

## I AM AMERICAN, AND I RESPECT ISLAM

I love my country. I love it a lot. I love the world too. I love them both for the same reasons. They are exciting and interesting and full of all kinds of people and ideas. I know that when I open myself up to new people and experiences there is really no end to things I can learn and discover—no limit to the ways in which I can be made to feel humble in the face of people's greatness, or proud of people's accomplishments.

Over the past few weeks, it has become clear that some people in my country have created an insulting vision of Islam, a degrading video on YouTube. I deplore their actions. Their values are foreign to me and I do not understand their hearts.

Those people do not represent their country, they do not represent my America. They inhabit the edges of society. The Americans I know do not insult the faith of others. The Americans I know have built a strong, vibrant, multi-faith society of Muslims, Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Atheists and many others by embracing an ethic of respect and understanding. The Americans I know look into their own hearts, seeking to become more kind, more good, more decent. They know we must replace loathsome expressions of darkness with our own sincere gestures of loving kindness.

To build a culture of peace, we must repudiate hatred. This sign is a demonstration of our love. We stand for peace and we choose to drown out darkness with light.

Good people will always disagree with each other. But disagreement is much different from hatred. Even those who disagree with you about politics or religion are, on the whole, good and decent people who simply see the world in a different way.

We respect Islam. We love Islam. We love you. We know there is beauty in your faith and traditions. We hope to know it better, through peace and dialogue, bridging our cultures with calm and understanding.

-Abigail Disney



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