

President Obama Invokes Faith to Combat Fear at Prayer Breakfast

President Barack Obama, taking on Republican presidential candidates for stirring up anxiety among Americans, told leaders at Washington's national prayer breakfast on Thursday that faith could conquer fear brought on by war, technology, and economic troubles.

"It is a primal emotion, fear, one that we all experience. And it can be contagious, spreading through societies, and through nations," Obama said.

"For me, and I know for so many of you, faith is the great cure for fear. Jesus is a good cure for fear. God gives believers the power, the love, the sound mind required to conquer any fear. And what more important moment for that faith than right now?" he said.

Obama's remarks came a day after his first visit to a U.S. mosque, where he sought to allay fears of Americans accustomed to pop-culture portrayals of Muslims as terrorists and to reassure Muslim American youth about their identity.

Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump has called for a temporary ban on Muslims entering the United States.

Obama, a Christian, said his faith had helped him deal with the challenges of being president and was bolstering him as his children grew up and prepared for adulthood.

"It helps me deal with the common, everyday fears that we all share. The main one I'm feeling right now is that our children grow up too fast. They're leaving!" he said to laughter.

The president said he had drawn on his faith when comforting

the parents of children killed by gun violence, a subtle reference to his failed effort to sharpen U.S. gun control laws. He said that people of faith had helped take in Syrian refugees, a subtle jab at Republicans who oppose allowing them into the country.

(Editing by Andrew Hay)

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