

Conference Report

Islam and Diplomacy : The Search for Human Security

Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR), Ministry of Foreign Affairs Malaysia hosted the 'Peace & Security Forum 2013' with the theme : *Islam and Diplomacy - The Search for Human Security* on Thursday, 16 May 2013 at IDFR auditorium in collaboration with International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS), Malaysia and Cordoba Foundation, United Kingdom. Event partners of the forum were : The State of Qatar, Global Movement of Moderates Foundation (GMMF) while media partners were: Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) TV Al Hijrah Sinar Harian.

The forum had two panel discussions in addition to an opening session and in the evening, a Banquet at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Kuala Lumpur sponsored by the Embassy of The State of Qatar, where YABhg. Tun Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi (Former Prime Minister of Malaysia and Patron of IAIS Malaysia) delivered the Keynote speech on 'Islam and Peace Building in the 21st Century'. HE Khaled bin Mohammad Al Attiyah did also attend. Ten scholars and officials offered insights into the concept and practice of the Islamic ideal of harmonious relations between nations. His Excellency Dr. Khalid bin Mohammad Al Attiyah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, the State of Qatar, and YABhg. Tun Abdullah Hj. Ahmad Badawi, Former Prime Minister of Malaysia and Patron of IAIS, Malaysia were present in the opening session while Professor Dr Mohammad Hashim Kamali, Founding Chairman & Chief Executive Officer of IAIS, Malaysia delivered his welcome address followed by the keynote address by His Royal Highness Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah Ibni Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah, Regent of State of Perak Darul Ridzuan, Malaysia, Royal Patron of IDFR. The ceremony concluded at 10:45 am with a tea break.

The first panel session started at 11:00 am with the theme: *Diplomacy- The Islamic Legacy*. The session was moderated by Mr. Anas Altikriti, President and Founder of The Cordoba Foundation, United Kingdom while four speakers were: YBhg. Tan Sri Professor Dr. Mohd. Kamal Hassan, Distinguished Professor, International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) and Distinguished Fellow of IDFR, H.E. Dr. Hassan Bin Ibrahim Al Mohannadi, Director of the Diplomatic Institute of the State of Qatar, Dr. Karim Douglas Crow, Principal Research Fellow, International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) Malaysia and Mr. Amjad Saleem, Head of Communications & Manager- Conflict Programme ,The Cordoba Foundation, United Kingdom. Then Lunch was hosted by Global Movement of the Moderates Foundation (GMMF) at 1:00 pm at the Multipurpose Hall.

The second session was a panel discussion with the theme: *In Search of Human Security- Islamic Diplomacy and the Way Forward*. This session, started at 2 : 30 pm and continued till 5 : 30 pm including closing address and light refreshments, was moderated by Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, President, International Movement for a JUST World (JUST) Malaysia and

Distinguished Fellow of IDFR while four panelists were: Professor Dr. Mohammad Hashim Kamali, Founding Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, IAIS, Malaysia, Tuan Haji Nasharudin Mat Isa, Chairman Al Quds Foundation of Malaysia, Venerable Datuk K Sri Dhammaratana, Chief High Priest, Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST), and En. Asrul Daniel Ahmed, Research Manager, Global Movement of the Moderates Foundation (GMMF). In this session, there was no formal paper or article. The extemporal dialogue of the panelists on the issues of security and peace helped to reach a common ground among inter-faith emphasizing on religious freedom, human rights, ethics and justice.

The third session was a dinner talk on '*Islam and Peace Building in the 21st century*' by YABhg. Tun Abdullah Hj. Ahmad Badawi, Former Prime Minister of Malaysia and Patron of IAIS, Malaysia while Mr. Rashid Al Mulla, Charge d' Affaires, Embassy of the State of Qatar delivered the welcoming address. The session was held at Ritz Carlton Hotel, Kuala Lumpur between 7:45pm and 10:30 pm.

In his keynote address, Dr Nazrin Shah spoke on the theme placing the problem of human security at the beginning and then he turns to address the quest for human security in the Muslim world. He thinks human security is a complex thing and it cannot be advanced by just the one tool of diplomacy. Rather, in his words, "The primary actor and driver may indeed be the state, but there are a host of other important domestic and external players that make an impact upon human security in every individual locale." He further adds, "The mix of political, economic, social and security factors that affect human security differ markedly among countries and communities, Muslim as well as non-Muslim." He compares the performance of Muslim countries and Muslim-majority countries between the Human Security Index (HSI) and the Human Development Index (HDI) and finds their performance is worse in HSI than HDI. So, the comprehensive well-being of the people in a number of Muslim-majority countries leaves much to be desired. Finally, he provides three roles that Islam can play in the contemporary diplomacy of Muslim countries in their pursuit of human security. Firstly, paying attention to the great achievement of the Prophet (PBUH) in bringing peace and reconciliation to reduce enmity among Muslim countries and communities; secondly, mobilizing the values and teachings of Islam through such institutions as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) to bring more and better development; and, thirdly, developing the non-governmental infrastructure through the organizations in civil society and the private sector.

In his statement, His Excellency Dr. Khalid bin Mohammad Al Attiyah mentions four challenges threaten human security as follows: the presence of super nuclear powers; ferocity of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons in different parts of the world; the emergence of racial tensions; and the advanced technological? causing ecological damage, impacting negatively on national cultures and values, and spreading moral decay among the youth and future generations. Then he emphasises to formulate a lot of policies and practices which govern the behavior of the international community in order to

achieve human security by ensuring the human rights and the entire humanity is responsible to protect human rights wherever they are and to ensure their security, stability and all rights. In this regard, he discusses the openness policy of the state of Qatar becoming the source of interest and winning loads of praise from countries, organizations and bodies for the initiatives, opinions, perceptions and solutions for its participation in solving many international and regional problems.

In his article entitled “*Is Peace Normative in Islam?*”, Professor Dr. Mohammad Hashim Kamali shows many different ways through which the Qur’an and Sunnah bring peace into the heart of Islam’s spirituality, law and ethics. To him, “a positive notion of peace shifts the focus from only prevention of conflict and violence to a willingness to generate balance, inner tranquility, and a just order of relations among individuals and communities. Mentioning *Tawhid* (Divine Oneness) as the basis of Islamic universalism, tolerance and inclusivity, he argues that every act of peace, however small, helps, for it is equivalent to praising the Creator and partaking in *amal salih* (righteous conduct). Moreover, he elaborates the concept of *adal* (justice) and *Ihsan* (benevolence) in peace building.

In his article entitled “*The Concept of Al-Wasatiyyah and the Place of Islamic Moderation with Reference to Jihad*”, Professor Dr. Mohd Kamal Hassan differs those who adopt the violent approach to Jihad and provides the comprehensive scope of jihad encompassing the meaning “striving hard against the lower self and evil desire” (*mijahadat al-nafts*), “striving hard against Satan” (*mijahadat al-shaitan*), “striving hard against inequities or injustices and reprehensible actions” (*mijahadat al-mazalim wa al- munkarat*) in society, and “striving hard against the [Meccan] polytheists” (*mijahadat al-mushrikin*). These striving efforts involve the use of the intellect, the tongue, the pen, the body, wealth as well as weapons-if need be-according to the dictate of the particular circumstances. Then he elaborates the concept of “economics *jihad*” or “*jihad* against poverty” in order to improve the economic conditions of Muslim community, and the moral and spiritual *jihad*.

In his paper entitled “*Securing Peace : Ethical and Conceptual Reality in Islam*”, Dr. Karim Douglas Crow vividly establishes the integral connection of the primordial conception and ideal of Islam with both security and with peace. To confirm the authentic roots of the Islamic concept of this twin principle, he provides the linguistic, historical and civilizational evidence. He deals with some words in his paper: *silm & salamah*, *aman & amanah*, and *sulh*. He urges Muslim authorities and societies to work for implementing the powerful potential of Islamic resources for peaceful security, communal reconciliation and social integration in the twenty-first century.

In his paper entitled “*Institutionalizing Humanitarianism in Peace Making and Diplomacy: The role of INGOs*”, Amjad Mohamed Saleem seeks to provide a new understanding for the role of Muslim FBOs and Muslim donors in a post- 9/11 world, and a chart a clearer relationship with Peace Building and Human Security. He thinks peace and security should correlate with development and humanitarian response where INGOs need to play much more

responsibility. A paradigm shift is needed for Muslim INGOs and governments in thinking how they respond.

This Forum reflects serious attention devoted to issues of Islamic Peace by IAIS and IDFR. In October 2011, the two institutes held their first conference 'Islamic Perspectives on Peace and Security'. The May 16th Forum highlights the close link between security and peace, since the word 'Islam' signifies these two closely related ideas. The ISLAM and DIPLOMACY Forum seeks to energize efforts by Islamic governments and Muslim civic organizations to take peace building more seriously, as well as shared efforts at reconciliation and humanitarian needs. After the conference, the following morning Friday, May 17th a closed door Workshop took place at IAIS to plan a common strategy for policy dissemination, capacity building, and joint future activities. It is proposed that a Network be established to be known as the Islamic Forum for Peace and Security. It is hoped that this Forum could be structured as global networks of institutions both private and public linking Ministries, think tanks and International NGOs to advance Islamic solutions to conflict and violence.

Foyasal Khan

PhD student (Economics)

International Islamic University Malaysia