Presidential Address by

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A New World Order without Ideologies

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Three years ago, at the annual meeting of the IMF and the World Bank in Prague, Vaclav Havel emphasised that the “the crucial task is to fundamentally strengthen a system of universally shared moral standards that will make it impossible, on a truly global scale, for the various rules to be time and again circumvented with still more ingenuity than had gone into their invention.”

Earlier still, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan and I, as co-chairmen of the Independent Commission on Humanitarian Issues, issued a call for the establishment of a new international humanitarian order, precisely to bring to humanitarian issues the same level of experience and expertise as is usually accorded only to economic and hard security matters. This proposal, I am pleased to say, was adopted in 1981 by the UN General Assembly. Today the Commission’s emphasis on the need for continued and sustained work in this area is once again being keenly felt.

The schisms in the world today have become so numerous, the iniquities and inequalities so stark, that a universal respect for human dignity must once again be brought back to the consciousness of the international community. Now, more than at any other time, an ethic of human solidarity and a new international order are required.

A few short weeks ago, I attended a meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Study Commission Working Group, in Amman, to discuss Euro-Med dialogue. There, I emphasised the theme of governance and building a society from the bottom up. Our current systems of governance, whether authoritarian, monarchic, or totalitarian, have not reached the people with what they need – transparent and participatory government, education towards altruism and tolerance, and clearly defined human values instituted through schools, media and legislation as the basis for a dynamic civil society. Moreover, the absence of a coherent formula providing universally acceptable guidelines for future global governance makes extremism a threat to the stability and security of all states.

We cannot get rid of systems to order our affairs; in the broader sense, we cannot rid ourselves of ideologies, which are systems of thought. A world without any ideology would be a world without aspiration. To the extent that our actions are directed towards making a better future for ourselves, we are all subject to one ideology – the ideology of improving conditions for
ourselves. I do not think that this very basic, even biological imperative can be avoided when we examine the question of ‘a new world order without ideologies.’

There is no denying that today, where I come from, and possibly where you come from too, there is a feeling of hopelessness, that the inevitability of war will force new realities on us in the absence of an ideology or system that we trust. For the world that we desire is surely not a world dominated by war, poverty and unhappiness. Unless we cease to work against this or that faulty ideology and instead work for a positive vision, the new realities of war will simply sweep us along on a tide of realpolitik.

Just as fundamentally, while we are facing critical international problems and issues, we lack an international terminology with which even to identify them securely. Boaz Ganor, the prominent Israeli thinker, addressed the question of terrorism today and demanded that there be ‘no prohibition without definition’. Let us be very clear in acknowledging that, just as one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter, so one man’s ideology is another man’s terrorist manifesto. Let us accept no prohibition of any approach without very clear definition of what, exactly, we are referring to as an ideology and to what exactly we object — which specific people, places, times, texts and actions.


“...in the most successful act of asymmetric warfare since the Trojan horse, the world came home to America. ‘Why do they hate us?’ asked President Bush. This was not a rhetorical question. Americans really wanted to know, and still do, for their innocence had been shattered.”

The explanations have been numerous, if largely inadequate as a result of their refusal to address more than one aspect of the issue. They range from assumptions as simplistic as the resentment of success, or the clash of civilisations, to the more thoughtful thesis of the developing world’s innate antipathy towards the double standards exhibited daily in the West’s tendency to call for the ideals of democracy and the rule of law, whilst apparently flouting both, both in their own policies (viz Kyoto for example)
and in their tendency to support regimes whose values are to the very opposite of such ideals.

Those dreadful attacks were, I believe, more than just a terrorist attack – they were indicative of the extent to which non-state actors could quite conveniently hijack religion in the form of pseudo-religious extremist ideology and proved, in tragic ways, that acts of genocide – crimes against humanity – can be committed by entities other than systems of government. They also, I believe, showed not so much America’s peculiar vulnerability (for who among us on this fragile planet has ever been immune from terrorism?) but it’s insularity, it’s ever-increasing self-polarisation, and it’s peculiar loneliness on what I consider to be a very unlonely planet. Many worlds have been coming home to America for many years because from its very inception America has seen the world as part of it, rather itself a part of the world.

We stand today at a crossroads and the choice appears stark: either we move further away from one another, basing our sense of self and our self-interests upon the idea of a threatening other, or we move closer together and, taking our common humanity as the starting point, move towards an organic whole. The first road involves a sort of ‘international apartheid’ – an absence of meaningful dialogue between groups, but I come here to suggest the second road, that of bridge-building, in an inclusive civil society that appreciates a holistic approach, and in the belief that our human interdependence is our community.

A New World Order…

Economic factors have always been of primary importance in international affairs and, during the 1990s, the ‘new world order’ was often less political—or even military—than economic. Globalisation, a term initially applied to investment, production and trade, gradually came to embrace a much wider range of phenomena: everything from ‘fast’ food, ‘world’ music, fashion and advertising to the information technology revolution, particularly the rise of the internet and of satellite television. The rapid pace of globalisation was almost as shocking as the changes themselves and, before long, many people around the world began to feel squeezed, not only economically, but politically, socially and culturally.
It is worth remembering in this context that, despite such rapid advances, the majority of the world’s population, far from sending emails, has never even received a telephone call; that 1.3 billion people live on less than a dollar a day (which incidentally is less than the sum allotted - $2.20 - to each cow/head of cattle in the EU) and that in most of the world individual success is neither celebrated nor individual, rather the fate of the individual is wholly linked to that of the community.

The growing disillusionment and anger at the hypocrisy of this new world order of globalisation that affects the entire world whilst embracing only a fraction of it, was given vocal expression at the meetings of such organisations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Group of Seven (now Eight) industrialised nations, where anti-globalisation activists repeatedly clashed with police. More constructively, we recently witnessed the success of the third Social Economic Forum in Porto Alegre, a forum to which I am proud to have been invited to send a video message on behalf of the South Centre, where positive attempts to redefine participatory democracy, wealth distribution, poverty elimination and an end to corruption are being made.

And I would like to applaud the UN’s Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the Right to Food for his comments. “Globalisation is a daily terror for three-quarters of mankind,” he said. “Thanks to cyberspace and the free market those in power have enormous vitality. Never has the massacre of mankind taken place so quickly: every day 100,000 people die of hunger. And this on an affluent planet.” Noting further that “…in the countries of the South, the noose is the economy of debt.”

The third world is my first world…..

Over the last few months we have been told variously that we are in a new transnational age, in which borders have become meaningless; that the nation-state itself has become virtually meaningless; even of a new age of empire, “‘empire by invitation’ or ‘consensual’ empire,” seen as a reluctant “empire with a difference—a coordination of economic exchange and security guarantees welcomed by its less powerful member states, who preserved their autonomy and played a role in collective policymaking.”

In the late autumn of last year, Charles S. Maier, Saltonstall Professor of History at Harvard University, responding to the formulation of what came to be known as the Bush Doctrine stated that the Bush Doctrine, had “emerged from a public discussion by policymakers and journalists” about the United States “as an empire.”

Most American “liberal internationalists” do not believe that Washington is embarking on a course of territorial conquest or domination; instead, they “prefer to think of empire as the reluctant acceptance of responsibility for peoples and lands who must be rescued from the primitive violence that threatens to engulf them if left on their own.” Regions whose poor governance and lack of convincing regional strategies and institutions has made them revisit their past.

(The rhetoric behind the post-World War I division of the former Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire into the states of Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq; and the imposition of a mandatory system of tutelage by Britain and France under the auspices of the League of Nations springs immediately to mind.)

To a degree that might surprise the proponents of a transnational, borderless world, Maier emphasizes the importance of frontiers in his definition of empire, noting that, although empires claim universality, they also “accentuate divisions between inclusion and exclusion, both on a world scale and within their own borders.” While the “barbarians” are not barred from entering the empire, their admission is strictly regulated.

This inevitably brings me to the issue of territoriality, identity and movement – Every region in the world has an identity except for our benighted Middle East. If you had sat at the table of Richard Holbrook when he was at the United Nations, you would know exactly what I mean. I remember his saying to me: “You are an Asian.” Quite right, by definition – geographic definition of the United Nations. Incidentally, Europe is part of Asia geographically, it is only through a purely political statement that it becomes an independent Europe. If you talk about a Moroccan, he’s an African by United Nations definition. If you talk about an Israeli, he’s not part of any region. No wonder we are finding it difficult in developing extra-territoriality.

The argument against cultural or religious triumphalism is based on the notion that competition is not a valid model for some kinds of human
activity. What Arnold Toynbee referred to as the ‘industrialisation of history’ provides a parallel to what happens when the capitalist model of competition for material results is superimposed on all areas of human existence.

Durwood Foster, a professor at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California, defines triumphalism as the belief which “assumes the primacy of one’s own values and the right to rule others”.

Following the awful events of September 11, triumphalism in America, particularly, has been, to some extent, characterised by a wave of self-righteous indignation which has led to consequences both intended and unintended: the Taliban are thankfully no more but how many ordinary Muslim people in America wake up feeling secure these days? The collateral damage in America – and the West’s generally – war against terrorism on so-called home ground can already be ascertained.

A poll in the International Herald Tribune\(^2\) a little more than two months after the attacks showed that overall, 58% of non-American respondents agreed that “US policies and actions in the world were a major cause of the attack”; in the breakdown of this figure, only 36% of people in Western Europe agreed with this statement, while 81% of people in the Middle East did so. A slender majority, 52%, agreed with Americans that their country was resented because of its power; however, just as many cited “US policies which may have contributed to the growing gap between rich and poor.” This would seem to indicate that many people feel that the United States has not used its advantages—certainly, its strength and, probably, its wealth—to reduce poverty in the world and advance the cause of social justice: in fact, just the opposite.

Yet while citizens of the US and western hemisphere exercise their sovereignty through elections and opinion polls, the peoples of that region rarely articulate their priorities in the world debate on global security. They are moreover often unaware of the trade-offs made at the expense of those priorities.

\(^2\) A link to the actual poll, conducted by the International Herald Tribune and the Pew Research Center, may be found at [http://www.iht.com/poll/sept11poll.htm](http://www.iht.com/poll/sept11poll.htm); the same webpage also has a link to the published article, namely, Brian Knowlton, “IHT Insight: How the World Sees the U.S. and Sept. 11,” International Herald Tribune, 19 December 2001.
Perhaps because it was ‘cold,’ the end of the ‘war’ between East and West was not followed by any ‘peace’ conference to explore the new situation or surviving ideologies that had originated in imperialist capitalism; there was no effort to assess the underlying assumptions and principles that might form the basis of a new code of conduct in international affairs. Instead, the United States emerged as the dominant power, with no significant challenges to its authority or security.

In a major foreign policy speech delivered in January of this year, the British prime minister, Tony Blair, warned the United States that chaos could “come from the world splitting into rival poles of power; the US in one corner; anti-US forces in another. It can come from pent-up feelings of injustice and alienation, from divisions between the world’s richer and its poorer nations.” Global interdependence, he suggested, works both ways and the United States needs to show “the desire to work with others,” whether the issue is poverty, the environment, the moribund Middle East peace process, or even the status of the United Nations.³

A recent article in The Economist⁴ looked at three surveys that seem to indicate that Europe and the United States are not only diverging in their approaches to international affairs, but in values as well. In terms of traditional versus secular values, it was found that America has become more traditional over the last quarter-century.

Two other surveys that The Economist cites indicate that terrorism and the possibility that Iraq is developing weapons of mass destruction are the overwhelming preoccupations of Americans; by contrast, the primary concern of Europeans is combating religious and ethnic hatred.

These findings bring to mind not only Tony Blair’s recent speech, but also Joan Didion’s observation that, since 11 September, American discourse on “postmodern relativism” has been replaced by a rhetoric of “moral clarity.”⁵ Didion is describing what occurs when reality is filtered through the lens of ideology. And that, I believe, is what has gone wrong with the ‘new world order’ become empire: ideology is threatening to turn peace into war and stability into anarchy.

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³ Michael White and Ewan MacAskill, “Listen to the world’s fears, Blair tells US,” Guardian, 8 January 2003; available online at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Print?0,3858,4578753,00.html>.
⁵ See Didion, “Fixed Opinions, or the Hinge of History.”
...without Ideologies
The word ‘ideology’ refers to the principles, aims and assertions underlying an economic or political theory or system. During the last century, a fairly broad spectrum of ideologies—communism and socialism; nationalism and fascism; capitalism and liberalism; and a host of others—competed for ascendancy on the world stage. By their very nature, these ‘isms’ brought together and organised those who shared the same world-view, strengthening their feelings of solidarity; yet, this very sense of inclusion inspired a contrary sentiment toward those who did not belong to the group. When backed by the authority of the state, such ideologies could become nothing more than totalitarianism—no matter what they actually called themselves.

Much in the same way that ideology may become a ‘religion,’ religions may be pressed into service as ideologies. This is well illustrated by the rise of another ‘ism,’ namely, Islamism. Although Islamism expresses itself by using the language and symbols of traditional religion, it is actually a modern political movement rooted more firmly in the twentieth century than in the seventh.

By contrast, ordinary followers not only of Islam, but of the three Abrahamic faiths – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – all affirm the non-ultimacy of economic and political considerations, of the new world order, the new world material order. We have attempted over decades to develop a concept of a ‘culture of compliance’, if you will, in the context of a new world humanitarian order and I would like to quote from the most recent document presented to the GA by the Independent Bureau and the Office for Humanitarian Assistance:

“Hiding behind one excuse or other the governments tend to violate international humanitarian and human rights law and bypass the universally accepted norms and principles and thus cause a lot of suffering. In such situations international reprimand and pressures for compliance are often ignored. Ironically violations take place in circumstances and at a time when respect for these laws is most needed. The problem is further exacerbated and becomes far more complicated when it involves non-state actors who do not consider themselves bound by the relevant international instruments.”

Here too I am reminded of Professor Sir Michael Howard’s foreword to Philip Bobbitt’s recent and rather terrifying book “The Shield of Achilles”. Howard points up “Bobbitt’s starting point that ‘law and strategy are
mutually affecting”, that “legitimacy… is sensitive to strategic events” and that “although wars create states, it is the state that creates legitimacy and it is legitimacy that maintains ‘peace’”. “If states can no longer maintain their legitimacy,” he continues, “there will be another war, the outcome of which will create a new legitimacy. To ignore the legal aspect of international order is a recipe for permanent war preached by Hitler. To ignore the strategic aspect, as did Woodrow Wilson, is at best to forfeit the capacity to create an international order reflecting one’s own value system; at worst to see it destroyed.” (The Shield of Achilles by Philip Bobbitt, published by Allen Lane)

Jews, Christians and Muslims must insist upon the ethical dimension and demand that humanitarian factors be placed at the forefront of all other considerations. We must seek a new kind of politics, capable of ending humanity’s ancient wars against itself and against nature. Politics for people, or anthropopolitics, if you will a point I will return to later.

In this context, I am painfully aware of the fact that during the years of conversation in a conference that was established in the hopeful moments after the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, under the ironic title of ‘Fear of Peace’, we passed through three phases of fear: fear of the other, fear of the folks back home and fear of peace itself – the irony being, of course, that the fear should be of war.

When we talk of the ethics of human solidarity, it is impossible not to talk simultaneously of altruism, of interfaith as well as intrafaith outreach, of humane political and economic strategies (inclusive of poverty-alleviation), of peace conditional on justice, of cultural security and identity, of universal codes of ethics.

In that context, again, it is sad to see that all the multilateral processes start with the basket on security, followed by the basket on economy. Three hundred billion dollars have been spent on security in our region over the past ten years. We all complain about the movement of illegal migrants to the northern and western hemispheres, and in 1994 after signing the Israeli peace treaty with Jordan, it was proposed, jointly with the EU, that thirty five billion dollars be made available for a decade of development to provide clean drinking water and alleviate poverty, in the southern and eastern
Mediterranean. In the event, the funds were not forthcoming. As a result, today we are spending money, globally, on increased security forces, rather than having spent less money, more constructively, on encouraging the will to stay.

Humanitarian outreach requires a holistic approach, inclusive of the all-important experiential component, the encounter with the other. A holistic approach recognises too the pain and suffering of the other and acknowledges fully our different histories and cultures, and I cite Rabbi Ronald Kronish, Director of the Inter-religions Coordinating Council in Israel (ICCI) who once said (in the context of Arab-Israeli historiography):

“Reconciliation is to understand both sides… In the Arab-Israeli conflict, both sides have suffered greatly for a long time; but I am struck by how little either side has recognised … or even tried to recognise the pain and suffering of the other. We tend to recite history so ideologically that we have very little consciousness about how the other side understands its own history in its own terms.”

And it is in terms of the understanding of history, of the other’s story, that I ask my European friends and interlocutors to bring to our region the Socrates, Erasmus and Tempus III (European Member States and Partner Countries) programmes of education by analogy. I distrust the description ‘comparative’ education or ‘comparative’ religion; it implies some sort of competition or race, but education by analogy, taking the best from the other, interacting with the other is, I think, the way forward.

As a Muslim, I would like to share with you my personal understanding of Islam’s relationship with other faiths. I believe the answer finds succinct expression in the work of the eminent scholar on Islam, Issa Boullata7 (Professor of Arabic Language and Literature, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University). On the basis of certain Qur’anic texts, Boullata notes Islam’s unequivocal recognition of Judaism and Christianity as revealed by Issa Boullata7, 8

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6 Kronish, Rabbi Ronald. Director of the ICCI (as above). Quote taken from an English-language article in the early 1990’s and used, in part, during a presentation Rabbi Kronish made at the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, Amman, 1997.
religions. He notes too the Qur’anic theme, repeated in various Suras, that God has created humankind to comprise many communities, adhering to various religions, not a single community abiding to a single religion. The Qur’an states: “But if your Lord had pleased, He could have made all human beings into one community of belief. But they would have still differed from one another.” (11:118)

What place, then, does a variegated human experience of religion serve in the Divine scheme of things? These questions Professor Boullata poses and answers with the following Qur’anic response: “Vie, therefore, with one another in doing good works” (“Fa-stabiqu’l – khayrat”; 2:148). This is God’s command to all human communities on earth and is not addressed to Muslims alone.

Boullata’s examination of Islamic exegesis reveals an overwhelming, though not unanimous, agreement on this point among the exegentes across the ages, beginning with Al-Tabari. Cultural diversity and religious pluralism inspire healthy competition between communities and nations, and God enjoins us to direct that competition towards the good.

This outlook presents us with a powerful version of the Qur’anic view of solidarity among the faiths. Solidarity, of course, cannot presume the adherence of the followers of one faith to the prescriptions and ordinances of another. On this point, the Qur’an is clear: “There shall be no compulsion in religion,” (2:256). In my view, compulsion is for hypocrites, while inspiration, and divine inspiration in revealed religion, is of course a matter of personal belief. So I would like to emphasise and I quote: “You have your own religion, and I have mine.” (109:6) Solidarity among the faiths means that competing human communities strive for the good, strive to understand and reach out to one another in pursuit of a common human ethic and vision.

Islam is a broad faith, with diverse institutions. It cannot possibly be understood in stereotypes. It is not unusual these days to read of Islam as a global threat, a menace to civilization that should be shunned or confronted. Islam is no monolith now, it never has been. Muslim societies and expressions of faith have undergone centuries of change. To suggest distinct boundaries between civilisations is surely to ignore the ongoing debate about their very definition. I, for one, object to the concept of civilisations in the plural. I refer to one civilisation and ten thousand cultures. I believe in a continuous process of interaction and dialogue between cultures. To
presume that the identity of a civilisation never countenances change is to obscure centuries of synthesis and symbiosis. The long evolution and development of Muslim civilisation contradicts the assumption that Islam labours under unbending theological rigidity. The four most fundamental values of the Holy Qur’an are justice (‘adl), benevolence (ihsan), wisdom (hikmah) and compassion (rahmah).

Many Muslim scholars point to the early Islamic period to indicate not only “that some notion of democracy was present from the outset and that this notion has been perceived as something positive all along.” Khalid Duran eschews anachronism to describe this notion as “crypto-democracy,” although “proto-democracy” does just as well. ‘Democracy’ is not the property of one nation or culture, to be propagated as part of a hegemonic cultural package. It is a system in which human beings contribute to their own government, based on an ideology of equal rights in that contribution. I do not believe in taking a comparative approach in order to find common ground. The common ground is what we share as human beings.

There are inherently universal values that we all share no matter what tradition we belong to. To say that one specific tradition is the progenitor of universalism is illogical since there are certain values that all human beings recognise as being universal in and of themselves. The universalist/cultural relativist dichotomy may therefore be a false proposition: whilst there may be different civilisations and cultures in the world today, all have contributed to universalism and the values that we share today have a sound basis in many different traditions. Thus, the Western libertarian philosophy will recognise the inherent values of universalism within Ubuntu African tradition, just as Ubuntu will recognise the inherent universalist values within Islamic tradition; and Islamic tradition recognises - indeed preserves – the values and advancements (ethical and material) of other civilisations and systems; and so on and so forth.

Yet, despite what we may call the universality of universalism, we see there are still, alas, too many unacceptables remaining in our world: an unacceptable level of illiteracy; an unacceptable lack of women's empowerment; an unacceptable North-South divide, with the rich getting richer and the poor poorer; an unacceptable level of inequality; unacceptable

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demands on the environment due to, among other things, an unacceptable level of pollution exacerbated by an unacceptable lack of international agreement on policy. In the Club of Rome we refer to ‘limits to poverty, but no limits to knowledge’.

About 850 million people throughout the world, mostly in rural areas, are illiterate, and 70 per cent of these are women. Civic rights and building justice and democratic institutions towards peace and development cannot be achieved with half the human beings being marginalised. How can we develop equality while 70 per cent [representing over 2 billion people] in the developing world have no access to electricity? And how can we supply basic energy needs at a time when our present method is far from being sustainable?

Is it not shameful for we have landed a man on the moon and harnessed technology, yet 24 people still die of hunger every minute, i.e. 35 thousand every day, or 13 million every year. It is not acceptable that villagers go hungry, die from having access only to polluted water, while epidemic diseases wipe out their children. It is not acceptable that preventable malaria takes a toll that will increase to 3 million by the end of this decade, mostly in Africa. It is not acceptable that the AIDS epidemic is increasing; yet so many countries still refuse to face up to its very existence.

Dealing with such unacceptables is therefore, one of the main challenges. A Common Minimum Agenda to tackle these and associated problems is essential for the well-being of the people of our planet. And I am pleased to say that we are working on just such an agenda within the context of the South Centre which should form the platform of both North and South.

It is nonetheless clear that Muslim countries today stand accused of supporting and in some cases of funding extremism – that is to say, of funding the parallel economy which in many countries is more effective than the state economy. Such blanket accusations do little to build bridges in an increasingly polarised world and nothing to counteract the politics and economics of despair. Numerous commentators (with some notable exceptions and I must here applaud the words of Prince Charles when he exhorted the British public to celebrate the contribution and sacrifices of British and other Muslims both now and during the last world war), numerous commentators – whether scholars, politicians or media analysts – maintain that Islam is entirely hostile to the West and its matrix of cultures.
Islam is almost invariably associated, in contemporary media accounts, with extremism. The very word ‘Islam’ conjures up the notion of ‘terror’ among some Western circles. At a time when Muslims comprise almost three quarters of the world refugees, the innocent victims of conflict, this is a deeply disturbing trend. Three quarters of the world’s refugees are Muslims and yet we are stereotyped as extremists.

Some commentators appear to be replacing the word Islamism with “Jihadism”, which actually shows a lack of understanding or awareness of the subtleties of defining such concepts within Islam. I do not believe that such analyses are based upon any objective enquiry but rather are beholden to particular pre-set worldviews, perhaps influenced by a neo-orientalist urge to explain complex phenomena in simplistic terms. One thing we cannot do is try and simplify the complex – and crazy – minds of what are essentially cultist movements with political motives. Hardly any religion can claim to be immune from the cultist threat which preys on the physical and emotional vulnerabilities of individuals, even communities. The ‘cultic milieu’ has been described by academics as a parallel religious tradition of disparaged and deviant interpretations and practices that challenge the authority of prevailing religions with rival claims to truth. These upstart movements are dynamic and novel, but usually short-lived. They adhere to an alternative theology that they regard as more authoritative than the laws, rituals, and interpretations that define their parent religions. Thus we might think we are sensing the emergence of a global jihad in many parts of the Muslim world, it could be argued that it is not a jihad that has any basis or legitimacy among the majority of the international Ummah.

Indeed, Muslim legal scholars often refer to Imam al-Shatibi who, six centuries ago, developed guidelines for developing and applying Islamic law (shari’ah) in the form of a set of Islamic universal principles (kulliyat), essentials (dururiyat), or purposes (maqasid), and explained that the number and inner tectonics of these maqasid are flexible according to time and place. For purposes of agenda formation, the universal principles of Islamic thought are seven responsibilities. When observed, they produce corresponding human rights. The first, haqq al-din, is the duty to respect and maintain the purity of divine revelation, without which human reason is unreliable. The next three, which promote human survival, are haqq al-haya, the duty to respect human life and the human person; haqq al-nasl, the duty to respect the human family and group rights at every level of human
association; and *haqq al-mal*, the duty to respect private property and the universal human right to individual ownership of the means of production.

The second set of three *maqasid* promotes quality of life. These are *haqq al-hurriya*, the duty to respect group self-determination through political freedom, including the second-order principles of governmental responsiveness (*shura*), representative government (*ijma’*), and an independent judiciary; *haqq al-karama*, the duty to respect human dignity, including freedom of religion and gender equity; and *haqq al-‘ilm*, which is the duty to respect knowledge, including freedom of thought, speech, and association, subject to the other six universal principles. These universal principles of Islamic law constitute a definition of justice, which, in turn, is the Islamic definition of human rights.

Islamic tradition enjoins mutual tolerance and coexistence among and between human communities. It also stresses the equality and dignity of each and every human soul. Sayyidina Muhammad is reliably reputed to have said: “All people are equal. They are as equal as the teeth on a comb. There is no claim of merit of an Arab over a non-Arab, or of a white over a black person, or a male over a female. Only God-fearing people merit a preference with God”. Furthermore, the idea that rights of citizenship accrue on the basis of residence was well known to Islam. For example, the Holy Qur’an rebukes Egypt’s Pharaoh for discriminating against the Jewish community in Egypt.

The Constitution of Medina, which articulated the agreements concluded between Sayyidina Muhammad and the non-Muslim tribes of Medina, for instance, not only enabled each party to keep its own laws and customs, but conferred rights and obligations of citizenship among members of the community on the basis of residence and religious belief. The Constitution of Medina is thus at base a civil code and a blueprint for Islamic pluralism. In later times, the millet system granted non-Muslims a bill of rights and empowered them to run their own communal affairs.

Terrorism is not islamocentric. It is islamophobic. And terrorists cannot be allowed to hide behind the religion of a fifth of humankind. Muslims have now to wake up to the enemy within and expose these evil fanatics for what they are. Those who commit such atrocities and claim to do so in the name of any religion shame us, and shame our heritage. Such people do nothing
for religion. They have, on the contrary, taken up arms against true people of faith.

In confronting the threat posed by extremists of all tendencies however, we might do better to concentrate less on the words of “those self-appointed prophets of xenophobia and militancy” (Professor Shimon Shamir, “Acceptance of the Other: Liberal Interpretations of Islam and Judaism in Egypt and Israel,” Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Occasional Papers 5) and more on those notable thinkers who “step forward to propose a different reading of their religio-cultural heritage, and to uphold a system of values and beliefs that converge on acceptance of the Other… to turn our attention from the threat posed by the radicals, to the promise indicated by the liberals.” (as above)

Thus, one cannot resist but concur with former US Ambassador Robert Dickson Crane when he argues that, “The greatest challenge to Americans’ commitment, courage and creativity lies not in enforcing stability through military might, which can never succeed in the long run, but in building security through foreign policies that address the political roots of terrorism. It is this unilateral militarism vs multilateral justice dichotomy that needs to be contextualized intellectually in order to galvanize an effective response to global terrorism”.

In order to achieve effective security, we have to be able to reach out to citizens, to build a community, before attempting to build civil society, inclusive of democracy. Further, the limits to democracy have to be understood. Israel may be an elected democracy, but many of the policies that are being pursued and the spiral of violence and killing is increasingly questioned by Israelis themselves.

In seeking global standards, we can choose to view the lowest common denominators of our various histories, cultures and traditions, or the highest. I do not believe in taking a comparative approach in order to find common ground. The common ground is what we share as human beings. It is that sentiment which is identical in the thought of a seventh-century Arab prophet and a twentieth-century… visionary, working towards a better world for all, not just for a few.
Relativism and triumphalism are two aspects of the comparative approach. Let us also recall that all three of the major monotheistic religions emphasise the role of free will in human affairs and the importance of making the correct choice. To claim that ‘All methods are equally valid’, or that ‘Our method is inherently superior’ is to deny on the one hand any notion of high or low standards of human existence, and on the other hand to assert a purely selfish standard. Neither attitude can inspire actions that will improve the human lot.

I concur wholly with the Reverend Kenneth Cragg when he quotes George Elliott, emphasizing her conviction that faith should be a moral emotion, a commitment to humanity, unconfined by dogma:

“I have too profound a conviction of the efficacy that lies in all sincere faith, and the spiritual blight that comes with no faith, to have any negative propagandism in me. I have lost all interest in mere antagonism to religious doctrines. I care only to know, if possible, the lasting meaning that lies in all religious doctrine.”

Syncretism is neither necessary nor desirable in a pluralist world. So long as a shared ethic is clear in which human welfare and human security are paramount, we can differ in our approaches to the betterment of the human condition.

By contrast, working by analogy (qiyas) can be successful because, although ideological approaches may differ, our aims and results can be the same when humanitarian concerns lie at the centre of policymaking and action. There should be no human competition except for the public good.

Some of the basic concepts need to be revisited. Might we not redefine poverty in terms of human well-being rather than in terms of dollars and cents? Humanise economics and politics, putting human well-being at the centre of national, as well as global, policy-making.

In all of this, it is important to distinguish between ends and means. People are not solely economic entities; mere commodity-producing instruments. The end towards which all our common efforts are focused must surely be
quality of human life, influenced by ethical, as well as material considerations.

The wealthier industrialised nations need to understand that much of our contemporary world is affected by a recent legacy of subjugation, its comparatively recent development, - stifled by a lack of good leadership, an absence of institutions, and an over-reliance on financial hand-outs. This needs to be understood if we are to comprehend the differential impact of globalisation and construct a model of global governance that is truly democratic (in the universalist sense). The social reality in these societies is, in many cases, poverty, illiteracy or lack of access to education, elitist maintenance of the status quo through military muscle, environmental degradation, lack of rule of law and civil liberties.

Any international gathering therefore that addresses the questions of governance, globalisation, democracy and ethics must include consideration of the state of the world problematique. Problems cannot be dealt with in isolation, nor can they be evaluated on the basis of short-term benefits, ignoring the longer-term. Our very existence depends on the actions and lives of other people; in the same way we inevitably affect the lives of other people, both our contemporaries and future generations. Such a global approach requires a willingness to assume new attitudes and apply ethical competence to our actions.

Culture cannot be viewed as a mere obstacle to supposedly desirable economic and political reforms that are meant to promote secularised free market capitalism and democracy. Culture, and religious culture, express human values as they are sought after in one particular time and place. Without support for those underlying values, the reason for cultivating democratic involvement or a free market — which is surely to provide greater opportunity for humans to cultivate their values and their future — vanishes.

Where do we go from here? The immense challenge facing us all is whether we can manage the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace (and I’ll admit that the signs do not look promising at the present time).

Together we must try to contain the madness that is sweeping through the entire world, from the Pak-Indian confrontation which threatens to re-ignite
at any time, through the Iranian context, the Palestinian-Israeli context, which some fear might become the Jewish-Arab context, the North Korean context and the most immediate Iraqi context. There are time bombs waiting to go off. The crucial issue is whether together we can build peace and foster development in a rapidly changing world or whether we are going to continue to implode.

We have to understand the cultures of others and respect them. Once we have understood the roots of conflicts, then with reasoning and dialogue, we may achieve sustainable peace with justice. Any outcome reached by force will breed conflict and hatred, which may become deeply rooted. I would prefer a *pax dei* to a *pax Americano*. Perhaps in the minds of some of our American friends the two are synonymous. Wars will never end until justice prevails. Likewise, to be sustainable, development must be founded on justice, (sustainable dialogue too is required, rather than sustainable development alone), which in its turn, depends on the framework of ethical references called democracy. Peace cannot be achieved through economic and political development alone, but requires the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.

Returning to economic issues, imbalances have grown in the past twenty years, even in the countries where growth has been most dynamic. Today, the world’s 358 richest people own an aggregate fortune greater than the combined incomes of 2.3 billion people – nearly 40% of the world.

And I quote my Swami neighbour in Assisi where a lot of virtuous things were being said, he said: “Enough of this goody, goody talk. Let’s do something about poverty.”

Vigilance and willingness might have prevented the catastrophes in Bosnia and Afghanistan. If we had kept the promises made in 1974 at the UN to allocate 0.7% of the gross national product of the industrialised countries to the development of the disadvantaged countries, some of today’s ‘angry neighbours’, might have been good friends and trading partners. But things turned out quite differently.

Crisis avoidance is all-important. In my region, time for crisis avoidance is short. In the context of what is happening on the ground, the situation looks bleak. We speak of the Palestinian Territories, actually the Palestinians are
subdivided into sixty four different administrative entities, making effective government virtually impossible.

Three years ago, when a Framework Agreement for Permanent Status was proposed as the agenda for talks, I suggested to Barak and Arafat, that perhaps we should at least talk about Framework on Agreement for Permanent Status talks, but there was an enthusiasm then for a temporary package deal before the end of the Clinton administration. In the event the actors were simply not in a position to see that package recognised and fulfilled.

Today, there is once again serious cause for concern over the inter-relations between the arc of crisis, from Cairo all the way down to the south of the Gulf and up to the north of the Caspian – home to 70% and 40% of the world’s oil and gas. A comprehensive OSCE (Organisation for Co-operation and Security in Europe) approach is required, a culture of compliance where state and non-state actors make plain their objection and opposition to terrorism and to weapons of mass destruction, particularly, in this context to medium range missiles.

As regards resisting occupation, the Al Aqsa Intifada, in its stone-throwing phase, probably represented the frustration of Palestinian youth in particular, more than anything we have seen hitherto. Unfortunately when the issue becomes militarised, when we see the securitising of Islam – the penetration by security services of different countries to survey Muslims and their every action, it only serves the extremist cause. This point was highlighted the other day in an interview between a BBC reporter and a Hamas activist. The reporter asked: “When all of your charities are closed down, don’t you think your organisation will cease to exist?” To which the Hamas activist replied, “You commit a fatal mistake if you think that by closing down the charities, you’re ending this organisation. It is not an organisation, it is a movement. It will regenerate under whatever name so long as there is fear and desperation, the economics and politics of despair.”

In order to achieve effective security, we have to be able to reach out to citizens, to build a community, before attempting to build civil society, inclusive of democracy. Further, the limits to democracy have to be understood. Israel may be an elected democracy, but many of the policies that are being pursued and the spiral of violence and killing is increasingly questioned by Israelis themselves.
I would like to emphasise the need for a code of conduct in our region, by quoting Rabbi Jonathan Magonet (Principal, Leo Baeck College, London) who has long been a participant in our Interfaith conversations]. Speaking at his Rosh Hashanah service on 18th September last year, he reminded us that:

“At a time when extremism seems to be on the increase, when stereotyping blunts any hope of recognising the humanity of 'the other',… (although) There are no simple answers to the political conflict. But there are possibilities of meeting each other at the level of religious understanding. Whenever we read the hallel, that Psalm can also be a call to us to escape the narrowness of vision that lumps all people together, that denies their uniqueness and humanity, and reduces them to a label or a slogan, the other, the enemy.

‘To get out of this narrowness I called on God.

God answered me with a broader vision.

Give thanks to the Eternal who is good.

For God’s love is l’olam, for the whole world.’”

The Qur’anic principle of return instructs us to repel an evil deed with a good one, and, faced with differences, to race for the performance of righteous deeds. Defensiveness and self-justification, especially in these days of informational spin, do not promise much success in improving intercultural relations.

The argument against cultural or religious triumphalism is based on the notion that competition is not a valid model for some kinds of human activity. What Arnold Toynbee referred to as the ‘industrialisation of history’ provides a parallel to what happens when the capitalist model of competition for material results is superimposed on all areas of human existence.

The ‘Swidler-age’ (Professor Leonard Swidler, Temple University, Global Dialogue Institute) of monologue must become the age of dialogue. In this context, I cannot overemphasise the importance of the principles of
democracy (and equality) to genuine dialogue. So it is extremely important
that the universal desire of peoples to be involved in their own government
be realised, and that ‘democracy’ not be ascribed to any one nation, culture
or ideology.

I participate; therefore I am. If I do not participate, I do not exist as a citizen.
This is how democracy deteriorates into market research, oligarchy,
plutocracy, bureaucracy and technocracy. Peace, development and
democracy should be built up by education, not by force; and they should not
be regarded as a gift. Education is the key to liberty. If we wish to reduce
social disparities that are a source of conflict; if we wish to improve the
quality of life; if we wish to guarantee food and education for all citizens; if
we wish to provide employment and mitigate poverty, then we must stop
paying the price of war and pay the price of peace.

We need to develop a discipline of anthropolitics, a politics of
humanity. I would like to pay particular tribute to achievements in
Bangladesh and India and Pakistan - the concept of the Grameen Bank, the
concept of the Kachiabadi Authority, the concept in Brazil of Bolsa Escola -
politics where people matter - anthropolitics. I applaud the work of my dear
friend Manfred Max-Neef, who is one of the authors of the concept of bare-
foot economics. And when we say back to basics, I would like to suggest
that the failure of political parties has largely been because they have been
closer to what in the Arab world we call positional elites than to the people
and consequently, people have found it easy to go to those donors who are
not interested in collaterals but in the promotion of such illegal trades as,
most notoriously, the drugs trade and trade in children. With the work of my
Egyptian colleague Professor Cherif Bassiouni in the United States, we are
tracing today the slave trade of two and a half million children, which
governments do not want to know about.

And I would like to suggest that in terms of the degradation of our human
environment, as Manfred Max-Neef suggests, that we go back to the book of
Genesis, back to the Parables and Psalms. The injunction to go forth and to
proliferate in the earth, to go forth and effectively predominate - was not an
injunction to dominate the weak and to destroy the environment, rather it
was a call to bring life to this planet not death, for we are its stewards and its
survival, and that of our fellow human-beings, is our responsibility.
If the great Lester Pearson could talk about ‘Partners in Development’, I think we are justified now in speaking in terms of ‘Partners in Humanity.’ Directing globalisation towards beneficial ends requires that all players be involved in the global partnership. This in itself is the most basic democratic principle. Towards the aim of a worldwide ideology of peaceful dialogue, I myself have recently been working with John Marks of ‘Search for Common Ground’ towards institutionalising conversation between citizens and cultures under the title ‘Partners in Humanity’ – an umbrella organisation dedicated to promoting fair media coverage and broadening dialogue.

At the same time, the project of a Parliament of Cultures, an idea originally introduced by my dear friend Yehudi Menuhin, to include representatives from western and Asian nations, is progressing well, thanks to the hospitality of our Turkish hosts. The Parliament focuses on the twin themes of education and the media today, in order to find common ground on the information that forms our views and attitudes and to work towards a culture of universal sustainability in all spheres, not only the economic, to assist in the transformation of the ‘Other’ into a friend, rather than a foe.

Rather than prescribing and testing ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ models in the cultural sphere, subject to unfruitful comparisons or unjust competition, I would like to suggest that we move towards describing the attitudes and personal choices within any culture that guarantee betterment of the human condition, and then devise strategies to move towards them.

Ideologies of any kind must become subject to an overarching imperative or ‘macro-ideology’ of interconnectedness and communications which can provide a moral framework for actions and policies according to shared human values and needs.

So I go back to the importance of anthropolitics over petrol politics. In terms of partners in humanity, what we need is a common North-South Agenda. We do not need further polarities. What I am suggesting is both consensual and contractual and basically focuses on the importance of restoring justice to development.

Thank you.