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ISLAM AND THE WEST
A CIVILIZED DIALOGUE

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**THE EMIRATES CENTER FOR STRATEGIC
STUDIES AND RESEARCH**

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CONTENTS

Abbreviations and Acronyms	ix
Foreword <i>Jamal S. Al-Suwaidi</i>	xi
Introduction	
Islam and the West: A Civilized Dialogue	13
1 The Andalusian Model and Muslim–Christian Dialogue Today <i>Ignacio Gutiérrez de Terán</i>	21
2 The Muslim Perspective on Western Attitudes to Islamic Unity <i>Ahmad Ali Salem</i>	45
3 Islam and the West: Theoretical Confusion <i>Hassan Hanafi</i>	67
4 Western Media from the Viewpoint of the Islamic World <i>Saleh Al-Nusairat</i>	81
5 Media Perceptions and Misperceptions: A Western Perspective <i>Melani McAlister</i>	107
6 Cultural Citizenship, Integration and the Representation of Muslim Minorities <i>Moustafa Bayoumi</i>	125
7 Why Palestine is Central to Resolving Islam–West Relations <i>Nader Hashemi</i>	149
8 Civil Society and Dialogue after 9/11 <i>Riem Spielhaus</i>	169

9 Problems and Prospects of Co-existence between Nations	195
<i>Abdulaziz Hamid Al-Jaboury</i>	
Contributors	247
Notes	251
Bibliography	291
Index	317

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AD	Anno Domini
AH	Anno Hegirae
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BC	Before Christ
DITIB	Diyanet İşleri Türk-Islam Birliği
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FPÖ	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs
ISESCO	Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
LN	Lega Nord
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NGO	non-governmental organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
OSE	“Our Shared Europe” project
PARC	Palestine American Research Center
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States (of America)
WEF	World Economic Forum

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FOREWORD

The interaction between the Muslim World and the West stretches back centuries and although the points of conflict are well known, the exchange of knowledge and cultural awareness cannot be underestimated and their impact on both civilizations is palpable. Recent historical events have once again focused attention on perceived points of conflict and their associated negative connotations. The advent of accessible communications technology has only served to perpetuate these viewpoints around the world at an incredible speed and global leaders have had to realize the importance of using the same technology to either correct or at least offer the opposing viewpoint to criticisms and stereotypes of the West and Islam in general.

By reaching back to the past we can sometimes find a way to pursue a more peaceful future, and past examples of cooperation and co-existence between the West and the Muslim World – if the historical context and perspective of these periods is taken into account – can offer a path to mutual understanding and respect. If we take the positive from the past and promote what we hold in common today, then the noise of extremism will always be held at bay.

In order to examine these issues and provide an in-depth overview of the relationship between the West and the Muslim World, the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research (ECSSR) held a Symposium under the title “Islam and the West: A Civilized Dialogue,” on May 16–17, 2011 in Abu Dhabi, hosting a group of distinguished experts from various academic, political and educational backgrounds in conjunction with the School of Policy and International Affairs at the University of Maine, United States. This book comprises a valuable collection of the papers presented at the Symposium. It identifies how relations between the West and the Muslim World have developed; where mutual interests

meet and diverge; and prospects for peaceful co-existence. This book draws on the in-depth knowledge and varied opinions of its contributors who share a wealth of experience in all facets of inter-cultural awareness, European and Islamic history, contemporary international relations, media and education, and includes experts native to the Muslim World and the West as well as those who have chosen both regions as their adoptive homes.

It is fitting at this juncture to express my gratitude to all the speakers for their participation in the Symposium. Their informative presentations compiled in this volume offer sound insight and informed perspectives on relations between the Muslim World and the West.

Finally, thanks are due to the editors and other members of the ECSSR Department of Publications who assisted during the course of this project.

Jamal S. Al-Suwaidi, Ph.D.
Director General
ECSSR

Islam and the West: A Civilized Dialogue

Relations between Islam and the West are often described as a series of conflicts interspersed by periods of tense peace, but such a description glosses over those moments of genuine interaction and coexistence that actually have not been unusual throughout history. Unfortunately historians tend to write more about battles than times of peace and a look at the past can reveal fascinating periods when in fact humanity prevailed. Ignacio Gutiérrez de Terán addresses this aspect and examines the Andalusian Civilization as an example. A re-examination of Andalusia offers the means to strengthen efforts of rapprochement between Islamic societies of the East and Christian societies of the West through the adoption of historical patterns of coexistence, interaction and cultural cross-fertilization, and thereby raise the hope of finding a possible model that will stimulate dialogue between the two civilizations. The Andalusian Civilization flourished on the territory of the Iberian Peninsula centuries ago one should take advantage of its most pertinent and accessible aspects. There is the belief that the Andalusian example can be employed in several ways, including formulating the theoretical and practical framework of fundamental principles, content and aims of such a dialogue. There is no doubt that the atmosphere of tolerance and peaceful coexistence that characterized the political experience and social development in Spain – during what was a relatively long period of time – sheds light on a civilized human behavior that has not lost its symbolism and energy as an incentive to recognize the importance of the lessons of the past in today's world.

Islamic unity – or rather the lack of due to East–West conflicts – is often considered a point of contention between the Muslim World and

the West and many feel it has had deep and long-felt consequences for cultural relations and has colored Muslim opinions of the West. Ahmed Ali Salem discusses the impact of Muslim views on Western attitudes to Islamic unity by analyzing four perceptions of the West in the minds of many Muslims. These perceptions are linked to specific important stages in the historical interaction between Muslims and the West. The first stage was the exploitation by Western powers of trading capitulations granted by the Ottoman Empire to nationals of certain European countries. The second stage was the Western colonization of Muslim countries and the rise of the Islamic League in response to the challenge of colonialism and the disunity of Muslims. The third stage was the accusation that Western colonial powers were trying to prevent the restoration of the Caliphate after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The fourth stage was the accusation that those powers were obstructing the territorial integrity of Islamic countries under colonial rule, and that the West during the Cold War prevented the convergence of Islamic countries unless it served Western objectives. Thus, these perceptions, real or imaginary, have shaped Muslims' general perspective of the West and its attitudes to Islamic unity in particular, Islamic relations with the West, and Islamic political unity.

The West's view of Islam is examined by Hassan Hanafi who points out that many of the judgments made by the West on Islamic civilization are the result of conflicting powers between the colonial West and Islamic countries securing their independence. These judgments were reflected in traditional Orientalism and contemporary Western social sciences, particularly cultural anthropology. The West generalized the history of Islamic civilization and its future from the perspective of current conflict of powers and marginalized any civilizing role for Islam, but instead glorified the role of the West. Colonialism is not only military, political and economic, it is also cultural. After the Islamic countries gained their independence, the Western cultural invasion continued as evident through the number of admirers of the West, which led to nations splitting into two parts: one admiring the West and the other admiring the old heritage. In addition, national cultures were

divided into two parts: one part advocating the new, and the other advocating the old; the former is represented by the elites and the latter represented by the general public.

Today, information and perceptions of each other have been greatly informed by the communications revolution that has swept the world. Never before has the media been such a powerful tool in knowledge and opinion dissemination. Saleh Al-Nusairat explains how the media has a fundamental role in shaping and directing public opinion, being the most influential means of communication available to individuals. Many people receive a significant amount of their information, ideas and views on things and people from the media. In light of the importance of this role, all countries and political and social forces are directly dependent on the media to deliver their message, programs and ideas to the public. The enormous technological progress in modern communications in general, and the Internet in particular, has made the media available round the clock and allows people to follow up on what is happening in the world moment by moment. Therefore, the great powers that enjoy influence in the world, and those that seek to have influence on world public opinion, realized very early on the importance of the media in achieving their goals. Those countries have targeted certain areas to broadcast what they deem as useful in order to achieve their policy aims. In the Arab region, for example, one finds that the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has operated its Arabic section since 1938. The BBC broadcasts in the languages of many Muslim nations, including Farsi, Pashto, Somali, Hausa, Uzbek, among others. After the events of September 11th the battle between Western powers and the forces of extremism in the Arab and Islamic worlds became a media battle *par excellence*. The militants used the Internet to access their supporters, and so the Western response was the establishment of new Western news networks. Thus, appeared Al Hurra TV channel and Radio Sawa, which were directly funded by the US Congress, followed by the BBC Arabic channel in 2007, Radio France 24, as well as German, Dutch, Chinese and even Korean stations. These satellite TV

and radio stations were not only meant to convey the Western viewpoint about current events, but also political and cultural influence on Arab public opinion.

The terrorist attacks on 9/11, Madrid and London fed the negative stereotype of Islam and the Muslim, which fed into everyday narrative in the West, from movies to the printed press. This subtle depiction is often dismissed as an irrational representation that bears little influence on matters of importance. However, Melani McAlister implies that images of Islam matter a great deal in US culture and in US–Middle East relations. Unquestionably, modern film, television, news media, literature and visual culture all offer perceptions of the Middle East. The images they produce are varied, although it is clear that the history of representing Islam is hardly salutary. After 9/11, the intensity of American fascination with Islam increased dramatically as did the number – and the diversity – of US representations. One simple but fundamental argument is that these media images do not operate in a simple or one-dimensional fashion. One cannot understand the impact of the media by cataloguing stereotypes, or by assessing how many “negative” or “positive” images appear in the media. Instead, one can learn more about the role of culture when it is asked how perceptions of Islam work in the United States, for whom and to what end.

Moustafa Bayoumi takes this further and examines how since 9/11 Muslims living in the West have found their loyalties to their states questioned and have endured greatly increased suspicion and occasionally outright hostility; their very presence has become a political issue. Not only have their legal rights as citizens been questioned but their collective ability and willingness to integrate into various Western societies is also being doubted. However, a careful analysis of this state of affairs, and the response to the loyalty question by intellectuals operating within Islamic theological traditions, highlights attempts by various arts organizations to illustrate more sympathetic treatments of Islamic culture to Western audiences. Still, while intellectual rejoinders and arts diplomacy have their place in this debate, neither provides vehicles for illustrating the complex ways that

Muslim minorities actually live their lives. Promoting empathy as a model for dispelling prejudice and highlighting empathetic accounts in the public sphere representing the varieties of Muslim minority life could expand the perception of Muslims as fellow citizens in Western liberal democracies today.

Nader Hashemi explores the issue of the “hateful” Muslim stereotype further and that following 9/11 a substantial body of influential opinion believed that at root, the conflict between Islam and the West was due to a fundamental clash of values. President George W. Bush famously asked, “Why do they hate us?” The answer he came up with was that, “they hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.” Prominent scholars and public intellectuals such as Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis sought to give credence to this perspective with controversial theories on the “Clash of Civilizations”. Far more convincing was the Gallup Organization’s massive multi-year research study. Based on a survey of attitudes from tens of thousands of Muslims in 35 countries with a predominately Muslim population, this comprehensive study found that Muslims and Westerners had rather similar values when it came to basic issues of modernity. It not only found widespread support for democracy but also found that substantial majorities in some of the most conservative Muslim societies believe that men and women should have equal rights and that substantial majorities in nearly all nations surveyed say that if drafting a constitution for a new country, they would guarantee freedom of speech, defined as allowing all citizens to express their opinion on the political, social, and economic issues of the day. In short, this study confirmed that most Muslims actually admire the West, in particular its economic development, political freedoms and technological prowess. Proof that this is the case can be observed by visiting any capital city in the Muslim world where often the longest line is outside the United States or Canadian Embassy where people queue in line to obtain a visa to travel to the West, emigrate there if possible or to send their children there to study. What better empirical proof exists to prove that Muslims

actually admire, respect and deeply appreciate Western civilization? How to explain then the ongoing tension between Islam and the West?

According to the aforementioned Gallup study, most Muslims stated that “the primary cause of broad-based anger and anti-Americanism was not due to a clash of civilizations but rather it was the perceived effect of US foreign policy in the Muslim world. The study went on to conclude that perceptions of US policy as a form of American neo-colonialism fuels anti-Americanism globally in the Muslim world and beyond and is used by terrorists as it appeals to new recruits. It also diminishes American moral authority in the Muslim world, Europe and other parts of the world. To summarize, Muslims do not have a problem the West *per se*, but they are deeply concerned and critical of certain aspects of the foreign policies of many leading Western countries, both of the past and the present which are deemed as unfair, unjust and deeply inimical to the basic human rights and sense of dignity of Muslim communities around the world.

Riem Spielhaus looks at the development of mistrust between Muslims and the West in the decade following 9/11, which has been shaped by a paradigm shift: Middle Eastern immigrants in Western European countries were increasingly perceived and debated as “Muslims.” The trend to discuss immigrants as Muslims has been followed also by a shift from xenophobia to anti-Muslim sentiments, as has been documented by quantitative research. Even in North America, Australia and New Zealand, where Muslims are far from making up a large part of the immigrant population, a new awareness has been given to Muslim residents. The focus on Muslim immigrants and their descendants has become an issue of investigations into Islam and subsequent political policies as reactions to terrorist attacks. What is often neglected, however, is that 9/11 and the new tone among policymakers afterwards had grave effects on the lives of non-Muslim immigrants as well. However, examples exist from different fields of encounters that show the power of individuals in resisting the dominant narrative of enmity between “Western” and “Muslim” people and civilizations.

Globalization is a term that has dominated much rhetoric of the 21st century and Abdulaziz Hamid Al-Jaboury highlights how the effects of globalization can be felt in political, social, economic, cultural and even moral circles. Globalization has influenced individual lifestyles and communities and also constitutes an inexhaustible intellectual source for thought, philosophy and vision in the intellectual and cultural arena. These discussions sometimes lead to agreement but usually become points of dispute, provoking controversy and skepticism over all what has been agreed upon when what is needed is translation into tangible results in society. Globalization has not stopped at cultural and scientific exchange, but has also extended to the imposition of influence and hegemony, denial of privacy, and impacting social, intellectual and cultural stability which are inconsistent with a society's foundations and its national and ideological identity.

Addressing the negative is the first step in dispelling it. As these academics have shown, despite the weight of historical and political baggage that has long influenced perceptions on both sides of the cultural divide, the determination to seek the path of humanitarian interaction has never failed. Whether it is an example of peaceful co-existence from the past, attempts today to dispel stereotypes in popular media, or protecting minorities in the community from hateful behavior, society instinctively realizes that there is more that we share and more that we have in common than anything that separates us, and that this alone can form the basis for mutual respect, advancement and peaceful co-existence.

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The Andalusian Model and Muslim–Christian Dialogue Today

Ignacio Gutiérrez de Terán

This paper addresses the means to strengthen efforts of rapprochement between Islamic societies of the East and Christian societies of the West through the adoption of historical patterns of coexistence, interaction and cultural cross-fertilization, and thereby raise the hope of finding a possible model that will stimulate dialogue between the two civilizations. The best example of such patterns is the Andalusian Civilization that flourished on the territory of the Iberian Peninsula centuries ago, and we should take advantage of its most pertinent and accessible aspects. There is the belief that the Andalusian example can be employed in several ways, including formulating the theoretical and practical framework of fundamental principles, content and aims of such a dialogue. There is no doubt that the atmosphere of tolerance and peaceful coexistence that characterized the political experience and social development in Spain – during what was a relatively long period of time – sheds light on a civilized human behavior that has not lost its symbolism and energy as an incentive to recognize the importance of the lessons of the past in today’s world.

Of course, the issue includes many dialectical elements since the “true image” of the “three civilizations” in Andalusia still raises various arguments and debates in Spain and Europe alike. Some groups skeptical about this civilized religious convergence push to deprive such an important era of its Eastern influence in order to create a European

identity. Such groups still denounce the “Andalusian legend”, which – in their view – is persistently fabricated for dubious purposes in order to justify a pointless cultural and religious dialogue. The opinion here – and putting aside those exaggerated positions that imply malicious intent – is that one can still hold to the solid belief that Andalusia’s achievements in terms of relations between the various religious and ethnic groups should be valued and deserve appreciation. However, in fairness one should reject the excessive literature and discourse that seem concerned with embellishing the real image of Andalusia and censoring the negative aspects, rather than promoting a scientific project that over any other consideration seeks to add to the enrichment of Mankind.

Dialogue of Cultures and its Current Prospects

The process of dialogue between “Islam” and “West” started a long time ago, and here we mean the “official” process, which is now sponsored by governments, international and regional organizations and institutions representing large segments of society on both sides. Of course, the exchange of views between Islam and Christianity – and the search for understanding of each other’s positions – represent a continuing phenomenon that has taken place for hundreds of years. This interaction finds itself renewed in the 20th century after several religious institutions in Muslim countries have responded to the calls for dialogue made by the Vatican Council II (1965–1966), and the subsequent visits and activities of Pope Paul VI in various Arab countries, notably Palestine.¹ Over time, the engagement of non-religious official bodies in this interaction has given the entire process a previously absent global focus, culminating with the United Nations (UN) – during its 59th General Assembly held in 2004 – announcing its support for the project of the “Alliance of Civilizations”, thanks to efforts made by certain Western and Muslim leaders such as Spanish Prime Minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, and his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. In this context, the way has been paved for several global meetings and conferences – of which the Arab Gulf States have kindly hosted a number – which resulted

in the adoption of international efforts and confirmation of the participants' desire (particularly certain Arab and Islamic representatives) to bring those efforts to fruition.

The purpose here is not to consider the conditions necessary for the process of dialogue – or the Alliance of Civilizations – but rather to limit the task to providing an overview of the Andalusian experience and the continuity of its positive social, cultural and institutional aspects. However, it is worth mentioning that the difficulties and obstacles facing the path of this dialogue means that results are limited and do not match the efforts and endeavors made so far. Beyond the speeches, statements, media coverage, optimism and hopeful expectations expressed here and there, it seems that the project has not progressed beyond the set-up stage and verification of good faith. Coming up with tangible proposals to adopt specific standards within an explicit time frame will ensure the transition to a new decisive stage, where the opportunity will be wide open for the employment of prominent historical experiences such as the Andalusian one.

Before moving to the heart of this research, it is important to discuss three of the main implications of the dialogue process (and our personal approach to it), namely: the identification of the participating parties; the civilization–culture relationship and its implications for the dialogue; and the dialogue in reply to the “clash of civilizations”.

The Naming and Identification of Participating Parties

This is an issue of paramount importance despite the fact that many have failed to see its intrinsic danger; traditional terms of reference indicate two main participants in the dialogue: one is “Islamic” and the other is “Western”. At first glance it presupposes that there is a “secular” addressee having a non-religious base vis-à-vis another addressee who is distinctively “religious” or devout. Interestingly, the dialogue had basically started as a conversation between representatives of Christianity and Islam before (European-American) Christianity transformed into the “West”. There are also various theoretical complications; the “West” is

primarily a geographical term whose natural limits and features are not well known. However, “Islam” is a very broad term that combines political, social, religious and other meanings. The most important thing is that depriving a party of the religious characteristic on the grounds that it is a secular party, while stressing the “religious” characteristic of the second party, predetermines the identity of the persons who are assigned to represent the views of their “civilization”. In a few bilateral meetings we have seen representatives from both sides establishing their conversations on backgrounds that cannot be matched or balanced because the process was not preceded by a precise definition of what is “Western” and what is “Islamic”. So, this failure or omission may explain why the majority of such meetings concluded with superficial recommendations. In addition, because of the absence of practical determinants of dialogue, the participants in such meetings in general tend to stress the religious or secular achievements of their civilizations, and to analyze the potential achievements of the other party from a purely “religious” or “secular” perspective.

Therefore, the impression received is some audiences do not care about any consensus on points of dialogue and similarity, but rather the uniqueness of their “civilization” and what distinguishes it from the other. Even if it is not said plainly, the listener feels sometimes that they want to prove the superiority of their culture through emphasizing what they deem as a deviation and deterioration of the other. In terms of Western discourse, the issue is further complicated by people stressing the “Christian element” of Western civilization, while others promote the “secular element” of the same civilization, noting that secularism fought and is still fighting with the Christian establishment, especially the Roman Catholic Church. As such, one should maintain the original binary (Christianity–Islam) or, at least one should have set up uniform standards for defining what is “Islam” and what is the “West”.

The Civilization–Culture Binary and its Implications For Dialogue

From the above, a second problem is identified that also has terminological implications, specifically the concepts of “civilization” and “culture”.

While the first has dominated contemporary discussion – we talk today about the “dialogue of civilizations”, “meeting of civilizations” and “alliance of civilizations” – we did not bother, when it comes to the question of “Islam and West”, to search for a consensus on the definition of “civilization”. Given the varied physical, political and civil implications of the concept of “civilization”, some have proposed the use of the term “culture”, believing that the spiritual and rhetoric fundamentals of the latter is a more fertile ground to address two intellectual systems that are the most important and influential in the history of Mankind. The focus on the element of “civilization” will inevitably distance participants from entering into a productive intellectual debate and would instead end up focusing on positions and policies that do not necessarily represent the ideological background of the culture which produced a particular civilization. This argument is known to intellectuals famous for their contributions to the process of dialogue, such as the Bosnian Alija Ali Izetbegović in his book *Islam Between East and West*; and those who call for a dependence on “culture” in order to avoid many terminological implications.

Dialogue in Reply to the “Clash of Civilizations”

It is not a secret, especially after 9/11, that the encouragement of dialogue is strongly linked to the heat of the political, diplomatic and military conflict between certain Western countries – primarily the United States – and a number of Islamic organizations, especially in the Middle East. There is also a major and undeniable support for the saying “clash of civilizations” and the prevailing belief that there is a serious “problem” between Islam and West rooted in history and a need to be solved at the present time.

However, the irony is that these circumstantial problems arise from many clashes including the conflict between on the one hand the United States and the West, and Al-Qaeda and what is termed “international terrorism” on the other hand, in addition to the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, Iranian expansion, etc., all of which do not represent cultural or intellectual issues but are political clashes with tangible aims, whether

it is to dominate the Middle East; to control geo-social issues such as immigration; or bilateral economic relations. Thus, the approach to this conflict as a matter of cultural or civilizational debate is an approach that is destined to be ineffective because it is used as a means to avoid calling things with their appropriate names. This also explains the slowdown in the development of this process and a repeat of the relative stagnation felt in the leading international conferences held in the 1990s.² While there is pressure to increase such meetings and activities qualitatively and quantitatively whenever political and military crises arise, the use of dialogue as a sustainable and comprehensive cultural tool for mutual understanding then loses its original purpose—one which was never meant to be the sole means for the resolution of such conflicts, but rather as a path for rapprochement and understanding.

In addition, these premises often lead to strange suggestions such as those put forward by the Spanish former Foreign Minister, Miguel Ángel Moratinos, in the wake of the horrific terrorist attack carried out by a supporter of the extremist right-wing in Norway in July 2011. He called for strengthening the process (of the Alliance of Civilizations) to confront this attack, which was an assault on co-existence and tolerance among religions, noting that most of the victims were Norwegian (Christians), and the motive was primarily political and it appears that it was related to domestic issues within Norway.³ Although the criminal targeted the Labor Party for its “lax” policy on immigration and the Islamic “invasion” of Europe, it is difficult to understand what is the benefit of involving the Islamic side in a dialogue limited to Christian–Christian extremism (and vice versa if the issue is related to Islamic–Islamic extremism) no matter how racist and hating the extremist right-wing ideas are towards other races, unless we want to take for granted that the exacerbated crisis of immigration and the spread of Muslim communities in a number of European countries is a part of (this) problem. However, this conclusion is a very serious and sides with the theories of the Nazi movements.

*Andalusia and the
Atmosphere of Ideological Tolerance*

The history of Andalusia extending from the 7th century to the 15th century AD is divided into five main stages: the rule of the Umayyads (the state, the emirate and the caliphate); disintegration of the Caliphate into small Islamic reigns (city states); the reign of the Almoravids; the reign of the Almohads; and the Nasrid Kingdom in Granada. Out of these phases the Umayyad era emerged as the most prosperous and flourished politically, socially and culturally; it is this stage which summarizes the glories of Andalusia. What attracts attention is that the Umayyad dynasty – its princes and caliphates – ruled most of the Iberian Peninsula for about 300 years—a very long period not surpassed by any other ruling family in the history of Spain.⁴ However, other eras were not devoid of achievements that honor the history of Andalusia, even if they were struggling to survive after the balances of power turned against the Andalusian when the northern Christian kingdoms took the initiative. Despite their initial momentum, the campaigns by Almoravids and Almohads could not stop the armies of the Christian kingdoms, particularly the Castile and Aragon, except for only limited periods of time.

The history of Andalusia recorded examples indicating the ability of Muslim communities to display cultural and social generosity as is the case with the small Islamic reigns that were established following the collapse of the Umayyad Caliphate in Córdoba in the 12th century AD/ 6th century AH Andalusia fell under the rule of “26 dynasties, most notably the Abbad family in Seville, the Noon family in Toledo, Hood family in Zaragoza, the Aftas family in Badajoz, Hammudid family in Malaga, and Zirid family in Granada.”⁵ Despite their political weakness and preoccupation with fierce internal wars and the continuous Christian raids, those kingdoms flourished in arts, music and science.

Most Spanish and European historians agree that the Islamic state in the Iberian Peninsula dealt with the issue of religious and ethnic pluralism in a new and unprecedented way in the region following the spread of Christianity during the last phase of the Roman era. With the exception of

a small group that deliberately misuses history to justify its ideological heterodoxy and claims that Islamic rule suppressed other religions and tried to eradicate Christianity by killing its followers or, at best, subjecting them to a very hard discriminatory system akin to slavery, the vast majority recognizes that the Muslim rulers generally treated the Christians and Jews in a very acceptable manner. This new soft approach was firstly represented in the “easy” tax policy and freedom of worship, which provided opportunity to many *Dhimies* (protected non-Muslims) to stay in the Andalusian cities and countryside under the sovereignty of the Islamic State. The discrepancies between Andalusian and Goth governance are mostly reflected in terms of the experience of the Jews, who had been subject to persecution and exclusion in the Goth-ruled lands (Germanic people who swept into southern Europe after the collapse of the Roman Empire). The Jews dealt with non-hostile Muslim rulers who recognized the sect’s right in managing their own affairs and practicing their religious rituals.⁶ So, truth should be told that a large proportion of the Andalusia population remained true to their original faith for a long period of time; the same phenomenon that is familiar to us in the Orient and the Levant in general, especially during the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates.

In addition, there appeared during this period the “Mozarabs”—Christians who maintained their original religion in the heart of the Islamic emirate although they adopted Arabic civilization, culture and language. Those people preferred to live in a Muslim region and did not move to the northern area of the Christian kingdoms because “they remained free to practice their religious beliefs and rituals as their churches, monasteries, religious communities and clerical judiciary were left for them.” Muslims requested the Arabists only to be loyal to the Andalusian State.⁷ So, the Mozarabs took charge of senior positions in the administration and institutions, including the army, after they had assimilated socially and become fully Arabized. In spite of this, certain European historians are skeptical about the idealized position of Mozarabs and insist that they suffered poor living conditions under the “yoke” of Islamic rule. However, there is a balanced organic relationship between the generosity of the Islamic State and the flourishing of Christian affairs.

It is found that “the institutions of the Christian minority were stronger and firmer in the regions where the authority of the Umayyad Caliphate was stable and strong,”⁸ unlike the conditions of the Mozarabs on the outskirts who were always exposed to rebellion and disobedience to the central government or vulnerable to raids from Christian armies. The phenomenon of the Andalusian Mozarabs indicates that the Umayyad state did not force the indigenous population to convert to Islam, but the radiating effect of Arab culture and Islamic religion is the reason that motivated great numbers of Spanish Christians and Jews to convert to Islam, but it was not coercion.

For the *Al-Muwal'ladeen* (Muslims of mixed ancestry), or those who converted to Islam, historical documents and evidence establish that these new Muslims were not forced to learn Arabic in order to join the Arab Islamic State, however, the majority of them clung to their romance languages derived from Latin.⁹ It seems that families descended from ancient Arab roots used their romance languages beside Arabic during the days of the Umayyad Caliphate; this is what scholar Ibn Hazm implies in one of his novels.¹⁰ When analyzing the Andalusian vision of the multi-religious society, one finds that the question of language is as important as religion because continuation of use by Spanish Muslims (*Al-Muwal'ladeen*) and Christians (Mozarabs) of their mother tongues gives us a very significant insight into the Andalusian leaders' mentality, and it invalidates some of the theories that the Arabs scorned romance languages and coerced their subjects in Spain to learn Arabic if they wanted to have any significant standing.¹¹

It is also of interest to follow the conditions of religious groups, especially the Mozarabs, in order to consider the facts of this pluralistic mentality; the “Martyrdom movement” (or “the Mozarab revolution”) itself indicates that the appeal of Islam to the Christians did not come from a programmed central policy, but rather resulted from normal conditions imposed by the flourishing of Arab culture. In the days of Caliph Abdul-Rahman Al-Awsat (8th century AD/3rd Century AH), the religious leadership of the Christian community was very dissatisfied with their children's deviation from Christianity, negligence in practicing their

rituals, and fascination with Arab-Muslim lifestyle. This forced monks Eulogio, Alvaro and others to appeal to their religious brethren to cling to their language, traditions and authentic norms. When these efforts failed, they launched a propaganda campaign against Islam to the extent of abusing the basic beliefs of Muslims and insulting their Messenger openly in public squares in order to seek martyrdom and thereby move the conscience of their sect.¹² Monk Alvaro summarized the motives of his displeasure and grief over the dissolution of the Mozarab community in a famous letter in which he blamed his brothers for neglecting the Latin language and adopting Arab culture.¹³ While the Spanish nationalism school claimed that the execution of the Mozarab monks who assaulted their Islamic beliefs is strong evidence of the Muslim rulers' hatred of "Spanish identity", a careful follow-up of others' reactions reflects the keenness of Muslim rulers to negotiate with the rebels and not to be decisive except in case of paramount necessity, as happened when the insurgency and civil coup expanded and the Caliphate had to seek the mediation of the Catholic Church itself.¹⁴

Andalusian Approach to Religious and Ethnic Pluralism

In general, it can be said that Muslim rulers in Andalusia dealt with the issue of religious pluralism in a way that is more positive than what the Christian European kingdoms did in the north and south of the Continent. It is true that Andalusian history was full of infighting, dissension and tension, but the European regions suffered fierce and more dangerous and destructive sectarian disputes and regional clashes, as was the case with the religious wars that took place between the Catholic Church and heretical groups. Such wars resulted in innumerable medieval massacres that killed hundreds of thousands of people. There is a big difference between the treatment received by the Jewish community in Andalusia and the campaigns of "ethnic cleansing" and exile suffered by the same community in countries such as France and England, which expelled the Jews from their territories. These "cleansing" processes are deemed the

direct historical precedent of the decision taken by the Catholic King Fernando and Queen Isabel of Spain to displace the Jews of the Kingdom of Granada after it was conquered in 1492. This is the discriminatory measure which will be later complemented by Christianizing the rest of the Muslims (they were later called “Moors”) before expelling them finally in the 17th century AD. It is no exaggeration to affirm that the religious openness that characterized some of the Christian kingdoms at the time of the Umayyad Caliphate, represented by unique models such as Toledo and its famous translation house, was the result of influence by the pluralistic Andalusian model.

However, this is not to say that the Andalusian experience was safe from ideological intolerance and radicalism, as in the states of the Almoravids and Almohads, although some contemporary studies of the alleged stubbornness of the Almoravids confirmed that they did not deviate radically from the classical pattern of Islam despite their bad reputation.¹⁵ Whatever the case may be, the two states of Almoravids and Almohads constitute a departure from the rules of religious and social Andalusian tolerance—not only in dealing with religious minorities but also at the level of ties between Spanish Muslims and the new Moroccan rulers (especially Almohads) who were hostile to the “local” theological and philosophical creative schools and preservation of the “religious tolerance” of Andalusian people.

However, the new Orientalist school – to be discussed later – insists on reducing the religious history of Andalusia to the more violent and fighting scenes such as the martyrdom movement among Mozarabs; the severe restrictions on Christians and Jews during the days of the Almohads and their pursuit of skilled scholars such as Ibn Rushd and the Jewish Ibn Maimoon; and the burning of the books deemed heretical. The goal here is not to praise the glories of Andalusia and embellish its image as some sort of fascinating stage of history during which human beings reached unprecedented level of inter-religious coexistence and interaction. The Andalusian age is nothing more than the product of its time (the Middle Ages), where domination, tyranny and monopoly of power was the norm. However, in comparison with the conditions at that time, this

age represented a remarkable development and as repeated earlier, it has vital elements that can be applied today. These elements were a genuine desire to respect others and establish a diverse society even within a hierarchical order that discriminates between the followers of religions and sects according to their affiliations.

The history of Andalusia shows many facts including that of religious and sectarian difference, which were not the decisive element in the relationship between Christians and Muslims throughout the seven centuries. The decisive elements in fact were economic interests, political conditions and social developments. By relying on the fundamentals of religious faith only, we cannot interpret why the Islamic armies spread so easily throughout the Iberian Peninsula. However, the Islamic conquest was accomplished with the cooperation of a local faction defecting from the Germanic ruling family and people in many areas rushed to welcome the Islamic armies, expressing their hatred of the tight grip of control by the Goths. So, without adding these key factors to the equation it is impossible to understand the scope of the intervention by Muslim leaders in the affairs of the northern Christian lands, and cooperation among them through agreements and royal weddings between families on both sides.

The same situation was repeated in reverse during the time of the small Islamic reigns, which used to seek assistance from certain Christian kingdoms in order to counteract internal conspiracies or face external threats. Even the recovery or retrieval wars fought by the northern kingdoms with purely religious enthusiasm and zeal – as alleged by former historians – had no relation to the said historical epic as advocated by Spanish nationalists because, with a few exceptions, such wars were subject to “non-religious” alliances, agreements and understandings between Muslims and Christians against a Muslim party or a Christian group, or against both of them together.¹⁶ What also terrified Almoravids and Almohads specifically, in addition to Islamic customs and beliefs, is the leniency of the Andalusians in their treaties with the Christians. Consider the Christian warrior, Rodrigo Ruiz de Vivar (“the Master”), the hero of Spanish nationalism and the symbol of the struggle against “Islamic occupation” according to the traditional nationalist story. He

employed his weapons and men to fight the prince of Christian Catalonia in order to defend Valencia.¹⁷

Furthermore, the collapse of Muslim rule in Spain was related to internal political and social reasons rather than the effects of the Crusades. Many historians revealed that the continuous differences between the Arab elites, and between the Berber soldiers and *Al-Muwal'ladeen* (Muslim Spanish people) – like the tribal tensions between the different parties that participated in conquering the Andalusian Peninsula – are the main factors which subjugated Umayyad rule. Thus, the most dangerous challenges that faced the Umayyad rulers were not the raids by the Christian kings but the rebellions and coups led by *Al-Muwal'ladeen* deserters, especially the insurgency led by Omar Bin Hafsoon.¹⁸ Furthermore, the days of the last Umayyad Caliphate in Cordoba were evidence of the separation between the Berber military and the dignitaries of the City.¹⁹

Some attribute the disintegration of the Andalusian State to the weakness of its institutions and the lack of cohesion in a society subject to an authoritative political system that took into account the interests of a few oligarchs. According to this narrative, the ruling elite could reign in rebellious opposition with the assistance of its huge military and generous financial strength – both were the pillars of the Andalusian government – but not through sincere loyalty or national jealousy, a problem that was repeated with the Almoravids and Almohads.²⁰ Still, this narrative has a great deal of simplification and generalization as it limited the “Andalusian dilemma” to a bitter struggle between Arab elites, the popular *Al-Muwal'ladeen* and the Berbers, and it adopts a rule that is applicable also to the Christian autocratic elitist kingdoms. However, what is of concern here is to point out that the religious issue was not a problem in the intellectual Andalusian system, unlike the European view which in many cases deprived the followers of such religions and sects “with doubtful loyalty” of their rights as citizens. Unfortunately, we have many examples demonstrating the cruel treatment which the Europeans meted out to other people, starting with the Jews in the Middle Ages, to the campaigns of extermination and ethnic cleansing of native Indians at the

hands of the English, Spanish, Portuguese and the French, and later the American settlers in the North and South America, ending with slavery in Africa or the military campaigns in Asia.

*The Debate on the Symbolic
Andalusian Civilization in European Culture*

One can conclude from the aforementioned that Andalusia provided very valuable contributions to the field of cultural dialogue and religious understanding. However, several Western groups started to doubt the validity of this conclusion, especially since 9/11. There are countless examples showing the sensitivity of the new Orientalist school towards the “Andalusian positivity”. Let us remember for example the “historic” speech delivered by the US President Barack Obama, addressing the Islamic World in June 2009, in which he praised Andalusia as a great or perhaps unique example of peaceful inter-religious coexistence, particularly that “Islam has a proud tradition of tolerance. We see it in the history of Andalusia and Cordoba during the Inquisition.”²¹ The case of Andalusia and Islamic view of religions and sects did not form a large part of his speech message in Cairo; however, the US President’s momentary recall of the Andalusia times raised a tremendous amount of comments and positions. Still, his speech opened the door again to reviewing the implications of Islamic civilization in Andalusia, and the ways to estimate its contribution in the formation of modern European culture in general and Spanish culture in particular. An essential part of the debate is about the true meaning of such “Islamic religious tolerance” and its historical contemporary manifestations, and whether such tolerance to other religions as witnessed in Andalusia may be considered as a fine role model that should be emulated or just a typical unfounded argument?

After Obama’s compliment on the religious peace during Arab rule in Andalusia, those who are anti- “the myth of Andalusia” and the “myth of Islamic tolerance” rose up and deemed such statements as new evidence that the “naïve ignorant Western society” has fallen in the trap of “pro-

Islam propaganda". Furthermore, they condemned the readiness showed by many Europeans to "swallow" this process of revisionism which aims to embellish an era of the Middle Ages (Andalusia) that was never characterized by grandeur and splendor as described by some.²² Yet, others said that, "it is a bitter, tragic irony that the foundational myths of 'symbiotic' Andalusian ecumenism and Ottoman 'tolerance', which were central to the genesis of the Eurabian pathology currently on display in Europe, are now also being invoked as salvational fantasies in the wake of the French riots. Denying any Islamic etiology for the major problems confronting Europe, thus begets more Islam as the 'solution', and accelerates Europe's seemingly inevitable trajectory towards complete Islamization, with implementation of Shari'a."²³

The phenomenon of rebellion against the "rosy image" of Andalusia, as drawn by intellectuals of the 19th century in Europe, thrived during the second half of the last century by a group of Orientalists and historians but it did not reach its peak until the aftermath of 9/11. Those censuring the "obsession of Andalusia" agree that the creators of the myth of Andalusia are the European secularists who hate the Christian religion and who intended through their creation of that myth to achieve two main objectives: accusing the Christian Church of religious rigidity and recognizing that the victory of secularism and abandonment of the church are the mainstays of contemporary European civilization. Actually, in terms of implications of this for Spain, the debate about the myth of religious co-existence during the days of Andalusia is within a broader subjective frame that also includes the role played by Andalusia in shaping modern Spanish and European identity. It is sufficient to refer back to the famous lectures of the historians Americo de Castro and Claudio Sánchez Albornoz in order to verify the significance of such a role.

The arena has not been empty of new debaters determined to revive such arguments and reconfirm that Andalusia is not one of the founding elements of Spanish identity. One of those debaters is the Orientalist Serafín Fanjul, the author of two books entirely devoted to denying any contribution by Arabs and Muslims to the establishment of current

Spanish civilization. Since then, various historians, journalists and politicians have followed his example trying to unveil the “true face” of Islam and alert their compatriots of its dangers. The said Spanish researcher has applied himself eagerly to put an end to what he called fallacies and propaganda traps regarding Andalusia and attacked specifically the argument of religious tolerance. Fanjul stresses that the Andalusian rulers’ approach to religious diversity did not differ much from past practices in Christian communities at the time of the Islamic State in Spain. Fanjul views Andalusia as representing a foreign period of time forcibly injected in the historical path of Spain and Europe, noting that the State of Spain as we know today is the result of the recovery from war and the Spanish people’s adherence to its Christian heritage and rejection of the Islamic influence. He concludes that the call for rehabilitation of such a “Andalusia fantasy” is essentially an attack on Spain and a blatant attempt to discredit its historical and social development. It is enough to consider the titles of both books in order to sense the quality of his conclusions (*Andalusia Versus Spain*, and *Illusion of Andalusia*).²⁴

It goes without saying that these opinions reflect a problematic approach to the new history of Europe; it tends to consider other cultures as a cause of tension and a dilemma in itself instead of trying to contain and meld them into a diverse civilized crucible. Thus, Andalusia is separated from Spanish history and deprived of any characteristic as a foundation of Spanish identity. This is exactly what was persisted by what is known as the “Continuous Traditional School”, which refuted the influence of the Andalusian era in forming Spanish identity, but rather it considered that Arabic Islamic institutions and culture did not leave any trace. In addition, Spanish societies succeeded in “Spanish-izing” the invaders and containing any possible effect of their Eastern civilization. The same applies to the Christian minorities under the Islamic State; the Mozarabs were “resistors” who never assimilated into the Islamic environment, but rather they are the human and civil foundation of the Spanish State which emerged in the south after the fall of Granada in 1492.²⁵

*Emergence of the “Myth” of
Inter-religious Co-existence In Andalusia*

One characteristic of those who warn that Islam is harboring despicable plots and ploys against the West and its exceptional values of civilization, is that they go too far in re-attributing anything that we may consider as an accomplishment from Islamic culture to other civilizations that had preceded it such as the Greek, Persian, Indian, Roman and Chinese civilizations; i.e. Arabs assumed the mission of the carrier only. If we recognize originally that Islamic civilization, especially the Arabs, provided a valuable production, then there is always someone who will denunciate the matter out of hand.²⁶

In a race to disguise any influence of the Arab presence, even through historical revisionism, there are some people seeking to rid the Arab historians of their leading role when it comes to the matter of “fabricating Andalusia untruths”; and they intended to attribute the matter to non-Islamic elements. The American Orientalist, Bernard Lewis, lays the responsibility of establishing the Andalusian “myth” on the Jewish community in Europe during the 19th century. According to him the Jewish community wanted to show up the Christian injustices against the Jews who were at that time subject to oppression and prosecution in several European countries. Those Jewish writers wanted to suggest the paradox that the Jewish living under the Andalusian government (also European) enjoyed a better social status.²⁷ Others state that the fabrication of Andalusian history was made during the same century, but by the hands of a movement that was keen to romanticize the medieval period in general, including the era of Arab-Islamic rule in Andalusia. However, such cosmetic attempts were not empty of political objectives, which were to save the face of the Ottoman Empire and find justification to maintain its unity.²⁸

Aside from these explanations, there are other theories highlighting the contribution of Islamic Arab authors to the Andalusian uniqueness, for example the historian Abul Abbas Ahmad al-Muqri al-Talmasani (died in 1631 AD) who was of Andalusian-Moorish origin. He wrote the book

“*Nafhu’l Teeb Min Ghusni’l Andalus Erratieeb*” (A Pleasant Scent From the Green Branch of Andalusia). Later, the 19th-century Orientalists adopted this work as a precious source when reviewing Islamic culture in Spain and integrating that period into the history of the country after purifying it of its negatives.²⁹

Illusory Andalusia and the “Eurabia” Phenomenon

As such, it seems that the main objective of the New Orientalist School is to undermine the founding myths of the “good merciful Islam”. Such a mission is transformed into a sort of scientific obligation for some people, including the said Professor Bernard Lewis who dedicated a great part of his research to “correcting the false image painted by makers of the myth” (what is meant here is the myth of Islamic tolerance to other religions).³⁰ For Lewis, the responsibility for the prevalence of this myth of Islamic open-mindedness toward monotheistic beliefs lies this time on the Christian missionaries in Africa.³¹

The supporters of the Western anti-Islam current took a great interest in the possibility that some people may restore the myth of Andalusia in order to justify what they called the project of turning the European continent into a “house of Islam” as a result of the growing radical Muslim communities living in Europe. Traditionally, the Islamic threat to the European continent was called “Eurabia”—a term usually attributed to the Egyptian researcher, Bat Ye’or, who became famous for her study of the (oppressed) Jews and Christians in Muslim countries. Ye’or and her team were concerned about the growing number of Muslim immigrants in Europe and the spread of religious influences, and that this reflects the “prophecy” of turning modern, developed and secular European society into a merely Islamic environment overshadowed by intellectual obstinacy and political closure. What is worse in their view is that the Europeans have not yet paid attention to the Islamic threat and they seem indifferent because of the influence of official governmental propaganda sympathetic to Islam.³² What makes matters worse for the future of Western societies as a whole is that the United States itself seemed to have taken on the

European infection and is tainted by the same vice of apathy. American society is unable to fathom the threat of Islam and the Muslims' march toward using the broad freedom they have in order to blow up the state from within. That is, in synonymous words, the West is on the verge of suicide because it is going too far in making its own free environment available to a fifth column, i.e. to the Muslims who are innately anti-pluralism, anti-tolerance and anti-modernity.³³

The term “Eurabia” – like “Islamofascist” – sums up the mouthpiece expression of those who hate Islam in the political and cultural circles in Europe and America. These people like to use a tragic tone when they talk about “a continent under siege” whose population faces “a youthful society to the south and east of the Mediterranean, which is quietly colonizing a senescent and secularized continent to the north and west of it. Today, at least 15 million Muslims have their home in the European Union, a number that seems certain to rise according to the historian Niall Ferguson,³⁴ who believes that Muslim immigrants clearly find it harder to integrate into European communities.³⁵

In the same context, the theory of an Islamic conspiracy against Europe is used by one of those calling for confrontation with the Islamic threat; the American Orientalist Daniel Pipes, who is famous for his fiery writings against everything related to Islam, states that:

Indigenous Muslims of northwestern Europe have in the past year deployed three distinct forms of jihad: the crude variety deployed in Britain, killing random passengers moving around London; the targeted variety in the Netherlands ... and now the more diffuse violence in France ... Which of these or other methods will prove most efficacious is yet unclear, but the British variant is clearly counterproductive, so the Dutch and French strategies probably will recur.³⁶

In the opinion of Pipes and his companions, the nature of this aggressive jihad, common among the Muslims of our time, does not differ much from Arab campaigns against Europe from the 8th century AD, when the Arabs' tightening control of Spain led to “the occupation of the Mediterranean by hands of Arab Mujahideen, who converted to Islam in the 6th and 7th centuries”.³⁷

Suggestions to Restore Andalusia

There are various views among contemporary Arab intellectuals and thinkers on the symbolic nature of Andalusia; some of them prefer to focus on the cultural achievements while others hold to its strong political and organizational signs. On the other hand, some view it as one of the Arabs' lost glories or a lesson of history. Whatever the case, the talk of Andalusia in current Arabic literature usually focuses on its lost cultural connotations that should be restored. Thus, the call for restoration of Andalusia has a symbolic force intended for the return to the values, principles and behavior that made the Islamic civilization surpass other nations.

Therefore, it is strange to see the continual mobilization among the corps of politicians and specialists in "jihadist movements" who define Islam (politicized or non-politicized) as the number-one enemy for the West. Andalusia is of great interest to those people because, as they allege, it symbolizes such a lost paradise, which Islamic extremism attempts to restore through terrorism (or by organized immigration, if necessary). Based on this hypothesis, such extremist movements did not consider the project of restoring Andalusia as a cultural symbol, but as a clear political plan that aims to Islamize Andalusia (i.e. Spain), heart and mind.³⁸

Destruction of the Andalusian Illusion to Serve Islamophobia

The essence of what is termed "Islamophobia" lies in the classic Orientalist argument that Islam is a frozen religion that does not change; or in other words, it is a belief system that rejects evolution and is not ready to cope with modern life and urban developments. It is a lowly theocratic system contrary to the West, tainted with violence and excessively patriarchal that despises the female gender.³⁹ Therefore, the collision between the West (with its modernity and rational balance) and Islam (which is backward and based on reverence for tradition) is inevitable. So, it is not surprising that such adherents rush to launch warnings about the fabricated maneuvers behind the mask of Islamic

“tolerance”, such as the ominous dialogue of civilizations and the like. What inflamed the fire of their anger more so is that the US President himself joined this infamous bandwagon (i.e. the dialogue of civilizations).

After analyzing their interpretive approach to texts and references, which is noted for its crude and careless manner, it is easy to recognize the ideological factors indicating that politics is the main motive behind this Islamophobia. So, it is not unexpected to see adherents boasting that they are absolutely committed to the Zionist narrative and the neo-conservative school in the United States. Here, we refer to the Spanish philosopher, Rosa María Rodríguez Magda, in her book significantly titled *About the Andalusia which Never Existed: How Thinkers Created the Myth of Andalusia*, who confirms that Spanish Muslim society favored civilized openness, tolerance and adherence to democratic pluralistic values, but it “hates Israel and the United States, and accuses numbers of intellectuals of Islamophobia.”⁴⁰ This statement offers the assumption that the reactionary (non-modernity) state of Muslims may be mitigated if they adopted a more positive position toward Zionism and American policy in the region.

Needless to say that in the context of current efforts for success of the dialogue of civilizations or cultures – or whatever we want to call – it is very dangerous if the symbols of Islamophobia have a wide influence on public opinion and political decision makers alike. In the United States, people such as Bernard Lewis, Daniel Pipes and Fouad Ajami – of Arab origin (he is famous for his studies criticizing Islam) – maintain a significant level of influence since they had actually participated in preparing the American campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. The list goes on as well in France (after the United States and Britain, France is the impregnable stronghold of Islamophobia); however, their leading proponent is the philosopher Bernard Henri Levy, followed by authors Alan von Kalckreuth and Michelle Holibek. Henri Levy boasts of the relentless challenge of the authoritative movements developed in the 20th century from Nazism and Communism to “Islamism”, while intensifying his activity in global campaigns aimed at any threat to the universal

Zionist project. Furthermore, Henry Levy co-signed a petition statement against “Islamism” with other Western and Muslim thinkers living in Europe and the United States such as Salman Rushdie and Taslima Nasreen. The statement called for confronting “cultural relativity” that legitimates the measure of “stripping the Muslim man and woman of their rights to equality, freedom and secular values in the name of respecting the privacies of other cultures.”⁴¹

We have no choice but to wonder at this violent language toward Andalusia, which does not in any way deserve such an outburst that uses Islam and Muslims as a palatable prey for its sharp claws. What harm will befall them if we deal with Andalusia as a symbol of reconciliation and harmony between religions and sects? Do we falsify history and the naked facts if we said to the world: “Look, there is a civilized precedent that we can utilize?” Do they want us to take for granted an Andalusia which is the same for fanatic Muslims and that is still beating in the hearts of millions of Muslims aspiring for glory and self-dignity? What will hurt us, we the Europeans, if we pay attention to the days when Arabs were among us and take lessons from them in order to pave the way for a European multi-national and multi-faith community that combines values of social modernity and religious and ethnic tolerance?

Some Lessons from Andalusian History

What does the Andalusian civilization symbolize in the context of contemporary Western modernism? A question often facing European intellectuals concerned with so-called “convergence” of Western (Christian) civilization and Arab (Muslim) civilization, and understanding between religions, especially after the “dialogue of civilization” has become a global project. The issue – i.e. the meaning of the Andalusian civilization and its cultural implications – is not easy or subject to simple examinations, analyses and discussions. It recently faced a campaign of ideological mobilization that participated remarkably in stripping it of its substantive historical and intellectual elements to the extent that it merely became a subject for furious debate. We are used to approaching the issue

of Andalusia with politicized views and positions that have propaganda interests standing behind them. In order to break this vicious circle, we have to find a functional approach which allows for debate on the dialogue of civilizations or the prospects of bilateral relations between the West and Islamic world; the concept of modernity in its Islamic manifestations; in addition to the other flash points that feed the present problematic relationship between the Christian West and Muslim East.

Many years ago, Spain (the European country which is most affected by this subject) witnessed a renewed interest in the symbolism of Andalusia and the contribution of the Arab-Muslim influence in the formation of Spanish national identity and its palpable effects on Spanish society today. The presence of Andalusia increased as a cultural and institutional factor because of the efforts made by the government since the fall of the General Franco dictatorship in 1975, especially in the southern province of Andalusia and its capital Seville, in order to restore the significance of Andalusia and “modernize” it. Based on these efforts, institutes and governmental and civil bodies were established to promote the most positive aspects of that historical period, particularly the phenomenon of peaceful co-existence between different religions and sects (the three cultures: Islam, Christianity and Judaism), and the interaction between the Arab and Christian kingdoms in spite of many wars that broke out between them throughout the centuries. Furthermore, a group of researchers, intellectuals and writers worked hard to restore the positive image of that stage, considering it as one of the most generous periods in the history of Spain and an example of good-neighborliness and cohabitation between Muslims and Christians in Europe. It is interesting that these efforts have resulted at the end in a balanced portrayal of that period, especially if compared with the negative behavior adopted by the extremist Catholic regime of Franco for some 40 years. Today’s portrayal has produced an incomplete vision of what Andalusia means to Spanish and European culture, and concentrates only on the moments of conflict between “Arabs” as dictatorial invaders, and the Spanish as an oppressed people fighting to restore a stolen Christian home.

This is how the narrative has moved from the Andalusian concept of civilization to its mere military significance, i.e. the collaboration of European societies in expulsion of strange Muslims and working after this religious confrontation on building a modern European culture (in other words, saying that Europe as a civilized project emerged after victory in the long-standing confrontation with Islam) as opposed to highlighting Andalusian exploits, peaceful co-existence and scientific, cultural and institutional development. Such a reading of the Andalusian record even went so far that some people concluded that the European continent in general, and Spain in particular, made a qualitative evolutionary leap thanks to the spread of Andalusian civilization; i.e. they reached a conclusion that is in total opposition to the first hypothesis: Europe did not arise as a civilization because it was against Andalusia, but because it was influenced by the Andalusian model to the maximum extent. Unfortunately, both hypotheses are based on fallacies and an incomplete reading of tangible historical facts. Confrontation and hatred were not the decisive factors in Islam–Christianity relations, as previously said, and the periods of constructive co-existence between the three cultures were not frequent or consistent over the centuries.

The attacks of 9/11 in the United States and the bombings in Madrid on March 11th, 2003 stimulated the debate on the significance of Andalusia as a record of the Muslim presence in the West. The literature that doubts the “civilization” of Muslims and their cultural achievements emanated from the Western right-wing camp. The main objective was to undermine what they called “the myth of Andalusia” and the “rosy Andalusian myths”. It is intuitive to say that genuine dialogue between Eastern Islam and Western Christianity cannot be based on myth and legend, and it may not be based on exaggeration and denial. On these grounds, it is imperative to emphasize the true face of Andalusia and consider its many aspects of civilization that retain a great deal of modernity because they represent sustainable human values. Therefore, if we examined the Andalusian model, it will reveal the historical human history that is always controlled by the need for understanding and convergence.

The Muslim Perspective on Western Attitudes to Islamic Unity

Ahmad Ali Salem

The unity of the Muslim World has remained a prominent issue in Islamic thought and of great concern to Muslims since the first split at the end of the Righteous Caliphs. Despite the agreement among Muslims on the need for unity, it has faced serious challenges since Muslims divided into factions and groups within different political entities, the most important of which was the Ottoman Empire. Attempts to restore the caliphate, or to gather Muslim countries into one international organization, or even to hold a meeting between the leaders of Islamic countries to discuss issues of Islamic unity, had not succeeded until the fire of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in 1969. Given the importance of Islamic unity, which has become an ideology advocated by many Muslim intellectuals today, Muslim views of foreign powers' attitudes toward this sensitive issue have been an important factor in shaping Islamic opinion. This is particularly so with regard to the West, which exceeded other foreign powers in its depth of interaction with the Muslim World, whether such interactions were ones of cooperation or conflict.

This paper discusses the impact of Muslim views on Western attitudes to Islamic unity by analyzing four perceptions of the West in the minds of many Muslims. These perceptions are linked to specific important stages in the historical interaction between Muslims and the West. The first stage was the exploitation by Western powers of trading capitulations granted by the Ottoman Empire to nationals of certain European countries; the

second stage was the Western colonization of Muslim countries and the rise of the Islamic League in response to the challenge of colonialism and the disunity of Muslims; the third stage was the accusation that Western colonial powers were trying to prevent the restoration of the Caliphate after the fall of the Ottoman Empire; and the fourth stage was the accusation that those powers were obstructing the territorial integrity of Islamic countries under colonial rule and that the West during the Cold War prevented the convergence of Islamic countries unless it served Western objectives. Thus, this paper presents additional research on Muslims' general perspective of the West and its attitudes to Islamic unity in particular, Islamic relations with the West and Islamic political unity.¹

The focus on these stages and the resulting negative perceptions of the West in the minds of many Muslims does not mean that Muslims have no positive opinions of the West. Even before the first stage, many Muslims saw the West as an example of renaissance and progress. This is evident in the writings of early students who were sent on scholarships to study in the West in the 19th century, such as Rafa'ah Al-Tahtawi and Ali Mubarak. Tahtawi found that, "Western countries reached the highest standards of skill in mathematical, natural and metaphysical sciences, their origins and branches," and that they "abounded in various types of knowledge and literature which no-one denies that they bring about affability and adorn architecture."² After his return to Egypt he was keen to translate this knowledge into Arabic through the School of Languages, which played a prominent role in the evolution of the translation and Arabization movement.³ Ali Al-Mubarak contended that the city of Paris in particular "was characterized by progress and the great number of authors. It was the destination of many people from Europe ... It had thinkers whose books spread into other countries and rid themselves of the darkness of ignorance and were distinguished from others by reason."⁴ This positive outlook continued with many students on scholarships even after the crystallization of critical opinion of the West in the minds of many Muslims, as shown for example in *The Book of Days (Ayyam)*, by Taha Hussein. However, the focus on negative images of the West is the start of a corrective reassessment by both Muslims and the West, as

shown in the conclusion. This study does not suggest an inevitable contradiction between the unity of Muslims and a positive relationship with the West, but adds a new dimension to the interpretation of the attitudes – negative or positive – of Muslims toward the West today. This helps those advocates of cultural dialogue between Muslims and the West to pay attention to the sensitivity of the issue of unity among Muslims and help such a dialogue succeed.

First Stage: Western Trade

Capitulations Dismantle the Ottoman Empire

Towards the end of the 15th century the Ottoman Sultans began to grant certain European countries trade capitulations which were originally only granted to citizens of Italian cities – such as the city of Venice – who traded with the cities of the Ottoman Empire. Naples obtained these capitulations in 1498, France in 1535 (and again in 1569), Poland in 1553, England in 1580, and the Netherlands in 1612. In the 18th century, additional European countries also received such privileges, including the Holy Roman Empire (1718), Sweden (1736), the Kingdom of Two Sicilies (1740), Tuscany, Hamburg and Lubeck (1747), Denmark (1756), Prussia (1761), and Spain (1780). However, after several centuries of this practice a number of Ottoman religious scholars opposed the extensive granting of trade capitulations to Western traders. This was due not only to the result of these capitulations becoming a heavy burden on the deteriorating Ottoman economy and a tool to protect illegal practices such as the white slave trade, but also to an increase in the use of these capitulations as a justification for foreign intervention in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire that negatively impacted territorial unity and populations. After being granted capitulations, Western countries established diplomatic missions and commercial agencies throughout the Ottoman Empire. The function of these missions and agencies at a time of weakness in the Ottoman Empire included the protection of certain religious minorities. An example of this took place in the 19th century around Mount Lebanon when France protected the Maronite Catholics,

Britain the Druze, and Russia the Orthodox Christians, even though all were Ottoman nationals.

Although foreign capitulations were a result of relaxed Ottoman–Western relations, they were not a manifestation of submission by the Ottoman Empire to Western nations. One cannot say that foreign capitulations from the beginning were meant to allow Western powers the opportunity to intervene in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire and historical linguistic analysis refutes this view. In terms of linguistics, the Arabic word *imtiyazat* is a translation of the English term ‘capitulations’ which assumes the existence of two parties between whom there is an unequal relationship exploited by the stronger party to achieve their interests at the expense of the weaker party. The English term suggests that European countries were exploiting the Ottoman State which granted these capitulations to them. However, the Turkish word synonymous with the English term is *Ahdname*, which is derived from the Persian language. This Turkish description does not carry any negative connotation for the party granting capitulations or pledges.

Historically, the European traders sought pledges of security or immunity from the Ottoman authorities when entering the country and allowed to stay for one year, although overstaying did not result in any negative consequences. Under the pledge of immunity, European traders would be exempt from all Ottoman taxes, including the poll tax on non-Muslims residing in the State, except for customs duties. While the duration of the covenant would end at the death of the Sultan who had granted it, traditionally it continued to be effective in the reign of his successors. Later sultans added privileges to pledges of immunity to include promises of protection. The pledge would grant trade capitulations to nationals of foreign countries that approach the Sultan in return for commitments by the rulers of those nations to friendship with the Ottoman Empire, and even sometimes loyalty and submission to it, as is clearly stated in the covenant which gave British traders capitulations in 1580. The covenant was not issued in the form of an agreement between the Ottoman state and the foreign state seeking to obtain capitulations; it was issued by the Ottoman Sultan (and the Persian Shah also later) in order to

encourage and secure trade between the Ottoman Empire and the state concerned and to achieve political goals. Capitulations were acts of sovereignty, an initiative made by the Sultan to the rulers of Europe who had been courting the Ottoman seat of power in order to establish official relations with the Ottoman Empire and ensure the safety of trade with it. It is therefore not surprising that the Sultans did not give any covenants or privileges to nationals of its arch-enemies, the Russian and Austrian empires, even after they inflicted on the Ottoman Empire several humiliating military defeats.

European countries were eager for such privileges because of the strong competition among them to monopolize trade in the ports of the eastern Mediterranean and the desire to get the support of the Ottoman Empire in their struggles against enemies. In the 16th and 17th centuries the pursuit by the rising European powers (especially France, England and the Netherlands) of such covenants intensified for economic and strategic reasons, including the desire for the friendship of the Sultan and his support against their common enemy, namely the Habsburg dynasty which ruled the Austrian Empire and several other countries in western Europe. These capitulations opened up for European traders the large and stable markets of the Ottoman Empire as well as the overland route to the East (especially Persia, India and China). This trade development was reflected in the prosperity of the European countries concerned and their increase in strength helped them to circumvent the Portuguese, who had closed the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf and monopolized trade with the countries of the Orient via the sea route around the Cape of Good Hope.⁵ In summary, the negative image of the West in the minds of many Muslims was reinforced by the behavior of Western nations with regard to the Ottoman Empire, enabling those countries to achieve huge commercial gain by opening up the Ottoman markets to their advantage. However, these countries also sought to dismantle the Ottoman Empire by exploiting the foreign concessions conferred upon them.

The reaction of Muslims to this Western behavior can be understood in light of positive Muslim opinion of the Ottoman Empire, which united under its flag a large portion of the world's Muslims. For example, the

followers of the Sufi Senussi order in North Africa remained loyal to the Ottoman Empire and collaborated with the representatives of its authority.⁶ When France attacked Algeria in 1830, the Algerian ruler announced his loyalty to the Ottoman Sultan asking him for support.⁷ During the following 80 years refugees from Algeria arrived in Ottoman territories to secure their protection.⁸ The leaders of the Orabi Revolution in Egypt (1881–1882) declared their allegiance to the Ottoman Sultan despite their refusal of the Ottoman army's intervention in the struggle with the Khedive Tawfiq, backed by British troops.⁹ Regardless of challenges by certain state governors to Ottoman authority politically and militarily – for example the governor of Egypt, Muhammad Ali Pasha (1805–1848), whose army defeated the Ottoman army in Asia Minor in 1839 – none of them had seceded from the Ottoman Empire or sought to overthrow it, but rather sought to maximize their control and governance within it.¹⁰

This positive view of the Ottoman Empire was reinforced when Sultan Abdul Hamid II adopted the idea of the Islamic University as a basis for state policy toward Muslims.¹¹ He added to the Ottoman Constitution of 1876 his capacity as a Caliph of Muslims and used this title so frequently that he surpassed in stature most of his predecessors—the Sultans of Al-Othman. Sheikh Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani sought to bring the two sects Sunni and Shiite together and unify Muslims around the banner of the Ottoman Empire. He succeeded in reducing the hostility of the Qajar state in Persia to the Ottoman Empire enough so that Shah Muzaffar Al-Din and a number of Shiite clerics did not oppose the idea of an Islamic League under the Ottoman Sultan.¹² In light of this loyalty, any attack against the Ottoman Empire would entail a hostile aggressor. The West played this hostile role twice in that period, once when he sought to dismantle the Ottoman Empire by using the card of religious minorities taking advantage of foreign capitulations obtained by Western traders in the Ottoman Empire; and the second when it dismantled the Ottoman Empire through colonialism of many Muslim countries that were not subject to the rule of the Ottoman Empire.

*Second Stage: The West Colonizes
the Muslim World and Destroys its Unity*

By the mid-19th century, most non-Arab Muslim countries had already fallen into the clutches of Western colonialism. The Netherlands occupied the East Indies (now Indonesia); Britain occupied India; and Russia and China shared the occupation of Muslim countries of Central Asia known as Turkestan. The negative image of the West began to take root in the minds of Muslims who viewed it as an enemy seeking to exploit their wealth and tear apart their unity. To meet this Western challenge and thwart its objectives, Muslims called on each other for unity or cooperation at the very least. In this context, the population of the colonized countries, particularly in Central Asia, India and the island of Sumatra, showed loyalty to the Ottoman Empire, which was the most powerful Islamic country and the most supportive of the Muslims even outside the scope of its sovereignty and they hoped that the Ottoman Empire would support their struggle against colonialism morally, diplomatically and perhaps militarily.¹³ For example, Imam Shamil – the commander of the Muslim mujahideen against the Russian invasion of Dagestan – sought the support of the Ottoman Sultan;¹⁴ the refugees of Dagestan in the Ottoman Empire issued calls for intervention to support the Mujahideen of their country.¹⁵ Similarly, Prince Jacob – the commander of the Muslim mujahideen against the Chinese invasion of East Turkistan – declared loyalty to the Ottoman Sultan as Caliph of Muslims in the hope of obtaining military support from the Ottoman Empire. In India, too, local sultans who were fighting against British colonial rule tried to obtain the support of the Ottoman Sultan.¹⁶ The Ottoman Empire responded positively to many of these and other appeals and issued a number of directives to some of its governors of powerful and rich regions, such as Egypt, to support those who asked for help. However, this response came in varying degrees and was not enough to repel the fierce imperialist aggression and consequently more Muslim countries submitted to direct and indirect colonialism; Britain occupied

the Malay peninsula and shared the influence of Russia in Persia while controlling Afghan territory on its own.¹⁷

Moreover, Sultan Abdul Hamid showed the Ottoman Empire's weakness when he requested for the first time assistance from Muslims who were not under its jurisdiction rather than help them overcome the major difficulties they were facing.¹⁸ For example, during the Ottoman–Greek war in 1897, the Ottoman Sultan demanded support from the Muslims of India and Egypt, which were under British occupation in spite of being nominally subject to the Ottoman state.¹⁹ He also called on all Muslims to contribute to the fund-raising campaign launched to build a railway connecting Damascus with Hijaz to serve pilgrims, among other purposes; the Sultan himself had contributed a large sum to that campaign.²⁰ Despite the belief of Sultan Abdul Hamid II that the Muslims under colonial rule were ready to revolt against it if he declared jihad to liberate them,²¹ he did not make such a declaration even in the former Ottoman states that were now occupied by Western colonialists. His argument was that if he had fought the British forces in Egypt, for example, he would have lost other regions in his empire such as Palestine or Iraq. By the same logic he refused to provide military support for Tunisia against the invading French forces under the pretext that he might lose other regions such as Syria.²²

The inability of the Ottoman Empire to face down the Western challenge, its defeat by Russia in 1877 and ceding its territories in the Caucasus, resulted in the decline of the Ottoman Empire's stature among Muslims. Such a decline was evident in the emergence of two conflicting images of the empire in the writings of many Muslim reformist thinkers at that time. The first image was that of the Islamic Caliphate, for which loyalty is a must while defending it against its enemies at home and abroad and seeking to reform any corruption in it. The second image is that of a stumbling block to the advancement of Muslims and revival of the way of the righteous caliphate. These two contradictory images were reflected in the attitudes of intellectuals toward the Ottoman Empire. For example, Jamaluddin Al-Afghani declared loyalty to Sultan Abdul Hamid II as Caliph of Muslims, then he gave up his pledge of allegiance to him at

the end of his life.²³ Sheikh Mohammed Abdu also considered the Ottoman Empire the protector of the sanctuary of Islam,²⁴ praising Sultan Abdul Hamid II because he believed that the Sultan was determined to save the Muslims, but he changed his mind and attacked his policy after his return to Egypt.²⁵ What concerns us here is the link between the visions of these thinkers of the Ottoman Empire and their loyalty to, and imitation of, the West and the empire's inability to protect and support Muslims who face the aggression and colonialism of the West.²⁶ Al-Afghani criticized the Ottoman Sultan because he had sought help from some Christians and appointed them to the highest positions despite their primary allegiance to the West.²⁷

However, Muslim reformist thinkers at that time did not agree on a single negative image of the West; rather, they had two contradictory images of the West. The first is that of an enemy that colonizes Muslim countries, plunders their resources, oppresses their populations, seeks to corrupt them and cast doubt on their religion; and the second is the example that should be emulated to achieve power, dignity and progress. Jamaluddin Afghani struggled against the forces of Western colonialism, especially Britain, and sought to liberate Muslim countries from colonization.²⁸ Therefore, he helped to counter their growing influence in Iran, which resulted in a popular campaign supported by religious scholars for a boycott of English tobacco.²⁹ After his return from exile, Sheikh Mohammed Abdu chose to work on education reform, yet did not take part in the struggle against British colonial rule although he began his political activity by supporting the Orabi revolution in Egypt and the resulting constitutional government.³⁰ Between these two extremes was the position of the Egyptian nationalist leader Mustafa Kamel who was known for his struggle to liberate Egypt from British colonialism.³¹ However, he claimed that the only way for development and advancement of nations was that of Western modernity,³² despite his admiration for the modernizing efforts during the time of Mohamed Ali Pasha, which – in his opinion – proposed an Egyptian vision of modernity.³³

Sheikh Muhammad Rashid Rida had a more balanced vision of the West. He analyzed the reasons for Western progress and the main pillars

of Western civilization as manifested in the 30 years of the 20th century, namely the economic dynamism and industrial and technological progress; political democracy that controlled Western governments; and moral and social values such as dedication to work, cooperation, organizational capability, love of knowledge, the spirit of research and innovation, the separation between the mind and emotion, and the Western attitude toward women. But he also saw the other side of the West, that is, the colonial West, which is driven by the values of individualism, power, racism, nationalism and excessive material enjoyment, and thus its behavior is in conflict with its advocated principles. Rida was not a mimic of everything brought from the West, nor was he an absolute rejecter of it; he just called for taking from the West while adhering to Islamic values. He admired the Japanese model of modernization and distinguished it from the Turkish model of Westernization.³⁴ He believed in the necessity of combining religious and heritage assets of the Muslims on the one hand with Western knowledge and sciences on the other.³⁵

The intellectual Abd Al-Rahman Al-Kawakibi was erratic in his vision of the West. On the one hand he criticized the Sultan of Turkey for trying to reform the state on a Western basis³⁶ and urged Muslims to adhere to their religion and culture and not to follow strangers who invite them while seeking to disrupt their unity. He accused the Ottomans deliberately of turning a blind eye to the massacres committed by the Spanish against the Moors in the 15th and 16th centuries and the occupation by the West of most Muslim countries in order to protect their interests in Eastern Europe.³⁷ On the other hand he expressed his admiration for Western democracy and its model of the welfare state³⁸ and called for the reconstruction of the Islamic caliphate on a federal basis similar to what was in effect at the time in the United States and Germany. He also supported the secularism of the West and the separation of religion from the state in Muslim countries as a permanent solution to the problem of the Caliphate in the modern era.³⁹ The Caliph's responsibilities – in his opinion – must be limited to matters of religion and not to interfere in the political affairs of Muslim countries. This concept of the

role of the Caliph is very similar to the role of the Pope in the Roman Catholic world in general and the Holy Roman Empire in particular. In conclusion, the perception by most Muslim League thinkers of the West was neither purely positive nor negative, but mixed. However, it is noticed that they unanimously agreed that the liberation of Muslims from colonialism was a primary goal and that the establishment of the Muslim League was a means to achieve this goal as well as being an ideal in itself for some of them.

*The Third Stage: The West Prevents
the Restoration of the Caliphate After its Abolition in 1924*

The West played a crucial role in the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire, which became dependent on Germany during World War I,⁴⁰ subsequently suffering a military defeat and was separated from its Arab territories after a revolution supported by Britain and France. British, French and Greek forces occupied its capital Istanbul and parts of its territories in Anatolia. There after the Turkish National Movement emerged led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to liberate the occupied Turkish territories.⁴¹ The Movement succeeded and took over rule of the country, separating the position of the Sultan from that of the Caliph and abolishing the sultanate and establishing the Turkish Republic in October 1923; five months later the post of the Caliph was also abolished. Although these decisions were the result of internal developments in the nascent Republic in order to resolve the conflict between the Sultan, his supporters and scholars on one side and the leaders of the National Movement, their supporters and the Westernized elite on the other side,⁴² it affected the whole Islamic world. Muslims were without a caliph for the first time since the fall of Baghdad at the hands of the Mongols six and a half centuries earlier. Therefore, many great Muslim figures, their communities and their institutions rejected such decisions, considering that the Muslim Caliphate is not a Turkish business and called for the revival of the caliphate.

This revival did not come about even though some Islamic parties still uphold the call today, such as the Islamic Liberation Party. The West has been accused of working to thwart such a call and to prevent the revival of the Islamic Caliphate. In addition to the occupation of Muslim countries, which virtually prevented them from establishing an overarching framework that would connect them all, the Western colonial powers, especially Britain, were accused of intervening in the debate among Muslims – scholars and rulers – about the restoration of the caliphate and trying to dissuade them from proceeding along this path. The evidence for this is their position on the debate concerning Sheikh Ali Abdel Razek's book, *Islam and the Principles of Government*, in which he denied any basis for the caliphate in the Quran and the Sunnah.⁴³ Although the book is not a sober academic study according to the clerics of the Al-Azhar Mosque, it caused a broad intellectual and political debate because of the position of the author and the sensitivities of the time and place of its publication. First, Sheikh Ali Abdel Razek was a judge in a court of law and bore the title of “scholar” in the Al-Azhar Mosque—the prestigious educational institution that had long been considered the highest intellectual authority in Egypt and the Sunni Muslim world. It was not expected that a sheikh who belongs to this institution to deviate from the basic principles of Islamic political thought or to abuse the two basic sources of Islamic legislation—the Quran and Sunnah; two charges he was convicted of when judging his only published book.

Secondly, although the writer had completed his book long before its publication – as noted later – he preferred to publish in the Spring of 1925 when only few Muslims had awoken from the shock of the abolition of the caliphate by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk a year ago. Regardless of the extent of weakness and corruption in the Ottoman Empire at the end of its administration it had remained a symbol of the unity of the Islamic World. At the time of the publication of the book, Muslim scholars and their representatives were holding conferences to consider how to restore the caliphate and not to consider if it needed restoring, since its restoration was taken for granted by them. The book not only downgraded the history of the Islamic Caliphate but also ridiculed the ideas of Muslims on how to

restore it and create a common future, basing his argument on the claim that the caliphate had no origins in valid Islamic sources. The shock by many Muslims at the book was no less than their shock at the decision to abolish the Ottoman Caliphate.

Third, while secular Turkey was the best place to publish that book, Egypt was not a suitable environment to disseminate such ideas in that period. Egypt was the country most nominated for the revival of the Caliphate – even formally – and its king was preparing for that high office. Egypt was also a refuge for many Turkish scholars who had fled from the persecution of the new secular system, including Sheikh al-Islam Mustafa Sabri, who published in Egypt a book that exposed Atatürk’s violations of Islamic law. Perhaps more importantly, it was not possible for Al-Azhar to disregard Sheikh Ali Abdel Razeq’s attack against the basics of the Islamic political system, since he belonged to that prestigious scholarly institution. Thus, according to established rules in Al-Azhar, the Committee of Senior Scholars convened to examine the book and found it poor academically and therefore judged that the author should no longer carry the title of “Scholar” and was forced to give up his position as a Sharia judge and was no longer qualified for any government position. It should be noted that the Committee did not issue a verdict regarding the validity or non-validity of the Sheikh’s beliefs; its task was purely professional despite the political consequences of its resolution. In defense of the fundamentals that the Sheikh had violated, a number of Al-Azhar scholars – especially those who were directly involved in that issue – criticized the book and refuted the allegations and suspicions raised by it.⁴⁴

Although the British High Commissioner in Egypt took neither a favorable nor unfavorable position in the controversy raised by Sheikh Ali Abdel Razeq’s book – since he was very careful not to interfere in this sensitive religious issue – the book was in line with British policy in the Middle East. Although it was published in 1925, Sheikh Ali Abdel Razeq had completed writing it long before, namely, before the end of World War I; this is clear from the frequent references to the Ottoman state as a contemporary entity and Sultan Mohammad Rashad as Caliph of Muslims. This implies that Sheikh Ali Abdel Razeq was not challenging

the British occupiers and the king of Egypt who was loyal to them. If the claim of non-authenticity of the Caliphate according to Islamic law as stated in the book had any political purpose, it was definitely in line with the goal of Britain, i.e. the disintegration and colonization of Islamic countries.⁴⁵

However, accusations that the West attempted to impede the restoration of the Caliphate can be answered by the observation that Arab politicians who were most eager to revive the Caliphate were the most friendly of, or subservient to, the West. Sharif Hussein of the Hijaz and the government of the parliamentary minority in Egypt were two examples. Some Arabs believed that Sharif Hussein was more qualified to be a Caliph and after Turkey's decision to abolish the Caliphate they held a conference in Jordan for his inauguration as Caliph of Muslims. The results of the conference were acknowledged by Iraq, Syria and Jordan. Although Sharif Hussein stressed that his post as Caliph was just symbolic and non-political, all other Muslim countries refused to recognize the results of the conference.⁴⁶ During the following pilgrimage season Sharif Hussein tried to use his rule of Mecca and Medina to persuade pilgrims of his right to the position of Caliph, but the exiled Tunisian scholar, Sheikh Abdul Aziz Thaalbi, rebutted this claim. Sharif Hussein declared that the conference would be held in Mecca during the following pilgrimage season to resolve the Caliphate issue.⁴⁷ However, by then Sharif Hussein had left the Hijaz after it had been taken over by the Saudis and therefore the conference did not take place. King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud did not claim his eligibility for the post of Caliph but he was quoted as saying that no contemporary rulers deserved to be Caliph.⁴⁸ He only called a conference in Mecca in 1926 to show that Muslims had accepted the rule of the Saudi family in Hijaz because Egypt did not recognize the Saudi expansion. The conference did not discuss the issue of the Caliphate.⁴⁹

The second attempt to restore the Caliphate was by Al-Azhar Al-Sharif with support from the minority government that was loyal to the king and the British in Egypt. Al-Azhar called a conference in Cairo for intellectuals representing all Muslim countries to choose a new Caliph. It was decided to hold the conference on the first anniversary of the decision

to abolish the Caliphate but political difficulties in Egypt prevented the convention at that time. These difficulties were not far from the theme of the conference, i.e. revival of the Caliphate. On the one hand certain Egyptian political parties – including the Wafd Party, with a parliamentary majority – were against the conference for fear of the inauguration of King Fouad as Caliph of the Muslims, which could impede constitutional reforms in the country. On the other hand a government crisis took place as a result of the publication of the aforementioned book. Despite the rejection of the publication by Al-Azhar and public opinion it was defended by one party in the government coalition – the Liberal Constitutionalists Party – due to the link between the author and the leaders of the party. King Fouad took advantage of this to get rid of this party after he had rid himself of the Wafd party government, which had a parliamentary majority. Because of this crisis the conference was postponed for a year and its agenda was changed to be limited to discussions of the legitimacy of the Caliphate and whether it was only to be symbolic or symbolic and political. However, most of the guests at the conference did not respond to the call to declare King Fouad as Caliph of Muslims. They objected because Egypt was effectively under the influence of the British and did not apply Islamic law in many matters.⁵⁰ Also King Abdul Aziz ibn Saud declined to send a delegation to the conference because the organizers had invited some of the Hijaz senators who were dissenters from his authority. Therefore, the conference convened with those scholars who were present or already a resident in Egypt and therefore did not represent the Muslim world.⁵¹

It is clear that the failure to restore the Caliphate was due mainly to differences between Muslim rulers and that the role of the West in this failure was limited, weak and indirect. These differences saved the West the trouble of opposing the restoration of the Caliphate. This view is consistent with that of Sheikh Mohammed Rashid Rida in his epistle about the Islamic Caliphate, which he published following the decision of the Turkish National Assembly to separate the Islamic Caliphate from the Turkish government and to withdraw all political powers and authorities from the Ottoman Caliph. Rida found that the two obstacles hindering the

restoration of the Islamic Caliphate were hatred between Arabs and Turks on the one hand and the growing alienation of the Muslim World on the other. Having no hope that the national Turkish government led by Atatürk would support his proposal to revive the caliphate, or that the conflicting or West-oriented Arab leaders would put that proposal into effect, Rida called for an innovative proposal for the establishment of a righteous Islamic caliphate. He proposed that the establishment of the Caliphate should be between Arab and Turkish lands and selected for this purpose the city of Mosul in northern Iraq. Other Islamic countries would join the Caliphate in turn if their leaders were convinced of its importance and the effectiveness of its political system.⁵²

His vision of the West's position on the Caliphate model he had proposed was optimistic. He thought that the West would be little concerned or try to prevent its establishment and he called on the West not to fear its establishment because it would not turn into an Islamic league that would mobilize Muslims against the West.⁵³ For Rida, the structure of the Caliphate was to be very much akin to that of Western democratic systems.⁵⁴ Rida did not fear the West but was afraid of the control of Westernized political parties in the Muslim world, especially the nationalist parties in Turkey.⁵⁵ Rida's intuition proved to be correct, for these parties were the most opposed to the re-establishment of the Caliphate in whatever form, to the extent that the Turkish National Assembly in 1924 decided to abolish the Islamic Caliphate altogether.

The fact was that the issue of the Caliphate needed a new and balanced approach to the West which only a handful of thinkers at that time – such as Sheikh Muhammad Rashid Rida and Dr. Abdul Razzaq Al-Sanhooori, who saw the West in both its positive and negative aspects – dared to adopt. Dr. Sanhooori studied in France and obtained his Ph.D in law with a dissertation addressing the issue of the Caliphate in modern times and called for Muslims to benefit from the Western experience and establish of a league of eastern nations as an alternative to the Caliphate under unfavorable international conditions.⁵⁶ He found that Western colonial powers refused any attempt to revive the Caliphate in its traditional form, so he supported the establishment of the league of eastern

nations as an incomplete Caliphate.⁵⁷ In his opinion, this was a temporary solution to the Caliphate issue in modern times pending the establishment of the Caliphate proper in accordance with the Prophet's model.⁵⁸

*The Fourth Stage: The West hinders
the Unity of Islamic Countries and Political
Rapprochement after Independence*

After Muslim countries gained their independence several attempts at rapprochement were made between them. However, this convergence was governed by several factors, most notably the sensitivity over the issue of sovereignty; definition of national identity; preoccupation with domestic restructuring within these countries; and foreign relations with major powers, especially the West. Of concern here is this last factor, since its effects were both positive and negative.

During World War II the British Foreign Minister, Anthony Eden, stated that his government was convinced of the natural right of the Arab peoples to strengthen ties between them. The sympathy of his government was with any action undertaken by the Arabs to strengthen their economic, cultural and political unity provided that the initiative comes from the Arabs themselves. Several Arab governments had actually made plans to achieve Arab unity which resulted in their agreement on the Protocol of Alexandria in October 1944 followed by the signing of the Charter of the League of Arab States in March 1945.⁵⁹ The establishment of the Arab League was a move forward toward unity although it was limited in two important ways. First, although all members of the Arab League were Islamic countries that later joined the Organization of Islamic Conference, the membership of the league was limited to Arab countries minus all other Islamic states, thus it was not an Islamic league as advocated by Sheikh Jamaluddin Al-Afghani, for example. Second, the League charter defined its goals as the strengthening of relations between its members, coordination between their policies and the achievement of close cooperation between them without establishing any union.

Despite Britain's support for the idea of the League, its attitude towards it after its creation was so uncertain that the Council of the Arab League recommended to the governments of Arab states at its fourth extraordinary session in 1946 that they should demand the British government recognize the Arab League.⁶⁰ This was not the only situation that raised the doubts of the Arab League members about Britain; many other Islamic countries generally remained wary of the positions of Britain and other Western colonial powers regarding territorial unity of Islamic countries that had been under colonial rule. Such countries expressed their suspicion – individually or jointly – through the resolutions issued by international organizations such as the Arab League alone, or together with non-Muslim countries such as the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Since its inception in 1945 and for several decades afterwards the Arab League issued decisions through its council that condemned the attitudes of certain Western colonial powers towards the territorial unity of Arab countries under their occupation. The Arab League Council tried to respond to the general attempts to divide up the Arab Maghreb – and Libya in particular – and especially Britain's attempts to divide Libya with France and Italy and to divide the southern Yemen into protectorates under British occupation. It also supported the unity of the Nile Valley under the Egyptian crown in the face of British attempts to separate Egypt from Sudan, and the Republic of Somalia's demand for its right to the Somali coast (which was then known as the Issa and Afar region, later taking the name of Djibouti) in the face of attempts by France to separate it.⁶¹

Such condemnation was reflected in the position of the Arab League Council on Mauritania's independence in 1960. The Council endorsed the position of Morocco and confirmed in an extraordinary session held in August 1960 that Mauritania was an integral part of Morocco, that Morocco had the right to exercise full sovereignty on all its parts and that colonialists aimed – through their attempt to create an artificial entity called the “Islamic Republic of Mauritania” – to break up the unity of Morocco. The Council supported Morocco's claim for recovery of Mauritania as an integral part of its territory; condemned the attempts to

separate it from Morocco; and called to work in various ways to thwart such attempts and support Morocco at the United Nations and to try and convince friendly countries to support its efforts to restore this part of its territory. The Council did not accept the membership of Mauritania in the Arab League until 1973, i.e. after Morocco had recognized its independence.⁶²

It was not only the attitude of Western colonial powers to the territorial unity of Muslim countries that muddied the relations between the West and the Muslim World after the independence of Islamic countries. Indeed, some leaders of Muslim nations felt that the major Western powers prevented their allies among Muslim countries from rapprochement with other Islamic states except when it served the objectives of those powers. A prominent example of this is the refusal by certain leaders to align with foreign policy approaches of major Western powers and their allies among Islamic countries in the face of the Soviet Union and its Communist bloc. Such foreign policy encouraged Islamic countries surrounding, or adjacent to, the Soviet Union to establish an alliance in order to prevent any expected or delusional Soviet aggression. The fruit of this was the Baghdad Pact, which was joined in the mid-1950s by the governments of Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Pakistan, in addition to the United Kingdom and the United States. However, this organization was met with strong opposition from the governments of Muslim countries other than those with pro-Western leanings. For example, the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser launched a strong and successful diplomatic and media campaign to prevent the expansion of the Baghdad Pact in the Arab world.⁶³ This alliance did not succeed in adding other Muslim countries to its membership, let alone bringing together Muslim around one goal, i.e. Islamic unity on the alliance with the West. Although the Baghdad Pact lost its momentum due to Iraq's withdrawal after the 1958 Revolution and then finally disintegrated after the withdrawal of Iran after its 1979 Revolution, and despite the attempts by Pakistan and Iran separately to bring Muslim countries into one regulatory framework,⁶⁴ the goal of Islamic unity remained far away.

If the reaction of Muslim countries is justified regarding the attitude of Western colonial powers over Islamic territorial unity, then the reaction of some of these countries to the attempts of major Western powers to prevent rapprochement between Islamic countries was not justified in all cases. Some Islamic countries had a vested interest in the fight against Communism. Thus, the Muslim World League was founded in Saudi Arabia during the Hajj season in 1962 and made one of its goals the struggle against atheist ideology (such as Communism) in the Islamic World.⁶⁵ Even when King Faisal bin Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia called for a conference of the Muslim World League, the governments of some Muslim countries – especially those that were described as progressive – remained suspicious for several reasons, mainly the fear that it would become a prelude to a new form of the Baghdad Pact, so much so that the Egyptian President Gamal Abdel-Nasser called it the “Islamic alliance”, accusing those who called for it of serving Western interests.⁶⁶ This idea was viewed more positively only after the regional balance of power and positions of certain countries regarding the conference had changed in the wake of Israeli aggression on Arab states in 1967 and the Al-Aqsa Mosque fire two years later. The Islamic Summit Conference was held in Rabat, Morocco, in 1969 and resulted in the establishment of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in 1972, which changed its name in 2011 to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. But the organization – like the Arab League – limited its objectives to strengthening the relations between its members, the coordination between their policies and the achievement of close cooperation between them without any union between them.

Conclusion

Over the past two centuries, many ordinary Muslims and their political movements have always been suspicious of the position of the West regarding Islamic unity. The West deepened this uncertainty by adopting negative attitudes toward this highly important and sensitive issue. Western countries have sought to exploit the foreign capitulations

obtained by their merchants in the Ottoman Empire not only for huge commercial gain by opening up the Ottoman markets for themselves, but also to dismantle the Ottoman Empire itself, which many Muslims considered the symbol of their unity and strength. Upon dismembering the Ottoman Empire Western powers occupied its territories in succession after having colonized many Muslim countries that were not under the rule of the Ottomans. These actions reflected negatively on the image of the West for many Islamic reformist thinkers at that time. Western countries should review their policies toward the issue of Islamic unity if they are keen to remove the doubts of Muslims about them in order to build a strong foundation for the success of any serious dialogue.

However, Muslim doubts expressed about Western attitudes towards Islamic unity were not always accurate. The West was accused of working to prevent the revival of the Islamic Caliphate after falling under the new Turkish Republic and of trying to frustrate the revival by occupying Muslim countries and dissuading Muslims from pursuing this revival. The failure to restore the Caliphate was due primarily to the differences between Muslim rulers; the role of the West in this failure was limited and indirect. These differences saved the West the effort of having to show strong opposition to the restoration of the Caliphate. Moreover, many Islamic countries after independence remained wary of Western colonial powers' position on territorial unity of occupied Islamic countries. Such wariness was rightfully expressed, individually or jointly, through the resolutions issued by international organizations to which they belonged. However, a number of Islamic leaders also felt that major Western powers prevented Muslim countries from allying with one another except when it served Western objectives in the fight against Communism. This ignores the fact that some Muslim countries saw a vested interest in the fight against Communism and their policies did not merely reflect the position of Western powers on the unity of all or some Islamic countries. Muslims, therefore, must review their own doubts about the positions of the West on the issue of Islamic unity if they are interested in the success of any serious dialogue.

However, dialogue between Muslims and the West may become more useful if it transcends the level of states and governments, which are primarily political in nature. This dialogue can take advantage of the current wave of globalization to enrich the exchange of cultural values and be open to civil society institutions in the Muslim and Western worlds. Muslims have already begun to realize the possibility of dialogue with certain non-state actors in Western countries in order to find common ground. Dialogue between civil society actors is a priority and is very productive whether at the grassroots or official levels and clear goals should be outlined, including long-term and short-term aims. For example, peaceful co-existence may be a long-term goal under which there are interim goals, such as agreement on specific issues and creating mechanisms for cooperation.

Islam and the West: Theoretical Confusion

Hassan Hanafi

The discussion about Islam and the West is not one that only emerged in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in the United States, but is actually an old issue going back to the spread of Islam more than 14 centuries ago around the shores of the Mediterranean after the fall of the Roman Empire. Moreover, the conflict between the East and the West is older still; it goes back to the aggression between the Persians and the Romans; the conquests of Alexander the Great in the heart of Asia; the conflict throughout the Mediterranean between the European northern and African southern shores during the Classical Graeco-Roman era; the Christian–Islam period; and lastly the modern colonialism–liberation stage. This historical legacy and cultural accumulation have made the two shores of the Mediterranean akin to two combating knights with neither dominating the other throughout history, while a love–hate relationship and exchange of influences between the two shores—often referred to in current literature as “Islam and the West”. It is a civilization opposing a geographical area or more correctly two civilizations in opposition—Islamic and Western civilizations. It can also be called an opposition between two geographical areas – the West and the East – or Western and Eastern influences, or between departing and incoming influences. Therefore, dialogue between the North and South, the Arabs and the Europeans and all attempts at establishing Middle Eastern or Mediterranean civilizations have faltered, not only because of the “Zionist

Entity” – which can be seen as the West in the East – but also because of this long historical legacy. Perhaps attempts of the Afro-Arabian and Turkish states to join the European Union will have the same fate unless this old historical legacy accumulating in the subconscious, which surfaces every now and then as is the case now, is alleviated.

It is possible that the only period during which the North and South experienced any form of “Dialogue of Civilizations” was during the Andalusian period when Arabs and Berbers, Muslims, Jews and Christians lived together in Granada, Seville, Cordoba and Toledo. The Andalusian model created a single human civilization in which various cultures combined and is referred to in Jewish history as the “golden age”. After the departure of the Arabs and Muslims from Andalusia, the West witnessed the Spanish inquisition persecuting intellectuals and scientists. The West’s renaissance began only after the translations of the Arab Islamic heritage in science, philosophy and architecture into Latin were completed in Toledo, Sicily and Byzantium and when Emperor Frederick II was speaking Arabic in his court and corresponding with Abdul Haq Ibn Saba’in.

The historical rooting of relations between Arab Islamic and Western civilizations is the burden preventing moves towards a new Andalusian model—the dialogue of cultures. The West is known for relativity in judgment of studies at home, but its judgment of non-Western civilizations abroad is absolute. At home, the West analyzes the history of its own civilization in the context of time and place but it studies other civilizations outside of any contextual framework. Moreover, the West avoids sweeping judgments of its own history and prefers analysis driven by objectivity and neutrality and yet it issues sweeping judgments on foreign matters, which exposes its bias and prejudice. The West’s duplicity of standards is not limited to political practices alone but also extends to its academic view of civilizations.

Many of the judgments made by the West on Islamic civilization are the result of conflicting powers between the colonial West and Islamic countries securing their independence. These judgments were reflected in traditional Orientalism and contemporary Western social sciences,

particularly cultural anthropology. The West generalized the history of Islamic civilization and its future from the perspective of current conflict of powers and marginalized any civilizing role for Islam but instead glorified the role of the West. Colonialism is not only military, political and economic, it is also cultural. After the Islamic countries gained their independence, the Western cultural invasion continued as evident through the number of admirers of the West, which led to nations splitting into two parts: one admiring the West and the other admiring the old heritage. In addition, national cultures were divided into two parts: one part advocating the new, and the other advocating the old; the former is represented by the elites and the latter represented by the general public. The extent of such differences in these opposing sides could even lead to domestic conflict as is the case now in Algeria.

It is unfair to make comparisons between the Islamic and Western civilizations from one fixed period of time, as each civilization has its own extensive history. Western civilization passed through three stages—Classical, medieval and modern. Islam did not exist in the Classical period so when it eventually emerged it benefited from the earlier Ancient Greek and Roman civilizations and their intellectual and philosophical heritage. In the Middle Ages a flourishing Islamic civilization emerged into its “golden age”, the age of Al Mutanabbi, Al Biruni, Al Tawhidi, Ibn Sina and Ibn Al Haitham. This era in Islamic civilization included the Mamlouk Turkish Ottoman period, also described as the second age of recording. During this period the West translated mathematical, natural and philosophical Islamic sciences from Arabic into Latin, which was the catalyst behind the European renaissance. Europe’s Middle Ages from the 7th century until the 14th century AD corresponds to our golden age during the first seven Hijri centuries chronicled by Ibn Khalun. Europe from the 15th century until the 21st century corresponds to our middle ages from the 8th Hijri century until the 14th Hijri century. Each civilization is now living through an historical moment that is markedly different from the past. The contemporary West began with religious reform in the 15th century, the Renaissance in the 16th century, the Age of Reason in the 17th century, the Enlightenment in the 18th century, science in the 19th century, crisis in the

20th century, and post-modernity in the 21st century. Our middle ages began during the Mamlouk Turkish Ottoman period—the era of annotations, abstracts and encyclopedias, and now ended since the dawn of the Arab renaissance and reform movements during the last century and from which national liberation movements emerged against European colonialism and the establishment of modern states afterwards.

The traditional stereotype inherited from the Turkish Malouk Ottoman age is the most prominent image held by the West of Islamic civilization. It is the image which Turkey gave to the West at the peak of its invasion into Eastern Europe right up to the gates of Vienna and is the image conveyed by traditional Orientalists in the 19th century. It is the image held of Islamic civilization after it had lost its diversity from the 6th century and the abolition of science by Al Ghazali in the 5th century. This spawned the ideology of submission to the Sultan in economics, belief and popular obedience, the revival of religious studies and legitimized seizing of power by force and not by pledge of allegiance. The West took an image of Islam which believes in miracles and not the laws of nature; magic and superstition and not reason and proof; and the rights of the ruler and the duties of the citizens and not the rights of citizens and duties of the ruler. The West only became aware of the Islam created by the Al Najiyah group (committed to Quran and Prophet practices) – the group of the Sultan – rather than the people’s culture which was marginalized and forgotten but recorded by its opponents. Therefore, contemporary intellectuals and researchers of heritage should highlight the aspects that have been excluded and marginalized such as the rationality of the Al Mu’tazelites (Islamic group favoring thinking over citation) and Ibn Rushd (great Islamic philosopher), the interests of *Hakimiyah* (Western political concept of ruling) and the jurisprudence of taking to task an unjust ruler. This is in addition to the pursuit of pure mathematical and natural sciences in addition to jurisprudence, and what contemporary researches call “enlightened Islam”.

After the stereotype held in the West of Arab Islamic civilization is corrected, then the image of the West itself can be corrected, and the myth of a universal civilization (culture) will be abolished. Western civilization

appears as an historical one that originated in a certain time and place and for certain peoples who had their roots in the Greek and Roman civilizations and in Jewish and Christian cultures. These two sources interacted with the European environment itself and its indigenous culture and pagan religions. The West has kept silent about its Eastern sources, suggesting that the “Greek” knowledge inherited by the Europeans was unique, despite the fact that Europe absorbed influences from all the civilizations in the ancient world and the middle ages, including China, India, Persia, Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt. Islamic civilization became one of the components of Western civilization in the early stages of its modern development. The West also separated science from its history so that it remains a purely European creation and suggested that the West is characterized by reason and rationality, science and scientific knowledge, humanism and humanity. As a result, racism grew deeply in the European consciousness where racial theories emerged in the 19th century and the centrality of Europe in modern times. Europe in the West’s opinion is the center of the World, others are foreign; Europe is the “metropole” and others are commonwealth; Europe is the self and the others are the subject as is the case with Orientalism. This duplicity transforms into values and Europe became right and others are wrong, as is often the case with fundamentalist movements. Europe’s principles are maintained for itself and the reverse for others. Science, reason, humanism and progress are confined within European borders alone. However, these principles are shattered when exported and turn into the opposite including ignorance, superstition, violation of human rights and backwardness. This is the highest degree of racism.

This history of conflict and dialogue between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, and even after the “New World” across the Atlantic Ocean had joined in confronting the East, does not rule out the emergence of a dialogue in the near future—a “Dialogue of Cultures” instead of a “Clash of Civilizations”. Europe played the role of teacher two times: the first one during the period of Ancient Greece and the second during the modern era; the Arab Islamic civilization was the “student” in both cases. Modern Arab philosophers such as Al Tahtawi

and Kheireddin Al Tunisi are the new teachers and the Arab renaissance is their product. Islamic civilization played the role of teacher only once in Andalusia when translation from Arabic into Latin was accomplished and Europe in the Middle Ages was the student. A second occasion remains for the Islamic civilization to be the teacher and the West to be the student, and it might be the present moment. The national liberation movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America raised slogans of ideals such as freedom, independence, socialism and justice. These slogans proceeded with their call for peoples' rights rather than human rights; peoples' right rather than the individual's right in self-determination; and control of national raw materials rather than the individual's investments in such resources. They called for moving from a uni-polar, European-focused world to a multi-polar one encompassing Bandung, Delhi, Cairo, Algeria and Belgrade. Third world nations represent three quarters of all votes at the United Nations and in addition to China form four fifths of the world's population. The New World is represented by the United States, which sits on the world's uni-polar throne in the name of globalization and the market economy where the "world is one village", domination of the communications and information technology revolution, organization and management, military power and the "end of history" with the survival of capitalism after the fall of socialist systems.

The tyranny of unilateralism appeared at the Durban conference when the United States and Israel withdrew and refused to even apologize for "hunting" millions of Africans and dragging them in chains to the "New World" to work as slaves and rejecting the correlation of Zionism with racism in spite of all the practices of the Zionist entity against the Palestinian people. These practices include organized terrorism, assassination of Palestinian leaders and killing of women and children, destruction of homes, and razing of lands. The injustice, tyranny and aggression joined together and naturally resulted in the individual's terrorist response to the terror of nations. To use the terminology espoused in Latin America in the 1960s, the "individual's terror" is the "liberation terror" against the terrorism of nations—the omnipotent terror.

This historical approach to the tension between Western civilization in the north and Islamic civilization in the south of the Mediterranean highlights the misunderstanding which fails to differentiate between what is the essence of religion and what is a result of social and political circumstances. Such misunderstandings include:

1. Linking Islam with terrorism, violence and aggression; lack of respect for the other; division of the world into the house of peace and house of war; house of faith and house of unbelief; Islam and ignorance; God and the idol. The phenomenon of *jihad* is the primary form of aggression and martyrdom is one of its tools. In fact this is a distorted image since Islam is the religion of freedom from oppression and aggression by the declaration that “there is nothing but Allah”, which is a single and comprehensive principle under which all are equal against tyranny and oppression and the false values of this age, including force, wealth, prestige, fame, sex, luxury and nihilism. Violence is a type of legitimate resistance against occupation and oppression after all other means have failed. The house of Islam in today’s language means opposition to injustice. Jihad is to be used in defense and not for attack and constitutes resistance against aggression and expulsion from one’s homeland. Martyrdom is the preference of a decent life rather than one of humiliation and the eternal life over one of subservience. Every culture has its own martyrs of resistance against aggression and the national liberation movements are legitimate movements against occupation. Jihad is a Quranic word that means “readiness to deter the enemy”; readiness does not mean warfare but rather to deter the enemy and prevent oppression and aggression.
2. Linking Islam to physical harshness through the severity of Islamic law in punishment including killing, crucifixion, stoning, amputation of hands, lashing, alienation as well as other punishments for apostasy, theft, adultery and drinking alcohol. In fact this is a pure media creation to discredit the image of Islam as a religion and as a culture. The Islamic Sharia is indivisible and punishments cannot be

separated from duties and expiations. Punishments come at the end and not at the beginning and rights precede duties. A Muslim has the right to satisfaction, i.e. he has the right to satisfy his basic needs including food, water, housing, education, medical treatment, work and early marriage. In Islam there is no hand amputation for a thief who steals because of starvation or unemployment or if all society is made up of thieves. The objective behind punishment is not its implementation but rather to act as a deterrence. Punishments are halted if there is any doubt about the perpetrator's guilt and are meant to protect life under all laws. Penal law is part of common law.

3. Accusations of intolerance, refusal of dialogue and inflexibility of opinion are attitudes dictated by psychological, social and political circumstances in Arab Islamic societies, while difference in opinion is a legitimate right. There is no divine book that has offered dialogue with offenders like the Holy Quran, which engaged in dialogue with the devil, infidels, polytheists, hypocrites, Sabians and Pagans. This dialogue was based on the principles of debate, opinion and proof. Anything that has no evidence should be denied by Muslims. Difference is a norm of nature and life and we should find unity in diversity and diversity in unity.
4. The West considers Islamic culture as fundamentalist; i.e. rejection of the new, adherence to the old, refusal of modernity, obsession with religious practice, acceptance of violence domestically and internationally, and atonement of society. They quote the words of Ibn Khaldun, who stated of Arabs and Bedouins that if they occupy a nation it will soon be ruined. Bedouins are against civilization and are happier in a tent than in a palace, happier on a camel than in modern luxurious cars, happier on land more than on the sea or in the air. The Bedouin has no interest in statehood but prefers to uphold the values of his tribe. In reality, fundamentalism is a movement found in every culture and it has its advantages and disadvantages and does warn against the dangers of alienation, loss of identity, obsession with modernity and loss of origins and roots. Fundamentalism in the West

is also a rejection of modernity and promotes the values of the consumer society.

5. Islam is accused of being irrational and extreme leading to dependency, fatalism, passivity, weak pursuit of livelihood and corruption. Renan and Leon Jote accused all Semitic civilizations of being a combination of extremes, lacking consistency and reason and ignoring cause and effect. This is a false accusation made by certain religious movements and directed at Islam. There were the rationalist Al Mu'tazelites (Islamic group favoring thinking over citation), fideistic Ash'arites (Islamic group that calls for use of proof and evidence in argument) and rationalist Ibn Rushed (Islamic philosopher) opposite Ibn Sina Al Ishraqi (Sufi). Indeed, the leader of modern Salafism, Ibn Taymiyyah, proves the agreement of intellectualism and traditional Sunnah in his work *Prevention of Conflict Between Reason and Tradition*. When Biruni studied Indian civilization he assessed it using reason in his famous book *Tahqiq Ma lil Hind Min Maqoolah, Maqboolah Min Al Akl Aw Martholah*. The West has now lost its rationality and has inverted values as Paul Karl Feyerabned highlights in his books *Farewell to Reason* and *Against Method*.
6. Islam is said to be a religious civilization belonging to the time of the Jewish and Christian Middle Ages, while the West alone is the owner and founder of the scientific civilization. Religion, morality, mysticism and asceticism are Eastern made, while science, civilization and politics are Western made. The East is said to be the birthplace of magic, superstition, physiognomy, fortune-telling and astrology. Islam is the Thousand and One Nights, the Magic Carpet, Aladdin, the Magic Lamp and Nights of Scheherazade. All of this is an incorrect generalization; science grew in ancient Eastern civilizations including China, India, Persia and the civilizations of Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt. Medicine and porcelain flourished in China; mathematics and logic in India; political systems in Persia; and astronomy in Mesopotamia. Astronomy, mathematics, algebra, geometry, music, natural sciences, medicine, pharmacy, chemistry,

botany and zoology flourished in the Islamic civilization. Latin translations of these sciences were behind the renaissance of modern Western science. Revelation, reason and nature are one concept in the Islamic civilizational model. The manifestations of fortune-telling exist in every culture. The soothsayer was known in ancient Egypt, the fortune-teller in India and prophecy was practiced by the Romans such as Cicero and the priestess of the Temple of Delphi in Greece.

7. The West has promoted the concept of “Eastern Despotism” and put Islam within this concept. According to the West all Islamic regimes whether hereditary or military are despotic and Israel alone is a democratic oasis in the region like Iran under the Shah. The West considers any Western regime as democratic and any Middle Eastern regime as authoritarian. The ancient Middle East knew only one free power—God or the Sultan. Greece knew only one free class, the aristocracy, while the modern West considers every individual to be free as a natural birthright. The West sees that in Islam the obedience to the Sultan is part of obedience to God and that Shura is non-binding. In fact this judgment is against reality, history of civilization and Islam and there are many examples in Islam which prove that this judgment is wrong. For example, to say “There is no God but Allah” is a declaration of freedom. The Prophet says that the greatest degree of jihad is the right word in the face of an unjust ruler. Advice in Islam is an obligation and Shura is against despotic opinion. Obedience to the ruler is a duty on condition that he is obedient to God. If the ruler violates this condition, the ruled shall have the right to revolt against him after dialogue fails. Pledges of allegiance comes from the people, their scholars and experts who are aware of public interests. In Islam, Shura is not conditional on quantity and respect for the other’s opinion is given irrespective of majority or minority favor. Western civilization is built on the principle that the majority coerces the minority.
8. It is said that Islamic civilization has not absorbed the International Declaration of Human Rights, which has only been advanced twice by the West: once after the French Revolution and again after World War

II. It is also said that Islamic civilization only knows duties before rights as expressed by Mohammad bin Abdul Wahhab in the *Book of Monotheism, the Right of God to the Slaves*. This is a false accusation and every civilization has its own interpretation. This is represented by Confucius in China, Buddha in India, Socrates in Greece, Christianity as a new interpretation of Judaism, and Islam in the theory of the ideal man and the commonalities between man and God such as knowledge, power, life, hearing, sight, speech and willpower. These are absolute in God and relative in man, metaphorical in God and a reality in man. Sufism describes the theories of the “Unity of Witness” (God’s oneness of perception) and “Unity of Existence” (God’s oneness of being). Sharia (Islamic law) defined human rights as expressed by Al Shatby as the protection of life, sanity, religion, honor and money. The Prophet says: “Whoever saved one human life is considered as if he saved all Mankind, and whoever kills one human life is considered as if he killed all Mankind”. What is meant here is the example of Mankind as being beyond the limits of tribes, peoples, races and ethnicities, and is an example of God on earth and not the man who exists only within the geographical boundaries of the West beyond which are only wilderness, tribes or primitive peoples used as subjects for anthropology museums. If the Arab Islamic civilization was built on the concept of duties without rights, the Western civilization was built on the concept of rights without duties.

9. It is said that the status of women in Islam is incompatible with the rights of women in the modern era. She is said to be the obedient wife, the fertile mother and the daughter who needs a guardian. No marriage for the Muslim girl takes place without her guardian’s consent and her inheritance and testimony are equal to half the inheritance and testimony of the male. According to the West a Muslim female cannot be a judge or head of state. Men are custodians of women who are covered and stay at home like “Taliban” women. According to the West, polygamy in Islam makes women as hostages in the house of the husband who has the absolute right of divorce. In fact this vision is nothing but a kind of theatrical image of popular life

that downplays the status of women in Islam and real life. Islamic Sharia appeared in an environment where women had no rights. A new-born girl used to be buried alive out of fear of disgrace. Islam returned rights to women. Before Islam women had no rights in inheritance or testimony, but Islam returned these rights gradually and decided half of the male's inheritance and testimony is equal for her. Islam gave women legal rights in maintaining her name and rights in commercial practices, education, work and participation in various social aspects of life. Islam has given women the right to choose her life partner and the right to seek divorce in the case of her marriage rights not being fulfilled or if she faces harm from her husband. As for the right of abortion, homosexuality and nudity, all of this is linked to Western civilization alone and not found in other civilizations with rights based on the right to life, natural sex and sanctity of the body.

10. It is said that Islam does not recognize citizenship and its ensuing rights and duties and that identity is Islamic rather than one based on nationality. Moreover, Islam consists of "Millah" (denominations) as witnessed in the Ottoman Empire and led to the massacres of the Armenians, the creation of a caste system, majority oppression over the minority and which often end up with sectarian wars as in the case of Lebanon and Sudan and the ongoing tension in Indonesia, Pakistan and Egypt. There is also the issue of "tribute", "Ahl Al Themmah" (non-Muslims living under the protection of Islam), paid by people of the book (Jews and Christians) in order to live in peace and security under Muslim rule, participation in defense expenditure and exemption from military service. Again this is another crude image of the makeup of Islamic society. Religious denominations in Islamic society are equal in rights and duties exactly like individual Muslims according to the stipulations of "Al Medniah Accord". Islamic society is diverse by nature and is governed by the law of justice. Certain practices and terms have disappeared with time such as "tribute", the "People of the Book" and "Ahl Al Themmah". Loyalty these days is to the homeland and rights and duties are for citizens. What happened

in the Ottoman Empire was the defense of the nation against the interests of conflicting powers in the name of religion.

11. Prejudice towards sects and denominations is also shown towards races, tribes and peoples by the West and termed ethnic minorities and defined by skin color. The white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant in the United States is at the top of society, while the African blacks, Spanish Chicano, colored Arabs and Asians are at the bottom. Such racism manifested in the Nazi ideology in Germany and fascism in Italy. The West has strived to prove the racism of Arabs throughout the ages and their role in the slave trade in Africa, including the rulers of Morocco such as Moulay Ismail and the rulers of Egypt such as Mohammad Ali. Indeed, this is a distorted view of history. Islam considered racism and tribalism as the heritage of Ignorance. To be Arab is not defined by a father and a mother but by tongue. Prophet Mohammad says, “No merit to the Arab or Ajami (non-Arab) except by piety”. The Prophet’s muezzin, Bilal, was Abyssinian; The Christian king of Abyssinia, Negus, was a champion of Islam and Muslims and the first Muslim Hijra went to Abyssinia during his tenure. When he died, the Prophet prayed for his soul as a brother of Muslims. All are descended from Adam who was created from dust. In Islam we are all slaves of God. Slavery was common among the Persians and Romans in the Ancient World and Islam tried to remove it from the minds of people. Islam prohibited slavery of those who knew how to read and write. Under Islam, the liberation of a slave is considered a penance for sins which is indicative that slavery is a major sin. While the slavery of individuals has been ended, the slavery of people and exploitation of small nations by major powers is still there. The American civil war between the north and south was ended in the late 19th century because of the slaves.
12. The Arab character in the Western mindset is portrayed as deceitful, hypocritical, conspires, shabby, treacherous, lazy, dependent, irresponsible, accepting of injustice, used to oppression and poverty, fatalistic, apathetic and makes do with little. He is known for lavishness and misery at the same time; lives in the past and re-enacts

it. Traditional images of Arabs by the West are intended to poke fun, something which the West repeats against others, particularly the Indians and Chinese. This is intended to make Europeans feel superior and are used as tools for self-defense; Jews have used this tool across history. In an enthusiastic self-defense, it can be said that Arabs have depicted themselves in poetry with praise and pride; an Arab is an adventurer, preferring the hereafter to the world today and death to a life of humiliation, generous with foreigners, and trustworthy, among other attributes.

Western Media from the Viewpoint of the Islamic World

Saleh Al-Nusairat

The media has a fundamental role in shaping and directing public opinion and is the most influential means of communication available to individuals. In light of the importance of this role, all countries and political and social forces are directly dependent on the media to deliver their message and ideas to the public.

Since the nature of human life is based on interaction between people and among nations, the media readily contributes to such exchange due to its relatively low financial cost and the ability of many people to obtain technology that allows them to receive media broadcasts. The enormous technological progress in modern communications in general, and the Internet in particular, has made the media available round the clock and allows people to follow up on what is happening in the world moment by moment. Therefore, the great powers that enjoy influence in the world, and those that seek to have influence on world public opinion, realized very early on the importance of the media in achieving their goals. Those countries have targeted certain areas to broadcast what they deem as useful in order to achieve their policy aims. In the Arab region, for example, we find that the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has operated its Arabic section since 1938. The BBC broadcasts in the languages of many Muslim nations including Farsi, Pashto, Somali, Hausa, Uzbek, among others. Not only the British, but also the German Nazis were keen to make their voice heard in the Arab World through

their Radio Berlin service. Later during the Cold War foreign media characterized the international scene for four decades (1945–1990) through Radio Free Europe, established by the United States.¹

Following the increase in the pace of world events over the past two decades there has become an urgent need to develop, diversify and increase the means of media output. Thus, the well-known international network CNN emerged, which has spared no effort in reaching Arab and Muslim viewers by broadcasting to the Middle East and a number of other Islamic countries. After the events of 9/11 the battle between Western powers and the forces of extremism in the Arab and Islamic worlds became a media battle *par excellence*. The militants used the Internet to access their supporters and the Western response was the establishment of new Western news networks. Thus, there appeared Al Hurra TV channel and Radio Sawa, which were directly funded by the US Congress, followed by the BBC Arabic channel in 2007, Radio France 24, as well as German, Dutch, Chinese and even Korean stations. These satellite TV and radio stations were not only meant to convey the Western viewpoint about current events but also political and cultural influence on Arab public opinion. This media development was not limited to broadcasting news bulletins, but also offered a variety of cultural, scientific and recreational programs where the main objective was to win the hearts and minds of Arabs and Muslims.²

The Historical Relationship Between Islam and the West

We cannot talk about the image of Islam and Muslims in Western media without considering the historical relationship between the two parties. The relationship between the Islamic world and the West began with the entry of the Muslim armies into Spanish territories in the 8th century AD. The Islamic presence in Andalusia lasted for nearly seven centuries (until 1452), a long period during which the events that took place created an historic milestone for Muslim Arabs and the Spanish in particular, and for Europe in general. During that long period, Europe witnessed wars

between the Muslims and the Spanish followed by the end of the Arab presence in Spain. At the same time, the Catholic Church mobilized Christians to invade the Near East in order to rid the tomb of Christ from the hands of Muslims in what was called the Crusades, which lasted from 1096 until 1291. Those wars, which also carried a history of violence and tragedy, ended with the departure of the Crusaders from Islamic Arab lands.

The Ottoman Empire, on the other hand, played an important role in relations between Muslims and the West through the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, and then in the wars with Western countries which led to the occupation of a number of European states and the spread of Islam, which reached the Balkans for the first time. The image of the Muslim wielding his sword in the face of the Christian West during the Ottoman Empire (1299–1923) was no less influential in the Western mindset than those images displayed today by the media of dead and wounded civilians in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq. This was followed by the colonial wars, which lasted until the middle of the 20th century, when many countries in the Arab and Islamic world gained their independence. This period extending over several centuries has colored the relationship between the two sides with hostility and antagonism and has created a stark divide between the West and the Muslim world. Historical interaction has cast a shadow on relations today, making the past difficult to forget and allowing certain parties to recall historical memory in order to justify certain acts. President Bush named his campaign against Iraq a “crusade”, ignorant of exactly how much ammunition such statement would provide for some Arabs and Muslims. Thus, Bush’s words became a powerful incentive for resistance to the US occupation of Iraq. Osama bin Laden was no different from President Bush when he declared the Islamic coalition against the crusading West in 1996.

These historical images were recalled by Muslim extremists to justify their terrorism against civilians in the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington, and the subsequent bombings in London and Madrid. But the question is: why is this Islamic history? Why do they insist on recalling

those historical periods and leave out other historical events that were models of Islamic tolerance? The clearest evidence of this was when the Prophet Mohammed declared a general amnesty just after he had entered Mecca; and Omar bin Al-Khattab, the second Caliph, did likewise when assuring the Christians of Jerusalem of the security of their churches and property. These models of tolerance did not stop at these two examples, but continued centuries later when Saladin showed utmost tolerance at the conquest of Jerusalem. These enlightened models in our history are neglected by Muslim hardliners and also overlooked by the Western media when talking about Islam.

The International Changes in the 1990s

It is not easy to talk about the Muslim World as distinct from the developments that have taken and are taking place globally. In the late 1980s and early 1990s the world witnessed major strategic shifts. The defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan had a significant impact on the Soviet Union itself and the Eastern bloc. Not only the communist world, but also many Islamic countries were affected by this major event. Some Muslim countries had had strategic relations with the former Soviet Union and were in alliance with it.

The fall of the Soviet Union, the traditional opponent of the United States, led some to look to the Muslim world as a potential enemy of the West, where a new world order emerged with a single superpower—the United States of America. Hans Kong says, “Hostility to Islam and Muslims appeared just after the fall of communism and it seemed that many in the West consider Islam as the new enemy, despite the many differences and controversies among Westerners themselves.”³ This has resulted in the distorted image of Muslims in the Western mindset and deepened the traditional stereotype. Kong says, “The Western media likes to portray Muslims as hard-liner lawyers with beards, terrorists, rich oil sheiks, and veiled women. The image of Islam has undoubtedly become even grimmer in the West.”⁴

The representation of Islam and Muslims in the West, says Kong, is “that Muslims are not tolerant, since their religion – Islam – is irrational, extremist and hysterical, and that the Christian minorities are subjected to injustice at the hands of Muslims which amounted to physical elimination. The same happened to certain sects, such as Bahaism and Ahmadiyya. In addition, Muslims’ relationship with the West is shaped by armed confrontation. Islam, the religion that launched ‘holy wars’, is determined to conquer the world, which has fallen under the tutelage of the West. Finally, there is backwardness, as Islam is associated with the Middle Ages, contemptuous of women, and does not believe in dialogue.”⁵

The First Gulf War, which ensued after Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, had a significant effect on Arab and Islamic relations with the United States at both the public and official levels. It became clear that Muslims felt that the West is targeting the Islamic World in order to control its natural resources and maintain the state of economic and social underdevelopment in it.

Huntington and the Theory of the Clash of Civilizations

When talking about international changes we cannot overlook the intellectual and philosophical theorizing of the relationship between Islam and the West. What Samuel Huntington stated in his article about the conflict between civilizations has had great impact on the two parties and inflamed the debate. The picture described by Huntington about the future of relations between Islam and the West confirms what some Muslims say about the fatalism (inevitability) of the adversarial relationship between Islam and the West.⁶ Huntington states in the introduction to his article that, “My hypothesis is based on the fact that the main source of conflict in the New World will not be ideological or economical. The significant differences between human beings and the largest source of conflict will be cultural. Nation-states will remain the most influential players in international affairs, but the main source of international conflict will be

between nations and groups of different civilizations. Conflict between civilizations will dominate the international political scene.”⁷

Despite the fact that Islam is a religion that prefers peace to war and dialogue to rivalry, there are hardliners on both sides – Muslims and Westerners – who refuse to adopt a civilized dialogue when exploring many aspects of religious and cultural interaction between both sides. Here lies the responsibility of wise people from both parties. Such responsibility entails the demolition of the walls set up by history between the sides and bridging the gap that may seem profound at first glance. This is what former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami did in introducing the theory of dialogue among civilizations, later adopted by the United Nations in 2001 as the “Year of Dialogue among Civilizations”.⁸

Western Media: Neutral or Biased?

The observer of the US media, in particular, and the European media in general, will find that there are multifarious intellectual, ideological and political trends. This is due to the nature of Western society, which allows political, religious and social pluralism in such a way as to make it impossible to color the community with unilateralism. Due to the existence of this extensive freedom its exploitation by certain individuals or groups is not surprising, for they have the opportunity to express freely their opinions and ideas at the expense of objective truth. What makes readers, politicians and media analysts in the Islamic World doubt the objectivity of the media is the dependence of those means on information from sources looked at suspiciously by many Arabs and Muslims. For instance, some Western media have reported arguments and adopted ideas about the Islamic World from the radical Christian Right and the Israeli lobby. When generalizing about Muslims we find that those forces reduce the Islamic world to a handful of Islamic extremists without any serious attempt to distinguish between the Muslim majority, which adopts a moderate understanding of Islam, and marginal categories of loud-spoken, bloody-minded people who consider others only as enemies with whom there is no room for dialogue.

Right-wing Western powers look at Islam only through those hard-line addresses delivered by extremists from the Al-Qaeda leadership such as Ayman Al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden, Anwar Al-Awlaki and other militants. Had those forces and media institutions exerted some effort and searched sincerely for the truth, they would have found that those addresses in fact only represent a small segment of the Muslim World. Notable Islamic religious institutions that enjoy value and credibility among the Muslim public such as Al-Azhar, the Islamic Fiqh Academy in Mecca, the Organization of Islamic Conference and the Muslim World League, are the ones that are respected in Islamic circles in general and do not hesitate to provide the true Islamic attitude towards such issues as terrorism and extremism practiced by some individuals and organizations.⁹ Such right-wing forces do not understand the nature of the multicultural, political and social structure of the Muslim World; they speak about Muslims in Indonesia as if they were part of the Arab Muslim world or speak about Turks without understanding the nature of the demographics and ethnic and cultural pluralism in Turkish society. Right-wing forces consider Arabs as extremist Muslims in general as well as hostile to modernization, democracy and the West. These ready-made charges do not require them to think much. When you listen to Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hunte or *Depka*, you cannot but describe them and their programs as superficial and naive. They take advantage of the Americans' poor cultural knowledge of Arabs and Muslims in general in order to pass views and ideas that aims only to distort the facts.¹⁰

The Israeli lobby is in fact more experienced and knowledgeable about the Islamic World because its media and research centers are run by Middle East experts. If we take, for example, American Jewish researchers like Daniel Pipes or Steven Emerson we find ourselves in front of people who are more knowledgeable about Arab and Islamic affairs than their counterparts in the Christian Right. However, despite that experience and knowledge, they commit the same errors made by those in the Christian Right. They do not hesitate to prosecute every Arab or Muslim activist who tries to present a true picture of Islam. They also stand up to anyone who criticizes Israel, its policies and crimes. They are

a shield and top-notch defender in the United States of the Israeli occupation. They also keep tabs on newspapers, magazines and websites, translate news and put it on their sites, and do not hesitate to provide one-dimensional explanations for such news in order to influence the reader.¹¹

It is important to note that minorities in general are facing major challenges in exploiting the media, especially those ethnic and religious minorities whose economic, social and even professional status do not enable them to compete in this field. This leads to priority being given to particular trends and opinions that are not friendly to minorities. Given the presence of large Arab and Muslim communities in the West, they may sometimes be a victim of a Western media that is armed with huge professional, scientific and financial capabilities. Such Arab and Muslim minorities are supposed to play an important role in bridging the gap between the Islamic World and the West.

Determinants of American Discourse

Supreme Interests of the United States

American supreme interests, namely the preservation of US citizens and the economic and political interests of the United States, are important determinants in US media. American media outlets in general play an active role in alerting the public opinion to the threats to US interests in the world. It also provides information and guidance that enable US citizens to be aware of dangers and those countries where political situations constitute a potential threat to US individuals and interests. In the midst of this, we sometimes find ourselves confronted by exaggeration when describing the situation in certain countries, which leads to adverse feelings and negative attitudes toward that country and its citizens.

Israel's Security

The relationship between Israel and the United States – including governments, civic institutions and political parties – is one of the most important determinants of the American discourse towards the Muslim

world. On an official level the United States believes that the existence of Israel is vital to US interests in the region, that Israel's existence is indisputable, and that the Middle East cannot be seen without Israel. Therefore, successive US administrations since the recognition of Israel in 1948 have not hesitated to give absolute support to it financially and morally. It should be noted that there have been some differences between certain US administrations and some Israeli governments, especially the hard-line Israeli right-wing administrations.¹² In order to ensure more sympathy for Israel its supporters in the United States present it as a model of excellence in the Middle East. It is a country that shares with the West, in general, the practice of democracy and respect for human rights as well as other aspects that fill US media space, both radical and moderate. Therefore, we can say that the US media focuses in its analysis of the situation in the Middle East on the following:

- Common values between the United States and Israel: the values of democracy, human rights and modernization.
- The growing Islamic currents working to destroy Israel.
- The Iranian nuclear project and its implications for the existence of Israel.
- The importance of Israel to US interests in the Arab and Islamic region.

The populist media is focused on the so-called common values between the United States and Israel. These values – with democracy at their top – are especially heeded by many Americans, particularly when Israel is compared with those Arab countries that lack democracy. Therefore, the task of Israel in the Arab region – according to Israel's President Shimon Peres in a populist entertainment program – is the reformation of the Arabs and doing everything in its power to modernize and democratize them.

We cannot, however, deny the fact that there are voices – albeit muted – in the US media and certain US politicians that are trying to show how the problems in the Middle East are inseparable from the issue of Israeli occupation. In an article published on the website of the National Interests

Council, we find that those in charge of the Council refuse the United States' absolute and unconditional support for Israel and that they believe the basic problem in the Middle East is the Israeli occupation. These voices are often faced by a sharp attack from the American Right and the Israeli lobby in an attempt to silence them. The militarization of the second intifada and the incorporation of a new factor into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, i.e. suicide operations, had an important role in providing new excuses for the Right and the Israeli lobby to discredit Arabs and Muslims.¹³

The operations that were carried out by Palestinian organizations in Israel during the 1990s were important material for the US media. After the Palestinians had won significant sympathy within the United States during their first intifada in the 1980s, that sympathy began to fade after the manifestation of suicide attacks carried out against Israeli civilian targets. The news of those operations headed news bulletins as well as political comments and analyses. The media focused on the dramatic photographs of the dead and injured Israelis without really trying to show the suffering of the Palestinians, which should have been the case if they had wanted to be objective in conveying the news and images. Therefore, we find that such media organizations refuse to listen to any other opinion that analyzes this phenomenon in an objective or even semi-objective manner. The Israeli occupation and subsequent settlement and systematic destruction of the Arab identity of Jerusalem, the attempts to eliminate the Arab presence or the daily suffering of Palestinians under occupation are all issues that do not find a strong echo in the US media. When analyses are introduced then such broadcasting stations evidently host pro-Israeli analysts. Even when they host Arab or Muslim thinkers, like Dr. Rashid Khalidi, the Arab-American thinker, or the political analyst Dr. Shibley Telhami, or even Americans sympathetic to Arabs and Muslims, such as Noam Chomsky or Prof. Flankstein, they are subjected to a fierce attack from organizations loyal to Israel through the radio and TV stations dominated by the American Right. Right-wing media does not tolerate an opinion which disagrees with it.

Arab Oil and the Relationship with the West

1973 was a distinctive year in the relationship between the Arab World and the West. In that year, following the October War between Israel, Egypt and Syria, a number of Arab countries imposed a ban on the sale of oil to the United States and various European countries. This resulted in the subsequent rise in oil prices that affected relations between the Arab world and the West. The higher the oil price, the fiercer the pace of attack on the Arabs. Oil is a basic commodity for Western society; it is the lifeline of industrial life. Given the extreme ignorance that is prevalent among a large number of workers in the US media, especially the populist media, we find that charges are directed, without evidence, against the Arab oil states which, in their opinion, control this strategic asset. This is not limited to the charges of raising prices or control the supply of oil to the Western world but includes the demands to occupy Arab oil states.

Aspects of Bias in the Western Media

“Islamic” Terrorism is a Threat to Human Civilization

The Western media characterizes the Islamic World from an important standpoint, namely that Islam is a real threat to the West. Huntington’s hypothesis has probably contributed significantly to providing suitable ground for this. Shortly after the fall of the Soviet empire and the end of the Cold War between East and West, i.e. the decline of the traditional enemy of the West, the idea of hostility between the West and Islam emerged through Huntington’s hypothesis, who also did not have a competent knowledge of the Arab and Islamic world.¹⁴ Hence, there began the talk about opposing values between Islamic and Western cultures to justify this state of hostility although recent history has witnessed a strategic alliance between Muslim forces (states and parties) and the West against the Soviet Union. The US media in general focuses on the phenomenon of international terrorism but it allots the lion’s share of coverage to Muslims. After every failed attempt at terrorism, we find that the US media portraying them creatively, weaving stories and giving

dramatic narratives about what could have taken place if these attempts had been successful.

Given the relationship between the West and the Muslim World after the Iraqi occupation and liberation of Kuwait, followed by the imposition of sanctions on Iraq, such a situation led to the emergence of groups in the Muslim World demanding retribution against the West through armed military action. The “Al-Qaeda” organization, founded by Osama bin Laden and Ayman Al-Zawahri, was the most active armed group in this area. The attack against the United States Navy destroyer *USS Cole* in Yemen in the late 1990s and the bombing of US embassies in Dar Es Salaam and Nairobi were a real declaration of war between Al Qaeda and the United States. These two incidents led to an attack by the Western media on Islam and Muslims, linking Al-Qaida terror operations with Islam to the extent that it became difficult to distinguish between a faction or group that adopts armed violence and the general Muslim public. The Western media had an important role in this connection, whereby Islam has become synonymous with violence and terrorism. This new situation has granted organizations hostile to Arabs and Muslims a big opportunity to eliminate the chances of co-existence between the West and Islam, despite the fact that ordinary Muslims do not accept the idea of armed violence.

Muslim Hostility to Freedom and Women

To make the story more acceptable to citizens of the West generally, we find that the media focuses on a number of issues that merit discussion such as freedom, democracy and women’s issues. Perhaps the freedom issue in its Western form is not acceptable to the majority of Muslims because of their belief that this form is contrary to Islamic teachings. Almost absolute freedom, as represented by Salman Rushdie’s novel *The Satanic Verses*, the libelous cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, and the desperate defense by the West of the freedom of expression, have made Muslims look with suspicion on that model. The reaction to the cartoons that swept many countries of the Islamic World has received great coverage in Western media, which would like to send the message to the

Western world that Muslims in general are against modernity and freedom of the press. These cases resonated with the Western public and officials. President Bush often used to say that Muslims, especially those radical among them, are the real enemies of freedom as seen in the Arab revolutions in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Libya and Syria where young people have got together in search of freedom and rejection of tyranny and corruption.

The Western media shows Muslim women in traditional hijab and niqab and reiterates arguments that show a real ignorance of the successes made by Arab and Muslim women. The focus on these traditional images has made the West look at Muslim women as if they were living in a prison while we find that Muslim women have surpassed men in terms of university enrollment in a number of countries in the Muslim world. Nothing is left in the quiver of the Western media except to highlight the Taliban model and those who follow their example by denying the right of women to education, employment and access to the highest official positions as witnessed in Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia.

In her recent study on Islamophobia and Muslim women in the Western media in general, and the Spanish media in particular, the researcher Laura Navarro reached important conclusions on this issue. She believes that “the Western press tends to build a picture of Muslim women using a discourse dominated by negative opinion and depicting Muslim women as victims of their society.” She adds: “The samples of Western journalism I have studied are pervaded by the idea of the reduction of Muslim women to the status of victims under the authoritarian Muslim male or Islamic fundamentalism. This common picture in the Western media hinders the idea of accepting the other and does not help us Westerners to understand the idea of freedom in choosing the traditional Islamic dress, namely the veil, for example.”¹⁵ In her book on the imperialistic narrative and European myths about the Levant, Rana Kabbani says that the famous American magazine *Vanity Fair* distorted her commissioned article so that it become a model for the negative stereotypes of Muslim women. Therefore, she concludes that the US

media coverage and the debate in the West about Muslim women are not reliable.¹⁶

The media certainly has the right to analyze terrorist operations and alert the public to their risks and the type of individuals who may try to implement them. Terrorism does not distinguish between one citizen and another. Thus, a number of Muslim-Americans have also died as a result of those operations. But the coverage practiced by right-wing or extremist media has led to the emergence of societal problems facing Arab and Muslim communities, which we will explain later, and has contributed to the negative stereotyping of Arabs and Muslims.

Hostility to Modernity and Modernization

A number of Western thinkers believe that there is a fundamental conflict between Islam and modernity.¹⁷ In their opinion, Islam is a religion that imposes certain patterns of behavior on people in conflict with modernization, development and with the progress and evolution achieved by Mankind, especially with regard to human rights and women in particular. Certain movements, such as the Taliban during their rule of Afghanistan, had discriminatory practices against women in education, employment, clothing and personal freedom and imposed certain practices on men. All these negative practices led to non-objective generalizations in the Western media. When discussing the causes of this phenomenon, we notice that they are misunderstood. Afghan society, for example, is a tribal society and what might be called the Islamic appearances are nothing more than the customs and traditions handed down through generations and acquiring the status of religion although in fact they often have nothing to do with Islam. This also applies to Somali society, which is not much different in its tribal structure from Afghan society. Therefore, the conflict between moderates and extremists is primarily a tribal conflict but extremists claim that their demands and practices belong to Islam in order to justify the crimes they commit against the Somali people. Therefore, lack of experience and knowledge of Islamic societies, and the cultural and social diversity in them, explain the prejudice in some

Western media. Therefore, blaming Islam for these problems is in fact the very problem. The superficiality of Western media coverage is reflected by the adoption of the idea that the problem lies not only in Muslims but also in Islam.¹⁸

Adverse to Democracy

Many Western media professionals believe that Arabs in particular are a tribal nation that does not know the meaning of democracy and good governance. A number of those concerned with Muslim affairs in the West have indicated the seriousness of the charges over the relationship between East and West. The former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, stated that, "Some claim that Islam does not coincide with democracy and that it is the enemy of modernity and women. Such claims pass without control or review, which boosts prejudice against Muslims." Annan added that, "Nobody should underestimate the sense of injustice felt by the members of one of the greatest religions and global cultures because of the failure to resolve the problem of the Middle East and Chechnya, and the crimes committed against Muslims in the former Yugoslavia."¹⁹

Sources of Negative Thoughts about Islam and Muslims in Western Media

Western Orientalist Heritage

Early Orientalists played a prominent role in the introduction of Arabic and Islamic heritage to the West. A number of Orientalists performed this role efficiently but others were not as concerned with telling the truth as with conveying a negative image of Arabs and Muslims, especially in periods of stagnation of Arab intellectual and cultural life. Thus, their writings have become the main source in Western universities for students and academics involved in studies on Arabs and Muslims. Theodore Lothrop Stoddard states that, "Islam is inherently incapable of reform, progress and adaptation to the human scientific revolution of humanity."²⁰

Israeli Campaigns to Tarnish the Image of Arabs

Images play a vital role in having an individual or a nation stereotype another. The West has known this tool for a long time, especially in the United States. Certainly, the repetition of a negative image continuously will lead the viewer to develop a negative attitude towards that image. A stereotypical image, according to Jack Shaheen, is “harmful because innocent people suffer when the media consistently portrays any ethnic group as inferior.”²¹ Israelis conduct regular campaigns through their excellent relationships with the US media to tarnish the image of Arabs and Muslims. Thus, an Arab at his/her best is an insatiable consumer of Western products, and at his worst is a terrorist looking for innocent victims in Tel Aviv, Washington, Madrid and London. Hollywood has had the greatest role in the promotion of this negative image through the films it has produced since the 1950s until today. Such campaigns intensified after 9/11; there is hardly an action film without Western or Israeli blood shed by Arab Muslim hands. Kenneth Turan, the film critic for the *Los Angeles Times* newspaper, noted that, “The fabricated Hollywood legends are embedded so deep in our souls that they are changing our minds politically and shaping the way in which we see the world ... When politics penetrates entertainment it becomes highly counterproductive and more influential.”²²

Right-wing Research Institutions

The United States now has a significant number of institutions and think tanks that provide detailed studies about life in Arab and Islamic countries. These numerous institutions and centers are promoting the negative image of Arabs and Muslims in the United States in particular, and the West in general. The institutions that adopt a clear rightist line have played a prominent role in this campaign. The Lebanese journalist, Jihad Al-Khazen, has monitored a number of those institutions that play this role. Hudson Center, the New American Century Foundation, the Near East Center for Middle East Studies among others, continue to provide a succession of studies about the Arab-Muslim reality. They are

often aimed at policy-makers who rely heavily on these studies in making decisions relating to affairs in the Arab and Muslim world and not to the average reader.

Western Media Professionals' Ignorance about the Islamic World

One cannot underestimate the role of knowledge for the media professional; the information provided by education programs at the university level in particular will be an important factor in the nature of the reports and news stories the media professional or journalist will provide later. Media professionals do not specialize in the study of specific cultures or regions, which helps to provide an incomplete or confused picture when talking about those countries or cultures. If you make a quick review of the subjects studied by students of journalism and media in three American universities that are rated as the best in the country in the field of the media, you will not find any courses that deal, for example, with US international relations or about the history of other nations or cultures up to the present day.²³ This lack of knowledge cannot be compensated through a quick read up or rapid visit to a country. The media professional often speaks on vital subjects of the Islamic World although he/she does not have any in-depth knowledge about it, often mixing up facts with opinions and myths.

Western writings on Islam and Muslims have generally increased in the last decade, given the importance of the Islamic World to the West. The United States and a number of other Western countries exist as military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, they have unique economic, political and cultural ties with a large number of Islamic countries. These forces have a clear impact these days because of the rapid political developments in the Arab World termed the "Arab Spring", represented by the uprisings and revolutions that have succeeded in changing the political equation entirely, as in the case of Tunisia and Egypt, while others are still in a state of conflict with existing systems such as in Libya, Syria and Yemen. We should not fail to note that a significant proportion of Western commentators and journalists are not graduates of colleges specialized in media; rather, they belong to some

party or other. The most famous right-wing commentator in the United States, Rush Limbaugh, is an example. This media professional, whose loud and audible voice is heard frequently in the United States, did not graduate from college himself. In fact, he often scoffs at universities and graduates because he considers universities to be the “stronghold of the American left and liberalism”. Thus, in his opinion, they are places devoted to the liberal ideology which he antagonizes.²⁴

One can sense this lack of knowledge when reading the writings of many journalists and media professionals in the West. One may find some talking about the Muslim World as a single cultural unit, which is a major misunderstanding. The Muslim World is rich in cultural, ethnic and doctrinal groups—Asian, African, Arab and non-Arab, Sunni and Shiite. Many media professionals miss the fact that the problems and challenges facing the Muslim world are diverse. Some countries have economic challenges while others have political difficulties such as those facing rebellions or protests from ethnic minorities or religious sects, while others have challenges related to political tyranny and economic corruption. Edward Said states that, “My concern is that [the] use of the word “Islam”, whether for clarification only or to condemn, usually ends in the form of an attack. Islam is defined in a way far less than what is happening in the Muslim World, whose population is about a billion people, and includes a large number of countries, communities, traditions, languages and experiences.”²⁵

These differences cannot be ignored since they often determine the policies, trends and economic and social plans of those countries. Lack of, or distortion of information in Western media makes adds to the confusion when talking about the Muslim World. The journalists who visit the Islamic world, especially the Arab region, often cannot speak Arabic and they depend on translators who convey the reality to them in the language of the journalist. This relationship between the translator and the journalist is limited. The image of Islam and Muslims in Western media, according to Dalia Youssuf, needs to be clarified for a deeper understanding of the reasons for such unbalanced coverage. “There must be an explanation, namely that the unfavorable portrayal of Muslims in Western media is not

due to hatred; it may be due to ignorance or other reasons related to the structure of media organizations, in addition to the lack of Muslims skilled to deal with the media.”²⁶

Effect on the Spread of Islamophobia

Certain Arab and Islamic centers and organizations in the West observed a number of manifestations of Islamophobia prevalent in their communities, including the report prepared by the Muslim Association of Britain, which highlighted the following:

- Verbal and physical attacks against Muslims.
- Attacks on mosques and desecration of Islamic cemeteries.
- A prevalence of hate speech against Muslims in the media, using the expressions that would be unacceptable in case they were used against other groups such as Africans or Jews.
- Speeches by certain political leaders which sometimes contain statements that underestimate the commitment of Muslims in the West in general to democracy and acceptance of integration into Western societies.
- Racial discrimination in employment.
- Delay in the approval of Muslims’ demands for amendment or adoption of laws guaranteeing the rights of Muslims in public life, particularly with regard to acts of worship and dress.
- Non-recognition of Muslims and Islam in the laws of many Western countries.²⁷

Muslims’ View of Media Coverage in the United States

A study by Farrukh Salim on the US media and Muslims aimed “to discuss the US media coverage and how it is dealing with Muslims following the events of September 11th.” The study was a follow-up to what had been published for one week in two important media outlets, namely the *New York Times* and CNN about Islam and Muslims. The study has concluded that there is an element of bias in their coverage.²⁸

Some believe that the biased discourse can be linked to a change in the American public opinion of Islam and Muslims. In a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center,²⁹ it has been found that the percentage of those who think that Islam incites violence rose from 25 percent in March 2002 to 40 percent in March 2011, while the proportion of those who believe that Islam does not incite violence fell from 51 percent in March 2001 to 42 percent in March 2011. These percentages are higher among Republicans and whites in particular, and are much lower among blacks and the citizens of Latin American origin. A study by John Esposito and Dalia Mogahed analyzing the results of a survey conducted by the Gallup Poll shows the following:³⁰

- 44 percent of Americans say that Muslims are very radical.
- Less than half of Americans believe in the sincerity and loyalty of American Muslims to their country.
- 22 percent of Americans refused to have a Muslim neighbor.
- When asked their level of admiration for the Muslim World, 32 percent of Americans do not believe that it is impressive, and 25 percent do not know anything about the Muslim World.

Such a biased discourse against Islam and Muslims in the media could have led to the results mentioned above and therefore it reduces the chances of developing a truly civilized dialogue between the West and the Muslim World. Despite many serious attempts by respectable Arab and American institutions to develop a civilized dialogue between the two sides, the picture is still bleak and misleading. The right-wing anti-Arab and anti-Muslim media used the events of 9/11 to demonize Islam and Muslims. Through the repetition of images, comments and various demonstrations that depicted the Islamic world as happy with the attacks, a negative stereotype of Islam and Muslims has been carved in the minds of Americans and that many feel Muslims to be the true enemies of the United States. Thus, the presence of a Muslim on a plane upsets the average citizen. Not only that, but a large number of Muslims had been made to disembark from the aircraft just because they recited verses from the Quran before takeoff.³¹

Muslims' Vision of the Media Coverage in Britain

Many Muslims believe that the British media does not provide a true and fair picture of them. Naturally, an unfair coverage may help to promote negative stereotypes about Islam and Muslims, which may turn into promote negative behavior towards Muslims.³² This negative behavior is reflected in practice by certain types of ill-treatment, racial discrimination and less employment opportunities or integration into society. A number of human rights organizations have recorded an increase in the frequency of racist attacks on Muslims in Britain, especially when terrorist incidents take place in the country or elsewhere in the West.³³ Many British universities and institutions have been active in an attempt to monitor media coverage of Muslims and the implications of such coverage on Islamic reality in Britain in particular and the West in general. In a report by the organization *The search for Common Grounds* concerning Muslims in Britain, it reached a set of results relating to media coverage on Muslims in Britain, the most important of which are as follows:

- The dominant view is that there is no common ground between Islam and the West and that conflict is inevitable according to the Muslim point of view.
- Muslims, according to the British media, are a threat to the traditional values and way of life in Britain.
- Views, opinions and concepts do not receive fair coverage in the media.
- The facts are often simplified or presented in a confused manner.
- The nature of the language is dominated by abuse, extremism and warning.
- The coverage can lead to increased feelings of doubt, insecurity and anxiety among Muslims, as well as a sense of alienation and vulnerability to attacks, which reduces the chances of success for government measures to reduce/eliminate extremism.
- The coverage reduces the chances of a genuine and fruitful dialogue between the parties.
- The coverage does not reduce the chances of eliminating hate crimes.

In 2008 the School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies at the University of Cardiff, United Kingdom, conducted a study on the image of Islam and Muslims in the British media. The study provided an analysis of 974 articles published about Muslims in Britain between 2000 and 2008 along with an analysis of the images that accompanied articles published between 2007 and 2008. The study found the following:

- There is a marked increase in the volume of media coverage of Muslims in Britain since 2000 and the situation has remained as such up until 2007 and 2008. The study attributed this marked increase to a rise in media coverage of “terrorism”. After the terrorist attacks in 2001 and 2005 in the United States and Britain, 36 percent of articles discussed terrorism.
- In recent years, coverage has focused on cultural and religious differences between Islamic and British society. The study concluded that the majority of articles (two thirds of the articles) focused on Muslims as a (terrorist) threat, or a threat to British cultural values.³⁴

Models of Positive Coverage

The American and Western media in general does include some articles, interviews or reports that give a positive impression about Islam and Muslims in the West, although this coverage does not represent more than 2 percent of what is published on these topics. In the aftermath of 9/11 the fever of press coverage of Muslims living in the West included positive coverage by focusing on Muslim centers and figures that had a positive role in building a balanced relationship with the surrounding community. The US commentator and broadcaster Charlie Rose, for example, has spared no effort in providing a positive image of Islam and Muslims. He conducted numerous interviews with Arab and Muslim intellectuals and leaders to clarify their views on the relationship between Muslims and the United States. He conducted an interview with the Swiss Muslim intellectual Tariq Ramadan, and also many interviews with activists, artists and the imams of mosques in the West, as in the case of Yusuf

Islam and even Khaled Meshaal of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in the wake of the election of President Barack Obama.

The *New York Times* has published numerous articles on Islam and Muslims in the West. In June 2010 it published an article about Muslims in the state of Mexico through the story of Muslim women of Latin origin. It also published an interview in October 2010 with Imam Abdullah and highlighted his role in spreading the culture of dialogue between religions. PBS station, a radio station with a wide reception in the United States and originally supported by funds directly from citizens, has introduced to the American public several documentary films about Muslims such as the *Empire of Faith*, a film produced by an American Muslim and tells the story of Islam from its early times. It also published interviews with Imam Muhammad Farooq about the mosque to be constructed at the World Trade Center, which was destroyed on 9/11. Moreover, it published a report on the efforts of the Muslim-American community in the fight against terrorism and the attempts by some terrorists to recruit young Arabs and Muslims under the banner of Al-Qaeda. As for the language used to describe Islam, 26 percent of literature stigmatized Islam as backward, dangerous, and an irrational religion. It often described Muslims as terrorists, extremists, fanatics and suicidal. Each positive word about Muslims was offset by 17 negative ones. Only 2 percent of articles contained a positive description of Muslims.

Aggravation or Breakthrough?

Mainstream American discourse at the general and academic levels will not be in the interest of any cultural dialogue; rather, it enhances the negative discourse and leads to a crisis in the relationship between the Islamic World and the West. If this discourse is to change from a negative to a positive one, a more cross-cultural and civilizational communication is needed between the two sides for a deeper understanding of the relationship between them. The United States in particular, and the West in general, is looking at the Muslim World in a way that is a continuation of the traditional colonial mindset but with more modern and advanced

tools. This situation gives extremists on both sides ammunition to continue and promote their aims. Muslim and Western radicals would not fail to find enough support from events, literature and trends to feed the state of hostility between the two sides. Therefore, the task becomes more difficult for the moderates of both parties who actively seek to build a system of positive relations through a serious and constructive dialogue in which both parties recognize the existence of this crisis; work on dismantling the reasons leading to it; and studying ways to develop a positive discourse that reinforces what is common between the two cultures and removes from extremists the chances to cause tensions in relations.

Recommendations and Suggestions

We think that there are many ways to help both parties build a positive relationship, including:

- Intensify intellectual and cultural relations between both sides for a deeper and more influential dialogue.
- Arab and Islamic organizations and governments should host Western journalists, especially those in media institutions known for their bias against Arabs, Muslims and the existence of Islam in the West, and those that are trying to tarnish the image of Muslims. They should introduce them – through extended visits to certain Arab countries, particularly the wealthy ones – to Arab Islamic culture and the changing reality on the ground, and give them opportunities to meet intellectuals, politicians and the general public in order to listen to them and discuss. These opportunities will be an additional factor in enabling Western journalists to correct their notions about the Arab and Islamic world, namely:
 - Build joint work institutions from both sides based on mutual respect and appreciation.
 - Work with official institutions in the Islamic World and the West to promote positive relationships that are not merely based on immediate economic interests.

- Enhance moderate attitudes and support institutions working in this direction.
- Recognize the existence of political and cultural moderating-oriented forces and work to develop productive working relationships among them.
- Support Muslim media organizations in the West in order to help them clarify the image of moderate Islam and the economic and cultural development in the Muslim World.

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Media Perceptions and Misperceptions: A Western Perspective

Melani McAlister

Images of Islam matter a great deal in US culture and in US–Middle East relations. Unquestionably, modern film, television, news media, literature and visual culture all offer perceptions of the Middle East. The images they produce are varied although it is clear that the history of representing Islam is hardly salutary. After 9/11 the intensity of American fascination with Islam increased dramatically, as did the number – and the diversity – of US representations. One simple but fundamental argument of this essay is that these media images do not operate in simple or one-dimensional fashion. We cannot understand the impact of the media by cataloguing stereotypes or by assessing how many “negative” or “positive” images appear in the media. Instead, we can learn more about the role of culture when we ask how perceptions of Islam *work* in the United States, for whom and to what end.

There is not, of course, just one “Western” culture, just as there is no one Islam and no single set of images that can capture the diversity of the Muslim World. Even if we just focus on the United States, as I will in this essay, we are immediately confronted with the reality that there are multiple communities with quite different investments—from Hollywood filmmakers to small town preachers to news show pundits to undergraduate majors in Middle Eastern studies. In recent years Muslim Americans have become self-consciously involved in attempting to shape perceptions, producing literature and scholarship and commenting in the news media.

To unpack the diversity of US images I will trace three different kinds of “moral geographies.” Michael Shapiro describes moral geographies as the cognitive maps that mark areas of affective connection as well as zones of separation.¹ All of us work with moral geographies of some sort or another: our worlds are mapped via hot zones, news stories, the locations of family or friends, the hours in the day. Almost inevitably the maps we make are not as clear, not as coherent or consistent as the ones that get posted on school walls with neatly defined borders of states and continents. These moral geographies often go beyond the nation and challenge pre-existing spaces; they reshape borders of all kinds.

Consider, for example, one particular kind of map that is available online today. If you have a Facebook account it is possible to use a program to map your “Facebook friends.” The program takes the basic information about each friend – Facebook, after all, has a great deal of information about all of its users – and offers you a map of your online social network. For many people those maps are miracles of global interconnectedness; a girl from Iowa may have many close-by links and many friends around the United States, but her map could show a former roommate who is now in Sri Lanka, a brother in the Peace Corps in Nigeria, a friend doing a semester abroad in London and a cousin who works for a business in Lebanon. If the student has herself studied for a semester abroad – say in the United Arab Emirates – then her social geography is likely to be even more interconnected and transnational. For such a person, national identities are likely to be less central and a sense of global flows may be as strong as state borders.²

This certainly does not mean that the nation does not matter any longer or that geographical categories like “East” and “West” have no meaning. Nor does it mean that it is possible to connect equally to everyone or to avoid the process of boundary marking. Even those of us who might want to claim universal solidarity with all beings – “my map has no enemies” – will necessarily find many limits in practice: we mark humankind as different from animal life, for example; or we cry over images of starving children but pass by images of adults killed in war; or we love everyone in theory but find that, amidst the necessities of daily

life, our attention is limited.³ Moral geographies are the world-makings that people live by. Analyzing them shows the complex ways that culture interacts with politics in shaping global encounters.

Orientalism

Orientalism describes a moral geography. Edward Said's field-defining book, first published in 1978, gave us an understanding of the profound impact of exoticizing and racist representations of "the East." Orientalism is a certain type of lens; through it, Europeans and Americans have "seen" an Orient that is the stuff of children's books and popular movies: a world of harems and magic lamps, mystery and decadence, irrationality and backwardness. Orientalism provides a detailed history of such images as well as an understanding of the cognitive mapping of spaces (East versus West). Said argues that Orientalism as a set of scholarly and cultural practices worked to distribute a certain kind of geopolitical awareness—"the world is made up of two unequal halves, Occident and Orient." Orientalism accompanied and in some sense laid the groundwork for European imperialism. As Etienne Balibar has argued, Europeans developed an "imperialist superiority complex" through which the project of imperialist expansion was able to transform itself in the minds of its practitioners, "from a mere entertainment into an enterprise of universal domination, the founding of a 'civilization.'"⁴ It is clear, then, that the stereotyping of peoples and the drawing of moral geographies are both intimately connected with economics, politics and state power.

Useful as this formulation is, there are limits to its explanatory power. In the last decades of the 20th century it became almost formulaic to analyze almost every US or European representation of the Middle East as Orientalist. "Orientalism" developed into a catch-all; if a representation was stereotyped, problematic or unflattering, it was inevitably understood as a version of what Said has described. In my own work I have described what I believe to be the "post-Orientalist" nature of US representations of the Middle East in the post-WWII period, when American film, news media and literature produced an image of the United States as separate

from the old European imperial powers and was friendly to self-determination and yet (often) deeply in opposition to Islam. These cultural products are not “good”; sometimes they are far more nefarious than the simplistic model of “us” vs. “them” precisely because they seem to be so liberal-minded. Although some Americans, notably African-American cultural radicals in the 1960s, did produce genuine narratives of affiliation, the study of US images of Islam requires that we expand our conceptual models beyond Orientalism without leaving it entirely behind.

I am interested, then, not only in the question of how Islam is represented but more generally in the ambivalence and ambiguity inherent in how “enemies,” “friends” and “others” are defined.⁵ The moral geographies that represent Islam for Americans are contested and conflicted; they do not represent one view and they are far from stable. If we aim to challenge the negative power of culture we must see the ways that culture actually works, and we must not forget the power of culture to rewrite and revise Orientalism and its legacies.

Moral Geography I: Hostile Views of Islam

In the ten years since the attacks of 9/11, there have been many examples of Orientalism. Actually, the hostile end of the spectrum of US representations is far more hostile and far less scholarly than the complex forms of knowledge that Said described. The stories of the days after 9/11 are familiar, as when Reverend Franklin Graham called Islam an “evil and wicked religion.”⁶ More recently, anti-Muslim sentiment emerged as a central factor in the 2008 US election campaign in the remarkable but persistent “accusation” that Barack Obama is a Muslim. In February 2008, the Republican Party of Tennessee put out a press release with the provocative headline “Anti-Semites for Obama.” Supposedly an analysis of the candidate’s Middle East policy views, the release argued that Israel’s security would be endangered if “Barack Hussein Obama” were elected president. The none-too-subtle use of the candidate’s middle name, along with a photo of Obama on a visit to Somalia wearing what the release described as “Muslim garb” (it was in fact traditional Somali

clothing), clearly insinuated that Obama had dangerous ties to Islam and was therefore opposed to Israel. But insinuation was not enough. The article also insisted that, if elected, Obama planned to hold a “Muslim summit” that would “determine [US] Middle East policy.” The document was so outrageous that it was immediately disavowed by the Republican National Committee and the McCain campaign.⁷

However, if the Tennessee Republican leaders were unscrupulous they were not stupid; their aim was clearly to build on the viral (and virulent) e-mail campaign from late 2007 that claimed that Obama was in fact a Muslim, that he refused to swear allegiance to the flag, and that, in the words of one widely circulated e-mail, when he had been sworn in as a senator, “he DID NOT use the Holy Bible but instead the Koran.” After all, the e-mail argued, “the Muslims have said they want to destroy America from the inside out, what better way to start than at the highest level.”⁸ The e-mails were obviously a compilation of misinformation and ridiculousness and they were quickly denounced by several evangelicals, by the Republican leadership and by prominent leaders in the Jewish community where the campaign had also made inroads. But the rumors had a fairly profound and lasting impact, one that neither Obama’s denials nor mainstream media debunking could undo. In September 2008 a Pew poll showed that only 46 percent of people in the United States could identify Obama as a Christian. Although most of the other 54 percent were uncertain about his religion, 13 percent of respondents declared him to be a Muslim, a misperception held almost equally by Democrats and Republicans.⁹

This moral geography is clearly one that defines “Muslim” as not-American, which maps the US nation as a space off limits to Islam. Tellingly, even mainstream media outlets that debunked the misconceptions about Obama often unselfconsciously referred to the Obama-as-Muslim claims as “smears” rather than “errors.”¹⁰ But there were other layers as well; the “rumors” about Obama conveniently combined anti-Muslim sentiment with anti-black racism. If they presumed that to be a Muslim was to be traitorous and unworthy of the presidency, they also made the statement – implicitly but clearly – that a black man with an Arab name

was inherently untrustworthy. Busy establishing the candidate's Christian credentials, the Obama campaign left it to Colin Powell to point out that Muslim children should also be able to dream the American dream.¹¹

Another important example of the moral geography of hate was the controversy that began in the summer of 2010 over the Park 51 Islamic Cultural Center, which was proposed for a location near the former World Trade Center site. The Cultural Center had the support of almost every New York City leader and politician as well as Christian and Jewish leaders.¹² But the grassroots response was visceral and remarkably virulent. Protestors showed up en masse at the proposed site, which was not at Ground Zero but rather two blocks away. Their signs said it all: "A Mosque at Ground Zero Spits on the Graves of 9/11 victims"; or "No Mosque at a War Memorial", with the "o" as a crescent. The Crescent appeared with a mark diagonally across it—in the shorthand of public signs it means "forbidden."¹³ The protestors came from many different backgrounds but a number of them were organized by two groups: "9/11 Families for a Safe and Strong America," which represents a group of conservative families, firefighters and others; and "Stop Islamization of America," run by right-wing blogger Pamela Geller and Robert Spencer, a pseudo-expert who writes about Islam.¹⁴

Virtually everyone, even those who supported the protestors, recognized that the planners had a *right* to build a mosque or an Islamic cultural center at the site. The establishment clause of the US Bill of Rights means that the government cannot prohibit the free exercise of religion by any group. The protests were not about what was legal; they were designed to bring so much public pressure to bear that it would become emotionally impossible and/or fiscally impossible to continue the project. They did succeed in reinvigorating anti-Muslim sentiment in America but they did not stop the mosque. In July 2011 Park 51 organizers cleared the final legal obstacle, which was over whether the current building at the area was an historic landmark. The New York State Supreme Court dismissed the case and the organizers are now legally free to build. Whether they will successfully raise the funds and finally build the Center is still unclear.¹⁵

At one level, the mosque controversy clearly illustrates the ways in which Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" argument has been mobilized in popular politics.¹⁶ Huntington's basic argument was that with the end of the Cold War, "civilization" would replace the Cold War bloc as the primary organizing site for identity and as the nexus of conflict. Civilizations, he argued, are coherent, generally large-scale cultures that have distinct values and worldviews. They are long lived and relatively unified based on fundamental ties of "blood, language, religion, and way of life" Members of any given civilization tend to define their identity through the articulation of an "other", an "outside." Thus, Huntington argued the prospects for peaceful intercivilizational integration were not good: "Relations between groups from different civilizations ... will be almost never close, usually cool, and often hostile."

Huntington's moral geography was as stark as that of any Orientalist. His work has been roundly criticized by scholars from almost every conceivable discipline; experts on Islam challenge his careless and generally hostile characterizations of the Muslim world (and China and Africa); anthropologists and others have unpacked his tendentious determination to resurrect the idea of "civilization" as an analytical category against the more complex and nuanced models that show how groups and individuals construct themselves in multiple ways that do not fit within "civilization." (I once had a student come up to me after we discussed Huntington in my class and said "I am a Sufi Muslim from Bali." The student was genuinely confused. While Muslims are a majority in Indonesia overall they are a small minority in the Hindu-majority Island of Bali. Sunnis are the majority of the Muslims in Bali and Sufism is uncommon. "Plus," the student continued, "I have family in the United States and a brother in Latin America. I am a minority everywhere I turn. What civilization does Huntington think I belong to?") The very concept of geographically-bounded and internally unified civilizations is one of Huntington's enabling fictions.

Huntington's argument remains significant, however, not because it is analytically correct but because it has had such political power. Commentators in the United States have increasingly referred to the

“clash of civilizations” as an existential reality, as something that we all understand to be the case. Protestors at Ground Zero or those who passed on rumors about Obama-as-Muslim probably had not read Huntington but his catchy title was well known. If relations between civilizations are “almost never close, usually cool, and often hostile,” then the objections of someone from “the West” to the presence of a “different civilization” are understandable. The work of this moral geography is not just to produce and reinforce global hostility, it also erases the very possibility of a truly American-Muslim identity.

Moral Geography II: Keep it Private

The second moral geography is more complicated. It involves drawing *connections* between Americans and the Middle East but does so in very particular terms: by dividing public and private and insisting that connections be made only in personal terms. Hollywood has been masterful at producing narratives that turn what might be meditations on US policies in the Middle East into stories of personal relationships that stand in for any larger political understanding. Hollywood has its own ugly history of hostility, of course. Since its beginnings, the film industry for years has trotted out one stereotype after another: conflating Arabs and Muslims; presenting Muslims as terrorists; and Islam as oppressive to women, etc.

However, since 9/11 the role of Hollywood has altered. While it hasn't given up stereotyping it has moved toward a more self-conscious practice of representing Islam and/or Arabs positively. In very many of the films or television shows that deal with the Middle East there is, at some point, a meditation on Islam that insists that Islam is *not* inherently violent and some “good Muslim” character is introduced. In the cable show *Sleeper Cell*, for example, an African American FBI agent is working undercover in a Muslim terrorist cell in Los Angeles. The “sleeper cell” is a Muslim terrorist network of people from Bosnia, England, Palestine and Egypt—a virtual United Nations of terrorists. The African-American lead character, however, repeatedly insists that “my

religion is a religion of peace” and “these people do not represent my religion.” He is the good Muslim, the one who provides the alibi for the TV show, proof of its liberalist tolerance, even as it perpetuates stereotypes.

In part, this determination by Hollywood to represent at least some positive images of Muslims comes from an awareness of a transformation in the US population. The US Muslim population is 2.6 million and growing; by 2030 the number of Muslims in the United States will more than double. The percentage of Muslims is still small, less than 1 percent, but that too will increase, to 1.7 percent of the country by 2020. Muslims are the most racially and culturally diverse religious group in the country: approximately one-third are African American, one-third of South Asian background, and one-third Arab or other heritage.¹⁷ As Evelyn Alsultany has shown, Muslim Americans have been anxious to present themselves to their neighbors as “good Americans” and some mainstream non-profit organizations have also joined in the effort. A central part of this project is showing that Muslims are “just people” too, presenting school teachers, doctors and Cub Scout moms as exemplary Muslim representatives. Audiences are invited to see the basic humanity of American Muslims—surely a salutary effort. But such advertisements assiduously avoid politics: Muslims have no particular complaints and are represented as essentially apolitical.¹⁸

To make an argument about the limits of that kind of representation I will examine the film *The Kingdom* starring Jamie Foxx. In that film, Foxx is an FBI agent who goes to Saudi Arabia to investigate a terrorist attack on an American compound. The story is something of a typical action movie plot: they search for clues, they search for bad guys, they get into firefights and car chases, they succeed in the end. The film also has a great deal to say about Saudi Arabia and Islam, however, and what it says is decidedly mixed. On the one hand Saudi Arabia overall is represented quite negatively. The country’s government and military are shown as rife with corruption and danger. More relevant to the plot of the film the Saudis are not versed in the most fundamental components of police

investigation; in that sense, they are posited as rather stupid and the streets of Riyadh are a source of constant danger: violent terrorists are everywhere, seething with rage and armed with AK47s. At the same time, Foxx and his team work closely with one Saudi officer, Colonel Faris Al Ghazi, played by actor Asraf Barhom, a Palestinian from Israel. Al Ghazi is presented very positively as a smart, kind and devout man, somebody who works very well with Jamie Foxx's character, Fleury.

In that context, the character of Al Ghazi is obviously the "good Muslim." This is not new in Hollywood: movies often make the gesture of including one "good" Arab or Muslim but *The Kingdom* goes further. The "good Muslim" is a *main* character, not a secondary one. And, unlike shows like *Sleeper Cell*, the film does more than simply announce that Islam is a fine religion. The film takes time to show Islam in quite a positive light. In one scene, for example, as Fleury and his team close in on the terrorist mastermind the film turns to Al Ghazi in his home. He is at prayer with his wife and his children, a son and two daughters. Shot in a soft haze of yellow light, backed by beautiful, evocative music, the scene shows the quiet dignity of the prayer. Al Ghazi holds his son joyfully in his lap; he also goes in to pray with his bedridden father whom he is caring for in his home. Here the film is determined to present Al Ghazi as a committed believer in a religion worthy of respect. The terms of this respect, however, are based on a prohibition: the personal must not become political. Islam is presented as "good" by being linked to family life, to children and parents. Al Ghazi's practice of Islam is never shown in a mosque. It does not lead to any visions of public good or ideas about politics. It is private, personal faith, shown in relation to his home and family.

The anthropologist Talal Asad has argued that scholars of religion have distorted our understanding of religion's role by defining "real" religion in precisely these private terms. Drawing implicitly on the practices of Protestantism, Asad argues that scholars describe "religion" as a matter of *individual* belief, rather than, for example, the shared practices of a community. In this model religions "count" only when they

can be defined as something that is private to the person, a set of individual beliefs and not part of a generalized set of communal values; the premise of modern Western culture is that politics are secular and public and religion is individual and private.¹⁹

Asad points out that this way of thinking adds credence to arguments about what “modern” religion should look like. Religions like Islam or Judaism, in particular, are marginalized as being “politics, not religion” whenever they make claims about how public life should be organized or how the state should be structured. Of course, many Christians also make claims on the public and the state but they do so while also *saying* that religion and the state should be fundamentally separate. Secularism, in the sense of defining religion as separate from the state, has been imported into the very definition of “modern religion.” To be welcomed into the supposedly modern, supposedly secular world community, Islam must define itself in Protestant terms: my religion is a *belief*, not a set of community practices; it is a belief *I hold* as an individual, not a way of structuring the public world.

Asad is *not* saying that Muslims do not have individual and private beliefs about God; he understands that very well. What he *is* saying is that Western scholars and politicians generally insist that religious claims must *not* go beyond the limited role that Western secularism has established for religion. In the United States most of the public is deeply opposed to the very idea of Shari’a law—whether it be in the United States or elsewhere. The presumption is that religion should not define the laws of the state. Again, this presumption remains strong even when in practice Christianity is often supported by state action. (One example is the practice of having people who are about to testify in the court swear on the Bible that they will tell the truth.) *The Kingdom* organizes its embrace of Islam precisely in these terms. Islam is made “good” by being shown as a private matter, a family affair. Al Ghazi’s religion happens at home. When he is in public his “Muslim-ness” is unimportant to his behavior; his role is simply to get the bad guys.

Private Terrorism

This privatizing move is particularly striking in a movie that *seems* to be about politics and public life. *The Kingdom* opens with a history of Saudi Arabia—a short two-minute documentary that describes the discovery of oil, the rise of Aramco, the Gulf War in 1990–91, etc. This is a film that promises to be relevant and politically sophisticated, to speak to the realities of the Middle East in some fashion. In practice, such a truncated history hardly counts as providing real knowledge to the audience. Unless s/he already knows a good deal about the Middle East, the viewer will understand little about the US presence in Saudi Arabia or US policy in the Middle East. In fact, despite its opening and its plot, which takes the “war against terror” as a starting point, the film is fundamentally apolitical. It is symptomatic that the most annoying people in the movie are government officials: a US embassy representative, on the one hand, and a Saudi general who has political clout, on the other. Political people are the problem because the bombing that Jamie Foxx and his team of Americans come to investigate is presented as something fundamentally outside of history and politics altogether.

In fact, our beloved Al Ghazi actually makes this point for the movie. Sitting in a car with Fleury as they begin their hunt for the terrorist in earnest, Al Ghazi explains a bit about himself to his American colleague.

“I am 42 years old. I have two daughters and a son ... a beautiful son,” he says, smiling proudly. “And I have come to the point where I no longer care about why we are attacked [by terrorists]. I only care that one hundred people woke up a few mornings ago, and had no idea it was their last. When we catch the man who murdered these people, I don’t care to ask him even one question. I want to kill him.”

The fact that he is a father and a family man is what underlines Al Ghazi’s sense of connection with the Americans who died. They are human, as he is human. The terrorist has broken that human connection and Al Ghazi has not the slightest interest in his motives. Al Ghazi refuses

to think about the politics of terrorism. He wants to ask “not even one question.” They have committed a crime and he wants to kill them.

We can notice several key issues here. First, there is the very problematic logic that when people have committed horrific crimes the correct response is to kill them. Although the US rules of engagement would (theoretically) prevent outright assassination of a suspect, the assumption is that a longed for vigilante justice is only natural. Second, and more crucially for my argument here, there is also the sense that in the case of terrorism there is *nothing at all to understand*, nothing about political and social context or US relationships with the Middle East or even debates about the best way to prevent or respond to terrorism. Many people have argued that, for the most part, the number of violent attacks on civilians can be significantly lowered when political and social grievances are addressed. In Palestine/Israel or Iraq, the political context is fundamental and no strategy can lower violence without changing the political conditions. Terrorism is like individual crime and is seen as deriving from individual pathology. In this view crime does not have to be understood or addressed as a social problem. It is a matter of individual evil and it must simply be punished. The irony, then, is that a movie which wants to say very clearly that not all Muslims are terrorists, nonetheless presents terrorism in the same individualistic terms that it presents Islam. Both are entirely privatized and individualized. Terrorism, like religion, has nothing to do with history or politics. It is all about the acts or beliefs of individuals.

The moral geography of private acceptance looks something like this. On the one side is a personal world of shared commitments to family and a privatized faith, and an understanding of political violence, like terrorism, as an issue of individual evil. On the other side is a public world where politics or politicized religion or bureaucrats get in the way of these fundamentals. This moral geography crosses national boundaries; it is not Americans vs. Islam or East vs. West. Instead it posits a transnational community of good guys connected by their love of family and their battle against evil. The “bad guys” are similarly transnational; they are not just Saudi extremists but also American bureaucrats who care more for politics

than crime-fighting. The geography imagines an inside and an outside but which do not follow political boundaries.

Moral Geography III: Solidarity

There is another vision of US–Middle East relations and a moral geography that leaves me a great deal more hopeful. This model links people via their commitments to social justice and their determination to understand the political and historical contexts in which other people live. There are many examples of projects that try to make these links. For example, one group of three hip-hop artists – two Arab and one Latino – have formed the Human Writes Project, producing a set of spoken word performances that link US struggles against racism and immigration debates with calls for justice and critiques of US policies in the Middle East.²⁰

There are also scholarly connections where academics in the United States and scholars from the Middle East connect on areas of mutual interest. The Palestine American Research Center (PARC) organizes trips to Palestine for US faculty who do not have significant experience in the Middle East.²¹ There they meet Palestinian scholars who share their interests, be that in English literature or agricultural economics. The goal is not to ignore the politics of the Palestinian situation but rather to have people meet across mutual lines of interest. Once there, US academics are also introduced to the realities of daily life for their colleagues. Academic ties are not abstract; they are forged in the cafés of Ramallah or on the campus of Hebron University and they cannot be separated from political knowledge and substantive awareness of the ongoing struggles of Palestinians.

One of the most exciting of these connecting projects is the International Hip Hop Academy in Beirut. In 2008 the US-based performance group “Lo Frequency” went to Beirut to work with local hip hop artists, including the renowned Lebanese performer Malikah. While there, Lo Frequency taught some courses to aspiring artists and also worked collaboratively with Lebanese performers to write and perform

the music video *Traditions*. The video features Americans and Lebanese each performing in English or Arabic, rapping about hip hop and the struggle to find a voice. It opens with traditional Arabic music showing scenes of Beirut along with shots of the international group who will be performing. The first rap is by the African-American performer DJ Scan, one of the founders of The Lo Frequency, who links himself to the “golden era” (the political era) of rap and describes how we are connected: “It’s the Brooklyn city streets to the blocks of the Middle East; it’s the way we all walk and the language we all speak.” DJ Scan then symbolically hands over the microphone to a Lebanese rapper who talks about the impact of the death of the US rappers Tupac and Biggie Smalls. Rap is the way his people define their community whether they are “home boy or saladi.” The third rapper marks himself as the person who crosses all worlds: Arabic, Lebanese, Syrian, American. He raps in English and Arabic, insisting that he can’t be pinned down by those labels. Everyone in the group sings the chorus: “All Across the world you’ll see, people making history. Living in every city; people struggling just like me.”

The Lo Frequency tour to the Middle East was sponsored by the US State Department. That, I believe, should give us some pause, since so much of US-government sponsored public diplomacy is designed to minimize any conflict, real or potential. And, indeed, this video does not have much to say about foreign policy or international politics directly. Yet there is a political vision here built on the original impetus of hip hop from the 1980s. That early music often spoke politically merely by describing the lives the performers lived where injustice, racial violence and poverty were daily realities.

There is every reason to believe that the collaboration that produced *Traditions* is authentic and that these artists would have refused any overt meddling with their message by the State department. Perhaps Lo Frequency and Malikah and the others were invited because of their “positive” message, but in the process of their work together they produced an alternative moral geography—one based on solidarity. It defines links between some Americans and some people in the Middle East in terms of shared passions, shared goals and – in this case – shared

commitment to the original vision of hip hop as something more than just songs about girls and riches.

Human Connections As Politically Meaningful

The chance to share stories is also the chance to explore differences and debates, to have honest discussions and to recognize that something meaningful is at stake in these connections—something that goes beyond the personal. We can see this possibility in the unlikeliest of places. Before the Park 51 controversy in the summer of 2010 there had been several similar, if far less visible, struggles over mosque building. Earlier in the year, for example, there had been a struggle in the tiny town of Wilson, Wisconsin (population 3,200). According to *Time* magazine a local physician, Dr. Mansoor Mirza, had asked the town planning council for zoning permission to open a small mosque on a piece of property he owned.²² There were less than 200 Muslim families in the areas, only 40 or 50 who actively practiced their religion, but those families needed a place to worship. Mirza worked at the county hospital and until he made his request he said that he had never really felt any discrimination.

However, when the proposal came before the planning meeting suddenly people were outspoken and angry. Islam is a religion of hate, they said. The mosque will encourage terrorism. Muslims want to wipe out Christianity. One woman told the *Time* reporter: “I don’t want it [a mosque] in my backyard. I just think it’s not America.” The doctor was shocked. Some of his fellow believers told him he should have known better, that he should have kept his head down, and soon it got worse as, hearing about the mosque, local pastors began a campaign to stop it. Then there occurred a different kind of tragedy. A nine-year old Muslim girl was visiting the area with her family when she disappeared while playing by Lake Michigan. As rescuers combed the lake and the girl’s family gathered in fear and mourning, one of the women who had opposed the mosque reached out to the local imam to ask him to minister to the family. Soon it became clear that there would be no rescue. Local families opened their home to the girls’ extended family as they arrived in town. When the

girl's body was eventually found, a man who had also opposed the mosque and whose land was next to the proposed site offered the use of his land for mourners to gather. In the wake of this communal mourning and the coming together that it brought about, 30 local religious leaders signed a petition in support of the mosque. The town planning council approved it unanimously.

One would hope that it would not take a human tragedy to bring about recognitions of our shared humanity, but sometimes it does. After 9/11 people around the world joined with the United States in mourning because they recognized the human suffering and could see themselves in the tears of those who carried signs asking for word of their loved ones. In the case of Wilson, Wisconsin, that kind of crucial human recognition did not remain merely personal. It instigated a rethinking of people's previous public statements and it opened up space—not just for a mosque but for a community. This is the kind of human connection that leads to transformation. When the love of family and embrace of our shared humanity does not stay at home it goes beyond the private to create new models of a shared public sphere and new moral geographies of social recognition.

We cannot understand US images of the Middle East or non-Muslim perceptions of Islam if we look at only one aspect of those images, be it the horrific or the hopeful. The moral geographies at work are complicated, overlapping and fluid. Our task as scholars and teachers is to recognize the diversity of these and to promote in our writings and our teachings the kinds of maps that might reshape our world.

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Cultural Citizenship, Integration and the Representation of Muslim Minorities

Moustafa Bayoumi

Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11 Muslims living in the West have found their loyalties to their states questioned and have endured greatly increased suspicion and occasionally outright hostility. Their very presence has become a political issue. Not only have their legal rights as citizens been questioned but their collective ability and willingness to integrate into various Western societies is also being doubted. This paper analyzes this state of affairs, the response to the loyalty question by intellectuals operating within Islamic theological traditions, and attempts by various arts organizations to illustrate more sympathetic treatments of Islamic culture to Western audiences. While intellectual rejoinders and arts diplomacy have their place in this debate, neither provides vehicles for illustrating the complex ways that Muslim minorities actually live their lives. The essay concludes by examining research on empathy as a model for dispelling prejudice and argues for more empathetic accounts in the public sphere representing the varieties of Muslim minority life; for such representations could also expand the notions of what citizenship means and the ways it is practiced in Western liberal democracies today.

At a town hall meeting held during the 2008 presidential race in the United States, Republican candidate John McCain was repeatedly harangued by his audience for the respect he had been showing Democratic candidate Barack Obama. Amid cries of people yelling “liar” and “terrorist” in reference to Obama, one man bluntly told McCain that

he's "scared" of an Obama presidency.¹ Another McCain supporter, Gayle Quinnel, offered her trepidations, "I can't trust Obama," she said. ("I got ya," McCain replied.) "I have read about him, and he's not, he's not ... he's an Arab." McCain began shaking his head. "No ma'am. No ma'am," he replied. "He's a decent family man, [a]citizen."²

This was a remarkable moment. First of all, Gayle Quinnel had confused being Arab with being Muslim as many in the United States continue to do (a later interview with her confirms this³). However, far more troubling was John McCain's response. In his attempt to set the woman straight and come to the defense of Barack Obama, McCain makes what he seems to think is an honorable statement. Yet, his proclamation utters several rather dishonorable things: it counterposes Arab ethnicity with decency, family values and – perhaps most importantly – citizenship in the United States (as if Arabs cannot be decent, cannot be family oriented and cannot be citizens). This was not the only time that Senator McCain had limited the pluralistic possibilities of the United States. In a 2007 interview with *Beliefnet.com*, he proclaimed that the Constitution establishes the United States as a Christian nation and that he would "prefer" someone "who has a solid grounding" in his faith when he was asked about the possibility of a Muslim running for president.⁴ McCain also repeatedly invoked the "Judeo-Christian" values and principles of the country in a manner that left many American Muslims (and Hindus, Buddhists, atheists, and many others) out in the cold.⁵

The Obama campaign of 2008 wasn't much better in affirming the citizenship of Muslim Americans in the United States. On one of its official websites the campaign called the labeling of Obama as a Muslim a "smear" (as if being called a Muslim is equivalent to being called a criminal).⁶ Staffers in the campaign also moved two women wearing hijab out of a view of the television cameras during a Detroit campaign stop⁷ and the campaign also pushed Mazen Asbahi, Obama's advisor to Muslim American communities, out of his position.⁸ Moreover, while both McCain and Obama visited churches and synagogues during the campaign, neither made a stop at a mosque.⁹ In addition, the US presidential campaign

of 2008 was not unique in exploiting fears of Muslims in the United States. Attempts to curry favor with voters by attacking (or blatantly sidelining) Muslim Americans have unfortunately become a regular feature of politics in the United States; Republican presidential hopeful Herman Cain's comment in April 2011 that he wouldn't appoint a Muslim to his administration because he has not found a Muslim who is loyal to the US Constitution is but one recent example.¹⁰ Analysts may debate whether such tactics are actually expedient to politicians,¹¹ but these political attacks on Muslims are symptomatic of something larger than opportunistic electioneering.

Muslims Have Become a Political Issue

Since the horrific terrorist attacks of 9/11 Muslims living in the United States and other Western countries have found that their very presence has become a political issue. In the United States the concerns emanating out of the American-Muslim community during the first few years after the terrorist attacks were quite specific and directed mainly at the security apparatus of the State and how various law enforcement practices were directly targeting them, thus potentially hindering their ability to live their lives undisturbed and free of State surveillance and suspicion.¹² The same could be said of the United Kingdom, which also passed a series of laws loosening civil liberties protections in the wake of 9/11 that disproportionately affected Muslims in Britain.¹³

More recently, however, Muslims in the United States and in Europe have a new narrative to contend with, one that argues that Islam is not only incompatible with democracy but that Muslims in the West constitute a major threat to American and European ways of life. At its most extreme the narrative heralds a fabulous story that Muslims are on a "stealth jihad," beholden as they are to an ideology that is adept, perhaps uniquely so, at exploiting liberal notions of tolerance. The argument here is that multiculturalism actually enables Muslim cultural domination of its non-Muslim neighbors and that this "stealth jihad" is actually more insidious than even outright acts of terrorism. Through their "stealth jihad" Muslims

are supposedly leading Westerners inexorably toward the establishment of an oppressive Muslim theocratic state where there once stood a proud liberal democracy. A few years ago, this belief was held by a radical fringe of the conservative right fueled by demagogues such as Robert Spencer,¹⁴ Mark Steyn¹⁵ and Bat Ye'or.¹⁶ Today, it has entered the mainstream of American and European discourse. In the United States at least 25 state legislatures have voted or are soon scheduled to vote on “Sharia ban” bills¹⁷ to the dismay of civil libertarians,¹⁸ the organized Muslim community¹⁹ and many Jewish groups (who fear that the legislation may next impact or target Halachah²⁰). To date, the most murderous expression of this theory occurred in Norway when Anders Behrens Breivik killed a total of 77 people on July 22, 2011 to protest what he saw as the “Islamization of Europe.”²¹

While the former narrative of suspicion of Muslims revolved primarily around security, for it assumed that Muslims in Western societies have a greater likelihood to be potential terrorists or terrorist sympathizers than non-Muslims, the latter operates more along the axis of culture. Thus, acts of cultural expression and the straightforward activities of Muslim daily life have now become suspicious on other levels beyond impending violence. These include Muslims constructing houses of worship (the minaret ban in Switzerland, for example), Muslims dressing according to their traditions (niqab bans in several European countries) or Muslims seeking accommodation for their religious practices in the workplace or school (see the debate over foot baths in public restrooms at the University of Michigan-Dearborn²²). All are seen as evidence of orchestrated Muslim assertion and the concomitant weak will of liberal values to repel a coming cultural invasion, thus explaining the perceived need, among anti-Muslim campaigners, to resort to legislative bans over liberal dialogue.

The current situation could be summed up in this way: Muslims may be statutory citizens, often first or second or third-generation immigrants to these states, but their citizenship is to be feared since they are doctrinally predisposed to abuse the privileges of citizenship to usurp the rights of other, more established citizens. In the United States and even

more so in Europe, the figure of the Muslim functions as a political and cultural symbol of what is not American or European. This supposed otherness of Islam within the borders of the nation and the purportedly strange, wily and dangerous cultural habits of Muslims in their midst, becomes a way for many in the United States and Europe to define their own identities by being fundamentally in opposition to their own Muslim citizens. The fact that many people, myself included, find these arguments of Muslim cultural domination alarmist and even a little bit silly goes without saying, but the growing cultural power of the notion that Muslims don't deserve full citizenship rights merits investigation and raises important questions about what it means to be a citizen in a pluralistic Western liberal democracy. To address this question one should turn to the scholarly literature on citizenship, which is undeniably huge. A starting point, however, could be historian Rogers Smith's discussion of the concept of citizenship in the United States.

Smith describes the official account of what defines an American citizen as one who "embrace[s] egalitarian, liberal, republican political principles." This is a seemingly uncontroversial definition but Smith finds it inadequate, noting the "inegalitarian legal provisions that have shaped the participants and substance of American politics throughout history."²³ In other words, citizenship in the United States has not historically been reserved for those who subscribe to egalitarian, liberal, republican principles and those who did hold those views were often still denied citizenship. Smith argues against scholars who posit that US citizenship was essentially, or manifestly, universal but occasionally held back by hidden or latent restrictions. He writes:

When restrictions on voting rights, naturalization, and immigration are taken into account, it turns out that for over 80 percent of US history, American laws declared most people in the world legally ineligible to become full US citizens solely because of their race, original nationality, or gender. For at least two-thirds of American history, the majority of the domestic adult population was also ineligible for full citizenship for the same reason. Those racial, ethnic and gender restrictions were blatant, not 'latent.' For these

people, citizenship rules gave no weight to how liberal, republican, or faithful to other American values their political beliefs may be.²⁴

The value of Smith's contribution here is his illustration of the varying and contingent nature of citizenship. He also shows that the idea of the liberal state guaranteeing equal rights to all of its members is a continuing rather than complete project. In other words, citizenship is not only a concept, it is also a dynamic condition with real-world consequences that has as much to do with exclusion as they do with inclusion. Today, it is Muslim minorities in the West (among others) who are feeling the brunt of exclusionary politics articulated through the rhetoric of citizenship. Smith shows how citizenship is a juridical category decided by law and policed at the border and how citizenship should mean that one ought to have the same rights as other citizens in the nation. In fact, citizenship today is still the primary mechanism by which our human rights are guaranteed. In a world of nation-states, to have a nation, that is to be a citizen, is to have as memorably described by Hannah Arendt, "the right to have rights."²⁵ In Western liberal democracies, citizenship also offers certain key privileges including voting and running for office. In a pluralist society citizenship ought not to mean that everyone must think or be the same, only that they collectively hold to core principles such as tolerance of each other, respect for the law and the belief that the law be applied equally to all.

Yet citizenship is more than a legal category; it is also a moral category since it assumes loyalty to the state and additionally it is an emotive category, since people are (usually) expected to feel like they are citizens of a nation and to act accordingly. Anthropologists over the last generation have thus developed the notion of cultural citizenship, the idea that one has "the right to be different (in terms of race, ethnicity, or native language) with respect to the norms of the dominant national community, without compromising one's right to belong."²⁶ The anthropological notion of "cultural citizenship" is important to understanding the status of Muslim minorities in the West for it is currently where their citizenship rights are usually either denied or affirmed.²⁷

Clashing Civilizations?

Why are Muslim citizenship rights currently being questioned in a number of Western liberal democracies? Part of the answer certainly comes from current political tensions and hostilities around the world and part of it would seem to derive from longstanding Western assumptions about Muslims generally. The terrible events of 9/11, the 7/7 bombings in London and other terrorist attacks have increased the pressure on Western Muslims to demonstrate that they are not threats to public order. The wars currently raging in countries with large Muslim populations also fuel feelings of distrust and animosity from many different sides, often expressed far afield from the theaters of war. The Danish cartoon controversy in 2006 is a case in point. In a specific time of extreme political tension exacerbated by current overseas wars and domestic terrorism, many European Muslim leaders felt they were unfairly demeaned and their concerns unheeded when a Danish newspaper published its provocative cartoons of their Prophet. Meanwhile, proponents of publishing the cartoons saw this as evidence of Muslim hyper-sensitivity and an inherent Muslim lack of respect for free-speech rights. The Danish cartoon controversy, and its global explosion, was certainly enabled by conflicts born out of today's global "war on terror."²⁸ But the tensions surrounding Muslim citizenship are often articulated as being beyond contemporary politics and essentially part of a centuries-long clash of civilizations that is as inexorable as it is inevitable—an idea that, as Edward Said points out, is full of "lazy generalizations... reckless distortions of history [and] wholesale demagoguery of civilizations into categories like irrational and enraged."²⁹

This clash of civilization thesis tends to move the debates around Muslim citizenship from (often discriminatory) policy disputes centered on politics and policing to (often superficial) arguments interpreting culture and history. Consider Christopher Caldwell's well-received 2009 book *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam, and the West* in this regard.³⁰ In this rather panic-ridden and Malthusian-derived text Caldwell assumes the old 'clash of civilizations' thesis

combined with demographic anxiety and disquiet over a lack of resolve of Europeans to face squarely some kind of Muslim invasion. “For 1,400 years, Islam and Christianity have opposed one another, violently at times. We are living through one of those times,” Caldwell proclaims.³¹ The most worrisome part of the current clash for him is that in Europe 10 percent of the population is composed of immigrants, many of them from Muslim countries. “Since its arrival half a century ago,” Caldwell writes, “Islam has broken – or required adjustments to, or rearguard defenses of – a good many of the European customs, received ideas and state structures with which it has come in contact.” Labeling Islam an “adversary culture,”³² Caldwell posits that “Muslim culture is unusually full of messages laying out the practical advantages of procreation”³³ and concludes, paradoxically when one considers the history, that “Islam” is on its way to colonizing Europe.³⁴ In Caldwell’s reading, Islam in Europe is further responsible for much of the crime,³⁵ poverty³⁶ and terrorism³⁷ on the continent. It intimidates its critics into silence,³⁸ promotes loyalty to its creed over the nation,³⁹ and forces sexual subjugation on its followers.⁴⁰ Caldwell concludes his tract stating, “It is certain that Europe will emerge changed from its confrontation with Islam. It is far less certain that Islam will prove assimilable. Europe finds itself in a contest with Islam for the allegiance of its newcomers. For now, Islam is the stronger party in that contest.”⁴¹

Other critics focus their aim on Muslim citizenship rights through examining European responses to their Muslims immigrants. In the case of the United Kingdom, Christian Joppke concludes that British policies of Muslim integration are doomed to failure because they won’t take into account the real problems.⁴² For Joppke, these include Islamic cultural norms and self-segregation, both of which are deflected through wrongheaded British attempts of symbolic recognition of Islam in the public sphere, which Muslims and their supporters opportunistically exploit. Still other critics are even more pointed in their assessments of minority Muslim politics. Asked whether Europe will be a superpower by the end of the 21st century, Bernard Lewis responded ominously: “Europe,” he said, “will be part of the Arabic West, of the Maghreb.”⁴³

Caldwell, Lewis and Joppke do not invent their narratives out of thin air (although their evidence is often as thin as air). There are segments, tiny as they are, within Western Muslim communities that also advocate the clash of civilizations thesis and they often promote the idea either that Sharia will eventually rule over Western lands or that the *ummah* (the global Muslim community) will be united by a caliphate. Such notions can be found in fringe groups such as the Muslims Against Crusades, Hizbut Tahrir, and al-Muhajiroun. At a recent rally of 200 people in front of the American Embassy in London organized by Muslims against Crusades against the killing of Osama bin Laden, one member of the group held up a sign saying “Islam will dominate the world,”⁴⁴ and Muslims Against Crusades makes its position clear on its webpage. In response to the question “If you hate this country, why don’t you get out?” They write: “as Muslims ... we are ... working to transform Britain into a flourishing Islamic State and we urge anyone who does not like this to leave.”⁴⁵ A 20-year old internal document written by a member of the Muslim Brotherhood in the United States calls upon the Brotherhood to assume a “grand jihad [devoted to] eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within.”⁴⁶

The fact that these groups and ideas command virtually zero respect among the vast majority of Muslims in the United States and Europe is too often neglected (or deliberately overlooked by some). Polls repeatedly indicate Muslims are loyal to their states: an ICM poll of British Muslims in 2006 found that 91 percent felt personally loyal to Britain;⁴⁷ a 2009 Gallup poll found that 80 percent of French Muslims considered themselves loyal to France;⁴⁸ and a 2011 Gallup poll in the United States discovered that 93 percent of American Muslims considered themselves loyal to their country.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, anti-Muslim polemicists rely on the idea that such fringe expressions of cultural domination are the true expressions of a hidden disloyalty among Muslims, offering up polling data that reveal how Muslims feel alienated from their host countries as evidence of their flimsy loyalties.⁵⁰ This produces a peculiar and frustrating state of affairs for Muslim minority publics. First of all, media representations gravitate towards spokespeople from the radical fringe

(who are all too comfortable in the spotlight). Secondly, anti-Muslim polemicists forcefully push the idea that all Muslims are untrustworthy and openly speak falsehoods, which as a consequence frequently renders Muslim minorities virtually mute in the public sphere, for almost anything they say will be used against them in the court of public opinion.

Defensive Citizens

This situation often puts Muslim elites in Western countries on the defensive and many Muslim public intellectuals and scholars of Islam in and of the West spend much of their energy today dispelling loyalty questions by working within the Islamic tradition. Andrew Marsh, for example, questions whether “Islam can provide believers with resources for affirming citizenship in a non-Muslim liberal democracy,” eventually concluding that “firm and culturally authentic Islamic values exist which can ground Islamically a social contract between Muslims and a non-Muslim liberal democracy.”⁵¹ Tariq Ramadan, in his book *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*, likewise invests in the idea that the Muslims must not live in the mentality of either “the ghetto or dissolution.”⁵² For Ramadan, the old Muslim legal concepts of *Dar al-Islam* and *Dar al-harb* are outdated and he introduces a new one: *dar al-shahadeh*, the abode of witness: “Muslims living in the West, individuals as well as communities from various countries, not only *may* live there but are also the bearers of an enormous responsibility: they must give their society as testimony [shahadeh] based on faith, spirituality, values, a sense of where boundaries lie, and a permanent human and social engagement.”⁵³

The work of Ramadan and Marsh and others is clearly relevant and, in the face of ideological distortions about Islam from arch conservatives in both East and West, it’s not surprising that some urgency is felt to redefine what Islam is after it has been so variously and often viciously defined by others. But is there not a fundamental mistake in locating the debates around citizenship and integration between the terms “Islam” and “West,” as if the terms were equal and opposite to each other? The latter

describes a specific geography and the former a universal faith system. What is needed, in other words, is less talk about Islam and more about Muslims and Muslim life and the varieties of the religious (and non-religious) experiences that Muslims have in the West if we are interested in understanding the stakes and contours surrounding citizenship and integration of Muslim minorities.

Varieties of Muslim Experiences

Muslims in the West come from every corner of the world. In the United States, Muslim Americans hail from 69 different countries and practice their faith in myriad ways⁵⁴ and their religious and daily experiences cannot be adequately subsumed by debates around doctrine. The same could be said for Muslims in Europe. Many practice their faith according to their country-of-origin traditions; many do not. Some abandon their faith in the West; others become more pious. Second and third-generation Muslims also have different experiences from their first-generation elders. Mosque participation could be a simple indicator that Muslim life is incredibly varied and difficult to qualify and describe fully. A Dutch government study has shown, for example, that only 35 percent of Dutch Muslims attend a mosque at least once a month. Dutch Protestants in fact have higher levels of church attendance than Dutch Muslims.⁵⁵ In the United States, a third of American Muslims (34 percent) rarely or never attend mosque services.⁵⁶ In France, only five percent go to Friday prayers regularly.⁵⁷

To point this out is not to say that Western Muslims are irreligious; it is only to say that their experiences are multiple and cannot be understood or sufficiently defined by elite intellectual debate or gross polemics. And yet, the forces with which Western Muslims must contend – including sensationalist media representation from loudmouth spokesmen speaking in their name to conservative populist wrath directed against them – constantly construct the object of the Muslim as a monolithic one (or sometimes in a good Muslim versus bad Muslim dichotomy). Such thinking enables the construction of the Muslim as the dangerous ‘other’

to a significant degree. In this universe it matters little what one Muslim's actual beliefs are. As long as one can be identified as a Muslim – by name, national origin, skin color, dress, etc. – one is assumed to be predisposed to unegalitarian, illiberal and anti-republican positions. As soon as Muslim individuals are judged on the basis of their collective attributes as member of this doctrine, debates over theological doctrine matter little since the issue now is fundamentally one of social discrimination. “The Jew is one whom other men consider a Jew,” John Paul Sartre writes in his book *Anti-Semite and Jew*. “That is the simple truth from which we must start.”⁵⁸ The same is now true for Muslims in the West.

Too many Muslim intellectuals and leaders and their defenders in the West seem to believe that explaining the true Islam is the key to dispelling contemporary prejudice against Muslims without perhaps realizing how to many non-Muslims the rhetoric often sounds defensive, hollow and apologetic. In fact, Muslims in the West are plagued by an excess of definitions of Islam in the public sphere coming from all quarters along with a lack of context of the politics of the Middle East and basic ignorance over the varieties of Muslim experiences. A better approach to adopt for intellectuals, writers and leaders interested in accessing the truth of the experience of a Muslim minority would be to argue for Muslim minority rights on the basis of full citizenship, not on the commonalities between “Islam” and “the West.” If they are to mean anything at all, citizenship rights must be equally applicable to all. Thus, Western Muslim elites should also be willing to advocate for the citizenship rights of all, not just Muslims, and they ought to demand their own equal rights on the basis of a shared citizenship.

The debates over Park 51, the so-called Ground Zero Mosque in New York, are an interesting study in this regard. The free exercise of religion and the right to property are two fundamental rights in the United States and when Imam Faisal Abdul Rauf and real-estate developer Sharif el-Gamal announced their plans for the center in December of 2009, no controversy brewed. In fact, there was initially some mild praise for the endeavor.⁵⁹ Months later, however, the project tore up the headlines, attracting thousands of demonstrators proclaiming their opposition to the

“victory mosque,” loudly expressing their fear of Sharia coming to the land and drew rather scary comments from politicians across the spectrum. Republican New Gringrich compared the center to “Nazis ... put[ting] up a sign next to the holocaust museum.”⁶⁰ Right-wing opposition to all things Muslim has sadly come to be expected. What is more surprising is the Muslim opposition to Park 51. Writing in the *Washington Post*, Tariq Ramadan claimed the proposed project was misplaced. “No doubt, it is the legitimate right of Muslims to build a community center near Ground Zero,” he explained. “Yet, I believe it is not a wise decision, considering the collective sensitivities in American society. This is a moment to go beyond rights and reach for the common good: To build it elsewhere, if possible, would be a sensible and symbolic move.”⁶¹

But Ramadan misses the point. You can’t claim your rights by sacrificing your rights. What it means to be an American or a Swede or Briton is precisely to demand the same rights that are accorded the general public. Anything more is unacceptable, but anything less is to subscribe to the “ghetto mentality” that Ramadan is so concerned about. (Ramadan seems out of touch when he writes, “With more active involvement, Muslims can get a deeper sense of what it means to be American, to feel more confident, to communicate and interact with their fellow citizens.”⁶²) Muslims and non-Muslims must see each other as united in the complex project of living in a society together with recognition of everyone’s histories, hopes and aspirations and with blind mechanisms to adjudicate those aspirations if and when contradictions or conflicts arise. Shared principles, not loud passions, are what build a society.

Arts Diplomacy

The debates around Muslim citizenship rights still tend to center on the dichotomy of “Islam” and “the West,” even from those dedicated to overcoming contemporary conflicts. In the United States, for example, many people on the liberal side of the political spectrum have been engaged in honorable attempts to mediate the “Islam and the West divide” through arts diplomacy, but here too the concepts of “Islam” and “the

West” remain intact. Major institutions of the American cultural establishment, from the Kennedy Center⁶³ to the New York Public Library⁶⁴ to the Metropolitan Museum of Art⁶⁵ have all held major exhibitions or symposia on Islam, Arab culture, or a broadly defined “Muslim culture” (which, by defining culture as “Muslim” is unfortunately often tinged with its own kind of liberal Orientalism). In July 2010 the Asia Society in New York also held a Sufi Music Festival,⁶⁶ attracting 5,000 people to Union Square in New York for one of its events. Zeba Rahman, one of the organizers, told me that she sees her work as a cultural producer to be crucial in reducing the tensions of the moment and building bridges of sympathy in a climate of extreme polarization.⁶⁷ Poet’s House in New York City ran a symposium in May 2011 titled “Illuminated Verses: Poetries of the Islamic World” funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities Bridging Cultures program. The symposium included pre-Islamic poetry of the Najd, Yemeni tribal poetry, the revolutionary poetry of the current Egyptian revolution, postmodern Iranian poetry and the Marxist poetry of Faiz Ahmed Faiz.⁶⁸ While such artistic production gets little hearing in the United States, the problem is that it was subsumed under the term of “Islamic” poetry, even when the verse in question had little to do with religion. Other regions of the world with large Muslim populations and cultural legacies, including South East Asia, were left unrepresented and minority religious cultures in the Muslim world were rendered mute.

Through such arts diplomacy one discovers the desire to imbue a kind of cultural citizenship, either global or local or both, to Muslims, but the problem with these approaches is that such representation of “Islam,” even in their sympathetic application, still tend to subsume everything under the religion. Everything else simply disappears. In other words, projects built on bridging cultures inherently run a risk of reifying “Islam” and “the West” into opposing categories that will in the best possible scenario be connected through a kind of sympathetic understanding of the other. While they are noble undertakings in their own right, sympathetic understanding of the other may actually do little to guarantee the cultural citizenship rights of an embattled minority.

The Limits of Sympathy, The Politics of Empathy

To a significant degree the problem facing Muslim minorities in the West is a problem of representation. Muslims are everywhere in the media but how Muslim minorities actually live their lives is barely represented, leaving the representational field almost entirely empty and thus free to be filled by various ideological distortions and hateful stereotypes. This helps explain why straightforward acts of Muslim cultural expression are now too often misinterpreted as acts of domination; for the representation of the counterweight, i.e. daily life, is acutely missing. Arts diplomacy attempts to respond to this impoverished state of representation by bridging ideological constructs between “Islam” and “the West,” but it relies on the idea of Western sympathy for Islamic culture to accomplish its goals. The idea of sympathy itself may be part of the representational problem here and empathy may in fact be more constructive. In English, sympathy and empathy are closely related terms, even though sympathy has a much longer history in the language dating back to the 16th century according to the Oxford English Dictionary.⁶⁹ Sympathy connotes “fellow-feeling” for another person insofar as sympathy is “the quality or state of being affected by the condition of another with a feeling similar or corresponding to that of the other.” Empathy, on the other hand, entered the English language in the early 20th century as a translation of the German term *Einfühlung*.⁷⁰ According to the literary critic M.H. Abrams, empathy “signifies an identification of oneself with an observed person or object which is so close that one seems to participate in the posture, motion and sensation that one observes.”⁷¹ Sympathy can connote charity; empathy carries with it the potential not just for understanding the emotions of another person but for experiencing those emotions as if they were one’s own. Suzanne Keen summarizes the difference this way: A statement of empathy would be “I feel your pain,” whereas a statement of sympathy would be “I feel pity for your pain.”⁷²

In recent years the study of empathy has generated a great deal of scrutiny from social scientists, humanists, psychologists, neuroscientists, philosophers and literary critics who seek to understand the motivations

behind empathy, linking it to altruistic behavior and moral actions and greatly expanding interest in empathy studies. “Emotional response to others’ condition has been seen as providing a basis for mature sympathy, morality and social arrangements that seek the common good,” writes Keen.⁷³ “Philosophers since David Hume and Adam Smith have argued this point and recent evolutionary psychology has embraced the notion of the adaptive function of reciprocal altruism. A great deal more than shared sensations is attributed to human empathy.”⁷⁴

Empathy can be a powerful political emotion. In a study about the culture wars in the United States, psychologists Peter Ditto and Spassena Koleva have shown how “empathy gaps” in the political culture of the United States contribute to a fiercely divided public. They conclude that “our insensitivity to moral intuitions that differ from our own can create moral empathy gaps that fuel partisan conflict by obscuring the logic and intentions of those who oppose us in political debates.”⁷⁵ In other words, if we cannot imagine how others come to form their beliefs, we have little chance of engaging in substantive dialogue over our differences. They write that, “Research confirms that people have particular difficulty predicting the preferences and behavior of people whose affective states differ from their own,” labeling this phenomenon “gut-blindness.”⁷⁶ They conclude: “A possible consequence of this ‘gut-blindness’ is a tendency to attribute differences not to differing moral sensibilities, but to more accessible social-cognitive constructs such as intellectual deficiency or malevolent intention.”⁷⁷ This conclusion would seem to apply to how Muslim minority publics are often misunderstood and how evil intent is so easily applied to them. They suffer, in other words, from an “empathy gap.”

Ditto and Koleva’s research focuses on an essentially equally divided field—between political liberals and conservatives in the United States. Studies here have also extended to empathy and reconciliation in war settings. In an article published in *Human Rights Quarterly* physicians Jodi Halpern and Harvey Weinstein locate the key difference between empathy and sympathy and seek to understand how empathy enables reconciliation.⁷⁸ (Their paper begins with the assessment “that it is

interpersonal ruins, rather than ruined building and institutions, that pose the greatest challenge for rebuilding society.⁷⁹) “Empathy,” they write, “differs from sympathy in that it entails seeking the individual perspective of another person rather than generalizing or stereotyping.”⁸⁰ (My argument here is that even arts diplomacy unwittingly traffics in generalizations and stereotypes.) For Halpern and Weinstein, “empathy involves being genuinely curious about another person. In contrast, war involves closing one’s mind toward the other’s experiences and presuming that one can already predict the other’s behavior.”⁸¹ (We should note how this point echoes Ditto and Koleva’s research.) Finally, they conclude, “empathy involves emotional as well as cognitive openness and tolerating the ambivalence this might arouse.”⁸²

Through informant interviews, focus groups and survey data drawn from survivors of war – primarily the wars in the former Yugoslavia – Halpern and Weinstein discovered that “co-existence without empathy is both superficial and fragile,”⁸³ even when overt conflict is absent. Empathy is a key component to “rehumanizing the other”⁸⁴ and empathy should be “a normative ideal after mass violence.”⁸⁵ “The goal of empathy is to see the world *from* the complex perspective of another person,”⁸⁶ even if that person is a perpetrator of violence. “Without seeing the events through the enemies’ eyes there is little to help one tolerate disagreement and reconciliation may never be achieved.”⁸⁷ Halpern and Weinstein underline that, “empathy involves perceiving the other’s complex point of view, [but] it does not require accepting the other’s view”⁸⁸ just as they acknowledge that social forces are often significant barriers to reconciliation.⁸⁹ Interestingly, one of their primary pieces of evidence is drawn not from their own interviews but from Bosnian filmmaker Danis Tanovic’s 2001 fictional film *No Man’s Land*,⁹⁰ thus drawing an unstated connection between aesthetic projects of representation and the political effects of empathy. In the end, Halpern and Weinstein are invested in proving how empathy is an important emotion to hold, but have not been able to show how it will necessarily motivate action.

C. Daniel Batson – perhaps the preeminent authority on empathy in the United States (in the field of psychology at least) – has sought to

investigate the link between empathy and action. In an article titled “Empathy, Attitudes, and Action: Can Feeling for a Member of a Stigmatized Group Motivate One to Help the Group?” Batson and his colleagues asked, “whether empathy felt for a member of a stigmatized group leads to increased readiness not only to help that specific individual but also help the group, independent of benefit to the specific individual.”⁹¹ They believed it would and devised a study to test their hypothesis. They also sought to determine if fictional characters could elicit an empathetic response that would likewise induce the subject into action. They write:

Results of our experiment suggest that the more positive attitudes toward a stigmatized group evoked by empathy felt for a member of the group do carry over into action to benefit the group. Of importance, our results suggest that this readiness to help the group is not simply a reflection of the well-known tendency for those induced to feel empathy for a person in need to help relieve that individual’s need. We found that the more positive attitudes evoked by empathy led to increased helping of the group in a way that could not benefit the individual for whom empathy was felt.⁹²

While Batson and his colleagues did not find conclusive evidence between fiction and empathy as a motivator to action, they did find enough of a connection to confirm that, “the belief that inducing empathy for a fictional character can be used to improve attitudes and stimulate concern for a stigmatized group may well be valid.”⁹³

Empathy, in other words, holds a pre-eminent place when attempting to bridge the gap between groups who are at odds with each other because of seemingly insurmountable differences or who are former enemies in war or who exist in a hierarchy where there is significant social stigmatization. Projects that honestly seek to channel our empathetic responses may in the end be more successful in bringing estranged groups together than ideological debates. Moreover, empathy is also an aesthetic project (it should not surprise us that its roots in English are through literary criticism). It depends on representation as a way of breaking down the wall of identity that can often seem intransigent and intractable.

Projects promoting empathy of Muslim minority populations carry with them significant potential to promote understanding and co-existence.

Cultural Citizenship and Representation

Anti-Muslim polemicists will certainly continue their ideological assault against Muslim minorities in the West and the public will continue to be influenced by their rhetoric and distortions. What we need then are many more empathetic accounts of what Muslim minority life is about. Clearly this is an uphill battle, as the figure of the Muslim and ideological debates surrounding Islam continue to significantly limit the possibilities of Muslims representing themselves or of the field of Muslim representation expanding beyond its current impoverished state. Nevertheless, the project of representing Muslim life more fully and accurately is urgently required. It is in fact closely connected to what the anthropologist Renato Rosaldo calls “cultural citizenship.”

Rosaldo terms cultural citizenship a “deliberate oxymoron, a pair of words that do not go together comfortably.”⁹⁴ Cultural citizenship, he explains, “refers to the right to be different and to belong in a participatory democratic sense.”⁹⁵ He continues:

It [cultural citizenship] claims that, in a democracy, social justice calls for equity among all citizens, even when such differences as race, religion, class, gender, or sexual orientation potentially could be used to make certain people less equal or inferior to others. The notion of belonging means full membership in a group and the ability to influence one's destiny by having a significant voice in basic decisions.⁹⁶

The anthropological project of cultural citizenship is about representing the varied experiences of minority groups in order to expand the idea of what makes a person a citizen. Ultimately, it is a project of representation and self-representation based on how people actually live their lives. Cultural citizenship pays attention to “the everyday processes whereby people, especially immigrants, are made into subjects of a particular nation-state.”⁹⁷ Aiwa Ong refers to cultural citizenship as “the cultural

practices and beliefs produced out of negotiating the often ambivalent and contested relations with the state and its hegemonic forms that establish the criteria of belonging within a national population and territory.”⁹⁸ According to Ong, to understand the mechanisms of belonging through the lens of cultural citizenship one must also “attend to the various regulatory regimes in state agencies and civil society.”⁹⁹

One important state agency where notions of belonging are articulated is the justice system, and here too we find a frequently contested ground for Muslim citizenship rights. Consider two cases involving spousal abuse, one in Germany and the other in the United States. Both cases caused great outcry from those who believed that Islamic law was infiltrating the legal systems of their countries and thus, the law was seen as a site producing Muslim cultural domination when the opposite was in fact the case. Through the dubious legal strategy of “cultural defense,” Muslims as a group were rendered not as subjects capable of determining right from wrong but as unthinking objects of an overwhelming faith system. In Germany a judge in 2007 ruled against a Muslim woman who was seeking accelerated divorce proceedings from her husband who was violently abusing her. The judge claimed the husband was acting in accordance with his Moroccan cultural background and by the rules of the Qur’an. The judge also came to her conclusion entirely on her own (the husband offered no such defense) and German Muslim leaders rejected the logic stating, “Our prophet never struck a woman, and he is our example.”¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, the case caused an outburst in Germany from both left- and right-wing circles that Islamic law was now above the German constitution. In 2010 a similar case in New Jersey saw a Muslim wife seeking a restraining order on her husband who was abusing her, demanding she have relations with him whenever he wanted. The trial judge ruled against the woman stating that the husband believed he was within his rights as ordained by his religion. (Thankfully, both the New Jersey and the German rulings were eventually overturned.) Writing about the appeals court judgment reversing the trial judge’s decision, Abed Awad, a prominent New Jersey lawyer who represents many Muslim women in family court, stated, “the ruling is a good first step toward

undoing a misperception that Muslim culture condones violence against women. In fact, the ruling is consistent with Islamic law, which prohibits spousal abuse.”¹⁰¹

What was remarkable about both of these cases was the assumption on the part of these (non-Muslim) judges to speak for Islam and to subscribe spousal abuse as a legitimate Muslim practice (which it is not), all the while ignoring the Muslim women’s suffering in these scenarios. The judges in these cases are thus representing Muslim life not just in stereotypical patterns but in such a fashion that actively suppressed the rights of the Muslim women involved and contradicted the ways that the mainstream Muslim leaders understood the practices of their faith and responsibilities of their citizenship. In their illusory respect for difference, cultural defense strategies in the law blame a monolithic culture for the “bad behavior” of minorities. (Law professor Leti Volpp has determined that cultural defense is almost exclusively invoked when minority defendants are on trial and it assumes minorities are beholden to their culture before they are obligated to uphold universal principles of human rights.¹⁰²) In this example, the actions of the judges produced a legal system that ended up limiting the citizenship rights of Muslims even while putatively taking those rights into account, at least until the cases were corrected upon appeal.

Representation plays a role here. As Yamine Yildiz points out about the 2007 German case, the woman who took the case to court was almost completely ignored by the media after attention to the case exploded in Germany. Made virtually invisible, she was interviewed just once and her self-representation was at odds with how she was represented in the German media. According to Yildiz the woman (a Moroccan immigrant with German citizenship) took “issue with the judge not just for ruling against her but also for misinterpreting Islam.”¹⁰³ In her interview she “states that the Prophet never beat women but rather gave them rights. For her future, she envisions a new relationship in which she can ‘live the real Islam. With all of my rights.’”¹⁰⁴ Yildiz notes that:

[t]he woman’s interpretation of her situation and her religion thus differs radically from that of the judge as well as that promoted in

much German media. The ultimate invisibility of this different perspective indicates that the judge and the media actually share the same horizon, one in which the ‘abused Muslim woman’ does not count as a legitimate participant in the discourse if her positions do not fit their preconceptions.¹⁰⁵

Once again, Muslim minorities are spoken for rather than heard from, and in that shift they are positioned in ideologically useful ways that end up denying the complexities of their lives and advancing the simple story of a nation under the threat of an outside culture. Yildiz describes it this way:

Instead of being individuals with complex stories, such as the Moroccan-German woman of the court case, (abused Muslim women in Germany) are subsumed under a preexisting narrative. Turned into reified figures, they are neither the subject nor the object of these discourses, but rather their vehicles. Yet the figures themselves occupy an ambivalent position in discourse. They are simultaneously an absolute non-European Other and, increasingly, a stand-in for a threatened European Self. As the slippage from the abuse of the woman to the abuse of the German state indicates, the woman does not stand for Islam but for a Germany threatened by the force of Islam and, in extension, for a liberal European order at risk.¹⁰⁶

Other kinds of representations are desperately needed. By examining the cultural citizenship rights of Muslims more thoroughly we can discover something else beside anxiety from the dominant culture over national definitions of identity. Rather, what could become visible to the general public are the many ways that Muslim minority populations live their lives overwhelmingly according to their own convictions within the broad boundaries of shared national values, and in ways that may be different from the practices assumed by the general public as practices of citizenship and daily life, thus expanding our notions of national belonging. But to date the representation of the variety of Muslim minority life in the West continues to be terribly thin. To relegate the representation of Muslim life to terror dramas on television like *24* or *Sleeper Cell*, to news channels such as Fox News and CNN, and to films such as *Traitor* and *Sex and the City 2* is to abdicate the possibilities of representation to ideology.

More empathetic narratives are needed, not to portray Muslims in a positive light (which is also ideological) but to represent the cultural citizenship of Muslim minorities in all of its complexity.

This is the approach I adopted when composing *How Does It Feel To Be a Problem?: Being Young and Arab in America*.¹⁰⁷ In this book, I attempted to describe the post-9/11 lives of seven young Arab Americans (six Muslim Arab Americans and one Christian Arab American) as richly as I could, not so that their lives illustrated Muslim doctrine or Arab mores but so that the texture of their lives was preeminent and made available to curious readers willing to empathize with their situations. My narratives included a young woman who was detained with her family on spurious suspicions of terrorism; an Arab-American soldier who fought two tours in Iraq; a young Iraqi American woman who battles her conservative family; a young Palestinian American who works as an intern for Al-Jazeera and believes the experience will launch a media career only to have his hopes dashed; and a Muslim-American teenager who wins an election for her high school student government only to have her position taken away because she won't, due to her religious beliefs, participate in the school dances. (She eventually challenges her school on the principles of equality and reasonable accommodation.) The idea was to acknowledge the dehumanization of contemporary discourses surrounding Muslims in the United States and to use narrative to rehumanize these lives.

I believe these types of stories matter a great deal and they won't be told by polemicists like Caldwell or intellectuals like Ramadan. They show how Muslim minority life cannot be distilled into mere ideological debate. In fact, Muslims are almost never plotting to overthrow the state and they are not forever besieged by intolerant Westerners fearful of an Islamic menace. Rather, they live their lives in a rich variety of ways and often in complicated relationships with the dominant culture. If we can acknowledge their ways of being citizens we will be acknowledging the concept of cultural citizenship generally. Rich narratives of Muslim life carry within them the potential to alter already debased debates on Muslims and their loyalties and to expand the imaginations of what citizenship actually means.

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Why Palestine is Central to Resolving Islam–West Relations

Nader Hashemi

When that [conflict in Israel and Palestine] is resolved, what we will find [is] that the tensions between the West and the Muslim world evaporates and that this [conflict] is a saw, chafing, and it's mucking up too many things.¹ (*Archbishop Desmond Tutu*).

Since 9/11 considerable ink has been spilt in trying to explicate the roots of Islam–West tensions. Hundreds of books have been published, numerous academic conferences have been organized and the global media has reported on this subject *ad nauseam*.² Seizing on the importance of this theme for international relations, President Obama, during the first year of his presidency, gave several important interviews and delivered two major speeches from Muslim capitals that sought to reduce conflict between the United States and the Muslim World.³ The topic of Islam–West relations, however, is an old one. It far predates the terror attacks on 9/11 and the ensuing rupturing of relations which the Pew Research Centre in a major 2006 survey called “The Great Divide.”⁴ All of this begs the question: what new information can one bring to the topic that is both substantive and can add a fresh perspective to this troubled relationship?

Following 9/11 a substantial body of influential opinion believed that at root the conflict between Islam and the West was due to a fundamental clash of values. President George W. Bush famously asked, “Why do they

hate us?” The answer he came up with was that “they hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.”⁵ Prominent scholars and public intellectuals such as Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis sought to give credence to this perspective with controversial theories on the “Clash of Civilizations” and “The Crisis of Islam: Holy War, Unholy Terror.”⁶ The evidence and arguments for these claims, however, were weak and ideologically motivated. Far more convincing was the Gallup Organization’s massive multi-year research study. Based on a survey of attitudes from tens of thousands of Muslims in 35 countries with a predominately Muslim population, this comprehensive study found that Muslims and Westerners had rather similar values when it came to basic issues of modernity. It not only found widespread support for democracy but also found that substantial majorities in some of the most conservative Muslim societies (73 percent of Saudis, 89 percent of Iranians, 94 percent of Egyptians), believe that men and women should have equal rights and that “substantial majorities in nearly all nations surveyed ... say that if drafting a constitution for a new country, they would guarantee freedom of speech defined as ‘allowing all citizens to express their opinion on the political, social, and economic issues of the day’.”⁷ In short, this study confirmed that most Muslims actually admire the West, in particular its economic development, political freedoms and technological prowess. Proof that this is the case can be observed by visiting any capital city in the Muslim World where often the longest line is outside the United States or Canadian Embassy where people queue in line to obtain a visa to travel to the West, emigrate there if possible or to send their children there to study. What better empirical proof exists to prove that Muslims actually admire, respect and deeply appreciate Western civilization?

How to explain then the ongoing tension between Islam and the West? According to the aforementioned Gallup study, most Muslims stated that “the primary cause of broad-based anger and anti-Americanism [was not due to] a clash of civilizations but [rather it was] the perceived effect of US foreign policy in the Muslim World.” The study went on to conclude that “perceptions of US policy as a form of American neo-colonialism ...

fuels anti-Americanism globally in the Muslim World and beyond and is used by terrorists as they appeal to new recruits. It also diminishes American moral authority in the Muslim World, Europe and other parts of the world.”⁸ To summarize, Muslims do not have a problem the West *per se*, but they are deeply concerned and critical of certain aspects of the foreign policies of many leading Western countries, both of the past and the present which are deemed as unfair, unjust and deeply inimical to the basic human rights and sense of dignity of Muslim communities around the world.

There is one foreign policy position emanating from the West, however, that specifically contributes to this sense of humiliation and injustice. It stands apart from other political issues and it exists in a unique way due to its perception of being particularly offensive and demeaning to Muslim identity: Western policy toward the Israel–Palestine conflict. The main claim of this paper is that the question of Palestine is central to Islam–West relations and that the tension and conflict that exists today between the West and Muslim societies can never be fully resolved until the Israel–Palestine conflict is justly resolved. Those of us who study the Arab-Islamic world and have reflected on Islam–West relations instinctively know that the question of Palestine is a huge part of the problem. It is the proverbial “800 pound gorilla” in the corner that everyone can see, yet to date very few scholars have sought to articulate precisely how and why Palestine/Israel is so central to the relationship and tension today between the West and the Islamic world. This is the task of this paper.

Specifically, I seek to provide a compelling moral narrative rooted in history and politics that precisely explains “why Palestine matters” to Arab and Muslim identity and why no serious “civilized dialogue” between Islam and the West can occur unless the Israel–Palestine conflict is addressed as a central component of this strained relationship. On a side note, interfaith dialogue groups in North America that bring together Muslims, Jews and Christians often face the challenge of dealing with the Israel–Palestine conflict. Inevitably it is often suggested that this topic be taken off the agenda because it too divisive and it will impede a genuine

dialogue. ‘Let us focus on areas of agreement and on broad commonality; the conflict in the Middle East is too emotionally charged to discuss,’ is how this oft-heard argument runs. Such a seemingly innocent yet insidious approach to conflict resolution and interfaith dialogue must be rejected out of hand. To avoid what is most important would be intellectually and morally dishonest. Moreover, it does not address fundamental grievances that are at the root of civilizational tensions in our world today.

*The Erskine Childers Thesis
on Palestine: The Broken Triangle*

To help explain the centrality of the question of Palestine to Islam–West relations, I want to draw upon a metaphor of a “broken triangle.” I am borrowing this idea from an obscure essay written in 1965 by Erskine Childers, an Irish journalist who worked for the BBC and then for the United Nations for most of his life.⁹ Historians and academic experts of the Israel–Palestine conflict will recognize his name. Childers played an early and seminal role in exposing a key myth of the Israel–Palestine conflict promoted by the state of Israel and its supporters. It was claimed that Israel was not responsible for the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in the 1948 war because the Arabs were alleged to have left voluntarily at the urging of neighboring Arab states. When war broke out, the story goes, Arab radio broadcasts urged the Palestinians to leave their homes so that Arab military forces could more easily prosecute the war against the nascent Jewish state. They were to return after the war was over. The implication of this claim was that Israel bore no moral responsibility for Palestinian dispossession and the plight of refugees; the real culprits were the Arabs themselves, Israel’s hands were therefore clean.¹⁰ During this time period, the British government was monitoring all radio broadcasts. Based on a reading of the transcripts and a personal investigation that took Childers to Israel, he found no evidence to corroborate this claim.¹¹ His public exposure of this aspect of the Israel–Palestine conflict, along with the scholarship of Walid Khalidi, were instrumental in contributing to a

later scholarly consensus that the Palestinians were indeed expelled *en masse* in 1948. Arguments to the contrary about “Arab radio broadcasts” exhorting Palestinians to leave their homes was a Zionist fabrication. Thus today, even the former Foreign Minister of Israel Shlomo Ben-Ami is forced to acknowledge that:

It is not at all clear, as maintained by a conventional Israeli myth, that the Palestinian exodus was encouraged by the Arab States and by local leaders. Benny Morris found no evidence to show “that either the leaders of the Arab States or the Mufti ordered or directly encouraged the mass exodus.” Indeed, Morris found evidence to the effect that the local Arab leadership and militia commanders discouraged flight, and Arab radio stations issued calls to the Palestinians to stay put, and even to return to their homes if they had already left.¹²

Erskine Childers’ thesis on “The Broken Triangle” was published in the *Journal of International Affairs* in 1965.¹³ He utilizes the metaphor of this geometric figure to historically explain the Israel–Palestine conflict and as a consequence Islam–West tensions.¹⁴ The three points of triangle refer to the West/Christendom, Zionism/Judaism and the Arabs/Islam. Each axis between the points represents broken relationships in history.

“The Palestine conflict,” Childers observes, “is and always has been a triangular confrontation of the West, the Zionists and the Arabs, but one in which the only real, or ‘two-way’ dialogue has been the Western-Zionist side. It began, however, on a single axis entirely with the Western world—the axis of dialogue between Western Gentiles and Western Zionists.”¹⁵ The reference here is to the history of anti-Semitism in the West dating back to time immemorial and culminating in the horrors of the Nazi holocaust. Medieval Christianity was replete with anti-Semitism; Jews were viewed as killers of Jesus Christ and in 1543 Martin Luther published *Von den Juden und Ihren Lügen* (On the Jews and their Lies) where, among other reprehensible claims, Jews are described as a “base, [a] whoring people, that is, no people of God, and their boast of lineage, circumcision, and law must be accounted as filth.”¹⁶

In Europe during the course of the second millennium Jews were expelled from Britain, France, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Austria and Hungary. While the French Revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man sought to liberate Jews from the ghetto and grant them full citizenship, it was a very different story in Eastern Europe. Pogroms against Jewish communities were frequent during the late 19th and early 20th century¹⁷ and it was in this context that Zionism developed. Zionism was one response to the historic problem of Christian anti-Semitism. While some Jews migrated to North America others argued for assimilation and some Jews embraced socialism as a vehicle towards full equality. The movement for Jewish nationalism, however, was ironically aided by the rise of fascism in Europe during the 1930s. With anti-Semitism reaching historic new levels during this period the idea that Jews needed a separate homeland where they could be secure and free became a pressing urgency and attracted more support both among the Jewish diaspora and Western political, cultural and intellectual leaders. In short, the “two-way” dialogue that Childers refers to was a direct by-product of these historical developments. The conversation within the West soon coalesced around the idea of creating a Jewish homeland backed by Western powers in historic Palestine. The famous 1917 Balfour Declaration that committed Britain to this goal encapsulates this moment. This brings us to the second axis in Childers “broken triangle”—the conflict between Zionism and the Arab-Islamic world. According to Childers, “the legacy of this Western anti-Semitism now devolved upon Arab Palestine: the axis of the Gentile–Jewish dialogue was shifted and the Zionist end of it was pegged into that land, the site demanded for Western redemption of Western crimes. This transferred dialogue became one side of the triangle that is now inaccurately called a ‘local’ or ‘regional’ dispute in the Near East.”¹⁸

After World War I the Jewish national movement with support from Britain began to settle in Palestine. While some believed the famous Zionist slogan that Palestine was “a land without a people for a people without a land,” others including the founding father of political Zionism himself, Theodor Herzl, knew there was an indigenous Arab population

that resided there. Nonetheless, Herzl wrote in his diary of “spiriting the penniless population across the frontier”¹⁹ to make room for Jewish immigrants. This reflected the dominant Eurocentric biases of a political movement bent on economic and political expansion and justified as the “white man’s burden” or as the French used to call it the “*mission civilisatrice*” (civilizing mission) of Europe toward the rest of the non-Western world. That Zionism was from its inception a colonial settler movement that looked down on the native population of Palestine was openly acknowledged by the founding fathers of the Jewish state. David Ben Gurion, Israel’s first prime minister, noted that “with compulsory transfer we [would] have a vast area [for settlement] ... I support compulsory transfer. I don’t see anything immoral in it.”²⁰ Moshe Dayan, former chief of staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, Minister of Defense and Minister of Foreign Affairs, was remarkably candid in discussing the origins of the Israel–Palestine conflict. He noted that “it is not true that the Arabs hate the Jews for personal, religious or racial reasons. They consider us – and justly from their point of view – as Westerners, foreigners, invaders who have seized an Arab country to turn it into a Jewish state.”²¹

Recently, considerable effort has been exerted by supporters of Israel to claim that the conflict in Palestine is really a result of enduring Arab and Islamic anti-Semitism and nothing more.²² Yet from any objective outlook such a claim would appear to be spurious as Israeli scholarship concedes. “The fear of territorial displacement and dispossession,” Benny Morris observes, “was to be the chief motor of Arab antagonism to Zionism.” Likewise, in his monumental study of Palestinian nationalism, Yehoshua Porath writes that the “major factor nourishing” Arab anti-Semitism “was not hatred for the Jews as such but opposition to Jewish settlement in Palestine.”²³ In any other colonial context this truism would be patently obvious and claims to the contrary would be dismissed as ludicrous. It would be analogous to claiming that native American opposition to Europe settlement in North America – which was often bloody and violent – was motivated by anti-Christianism, anti-whiteism or anti-Europeanism.²⁴

Over the course of the 20th century the demographics of Palestine were transformed. An indigenous population that was overwhelmingly Arab Muslim and Christian became a minority due primarily to their expulsion and to the influx of new Jewish settlers who colonized the land. It is worth emphasizing that this project happened with strong collusion, support and sustenance from the major Western powers. From the inception of this conflict Western powers were supportive and sympathetic toward the national rights and aspiration of the Jewish settlers who came to Palestine; the rights of the local population who were largely displaced in the process were and still are treated less sympathetically. This clash between Zionism and Palestinian-Arab nationalism was to lead to a major rupture between two of the world's great civilizations: the Judaic and Islamic. It also led to another broken relationship in history that Erskine Childers identifies as the third axis of conflict: Islam–West relations. According to Childers, “British control and the general Western pledge to Zionism in Palestine, at once set up another side of today’s triangle—that of a Western-Arab dialogue.” The reason for this conflict he observes was because:

[the] West was, in effect, asking the indigenous people to acquiesce in their own political extermination and physical eviction in order to enable the West to pay for the crimes of which the Arabs were innocent; crimes committed by the West, in the West, against Western Jews. No other indigenous people has ever been asked to make such third-party payment by obliteration. It can scarcely be held surprising, or immoral, or “unrealistic,” that the Arabs have been refusing to accept such a fate ever since.²⁵

Western Policy and Israel/Palestine

Evidence that Western support for Zionism would lead to a conflict both among Arabs and Jews and between the Islamic world and the West existed from the outset of the Israel–Palestine conflict. Western powers were fully aware of this fact but they chose to ignore it for reasons of *realpolitik* and political expediency. The King–Crane Commission and the

report that was issued under its auspices is worth recalling in this context.²⁶ At the end of World War I the victorious Allies gathered in Paris to divide up the spoils of war. One of the areas in dispute was the Middle East, specifically the Arabic-speaking provinces of the defeated Ottoman Empire. The British and French had struck a secret deal in 1916 to carve up the region but in opposition to their designs stood US President Woodrow Wilson. He arrived in Paris in 1919 and openly challenged British and French intrigue while expressing sympathy for the peoples of the region and for their desire for dignity and national self-determination. Wilson, an idealist in the age of imperialism, advanced a radical and controversial idea—the political future of the Middle East should be tied to the aspirations of its inhabitants. In pursuit of this goal he set up a commission of inquiry, later known as the King–Crane Commission, named after Dr. Henry Churchill King, president of Oberlin College and Charles Richard Crane, a wealthy Chicago businessman, philanthropist and future US ambassador.

After traveling to the Middle East and canvassing public opinion, Crane and King issued a report that remains as relevant today as it was back then. The three critical findings of this study were: 1) a strong desire for full Arab independence, 2) there existed strong local opposition to the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine (where the population was 90 percent Arab) and only “force of arms” could achieve this goal and 3) at the time the United States was held in high esteem and was genuinely popular among Arabs and Muslims.²⁷ The King–Crane Commission revealed that if the people of the Middle East had to choose a global power to act as a trustee during a limited period of transition to self-rule, they would prefer the United States to rule over them. Admiration for the United States at this time was understandable. It flowed in part from the absence of US colonial involvement in the region but also from the first-class hospitals and educational institutions that American missionaries had established there. President Wilson’s support for self-determination at the Paris Peace Conference resonated among the national elites in the Middle East thus contributing to genuine sympathy towards the United States.

The United States was not a major power in the Middle East at the time. Notwithstanding President Wilson's preferences and the recommendations of the King–Crane Commission, the future of Palestine had already been decided by the British. Arthur James Balfour in an internal memorandum to his successor Lord George Curzon, the new British Foreign Secretary, unambiguously confirmed British policy on the question of Zionism and Arab self-determination:

The contradiction between the letters of the Covenant [of the League of Nations] and the policy of the Allies is even more flagrant in the case of the 'independent nation' of Palestine than in that of the 'independent nation' of Syria. For in Palestine we do not propose to even go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country though the American [King-Crane] Commission is going through the form of asking what they are ... The Four Great Powers [Britain, France, Italy and the United States] are committed to Zionism. And Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, and future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land.²⁸

Although this statement was issued in 1919 very little has changed during the course of the ensuing 92 years. While it is true that today there is greater support among Western powers for the creation of a Palestinian state, this is conditioned on the Palestinians demonstrating good behavior by first recognizing Israel's sovereignty over most of British-mandated Palestine. This has always been a precondition for Palestinian national rights. In this sense Western policy has been perfectly consistent over the years in elevating the rights to statehood and security for Israelis above those of Palestinian rights. Even today in the context of what is called the "peace process," a clear double standard is apparent. For example, Hamas is barred from recognition and is subject to sanctions until it meets three conditions set by the United States and its European allies: a renunciation of violence, recognition of the State of Israel and a commitment to respect past peace agreements.²⁹ These are perfectly reasonable conditions to

apply against Hamas. If they are met they will certainly contribute to a peace process that could lead to a just and lasting settlement of the conflict. But a reasonable question to ask is: does Israel have to meet the same conditions? In other words, does the United States and Europe also insist that Israel renounce violence, recognize a Palestinian state within its international borders and respect previously signed agreements or do these preconditions apply to only one side of the conflict? Double standards abound. For example, in September 2011 the Palestinian Authority will launch a formal bid for recognition as an independent state at the United Nations. From the moment this initiative was announced the United States has been lobbying furiously to prevent it from happening. The US Senate has passed a resolution condemning this move and threatening to cut off aid while the Obama Administration has promised to veto the resolution at the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly claiming this it is a “unilateral” action that is unhelpful for advancing peace between Israelis and Palestinians.³⁰

Sixty-four years after the United Nations decreed the creation of two states in Palestine, the United States whole-heartedly supports, sustains and backs the national and human rights of one of the parties to this conflict while blocking the same rights to the other party. While this position raises little controversy in the West, the double standards and hypocrisy are clearly apparent to Arabs and Muslims. A broken relationship in history is the result that coincides with the third axis of Childers “broken triangle.” I am not suggesting here that the Islam–West relations can be reduced simply to the Israel–Palestine conflict. Hypothetically, had the Zionist movement chosen to establish their state in Africa instead of the Middle East there would still be considerable tension between the West and the Arab-Islamic world. I am claiming, however, that the question of Palestine has exacerbated and uniquely contributed to a deterioration of relations between Islam and the West for reasons that will be explored below. Western policy, both in the past and in the present, in terms of its one-sided support for one party in the conflict (Israel) at the expense of the other (the Palestinians) has

exacerbated tensions to a very high level while alienating Muslim public opinion in the process.

Due to the ongoing nature of the conflict, which is now approaching 100 years, every outburst of violence between Israelis and Palestinians widens the chasm between the West and the Islamic world. Consider the 2006 Israel–Hezbollah war or the 2008–2009 Israel– Hamas conflict. In both conflicts more than 1,000 people were killed, mostly Palestinian and Lebanese civilians. When violence broke out a predictable scenario unfolded. The West rallied to the support of Israel, defending its security and its right to self-defense while condemning the Palestinian and Arab side for initiating the conflict. By contrast, the Muslim world rallied to the defense of the Lebanese and Palestinians and strongly rebuked Israel for its use of force. With each passing day the anger and the animosity between both camps increased. Each side looked toward these events through the prism of their own historical approaches to the conflict. While a ceasefire was eventually established and the fighting subsided, a key casualty from these events was renewed enmity along the Islam–West axis. The triangle outlined by Erskine Childers’ triangle was once again complete.

Israel and the Politics of Muslim Identity

But why is the question of Palestine so central to Arab and Muslim identity today? How and why does it uniquely contribute to a rupturing of Islam–West relations? In this section I seek to answer these questions by refuting the claims of Dennis Ross and David Makovsky, among others, who deny any linkage between the Israel–Palestine conflict and broader regional and international issues such as Islam–West relations. Lee Smith, another author who writes in this vein has stated that he “give[s] no credence to the notion that the Arab-Israeli area is the region’s defining issue” but rather it is simply one conflict among many others that plagues the Middle East.³¹ It is precisely this interpretation of the Israel–Palestine conflict that I seek to scrutinize and counter.

Evidence of the importance of the Israel–Palestine conflict and how it affects Arab and Muslim views of the West is available from reputable public opinion surveys. In a June 2008 study by the Brookings Institution, “Does the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict Still Matter? Analyzing Arab Public Perceptions,” Shibley Telhami concluded that despite “the Iraq war and the increasing focus on a Sunni–Shiite divide, the Palestinian question remains a central prism through which Arabs view the world.”³² This study was based on six public opinion surveys from 2002–2008 and involved face-to-face interviews in six countries (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Morocco, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates). The size of the survey ranged from 3,300 to 4,046 participants and it engaged mostly the urban and educated populations of each country. In 2008, for example, this study revealed that 86 percent of the people polled reported that the Palestine question was either the “most important” issue or ranked in the “top three”.³³ In terms of general trends the report noted that the “remarkable thing to observe is that, consistently, two-thirds to three fourths of respondents say this issue remains among the three most important issues in their priorities.”³⁴ More importantly for our purposes, the polling indicated a clear linkage between the Israel–Palestine conflict and Arab perceptions of the United States. “It is clear,” this study observes, “that there is a correlation in the rise and decline of the importance of this issue on two things: the degree of Israeli-Palestinian violence and the nature of the relationship between the Palestinians and the United States.”³⁵

This same study asked what steps Washington could take to improve the respondents’ view of the United States. “More than 60 percent of respondents chose brokering Arab-Israeli peace as the number one answer followed by withdrawal from Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula.”³⁶ In this context the report revealed that “the Arab public consistently and overwhelmingly expressed views that attitudes toward the United States are shaped by American policies, not by American values.” When asked how the Israel–Palestine conflict shapes their views of the United States “more than three quarters say it is at least somewhat important and half or more consistently say it is ‘extremely important’.”³⁷ As one moves outside

of the Arab world toward non-Arab parts of the Islamic world the question of Palestine remains relevant to how Muslims view the West but to a lesser degree. The Gallup Organization's 2002 study "Islamic Views of the U.S.: The Palestine Factor," asked Muslims in nine separate countries the following question: how much does the Palestinian-Israeli conflict factor in fostering residents' negative views of the West and in particular of the United States? The Gallup Poll noted that the data did not allow for any conclusive statements on the topic, however, they did see "statistically significant increases in negative attitudes toward the United States according to respondents' attentiveness to the Palestine issue with an average increase in negative ratings of about nine percentage points across all nine countries."³⁸

Two more recent studies on Islam–West relations also point out the relevance of the Israel–Palestine conflict. "Measuring the State of Muslim–West Relations: Assessing the 'New Beginning'," released in November 2010 by the Abu Dhabi Gallup Center observed that "forty percent of the respondents across 19 MENA [Middle East and North Africa] countries told Gallup that Muslim–West tensions arise more from conflicts about political interests than religious or cultural differences." The one conflict that was pre-eminent was "the Israel–Palestinian conflict and the Palestinians' struggles in Gaza." This report noted that the discontent many people feel that flows from the Israel–Palestine conflict "often plays into the frustration many in the MENA region have with US foreign policy as it relates to the larger Arab-Israeli conflict. These perceptions highlight how the conflict could be seen as a proxy for Muslim–West relations."³⁹

But these polling results still do not answer the question: why Israel and Palestine? Why are Muslims and Arabs so fixated on this conflict? When President Obama travelled to Indonesia in November 2010, Anis Matta, the secretary general of the Prosperous Justice Party, observed that Obama's outreach to Indonesian Muslims would be judged by a single issue. "What will Obama do in resolving the Israel–Palestine conflict? If we don't see any progress [on this issue] what he says is just a speech."⁴⁰ What is truly at the root of the ongoing and harsh condemnation of Israel

by Arab and Muslims for the past 64 years? When viewed objectively this seems to be out of proportion with other political conflicts that affect Arabs/Muslims where there has been large-scale suffering and loss of life. The repeated calls, for example, by Iran’s hard-line president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, that Israel – and no other political regime – “must be wiped off the map” is precisely what I am referring to. Why the Muslim fixation and obsession with Israel? Western commentators and political pundits have provided two different answers in the past.

Some believe that this is simply an affirmation of ancient ethno-religious hatreds that have existed for centuries. This perspective is most often heard in popular culture where it is affirmed that Arabs/Muslims and Jews have been fighting for “thousands of years” and the current conflict is a manifestation of age-old hatreds that defy rational explanation and a solution. The more popular interpretation is that Muslim/Arab criticism of Israel is motivated by anti-Semitism. The excessive focus on Israeli actions and crimes to the exclusion of other heinous crimes and subsequent calls for boycotts against the Jewish State, in the words of *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman, is a function of bigotry. “There is only one way to explain those contradictions, sometimes. Not all the time, but sometimes, and that’s anti-Semitism,” he affirmed in a 2006 interview.⁴¹ I am of the view that, contrary to the above, a compelling alternative interpretation exists. Today, as in the past, when Arabs/Muslims comment on Israel they routinely invoke its human-rights record as a justification for their moral censure and rejection of the Jewish state. Given the persistence of this theme in their rhetorical flourishes this appears to be suggesting that Israel is *the* worst human-rights violator in history. The problem with this position is that it is both factually inaccurate and morally dishonest. Yes, when judged by international human-rights standards, Israel’s human rights record leaves a lot to be desired—especially after the 2009 Gaza war where the UN report (also known as ‘The Goldstone Report’) found Israel guilty of “war crimes that may amount to crimes against humanity.”⁴² However, in truth, there have been other human conflicts that have killed more innocent Muslims civilians that do not evoke the same reaction from Muslims. Why?

For example, if human rights is the standard for moral censure why is there no equivalent condemnation from Muslims at far greater human-rights disasters afflicting fellow Muslims in Darfur, Algeria (whose civil war from 1992–2002 killed over 150,000 people), in Chechnya or among the Kurds during Saddam Hussein’s gassing of Halabja in 1988? Why the double standard and the obsession with Israel? In my view the answer lies not in ancient ethnic hatreds or in alleged “Muslim anti-Semitism” but primarily in the trauma and enduring legacy of European colonialism/imperialism in the Muslim World and Israel’s perceived connection with this legacy. For much of the 20th century opposition to European colonialism – and later American imperialism – has been the most powerful organizing theme in the Muslim World. No topic can galvanize and rally the masses more than the issue of national independence, self-determination and repelling external intervention. Such sentiment has dominated the politics of many Arab/Muslim societies for a large part of the 20th century and it has subsequently sunk deep roots within Arab/Muslim political culture. Concomitantly, there is widespread perception among Muslims that had it not been for Western intervention (both in the past and in the present), Muslim societies would have been more internally united, economically successful and politically advanced than they are today.⁴³

What is lost in much of the political commentary on this topic in the West is that Arabs and Muslims perceive Israel fundamentally as a European colonial settler state formed on the ruins of Palestinian society. The occupation of the West Bank and Gaza – now the longest occupation in modern history, with its escalating settlement construction, land confiscation and human-rights violations – serves as a constant reminder of the impact of colonial and imperial policies on the region. In other words, the conflict in Israel–Palestine is perceived from within the Arab-Islamic world as “in-your-face colonialism” not from a bygone era but of the contemporary period. This sentiment has been heightened in popular consciousness as a result of satellite technology (the Al Jazeera effect) that brings the occupation to people’s homes every day, keeping both the horrors of Israel’s occupation and treatment of Palestinians very relevant to

people's lives as well as reinforcing the perceived historical connection to colonialism and imperialism and Western intervention in the Middle East.

Writing in the mid-1960s Erskine Childers picked up on the importance of Palestine for Arab identity. He astutely noted that “it has a moral and emotional scope very considerably *larger* than was evident in the early years following Israel's establishment.” He noted that the Arabs “see the recent history of their region as one of social injustice and exploitation as well as of a more formally political nationalist struggle against Western pressure. Allusion to the conduct of Zionist settlers ... and eventual removal of the mass of Palestine Arabs has become part of one comprehensive retrospect that embraces landlord-domination in Egypt or Iraq and *colonial*-domination in the Maghreb.” The “story of Palestine is one of moral contradiction on so great a scale as to make them burn with anger.”⁴⁴ These views have only intensified in the intervening years as popular sentiment in the 2011 ‘Arab Spring’ has revealed.⁴⁵ The impact and legacy of colonialism also explains why there is widespread sympathy for the plight of Palestinians in much of the developing world. Asians, Africans and Latin Americans instinctively relate to Palestinian victimization because of its similarity to their own colonial and imperial experiences. Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress, for example, were strong supporters of the Palestinians both during the apartheid era and afterward for precisely this reason.

The fact that the final borders of Israel–Palestine remain to be determined, that the conflict is ongoing and that most of Israel's political leaders have been Europeans and that Israel is generously supported by the leading global power (the United States) gives the Israel–Palestine conflict a decidedly colonial spin—that of powerful white Europeans versus a subjugated indigenous population stealing their land, humiliating them and denying their political aspirations. The Third World has seen this script before and experiences Palestinian suffering with a sense of *déjà vu*. The unresolved conflict in Israel–Palestine, therefore, acts as a constant reminder of the carve-up, humiliation, defeat and setback faced by Muslim societies as a result of Western intervention. The American occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan – and threats of a possible military

strike against Iran's nuclear facilities – serve to exacerbate these feelings. Palestine, in a very real sense, has now morphed into a core “identity issue” for Arabs and Muslims precisely because of its perceived link to the 19th and 20th-century Middle Eastern experience with European colonialism. For most Arabs/Muslims today, accepting the legitimacy of the state of Israel while the Palestinians remain largely a refugee population is tantamount to giving colonialism a moral stamp of legitimacy. No self-respecting Arab or Muslim can easily do this; if they were to try, they would likely be morally ostracized and condemned by their own communities.

Conclusion

Edward Said, the late Palestinian-American intellectual, once referred to the Palestinians as the “victims of the victims.”⁴⁶ He was referring to the fact that the historic victims of the Christian West, the Jews, were now victimizing a new population and creating new victims, the Palestinians. This interconnected view of history is precisely what Erskine Childers was seeking to demonstrate with his theory on Palestine and the “broken triangle.” As I have tried to demonstrate in this paper, the question of Palestine cannot be understood simply as struggle between Jewish and Arab nationalism but it must be comprehended historically and interdependently. One historic conflict in one part of the world was transferred to another region leading both to new conflict among a group of people who previously had co-existed (Jews and Muslims) along with new frontiers of conflict between civilizations that were already in tension (Islam and the West). Islam–West relations took a turn for the worst during the modern period and the era of colonialism and imperialism was a new low point for this relationship. But after World War II, when the West began to withdraw from the Middle East, the creation of the state of Israel on the ruins of Palestinian society – and with full backing of the Western powers – effectively meant that the era of external intervention in the region did not end. The ongoing nature of this conflict has turned the question of Palestine into a key identity issue for Arabs and Muslims

today. It serves as a constant reminder of past injustices and humiliation that the region has suffered at the hands of Western powers. It is for this reason that the Israel–Palestine conflict is central to resolving Muslim–West relations. Until and unless this happens, a reduction in Islam–West tensions is wishful thinking.

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Civil Society and Dialogue after 9/11

Riem Spielhaus

The notion of a dichotomy or even an antagonism between “the West” and “the Orient” has a long history¹. However, after 9/11 it became dominant in shaping contemporary political debates and the perception of global power structures both in the media and in the cultural field. Since then, media representations, political debates and academic work on 9/11 and its repercussions are characterized by their focus on Muslims and Islam which – even if connected to a well-meaning awareness for stereotyping and discrimination – excludes a range of issues and leaves blank spaces.²

The decade following 2001 has been shaped by a paradigm shift: immigrants in Western European countries were increasingly perceived and debated as Muslims.³ The trend to discuss immigrants as Muslims has been followed also by a shift from xenophobia to anti-Muslim sentiments, as has been documented by a set of quantitative studies. Even in North America, Australia and New Zealand, where Muslims are far from making up a large part of the immigrant population, a new awareness has been given to Muslim residents⁴. However, 9/11 is merely strengthening this shift in perception and serves as a subsequent legitimation. For Western Europe, at least, this new awareness has been described before 2000. In an article that appeared three years before 9/11 under the title *Why Islam is like Spanish*, Aristide R. Zolberg and Long Litt Woon reveal a fundamental similarity in the categorization of Spanish language speakers in the United States as “Hispanics” and immigrants and their descendants from majority Islamic countries in Europe as “Muslims”, while already

Yasemin Soysal speaks of “Europe’s rediscovery of Islam” back in 1997,⁵ Tariq Modood traces the British attentiveness to the religious affiliation of many South Asian residents back to the Salman Rushdi affair in 1989, and in France the *affaire du foulard* – the debate on the headscarf in French schools – began.⁶

The focus on Muslim immigrants and their descendants has become an issue of investigations into Islam and subsequent political policies as reactions to terrorist attacks.⁷ What is often neglected, however, is that 9/11 and the new tone among policymakers afterwards had grave effects on the lives of non-Muslim immigrants as well. Many of the anti-terrorism laws target (pheno)types that also match immigrants from other parts of the world. The debates on security gaps led to a tightening of migration laws for which the argument was directly tied to issues of national security and fear of Muslims.

Last but not least, academic research is predominantly focused on rising conflicts, legal restrictions and increasing anti-Muslim sentiment⁸, but rarely on the many initiatives in civil society and government administrations that try to counter negative sentiment and foster understanding at the local level. Recounting the history of Christian–Muslim interaction, the historian Jørgen Nielsen strikingly remarks that “the conflict is remembered and restated, while the positive interaction and interdependence is so easily forgotten.”⁹ Similarly, the media fascination with negative news highlights the problems, conflicts and the deterioration of civil rights. Hitherto, the unwanted positive effects of 9/11, so to speak, have been neglected including the voluntary engagement of thousands of lay people and religious leaders and citizens who consciously ignore the fear-mongering by the media and political debates and reach out to those who are labeled as ‘others’ in their neighborhood, school or city.

This paper is dedicated to addressing the desideratum last mentioned and shed light on some of the many personal initiatives of citizens, religious leaders and even political authorities. It chooses a set of examples from different fields of encounters in order to show the power of individuals in resisting the dominant narrative of enmity between

“Western” and “Muslim” people and civilizations. As many researchers have exposed, Muslims are presented as the new “others” or even the new enemies, complicating the lives of domestic Muslim populations.¹⁰ Meanwhile, in the Muslim World a reverse story is being told by media addressing Muslim audiences, portraying “the West” similarly as a homogeneous block with an aggressive attitude towards Muslims both in “the West” and “at home”. Again these two notions complement and feed each other. Acts and speeches of hatred, public displays and the publication of demeaning pictures and narrations of the “other” are fuelling responses. What is most remarkable is that these stories are exchanged on a global level. They travel through different media and languages and are retold and remembered repeatedly.

Therefore, it becomes relevant to ask which stories are *not* being told, or, if they are being told in one place, why they do not travel the globe? Hate speech and hate crime do not only incite further hate, they can also bring about positive reactions that stress a humanist ideal of belonging and foster a sense of neighborhood or unity beyond ethnicity and religious affiliation. These positive stories are reported in significantly fewer cases and so far they are attracting less attention from researchers. European and American media have for a long time not been reporting on civic initiatives aiming at inclusion and understanding¹¹. As Kai Hafez argues, Islam made it to the front pages framed as ‘political Islam’.¹² However, within the US media this seems to have changed slightly. Lately, stories of Muslim communities congregating at churches or synagogues and mosque communities lending their places of worship to Christian faith groups or inter-faith meetings are receiving growing attention from the media. As counter narratives to anti-Muslim hate speech, these initiatives themselves became news content to a certain degree, although considerably smaller than stories about conflicts.

Dialogue: A Civil Reaction to Conflict and Aggression

Immediately after 9/11 various heads of government not only condemned the terrorist attacks but also stressed the differences between Islam as a

religion and the terrorists' acts. A few days after the attacks in the United States, the US president George W. Bush visited the Islamic Center Washington, DC and declared in his speech, "The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam. That's not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace."¹³ Several national leaders in Europe and North America pronounced the need for dialogue as a preventive measure against the rise of religious conflicts. A new field of public diplomacy – inter-faith or intercultural dialogue – took shape. As a measure against terrorism – or at least a direct reaction to the new situation after the 9/11 terrorist attacks – the German Foreign Ministry established a department for "Dialogue with the Islamic World" in early 2002. Embassies in Muslim-majority countries were supplied with additional staff to act as dialogue officers and were employed to assist the embassies in monitoring relevant developments, promote contacts with important civil society actors (including the media), and initiating and steering dialogue projects.¹⁴

International exchange was sustained by a variety of means including an Internet platform called *Qantara*, which published essays and interviews on Islam-related issues in German, English and Arabic; the magazine *Fikrun wa Fann*, which translates and publishes opinion pieces from German public debates in Arabic; and an art gallery in Berlin specializing in curating exhibitions that bring together artists from Muslim-majority countries and Germany. Other states followed and funded local and global initiatives such as the Austrian Foreign Ministry's program called the "Dialogue of Cultures" in 2007. On the multinational level several institutions have also become active in the field of dialogue. After the bombing in Madrid in 2004 the president of Spain proposed an "Alliance of Civilizations between the Western and the Arab and Muslim worlds",¹⁵ which soon found the support from the president of Turkey and has since then become an initiative of the United Nations. In 2004 the World Economic Forum (WEF) initiated the "Community of West and Islam Dialogue," with the aim of "promoting dialogue and cooperation between the Western and Islamic world" and included more than 80 leaders from business, the religious community, the media, academia and civil society.

However, many of these dialogue projects have been criticized as being elitist¹⁶ on the one hand and on the other hand of perpetuating the notion of two entities that need to be reconciled in order to prevent war and conflict. Dialogue, when referring to “the West” as one block and “Islam” or the “Islamic world” as the opposite block simply serves as the two sides in the “clash of civilizations”. The German scholar of Islamic Studies, Jamal Malik, points out that this idea of dialogue as a counterweight to a “clash of civilizations” stems from the same notion of closed cultural entities.¹⁷ It tends to ignore the diversity within “Western” countries and the religious plurality in countries with Muslim majorities. Last but not least, the extensive usage of geographical terminology combined with the notion of civilizational clash and dialogue creates a concept of religions as being bound to territories while in fact religious diversity shapes European countries as well as the Middle East. This diversity is often ignored, as the German-Iranian writer, Navid Kermani, points out. The frequent calls for dialogue between Germans and Muslims might be well-meaning, he argues, but they deny the possibility of dialogue for Germans of Muslim faith who combine nationality and religious affiliation. “For approximately three million people in my country this would mean that they ought to engage in a dialogue with themselves.”¹⁸ For them, as for millions of other residents of Western Europe, the divide between “the West” and Islam or the “Islamic world” does not exist because they embody both.

The following examples will also show how a divide that is often evoked in the Arab media does not fully comply with reality—that of Europeans and Americans being hostile towards Islam. Even though the incidents of insults or violence against Muslims that are reported are certainly real, they do not represent the state of mind of a majority of Dutch, German, Danish or American people. In this respect democratic states are struggling with the tensions between freedom of opinion on one side and hate speech and acts on the other. The line between banning images and arguments or allowing a pluralist debate about relevant challenges often appears to be quite narrow.¹⁹ In order to make clear that extremist positions are not the only ones out there or even dominant, civil

society initiatives in Europe and North America see it as their responsibility to raise their voices and take a stance against hatred and exclusion. Extremist and hostile positions so far have a greater appeal to the media while the tolerant majority seems to have problems getting heard with their message of solidarity and support of minorities, even though these counter narratives are often full of creativity and depth.

*Narratives of Inclusion
against Narratives of Exclusion*

During the last two decades Islam and Muslims in Europe have sometimes become a heated issue of debate over the notion of “belonging” as well as national and supra-national notions of identity and values. The discussion is sometimes framed by the question whether the European Union is a “Christian club”. Even though the reality of millions of Muslims and adherents of many other religions living within the EU and the ideal of European religious freedom would be strong arguments against such a notion, political movements which maintain the idea that people of certain beliefs could not be “real Europeans” are enjoying increasing popularity. Moreover, even in the established parties and mainstream media one can find rhetorics that are exclusive of Muslims; yet the same parties and media also contain individuals and platforms that lobby for narratives of inclusion and draw on the historical presence of Muslims in Europe and the long history of dialogue and cultural exchange.

One example is the debate about a statement by the German President Christian Wulff. In his speech celebrating the 20th anniversary of the German reunification on October 3rd 2010, Wulff stated that “Islam has now also become part of German identity,” thereby linking the issue of German unification after four decades of Cold War with that of contemporary challenges of integration and religious plurality.²⁰ Even though he had only repeated a sentence which had been uttered by previous Ministers of Interior Affairs, the president’s statement triggered immense disagreement from his own party, the Christian Democratic Union. Some months later, the new Federal Minister of Interior Affairs,

Hans-Peter Friedrich, stated at a press conference in early March 2011 that while people of Islamic belief would belong to the country there was no historical evidence for the fact that Islam belonged to Germany. With Hans-Peter Friedrich, the issue was turned into a matter of historical depth when he introduced the difference between the contemporary presence of Muslim subjects and the historical past of German culture and national values. The minister is drawing on an idea of an unchangeable past in a debate on narratives of “belonging” today.

Historians have stepped up the argument by pointing out that one could find proof of a history that ties not only Europe and Islam but even Germany and Islam together. The Museum for Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum, located on the renowned Museum Island in Berlin, is one of the venues for such an inclusive approach. Its current director, Dr. Stefan Weber, took his new position in 2008 with the aim of drawing new visitors to the Museum Island in Berlin’s city center. Attracting thousands of tourists every day, the museum does not lack visitors; however, the new director called for a different goal: he aims to attract Muslims, especially those with an immigrant background and from socially challenged environments and wants to turn the museum into a “symbolic home for Muslims in Germany”²¹—a space of belonging that provides links to a positive identification with the cultural heritage of Islamic regions. Since 2009 the museum opened its gates beyond school classes and also for cultural events during the festival of Ramadan and for the capital’s “Islamforum”, a consultation council between representatives of Muslim communities and the state’s government. Each year during the month of Ramadan it hosts events presenting contemporary music and performance.

In his guided tours Stefan Weber leads visitors through all three collections of the Pergamon Museum—the Collection of Classical Antiquities, the Museum of the Ancient Near East and the Museum of Islamic Art. His tour program comprises carpets, porcelain and wooden handicrafts from Spain and Aleppo, and also leads through the monumental reconstruction of archaeological building ensembles including the Pergamon Altar, the Market Gate of Miletus, the Ishtar Gate, the Processional Way of Babylon and the Mshatta Façade. All of these

monuments that contributed to the Pergamon Museum's global fame were excavated in countries that today have a majority of Muslim inhabitants.²²

Throughout this tour, the director of the museum embeds his presentation of Islamic art into a broader narrative pointing out commonalities in architecture and aesthetics as well as historical connections in trade and philosophical exchange. Why should Greek monuments and ideas be inherited only by "the West" or Europe? If they represent "our" roots, aren't these roots clearly shared with Islam? By asking these questions Stefan Weber dismantles some presumptions of exclusive narratives. Most of all, he presents his museum not necessarily as a *lieu de mémoire*²³ but as a *lieu d'identité*. Whether this presentation will be accepted and the museum turned into a space for Muslims in Berlin and Germany is difficult to foresee and most probably will be connected to many other factors including the development of national and European debates on belonging and identity.

Our Shared Europe and Our Shared Future

Another initiative that engages in an inclusive narrative was launched by the international cultural relations body of the United Kingdom. For several years now, the British Council engages in projects to promote a history of Europe and "the West" that is inclusive of Muslims. In 2007, it started preparations for *Our Shared Europe* (OSE) with a series of consultations and the project began in 2009 with diverse events in its branches throughout Europe. In 2011, *Our Shared Europe* was extended to the United States in a project called *Our shared Future* that included a cooperation with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the Carnegie Foundation. In his foreword to the introductory report on the project that was published prior to its first events, Stephan Roman, the British Council's regional director for West Europe and North America, presents the initiative as a reaction to the changes in societies at the national and the local level:

Globalization, migration, climate change, the energy and food crises, and the constantly shifting nature of international events are propelling us into a more uncertain and less stable future.²⁴

These changes, unstoppable and challenging at the same time according to leading personnel of the British Council, made it necessary to engage in new narratives for a sense of national and supranational belonging in order to uphold a sense of social order. In a video presented on the *Our Shared Europe* website, the British journalist and science writer Ehsan Masood, who was a key figure in planning and shaping the project, describes its initial motivation as connected to the negative media representation of Muslims in the aftermath of terrorist acts in the United States and Europe.

Especially in the initial weeks, months and years after 9/11 and then the London bombs and the Madrid bombs where there was just almost a rainbow shower of headlines and really quite vulgar reporting and coverage on Muslim communities around Europe.²⁵

Martin Rose, director of the OSE project, mentions that “a widening division between Muslims and Non-Muslim Europeans”²⁶ is a consequence of these developments. Therefore, since its beginning the OSE project has been exposing two narratives that are contributing to the divide between Muslims and non-Muslims. One is the skepticism held by non-Muslim Europeans towards immigration, perceiving Islam as an effect of migration and furthermore the cause of “incompatibilities of culture and attitudes (to gender, sexuality and freedom of expression, in particular). This narrative trails radicalism, backwardness and violence as hallmarks of Muslims in Europe.”²⁷ The other one is skepticism held by Muslims over the notion that Europe or ‘the West’ is morally deficient and anti-Muslim. Often this skepticism is fuelled by actual and perceived exclusion “that subsumes all the very real affronts and difficulties that Muslims face into a single, purposeful hostility that it claims to perceive towards ‘Islam’ and draws together all the foreign wars of Europe, the US, Russia and Israel into a single story of aggression against” the Muslim community. Interestingly both narratives are constructing the self as a

victim of global developments and actions of political and sometimes even religious elites. They are both heavily engaged in constructing an “other” who is to blame for any misfortunes and challenges and thereby widening the divide on the basis of religious identities, while these identities do not even need to be filled with religious practice or theological arguments. Already the claim on one side that “the others” are doing certain things “because they are Muslims”, or on the other side the claim that “the others” are treating “us as they do because we are Muslims” reveals similarities between these two narratives—the main one being the focus on (sometimes only alleged) religious affiliation. Martin Rose has a dark outlook for Europe if this trend cannot be reversed:

The danger for Europe is that the coming years will entrench a largely artificial, and deeply damaging binary divide between ‘old-stock’ Europe and the youngest, liveliest and largest of its minority demographics. At its worst, the rhetoric of today is reminiscent of the 1930s. It is vital to Europe’s future that we do all we can to confront and reverse this dangerous trend.²⁸

The core of these exclusive narratives is their adherence to old concepts of national order or white supremacy and their aim at restoring a situation of national purity, which is often understood as connected to ethnic and religious purity. Cultures and civilizations are in these cases understood as distinct unities that can co-exist, communicate or be in conflict with each other. According to the understanding of the British Council, cultures are not the actors but are used or misused in the interest of individuals and groups. Hence, culture(s) as such is neither good nor bad, as Stephan Roman maintains:

Equally, culture can also be misused so that it becomes a vehicle for fuelling fears and tensions that can corrode trust between peoples and communities. In fact, culture and cultural identities are used to exclude as well as to include.²⁹

Promoting narratives of inclusion is the core of the OSE program in its Western European branches in order to respond “to one of the major cultural challenges facing our continent today—the growing mutual

mistrust between Muslim communities and wider European society” by “building a new narrative about how we can all best live together in the Europe of the 21st century”³⁰ and “help to change the way we understand and think about one another as fellow Europeans.”³¹

The British Council’s counter narrative to comments of antagonism or incompatibility of Islam and Europe, which lie at the heart of scenarios of an “Islamization of Europe”, highlights the assets of diversity and the contributions made by certain Muslims to the development of Europe in science, arts and even military conflicts. However, this narrative also rejects the notion of an exclusively Judeo-Christian basis of Europe that is frequently asserted in negotiations on the identity of the union of states. Project director Rose argues that, “what we tended to do is to forget about the contribution that Islamic culture has made to the modern European mind,”³² and the slide presentation shows a list of carriers of the Victorian Cross honored for their service in the British Army during World War II led by Fazal Din, followed by a picture of a South Asian division of British soldiers wearing turbans and arms and finely colored arabesque ornaments. The project’s focus on science history highlighting certain Islamic contributions to mathematics and natural sciences and addresses a fundamental account of European enlightenment based on reason. Similar to the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin, this narrative refers to common sources and long-lasting exchanges as arguments for compatibility in the present, or as Rose sums up the aim of the project: “our job is to remind Europe today that its own mind, its own mentality is a joint enterprise.”³³ It is this thought that leads to the focus on the diversity of European roots as its strength and not its weakness.

The Europe of today is what it is thanks to a complex set of cultural influences. These include the ones commonly known: Christian, Jewish and secularist. [...] It is from this conglomerate of cultures and influences that Europe derives its beauty, its strength and its multiple identities.³⁴

This notion of an inclusive Europe developed on the basis of a shared historical past and a joint present and future hence differs considerably

from the one following the idea of separated cultures. The British Council seems careful not to phrase its initiative as one that supports Muslims but as one that supports a certain notion of Europe. However, OSE addresses existing discrimination and deprivation of Muslim communities, individuals and families, but counters the perception of Europe being generally hostile to Islam and Muslims. In this way the inclusive narrative of the British Council rejects both narratives of exclusion and suggests a notion of co-existence that bridges the divide between Muslims and Non-Muslims.

However, by reacting to narratives of Europe that are exclusive of Muslims and by targeting Muslims and only Muslims, both *Our shared Europe* and *Our shared Future* are still not leaving the discursive frame of religious dichotomies, rather than promoting a new concept of diversity. This approach holds the danger of only reaching a certain set of likeminded people on one side while simply inflaming the debate about religious identities still further on the other side, even if positive aspects of Muslim life or contributions of Islam to the development of modern societies are included. This project reveals the dilemma of the current situation. Exclusive narratives and anti-Muslim hate speech as well as acts of hate are calling for decisive reactions not only by state institutions but also by fellow citizens and civic initiatives. Yet, narratives of religious identities – be they positive or negative – feed into a variety of identity politics with religious categories at the center of attention. This is why activities that bring together people of different faiths and convictions while highlighting the commonalities as humans, citizen or neighbors rather than disparate religious, ethnic or national identities are of special interest in the following accounts of small initiatives against hate and exclusion.

Standing Up Against Hatred

On a rainy day in 2006 people in the US town of Fremont came together to commemorate the death of a member of their community. “When Alia Ansari, a resident of Fremont, California, was shot to death as she walked

her daughter to school, community members feared she was targeted because she was wearing a hijab,” a video on the website of ‘Not in our Town’ (NiOT) reports. It documents the initiative of Ansari’s neighbors, political leaders and religious minorities to support the victim’s family, the Muslim community and stand up against prejudice and violence. The video shows women wrapping a scarf around their heads, standing together with men under umbrellas protecting them from the rain. They all followed the call for a “Wear a Hijab Day.”

Today we have come together to honor the death of Alia Ansari. We are also here today to talk about race, racism, prejudice and privilege. Please join me for a moment of silence to honor all victims of hate crimes and all victims of crimes against humanity.³⁵

In this speech of one of the participants at Fremont’s “Wear a Hijab Day,” Alia Ansari is not only remembered as a Muslim or a victim of a crime, but as an equal member of the local community. By wearing the piece of cloth that might have been the cause for the death of the woman, the female participants not only show their sympathy but they symbolically make it impossible to differentiate between Muslim and non-Muslim women. Alia Ansari becomes “one of us” and thereby the aim of hate crime of this kind that goes beyond the destruction of one individual and aims to destroy community cohesion and prevent people who share certain features with the victim to feel secure or even at home, is rejected. In a short interview a participant with a black scarf wrapped around her head explains why she is at the event: “What happened to Alia hurts their community but it hurts us all.” While often after such events discussions start about whether an insult – or in this case a murder – has really been an act of hate against a certain minority or just a random incident, on this occasion community members refused to engage in such a debate. It was much more important that it *might* have been one and most of all that other Muslim women *felt* threatened by what has happened. That alone was reason enough for Herman Rosenbaum, a representative of the Jewish Community, to participate in the “Wear a Hijab Day,” declaring that:

The entire community of course was shocked by the murder of Mrs. Ansari. We don't know that it was a hate crime. But irrespective of whether it was a hate crime it is very important to all of us to stand with the victims and stand against hatred.³⁶

This event remembering the murder of Alia Ansari brought together the most diverse people, among them Christians, Jews, Sikhs and Muslims. A woman from the victim's community explains that this has been the major aim of the initiative.

We're here so we can turn this tragic moment into a learning experience. Not just for Freemont, for the whole world.

This is also the motto of *Not in our Town* (NioT), a US-based NGO that collects stories of this kind, creates short documentaries in order to spread them on video or making them available online. Thereby, the initiative aims at breaking the cycle of violence that answers one act of hate with other acts of hate, but instead inspiring reunions of different ethnic and religious groups and individuals. The initiative started with a documentary series about American communities fighting hate crime on the national television network PBS. It then developed into a campaign that combined public television broadcasts with grassroots events, educational outreach and online activities to help communities battling hate and to communicate with and learn from each other.

After collecting several stories of communities standing up against all kinds of hate attacks and distributing them on DVD to schools and interfaith groups, NioT launched a website to make a collection of short documentaries available online. Additionally, this website aims to connect those interested in this kind of communal work. On its website the initiative explains its objective: "While hate violence makes headlines, the positive actions of people across the country are creating a different story."³⁷ Patrice O'Neill, filmmaker and one of the initiators of NioT, explains the need for ideas such as those promoted by the short films of the movement. Individuals and communities can take other examples both as inspiration for their own creative ways to answer difficult situations in

their neighborhood or classroom and as a comfort and support in times of alienation and tension.

Not in our Town [NioT] highlights communities working to stop hate together. Many media outlets cover hate crimes by reporting the violence, but Not in our Town looks for stories that show what people can do to both respond and prevent hate crimes (Patrice O’Neill, June 2, 2011).

Many surveys have shown that perpetrators and even sympathizers of violence are a very small minority, but despite that the peaceful majority tends to be silent or overheard. One of the core ideas of NioT is the belief that the passivity of the many could be overcome and large parts of civil society can be activated to counter violence, bullying and exclusion of marginalized groups and individuals. Furthermore, in the movement’s understanding, acting against hatred is not simply a charitable act on behalf of the marginalized but a contribution to the cohesion of the whole society. Hatred, especially in form of acts of violence, affects not only the direct victim but has larger effects and actually addresses the plurality of society, or as Patrice O’Neill puts it: “An attack on any one of us [...] is an attack on all of us.” Therefore it is so pivotal how other members of this collective react:

Hate crimes cause terrible pain to those who are directly attacked, but the harm of hate spreads across entire communities. Every time we hear a story about a woman who is attacked or harassed for wearing a hijab, we know that it can create deep fear and anxiety for every woman who expresses her faith in this way. A hate crime murder, such as the one in Dresden, or the killing of an Afghani woman in Fremont, California a few years ago can affect entire communities. A community response is vital. In Fremont, civic leaders and people of many faiths gathered to support community members who felt vulnerable in an event called “Wear a Hijab Day.” The message to the Muslim community was simple: You are not alone. An attack on any one of us because of our race, religion, gender or identity is an attack on all of us. We are invigorated by

stories like these, which so often go uncovered (Patrice O’Neill, June 2, 2011).

The website of NioT (www.NIOT.org) provides over 50 short films and Patrice O’Neill expresses her hope that people will be inspired to use these films “to stop hate in communities around the world.”

Violent attacks not only create pain and fear but also a sense of powerlessness. Creative acts of support as well as making these supportive acts public and becoming part of a national or even global movement against hatred are ways to gain a sense of empowerment. NioT does not initiate or organize these activities; they come from the grass-roots level and need to be entrenched in the specific local context, inspired and arranged by local actors. NioT assists communities to connect, provides platforms to meet virtually on social networks like Facebook and Twitter and documents some of the many incidents where ordinary people felt it is necessary to stand up and support those who feel under attack and show them that they are not alone. The short videos are handed out as teaching material for schools that can also invite workshops on bullying into the classroom.

The videos at NioT’s website highlight the many different communities in the United States which are attacked – because of their religion, color or family background – by groups that threaten pluralist communities aiming at creating an atmosphere of mistrust. These videos also show that there are many creative ways to stand up against them and support one another. During the last few years contacts have been made between initiatives of this kind in the United States and Europe. Patrice O’Neill had been invited in 2011 to speak about the work of NioT at the “Kirchentag”—the biannual national Protestant congregation of lay people in Germany. During the five-day event organizers of the Kirchentag³⁸ had arranged a commemoration at the place of the murder of a Muslim woman killed two years earlier in a courtroom while witnessing in a case against an offender.

The Murder of Marwa El-Sherbini in Dresden, Germany

In early July 2009 a woman was killed while wearing a headscarf. This case shocked people in her community and entered the consciousness of Muslims around the world as an instance of anti-Muslim hatred. Marwa El-Sherbini, an Egyptian pharmacist and mother, was stabbed to death in a courtroom in the southern German city of Dresden during a trial against a man who had insulted her because of her religion. While the news quickly reached her home country Egypt, it took a week for German media to report it and understand the incident as a hate crime.³⁹ Muslim communities were shaken and interestingly the first community to come forward to join the Central Council of Muslims in their grief and rage about what had happened was the Central Council of Jews in Germany. However, they were not the only ones who mourned the murder. Hundreds of people came together a few days after the attack at the court house where it had happened. Among them were regular inhabitants of the city, court personnel, engaged activists from the immigrants' council of the city, immigrants from all around the globe and representatives of different faith groups and leading members of national political parties. Since then several initiatives are keeping up the memory of Marwa El-Sherbini and the crime that ended her life.

While her murderer has received the maximum sentence under German law of 18 to 25 years in prison, people from the city of Dresden and all over Germany gather in an annual memorial honoring Marwa El-Sherbini. A year after the murder the non-government organization "Bürger Courage" (Citizen Courage) created the artwork *18 Stiche* (18 stabs) by the artist Johannes Köhler, which represents 18 symbolic knives cast in concrete stuck in Dresden's soil in front of prominent buildings throughout the city including the courthouse where the murder took place, symbolizing that the city of Dresden itself was hurt by the murder.⁴⁰

An Attack Against a Buddhist Temple in Turku, Finland

Muslims are by far not always and only the victims of xenophobic or anti-religious attacks in Europe or North America; this also means that in

many cases they get the opportunity to reach out and comfort communities that are under attack. The following example describes an attack on a house of worship by another religious minority. On September 11th 2010, nine years after the 9/11 attacks, a Buddhist temple in the small town of Turku in Finland was vandalized, sprayed with swastikas and set on fire. Soon afterwards other religious minority groups declared their solidarity with the community that consisted mostly of Vietnamese immigrants. Ruth Illman reports in her analysis of this incident as a story of “the changing face of and conditions for inter-religious dialogue”, and one of the first groups to come forward was the Islamic Community of Turku.⁴¹ A group on Facebook that had reached 3,000 members within days was the main forum for inter-religious support for this minority. Members of the Buddhist community valued this, as Ruth Illman established in an interview: “Of course it is important; it felt like getting 3,000 hugs!”

When A Whole Town Rose Against Hatred

In 2008 the city of Cologne was facing the height of a controversy about the building of a mosque. The Turkish-German association Diyanet İşleri Türk-Islam Birliği (DITIB) – Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs – was planning to tear down a factory building in the borough Cologne–Ehrenfeld that it had used for decades as a home for a mosque and its national headquarters in order to erect a purpose-built mosque with a dome and two minarets. DITIB had successfully invited leading politicians including the mayor of the city on to a board to support the building of the mosque. Nevertheless, once published the architectural plans were debated heavily. Opponents of the mosque were found in many circles of the city. However, most of them engaged in a critical dialogue with mosque builders, which was carried out through established national media outlets and in various inter-religious platforms. Muslim voices were given a fair amount of airtime to present their views on such a mosque.

Under the headline “Who Says the Majority is Reactionary?” the German–Iranian author Navid Kermani, himself a resident of this very neighborhood of Cologne–Ehrenfeld, describes his impressions at a town-

hall meeting on the mosque building project. He emphasizes that the media's concentration on the comments of critiques of the mosque, who argued the building of the mosque in Cologne would be the first step towards the creation of a parallel society, were not representative of the high levels of common sense and support for religious rights shown at well-attended public meetings on the plans for the mosque.⁴² Certainly neighbors raised doubts about the construction, they mentioned problems in the district such as heavy traffic and noise, but all in all this debate was constructive, as Kermani noted.⁴³

The members of the majority society did not only accept this symbolic building of a new minority, no, they said: 'Yes, such a mosque, well if it looks that magnificent, we want to have it'. Applause. 'These people have to pray somewhere.' Applause. 'We can't tell them to integrate and at the same time demand them to stay in factory buildings with their faith.' Applause. 'We are Ehrenfeld.' Ovation.⁴⁴

During this time the political party Pro Köln started to get engaged in the conflict and took a strong stance against any such building. They claimed to represent the majority of Cologne's inhabitants whereas the leading elite was acting against ordinary people's interests. Pro Köln had planned to host an "International Anti-Islamization Congress" on September 20, 2008. The list of invited speakers announced for the conference came from the European network of right-wing populist parties including politicians of the French National Front (*Front Nationale*), the Austrian Freedom Party (*FPÖ*), the Italian Northern League (*Lega Nord, LN*) and the Belgian Flemish Interest (*Vlaams Belang*)⁴⁵. Finally, the event had to be cancelled because of strong opposition by civil society in Cologne. Even citizens of Cologne who continued to have doubts about the planned mosque united to prohibit a public demonstration by the radical far right in their town. A broad spectrum of civil actors called for an act of resistance including Christian Democrats, trade unions, Social Democrats, left wing party members and students, Christian churches and Islamic groups. Critics of Islam, as well as mosque supporters, participated in a demonstration against the Anti-

Islamization Congress. It appeared that the city refused to host such a congress and hence, those who wanted to exclude a religious minority had to face exclusion themselves. Media reported that taxi drivers refused to transport the well-known delegates; hotel owners cancelled their rooms and bar owners displayed banners stating that they would not serve their local beer to right-wing populists. In 2009 Pro Köln once again invited an Anti-Islamization Congress and this time succeeded in holding it. In the same year the local party won 5.4 percent of the votes and re-entered the city council with five representatives. Since 2011 Pro Köln has been under surveillance by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, which considers the party as potentially anti-constitutional. The architectural plans of the mosque were slightly altered and in autumn 2008 the Islamic community received permission to build the mosque. It celebrated the laying of the first stone in November 2009 and is planning the inauguration of the building in mid 2012.

A Ramadan Story of Two Faiths Bound in Friendship⁴⁶

The friendship of a Christian and a Muslim congregation was the unusual headline of a news story from the US public broadcaster NPR. A Christian pastor in Tennessee had put a sign outside his church before the month of Ramadan 2010 that read, “Welcome to the neighborhood, Memphis Islamic Center.” As the radio show reported, Pastor Stone invited the Muslim community to celebrate their holiday inside his church while their own cultural center was under construction nearby. When the Muslim community did not know where to accommodate the usually bigger number of attendants during the month of Ramadan, this visible message not only offered them a place to worship but also demonstrated solidarity in a time that was shaped by rallies against a mosque building project in New York and a town 200 miles away. The radio report calls this welcome sign the beginning of an “unusual alliance” that’s still strong a year later. Accordingly, the Christian and the Islamic community continue to get together and jointly work for the neighborhood.⁴⁷ However, a short Google search in US news and an in-depth research into the history of

Muslims' presence in Europe indicate that such an alliance is not that unusual. During the first years of the arrival of Turkish guest workers' in Germany, churches provided them with spaces to mark Ramadan. There is also the story that in the late 1960s the Catholic Church had offered them a space in the cathedral of Cologne; a similar story from Berlin is also reported. Another example of a long-term relationship is the soccer championship that have brought together teams of imams and teams of clergy in the cities of Leicester (UK), Berlin (Germany) and Gothenburg (Sweden) over the past few years, establishing not only contacts but lasting trust between the individual participants.

A local newspaper from the Washington, DC area awarded a rabbi and an imam the title "Washingtonians of the Year 2010"; for nearly six years Imam Mohamed Magid, spiritual leader of the All Dulles Area Muslim Society, and Rabbi Robert Nosanchuk, leader of the Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation in Reston, have been holding public dialogues. Every Friday afternoon about a thousand Muslims use a room in the synagogue for weekly prayers. Once Rabbi Nosanchuk addressed the Muslims at a prayer service and at the same night Imam Magid spoke to the Jewish congregation gathered for a family Sabbath service.⁴⁸ This article is striking in another respect—the comments board under those on-line articles with a positive approach towards Muslims are often filled with offensive remarks. However, this article proved the opposite; the comments board included remarks such as: "This is the only way!"; "Now that is the best article I've read in a long time, it's what Washington should be all about!"; "That's my Imam!"; "Great stuff! Religious tolerance and cooperation is the way to go. Please come to Utah and spread the message here too brothers!!!"; and "Congratulations and I wish both individuals much success."⁴⁹

*Global Connection: Establishing
Links Between Universities and Students*

Sonja Hegazy, a German political scientist, reflects on the deficit – and the potential – of dialogue initiatives, in particular the neglect of young

people that could present a strategy to reach out beyond religious and political elites to common people who are not only curious about the world but who also represent its future.

Surprisingly, the work with and on young people has been sadly neglected to date in the dialogue with the Islamic World. The focus on institutions has long since blended out a large majority of the population.⁵⁰

Europe's internal divides after hundreds of years of violent conflicts have been mended by grand projects that targeted the youth of neighboring countries such as France and Germany. International friendship organizations have been bringing new generations together in holiday camps and school exchanges, allowing them to build long-term relations with the descendants of their ancestors' former enemies. A similar idea has been taken up and translated into the new age of social online networks by "Soliya," a non-profit organization using new technologies to facilitate dialogue between students across the globe and is supported by the United Nation's Alliance of Civilizations. The *Connect Program* uses the latest web-conferencing technology to connect university students in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and the United States and form a learning environment over large distances.

In a time when media plays an increasingly powerful role in shaping peoples' viewpoints on political issues, Soliya provides students with the opportunity, skills and tools to shape and articulate their own viewpoints on some of the most pressing global issues facing their generation.⁵¹

Participating students are not alone in this; a cross-cultural team of young leaders drawn from over 25 different countries facilitates online meetings over the course of at least one university semester that sometimes lead to meetings in person. Participants form research and study teams to work together on solving a problem and present their results in online meetings to the whole group. Participation is facilitated by universities that join the program and consequently invite their students to follow a course online. The results of their work are later shared on the

Soliya News Network and the Common Ground News Service, with support of active and former news correspondents. According to the organization's statements, it aims "to build confidence and support the efforts of peaceful co-existence and mutual respect between nations."⁵²

This cross-cultural education program allows university students from the United States and throughout the Middle East collaboratively to explore and discuss controversial issues, mostly as part of an accredited course at their universities. According to Soliya, by 2011 over 400 students and 20 universities from the United States, Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait have participated in the program. Internet-based links between colleges and universities provided by the non-profit organization allow students to jointly compile documentaries. The short films cover major events at the root of current conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the war in Iraq, the Madrid train bombing or the 9/11 attacks. The outcome is twofold: students learn how the same events can be presented differently by the media and at the same time get a voice and while producing their story discuss why they view these events differently. This process enables students to see global developments from different perspectives and build up empathy for people that are usually presented as enemies or at least members of different cultures and entities.

How to Foster Understanding: Some Concluding Remarks

There are many more stories and examples of activities initiated by political leaders, engaged citizens, religious authorities or lay members of faith groups that could serve as accounts of engagement for mutual understanding and resisting the extremists' narratives of irreconcilableness of different faith groups. These many stories and initiatives show "the West" as not suddenly appearing as one block looking down upon people of other colors and faiths. Some of the examples mentioned highlight how more or less direct reactions to a tragic event or an act of hatred have in effect brought people from different faith communities together. These cases show us, in an unexpected way, that acts of hatred can be the spark

to begin a long-term relation. Another effect of 9/11 cannot be denied; it led Muslims in minority contexts to become more engaged in various dialogues, fostered the institutionalization of Islam in minority situations and the opening up of mosques, or as Liyakatali Takim phrases it:

The increased dialogue and interaction between Muslims and Christians represents a significant paradigm shift, a shift from attempts at 'conversion of' to those of 'conversation with' the other.⁵³

Likewise, European and North American governments became more aware of Muslim minorities living in their countries. This has negative effects such as the stereotyping and profiling in anti-terrorism strategies, but also opened up opportunities to raise concerns of these minorities in dialogues with political authorities. In this way the new visibility has contributed to a development of mosque associations; more professionalism in public relations and media contacts; and an enhancement of inter-Muslim debates and communications. In some European countries such as the Netherlands, Austria and Germany this process has led to the foundation of state-funded chairs for Islamic studies aiming at educating future teachers of Islam in schools and religious leaders for European Muslim communities. Even though this process will doubtlessly be accompanied by conflicts about the content of these studies, not only between different Muslim communities and interest groups but also between Islamic organizations and the funding institutions, it still is a step towards consolidation of Muslim life in these societies.

Besides governmental and academic initiatives to invest in the future intellectual development of Islamic thought, we find civil society, administrations and state-funded institutions investing in the creation of inclusive visions of living in diverse societies that are characterized by religious plurality. Explicitly or implicitly these initiatives counter or are countered by exclusivist understandings of the nation state, especially by anti-Muslim expressions. Jamal Malik calls for a cautious reply to these dividing forces that does not simply take up simplistic explanations for conflicts.

While making policies, they [policy makers] should avoid simplistic paradigms of understanding the conflicts, e.g. Islam versus West, religion versus secularism etc. All such terminologies carry a danger of boxing diverse people and a complexity of issues into only one category.⁵⁴

The dilemma still remains unsolved: how can hate speech against a specific religious group be answered without contributing to the dividing trends of identity politics? Citizens' and neighborhood initiatives that bring together people from diverse backgrounds, without denying their religious and ethnic affiliations, have developed methods of reconciliation on a small scale in personal interactions. They are trying to re-establish the trust of verbally or physically attacked minorities and build up long-term relations and cohesive atmospheres in order to prevent such attacks in future. So far, these initiatives have been neglected by researchers and have not entered the global consciousness. However, many engaged people are showing in daily practice that the line of enmity does not pass between people of "the West" and Islam.

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Problem and Prospects of Co-existence between Nations

Abdulaziz Hamid Al-Jaboury

Analysis of the concepts, means and points of convergence and diversion when discussing co-existence between nations and societies, particularly between the Islamic World and the West, is not new for academics, philosophers and political leaders. It is a result of the intellectual and cultural phenomena that have pervaded societies throughout human history where the latest influence has been globalization, which has brought together the old and the new through rapid scientific advancement and telecommunications technology in the developed world. The effects of globalization can be felt in political, social, economic, cultural and even moral circles. Globalization has influenced individual lifestyles and communities and also constitutes an inexhaustible intellectual source for thought, philosophy and vision in the academic and cultural arena. These discussions sometimes lead to agreement but usually become points of dispute, provoking controversy and skepticism over all what has been agreed upon when what is needed is translation into tangible results in society. Globalization has not stopped at cultural and scientific exchange but has also extended to the imposition of influence and hegemony, denial of privacy and impacting the social, intellectual and cultural stability on a society's foundations and its national and ideological identity.

Discussing the controversy over perception and reaction to problems of co-existence between Islam and the West requires additional effort to

decipher cultural, social and political symbols that indicate identity, vision, philosophy and contribution to human civilization. This study is a multi-angled presentation free from hard-line views and in compliance with academic accuracy and neutrality based on the actual facts of the Islamic World and its dealings with Western civilization as recognized by intellectuals and historians on both sides. This presentation is also a modest effort to highlight the role of civilization and the economic, cultural and social developments of the Islamic World in enhancing the principle of dialogue between civilizations through the emphasis of common ground and points of agreement between nations and society.

The Islamic World is also a crucial component of human society, which cannot be ignored or comprehended without understanding the Islamic message introduced in theory and practice. This understanding should not be based on certain social practices by Muslims that might not be necessarily consistent with Islamic principles. Such practices are a result of their particular environment upon which the West has based its negative perceptions about Islam and Muslims. The media, which has experienced huge technological developments in the West, has helped to spread these perceptions that often express a misguided ideology and lack accuracy and fairness. This might have come as a result of ignorance or animosity but it certainly does not express Western society's desires, views and aspirations for peace, progress and prosperity for the future of human civilization. Searching for common ground between civilizations to strengthen cooperation is extremely important. However, searching for the points of difference is equally important, not necessarily for their eradication but at least to minimize their impact. This search also aims to bridge the gap between Muslims and the West created by those who have negative or destructive objectives and agendas.

This study tries to answer various fundamental questions thrown up by the issue of dialogue between civilizations by asking the classic question centered on whether co-existence between nations and societies is part of the development of civilization, is simply inevitable regardless, or a reality imposed by specific living conditions. Questions asked are: where are its problems centered? How do they manifest themselves? What is the

correct way to encourage prospects for co-existence? What are the fundamentals required for co-existence between nations? What are the catalysts for creating and promoting co-existence? What are the crucial constraints? What is the role of the media in consolidating co-existence between nations and societies? This study also reviews the Islamic perspective on co-existence within a single society and between nations and examines the main features of Islamic civilization including its developments today. The reality of Islam and its contemporary approach in a changing society is explained as well as a brief look at the role of individuals, groups, regional and international organizations and civil institutions concerned with creating and enhancing co-existence between nations, for example the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). There follows a discussion on what the Islamic World should do to advance work on co-existence between it and the West and concluding with a vision of how to bridge the gap between the Islamic and Western worlds.

Co-existence: A Civilizational Approach?

The emergence of Islamic civilization has neither been abrupt nor coincidental, nor was it the result of a collective human desire or of a specific people who wanted to lead and take the credit for its emergence. It has not originated from an ideology or a specific culture but as a result of interaction between individuals and groups over long periods of time. The term civilization refers to a shift in human existence that brings about changes in life organization (social, economic, cultural, political and even behavioral), resulting in a new stage that has its own unique character. It also implies that there was a preceding “uncivilized” stage. What was taking place within human society before it became a civilized society?

This subject had been fully discussed by many researchers and historians throughout the ages, all of whom have proposed how civilizations emerged according to their own philosophy and ranges from the works of Plato and Aristotle all the way to contemporary thinkers such

as Nietzsche, Sartre, Toynbee, Garaudy, Salama Mousa, Ali Al Wardi and others who unanimously agreed on the following:

Civilization began when Man evolved from a primitive existence using his intellect to meet life's needs in the ongoing struggle with a hostile environment. This struggle forms the basis of development in the opinion of many academics. Arnold Toynbee, for example, states that Man's need to use his intellect started by the end of the fourth Ice Age, when ice had receded toward the two poles and desertification began to spread in most of the Asian regions. Along with desertification, scarcity of food and water began to emerge and the need for survival led to the migration of primitive tribes to valleys where rivers were still running. Human migration to these valleys formed the beginnings of stable settlement when Man developed agriculture and animal husbandry and consequently an economic life began to appear as the first steps in human civilization. In his discussion of philosophers and intellectuals' views on the beginnings of human civilization, historian Ali Al Wardi agrees with Toynbee that creativity, innovation, comparison and contrast form the basis for differentiating between primitive and civilized societies. Consequently, these elements are considered to be the cause behind the emergence of the first human civilization. This is consistent with the view of the American writer, Will Durant, in his 14-part book *The Story of Civilization*, in which he said:

The earliest human being lived in caves and depended on hunting, and learned and acquired skills depending on his needs to survive in the face of nature and to control it. The advent of writing skills marked the entry of Man into the era of human civilization. Thus the emergence of the first human civilization came from environmental constraints, creative and innovative capabilities, struggle with nature to satisfy survival needs, and from the general diversity that prevailed in the environment.

Comparative study of civilizations, as a branch of modern science, is therefore closer to the study of social, cultural and intellectual transformation in homogenous societies over a specific period of time or during prolonged periods of history. However, civilizations share one

point—primitive societies are more numerous than civilized societies but as far as number of individuals in primitive societies are concerned, they are much less than the number of individuals in civilized societies. From here comes the flaw in the idea of civilizational unity as described by Toynbee. He says that there is only one civilization, which is the Western civilization; this idea is considered to be civilizational racism, so to speak.

Civilization as a Concept

The definitions of “civilization” are numerous; they vary according to the school of thought used. However, the most comprehensive definition which expresses the general meaning of civilization is the one which views it as the expression of systems of beliefs, values and principles as well as the synthesis of human activities in science, literature and art. The term civilization has evolved over the ages. Ibn Khaldun defined civilization as a “sophistication in luxury and the mastery of crafts used for advancement in various aspects such as cooking, clothes, decoration, architecture and all social situations.” Each of these requires skills and crafts influenced by individual taste for pleasures, delights and an enjoyment of luxury that are determined by environment. Therefore, the cycle of civilization related to the monarchy is intertwined with the cycle of peasantry, since peasantry and monarchy are consubstantial. Ibn Khaldun argues that civilization is the “additional welfare” added to the basics of life for any human society. It varies depending on the degree of luxury and level of difference between nations in terms of abundance or scarcity of resources.

Ibn Khaldun also provides a more elaborate definition of civilization, holding that monarchy and statehood are the ultimate expression of rural life. Every human entity – be it the peasantry, a civilization, a monarchy or ordinary folk – has a limited lifetime. This is what confirms the theory of the rise and fall of civilizations which Ibn Khaldun had been the first to develop and well before the European philosophers. Only late in the 20th century had the British historian Arnold Toynbee expounded and reformulated this theory as an axiom in the field of history philosophy.

Today, the meaning of the term civilization has evolved considerably. The American historian, Durant, in his publication *The story of Civilization*, which has been translated into many languages, states that civilization is a social system which allows man to increase his cultural production. Civilization is made up of four components: social resources, political systems, ethical standards and the pursuit of science and art. “It (civilization) begins where anguish and uncertainty end.” In this sense, civilization is more loaded with meaning and significance to express the spirit which animates a given society. It is, therefore, more comprehensive than simply culture, which has more to do with identity than with the appearance and the general character of human life in a social environment, as Toynbee puts it: “civilization contains but can never be contained.” Based on this concept civilization starts from the interaction between various cultures whose features are shaped by people of different origins. Those cultures merged together into one stream that constitutes civilization.

Civilization has no ethnic character and cannot be associated with a given race or a given people. When it is sometimes ascribed to a given nation or geographical region, this is only for the sake of definition. Conversely, culture is the symbol of identity, the reflection of subjectivity and the expression of the uniqueness of a particular nation or people. Civilization is a crucible of various cultures blended and cross-fertilized to shape the characteristics of civilization, reflecting the human spirit in its sublimity and expressing the general principles and values shared among them all. Every civilization is underpinned by general principles, which stem from religious creeds or philosophies. No matter how numerous these creeds and philosophies are, the distinctive characteristics of a civilization are determined by those dominant belief systems most established in the hearts and minds of people and the most influential in public life to the extent that civilization becomes associated with them. This association is all the more positive when these foundations are positive themselves, as is the case with the Islamic civilization.

The major civilizations in the history of humanity differ from one another by their stance on the material and spiritual life. There are, in fact,

civilizations where materialism is dominant, others which favor the spiritual life, and finally those which strike a balance between the materialistic and the spiritual elements. There is a succession of civilizations, each one giving way to the next, and a state of affairs that led many a thinker to go as far as to argue that there is a similarity between civilizations.

*Co-existence as the
Basis of Civilization Building*

The aim of this study is not to examine human civilization from the point of view of its emergence and development, but rather to study the problem of co-existence over the course of human civilization and whether this is an inherent element in the emergence of civilization or an element imposed by societal conditions at a certain time and place. Will the problem of co-existence disappear with the demise of these conditions? Many researchers and philosophers in the East and West see the emergence of human civilization taking place when the following three phenomena were shaped:

1. **The Emergence of Cities and Development of Economic Relations:** Researchers assert that Man lived for long periods of time in a primitive, nomadic existence dependent upon hunting until agricultural villages began to emerge in river basins, including Mesopotamia and the Nile valley around 5000 BC. This was the nucleus for emergent agriculture settlements, which did not exceed three in number, and with a population of no more than 5,000 in each. These inhabitants were in need of protecting their settlements and cultivation from nomadic hunter/gatherers living in proximity and who had no concept of social contract or land ownership now found among the settled inhabitants. Settled living became a key factor in stability for food production, building and reconstruction and sparked the development of agricultural settlements into agricultural towns, urban cities, city states and eventually sovereign states.
2. **The Emergence of a Political and Social Pyramid:** After a settlement had become a socially and economically linked unit, the

emergence of what is called the “social pyramid” began to emerge and formed the first nucleus of the “political system”. This was the second basic foundation in the emergence of human civilization, the organization of society and the development of organized relations between communities where the concept of control, influence and expansion became a political concept.

3. **The Emergence of Religious Belief:** Humans instinctively questioned and searched for answers to the very nature of existence and one’s role in this life. Differences in explanation, and therefore belief, emerged and became a major cause of struggle.

Civilization in essence is the high capacity to participate in making the present and shaping the future; the civilized act refers to human efforts made by individuals and groups to achieve these two objectives. The conditions of this participation cannot be completed without cultural and civilizational co-existence between peoples and nations governed by humane values and regulated by rules agreed upon and abided by the international community. Based on this point, the principle of co-existence between individuals, communities and societies in the course of human civilization and its development to this day requires the following characteristics:

1. **An Interactive Approach:** Since no society can build a civilization where conflict (not competition) prevails among its individuals and communities.
2. **A Rational Approach:** Civilization cannot be built without minds that are capable of creativity, innovation, dialogue and a capability to understand and grasp the opportunities presented from competition and the exploitation of diversity between individuals in theory and practice.
3. **An Integrated Approach:** Society needs the individual and his mental and physical capabilities to be able to establish an advanced and civilized structure. This is exactly the same as the individual’s need for a safe and secure environment that provides him with the opportunities to use his capabilities. Integration is inevitable for

individual and group components of society who want to build a sophisticated civilization.

4. **An Evolutionary Approach:** Civilization is always developing, as witnessed by the massive developments experienced today. Many species existed on earth before Man but never evolved towards the development of civilization.

Importance of Co-existence in Human Civilization and its Definitions

Co-existence, as defined by the Spanish encyclopedia *Otyano*, is defined as a state of “living” that cannot be achieved without others because Man is a social animal by nature. *Al Waseet* dictionary defines co-existence as “the ability to participate in life”; this means participation in shaping and developing life and participation in creating visions and policies for the future. Therefore, participation has the following four aspects:

1. Shaping life as desired by an individual who works to achieve it, which explains his existence.
2. Life experiences that promote the concept of a cultural and rational human being as the finest and most honored creation.
3. Participation in life experiences which assert the higher capabilities of Man.
4. Participation in shaping visions and strategies to guarantee future generations’ continuity in the processes of development.

Human society consists of individuals, communities and nations each of which has its own territory and boundaries. These components have a common connection, namely the innate human link regardless of the diversity of human origins, race, color, physiology, gender or approaches to life and intellectual beliefs. It is of prime importance to note that research into the concept of co-existence will lead to many meanings that will help to understand this subject, and can be classified into the following three levels:

1. A political and intellectual level with the aim of putting an end to struggles, alleviating differences, containing or controlling strife in order to open channels for communication and the necessities of civilian and military requirements.
2. An economic level where co-existence is linked to cooperative relations between governments and populations in legal, economic and commercial affairs.
3. A religious, cultural and civilizational level where followers of various divine messages and global societal members meet in order to achieve international peace and security.

Co-existence Fundamentals

Although many researchers always prefer the third aforementioned level for its clear direction and effectiveness, a co-existence approach can include the following foundations:

1. Common free will where willingness for co-existence stems from the self and is not imposed by any external pressures or is subject to conditions.
2. Harmony of objectives so that co-existence is not bereft of any practical significance or short of securing benefits for the parties involved. Co-existence should aim to serve humanitarian higher objectives, secure social interests, establish global security, deter aggression and oppression, condemn policies and practices that confiscate peoples' and nations' rights and fighting all manifestations of racism and sexism under any pretext.
3. Joint cooperation in order to achieve goals agreed upon by the parties concerned.
4. Protection of co-existence by mutual respect and trust and one party's interests not to be favored over another, no matter what the motives or goals might be.

The term "peaceful co-existence" has been defined according to international policy as cooperation between world nations on the basis of understanding and exchange of commercial and economic interests,

particularly after World War II, which saw nuclear weapons used as tools of mass destruction and the emergence of a group of non-aligned countries reiterating their wish for co-existence as a way to coordinate international relations in the world, refrain from wars, brinkmanship and the threat of weapons of mass destruction. Co-existence with this objective and these foundations constitutes an agreement between parties based on compatibility of interests or common objectives.

*Difference and Diversity
as a Source of Co-existence*

The contentious relationship between the idea of unity, diversity and difference is based on overall cognitive fundamentals, which emerge from the inherent relationship between the concept of the oneness of God and the diversity of creation, which is also the source of variance in private behavior of individuals and societies. This private behavior is “a set of social and ethical behavioral systems created by certain people during their history and who have made them part of their national, or religious dimensions, but with stagnation and inability or unwillingness to develop, these have been absorbed into the collective consciousness of this people.” In other words, “it is the total product of thought, art, custom, practice and action acquired over history that creates a framework of national or religious sense.”

Accordingly, “private” has become one of the more frequently used terms as shown by the desires and wishes that prevail in contemporary societies and as used by political authorities, religious groups and intellectual, cultural, economic and social groups. This highlights the concept of “diversity” as a major condition for “co-existence” between the self and others, and based on this “diversity” rights and duties will have a specific meaning. These are two of the principles within the framework of co-existence. Highlighting privacy and its pursuance indicates a wish for co-existence, dialogue and cooperation more than insulation, narrow mindedness and isolation. This is due to the fact that “cultural and urban co-existence are two factors that pave the way for dialogue, which is

considered one of the life's necessities." Dialogue between cultures and civilizations, between individuals and groups, between peoples and governments, and between institutions and organizations is the sole means to achieve equilibrium (co-existence) in a human society characterized by diversity. This has been highlighted by the experience of international relations over recent decades and its interest in dialogue as the best way to achieve co-existence between all peoples, and an effective tool to achieve peace and security.

Approaches to the Prospects and Problems of Co-existence

The basic approaches to the problems and prospects of co-existence can be placed within three overarching comprehensive frameworks that encompass all political, social, economic and cultural frameworks. These approaches are:

Social Approaches

Proceeding from the idea of the unity of origin of human existence, history has shown that most nations and civilizations that managed to progress and climb the ladder of civilization are those which were able to find a state of co-existence and understanding between their various nationalities, sects and religions, between the individual on one the hand and nations and peoples on the other. This case should also include those psychological, social and political aspects necessary for an existence free from war, killing and violence. The history of societies tells us how nations fell as a result of intolerance and rebellion. Life in such nations transformed into a living hell for their inability to understand and co-exist with others. A nation can achieve power and excellence depending on its ability to accommodate others in its march for comprehensive social harmony based on positive interaction and integration all of their parts.

A framework to move towards the future becomes complete when we realize the legality of the other, theoretically and practically. Human social life is based on achieving social integration through communication,

intellectual openness, mental and scientific interaction and commercial exchange and co-existence. In all situations, interacting with others does not depend on physical closeness or distance but stems basically from an individual's psychological and social behavior. Denial of the other; non-recognition of his potential and capabilities within his psychological, cultural and intellectual framework; considering his existence merely as marginal; and putting him in zones of conflict in order to eradicate him or impose hegemony and control over him do not count positively for individual or social development. Rational thinking based on objectivity and impartiality in the management of life cannot be achieved without the presence of the other physically, intellectually, psychologically or socially. The attempt to marginalize the other is nothing but an attempt to rebel against the law of life. By denying the other, society will cease its integration because of the lack of the spirit of diversity and interaction between its parts. The individual's basic needs in society are to know his own capability by knowing that of the other, and dealing and integrating with him so that he can learn more about himself and co-exist with others and create an inclusive society. Researchers confirm that, "what applies to an individual applies to the society as well, since it is composed of individuals who are different in conduct, thoughts, objectives and capabilities." Many factors are common in the inability to recognize the other. Among these are the following:

1. *Psychological Factors*: De Tocqueville sees individualism as a diluted version of selfishness, pushing members of society to isolate themselves from others.
2. *Cultural Levels*: Many researchers and intellectuals in the East and West have indicated that the basic construction of behavior of individuals and groups depends on the cultural level creating a suitable environment for mutual understanding. An individual who has acquired the culture of contempt and supremacy toward the other promotes bigotry and an inability to co-exist with others.
3. *Lack of Good Intentions*: The family, social influences, bad experiences and irrational thinking create an atmosphere of mutual

suspicion. When an individual or a society experiences injustice, oppression or exploitation, this transforms into a constant mental state of victimhood. History tells us that most conflicts and disputes erupt as a result of misunderstanding and inability to reach agreement with the other side along with constant suspicion of intentions.

4. *Weakness and Fear of Confrontation*: Very often, lack of confidence in one's self becomes chronic and creates a permanent sense of inferiority and defeatism. In such a situation a person becomes withdrawn into a siege mentality before an imagined or perceived enemy. Any association with the "other" is rejected, whether it is true or false, right or wrong, beneficial or not. The "other" becomes a permanent enemy and an axis of evil. This applies to societies and nations plagued with cultural deficiencies that reject the "other" because it highlights the weaknesses in their own society and therefore they avoid communication with the "other" out of fear that the "other" will pervade their societies and influence thinking.
5. *Isolation from the "Other"*: Isolation is considered one of the most important factors in causing communication to deteriorate. The causes of isolation can be psychological, cultural, geographical or economic. The isolationist finds it difficult to understand others because he lacks the language of dialogue and understanding, the consequences of which are evident in the following aspects:
 - i. **NEGATIVE COMMUNICATION**: An individual progresses and a society grows through positive communication. Advanced societies have benefitted from this positive communication, which indicates the presence of a conscious capability to understand the "other" through intellectual, scientific and cultural exchange. However, a lack of positive communication produces a negative language based on conflict and suspicion as is the case with Arab and Muslim nations. While we live in the age of information technology and globalization there are examples of negative dealings with the outside world due to a lack of positive communication. There are those who use violence as a basic

language; there are others who have chosen absolute isolation from influencing or being influenced; and there are those who have assimilated completely to the extent that they have lost their own values. This kind of misunderstanding and miscommunication makes us unable to understand the external world around us and is reflected in our mutual dealings with each other.

- ii. LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF SURROUNDING DEVELOPMENTS: The world consists of escalating changes in culture and civilization as a result of the technology and information revolution. The culture of suspicion and lack of communication with the “other” has added to the difficulty of adapting to these new changes and developments in the world. Isolation leads to political, economic and cultural illiteracy.
- iii. DEVIATION AND NEGATIVITY: The consequences of the present situation has proved that most of the doctrinal and moral deviations over the past years emerged in enclosed and despotic environments where a lack of continuous communication removes constructive dialogue in society. Thus, we see many isolated societies becoming a fertile ground for deviant ideologies after they have cut off communication with the outside world.
- iv. LIMITED CREATIVITY, INNOVATION AND EFFECTIVENESS: Civilizations flourish with competition, creativity and innovation when they face challenges and interact positively with others. Creativity provokes and stirs competition and no creative work can be achieved unless it is within the framework of understanding the creativity of others. Rejection of the “other” comes as a result of belligerence, isolation and inability to have any creative interaction. Belligerent cultures consume their own energy in defending themselves against foreign influences. Isolation will inevitably lead to the eradication of the individual and social decay. Absolute rejection of the “other” is a call to antagonize the other culture and rejecting its contributions. This approach leads to gradual cultural death.

- v. **INEVITABLE COLLAPSE:** The basic result of isolation is the death of creativity and interaction and the extinction of solitary groups. The extinct group is one that prohibited dialogue among its individuals, isolated itself absolutely from the outside world, and imagine that it possessed the absolute truth.
- vi. **RULE OF VIOLENCE:** When an individual is unable to establish an objective understanding and communication with others, he resorts to violence to impose his values. The use of unwarranted violence is indicative of weakness in dialogue, understanding and integration. Communication aims to establishing the fundamentals of dialogue and co-existence and putting an end to violence in on-going conflicts.
- vii. **AFFIRMATION OF INDIVIDUALISM AND ITS INFLEXIBILITY:** Social fact confirms the necessity for the integration of the individual within society while maintaining personal privacy within a general social framework based on dialogue, reciprocation and integration. Aristotle says “the individual who lives absolute self-sufficiency is either a beast or God.”

In order to communicate and achieve the principle of balanced co-existence the following has to be addressed:

1. Stressing those common factors which bring people and ideas together and rejection of that which hinders communication.
2. Creation of a spirit of cooperation and co-existence.
3. Acceptance of others’ opinions, which develops human intellectual and cultural experience.

Common Interests Approach

Since the end of World War II humanity has realized the importance of working within the framework of a common destiny, participation in major issues and linking relationships in a manner that unifies concerns, aspirations and the importance of co-existence. This awareness deepened further at the intellectual level when publications started to appear in the West on the nature of international relations, particularly after the end of

the Cold War and after the attention given to Fukuyama's book *The End of History and the Last Man* and Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations*. While Fukuyama predicted the rule and domination of liberal democratic values and their transformation into one human destiny, Huntington predicted that conflict in the future would not be between nation states or ideologies but between civilizations, which form, according to him, "the broader cultural framework of societies." These cultural lines of demarcation were experienced in the bloody conflicts in places such as Bosnia, Somalia, Kosovo, Iraq and Palestine. Thus, the United Nations and various countries rushed to adopt the notion of inter-cultural dialogue and dedicated 2002 as the year of "dialogue of civilizations," resulting in a flood of literature on the subject in intellectual, political, religious and social circles. The issue has become even more important in light of globalization characterized by the unlimited use of American power, peacefully and militarily, to impose hegemony on the world according to strategic interests in the West.

There has been much talk about the dialogue of civilizations, cultures and religions as an important and basic step for co-existence to work. This indicates the awareness of the difficulties everybody is facing in the developed or developing world. However, much talk about dialogue between civilizations indicates the imbalances which current relations between nations are facing. In particular, it indicates the imbalances of Western culture and values, American ones especially, in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. These imbalances, according to many studies, are attributed to two opposing lines of argument: the first is the logic of history ruling the orientation of humanity towards unity of destiny due to interrelated interests as a result of huge technological advances. The second is the logic of Western hegemony in the world and its attempts to impose its own vision, values and materialism on the world. This in turn leads to rejection by other cultures. These two lines of argument present an extremely important problem, based on two main issues:

1. The unity of human destiny imposes on all civilizations, peoples and nations a collective commitment to global or universal cooperation in

light of modern technological developments whereby every entity affects and becomes affected by events across the globe.

2. There is a marked difference in values, standards and cultures among various nations, which should have a fundamental say in these issues. Thus, precaution is required whether in theory or in practice to safeguard against cultural immersion.

Cultural Dimensions

Do we consider contemporary Western civilization as the pinnacle of human achievement, and if so, do we look at it as an example that we have to accept as a dominant model to be followed? Do we have to leave all our cultural privacy? Is civilization today a historical accumulation of various peoples and cultures and consequently has no special characteristics nor is it a product of a certain nation? Or is the idea of civilization as a flexible and vibrant concept used by the conqueror to control the conquered? Is it something the strong use to take the last tool away from the weak to resist a distorted, deficient and limited model? Should cultural privacy be maintained and the principle of distinction and difference be consolidated? These options represent the most important avenues of discussion in political, cultural and scientific circles and which are used by researchers and experts concerned with civilizational matters. We can say that each of these approaches has its own positive and negative aspects. This is what drives a call for action in order to formulate a more comprehensive approach and study the issue through a strategy and methodology encapsulating three dimensions:

1. Understanding the historical context in which contemporary civilization originated. There is no doubt that it is the style of Western modernization that also produced a Western philosophical framework, intellectual reference and value system through which Western civilization developed and formulated its approach towards non-Western cultures.
2. Understanding the relation between the religious and the secular formulated by Western civilization and its impact on the formation of

political, social, cultural and professional institutions and groups in the West. In other words, we should understand the concept and position of religion in contemporary Western civilization.

3. Understanding the enormous technological development which characterizes contemporary Western civilization and its effect on value systems and the changing perception of Man.

People live in a world today connected through various communication channels that link societies and form relations between them. This development integrated the world system, which stabilized after World War II by establishing bodies such as the United Nations and the network of organizations, institutions and specialist agencies operating within its framework and supposedly free of any hegemony, control or influence. The global community has operated for more than five decades at the international level where relations in the areas of trade, economy, science and technology have come under a system of global interaction. However, the issue has taken a more sensitive direction that highlights how societies' and governments' interests cannot be achieved within the framework of a system that overrides matters of identity or abolishes cultural and civilization distinction.

Regardless of the reasons behind the nature of international relations there is a consensus among researchers and philosophers that these relations are “an endless struggle for power to achieve interests” using what is known as “interdependence,” according to Joseph Nye Jr., who states that, “increase in the growth of networks of interdependence between nations and groups at the global level is characterized by networks of connections that span multi-continental distances.” He stresses the cooperative dimension in human behavior and relations between nations. This model of “reciprocal dependence” is based on the influence of educational links, cultural interactions, economic development, international trade and technological progress. Thus, it enhances the potential for international peace, basic human dignity and freedom. It is a model that sees the world represented by a society of nations (international community) within which societies interact at a high

level of diplomatic, economic, cultural and social exchange, provided that it does not contradict with an individual society's national identity or substitute it. On the contrary, this exchange might be more effective in the context of "cultural diversity" and prosperity of peoples' national identities. The "dialogue between civilizations" could see the future of humanity as defined by accumulation of experience and a deepening of mutual respect for all as a basis for the establishment of a pluralistic humane society. This society is not characterized by stability alone but also by its respect of diversity which enriches it. If this human element is lost and this moral foundation disappears, the idea would become closer to totalitarianism.

The international legal system cannot serve humanity unless it is based on the rules of international law and derived from the spirit and values of humanity. The global system must be governed by the power of international law, which guarantees for individual states their full sovereign and human rights for their populations. This requires the application of international law and the charter of the United Nations, particularly Article 13 which provides for international cooperation in economic, social, cultural and educational fields and assisting in achieving and guaranteeing human rights and freedom for all. This is in addition to Article 73 which guarantees the right to participation in political, economic and educational affairs and an individual's right to fair treatment and protection from all kinds of abuse. All of this should go hand in hand with respect for individual cultures and the protection of "right to cultural diversity", which requires the development of international cooperation in the fields of education, sciences and culture under covenants and charters governing the work of international and regional organizations and institutions.

At the same time the practice of "right to cultural diversity" at the international level will not be accomplished unless cultural dialogue and co-existence recovers and leads to the consolidation of the values of harmony and cooperation in the world and a strengthening of international cooperation within the framework of existing international and regional organizations. In order to be meaningful, effective and structurally

interactive, co-existence and dialogue have to be based on mutual respect in a moral and peaceful sense. In other words, dialogue and co-existence have to be based on legal, moral and equitable rules. Therefore, it is possible to provide an historic opportunity for civilization and cultural interaction in addition to an effective element for establishing global and personal security and prosperity. The right to cultural diversity has become one of the basic rules of international law based on the charter of the United Nations (UN) and the covenants and agreements that govern and regulate cultural relations between nations. Ensuring this human right is an affirmation of cultural identity for all people in the world.

As stated in Article 1 of the UN's "Declaration of Principles on Cultural Cooperation," each culture has its own dignity and values which must be respected and maintained. Every people has the right to develop its culture as part of Mankind's heritage. There is nothing in the concept of cultural diversity that conflicts with achieving common interests between communities and nations within the framework of human cooperation based on mutual understanding and co-existence. However, diversity also feeds the human drive towards owning the means of progress and prosperity motivated by natural competition, which should be an opportunity for cultures and civilizations to communicate these means to serve humanity as a whole. Paragraph 3 of Article 1 indicates that achievements in the scientific, literature, material and moral fields should be for all Mankind and not merely a certain culture, nationality or country.

Arab and Islamic Civilization and Co-existence

The Concept of Islamic Civilization

Islamic civilization is a product of the interaction of cultures which became Muslim after Islamic conquests of lands and brought the new religion as a gift to all peoples. Islamic civilization in a fully inclusive, deep and wide sense is a common heritage for all nations that participated in forging it. Islamic civilization is not one belonging to a specific race or

ethnicity, but it is a collective civilization for all nationalities and races which participated in its establishment and played a role in its prosperity, glory and expansion to various parts of the world at that time.

Islamic Civilization Characteristics

For each civilization there is a “body” and “spirit” exactly like human beings. The “body” of civilization represents its tangible achievements while its “spirit” represents a set of beliefs, concepts, ethics and traditions embodied in the behavior of individuals and groups, their relations, vision toward religion, life, the universe, the individual and society. Islamic civilization characteristics are formed from these elements. Islamic civilization is unique in five characteristics that distinguish it from other successive civilizations. These characteristics are:

1. It is a civilization of faith that emerged from Islamic doctrine. It is a monotheistic civilization that started from belief in one god, creator of heavens and earth, of Man and all other creatures. It is a man-made civilization but it has perspectives of faith and a religious reference, and religion was the strongest motive for its establishment, creativity and prosperity.
2. It is a humanistic civilization, universal in its prospects and expansions, unlimited to a certain geographic region, race or historical stage, but absorbs all peoples and nations with its global influence. It is a civilization that infuses all peoples and everyone who turns to it will reap the fruits of his efforts. Islamic civilization was built on the basis of faith that Man is the most important creature; that all human activities will inevitably lead to his pleasure and welfare; and that any action Man takes for achieving this goal is considered an action for the sake of God; in other words a humanitarian action in the first instance.
3. It is a generous civilization that has taken from other human civilizations and cultures from the ancient world and generously provided the world with advances in science, knowledge and art. It has provided the values of goodness, justice, equality, virtue and beauty for the benefit of humanity with no distinction made between

an Arab or an Ajami, black or white, or even Muslim or non-Muslim, whether he is a follower of any of the other religions or he is an unbeliever living under the umbrella of the Islamic civilization.

4. It is a civilization that balances between the spiritual and physical in a moderate manner that characterizes Islamic thought. Moderation has also characterized Islamic civilization throughout the ages without excessiveness or negligence, unjust extravagance, temerity or recklessness.
5. It is an everlasting civilization on earth that derives its existence from Islam. Almighty God guaranteed the protection of the true religion (Islam). Therefore the Islamic civilization has its own special characteristics, neither aging nor become extinct since it is not a national culture, discriminatory or against human nature. While Muslims may weaken and their influence may decrease, Islam never weakens and its influence never recedes and hence it is a civilization with permanent presence.

These five characteristics acquire the nature of permanence and continuity from the principles of the true religion of Islam and do not change even if conditions alter or if Islamic societies experience strength or weakness or collapse. Islamic civilization led the march of science and knowledge in the Middle Ages, called the Dark Ages by Europeans, while we consider them the ages of enlightenment in the history of our nation. In this context it is important to note that George Sarton divided scientific activity in his book *Introduction to the History of Science* into historical periods each lasting half a century and mentions a name that is representative of the achievements made in that period. From the year 750 to 1100 (350 years), all scientists were from the Islamic world including Jabir Ibn Hayyan, Khwarizmi, Al Razi, Al Masoudi, Abu Al Wafa, Al Biruni and Omar Al Khayyam, and were Arabs, Turks, Afghans and Persians. These scientists excelled in chemistry, mathematics, medicine, geography, nature and astronomy. From the year 1100 onwards for 250 years Europeans scientists interacted with those from the Islamic world such as Ibn Rushd, Tusi and Ibn Al Nafis. During that period the

European Renaissance emerged and witnessed the translation of the sciences of the Islamic world and their study and development until the present day. This is an historical fact confirmed by the Muslim Arab scientist residing in Germany, Dr. Mohammad Mansour, who was chosen from among 2,000 international figures for having left their mark on the world during the past century following an initiative by Cambridge University.

If the concept of civilization in general is the result of everything a person does to improve his living conditions, whether intentionally or unintentionally, and whether the outcome is materialistic or moral, Islamic civilization is the fruits of the efforts of the whole Islamic World made throughout the ages to improve the existence of Mankind. If civilization is a reaction to human needs, Islamic civilization has responded to all these needs throughout the ages and was the world's unchallenged civilization for many decades. Thus the credit goes to the Islamic civilization in laying the foundation stone for contemporary European civilization by contributing to medicine, pharmacy, chemistry, mathematics and physics, which accelerated the Renaissance and a revival of the various sciences.

The Reality of the Islamic Civilization

The reality of the Islamic civilization today does not reflect the status it should have. However, we have no reason to consider it to be collapsing and is far from accurate when describing its current situation. In addition, there is plenty of evidence to invalidate the theory any collapse of the Islamic civilization comes as a result of the decline of the Islamic nation's role in enriching contemporary human civilization.

The Egyptian intellectual Fuad Mohammad Shibel, who translated *A Study of History* by Arnold Toynbee, was one of the first shrewd thinkers to realize the meaning of civilizational collapse. He says that, "collapse does not exactly mean the end, as history does not indicate a possible life span of any society." Toynbee used the term "collapse" to denote this meaning and it will be seen, when this term is used in this sense, that the most productive, illuminating and famous works in the history of any

particular civilization came in the wake of collapse or indeed as a result of it. This is a profound and long-term vision of the nature of successive human civilizations through which we view the reality and impact of Islamic civilization today. Close examination of the reality of the contemporary Islamic world – bypassing temporary changes and superficial manifestations – will lead us to results which might seem inconsistent with the logic of events. However, if we assume that the fate of civilizations is not linked to historical facts during certain periods of time and that fate is not decided according to the results of crises that afflict communities, we can reach the conviction that the Islamic civilization at this historical stage is in a state of cultural readiness to resume a new round of civilization in the new millennium.

The general weakness manifest in the Islamic World is the decline in economic growth, but this is a temporary stage that will not last long because the roots of the Islamic civilization are still intact and their elements are still vital. Muslims are responsible today for the recovery of these roots and injecting new vitality in order to salvage Western civilization, which is suffering from a serious crisis that needs addressing. Mankind cannot avoid catastrophes without the participation of the Islamic civilization characterized by its spirit of faith, humanism and future vision.

Islamic Civilization Among Major Contemporary Civilizations

Researchers in the field of cultural studies generally agree on the identification of major civilizations whether new or old. However, they mostly differ in the number of these civilizations. Through the examination of basic cultural elements that are used to define civilization, we can talk about six major contemporary civilizations, which include the Islamic, Western, Indian, Chinese, Japanese and Latin America civilizations. However, each of these civilizations has its own characteristics, making them unique in a variety of ways.

Western Civilization

Contemporary Western civilization is founded on intellectual roots that go back to the Ancient Greek and Roman eras. Among the characteristics of Western thought are five as detailed by Dr. Yusuf Al Qaradawi:

1. Various interpretations of the divine; Western thought is not a pure vision that highly appreciates God but rather is a fractured vision.
2. Materialism alone explains the universe, knowledge and behavior and denies the role of metaphysics and the supernatural.
3. Secular trends – which are the outcome of the previous two – that separates religion and society.
4. It is a civilization built on conflict and knows neither peace nor satisfaction or love. It is a civilization based on conflict between men, and also a conflict between Man and God.
5. Superiority over others; a trend embedded in the minds of all Westerners who consider their civilization as the pinnacle of advancement and do not recognize other civilizations.

These are the traits of Western civilization in the ancient and modern age. We should be fair and say that Western civilization has many positive aspects that are beneficial for humanity in addition to the positive effects that it shares with many bright aspects of the Islamic civilization. Western civilization has managed, through progress in the sciences and technology to provide Mankind with capabilities and potentials never seen before. Western civilization has shortened distances and saved time through modern communications technology to create the “global village”. The first industrial revolution spared Mankind much physical effort through the introduction of machines; the second industrial revolution (computers) spared Mankind much mental effort. It is this age of computers which can carry out massive and extremely complicated operations and has penetrated scientific Islamic life, Quranic sciences, Al Hadith sciences, languages and literature.

The advantage of this culture is that it is not inflexible but adapts to changes around it. It provided individuals with incentives to be innovative and productive and has created a conducive psychological environment

for advancement in addition to providing efficient management that rewards good performers and punishes the lazy and the inefficient. Western culture has also built a society where freedom, basic rights and sacredness of human life are protected from tyranny and that one's dignity, self-worth and freedom from fear and humiliation are the benefits of its society.

These are the positive aspects of Western civilization related to the physical and technological benefits enjoyed by Man. However, this is a double-edged sword which can be used for good and evil. Also the creation of the "global village" is not necessarily all positive and may entail negative aspects. Moreover, it is a civilization of ways and means and not one of goals and objectives. The negative aspects of Western civilization include inconsistency with religious and moral teachings, which constitute a threat to human civilization and lead to conflicts between nations. It also strengthens immoral desires in individuals and impacts the progress of science, knowledge, prosperity, literature and the arts and undermine the foundations of civilization.

Indian Civilization

The ancient Indian civilization was not established on the banks of the rivers in northern India but grew out of the Sumerian civilization and migrated to India where it flourished and became one of the major civilizations of history. The original Indian civilization was established on the worship of an Indian divine pantheon and called for ethical principles close to those advocated by Buddhism and flourished between the years 375 and 475 AD. Indian civilization, or Al Jupta civilization, was destroyed by "Huns" tribes which swept across India, Central Asia and Europe. Indian civilization had been established on successive older civilizations as is the case with all major civilizations. All successive Indian civilizations had common theological themes of meditation and calm. In one way or another, Hinduism has always been an essential factor for the culture of the Indian subcontinent from 1500 BC until 400 AD. One can conclude that the ancient Indian civilization had been built on a

spirituality that tends towards asceticism in life. Al Biruni strongly criticized this tendency in his book about India entitled *Kitab fi tahqiq ma li'l-hind* (or simply, *Ta'riph al-hind*). Contemporary Indian civilization constitutes a steadily growing global power seeking to participate and strongly influence international policy-making.

Chinese Civilization

Chinese civilization goes back to 2000 BC and became orderly and settled between 1786–1223 BC. The Chinese at that time, despite their different origins, saw themselves as the only people worthy of respect while all others were nothing but barbarians of no value. Chinese civilization is different from others in that it has not been affected by foreign civilizations. China did not come under any foreign control that could influence its cultural structure, apart from two occasions—first, when it was ruled by the Mongols and second, in the modern age. The Mongol invasion had left deep influences in the cultural structure of China but these influences faded with time. However, the Western invasion was so violent and severe to the extent that it destabilized the fundamentals on which Chinese traditional society was built. Confucianism is one of the basic components of Chinese civilization. Since China is a major country today, demographically and financially, it is qualified to occupy a privileged position in the international arena, which makes it a competitor for the major powers in influencing global policy making.

Japanese Civilization

Although some researchers combine the Chinese and Japanese civilizations under the title “Civilization of the Far East” and consider them as one, many view Japanese civilization as unique and with distinctive characteristics despite the fact that it originated from Chinese culture. Japan has built a modern and advanced society in various aspects of life and at the same time maintained its language and identity and stands as a competitor to the West in science and industry.

Latin American Civilization

Contemporary Latin American civilization is a mixture of ancient civilizations of the Andean, Inca, and Maya and Western civilization which integrated with the societies of Latin America and converted them to Roman Catholicism. This interaction appears clearly in the arts, music, literature, music, social customs and architecture. Many researchers see Latin America as a distinctive branch of Western civilization that does not match in many respects the pure Western orientation in North America and Europe. Thus, we see civilizations consisting of layers upon one another until the beginning of the history of civilization and which Ibn Khaldun was the first to record in his introduction.

One of the fallacies of many thinkers in the West is their labeling of Western civilization as “humanitarian” and ignoring all other civilizations. The fact is that Western civilization is part of human history which we are experiencing today. All of these other civilizations cannot be abolished or transcended in order to please the sense of superiority and domination of the ruling classes and thinkers in the West. The world has experienced many civilizations in Asia, Africa, Latin America and also the Islamic civilization, which is unique and distinguishes itself from others. The decision taken by the UN General Assembly to make the year 2001 the year of “dialogue between civilizations” has put an end to the calls for the centrality of Western civilization. It has also invalidated the racial claims of superiority promoted by some Western thinkers; invalidates its sole leadership of the world which violates international law and contradicts the facts of history and geography. From this point the desire for dialogue between civilizations has come as a wise and intelligent call. The Islamic civilization is the most eligible today to carry the message of dialogue due to its distinctive faith and humanitarian characteristics that are not found in other civilizations.

Islamic Civilization and Dialogue for Co-existence Between Nations

The characteristics of the Islamic civilization do not isolate it from the mainstream, but rather form elements of strength that stimulate dialogue

and push towards the notion of co-existence, which makes it attractive when interacting with other civilizations. This dialogue will lead to what we call cultural reform and I believe that the Islamic civilization has a message, responsibility and role in such reform. Islamic civilization is the only one that possesses today the vital elements required for this reform by providing the message of Allah for the whole of humanity at all times and all places until the end of time. The goal of all cultural efforts is to enlighten Man. What is the importance of materialistic progress in itself? Western civilization has not so far succeeded in achieving progress in faith and belief as provided by Allah, the creator of the universe, which brings peace of mind and tranquility and a sense of mental and emotional security. The Islamic civilization has been built on this vital element, making it a civilization of faith in its purposes and objectives. The Islamic civilization is the one that gives a religious dimension to the idea of progress, so progress is meant not only for advancement alone but also to promote goodness in Man. However, the Islamic civilization is not an ideal, a sectarian goal, or a project that has not been implemented or a vision not yet achieved. It is a reality of living in Islamic society where Muslims and non-Muslims live and form an integral part and participate in building this co-existence.

Co-existence in Islamic Thought

Based on the philosophy of Islamic thought and Sharia, there is nothing more indicative and reassuring about the relation between Islam and the notion of co-existence than what is in the Koran and the Sunnah of his Prophet Mohammad. The common ground between Muslims and the people of the book (Christians and Jews) is wide. While Islam ordered Muslims to open their hearts for co-existence with all human beings, it called them also to open their hearts for co-existence among themselves. Co-existence in Islam begins from a base of faith and not a set of man-made concepts from which international law is derived. Islam confirms the approach to co-existence in various Koranic verses, which formulate relations between individuals and groups, nations and peoples starting with respect for the self and one's fellow man and ending with laws which

regulate relations between them all. This concise study has little room for a detailed examination, but mention must be made of the following verses as evidence of its comprehensive and great philosophy:

- O Mankind be dutiful to your Lord, who created you from a single person (Adam) and from him (Adam) He created his wife (Hawwa [Eve]), and from them both He created many men and women and fear Allah through whom you demand your mutual rights, and do not cut the relations of the womb (kinship). Surely, Allah is ever All-Watching over you. *Surah An Nisa' (Women) Verse 1.*
- O people of the scripture (Jews and Christians), come to a word between us and you, that we worship none but Allah and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as Lords beside Allah. Then if they turn away say, "Bear witness that we are Muslims." *Surah Ale Imran (The Family of Emran), verse 64.*
- Invite Mankind to the way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom (i.e. with divine inspiration) and the Koran and balanced preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from His path, and He is the most aware of those who are guided. *Surah An-Nahl (The Bees), verse 125.*
- And indeed we have honored the children of Adam, and we have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with Al-Taiyibat (lawful good things) and have preferred them above many of those whom we have created with a marked preference. *Surah Al-Isra' verse 70.*
- And among His signs is this, the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colors. Verily, in that there are indeed signs for men of sound knowledge. *Surah Ar-Rum (Rom) verse 22.*
- O Mankind, we have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is you (the believer) who has At-Taqwa (i.e. one of the Muttaqin [pious]). Verily, Allah is all-knowing , all aware. *Surah Al Hujuraat (The Dwellings), verse 13.*

- There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the right path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in Tagut and believes in Allah, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. Allah is all hearer, all knower. *Surah Al-Baqarah (The Cow), verse 256.*

These are in addition to many Hadiths of the Prophet Mohammad the following: “The best people are those who others benefit from”; and “whoever hurts *dhimmi*, a free non-Muslim under Muslim rule, hurts me.” These are the orders of Islam as mentioned previously and in other texts. It directs people towards their humanity, honoring Mankind, guaranteeing human freedom, human intellectual and cultural diversity and prohibition of forced homogeneity. In other words, Islam corrects the perception of the self and others, respects diversity and expects co-existence, thereby downplaying any exaggeration of the self, denial of the ego, intolerance and all things that hinder communication with others. Islam is also rooted in freedom and rejects compulsive integration, which supports the perception of pluralism to ensure positive and constructive dealings. In all honesty, sincerity and confidence we can say that tolerance is one of the fundamentals of co-existence in its modern meaning and calls for acceptance of difference in religion or race. Islam does not only respect the privacy of others, but also permits others to implement their laws in their own environment and under the Islamic system. The coalitions and agreements held and implemented by the Prophet Mohammad since the emergence of the Islamic State on the first day of “Hijrah” from Mecca to Medina, began with the “Medina Document”, which aimed to regulate relations between Muslims and the people of the book in Medina.

Islam has laid the foundation for all the requirements of co-existence, in addition to what nurtures and guarantees its sustainability such as justice, tolerance, support of rights, denial of injustice and correct thinking.

Allah says: Ye who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just, that is next to piety, and fear Allah For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do. *Surah Al-Maeda verse 8.*

Throughout history, Islam as a religion and civilization has never constituted any obstacle in the way of human co-existence. On the contrary non-Muslims have their basic presence in the Islamic principles where much of the Islamic discourse focuses on positive dealing with others because Islam is a religion for the whole world and not restricted to an isolated and fanatic category.

Allah says: And We have sent you (O Mohammad) not but as a mercy for 'Alamin (Mankind, Jinns and all that exists), *Surah Al-Anbiya' verse 107*; And We have not sent you (O Mohammad) except as a giver of glad tidings and a warning to all Mankind, *Surah Saba', verse 28*.

The approach that adopts isolation and estrangement of the other does not represent Islam because Islam is a universal religion and contains vital principles that are inconsistent with confrontation and self-inflicted separation. The vision of Islam on this point can be understood through dealings with non-Muslims who enjoy Muslim protection, where many of the Prophet's Hadiths urge respect for non-Muslims and protecting their rights. The Prophet Mohammad said: "Who oppresses a signatory of a peace treaty, I will be his enemy". Toynbee in his book *Call to Islam* says: "Force was not a crucial factor in converting people to Islam. The Prophet Mohammad himself forged a pact with *dhimmi* (non-Muslims), and undertook to protect them and give them freedom in performing their religious rituals in addition to permitting them to enjoy their rights and influence." Adam Mitz states in his book *History of Islamic Civilization* that churches remained under the rule of the Islamic state but were beyond control of the governing authority and depended instead on signed agreements and the rights these agreement guaranteed for them. Jews and Christians lived beside Muslims—a fact that created an environment of tolerance which Europe did not experience in the Middle Ages. A Jew or a Christian was free to practice his religion under the rule of the Islamic state.

Allah says: And argue not with the people of scripture (Jews and Christians), unless it be in (a way) that is better (with good words

and good manner), *Sural Al-Ankabut (Spider)*, verse 46; For every nation We have ordained religious ceremonies (e.g. slaughtering of cattle during the three days at Mina [Mecca] during the *Hajj* [pilgrimage] which they must follow; so let them (pagans) not dispute with you on the matter (i.e. to eat of the cattle which you slaughter, and not to eat of cattle which Allah kills by its natural death), but invite them to your Lord. Verily! You (O Muhammad) indeed are on the (true) straight guidance. (i.e. the true religion of Islamic Monotheism), *Surah Al-Hajj*, verse 67.

Islam and International Relations

What are the contributions of Islamic thought to regulating international relations in order to create a suitable environment in which all peoples and nations can co-exist? To answer this question we should discuss two basic and firm facts of Islamic doctrine: first, Islamic theory in international relations is a comprehensive one and second, Islamic theory is based on the rules of Islamic Sharia. The concept that governs international relations from the Islamic perspective stems in general from the framework governing the study of all existence and thought. It is the framework that defines human behavior to achieve the will of Almighty God. Allah had created Islam for all Mankind at all times and to be a point of reference for humanity to develop within its parameters. Consequently the Islamic constants are the ones that control humanity and do not lead astray as happened in Europe when it detached itself from religion. We can examine these constants through the following principles:

Islamic Monotheism

The Islamic perspective is unique in its perception of an absolute and pure monotheism that is different from all other concepts of belief. Monotheism is “the first constant” that Allah ordered in the first verses of the Koran so that it would be the starting point and cornerstone for any sound and practical action. Emphasizing this fact is the most important element of Islamic identity, which influences perceptions and behavior

inwardly and in its relations with others. Therefore, complete harmony will be achieved between thought and action aside from man-made philosophical perceptions, which is based primarily on human individualism and personal interest.

Validity of the Universal Order

Monotheism necessarily entails that Man should attribute everything in this universe to Allah who created it with his absolute and direct will. Allah created this world with the highest degree of order and beauty and exposed it to certain fixed laws. Allah built the universe with astonishing perfection and beauty without any inconsistency, deficiency or defect. The Koran confirmed this repeatedly and drew the attention of worshippers to the wisdom behind the creation of the universe. Allah says in the Koran: "The best of everything He created and began the creation of man from clay." Thus the Islamic perception requires the protection of this universe and refrain from harming it. Therefore, all rules decided within its framework should comply with this Islamic dimension and the various rules and regulations controlling international relations should be defined accordingly.

Unity of Humanity

This principle was decided according to the verses of the Koran. Allah says: "O Mankind be dutiful to your Lord, who created you from a single person (Adam) and from him (Adam) He created his wife (Eve), and from them both He created many men and women." *Surah Al Nisa', verse 1.*

Moreover, the Prophet Mohammad confirmed this principle in his farewell (before his death) speech. The Islamic system was based on this principle from the very beginning where Muslims have been keen to communicate constantly with other human beings in a manner that would safeguard the earth and secure peoples' common interests and guarantee human rights. The Prophet Mohammad was concerned from the beginning to communicate and passed messages to kings and princes and sent out preachers. The orthodox caliphs and true Muslim princes and rulers gave

the best examples in the realization of human unity when they addressed people with wisdom and good advice. Groups of non-Arabs converted to Islam and Muslims established distinctive relations with non-Muslims and provided humanity with all that they had achieved in the fields of science and literature. This is due to the fact that Islam was sent down from above as a mercy to the world. God says: “We sent thee but as mercy for the worlds.”

Principle of Equality

Equality is one of the prominent pillars of the world order set by Islam for relations between the Islamic nations and other states. According to this principle Islam rejected the idea of discrimination and ordered equality between all individuals. There is no distinction between one sect and another or between one individual and another based on gender, color or race, and all that leads to dissent and discord. Thus, Islamic sources assert that differences beyond the will of humans should not be a reason for unfair discrimination which leads to disharmony, fighting or conflict. They call for using the aforementioned differences to achieve harmony between all people and cooperation in order to satisfy their mutual needs. One of the consequences of this principle is the need for refraining from discrimination based on origin or social status in the call to Islam.

The Principle of Justice

Justice is a fundamental principle in regulating the relation of a Muslim with a non-Muslim, including international relations. It is sometimes expressed as establishing justice and balance. In the relationship of Muslims with others, justice must be taken into account in familiarizing non-Muslims with the call to Islam and a relationship with them would be then defined and should be fair under all circumstances. Verses from the Koran also call for justice in relations between Muslims.

Islamic Sovereignty

Absolute sovereignty and authority in Islam is for Allah and if it is assigned to a group of people, it is only relative. This protects individuals

from tyrants and dictators. In the area of international relations, Islam aims to establish this fact and that Allah's words are supreme. Under this principle a Muslim is brought up only to ensure the sovereignty of Muslims on their decision and their own wealth and the prohibition of oppression, domination and tyranny in the international arena.

Commitments and Respect of Conventions

This principle, within the scope of the Islamic state's foreign relations, constitutes a major anchor. The most important point for Muslims and non-Muslims is that these conventions should be respected even if they might be at the expense of Muslims, as happened to the Prophet Mohammad when he, according to the "Hudaybiyah Reconciliation", had to surrender some men who came to him as Muslims. On this basis and in order to meet the provisions of agreements made with non-Muslim countries, within certain conditions, Islam gives priority to such agreements over any appeal, demand for investment or call for help by Muslims living in these countries. This comes out of observance of the sanctity of these accords and treaties.

Loyalty and Repudiation

Loyalty means allegiance to the believers and repudiation means abandonment of their enemies. This is considered one of the basic principles governing the Islamic nation's relation with other non-Muslim nations and groups. In this regard, it is worth noting that the principle of repudiation is closely linked to the movement of the call to Islam, which defines who should be abandoned. The reasons for rejection of non-Muslims then becomes stronger when non-Muslims refuse Islam and are determine to resist it. The principle of repudiation in this form does not contradict the principle of Islamic tolerance since Islam does not object to co-existence between religions. Consequently Islam orders Muslims to treat others well until they become convinced that their conversion to Islam and compliance with its rules would be for their own good.

Islamic and Western Visions of International Relations

This approach is not intended as a comprehensive comparison between the Islamic and Western visions of international relations, but rather to search for a rational explanation for current international dilemmas and proceed with creating cultural foundations for co-existence between nations, taking into account that Westernizing the international system's rules has better chances for practical application than Islamic international relations rules. Therefore, objective comparison between the two visions requires taking into account the different period of time when the system of relations between Muslims and other nations was formed in addition to the physical, geographical and moral difference in which both systems were established. The various sources which have enriched the principles of both systems and the cultural, intellectual, political, economic and social benefits should not be overlooked. These differences include:

- **Nature of Governing Rules**

International relations differ in nature according to Islamic and Western perspectives with the former's origin being divine while the latter's origin is man-made. This means that the source of the Western perspective is the changing human will and its realization of personal interests. In contrast we see the Islamic perspective capable of interacting with developments of life in every age and it is open to all human experiences in every culture but on the basis of fixed and comprehensive rules laid down by Allah. These rules govern life and religious affairs and their mandate and legitimacy is superior to any rule by Man, as well as being mandatory as far as the Koran and Sunnah rules are concerned.

- **Difference of Time and Environment**

During the historical period which witnessed the formation of international relations in the Islamic system, relations between non-Muslim countries were based on wars. There was no equality or recognition of others' rights until Islam came and defined objectives and rights of warriors and imposed a moral law governing war.

Although the interval between the formation of a system of international relations in Islam and the formation of an international relation system in the West is more than 1,200 years, the modern international system in the West does not match or even come close to the Islamic system. This is despite the massive developments and deep changes in human mentality and culture over these years. As for the formation of political groups and the overlap of relations between them, international political theory in the West is still unstable as far as the relations of Western countries with other nations are concerned.

Obstacles to Co-existence

The 9/11 attacks in the United States and the collapse of the former Soviet Union have brought to prominence Huntington's theory of the "clash of civilizations." Scholars, researchers, media professionals and politicians alike circulated it in an attempt to find common channels for dialogue and co-existence between nations. This has led to an emphasis on the following matters:

1. The idea that Islam is a danger to Western society and a source of conflicts between various cultural groups has become entrenched, making the cultural axis a base for division. This position has been aggravated by a situation where the world is experiencing economic modernization and development while the Islamic countries suffer from division, weakness and lack of a strong and influential force capable of controlling extremist Islamic groups engaged in conflicts with other cultures. This has also led to the growth of extremist groups and movements in Western countries that are protected under the umbrella of the freedom of expression without limits or restrictions.
2. Dominance of the idea that Islam is the religion of confrontation and conflict based on misinterpretation of the Islamic civilization and its history, where it is accused of involvement in many examples of violence throughout human history. This has come as a result of certain parties whose interests can be served only through igniting

conflicts and wars between nations exploiting the Islamic civilization's weakness in achieving economic, political, scientific and social accomplishments. This is in addition to the slow development of the Islamic civilization compared to the West and the idea that most Islamic movements and powers tend towards further introversion and confrontation before the West, and enhances the idea of cooperation between members of a single civilization, particularly between the United States and Europe. This Western cooperation also calls for alleviating differences between them in order to face the coming risks from the Islamic World. While the world had fought two devastating world wars religion was not the major drive for these conflicts. The actions of the extremist movements in Islamic society have deliberately been attributed to Islamic ideology, which never endorse such actions. These powers ignore the tolerant nature of dialogue and co-existence in Islam and its civilization throughout history. Examples of this are many including what happened in the aftermath of the liberation of Jerusalem during Umar Ibn Al Khattab tenure and the conquest of Andalusia at the end of the Umayyad dynasty.

3. Deliberate confusion and ambiguity in relations between Islam and the West. Islamic conquests had never been aimed to control, oppress or steal the wealth of other people, but aimed to respect society in contrast with what is depicted by Orientalist studies. These assessments deliberately reflect a confused image about Islam in Western society, viewing it as a barbaric and vicious warrior. The Orientalist perception has come about from a lack of distinction between what is Islamic ideology and what comes as a result of the prevailing social, political and economic circumstances resulting from human practices. This narrow and corrupt understanding of Islam is apparent when it is placed within the circle of "Oriental despotism" and disseminates extremism and intolerance, cruelty, terrorism, irrationality and reflects the backwardness of Islamic culture as a whole.
4. Some Orientalists, under the influence of certain parties with specific agendas, forged historical facts in the absence of any Arab or Islamic

mass media presence, which has encouraged media circles in the West to depict Muslims as enemies of the West. Such parties have been determined to promote misconceptions about Islam, ignoring or lacking awareness of the flexibility of Islamic thought, its universality and comprehensiveness in solving global problems. This is in addition to their weakness in differentiating between thought and human practice (between Islamic doctrine and terrorists actions), despite the various statements by Western leaders who confirm their respect for Islam and that their war is not one against Islam. However, all this comes within the framework of official diplomatic courtesies.

5. Although many Muslim countries have friendly relations with the West and despite the political, social and economic problems which these countries experience, there are some parties in the West that exaggerate concerns and fears of Islam and conclude that every Muslim, wherever he lives, is extremist, militant and anti-Western.
6. Ignoring public opinion in Muslim countries by the West enhances hostility and escalates rhetoric about national identity to the point of extremism, which in turn aggravates tension between Muslims and the West.
7. Emergent political and intellectual discourse is explicitly hostile to Islam under the cover of freedom of speech, which equally influences decision-makers to adopt such antagonistic attitudes.
8. The West is attributed with economic, cultural and technological power and tries to curtail the power of Islamic countries and impedes attempts to build a distinct Muslim identity, viewing it as a departure from the values of dialogue, co-existence and tolerance and an incitement to violence. The West exercises considerable pressure on Arab and Islamic systems to exclude all those Islamic movements it considers as having radical and hostile programs against the West. Even moderate movements are not spared while Western right-wing extremist movements carry explicit destructive and racist programs and practices against other civilizations.
9. The West continues to dominate modern media and mass communications, which contributes to antagonizing other nations and

the Islamic World in particular. In addition, the West spends considerable effort promoting and consolidating Western concepts internationally such as “democracy”, “terror” and the culture of “globalization” etc.

10. Lack of equality in international agreements reflect the interests of the stronger sides, which have often been drafted during the first half of the 20th century when most of the Islamic countries were under the imperial rule of the West. These agreements have not been updated or amended since then. The continued implementation of these agreements in their old form controls the political, military and economic institutions responsible for formulation of international strategy such as the Arab-Israeli peace treaties.
11. Duplicity in Western discourse constitutes one of the largest impediments to finding common ground for co-existence between nations.

Role of the Media in Establishing Co-existence between Nations

The orientation of media outlets is a serious hindrance to co-existence between Islam and the West. Modern means of communications have helped in overcoming the barriers of time and place and spreading various ideologies through satellite channels and the Internet. This technological development in international communications has contributed to restructuring world through the emergence of political and economic entities that have made achievements in cooperation and opened borders for trade including cultural and media exchange.

Western media has been giving much attention to Islam and Muslims since the emergence of Islamic movements that call for liberation from the influence of Western colonialism in their countries. Western media has blasted these movements and branded them as intolerant and call for the hatred of foreigners. Western media highlights a limited number of issues such as the relation of Islam with Western civilization, women’s rights, and the status of non-Muslim minorities in Islamic countries. The focus of

Western media on Islam and Muslim issues is not official government policy but tends to support the attitudes of Western governments keen on their capitalist interests. Western media is fighting on two fronts—communism and Islam. When communism fell, Western media found itself in a void and so filled it with an intensified hatred of Islam.

A publication issued by the Hartford Theological Institute includes an article by the Reverend Martson Speight, former coordinator and director of the Office on Christian–Muslim Relations, who claims that “the end of the Cold War between the capitalist and communist camps raises the question: ‘will Islam be the new bogeyman?’” Martson says that, “the power of the communist world does not pose a threat any more as a result of the spectacular events in eastern Europe. Thus the Americans who used to elaborate in talking about the supposed danger of communism found themselves all of a sudden deprived of their delightful subject.” He adds that:

The question is will the media, which takes the responsibility of warning the American people of risks, choose another group of people as a source of threat to the United States and the world? The bad image of Islam portrayed in the American media has drawn some of us to see Islam as the new bogeyman.

Martson supported his words with examples from the American press summarizing an article by the US writer Krauthammer Charles and raising the question: was the image of Islam good in the Western media before the end of the Cold War? There is no doubt that some moderate voices in the West tried to look at the relations between Islam and the West in an objective manner. Among these are university professors, intellectuals and politicians, but we should ask about the size of this current of moderation and the extent of its influence. The 9/11 attacks have been the strongest justification for complete bias in Western media against the Islamic World and especially the negative image portrayed of Islam and Muslims as weak, backward, terrorist-supporting and extremist—all things that do not match our history and civilization. This image is not based on concrete facts but is based on racism.

Inefficiency of Islamic Media

Media and communication experts assert the inefficiency of the Islamic media when targeting the West and its lack of ability to address the West in its language and build a comprehensive image of Islamic culture that would correct negative stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims. Although the Muslim World is full of Arabic and Islamic satellite channels, these are unable to address global public opinion in a language it understands. In addition, media professionals in the Muslim World have failed in improving the quantity and quality of their media content in face of the efforts made to improve the image of Arabs and Muslims in the Western societies. These minorities face increasing challenges, particularly in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in the United States and the direct accusations that Muslims and Arabs not only support international terrorism but also provide fertile ground for terrorism to threaten Western interests.

Is There a Way Forward?

The Foundations of Islamic Media for Co-existence

Media experts agree on the need for this plan to benefit the Islamic World in a way that would ensure an objective portrayal of Islam and Muslims and highlight the tolerant principles of Islam. The Islamic religion should be portrayed as supporting relations between humans and spreading the principles of justice, mercy and peace between nations. The following are mechanisms that can be implemented through this media plan:

1. Call for concerted efforts through academic institutions and bodies concerned with media affairs in the Islamic World to develop an integrated and long-term media strategy to correct the distorted image of Arabs and Muslims.
2. Call for the establishment of a global think tank that seeks to open channels of dialogue with scientists, experts and academics in the West to correct misconceptions and remove misunderstandings.

3. Promote initiatives from professionals and media experts who work with modern technology to use their skills in highlighting the true image of Arabs and Muslims and refute the lies constantly spread by the Zionist propaganda machine.
4. Invite the United Nations and its affiliated organizations to develop legislation that prohibits insulting religions and their doctrine and encourage respect for different communities without compromising their beliefs.
5. Establish an Islamic body for media research to monitor and analyze what is published about Islam and Muslims in Western media and prepare facts to respond to the distorted images or insults directed at Muslims, their culture and religion.
6. Establish an Islamic media body for the production of programs, films, news reports and other content that address the true image of Islam and Muslims and disseminate it to other nations through satellite channels and the Internet and in the relevant foreign languages.
7. Issue series of books, tapes and CDs to familiarize people with Islam and its value in various languages and distribute them widely through various official and civil channels.
8. Take advantage of modern communication technology in the fields of satellite channels and the Internet to establish Islamic channels that broadcast in Western languages, in addition to Islamic sites on the Internet to explain Islam and its principles to Westerners.
9. Organize a series of informational workshops on the influence of modern communication technology and its use in education and research. Media professionals from Islamic countries who are able to correct the image of Islam and Muslims can participate in these workshops.
10. Establish an Islamic network for information through which knowledge can be transferred in the Islamic world to help in the exchange of expertise, particularly in those areas connected with correcting the image of Islam and Muslims in Western societies.

11. Establish an Islamic fund for the improvement of the image of Islam and possibly financed through support from Islamic governments and donations from Islamic institutions and figures.

*International and Regional Roles
in Enhancing Co-existence and Dialogue between Nations*

International, regional and even local organizations play an important role in creating a suitable environment for co-existence between nations and communities by finding points of convergence, understanding and dialogue in order to frame an alliance between countries and societies. An “Alliance of Civilizations”, which represents an alliance between societal, political and civil powers that can unite in fighting terrorism, intolerance and extremism and those who seek isolation and division of cultures and societies. This alliance needs efforts from the international community at all levels (local, regional and international institutions and civil society) to bridge the gap and eliminate prejudice, misconceptions and polarization of views that pose a threat to world peace.

The tension in recent years between Muslim and Western societies depicts a lack of mutual understanding. Consequently, the work of international and regional organizations should focus on helping societies move towards this direction and the promotion of dialogue between civilizations in order to address concerns of humanity and finding relevant solutions. A dialogue between civilizations at all levels will be a means to prevent the deprivation of people’s rights as confirmed by international treaties and guaranteed by divine law and humanistic principles; instrumental in creating awareness of the importance of such issues and their role in the development of human civilization; and spread values of justice, equality and co-existence between all. This requires all Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to respect human dignity without discrimination; respect for nations whether big or small; and seek common ground between differing cultures in order to be able to confront international challenges. NGOs should accept to work together and seek understanding as a suitable mechanism for enhancing common international

principles and putting an end to global threats. Moreover, the efforts made by these organizations should be based on mutual tolerance and respect of the views and values of various cultures and civilizations, and the rights of all individuals to preserve their cultural heritage and reject the desecration of moral, religious and cultural values and the violation of holy places. Participation of all individuals and nations in the decision-making process and distribution of benefits locally and globally is essential alongside the adherence to the principles of justice, equity, peace and solidarity; the principles of law and the charter of the United Nations; the promotion and protection of women's rights and dignity; the preservation of the family; and the protection of the vulnerable in society including children, youths and the elderly.

*Efforts of ISESCO and its Vision for Dialogue and
Co-existence Between Nations and Civilizations*

The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) has focused on the issues of dialogue between cultures and civilization and the necessity for cooperation in accordance with Islamic doctrine as inspired by the Koran and Sunnah. It is the belief that dialogue is the best way forward for the development of co-existence between nations, removal of the causes of tension and misunderstanding, and confronting the attempts to distort the image of Arab and Islamic civilization and culture. Dialogue and co-existence are at the center of the programs launched by ISESCO and are based on three premises: mutual respect, equality and justice, and rejection of intolerance and hatred. The conditions necessary for this are the following:

1. Co-existence should be equally balanced and within the framework of equality and mutual good will. It should be multi-faceted in order to allow a comprehensive co-existence at societal and governmental levels.
2. Co-existence should aim to bring benefits to the parties involved and secure their interests linked to progress in the cultural, scientific, economic and social areas of life. It should also seek to fight injustice,

aggression on communities and nations and work to eliminate the causes of conflicts.

3. Dialogue and co-existence should be carried out in a civilized manner and free from topics and problems that constitute a permanent source of dispute.
4. Dialogue and co-existence should go hand-in-hand according to prepared programs to achieve their targeted objectives.

Future ISESCO Vision and Philosophy on Dialogue and Co-existence between Civilizations

Out of its charter calling for dialogue to achieve co-existence and respect for the cultural identity of all individuals, ISESCO incorporated in its future plans an integrated program entitled “Effective and Interacting Islamic Culture.” This program has focused on the most important characteristics of Islamic civilization and its ability to interact positively with human cultural advancement due to its flexibility without any loss of principles. Islamic doctrine has produced an effective and humane civilization that has influenced the course of other civilizations despite moments of weakness felt historically and geographically. It has also faced significant challenges, particularly from colonialism, which tried to weaken Islamic civilization and its cultural identity. However, the Muslim World was able to recover, prompting calls for cooperation, co-existence and dialogue on the grounds that Islam’s message is a universal and humanitarian one.

The cultural strategy of the Islamic world endorsed by the ministers of culture and information in Muslim countries reiterates that no culture can at present live independently and that cultural diversity and interaction have become a reality. It also involves the need for the Islamic World to refrain from doctrinal differences in order not to be an obstacle to peaceful co-existence between civilizations and religions. ISESCO has set out an approach to further work within this framework in order to enhance co-existence and understanding within the Islamic World on one hand and other civilizations on the other.

*Mechanisms for Cooperation and Partnership
with Institutions Concerned with Dialogue
and Co-existence between Nations*

The work of ISESCO includes many projects and programs emanating from the organization's educational, scientific and cultural strategy, which aims to keep pace with global development in the areas of education, tolerance, dialogue, democracy, respect for human rights and the advancement of the sciences, technology, communications and information systems. ISESCO works in cooperation with international and regional Islamic and Arab institutions to promote the intellectual renaissance of the Muslim World that does not contradict with the teachings of Islam, its values and cultural heritage as follows:

1. ISESCO seeks to increase its participation in the meetings of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) including Islamic summit conferences and gatherings for matters involving ministers of foreign affairs, education, culture, information and planning, as well as the OIC General Secretariat regarding coordination of policies and programs.
2. ISESCO continues to work in parallel with international institutions and organizations to implement decisions taken at international conferences. It also seeks to establish new relations with other concerned institutions seeking to strengthen the influence of joint cooperation.
3. ISESCO continues to consult with international, regional and governmental organizations and regional banks such as the World Bank, UN Fund For Development, Islamic Development Bank and Arab Bank for Development in Africa, etc., in order to implement joint programs and activities for the benefit of Islamic countries.
4. ISESCO seeks to develop partnerships and diversify its cooperation with finance institutions and donors capable of supporting large-scale projects in Islamic countries in order to assist with comprehensive and sustainable development. ISESCO also aims to influence such institutions to respond more to the urgent educational, scientific and cultural needs of Islamic countries.

Finally, ISESCO believes the role of national, regional and international organizations should focus on:

1. Promotion of the principles of dialogue between civilizations and cultures and consolidation of the foundations of peaceful co-existence between nations. Dialogue is the choice of the wise and an effective way to resolve disputes and put an end to crises that contemporary societies face.
2. Confirmation of the concept of cooperation based on mutual respect to strengthen relations, cultural exchange and solidarity among nations, within the framework of respect for cultural, political and social values according to the principles of international law.
3. Search for appropriate means to further the objectives of the “dialogue between civilizations” within the framework of the requirements of the UN Charter, conventions, declarations and relevant international covenants.
4. Promote the “dialogue between nations” to become a legitimate tenet of international relations rather than a mere cultural choice that is non-binding on the international community.

Suggestions to Correct the Image of Islam and Muslims in Western Society

Co-existence between nations requires each participant to have a thorough knowledge of the other with regard to ideological and intellectual affiliations in order to find common ground for co-existence. Among the ways to achieve this are the following:

1. Sincere attempts to introduce the values of tolerance, focusing on dialogue, co-existence and communication between nations and an avoidance of confrontation. The significant contributions of the Islamic World to global cultural and intellectual heritage should be highlighted through all media and customs exemptions for Arab and Islamic cultural and intellectual products that serve the aim of co-existence.

2. Review of extremist Arab and Islamic political and cultural material, which promotes suspicion of other nations and fear of cultural influence.
3. Active participation to improve the political, social, economic and cultural environment of Islamic countries to avoid the emergence of radical and extremist rhetoric.
4. Awareness that extremism is harmful to Islam and Muslims.
5. Belief in the principle of equality between civilizations and that all civilizations make up the collective human civilization in which every individual bears the responsibility for its advancement for the betterment of Mankind.
6. Focus on the points of convergence with other cultures instead of focusing on points of divergence and ensure balanced dialogue with educated elites in Western society.
7. Unification and conformity in any discourse with the West from the Muslim World, since diverse and contradictory arguments merely create confusion. Europeans have managed, within the framework of the European Union, to develop a united European political and cultural rhetoric despite ethnic and cultural differences, which has enhanced economic and financial integration and helped protect European cultural heritage.
8. The developed world should bear the responsibility of helping less developed nations to progress through the provision of suitable support and opportunities without influencing their sovereignty and culture.
9. Supervise the work of Arab and Islamic communities in the West to create awareness among them of appropriate Islamic conduct in order to gain the confidence and respect of Western society.
10. Promote and support common interests between Islamic countries and the West, promoting the notion that Western interests can be secured through friendly relations with Arabs and Muslims.
11. Western institutions should be encouraged to establish meaningful partnerships with Arabs and Muslims within a context of mutual

cultural exchange and cooperation based on recognition and respect for the principle of sovereignty.

12. Make all necessary efforts to promote and advance the fundamentals of dialogue and co-existence within Islamic society and work hard to improve the political, social, economic and cultural conditions in Islamic countries to ensure comprehensive and sustainable development.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Chapter 1

1. Abdullah Ali Al-Alien, *Dialogue of Civilizations in the 21st Century: Islamic Vision of the Dialogue* (Beirut/Amman: Arab Institute for Research and Publication, 2004), 203–205. The same author has other writings in this respect such as: *Islam and the West After September 11, 2001* (Casablanca: Arab Cultural Centre, 2005).
2. We recall in particular, the atmosphere of a conference held in Cairo in 1997 which included a large number of Muslim and Christian participants, where the impressions of some of the attendants and participants do not differ very much from what a neutral observer may conclude today, such as the absence of individuals who have the right to “represent” their “civilization” (this dilemma is related to the nature of the problem mentioned at the text), the repetition of recommendations and conclusions that were already adopted in previous events, and the lack of clearly identified axes and objectives. Article titled “Islam and the West. Coexistence ... or Clash,” *Al-Watan Al-Arabi* magazine, no. 1024, July 25, 1997.
3. Article in Spanish language newspaper “Alliance Against Intolerance,” *El País*, August 2, 2011.
4. Juan Martos, “Los Reinos de Taifas en el S. XI”, in Machado, Martos y Souto (eds), *Historia Medieval: al-Andalus IV* (Madrid: Istmo, 2009), 148. Therefore, the Andalusian era holds a record number in this respect. There is one royal family that can compete with the Umayyad Family in terms of speciousness of controlled lands and the time-length of its reign, which is the Bourbon Family (from 1711 till now), but its sovereignty has not been continuous since it was broken by periods of republican regimes or military dictatorships during the 19th and 20th centuries.
5. Rajab Muhammad Abdul Halim, *The Relations Between Islamic Andalusia and Christian Spain During Umayyad Dynasty and the City-States* (Cairo: Islam House, 1885), 320.

6. As a simple example of this view that is prevalent among Spanish historians, Ferrán Soldevilla, *Síntesi d'història de Catalunya* (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 1995), 53–54.
7. Abdul Majeed Nana'ey, *History of Umayyad State In Andalusia: Political History* (Beirut: Dar Annahda al Arabiya, 1983), 227.
8. Cyrille Aillet, *Les Mozarabes. Christianisme, Islamisation et Arabisation en Péninsule Ibérique (IX–XII siècle)* (Madrid: Casa Velázquez, 2010), 311–312.
9. José Vicente Gómez Bayarri, *La Valencia Medieval (Volumen III de la Historia General del Reino de Valencia)* (Valencia: Real Academia de Cultura Valenciana, 2009), 72.
10. *Ibid.*, 68. An excerpt by Ibn Hazm quoted from his book *Jamharat Ansab Al-Arab* about a genuine Arab family that maintained its mother language and Bedouin traditions without learning the romance dialect, which is an exceptional case breaking the rule.
11. The hypothesis of obligatory Arabization policy in addition to religious coercion and ethnic discrimination is within the frame of the traditional approach – renewed in our present time as we will discover later – of the classical historical school that persists in showing the “grievances” of Islamic civilization. Reinhart P. Dozy, *Recherches sur l'Histoire et la Littérature de l'Espagne pendant le Moyen Âge* (Leyden: 1881), 86.
12. Nana'ey, *op. cit.*, 320.
13. Many studies included the mentioned letter edited in Latin, which is the language of the Mozarabs' religious rituals and rites. For example: É. Lévi-Provençal, *La Civilización árabe en España* (Madrid: Colección Austral, 1980), 94–95.
14. Nana'ey, *op. cit.*, p. 235; J.A. García de Cortázar, *Historia de España II. La época medieval* (Madrid: Alianza Universidad), 95.
15. Ana I. Carrasco Manchado, “Al-Andalus bajo el dominio magrebí: almorávides y almohades”, in Machado, Martos y Souto, *op. cit.*, 309.

16. There were many agreements between the Umayyad and the Christians in order to support one northern kingdom against another, as well as the conventions between these kingdoms and the city-states, and so on. The fall of the Granada Kingdom was much later in 1492, i.e. after 300 years from the fall of Andalusia, resulting in a state of degeneration and political isolation because of the “brotherhood” wars between the Christians; J.A. García de Cortázar, op. cit., 112.
17. Castilian Knight “Cid Campeador” confronted two times the attempts by the Prince of Catalonia to conquer Palencia City between 1089–1094 A.D., after which he confronted Almoravids’ attack on the Eastern City. Ferrán Soldevilla, op. cit., 76–77; José Vicente Gómez Bayarri, op. cit., 71.
18. There are valuable studies specialized in analyzing the nature of the tribal relationships in Andalusia, and the extent of interaction between the ethnic and regional elements, and the social structure in the formation of Andalusian identity and its later disintegration, such as the book written by the famous French Arabist, Pierre Guichard, *El Andalus. estructura antropológica de una sociedad islámica en occidente* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1995).
19. Because of the hostility between the two sides, the elite of Córdoba made “relations with *Siqlibian* (Slavic) young men, Khayran Sahib Almari’yah and Zuhair Sahib Dani’yah from eastern Andalusian, who were the most hostile to Berbers” (Nana’ey, op. cit., 527).
20. J.A. García de Cortázar, op. cit., 97. It is the same weak point which many of the authoritative Arab regimes have, namely only by resorting to violence on occasion, and financial aid in other times, can some Arab governments control their citizens.
21. Asharq Alawsat, London, June 5, 2009.
22. The Spanish historian, Fernando García de Cortázar (awarded the national prize for history in Spain in 2008, and author of one of the above mentioned references) stresses that, “Andalusia had never represented a dream for coexistence ... it is pointless and nonsense

- that we seek to transform a violent and cruel world such as Andalusia into a civilized example. Islam was and still is a divinely inflexible system, for which it is difficult to absorb modernity.” Interview with Fernando García de Cortázar in Spanish, published on June 8, 2009; (<http://www.periodistadigital.com>).
23. Andrew G. Boston, “Eurabia’s Morass Elicits Mythical Solutions”, *American Thinker*, November 24, 2005; (<http://www.americanthinker.com/2005/11/eurabias?morass?elicits?mythic.html>).
 24. Serafín Fanjul García, *El Ándalus contra España* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 2000); *La quimera del Ándalus* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 2004).
 25. Francisco Javier Simonet, *Historia de los mozárabes en España: deducida de los mejores y auténticos testimonios de los escritores cristianos y árabes* (Amsterdam: Oriental Press, 1967).
 26. Silly article by British journalist Robert Kilroy, “We Owe Arabs Nothing,” *Evening Standard*, April 23, 2004. He insists that Muslims did not provide anything to humanity over the past centuries.
 27. For example: Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1974).
 28. It is referring to the role played by European romanticism in the interview with the Spanish historian Fernando García de Cortázar, but as for the political geostrategic reasons, we find them in the study prepared by researcher Bat Ye’or (Jewish of Egyptian origin), and one of the leaders in the camp opposed to Islam in Europe, *Face au Danger Intégriste* (Paris: Berg Internacional, 2005).
 29. Maria Khissios Robera Mata and Migel de Eibaltha, “Al-Andalus: Between Myth and History,” *History and Anthropology*, vol. 18, issue 3 (2007).
 30. Bernard Lewis, *Race and Color in Islam* (New York, NY: Harper Row Publishers, 1971), 101–102.

31. Ibid., 103.
32. Bruce Bawer, *While Europe Slept: How Radical Islam is Destroying the West from Within* (New York, NY: Random House, 2006).
33. Bruce Bawer, *Surrender: Appeasing Islam, Sacrificing Freedom* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2009).
34. Comments by Niall Fergusson, professor of history, Harvard University, on the march of Islam and the triumph of the “Eurabia” project; (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/3652572/The-march-of-islam.html>).
35. Niall Fergusson, “The Fires of Disintegration,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 7, 2005.
36. Daniel Pipes, “Reflections on the Revolution in France,” *New York Sun*, November 8, 2005.
37. Alexandre del Valle, *Le totalitarisme islamiste à l’assaut des démocraties* (Paris: Éditions des Syrtes, 2002), 397–398. Bat Ye’or and Andrew Boston indulge so far in the same direction saying that the conquest of Andalusia “if it was achieved with the support and joint planning of a class of Christian dissidents nobles and Goths, including a bishop, it has taken all specifications of traditional Jihad so it included collective strikes, spoils, slavery, alienation and murders.” Bat Ye’or and Andrew G. Bostom, “Andalusian Myth, Eurabian Reality”; (<http://www.jihadwatch-prg/2004/04/andalusian-myth-eurabian-reality.html>).
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Chapter 2

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Index

A

- Abbasid Caliphate 28
- Abdul Hamid II, Sultan 50
 - calls for support 52
 - Muslim attitudes to 52–3
- Afghanistan
 - and Britain 52
 - and the Taliban 94
 - Western occupation of 25, 41, 97
- Africa 38, 72
- African National Congress 165
- African Unity, Organization of (OAU) 62
- Age of Reason 69
- Ahl Al Themmah 78
- Ahmadinejad, Mahmoud 163
- Al-Afghani, Sheikh Jamaluddin 50, 52–3, 61
- Al-Aqsa Mosque 45, 64
- Al-Awlaki, Anwar 87
- Al-Awsat, Caliph Abdul-Rahman 29
- Al-Azhar Mosque 56
- Al Biruni 75, 217, 222
- Al-Din, Shah Muzaffar 50
- Al Ghazali 70
- Al-Khattab, Omar bin 84
- Al Medniah Accord 78
- Al-Muhajiroun 133
- Al Mu'tazelites 70, 75
- Al-Muwal 'ladeen* 29, 33
- Al Najiyah group 70
- Al-Othman, Sultans of 50
- Al-Qaeda
 - clash with US/West 25
 - falsely seen as representing Islam 87
 - foundation of 92
 - US recruitment 103
- Al-Zawahiri, Ayman 87, 92
- Alexander the Great 67
- Alexandria, Protocol of 61
- Algeria 50, 69
- Alliance of Civilizations 22–3, 26
- Almohad Caliphate 27, 32, 33
- Almoravid Caliphate 27, 31, 32, 33
- Alvaro, Monk 30
- American Civil War 79
- Anatolia 55
- Andalusia
 - and “Eurabia” phenomenon 38–9
 - expulsion of Muslims 31, 33, 68
 - Islamic conquest of 32
- Andalusian civilization 21–2, 23
 - call for restoration of 40
 - and dialogue of civilizations 68
 - European debate on 42–4
 - ideological tolerance of 27–30
 - lessons from history of 42–4
 - religion
 - creation of co-existence “myth” 37–8
 - religious/ethnic pluralism 30–4, 43
 - Western attitudes
 - denunciation of, to serve Islamophobia 35–6, 40–2, 44
 - European debate on 34–6
- Annan, Kofi 95
- Ansari, Alia 180–2
- Anti-Semitism 153, 163
- Arab League
 - and Britain 62
 - establishment of 61
 - and Mauritania 62–3
- Arab people
 - confused with Muslims 114, 126
 - formation of Arab League 61–3
 - hatred of Turks 60
 - unity attempts 61
 - Western view of character 79–80
- Arab renaissance 71–2

“Arab Spring” 93, 97, 165
 Arab–Israeli War (1948) 152–3
 Arabic 29
 translation into Latin 68, 69, 72
 Western journalists’ lack of 98
 Arabization movement 46
 architecture 68
 Armenians 78
 arts diplomacy 137–9, 141
 Ash’arites 75
 Asia 67, 72
 Asia Minor 50
 Atatürk, Mustafa Kemal *see* Kemal, Mustafa
 Australia 169
 Austria 49, 172, 192

B

Baghdad 55
 Baghdad Pact 63, 64
 Balfour, Arthur 158
 Balfour Declaration 154, 158
 Balkans 83
 BBC 81, 82
 Bedouins 74
 Ben-Ami, Shlomo 153
 Ben Gurion, David 155
 Berbers 33
 Berlin 175
 Bin Hafsoon, Omar 33
 bin Laden, Osama 83, 87, 92, 133
 Bosnia 211
 Breivik, Anders 128
 Britain
 and the Arab League 62
 and Arab unity 61
 colonialization by 51–2, 57–9, 62
 Islamophobia of 41
 Muslims and the media 101–2
 and Ottoman Empire 55
 post-WWI Middle East division 157
 protection of Druze 48
 support for Jews 154
 see also England; United Kingdom
 British Council 176–80

Buddhism 185–6, 221
 Bush, George W. 83
 on Islam–West tensions 149–50
 on Muslims and freedom 93
 post-9/11 Islam support 172

C

Caliphate
 and Andalusia 27
 restoration of
 Muslim attempts 45, 55–60, 133
 obstacles hindering 59–61, 65
 Western prevention of 46, 55–61, 65
 Turkish abolition of 56–8, 60
 Caliphs
 abolition of 55
 role of 54–5
 caste system 78
 Catholic Church 43
 Crusades of 83
 and Latin America 223
 religious wars of 30–1
 and secularism 24
 see also Maronite Catholics
 Caucasus 52
 Central Asia 51
 Childers, Erskine
 on Arabs and Palestine 165
 broken triangle theory 152–6, 159–60, 166
 China 49, 71
 civilization of 222
 colonization by 51
 Christian Right 86, 87
 Christian–Islam period 67
 Christian–Muslim interaction
 Memphis alliance 188–9
 positive instances of 122–3, 170
 post-9/11 effect 192
 Christianity
 in Andalusia 28–30, 43
 and anti-Semitism 153
 dialogue with Islam 22, 23
 early spread of 27

- separation from politics 116–17
- and the West 24
- see also* Orthodox Christians
- citizenship
 - and human rights 130
 - and Islam 78
 - US definition 129–30
 - see also* cultural citizenship
- citizenship: Muslim rights
 - clashing civilizations? 131–4
 - defensive citizens 134–5
 - European responses to 132–3
 - full citizenship need 136–7
 - and the legal system 144–6
 - Muslim exclusion 130
- civil society: post-9/11 dialogue initiatives
 - global student links 189–91
 - hip hop exchange 120–2
 - Not in our Town* NGO 182–4
- international exchange 172
- narratives of inclusion vs. exclusion 174–6
- standing up against hatred
 - Buddhist temple attack 185–6
 - murder of Alia Ansari 180–2
 - murder of Marwa El-Sherbini 185
 - town rises against hatred 186–8
 - two faiths join together 188–9
- “two entities” criticism 173
- civilization
 - components of 200
 - definitions of 199–200
 - emergence of 197–8
 - material vs. spiritual 200–1
 - necessary conditions 201–2
- civilizations, contemporary
 - Chinese 222
 - Indian 221–2
 - Japanese 222
 - Latin American 223
 - Western 220–1
- “clash of civilizations”
 - dialogue in reply to 25–6, 173
 - as extremist Muslim view 133
 - Huntington’s theory 85–6, 91, 113–14, 150, 211, 233
- Classical Graeco-Roman era 67
- CNN 82, 99
- co-existence
 - approaches to problems of
 - common interests 210–12
 - social approaches 206–10
 - and civilization 206
 - cultural dimensions 212–15
 - definition 203
 - difference/diversity as source 205–6
 - fundamentals 204–5
 - and international/regional organizations 240–1
 - and ISESCO
 - efforts of 241–2
 - future vision of 242
 - projects and programs of 243–4
 - and Islamic civilization 223–4
 - and Islamic media 238–40
 - in Islamic thought 223–8
 - levels of 203–4
 - obstacles to 233–6
 - and participation 203
 - requirements 202–3, 210
 - role of the media 236–8
- Cold War
 - end of
 - and “clash of civilizations” 91, 113
 - and focus on Islam 237
 - and Islamic unity 46
 - and US broadcasting 82
- Cole*, USS 92
- Cologne 186–8
- colonial wars 83
- colonialism
 - cultural dimension of 69
 - and Islamic civilization 242
 - and Islamic movements 46, 236
 - Muslim opposition to 51, 53, 55, 70
 - and Ottoman Empire 50
 - settlement of Israel as 164–6

- US foreign policy seen as 150
 West colonizes Muslim world 51–5
 colonialism–liberation stage 67
 communism
 and focus on Islam 84, 237
 Muslim opposition to 64, 65
 Confucianism 222
Connect Program 190–1
 Constantinople 83
 Continuous Traditional School 36
 Cordoba 68
 Crusades
 by early Christians 33, 83
 modern equivalents of 83
 cultural anthropology 69
 cultural citizenship
 and arts diplomacy 137–8
 and belonging to a society 143–4
 clashing civilizations? 131–4
 defensive citizens 134–5
 Muslims as political issue 127–30
 and representation 143–7
 cultural diversity 214–15
 culture, Islamic
 new vs. old split 69
 seen by West as fundamentalist 74–5
 seen as threat to West 128
 Western invasion of 69
 cultures: Islam and West
 bridging attempts
 arts diplomacy 137–8, 139
 danger of widening the gap
 138, 180
 human connection projects
 120–2
 need for empathic Muslim
 accounts 146–7
 Our Shared Europe project
 176–80
 politics of empathy 139–43
 shared history concept 175–6,
 179–80
 Curzon, Lord George 158
- D**
 Dagestan 51
 Damascus–Hijaz railway 52
 Danish cartoons 131
 Dayan, Moshe 155
 democracy 92
 and the Caliphate 60
 and Muslims 95, 150
 Western 54
 Denmark 47
 despotism 76
 dialogue of civilizations (cultures)
 and co-existence 206, 211
 current prospects 71
 civilization–culture binary 24–5
 “clash of civilizations” reply
 25–6
 identification of participants
 23–4
 and future of humanity 214
 as global project 42
 introduction of theory 86
 and Islamophobia 41
 UN year of 211, 223
 Dresden 185
 Druze 48
 Durban conference 72
 Dutch *see* Netherlands
- E**
 Eastern Europe 54, 70
 Eden, Anthony 61
 education
 global student links 189–91
 Islamic studies chairs 192
 Islamic University 50
 Muslim students in West 46
 Egypt 71, 78
 “Arab Spring” 93, 97
 and Britain 52, 53, 58–9, 62
 and the Caliphate 57–9
 October War 91
 Orabi revolution 50, 53
 and Ottoman Empire 50, 51

- School of Languages 46
 slavery accusations 79
 El-Sherbini, Marwa 185
 empathy
 definition 139
 empathy gaps in societies 140
 need for empathic accounts of
 Muslim life 143, 146–7
 vs. action 142
 in war settings 140–1
 England
 and Jews 30
 and native Indians 33–4
 Ottoman trade capitulations 47
 see also Britain; United Kingdom
 Enlightenment 69
 Erdogan, Recep Tayyip 22
 ethnic cleansing 30–1, 33
 Eulogio, Monk 30
 Eurabia phenomenon 38–9
 Europe
 Andalusian debate 21–2, 34–6
 centrality of 71
 cruelty to minorities 33–4
 expulsion of Jews 154
 immigrant percentage 132
 Muslims
 civil society initiatives 173–4,
 176–80
 current population 39
 debate about Islam’s place
 174–5
 perceived “otherness” 129,
 169–71
 as political issue 127
 post-9/11 dialogue 172
 racial diversity of 135
 Ottoman trading capitulations 47–
 50, 64–5
 and racism 71
 religious wars 30–1
 and science 71
 seen as “Christian club” 174
 as “teacher” 71
 see also individual countries
- F**
 Facebook 108, 186
 Faisal bin Abdul Aziz, King 64
 Fanjul, Serafin 35–6
 fascism 154
 Fernando, King 31
Fikrun wa Fann 172
 Finland 185–6
 First Gulf War 85
 Fouad, King 59
 France
 African colonization 50, 52, 62
 Islamophobia of 41
 and Jews 30
 Muslims
 loyalty to state 133
 religious observance 135
 and native Indians 33–4
 and Ottoman empire
 Arab revolution support 55
 Ottoman trade capitulations 47
 protection of Maronite
 Catholics 47
 post-WWI Middle East division 157
 and Tunisia 52
 Franco, General 43
 Frederick II, Emperor 68
 freedom
 and Islamic teachings 92
 of speech 150
 French Revolution 76, 154
 fundamentalism 74–5
- G**
 Gaza 164
 Germany
 federal system of 54
 and Islamic law 144
 and Muslims
 Islam–Germany debate 174–6
 Islamic studies chair 192
 mosque protest 186–8
 post-9/11 dialogue 172
 Nazis

- Arab broadcasts 81–2
 - holocaust 153
 - racism of 79
- and Ottoman Empire 55
- Gingrich, Newt 137
- globalization
 - and cultural values 66
 - summary of effects of 195
 - and US hegemony 72, 211
- Goths 28, 32
- Granada 68
- Greece, Ancient 69, 71, 220
- H**
- Habsburg dynasty 49
- Hadiths 226, 227
- Hajj 64
- Hakimiyah* 70
- Hamas 158–9
- Hamburg 47
- Hartford Theological Institute 237
- Herzl, Theodor 154–5
- hijab 181
- Hijaz 58, 59
- Hinduism 221
- Hizbut Tahrir 133
- Holland *see* Netherlands
- Hollywood and Muslims
 - early negative images 96
 - post-9/11 positive images 114–20
- Holy Quran 74
- Holy Roman Empire 47
- human rights
 - and citizenship 130
 - false Western view of Islam 76–7
 - and Shari'a law 77
- human social life 206–7
- Human Writes Project 120
- Huns 221
- Huntington, Samuel 85–6, 91, 113–14, 150, 211, 233
- I**
- Iberian Peninsula 21
- Ibn Khaldun 69, 74, 199, 223
- Ibn Maimoon 31
- Ibn Rushd 31, 70, 75, 217
- Ibn Saud, King Abdul Aziz 58, 59
- identity 78
- immigrants
 - Europe
 - Muslim percentage 132
 - non-Muslim skepticism 177
 - post-9/11 focus on Muslims 169–70
- India 49, 71
 - British occupation 51, 52
 - civilization of 221–2
 - Ottoman loyalty 51
- Indians, native 33–4
- individualism 210
- Indonesia 51, 78, 162
- integration
 - and empathy 139–43
 - UK policies 132
- International Hip Hop Academy 120–2
- international relations
 - definition of 213–14
 - and Islam
 - Islamic monotheism 228–9
 - Islamic sovereignty 230–1
 - loyalty and repudiation 231
 - principle of equality 230
 - principle of justice 230
 - respect for conventions 231
 - unity of humanity 229–30
 - validity of universal order 229
 - Islamic/Western visions of differences 232–3
 - publications on 210–11
- Internet 81, 82, 236
- Iran 76
 - 1979 Revolution 63
 - and Baghdad Pact 63
 - expansion of 25
- Iraq 52, 58, 211
 - 1958 Revolution 63
 - and Baghdad Pact 63
 - and the Caliphate 60
 - invasion of Kuwait 85, 92

- US occupation of 25, 41, 83, 97
Western sanctions 92
- Isabel, Queen 31
- ISESCO 241–4
- Islam
- and Andalusia 27–44
 - association with politics 117
 - and colonialism 242
 - correcting Western image of 244–6
 - dialogue with Christianity 22, 23
 - early spread of 67, 83, 215
 - extremists in minority 87
 - and international relations 228–31
 - and *jihad* 73, 76
 - “otherness” of 128–9, 135, 146
 - as threat to West 38–9
 - tolerance of 84
 - Western irrationality claims 75
 - Western writings on 97, 103
 - see also* minarets; mosques
- Islam–West dialogue
- civil society initiatives 173–4
 - criticism of 173
 - following Madrid bombings 172
 - post-9/11
 - governments’ support for Islam 171–2
 - international exchange 172
 - see also* civil society: post-9/11
 - dialogue; co-existence
- Islam–West tensions
- causes
 - 1973 Arab oil embargo 91
 - Israel–Palestine conflict 151–2, 156, 159–67
 - US foreign policy 150–1, 161
- Islamic Art, Museum for (Berlin) 175–6
- Islamic Caliphate *see* Caliphate
- Islamic civilization
- characteristics 216–18
 - concept of 215–16
 - and dialogue for co-existence 223–4
 - emergence of 197
 - “golden age” of 69
 - reality of 218–19
 - traditional stereotype of 70
- and the West
- Islamic vs. Western civilization 69–70
 - as Western cultural source 68, 69, 72
 - Western denunciation of 37
 - Western judgements of 68–9
 - Western misunderstandings 73–80, 85
 - see also* Arab people; Islamic countries; Islamic world
- Islamic Community of Turku 186
- Islamic Conference, Organization of 61, 64, 243
- Islamic Cooperation, Organization of 64
- Islamic countries
- and Baghdad Pact 63
 - colonial wars of 83
 - and Communism 64
 - independence of 61, 69
 - post-independence unity attempts 61–3
 - and the West
 - conflicting views of 69
 - Western colonization of 46
 - Western opposition to convergence of 46
 - see also* Islamic world
- Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) 241–4
- Islamic League 46, 50
- Islamic Liberation Party 56
- Islamic Summit Conference 64
- Islamic unity
- and the Arab League 61–3
 - Western hindrance of
 - colonization of Muslim world 51–3
 - hindrance of post-independence unity 61–4
 - and Ottoman trade capitulations 47–50

- prevention of Caliphate
 - restoration 55–61
 - and the Ottoman Empire 45, 49–50
 - Islamic University 50
 - Islamic world
 - cultural diversity of 87, 98, 113, 115
 - diverse challenges of 98
 - foreign broadcasts to 81–2
 - and Islamic message 196
 - media distortion of 196
 - religious institutions 87
 - suspicion of Western media 86
 - targeting of by West 85
 - and US–Israeli relationship 88–90
 - West portrayed as anti-Muslim 171
 - Western judgement based on extremists 87
 - Western negative discourse 103–4
 - Islamophobia 93
 - 2008 US presidential race 125–7
 - and the Andalusian illusion 40–2
 - situation in Britain 99
 - Israel 76
 - aggression in Arab states 64
 - anti-Arab media campaigns 96
 - causes of Arab/Muslim
 - condemnation of
 - anti-Semitism 163
 - colonialism 164–6
 - human rights record 163–4
 - October War 91
 - racism of 72
 - relationship with US 88–90
 - Western support for 156–60, 166
 - Israel– Hamas conflict 160
 - Israel–Hezbollah war 160
 - Israel–Palestine conflict
 - and colonialism 164–6
 - Erskine Childers’ triangle 152–6, 159, 160, 166
 - Indonesian concerns 162
 - and Islam–West tension 151–2, 156, 159–67
 - MENA region concerns 162
 - and Muslim view of US 161–2
 - Western double standards 159–60
 - Israeli lobby 86–8, 90
 - Istanbul 55
 - Italy 62
 - Izetbegović, Alija Ali 25
- J**
- Japan 54, 222
 - Jerusalem 84, 90
 - Jews
 - and Andalucia 28, 37, 43
 - early anti-Semitism 153
 - European treatment of 33, 154
 - expulsion of 30–1
 - nationalist movement 154
 - Palestine
 - settlement in 154–6
 - Western support 154, 156
 - jihād* 76
 - as anti-Europe conspiracy 39
 - definition of 73
 - “stealth jihād” claims 127–8
 - Jordan 58
 - Judaism 117
 - jurisprudence 70
- K**
- Kemal, Mustafa 53, 55, 56, 57, 60
 - Khatami, Mohammad 86
 - Khedive Tawfiq 50
 - King–Crane Commission 156–8
 - Kingdom, The* (film) 115–20
 - Kingdom of Two Sicilies 47
 - Kirchentag, Germany 184
 - Koran *see* Quran
 - Kosovo 211
 - Kuwait 85, 92
- L**
- languages *see* Arabic; Latin; romance languages
 - Latin 68, 69, 72
 - Latin America 72
 - law

- international
 - and global system 214
 - and Muslims 144–6
 - Islamic, Western view of 73–4
- League of Arab States, Charter of 61
- Lebanon 78, 160
- Levy, Bernard Henri 41–2
- Lewis, Bernard 37, 38, 41, 132–3, 150
- Libya 62, 93, 97
- London bombings 83, 131
- Lubeck 47
- M**
- McCain, John 125–6
- Madrid bombings
 - and Andalusia debate 44
 - and government dialogue 172
 - historical justification of 83
- Maghreb 62, 165
- Malaya 52
- Mamlouk Turkish Ottoman period 69, 70
- Mandela, Nelson 165
- Maronite Catholics 47
- Mauritania 62–3
- Mecca 58, 84
- media
 - and co-existence 236–8
 - Islamic
 - as co-existence tool 238–40
 - inefficiency of 238
 - post-9/11 West–Islamic battle 82
 - role of 81
- media, United States
 - determinants of US discourse
 - Arab oil 91
 - Israel’s security 88–90
 - supreme interests of US 88
 - diversity of Muslim images 107
 - Hollywood and Muslims 96, 114–20
 - Muslims’ view of 99–100
 - positive Muslim stories 171
- media, Western
 - aspects of Muslim bias
 - aversion to democracy 95
 - hostility to freedom/women 92–4
 - hostility to modernity 94–5
 - Islamic terrorism as threat 91–2
- broadcasts to Arabs 81–2
- distortion of Islamic message 196
- hostility to Islam 236–7
- Muslims’ view of Britain 101–2
- neutral or biased? 86–8
- position of minorities 88
- positive Muslim coverage 102–3
- sources of negative thoughts about Muslims
 - Israeli campaigns 96
 - media professionals’ ignorance 97–9
 - Orientalist heritage 95
 - right-wing research institutions 96–7
- Medina 58
- Medina Document 226
- Mediterranean 49, 67
- Memphis 188–9
- MENA region 162
- Mesopotamia 71
- Mexico 103
- Middle Ages
 - Islamic 70
 - Western
 - and Andalusian age 31–2, 35
 - Islamic contribution 68, 69, 72, 217
 - and Islamic “golden age” 69
 - treatment of Jews 33
- Millah (denominations) 78
- minarets 128
- modernity
 - early Muslim advocacy of 53, 54
 - Muslim–Western agreement 150
 - Western belief in Muslim hostility to 94–5
- Mohammad Ali 79
- Mongols 55, 222
- Moors 31, 54
- moral geographies

- definition of 108–9
 - and Muslims
 - hostile views of Islam 110–14
 - keep it private 114–20
 - Orientalism 109–10
 - solidarity 120–3
 - Morocco 62–3, 79
 - mosques
 - Cologne 186–8
 - Ground Zero
 - positive media report 103
 - protests 112, 114, 136–7
 - Western Muslim attendance 135
 - Wilson, Wisconsin 122–3
 - Mosul 60
 - Moulay Ismail 79
 - Mozarabs 28–30, 31, 36
 - mujahideen 39, 51
 - Muslim Association of Britain 99
 - Muslim Brotherhood 133
 - Muslim countries *see* Islamic countries
 - Muslim League 55
 - Muslim unity *see* Islamic unity
 - Muslim world *see* Islamic world
 - Muslim World League 64
 - Muslims Against Crusades 133
 - Muslims and the West
 - and 1990s international changes 84–5
 - correcting Muslim image 244–6
 - historical interaction between 45–6
 - 8th century to present day 82–4
 - history of conflict 67–8
 - Ottoman Empire and trade capitulations 47–50
 - West colonizes Muslim world 51–5
 - West hinders post-independence rapprochement 61–4
 - West prevents Caliphate restoration 55–61
 - human connections between
 - connecting projects 120–2
 - shared humanity story 122–3
 - loyalty to adopted countries 133, 134
 - Muslim extremist groups 133
 - Muslims as Westerners 173
 - non-state dialogue possibilities 66
 - population
 - European Union 39
 - United States 115
 - as post-9/11 political issue 127–30
 - recommendations for positive relationship 104–5
 - religious observances of 135
 - seen as the “other” 169–71
 - varieties of experiences 135–7
 - writings on Muslims 97, 103
- N**
- Naples 47
 - Nasrid Kingdom 27
 - Nasser, Gamal Abdel 63, 64
 - National Interests Council (US) 89–90
 - national liberation 72
 - neo-conservatism 41
 - Netherlands 47
 - colonialism of 51
 - Islamic studies chairs 192
 - Muslim religious observance 135
 - tolerance of Muslims 173
 - New Orientalist School *see* Orientalism
 - New York Times* 99, 103
 - New Zealand 169
 - Nile Valley 62
 - 9/11 attacks *see* September 11 attacks
 - Non-Aligned Movement 62
 - Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) 240–1
 - North Africa 50
 - North America 169, 172
 - Norway 26
 - Not in our Town* (NioT) 182–4
- O**
- Obama Administration 159
 - Obama, Barack 103
 - “accused” of being a Muslim 110–12, 114, 125–6

- and dialogue of civilizations 41
- and Islam–West tensions 149
- praises Andalusia 34
- visit to Indonesia 162
- October War 91
- Orabi Revolution 50, 53
- Orientalism 68
 - 19th century Muslim image 70
 - and Andalusia 31, 34, 37–8
 - definition of 109
 - duplicity of 71
 - negative image of Islam 95
 - view of Islam as immutable 40
- Orthodox Christians 48
- “other”, the
 - factors in inability to recognize 207–10
 - and human social life 207
 - Islam as 128–9, 135, 146
 - isolation from 208–10
 - Muslims seen as 129, 169–70, 171
- Ottoman Empire 35, 37
 - and colonialism 50, 65
 - dependence on Germany 55
 - effect of Millah 78
 - European trading capitulations 45, 47–50, 64–5
 - fall of 46, 52, 55, 65
 - and Islamic unity 45, 49–50
 - and Muslims
 - decline in stature among 52–4
 - Muslim loyalty to 51–3
 - and Muslim–West relations 83
- Ottoman–Greek war 52
- Our Shared Europe* (OSE) 176–80
- Our shared Future* 176, 180
- P**
- Pakistan 63, 78
- Palestine 22, 52, 211
 - Arab minority 156
 - as Arab/Muslim identity issue 166–7
 - and Islam–West tensions 151–2
 - Israel’s treatment of 72
 - Jewish settlement of 154–6
 - Arab opposition to 157
 - US opposition to 157–8
 - removal of Arabs 152–3, 165
 - suicide attacks of 90
 - US media bias against 90
 - see also* Israel–Palestine conflict
- Palestine American Research Center (PARC) 120
- Palestinian Authority 159
- Palestinian state
 - conditional Western support 158–9
 - US opposition to 159
- Paris 46
 - Peace Conference 157
- Park 51 Islamic Cultural Center 112, 136–7
- Pasha, Muhammad Ali 50, 53
- Paul VI, pope 22
- PBS radio station 103
- PBS TV network 182
- People of the Book 78, 224
- Peres, Shimon 89
- Persia 48, 49, 50, 52, 71
- Persians 67
- philosophy 68
- pilgrims 52, 58
- Poland 47
- politics
 - Muslims as post-9/11 political issue 127–30
 - politics of empathy 139–43
 - and religion 116–17, 119
- United States
 - 2008 presidential race and Islam 125–7
 - Obama defined as Muslim 110–12, 114
- polygamy 77
- Portugal 34, 49
- Powell, Colin 112
- Protestantism 116
- Prussia 47

Q

Qantara (Internet site) 172
 Quran 56, 224, 241

R

racism

in Britain 101
 Islamic lack of 79
 and Obama campaign 111–12
 in the West 71
 and Zionism 72

Radio Free Europe 82

Ramadan 175, 188–9

Ramadan, Tariq 134, 137

Razek, Sheikh Ali Abdel 56–8

religion

minorities in Ottoman Empire 47–8
 Muslims in the West
 degrees of observance 135
 US religious freedom 136–7
 non-geographic diversity of 173
 pluralism in Andalusia 30, 37
 as “private” matter 116–17, 119
 separation from state 54
 and shared humanity 122–3, 180–2, 185
 Western religious reform 69
see also individual beliefs

Renaissance, European

and contemporary West 69
 Islamic contribution 68, 69, 72, 218

Rida, Sheikh Muhammad Rashid 53–4,
 59–60

Righteous Caliphs 45

Roman Catholic Church *see* Catholic
 Church

Roman era 27, 28, 67, 69, 71, 220

romance languages 29

Ruiz de Vivar, Rodrigo 32–3

Rushdie, Salman 42, 92

Russia 48, 49

colonization by 51
 defeat of Ottomans 52
 invasion of Dagestan 51

S

Said, Edward 98, 109, 110, 131, 166

Saladin 84

Salafism 75

Sartre, Jean-Paul 136

satellite technology 164–5, 236

Saudi Arabia 58, 64

science 70

Eastern origins of 68–9, 75–6, 217
 historical periods of 217–18
 seen as European creation 71

sectarian wars 78

secularism

and religion vs. politics 117
 and the West 24, 54, 117

September 11 attacks 67

and Andalusia debate 44
 historical justification of 83–4
 impact on non-Muslim immigrants
 170

international reaction

governments’ pro-Islamic
 diplomacy 171–2
 international exchange 172
 and Islam–West dichotomy 149–50,
 169

and the media battle 82

and Muslims

Hollywood Muslim images
 114–20

loyalty to state questioned 125,
 131

Muslims now a political issue
 127–30

renewed focus on 169–70

US media coverage 99–100,
 102–3, 107

US public opinion 100, 107

Seville 43, 68

Shari’a 224

and human rights 77

media portrayals of 73–4

Muslim extremist hopes 133

US opposition to 117, 128

Shiite Muslims 50

Shura 76

slavery 47

Islam vs. West 79

and United States 72
Sleeper Cell (cable show) 114–15
 social sciences 68
 Somalia 62, 94, 211
 Soviet Union
 collapse of 84, 91, 233
 and the Muslim world 63, 84, 91
 Muslim–West alliance against 91
 Spain
 Andalusian debate 21–2, 43
 emergence of State 36
 expulsion of Muslims 31, 33, 68, 82–3
 invasion by Muslims 82
 massacre of Moors 54
 and native Indians 33–4
 Ottoman trade capitulations 47
 see also Andalusia; Andalusian civilization; Madrid bombings
 Spanish inquisition 34, 68
 stereotypical views
 of Islamic civilization 70
 minorities and Western courts 144–6
 Sudan 62, 78
 Sufi Senussi order 50
 Sufism 77, 113
 suicide attacks 90
 Sumatra 51
 Sumerians 221
 Sunnah 56, 75, 224, 241
 Sunni Muslims 50, 113
 Sweden 47
 Switzerland 128
 sympathy 139
 Syria 52, 58, 91, 93, 97

T

Taliban 94
 taxes 48
 terrorism, international 25–6
 emergence of Al-Qaeda 92
 historical justification of 83–4
 and increased racist attacks 101
 and Islam 73, 83–4
 random nature of 94

and the US media 91–2, 114–20
 US recruitment 103
 third world 72
 Toledo 68
 trade 49
 tribute 78
 Tunisia 52, 93, 97
 Turkestan 51
 Turkey 54, 55, 63, 70, 172
 Turkish National Assembly 59–60
 Turkish National Movement 55
 Turkish Republic 55
 Tuscany 47

U

Umayyad Caliphate 27, 28, 29, 31, 33
 Unilateralism 72
 United Kingdom
 and Baghdad Pact 63
 and Muslims
 integration policies 132
 loyalty to the state 133
 Muslim extremists 133
 Our Shared Europe project 176–80
 post-9/11 civil liberties 127
 see also Britain; England
 United Nations 213
 and Alliance of Civilizations 22, 190
 and cultural diversity 215
 and dialogue among civilizations 86, 223
 and Morocco 63
 Palestinian statehood bid 159
 third world share of votes 72
 United States
 and Baghdad Pact 63
 federal system of 54
 Muslims
 2030 population forecast 115
 current population 115
 loyalty to US 133
 Muslim–US connecting projects 120–2, 137–8
 racial diversity of 115, 135
 Muslims, attitudes to

- Islamophobia 41
 Muslims as political issue 127–30
 opposition to Shari'a law 117, 128
 perceived "otherness" 125–9
 positive initiatives 173–4, 176, 188–9
 post-9/11 discussion of 67, 99–100, 102–3
 research institution image 96–7
 stereotypical views 144–5
see also media, United States
 racism of 79
 relationship with Israel
 dissenting voices 89–90
 and Muslim discourse 88–90
 world domination 72, 84
 US embassy attacks 92
- V**
- Vatican Council II 22
 Venice 47
 Vienna 70
- W**
- Wafd Party 59
 war on terror 131
Washington Post 137
 welfare state 54
 West
 and the Caliphate 46
 Christianity vs. secularism 24
 denunciation of Islamic culture 37
 duplicity of standards 68
 "Eurabia" fears 38–9
 Muslim admiration for 150
 Muslim image of
 contradictory 53–4
 negative 49, 51, 53, 65
 positive 46
 West seen as morally deficient 177–8
 Renaissance of *see* Renaissance, European
 stereotypical view of Islam 70
 see also Muslims and the West
 West Bank 164
 Western civilization
 characteristics of 71, 220
 cultural sources 70–1
 imbalances in 211–12
 Islamic contribution 71, 72
 main pillars of 53–4
 negative aspects 221
 non-centrality of 223
 positive aspects 220–1
 three stages of 69
 vs. Islamic civilization 69–70
 Wilson, Wisconsin 122
 Wilson, Woodrow 157, 158
 women
 and Islam
 media distortion of facts 92–4
 status misunderstood by West 77–8
 status in Islam 77–8
 and tribal practices 94–5
 Western attitudes to 54
 women's rights 236
 World Economic Forum (WEF) 172
 World Trade Center 103
 World War I
 Allies divide territories 157
 and Ottoman Empire 55
 and Palestine 154
 World War II
 and Israel 166
 and nuclear weapons 205
 and the world system 213
 Wulff, Christian 174
- Y**
- Yemen 62, 93, 97
 Yugoslavia, former 141
- Z**
- Zapatero, José Luis Rodriguez 22
 Zionism 41
 and anti-Semitism 154
 colonialism of 155
 and racism 72
 "Zionist Entity" 67–8