



Written by [James Heiser](#) on September 29, 2010

UN May Appoint Ambassador to Outer Space

Since the signing of the United Nations charter in 1945 the international institution which has grown since that day has made a point of proving itself invasive, irrelevant, meddlesome, and, when possible, oppressive. However, the UN's actions fall into another category, on occasion.

Silly.

A case in point is a decision which may soon be placed in front of the UN General Assembly. No longer content to meddle with the lives of the citizens of one world, the UN may soon have its very own ambassador to the stars. No, not to Hollywood (though the inhabitants of that "world" and those of the UN are equally unqualified to run the world). No, the UN may soon have its very own ambassador to Vulcan or Gallifrey.



Pay no attention to the fact that the UN does not speak for the human race. Also pay no attention to the fact that the human race has not discovered so much as a single alien microbe. Such minor complications are hardly relevant to the decision to make Malaysian astrophysicist Mazian Othman the first interplanetary ambassador.

According to a story at CBSNews.com:

According to numerous reports, Othman will be named as the UN ambassador to extraterrestrials, if and when they contact humanity. The post will require approval from UN scientific advisory committees and the General Assembly.

Othman, who led Malaysia's national space agency before heading to the U.N., and helped train that country's first astronaut, is scheduled to speak next week at a Royal Society event devoted to the implications of alien contact and the need for necessary political processes to be in place should that contact occur.

"The continued search for extraterrestrial communication ... sustains the hope that someday humankind will receive signals from extraterrestrials," the publication *The Australian* quoted Othman as saying. "When we do, we should have in place a coordinated response that takes into account all the sensitivities related to the subject. The U.N. is a ready-made mechanism for such coordination."

The news organ also quoted Professor Richard Crowther, a specialist in space law and governance at the U.K. Space Agency, on Othman's suitability for the job: she "is absolutely the nearest thing we have to a 'take me to your leader' person."

Talk about "mission creep"! The General Assembly has not even made her an ambassador, and Prof. Crowther seems ready to embrace her as global empress.



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According to the story cited above, Othman maintains that there is need for a “coordinated response.” But to date, the search for alien signals from distant stars has met with complete failure, and even if an alien message were to be received, it would probably have been sent hundreds, even thousands, of years ago. Why the rush to appoint Othman as the ambassador to nonexistent aliens who are not sending messages to anyone?

Othman’s involvement with training Malaysia’s first astronaut only serves to highlight the fact that her nation has sent a grand total of one citizen — Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor — to orbit, and he traveled to the International Space Station on a Russian Soyuz. Press accounts of his trip to the ISS were at least as focused on his orbital celebration of Ramadan as they were on his scientific experiments.

In fact, the Malaysian space agency is busy weighing such of the most pressing issues of space science in the 21st century. For example: How may a Muslim uphold his obligation to pray toward Mecca five times a day when he’s whirling around the globe in low earth orbit?

According to a 2006 story at [Islamonline.net](#):

As it prepares to send its first astronaut to space next October, Muslim heavyweight Malaysia is seeking answers to important questions on determining prayer times and the qiblah (direction Muslims take during prayers).

Some 150 astronauts, scholars, academicians and professionals will come together on Tuesday, April 25, to find answers to these and other questions, the official Bernama news agency reported on Wednesday, April 19.

The two-day conference will be organized by Malaysia’s National Space Agency (Angkasa).

Angkasa Director-General Mazlan Othman said the ISS would circle the earth 16 times in 24 hours (which means there will be 16 daylights and 16 nights a day).

“And under the circumstances, it would affect Muslim astronauts in performing their prayers and so on.”

Muslims must face the Ka`bah in the holy city of Makkah while praying and determining which direction that will be while hovering above the earth is challenging.

Malaysian Astronomy and Islamic Law Association vice-president Syed Kamarulzaman Syed Kabeer, also chairman of the coordinating committee, said the seminar would be the first-ever in the

Muslim world to discuss the question of living in space for Muslim astronauts.

The two-day meeting will also mull how Muslim astronauts perform ablutions with water rationing in space and prepare food according to Islamic standards.

“So far, Angkasa has not discussed these matters with Russia because the candidates have not been decided and the needs of Malaysian astronauts have not been determined,” Mazlan said.

“We have to make preparations to discuss with Russia when the time comes,” she added.

Apparently the idea that Malaysia’s astronauts might be drawn from the 35 percent of the nation’s population who are Buddhist, Hindu, or Christian is completely out of consideration. But then, given Malaysia’s recent record for dealing with its Christian minority, perhaps that simply goes without saying.



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No doubt preparing for such discussions with the Russians provided Othman with the diplomatic expertise needed for peace negotiations with the Cylons.

Thus the United Nations considers the weighty issues of appointing Earth's first interplanetary ambassador.

It does not matter that the United Nations does not have a space program. It does not matter that the person they would appoint as ambassador comes from a country which has the barest minimum of a space program, and thus far has sent one person to the ISS. And it does not matter that the UN has a 65 year record of ineffectiveness when it has come to solving the problems on our own planet. (In fact, the UN has an uncanny record of making things worse.)

We will hope that the little green men know nothing of the history of the UN as they undertake their peaceful discussions with the new UN ambassador. That way they'll never see the "blue helmets" coming until it is too late



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