



American Institute  
for Contemporary  
German Studies  
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

## The Role of Jewish and Muslim Communities in the Politics of Germany and the U.S.

AICGS  
1755 Massachusetts Avenue NW  
Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20036

**Wednesday, April 23, 2014**

### Agenda

Jewish and Muslim communities are two of the most politically-active minority groups in the United States and Germany. This workshop will examine how these groups impact domestic and foreign policy issues and what common challenges they face in their interaction with the broader public, the government, and each other. The workshop will provide a forum for leaders from both communities to compare their experiences and assess their role in politics.

8:30 – 9:00am            **Check-in and Breakfast**

9:00 – 10:45am        **Panel I: The Ability of Ethnic and Religious Minorities to Affect Foreign Policy**

The Arab Spring, the crisis in Syria, Turkish politics, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and negotiations over Iran's nuclear program seem far away for many living in Europe or the United States. However, Muslim communities often maintain deep connections to their home countries, and Jewish communities often identify with the difficulties faced by those with a similar ethnic or religious background.

- How important is foreign policy to Muslim and Jewish communities compared with the general public?
- How do umbrella groups formulate and promote their positions on foreign policy?
- How do organizations address claims of ties to foreign extremist groups or to foreign governments?
- How receptive are politicians and policymakers to the views of the Jewish and Muslim communities?
- Are there interfaith dialogues about foreign policy issues?

Moderator: Parke Nicholson, AICGS

Speakers: Michael Brenner, American University Center for Israel Studies  
Jason Isaacson, American-Jewish Committee  
Haris Tarin, Muslim Public Affairs Council  
Michael Werz, Center for American Progress

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10:45 – 11:00am      **Coffee Break**

11:00 – 12:45pm      **Panel II: Fighting Discrimination on a Domestic Level**

Xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and hate speech are difficult issues for many minorities. Both Jewish and Muslim communities face these challenges on a regular basis. Extremist crimes get attention in the media, but there is also a surprisingly significant level of general anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim sentiment that persists both in Germany and the United States.

- How do both communities respond to expressions of hate in the public, media, or by politicians?
- What are the main domestic policy issues on which Jewish and Muslim communities engage politically in the U.S. and in Germany, and how do they convey their views to policymakers?
- How do communities react in the political realm to issues like the wearing of headscarves in school, the treatment of women, and the circumcision debate?
- Is there cooperation between Jewish and Muslim communities in their strategies vis-à-vis politicians and policymakers on domestic issues?
- What strategies are available to both governments and local leaders to engage both of these communities on difficult issues? Is there a difference in the approach of Jewish and Muslim groups?

Moderator:      Lily Gardner Feldman, AICGS

Speakers:      Ayse Aydin, Turkish-Islamic Union  
Eric Fusfield, B'nai B'rith International  
Asiye Kaya, Georgetown University  
Sergey Lagodinsky, Assembly of Representatives, Jewish Community of Berlin  
Sayyid Syeed, Islamic Society of North America