

# Dialogue on civilizations

*Civilization News 30.1.02  
& Civil. Conflict*

By Amanat Ali Chaudhry

At a time when the entire world is surrounded by internal and external threats and the very fabric of civilization is about to collapse, the need for shoring up helpless humanity has increased manifold. The dawn of 21st century symbolises the height of scientific advancement. But in spite of this gigantic progress, have we met needs of the spirit, which believe in the eternal values of co-existence and peace? The question is a bit complex and deserves some analysis.

There is a widespread assumption that the world has changed after the September 11 attacks on the US. No commentator has ever thrown light on the nature of the change. Is it change for the good or for the bad? Has there come a paradigm shift in the existing rules of the game and set of ethos plugging all gaps in the power politics? On a close scrutiny, one sadly comes to note that the collective conscience of the mankind is sleeping as ever. The soul-searing happenings across the globe have fallen flat on it. Instead of being introspective with a view to finding out as to what went wrong and where, champions of the world affairs are bent upon maintaining the status quo. The blood of the thousands of innocent people in the New York carnage has not moved the power elite. Instead the circumstances have turned from bad to worse. Terrorism in one part of the world is begetting more terrorism in the other. As a reaction to the September 11 massacre, America-led war on terror has ruined the poor people of Afghanistan. They were already

Now do not all these incidents seem to target Muslims the world over? Don't they deepen the sense of grievances already inflicted upon by the double standards on the part of champions of the world peace? Thus it is evident that the change has turned out to be a negative one. Instead of serving as a clarion call to live in the environment of co-existence, the response to the terrorism has filled a new page of brutality in history against Muslims and other weak nations. It looks as if the wish of grabbing more and more wealth has put all the morality to bed and devised different rules of game, which best meet their objectives. The edifice of civilisation is being built upon not on values but on the size of economy with total disregard of the great human ideals.

After a little meditation it becomes clear that clash of civilisations theory has motivated the West that any potential enemy, which can challenge the Western hegemony, is Islam after the collapse of communism. Now all energies and efforts have been exerted in way of checking this supposedly looming danger with innovative policy objectives. The Western power elite has created an environment at home aimed at widening gaps between Islam and West so that public opinion could be moulded for their benefit. The effective mobilisation of media has been made for this purpose. That is why, we see that the Western media has presented biased and the extremist picture of Islam before the world, thanks to some obscurantist elements within Islamic polity who are bent upon establishing Khilafat. No effort at bridging these gaps has ever been made. On the other hand military might has been used to intimidate some of the allegedly rogue Islamic states least they should challenge the West. Those victimising Muslims have been encouraged as in the case of India and Israel with regard to their proverbial violation of human rights. Even the American power elite has resorted to

**and reactionary picture of Islam; a medieval version which abhors every effort at modernisation in this cyber world. Whether we admit or not both the civilisations stand at the opposite junctures with no sustainable bridgehead for fostering debate and dialogue aimed at clearing away the haze of doubts and misunderstandings.**

the victim of combined Jihad against the evil empire, but the present war on terrorism has decimated them to the hilt. Kashmir and Palestine continue to bleed.

Finding a convenient cover of global campaign against terror to hide their atrocities, the power intoxicated hawks in both countries have solidified their resolve to exterminate Kashmiris and Palestinians. They have stepped up their activities of suppression of the innocent masses bracketing their freedom struggles with terrorism, he world's favourite most catch phrase now a days.

Ever dangerous part of the world as South Asia is known to be, has become the focal point of the world media due to unending sabre rattling between two arch rivals, Pakistan and India. The sorry truth is that India, owing to its international image of the largest democracy of the world and its huge economic market, is trying its level best to use to state managed terrorist activities as casus belli against Pakistan. If India's bellicosity is not checked, it has the potential of leading to one of the worst nuclear holocaust ever witnessed in the human history. On the other hand, the US is expanding its network of war against terrorism to the alleged terrorist states. Indications are being dropped that the next victim of the US wrath can be Iraq, Libya etc.

In the changed world, state terrorism has been neglected. Struggle for right of self-determination and terrorism have been lumped together, thanks to Uncle Sam for its even handed approach.

ever kind of measure, fair or foul, for the purpose of installing the puppet governments in the Islamic countries and bringing down the defiant government with total disregard of the public opinion. That is what makes the history of injustices done to the Muslims the world over.

If seen in this context, what appears a manifest is the fact that anti-Islam mindset has been purposely made up from the go-get. We have acted our part in grisly drama by painting orthodox and reactionary picture of Islam; a medieval version which abhors every effort at modernisation in this cyber world. Whether we admit or not both the civilisations stand at the opposite junctures with no sustainable bridgehead for fostering debate and dialogue aimed at clearing away the haze of doubts and misunderstandings.

There is a dire need of reversing this deep rooted trend at the moment. The time has come when the dialogue on civilisations should be initiated at international level, so that the long history of antagonism and mistrust should be brought to its ultimate end. As a seminal step the inter faith dialogue can be sovereign remedy available to cure the age long ills. It will provide the opportunity to both the civilisations to present the real teachings of their religions. Certainly, there are many areas of our life where there are many commonalities waiting for our work. Respectable Pop John Paul should be congratulated for having undertaken the mammoth task "Role of Religions in Promoting Peace". This is laudable step that has set the precedent for others to follow. It will take some time to change the mindset, but at least an effort has been exerted in the right direction. The intellectuals and commentators across the globe should take up the mission of awakening the public opinion to the need of fostering a dialogue at various levels. Media mobilisation will certainly reduce the distance of creating harmony and peace in the world. The time has come that we moved towards breaking the ice. We need to right what has gone wrong at this crossroads of history. Let us pray that this dawn of new century should serve as a wake up call and the dove of peace and harmony, which has flown away to the wilderness, should come back to the world. Perhaps it may, who can tell!

**.....**  
**If seen in this context, what appears a manifest is the fact that anti-Islam mindset has been purposely made up from the go-get. We have acted our part in grisly drama by painting orthodox**