

## Cultural and Civilizational Realities

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Preface</b> by JAMES HOLLIFIELD	9
<b>Introduction</b> by ABDELHAK AZZOUZI	11
<b>First Part: Culture, Civilisation and Dialogue</b>	<b>25</b>
ABASS JIRARI <b>Peace and War in Islam</b>	27
AYATOLLAH MUHAMMAD ALI TASKHIRI <b>Common Human Values and their Role in Furthering Solidarity among Peoples and Nations</b>	37
JOCELYNE CESARI <b>Global Islam: Between Fundamentalism and Cosmopolitanism</b>	49
EMILE SAHLIYEH <b>Measuring Political Authority and Human Rights among the Islamic Countries: Patterns and Trends</b>	71
SEYOM BROWN <b>Unipolar and Multipolar Illusions, Cultural and Civilizational Realities</b>	87
VANDA FELBAB-BROWN <b>Culture of “Illegality” Across Borders: The Survival Imperative</b>	105
JILL CRYSTAL <b>Cultural Conflict and Dialogue in the Gulf</b>	127

*Table of Contents*

<b>Second Part: How Can Common Values Contributes to Cross-Cultural Dialogue?</b>	<b>143</b>
ROBERT W. JORDAN <b>Uncommon Values: Is it time for an American-Saudi divorce?</b>	145
MOHAMED BRAHIMI <b>The Salient Role of Civic Society in Promoting Interfaith Dialogue</b>	159
FATIMA SADIQI <b>Gender Perception in Moroccan Culture</b>	165
JAMES HOLLIFIELD <b>The Emerging Migration State</b>	191
SAID GRAIOUID <b>How Can Migration Contribute to Cross-Cultural Dialogue?</b>	221
PHILIP MARTIN <b>Integrating Immigrants: The Role of the Labor Market</b>	231
<b>Authors</b>	243
<b>Table of Contents</b>	251

## **Introduction:**

### **The Clash of Ignorance**

By *ABDELHAK AZZOUZI*

The famous French historian, Fernand Braudel wrote about the civilization variety: "Thus our first gesture is to believe the heterogeneity, to the variety of the civilizations of the world, to the permanence, to the survival of their personages, what comes back to place to the first row of the current one this study of reflex ones obtain, of attitudes without big flexibility, usually close, of deep tastes that explains alone a slow, old history, not very conscious (such these antecedents that the psychoanalysis The adult). It would be necessary that one is interested in it us as early as the school, but every people takes too much pleasure to consider itself in his own mirror, except the others". In fact, this precious knowledge remains enough not very common. She would oblige to consider outside of the prejudices, biases, thought backs, all the engrave problems of this world, this obligation to find, of civilization to civilization, bridges of comprehension, languages unifying that know, respect and promote the different positions, to avert perils and possible catastrophes, say our human and tenacious hopes.

The entire world lives henceforth, under the effect of the phenomenon of the globalization, in a planetary town" that does not stop shrinking and more than ever, here the men, to paraphrase Arnold Tonybee, must live "under a same roof". Nevertheless, despite the profusion of the speeches and manuscripts, this is the ignorance that reigns. And this is this ignorance that is at the origin of the fantasies and of all the prejudices. Civilizations ought not to be judged based on the acts and behaviors of individual. Others believe that the analysis of the geopolitical scene has to take into account necessarily and principally factors of culture and civilization. On the scale of the analysis of the international geopolitical scene, regarding civilizations, there are other variables that are necessary to take advantage of in order to understand them or seize them. But before revealing my finding and where I stand on this topic, let us stop at the definition of civilization and culture.

## **Civilization, Civilizations, and Culture**

A large number of sociologists, historians, and ethnographer have tried to define civilization. However, this becomes a worthy task of knowledge when we try to discern its outlines, set up its limits, its constituting elements, its centers and peripheries, "the provinces and the air that one breathes, the special and general forms that there one live and associates" to paraphrase Fernand Braudel

The term civilization – derived indirectly of the Latin *civilis* meaning "citizen" by the intermediary of "civil" and "to civilize" – was used differently throughout history; it has, three main significances:

- Civilization, in lay terms, is the act of civilizing, which mean to bring the society up to a level where it is considered to be better raised and more evolved, and this is, by metonymy, the status attained by this evolved society. This meaning includes a notion of progress. It opposes barbarity, savagery.
- Civilization is also the body of traits that characterize the state of evolution of any given society, on the technical plan, intellectual, political than morale, without holding any value judgment. To this end, one can talk about in the plural civilizations and even of primitive civilizations.
- The state reached by some cultures in the history of humanity. This acceptance is in direct agreement with the evolutionist theories of the XIX century which have been refuted since much to the advantage of more neutral theories.

The word civilization used in the plural form designates phenomena that distinguish themselves from ordinary social phenomena by their range in the space. As explained by Sociologist Marcel Mauss: "The civilization phenomena are thus essentially international, ultra national. One can therefore define them in opposition to specific social phenomena of such or such society: those are social phenomena that are common to several societies more or less compared, compared by extended contact, by intermediary permanent, by affiliation from a common stump".

As for culture, one can refer to the definition given by an institution as prestigious as the UNESCO: "Culture, in general terms, is considered to be the body of the distinctive traits, material and spiritual, intellectuals and emotional, that characterizes a society, a social group or an individual. Subordinated to nature, besides the environment, it includes the arts and literature, the way of life, basic rights of the human being, value systems, traditions, beliefs and the sciences". The notion of culture reflects an

essential issue. This is the reason why we have a tendency to cover various activities that are removed from one another ("general culture", "traditional culture", "technical culture", "business culture", "cultural industries", "culture ministry", "animal cultures", etc.). Every group possesses his own culture with own characteristics and the existence of different cultures. Cultural diversity and multiculturalism are moves that insist on values such as living together, co-existence, acquaintanceships, mixing and evolution.

In general, a civilization phenomenon is, by definition as by nature, a phenomenon applied to a mass of populations much larger than the tribe, the populace, the small kingdom, the confederacy of tribes and of which the traits reflect the evolution of a determined society on every level be it cultural, technical, intellectual, political as well as moral. Marcel Mauss gives thus a concise but elaborated definition of civilization: "this is a hyper social system of social systems", a definition that inspires itself to the abode Samuel Huntington that considers civilization to be " the widest cultural entity", all while asserting that "the civilizations are the biggest one "us" and oppose all the others "them"" before adding that " culture, cultural identities that, to a crude level, are identities of civilization that determine the structures of cohesion, disintegration, and world conflict in a post cold war world" and that the "the societies share cultural affinities; The efforts conducted to bring societies and civilizations together failed; countries rally around leading States of the same civilization". According to Samuel Huntington, the basic and first source of conflicts is neither ideological nor economical. The biggest divisions within humanity as well as the principal source of conflict will be cultural, "Nation States will remain the most powerful actors on the international scene, but the central conflicts of global politics will be essentially cultural. The shock of civilization will dominate the political scene at the global level. The break lines between civilizations will be the front lines of the battles of the future".

But at a close look, Samuel Huntington's thesis simplifies to excessive approaches developed by Marcel Mauss and Fernand Braudel to which he refers himself to. It gave rise to a tide of commentaries to differentiate such orientation of such other and always continues to be the topic of critique of a number of intellectuals. Edward Saïd replied brilliantly to this prejudice picture, clichés, and simplifications: "The thesis of the shock of civilizations is a gadget as "the world War", more effective to reinforce a defensive pride than to attain a comprehension of the great interdependence of our era". Samuel Huntington is an ideologue who wants to create civilizations and identities that are hermetic entities closed on themselves, purged of all antagonisms that animate the human history, and for centuries " have allowed him not only to contain religious wars and of imperial conquests,

but also to be an exchange history, of fertile intermarriage and sharing. This history, a lot less visible, has been hastily unaware of figuring a cost of the ridiculously restricted and compressed war, of which "the shock of civilization" claims to establish itself as a reality".

The author of the clash of the civilizations bases his theory on the work of the Bernard Lewis, whose ideological coloring is serious in the title of his work "the roots of the Moslem rage", to justify his way of thinking. But neither one had any time to "to devote to the dynamics and to the internal pluralities of every civilization or to the fact that the principal debate in most modern cultures is tied to the definition and the interpretation of each culture, or to the unpleasant eventuality that a good one leaves demagoguery and of frank ignorance signals the pretention to speak for a whole culture or civilization". Huntington writes that the challenge that should be raise by the strategists and the persons in charge of the West is to guarantee the supremacy of the western world, to defend it against the rest of the world, and against Islam in particular. One would easily imagine the disappointment that this kind reasoning can do to those born to Arab and Muslim civilizations.

Huntington reasons in alarmist terms of clash of the civilizations by pitting the West against the Muslim World. If his theory was elaborated in respecting the fineness of the method of scholarly work, each of us, scholars or not, will be able to understand the simplistic manner in which he presents the world and his shallow reading of the geopolitical international scene manifested in his articulation of the variable of civilization and inevitably the one of religion and culture all on the whole the decision-makers of the West to take appropriate long and short term measures guard against catastrophes that can't be remedied. The challenge that faces western political leaders, said Huntington, is to guarantee the supremacy of the West and to defend it against the rest of the world, Islam in particular.

### **The Islam: Opened or Sealed? Peace or War?**

Islam, as a religion, to which some fanatic jihadists refer themselves to in order to justify their terrorist acts, is certainly not to be held accountable, neither the Koran nor the Sunna authorize these heinous crimes. Nevertheless, the Koran and the Sunna are the only two legitimate references in Islam. Western intellectuals try to establish a link between acts of terrorism and the spirit and the body of the religion of Islam, and that of Arab and Muslim civilizations without troubling themselves to look into the history the texts to separate truth from myth.

There exist so many misunderstandings between the East and the West. Instead of the deconstructing them for the sake of gaining a deeper understanding of the problem, the analysis as well as the belligerent declarations are assuredly a very dangerous factor that amplifies clichés, predispositions, and generalizations. Do we not risk, once again, by committing a series of errors grave enough to further exacerbate opposition and conflict between communities and civilizations?

No one can deny that the Arab-Muslim civilization lived universality, hospitality, the important opening to the all others and to “the other”. It was always an intersection of other civilizations, cultures and of other systems of values. It saw the light of day in the *Bedouin* context of the Arabian Peninsula, but that did not prevent it from adopting the aspects of the Persian civilization. The big Arabic sociologist Ibn Khaldun, in his approach to the openness of civilization, explains that the defeated does not necessarily imitate the conqueror. It gave as example the Arabs that imitated the Persians even as conquerors! That also did not prevent it to be opened to the Indian civilization, and the Roman-Greek civilization. Similarly, the western civilization opened up to the Islamic civilization and took that which is useful for collective progress.

Ibn Arabi (XII century) one of the biggest visionary in Islam, summarize in some words the opening of the Muslim civilization far from the deviances of confinement and dilution: "My heart became capable of receiving all the beings, is a prairie for the gazelles and a monastery for the monks, a house for the idols, and the Kaaba of those that around it do the turn, the tables of the Torah and the pages of the Koran. I practice the religion of love [...]. Everywhere there is the love that is my religion and my faith". This beautiful tonality expressed by Ibn Arabi is one of welcome, dialogue and hospitality of the Arab-Muslim civilization. It is not in our attention to dwell on measures on opening of the Arab-Muslim civilization, but just to recognize the intermingling between the civilizations and that they are inevitably were geared towards living together. Intermingling that allowed the women and men to think, write, and sing in Berber, Arab, in Greek, in Latin, in Spaniard in what one has commonly the habit to say (heirs the spirit of the Andalusia), mixing without confusing them "idioms and idiosyncrasies. Thus formerly through the mixed Ionic of peoples coming from the East and others of Africa, thus formerly in Arabia mixed men of the desert and merchants of the Mediterranean coasts, thus formerly mixed in again undefined Europe of the Celts, Franks, Gallic one and Latin".

The history of the Arabic-Muslim civilization unfortunately is ignored. I have come to this realization at the time of my graduate studies in France. While studying the thesis of Samuel Huntington with my colleagues and my

professors (who taught us the International Relations theories), I was able to notice their flagrant ignorance of the Arab-Muslim world. This ignorance was most often grounded in the fantasies and prejudices. Rare are those within my cohort who read or understand the works of the pioneers of the universe, of openness and progress, of Averroès to Maimonide, Massignon and Berque. The reality is bitter and the events in the international scene are so serious and so tenacious that they could lead to the belief in the incompatibility between the civilization of the Arabic-Muslim world and the Western civilization. When ignorance reigns, when thought suffers from deficiency, prejudices and backwardness are amplified, action becomes difficult, insufficient in most times or even impossible.

A different report: Islam is ignored and suffers as a result of disrepute without limits: "A Muslim is dubbed the eternal Saracen, render even more dangerous by modernity to what he only attains for what is worse." points out Jacques Berque. Islam is nowadays judged by the acts of some of its ignorant men inspired by pathological motivations to the brain deviant and disturbed giving for certain a validation of the thesis of Huntington instead of seeing these events for what they are. Ever since the ex-premier minister of the Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto, to the Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, have pontificated on the inherent disturbances to the Islam".

If a Muslim commits a terrorist act in the name of the Islam, it is not this barbaric act that must judge the Islam but this is the inverse one. God says in the Koran: "Kill only in all justice the life that Allah has made sacred" (Al anâm, 151) and also says, "Whoever intentionally kills a believer, his retribution then will be eternal Hell. He deserves Allah's wrath, and a great punishment awaits him" (Annisaa, 93). One will quote also a hadith of the prophet narrated by Al Boukhari: "The one that brandishes a weapon on one of us is not one of ours". In truth, one can be satisfied with of these two verses of the Koran and of this Hadith that disavow not only a person who kills arbitrarily but also anyone who threaten death of the innocent all a very heavy penalty on earth and in the hereafter. I did not invent these verses they are quoted in the Koran and are recited by Muslims in their daily prayers. Islam give great value to human life, regardless of faith be it Muslim, Christian, or Jew.

Those who say that the Islam is a religion of war, one would reply with these two verses of the Koran: "Fight for the sake of God those who fight against you. Do not be transgress; God does not like transgressors" (The Cow, 190) "If they stand to the side, they would not fight you, they would offer you peace, God grants you no reason to fight against them" (the Women, 190). In other words, war in Islam is only an instrument of retaliation against the aggressor who crosses the life of the Muslims to the

extent of the damages that it caused, without any abuse. Peace represents the only rule in Islam. If the war is pronounced, it is meant to be the exception that is tied to several restrictions, all to restore peace which is the real foundation of the Islamic society, and which achieves the meaning of the following verse: "O you who believe! Enter all in peace" (The Cow, 208). The following verse establishes the world-wide restoration of peace principles: "Do not follow the track of the Demon; it is for you a declared enemy" (The Cow, 208).

Similarly, according to Islam, religious disagreements do not authorize belligerence, hate, and misunderstanding; on the contrary, they should invite to peaceful coexistence and living together, and be open to one another. The Koran tells us in this context: "God does not forbid you to be good and equitable towards those who did not fight you because of your faith and that did not expel you from your houses; God likes those that are equitable. God forbids you to take for leaders those who expel you from your houses and those who participate in your expulsion. Those that the take in employer, here those that are unfair" (the Proof, 8-9).

The Koran in its entirety invites us to contemplate and the universe, the world, the cosmos that are the signs of the creation by the almighty. The Koran treats the question of diversity, the reasons of plurality and openness to the other, the necessity of understanding and coexistence: "If God had wanted it, it would have made you a single community. But He wanted to test you. Do good deeds, to him you all shall return. He will inform you of your divergences". This unity is manifested in diversity and this diversity that resolves itself in unity as elaborated by the great scholar of Islam Jacques Berque. When Bin Laden preaches by calling to kill and to terrorize people and the human spirit, it has nothing to do with Islam. This monotheistic religion is not to be blamed. Bin Laden and his followers are the carriers of this message. It is false. The response summarizes itself in a single verse: "There is not compulsion in religion". God says also in his Holy Book: "Say, the truth emanates from your God; and you are free to believe or not to believe" (The Cave, 29). This is the freedom of conscience and religious liberty that are established by these two verses of the Koran. The belligerent speeches of Bin Laden and of many others give rise to ignorance. The Koranic verse mentioned above shows that there is no quid pro quo here: "whoever intentionally kills a soul, His retribution then will be the Hell, He deserves Allah's wrath, and a great punishment awaits him".

I do not see in these verses, and I can quote several more, what makes Islam belligerent. This is a religion of peace. Those who do not live by its rules and its spirituality have nothing to do Islam. Those who attribute to the Muslim religion the blunders of some of its men must visit the original text

of the Koran and Sunna before judging an entire civilization and a whole religion. It is precisely this orientation, this return to the source, this approach, this interpretation that is lacked in Bernard Lewis and to Samuel Huntington reasoning. In the work of excellent clarity, the Algerian thinker Mustapha Chérif writes: "The context and the era are preoccupying. Universality is threatened in many ways, by pretensions and monopolies without any report with the truth. There is a strong reason to return to the sources, but to do it in an objective manner, for future development. The west and the east seem, on this point, to have lost the light even, as articulated by the philosopher John Luc Nancy, "this light must be declared once for all divided chiaroscuro of inevitable shadow". The Koran tells us: "God guides to his light whomever he wants" (The Light). It is necessary to draw lessons and references. I invite you to read the Koran. It is actually the Koran that judges the acts committed by the men in his name. All the verses that I quoted that set the tone of Islam, the one of the tolerance, openness, welcome, dialogue, and hospitality.

To understand the people who "refuse the west", it is necessary, as articulated by the talented Moroccan novelist Tahar Ben Jalloun in a lecture to the international seminary on Ibn Khaldoun that was held in Grenada, Spain: "To trace back the origins of the humiliations and frustrations suffered by Arab people. The west maintains with this so close and so distant East (especially very complex), turbulent relations since centuries. The colonial occupation followed by the despoliation of the Palestinians of their earths in 1948, remain of the burning injuries in the memory of the Arabic world, bosses of State of which the most were not elected democratically and that follow a political unpopular one based on the security obsession and the authoritarian endless system perpetuation; one besides these leaders struggle themselves in order not to disturb Helped and supported. It lacks to these political a vision of future, a philosophy of the progress and respect of the rights of their people. The example more flagrant is the case of Saddam Hussein. Without the support of the Europeans and Americans, it would not have waged war against Iraq. Without the weapons sold by France and Germany, among others, Iraq could not have oppressed its people. Its European "friends" looked the other way when Iraq ethnically cleansed the Kurdish population in the town of Halabja; these unfortunate Kurds got murdered in their sleep where the weapon used was none other than the Gasses bought from the Germans and dumped by French airplanes. Because Iraq is an immense reservoir of oil, political moral was never invoked when Saddam was committing atrocities against his own people. The interests have always trumped human values. The Arabs, who have suffered and continue to suffer under American backed dictatorships, will certainly not

forget it", and I would add, that it is the United States of America that has helped Bin Laden in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union during the cold war. Bin Laden's indoctrination had begun during those days.

One also can wonder with Edward Saïd, why not look at the parallels, of course those that are less spectacular in their destructive potential, as in the example of sects like the David Korach sect, or the disciples of Reverend Jim Jones in Guyana, or again the members of Aoum Shinri kyo to Japan? "One does not count the American and European press editorials of importance that do not switch to this vocabulary of the gigantism and apocalypse, every recourse to this register aiming clearly not to edify the reader, but to inflame his indignant passion of the West, before saying what we must absolutely do. This is the label problem also little lighting up as Islam and West: they mislead and tangle the spirit that stretched to find a direction to a varied reality that will not leave itself to label and confinement so easily".

The thesis of a clash of civilizations is a distraction that is destined to divert the attention from the true political problems, namely economical and social. It would be very simplistic to reduce Muslim countries to terrorism and religion. The civilization shock is more a slogan than a reality. This is the shock of ignorance that has shared between the two camps: western that ascribes the obscurantism of fanatics to religion justifying among others the war of civilizations and individuals. It is on the rubbish of ignorance that the thesis of the shock of the civilizations was constructed, reducing Muslims to disastrous dissidents threatening by their fanaticism and their extremism the course of the history, and this is also on the garbage of ignorance that terrorism develops, works, recruits, washes brains, indoctrinates youngsters, diverts religion and it is also on the garbage of ignorance that Islam is vilified and distorted and caricatured.

### **Which keys of reading for world analysis?**

Is it realistic to analyze international relations based on civilisational and cultural paradigm and engender future conflicts that interpretation? As a matter of clarity, the French specialist of international relations Frédéric Charillon starts by asking likely preliminary questions to trace an eventual card of the world: "which tendencies do we grant more importance to? To the strategies of the State or rather to the way society relates to authority, to the sacred one, to violence? Are there social dynamics that, more than others, would model the international structures and of which the distribution on the globe surface would prefigure a new geopolitics? Can one to explain

today's world by this compared sociopolitical? The fact that there is more religious fervor now, less than belief in authority there, or a rejection of war clearly testify that current international relations are more confused. The actors, the processes and the dynamics do not detach themselves easily. The parameters carried out by the analysts during the bipolarity became null.

By the end of the cold war, the bipolarity preceding 1989 was replaced by an unstable, complex configuration and with a qualified difficulty. The huge failure of the American power in Somalia (1993), their reluctance to act regarding the crisis of the Great lakes (Rawanda 1994), and the crisis of the Balkans (closed by the agreements of Dayton, 1995), the sino-American tension particularly in the straits of Formose, the failure of Oslo (September 1993), the reigniting of the Israeli Palestinian conflict and the second Intifada (septembre2000) then the freezing of the peace process, have widely contributed, each to its own way, to the collapse of the myth of unipolarity. Similarly, the very old debate on the position of the State became henceforth old-fashioned. There is no longer any observer that supports the State being the only actor on the international scene. Different non state actors populate the world-wide scene nowadays without arriving to an establish hierarchy: NGO, religious actors, multinational firms, mafias and terrorist groups, etc. But in fact these actors are mixed, cross themselves in a permanent manner. The question to be probed is which type of relations? Is the world engaged in a process of identity fold or that of opening, a process of conflict or of cooperation, integration or marginalization and of exclusion? "To the optimists, replies Frédéric Charillon, returns the care to insist on the multilateralism resistance, to the pessimistic to recall the return of national selfishness, starting with that of the first world power, that announces without reservations its will to defend, even unilaterally, its national interests to the risk of major conflict. For the optimists, the discourse should be on a globalization of communications and public space, encouraging dialogue, and therefore peace through exchange. To the pessimists, it is the fear of a predictable shock of civilizations". We showed above that the prophecy of a shock of civilizations is a pure speculation based on an ideological bias. The thesis of Samuel Huntington reveals how much the author is worried to see the domination of the West being threatened. The latter must guarantee its supremacy and to defend it against the rest of the world, Islam in particular. On these grounds, the author operates on a double standard: "First, while asserting the primacy of civilization paradigm on all other potential sources of conflict; while spreading his theory on the geopolitical world scene".

So in fact, the cultural or civilization variable could not possibly be neglected in the explanation of certain phenomena on the global scene. Otherwise, how can one to explain the phenomenon of the alliance of

Muslim countries with the international coalition at the time of the Iraqi invasion to Kuwait? Or the Iraq- Iran conflict itself? Or the Moroccan-Algerian conflict on the question of the Moroccan Sahara, does it have cultural or civilizational dimensions? Not at all!! In multi vocal states, from Lebanon to Pakistan and going through Iraq, internal conflicts cannot be interpreted by the prism of cultural or civilizational variables. George Corm and Khalifé Kazem in their works on Lebanon, explained the strong community exacerbation since 1975 by the brittleness of Lebanon. To every phase of the tormented history of the region, Lebanon pays the highest price of these whirlwinds.

In a remarkable retrospective study conducted by Bruce Russett, John Oneal and Michaelen Cox, it was clearly established that the variables "realist" and "liberal" in the conflicts that rose during more than a century (between 1885 and 1994) are the most influential than the ones of civilizations. The political calculations as well as the ethnic furies are more omnipresent in the Rwandan drama and more Zairian than the civilizational dimensions. Similarly, being in line with the retrospective method, Samuel Huntington does not show us why certain parties of the globe, presented as the illustration of his prophecy did figures a time of zones of living together between the different communities (the ex-Yugoslav for example), by way of implication "the clashes of today's world are not necessarily those of tomorrow. So certain tendencies seem with difficulty to be able to be inverted in the near future; and certain states appear to be provisional".

In totality, an analysis of the global scene has to take in consideration several variables just equally as important as economic ones, namely, social, technical, as well as cultural and political. Order representation as well as that of disorder must incorporate all the dimensions possible to surpass the clichés and the pessimistic visions of the world which have been used to kick off the XXI century. This work is necessary in order to deconstruct the imagery that is being propagated by scholarly work, the media, decision-makers, and opinion leaders.



If one were to study the holy Koran and try to extrapolate the facts about Islam's outlook on the issues of War and Peace, the dominant theme throughout hundreds of verses is that of peace and peaceful means. Peace is a default state for all kinds of conflict resolution situations. War is reluctantly recommended as a last resort when all other means are exhausted. Islam has often been intentionally vilified and unfairly mischaracterized as a religion of calamity based on the isolated of the few who identify themselves

as Muslims as it is expounded by Mr. Jirari in his insightful article. Jihad is also a term that is wrongly defined to make Islam look like an instigator of violence and militarism. In the Koran, the word “Jihad” has been consistently used to convey the meaning of self purification and resisting whim and caprice. Those who have a vested interest in making Islam and Muslims look like villains have distorted the values of Islam and presented them in negative light using a very biased and slanted case study approach that is not appropriate in studying the behaviour of a nation or that of a faith. Case study approach is fallacious and guilty of committing dumping, blanket judgments and sweeping assertions. Therefore a more scientific approach ought to be implemented in studying faith and the conduct of its adherents.

The patterns of inconsistency are also clear and abundant in the way developed countries have put in place institutions of civil society that have not lived up to its potential of furthering the ideals of diversity and pluralism. Diversity should never hamper coexistence; in fact, it should support it and enrich its premise. The politics of fear has long been practiced to drive wedges between states and fragment the world. Globalization is only praised in the context of lifting border restrictions on the flow of goods and services. But, when it comes to globalizing human interactions and increasing its frequency, one sees the obvious reluctance on the part of Nation States to listen to what non state actors have to say. The last three of four decades, Civil society has established a track record of know how and it became increasingly important for states to partner with civil society in policy making. The Media is also becoming a double edged sword that cuts both ways and it is absolutely necessary that the media is held to its sworn word of ethics and journalistic integrity. Some media has shown very little care to anything beyond the bottom line and net profit. The media should also be an honest and genuine partner in fostering good human relations instead of a mercenary force for hire.

Ayatollah Muhammad Ail Taskhiri acknowledges the difference that exists between people from different faith and those who ascribe to different cultural traditions. He then explains that these differences should not be perceived as an inherent problem that threatens the world. He expounds on how difference is the one ingredient that helps invigorate progress and friendship. Arrogance is what has proven to trump any attempts to reconciling difference and capitalizing on them to make this world a better one.

While it would look from the outset that there is a converging opinion that diversity cultural and otherwise is a healthy ingredient to cement relationships, there are different theories on how to make that diversity work to the advantage of all societies. From reading all the articles, one gets the

feeling that Huntington was bashed quiet a bit for his theory on the clash of civilization. Said Graioud and James Hollifield explain that Migration is a phenomenon that should, at least in theory, advance the prospect of understanding and cooperation. It is the intermixing and the intermingling between people that helps alleviate whatever ambiguity that one has about others. The clash of Civilization theory did nothing but exacerbate a situation that was already in need of work and improvement. Edward Said did great job debunking Huntington's theory that showed that it lacked the intellectual merit that one should observe in the field of social sciences.