

Culture of the Difference in Eurasia:
Azerbaijan—Past and Present
in the Dialogue of Civilizations

REFERENCE TEXTS

13th International Conference

**Culture of the Difference in Eurasia:
Azerbaijan—Past and Present
in the Dialogue of Civilizations**

Baku, April 19–21, 2006

APPENDIX 1



Académie de la Latinité
Rio de Janeiro, 2006

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First published in 2006

Published by

Educam – Editora Universitária Candido Mendes

Praça XV de Novembro, 101, sala 27

20010-010 – Centro – Rio de Janeiro – Brasil

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A uniquely carved statue of a large head in honor of the poet Aliagha Vahid (1896-1965) sculpted by Rahib Hasanov and Arif Mansurov. Scenes from his works are depicted on the neck and hair

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Idea of Azerbaijanism, Idea of Unitary Secular State System, Moral Values of Religions

Rafiq Aliyev *

For the period of the last two hundred years in the world, both in the West and the East, there have existed various models of political and ideological state system: from monarchy to ultra democracy. Some of them still exist nowadays, others have been sent to history archives, and a number of models acting in developed and under-developed countries undergo serious economic, political and moral crises.

As we know, the models of political-ideological state systems used to be based, as a rule, on two fundamental bases: nationalism (or national idea) and the idea of unitarity (or state federative system). In the beginning of the XX century the following ideologies were brought to the forefront: Marxism-Leninism and

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national liberation ideology (with inclination towards the exaggeration of the role of the nationalism and the nation as such).

Sometimes the whole structure of political power used to be based on one personality and his views—the Soviet Union, China, North Korea, Yugoslavia, Egypt, Germany, France, Spain, etc.; however, the history showed a full groundlessness of such an approach.

The West and the USA put forward the ideas of liberal democratism, social-democracy and democracy as the totality of European standards of building of open society, and at last an American idea of globalization that replaced the aforesaid ideologies appeared.

At present the models of political state structure relying on the foregoing ideas, including that of globalization, do not satisfy most peoples and countries of the world; as a result of this confrontation, focuses, both on ideological and cultural bases, increase day by day.

Some eastern countries try to create a new model using century-tested dogmas and laws of religions—Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, etc., but today it cannot even claim to comparative universality.

I think the model presented in this book can be of a more universal nature. The application of this model in different countries requires just negligible changes that take into account historical and formation peculiarities of the development of every individual state.

The Azerbaijan model of the society's development offered in early '90s of the XX century consisted of "Nationalism, Turkism and Islamism." Unfortunately, the first constituent gave rise to aggressive separatism, the second dissolved the Azerbaijanism and the third gave Islamists an opportunity to lay claim to the role

of the first fiddle in state policy. Thus, this model did not exist long.

Taking into consideration Azerbaijan's development experience for the last ten years we turn back to the society development model which, as I think, should consist of three basic components: a) the idea of Azerbaijanism put forward by the national leader, now late Heydar Aliyev; b) the idea of a unitary secular state system proceeding from the very point of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan; c) moral values of religions considering present reality of the process of public relation formation at the present stage of the development of Azerbaijan. Such a model, in my opinion, is able to provide taking into account of the interests of all strata of society, national, ethical and religious minorities at the most as well as to create conditions for harmonious development of the society. The model can be expressed as a universal, more simplified formula: "Citizenship," "State System," "Morality." The given formula can be applied to different states taking into account the level of their development, national-ethnic composition and religion. Some details of this model are reflected in the articles included in this book; others (more specific explanations and the basis of its viability and superiority) are being worked out. To prove the above-said one may try to apply the idea of this model taking two different countries as an example.

Iraq: *ideas of Iraqi peoples' unity (citizenship) and a unitary democratic state (state system) as well as Shariah norms (morality) acceptable to the present stage of the country's development.*

Russia: *united Russian people (citizenship); idea of democratic federalism (state system); moral values of religion (morality).*

Thus, when considered in detail, the model in question can be applied not only in those countries where religious consciousness constitutes a substantial part of public consciousness, but

also in the states where religious place and role in the society are inconsiderable. However by different arrangement of the components of the model religious values and religious consciousness take the third position.

The previous models failed because either the idea of nationalism (in Muslim countries of the East) was taken into account or the nationalism did not take into consideration the importance of the people's religious consciousness. In the USSR the ruling Marxism-Leninism did not accept both at all. Everybody knows the result.

Bringing my views about the interrelations between the state and religion to the attention of a wide circle of experts, being against the deideologization of the society and considering this idea warning and harmful for the development of any country, at the same time I have presented for the first time my model of political and ideological development of Azerbaijan: *Idea of Azerbaijanism + Idea of unitary secular state system + Moral values of religions.*

Interaction of these complementary elements in the consciousness of the country population is capable of creating social and psychological comfort and thus providing harmonious development both of an individual and the society as a whole.

I would be very glad to debate, exchange views and criticism related to the model that I have presented.

Globalization in Estimation of Muslim Scientists

Vasim M. Mamedaliyev *

It is known that in speaking about “globalization” we mean currently existing in different countries the worldwide process of integration from the point of view of political, economic, commercial, military, social and economic relations.

We have to take into consideration the constantly increasing globalization of our world. On this background our world is identified with a small village and countries all over the world, correspondingly, with the houses located there. It is impossible to imagine that these country houses and inhabitants can exist separately and autonomously. It is as well impossible to imagine that world countries can exist in isolation.

Nowadays the social, political and cultural relations between different countries in the world enlarge and strengthen. This process bears the irreversible character, and the expression “national borders” has gradually lost its original meaning.¹

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¹ Sheykhulislam A. H. Pashazada, Qloballaşma va islam dəyərləri. —Qloballaşma va islama (elmi konfransın materialları), Bakı 12-13 May 2004, s.6.)

It is natural that at the present the West takes the leading role in the process of globalization for nowadays-Western countries and the USA particularly occupy the key position in economy, science, technology and a number of other spheres of life. The achievements and innovations of the West in the fields of science, technology, industry and modern communication services are applied in many countries including Muslim countries. But this is “very expensive” for such countries. They can win from one side but lose something from the other one. This process has negative factors as well. As a result of this the Western traditions, standards, style of life and spiritual values that differ greatly from the Eastern mentality infiltrate these countries including Muslim countries. This in its turn doesn’t arouse sympathy in a lot of the Eastern countries, but it on the contrary lead to serious dissatisfaction and creates a movement of opposition.

Modern Islamic scientists doing a careful study of this process very seriously analyze globalization and exert every effort to understand how much or how high the benefit or harm of this process is for Muslim countries and if it could be acceptable for them or not.

The following well-known and outstanding scientists including Abdul-Wahhab Abu Suleyman (Saudi Arabia), Muhammad Muhtar as-Salami (Tunis), Ayatollah Muhammadali Tashiri (Iranian Islam Republic), Samir Suleyman, Ishmael Sabri Abdullah (Lebanon), Omar Djah (Northern Africa), Vahba Mustafa az-Zuheyli (Syria), Abdurrazzag Gassym (Algeria), Halid Seyfullah ar-Rahmani (India) and a number of other significant Muslim scientists have dedicated very interesting research works in which they considered various aspects of the current world-wide process of globalization.

Contemporary Islamic scientists-lawyers refer to globalization using such terms as “globalization,” “Westernization,” “Americanization,” and “McDonaldization.” The most widely used is “*avlama*.” They consider that globalization is a phenomenon arising during last 25 years; it became strengthened when the Soviet Union disintegrated. When the Soviet Union collapsed only one of two pre-existing super states, we mean the USA were left in the world and the place of double polarity was substituted by a single polarity.

The Muslim scientists side by side with some positive process including for example the modern communication services, Internet technologies, scientific and technical progress, tourism and so on, consider globalization as a new form of supremacy and domination of strong people over weak, some form of restoration in the international world economy, the hegemony of strong monopolists the Western financial oligarchy, the “form of weakening” of developing countries and strengthening of their dependence on West and particularly on the USA, a threat that customs and traditions of non western nations can be destroyed, it even contributes a lot and serves to substitute local traditions and culture with western culture, traditions and style of life and European dissoluteness.

The Muslim scientists consider globalization as a form of destruction of Islam and propaganda of Christianity.

In their opinion, the main goal of globalization is to destroy Islam and other local religions in the countries of East on the given stage spread Christianity instead of above mentioned religions and establishment of the Western standards.

The Lebanese scientist Ishmael Sabri Abdullah considers that globalization is the next stage after imperialism of international

capitalism. A lot of Muslim scientists support and approve this idea, which was a reason of great resonance in the Arabic world.

In opinion of Muslim researchers, in modern conditions globalization can be observed in the following shapes: 1) Cultural globalization, 2) social globalization, 3) economic globalization, 4) political globalization.

Each kind of globalization has its own peculiarities, but all these forms have the same goal: to subordinate or bend the developing countries, and particularly Muslim countries, to the USA's and Europe's will. It should be mentioned that some pro-western scientists and analytics of Muslim countries as well as modern European and American sociologists consider that increasing globalization is an irreversible process that has no alternative and summon all countries and nations to completely accept its achievements. Some representatives of the intelligentsia of Eastern countries even consider that if they secure their countries against negative and harmful affect of globalization, they can direct the priorities on social-political and cultural-technical development of their countries.

The Muslim scientists affirming that globalization is a process directed first of all against developing countries and in the first turn against Arabic countries clearly declare on necessity to fight against it. The question is: What do the Muslim scientists suggest instead of globalization, what do they propose as a way of preventing of this situation?

The analysis demonstrates that as some antidote for this they use such terms and expressions as "*shumuliyatil-Islam*," "*al-avlamatul-Islamiyya*"—"Islamic globalization" and as well "*alamiyatul-Islam*"—"universality of Islam" and consider them the best one and the most suitable and ideal model for all coun-

tries, particularly for developing and Muslim countries. They consider Islamic globalism more acceptable than the Western one which is based on atheism and society and prefers material values to spiritual ones, disclaiming the religious order, the divine dogmas and particularly Islamic morals and ethics and tries to replace them with secular laws.

The Muslim scientists contrast Islamic moral and ethics combining the best characteristic features common to all mankind the immanent elements of globalization such as dissoluteness, lack of limitations and veto for some themes, non traditional sexual relations—to all these artificial attempts directed at destroying of national customs and traditions and creation, instead, of some spiritual ersatz.

The Muslim scientists, who clearly understand that from the one side the Western monopolists rule and have domination over the world and possess a great advantage in the military economic sphere, and from the other side Muslim countries aren't competitive with Western countries in the spheres of economy suggest the following:

- to be able to resist all above-mentioned factors and stand in competition with globalization, it is required to create a common market of Muslim countries, to conduct a united and common oil policy especially for all Arabic countries, instead of capitalist order which is exploitative in character it is necessary to apply an Islamic economic order based on the Koran and Shariat in the market economy.

They also consider that it would be possible to prevent the negative and harmful affect of the western culture and penetration of western dissoluteness into Islamic countries only if they resist the fetishism of the West observed among the Islamic young

generation, that is charmed and fascinated by the West, and destroy the myths about superiority of Western civilization, which are inculcate in their consciousness.

To implement all the above-mentioned, first of all it is necessary to strengthen the development of culture in the Muslim countries within the framework of Islamic values and morals.

Azerbaijan at the Crossroads of Civilizations

Mubariz Qurbanli *

The XXI century is the century of unification on the basis of integration and national values. The process of globalization in our modern world, is going with high speed. The humankind has reached such a level of development which demands universal solution of existing global problems and cooperation in removal of global threats. The economic, food, energy, demographic and military-political problems that once used to be characterized as national or regional problems are considered to be world scale problems now. Rapid development of science and technology, extension of national and intergovernmental relations, exchange of information has created a new global situation. We live in a very important period of time which determines future development prospects of states and nations, and different civilizations inhabiting our planet are realizing more deeply the inevitability and vital importance of a dialogue among themselves. A dialogue among civilizations is also aimed to stimulate further development of mutual relationships and the process of integration be-

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tween internal sub-civilizations and local, national cultures, ethnopolitical structures which have been disunited at various stages of history.

The processes taking place in modern life influence on individuals and cause changes in society structures in general. It is an unquestionable fact that a necessity to keep up with changing reality and social circumstances has given rise to new values in every culture, but this does not mean that core values are being ignored. The core values are usually based on development experience, customs traditions, and lifestyle of a society. Azerbaijan, which is located at the crossroads of the West and the East, has made numerous contributions to the world culture and the Turk Islam civilization. Independent Azerbaijan has a specific role in a dialogue between civilizations. Before expressing our opinion on this matter, we would like to speak about the civilization classification theses presented by the current scientific literature.

A number of Western researchers present different theories trying to explain present strong tendencies towards nationalism, separatism, racism and religious fanaticism, among which American researcher Samuel Huntington's theory of "clash of civilizations" has turned be an object of a particularly extensive discussion. The main postulate of his well known thesis is based on the foremost role of cultural rather than ideological, political or economical differences between peoples of the modern world. He offers to divide the existing world system into eight civilizations: the Western, the Islamic, the Japanese, the Chinese (Confucianist), the Indian, the Slavic-Orthodox, the Latin American and the African ones. However, despite being a relative theory it is far beneath criticism. S. Huntington's efforts to mark out the Western civilization, to display it in a distinct and particular way, trying,

at the same time, to advocate and proclame the inevitability of clash between it and the other civilizations does not serve to improve a dialogue between them. Unfortunately, some Western scientific centers and mass media energetically promulgate the civilization clash thesis. It is obvious that such kind of behaviour helps to create a monologue, rather than improve the dialogue. It is an undeniable fact that the history of humankind is full of confrontation sometimes resulted in wars between representatives of various religions and cultures. However, if we make a generalized analysis of wars and conflicts which happened in the history of humankind, we can find out that a minor part of them had a religious background. Two great world wars of the last century (1914-1918; 1939-1945) didn't happen as a result of a clash of civilizations or conflict of religions. There are other examples which prove the above-mentioned. According to German researchers, around the world, during a period of time from 1945 to 1985, there were 160 armed conflicts, of which 151 were of domestic character.

Collapse of the USSR and failure of the socialism system resulted in armed conflicts in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and other places of the world. Study of these conflicts, as well as the support of the US led Afghanistan and Iraq military operations by countries belonging to different religions prove that national, economic, military-political and geopolitical interests are the main factors that lie behind conflicts and wars. The statement of the fact does not mean the denial of the existing contradictions both between religions and civilizations. As a matter of fact after the cold war strengthening integration interests in political-economic and cultural fields helped the process of globalization, democracy and liberalism to obtain universal character. However, exist-

ing religious and cultural differences, as well as arising inequality in the economic development does not eliminate contradictions between different civilizations; on the contrary, a number of objective and subjective factors aggravate these contradictions. The recent caricature failure can serve as an example of such contradictions. Western mass media's recurring use of anti-Islamic material for articles deepens confrontation and increases disbelief. I'd like to draw your attention to another problem. It is clear that, at the present moment one of the most dangerous factors for peace process is terrorism. Today danger that terrorism presents to humanity makes it necessary to unite efforts of all the countries of the world. The USA September 11 events showed that any country irrespective of its size may face this kind of disaster. However, use of double standards by the USA, western countries and international organizations regarding terrorism and terrorists are not accepted unanimously around the world. When the subject of struggle against terrorism is limited just with the notion of Islamic terrorism, it turns out to be a boomerang. It is an unquestionable fact that a 17 thousand square kilometer piece of Azerbaijan's territory is occupied by the armenian armed forces. Armenian terrorist organizations have committed a great number of terrorist acts on the territory of Azerbaijan. As a result of terrorist acts (explosions in buses, metro trains, etc.) thousands of civilians of Azerbaijan have been killed. By stating these facts I mean that democracies should not allow neither national nor religious differences to exist in the war against terrorism.

A dialogue among civilizations must serve nations, unify and enrich cultures, inspire international organizations to solve problems of humankind.

Azerbaijan, located at the crossroads of the East and the West, the historic Silk Road of ancient times, still has played a unifying

role among civilizations. Azerbaijanis have rich culture and great historic past. Modern Azerbaijan's precursors Manna, Media, Atropotena and Caucasian Albania had laid down foundation of the great civilization long before Islam spread in the Caucasus and Asia. During the Arabian Caliphate period, Azerbaijan, as a part of the Caliphate, played an important role in strengthening relationships between the East and the West, made a great contribution to the Islamic civilization. Some countries formed on the territory of Azerbaijan in the Middle Ages, especially the Safavit State, founded by Shah Ismail, the Azeri Turk, head of "*Qizilbashlar*," established commercial, economic, political, cultural relationships with Europe, and both the civilizations made use of these relationships for the welfare of their people. Despite the fact that lately the northern part of Azerbaijan was annexed by the Tsarist Russia and its successor the Soviet Empire, Azerbaijan played the role of a joining bridge between the East and the West civilizations. So, it is not a mere chance that Azerbaijan was called "the gate of the East." The first theatre, the first opera and the first democratic republic in the Moslem East were established in Azerbaijan.

October 18, 1991 reestablishment of the state independence of the Azerbaijan Republic allows our country to be involved and remain active in international and regional politics. The Azerbaijan Republic follows the policy determined by the founder of our republic, National Leader Haydar Aliyev, and achieved serious progress in establishing a democratic, secular state that depends on the rule of law.

Global peace and security, protection of financial, economic and political stability depend, for the most part, on nations, will and level of their leaders. Therefore representatives of different

cultural civilizations must reach consensus of opinion on achieving the optimum variant of political relations. The first steps on this road should involve respect of a unique and distinctive development experience of different civilizations, their system of cultural values, provision of equal rights. As a matter of fact strengthening of mutual relationships between civilizations is a very complex and difficult process. Sometimes this process strengthens a civilization, sometimes might even aggravate contradictions between nations or ethnic groups. However sometimes this process gives an impetus to development of events. It is proved by the experience that relations between different civilizations, which developed apart of each other for some time because of their dissimilarity, can be established or reestablished. Different civilizations can create mutual understanding, establish, improve and even strengthen relations between each other. Relationships between Moslem Turkey, newly independent Azerbaijan, which makes its first steps toward democracy, and expanding relations with European countries, the Council of Europe, OSCE, the European Union is a good example of it.

Although independent Azerbaijan is a part of Islamic culture, it has established strong relationships with countries of different culture and religion. Different religious confessions are active in Azerbaijan which major characteristic is tolerance. Islam, Christianity and Jewdaism are practiced in Azerbaijan at present. The government of Azerbaijan has always supported a dialogue between civilizations. Touching upon this matter president of the Azerbaijan Republic Ilham Aliyev said: "We strongly believe that it is necessary to develop a dialogue between civilizations and cultures. Only through dialogue and good will, we can defeat disbelief and confrontation, join against general dangers and difficulties, and can act as a great strength."

Finally, I would like to say that regulation of a dialogue between civilizations can help to resolve many problems of humanity. Efforts of one civilization to achieve superiority over another could bring disaster to both of them. The old Indian proverb runs “Victory is real when everybody has won and nobody is defeated.”