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Religions and Peacebuilding in the Third Millennium, Capacities and Challenges

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Introduction

The peace-building processes worldwide are suffering numerous challenges, including terrorism, fundamentalism, environmental problems, ethnic, religious, identity, and gender tensions, migration, and several other challenges, all threatening security and peace in societies and exerting a far-reaching impact on the lives of the people worldwide. As significant sources that guide societies towards prosperity, world religions have long played a key role in providing their followers with the pathways to achieving peace. Therefore, it seems that theologians' and religious thinkers' intellectual synergies to find common mechanisms and their efforts for designing collective programs to achieve global peace can, on the one hand, be a good ground for communities' peaceful coexistence at the regional and international levels and pave the way for the formulation of common solutions to global threats and insecurities, on the other hand.

Therefore, the IPSAN, as a pioneering association which has tried to contribute to the development of peace through facilitating dialogue among religious scholars and intellectual elites from different religions, is planning to convene its sixth annual conference on "Religions and Peace-building in the Third Millennium: Capacities and Challenges" on May31-June 1, 2023 in collaboration with scientific institutions around the world and with the presence of intellectuals and academia from different countries.

The conference aims to develop scientific literature on the topic of religions' approach toward lasting peace, invite theologians and religious thinkers to reflect on peace and non-peace in today's world, establish acquaintance and communication between religious-studies scholars in different countries, and find solutions for peace-making in today's societies based on religious teachings.

The Iranian Peace Studies Scientific Association considers it necessary to sincerely thank the collaboration of the members of the executive committee of the conference "Religions and Peacebuilding in the Third Millennium; Challenges and Capacities", who with effort and empathy provided the ground for holding this conference.

ladies and gentlemen, Amin Alboghobaish, Vahid Baghban, Komil Entezari, Mahbobeh Ghobadi, Maryam Hashemi nejad, Dr Maryam Khaleghi nejad, Dr Mehrdad Khoram Nasr, Amir Hossein Mansour, Razieh Minaee, Hojatollah Mohammadshahi, Fatemeh Naseri, Seyed Alireza Shafiee Motahar, Maryam Shaygan, Pari Vakili.

Without the cooperation and support of these precious friends, the sixth conference of the association could not be held.

Analyzing Interfaith Dialogue as a tool for Achieving Regional and Global Peace

Quaisar Alam[1]

" Interfaith dialogue" refers to a process through which people from different religious traditions come together to understand, respect and learn from each other's beliefs, values and practices. It is a form of communication between people of different religions or belief systems with the aim of promoting understanding and cooperation. The paper discusses the role of "interfaith dialogue" as a tool for "achieving regional and global peace." It examines the concept of interfaith dialogue and its relationship with peace. It argues that interfaith dialogue is an important tool in promoting regional and global peace. The paper also discusses the challenges faced by interfaith dialogue in achieving regional and global peace. My research paper aims to showcase as to how imperative is achieving regional and global peace with the help of "Interfaith dialogue". My submission demonstrates an empirical case study of sports related to the politics as a tool beyond frontiers. My research paper will primarily employ quantitative content analysis as a method. Over and above the, study will adopt 'data selection' as a methodology based on a number of official government documents and reports connected to my title of the research paper. Moreover, a substantial amount of literatures will be surveyed related to have better insights of the topic. This is because "interfaith dialogue" can promote understanding and respect between different religious communities, and can help to resolve conflict. There are a number of challenges to effective "interfaith dialogue," however, including the need to create safe spaces for dialogue, to build trust between participants, and to address power imbalances. Additionally, it is important to ensure that interfaith dialogue is inclusive of all religious communities, and that women are equal participants. Despite these challenges, "interfaith dialogue can be an effective way to promote peace and understanding between different religious communities." In order to maximize its potential, however, it is important to address the challenges listed above. Finally, it will discuss the process of gaining and set an example whether peace is possible through interfaith dialogue.

Keywords: Interfaith, Dialogue, Globalised world, Peace and Harmony

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Islamization of Knowledge as a Foundation of World Peace: Reflection on Naquib Al-Attas Thought

[1] **Nuruddin Al Akbar**

This study elaborates on Naquib Al Attas' thoughts on religion and world peace. Al Attas is a contemporary Muslim philosopher from Malaysia who is known to preach the idea of Islamization of Knowledge in addition to other figures such as Ismail Raji Faruqi and Hossein Nasr. We can trace Al Attas' idea of world peace from his concept of the loss of Adab. The idea of Adab itself does not have a narrow meaning as politeness but is more philosophical, namely metaphysical order. In other words, we can say that the loss of Adab is a loss of esoteric order. We can compare Al Attas with the idea of Confucius, who believed that the fundamental problem in his era was the loss of the essence. Al Attas also agreed with Confucius's conclusion by stating that the loss of Adab resulted in chaos in three kingdoms: the mineral kingdom, the animal kingdom, and the human kingdom. In other words, this loss of Adab is the fundamental cause for the absence of world peace today.

Al Attas traces that the root of the loss of Adab is related to problems at the level of human consciousness. Modern human consciousness (including those who claim to be religious), for Al Attas, characterized by confusion of knowledge. This confusion of knowledge occurs because of the process of secularization of knowledge. Secularization happened in the modern era, which began in the west and then spread along with the dominance of western intellectuals on a global level to this day. This secularization of knowledge cuts off the metaphysical dimension of knowledge (in modern terms, it's known as the division between fact and meaning). This reduction in the definition of knowledge has resulted in contemporary scientific production only caring about the accumulation of "facts" within a "materialistic" framework. The result is that modern knowledge generates a "reductive" picture of reality. In turn, this reductive-modern knowledge influences human behavior, which is no longer bound by any "intrinsic-metaphysical meaning." In the language of Yuval Harari, -a famous world historian-, a materialistic understanding of nature causes the concept of truth to be lost and replaced by the idea of survival of the fittest (the logic of power).

As a solution to the loss of Adab, Al Attas called for the Islamization of knowledge project. The Islamization of knowledge means returning the lost metaphysical dimensions of contemporary knowledge. Al Attas believed religion (especially Islam)

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was a "way" (straight path) to restore order. As in Confucianism, religion is considered a "way" (Tao) to restore order. Even though Al Attas talks more specifically about Islam, his idea parallels Confucian ideas. These similarities can become a solid argument to claim that the Islamization project is an ecumenical umbrella that can be developed by various major world religious traditions to jointly restore the metaphysical dimension to the production of contemporary knowledge today. With the Islamization of Knowledge project, religion can play a significant role in transforming the world's disorder into a peaceful order.

Religion as a Harbinger of World Peace
Sima Baidya[1]

The paper contends the multifarious role of religion in ameliorating world peace. In a conflict ridden today's society, no doubt religion plays dialectical role. The paper aims to decipher the polarized understanding of religion and makes an attempt to situate it in a right perspective. Hisriography of religion reflects its deep engagement in quelling societal conflict as well as violence. The paper captures the trajectory of religion in the sense of plurality. It has been often observed that religion has been used as a double-edged weapon. As the critics argue that there is no denial that behind many religio-societal conflicts, there is an invisible/visible hand of religion. On the contrary, therefore, the paper argues that in that conflict-prone scenario, only religion can mitigate the tension, conflict and to check violence as well. The paper also highlights, how religion can be utilized as the tool of world peace. Religion's deep rooted ethos in humanity, tolerance, cultural binding and peace makes its trajectory deeper down, whereas it cannot escape with the social responsibility of a harbinger of peace. Last but not the least the paper would make an assessment of religion to create, spread and sustain peace in the world.

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Opportunities for Empathy, Peace, Stability and Cooperation Between Belief Systems in The Third Millennium

Ali Bilgin Varlık[1]

In this paper, the capabilities and possibilities of empathy, dialogue, peace, stability and cooperation among belief systems in the third millenniumare investigated. For this purpose, first of all, belief systems are summarized categorically. In this general framework, the similarity and integration of the monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) are investigated by making a comparative analysis of their original states. Subsequently, it is revealed how the monotheistic religions underwent a transformation in the historical process with the effect of geographical, cultural, political and economic factors until the third millennium. In this section, the different sects of the three monotheistic religions are also discussed. At the last stage of the study, the capacity of the third millennium people's perception and search for religion, which takes place in multiple structures, to create empathy, dialogue, peace, stability and cooperation is discussed over three different possibilities. Accordingly, the first possibility is radicalization and polarization; the second possibility, dialogue and peace; third possibility, empathy, dialogue, peace and stability; the fourth possibility is empathy, dialogue, peace, stability and cooperation.

Keywords: Empathy, Peace, Belief systems, Dialogue

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Religious actors and mediation of intercommunal conflicts

Oktay Bingöl[1]

There are arguments about the role of religion as a source of conflict and a source of peace in any given context. However, in the 21st century, it is unfortunate that religion has often been thought of as playing a crucial role in generating especially inter communal conflicts, its positive role in peace processes has often been ignored.

As intercommunal and intrastate armed violence prevails across the continents and direct negotiation between fighting parties are rarely sustained, mediation remains one of the most widely used tools of peaceful resolution of conflict and peace building efforts.

In this paper the role of religion and religious actors in the process of mediation is examined. It is believed that legitimacy of mediating actors and leverage they hold have a major impact on initiation and outcome of mediation. Regarding legitimacy, identity of a mediator bears high value fora successful mediation in especially ethno-religious identity conflict. In fact, religious actors both individuals and institutions have been involved in several peace processes in various part of the world.

In this paper, general conditions are examined in order to explore the prominent factors in the success of religious mediators. To make a comprehensive analysis, selected cases explaining success and failure of religious mediators are studied, compared and the findings are assessed.

Keywords: Conflict, religious actors, mediation, conflict resolution, legitimacy

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The Role of Religious Education in the Process of Social Peace

Parisa Ehteshamnia[1]

It is a fact that in this modern world when discrimination, violence, terrorism, and conflict are increasing, how much peace, brotherhood, and tolerance are needed. It is not possible to neglect religious education in realizing social peace. Religion has much more to say in the name of making peace. Based on this fact, the researcher made the subject of examining the contributions of religious education to realizing social peace. The starting point of this research, which was prepared to determine the contribution of religious education to the social peace process; poses this important question. "How can the power of religious education be used to help reconcile problems such as discrimination, conflict, violence, and terrorism that arise from time to time between people and groups, and to create a peaceful society together within the framework of understanding and tolerance?"

Physical-logistical measures such as spending budget on defense and increasing the number of security forces against internal and external threats are not sufficient. Making peace dominate in social life requires focusing on solution proposals that put people in the center and aim to train their feelings towards being peace-loving. Social peace primarily concerns education that aims to develop good feelings in people. Especially religious education is an important opportunity in this regard. Religious education, which can affect the conscience even in cases where laws and external authorities cannot reach it, is an important power for the members of the society to acquire the habit of acting consciously. In this research, the researcher has tried to study the importance of religious education by studying numerous articles. The results have revealed that religious education, which can affect the conscience even in cases where external laws and authorities do not have access to it, is important for individuals in society to become accustomed to conscious action.

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Transformation through Peace Paradigm: Sufi's role in Peacebuilding in the Indian subcontinent

Arshi Saleem Hashmi[1]

Since the beginning of civilization, humans have lived and will continue to live with one another, not in isolation. The awareness and realization about complexities in diverse cultures, lead us to appreciate and discover our dynamic shared human civilization. Religious traditions through Sufism played a significant role in socio-political environment and provided a complete concept of wassatiya (ideal state and society system) in the sub-continent. Their message was of interfaith harmony between Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Christians in the subcontinent, even today the Sufi Ulemas are venerated by people of all faiths.

Sufism developed as a system parallel to the Delhi Sultanate, in eleventh and twelfth centuries. Five Sufi orders emerged in the subcontinent including Chishtiya, Suhrawardiya, Qadriya, Naqshbandia and the Firdousia schools. Contrary to the extensive spread of military and political power during this time, Sufism acted as the intellectual and spiritual force, strengthening the linkages among various cultures under Islamic rule. Sufi Spiritual Peacemaking is established upon the principle that the humanity is a single soul that forms one family. Sufi Scholars articulated their approach towards humanity and contributed in the development of society for education, socio-economic equality, justice, social order, interfaith dialogue and sustainable peace.

In line with the basic premise of the critical theory, Sufis teachings focused on emancipation of societies from hegemonic power relations. In view of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Sufism gave primacy to self-determination and self-respect of people for the development of society. Sufism in the subcontinent adopted an approach of 'Universality of Human kind and Equality' as their basic principles. Contrary to imperialist tendencies of the ruling class and traditional hierarchical structure of Indian society, Sufis scholars tried to establish an inclusive order.

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Sufism led transformation through power of love and truth providing a framework for dealing with transition from negative to positive peace. It focused on reflective assessment and critique of society and culture to challenge power structures and rise to the challenge of addressing the negative peace.

Islam, Peace and Sectarian Violence: A Case Study of Wahabbism in Pakistan

Hashmat Ullah Khan[1]

Islam advocates peace and discourages violence. Peace is the backbone of a prosperous, stable, progressive, and vibrant society. Islam stresses upon conflict resolution and peace-building through peaceful means not only for its followers but for all mankind. Besides the peaceful teachings of Islam, why do the Sunni-Shi'i conflict and sectarian violence which is intrinsically and historically doctrinal and not political in nature, make headlines in regional and international media? Different sects were living in peace and harmony for a long in Pakistan, but now it is the epicentre of the Sunni-Shi'i conflict because of the polemical literature produced for political objectives especially after the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the importation of Wahabbism from Saudi Arabia in 1980s during Zia Ul Haq era to compliment the Afghan Jihad under the US patronage. Sub-continent has a long tradition and rich heritage of religious harmony, pluralism and syncretism that created and strengthened peaceful coexistence among the followers of various religious traditions and denominations. Unfortunately, religious pluralism and syncretism turned into violent sectarianism because of the exclusivist religious thought of Wahabbism. To counter the exportation of the Iranian Revolution into Pakistan, various militant organizations emerged that resulted in sectarian violence. A mass exodus of the Shi'i populations from Pakistan is being observed due to the ongoing social marginalization and structural violence. The study aims to know the failure of Islam inpeace-building in Pakistan and the potential contributions of Wahabism to sectarian violence in Pakistan. As the introduction of Wahhabism in Pakistan had political objectives, therefore, the manipulation of religion for some vested interests has inflamed sectarianism, sectarian-based militant organizations, and sectarian violence in Pakistan.Wahhabism has created profound hate among fundamentalist Sunnis towards Shias even though they share fundamental Islamic principles and doctrines. Despite the religion of peace, the failure of peace-building and growing sectarian violence have caused hate and violence against the Shi'i minority in Pakistan. It has badly affected peace, security, inter-faith harmony, and peaceful coexistence of different sects particularly Sunni and Shias in the country. It not only affected peace and harmony inside Pakistan but also influenced the foreign policy of the country concerning Afghanistan and Iran. The rational choice for Pakistan is, that the indigenous society is intrinsically pluralist in nature, therefore, it should not

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institutionalise any foreign promulgated sect and do reconciliation among different sectarian groups through confidence-building measures and completely curb the sect-based militant organizations. These are pre-requisite for inter and intra-sect harmony, peace and stability in the country. In this study, will be conducted through critical and analytical approaches and Content Analysis Technique. Both primary and secondary data sources will be utilised.

Problems of youth socialization in modern conditions

Ainura D. Kurmanaliyeva[1]

Modern Kazakh society, taking into account the challenges of today's global world, needs effective approaches aimed at the formation of such socially significant values as patriotism and civic responsibility among the younger generation. Otherwise, such negative trends as the expression of public disregard for the norms of public morality; religious fanaticism, manifested in the rejection of national traditions and culture; civic passivity and apolitical attitude can lead to the formation of a spiritless society, which will eventually begin to consider indifference, low level of education, and intolerance as the norm. And at the same time, young people may begin to ridicule patriotism as an archaic concept. It is important to realize that the main causes of the emergence and spread of extremism among young people are associated with an ideological vacuum. Involved in the global information space, many streams of which carry negative content, our country has faced religious extremism and terrorism. The situation is tough spot by the fact that the actions of destructive religious movements are aimed at moral and spiritual suppression of the individual. Understanding these problems obliges us to raise the issue of making significant adjustments to the strategy of combating terrorism, searching for new opportunities and reserves, actively countering extremism and other negative antisocial manifestations.

A particularly important task in eliminating the threat of religious fundamentalism is to increase the level of theological and religious studies education of citizens. Religious education is the prerogative of mosques, churches, and other religious education within the framework of the law, and secular educational institutions. It is necessary for young people in order to form immunity against radical and destructive ideas, to obtain objective and complete knowledge about traditional world religions, to form an adequate worldview, tolerant attitude towards other faiths.

Lecturers of the Department of Religious and Cultural Studies of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University actively participate in explanatory works on religious literacy among citizens. They have been conducting lectures and talks as part of the city's outreach group since its foundation. The professors of the department are the authors of educational and methodological manuals on combating extremism and terrorism, conduct, by order of the Department of Religious Affairs of the city of Almaty, refresher courses for clergy representatives, school teachers teaching the subject

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"Secularism   and   the   basics   of   Religious   Studies"
<https://www.kaznu.kz/en/10844/page/>.

Thus, an expert group of teachers of the Department of Religious and Cultural Studies has developed a special system of measures that allows students to be permanent participants in cultural and other socially significant events held in Almaty and the country. It is implemented by creating a student's social card "Bilimger". The social card has a rich list of advantages and opportunities. One of the directions of the Bilimger project is aimed at stimulating students' interests in culture and learning. It is the value of a person's inner culture that determines his/her personality. The level of human development explains many of his/her actions and has a cardinal impact on his/her life.

I think all this should be taken into account when creating a new ideology of "New Kazakhstan". The best humanitarian forces of the country should be involved in its formation, able to analyze the features of the historical path traversed, outline the prospects for its effective development in the present and future.

Arthur Schopenhauer's Concept of Suffering: A Challenge to Christian Discipleship

Jie Romen Lim[1]

Suffering is an existential fact of human existence no one can ever deny. It is a part and parcel of human limitation. Everyone is vulnerable to suffer. Human suffering rears its head in myriad ways such as economic, political, physical, moral, and social, among others. However, human suffering can be gleaned differently depending upon one's perspective. A naturalist individual or non-believer would only look at suffering as nothing but a natural human condition. Arthur Schopenhauer suggested in his dictum that the more intense you desire, the more intense will be your suffering. He proposes that the worldly pleasures can never be more than liberation from pain, further suggesting that we only experience happiness through the memory of suffering and pain. On the other hand, a believer, in particular, a Christian, considers suffering with religious significance. He views suffering as a way of being in solidarity with Christ's passion, death and resurrection. Christian discipleship is an imitation of Christ's life of suffering. It is in a way a vicarious suffering by which a follower empathizes with Christ's own suffering. A true follower of Christ must, therefore, be firm and determined to "take up his cross and follow Him". Such is the challenge to Christian discipleship. The heart of this paper lies on arguing on human suffering not just an existential fact of human condition but as an existential condition towards one's solidarity with Christ Himself.

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Huseyn Javid's Drama "Iblis" is a Message of Peace Aimed at All Humanity

Nezaket Memmedli[1]

The works of the great Azerbaijani poet and dramatist of the 19th century Huseyn Javid promote universal ideas, humanism ideas such as peace have been expressed. In particular, the horrors and tragedies caused by wars are expressed with high skill in the author's works "Topal Teymur", "The Devil's Revenge" and "The Devil".

Javid's work "Iblis" is one of his most famous works. From the very first scene, the poet expresses the horror of war from the mouth of the Devil: Golden blood flows in floods, People take lives, destroy houses.

These wars, which delight the devil, cause sorrow and terror to the angels:

What a horror, what a disaster, Oh Lord, what atrocity, what a disaster! No one has justice and kindness, Mankind who imitated the Devil!

After the dialogue between the Devil and the Angel, Arif, who represents the human race, the people of science and knowledge, enters the scene: Of course, there is a wisdom, a meaning in creating people. So, my God, what did Iblis need?

Arif cannot come to terms with people killing each other, killing innocent people, destroying and burning houses and cities. He wonders how the most highly created human race can commit such atrocities. He is confused in these questions.

The war scenes in the work, the Devil's attempts to lead Arif astray, the horrors of war, the advice of the old, wise Ikhtiyar comprehensively describe the war between Good and Evil in a very vivid, dynamic and realistic style. This work shows the importance of eradicating ignorance for the welfare of all mankind. It means the development of science and culture, the possibility of saving humanity with the victory of love and friendship feelings. Javid ends the work with these instructive words: What is a person who betrays everyone? - Devil!

According to Javid, whoever stops the bloodshed, whoever ends these wars, is the true Savior of humanity.

Keywords: Huseyn Javid, Azerbaijan, Iblis, Peace

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Importance of Religion in Protecting Communal Harmony in Bangladesh

Mizanur Rahman[1]

Bangladesh is a country of communal harmony. An atmosphere of peace has been maintained in this country for thousands of years by co-operation and participation of fellow citizens in various arrangements, festivals. However, sometimes the ruling party injures the tender parts of the motherland by the diplomatic games of its own army to achieve their interests. Again, the massacre of the followers of Islam by the radical Sanatan religious followers of the neighboring countries, especially India, came and affected the fair environment of this country and spread the heat. Hatred spreads. The junta government's brutal massacre of the Rohingya in the bordering country Myanmar has also reached this country. Millions of displaced Rohingyas had to be given shelter. Many times they get involved in various misdeeds by mixing with the mainstream. As a result, communal harmony is destroyed. This harmony is more damaged by the half-educated and the stupid. Lacking proper religious knowledge, they do not make the slightest effort to consider the truth or validity of any information. Rushed to judge the insults. The result is chaos. On the other hand, if they had a correct religious understanding, they would not have harmed the country, nation or fellow citizens. Especially since Bangladesh is a predominantly Muslim country, insulting Islam or insulting the Prophet is seen to be very violent here. And riots sometimes ensue. Islam is an Arabic word meaning peace. And those who accept Islam and become Muslims are surrender. Therefore, the one who surrenders to Islam will be in the right place only if he does not do anything beyond the restrictions of the Shari'ah. Harming others is strictly prohibited in Islam. It has been said again, Because of that, we decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land – it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one – it is as if he had saved mankind entirely. And our messengers had certainly come to them with clear proofs. Then indeed many of them, [even] after that, throughout the land, were transgressors.

The Prophet, May God bless him and grant him peace, said, "A believer is at peace in his religion until he commits unlawful killing." (Bukhari, Mishkat) The Prophet was very careful about Fitna (sedition). The Qur'an says that surely most ideas are sins. So self-reflection will work to prevent assumptions and to know the correct information. Learn peace from the life of the Prophet and companions. This is why there is a great need for religious educational institutions with proper understanding. From there,

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providing citizens with the right understanding will be good regulators to maintain communal harmony.

The essay will discuss the immense importance of religious education in maintaining communal harmony in this country.

The Conflict in Syria, the Humanitarian Activities of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society and its Peacebuilding Potential

Vladimir Rumyantsev[1]

The Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society (IOPS) established in 1882 by decree of Russian Emperor Alexander III. Its activities did not stop even during the Soviet Union. In the 21st century the work of the IOPS has gained particular importance due to the aggravation of the situation in the Middle East. The most important goal of the society was to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Syria, both Christians and Muslims. Organizers of humanitarian activities of the IOPS maintained direct contacts with Patriarch John X of Antioch and Grand Mufti of Syria Ahmed Badr al-Din Hassun. In the years that have passed since the beginning of the armed conflict in Syria, the authority of the IOPS has grown throughout the Middle East. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in 2016 that the IOPS could take the initiative to develop universal interstate mechanisms for promoting interreligious dialogue, educating citizens in all countries in the spirit of respect for other religions and high moral values. Currently, the IOPS, as the oldest non-governmental international organization in the Middle East, operates quite effectively from the position of "soft power", public diplomacy. Its peacekeeping potential can be useful to resolve various kinds of conflicts.

What are the benefits of the IOPS? First, it is 140 years of experience of the organization in the Middle East. Secondly, it is a smooth relationship with opposite sides of the conflicts. For example, Sergei Stepashin, Chairman of the IOPS, has very good contacts with the leaders of the Middle Eastern states. He meets with President of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas, Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu, President of the Syrian Arab Republic Bashar al-Assad. He had meetings with Pope Francis, as well as with the patriarchs of the Eastern churches, leaders of Muslim and Christian communities. Thus, the IOPS has a fairly high degree of trust in the Middle East.

Keywords: The Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society, Syrian conflict, peacebuilding process, the Middle East

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An Analytical Approach towards Terrorism in the Name of Religion: A Case Study of the ISIS

Alireza Salehi-Nejad[1]

There are various distinctive reasons and motivations for terrorism. The act of terrorism can be put down to the sociopolitical irreconcilable conflicts that foster authoritarianism. However, religion, which contributes a crucial role in human life, becomes a medium of rendering this sociopolitical conflict into a moral feud. The phenomenon of terrorism on religious grounds with the expectancy of spreading or enforcing an ideology has been committed for many centuries; notwithstanding, it poses the most serious hazard today since it has escalated in its frequency, scale of violence, and global reach. This study employs a multi-method analysis approach to evaluate and criticize religious terrorists, and intends to illuminate whether religious terrorism is committed by those whose motivations and aims have a major religious influence that is rooted in the misinterpretation of theological beliefs, or it could be the implications of extreme forms of delusion that may alter reality and thus lead to distortion of various versions of religious facts and beliefs. Hence, the major question is whether religious terrorists are orthodox believers, or violent extremists who justify their act of terror under the flag of religion. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which is a Sunni jihadist militia that caused unrest in Iraq and the Levant with the aim of establishing a transnational Islamic state based on sharia, is selected as the case study.

Keywords: terrorism, religious terrorism, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, Middle-East, jihadists

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Islamic Propositions and Their Origins in Central Asia in the Perspective of International Relations

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The current academic discourse on Islam and Muslim societies in Central Asia commonly employs the concept of "revival" in a context that presupposes the reality that the Islamic climate in Central Asia is a lost and recovered one after the collapse of the Soviet regime. Traditionally, it still forms part of the wider Islamic world.

If we look closely at this claim, we may well conclude that, similar to post-Reformation Britain, Islamic civilization in Central Asia is no longer comparable in form or content to what it was before the Russian conquest. While Central Asian Islamic society has been transformed by Soviet discipline and the newly independent states, and while it has partly taken over as an indirect source of how to continue writing universalism after the collapse of the communist value narrative, an implicit change is that Central Asian Islam has undergone a significant transformation in its meaning from the social, national to the regional level - at the social level, the Islam has served as a vehicle for anti-colonial narratives and its spiritual core has been replaced with a vehicle for the national culture of the classical era; at the national level, Islam has acted as an Other, a counterpart for the construction of a new kind of nation-state; at the regional level, it has been skilfully used as a flexible option for the formulation and implementation of national or regional foreign policy. From the perspective of international relations, the causes of the reality of the Islamic revival proposition in Central Asia are manifold, but the intellectual construction and political shaping by external forces in Central Asia out of geopolitical visions are often overlooked. Clarifying the above perceptions will help us to reconceptualize Central Asia and its Islamic issues.

Keywords: Islam, Central Asia, Russia, Anti-colinial narratives, Other

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China Approach: Religion and Public Diplomacy in the Era of Adapting Religion to the Chinese Context and Building a Community of Shared Future for Mankind

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Religion plays a unique role in China's public diplomacy in the past 10 years. Two key conceptions, adapting religion to the Chinese context, and building a community of shared future for mankind, are vital in interpreting the idea and practice of religion and China's public diplomacy. However, there are very limited international academic discussions on the theoretical framework of China's religion-related public diplomacy in the current context. The paper offers an explanatory model to clarify China's theoretical approach, that is, from adapting religion to the Chinse context, to building a solid community for the Chinese nation, then towards building a community of shared future for mankind. The effectiveness of China's religion-related diplomatic practices will also be taken into account.

Keywords: China, Public Diplomacy, Religion, solid community

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