# BRIDGING ISLAM AND THE WEST:
# AN INDONESIAN VIEW

**MUHAMAD ALI**

# PREFACE

The relation between Muslims and the West continues to become a crucial issue among scholars, leaders, journalists and the public at large. Most informed scholars have generally viewed that the relation is complex, dynamic, and undergoes ups and downs throughout history up to the present. The terrorist attacks of 9/11/2001 in the United States, and a series of bombings in Indonesia, wars in Iraq, and other places, has made the relation even more complex, costly, and worsen. It is this complexity that Muhamad Ali has been attempting at grappling with in this collection of articles mostly published in the Jakarta Post and other newspapers.

As can be read from his work, Muhamad Ali has written on different topics as a response to current issues, but, it seems to me that these various issues centre on the theme of human and social relationship, on the theme of the relations between the self and the other, especially between Muslims and the West. It is quite clear about what Muhamad Ali has been promoting. He writes about the necessity of a shared, rather than divisive civilization. He is concerned about a global multiculturalism, global peace, coexistence. From an Islamic perspective, Muhamad Ali has been promoting peace education, dialogue, cooperation, democratization, religious moderation, and religious reforms. He is against

racism, chauvinism, violence, wars, hatred, and radical fundamentalism. For Muhamad Ali, Islam should serve as a blessing for its adherents and non-adherents, or *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, a blessing for all humankind and the universe. Islam, if interpreted moderately and contextually, will function as a positive factor for global peace and harmony among different individuals, groups, societies, and states.

My own observation and study of the relation between Islam and the West has shared Muhamad Ali's argument that both sides must learn from and understand each other. There are many in the West ignorant and indifferent about the diversity and complexity of Islamic beliefs and practices, such as the interpretation of the concept of *jihad*. The tendency is to interpret jihad as "holy war", simply because a number of radical groups in history and at present have utilized the term as the name of their organizations or movements. In my view, Western perception of Islam and the Muslim world has not changed very much; on the contrary, it is worse now than when Islam first became known to the Western world – or more precisely the Europeans. On the other hand, many Muslims both in Eastern and Western countries have shown their similar attitudes of ignorance and indifference, and even rejection of anything culturally and ideologically Western. Many Muslims are simply apologetics because this attitude is easier, simple, and gives comfort and justification to what they have been taught and have believed for long. Many Muslims have not understood the diversity and complexity of the history and contemporary lives of the government and the people in the West. For example, there are still many who show distrust and hatred against any foreigners simply because they are foreigners. There are also many who cannot differentiate between foreign policies and the people. This is why, as

Muhamad Ali has attempted to demonstrate, the Muslims should reform themselves. As I have argued in my article "Islam and the West Revisited", Muslims should further their reforms in all fields of life: religious, legal, cultural, economic, political and more importantly educational. Only through these strategic efforts shall Muslims become in a better position that they are today.

It is legitimate for Muslims as for American citizens themselves to criticize American foreign policies in Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, the Middle East and elsewhere, but this criticism should not be carried out blindly, arbitrarily, let alone violently. For Muslims to live peacefully and justly, they need to raise their voices against global injustices and insecurity, but again and again, as Muhamad Ali has tried to remind all of us, the movement against perceived and real injustices must be rational, legitimate and effective. There are many issues that should be resolved through mutual listening and dialogue. But many in the West as well as in the Muslim world have shut the door to meet, to talk, to listen, and to understand each other.

Along with Muhamad Ali's ideas, I would argue that, in regards to unfortunate international developments in recent years, the two worlds should conduct concerted efforts to re-enhance a greater understanding between them. One of the most important ways is to develop inter-civilizational dialogue. Dialogue is now not a simply a matter of choice, but it is a necessity for the two civilizations and cultures in order to be able to live in harmony and peace. Successful and beneficial dialogue can be achieved only when those involved are on a-par, based on freedom and freewill of each side. In dialogue, no idea and privilege should be imposed on the other side; one side should respect the national, cultural, and religious

identities of the other. Only in such a case, can dialogue be the preliminary step leading to peace, security and justice.

Muhamad Ali is a young Indonesian Muslim thinker that hopes and tries to bridge the perception gap and conflicts between Islam and the West. He has the necessary ability and environment favorable to this great task. He has been educated in two Western universities, first in Edinburgh, Scotland, and second in Hawaii. He was previously educated in the *pesantren* and *madrasah* (modern Islamic boarding school) before his study at the State Islamic University of Jakarta. What is striking and important to me and to us is his attempt to combine and synthesize the traditional Islamic sciences and modern theories and vocabularies. Muhamad Ali is according to me well versed in Islamic studies in its various aspects, which has facilitated his way of thinking on cross-cultural issues pertaining to different communities in the world today.

This collection is an excellent contribution to the debate and dialogue on the relationship between Islam and the West. Given the importance of the issue and the thinking and writing skills of this fine author, it is hoped that it can reach broader international audience. Anyone interested in the relation between Islam and the West in its normative and contemporary terms should not miss this fine work.

Jakarta, February 2009

**Prof Dr. Azyumardi Azra, M.A.**

Professor in Islamic History

# INTRODUCTION

This book, which is a collection of articles and essays written and published in the Jakarta Post daily and other newspapers and journals over the last six years from 2002, is a product of a continued interest in the relationship between Muslims and the West. The 9/11/2001 terrorist attack in New York has marked a new phase of global history particularly as regards to the West and Muslim societies not only in the center of Islam, the Middle East, but also in Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe and the United States. The relationship between East and West which since the World War II to the collapse of the Soviet Union (USSR) was especially dominated by the Cold War between the two world powers - the capitalist United States and the communist Soviet Union (USSR) - has now shifted into new and different players, involving the state, international organizations, and civil associations as well as individuals. In the past couple of years, I have been attempting to respond to what I viewed as crucial events or ideas that circulated in the scholarly and popular mass media from perspectives contextual to the circumstances, the events, and issues that many may have something to say, but according to my view should have received more attention and scrutiny in Indonesia and the global world connected by the print and

audiovisual media and internet technology.

It is important to note that my usage of the categories "Islam", "East", "West", "civilization", "nation", "religion", is for the sake of simplification of the much more complex realities. In fact, my main argument in the articles is that the relationship between Islam and the West is not a monolithic, simple one. It is complex, multifaceted, and thus is to be understood and explained by different approaches, and more importantly in not a black-and-white fashion. Most Muslims who have lived outside Western countries and many in the Western countries do not have enough understanding about Western civilization, its history and its development. This absence or lack of knowledge about the other has led many to misunderstand the complexity of Western civilization. Many have identified the United States, for example, as a representative of a Western civilization and dominance, as one monolithic dominant entity. On the other hand, so many Westerners have not understood and are not willing to understand Islam and its simple yet sophisticated beliefs and practices, which led them to see it as a monolithic and always antithetical to anything Western. Both sides, Muslims and the Westerners, have tended to create and continue to perpetuate the gap not only in the real life but also in the perception. Bridging the perception gap between Muslims and the West is therefore becoming more crucial and indispensable than ever before.

Bridging the perception gap might help reduce tensions at the level of discourses in their own communities but also help minimize the degree of the potentiality of going into conflicts and more dangerously into wars. It is my contention that violence will only create more violence if strategic cultural intellectual and spiritual efforts are left unmade. It can be suggested that the world should have boundary leaders to cross boundaries,

talking to the enemies not with similar or greater hatred but in a perspective that solves rather than worsens contentious issues and problems. It is therefore crucial to reform the mind of the leaders so that public others might see the valuable lesson about how beautiful enlightened mind could make a difference in building social cohesion and peace amidst diversity and contestations. To reform mind should mean to reform one's own religiosity, spirituality, and mentality. To reform mind is not to suggest negating or destroying identities, such as religion, nationalism, ethnicity, race, and political ideology, but it is to moderate the excesses and extremities emerging from such identities. Moderating ideologies is therefore part of reforming mind. With such moderation and reformed mind and comprehension, the gap, tensions, and conflicts might become less likely to happen or to continue when they should end. Peace, harmony and cooperation are too important to sacrifice just for the sake of primordial sectarian identities at the expense of shared common human values and civilizations.

The writing and publication of these articles and essays would not have been possible without the support of a number of individuals and organizations. My enormous debt is to Prof Azyumardi Azra, a prominent scholar and advisor of many young scholars in Indonesia and abroad, including myself. I would like to thank Endy M. Bayuni, currently the chief editor of the Jakarta Post who always encouraged me to write articles for the newspaper, Kornelius Purba and Muhammad Yazid at the editor desk of the Jakarta Post, and editors in journals or magazines which have published my articles. My special gratefulness is also for my teachers from the elementary to the university levels, especially KH Irfan Hielmy at Pesantren Darussalam, West Java, who has until now encouraged me to continue with my research and writing on Islam. I would like

to thank all my advisors at Edinburgh University, especially Prof William Roff, Prof Carole Hillenbrand, and Dr Andrew Newman, and my professors at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, particularly Prof Leonard Andaya, Prof Barbara Andaya, Prof Jerry Bentley, Prof Peter Hoffenberg, and Prof Liam Kelley, and those at the East-West Center, especially Richard Baker and Dr. Terrance Bigalke, from all of whom I learnt a great deal about different branches of knowledge and approaches. I also offer my thanks for the readers and commentators of my articles and essays. Special thank goes to the publisher and editors of this book. I am very grateful to be the son of my late father, abi Miqdar Muhammad Umar, and mother, mamah Zainab Anwar, who have been my lifetime support. My greatest debt goes to my wife, Neneng Syahdati Rosmy, who over the years has sustained my scholarly spirit with her love, understanding and care. Having said this, whatever faults remain are entirely my own alone.

Riverside, February 2009

**Muhamad Ali**

Author

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**Part I :**

**COMPREHENDING COMPLEXITY**

# Islam and the West after 9/11

Since September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks to the United States, there has been either an antipathy against Islam on the one hand, and an increased interest in understanding the religion on the other, as a 'Muslim group' became the number one suspect. The U.S Government turned their attention not only to Afghanistan with its Taliban, but also to all other potential Muslim extremists, including some of Southeast Asian countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Washington believes that Indonesia in particular could play a crucial role in ensuring that "militant Islam" does not spread and thus jeopardize regional peace and security. With regard to the relationship between Islam and the west, questions have been raised as to whether there are such things as Islamic threat and Western threat and how to establish harmonious relationships between Islam and the West.

It appears that public perceptions of Islam have tended to be characterized by ignorance, confusion, and misinformation. Some observers, such as Edward Said (1978), have long asserted that "Islam has been singled out for abuse", in part due to the historical and theological confrontation between Islam and Christianity, which is still echoed by many observers. The most notable one has been Samuel Huntington (1996) who has viewed Islam as monolithic entity and the West as monolithic as well. To him, Islamic civilization will always be contradictory to Western civilization, with its Christian origin. Huntington claims, both are deeply irreconcilable and the level of conflict has been influenced by demographic growth and decline, economic developments, technological change, and intensity of religious commitment.

I would suggest that Huntington over-simplifies and sidesteps the phenomena of the Muslim world as well as the Western world. His and our general inability to interpret present-day movements within Islam is largely attributable to his and our way of peering at them through the outmoded theoretical spectacles which are all we have to hand, and which simply blur our perception even more.

In fact, Muslims, like Christians and others, do not speak with a single voice. In contemporary Southeast Asia, the dominant discourse to emerge has been marked not by theological fundamentalism, but by a remarkable combination of pluralism, intellectual dynamism, and openness to dialogue with non-Muslim actors and institutions (Robert Hefner, 1997). It is also largely theologically moderate, while "Islamic fundamentalism" has attracted only a handful of people. Many Muslims in Southeast Asia have tended to subscribe to anti-fanaticism and anti-extremism. The majority of Indonesian Muslims are not hostile to modernism; they have long been interested in modern discourses such as democracy (or popular sovereignty), human rights, civil society (or citizenry participation), international peaceful relations or dialogue rather than confrontation, as well as religious pluralism rather than religious exclusivity.

Therefore, any generalization about Islam, as other religions and worldviews, should not be justified for Islam has

historically and sociologically revealed different expressions, most of which represent moderation rather than extremism. In Islam, there are some elements of liberalism, secularism, or modernity. For example, Charles Kurzman (1998) suggests that many contemporary Muslim intellectuals are liberal. Themes such as democracy, rights of women, rights of non-Muslims, freedom of thought, and progress have been much appreciated and applied in Muslim contexts. Bassam Tibi (1998) has asserted the compatibility between Islam and democratization and further argued that Islam and the West must establish a common international morality. Robert Hefner (2000) equally believes that Islam has been the main factor of democratization in modern Indonesia. The idea of civil society, albeit originally a Western concept, can be applied to Muslim communities. Southeast Asia in general should provide an alternative to the existing unbalanced, one-side picture of the so-called "Muslim world".

Contemporary Southeast Asian Islam has been a result of diverse outside influences as well as of indigenous localization. Politically, Middle Eastern Arab has been certainly important, but European arrival has led to the acceptance of the nation-state and its administrative system, including the civil law; The idea of Islamic universal caliphate has never succeeded in Southeast Asia. Instead, political liberalism has been more attractive to Southeast Asia than theocracy or fundamentalism. Culturally, religious dresses, mosques, and other ritual symbols in the region have been different from that in the Middle East and elsewhere. Linguistically, many Indo-Malaysian words are derived from Arabic, English, Sanskrit, Portuguese, Dutch, and hundreds of local languages. Economically, open-market system has been adopted almost thoroughly, although some Muslim elements in Malaysia and

Indonesia have begun to develop the so-called an Islamic economic system (non-interest system). In religious terms, partly affected by the globalization and political dynamics, religiosity has had various forms, but the mainstream was the one with compromise and accommodation.

Southeast Asia is geographically far away and marginalized from the centers of Islam in the Middle East, but it has become highly important in terms of balancing the images of Islam. It has undergone peaceful conversions through trade, marriage, and missionary activities. Since Hinduism, Buddhism, and animism have long existed in Southeast Asia, conversions show a different nature and development. The emphasis of spiritualism, rather than legalism, has contributed to the tolerant, accommodating and open-minded religiosity. Although Middle Eastern Islam has had a significant influence, as indicated by the rise of some Islamist organizations, its application remains unique and mixed with Indonesian cultures and histories. As a result, the mainstream Islam in Southeast Asia has been the "cultural Islam", as opposed to the political Islam (the latter often manifested in "fundamentalism").

Indonesia alone is the world's largest Muslim country (190 million Muslims, out of 220 million Indonesians). However, it is not an Islamic State; instead, it is the State of *Pancasila* (derived from *sanskrit*, which means five principles: belief in one god, humanity, unity, democracy, social justice). The *Nahdlatul Ulama* dan the *Muhammadiyyah* are the largest Muslim socio-religious organizations, which mostly represent moderation and constitute the mainstream movements. Islam has come to Indonesia in a more significant manner since twelfth century and Christianity came with the coming of Europeans from the fifteenth century onwards. In Soekarno's era, nationalism, communism, and religion were to coexist but

he failed. Islamic parties developed at the time, but the idea of Islamic State never gained majority support. Soeharto, with his pragmatism (economic growth plus political stability), was 'successful' in de-politicizing Islam; many Islamic figures and organizations were oppressed and jailed; consequently, Islamic identity, besides ethnicity, became a symbol of opposition. As economic crises hit Indonesia in 1997, Habibie started to boost openness in the name of reform, and Abdurrrahman Wahid continued the process. Less controversial than his predecessors, Megawati is just following what has been initiated by Habibie, Wahid, and previous presidents, including her father, Soekarno. In constitutional terms, the Indonesian Constitution (UUD 45) does not accommodate Islamic Law as national civil law, although dual court system has long prevailed for Indonesians in general to allow them legal options. Recently, the implementation of Islamic Law has been a controversial debate, but its proponents have never been successful in gaining majority support.

Malaysia is also a Muslim country, but Muslims do not account more than 65% of all population (which consist Indian, Chinese, Melayu and other small ethnics). Islam is the religion of state, but the state exercises multicultural policy. Some areas, including Kelantan, have been dominated by an Islamic party, PAS, where an Islamic Law is applied, although democracy has entered their political discourse to gain educated peoples' support. Prime Minister Mahathir Muhammad has been the most vocal in Southeast Asia in criticizing the West, getting rid of such organization as IMF (International Monetary Fund). The Philippines is a majority Christian country, but Islamic concentration in the southern part (Moro National Liberation Front/MNLF and a more radical Abu Sayyaf) has made it a focus of international concern because of suspected links to

the Al-Qaida. Likewise, in Singapore and Thailand, Muslims are minorities, while Brunei holds an Islamic monarchy, but all have been less influential in regional Islamic intellectual discourse.

Soon after September 11, 2001, President Megawati met President Bush, expressing Indonesian commitment to participate in the global war against terrorism. Throughout the region, Indonesian peoples were in mourning and praying for the victims and their families as well as for all the Americans. Yet, as the U.S government retaliated and attacked Afghanistan in October and November 2001, some elements of Islamic organizations such as the *Nahdlatul Ulama* and Islamic Solidarity (KISDI) criticized them on the ground that proofs had not been adequate. Not convinced by the U.S government statements, they felt that their innocent Islamic brothers were under attack. Pressed by this situation, Megawati also criticized Bush, insisting that war cannot be solved by another war, as civilians could be the victims.

Some Islamic hard-liners are active and vocal, but very small in number and not-influential. They are some elements of Islamic preachers and organizations, which are much influenced by Middle Eastern Islam (e.g. Egyptian Muslim Brothers), Indian *Hizbut Tahrir,* and Pakistani Islam. They often express their antipathy against foreigners, Christians, Americans, Westerners, especially through speeches and publications. As the U.S retaliated, some were ready to help Afghanistan as well as other Muslim countries when attacked. The Islamic Fighters (*Laskar Jihad*), The Council of the Jihadist (*Majelis Mujahidin*), Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) and Islamic Solidarity Committee (KISDI) frequently used symbols, pictures, CD-ROMs, cassettes, talks, and demonstrations to show their own aspiration. For example,

before the U.S definite conclusion, some had told the U.S not to easily suspect Muslims as actors without adequate proof. As a sign of solidarity, they cared also about Muslims living in the West who became the target of anti-Islam or anti-Arab sentiment. They took a militant interpretation of "Jihad" as holy war. Thus, it can be said that many radical groups have some connections with theological or organizational groups elsewhere, including the Middle East, but it is difficult to establish a direct connection with Al-Qaida, and the leaders of several groups, including Jafar Umar Thalib, have criticized Usama bin Laden in a meeting in Jakarta.

In the meantime, it seemed that anti-U.S administration sentiment was often mixed up with anti-Americanism to some Indonesians. It is said that Bush' speeches have contributed not only to anti-US administration but also to anti-Americanism. Some even proposed to boycott American products. The causes could be that they were too emotional when their brothers were being accused as the actors and that the U.S has implemented a 'double standard' policy in the Middle East where Muslims were oppressed. These external factors have also been supported by their literal, partial religious reading regarding Jews and Christians. Unfortunately, to many Indonesians, Western media have unqualifiedly presented the hard side of Islam. The Washington Post, The New York Times, and MSNBC TV station have contributed to the unbalanced, one-side image of Indonesian Islam by broadcasting how Indonesian Islamists hate the U.S and made Usama as hero rather than evil. A leading Indonesian Jesuit priest, Franz Magniz Suseno tried to convince that they are very small, and the picture could not be generalized as a whole image of Indonesia.

Under these circumstances, many Indonesian Intellectuals and public figures have become concerned about discourses and initiated dialogues. The issues cover definition of terrorism, the relation between religion and tolerance, and so forth. Dialogues between foreign embassies and Indonesian organizations were several times held, including the dialogue on "Islam and the West Working Together for A Peaceful World", initiated by the *Muhammadiyyah,* on March 26, 2002. Afterwards, in May, U.S ambassador for Indonesia, Ralph Boyce, proclaimed, trying to understand the Indonesian people, that radical Islamic groups in Indonesia do not disturb or threaten U.S interests. Boyce personally didn't intend to link Indonesian Islam with Al-Qaida or other terrorist groups. Before that, in December 2001, world Muslim leaders of the Islamic Organization Conference (IOC) held an international meeting in Jakarta to express their commitment to fight against terrorism and their statement that Islam never justifies intolerances. These dialogues have been certainly helpful in reducing tensions amongst Indonesians themselves and foreigners in Indonesia. Media coverage about such dialogues have been more useful than the coverage of demonstrations and hatred which are usually carried out by only a handful of people.

Meanwhile, based on the free and non-aligned policy, Indonesian government seemed very careful, which gives an impression that it has been slow in fighting against terrorism. The free and non-align foreign policy was being attained. The Indonesian Military were in definite commitment to help fight against terrorism through such ways as information exchange, education and training (International Military Education and Training (IMET), or participating in United Nations peace keepers, rather than through risky operational cooperation such as sending troops to attack Afghanistan.

In May 2002, a tension reoccurred. The U.S. Department of Foreign Affairs accused Indonesia again as the base of Al-Qaida terrorist groups. The proclaimed reasons were that Southeast Asia had attracted terrorist groups due to its great number of islands and of Muslim population. The economic crisis has been also said to have contributed to the rise of terrorist groups in the region, while law enforcement was not strong enough. In addition, the U.S claimed that some of Islamic organizations in Indonesia and Malaysia had admitted to have connection with Al-Qaida, but the claim was not quite convincing at the time. The government of Megawati Soekarnoputri has long denied the presence of substantial terrorist networks in the archipelago, although it has taken US$50 million from Washington to assist security forces in the antiterrorist struggle.

Apart from that, there is a matter of regulation. Indonesia has soon ratified several international conventions: 1) Convention on Offences and Certain other Acts on Board Aircraft, Tokyo 1963, 2) Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, Montreal 1971, 3) Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Civil Aviation, The Hague 1970, 4) Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, Vienna 1980, 5) Protocol on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation, supplementary to no.2, 1988, and 6)International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, New York, 1999. The effectiveness of this ratification remains yet to be seen.

In the regional context, Indonesia recommended that ASEAN Regional Forum be revitalized to talk and find solutions on regional issues, including terrorism threat. Similarly, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) was hoped to

be more active, especially in attempts at reducing poverty in the region which in turn could help minimize terrorist potentials. War against terrorism then became common issue, transcending national interests. The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks have led members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to join the American-led global war against international terrorism.

Some officials said all the activities were not carried out just because the U.S. pressures. Indeed, Indonesia had long had its own programs and ways in dealing with internal problems although not often successful. Indonesia has been facing separatist movements and local terrors (e.g. a series of bomb terrors in 2000-2001) and civil wars in Aceh, Ambon, Kalimantan, Irian Jaya, and others on a more small scale. Global, regional, national, and local difficulties have not yet come out of Indonesia as a big, young democratic country.

If it is true that Muslims are the actors, how can religion justify or even encourage violent intolerance? Why do some Islamists hate America? Some of the answers have been partly accounted above, but from another point of view, these also could mean challenges. The history has not ended yet. Ideologies and interests still vary and are often conflicting. Fundamentalism, as an ideology, has been endorsed by many. We can see that globalization has facilitated both convergent and divergent processes. Both good peoples and terrorists use communication and information technologies. Modernity has been interpreted differently by different people. Modernity could mean rationality and humanity, but could also signify unlimited, irresponsible freedom and violence to reach certain goals.

History has not ended yet. Ideologies and interests still vary and are often conflicting. Fundamentalism, as an ideology, has been endorsed by many. We can see that globalization has facilitated both convergent and divergent processes. Both good peoples and terrorists use communication and information technologies. Modernity has been interpreted differently by different people. Modernity could mean rationality and humanity, but could also signify unlimited, irresponsible freedom and violence to reach certain goals.

September 11 tragedy thus should provide us, as world citizens in this global village, with many lessons. Of course, international military cooperation is indispensable to prevent any kind of intolerance and resolve international conflicts. Other kinds of international technical cooperation are also urgent. Regulation and ratification of conventions are also important. Yet, in the long run, cultural approaches seem to be much more strategic. Inter-civilizational dialogue should be the best way to bridge differences and distrust. All need to be encouraged to seek and follow "wisdom" wherever it exists. Exchange of ideas and experiences would help increase mutual understanding. All should promote dialogue vision and minimize conflict vision (as expressed by many political fundamentalists).

World citizens should set up common platforms, should find global ethics, and apply contextual democracy and civil society. "Oh ye human beings, We have created you into tribes, peoples, and nations in order that you can know and help each other. Those who do righteousness are indeed the best and noblest", to quote a *Quranic verse.* "All lands in their diversity are one, and men are all neighbors and brothers ", says a Muslim scholar, Al-Zubaidi, in the tenth century AD. Therefore, religious education needs to be more comparatively

and contextually, rather than textually, in order to understand how human history has been moving progressive, rather than retrogressive. We need to accept that pluralism is a historical necessity and that adaptation and accommodation are more useful and meaningful in allowing different kind of human beings to live and coexist in peace and harmony.

There is another blessing in disguise. In the aftermath of September 11, there has been a continuous need and an increased awareness throughout the world to more seriously study the complexity of the relationships between different nations, cultures, and civilizations, between "the East" and "the West", and to figure out more acceptable world management. Dialogue, as a non-violent conflict resolution, has proved to be the best option for international communities in order to develop more peaceful relationships based on mutual understanding, recognition, listening, and respect. The road ahead is still fraught with problems, but the on-going diplomatic and educational processes have helped make at least some of regional and global difficulties less pressing. If this performance can be enhanced in the next decade, enough time may be bought so that 'the new world order' may yet emerge.

Although we may disagree with Huntington in his thesis of the clash of civilizations, we may use his definition of civilization: "Civilization is the highest social grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguish humans from other species."[1] Before him, Ibnu Khaldun (1332-1406 C.E) suggested that civilization is a human social organization as a result of

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[1] Huntington, *op.cit.,* p.24.

urbanization and a group feeling.[2] Based on this definition, we can then promote 'conversation of civilizations'. Peoples from different civilizations can only understand and appreciate each other with an effort of what Habermas would call 'communicative action'. [3]

In order to implement a dialogue in a more concrete way, we will need a kind of 'civilizational analysis', by which we mean a study of different civilizations throughout history. Consequently we realize that there is more than one civilization. There has been always a civilizational plurality. Of course there are many civilizations, but only few people in the world view this plurality as a positive reality. If we see this as a historical necessity and respect civilizations other than our own then we advocate what can be called 'civilizational pluralism'.[4] In addition, there will be no universal civilization, but instead a world of different civilizations, each of which will have to learn to coexist with the others.

It is good to quote two enlightening poems, the first one written by a Germany poet and the second one by a Muslim mystic poet, Jalaluddin Rumi. [5]

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[2] Ibnu Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* trans. Franz Rosental from Arabic (New Jersey: Princeton Press, 1969).

[3] Habermas, "Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action, " as explained by Marc Lynch, "The Dialogue of Civilizations and International Public Spheres", in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies,* vol.29, no.3, 2000.

[4] See Victor Segesvary, *Dialogue of Civilizations: An Introduction to Civilizational Analysis* (Lanham, New York, Oxford: University Press of America, Inc., 2000)

[5] Quoted in Fred Dallmayr, *Dialogue of Civilizations: Some Ex-*

*But good is it*
*To have dialogue and to talk*
*About the heart's thought, and to listen much*
*About the days of love*
*And about the deeds that have happened*
(Frederick Holderlin)

*Come now whoever you are!*
*Come without any fear of being disliked*
*Come whether you are a Muslim, a Christian or a Jew*
*Come whoever you are!*
*Whether you believe or do not believe in God*
*This door is not a door of fear*
*This is a door of good wishes.*
(Jalaluddin Rumi)

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*emplary Voices* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

## Religious Factor
## in World Conflict and Peace

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Religion is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon in human history and even more so today in a global environment where deeply held religious, ideological, and cultural values exist alongside powerful special interests and intense emotions. In the United States as well as in the Muslim word, religious element exists and plays a role in shaping their worldviews.

The rise of 'fundamentalism' in different forms reflects how religiosity has become vital in the public sphere. Religion never comes to the private sphere only. It is widely held that fundamentalism has provoked a threat to world peace, but many would suggest religion should be taken away out of solution debates and policies, while few argue that religious factor needs to be considered not merely as a problem but also as a solution. I would argue that while religion has been used to be an inspiration for clashes between different peoples, religion has equally proved to be one of the most important forces of world peace**.**

Scholars differ in their explanations of the correlation between religions and world conflicts. Primordialists argue that religious difference is one of the most important independent variables to explain violence in and between nations. Collective actors tend to form alliances around common cosmologies and tensions arise and escalate primarily between such alliances. Instrumentalists recognize that conflicts may be aggravated by divergent religious creeds, but they are rarely if even caused by them. World conflicts occur because of political and socioeconomic inequalities in and between nations. By contrast, moderate constructivists argue that in many cases it is the juxtaposition of religious believers and sinister pagans that enables political entrepreneurs to mobilize their constituencies into violent action. As acts of violence require legitimization, religion can provide such legitimization. Religious leaders can refuse to bless weapons, and then violence may not occur even if significant socioeconomic and political inequalities exist in or between nations.[6]

In the context of the U.S.-Muslim relations, since the World War I, the Palestinian question has received the major concern. For the Muslim world, the major criticism is the full, uncritical support of the U.S. for the creation and defense of Israel. Many Muslims view the U.S-Zionism as one unified, monolithic force that humiliates the Palestinians and therefore the Muslims. They believe that Zionist propaganda plays a vital role in gaining such support and know that Zionists

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[6] Andres Hasenclever and Volker Rittberger, "Does Religion Make A Difference? Theoretical Approaches to the Impact of Faith on Political Conflict", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, vol.29,no.3, 2000, pp.642-3. Yet, to suggest that religion matters in causing conflict does not simply suggest that it is the difference between religions that only matters. In fact, among other factors, religious factor also plays a role in conflict between co-religionists, such as between Muslim Acehnese and Muslim Indonesian government, between Iraq and Iran, between Al-Qaida and the Saudi government.

relies on allies abroad to apply strong pressures to influence decisions in their favor. Nowadays the vast number of the Jews and Christians are very supportive of Israel for religious reasons. According to the Pew Research Center, in July 2003, 41 % say they sympathize more with Israel, while only 13 % sympathize more with the Palestinians; 8% sympathize for both sides and 18 % neither. Views of Muslims and Islam are influenced heavily by religious beliefs. More specifically, White evangelical Christians and political conservatives hold more negative views of Muslims and are more likely than other Americans to say that Islam encourages violence among its followers. Religious beliefs about biblical prophecy play an important factor in shaping these attitudes.[7]

The crisis in the Middle East and other parts of the world, have involved Western or European intervention in various different ways, but the scenery seems always similar: the distinction between the colonizer and the colonized, creating the 'us' and 'them' binary opposition. This essentialization is found in all sides. Zionists made an absolute distinction between Israel and world Jewry on the one hand and the *goyim*, or non-Jews, on the other.[8] Likewise, many of the Muslim fundamentalists, especially the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) in Palestine and Al-Qaida, divided the world into the Abode of Islam (*Dar al-Islam*) and the Abode of War (*Dar*

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[7] News Release, "Religion and Politics: Contention and Consensus", The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press & The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, July 24, 2003.

[8] Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A History with Documents*, forth edition (Boston & New York: Bedford & St.Martin's, 2001), pp.231-2.

*al-Harb*).[9] The Christian fundamentalists equally viewed the world in terms of the Christendom and the others. Thus the world is viewed in religious terms. When many people talk about the West and the East, they generally imply the Judeo-Christian West and the Islamic East.

September 11, 2001 tragedy has dramatically transformed the world relations. But the old binary oppositions 'us' and 'them', 'good' and 'evil', revived. Apparently, President George W. Bush put religion at forefront of war against Iraq. In the State of Union address in March 2002, President Bush said, "The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world, it is God's gift to humanity. We do not claim to know all the ways of Providence, yet we can trust in them, placing our confidence in the loving of God behind all of life, and all of history. May He guide us now." In another speech, Bush declared," Saddam Hussein is evil, and we are pure and good; our cause is just." On the other hand, Saddam Hussein insisted, "God's victory will be us." U.S. leaders' religious language makes it easier to connect U.S. policy in the eyes of the Muslims to evangelical preaches who call Islam "an evil religion."

Indeed, for most Muslims, the U.S. support for Israel and humiliation of the Palestinians, and its attack on Iraq is an attack on Muslims and therefore on Islam. This attitude has been compounded by the fact that they were never convinced

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[9] Sayyid Qutb, the Egyptian leader of the Muslim Brotherhood who became a martyr, and ever visited the U.S., and who inspired Al-Qaida and other fundamentalist groups around the world, believed that the modern era is the era of ignorance (*jahiliyyah*) which should be replaced with the era of Islam. He believed that Christianity of today is inseparable from the culture of the West.

by the U.S. leaders that Saddam Hussein was connected with Usama bin Laden, or that he had the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), or that he posed a threat to the U.S. For the Muslims, to liberate Iraqi people without their consent and international support was a non-sense. Facing criticisms, President Bush changed his rhetoric. He said he didn't want to use religious terms again. He began to speak well about Islam, saying that Islam is one of the greatest faiths and promotes freedom, tolerance and progress. In his recent State of Union address in January 2004, President Bush used a different rhetoric, "America is a nation with a mission – and that mission comes from our basic beliefs. We have no desire to dominate, no ambitions of empire. Our aim is a democratic peace – a peace founded upon dignity and rights of every man and woman…". But the Muslims remain unconvinced even after the Iraqi regime's defeat. They witnessed a vulgar violence being carried out by the U.S. against the historic Baghdad and killed thousands of Muslim civilians, while the U.S. only cares about their own soldiers and their victory.

The war against terror never ends. Usama bin Laden, the main target of the U.S war against terrorism, a wealthy businessman with a B.A. in economics, now found more justification for his more attacks against the U.S. He became more deeply conscious that *jihad* should only mean a holy war against the U.S., the infidel (*kafir*), after the previous infidel, Soviets. When the U.S. soldiers entered the Muslim land, Usama established *Al-Qaida*, a network of people to be recruited as the soldiers of God. When Iraq invaded Kuwait and the U.S. soldiers entered Arab Saudi's soil, he criticized the U.S. presence because in his belief no non-Muslims are allowed to enter the holy lands. The U.S. support for Israel remains another reason of hatred against the U.S. While many

Muslim governments asked U.S. blessings, Usama challenged the mighty U.S. Every time Usama was asked after bombing attacks, he refused to say that he was behind them but he praised and blessed any attacks against the U.S. He even used the *fatwa* (religious edict) to legitimize his *jihad* ideology. He justified his act by saying that the U.S. killed women and children in different parts of the world, including the one in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But when he was asked why he also killed innocent people he replied that it is their destiny; it is the way of God that they die in such manner. Usama did not make distinction between those directly supportive of the Zionists and those who are allied with them, nor did he make a distinction between military and civilians.[10] But Al-Qaida didn't direct its attacks solely against the U.S. It is also against the un-Islamic, corrupt Muslim governments. The vast majority of Muslims have condemned Usama and call terrorism as an un-Islamic. Although the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) viewed the world also in religious terms, this organization repeatedly condemned terrorism, either committed by Muslim terrorists or others (Israel and the U.S. being included). In Iran, the President Khatami regards Usama as his enemy. When asked about the presence of Al-Qaida members in Iran, President Muhammad Khatami said,"The hostility of Al-Qaida toward the Islamic Republic of Iran is not less than their enmity with the U.S."[11].

Many Fundamentalist Muslims remain unconvinced that since the Crusades the Western world, especially the U.S.,

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[10] Mohammed M.Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression and Resistance in the Islamic World* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2003).

[11] http://www.oic-oci.org

has been engaged in a campaign to destroy Islam and Islamic civilizations and humiliate Muslims. In Southeast Asia for example the colonial legacy and the Christian government in the Philippines has done much to exacerbate this. Globalization is also seen as a form of economic and cultural imperialism that is contributing to the impoverishment of the Islamic world. The West's cultural imperialism, which encourages immoral behavior and crime, fragments the community, puts individual rights ahead of individual obligations, and supports the privilege and affluent ahead of the deprived and disadvantaged. The U.S. individualism, arrogance, consumerism, and sexual liberty come to be seen as at odds with Islam. These moral issues exacerbated the issue of the U.S. full support of Israel and the loss of Jerusalem and others lands to Israel.

With the persistence of *intifadha* (uprising movement) and the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) in Palestine, the religious divide remains important. On the first leaflet HAMAS issued on January 1988, read: "To you our Muslim Palestinian people, Allah's blessing and protection! May Allah strengthen you and give you victory. Continue with your rejection and your struggle against the occupation methods, the dispossession, deportations, prisons, tortures, travel restrictions, the dissemination of filth and pornography, the corruption and bribery, the improper and humiliating behavior, the heavy taxes, a life of suffering and of degradation to honor and to the houses of worship."[12] Clearly humiliation factor has been always there, but the impact is further religious conflicts.

Are the U.S.-Israel-Palestinian-Afghanistan-Iraq conflicts a sign of clash of civilizations? Many do not

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[12] Smith, *op.cit.,* pp.450-2.

think so because there is no such thing as an inherently and purely authentic Western civilization or an authentic Islamic civilization without mutual interactions in history. But fundamentalists from both sides perceive such clash of civilization. And this perception is created by multiple factors, including exclusive religious education, religious bigotry, coupled with socio-economic and political circumstances. If radical fundamentalism needs to be reduced, the religious element must be taken into consideration in peacemaking and building.

The first and foremost attempt to avoid further terrorism is to solve the Palestinian Problem. The late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat once reminded us, "Even if a peace agreement was achieved between all the confrontation states and Israel, without a just solution to the Palestinian problem it would never ensure the establishment of the durable, lasting peace the entire world is now trying to achieve…".[13] President Bush, the United Nations, and the European countries have initiated a Road Map, but this is still on the papers and speeches rather than on the attitudes and actions. The Muslim world still see how the U.S. condemned Palestinian uprising while praising Israel. Muslims still talk about unbalanced and unjust U.S. policy in the Middle East. They still believe that the perceived and real anti-Muslim bias in U.S. foreign policy is one of the main causes of terrorism worldwide. They waited for U.S. condemnation of the Israel oppression as well. If Christians and Jews can acknowledge the evil of Israeli oppression of Palestinians, then Muslims will be more prepared to condemn

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[13] The late Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat, delivered a speech to the Israel Knesset on November 20, 1977. in Smith, *ibid*., 395-6.

Palestinian suicide bombers.

In the longer term, to prevent the appeal of fundamentalist ideology among younger generation, there should be an attempt to bridge the cultural-religious gap between the West and the East through education, intercultural collaboration, mass media balanced report, and diplomacy. Tolerant religious education is an emergency. Efforts should be made to develop teaching materials about various faith traditions for use at various levels in the education structure. Textbooks should contain different religions and avoid or even correct biases and distortions. Courses need to be developed on conflict resolution and peacemaking. Sharing of cultural materials such as films, novels, music is also effective.

Political leaders should seek a balance between national security and sense of humanity. They need to be conscious about the religious-cultural element and should deal with it in a wise and just manner. Diplomats need to recognize that religious peacemakers can be their allies in the promotion of peace and reconciliation. As German philosopher Hans Kung said, "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed." He also said, "No peace among the nations without peace among the religions; not peace among religions without dialogue between the religions; no dialogue between religions without investigation of the religions."

In religious education and missionaries programs, the values of moderation should be emphasized to avoid religious triumphalism because religious triumphalism at the expense of interfaith amity compounds the levels of fear and mutual hostility. It should be recognized that Islam, like other religions, can create two different positions: liberalism

and fundamentalism. Any efforts should be made to promote moderation if not liberalism and diminish fundamentalism. The world should support the moderates to establish moderate religious teachings.

It is essential to recognize that there are narratives in all religions that are pluralistic and peaceful, but there are also exclusive narratives in each of these traditions. Diplomats need to recognize that religious peacemakers can be their allies in the promotion of peace. To leave the language of faith out of peacemaking is a serious deficiency. Religious language is powerful. It motivates people. If religion does not become part of the solution, it will motivate hate.

Dialogue vision, rather than conflict vision, dialogue of civilizations, rather than clash of civilization, should be promoted in every corner of the globe. We need "boundary leaders"–those who operate on the borders of their communities and are ready to reach out other communities. There are experts of empathy. They become conflict resolvers not to reinforce boundaries but to reach out to other communities. Mass media play a role too in. There are negative impacts that the media has on interfaith relations. The excessive emphasis on the negative sides of religion and actions of religious extremists generates interfaith fear and hostility. Greater media attention needs to be given to positive steps taken post 9/11 to reach out across religious boundaries.[14]

President Bush once said, "Terrorists who claim Islam as their inspiration defile one of the world's great faiths." "There was kind of a sense that Americans believe that Muslims are

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[14] United States Institute of Peace, www.usip.org, Special Report 99, February 2003

terrorists; I made it very clear that I didn't feel that way and Americans don't feel that way."[15] President Bush didn't agree with Lt. Gen. William Boykin, the deputy undersecretary of defense for intelligence and war fighting who had likened the battle against Islamic terrorists to war against 'Satan" and said at evangelical gatherings that Muslims worshipped an "idol" and not "a real God". Mr. Bush repudiated General Boykin's statements, saying "he didn't reflect my opinion, and it just doesn't reflect what the government thinks." "Americans hold a deep respect for the Islamic faith which is possessed by a growing number of my own citizens. We know Islam is fully compatible with liberty, tolerance, and progress." These emphatic attitudes help reduce the Muslim distrust of the U.S.

Given the importance of the religious factor in world conflict, inter-religious dialogue, education, and intercultural cooperation between different peoples should become an imperative. This is so because trust and peaceful coexistence come from mutual listening, learning and sharing through dialogue as well as from real actions on the ground and policy change. Dialogue and cooperation are for the establishment of a global coexistence and peace as well as a harmonious and enriching experience of living together among people of diverse identities.

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[15] New York Times, October 22, 2003, www.nytimes.com

# Religious Factor in U.S.-Muslim Relations

In February 2004, Nahdlatul Ulama, the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia, is hosting an international conference of Islamic scholars from over 40 countries, discussing world peace, education, the global economy and the mass media. At the same time, the U.S Embassy in Jakarta will distribute books on U.S. history, geography and other topics to a thousand Islamic boarding schools to counter rising anti-American attitudes in Indonesia.

Embassy spokesman Stanley Harsha said the important thing was getting the books into Islamic boarding schools whose students often base their view of the United States on "movies, television and rumors". These recent developments indicate that the religious factor in Western-Muslim relations has started to receive attention.

Religion is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon in human history. In the United States, as well as in the Muslim world, the religious element exists and plays a role in shaping worldviews, thereby affecting views of the relationship between the two worlds.

The rise of "fundamentalism" in different forms reflects how religiosity has become vital in politics. It is widely held that fundamentalism has provoked a threat to the U.S., as well

as the world. But many would suggest that religion should be taken out of debates and policies, while only a few argue that the religious factor needs to be considered not merely as a problem but also as a solution. While religion has been used as an inspiration for clashes between different peoples, religion has equally proved to be one of the most important forces of world peace.

In the context of U.S.-Muslim relations, the Palestinian question has always received the major concern. For the Muslim world, the major criticism is the uncritical support of the U.S. for the creation and defense of Israel.

Many Muslims view the U.S and Zionism as one unified, monolithic force that humiliates the Palestinians, and therefore Muslims. They believe that Zionist propaganda plays a vital role in gaining such support and know that the Zionists rely on allies abroad to apply strong pressure to influence decisions in their favor.

Nowadays, the vast number of Jews and Christians are supportive of Israel for religious reasons. According to a survey by the Pew Research Center in July 2003, 41 percent of respondents said they sympathized more with Israel, while only 13 percent sympathized more with the Palestinians. Eight percent sympathized for both sides and 18 percent neither.

Views of Muslims and Islam are influenced heavily by religious beliefs. More specifically, white evangelical Christians and political conservatives hold more negative views of Muslims and are more likely than other Americans to say that Islam encourages violence among its followers. Religious beliefs about biblical prophecy play an important factor in shaping these attitudes.

The Sept. 11, 2001, tragedy dramatically transformed world relations. But the old binary oppositions of "us" and "them", "good" and "evil" were revived. For most Muslims, U.S. support for Israel and its humiliation of the Palestinians, and its attack on Iraq are attacks on Muslims, despite U.S. insistence to the contrary.

The vast majority of Muslims condemn al-Qaeda and call terrorism un-Islamic. The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) repeatedly condemns terrorism, both by Muslims and others (Israel and the U.S. included). In Iran, President Muhammad Khatami regards Usama bin Laden as his enemy. When asked about the presence of al-Qaeda members in Iran, President Khatami said: "The hostility of al-Qaeda toward the Islamic Republic of Iran is not less than their enmity toward the U.S."

Are these conflicts a sign of a clash of civilizations? Many do not think so because there is no such thing as an inherently and purely authentic Western civilization or an authentic Islamic civilization without mutual interaction in history. But fundamentalists from both sides perceive such a clash of civilizations.

And this perception is created by multiple factors, including exclusive religious education and religious bigotry, coupled with socioeconomic and political circumstances. If radical fundamentalism needs to be reduced, the religious element must be taken into consideration in peacemaking and building.

The first and foremost attempt to avoid further terrorism is to solve the Palestinian problem. The late Egyptian president Anwar Sadat once reminded us, "Even if a peace agreement was achieved between all the confrontation states and Israel,

without a just solution to the Palestinian problem it would never ensure the establishment of the durable, lasting peace the entire world is now trying to achieve."

Muslims have been waiting for U.S. condemnation of Israel's oppression and injustices in Palestine. If Christians and Jews can acknowledge the evil of Israeli oppression of Palestinians, then Muslims will be more prepared to condemn Palestinian suicide bombers.

In the longer term, to prevent the appeal of fundamentalist ideology among younger generations, apart from sending American books to Islamic boarding schools, there should be an attempt to bridge the cultural-religious gap between the West and the East through education, intercultural collaboration, the mass media and diplomacy. Tolerant religious education is also necessary.

Efforts should also be made to develop teaching materials about various faiths for use at different levels in the school system. Textbooks should contain information on different religions and avoid or even correct biases and distortions. Courses need to be developed on conflict resolution and peacemaking. Sharing of cultural materials such as films, novels and music is also effective.

Political leaders need to be conscious about the religious-cultural element and should deal with it in a wise and just manner. Diplomats need to recognize that religious peacemakers can be their allies in the promotion of peace and reconciliation. As German philosopher Hans Kung said, "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed."

The values of moderation should be emphasized to

avoid religious triumphalism, because religious triumphalism at the expense of interfaith amity compounds the levels of fear and mutual hostility.

It should be recognized that Islam, like other religions, can create two different positions: liberalism and fundamentalism. All efforts should be made to promote moderation, if not liberalism, and diminish fundamentalism. The world should support the moderates to establish moderate religious teachings.

It is essential to recognize that there are narratives in all religions that are pluralistic and peaceful, but there are also exclusive narratives in each of these traditions. Diplomats need to recognize that religious peacemakers can be their allies in the promotion of peace. To leave the language of faith out of peacemaking is a serious deficiency. Religious language is powerful. It motivates people. If religion does not become part of the solution, it will motivate hate.

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# East-West Relationships:
# a Complex Phenomenon

In the wake of the Bali, Baghdad and Jakarta terrorist attacks, I would like to share my view of contemporary East-West relationships. I have seen examples of a clash of ignorance, if not a clash of interests, rather than a "clash of civilizations".

Anti-Westernism, on the one hand, and anti-Islamism on the other have indeed been on the rise since the end of the Cold War. Both are a very complicated phenomena, as people live in an environment where deeply held religious and cultural values exist alongside powerful special interests, intense emotions and not a few psychopathic personalities.

Westerners wondered why such anti-U.S. sentiments emerged in some Muslim areas, even in Indonesia where the majority of Muslims are moderates. People in the Muslim world equally wondered why Americans hate Islam.

While anti-American sentiment can be said to be a product of specific U.S. government actions or foreign policies, coupled with rampant cultural misunderstandings and theological underpinnings, anti-Islamism emerged either as a response to this anti-Americanism or as a potent sentiment created by ignorance.

As many Americans misperceive the rest of the world, America is equally a vastly misunderstood paradox, partly because of media distortions and cultural misunderstandings. Both Western and Eastern media have contributed to these distorted perceptions.

Yet, sentiments are often there. Sentiments have to do with both perception and reality. The realities have been always more complex than the perceptions, but the latter often matters the most. Paradoxically, it is misinformation and narrow-mindedness that characterize today's information age. The challenge to globalization is globalization itself. Globalization seems to have educated human beings, but also to have facilitated them to become more resistant to others.

In many cases, anti-Western sentiment is also related to the rise of political fundamentalism, as a reaction and challenge to modernization and Westernization. While modernization is accepted as a means of building a viable state and improving standards of living, it is often confused with Westernization.

In some parts of the Muslim world, opponents of Westernization see a zero-sum relationship with Islam; a gain for one meaning a loss for the other. Even "neo-fundamentalists" show antipathy toward their fellow believers who try to accommodate "Western" ideas (democracy, human rights, civil society, pluralism) because they believe this will have fundamental effects on the nature of Islamic praxis.

Radical fundamentalists remain convinced that since the Crusades the Western world has been engaged in a campaign to destroy Islam and "Islamic civilization" and humiliate Muslims. Obviously in Southeast Asia the colonial legacy

in the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia have done much to exacerbate this. In the minds of radical fundamentalists, there is a close relationship between Western imperialism and Christian missions.

Globalization is seen by fundamentalists as a new form of economic imperialism contributing to the impoverishment of the Islamic world, particularly by the U.S. It is perceived that the U.S. cultural imperialism encourages immoral behavior and crime, fragments the community, puts individual rights ahead of individual obligations and supports the privileged and affluent ahead of the deprived and disadvantaged.

Many writers and leaders exhibit a "paranoid style" of discourse. Many writings on Christianity portray it as exclusively and inherently a Western phenomenon, and feel that the Christianity of today is inseparable from the culture of the West. Christianity is often seen as containing the seeds of secularism in its very origins. Many writings and speeches continue to promulgate an East-West divide, which is still often expressed in terms of a Muslim-Christian divide or a divide of civilizations.

So many Muslims ignore what is happening in the West, and many non-Muslims ignore what is happening in the Muslim world. Both sides tend to essentialize each other as monolithic and victimize innocent others.

Hence, what is to be done in the long run is to "educate" people through various means -- cultural, political, diplomatic, and educational. Conspiracy theories believed by both Eastern and Western "fundamentalists" should be replaced by more rational, evidence-based explanations by governments and the mass media both in the West and the East.

Western decision-makers should rethink their foreign policies which relate to other parts of the world. U.S. policy needs to show real concern about the plight of others and be willing to listen. The American government should be more sensitive in its domestic and foreign policies. They have to show more credible and well thought out policies on global governance.

The rest should learn that the West is not a monolithic entity. The West is not inherently against others. What is now perceived as "Western civilization" and "Islamic civilization" are products of diverse peoples throughout history. There is no single culture or civilization that exists without interaction with others.

Our world needs more leaders and scholars to emphasize diplomacy and dialog. As modern communications and technology diminish cultural distances, so the task of intercultural exposition becomes ever more important and necessary. Global multiculturalism with mutual understanding and mutual respect is a challenge to everybody living in this global village. The relationships between "we" and "they" should be equal, dialogical, cognizant and hospitable.

## Headscarf Ban and Multi-Secularisms

Indonesian Muslim women from Hizb ut-Tahrir recently rallied outside the French Embassy in Jakarta against France's headscarf ban at state schools. The protesters urged the French government to revoke the ruling, arguing that wearing headscarves for Muslim women is a religious obligation and not merely a cultural expression. A poster read, "Secularism oppresses Muslim women."

The above protest reflects one among different positions in the world concerning the ban of Muslim headscarves, Jewish skullcaps and large Christian crosses in France's public schools. The issue of the ban on religious symbols indicates that the question of secularism is still alive, even in the first secular state, France.

One is not sure yet what the percentage is of those Muslims living in France (five million, or 8 percent of the country's population) who oppose and who agree with the ban, but surely their views are mixed: Opposing, accepting or being neutral.

Dr. Yusuf Qardawi, an influential Egyptian cleric, opposed the ban, saying that banning headscarves might provoke the hatred and enmity of Muslims. According to others who oppose the ban, French President Jacque Chirac has violated religious liberty.

On the contrary, the sheikh of Al-Azhar University, Mohammad Sayyed Tantawy, commented that the French government has the right to ban headscarves at state schools. Muslim women should obey their government even though they live in a secular state, not in a Muslim state. People may see a political context behind Sheikh Al-Azhar's agreement with the French policy, but putting this aside, we can see how Muslim leaders themselves disagree on this matter.

French secularism (*laiciti*) needs to be put in context. To maintain the secular character of the French state -- liberty, galit, fraternity -- the French need to prevent fundamentalism.

Yet, in France itself, the concept of secularism is a dynamic one. Even the French Revolution of 1789 has been interpreted in different ways. The French have to deal with migration issues and minorities, and Muslims living in the West have to decide between rejection, adaptation, or assimilation.

There have always been dilemmas between individual rights and collective rights. Today, liberty seems to be a universal principle, but its interpretation and applications vary. Secularists love liberty, but many of the religious fundamentalists in the West and the Muslim world have equally used justice or liberty as their political language, but they interpret them differently; many would use liberty to oppress others' liberty.

The issue here is not so much about whether or not wearing the headscarf is a religious obligation, as has been debated in Muslim circles (France recognizes that for many wearing the headscarf is believed to be obligatory for Muslim women, and also understands the sacred aspects of Jewish and

Christian symbols which are also to be banned). Rather, it is about whether or not the state permits the religious expression of its citizens.

Those who advocate the ban and those who oppose it have different interpretations of liberty. The former argue that there is an intimate connection between liberty and law, and that the law to ban the headscarf at state schools is aimed at ensuring liberty in the assumption that the ban will prevent religious fundamentalism and its further effect, terrorism, and therefore ensure liberty.

Those who oppose the ban contend that the ban would mean violating liberty. The law should ensure that civil liberty, including observing religious rituals and wearing religious symbols, is ensured. Here the point of debate is the notion of liberty.

Thus, France is struggling between individual liberty and civil liberty, as well as between religious liberty and political order.

There are a number of definitions of the secular state, one of which, by Donald Eugene Smith (1963), states: "The secular state is a state that guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion, deals with the individual as a citizen irrespective of his religion, is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion, nor seeks either to promote or interfere with religion."

Secularism should recognize no religious expressions at state-owned institutions, including state schools. The completely secular state, however, does not exist. What exists are states that pursue their own secularism.

Secularism is a very complex, not monolithic

phenomenon. It involves beliefs, ideas and institutions, relating to such religious and political issues as human rights, liberty, discrimination, citizenship and so forth. Secularism in its different forms has been celebrated in most Western countries, but has been also politically practiced in most of the Muslim world.

The problem of secularism is not about right and wrong in its absolutist meaning, but a matter of human effort to live in plurality in a manner that would please as many people as possible within a nation-state.

Modern history shows us that secularism has never pleased everybody, and the success of secularism from country to country varies according to how much both the state and civil society have worked out a social contract.

French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau said: "Man was born free and he is everywhere in chains." For Rousseau, it is possible to be both free and be a member of a political society. One's liberty is guaranteed but also is limited by law. It is for the people themselves to determine their own social contract for the benefit of their own good.

In one sense, the French government has chosen one among many different interpretations of the secular state. The United States, for example, has its own application of secularism, where President George W. Bush has personally recognized religious expression in public, albeit at the same time triggering controversy as well. For many in the U.S., a ban on religious symbols would be a violation of religious freedom.

Eventually one needs to recognize the different interpretations of what it means to be a good state. As Rousseau

put it, "Throughout the ages, men have debated the question, 'What is the best form of government?', and yet they have failed to see each of the possible forms is the best in some cases and the worst in others."

Indonesia and other countries may see the ban as inappropriate for their own nation-states, but the French government may have learned from its own history about how to deal with diversity.

# French Secularism:
# Religious Liberty and the Law

Endy M. Bayuni's article, *Neither Secular nor Theocratic? Try Laicite*, is very interesting because it argues for Indonesia to consider the French path of secularism or laicite. Despite Indonesia's formal adoption of Pancasila as the state ideology, the government, religious leaders, and the public remain confused about how the state ought to deal with religious affairs and how religions should relate to the state.

The issue is crucial and timely. The recent attacks and condemnation of minority groups Ahmadiyah and Liberal Islam Network, the religious edicts (fatwa) condemning pluralism, liberalism and secularism and the forced closure of hundreds of churches by hard-liners, are not only indicative of the constitutionally ambiguous state-religion relationship, but also of the lack of understanding (and enforcement) of religious liberty and supremacy of the law in Indonesia.

Of course, Indonesia is not the only country facing such problems. But Indonesia could have learned from other countries that have faced similar problems and have generally coped with them more intelligently and successfully. France could be one of them. The question, however, is not whether or not Indonesia should adopt the exact and complete form

of French secularism, or laicite, due to its complexity there, but about which aspects of French laicite could be feasibly contextualized within Indonesia's situation. Localization or domestication of some of the good things of French secularism is perhaps more relevant and feasible today. Two of such elements are religious liberty and the law.

As Jacques Robert argued well in *Enjeux du Siecle: Nos Libertes* (2002), France has experimented throughout its history with nearly all of the existing forms of church-state relations. Since 1905, France found that laicite conforms more than any other form to France's inclinations and ideals. A regime of total separation -- by no means hostile to, but tolerant of religions -- is the approach that conforms most to France's democratic ideals of liberty, egalitarianism and fraternity.

The French Constitution of 1905 stipulates that the Republic ensures the liberty of conscience and guarantees the free exercise of religion, under restrictions prescribed by the interests of public order. It also rules that the Republic does not recognize, remunerate, or subsidize any religious denomination.

Politically, France prefers the politics of non-recognition (that is, to abandon the system of recognized religions) to the politics of recognition (to recognize all religions without discrimination (recently called the politics of multiculturalism or pluralism). Although in both cases the state puts all religions at the same level politically, France decided that in order to be neutral in terms of religion, it should recognize none. French politics of non-recognition does not mean, however, that the government does not wish to maintain good relations with religious leaders and communities. It is not an attitude of hostility or suspicion, as Jacques Robert aptly put it.

Moreover, unlike Indonesia, the French government does not finance or subsidize a religion. Yet, the 1905 French Constitution gives the possibility of state subsidies for activities that have a general character despite taking place in a religious setting like charities, hospitals, nursing homes etc.

The same subsidy is also provided for direct administration by public collectives of certain religious services (religious instruction in public establishments such as high schools, junior high schools, hospitals, asylums, prisons, etc.) if the organization is deemed indispensable to insure that everyone has the freedom to practice their religion, and the payment of religious ministers when they render services to the general public (national religious ceremonies, media events, etc.). But as the basic principle, all churches are given the liberty to organize themselves and to establish and apply their internal rules.

On liberty of conscience, France recognizes that there is no second-class citizen based on ethnicity, class, or religion. In accordance with one of the articles of The Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, no one should be harassed due to his or her opinions, including religious opinions. Article 2 of the Constitution of Oct. 4, 1958 under the terms of which France is a secular state also assures equality before the law for all citizens without distinction based on origin, race or religion.

The principle of the liberty of religion precludes any operation of any type of distinction between religions, whether the religion is practiced by cults, sects, heterodoxies, or by the mainstream. The state must protect the minority religion in the name of the liberty of religion.

When religious liberty threatens public order, it is the

law that should be obeyed and enforced. In France, the state shall punish those who utilize violent acts or threats against an individual (creating either fear of job loss or causing injury to the individual's person, family or wealth) to force that individual to participate, or to refrain from participating, in a religion or religious sect. The jurisprudence of French tribunals do not interfere in religious rules, and the courts do not take jurisdiction unless a threat to public order exists.

Liberty only consists of the power to act in a manner that does not endanger public safety or individual rights. The law is always authorized to penalize the authors of these harmful acts, as Jacques Robert pointed out.

All religious movements that respect the public order must have their religious practices protected equally. The European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, for example, recognizes the right of every person to receive or communicate ideas without regard to national borders.

In France, no religious people and movements should be above the law, because everyone must respect the law. French law will not leave unpunished the condemnable actions of those who come to illegitimately proselytize and thus contravene the law. Fraud, abuse of trust, violence and assault, illegal confinement, lack of assistance to a person in danger, extreme breaches of fundamental social mores, illegal practice of medicine, abduction and brainwashing of a minor, etc. are all punishable under the law.

Thus, what Indonesia can learn is the French principles of religious liberty and supremacy of the law. Inter and intra-religious problems should be first and foremost solved by the religious groups themselves, whereas the state only interferes

so long as it is aimed to ensure the liberty of all religions and all parties involved, and to ensure that no particular group harms other groups or endangers public order, the criteria of which shall be governed by the law.

# U.S. Public Diplomacy
# in the Muslim World

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This is a constructive criticism of how, until recently, U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy have failed to win the hearts and minds of the Muslim world. U.S. politicians and diplomats, generally, have done nothing of significance that they should have been doing since September 11, 2001. Instead, they have contributed to the increased sense of threat of U.S. hegemony among 1.2 billion people in the Muslim world.

Muslims, like other people in the world, expressed horror and sympathy at what happened on Sept. 11, 2001. Indonesian leaders were among the first to express that sympathy. Middle Easterners were no exception in mourning the victims and blaming the evildoers. Soon, a "war on terrorism" was waged, but continued to be handled badly and ineffectively.

U.S. leaders indicate self-denial of American "imperialism". President George W. Bush keeps denying that the attack in Iraq was driven by imperialist motives. He denied the war was like the U.S. war in Vietnam. But people in the Muslim world could not easily place their trust in what the U.S. elite had to say. Action speaks louder than words. The U.S. attacked the wrong target -- Iraq.

And now, Moqtada al-Sadr, the young cleric who had nothing to do with the U.S. before, became involved in what he has called a "holy war against the invaders". Not religious bigotry, but a sense of anticolonialism, the nature of which was not that different to conventional anticolonialism, has emerged. While many hope that no more wars will occur in Iraq given the infrastructural damage and thousands of innocent victims, the implications of such wars in Iraq are hardly positive in the minds of the majority in the world.

War images in Baghdad, Najaf and other cities are viewed and perceived by Muslims in schools, mosques and streets as an attack on their Muslim brothers and sisters. What Americans see as a war on terrorism, many Muslims perceive as a war on Islam and Muslims. Such images and perception still prevail strongly, but U.S. public diplomacy has not coped with this effectively.

A number of concrete programs can be proposed that might improve such poor U.S. public diplomacy.

First, because Americans are overwhelmingly Christian and are perceived by others as a Christian nation (despite its internal religious pluralism), interfaith dialog within the U.S. and abroad should be the first priority in U.S. public diplomacy. As Samuel Huntington recently argued in his recent book, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (2004), American national identity is religiously Christian. Thus, I would argue, American religious leaders should take the initiative to further interfaith dialog within and outside the U.S.

Second, there should be much more educational and cultural interchange without a political impulse to tell others what to believe and what to do. Education and cultural

exchange are the heart of public diplomacy. But the principle should be intercultural learning in equality, not indoctrination and imposition of American national values. Americans have the right and obligation to promote the image and democratic values of the U.S. around the world, but this should involve and respect the values of others.

Humankind, by its very nature, has self-dignity, and is nationalistic, has ethnic ties or is religious. People normally feel deeply committed to their indigenous culture, tradition and institutions and hence often resist efforts to change them by outsiders from alien cultures.

Therefore, rather than emphasizing the promotion of "freedom and democracy" abroad, two abstract values that can be interpreted differently by different people, the U.S. should promote intercultural dialog within the context of dynamic global multiculturalism. Besides, as Huntington pointed out, whatever the goals of the U.S. elite, the American public has consistently ranked the promotion of democracy abroad as a low-priority foreign policy goal.

According to Huntington, there are three broad concepts of the U.S. in relation to the rest of the world. The U.S. can embrace the world, that is, open the country to other peoples and cultures (the cosmopolitan, universalist view), or it can try to reshape other peoples and cultures in terms of American values (the imperialist view), or maintain a society and culture distinct from those of other peoples (the nationalist view).

Cosmopolitanism and imperialism attempt to reduce or to eliminate the social, political and cultural differences between the U.S. and other societies, but neither the universalist nor the imperialist impulse will work well in the world of the early 21st century.

Third, public diplomacy requires resources. There should be an increase in budget to finance educational and cultural programs. As reported by the *Washington Post* (Aug. 19, 2004), the U.S. has redirected funds and designed a wide range of political, economic, educational and aid programs to improve lives, achieve press reform and burnish the image of the U.S. as an ally to Muslims in more than 50 countries. Yet, these efforts are underfunded. Only US$79 million goes to education and cultural exchanges and the number of people reached directly by key U.S. programs is extremely small.

Fourth, given all the mistakes, the U.S. should end its occupation in Iraq as soon as possible. The U.S. presence there has further divided Iraqis, rather than unify them. The longer U.S. troops stay there the worse the damage will be for the Iraqi people and the more difficult for the U.S. to convince the world of its goodwill.

Also, in the long run, the U.S. should support a peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians. The U.S. should serve as mediator-facilitator rather than a close ally of one side. However familiar it may be, this is still the bottom-line issue in U.S.-Muslim world relations. If this is not dealt with properly, other attempts at public diplomacy are more likely to fail.

How can the U.S. undertake the task of winning the hearts and minds of the Muslim world? Well, everybody knows the U.S. has all the necessary resources: goodwill, capital and smart people.

## U.S., Indonesia and Religious Tolerance

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Christmas comes every year; Christmas trees with all their trimmings and lights have been placed in offices, shopping centers, streets, and campuses. For many Americans, Christmas appears to be secularized, but for others, it is still a deeply religious celebration. While the nature of the state is admittedly secular, the American identity remains overwhelmingly religious.

Like America, Indonesia is overwhelmingly religious, although the nature of the state is not admittedly secular. Both America and Indonesia guarantee freedom of religion, and therefore the challenge is quite the same: How to uphold religious tolerance?

For many, "the American Creed" was initially religious. Within the new, radically different global context many Americans have turned to religion. Historically, religion has become a crucial element of American national identity. Christianity, especially Protestantism, has become the vital element of the American Creed. As Samuel Huntington has eloquently argued in his *Who Are We? The Challenges to America"s National Identity* (2004), American identity was and still is predominantly Anglo-Protestant, despite some internal and external challenges.

Arthur Schlesinger, as Huntington quotes, maintained that the language, law, institutions, political ideas, literature, customs, precepts, and prayers were primarily derived from Britain. Britain was historically Protestant, in opposition to the Catholic French during the 17th to the early 19th century, despite the current secularizing trends. But America is still predominantly Protestant.

Huntington quotes Gunnar Myrdal (the American Dilemma, 1944), who argued that Americans had something in common: A social ethos and a political creed. Myrdal wrote about the dignity of the individual human being, equality of all men, freedom, justice and fair opportunity. Alexis Tocqueville found that American people agreed on "liberty and equality, the liberty of the press, the right of association, the jury, and the responsibility of the agents of government." More recently, Daniel Bell described individualism, achievement and equality of opportunity as American values.

Huntington concurred: "the Protestant emphasis on the individual conscience and the responsibility of individuals to learn God's truths directly from the Bible promoted American commitment to individualism, equality, and the right to freedom of religion and opinion...it also promoted moralistic efforts to reform society and to secure peace and justice at home and throughout the world."

It should be added that the 2000 and 2004 elections have been partly religious as well. Religious factors -- clothed in moral issues such as abortion, gay marriage, and the emphasis on "family values" -- has helped the victory of George W. Bush. Many religious figures have attempted to shape the path toward which national and state politics should be directed.

In the economic field, "it was Anglo-Saxon Protestants

who created the gospel of wealth and the ideal of success," Robert Bellah maintained.

As Huntington pointed out, the words "separation of church and state" are not found in the Constitution, although the line between the two has been drawn to ensure religious freedom. But, interestingly in America the prohibition of an established national religion promoted the growth of religion in society.

About 90 percent of the Americans believe in God. Some 60 percent of Americans claimed membership in a church. Voluntary religious organizations have played a crucial role in deepening civic, economic and national values.

Minorities, including the significant Catholics, have been assimilated into the dominant Protestant culture. Catholics are proud of their American identity too. "Americanization", Huntington believes, has been largely successful. The Protestant character of America remained unshaken. The bulk of Americans are still Christians.

The emergence of different religious communities is one of the big challenges that American identity has to face and has not been resolved. Both the Protestants and the minorities have to redefine their identities. Multiculturalism reflects such a challenge.

Muslims in America for example love the American constitutional guarantee of religious freedom, despite the fact that it has never been of perfect equality. For example, Christmas is still the most popular and most celebrated holiday, while the Jewish Hanukah and Islamic Idul Fitri, for example, represent only a peripheral phenomena.

Americans have generally attempted to tolerate and accommodate the practices of non-Christian groups.

If American history is unique, so are the histories of other countries, including Indonesia. Indonesia was once animist, then predominantly Hindu-Buddhist for centuries, and has now become predominantly Muslim. But Indonesian religious history is quite similar to the American religious history that Huntington has spoken of. In Indonesia, it is Pancasila (the five pillars consisting of belief in God, civilized humanism, national unity, representative democracy and social justice) that has become the Indonesian creed. The Indonesian creed is also largely religious as reflected in the belief in God, albeit interpreted differently.

Like America, Indonesia guarantees freedom of religion, although for many non Muslims it is more difficult now to believe that the principles are truly implemented as they perceive more intolerance now in daily government policies and practices.

Some scholars have recently suggested that America has increasingly become pluralistic with the coming of Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists, and others, and therefore has challenged the Protestant American identity. Trans-national, diasporic, and ethnic identities have also challenged the salience of the American identity.

Indonesians have had a tradition of civil society and strong tolerance has been displayed by the country's two biggest Muslim organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama and the Muhammadiyah. But the challenge of religious tolerance is still so pressing to the new government and the already existing civil society. The meaning and application of religious tolerance is still far from being revolved. New generations of Indonesians

should redefine what religious tolerance implies and how it should be applied in different and changing contexts.

# Islam in Indonesia
# has always been Multifaceted

An adequate understanding of the history and contemporary nature of Islam in Indonesia has been and is still crucial in dealing with national, regional and world affairs. There have been two streams of thought on Indonesia's religious character among the public, policy makers and scholars. Many observe that hard-liners are still the most conspicuous phenomena in the country. "Religious" problems are still a real potential threat.

Intimidation, sweeping operations conducted against foreigners, and overly religious politics (such as the war cry of jihad) nationally and locally, which often feature Middle Eastern dress, have contributed to the portrayal of actual and potential radicalism in the country. Others, such as Giora Eliraz in his book *Islam in Indonesia: Modernism, Radicalism and the Middle East Dimension*, suggest that moderation and intellectual and organizational pluralism are the true characteristics of Indonesia's Islam. Islamic radicalism to which only a minority adhere in Indonesia has historical and contemporary connections with modernism in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and South Asia.

Yet, according to this viewpoint, in Indonesia radical

Islam never historically or contemporarily becomes a dominant or influential actor in national and regional affairs.

There is still some argument that Indonesia's Islam reflects the nature of Islam in the Middle East. Concerns for Palestine-Israel conflicts and the Iraq war in the political scene, as well as the international pilgrimage in Mecca, the traditional Islamic schools (*madrasah*), and religious movements, have indicated that Islam in Indonesia is simply a copy of Islam in the Middle East, they argue.

Islamic radicalism that has often involved Arab faces and symbols also supports this observation. Some scholarly works, such as *Globalized Islam* by Olivier Roy (2006) also pay much attention to the globalized dimension of Islam including Indonesia. What happens in the Middle East has some resonance among Indonesian Muslims and what is there can always be found here.

National or more localized aspects of Islam in Indonesia have now been given more emphasis. Islam in Indonesia is Islam within the context of the state ideology of Pancasila, which combines divinity, humanity, nationalism, democracy and social justice within the context of local culture and history. Some elements of national and local values have been Islamized, but more aspects or teachings of Islam have been nationalized and localized. This can be seen from the differences between Islam in Aceh and Islam in Sulawesi, for example.

The Forum for the Indonesian Muslim Community, recently held by national Islamic organizations, for example, has also demonstrated how Islam should also be contextualized in Indonesia. More local problems, such as corruption and poverty deserve more attention, although international issues

such as the erroneous link between Islam and terrorism and the Palestinian struggle gain attention.

Also more daily scenes of Islam in Indonesia can be seen on TV programs and read in printed publications. More Islamic programs are localized, dealing with local problems and issues. The past cases of the Laskar Jihad in Ambon and the recent case of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI)'s allegation that Dewa, a local band, had insulted Islam through using a symbol of God in their new album, can be regarded as indicators of Islam being more localized.

The difference between *santri* (good Muslims) and *abangan* (nominal, syncretic Muslims) as systematized by American anthropologist Clifford Geertz in the 1960s, also shows localized Islam in Indonesia, although it has now become more complicated, especially with the use of more Western global categories such as fundamentalists, radicals, moderates, liberals, and so forth.

There is some truth in saying that fundamentalism, moderate and radical, has emerged predominantly from and in "secular" universities and institutions, rather than from Islamic institutions, *madrasah* or *pesantren*. But the kind of fundamentalism that they show is not necessarily similar to fundamentalism in Pakistan, Egypt, Iran or Saudi Arabia.

Thus, Islam in Indonesia can be said to be both globalized and localized. It can also be said that Islam in Indonesia is sometimes more global and sometimes more local, depending on the issues being raised. It follows that Islam in Indonesia has been always complex and multifaceted.

In this regard, what is connected with globalized Islam should not be understood as always negative. Globalization has

multiple impacts on religions. Global communications have facilitated a globalized Islam, whether radical or moderate. Islamic moderation is also part of international Islam through international programs and publications that emphasize Islam as a blessing for humanity.

By the same token, not all localized Islam is positive for the people and the country. For example, the superstitious religiosity has also gained some appreciations, as in some TV programs and publications that stress short-cuts in dealing with complex realities. Rational religiosity has been challenged by the more superstitious, lazy attitudes in solving real problems. Islam can also be localized in the wrong way by promoting domestic and public violence, gender disparity and or perpetuating local corrupt leaders.

Therefore, if one has to make some generalizations about Islam in Indonesia, one should understand that such generalizations are merely a simplification of complex realities. This is partly because transmitters and interpreters of Islam in Indonesia have increased considerably due to the availability of more means of communication, more diverse educational backgrounds, and more complicated human and social problems. Religious authority has thus been dispersed. Islam in Indonesia is globalized, localized, and even personalized, and therefore is a truly complex faith and reality.

# From Tolerance to Mutualities

Generally speaking, despite British imperialism in the Middle East, the Indian continent and the Malay world, the relationship between Britain and Islam has been historically and sociologically constructive, tolerant and harmonious.

Trading links and cultural encounters have taken place for centuries. Muslim migrants and their children have become British citizens, while Britain has established economic, cultural and political links with Muslim countries.

However, Britain and the Muslim world are yet to increase the level of tolerance to the level of mutualities. Tolerance is simply meant at best as a "grueling acceptance of differences", whereas mutualities embrace respect for, and recognition of, differences. The latter term may be called pluralism.

Dialog and cooperation between Britain and Muslim communities is not a new phenomenon either. The scale and significance of the dialog between Britain and the Muslim world has today become greater since terrorism continues to be a threat, not only to the West but also to the Muslim world, including Indonesia.

With regard to the relationship between Britain and British Muslim minorities, problems have been raised and

addressed. For example, a conference, "Mutualities: Britain and Islam", held in 1999 in London, talked about a wide range of common issues, including identity ("British Islam", "European Islam"), Islamophobia and the media, race and religion, film, television and the arts, education, gender, secularism and globalization.

It was concluded that since Muslims have become part of Britain -- an asset, rather than a burden, and equal, rather than second-class citizens, differences should be acknowledged, celebrated and cultivated. Mutualities and pluralism should be enhanced.

Programs have been proposed aimed at improving relationships by improving education (curriculum and methodology, learning British history and culture, Islam), well-balanced media reports (more information on moderate Islam), strengthening Muslim scholarship on Islam and religions, reforming laws seen as discriminatory against Muslims and other minorities, such the blasphemy law, improving cultural exchanges in film, TV and the arts, and developing more intellectual and spiritual rather than legal-formalistic Islam.

It has also been felt that both parties should place Islam more centrally on the European Union agenda, to translate moderate Islamic texts, to teach English as the second if not the first language of British Muslims and to encourage Muslims themselves to correct misconceptions about Islam and the British government, and to educate Muslims about British history and culture. Mutual learning is the key to improving relations.

Prime Minister Tony Blair's recent visit to Indonesia was a good example of such mutual learning. Moderate Muslim leaders and intellectuals spoke of different crucial issues related

to the relationship between Islam and the West: the issue of Iraq -- that British and American troops should withdraw as soon as possible; Hamas and Palestine -- that the West should accept the election results; and the issue of leadership -- that the world would be peaceful if leaders followed their sincere, common sense.

Despite a complaint that radical groups should have been involved in the meetings, the dialog between Blair and respected Indonesian figures went quite well, and hopefully will influence the way in which the British government sees the points of concern. The dialog provided both an opportunity to speak as well as to listen.

A UK-Indonesian Islamic Advisory Forum is to be formed. Blair said that this forum was aimed at bridging differences and reducing prejudices about Islam. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono also hoped that with this forum, both the governments and civil societies of the two countries would periodically communicate with each other on common concerns for the sake of a mutually peaceful world.

Modern education is one of the fields that British civilization has brought into the Middle East, India and the Malay world. Many Indians and Malays, including Indonesians, have pursued graduate studies in Britain, and have taken their knowledge back with them to their home countries.

Thus, for such a forum to be effective, it is important to examine and formulate the various factors influencing Muslim-Western relations: interpretation of holy scriptures, historical legacy, missions, imperialism and Islam, nationalism and globalization, the social and political dimensions of religion.

It is now the task of both countries to seriously follow

up the initiatives under the coordination of both foreign ministers.

There is a lot more to be initiated in light of the broad objective of bridging the religio-cultural gap between Britain and Indonesia. The key step is to continue pursuing dialog, rather than confrontation, and to hold joint programs. Actions speak louder than mere words.

## Salafism and Terrorism do not Mostly Mix

A recent report issued by the International Crisis Group (ICG) entitled *Why Salafism and Terrorism Mostly Do Not Mix* is long overdue, but we should welcome their important conclusions in light of the oversimplified representation of Islamic movements and within the context of the "war on terror".

Scholars have debated whether or not Islamic fundamentalism is a threat to the United States and its allies, and whether or not Islamic fundamentalist schools foster terrorism. The report provides some explanation as to whether or not Salafism per se is a threat to the West.

First of all, the ICG defines Salafism as a movement that seeks to return to what is seen by its adherents as the purest form of Islam -- the faith practiced by the Prophet Muhammad and the two succeeding generations. They support the view that the further away from the time of the Prophet, the more impure Islam has become, and they reject innovation in religious matters, or *bid'ah*.

While the terms Salafism and Wahabism are sometimes used interchangeably, many Salafis see themselves as having taken purification of the faith one step further.

In addition, while the Wahabis look to the Hanbali school

of law for guidance, the Salafis tend to reject all schools of law and look to the *Koran* and the *Hadith* directly and literally. The ICG lists several Salafi organizations and movements in Indonesia: the Indonesian Council of Islam Propagation (DDII), the Institute for Islamic Sciences and Arabic (LIPIA), the al-Sofwah Foundation, the at-Turath network and the al-Irsyad network.

According to the report, the strictest Salafis in Indonesia are religious, not political, activists. They eschew political or organizational allegiances because they divide the Muslim community and divert attention from study of the faith and propagation of Salafi principles. They reject oath-taking to a leader, which are central to the organizational structure of groups like the Jamaah Islamiyah (JI).

Strict Salafis believe it is not permissible to revolt against a Muslim government, no matter how oppressive or unjust, and are also opposed to the JI and the Darul Islam movement because, in their view, these groups actively promote rebellion against the Indonesian state.

Salafis also tend to see the concept of jihad in defensive terms -- like in aiding Muslims under attack -- rather than waging war against symbolic targets that may include innocent civilians.

The ICG continues, suggesting that while some involved in terrorism in Indonesia, such as Ali Gufron, alias Muklas, a Bali bomber, claim to be Salafis, the radical fringe that Muklas represents -- sometimes called "Salafi jihadism" -- is not representative of the broader movement. The ICG concludes that Salafism in Indonesia is not the security threat it is sometimes portrayed as, partly because it is so inwardly focused on faith.

Therefore, the ICG argues, purist Salafis are a more potent barrier against jihadis like the JI than pluralist or moderate Muslims. If Salafi jihadis believe they are making bombs to destroy the enemies of Islam, strict Salafis may have more success in convincing them, using the same texts, that their interpretation is wrong.

Thus, the report suggests, it might be more productive to analyze the educational background and employment history of everyone in Indonesia now in custody for crimes connected to jihadist organizations. Using this information as a base, it would be useful to develop programs in a few geographic areas that include elements that JI and like-minded organizations offer.

ICG concludes that Salafism is not the source of the problem, and jihadism is far too complex for simple, silver-bullet solutions.

The report explains the phenomenon of Imam Samudra, the Bali bombing mastermind who recently published his autobiography, *Aku Melawan Teroris* (Me versus the terrorist). Samudra claims that he is a Salafi, but he always relies on fatwas, or religious edicts, issued by Saudi ulama in matters such as the veil, music and entertainment, and jihad.

He also subscribes to the Muftis -- scholars who issue the edicts -- who had fought in wars, and understands jihad partially as a holy war against "infidels", or *kafir*, who wage wars against Islam and Muslims. For Samudra, the infidels have existed since Mustafa Kamal Attaturk destroyed the Islamic caliphate.

The victorious enemy continues to the present, with the United States as commander, followed by Israel and its allies.

The bloody wars in Palestine, Serbia-Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq have raised his spirit of jihad. "Blood is paid by blood, soul by soul, civilians by civilians," Samudra wrote.

Samudra's book will be read by thousands of Indonesians and foreigners, but his religious-political interpretation is very dangerous and will pose a threat to the peaceful and tolerant version of Islam.

Samudra's interpretation of Islam is strict, literal and partial. He selects only those verses that suit and fulfill his enduring hatred against the West. He has interpreted *kafir* as the enemy that should be destroyed. He simplifies the U.S. as the *kafir* that must be diminished, while denying the complexity of relationships that exist between the West and the Middle East.

Certainly, the U.S. and its allies need to change their policies in the region, but the limited interpretations by Samudra and other like-minded individuals about jihad as violence and terror is not in accordance with the messages contained within the *Koran* and the *Hadith*. Samudra also follows blindly edicts issued elsewhere and in radically different contexts.

Therefore, improving and deepening religious understanding among their followers is a very critical obligation of Salafis as well as moderate Islamic movements.

In addition, they must incorporate a thorough study of Middle Eastern history and world politics. The case of Samudra and his groups is revealing in that the misreading and misunderstanding of "others" can be very dangerous.

The ICG report has shed some light of the Salafis and jihadi groups in Indonesia, although more research is required into the educational background and employment history of those in custody, as it suggests. But with some understanding of the diversity and complexity of Islamic movements in Indonesia, it is hoped that national and foreign intelligence bureaus can be more specific, clear and precise in dealing with terrorism. Purely religious movements should not be confused with terrorist groups.

## Pope, Islam and Future of Interfaith Dialog

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Pope Benedict XVI's controversial comments on Islam at the University of Regensburg, Germany, despite his prompt apology, has left us some crucial issues to rethink in terms of promoting interfaith dialog.

I have tried to understand why the pope made a reference to Islam when he was talking about Christian belief, reason and Western civilization, and now better understand why he was upset by the unexpected reaction to his comments and later regretted his words.

Before becoming pope, the then Cardinal Ratzinger wrote in 2004 that Christianity should be revitalized amid a secularizing Europe and West. The Hellenistic civilization influenced Byzantine, and led to the establishment of a continent that would eventually become the basis for Europe.

For Benedict, there are spiritual and rational roots in Europe and the West in general that should be defended and revitalized. In his controversial speech, Benedict intended to put into context the historical connections between those great civilizations and Western Christian civilization, and he found this context in a 14th century conversation between a Byzantine emperor and a Persian scholar representing a rival civilization of the time. In his speech, the pope seemed to be trying to bridge the gap between secularists and Catholics.

Adel Theodore Khoury, the editor of the book *Polimique Byzantine contre l'Islam*, said what the pope quoted was actually an advocation for genuine harmony among Abrahamic believers. According to Khoury, "Membership in the posterity of Abraham can foster an open encounter between the faithful of the three Abrahamic religions."

"...Rather than being an object of dispute and wrangling between the three faiths that claim him, Abraham can become the initiator and the guarantor of a serious dialog between them and of a fruitful cooperation for the good of all humanity."

Thus, in my reading, the pope's selection of the quote was more likely motivated by his intention to provide a context, not an opinion.

For many Muslims, however, the problem with the speech was that the selected quotation failed to portray a complex relationship between Islam and reason, merely for the purpose of reasserting the compatibility of Catholicism with Hellenistic rationality.

In retrospect, the pope could have quoted other phases and sides of history which provide more complex and diverse experiences of the relationship between Muslims and Christians in connection with faith and reason.

In the medieval history of Islam, many Muslim scholars, philosophers, Sufis and theologians believed in the compatibility between Islamic belief and reason, progress and humanism, despite others who believed otherwise. There are also the histories of peace and coexistence between Muslims, Christians and Jews in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and all over the world. In fact, shared and connected civilizations have long existed in parts of the world.

Religion is a complex historical and theological phenomenon. Catholicism, Islam, Judaism and other religions (and secular ideologies) have dark histories -- of polemics, conflicts and wars -- that everyone should realize and understand as part of world history. Religious believers keep the faith that their religions are essentially good. Yet, double standards have occurred: many Catholics may emphasize the normative ideals of their religion while pointing to the bad practices of other religious communities. Many Muslims say and write about the normative ideals of their religion, while at the same time criticizing the bad practices of Christians and Jews. Self-criticism is a very rare practice among believers, although it is crucial in terms of bridging the perception gaps and creating peaceful coexistence.

The pope's speech was not his first on Islam. In Cologne on Aug. 20, 2005, Benedict delivered a speech to the Muslim community. His major concern was the spread of terrorism in the name of religion, and he said, "I know that many of you have firmly rejected, also publicly, in particular any connection between your faith and terrorism and have condemned it. I am grateful to you for this, for it contributes to the climate of trust that we need. The life of every human being is sacred, both for Christians and for Muslims."

He reaffirmed that "the Church wants to continue building bridges of friendship with the followers of all religions, in order to seek the true good of every person and of society as a whole" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, April 25, 2005).

For Benedict, the Magna Carta of the dialog with Muslims remains the Second Vatican Council: "the Church looks upon Muslims with respect. They worship the one God living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, creator of heaven

and earth, who has spoken to humanity and to whose decrees, even the hidden ones, they seek to submit themselves wholeheartedly, just as Abraham, to whom the Islamic faith readily relates itself, submitted to God ..." (Declaration Nostra Aetate, n.3).

Not to repeat the mistakes of the Crusades should not mean not learning from and studying the history. Many studies on the Crusades have uncovered many revealing facts as well as mysteries. The Crusades have tended to be viewed from partial perspectives, from the Muslim side or from the Christian side (Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*, 1999).

There are certainly more theological and ethical issues that Muslims, Christians and all others need to discuss in facing the complex challenges of modern or postmodern times. As Benedict said in 2005: "Dear Christians and Muslims, we must face together the many challenges of our time. There is no room for apathy and disengagement, and even less for partiality and sectarianism ... interreligious and intercultural dialog between Christians and Muslims cannot be reduced to an optional extra. It is in fact a vital necessity".

The great historian Arnold Toynbee once said that the fate of a society always depends on its creative minorities. Muslims, Christians, Jews and others, in their respective countries everywhere, should play their roles in helping the world into peace and prosperity.

The future of interfaith dialog is still bright if everyone is sincere and serious, and Pope Benedict XVI has given a very valuable example for everyone about sincerity, empathy and seriousness in dialog and mutual understanding.

## Ramadhan in America:
## A Lesson for Everyone

In a secular nation like the United States, observing religious obligations is recognized because religious freedom is implemented seriously. I have had many experiences concerning religious freedom in the country, but the most recent one is worth reflecting on.

Obviously fasting in America is unlike fasting in Indonesia, where almost everyone joins you in your quest. The University of California at Riverside, where I teach, is one of the most diverse campuses in America. People of Hispanic, Asian, African, Middle Eastern and Caucasian origin are all proud to be American.

In the second week of Ramadhan, the Islamic Center of Riverside hosted a public gathering. The event was specifically organized for Muslims to break the fast, but everyone invited also enjoyed the food and drinks provided, including non-Muslims. Everyone who attended, regardless of their religion or identity, conversed in a friendly and respectful manner, despite the fact they had never met.

A Jewish rabbi shared jokes with the crowd and thanked the leaders of the city's Muslim community for the invitation. He said rabbis should not feel uneasy congratulating Muslims during Ramadhan. He said he hoped there would come a time when people greeted people of other religions without even thinking about it.

Symbolic gestures and greetings, however trivial they may seem, are significant in the creation of an inclusive and respectful social environment. A Catholic said he understood the feelings of Muslims, and that in Northern Ireland terror attacks have also occurred, pointing toward the fact terrorism is not associated with a particular religion.

The Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack was a turning point for different religious communities in the U.S., during which they were forced to come to terms with differences and prejudices. In a secular country like the U.S., efforts to foster interfaith dialogue and meetings are taken seriously. Muslims and non-Muslims work together to overcome misunderstandings and misperceptions between them.

In a touching speech, UCR Professor June O'Connor, a Catholic and an expert on religious ethics, emphasized the need to go beyond tolerance. One has to show true willingness to know more about others in order to achieve peace and harmony, she said. She invited the audience to strengthen common ethics shared by conflicting religious beliefs.

Another interesting aspect of the gathering was that the city's Islamic community handed out awards to recognize the contributions certain figures had made to the Islamic community and the general public.

The mayor of the city has been a leader in the areas of inclusivism and multiculturalism. He initiated a forum aimed at building a more inclusive Riverside community. In his speech, he said the inclusive community was a type of social capital

that could be seen as a great asset.

Having observed this particular event, I have some lessons to share. First, a religious community has to reach out, to embrace inclusiveness and pluralism. No one should express the idea that one religion is superior over others. One should embrace others, seek common values and set aside differences.

Second, this relationship must not be built in terms of majority-minority because everyone is equal. In the U.S., the value of inclusiveness was developed by a Catholic, John F. Kennedy, who become a president in a predominantly Protestant country. It was also developed by a Muslim who became a senator, and in the future, may be developed by anyone from any ethnic group or religion. Inclusiveness means everyone should be included without exception.

Interfaith meetings are an excellent beginning to reducing racialism, anti-Semitism, anti-Islamism, anti-Christianism and so forth. However, such meetings are not without long processes of engagement. They require moral courage and sincerity in building a cooperative, inclusive and prosperous community.

Third, everyone's contribution to the community must be recognized and acknowledged regardless of their race, gender or religion. Recognition is important and must be given by the state and/or civil society.

Fourth, Muslims can actually live a prosperous, Islamic life in a country where the constitution separates the church from the state. Muslims are proud of being American Muslims and they do not endorse the idea of an Islamic state or the formal implementation of sharia. Muslims in America

hope that the current secular constitution will last forever as it benefits rather than harms people in terms of community building.

However, this secular constitution does not mean everyone takes distrust, prejudices and stigmas for granted as if problems do not exist. The secular constitution does not necessarily mean that religious communities and leaders can not speak and stand up to express their religious views. But they speak in terms of their contributions to the larger community and to the state.

Lastly, people should speak their mind without pressure because they are speaking in a civilized and a non-threatening manner. Freedom of speech is guaranteed by the constitution, and is practiced by many local politicians and civil society leaders.

A sheik from al-Azhar University, for example, who clearly has a different viewpoint regarding how society needs to be educated, has continually been invited to give Ramadhan lectures and lead prayers in the mosque as part of his contribution to the community at large.

The secular state allows its citizens to speak their mind as long as what they say does not harm the rights of others. The most important thing is not what is said, but how it is said.

There remain many challenges ahead. Interfaith meetings are important, but not sufficient. Leaders must return to the grassroots level and reach out to the marginalized, oppressed, poor, backward and illiterate.

These people need more than just meetings. They also need interfaith social work and social, economic, cultural and political networks that reflect practical pluralism.

Like in Indonesia where such interfaith meetings are common, the challenge is the same. How can we move further toward the grassroots level?

People of different religions can learn from each other's beliefs and practices. Muslims in particular countries can learn from other cultures about how religious freedom and social inclusivity is upheld.

# PART II:
# REFORMING MIND

## Getting Literate about Islam of Benefit to All

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A well-known historian whom I observe has been helping shape American opinion about Islam, Bernard Lewis, recently published a collection of articles titled *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy War* (2003). His opinion is well founded and I appreciate many of the opinions in the book, but I found the title of the book and some of his statements quite disturbing and requiring critical reading with regard to the image of Islam and terrorism.

Lewis, for example, writes as follows: "Most Muslims are not fundamentalists, and most fundamentalists are not terrorists, but most present-day terrorists are Muslims and proudly identify themselves as such. Understandably, Muslims complain when the media speak of terrorist movements and actions as "Islamic" and ask why the media does not similarly identify Irish and Basque terrorists and terrorism as "Christian". The answer is simple and obvious -- they do not describe themselves as such. The Muslim complaint is understandable, but it should be addressed to those who make the news, not to those who report it," (p.137).

Suggesting that most present-day terrorists are Muslims does not seem to be based on scientific evidence. Also, many media quickly depict whoever acts violently as "Islamic" simply because the actors happen to have Arabic names, even if they don't describe their acts as "Islamic".

In addition, more and more Muslims and non-Muslims alike believe that terrorism actually occurs in various religions, ideologies, and even on a no-religious basis. Lewis has not done any specific research about terrorism. Even so, he should have relied on research concerning terrorism that has been conducted by others. This indicates that Lewis himself is just a victim of the often unbalanced media coverage, a fact that many Westerners have already recognized.

Lewis has overlooked the fact that the media have not always been "objective" about Islam and Muslims. I don't need to specify the precise media outlets that have shown themselves to be biased in their coverage of Islam. There are obviously many media that tend to essentialize, generalize and even demonize Islam. There are many reports, films, talk shows, and other programs that portray a negative image of Islam.

Lewis should have recognized the fact that media coverage plays a great role in shaping public image. According to a survey by The Pew Research Center released on July 24, 2003, a third of Americans say that media coverage of the Middle East has had the biggest influence on their thinking about the issue, followed by education (21%) and religious beliefs (20%). This suggests that if media connects terrorism with Islam, the public would tend to accept it as a "truth".

As a professor of religion, John Kaltner, has sympathetically contended in his recent book *Islam: What Non-Muslims Should Know* (2003) that "No religion in recent times has labored under more stereotypes than Islam. Ask a non-Muslim for a description of the 'typical' Muslim, and he or she will probably respond with one or more stocks of

characterizations, the most common being a veiled woman, a bearded cleric, a desert dweller, and a suicide bomber," (p.1).

In addition, Bernard Lewis ignored the clear fact that most Muslims in the world have condemned "those who make the news" -- the terrorists. Al-Qaeda and its international network are just a very tiny minority compared to the around one billion Muslims in the world. It goes without saying that Muslims view terrorism as "un-Islamic". Muslim countries have attempted to work together against terrorism, not simply because of U.S. pressure but because they are also the victims of terrorism. Terrorism is the enemy of all human beings, irrespective of belief and nationality.

Lewis and other academics and journalists should know that if many Muslims criticize American or U.S. foreign policy, this does not mean that they do not at the same time criticize Usama bin Laden and other terrorist actors. Most Muslims would from the outset blame terrorists for what they have done to Islam and the Muslim world in general; they have devastated the economic, cultural, and religious life of Muslims. If a terrorist employs Islam as his political language, this does not necessarily tell us about what Islam is really about. Most Muslims have taken great pains to make it clear that Islam is the antithesis of terrorism.

And in such efforts, non-Muslim journalists and academics, such as Lewis, should help improve the image of Islam as they have attempted to improve the image of other religions and of the United States in the world. As an Indonesian Muslim, I myself have tended to help improve the image of America and the West in the Indonesian media as well as the image of Islam in the United States.

Bernard Lewis has also reinforced the one-sided

meaning of jihad as "holy war", which many Muslims and a number of non-Muslim academics would disagree with. He should have informed the readers about the great variety involved in its meaning and application. Many have distorted its sense by simply assigning it the meaning "holy war", a term not found in the Koran and one that fails to do justice to the complexity of the concept.

I don't intend here to argue that Muslims have a better knowledge of the West than Westerners do about Islam. Rather, I would invite journalists, academics and decision-makers to recognize the complexity of Islam in its relations with contemporary problems. Islam should be given much more space to provide its contribution to world peace. The portrayal of Islam as a source of world conflict should be understood in context and be balanced with a depiction of it as a significant source of peace. Non-Muslims are more than welcome to help Muslims to provide a more balanced account of Islam.

Mutual sympathy, understanding, respect and collaboration among different actors are the best ways for all in preventing and combating terrorism, thereby creating a better place to live in our global village.

# Paradigm Shift in Religious Understanding in the World

As we approach the end of 2003 we must ask ourselves, as world citizens, what has become of our religious tolerance. To follow a religion has not necessarily meant that we live peacefully or righteously.

We are religious, but we are also corrupt; we observe religious rituals, but we also justify violence. Violence in the name of religion has erupted in the United States, Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa. What has become of religious understanding?

I believe that the many social, political and cultural problems that we face are tied to our poor understanding of religion. While religion has both relative and flexible dimensions, absolutism and rigidity prevail.

Violence is not isolated to conflicts arising from politics nor economics, but also stems from the lack of humanity in religion today. Religion has been interpreted as a way for God to control the world, rather than a path toward peace and the well-being of mankind.

Hate and hostility among religious communities indicate that religion has lost its vitality and no longer serves to liberate us from injustice, backwardness, or social conflicts.

A paradigm shift in religious understanding is desperately needed; a conscious attempt to change our religious attitude from hypocritical to sincere, from extreme to moderate and liberating.

This is a shift from exclusivism to inclusiveness. For example, the former would say that the church or religion is the only true form of worship. Under exclusivism, all others forms of worship are false and should therefore be destroyed. Everybody else must conform to the chosen religion and God will only side with those that do. In other words, salvation belongs to a chosen few...

Inclusiveness, on the other hand, leaves a little more room for doubt or interpretation. That is to say, a religious follower believes that he or she is right, but does not exclude everyone else as being wrong. Or they try their best to be righteous, but refrain from calling others sinners.

Puritanism is another interpretation of religion that needs to be modified. There are many religious followers who claim that their religion is the purest of all. They argue that culture, history, and environment have not affected their religious understanding. This religious understanding, they say, is universal and thus should be followed by everyone, irrespective of time or place. But a shift is needed from this attitude to one that recognize the subtleties of religious understanding.

Many religious people also tend to be coercive. They want to impose their perception of what is "right" and "wrong" on others. They use the state, political parties, or religious organizations to force others to be like themselves.

But, contrary to this, a dialogical and persuasive paradigm is that the involvement of the state, or war and terror are not justified to impose a particular religious understanding.

Such an extreme and exclusive understanding of religion is conceived in literalism, which sees text (scripture) as before and above everything. All laws documented in holy scriptures and within religious traditions should be understood and implemented as such, without the process of contextualization and without taking into account the reasons behind the laws (*ratio legis*). Religious contextualization is therefore an attempt to revise such literalism.

Another paradigm that needs to be shifted is ritualism, which emphasizes symbols without meaning. Each ritual is observed as such without an understanding of its purpose. God has commanded us to do so, and we do not have the right to ask why. This understanding should be also transformed. Humans have the right to ask why God stipulated a particular ritual. Our understanding of the purpose of a ritual would prevent us from blind observance, or the absence of a real impact on our everyday life.

Individualism or indifference is another unhappy characteristic of religion today. Followers are convinced that their path is toward a better place, but in their pursuit of happiness they are concerned only about themselves and their inner-circle. Thus, other people's suffering is viewed as an abstract concept. These so-called religious men avoid responsibility and leave those less fortunate in the hands of God.

But a shift from this attitude to a religious practice with the welfare of all people in mind is needed. While others suffer we suffer; when they are happy we are also happy. God's

blessings are for all human beings alike.

History has taught us many lessons. Exclusivism, extremism, coerciveness, literalism, ritualism, and individualism that is religiously motivated has tended to bring about human suffering and has undermined the peaceful and liberating character of religion.

The human need for religiosity cannot be fulfilled without emphasizing universal human values, such as justice, solidarity, and peace. Therefore a paradigm shift is needed to develop an inclusive, moderate, dialogical, contextual, substantive and caring religious understanding.

Religion as such is not a problem. The problem is that humans are driven by various impulses that are self-centered. Our religiosity should sustain our active involvement in social activities that solve, rather than create problems.

It is hoped that next year our religiosity will be more effective and sincere and that our social, political, and cultural lives will be more peaceful and meaningful, and that God will bless us.

# Driving Islamic Reformism from Within

*The New York Times* columnist Nicholas D. Kristof in his recent article, *Islamic Reformism: Martyrs, Virgins and Grapes* (Aug. 4, 2004), provides criticism of religious fundamentalism -- Christian, Jewish, but specifically Muslim fundamentalism -- and hoped that Islamic reformism could prevent the creation of future fundamentalists and therefore should be path taken by the Muslim world. But he does not say how Islamic reformism can be undertaken.

The article coincided with the Indonesian government's plan to host an Asia-Pacific interfaith dialogue in October to discuss terrorism and its roots. Muhammad Syafi'i Ma'arif, who chairs the country's second largest Islamic movement, Muhammadiyah, said the forum, which will be jointly funded by Indonesia and Australia, was expected to be attended by representatives from 15 countries, with hard-line Muslim groups also being invited to take part in the dialogue.

The dialogue was aimed at scotching the notion that Islam is synonymous with terrorism. It would also focus on how to empower moderate Muslim elements and analyze terrorism from a Muslim standpoint. The big question is then: Why does Islam need dialogical reformism and how should this be brought about?

It is noteworthy that Muslims have long initiated reform through the use of *ijtihad* (independent thinking), challenging blind letter-for-letter compliance (*taqlid*). Muslims have developed their own ways of coming to terms with changing times and places.

They have created Islamic methodology in dealing with religious texts, including the science of the hadith (the Prophet's "traditions"), science of the Qur'an, science of law and jurisprudence (*ushul fiqh*), and so forth. Muslim contact with Greek philosophical traditions enabled further dialogues and rethinking of Islamic tradition. Consequently, Muslim philosophers, sufis, theologians, historians, sociologists and scientists flourished during the time the West was in darkness in the Middle Ages.

But now, in this modern era, the Muslim condition is generally the reverse. Most Muslims are backward, poor and underdeveloped, and the West has become politically, militarily, scientifically, economically and culturally dominant. The ideas of democracy, liberal government, human rights, pluralism, tolerance are commonly viewed as Western, rather than Muslim traditions.

Consequently, modern Muslim history is to be measured by Western standards. Modernization in the Muslim world is assessed through Western categorization: whether or not Muslim states and societies are close to the modernization taking place in Europe or the United States.

Muslims are mostly in Asia, Africa and the Middle East -- and are only minorities in Western Europe and the U.S. Thus, many Muslims feel they have to catch up with Western modernity. Some Muslim groups become frustrated and involved in radicalism.

Internal crisis and external hegemony are some of the reasons why some Muslims need reformism. Muslims should be willing to adopt and adapt to external ideas and experiences.

Islam is said by its adherents to be the faith of both reason and revelation. For most believers, Islam is "rational", although it includes transcendental and supra-rational beliefs. Muslims should embrace science and technology.

Thus, Islamic reform should mean returning to the basic teachings of Islam, that is, the rational Islam. Here Muslims should reform themselves because their religion demands them to do so. Reform should also be begun from within. Islamic reformism should be both authentic and modern.

How can Muslims undertake reforms? Some Muslims ask whether the discourse of the Islamic liberals (i.e. Islamic reformism) has not been a form of "false consciousness", an abject submission to the hegemonic discourse of the dominant secular Western capitalist and imperialist societies, and oriental Orientalism, or whether it was and is practical, rational, emancipatory and internally well-founded. There are various answers to this, but, it can be argued, Islam and modernity are not incompatible.

For liberal, Western and locally trained Muslims, like Nurcholish Madjid and the younger generation, reformism, or neo-modernism, should mean rationalization of what should be rational in Islamic teachings. Islam is essentially a modern, rational religion.

Yet, rationalization need not mean "Westernization", because the latter would mean deracination from some of Islam's cultural roots. Not all Western cultures are relevant to Muslims, according to this viewpoint.

For other thinkers, Islamic reformism should learn the lesson of Christian Reformism -- Protestantism. Michaelle Browers and Charles Kurzman in their edited book, *An Islamic Reformism* (2004), attempt to observe how different Muslims think of their tradition and seek its reform in different ways.

Hashem Aghajari in Iran in June 2002, for example, argued that like medieval Christianity, Islam in the Islamic Republic of Iran has become bureaucratized and hierarchical and it therefore ought to embark on a "project of Islamic Protestantism" as a rational, scientific, humanistic Islam. Some further argue that Muslims should be allowed to undertake their own reformation, which would result in the reorientation and rationalization of religious values and beliefs of Muslims.

In fact, Hashem was not the first to endorse reformism. Muhammad Abduh (Egypt, d.1905) has been called "the reformer of Islam". Muhammad Rashid Rida (Egypt, d.1935) felt the need to combine "religious renewal and earthly renewal, the same way Europe has done with religious reformism and modernism." Tariq Ramadan (born 1962), the grandson of Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan Al-Banna (d.1949), was labeled the "Martin Luther of Islam."

Observing this phenomenon, the sociologist Jose Casanova contended that this is all in the very recent past: "if there is anything on which most observers and analysts of contemporary Islam agree, it is that the Islamic tradition in the very recent past has undergone an unprecedented process of pluralization and fragmentation of religious authority, comparable to that initiated by the Protestant Reformism."

How then to promote Islamic Reformism within the contemporary context of Muslim diversity and modernity? Certainly Muslims are different in their religious backgrounds

as regards education, experience and orientation. Religious monopolies are increasingly being broken by globalization and new media.

Thus, Islamic Reformism can take place in different ways in different groups, but they cannot ignore mass communications and mass education. Since there is no single way of reforming one's own religion, Muslims should initiate more dialogs and increase collaboration among themselves, and between themselves and others, including Europeans and Americans. Historically, Muslims and the so-called West have influenced each other and therefore inherent Muslim-Western antagonism is historically untrue.

On the other hand, it is also a utopian idea to think that the terrorists will become tolerant. The trans-local and trans-national terrorists should be dealt with through collaborative security measures. But world citizens, whatever their ideology, can prevent the emergence of future terrorists, partly by understanding and dealing with the root causes of their hatred. Islamic Reformism is therefore not a mere matter of religion, but also a political, intellectual, economic and cultural endeavor.

Islamic Reformism can be best undertaken from within, but this should not mean that external ideas and wider collaboration are not necessary. Within the modern and global context, Muslims do not live in isolation, neither do the Western people.

# Working to Discount
# the Growing Theology of Terror

In 2005, Dr. Azahari is gone, but terrorism neither began with him, nor will it end with his death. The military and political efforts to crush terrorist networks have certainly reduced the terrorist threat, but a more serious systematic intellectual effort to de-legitimize a theology of terror, a worldview which justifies the unjustified killing of innocent people is no less crucial in our attempt to prevent it gaining widespread sympathy and following. In our preaching, teaching, and writing, we have not done enough to de-legitimize terrorism which has made the world a dangerous place to live.

The masterminds must have transmitted their knowledge and skills to new recruits. They have spread their worldview through various means: statements, books, the Internet and mass media. The terrorists may well have sympathizers in every country in the world.

In every religion or ideology radicalization of sacred texts has long existed. In Muslim history, theological prisms were born out of politics with a religious nuance. *Khawarij* was a splinter group which justified the killing of Muslims who according to them did not obey the law of God. Today's terrorists may be regarded as the *khawarij* of the early Islamic

age.

Each sacred scripture or ideological book can be interpreted in many ways. But this semantic character of multi-interpretability does not mean that those of us who seek a peaceful world are to tolerate the intolerant interpretations of texts. In other words, we should refute the religious arguments of the terrorists -- or whatever they call themselves. It is really not enough to condemn terrorists as "un-Islamic" and leave their discourse publicly unchallenged.

To maintain that Islam allows multi-interpretations should not mean passivity, relativism, or nihilism as if there is no truth at all. To say that Islam is diverse should not mean that we should tolerate particular interpretations which not only denounce other interpretations but also wish to destroy universal humanity.

Muslim scholars now have to be more vocal to state that the terrorists are not martyrs. They should state that the terrorists will not go to heaven as they no doubt claim.

The *khawarij*-like-terrorists have used particular religious teachings for self-legitimatization, have read world events and legitimized their actions in such a way that they believe only they are genuine religious and only they go to paradise. Their interpretations of jihad, *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, and *kufr* are highly selective, literal and partial.

The terrorists have militarized the peaceful teachings of Islam. They are absolutist; they believe that their interpretations are the only genuine interpretation of Islam and the others are simply wrong.

Their definition of jihad as a holy war against unbelievers, infidels, and Muslims who do not share their views, should be declared foolish, delusive and false. They are misguided into false consciousness.

Jihad in its defensive meaning can only be carried out under particular conditions (*shurut wal arkan*), that is, legal conditions with a justified cause. The holy war waged by the terrorists has violated religious teachings by creating widespread destruction of humankind.

The terrorists do not treat the Koran justly and comprehensively. They entirely neglect the Koranic passages that urge the use knowledge and wisdom (*hikma*), good lessons (*mauizha hasana*) and better dialog (*jadal*) in their interaction with other people. The terrorists do not understand the essence of Islam to spread justice (*adl*), peace (*salam*), and blessings for the whole mankind and universe (*rahmatan lil alamin*).

The terrorists repeatedly state that they are waging a holy war against the enemies of Islam, the enemies of God, who have killed the Muslims in Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan. They feel they are in a global war and are thus justified to kill any Americans or their allies in any parts of the world. They will wage a war until there is no progeny (*fitna*), a progeny according to their own definition. They believe they are commanding the good and forbidding the evil. They claim the West is entirely evil. The Arab and other Muslim governments if not infidels are apostates. And only through jihad such a progeny will not prevail. These interpretations are literal, selective, essentialist and dangerous.

Terrorists view the world events, a country, a religion, a people in essentialist ways, in a black and white fashion. They interpret the American presence in Saudi Arabia, the conflicts in the Middle East, in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in the Philippines, in such a way that all the enemies should be fought against

everywhere.

They generalize one moment, one person, one place into the whole moment, all people, and the whole place. They cannot differentiate; they simplify the complex realities. They use myths, perceptions and sentiments, rather than reason which they do not trust. They are against reason and dialog.

They claim to follow the path of the earliest pious Muslims (*al-salaf al-shalih*), but they have actually followed the radical *khawarij* path. The Prophet and the earlier pious companions could not possibly justify the killing of innocent people and the waging of war in times of peace. The terrorists are simply misguided in their attempt at using the text and the golden age of Islam for their misreading of today's events, religions, and peoples.

It is not sufficient simply to understand the roots of terrorism. We have to deal with them seriously. The voices that resort to terror, violence, and murder, must be silenced.

# Islamo-Christian Civilization

What would most people think when they read or hear the phrase 'Islamo-Christian Civilization'? Many Muslims and Christians would likely bristle at the very idea it seems to embody, and others might view suspiciously the omission of "Judeo-" from the phrase. Many more would suspect that this is simply impossible theologically and historically. Why Islamo-Christian Civilization? Aren't Christianity and Islam distinct and separated theologically and historically?

Challenging Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*, Prof. Richard Bulliet wrote an enlightening work entitled *The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization* (2004). Such phrases as Children of Abraham, Semitic Scripturalism, or Abrahamic Religions seem to do quite well for the Islamo-Judeo-Christian Civilization, but an Islamo-Christian civilization implies that Muslims and Christians share a past, present and future.

Conventional wisdom maintains that the differences between Islam and Christianity are irreconcilable. Bulliet looks beneath the rhetoric of hatred and misunderstanding to challenge the prevailing and misleading views of Islamic history and "Clash of Civilizations". Bulliet argues that sibling Christian-Muslim societies began at the same time, went through the same developmental stages, and confront the same internal challenges. Yet as Christianity grows rich

and powerful, Islam finds success around the globe but falls behind in terms of wealth and power.

According to Bulliet, the term Islamo-Christian civilization denotes a prolonged and fateful intertwining of sibling societies enjoying sovereignty in neighboring geographical regions and following parallel historical trajectories. Neither the Muslim nor the Christian historical path can be fully understood without relation to the other.

There is still a tendency to say that Muslims are less open to new ideas than Christian Westerners, and that Muslims are more prone to conflict between themselves and to hate non-Muslims. Many Westerners view the actual life of backward, poor, and sometimes violent Muslims in the light of the ideal peaceful separation between religion and the church in the West. On the other hand, many Muslims still blame the West as the cause of their backwardness materially, and defend their moral crisis by referring to, for example, sexual references appearing in the media.

As Bulliet suggests, Westerners characterize militant Muslims as the dominant voice and scarcely recognize the presence of moderate and liberal minds. Muslims on the other hand, see the West as the secular land of sin, salesmanship, and superficiality. Both sides seem unaware of the admirable positive qualities that most Muslims and Westerners exhibit in their everyday lives.

Westerners do not include Islam in their civilization mainly because they are heirs to a Christian construction of history that is deliberately exclusive. Western Christendom has for many centuries regarded Islam as a malevolent "Other", and has created many reasons for holding to this view.

In Western academic circles, there is a strong tendency to read European or Western history from Euro-centric perspectives; that is, interpreting the world only in terms of Western values and experiences. On the other hand, Muslims also have their own historical readings, as if there where only Islamic history with no interaction between them and others.

In Indonesia, historiography tends to be exclusive. For example, Christianity has been regarded as a colonial religion; a religion that was carried and preached by Dutch colonials -- as well as English, Germans, and Americans. This has become the main obstacle for mutual understanding among Muslims and Christians in Indonesia.

The historical fact is that Christianization is not always part of a colonial enterprise. There were Christians who opposed Dutch colonialism; and when some of them did not they were engaged in education and cultural development. Many of them were independent missionaries, just like Muslim preachers. Understanding this objective shared history is crucial in rehabilitating hidden distrust between Muslims and Christians.

It is true that the majority of Indonesians today are Muslims, but this does not necessarily mean that non-Muslims, including Christians, did not play a significant part in achieving Indonesian national independence, or in postcolonial local and national development. Majority-minority perspectives have often obscured the fact that significant contributions to shared economic, cultural, and political development have been made by different religious leaders and communities.

Indonesia has actually witnessed peaceful coexistence between different religious communities. News reports and scholarly research on inter-religious conflict taking place in

certain parts of Indonesian archipelago should not overlook the more consistent and wider-range condition of inter-religious cohabitation.

Such economic, political, and cultural shared experiences are examples of how Islamo-Christian civilization in Indonesia is neither something foreign nor impossible to maintain in the future. In social, economic, and political relationships, Muslims and Christians have long collaborated at both local and national levels.

The kind of Islamo-Christian civilization that Richard Bulliet envisages has apparently worked quite well in Indonesia, but a shared religious history in which Muslims, Christians as well as other religious communities play an equal role is still far from reality. The challenge is how to establish a shared history of civilization in which both Christian and Muslim cultures are integrated in Indonesia.

In addition, religious pluralism in the sense that good Christians and good Muslims do not treat each other as "infidels", and that good Christians and good Muslims can achieve salvation and happiness, is something much more difficult to achieve.

Therefore, an Islamo-Christian civilization should consider different levels of human relations: material-economic, but also religious-moral. Our challenge is how to rethink our own beliefs in light of other beliefs, and to reinterpret our rituals and sacred texts in light of more contextual, general and shared reading of history.

Thus, to be tolerant does not simply mean pretending to be "good" to other religious individuals and communities at the social and economic levels, but also to regard the others as

we regard ourselves in terms of God's salvation and blessings here in the world and in the hereafter.

## Humanity Beyond Religion

I do not known of any disaster more horrific or more touching than the earthquake and tsunami that hit Asia at the end of 2004. Virtually everybody in the world is deeply touched and tearful. It is hard to imagine a natural disaster so devastating, taking about one hundred and fifty thousand lives and destroying human civilizations. The tidal wave was not the biggest in recorded history but the devastation in terms of human lives may be the biggest ever. It is beyond belief; it remains beyond imagination.

Many scholars and officials have started to think of how to deal with this kind of natural calamity in the future. Warning systems should definitely be established. Other technological efforts to avoid the worst impact are urged to be taken.

But spiritually speaking, this natural disaster obviously shows how human beings are indeed very weak, in the face of the power of nature. Modernity and progress quickly and inevitably disappear.

For those people who have lost their families, relatives and friends, this natural disaster has provided much deeper meaning. For Muslims, for example, the belief that all life is in the possession of God and everything is from Him and will return to Him can help comfort the survivors and those who lost their loved ones.

Many believe that natural disasters are a test from God to examine the extent to which individuals and societies are able to show their solidarity, care, and assistance: "We shall test you with something of fear and hunger, loss of goods or lives or fruit, but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere. Who say, when afflicted by a calamity: To God we belong and to Him is our return." (Koran: *Al-Baqarah*, 155-6).

It is also believed that natural disasters are also the outcome of the sinful behavior of the human societies themselves: their lack of love of nature as manifested in global warming, destruction of the environment, and so forth. But most Muslims believe that both God and humankind play their part in the occurrence and impact of natural disasters.

In any case, this tragedy is beyond any religious, cultural, ethnic, economic or political boundaries. Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, and other religious and non-religious individuals have become the victims, directly and indirectly. Grief, sadness and shock are felt by so many peoples from different faiths as they meet and share their feelings in shops, houses, restaurants, offices, and so forth. I find this a wonderful example of humanism.

For those of us who are not directly affected, it is high time we united. The United Nations have promised to provide any kind of help. Other governments have also stated what they will provide assistance. Relief efforts have begun. Despite some problems in coordination and management of relief efforts, different organizations and individuals in the world continue to collect money and other kinds of assistance. The East-West Center, for example, has raised funds through

art performances, involving students from the affected regions and participants from different nationalities and religions. There are countless activities of this kind in the world today.

Attention, care, sympathy, empathy and solidarity that the different peoples of the world have shown is unprecedented. I have not experienced in my life such a demonstration of enthusiasm to help. The amount of money that is being collected would probably, I believe, exceed any amount of money in recorded history provided for the victims of a natural disaster. Donating money is above all a sign of our deep sense of humanity.

Churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, and other religious and spiritual centers have mobilized their communities to collect and raise funds. With the help of all kinds of mass media, there appears a shared feeling of empathy and solidarity among everyone touched by the tragedy. Everybody feels they are one, mentally and spiritually. Everyone feels they are one family, as my American friends say to me.

An American teacher wrote to me: "I'm so sorry to hear about the tragedies in your country! Since I don't know where you are from in Indonesia, I can only send my deepest condolences to you as a general message for your entire country. I want to offer my assistance, where possible, to you and others. Please let me know if there are other things I might do to help. I and my husband will keep your country and its people in our prayers as the aftermath of this continues to unfold. May God have mercy on all those affected in any way. Peace to you and your family. "

This expression of condolence and sympathy is just one among so many similar messages.

I believe that this trans-religious and trans-national sense of humanity is the most valuable lesson that we can take from this natural catastrophe and that we should maintain this in situations of crisis and peace. We pray for the victims without discrimination, expressed in our own manner and language, religiously or otherwise.

We should continue to see others regardless of their color, religion, ethnicity or nationality. A sense of humanity in any form is a wonderful and beautiful thing that we should be proud of as global citizens in a borderless world. Humanism is here and should continue to exist.

## Promoting Tolerant Nationalism, Beyond Religious Versus Secular

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The commemoration of Independence Day every Aug. 17 may leave certain crucial questions unanswered, despite all the underlying spirit, surrounding symbols and colorful celebrations. One such question is whether Indonesian nationalism was and continues to be secular or religious.

Scholars have attempted to provide answers to this delicate and complex question, but most of them are trapped in a dichotomous opposition between the religious and the secular. In fact, for many Indonesian Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus and Confucians, nationalism is both secular and religious. Pancasila has become the ambiguous yet accepted ideology of Indonesia's nationalism. But what can we, as a nation, gain from it?

Most Western literature on Indonesian nationalism argues that historically the emergence of nationalism was attributed to the rise of secular leaders such as Sukarno and Hatta (both being graduates of the Dutch educational system) and a secular print media, including Budi Utomo and the Indonesian National Party of Sukarno. Nationalism is believed to be a Western import, and it was secularly educated leaders who introduced this concept to this new country.

This argument has been challenged by many. Michael Francis Laffan, in his *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia* (2003), argues that Islam played a crucial role in the rise of Indonesian nationalism. According to him, it was Muslim scholars and leaders, influenced by Islamic reform movements in Mecca-Medina and then Egypt, through their religious organizations (such as Syarikat Islam, Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah), publications and activism, who worked in anti-colonial movements during the early 20th century. These two arguments stand upon their own emphasis of certain movements and individuals in selected moments of history.

The essence of nationalism is patriotism, or love of the native land. This love of the native land has very constructive impacts on the life of a nation. By this spirit of love, all members of a nation are willing to work hard to build their country into a prosperous and peaceful one. Also by this spirit, self-determination arises and can become a strong force in self-improvement and nation-building.

In interfaith meetings, every religion attempts to argue that nationalism and patriotism are sanctioned by their religious beliefs, and their gods teach them to love their country and to work hard for it. This may be called religious nationalism, for the absence of a better term, to suggest that nationalism and religion are not incompatible in the heart and minds of many of these religious peoples.

If one says nationalism was and is Islamic, then a question may arise: Were there only Muslims who fought against colonialism? They were a majority certainly in the struggle against colonialism, but were there Protestants, Catholics, Hindus, Buddhists, Confucians and non-religious

peoples in nationalist movements?

This question leads to the very problem Indonesia has faced again and again: Is Indonesia truly a pluralistic nation? To the latter question, many Islamic political parties and leaders have only one answer: that it was Muslims who played the main role in gaining and keeping independence and therefore it is the Muslims' right to determine the direction of the nation by their particularistic laws.

It is often claimed that Muslims gave up seven words of the Jakarta Charter (with the obligation for Muslims to observe their religious beliefs) and presented it to non-Muslims of the nation as a gift. For them, Pancasila was often seen as a gift to the pluralistic nation, compromising Islamic ambitions to make the nation-state an Islamic state.

Thus it is hardly present in the minds of the Muslim majority that Protestants, Hindus, Buddhists, Confucians and others, whether or not they identified themselves as such, participated in the struggle against colonialism, and have long contributed to the development of the nation.

Pre-independence nationalism was to get rid of the Japanese and the Dutch, but post-independence nationalism was to contribute to the development of the country in all aspects of life. Some post-independence nationalists argue that nationalism should today mean anti-neo-imperialism, economic imperialism in the form of capitalism (and its representative institutions) and so forth.

More recently, some Nahdlatul Ulama leaders issued a manifesto that criticizes new modes of imperialism in the form of external forces imperializing Indonesia economically, politically, culturally and intellectually. This neo-nationalism

is sometimes linked to particular religious interpretations as well.

How should we resolve this question? There is no one answer to this. Nationalism is perhaps neutral in itself. It is a good thing to love one's country. Every community in the world today, including the Muslim world, has accepted nationalism as the best political ideology.

But we are facing excesses of nationalism: Aggressive nationalism which tries to impose one's nationalism onto other nations near and far. Between nations, tolerant nationalism, either religious or secular, should be promoted.

Indonesian nationalism, either religiously or secularly based, can have excesses and extremes as well. Extreme nationalism, for example, forces minorities to adopt the overarching political agenda that they would otherwise reject because it does not suit their needs and interests.

An extreme nationalism wants to civilize the margins (indigenous believers, religious sects, new religious movements, mountain and jungle tribes, and so forth) by way of imposition without respect for their particular conditions and needs. Within a nation, there needs to be a balance between nationalism and multiculturalism.

Thus, we should now go beyond secular versus religious nationalism. It is time to promote more substantive and tolerant nationalism: strong, solid, but respecting other concepts of nationalism and nationalities within and without the country. Tolerant nationalism is a love of one's country manifested in various aspects of life, but not at the expense of the destruction of other peoples within and beyond the constructed boundaries.

Indonesian nationalism should be tolerant in the sense that, whether religious or secular or mixed according to different communities, it should respect minorities and the marginal, and at the same time should respect other nationalisms outside it. One of the outcomes of such tolerant nationalism is continued participation within the nation and peaceful coexistence and fruitful cooperation outside it.

## Toward Global Multiculturalism

The contemporary world still demonstrates clash of ethnicities: U.S-the Middle East, Israel-Palestine, India-Pakistan, Philippine-Moro, and Aceh-Indonesia, to mention only the most striking ones. In spite of the triumph of capitalism and the collapse of communism, history has not ended yet. Differences between communities always exist and for different and complex reasons, differences lead to wars and world disorder. In my view, global multiculturalism could be the politico-philosophical answer to today's world conflicts.

Nationalism in its various manifestations (ethnic, religious, secular, etc) has proved to be among the most powerful ideologies ever followed by most communities, even though nationalism has not necessarily superseded other identities such as religion and tribalism. The problem is that a nation hardly imagines itself coterminous with mankind. Nation, according to Benedict Anderson, is imagined as a community, or as a fraternity, that makes it possible for so many millions of people to die for such limited imaginings.

Nationalist leaders may speak in the name of "democracy", "civilization", "peace", but at the same time could act in a non-democratic and uncivilized manner, in the name of nationalist

security or interest. In addition, while they can claim to seek international peace, they are actually harboring hegemonic or imperialist designs. Here nationalism becomes aggressive. Thus, as history shows us, forced nationalism extends abroad: Pax-Americana, Pax-Britannica, Pax-Romana, Pax-Arabia, etc. In fact, imperialism in the name of nationalism has become a mix of love and hatred, peace and war, blessings and sufferings.

In the book *The Invention of the Americas* (1995), Enrique Dussel depicts the cruel terrors of European conquest. "Evils accompany war: the clamor of arms, sudden, impetuous, and furious attacks and invasion; ferocity and grave perturbations; scandals, deaths, and carnage; havoc, rape, and dispossessions; the lost of parents and children; captivities and the dethronement of lords; the devastation and desolation of cities, innumerable villages and other sites." Indeed today and in the past, the conquest is not typically European

Given its negative excesses, nationalism should not be an absolute ideology. There are always reason and unreason in nationalist ideology. As history shows, nationalism can be excessive and aggressive. Even religion can be made to justify aggressive nationalism. Fundamentalism can be secular or religious, but it has the potential to absolutism.

The will for wealth and domination has not ended yet. Jacques Derrida, in his *The Other Heading: Reflections of Today's Europe*, wrote: "Europe takes itself to be a promontory, an advance – the avant-garde of geography and history. It advances and promotes itself as an advance, and it will never have ceased to make advances on the other: to induce, seduce, produce, and conduce, to spread out, to cultivate, to love or

to violate, to love to violate, to colonize, and colonize itself." These can occur not only in Europe, but also in the U.S., Middle East, Asia, and elsewhere.

Such will for domination has been made possible because many leaders still view the world in terms of core and periphery, their own nation being at the core, and other nations at the periphery. Self-glorification often corresponds with diminishing the others.

Learning from history, world leaders and citizens should realize that there are multiple cultures, or in this modern era, multiple modernities, admitting the limits of Western modernity. As S.N. Eisenstadt nicely put it, all historical and contemporary developments attest to the continuing development of multiple modernities, or of multiple interpretations of modernity – and above all to the de-Westernization of modernity. In this broad context the European, American or Western modernity or modernities are seen not as the only real modernity but at best as one of multiple modernities – even if the West has played a special role in the origins of modernity and in the continual expansion and reinterpretation of modernities.

As we come to multiculturalism, it has been generally viewed within the boundaries of the nation-state. What if we extend it to a global context, taking into account diversity of cultures cutting across such national boundaries? It sounds plausible to me to promote global multiculturalism as an alternative to aggressive nationalism, religious fundamentalism, ethno-nationalism, and racism.

Multiculturalism should not be merely a descriptive category, by simply saying that well, the world is diverse and multicultural. It needs to be normative as well, that requires

certain attitudes and practical foreign policies. As Fred Halliday (2001) put it, when reviewing Cornwell and Stoddard's book *Global Multiculturalism: Comparative Perspectives on Ethnicity, Race, and Nation*: "Multiculturalism becomes a deliberate approach to diversity, a type of normative discourse."

Yet, global multiculturalism should not be at odds with global humanism. There are inhuman cultures. Not every aspect of cultural diversity is worth of respect. Some differences, such as racism, ought not to be respected because it is both anti-multiculturalism and anti-humanism.

Humanism encourages common human values which are shared by most. As Vaclav Havel eloquently put it, "Different cultures or spheres of civilization can share only what they perceive as genuine common ground, not something that few merely offer to or even force upon others. The tenets of human coexistence on this earth can hold up only if they grow out of the deepest experience of everyone, not just some of us."

Global multiculturalism and humanism can coexist in international relations as global conversation or global dialogue becomes priority before anything else. Thus, voices of dialogue, such as Hans Kung's *Global Ethics*, Muhammad Khatami's *Dialogue of Civilizations*, Anwar Ibrahim's *Global Convivencia*, need to be provided a greater space in public discourse and world politics. So do such theses as *World Peace through World Law* (Clark & Sohn) and *World Order Models Projects* (WOMP).

In these theses, there is a positive escape from self-absolutism which negates the others, which drives a healthy skeptical epistemology. There is also a will to be self-critical

that avoids cultural imposition and military aggression, that paves the way to pluralism, which in turn leads to global coexistence and peace.

Humanity has been created to form tribes, races, nations, religions, and other identities, whose differences in physical characteristics, languages, and modes of thought are but the means for the purpose of *lita'arafu,* to use an Islamic term –"getting to know one another".

Dialogue has become an imperative at a time when the world has shrunk into a global village. For it is a pre-condition for the establishment of a global coexistence and peace, a harmonious and enriching experience of living together among people of diverse identities. Clash of identities can be diminished by a conscious attitude in order that they could coexist and cooperate in resolving common world problems such as terrorism, poverty, and environmental disaster.

## The experience of Islam in Multicultural Malaysia

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Islam in Malaysia remains moderate, it is often argued. In response to the Singaporean senior leader Lee Kuan Yew, who recently commented that Malaysia was increasingly predominated by pro-Islam leaders and to similar Western voices, Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi asserted that Malaysia is not taking the path toward extremism. Yet, this public diplomacy does not necessarily mean that no struggle has taken place within Muslim groups in the country.

Muslims are usually called "moderate" by becoming "democratic" and "modern". When compared to Indonesians, Malaysian Muslims have fewer religious organizations, but they are educationally and technologically becoming more "modern". In Michael Peletz's words, Malaysia is "Islamic modern". Malaysian scholars, Azmi Aziz and Shamsul A.B, have shared the notion that sociological realities, namely a pluralistic society, secular government and modernity, have resulted in the creation of "moderate" Islam in Malaysia.

Unlike Indonesia, which has about 230 million people, Malaysia has only about 26 million (Malays about 56 percent, Chinese 25 percent, Indian 8 percent). Unlike Indonesia, which subscribes to *Pancasila* (five pillars of state-ordained ideology) as the state philosophy, Malaysia gives Islam an official status,

while recognizing religious diversity. In Malaysia, religion and ethnicity are closely interwoven. To be Malay one has to be Muslim. If a Chinese or Indian wants to be fully integrated into Malay society, he or she should speak Malay and adhere to the Malay religion.

As Prof. Leonard Andaya observed, there is a strengthened identification of Islam with Malayness. Therefore, Islam continues to comprise the major line of religious demarcation between the Malays and non-Malays. There exists an "ethnicization of Islam" and Islamization of ethnicity in Malaysia, a process not present in Indonesia.

Ethnic prejudices and in-group feelings may still be present in Malaysians' daily lives. Interestingly, although the government privileges given to Malays in the field of education, business and public administration to bring them up to the level of the other ethnic groups, called *Bumiputera* (the people of the soil), they have managed to ensure political stability and economic advancement. Differences and prejudices have not turned into social unrest or riots, which could harm stability and progress. After the 1969 riot there has not been any significant racial, ethnic or religious unrest as is so common in Indonesia's Kalimantan, Maluku and Java.

While major Islamic organizations (Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, Persatuan Islam, and more) have colored the face of Indonesian Islam, fewer Islamic organizations are present in Malaysia although there are some religious orientations like NU (more conservative old faction/*Kaum Tua*) or like Muhammadiyah (more reformist young faction/ *Kaum Muda*). Traditionalism, neo-traditionalism, modernism, neo-modernism and even Islamic secularism are also present in Malaysia.

The *dakwah* movements, such as Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (Malaysian Islamic Youth Organization, ABIM) with the slogan "Islam first, Malay second", have played an important role in shaping religiosity of contemporary Malays. The current popularity of headscarves among Malay women, the importance of *halal* (permissible) food, the popular use of Arabic names, the establishment of Islamic banks and universities, and other Islamic projects show an increasing "Islamic hegemony", as the outcome of both civil and state Islamization programs.

There are now fewer major political parties in Malaysia than in Indonesia. Most Malays, Chinese and Indians are for the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), while the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PAS) gained its major support in the state of Kelantan, less in Trengganu and Kedah, and even less in other states. The Dominance of UMNO in Alliance (Barisan Nasional) assures privileges for Malays. Mahathir Mohammad introduced the concept of the "new Malay" which implies a transformed Malay identity with a high economic profile and a Malay with increased religiosity.

The struggle between "political Islam" and "cultural Islam" has also taken place in Malaysia. There are still differences between the Islam of PAS under Nik Abdul Aziz and the Islam of UMNO under Mahathir Mohammad and now Abdullah Badawi. PAS keeps criticizing the kind of Islamization of UMNO. Recently, when Abdullah Badawi and some groups promote a Civilized Islam' (Islam Hadhari), emphasizing cultural and scientific approaches to Islam, PAS leaders challenge this by promoting "Islamic Civilization" (*Hadharah Islamiyyah*), which stresses that Islam is a totality of life. PAS has often blamed UMNO of marginalizing Islam as the complete way of life.

PAS development is dynamic and changing according to local and global contexts; its political programs are not necessarily "extreme" when compared to the Taliban in Afghanistan or other reactionary groups elsewhere. PAS can today be compared with the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) in Indonesia, although the former is more actively promoting the enactment of the *hudud* (criminal) legislation particularly in Kelantan. Anwar Ibrahim, now being marginalized, for example, has expressed his agreement with some of PAS' ideas of promoting discourses on social justice and clean governance.

Apart from UMNO and PAS, more liberal Muslims continue to challenge conservative and more political Muslims. Sisters in Islam and smaller non-government organizations have recently considered promoting values such as human rights, religious tolerance and substantive religiosity. A few publications have also been promoting more colorful interpretations of Islam. In addition, TV programs and art performances show a combination of tradition and modernity. Modern and postmodern cultures using Islamic themes are also present. The struggle also continues against such problems as corruption, vote-buying, moral decadence, social injustice and human rights violations.

Thus, although the government has played a moderating role in ethnic and religious affairs, and has served as an agent of modernism, the time will tell whether it too will succumb to even greater Islamic measures. One thing is for sure however: The struggle of Islam will continue within a multicultural Malaysia and in a changing world.

## Islamic Moderation in Singapore Thrives in a Secular Environment

Singapore is a unique example of how Islamic moderation could be made possible by a politically and economically secular environment. It is commonly held that global modernity has nothing to do with tradition and religion. But if one more closely observes, religious lives can be interrelated to the ways in which a country modernizes itself in economy and education.

It is true that Singapore remained one of the most tightly controlled, though nominally democratic, states in Southeast Asia. With a total population in 2000 of four million -- 77 percent Chinese, 14 percent Malay and 8 percent Indian -- Singapore faced sensitive issues relating to ethnicity, though there was little overt unrest.

With a highly urban character and its predominantly Chinese population, Singapore became Southeast Asia's most thriving entrepreneurial state and a major regional -- and global-communications center by the early 1990s, though it was done at some cost in personal liberties, self-expression and stringent controls continued on information and the media.

But paradoxically, most Singaporeans seem to be quite happy about their religious lives. The question arises: Is that because economic development has actually transformed in positive ways the pragmatic, thus tolerant minds of the religious peoples? Is the religious freedom that they have been experiencing made possible by their prosperity? What is the relationship between religious observance and global modernity appropriation?

In Singapore, where (mostly Malay) Muslims constitute a minority living in a society undergoing far-reaching secularizing changes, some 68 mosques stand as an important bulwark of Muslim identity and community integrity. Though the main function of a mosque is as a place of prayer, the mosque plays a variety of roles. Many such satellite mosques have also *madrasah* (modernized Islamic schools) and pre-school centers. Mosques also provide diverse services, mostly religious, educational, social and economic ones. Religious development and economic modernization seem to support each other.

Islamic organizations such as PERGAS (Union of Singapore Islamic Teachers) and MUIS (Council of Islamic Religion in Singapore) have been actively engaged in educational and social activities. Singapore has conditioned MUIS, for example, to have a vision of reaching towards "a community of excellence that is religiously profound and socially progressive."

MUIS further spells out the desired attributes of the Singapore Muslim community with respect to socio-religious life, namely to hold strongly to Islamic principles while adapting itself to changing contexts.

Unlike Indonesian Muslims, Muslim communities in Singapore are comparatively "conservative" in their religious

beliefs and practices, but "progressive" in terms of economic and social behavior.

The kind of Islamic "conservatism" can be easily recognized (headscarves and Arabo-Malay attire) due to the influential role of the particular kind of Middle Eastern Islamic preaching, publications and organizations. In fact, Singapore used to be the center for Islamic publication in Southeast Asia. Although they are conservative in religious belief and practices, they are against radicalism and terrorism.

For example, a Singaporean Malay Muslim woman said, "We as Muslims should not be defensive about the misperceptions linking Islam to terrorism; it is our responsibly to explain that Islam has nothing to do with terrorism; if the terrorists claim themselves as Muslims they have misinterpreted some of the Koranic verses; but for us the terrorists are not truly Muslims because the meaning of Islam itself is peace."

It is also very interesting to understand the extent to which Singaporeans experience religious freedom of its own. When I attended a Global Education Convention at the National University of Singapore in which international educators and students shared their knowledge and experiences in an attempt to promote global citizenship and education, I observed and talked to some of the Singaporeans about their religious lives.

Most of them are proud of being Singaporean and of the ways in which religious beliefs are being practiced. In places of worship, it appears that different peoples of religion (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity) are quite content with the development of their religious lives.

Thus, when a country prospers, radical Islamism becomes less possible. Singapore provides a case in which

Muslim minorities can actually live peacefully and prosperously in a secular, globalized country. Despite the imminent threats posed by Southeast Asian terrorist networks, Islam in Singapore can coexist with economic and political secularism.

# Enhancing US-RI Education Cooperation

The United States-Indonesia Society (USINDO) Special Event: "Expanding Bilateral Education Cooperation under the Forthcoming Comprehensive Partnership between the United States and Indonesia", and the 90th anniversary of the Institute of International Education (with counterpart the Indonesian International Education Foundation), are very timely, and have left us with both challenges and hopes.

The speakers tried to explain why the number of US-Indonesia educational exchanges has declined over the years. What would it take to increase those numbers under an Indonesia-US comprehensive partnership, currently being planned?

What needs to be done to familiarize Indonesians with opportunities to study in the US? What fields are suggested for partnership between American and Indonesian institutions?

What role can the Indonesian public play in the development of partnership goals in education? Increasing the number of Indonesian students to study in American universities for degrees (undergraduate and graduate) and the number of American students to study in Indonesia is one such challenge.

The appeal of Indonesia to American students and public, and America to Indonesian students and public cannot be increased without proactive and strategic marketing from both ends.

Information about opportunities, including scholarships and assistantships and procedures to prepare and to succeed needs to be supplied more effectively and attractively through websites, brochures, visits, and students, teachers and alumni ambassadors.

Partnership implies equality, but Americans thus far have more financial and technical resources than their Indonesian counterparts.

For example, it is more likely to have American students self-financed to visit and study in Indonesia than to invite Indonesians to fund themselves to study in America.

Scholarships are for most Indonesians the only possible means, but there are an increased number of such scholarships (provided by international funding agencies, departments, universities and research centers), but the information is yet to be disseminated more aggressively to a wider networks of Indonesian educational institutions and the public.

The National Education Ministry and its directorates play a crucial role, but NGOs and private educational institutions should have more initiatives to start building relationships with American institutions through correspondences and visits followed up with joint programs. Networking is the key to mutual gains, but effective and sustained networking seems still to be lacking.

Americans, either paid or working as volunteers, are expected to teach, train, or guide Indonesian teachers and or students in Indonesia, not only in lectures, but also focused

workshops in fields of common interest, such as English, research methodology and writing, American history and cultural diversity.

On the other hand, Indonesian educators, paid or volunteer, can teach American teachers and students in America about Indonesian language, history, culture, economy, politics, and so forth.

Faculty exchange will help improve mutual understanding and appreciation of shared characteristics, unique histories and diversities.

Fields of study have varied, including political sciences, anthropology, sociology, religious studies, Islamic studies, and other arts, humanities and social sciences, but also climatology, tourism, arts, business and management, urban planning, computer science and other natural sciences and technology.

The key idea here is that people know what they want and are excited to learn and how what they learn can benefit the advancement of knowledge and science in both countries.

Each university needs to recognize what gaps in fields of study that could reduce the over-supply of certain fields and a lack in other fields. Distribution of fields of study in universities or regions is important.

Indonesian scholars fall short in international publications, especially in English. Local scholarly journals have increased in quantity, but few Indonesian scholars publish and are cited internationally. To improve this gap, American and Indonesian scholars who have published internationally should help their Indonesian fellows individually or collectively in conducting research and

writing scholarly articles.

In writing scholarly articles, access to primary and secondary sources is crucial, and American universities can help Indonesian institutions build and improve their library collections of books and journal databases.

Apart from electronic materials, another aspect of educational development is the availability of affordable printed books. In India, for instance, publishers have been able to reproduce international books in local papers with affordable prices.

It is also strategic to increase translations of quality Indonesian research products into English, not simply English materials into Indonesian.

Indonesia has become a field of research for many American scholars, but Indonesians have yet to make Indonesia as their field of research and make themselves as producers of knowledge, but also make America and other countries their research fields. Indonesians and Americans have learned from each other's strengths and weaknesses, but more importantly, this mutual learning should be recorded as research can help strengthen knowledge and technology development.

An increased literacy of both Indonesians and Americans requires political and social engineering, but there is the prerequisite of a cultural paradigm, that is, to be educated is a public right.

# PART III:
# MODERATING IDEOLOGY

# The Arab-Israeli Conflict:
# Between War and Peace

Optimism and pessimism about the Middle East crisis will depend on the perspectives of all the parties involved in seeing the crisis and how they can deal with them seriously and wisely. I agree with an Israeli Professor Benyamin Neuberger from the Open University of Israel (2006) on that the conflict should not be seen in a black-white fashion as many seem to have shown. Everyone should realize that the conflict is not a monolithic, but a highly complex phenomenon.

Neuberger said that there is no eternal conflict in history. The conflicts between Germany and the Jews in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Muslims and Christians in Europe with the Crusade (from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries), and other conflicts, have no longer occurred, despite some ramifications today.

Professor Benjamin Neuberger argued that the relationship between Israel and Palestinians, the Arabs, and the Muslim world is not entirely of conflict, unlike the general image in the media. The fact is that there have been peace attempts from both the Israeli and the Palestinian and Arab governments and civil actors. For example, Israel had

relationship with Egypt and Jordan: agreements were signed albeit broken. Many informal talks and agreements continued to be held between Israel and Morocco, Tunisia, Suria, and Qatar.

However, Neuberger said that with the more recent rise of HAMAS as the governing political party in Palestine, Israel though that they had to start all over again in the peace-building; Israel find it much more difficult to deal with HAMAS because HAMAS had not accept the existence of the state of Israel and has not clearly denounced "terrorism" as the Israeli government and the West have often seen it. In Neuberger's view, the root cause of Arab-Israeli conflict is not the dispute on the territory or Jerusalem; the root lies in the non-acceptance of the existence of the State of Israel in most Middle Eastern governments.

The attitude among the Arabs toward the existence of Israel was neither static nor unified. The secular Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) under Yasser Arafat tended to be moderate, willing to resume talks despite disputes and disagreements. There were some tactical and pragmatic changes in both Israeli and Palestinian authorities.

But it seems that pragmatic changes were not accompanied by ideological changes. Most of the Arabs, and the Muslim world, could not accept the existence of the State of Israel. Zionism continues to be unacceptable, despite the fact that Israel has existed since 1948.

Actually, among the Muslim world, there are governments and peoples who begin to accept the coexistence of two countries: Israel and Palestinian State. In Israel there is some realization that they are Palestinian people who need their own political institutions and the state, although there

are also many Israelis who still believe from their ideological reading of the Old Testament that Palestinian did not exist. There were only Arabs of the Israel, rather than Palestinian, according to these Israeli people who reject the possibility of a Palestinian state in the region.

In Israel, the different factions actually would not be able to win the elections without ensuring the future of peace. The Israeli want peace.  But powers are not unlimited. There should be limits to powers. Once a regime in Israeli admit that their powers are limited, they would make compromises and moderate their absolutist paradigm regarding Palestinians.

Of course, among Arabs and Israeli, there has been a cognitive dissonance. There is a perception of incompatibility between two Arab and Israeli cognitions, attitudes, emotions, and beliefs. But actually many people in the Arab countries and Israel have tensions in their own minds. This uncomfortable tension should theoritically serve as driving force that compels the mind in both sides to acquire new thoughts and perspectives, to modify existing beliefs and attitudes, so as to reduce the amount of dissonance or conflict between cognitions.

The two states solutions, in my view, is the only viable solution. The 1967 boundaries should be resumed. The partition can be worked out. There should be greater Istrael or greater Palestine. The historical and the ideological dimensions of the conflicts should be carefully managed by the leaders in both sides so that more pragmatic solutions will b worked out. More talks, dialogues are indispensable. Both sides, with the intermediaries of international communities, including the most popular nation, Indonesia, should start to resume communications.

More specifically, for HAMAS, they should renounce

violence and start to recognize Israel. For Israelians, they should cease their state terrorism against the Palestinians as well. And for the international community, including the United States, they should be more neutral and more objective. Neutrality, objectivity, and moderation, are very hard to uphold in international relations, but only through these, any viable solution to the Middle East crisis can be achieved.

# Nonviolence as a Means to Combat Terrorism

Terrorism has today become an overworked term in domestic, regional and global politics in many areas, not least of which, the United States. However, the major focus has been on physical, often violent reactions to it.

It is unfortunate that many policymakers have continued to respond to terrorist threats by strict military actions, rather than by finding out ways of dealing with it much more effectively.

It should be stressed that there are nonviolent responses to terrorism as many peace studies scholars have attempted to promote.

Among the many studies of how terrorism should be curbed nonviolently, is the work of Tom H. Hastings, entitled *Nonviolent Response to Terrorism* (2004), which argues that the war in Iraq and other places in the name of the war on terror is not effective in preventing terrorism. Hastings maintains that what needs to be worked out is many different short-term and long-term nonviolent ways of responding to terrorism.

Despite the on-going militaristic mindset of many of the policymakers in the United States and other countries, there have been rapid and significant advances in non-

militaristic ideas. International negotiation, mediation and adjudication have progressed through experience and research in the past several years and the skills are available to negotiate with anyone, including officials of terrorist organizations of all stripes. The fields of international aid and nonviolent interposition have grown in knowledge and application.

It is useful to understand different nonviolent responses to terrorism. For the moment, there are sanctions that focus on and affect elite officials only (not the populace in general), mediation, negotiation, adjudication, international law enforcement, nonviolent resistance and interposition, as well as global opprobrium against all violence and a complete halt of arms trade and manufacture.

Long-term nonviolent responses to terrorism can include the scaling back of consumption by rich nations, massive aid to poor nations and populations, refugee repatriation or emigration and debt relief to the poorest nations. Other responses include education about the roots of terrorism, education and training about nonviolent power, promotion of culturally and ecologically sensitive tourism, cultural exchanges, sustainable economics and energy use, as well as fair distribution of agricultural products.

There are a wide range of actions that can be undertaken, but unfortunately, very few has been seriously taken into consideration by domestic or international policymakers. The roots of terrorism have been recognized by many people, but few leaders have paid attention to dealing with them.

One of the roots includes cultural gaps because of the natural differences between human beings. This is related to ignorance and a sense of injustice, whether imaginary or actual. Here cross-cultural communication is crucial in bridging such

gaps, but many policymakers pay little attention to this.

What they are very eager to demonstrate is their force and power. They reinforce militarism, while overlooking the need to ask for consultation from the many peacemakers, religious leaders and community figures.

I still find it hard to understand why the administrations of the the U.S., Britain and Australia do not start to use nonviolent responses to terrorism. Violence will only create more violence. I share the belief that violent response to violence tends ultimately to breed continual violence. History proves that each time the military is used, civilians are killed or become major victims.

What we see each day in Iraq, and often in Palestine, is that hatred has been responded to by another, often more destructive, hatred. Killing civilians, including women and children, is never justifiable, but many policymakers seem to ignore the very fact that according to the latest reports thousands of Iraqis and soldiers have lost their lives, not to mention property. This obvious fact has never made the government leaders or the people of the U.S. and others rethink their militaristic policies.

Nonviolence is more effective that any other mode of response to violent attack. A nonviolent response to terrorism does not mean tolerating terrorism. It does not mean that military strength is not important. What I disagree with is the mindset and policies that always respond with violence first and foremost before anything else.

It is high time for the policymakers to rethink their military responses to terrorism and to find alternative ways and give more attention to nonviolent responses. If a leader really intends to build peace, then he or she should first exhaust all nonviolent means of dealing with violence. Otherwise, our world in which we all live together, will not be a safer place. People will always think of others in terms of their antagonists rather than which commonalities we share. People will always have a negative perspective about what the other side is doing. If there is no trust, there is no peace. And trust can only be built by mediation, negotiation and dialog.

## Middle East Peace process after Yassin's killing

The assassination of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin -- the founder and spiritual leader of Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement, *Harakat al-Muqawwama al-Islamiyya*) -- by Israelis in Gaza, certainly deepens the divide and worsens tension among those involved in the Middle East peace effort. Among the Palestinian and Arab world, revenge has been vowed and anti-Israeli sentiment has become the common language in offices and on the streets.

For Ariel Sharon and his supporters, the murder was a blow to, what they perceive as, antiterrorism efforts, comparable to the American pursuit of al-Qaeda. Israel's objective was to root out the radical elements. For Palestinians and all those who seek peace in the Middle East, by this, Israelis are the peace breakers.

World leaders in the European Union and the Arab and Muslim world were shocked by the news and condemned this brutal and illegal move. All agree that the assassination was against international law. Even U.S. officials, under the pressure of such widespread condemnation, criticized Israel, stating that the assassination was "deeply troubling". The U.S said that the action would do little for progress toward peace in the region.

The killing had particular impact for U.S. officials as they had welcomed Israel's plans for "disengagement" from Gaza and parts of the West Bank. U.S. officials said that the killing was a mistake that would make Arab cooperation in the withdrawal more difficult, particularly regarding Jordan and Egypt.

Since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, the peace process in the Middle East has undergone ups and downs. Talks, cease-fires, and attacks are endless phenomena. Little progress has been made. One of the major obstacles for making progress has been rejections from both parties, the Israelis and the Palestinians. Likud Party has shown the most radical attitude among the Israelis and tends to avoid compromise.

Hamas, on the other hand, promoted the rejection of the very existence of the State of Israel and tended to avoid the need to hold international conversations. In 1988, Hamas asserted that "the Muslim Palestinian people reject the surrender solution and international conferences, for these will not restore our people's rights in their homeland... Liberation will not be completed without sacrifice, blood, and jihad."

For Hamas, Palestine is a homeland that should not be shared with the Israeli Jews. Hamas views the Israelis and their main supporters and allies as "enemies". Yet, over the course of time, Hamas has not become a monolithic movement and its ideology is not entirely static. Two wings may be discerned: The religious and the military, although both are connected in many respects. Sheikh Yassin has been well known for his spiritual and religious teachings, rather than for his military leadership and involvement.

Yassin's "anti-colonial" ideology was born out of the Israeli occupation. His family was among those who became refugees in 1948, and he grew up in the occupied territory. Rejectionist ideology resulted from alienation from his land and property. "If there was a choice between death and the loss of one's homeland, one would choose death," said Sheikh Bitawi, another leader of Hamas.

At the same time, the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood -- founded in 1928 -- greatly influenced the Islamic nature of Hamas, but the occupation was the primary background of its rise in 1988, and its development. The uprising by stones *intifada* was among the main products of Hamas and has appealed to many Palestinians and the international world. It has become an icon of resistance against colonialism.

Given the characteristics of Hamas, any peace talks would not bring about progress without the involvement of parties in Palestine, including Hamas. It would be a huge mistake to undermine the role of Hamas in peace talks, even though its leaders tend to reject such conversations.

It is also a grave mistake to aim to crush Hamas. Hamas -- as an icon of resistance -- has been omnipresent in Palestine and in the Arab and Muslim world, despite disagreements in ideology and strategy.

For a peace talk to make a difference, the task would not be merely to moderate radical Palestinian attitudes, but also to moderate the radical, militant elements of the Israeli government and Jewish people, as rejectionism is not exclusively observed in Palestinians. Therefore, U.S. and international pressure should be directed toward both Palestinians and Israelis -- to restrain from destructive moves and to compromise their total rejection of others.

The role of Sheikh Yassin was so crucial that his absence will have a great impact on the future of Hamas. Many believe that there is no leader comparable to Yassin. However, younger generations have become members or supporters of Hamas and it seems likely that this generation will take over the leadership.

As a result of Israeli militant attitudes, the radicalization of the Palestinian youth will be the main phenomenon in the future. More and more attacks against Israelis are likely. And the Israeli soldiers will be required to be both defensive and offensive. Conflicts will be more severe and the number of victims will increase.

However, despite the assassination, all parties should remain optimistic about the future. There are some strategies that could provide reason for hope. First, the participation of all parties in the Middle East peace process is vital. No party should go its own way.

Peace in the Middle East will not be realized unless all parties are treated justly. The only hope for the future is the coexistence of the two peoples based on equality and self-determination.

Second, international intervention through detailed peace strategies is desperately needed to prevent the increasing episodes of violence, and to move toward reconciliation. The United Nations should impress upon the Israelis that the killing was destructive and counterproductive to the peace process. The U.S. and international community should be more direct in condemning the Israeli government whenever injustice occurs, not just in acts carried out by Palestinian suicide bombers.

Third, a military strategy should not be an option at all.

Killings, attacks, terror, and other kinds of violence committed by either side should come to an end. Dialog, compromise, and reconciliation are the keys for the Middle East to make progress toward long-term coexistence and peace.

## Hamas Victory and Middle East Peace Process

There are now two general political views and attitudes towards the victory of the Palestinian Hamas in the context of the Middle East peace process: Pessimism and optimism. The United States, Israel and some European leaders, which brand Hamas as a terrorist group, consider this triumph as a shocking set-back and they are reluctant to appear optimistic.

Some, including Indonesia, are more positive, however this will depend on the way in which Hamas runs the government, solves internal problems, and deals with "significant others", especially Israel.

By participating in the local, municipal, and now general elections, Hamas has actually of itself changed. Founded in 1987 by Shaikh Ahmad Yassin and Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi, it was partly shaped and even aided by the existence and attitudes of the Israel occupation, and was partly influenced by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood movement. Israel helped weaken the Palestinian Authority under Fatah that led to the strengthening of Hamas.

Hamas provided hope for many discontented Palestinians, because of what they saw as a corrupt and ineffective Palestinian Authority. It is formally committed

to establishing a Palestinian state within its own borders, and to the destruction of the state of Israel. It has pursued this aim through a series of attacks on Israeli troops, settlers and civilians both in Palestinian territories and in Israel.

However, it also assists ordinary people in settlements and refugee camps. Hamas has gained support because of its charity work and its corruption-free image. Significantly, in the election campaigns Hamas omitted mention of its long-standing commitment to destroy Israel, and raised the possibility of indirect negotiations with the Israelis. Now, by winning the elections, Hamas would in all likelihood have to shift their violent, radical policies to more moderate strategies befitting a responsible government.

Recent results of general elections in Iran, Egypt and now Palestine, show that the Middle East is actually taking the democratic path. Radicalism and terrorism have existed partly because certain elements have seen no viable political alternative to pursue their aspirations.

The participation of Islamic movements in the democratic process will likely reduce the possibility of underground resistance and violence. The elections have been praised as free, fair, transparent and peaceful, which should be regarded by other democratic governments as a good sign.

Hamas leaders and the Palestinian peoples now face even greater challenges.

First, they must be able to convince people in Palestine and Israel that they will no longer endorse violence.

Second, despite the triumph, Hamas must fulfill their promise to collaborate with Fatah and smaller parties; they should no longer reject each other; they must build their country together. They have democratically won the elections and they must show that they are also able to govern democratically. Hamas has the right to form the new government, but the new government must govern democratically and professionally.

Third, and this is probably the greatest challenge, Hamas must change their political attitudes to Israel. Hamas should be willing to deal with Israel; they must talk. Conventional rejectionist attitudes will not help at all in the peace process.

Being in a position of power, Hamas cannot ignore its partners in the Middle East and international communities. Politics means compromise, and if Hamas cannot compromise, then the path to peace will become much more difficult. All have to come to terms and adapt to the new reality.

Of course, the challenges are now being equally faced by Israel, the U.S. and the European Union. Many tend to see the victory as an obstacle to the peace process. But they will have to moderate their views and accept the current political reality.

They cannot say that the election was democratic but disregard and isolate the winner, in the same manner that Hamas cannot win democratic elections but at the same time reject the right to exist and live peacefully with their significant others. Both sides of the equation cannot be ignored. Both must negotiate, no matter how hard and painful.

Peace in Palestine will now greatly depend on the way that Hamas runs the government, its behavior in internal affairs, and its dealings with other important players. If they can ensure all of this, they will win international support and long-term peace in the Middle East will be more likely to prevail.

# War is the Spiritual Cancer

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Terrifying terrors in the United States, and recently in Indonesia, should be enough in teaching valuable lessons to world citizens. International military cooperation, technical cooperation, and ratifications of conventions are important but cultural approaches should be much more strategic.

Inter-civilizational and inter-religious dialogue should bridge differences and distrust. Dialog is the best option for international communities in order to develop more peaceful relationships based on mutual understanding, recognition, listening and respect. Through dialogue, world citizens are able to set up common platforms towards global peace. There are four irrevocable directives: culture of nonviolence and respect for life, solidarity and a just economic order, tolerance and a life in truthfulness, and equal rights and partnership between all human beings.

Common platforms can be derived from all theologies and world views, and be developed by openness of mind and eagerness to learn in order that all parties have the same substance of faith and the similar direction of lives. Any effort to do justice to all creatures, without discrimination and exception, must be strongly promoted. Religions should provide humanity with a world view that unifies world society

and provides a moral code within which human beings can orient their lives. Religious exclusivism must be subordinated to humanity because religions exist for humanity.

While each religion has its own particular basis of authority for the implementation of ethical standards, the practical results are to a large extent similar. Many basic ethical principles are common to all religions. Justice is central to the teaching of all religions. All enjoin their followers to do justice and benevolence. The realization of justice in our societies depends on the insight and readiness to act justly. Rights without morality cannot endure long, and there will be no better global order without a global ethic, and there will no global ethic without a global responsibility.

Since all human beings share in high dignity, they have the right to be respected, served and loved. Christians, Muslims, Jews, and other religious peoples are obliged to render love and service to all people. Human dignity may be promoted by respecting the dignity of life, the dignity of spirit, the dignity of conscience, and the dignity of freedom. Every human being, without exception, possesses an inalienable and untouchable dignity. The Golden Rule, which is found in many religions and ethical traditions is: What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others!

Every form of egoism, or every self-seeking, whether individual or collective, whether in the form of classicism, racism or chauvinism, is to be rejected, for all these prevent humans from being authentically human. In inner orientation, in the entire mentality, in the "heart", religions bear responsibility in a special way. We are convinced that the new global order will be a better one, only in a socially-beneficial and pluralist, partner sharing and peace-fostering, nature-friendly, and

ecumenical globe.

The spiritual problem of modern man is one of those questions that belongs so intimately to the present in which we are living that we cannot judge of them fully. The modern man is a newly formed human being. The question seems rather vague, but the truth is that it has to do with something so universal and so global that it exceeds the grasp of any single human being, of any single religion.

We have all the responsibility to replace the history of conflict with the history of harmony and peace. We must be willing to look at ourselves with critical eyes and our readiness to confront in our tradition anything that may, intentionally or otherwise, contribute to the demeaning of others. To prevent wars and terrorism is not spontaneous. It is a civic and active position. Dialog and peace education should be foremost and be strongly promoted.

## Dangerous Intentions

The Iraqi war has killed hundreds of Iraqi civilians as well as soldiers from both sides and destructed Iraqi historical buildings. Yet few people realize the potential impact of the war on intercultural relationships. President George W. Bush and President Saddam Hussein are aware of uncertainty and difficulties in terms of their military action, but they haven't shown their sensitivity over its negative cultural implications. Since they entered the war, they are no longer the masters of policy but the slaves of unforeseeable and uncontrollable events.

Bush and Hussein show their dangerous minds. Their confidence was so strong that they embraced moral absolutism. Both use religious language, regardless of their secular leadership. God is to take sides. As Bush claimed, Hussein is evil, and we are pure and good; our cause is just, may God bless us. Hussein soon replied, God's victory will be us. One's tendency to demonize the enemy has led the other to do a similar demonizing, just like the war between Hitler and the Slavs. When Hitler stated: "God has made our nation. We are defending His work by defending its very existence." The reply from the other side, from followers of Pan-Slavism, was equally true to type: "The German monsters are not only our foes, but God's foes."

Not only have Bush and Hussein manipulated religion, they also take nationalism to the extreme. Bush has believed in zero-sum terms: the gain of mine is necessarily the loss of others. Bush presents the immoral and irrational penumbra of nationalism, which is the attempt to enforce his own interests to the direct damage of those of others.

Bush claims to liberate Iraqi people, but the Iraqi people don't want Bush to liberate them by destroying their fatherland, lives, property and civilization. Most Iraqi people themselves do not share the rhetoric goal merely told by the aggressors. It is far from reality that Iraq will view America as a hero. America will be seen as threatening, not leading peace. Americans have no right to tell the world about democracy and peace. Instead, American government's self-glorification would be seen as a political arrogance.

Bush is apparently decisive, but towards a dangerous direction. He fears that his people are surrounded by a world of enemies. This is a culture of fear. This aggression can be an endless process in which it would serve as a stepping-stone for further expansion. This could be used by others as a pretext for radicalism and terrorism.

This aggression implies racism. Racists have a worse record of patriotism than the representatives of all other national ideologies altogether. They were the only ones who consistently denied the great principle upon which national organizations of peoples are built, the principle of equality and solidarity of all peoples guaranteed by the idea of mankind. Bush does not give up the idea of mankind, but thinks that America is the supreme guarantee of humanity.

Bush denies any equal relationship between human races, justifying the distinction that East is East and West is West

and never the twain shall meet. Darwinism was strengthened by the fact that it followed the path of the old doctrine that "Might is Right." Bush's idea of conquest demonstrates the embracement of the survival of the fittest.

If a recent polling indicating that some 70 percent of Americans support the aggression is valid, it would mean that most Americans are suffering from false consciousness, uncritical patriotism and blind support for their government: "Right or wrong is my country." This can be a real obstacle to world pluralism.

The war can widen the gap between the self and the others. Prejudices, hatred and misunderstandings would increase as peoples tend to show their absolutism, rather than moderation and relativism. It is this moral absolutism that has lead to American exceptionalism.

The war is not between religions or civilizations. It is essentially a war against humanity. This is a tragedy of humanity in which all rationale-critical individuals, regardless of identity, must regret and then support for its end. Moderation and moral relativism are necessary for peoples to coexist.

## The Epithet "Islamic Fascism"

President George W. Bush's epithet "Islamic fascists" in talking about the arrest of the suspected terrorists in London (and about Hizbullah and HAMAS) and the popularization of the epithet by other politicians associating particular strand of Islamic ideology with "a new type of fascism" does more harm than good in our attempt at bridging the perception gap between the Muslim world and the West. These buzzwords and excessive jargons, especially among American fundamentalists, have shifted us from identifying and solving the real problems and the root causes of transnational terrorism, the enemy of all world citizens.

There are some reasons why the labelization of a group of terrorists with Islamic fascism is unhelpful in our peace making and peace building efforts. First, "Islamic fascism" is more a portrayal, imagination, invention than an explanation of the fact and historical truth. Of course President George W. Bush and others using the term do not feel the need to explain their definition and do not care about how this term might insult the Muslim majority, because for Bush and others it has becomes clear that terrorists fight against freedom and democracy. The terrorists do not use the word fascism and most moderates do not view them as such. Fascism which emerged in Italy was then used very loosely to mean all kinds of ways.

Second, it will incite more buzzwords coming from Muslim radicals. The term Islamic fascism can be misused by the radicals and the terrorists themselves in their counterattack. In world history, the use of buzzwords during wars are common among conflicting parties, Today there are the same buzzwords used to demonize the West, American, Jewish people, Israel, the "infidels", etc. For example, in an Iranian newspaper, Bush is depicted as "the 21$^{st}$ century Hitler" and Tony Blair as "the 21$^{st}$ Mussolini". Certainly Bush and Blair do not like to be called with that. This is thus the task of the leaders and moderate groups everywhere to moderate the extremists on both sides of the conflict. Demonization creates further demonization, and violence comes very easily from and with this. But for the 21$^{st}$ century generation of peace leaders they must stop using terms and jargons that are not in conformity with facts and realities.

Third, the moderates feel uneasy and uncomfortable about the attachment of the term fascism to the peaceful religion of Islam since fascism has been commonly used in derogatory and negative manner. It will become harder for the moderates and liberals to bridge the gap between themselves and the radicals when they know how the Western leaders are so easy to make fun of Islam by putting any kind of extremist words to the religion. For the moderates, terrorism, or fascism, is alien to Islam, and this should be born in mind. When Al-Qaida use Islam for their violent acts the moderates can easily say "that is not our Islam" and the latter can work to discount their theology of violence. But when the outsiders or the enemies of the terrorists label the terrorist group with Islamic fascism, the moderates cannot say "that Islamic fascism is not our Islam" because the terrorist themselves do not use the term nor do they show a full conformity with the characters of fascism.

Forth, when Islam is attached to an extreme ideology, it may imply that Islam plays a part in the creation of such extremist ideology. All scriptures, Old Testament, New Testament, Veda, and the Koran can be interpreted to legitimize any strands of political ideologies, but most religious believers, the majority, would not accept that their ways of interpreting religious scriptures are accused as destructive or extremists. The feeling of the majority will not be different when for example Christianity or Judaism is associated with fascism by some. The same feeling will also arise when for example terrorism is associated with American ("American terrorism", as many people in Iraq, Afghanistan, or Vietnam, perceive it). Therefore, categorization seems always simplistic, but can become unhelpful and dangerous when the majority (Muslims, Americans, Westerners, etc) do no share certain derogatory epithet.

If they wanted to refer to group of terrorists, they may name them with their self-identification (Al-Qaida, Jamaah Islamiyah, Islamic Jihad, HAMAS, Hizbullah, etc) instead of using Islamic to any ideology emerging outside Muslim tradition and history without clear definition and full understanding of the characteristics and diversity of Muslim movements. In 2005, George W Bush gave a speech: "[Islamic terrorist] attacks serve a clear and focused ideology, a set of beliefs and goals that are evil, but not insane. Some call this evil Islamic radicalism; others, militant Jihadism; still others, Islamo-fascism. Whatever it's called, this ideology is very different from the religion of Islam. This form of radicalism exploits Islam to serve a violent, political vision: the establishment, by terrorism and subversion and insurgency, of a totalitarian empire that denies all political and religious freedom." Here there is some clear confusion on President Bush's mind about the nature of terrorists in particular and Muslim movements in general. I should quote what French philosopher Claude Lévi-Strauss says "Words are instruments that people are free to adapt to any use, provided they make clear their intentions." Categorization becomes useful and helpful if it clarifies what one is trying to say in order to facilitate communication and understanding.

The war today seems to be waged by both sides which are fundamentalists, either some Western fundamentalists, and some Muslim fundamentalists. Extremism and the use of violence have emerged from the part of the Western peoples, as well as from the part of the Muslim groups. We may say this is the clash of fundamentalisms, and for most cases, clash of ignorance, since both sides do not want to moderate their attitude and believe in their self-prophecy and has the divine task to fulfill. They fight against each other on behalf of God and in the name of God. And God might be "laughing" watching His creatures fighting against each other, killing civilians, and destroyed civilization in His name and in His service.

Both sides, Western governments and the terrorists, have to understand the limits to their powers if peace may be achieved. If they continue to be preachers of hate and actors of war peace will never materialize. What we need now is not to appease both Western arrogance and to appease the terrorist groups. What we need today are "boundary leaders" who are honestly and seriously willing to pass over their own ways of seeing things to others, to understand why they hate us as well as why we hate them, and to find compromising pragmatic ways in solving the why, or root causes, not by perpetuating the already long existing gaps. What we need now are convincing speeches that try to talk to and to convince as many people as possible in pursuit of world human peace.

# Remembering
# Global Humanist Edward Said

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Edward W. Said, an international scholar famous for his theory of Orientalism, died in New York on Sept. 25 at the age of 67 after a battle with leukemia. Said was a literary critic but was also known as a prominent Palestinian activist. Leading lawmaker Hanan Ashrawi described his death as a "huge loss for the Palestinian cause, for the world and for humanity".

For Said, Orientalism centered on the ideas and practices, intellectual or otherwise, produced by Westerners about the "East". The Orientalists created their own discourses about the East for their own needs and interests. Orientalism was ideological, largely associated with imperialism, where distinctions between Western superiority and oriental inferiority were systematically built up.

Said looked at "oriental" studies to understand the way cultural domination operated. The Western view of the East as sensual, corrupt, vicious, lazy, tyrannical and backward exemplified this power, Said argued.

Said said that there was no such thing as an overall, monolithic Orient, and that it was not really a fixed category of study.

He explored processes of representation of other cultures, societies and histories, the relationships between power and knowledge, as well as methodological questions. According to Said, Orientalism involved several aspects, including the changing historical and cultural relationship between Europe and Asia, the scientific discipline in the West, and the ideological suppositions, images and fantasies about "the Orient".

In other words, Said also established that colonial discourse was intrinsic to European self-understanding, determining how Europe and Europeans could locate themselves -- as modern, as civilized, as superior, as developed and progressive -- only by reference to an "other" that was represented as the negation of everything that Europe imagined or desired itself to be.

Said attempted to demonstrate that the Orientalists always attempted to control the East with the knowledge they had. Power was regarded by Said as not necessarily political, but also cultural.

Said's approach was emancipating because it left the interpretation of Islam to Muslims. He argued that a political interpretation of Orientalism was possible, but did not realize that his critique of Orientalism could be regarded by his critics as equally political.

In response Said wrote that he regarded himself as an advocate of humanism. He argued that the paramount issue in the struggle for equality in Palestine/Israel should be directed toward a human goal -- peaceful coexistence.

The political scientist Leonard Binder shares Said's view that Orientalist discourse in general is "violent" in its

effect on the Islamic world, but the discourse of Islamic apologetics is also so in its impact on the West. Instead of being trapped in violent and inhospitable discourse which has been so far expressed by either "Orientalists" or Muslims, scholars need to envisage some compromise and dialog.

Binder writes, "We have not yet gone beyond this stage of the limited violence of discourse toward some deeper understanding of the being of the other, but at least we have not yet drawn back to the greater violence of silence."

Orientalist discourse is not always purely academic, but it is not inherently violent either. The time has come for Muslims or peoples in the East to benefit from a number of positive orientalist methodologies and products (encyclopedias, libraries, translations, etc.), which Muslims themselves have perhaps little capability in doing so. And vice versa.

All intellectuals from the West and the East should be aware of their limits and shortcomings, and should avoid vested interests of imposing unequal relationships if they want their discourse to be meaningful and useful for others.

Dialog must feature mutual understanding, and as such humanism will become possible.

Said recently reminded us of a global interdependence: "We must admit that no one can possibly know the extraordinarily complex unity of our globalized world, despite the reality that the world does have a real interdependence of parts that leaves no genuine opportunity for isolation." A fitting parting message for any attempt at crucial dialog and discourse.

## Shirin Ebadi Epitomizes Women's Jihad

Shirin Ebadi, an Iranian Muslim woman, recently won a Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her ideas and activities promoting the rights of women, children and refugees in Iran over the past three decades. Despite some criticism that her selection had a European political objective, Ebadi, the first Muslim woman, the third Muslim, and the 11th woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize, provides a good example of "gender jihad" in the Muslim world.

Jihad has been long and mostly associated with holy war, a male custom closely connected with military-like and violent acts. The term jihad is used as an antithesis to the West, as summed up by "McDonalds versus McJihad", "Jihad against America", and other similar slogans.

On the other hand, many Islamic organizations are accustomed to employing the term jihad to describe their struggle against what they perceive as enemies. Some even justify suicide bombings by using the term jihad. Thus, jihad has come to signify male-related violent struggles.

Yet Muslim women have been playing a great role in jihad, not in its military-like associations, but in the struggle against discrimination, domestic violence and social injustice. This type of jihad involves the struggle for basic women's rights both in the domestic and the public spheres.

Muslim women have demonstrated multiple voices of jihad, but most have emphasized the moral and spiritual struggle against backwardness, poverty and social injustice. Muslim women also believe in the universal applicability of jihad and agree on the high status of women accorded by Islam, but they interpret and implement jihad according to different perspectives in their local contexts.

Aisyiah, the women's wing of the Muslim organization Muhammadiyyah, and Muslimat, that of Nahdlatul Ulama, have been among the active Indonesian women's organizations in such "gender jihads". Both organizations engage in religious propagation, and educational and political activities. They run orphanages, maternity clinics, hospitals and day-care centers. They are actively involved in establishing cooperatives in villages. Most of their activities are conducted in rural areas where they attempt to help eradicate illiteracy and to encourage women to be more independent.

Other, more recently established organizations, such as Rahima, Puan Hayati, Cut Nyak Dien and the Liberal Islam Network, involve many young and educated Muslim women working in groups and developing networks in pursuit of their goals.

They have raised various issues such as domestic violence, unequal domestic relations (including the issue of polygamy), a greater role for women in politics, and economic independence.

In dealing with such issues, Muslim women have attempted to use different channels and means, including the media, the Internet, publications, workshops, and advocacy. They never use violent, military means to promote their ideas. Some join demonstrations, but every time women are involved, demonstrations turn out to be peaceful, including demonstrations involving Muslim and non-Muslim women demanding an end to the violence in Maluku.

In addition, Muslim women are concerned with resistance against state oppression, which in their eyes contributes to gender inequality. Through its laws and regulations, they take the view that the state has contributed to much of the political and legal climate that allows male dominance in the public sphere. They have thus enjoined the state to guarantee quotas in the legislature as a form of affirmative action to ensure that more women get political opportunities.

Another important issue is religious interpretation, which these women view as favoring men. Rethinking religious texts (the Koran, the hadith, or sayings of the Prophet, and *fiqh*), the interpretation of which has been male-biased to date, also represents part of their jihad.

Moderate and liberal Muslim women believe that gender inequality in Muslim families and societies has primarily resulted from improper religious interpretation and practice. They maintain that religion should never discriminate against human beings on a sexual basis.

One striking feature of this contemporary jihad is the networks established by individual Muslim women and institutions across national borders. Thus, Muslim women's institutions in Indonesia are linked to the Sisters in Islam in Malaysia and other women's organizations around the world. They hold conferences and other joint activities, not only to solidify their networks but also to provide a space where Muslim women can discuss their concerns, problems and proposed solutions.

A number of Muslim women's organizations also work with non-Muslim organizations. Interfaith women's networks and movements are made possible by the fact that women's problems cross religious lines. Jihad for them does not mean converting others to their faith, as some understand the term, but rather helping women understand their basic human rights and working out ways in which they can be liberated from social injustice.

Yet across the Muslim world, such active, progressive women are a tiny minority. Many more Muslim women are needed to take initiatives and work with men in such jihads, to focus on the empowerment of women as part of the true struggle against backwardness, illiteracy, poverty and social injustice.

# Nurcholish Madjid
# as Indonesia's Great Teacher

Indonesians have felt the deep loss of one of their great thinkers. Nurcholish Madjid, widely known as *Cak* Nur, was one of the country's most influential thinkers who had been lauded internationally since the 1970s. A wide range of labels have been attached to him: Reformist, neo-modernist, nationalist, moderate, liberal, and most often the nation's "great teacher" (*guru bangsa*). It is important to remember and appreciate some of what Madjid taught at a time when we continue to be in need of inspirational and enlightening ideas to solve this country's multitude of problems.

At the base of his often elaborate ideas, Madjid kept emphasizing that it was our mindset (ideas, ways of looking at things, thought paradigms) as a people that needed to be reformed before anything else. The key concepts that he tried to develop were modernization and secularization, pluralism, nationalism, good governance and universal values. In other words, Madjid saw that the nation's problem lay in the wrongheadedness of the leaders and the people -- dangerous ideas like traditionalism, fundamentalism, absolutism, sectarianism, corruption and vested interest.

For Madjid, one had to free oneself from outdated and

traditional values and seek those that were oriented toward the future. Focus on the past and excessive nostalgia had to be replaced by a forward-looking attitude. The process of freeing the teachings and views of religion from the traditional, closed ideas of the past involved such processes as secularization, the encouragement of intellectual freedom and openness.

Secularization for Madjid was to make what was temporal stay temporal. He saw that Muslims tended to make all things religious and sacred. He thought that Muslims should distinguish -- among the values that they considered Islamic -- between those that were transcendental and those that were temporal. Muslims should always test and retest the truth of a value in the face of material, moral, or historical facts, Majid said.

His famous catchphrase "Islam Yes, Islamic Party No" was intended to be critical of the fact that the formally stated Islamic political parties had failed to attract the majority of the Muslim community and had failed to build positive and sympathetic images. He was also against the concept of an Islamic State, which he considered unrealistic as well as legalistic. What the nation really needed, said Madjid, was the implementation of universal basic values such as social justice, prosperity, and peace, rather than focusing on past and outdated ideas.

According to Madjid, Islamic ideas could best solve economic, political, or social problems if they were adjusted, refreshed, renewed, and organized in ways that they were in step with the realities of the present age. The principal teachings of Islam about social justice and the care and protection of the weak, the poor, and the oppressed, had yet to have a practical application that was both dynamic and progressive. It was only

through the afreedom to think and to express opinions that the best ideas and truths could be found.

Madjid believed that the idea of progress came from the notion that humankind was intrinsically good, pure, and yearned for truth and progress. A reactionary attitude stemmed from a pessimistic view of history. Consistent with this idea of progress being openness, was a readiness to accept and take values from whatever sources as long as they contained truth.

Madjid saw modernization not as "Westernization" but as a form of rationalization. He attempted to base his ideas in various and rich primary sources in Arabic, English, and other languages, not to mention the Koranic verses and the Prophet's sayings and deeds as well as historical experiences.

Madjid endorsed nationalism, not for its chauvinist forms, but for its positive and constructive forces in preventing sectarianism and sustaining true unity. Nationalism shaped his Islamic thinking and his Islamic views colored his nationalist views. His last speech in absentia on the eve of the 2005 Independence Day celebrations was about how to revitalize nationalism and pluralism.

Pluralism for Madjid was the acceptance of diversity as the work of God and the historical necessity within Muslims and among different religious and nonreligious communities. Madjid believed that there was a universal truth, a common platform that transcended all religions and beliefs. He shared the view of the Koranic commentator Abdullah Yusuf Ali who wrote: "As God's Message is one, Islam recognized the true faith of other forms, provided that it be sincere, supported by reason, and backed up by righteous conduct."

Madjid always elaborated on his ideas, rather than

simply sloganize. Madjid saw it as important to explain issues and problems historically and philosophically, but was also careful to ensure what he believed could be justified by a strong theological basis.

Madjid was not only a great thinker; he was also a man of action. He spoke humbly, moderately, elaborately, systematically, and clearly and never raised his voice emotionally in speeches when he disagreed with others. His active involvement in different Islamic, inter-religious, national, and international movements only showed how seriously and wisely he acted on what he thought was right.

As the nation's great teacher, his enlightening ideas have inspired many politicians, intellectuals, academics, and the general public. When leaders and their followers needed intellectual inspiration to help solve national problems, they listened and read what Madjid had to say and write.

Madjid has left us some invaluable legacies. He showed us that the big challenge for this increasingly educated generation is for it to be seriously critical of itself, to start reform from within, to develop a renewed sense of morality by making use of a wide range of sources wherever the truth is to be found, in order for all to live better in prosperity, justice and peace.

# Munawir Sjadzali
# and
# Islamic Contextualization

One of the great scholars and statesmen in Indonesia, Munawir Sjadzali (79), passed away last Friday in Jakarta. Among other professions and activities, Munawir Sjadzali was a minister of religion for two terms from 1983 to 1993, a member of the Human Rights National Commission (Komnas HAM) from 1993 to 1999, and a member of People's Consultative Assembly (1987-1992). Munawir Sjadzali is very well known nationally and internationally for his breakthroughs in the religious, governmental and human rights fields.

I read the news about *Pak* Munawir's death in mass media right after I reread his book entitled Islam and governmental system. He did his M.A. in political science at Georgetown University, Washington. His education was unique at his time, because he studied at both the *pesantren* (boarding school) and the "secular" school. He was exposed to both traditional and modern education.

Among many, I am personally grateful to his educational policy of establishing Islamic high schools of special programs (*Madrasah Aliyah Program Khusus,* MAPK) in a number of

regions throughout Indonesia. I was a graduate of one of the high schools in West Java, which was aimed to train young Muslims to be what he calls intellectual religious scholars (*ulama intelektual*). The educational system was innovative in the sense that religious sciences, such as *tafsir, fiqh, hadith, tasawwuf*, and Arabic, were taught in combination with "secular modern" sciences such as math, physics, chemistry, English, history, and so forth. Thus, two systems of *pesantren* and modern class system were adopted to create educational and academic excellence. At the schools, students have to speak Arabic and English daily.

I still have a vivid memory about when Munawir explained one of the backgrounds for the establishment of such special high schools. "I don't want that Muslims can only read the Indonesian translations of Islamic books. They should be able to read the books themselves and think creatively to produce their own interpretations of Islam".

*Pak* Munawir was also a statesman. One of his political ideas concerns the relationship between Islam and politics. For example, he wrote, "after studying the contents of Al-Qur'an, it can be said that the Muslims' Holy Book contains a set of principles and moral values for life within a community and in a state, loyalty to leadership, equality, justice, freedom of religion and mutual respect among *ummah* (communities) of various religions. But more than that, both the Qur'an and the Prophet's Tradition do not teach a specific government system to be followed universally by Muslims. The Prophet died without leaving any guidance on how the Islamic *ummah* should decide their leaders or heads of state, on how to regulate the relationship of authority between a head of state and people, on limits of authority and terms of office for a head of state, on whether he can/cannot be relieved from his function." Pak

Munawir is an advocate of substantive Islamic politics.

He believed that the Pancasila, the five pillars of the state's ideology, had become the best and most suitable form of state for Indonesia which should be praised and proud of. The spirits of Islam and the spirit of the Pancasila were for him compatible. The current form of political ideology of Indonesian state had been for him final and therefore there was no need to promote an Islamic state like other Muslim countries.

*Pak* Munawir then promoted among Muslims of the acceptance of a law on social organizations, which formulated the Pancasila as the sole basis for social and political organizations. This law was a final step toward the de-politicization of Islam.

About ten years ago in the month of Ramadhan I visited Pak Munawir's house in Jakarta with my friends, all graduates from the *pesantren*-high school in West Java. He and his wife welcomed us very hospitably. He showed us his home library with huge collections in different languages. We discussed many issues, one of which -- I still remember --was the importance of dialogues and rationality in religious teaching and education.

*Pak* Munawir didn't prefer one-way education system in which teachers indoctrinate students. He also expressed his preference to enjoy dialogist preachers rather than monologist ones. Muslim leaders, he said, should encourage rational thinking, rather than blind imitation in religion. That's why he had an important policy of sending hundred of the academic staff of his ministry and the institutes for Islamic Studies abroad for study, mostly to the Netherlands, the United States, Australia and Canada. Now many of the graduates, have played

an important academic and political role in their institutions, nationally, and internationally.

One of his books was entitled "human rationality" (*ijtihad kemanusiaan*). For him, Muslims had been too much concerned with classical and medieval products, but are not independent enough to produce their own laws according to their times and places. There should more independent reasoning which allows authenticity and flexibility for the benefit of as many humankind as possible because Islam should be a blessing and grace for all humankind (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*).

Among Muslims, *Pak* Munawir was mostly famous with his idea of contextualization of Islam, a controversial idea at that time, along with other ideas of indigenization (*pribumisasi*) of Islam by Abdurrahman Wahid and that of secularization of Islam by Nurcholish Madjid. One famous example of such contextualization was inheritance. Local tradition shows that most Indonesians have governed their inherence according to their local traditions, giving men and women equal portions. Islam, according to *Pak* Munawir, should be interpreted and applied in consideration of local traditions. In this effort, there is no way other than emphasizing rationality.

He reasoned that Muhammad's successor, Umar ibn Khattab, without hesitation changed some of the rules of the Qur'an and the Prophet in an effort toward contextualization, *maslahah* or *istihsan,* to use the Western as well as the Arabic terminology. His ideas received criticisms, but many gave him their support and attempted to develop it in different ways.

*Pak* Munawir had done great things to his religion, nation, and family. He was man of faith and knowledge. He was both statesman and scholar. He gave a great contribution to the development of modern Islamic education, Islamic contextualization, as well as of a substantive politics in Indonesia.

# Barack Obama

# and

# Revival of American Values

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Barack Obama's rise to the presidency of the United States of America is a historic moment for Indonesians as much as for Americans and others around the world. Barack Obama has been shaped by history and is making history.

To me, Barack Obama is the second person I become proud of whom I can personally and intellectually relate to after Muhammad Ali, a Muslim African-American boxer.

As an Indonesian, born and raised in Indonesia and who studied abroad for a doctoral degree at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and as an assistant professor at the University of California, Riverside, I have become increasingly in love with America as much as with Indonesia. America has its shared values. And so does Indonesia.

The greater challenge for America and Indonesia is how to revive those values and who can lead the nation in the right direction.

During my five-year residence while studying in Hawaii I found the people incredibly diverse and hospitable. I volunteered in the international student's organization as well as in the Indonesian community. I learned that bridging differences was the key to resolving miscommunication, prejudice, and hatred between people.

I enjoyed teaching a workshop on Islam to teachers at the Punahou School, which Obama attended, because we learned so much from each other's cultures.

I have become more aware that when we emphasize the common values, problems and issues will be easier to handle.

I knew his half sister Maya Soetoro Ng before I knew her brother as a senator. Maya Soetoro is a humble, straightforward and intelligent friend, before and even after her brother's candidacy.

She is very proud of her Indonesian heritage, loves Indonesian food and is always excited to talk about Indonesia. Barack Obama sometimes speaks a few Indonesian words with her. Making jokes about names was fun when Arabic names became an issue, especially after 9/11.

In interviews, Barack Hussein Obama admitted that his name had become a liability after 9/11 and the Bush administration's war on terror, as many associate Obama with Arabs and Islam.

Obama often jokes with his friends about his name, as I often do with friends and others.

Obama's spiritual faith is even more revealing. In his autobiography Dreams from My Father, he saw his Kenyan father as being a Muslim "thinking religion to be so much superstition", and this influences one of his spiritual life stages.

On his Indonesian step-father, Lolo Soetoro, Barack

Obama wrote, "like many Indonesians, Lolo followed a brand of Islam that could make room for the remnants of more ancient animist and Hindu faiths…" His memory of his Indonesian stepfather was that of accommodative Islam and tolerant religiosity shaped by Indonesian syncretism.

Obama felt his mother's "secularism", but his mother for him was "the most spiritually awakened person" he had ever known, having instincts of kindness, charity, love, discipline, empathy and hard work. Obama recalled his time in schools in Indonesia.

"In Indonesia, I had spent two years at a Muslim school, two years at a Catholic school. In the Muslim school, the teacher wrote to tell my mother that I made faces during Koranic studies. My mother wasn't overtly concerned.

"Be respectful,' she'd said." His spiritual journey did not end there. He became a member of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago which has since transformed his spiritualism and faith.

As an American, with a diverse religious, cultural, national and racial background, Obama believes in what others would call a civil religion. Obama said that Americans should acknowledge the power of faith and its diversity in the lives of Americans.

"Whatever we once were, we are no longer just a Christian nation; we are also a Jewish nation, a Muslim nation, a Buddhist nation, a Hindu nation, and a nation of nonbelievers," wrote Obama in his The Audacity of Hope. In speeches he delivers, he would end with "May God bless America."

More importantly, Obama advocates an active and authentic faith to turn American back to its core values inherited

from the founding fathers and shaped by influential figures.

He recognizes faith not for faith; it is for community empowerment. Obama's faith has been and continues to be shaped by problems and challenges facing America.

Barack Obama's journey was that of not only dreams, but of clarity in how to fulfill these dreams: Perseverance, discipline and hard work. Martin Luther King Jr. and Abraham Lincoln in particular have long inspired him as dreamers of their times, and as role models for the struggle toward racial justice, freedom, equality and citizenship rights. King's speech "I Have a Dream" shapes and echoes Obama's rise to presidency.

"All men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," King said powerfully. And that was how Obama became inspired.

The challenges Obama's administration are facing now are greater than the time of King's and any previous American presidents: Two wars to finish, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to mediate, economic crises to navigate, healthcare and education to improve.

A great lesson to learn however is not so much about his sound judgment of the details of each problem and challenge, but his repeated attempts to turn to American values.

Barack Obama demonstrates an inspiring intelligence, a calm and cool personality, and great oratory skills. Obama has brought many Americans of common values and common destiny together.

He believes that problems of injustice, the economic

crisis, and the diminishing image of Americans in the world require a change of hearts and minds before anything else.

In cultivating American values, Obama puts the emphasis on education. For him, academic success is not enough without proper values and preparation for responsible citizenship.

Obama's administration, for example, promises to encourage schools and parents to work together to establish expectations for student attendance, behavior, and homework, calling parents to turn off the TV and video games, and expect all students to engage in community service.

Moreover, in facing the challenges, Obama stresses a shared responsibility. "It is not about me, it is about you, all Americans," he said. When he met the pilot who successfully landed a plane in trouble, he said, "If everyone does his job, we are going to be fine." Everyone needs to serve the country. Everyone has to take the burden.

For Obama, politics, like science, depends on the ability to persuade one another of common aims based on a common reality. For him, it is to ensure that persuasion rather than violence or intimidation determines the political outcome.

Internationally, Obama has received worldwide support. His first speech during the campaign period in Berlin is perhaps one of the best speeches ever delivered.

"Look at Berlin, where Germans and Americans learned to work together and trust each other less than three years after facing each other on the field of battle," he said. Trust is perhaps what the key value is but it is often missing in many international relationships.

In Berlin, Obama emphasized common humanity.

"Partnership and cooperation among nations is not a choice: It is the only way, to protect our common security and advance our common humanity." "That is why the greatest danger of all is to allow new walls to divide us from one another.

"The walls between old allies on either side of the Atlantic cannot stand. The walls between the countries with the most and those with the least cannot stand.

"The walls between races and tribes; natives and immigrations; Christian and Muslim and Jew cannot stand. These now are the walls we must tear down."

If there is a crucial lesson for Indonesians to learn, Barack Obama's successful rise to presidency shows that it is the people's minds and hearts that should be transformed before anything else.

It is to revive American shared values in order to move forward. It is to have vision and hope, in turmoil and in peace. It is to have dreams and a clear path to follow.

Congratulations to President Barack H. Obama! And may God bless you (as your middle name means) and America, Indonesia, and all the people around the world!

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