

UNIVERSITY SENATE 2/20/03 (resolution affirmed)

REGARDING ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN A TIME OF CRISIS
from
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
of the
MIDDLE EAST STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

NOVEMBER 25, 2002

RECOGNIZING that this is a time of extraordinary tension in the Middle East and the Muslim world, and that public debate in North America about the policies of the US government and of other governments has grown passionate and contentious, the Board of Directors of the Middle East Studies Association of North America calls upon the leaders of North American colleges and universities to be especially resolute in fulfilling their responsibility to uphold academic freedom on their campuses.

As the representatives of the academic organization whose members are most intimately associated with the issues that stir these passions, and as scholars and advocates ourselves, we are acutely aware of the necessity of maintaining the university as an arena in which unfettered debate takes place.

WE BELIEVE that critical analysis and argument should infuse university life. We believe that individuals should be accorded equal access to that arena for debate without regard to their personal status, country of origin, religious persuasion or policy preference. Education and analysis require discriminating, thoughtful and provocative debate; competent citizenship demands that we be prepared to reflect on and refine our arguments and our beliefs.

Therefore, to nurture this capacity among our students and colleagues and thereby create more capable citizens,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the Middle East Studies Association of North America calls upon the leaders of North American colleges and universities to steadfastly defend academic freedom and to champion freedom of expression--even when the ideas and opinions expressed are unorthodox or unpopular.