

Le Message de S.E.M.

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**L'Ex –Président de La République
Islamique D'IRAN**

**A l'occasion de la réunion du groupe de
haut niveau de**

**L'ALLIANCE des
CIVILISATIONS de
L'ORGANISATION
des NATIONS UNIS**



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In the Name of God

Near Dakar who hosts the third meeting of the Alliance of Civilizations, sad remnants of misunderstanding and clash of civilizations can still be seen. Gorée Island reeks of the death of countless humans who were forced to leave Africa under persecution during Europe's colonial era. Today, is Gorée merely a museum and memorial of the history of slave trade, or is it an old and enduring visage of the consequence of peripheral civilizations?

It would be more pleasant for us all to answer the former question; but it would be more realistic to give careful consideration to the latter. Even though whoever comes to Gorée leaves it with a grief and regret as vast as the entire human race, but we must still be worried about creating colossal catastrophes in an intolerant, unequal and unjust world where humanity itself is in danger.

Unfortunately, the sound of "dialogue", which is the voice of prudence, understanding and peace, has been increasingly lost in the shouts of "extremism", which is the noise of hate, force and violence. How far will these shouts of extremism and intolerance carry and at what pace? The Doha meeting focused on this concern: that extremism has cast its shadow on both sides of the world. The real danger is that firstly, this extremism becomes the identifying feature of both the Islamic and Western civilizations, and secondly that the internal dynamism of these two world civilizations becomes hardened and they end up favoring clashes over dialogue.

In this meeting, it may be better to address the issues in the political sphere that have restricted dialogue among civilizations, which is the foundational and fundamental form of our world:

1. Without a doubt, marginalization in the field of culture, inequality and poverty in the field of economy, domination of neo-colonial relations and the crisis-prone centers in the field of politics as well as humiliation, pressure and interference in international relations can all be cited as the sources feeding extremism, and factors contributing to the emergence and expansion of hatred, violence and terrorism.

The solution lies in finding a new method to approach



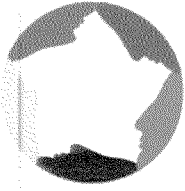
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politics, economics and international relations from a cultural, thoughtful and spiritual standpoint. The freedom of politics from force, and economics from inequality and the separation of international relations from the notion of “center-peripheral”, will establish a new order in which there is little room for extremism. In this midst, the principle actors will be thoughtful, prudent and cultured and their tools will be logic, ideas and dialogue, and they will transform the structure and function of organizations which have been established to preserve human dignity and create peace and security for the human race.

During the emergence of the dangerous outlook which ensued after the bitter events of September 11th, I said that dividing the world into centers and peripherals could no longer provide an adequate description for the security of the contemporary world. Even the most marginalized sections of today’s world, have the ability to strike at the biggest powers. The world needs new visions and collective action to achieve a life of security and hope. This is why I proposed the “Global Alliance for Lasting Peace”, instead of the Coalition of War. Those words were lost in the violent global chaos dominant at the time, but I am still of the belief that, despite the horrifying and instable years that have passed, the United Nations can still use the “Alliance for Peace Based on Justice” as a framework for ridding today’s world of its danger and extremism.

In recent years I have given a great deal of thought to the possibility and necessity of this issue, and have found dialogue to be the solution for dispelling illusions and various forms of misunderstandings in the real world; a dialogue in which the East and West, North and South are not the topic of discussion, but rather they are the participants and sides of the discussion. A dialogue which means a precise and accurate awareness of the history and cultural-geography of the world and achieving a critical view of the “self and others.” Knowing the past, while understanding the present and striving for the future and eventually dialoguing about the needs and concerns that humans face in their lives today, and tomorrow.

| Any society, culture or civilization who considers itself to be pure good and others to be absolute evil can never know



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“others”, and moreover will even fall short of knowing itself. Knowing “others” is dependent on knowing oneself. Wars break out when the image of the “other” is only the image of the “enemy.” The idea of dialogue among civilizations is contingent on the existence of a relationship of dialogue between “self” and “others”; as the idea of clash of civilizations is based on the existence of “they” and “there” in a hostile way. It is very different when “they” are the side of a dialogue, as to when “they” are the side of a war. The possibility and argument for establishing dialogue among civilizations stems from this very fact.

The existence of common concepts between civilizations is of the factors influential in establishing dialogue; and furthermore, dialogue itself will boost the capability and capacity of humans for understanding and sympathy required for advancing dialogue.

Is it not that the current ill-will and reluctance to dialogue is the result of political repression on one hand and self-centeredness which results in political domination on the other? The reality is that in most South countries political repression has profoundly impacted people’s way of life and their social interactions and a desire to dominate and exploit has defined a significant portion of the North’s relationship with the South and continues to do so. Can we not imagine a situation in which instead of opposing approaches and movements, we have comprehensive and encompassing approaches and movements which seek common values even in different worlds.

Even today, my proposal for this meeting is to identify fundamental concepts and thoughts which can serve as “bridge” for understanding between civilizations and cultures rather than a “wall.” Obeisance towards an ultimate spiritual being, justice, democracy, human rights, and respecting one another, are all bases for common values in differing worlds. We must give careful consideration to these matters.

2. What must be done and what can be done?

It is clear that for any great thought and ideal we must start from practical instances. The alliance of civilizations is a great ideal, and to achieve it through civilizational dialogue



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we must work on understanding among civilizations, reconciliation among civilizations and peace among civilizations in that order. This is a long process that requires the resolve of the international community and planning and preparation by the United Nations. The historical misperceptions on both sides of the world must be addressed through dialogue, education, training and establishing a system of public culture. If dialogue gets under way with the goal of understanding each other, this understanding can be the base for common action, and there can be real hope for an alliance for achieving the great ideals of peace based on justice and progress based on freedom. As the initial steps to this end, I want issues such as establishing a permanent dialogue process, networking and creating regional and international structures to be addressed and assess how foundations, institutions and funds can be established in the global arena for this purpose.

If we are aiming to achieve lasting peace in the world, there are two prerequisites. The first is that all nations and humans must have a feeling of justice, and assurance for its continuation; second is creating a culture of understanding in the face of hostility, and kindness and friendship in the face of force and enmity. Naturally, this dialogue will first take place between the intellectual elites of each culture and civilization and then be expanded and disseminated within societies.

It appears that establishing a United Nations Fund for Alliance of Civilizations with the objective of achieving peace based on justice and utilizing all the educational and advertising facilities and creating technical and economic facilities and cooperating with all the organizations and institutions that have been established for this purpose as non-governmental organizations or will be in the future, as well as providing the mechanisms which will encourage governments to cooperate and support practical proposals can make us hopeful for the situation of the Alliance of Civilizations and the achievement of better conditions in the world today.

The well-intentioned proposals of the Alliance of Civilizations can eventually lead to the establishment of the Foundation for Alliance for Peace based on Justice, under



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the supervision of the United Nations.

With hopes that such proposals meet the approval of the international community in the UN bodies concerned.