



Dialogue in the World Disorder

A Response to the Threat
of Unilateralism and World Terrorism

Editors:

Karlina Helmanita
Irfan Abubakar
Dina Afrianty



Dialogue in the World Disorder

A Response to the Threat of Unilateralism and World Terrorism

Copyright © 2004 by Pusat Bahasa dan Budaya
UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta and
Konrad-Adenauer- Stiftung
All rights reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever
without written permission except in the case of brief quotations
embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Editors:
Karlina Helmanita, Irfan Abubakar, Dina Afrianty

Language Editor:
Lucy Rhydwen-Marett

Proof Reader:
Chaider S. Bamualim

Published by

**Pusat Bahasa dan Budaya Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN)
Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta**

Jl. Kertamukti No. 5, Pisangan Ciputat
Jakarta 15419 INDONESIA
Tel. +62 21 7445173, +62 21 7493727
Fax. +62 21
Email: info@pbb-iainjakarta.or.id
[Http://www.pbb-iainjakarta.or.id](http://www.pbb-iainjakarta.or.id)

Konrad-Adenauer- Stiftung

Plaza Aminta, 4th Floor
Jl. Let. Jend. TB. Simatupang Kav. 10
Jakarta 12310
Telp. +62 21-7590 9411-14
Fax. +62 21-7590 9415
E-mail: info@kasindo.org
<http://www.kas.de/indonesien>

First Edition, May 2004
Second Edition, August 2005

Publication and Media Program Officer: Sholahudin
Cover Designer: Jony Hadi
Layout: Abdullah Sajad & Muchtadlirin

ISBN: 979-3531-10-x

Contents

Preface

Murni Djamal	v
Norbert Eschborn	ix

Editorial

Karlina Helmanita, Irfan Abubakar, Dina Afrianty	xv
--	----

Introduction

<i>The Theology of World Equilibrium for the Balance of Power</i> Nurcholish Madjid	xxv
--	-----

Part - I

Multilateralism as a Guiding Principle for the Future of Global Order

<i>Multilateralism and Unilateralism: The Way Forward</i> Makmur Widodo	3
--	---

<i>US Foreign Policy: Our Place in the Community of Nations</i> Ralph L. Boyce	9
---	---

<i>Third World Countries in the Global Order</i> Makmur Keliat	25
---	----

<i>Cultural and Inter-cultural Multilateralism: What Muslims Can Contribute to Create a New Global Order</i> Hassan Hanafi	41
---	----

<i>Beyond the Dialogue of Civilisations; The Sense and Nonsense of Inter-cultural Exchange: A Perspective from Europe</i> Andreas Jacobs	63
---	----

Part - II
Cultural Globalism versus Local Identity: The Creation of Terrorism?

<i>Are the Roots of Global Terrorism Cultural?</i> Randolph Mank	79
<i>Globalisation, Local Identity, and Terrorism in Global Cultural Pluralism</i> K.S. Nathan	87
<i>Political Fairness: An Approach to the Genuine Issue of Local Identity</i> Richard Gozney	109

Part - III
New Consolidated Democracy: In Search of Pluralism, Clean Governance and Non-violent Cultures

<i>New Consolidating Democratic Countries towards Global Challenges: The Case of Southeast Asia</i> Jörn Dosch	117
<i>Muslim Countries and the Struggle for Pluralism, Clean Governance and Non-violent Cultures</i> Shaban Shahidi Moaddab	149
<i>Islamic Civilisation and the Quest for Democratic Pluralism: Good Governance and the Political Culture of Non-violence</i> Bassam Tibi	159
<i>The Challenge of Democracy in the Muslim World: Traditional Politics and Democratic Political Culture</i> Azyumardi Azra	203
<i>ASEAN and Multilateral Security Arrangements in Southeast Asia</i> Dina Afrianty	215
Index	233
Contributors and Editors	245




Preface

Murni Djamal

We live today in a situation of unprecedented crisis. The crisis of the individual and the crisis of national identity have become increasingly apparent. Political, economic, religious, ethnic and communal misunderstandings have taken place in various parts of the world and have frequently led people to revert to violent confrontation. Kashmir in India, Sinkiang in China, the West Bank in Palestine, Sri Langka, Southern Thailand, Mollucas, Poso, Sambas in Kalimantan (Indonesia) are some examples of bloody conflicts where cultural clashes have occurred. The ideas of multi-cultural dialogue have been difficult to implement; a culture of violence has become routine. This is what we call “the crisis from outside”.

In addition to the crisis from outside, the people of the world have also suffered crisis from within. There has been a wave of spiritual depression and religious scepticism, widespread and devastating. Many young people have paid no attention to religious teachings. They have violated laws, consumed narcotics and committed suicide. They could not





find a way out of the problems they were facing.

Other ages have certainly suffered no less than ours from massive starvation, social upheaval and ethnic, communal, political, economic and cultural war. The differences between the two, i.e. our present age and past ages, might be in the degree of destruction. The first and the second World Wars showed us how fragile mutual trust and mutual understanding are, which in turn brought the people of the world to suffer from starvation, frustration, disappointment and death. Those two wars were horrific for all living things on earth, not just mankind. Air and water were poisoned; vital forests were destroyed; houses and historic buildings were decimated; soil was irreversibly depleted; and nuclear war cast a shadow over the globe. Whether insidious or catastrophic, the end to life on earth loomed as an unthinkable but growing possibility. People felt they had no way to escape. No one wanted to imagine how destructive and horrible it would be if a third World War were to take place in the future.

All of this has been intensified partly by the world's problems, that is, the problem of cultural differences and cultural conflicts. In the past, these conflicts have led to serious confrontation and war. Concerned people are working hard to prevent another world war at the same time as trying to minimise and avoid bitter inter-cultural and inter-religious conflicts, which have the potential to become the roots of the war, and, of course, damage peace and harmony. This means that all parties concerned with global order, whether they are world calibre politicians, national religious leaders, university scholars of international repute, or researchers on intercultural dialogue, should share their experiences and expertise and offer their best solutions.



It has become obvious that no single country, single culture or single religion can overcome the world's problems without help from others. Too many problems are arising and the options for solutions need to come from all parties.



In order to discuss intercultural dialogue, to find possible solutions and to identify some of the constraints to achieving these objectives, the Center for Languages and Cultures (CLC) of Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta held an International Seminar with the topic “Inter-cultural Dialogue for New Global Equilibrium: Constraints and Possibilities” on October 9, 2003. The dialogue was attended by scholars from various universities of international repute, such as Prof. Hassan Hanafi from Cairo University, Egypt, and Prof. K.S. Nathan from the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore, along with Ambassadors from the United States, United Kingdom, Germany and Iran, and several scholars from Indonesia such as Prof. Azyumardi Azra. All of these participants contributed ideas and suggestions through the papers they presented.

This book, presented by the Center for Languages and Cultures (CLC) of UIN Jakarta, is derived from papers and discussion materials presented by the participants during the seminar. After having discussed the topic of the Seminar of October 9, 2003, “Inter-cultural Dialogue for New Global Equilibrium: Constraints and Possibilities”, and compared to the existing materials available during the Seminar, the editors, CLC Director, KAS Representative office in Jakarta and the Executive Committee of the Seminar felt free to give new title to the present book “Dialogue in the World Disorder”. The seminar itself was jointly organised by CLC of UIN Jakarta and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) Jakarta office.

Many ideas have arisen from the discussions. These have, of course, enriched our experiences, increased our understanding of the important aspects of intercultural dialogue, identified the roots of cultural conflicts, recognised the constraints and finally helped us to be more familiar with the most possible resolutions. As a result of this seminar CLC is convinced that there are always options to resolve conflicts and misunderstandings between people from different



cultures, provided that they are eager to sit down together, to discuss their concerns, and to find solutions. CLC is happy to make this book available, no matter how small its contribution to other intercultural dialogues in the future will be and to the realisation of the world order.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks and high appreciation to the staff of CLC Office: Karlina Helmanita, Chaider S. Bamualim, Irfan Abu Bakar, Dina Afrianty, Sri Hidayati, Muchtadlirin and Abdullah Sajad who have worked very hard to make this book ready to the readers. Our special thanks should go to the Rector of UIN Jakarta Prof. Dr. Azyumardi Azra and staff, and Dr. Norbert Eschborn from KAS for his financial assistance, without which this book might not have been published.

Jakarta, April 2004

Murni Djamal
Director of CLC



Preface

Norbert Eschborn

We are the leaders and we must continue to lead, [but we are] ready to take a multilateral approach to tackle trouble spots in the world.



U.S. President George H.W. Bush (1992)¹

I mean, you know, if you want to hear resentment, just listen to the word unilateralism. I mean, that's resentment. If somebody wants to try to say something ugly about us, 'Bush is a unilateralist, America is unilateral.' You know, which I find amusing. [...] Well, we're never going to get people all in agreement about force and use of force.

U.S. President George W. Bush (2002)²

Since the late 1980s in particular, world history has been full of developments that are both significant and far reaching in their implications for the future of mankind.

What was a typical gray, cold and almost depressing autumn day in Germany turned out to be the starting point for widespread and far reaching hope, not only for Germans but also for many people in Central Europe and the rest of the world: on November 9, 1989 the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent collapse of the dictatorial regimes beyond the infamous "Iron Curtain" appeared to be the begin-





ning of a new period of peace and security at the end of the 20th century.

What was a typical, warm, almost inspiring late summer day with blue sky in the United States of America turned out to be the starting point for widespread and deep reaching fear, not only among Americans, but also among many people in the so-called Western world and in developing countries: September 11, 2001 with the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C. appeared to be the beginning of a new period of violence and war at the dawn of the 21st century.

September 11 and its aftermath has exposed the underlying conflicts in relations between the Islamic world and the West. The existing differences have been highlighted and exacerbated, while new ones have emerged as a result of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq. However, while security issues are involved, so are issues of identity, culture, religion and economy. Therefore, military solutions have limited effects.

This appears to be all the more true in light of the latest research conducted by the Pew Research Institute in Washington, D.C. in 2003. The extensive study examines attitudes of the populations in 44 Arabic and Muslim countries and covers subjects such as globalisation, democratisation and the role of Islam in politics and society. Despite the fact that, in general, Western values like democracy, freedom of speech and human rights are highly regarded among Muslim and Arabic populations, attempts by the United States of America to establish these values in Muslim countries are being viewed extremely critically. The study expresses a negative trend: in the past an unfavourable perception of the United States was limited to the countries of the Middle East but has spread to the whole Muslim world within the last two years. In Indonesia, where in 2001 almost 61 per cent of the population still had a positive opinion on the US, this share has since dropped to 15 per cent. Further-





more, US foreign policy, according to the Pew Research Institute, is increasingly being perceived by Muslim countries as threatening: in Indonesia alone, almost 75 per cent of the respondents were either “very” or “somewhat” concerned about a military threat by the United States.

When identities sharply diverge, as they do between the Muslim world and the West, diplomacy faces a serious dilemma. The tensions between the two can only be resolved through economic development, political reform and cultural dialogue. Dialogues must happen more often, and include more and more perspectives. They serve several useful purposes. Wars of words can sometimes help delay or even render unnecessary wars of guns. Familiarity with the other’s fears and aspirations will help modulate one’s own position. While dialogues are most productive in an atmosphere of mutual trust and mutual willingness to compromise, they can also help identify core political issues and develop understanding. In an era when misunderstanding and faulty intelligence can have devastating effects, dialogues can go a long way.

Because the future of the two civilisations is inseparable, any clash will be devastating to both. A clash between Islam and the modern West would be like a collision between the present and the future for both. Islam is integral to the future of the West and Islamic civilisation’s reserve toward modernity is on shaky ground. Eventually, the Muslim world will have to modernise, democratise, and recognise that its future, too, is interdependent. Neither the West nor the Muslim world can imagine a mutually exclusive future.

Clearly, the long-term benefits of cooperation and co-existence are apparent to all except those who are quite insensitive and whose reason and good will are blunted by their hatred for the other: they seek a future for the one without the other. Sadly enough, the despicable terrorist attacks of March 11, 2004 in Madrid are still a fresh memory as this book goes to press.



In contrast, dialogues between the two civilisations help convince the undecided on both sides that there is hope and the conflict is not inevitable. Through the dialogue itself, one can convince the other that not all interests are sacred and not all positions are etched in stone. With a little more understanding, patience, and a willingness to recognise the legitimate concerns of the other, along with some compromise and much restraint, dialogues can bridge even the widest of divides. For those who believe in a common humanity, dialogues are necessary and the only means to resolve disagreements and disputes.

This book presents the proceedings of an International Seminar on “Inter-Cultural Dialogue for a New Global Equilibrium: Constraints and Possibilities”, conducted in cooperation between Center for Languages and Cultures (CLC) of Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta and the Konrad -Adenauer- Stiftung (KAS) on October 9, 2003 in Jakarta. It was the third event in a series of high-profile International Seminars on topics of inter-cultural and inter-religious interest, organised jointly by CLC and KAS since 2001. Once again, high-ranking political representatives, diplomats and academics gathered in Jakarta in order to discuss how, despite the tragedies brought upon mankind by blind fanaticism and terrorism since the beginning of the 21st century, all peace loving nations can prevent the seeds of terror from spreading. KAS is indebted, therefore, to all speakers at the seminar and authors of articles presented in this publication who were unable to come to Jakarta in October 2003.

The ongoing partnership between the co-publishers of this book, KAS and UIN, in particular the Center for Languages and Cultures (CLC), has been an especially productive and successful one. It serves as a model for what can be achieved if like-minded people determined to initiate academic exchange (and sometimes even academic controversy for the sake of intellectual dynamics), join forces and con-

vince their respective clientele that cross-cultural and inter-religious efforts can often lead to results impossible to achieve alone.

KAS, therefore, is once again very grateful for the personal dedication of several members of CLC: their commitment proved crucial for this project to be finalised. The Foundation's sincere thanks go to Drs. Murni Djamal, M.A., Director of the CLC, for his continued inspiration with which he accompanied this project. Karlina Helmanita worked tirelessly as an efficient project manager; together with Irfan Abubakar and Dina Afrianty they formed a competent team of editors. Chaider S. Bamualim and Abdullah Sajad took care of proof reading and layout tasks. Sri Hidayati and Muchtadlirin made sure that the publication process was handled smoothly. This book is their personal achievement.

Finally, I would like to express my profound gratitude to the staff of the KAS office Indonesia: Lia Yulianingrum, Evy Kurniawati, Amalia R. Satochid and Sarah Sabina Hasbar. It is only through their skills, hard work and admirable character that the contribution of KAS to inter-cultural dialogue in Indonesia and beyond has become so special.

Jakarta, March 2004

Norbert Eschborn
Representative to Indonesia
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)

Notes

¹As quoted in Jörn Dosch, *Die Herausforderung des Multilateralismus: Amerikanische Asien-Pazifik Politik nach dem Kalten Krieg* [The Challenge of Multilateralism. American Asia Pacific Policy after the Cold War] (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2002), p. 20.



²As quoted in Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (London: Pocket Books, 2003), p. 341.



Editorial

As we write the editorial for this book we are witnessing violence by countries and by extremist groups who have overstepped the borders of tolerance; “disorder” is an expression constantly uttered in order to paint a picture of the state of the world in which we are currently living. The Israeli government intentionally killed the Palestinian Hamas leader Shaikh Yassin and Rantissi, and almost the whole world denounced these violent actions, in much the same way that they have condemned the despicable actions by terrorist groups in a number of tragic events since September 11, including the Bali tragedy, the Marriott Hotel bombing, the suicide bombers in Spain and terrorism in other places.



The use of “hard power” rather than “soft power” by superpowers reached a worrying momentum when the United States and their allies invaded Iraq, with disregard for the principles of multilateralism and for the United Nations (UN). The logic of power carried out in Iraq is extremely difficult to accept, as the use of violence, as has already been seen, only generates further violence and in turn strengthens the culture of violence that we must endure



together. The power of logic sees this war perpetuating resentment and it is fertile land for the growth of radicalism amongst youth, in the name of an ideology that legitimises the use of violent methods. At the same time as a number of countries are in the process of development, such as Southeast Asia, which is in the middle of consolidating democracy in each area, and the war on terror has become an agenda that demands priority. Failure to control these problems is considered dangerous for the future of democracy and could see the disappearance guaranteed safety in this region.

This book is a record of a dialogue between culture and civilisation in this worrying worldwide condition. It is a reflection on the threats to the fragile balance in the world, caused by the use of unilateral action in dealing with the global political crises and a culture of using violence and terror to weaken the morals of people, so that they may submit to the extremist ideology. Dialogue is a process that must be continued, particularly in the current global situation. Most importantly, dialogue requires the willingness of one side to listen to the opinions and points of view of another side, which may not be in line with their own interests. Ideally dialogue will produce something concrete that can bring all the actors together in order to move towards similar perceptions and see the integration of resolve to overcome the problems that we are facing together. However, if this target cannot be reached, then at least there can be dialogue where the different sides sit down together to listen to each other and try to convince the other side in a well mannered and respectful manner. The assurance of the agenda, targets and methods in the dialogue is important for guaranteeing maximum results, along with avoiding the impression of it being only ceremonial and superficial. However, whatever the result, dialogue is still far better than employing violent means.


This book also reflects upon the dialogue between perspectives that are perhaps different in practice and theory,



that represent different experiences and understandings and likewise present current international issues. This formed the basis of the integration of the dialogue participants, between ambassadors (including the Ambassadors from the US, England, Iran, Germany and Canada), along with experts and academics of international repute in several related disciplines. The themes and approaches of the writers of this book include theology, phenomenology, culture, history and international politics. Based on priority and relevance, three general themes have been chosen to represent the problems in the world at the moment. First, the issue of multilateralism as a guiding principle for the future of Global Order; second, the problems of the globalisation of culture and the strengthening of local identity, which may use terrorism as a weapon of resistance; and third, the challenge of reinforcing democratic culture, pluralism, and non-violence in newly consolidated democratic countries, where Muslim nations become a point of analysis.

In the introduction to this book, Nurcholish Madjid explains the importance of a balance of power within the global political setup. The creation of a balance of power, according to him, is an important part of the moral duty of humanity and, in the perspective of Islam, constitutes a fundamental expression of religiousness: balance is how God saves the world from the damage caused by despotism and tyranny by one group towards another. The application of the principles of social and economic justice, multiculturalism, multireligiosity and democratic values can certainly strongly support global balance.


At the level of praxis, global balance as a basis for a good world order demands a commitment to multilateralism from every country in order to have legitimacy and legality when using power for the resolution of international political disputes. However, the issue of multilateral power depends on the existence of the UN, which at the moment is facing questions about its relevance as a credible multilat-



eral organisation. Makmur Widodo cites UN Secretary General Koffi Anan looking at the urgency of reforming the institutional processes of the UN. However, there is an awareness that these ideas are not going to hold power without the involvement and commitment of the US, which has veto rights in the Security Council. As a result, the established leadership qualities of the US must be acknowledged and in this context appeals to the US's need to implement "soft power" are highly relevant, as this will possibly attract more support for the US's foreign policy agenda.

Has the US really abandoned multilateralism? US Ambassador to Indonesia, Ralph L. Boyce, rejects this opinion and explains that the US currently cooperates and will continue to cooperate with other countries in efforts to bring the world into a better and safer state of being, both through working with like-minded countries and through multilateral organisations like the UN. This assumes that whatever the opinion of multilateralism in the eyes of the Bush government, there is no choice other than participation from a number of sides in responding to international issues of interest of the US. Several international political experts, such as Makmur Keliat, are inclined to consider that the American war in Iraq demonstrates a shift in US foreign policy from diplomacy with soft power to the use of hard power; the shift from the paradigm of Roosevelt to the Wilsonian paradigm further emphasises the moral standards of the US. Consequentially, if this shift eventuates, the paradigm of the UN in terms of international relations must transform from being based on state to being based on people, since it is the people who will directly feel the results of international political processes. Borrowing from Hassan Hanafi, "The declaration of universal human rights is to be completed by another declaration of a Universal Declaration of People's Rights for self-determination."



The dichotomy between multilateralism and unilateralism is not just a problem of the international po-



litical structure, including the UN, but deeper still is the problem of a culture that is based in a world view in conflict with World Order. According to Hassan Hanafi, in the context of culture, multilateralism represents liberalism, freedom of thought, dialogue and mutual respect, whilst unilateralism leans towards conservatism, censorship and orthodoxy and at the absolute level can breed fanaticism and violence. As long as cultural multilateralism and intercultural multilateralism do not truly develop, then the world will witness the domination of unilateralism, even though theoretically multilateralism is still more highly valued.

Both Hassan Hanafi and Bassam Tibi stress the importance of the Muslim community developing a culture of openness and pluralism, which has been demonstrated by classical Islamic traditions, and to accept difference and diversity both within Islamic culture and between Islam and other cultures, particularly Western civilisation. In this context, it is interesting to observe Andreas Jacobs' criticism towards intercultural dialogue between the West and Islam in the case of Germany. He argues that the cultural exchange of this kind is nonsense if those carrying out the dialogue fail to demonstrate an attitude that supports the creation of dialogue that is constructive, where freedom must be the basis of dialogue. An honest attitude is needed for self-criticism, compared with apology and accusation, because dialogue with this kind of attitude is reaffirming differences rather than building bridges. Problems based on intercultural exchange are not dialogues between beliefs but rather dialogue between beliefs and modernity. In the context of Islam, according to Jacobs, the key lies in the efforts of Islamic intellectuals finding the authentic road to modernity.



The fragile relationship between Islamic culture and modernity is closely linked with the Muslim response towards the modern culture of globalisation. Is the issue of world terrorism in the name of Islam able to be explained as a part of the strengthening of Islamic identity in the face of a mod-



ern globalism that has un-Islamic values? According to K.S. Nathan, globalisation has uneven impacts on the world's community, which is made up of many varieties of local culture. For those prepared with all the prerequisites for a relationship with globalisation there will be a positive acceptance of globalisation, as something conducive to the improvement of their economic conditions, whilst for those who are not ready, globalisation may be viewed negatively and as a threat to their identity. The emergence of Islamic extremists can be said to be a product of the globalisation of culture and religion. The failure of secular regimes in countries of a Muslim majority to overcome imbalances in the economy, poverty and corruption, the lack of power of the Islamic world compared with the industrialised, capitalist and secular Western world, along with the difference in power that materialises in various international political fronts, creates feelings of alienation for radical Muslim groups in a unipolar world. It may be that these all impact upon the violent steps in the name of Islam, taken by people like Osama bin Laden, as weapons of resistance.

Randolph Mank (Canadian Ambassador to Indonesia), although he sees the thread of the cultural argument to explain the phenomena of terrorism reflecting Huntington's thesis of the "clash of civilisations", points out that the complexity of problems behind the symptoms of world terrorism are strongly linked with a world environment that is dominated by economic imbalance, undemocratic culture, along with a lack of transparent and accountable governments. Richard Gozney (former English Ambassador to Indonesia) observes that a just resolution of political disputes caused by the annexation of land can decrease the emergence of violent actions as an impact of the intensification of local identity, as is the case in Palestine and Northern Ireland.



Globalisation certainly must be seen positively, not as a project of the West but rather as a necessity caused by the



global technological and communication revolution that has globalised the way we perceive world order and global interdependence. K.S. Nathan observes the importance of a comprehensive and solid approach towards threats of global terror, by overcoming more basic issues such as threats to human security. To achieve this there needs to be a strengthening of multilateral cooperation at all levels, including at the regional level, not only in the field of military, but also in areas of economy, society, politics and diplomatic strategy. Then it is hoped that harmony between local, national, regional and global identity can be created in the framework of a peaceful and just world order.

For the governments and politicians of newly consolidated democratic countries, such as South-East Asia, a network of forums and multilateral organisation like ASEAN can hopefully play a role in changing the unilateral structure of international relations that had existed since the Cold War era. However, as shown by Jorn Dosch, multilateral organisations like ASEAN, alongside several regional achievements, have not yet maximised the concrete actions that are needed to carry out projects that they have already announced. However, interrelations between the rapidly changing challenges of globalisation and processes of democratisation in this region have altered the perceptions and responses of these countries towards global challenges. Clearly their way of defining current global security has already been broadened from a definition that sees security as hard security, military security, to a liberal definition that sees security as embracing humanity, economy and living conditions.

Whilst currently democracy is considered to be a global phenomenon, countries with a majority Muslim population still must face many challenges in order to realise a genuine political democracy that is supported by pluralism and good governance. Bassam Tibi, Shaban Shahidi Moaddab (Iranian Ambassador to Indonesia), along with Azyumardi Azra,





all observe that the main challenges being faced by Muslim countries are the creation of good governance and the implementation of democracy. Moaddab, for example, acknowledges that regimes in Muslim countries often carry out human rights violations and practice unclean governance, with the result that there are impacts in terms of economic inequality and poverty for the Muslim community.

Azra and Tibi in particular both see that the challenges to democracy in Muslim states are located in the relative lack of a democratic culture and the weakness of institutions that support democracy and pluralism. In the case of Iraq, for example, Tibi observes that the strength of ethnic cultures makes it difficult to introduce democracy, pluralism and its related institutions, which in turn become a constraint for the creation of good governance. In the case of Indonesia, Azra observes, alongside the fragility of socio-economic infrastructure, challenges to democracy rest in the arbitrary and violent culture of corruption, patrimonialism, cronism, nepotism and a culture of blind loyalty towards charismatic leaders; along with the weakness of civil society, as a result of dependence on the government or cooptation by the state.

Symptoms of the emergence of a political Islam that supports shari'ah and an Islamic state, the use of traditional political concepts like *bughat* (dissension), *jihad*, and *bai'a* (oath of loyalty), along with the emergence of radical Islamic groups on Indonesia's political stage, all of these may be threats to the future of democracy in Indonesia. However, Azra is convinced that it would be difficult to implement an Islamic state in Indonesia, due to the fact that Muslim political concepts are not singular, but varied and dependent on the situation, borrowing from Hefner, "in competition with each other".

Both Azra and Tibi agree on the importance of developing an authentic concept and culture of democracy using what Tibi calls "civil Islam" and what Azra calls "substan-



tive politics”, namely the adoption of universal Islamic values, such as *al-musawa* (equality), *al-‘adala* (justice), *shura* (deliberation), and *tasamuh* (tolerance), as well as Islamic ethics in contemporary political concepts and systems. This aims to decrease opposition to democracy, which has secular values. Tibi argues that democratisation cannot be carried out by a Western order, but must be directed with a good understanding of the conditions of culturally varied Islamic countries, and must include the reinforcement of institutions for good governance. Democratic pluralism, according to Tibi, requires the application of the principles of religious freedom and power sharing to protect and accommodate the interest of religious and ethnic minorities at both the local and regional levels.

Editors

Karlina Helmanita
Irfan Abubakar
Dina Afrianty



Introduction

The Theology of World Equilibrium for the Balance of Power

Nurcholish Madjid

The concept of equilibrium lies in both philosophical and religious points of view. Greek philosophers defined cosmos or the universe as the opposite of chaos and implies equilibrium and order. From an Islamic point of view, equilibrium (*mizān*) is believed to be the order of the Lord or the law of balance created by God, which holds sway over the whole universe. This cosmological idea is tied strongly to the principles of human responsibility and obligation to establish pillars of justice and righteousness. Justice, as the manifestation of balance, serves as the cosmic law, while injustice, which is the violation of the law, is counted as the cosmic sin.

The law of balance is further correlated with the principle of the balance of power, in which the earth and human legacies, including religious institutions, can avoid further devastation. Human civilisations therefore can only be sustained through the presence of a social order that is grounded in the principle of the balance of power.¹



As a student of Islam I am very interested in what is said in the Qur'an when David was successful in defending Jerusalem from the opponents of God (*kāfirun*), when he killed Goliath. The story closes with a divine statement that translates into English as "And did not Allah check one set of people by means of another, the earth would indeed be full of mischief: But Allah is full of bounty to all the worlds".²

So, what keeps the world in order is the presence of a balance of power and God checking one set of people against another. It was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad that he was permitted to wage a war and the goal of this war, according to His divine instruction, was to maintain religious institutions and religious freedom. At the end of the series of verses in the Qur'an that declare the Prophet's permission to wage the war, it says:

Did not Allah check one set of people by means of another, there would surely have been pulled down monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, in which the name of Allah is commemorated in abundant measure. Allah will certainly aid those who aid his (cause); for verily Allah is full of Strength, Exalted in Might (able to enforce His Will).³

Unfortunately, some Muslims forget that the goal of war in Islam is to protect these religious institutions from destruction and to maintain religious freedom, which includes the modern concepts of multiculturalism or multi-religiosity. The Qur'an wants the world to support multiculturalism and multi-religiosity. It says that God will certainly help people who assist His maintenance of religious institutions, and that God is full of thanks to whom-ever maintains religious freedom.

On these grounds, it is essential to support the idea of promoting religious freedom, as included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights. Inherent in this Declaration is the conviction that freedom of religion and belief should





contribute to the attainment of world peace, social justice and friendship among peoples and to the elimination of ideologies or practices of colonialism and racial discrimination. But at the same time, religious freedom should be in line with the purposes and principles of the Declaration itself.

Balance of Power Politics

The concept of equilibrium has been depicted in many political theories, the classical one being Hans Morgenthau's "Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace".⁴ Morgenthau talks about the "balance of power politics" to maintain the world order. The "balance of power politics", according to him, is a necessity in order to keep world peace and universal equilibrium. This book is sometimes considered to be obsolete, but now I think it is once again becoming relevant, because we are now facing the same problems.

Hans Morgenthau maintains that "balance of power" refers to the ways in which power is shared equally by a group of countries. Since the most direct and fundamental goal of foreign policy is to acquire power, a policy of a "balance of power" is the only thing that could prevent powerful countries from becoming too strong and threatening others' existence and independence. Morgenthau also points out that a group of countries hoping to maintain or break the *status quo* would eventually come to the structure of a "balance of power" and would adopt the necessary policies to sustain such a structure.⁵

Today we are safe from nuclear destruction. The threat of nuclear destruction has in the past brought about messiahistic hopes and thoughts among particular religious cults, which at times endangered human security. In 1977 there was a cult in America called the "People's Temple", led by Jim Jones, who believed he was the reincarnation of Lenin and Christ and who predicted that the world would




be destroyed by atomic war. Accordingly, one of the rituals of the cult was to build atomic shelters in the Nevada desert, but the followers of the cult then, committed suicide in Indiana.

We are safe from the threat of nuclear destruction only because of the balance between America and Russia in their ability to develop nuclear bombs. Because both super powers were afraid of using these weapons of mass-killing we were safe. In a theological framework, this is a blessing of God and God's Law (*sunnatullah*). Recent events unfortunately produced a kind of challenge to this equilibrium when the Iraq war took place. This war is clearly very hard to explain because the very reason for waging remains unproven, a fact not officially admitted by President Bush and the British government.

This is what drives us to rethink the new equilibrium in the world. It is very hard to understand the reasons behind the Iraq war. The toppling of Saddam Hussein can perhaps be justified, because he was a despotic leader who punished those who followed different schools of thought, such as the Shi'ites. Nevertheless, there is still the question of how to justify interference by another country. Great Britain, Australia and other countries supportive of the Iraq war have begun to distance themselves, which means that we face that the danger of America being the sole super power.

New Equilibrium and the Struggle for Democratic Values



It is a simple and common concept in politics that power tends to corrupt and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely. It is for this reason that we need balance, but the balance of power politics at a global level can no longer be based on ideological agitation, solely. This new balance and new equilibrium in the world should be based upon democratic values.



We have to strive for democracy in the world as we strive for democracy in national states. In democracy there is no absolutism, there is no room for those who claim to be the only leader, the only holder of truth, which will lead to an uncompromising attitude. There should be room for compromise, but it must be based on compromise, not on opportunism. In democracy there must be a mechanism that ensures that it is an open system for all participants. It is therefore absolutely a mistake to leave such a mechanism to willingness or prudence, whatever eagerness and prudence this may be.⁶ Another important feature in democracy is a mechanism of balance. This is because social systems can only be democratic if every group in society is given equal opportunity to participate. There should be no room for any side to dominate and take control. A check and balance mechanism, as argued by Alexis de Tocqueville, prevented tyranny.⁷

Efforts towards creating a new world equilibrium should be based on democratic values, not on ideological divides, nor on national divides, nor on state divides. It was interesting to see that Americans also took part in the opposition towards the Iraqi war. The demonstrations against the Iraqi war in Washington, New York and Saint Francisco were also elements of the balancing of power. This kind of balancing should be peaceful and harmonious. We need to establish global cooperation that transcends national borders and state interests.

One of the requirements for establishing the new equilibrium is social and economic justice. If we consider that Indonesia is a large and rich country, we will be shocked by the fact that majority of its people still live below the poverty line. Unequal distribution of the economic cake has led to deep and continuing crisis in places such as Aceh and Papua. Aceh is one of the provinces that contributes to the national wealth, but it receives too little in return. I think the world equilibrium should also be based on social and eco-



conomic justice. Fortunately various efforts have been made, such as the one by Franklin Roosevelt when he had the idea of establishing the IMF and the World Bank as organisations to finance rebuilding after the Second World War, following the example of the Marshall Plan. There has been a deviation in the practices from what is written in the global agreement, but I think that if concern is strong enough, these world institutions will return to the idea nurtured by Franklin Roosevelt. If this were to happen we would see the world in a new equilibrium.



In connection to this, I think that there should be a kind of affirmative action from the side of the first world towards the third world, similar to the affirmative action policy in America for the deprived and for African Americans. America has the most experience in this respect because of the division along resource and regional lines. Each of the many cultures that make up the American nation is allowed to maintain its self-identity and receives relative autonomy. The idea of multiculturalism is reflected in the school textbooks on American history in which African Americans, Asians and Native Americans are included and minorities are treated with dignity. This has been developed through training and education, involving a number of university departments concerned with multiculturalism.

Therefore, it seems to me that constraints exist, but possibilities are also there, as it was during this period that human rights, as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, became the guiding principle in the world. Equilibrium can be defined as difference but also as cooperation, just like the two wings of a bird. There is a left wing and a right one and the bird can fly only because of cooperation between the two wings.

We are all different and we cannot change the position of the two wings. Thus, we have to accept the fact that we have differences, we have to accept plurality and promote

xxx





pluralism. Plurality is very positive, because through it there is a possibility of enriching cultural achievements through cross-cultural sharing. Pluralism however, cannot be limited to the concept of “many” in the sense of fragmentation. Neither can it be understood simply as keeping fanaticism at bay. Rather it should be understood in terms of the necessity to shape diversity into bonds of civility, in which there is strong mutual understanding and positive thinking. Pluralism should moreover be understood as a necessity for human salvation, particularly the check and balance mechanism that it produces.⁸

It is hard to deny that until recently there has not been a single Muslim nation, except possibly Turkey, whose social and political system has been entirely shaped in this way. Muslims have never made efforts to realise ideas of tolerance and pluralism, as understood and practiced by modern Western nations. It is a matter of fact that the issue of Islam *vis à vis* pluralism reflects Muslims’ problem of how to adapt to the modern world. It involves the issue of how they perceive Islamic history, and the necessity of bringing normative and universal Islamic values into dialogue with the reality of space and time.⁹

Despite the undoubted differences between the past and present social and physiological contexts, Muslims living in this modern era should reconstruct various past experiences and practices. It would be paradoxical if the ideas of tolerance and pluralism in classic Islam have faded, precisely at a time when they are needed in order to support increasing global human interaction.

In the context of Indonesian society, pluralism is indeed a social reality, as reflected by the long-standing co-existence of different ethnicities and religions in this country. However, it remains a passive consciousness of social diversity and there has not yet been an active effort to maintain and nurture the positive side of diversity, which can contribute to the nation-building process. It follows that if

they are truly committed to a democratic way of life, Indonesian people should dedicate themselves to maintaining the existing bonds of plurality and developing them as a meeting point for shared national objectives.

The new equilibrium should be based upon ideas of pluralism and religious freedom. Again, the principles of multiculturalism, multi-religiousity, harmony, and cooperation between opposites are just like the wings of a bird. In thinking about equilibrium, let us remember that according to the Holy Book, equilibrium is the way God saves the world.

Notes

¹ See Nurcholish Madjid, *Cendekiawan dan Religiusitas Masyarakat* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1999), p. 209.

² The Qur'an, *al-Baqara* (2): 251.

³ The Qur'an, *al-Hajj* (22): 40.

⁴ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), fifth edition, revised.

⁵ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*.

⁶ Nurcholish Madjid, *Cendekiawan dan Religiusitas Masyarakat*, p. 128.

⁷ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Delba Winthrop and Harvey Claflin Jr. Mansfield (eds.), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), third edition.

⁸ See Nurcholish Madjid, *Masyarakat Religius* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1997), p. 35; See also Nurcholish Madjid, *Cendekiawan dan Religiusitas Masyarakat*, p. 63.

⁹ See Nurcholish Madjid, "Mencari Akar-Akar Islam bagi Pluralisme Modern: Pengalaman Indonesia", in *Jalan Baru Islam: Memetakan Paradigma Mutakhir Islam di Indonesia*, Mark R. Woodward (ed.), (Bandung: Mizan, 1998), pp. 100-102.



Bibliography

Madjid, Nurcholish. 1997. *Masyarakat Religius*, Jakarta: Paramadina.

_____. 1998. "Mencari Akar-Akar Islam bagi Pluralisme Modern: Pengalaman Indonesia". in *Jalan Baru Islam: Memetakan Paradigma Mutakhir Islam di Indonesia*. Mark R. Woodward (ed.). Bandung: Mizan.

_____. 1999. *Cendekiawan dan Religiusitas Masyarakat*, Jakarta: Paramadina.

Morgenthau, Hans J.. 1978. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. Fifth Edition. Revised.

Tocqueville, Alexis de. 2000. *Democracy in America*, Delba Winthrop and Harvey Claflin Jr. Mansfield (eds.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Third Edition.