-filled post-9/11 world. No wonder so many Americans believe that the Islamic world is our enemy!

But the Islamic world is not our enemy. *Ignorance* is our enemy.

Through a conversational tone with American Christians and Bahraini Arab Muslims, overcoming ignorance is the powerful main message. Readers will gain crucial insight into eleven specifically-identified generalizations each group had of one another, along with religious views and cultural practices of this Arab Muslim country that has been home to the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet for more than fifty years.

Culturally Speaking offers a new twist to the tired U.S.-Arab bashing filling today's airwaves and Internet by introducing an open forum of dialogue with average people identifying and promoting the positives in bridging cultural gaps.

“Admitting our ignorance, recognizing and dispelling gross generalizations and, finally, beginning to influence and inspire changed attitudes toward cross-cultural differences among family, friends, and coworkers are the main message points of this book,” states Coons. “This does not mean we must always agree with one another's perspective. But we do have a responsibility to respect one another's opinions as part of healthy, intellectual stimulation.”

This book does not promote Islam or Christianity, or endorse one country's collective opinion over the other, she emphasizes. “Rather, it inspires the reader to discover some of the differing perspectives of real issues, common yet important, to real people. You will never forget your journey inside this intriguing Arab culture.”

“Understanding one another must go beyond the hype and the generalization circulated about the other in the media,” explains Dr. Sam H. Zakhem, former U.S. Ambassador to Bahrain, who wrote the book’s foreword. “Americans must realize that Bahrainis shun Islamic radicalism and abhor terrorism, and are as offended by this violent minority as are Americans.”

Coons, a professional writer, is the owner and president of Pen & Ink Communications, a Minneapolis-based small business specializing in proofreading, writing family stories/life histories, and business and travel writing. She is the international editor of the *Bahrain Traveler*, the official tourism magazine of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

She began visiting Bahrain in December 2005, and was immediately in awe of the Arab culture and people. As a writer, it was natural that she would seek out individuals to understand who they are and how they think. *Culturally Speaking* is the result of her drive to learn.

Culturally Speaking: Promoting Cross-Cultural Awareness in a Post-9/11 World (ISBN 10: 1-59298-239-5, ISBN 13: 978-1-59298-239-4) by Mary Coons was released on September 12, 2008 through Beaver’s Pond Press, Inc. (www.bookfulfillment.com) in the U.S. and is available in mid-October 2008 in Bahrain.

For more information, visit www.culturallyspeak.com or contact the author at marycoons@usinternet.com.