

UNITED NATIONS HIGH LEVEL GROUP

PALMA DE MALLORCA

November 27–29, 2005

Major points from the First HLG Meeting held in Palma de Mallorca, on November 27–29, 2005.

- Opening speech by the Prime Minister of Turkey, Mr. Erdogan:
“First steps toward peace and stability... What are the obstacles? What makes us feel “foreign”?... Finding points in common ...
- Speech by the President of the Spanish Government, Mr. Rodríguez Zapatero: “One single world, populated by one human race, with a common destiny ... Nothing is inevitable ... We must take action against those who use force ... Taking into account the actions already undertaken by the United Nations, UNESCO, other organizations within the System, and other international institutions ... Bearing in mind that today the European Union encompasses those who were “enemies” in the past ... Taking into account the “deformed images”... and the disparities between wealth and privilege and hunger and suffering ... Launch an all-inclusive message of understanding and conciliation ... Trade unions, management organizations, religions, opinion makers, performers and inventors, athletes, representatives from the world of science.... Isolating spurious interpretations and the intolerant...”
- Message from the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, presented by Mr. Iqbab Riza, his Special Adviser for the Alliance of Civilizations: “We live in one world. We have no choice but to understand and respect each other, live peacefully together and search for commonality in the best of our respective traditions.”...

- Mention was made of the reference documents (Annex I) and the mission set forth by the Secretary General (Annex II).
- An extended and deep exchange of opinions ensued in order to determine the conceptual framework and methodology to be followed.

The only member of the HLG who was unable to attend, Mr. Pan Guang sent his comments on the “Working Paper”. Among them, *“The diversity of civilizations and national cultures has been a basic feature with the human society and a basic driving force of human progress. Failure to recognize and respect the diversity of the world or any attempt to create a world of uniformity is bound to meet rebuffs”*.

- The HGL Secretariat will prepare a summary of all comments concerning the Working Paper, especially the paragraphs on “Understanding the Nature of the Problem” and “Objectives and Strategies”.
- Certain members contributed to more closely defining certain terminology, such as “civilizations” (“a system of ideas, religious beliefs, science, techniques, art and customs shared by a given human group”); Islamic, Islamicist, Moslem...underlining the inadmissibility of contrasting “Western”, a geographical term, with “Islamic,” a term referring to a religion...
- Everyone agreed that threats to international peace concern all of us; aggression against a people or a country is an aggression against all. Together we must say “no” to terrorism and to all forms of extremism. We must find new venues where we can

engage in open and transparent dialogue, based on mutual respect and understanding.

We cannot change the past, but we can change the future. The future has yet to be forged, and that is our greatest commitment.

It is important to conduct studies and draft reports to enable us to adopt the appropriate corrective measures, but without getting carried away or bogged down in academic and rhetorical aspects: diagnostics are only relevant if they provide prompt and effective treatment.

- Basic Principles:
 - 1) One single human race.
 - 2) No culture is superior to another. All are different, yet share aspects in common.
 - 3) Identify what unifies and complements them, and what separates them and creates distances.
 - 4) Nothing can be imposed. Serenity and moderation are essential... All opinions are worthy of respect, but the imposition of opinions is not, and imposition by force is even less so.
 - 5) The immense majority of people desire peace and concord... Those who embrace violence and immobility must understand that they must change their attitude.
 - 6) The past must serve as a lesson; our common future is our principal priority... with our eyes set on our future generations ...
- We must look outwardly... and at ourselves and our surroundings. And promote dialogue and meditation, avoiding

imposition and lies... From a local context, projecting outward at the national level and worldwide...

- A political, cultural and educational focus. It is dangerous and, moreover, incorrect to reduce political and economic problems to religious or cultural ones (Mr. Ali Ata). “We must achieve a different world, void of suspicion and fear” (Mr. Mendes).
- Long debates focused on the causes of extremism in all situations, ideologies and groups: political, social, economic, religious aspects... The process of alienation and humiliation that leads to frustration, radicalization, intolerance and violence ... Problems such as those stemming from desperate emigration and the violent and aggressive reactions which have been predicted for years, without any change in course despite multiple warnings from specialists and those directly affected. Nothing justifies violence, but it can be explained... It is the delinquents who are murderers, not their countries, nor their religious ideas or ideologies... If we observe the past, and the present too, we will see that there have been many atrocious wars in which no Arabs or Moslems were involved (Rwanda, Cambodia... to cite only two examples).

Leaders who prefer to use force, action and reaction, rather than the word and dialogue, are also guilty transgressors.

- Integration is appropriate: to become a part of something without losing one's own characteristics. Assimilation implies homogeneity, a uniformity that reduces self-esteem and, in the long term, makes coexistence difficult.

All of us have to review certain aspects of our conduct that may reflect extremism or intolerance, commencing with the terminology we use ... All phobias must be condemned. You cannot love someone you do not know... We must strive for mutual understanding, a lack of which prompts prejudice and disdain for others. It is essential to find a middle ground.

The wealthy nations have broken so many promises! The “Western” nations have been proclaimed as the “good”, while all others were the “bad”... But the time has come to keep our promises and to share, so that so many frustrations can be transformed into renewed hope. Racial apartheid has been resolved in many places... but, social apartheid? This is the root of many of today’s problems and conflicts...

- As author of the “Dialogue of Civilizations” initiative in 1998, President Khatami presented different aspects of the Program of Action and the results achieved thus far, together with projects to be continued in the future... Dialogue is essential for the alliance, as a complementary activity.
- After numerous contributions, it was agreed that we are not facing a bipolar conflict –despite the present emphasis in that regard– but rather one that is multipolar, international and also intranational.
- To counteract extremism, imposition and violence it is essential to include all parties in any attempt at dialogue: all of us must sow the seeds of dialogue and alliance: each person must

contribute to the effort to provide a better future for his family, children, country... different cultures united by a commitment of solidarity, but never again by force.

Mobilization of all of those who wish to live in peace, justice and in a context of respect and solidarity, without impositions, without violence of any nature; no one must wait for the “others” to make these changes. Governments, the United Nations, the European Union, etc. can and must build new bridges to a different future, for their future. Mothers, fathers, professors, professionals, workers in all fields, businessmen... All citizens: “We, the Peoples”... The time has come to cease to be spectators, and become the actors and the authors of this change...

- Proposals will be made to:
 - Governments (committed to the aforementioned paragraph from the recent Summit of September, 2005)(Annex I).
 - International and national institutions (UN, IGOs, etc.)
 - Society: NGOs, academic and business institutions and associations, etc.

- One of the principal topics discussed was the involvement of the communications media and how to achieve their participation:
 - Communications media; press, radio; TV
 - Internet
 - SMS

The use of already existing television broadcasting companies prevailed over the idea of creating our own.

- The most important goals agreed for achieving the objectives of the alliance were:
 - Education –with special emphasis on human rights and the equality of women.
 - Youth
 - Massive mobilization through attractive messages.
- Education: not only for the school-aged, but at all levels. “War is born in the minds of men”... It is in the minds of men where we must eliminate prejudice, stereotypes, and images that prompt hostilities...

Art.26/2 Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Advisability of obtaining “non-violent” history books and textbooks (“ desarm history”).

Study of the already-existing best practices.

In the area of primary and secondary education, a series of curricular and extracurricular activities will be conducted to promote an understanding of different cultures. (See the Montreal Declaration, 1933)

In the area of higher education, special emphasis will be placed on exchange programs, involving students, as well as professors and researchers.

Review of the content of school curricula, to eliminate aspects that promote dogmatism and intolerance. In that regard, it is of quite some concern that the teaching of creationism has been imposed in the schools in several states of the United States, the world's leader in scientific research.

- Youth: “Youth Solidarity Corps”... Permanent appropriate information for young people!

- For all young people, the poorest and the wealthiest immersed in a world of advertising and consumerism. Suicides in the western countries with the greatest material wealth...

- Environmental topics: so that they, our youth, will realize that they are particularly threatened!...

Conscience- commitment. “Young people are waiting! (Azulay) and deserve imaginative initiatives. Promote the alliance in the events that most attract their attention: football and sports, music, cinema, etc.

- Support for major cultural and sports events to foment a culture of peace and dialogue and the alliance of civilizations, could be rapidly undertaken.

Many gaps must be narrowed... including the digital one: great efforts must be made –especially with regard to large enterprises- so that computers do not discriminate in the access to information...

We must demonstrate our concern for them now... Hundreds of inter-religious and intercultural meetings have been held. We now have to decide how to reach people, especially young people, with very simple messages!

- Communications media and other addressees of the HLG:

It was unanimously considered essential to involve the communications media, from the large media groups down to local radio stations, as well as newspapers, magazines and professional bulletins.

Parliamentarians, city councils and different levels of government:

- Promoting sister-city initiatives and the roles of different parliamentary groups, from the Inter-parliamentary Union to the creation of joint working groups among different regional parliaments.

Religions: dialogue among religions, promoting the participation of the major religions and engaging in activities that foment the principles of dialogue and the alliance of civilizations.

And all of this without ignoring the major problems of a political¹ or socio-economic² nature, which lie at the root of the situations that give rise to this urgent need for an Alliance of Civilizations.

- Other matters discussed:

¹ Desde el terrorismo transnacional, pasando por el conflicto árabe-israelí o la cuestión de Irak, entre otras.

² Las desigualdades económicas abismales y crecientes, o los problemas de género.

- Democracy building: freedom of expression. There cannot be dialogue when poverty, lack of freedom of expression and thought, alignment and subjugation exist. The “silent majority” will soon speak... (Nafis Sadik).
- “The Return to Ethics”, invoked by Minister Charfi. The Millennium Declaration is a significant step in that direction, which must be emphasized and disseminated.

Universal values have been replaced by those of the market... To “protect future generations from the horror of war” ethical reference points are essential. Co-president Prof. Mehmet Aydin intervened to underscore the essential importance of the values and principles to guide the world as well as the HLG’s activities.

-All members of the HLG agreed that strengthening the United Nations is essential for building peace and justice, for the competent strategies and courts to identify and punish transgressors and delinquents.

-Global movements to reject and prevent extremism, achieving an influential alliance to avoid threats to international stability. Establishing rules of mutual respect among all cultures and groups.

-The security of peace, and not the peace of security. Security is indivisible and requires global cooperation. The peace that all of us desire for our children cannot be achieved if we are mere spectators, but rather we must join the proactive social forces.

-We must make the violent, dogmatic and arrogant understand that their turn is over, and that the immense majority of people reject them.

➤ After the first meeting of the HLG each member must take an active role: all agree to carry out activities within their areas –meetings, interviews, articles- informing the Secretariat of the actions that they consider appropriate to take, both immediately and in the medium and long term. In that regard, each member of the HLG will become an agent for mobilizing dialogue and the alliance:

- Interviews with the press and other communications media.
- Interviews with parliamentarians and associations
- Meetings with NGOs... and any other “daring and attractive” initiatives that may contribute to publicizing the Alliance’s message.

It is advisable to notify the Secretariat of any actions, conferences or events related to the Alliance, in order to offer its sponsorship...

➤ To ensure its success until we present the mandatory report to the Secretary General of the United Nations at the end of 2006, this process must be inclusive and transparent:

-Its all-inclusiveness will be ensured through a process of global consultations/hearings (regional, thematic, etc.) organized by the HLG and its members. Representatives of governments and international organizations, civil society and academia, etc. will be asked to participate in this process. The HLG will likewise gain from the initiatives (meetings, conferences, etc.) that are held in these same areas during their working term, of which the Secretariat of the United Nations will be informed, in order to measure the impact of what is being achieved.

-Transparency and publicity of the process will be achieved through a soon-to-be-created webpage, which will be constantly updated.

- The constant interaction with the UN Secretariat for the Alliance of Civilizations (Director, Prof.Mastnak; deputy-Director, Mr.Idriss) as well as with the Advisory Group is extremely important for the success of the HLG's mission.

-It is necessary to take a “new look” at the world, both east and west, to achieve the transition from a culture of imposition and force to a culture of peace.Those who prefer confrontation will do everything in their power to discredit these initiatives. Gabriela Mistral expressed this when she warned that “for some, peace is an unmentionable word”.

But we should not despair when faced with such bleak horizons. We can feel confident if we second this wise African proverb:

«Les branches se bagarrent mais les racines souvint s’embrassent».

The most important achievement would be to succeed in getting all of the countries to proclaim, as they did in San Francisco in 1945 “We, the Peoples, have determined to save our children from the horrors of war”..., violence, imposition, fear, poverty....

- The first meeting has concluded.... It is now time to commence to achieve our mission ...!

(Text presented by the co-presidents Mehmet Aydin and Federico Mayor, at the end of the first HLG meeting at Palma de Mallorca, on November 29, 2005).

ANNEX I

- 1945 • UN – Charter – “We the Peoples”.
- 1945 • UNESCO, Constitution – “Building peace in the minds of men”...
- 1948 • Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “to liberate human beings from fear and want”...
- 1985 • Declaration on the Elimination of Violence. Human beings are not born with a predisposition toward violence.
- 1994 • Declaration of Religious Leaders concerning a Culture of Peace: no religion –all of which are based on love and compassion– promotes the use of violence. No religion promotes hostility or hate.
- 1995 • Declaration of Principles on Tolerance.
- 1998 • Declaration on the Dialogue among Civilizations.
- 1999 • Declaration and Program of Action on a Culture of Peace.
- 2000 •- Millennium Declaration
- 2001 • Declaration on Cultural Diversity.
- 2005 • UN Summit Declaration

Culture of peace and initiatives with regard to dialogue among cultures, civilizations and religions

144. We reaffirm the Declaration and Program of Action on a Culture of Peace⁴⁰, as well as the World Program for Dialogue among Civilizations and its Program of Action⁴¹, approved by the General Assembly, and the value of various initiatives concerning dialogue among cultures and

civilizations, including the dialogue on cooperation among religions. We are committed to adopting measures to promote a culture of peace and dialogue at the local, national, regional and international levels, and we ask the Secretary General to consider the possibility of improving mechanisms for implementing and monitoring these initiatives. In that regard, we likewise welcome with much satisfaction the initiative of the Alliance of Civilizations announced by the Secretary General on July 14, 2005.

ANNEX II

(Terms of Reference as stated by the Secretary-General of the UN, 22 August 2005): “To provide an assessment of new and emerging threats to international peace and security, in particular the political, social and religious forces that foment extremism; to identify collective actions, at both the institutional and civil society levels; to recommend a practicable program of action for States, international organizations and civil society aimed at promoting harmony among societies.”