

Muslim leader decries American ‘bigotry’

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NEW ORLEANS (RNS)—American culture’s view of American Muslims and Islam steadily is deteriorating under an onslaught of “bigotry” on cable news shows, newspaper op-ed pages and in the blogosphere, an Arab-American activist said.

Commentators and politicians have devoted hours of air time to misrepresenting Islam and fueling suspicion about American Muslims, said Hussein Ibish, founder of the [Foundation for Arab-American Leadership](#) in Washington, D.C.

Hussein Ibish

Ibish, formally trained as a literature scholar at the University of Massachusetts, works in public policy now.

Ibish appears as an occasional guest on cable talk shows to represent an Arab-American point of view. He has had at least a couple of sharp

exchanges with Michelle Malkin of Fox News.

Since 9/11, he said, commentators such as Malkin, Ann Coulter, Charles Krauthammer, Daniel Pipes and David Horowitz have transferred old anti-Arab stereotypes to Islam, in a stream of “incredibly bigoted commentary” that would not have been tolerated before then.

In this context, Ibish said, the West sees Islam as bent on its destruction and American Muslims as suspected allies of terrorists. Thus, ethnic profiling becomes reasonable and forced internment or mandatory identification of Muslims becomes a potential remedy, he said. Ibish said he did not want to sound alarmist.

“This is still a great country to live in,” he said. But a growing climate of suspicion toward Muslims makes the situation steadily worse, he added. “There are people who want to make it impossible for the American Muslim community to engage in dialogue.”

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