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October 31, 2022

### Bridging Ignorance

Many prejudices that exist against Muslims, much like other minorities in the US, grow from a place of ignorance. We must encourage Americans to learn about cultures that differ from their own. From such, people can gain a better sense to close gaps where insensitivity and hatred flourish. I am pursuing my studies in international relations with focus on the MENA region. This semester, I am living in Morocco with a Moroccan family learning their language and culture. The program engages myself with the Muslim world by understanding its history and intersectionality with the west from a Muslim's perspective. Diplomacy, humanitarianism, or policy are the fields I hope to pursue a productive career, where I aim to concentrate on the relationship between predominant Muslim regions of the world and the US. With these areas as my focus, I intend to uncover a bridge between oceans. Finding myself past the threshold, my connection to this region of the world will inform and help me understand how Muslim lives developed into their identity in present-day Morocco. To best discern, reckoning with history is the main objective. Knowing a peoples' history informs us of the stories of how they progressed. There remains a large rift between the MENA region of the world and the United States. Lately, America has taken to discriminating and demonizing the people in those communities. Stereotypes and hatred persist among Americans, despite the greater majority of people from Muslim backgrounds being peaceful, embracing warm intentions. Yet, war and problematic policy continues to ensue against Muslim countries, resulting in nothing but fear and death. The war in Afghanistan took its adjournment only after 20 years of meaningless destruction within the country, having taken countless innocent lives. This is an example of the tensions I wish to diminish between two worlds; by learning Arabic and immersing myself in a country entrenched in Islam, I am beginning to better understand the perspectives of those who embody that realm.