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Embracing diversity, not clash

Welcome to the first edition of Arches for 2007. In the previous issues, we have covered a lot of ground; our esteemed line-up of contributors and interviewees have provided different perspectives on the broad theme of dialogue and civilisational engagement.

The salient messages arising from the all articles and interviews were firstly, that dialogue is a two-way or multi-directional communication where those involved are not trying to limit their - or each other's - understanding, values and beliefs.

> **There needs to measured responses and approaches to diversity as societies have markedly become multicultural.**

This is because dialogue, by its very definition entails shared exploration towards greater understanding and interaction. Secondly, there will always be differences of views and interests in human society. We have to accept this fact and embrace the reality that cultures and civilizations are all interdependent. Moreover there needs to measured responses and approaches to diversity as societies have markedly become multicultural.

Finally, in the articles and interviews, hope and aspiration for people to coexist and build bridges featured prominently. This bridge-building can take the shape of something as simple as extending tea and dinner invitations to one's neighbours and members of other faiths, to intellectual discourses on a range of issues both at the grassroots and policy levels.

We would like to think that Arches has constructively contributed to the promotion of positive coexistence among civilisations, by addressing some of those pertinent issues. We are grateful to everyone that have contributed to Arches last year, in particular Dr Norman Kember, Dr Murad Hofmann and Alastaire Crooke. We hope to bring to you the same level of quality articles and interviews over the course of 2007, on dialogue in order to generate shared understandings around many issues. ▶

Finally, we leave you with two timely quotes from Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Professor Khurshid Ahmad, which are a source of hope for us all.

We have to respect different faiths. We mustn't despise, disparage or speak ill of another faith. And we have got to try to be sensitive to what other people consider to be important. And some of us sometimes get a bit reckless.

-- Archbishop Desmond Tutu

The 'clash of civilisations' via a global war on can only mean the destruction of the entire human civilisation and not the promotion of one culture over another. The only alternative available to mankind is dialogue in a framework of conflict, communication and the free exchange of ideas. It is only through research, debate and dialogue that different moral, social and cultural alternatives can be presented in the world of today and appropriate choices made.

-- Prof. Khurshid Ahmad

The Editor

The Cordoba Foundation

Founded in 2005, The Cordoba Foundation (TCF) is an independent Public Relations, Research and Training unit, which promotes dialogue and the culture of peaceful and positive coexistence among civilisations, ideas and people. TCF aims are to:

o   **Promote dialogue and the culture of peaceful coexistence among cultures, ideas and people.**
o   **Work with decision-making circles for better understanding and clearer comprehension of inter-communal and inter-religious issues in Britain, across Europe and beyond.**
o   **Provide a new and unique standard of information, allowing decisions and policies to be established upon proper basis and efficient consultation.**

As an advocate of dialogue and understanding, engaging with practitioners, researchers, journalists, policy-makers and a host of other stakeholders of society, TCF runs:

o   **Structured consultation and advisory services**
o   **Face-to-face interaction with decision-makers, figures of authority and scholars**
o   **In-house research and research support on key topics**
o   **Workshops, seminars and roundtables on pressing issues, including conflict resolution**
o   **Training and capacity-building – building a pool of expertise, sound knowledge and awareness**
o   **Event management in the spirit of mutual recognition of the needs and sensitivities of respective parties**

The Foundation also participates and cooperates with various local and international conferences and forums, and publishes a periodical as well as various articles on key issues on its website.

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Reflections on Counter-Terrorism Partnerships in Britain

Bob Lambert - Head of Muslim Contact Unit, Metropolitan Police

By successfully targeting iconic symbols of political and economic power, the strategists behind 9/11 demonstrated the key purpose of terrorism: political communication, what the Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin called "propaganda of the deed" at a meeting in London in 1881. By simultaneously achieving an incredibly potent impact on live television the same strategists took the business of terrorism into a new global media arena for the first time. Never before had terrorists achieved such concentrated international attention. All around the world people stopped what they were doing to ponder on unbelievable images on their television screens.

While the majority could not comprehend any rational purpose to what they saw, the audacious terrorist act immediately communicated itself as a reciprocal act of violence amongst a minority already in tune with al-Qa'ida's revolutionary ideology. The empowerment of minorities is always more important to terrorist strategists than the condemnation of their actions by the majority.

> **It is hard to imagine any single terrorist attack ever again making such a dramatic impression on an international public audience. Hollywood couldn't have orchestrated audience shock and awe half as well.**

As the first twin tower shrunk to the ground, anti-military and anti-globalisation campaigners abandoned a picket of an international arms fair in London's docklands. Inside New Scotland Yard's public order control room attention switched from screens with departing protesters to the televised attack on the World Trade Centre. No one could quite comprehend the enormity of what was happening in New York and Washington. It is hard to imagine any single terrorist attack ever again making such a dramatic impression on an international public audience. Hollywood couldn't have orchestrated audience shock and awe half as well.

In response, the 'war on terror', was immediately characterized by a fierce resolve and a 'you're either with us or against us' message to potential allies and enemies around the globe. Ironically, the 'war on terror's' own heavily promoted and choreographed attempts at 'shock and awe' fell flat on the same TV audiences satiated on predictable, unopposed state violence.

In the morning after night-time air strikes on Afghanistan launched the 'war on terror', I discussed the implications for London with a long time colleague. Over a cup of coffee in a café in St. James's Park underground station, two experienced counter terrorism police officers came to the swift conclusion that the 'war on terror' was in grave danger of playing into the hands of al-Qa'ida strategists if it did not sufficiently distinguish

Demos report on Muslim Contact Unit

"The Metropolitan Police Muslim Contact Unit (MCU) was set up in January 2002 to service the needs of grass roots Muslim community groups tackling the adverse impact of al-Qa'ida inspired terrorist propaganda at close quarters in London. Typically, partner groups are Salafi or Islamist in complexion, minority sections of London's diverse Muslim population where the seeds of al-Qa'ida ideology had been planted and nurtured over a sustained period often by notable London-based extremists. Given that both 'Salafi' and 'Islamist' had become (and remain) pejorative terms in the hands of leading commentators on what has been dubbed 'Londonistan', such partnership work - between counter-terrorism police and challenging community groups - remains contested. Willing to stand by such community partner groups in the face of criticism, the unit has won respect and trust in the very heart of communities where these vital ingredients have been seriously eroded by a perception that the wider 'war on terror' is often indiscriminate in its impact on Muslim communities (at home and abroad).

…the MCU has also been able to address community concerns including the stigmatisation of sections of the Muslim community publicly 'associated' with terrorism, incidences of Islamophobia, media coverage of these issues, and civil liberties and policing issues. Those we consulted during the course of this research rated the value of this unit incredibly highly. Much of the trust that it has been able to build is attributed to the skills and qualities of the individuals working for the unit."
(Demos report, 2006, pp.36/37)

between terrorists and the communities where they choose to operate. We reckoned: one, that the terrorist enemy would already be excited by the nature and tone of the 'war on terror'; two, that sophisticated terrorist strategists would regard it as being disproportionate and thereby boost recruitment to their cause, and most importantly; three, that London Muslims - fellow citizens paying a good chunk of our wages - might begin to feel so alienated by the rhetoric of the 'war on terror' that we would lose their critical support in combating al-Qa'ida's established influence in the capital. We were determined to do all that we could to retain it. The discussion marked the inception of the Muslim Contact Unit.

Counter terrorism strategists had long cited community support as a key ingredient for long-term success. 'Communities defeat terrorism' had become an accepted counter terrorism maxim just as it had become axiomatic that the majority of Londoners - faced with serious terrorist threats and the fear it generates - looked to support the Metropolitan Police in its efforts to prevent terrorist attacks and apprehend offenders. Indeed, for many years prior to 9/11, Londoners lived and worked against the backdrop of a tangible terrorist threat, often dramatically demonstrated during Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) and Real Irish Republican Army (RIRA) bombing campaigns in the 1970s, 80s, 90s (and concluding with a RIRA campaign in 2000/1). Notable cases of public vigilance leading to the detection or disruption of such terrorist activity testified to the health of active and vigilant citizenship in the capital.

However, the detection, disruption

and prevention of terrorism is greatly enhanced if all sections of society - especially those sections where terrorist propaganda is prevalent - are active in their support of counter terrorism policing. It has long been

> **Detection, disruption and prevention of terrorism is greatly enhanced if all sections of society - especially those sections where terrorist propaganda is prevalent - are active in their support of counter terrorism policing.**

recognised that terrorists should, wherever possible, be denied community support and sympathy. Would-be terrorists in London maximise their opportunities to successfully surmount counter terrorist security measures and carry out violent attacks if they have the tacit support - or at least the willingness to turn a blind eye - of sections of the community that they either belong to or frequent.

Clearly though, counter terrorism has more than opportunistic vigilance in mind when it postulates the necessity of community support. When terrorists are using London as a place of residence - whether permanent or merely fleeting - police naturally want the public to report suspicious behaviour that might help detect or disrupt terrorist activity. Examples of community support here mirror the kind of assistance that has become vital in all areas of policing that is to say, the provision of community intelligence.

By way of example, and perhaps most notably, informed figures from sections of London's black

community work in partnership with police to tackle 'black on black' gun crime under the auspices of Operation Trident to good effect. Coming in the wake of Lord Macpherson's finding of institutionalised racism against the Metropolitan Police at the conclusion of a high profile Stephen Lawrence enquiry, the success of Operation Trident has also served to build confidence in those very sections of the community where it had reached a nadir. Not surprisingly, this major breakthrough in partnership policing has been hailed as a model for counter terrorism policing, most especially in relation to establishing effective partnerships with London's Muslim communities.

Experience shows, however, that minority communities in London have been reluctant to forge partnerships with police when the counter terrorism effort is felt to be indiscriminate or disproportionate in an exactly the way that terrorists intend it should be. Comprising five officers with a cumulative total of over a hundred years Special Branch experience and three with intimate

> **Minority communities in London have been reluctant to forge partnerships with police when the counter terrorism effort is felt to be indiscriminate or disproportionate**

knowledge of Muslim London the MCU has been concerned to remind colleagues new to counter terrorism how important it is not to alienate the communities where terrorists embed themselves. Suggestions that the al-Qa'ida threat is so serious as to make comparisons with Irish Republican

terrorism redundant are wide of the mark. Opportunities to forge counter-terrorism partnerships with London Irish communities were undermined in the past by an over reliance on traditional coercive approaches to communities, the MCU has learnt those lessons and has sought to apply them in the post 9/11 world.

> **Young Muslim community workers who might become key partners in the battle against terrorist propaganda will be further alienated if they are approached instead as potential informants. Worse still, if they are treated as part of 'suspect communities' merely because they are Salafi or Islamist.**

Notwithstanding the modest efforts of a small unit like the MCU, a concerted effort to win Muslim community support (along Operation Trident lines) has not been fully tested. It should also be acknowledged that the context for police engagement with black community leaders in respect of 'black on black' killings and in relation to al-Qa'ida inspired terrorism is so different as to call for a separate analysis. For instance, in the latter case, Muslim communities are united in believing that special anti-terrorist powers unfairly target them. Thus, two minority London communities - Irish and Muslim - have, at different times, come to resent the implementation and prosecution of counter terrorism policies to such an extent as to withhold their support for police.

In contrast, for all their prior

concerns about racist stereotyping by police, black Londoners engaged in Operation Trident (and related police partnerships), have never faced counter terrorism measures that allows security activity outside the familiar boundaries of everyday policing. In consequence police have been able to build a partnership strategy with key black London leaders without tensions surrounding objectives (reduction of gun crime) and methodology (all activity within a normal legal framework). For Muslim community leaders contemplating counter terrorism partnerships with police caution even preceding agreement on objectives. Such is the apparent connectivity between counter terrorism activity in London and what is perceived to be an Islamophobic 'war on terror' agenda in Washington and Whitehall that common strategic goals are elusive. In the circumstances, it comes as no surprise that Irish and Muslim community leaders compare experiences of what they have come to call 'living in suspect communities' - one experience in the recent past familiar to many Irish Londoners living in Brent, Camden, Hammersmith & Fulham, Hillingdon and Islington and the other affecting Muslims in Waltham Forest, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Redbridge, Hounslow, Lambeth and many other London boroughs at the present time.

Potential counter-terrorism partners are sometimes approached as would-be informants in a manner first described by the Muslim News in August 2002 under the banner 'MI5 and Special Branch officers have visited the homes of over 30 British Muslims since May'. Described in the paper as 'fishing' expeditions that were 'part of a new strategy to collect information on possible terrorists' in which 'no one

was arrested' the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, was reported to have apologised to some of the Muslims interviewed, 'I am sorry' he is quoted as saying, 'that anyone interviewed was distressed by the experience'. It is instructive to quote further from the Muslim News report:

"We felt intimidated. They alleged that our names and addresses were found in the Tora Bora region of Afghanistan,' one Muslim from Blackburn was quoted as saying. Most of those visited preferred not to be identified….All the Muslims said they co-operated with the security services and answered their questions. Some of them said they reluctantly agreed to talk to the Special Branch as they were 'too frightened' to say 'no' as they were not aware of their rights and thought that 'if we had refused to talk to them, they would have suspected that we had something to hide."

> **Muslim youth workers need religious and street credibility in equal measure. Street credibility often includes opposition to the wider 'war on terror' and while that can easily be misunderstood by outsiders, it is an effective approach when looking to undermine al-Qa'ida propagandists.**

Both reports highlight a poorly understood distinction within the counter terrorism world between coercive and partnership approaches to community representatives. In-house, since 2002, the MCU has been busy

explaining that there needs to be a far greater appreciation of the tension that exists at street level between partnership policing and the demands of conventional counter terrorism. Just as the Met made a quantum leap towards minority ethnic communities post-Macpherson so counter terrorism needs to re-assess its policy towards burgeoning Muslim communities in the capital. Young Muslim community workers who might become key partners in the battle against terrorist propaganda will be further alienated if they are approached instead as potential informants. Worse still, if they are treated as part of 'suspect communities' merely because they are Salafi or Islamist. Partnership means working transparently with communities to build trust and confidence; source recruitment is coercive and weakens community confidence. This is not to argue against the necessity of informants but rather to understand when partnership may be a better option.

Trust is certainly crucial. By working with - not against - the grain of local communities the MCU has been able to empower grass roots initiatives that have scored landmark successes against deeply embedded al Qa'ida propagandists in the capital. For example, while

the media has focused on terrorists and extremists with links to Finsbury Park Mosque and Brixton Mosque the MCU has formed partnerships with authentic credible local groups to enable them to win the battle for hearts and minds of youth susceptible to terrorist propaganda. Prior to 2002, management committees at both mosques said they lacked police support in tackling violent extremism, the MCU has sought to rectify that and to empower effective community voices against terrorist propaganda. Ironically, the most effective voices against al-Qa'ida have regularly been labelled extremist themselves by influential media commentators. The same commentators label the MCU as 'appeasers of extremists'. This fact highlights another important difference with Operation Trident.

To be successful in this pro-active preventative work Muslim youth workers need religious and street credibility in equal measure. Street credibility often includes opposition to the wider 'war on terror' and while that can easily be misunderstood by outsiders, it is an effective approach when looking to undermine al-Qa'ida propagandists.

The MCU has taken a leaf from the book of former head of the Anti-

Terrorist Branch, George Churchill-Coleman in challenging conventional counter terrorism thinking by highlighting the danger of unintentionally increasing support for terrorism by recourse to extra-judicial powers in tackling it. Internment in Northern Ireland, he recalls, was immediately followed by a substantial increase in violence, just as the government's unbending approach to Bobby Sands and fellow hunger strikers gave the IRA its biggest ever recruitment boost. Al-Qa'ida strategists plan to provoke disproportionate responses so as to further alienate a minority of young Muslims - that is the weapon terrorists always use. However, although there is a clear police appetite for Muslim community support there has sometimes been a reluctance to acknowledge the extent to which counter terrorism policy and strategy (together with aspects of operational activity) often militates against the objective. This connection has to be made. Terrorist actions intend to provoke over-reaction from governments, security services and police. The fact that they often succeed is testament to the power of the terrorists' chosen form of communication and the politicians' lack of historical perspective.

Detective Inspector Bob Lambert is the Head of Muslim Contact Unit at the Counter Terrorism Command (S015), Metropolitan Police. In January 2002, Bob and a Special Branch colleague, set up the Muslim Contact Unit (MCU), with the purpose of establishing partnerships with Muslim community leaders to help tackle the spread of al-Qa'ida influence in London. Previously, Bob worked continuously as a Special Branch specialist counter-terrorist / counter-extremist intelligence officer from 1980, which involved dealing with all forms of violent political threats to the UK, from Irish republican to the many strands of International terrorism.

In October 2005, Bob embarked on a parallel project, researching key aspects of MCU partnership experience, for a PhD at the Department of Politics, University of Exeter. This followed a recent path of mixed practitioner / academic activity: in 2002 he was awarded a distinction for his MA dissertation on early modern English encounters with Islam at Birkbeck College; and in 2000, 1st class honours for an inter-disciplinary European cultural history BA at the Open University.

'Framing'
For a Cultural Clash

Wanda Krause

On a cold overcast morning, an SUV quickly approaches an outer London train station. Before it comes to a complete halt a man lunges out of the passenger side. Dressed in an oversized black coat and firmly holding onto a large black briefcase, the man bolts towards the train. The scene forces every bystander to freeze, some likely not breathe. His hair is black; his face somewhat dark; his expression - determined.

A few seconds too slow, the unlucky man does not make his train. Swinging around his briefcase in his submission to fate, he strides over to the line-up to purchase a travel ticket. Fumbling through his pocket and eying the time, he is obviously oblivious to the hushed line-up and frightful eyes that hardly relent from his image.

Upon pondering the incident I witnessed that morning, one could say the guy should have 'known better,' that being dark and running at a train station is probably going to scare the wits out of everyone in the post 9/11 and 7/7 era. The least is he could have remembered the Brazilian electrician, Jean Charles de Menzes, who was shot dead by London police at an underground station. In a certain way, however, this scene is significant. It begs asking, what constructed frames force us to understand this man running at a train station as a cause for such a state of panic, in which was the condition of most people there that morning. What kinds of selves have been produced from such framing and the ongoing discourse on the 'Other' and terrorism?

Of course, the terrorist attacks in New York and London endured and looming threats are reason for a heightened sense that our security is being violated. But not only our 'frames' through which we can view the world in its neatly packaged categorisations, but our own being and consciousness, has been (and continues to be) trimly shaped - ironically, by our own agency. With this view, we can be in a better position to direct ourselves to the construction of discourses in way of securing better relations, better understanding of each other, and better living conditions.

> **Humans exist in a world in which there are few clear lines of division.**

According to Tobias Theiler, humans exist in a world in which there are few clear lines of division. Both social and physical reality is fluid and ever changing rather than neatly divided into different categories.[1] He explains, further, that "this threatens to overwhelm our cognitive apparatus with a mass of seemingly chaotic and unstructured stimuli. To counteract this [people use representations of 'us' and 'them' to] order, systematize and simplify [their] field of perception by dividing the social and physical world into categories. This makes it more manageable and renders [their] 'experience of the world subjectively meaningful'."[2] In other words, 'frames', defined as "a cognitive order that relates events to one another"[3] and that tells people how to think about things, are strategically and conveniently

used to place not only the dramatic events that have happened especially in the UK and US, but wider global conduct, including the war on terror, in 'intelligible' terms. Such a technology of 'assembling' good and bad feeds neatly into rhetoric that can mobilise to action.

Such a technology of 'assembling'[4] through, in many aspects, ill-formulated policies and the media has a significant impact on the capacities of the individual subject. Through forms of authority this assemblage produces a knowledge of the world and mobilises through modes of self-regulation. That is, the individual, as Foucault has argued, is produced through power relations.[5] Thus, the subject does not simply receive a set of frames through which to view the way the world works. The individual subject works on this socially constructed knowledge of the world and applies this knowledge through everyday actions.

> **Muslims, most commonly framed as the 'Other', have also found themselves in the same frame as fundamentalists, and are increasingly moving into the frame of the terrorist.**

Numerous frames exist through which groups attempt to make sense of a complex and changing world. The incident above, however, illustrates one frame, in particular, which has come to shape identities

and power relations. Muslims, most commonly framed as the 'Other', have also found themselves in the same frame as fundamentalists, and are increasingly moving into the frame of the terrorist. This serves a couple of basic ends. One is to safeguard societal security. Societies will put up certain barriers to maintain their cultural security.[7] Two is to establish a stratified society through social and economic advantage/disadvantage. Both can be achieved most effectively by creating barriers along racial and religious lines.[8] The discourses that move one group into the 'them', the disadvantaged or inferior and the other group into the 'we' or superior for economic advantage and domestic security runs risking human security and long term stability.

Such an assemblage is effecting a clash of civilisations, as Samuel Huntington had prophesised. Huntington theorised that a clash of civilisations will occur as different civilisations are more likely to fight each other.[9] As per the theory, the clash of civilisations has emerged due to factors, such as, the increased interaction among peoples of different civilizations, a global resurgence of religious identity, and demographic and economic changes that threaten to shift the balance of power among western and non-western civilisations. Asian and Islamic states will face conflict as Asian and Islamic states rise to challenge western hegemony. For Huntington, religion is the central defining characteristic that defines identities.[10]

Muslims - a category for a vast array of people of differing ethnic backgrounds, races, origins, practices, and understandings of how to live the Islamic faith when they choose to practice it - on the other hand, have attempted to demystify the social construct of inferiority as developed within most

western states. It is here, in this endeavor, where they have chosen particular frames and the kinds of selves they become in this process. One notable mode of action has served - until yet, not much more than bolster and confirm the frame that has effectively portrayed Muslims as fundamentalists, fanatics, and terrorists.

These individuals contribute to the discourse on the Muslim radical, stretched so broadly to always include the Muslim terrorist, through their own actions: during the controversy over the cartoons of Prophet Muhammad, in their protest marches the holding up of signs in which hate and the threat of violence were plastered all over; in their study circles confirming and embellishing the usual rhetoric

> Huntington's theory, not flawless to begin with, has been used overly deterministically. Its prophecy is not written in stone, as a growing number of scholars are pointing out. Rather, individuals have the ability to exacerbate the conditions for fulfilling the prophecy, as well as help foster intercommunal dialogue.

which includes articulations of hatred against people as a general category in the West - despite some of them having been raised in the West and others hoping to raise their children in the West; in the mosques in which they have decision-making power determining women have no place, whether for worship or to acquire knowledge at lectures held for men only; or phoning in on Islamic talk

shows to articulate their frustrations of the constructed knowledge of superiority and inferiority through sweeping imageries, such as that of raising the next generation (in the West, that is) to emulate Salah al-Din. While this group forms the minority of Muslims living anywhere, including the West, they are enabled to have immense impact on the development of the frame depicting Muslims as radicals warring with the principles the frame has formulated are western.

Both the policies that actively seek to construct a knowledge of superiority and inferiority and the minority of Muslims that feed into the rhetoric that is needed to build this truth are dangerously forming the kinds of selves that could make some form of Huntington's theory of the clash of civilisations a prophecy come true. Instead of at the state level, conflict would intensify also domestically. Huntington's theory, not flawless to begin with, has been used overly deterministically.[11] Its prophecy is not written in stone, as a growing number of scholars are pointing out. Rather, individuals have the ability to exacerbate the conditions for fulfilling the prophecy, as well as help foster intercommunal dialogue.

Recognising that one has the ability to change and affect discourse framing, more active endeavours on part of people (Muslims and non-Muslims) is needed. This includes both organisational and individual effort. Both begin with the simple awareness of the kinds of frames through which our physical and social world is divided, ourselves are categorised, and most importantly, how we may even unwittingly contribute to such powerful frames.

Organising with others is, indeed, what groups before us have historically needed to do in order to effectively challenge the very real constructs that divide people of

basically similar dreams, hopes, principles, and ethics. The struggle of blacks for equality and basic rights in the States which began in the 1960s - a mere half a century ago - is a notable example. Richard Bulliet points out that now a century earlier (1894) at the time of the Alfred Dreyfus conviction where Dreyfus was unjustly convicted of treason by a French military court, a profound anti-semitic sentiment in Europe could be exposed - a sort of world remaking event.[12] Such struggles for human dignity are not over. But certainly with some Arabs in America increasingly having adopted both Jewish first and last names must mean something.

Perhaps with at least a heightened awareness of the reality of this construction, the man in the oversized black jacket and large black briefcase might be in a better position to monitor actions that - firstly could have cost him his life - but also might better serve to demystify these constructs in a productive way. Perhaps he will utilise not only an Islamic radio station, but any of the multitude of mainstream radio stations or other media outlets to interrogate the policies or articulations found in sensationalist and serious newspapers that frame the Muslim categorically as radical. Or perhaps more aware of the frame through which others might behold him, he could look up and surprise with a simple smile.

Dr. Wanda Krause, of Canadian-German extraction, holds a PhD from the University of Exeter (2007) on Politics of the Middle East. Her interests include civil society development, social movements, social networks, Islamist politics, gender politics, and modes of governance and state - society relations.

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[2] Quoted in ibid.
[3] Myra Marx Ferree and David A. Merrill, 2000, "Hot Movements, Cold Cognition: Thinking about Social Movements in Gendered Frames", Contemporary Sociology, vol. 29, no. 3 (May): p. 456.
[4] Rose, Nikolas. 1999. Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self. 2nd ed. London: Free Association Books, 217.
[5] Michel Foucault. 1980. "Truth and Power." In: Power/knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977, ed. and trans. C. Gordon. New York: Pantheon Books, 109-133; and M. Foucault. 1983. "The Subject and Power." In: Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics, ed. H. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 208-226.
[6] Personal correspondence with Melissa Finn, University of York, Canada, February 2007.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Samuel P. Huntington. 1993. "The Clash of Civilizations?" Foreign Affairs, vol. 72, no. 3:22-49 and S. P. Huntington. 1996. The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order. New York: Simon and Schuster.
[10] Huntington 1996, 47.
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IN THE BIGGER PICTURE

WITH DR. ANWAR IBRAHIM

Dr Anwar Ibrahim was the Deputy Prime Minister for Malaysia from 1993-1998. He served as Minister of Finance for Malaysia from 1991-1998.

He received his early education at his hometown before joining the Malay College Kuala Kangsar, a prestigious school that has produced several generations of Malaysian leaders. He joined the University of Malaya at a time when Malaysia was undergoing rapid changes and that coincided with student rebellion all over the world. After graduating in 1971, he established his own school to cater for poor dropouts. He pursued his interest in social activism and was elected president of the National Youth Council in 1974 and international committee member of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth and later President of the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS) in the UK. He founded the Malaysian Youth Movement of Malaysia in 1971 and was its president for 10 years.

Dr Anwar has held several positions in the international scene, including President of the UNESCO General Conference (1991); chair of the Asean-Vietnam Study Group, which prepared the report Shared Destiny: Southeast Asia in the 21st Century recommending the entry of Vietnam into Asean; Chairman of the Development Committee of the IMF-World Bank annual meeting in 1997; joint chair of the Pacific Dialogue (1994-1997); Honorary President of the London-based think-tank AccountAbility; chairman of the Beirut-based Foundation for the Future. He has also held many academic and research positions including jointly founding (with Ismail al-Faruqi and Dr Taha Jabir Al-Awani) the International Institute of Islamic Thought and later set-up the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences in Ashburn, Virginia; lectured at St. Anthony's College at Oxford, the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University and at the School of Foreign Service in Georgetown University.

Dr Anwar is currently advisor to the People's Justice Party (Keadilan), Malaysia. He was sacked from the government on September 2, 1998, later stripped of his party membership and incarcerated on 20 September on trumped-up charges. He regained his freedom in September 2, 2004 after acquittal by the Malaysian Federal Court. In the words of the German writer and scholar Dr Murad Hofmann, "Dr Anwar Ibrahim is a perfect Muslim in as much as he is in command of Asian culture, Islam, and knows the Occident as well. He is an economist, a philosopher, and a Muslim activist, all at once."

Arches editor, Abdullah Faliq talks to Dr Anwar Ibrahim about his experiences and visions for the future.

Abdullah Faliq: You are often criticized for rubbing shoulders with the neo-cons in Washington like Paul Wolfowitz and Madeleine Albright. How did you develop such good rapport with them?

Anwar Ibrahim: There is no basis for criticism here. I choose to engage with all groups and I seek understanding and consensus. This can only be achieved through communications.

AF: But surely, you must have disagreed on major issues?

AI: Of course there are areas where I disagree with my friends and colleagues around the world - such as the war in Iraq - but I am supportive other efforts to support governance and accountability, to promote human rights, and the rule of law. I must also credit my friends who were supportive of my cause during the period of my

> **The boycott of the Hamas government after free and fair elections was an unfortunate turn of events and dealt a serious blow to the credibility of voices in the West calling for democracy**

incarceration, many of whom were kind enough to visit with my family while I was in prison.

AF: In an ABC interview, you stated that "I support the policy to protect the security of Israel". Can you elaborate please?

AI: If I recall correctly, the ABC interview failed to mention that while Israel's security must be part of an effective resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, I also stated that justice for the Palestinians and their many years of suffering under occupation must also be addressed.

AF: What about the right of the Hamas-led government? What do you make of the US and European Union boycott of financial aid to the Palestinian Authority?

AI: The boycott of the Hamas government after free and fair elections was an unfortunate turn of events and dealt a serious blow to the credibility of voices in the West calling for democracy in the Muslim world. It is ironic that free elections, which are often heralded as the indicator sine qua non of democracy, were in this case marginalized and nullified when their outcome was unsuitable to external actors.

AF: In retrospect, was it a mistake on the part of the Western governments not to engage with Hamas?

AI: I think overall it was a mistake not to engage with Hamas and

more could have been done regionally with the support of the West to bring both sides to the table. It has increasingly been the case in Palestinian-Israeli negotiations as of late that the bar prerequisites conditions for even coming to the table are so impossible to attain that they preclude any possibility of constructive talks. Now with the new agreements reached in Makkah one can hope for better days.

AF: What are your observation of the current performances and the future of Muslims in the West in regards with civilizational dialogue and participation?

AI: The climate has certainly become more rancorous with Western interventions in the Muslim world, the continued oppression of Muslim peoples by authoritarian dictators, and the now rising influence of radical ideologies which have espoused a theology of violence and vigilantism in seeking to rectify the ills in their own society as well as abroad. These factors all work in tandem with reckless political forces and vested interests in media and the academy to create an impression that civilizations are destined for conflict. Muslims living in the West can play a unique role in bridging an ever-widening gap between East and West and reminding their neighbors of many of the shared fundamental values and beliefs that one finds in Muslim civilization as well as the West. This of course requires engagement at

every level of society - not just in the form of political activism - but also through integrating with the social, cultural, and academic institutions as well.

AF: Having lived in the United States for some time now, are you personally optimistic of better days ahead?

AI: After living in the United States for two years I have many reasons to feel optimistic the Muslim community there is and will continue to make substantial progress in this effort.

AF: How important is the role of Human Rights in the process of dialogue, especially in Muslim countries?

AI: Muslim countries have fallen into a paradox whereby they will burn buildings in protest over the atrocities committed in Abu Ghuraib or Guantanamo, but when it comes to their own gulags their opposition is muted and weak. Of course this is in part due to the manipulation of governments that flaunt the bogey of the West as a tool for inciting the passions of their people against an external threat and deflecting attention from their own failure to govern in a manner that protects human rights and promotes a vibrant civil society. Talking about human rights strike at the core of the challenges Muslim countries face in the 21st century. Are not questions of poverty, of corruption, of poor governance and authoritarianism, of fear of

persecution all fundamentally questions of human rights? Did the Prophet of Islam not provide us with a clear indication that the dignity of the human being is to be preserved and protected? Therefore where is the strong Muslim voice advocating for greater humanity in dealing with these issues. I reject the notion that the human rights agenda is just another encroachment of the West to be resisted and opposed.

AF: Do you feel South-East Asian Muslims are making enough constructive contributions with respect to dialogue, pluralism etc?

AI: There has been a tendency to look at the Muslim world through the lens of the Middle East. Some of the most intractable problems such as the Arab - Israeli conflict, or now the war in Iraq and rising sectarian violence are mistakenly applied to all other Muslim countries.

I have consistently advocated Indonesia, for example, provides a valuable model to be gained from. Its peaceful transition from 30-years of authoritarian rule to a functioning democracy offers a valuable lesson for its neighbors and for the entire Muslim ummah.

AF: But can more be done in this respect?

AI: Yes. I think a key factor for the Muslims of Southeast Asia will be consolidating their position by establishing strong democracies governed by principles of the

> **If we view Southeast Asia solely through the lens of the war on terror, as a so-called "Second Front," we will miss the bigger picture.**

separation of powers and the rule of law. In doing so they will continue to serve as a model for other Muslim countries. And in doing so they can be more effective proponents of reform and democracy in the region than the United States.

AF: Are you surprised at the rise of radical Islam in South-East Asia? Could we see the eclipsing of mainstream Islamic voices by more radical and violent trends?

AI: As I wrote in the Far Eastern Economic Review last year, the rise of radicalism in Southeast Asia must be looked at in the proper context. We cannot ignore or underplay the seriousness of the attacks that have taken place in the region. But on the whole, if we view Southeast Asia solely through the lens of the war on terror, as a so-called "Second Front," we will miss the bigger picture.

Indonesia for example is a nation of over 200 million people who have made a peaceful transition to democracy after thirty years of harsh authoritarian rule. This is a monumental achievement and its affect on Indonesia, on the region, and on the entire Muslim world should not be underestimated.

Furthermore, the question of

whether the region will gradually slide towards the more radical interpretations of religion has been answered decisively at the polls. In Indonesia when given the choice between the Islamists calling for an Islamic state, the people chose a more moderate stance in line with Indonesia's tradition of pluralism and inclusivity. There are certain issues such as the conflict in Southern Thailand that warrant the closer attention of governments in the region. These hot spots could foment greater strife and conflict if the underlying economic and social causes are left unaddressed, leaving the ground fertile for the extremists to come in.

AF: What is your take on the current Malaysian PM's espousal of Islam Hadhari, the concept of modern Islam? Could such a model overcome some of the problems presently encountered?

> **If,... [an] Islamic party wishes to marginalize other groups and undermine the rule of law then I would argue that this party is neither Islamic nor does it stand a chance in any country where the powers vested in government derive from the consensus of the people.**

AI: They have coined the phrase Islam Hadhari. In principle we are not opposed, and to be fair it is in theory an extension of policies that we proposed throughout the 1990s. Unfortunately the current

government has adopted this slogan, which has gained much approval in circles inside and outside of Malaysia, but has little to show for it after more than three years in power. Does a modern Islamic state condone rampant corruption by the ruling elite? Does it forsake the judiciary and allow the media to by compromised at the expense of the interests of the common man. Does it oppress minority groups in a country with millions of non-Muslim citizens? Frankly we must look at the results of particular policies and not be hypnotized by its empty slogans.

AF: Does a truly Islamic party stand a chance in Malaysia?

AI: If by truly Islamic you mean a party that accepts constitutional provisions that guarantee basic human rights including the freedom of conscience, sanctity of human life, the fair treatment of minority communities, the inviolability of the media and the independence of the judiciary then I do believe an Islamic party can win in Malaysia. If, on the contrary the Islamic party wishes to marginalize other groups and undermine the rule of law then I would argue that this party is neither Islamic nor does it stand a chance in any country where the powers vested in government derive from the consensus of the people.

AF: You are suing Mahatir to clear your name; can't you leave this dark chapter behind you now?

AI: To be precise, my suit against Tun Mahathir was filed some time after my release from prison. When I was released I said that I would forgive but not forget [the injustices heaped upon me and my family]. It was sometime thereafter that Tun Mahathir resumed his baseless accusations against my character in a manner that was undermining my rights as a Malaysian citizen. I am within my rights as a human being to defend my reputation in the public eye and will rely on Malaysian Courts to grant justice where justice is due. But this is not a case about clearing my name - it is a question of preserving my name against these ongoing vicious attacks in a manner consistent with the protections afforded me by Malaysian law.

AF: Can you tell us what role your faith played when you were put under solitary confinement?

AI: The period of my incarceration was indeed a difficult time. I could not have imagined that a Deputy Prime Minister of a democratic nation could be beaten and thrown into jail alongside some of the worst criminals in the country. I was torn from my family and my youngest children grew up without their father at home. During these dark moments my faith provided a constant source of hope and contentment that the events that have transpired are part of God's plan which we as mortals are incapable of comprehending and to which we must submit. I took comfort in the many letters of

prayer that I received from people of all faiths from around the world and am truly humbled, even to this day, when I meet people and groups who express their caring and concern for me and my family during those six years. There was an upside - though one which I would not wish upon anyone else - that I was able to devote many more hours to the remembrance of God, to the recitation and memorization of the Qur'an and to performing supererogatory acts of worship in my tiny cell, than would have been possible had I remained in government during. I suppose there is a silver lining from which I have drawn tremendous spiritual strength.

AF: Your Keadilan Party seems to be successfully reaching out to a multiracial constituency where people tended to vote on ethnic lines. The Keadilan Party recently

> **Globalisation has caused fundamental changes in the nature business and communications. Many of our neighbors in Asia have responded to these changes with great vigor and tenacity.**

won a seat in the Sarawak state elections? What's been your strategy?

AI: As we have traveled around the country meeting with the different groups we find tremendous hunger for a new and different message. For decades the population has

been fed the same line that political differences are dangerous and we must remain united to avert racial discord. But this has been a guise whereby the BN makes grand promises to address issues of income inequality, of poverty, and of unfair social practices, but once in power they continue to ignore the plight of the common man - be he Malay, Chinese, or Indian. The pattern is altogether too familiar and the people, when presented with a viable alternative, are often more than willing to support our vision. What we are proposing is not rocket science. The government should serve the interests of its people - all of its people and not just a privileged few. The people are ready to embrace this message after many years of unrealized expectations.

AF: You've called for the dismantling of Malaysia's decades-old affirmative action policy that has favored 'Bumiputras' (Malays) above ethnic Chinese and Indian Malaysians. This policy has been the cornerstone of UMNO even when you were in government. Is it not political expediency on your part for not pushing for its dismantling before while you were in government?

AI: This question is one of the central issues facing Malaysians today and my position on the NEP [New Economic Policy] has not changed. I agree that it played an important role in stabilizing society and raising the hopes of millions of marginalized people when it was

implemented decades ago. But affirmative action policies are best viewed as temporary measures to establish a more equitable situation in society. More importantly, they are susceptible to abuse and must be monitored carefully to ensure that over time they are achieving the intended results. The world has changed a great deal, even since the late 1990s when I was still in government. Globalisation has caused fundamental changes in the nature business and communications. Many of our neighbors in Asia have responded to these changes with great vigor and tenacity. India and China have of course made some of the most substantial gains in recent years. Our neighbors to the North and South have also fared well - so much that Malaysia has dropped substantially behind in attracting foreign investment.

It is therefore time to move on. The NEP has become a vehicle for institutionalized corruption. The Bumiputras are themselves suffering from the abuse of the system as the benefits of the NEP are funneled to crooks and cronies of the administration. When we call for a dismantling of the policy we are in fact calling for something better - which ensures a level playing field for all groups in society, and protects and provides for the marginalized poor, whether they be Malay, Chinese, or Indian.

AF: How long do we have to wait to address you as "Prime Minister" Anwar Ibrahim?

AI: Well as I have recently stated I plan to exercise my rights as a Malaysian citizen and it is ultimately for the people to decide who will lead them in the coming years.

AF: Thank you
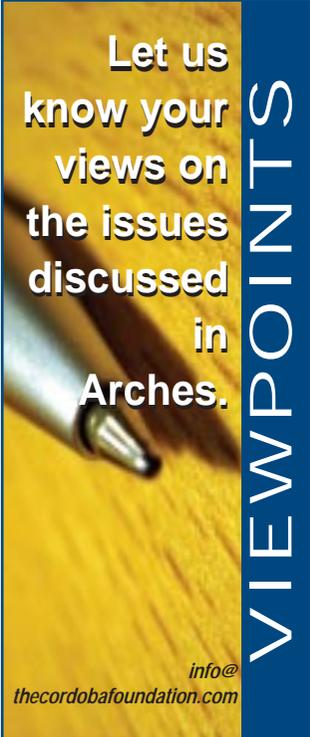
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