



Alliance of Civilizations

Professor Joseph Camilleri, Director of the CfD, was invited to deliver a keynote speech entitled “The Alliance of Civilizations: Possible Pathways for Asia Pacific” at the “Alliance of Civilizations” symposium organised by the Toda Institute (Honulu and Tokyo).



In 2005, the Alliance of Civilizations was established under the auspices of the UN to explore the roots of polarisation between societies and cultures. Spanish Prime Minister, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, one of the pioneers of the Alliance, has identified “management of diversity in a globalised world” as one of the key tasks facing the world system.

Professor Camilleri argued that the Alliance of Civilizations offers an intriguing and as yet little explored instrument for fostering understanding and collaboration among cultures, religions and civilizations in the Asia Pacific.

Khatami at La Trobe University

On 26 March 2009 the Centre for Dialogue, in cooperation with the Australian National University’s Centre for Arab & Islamic Studies (Middle East & Central Asia), hosted H. E. Seyed Mohammad Khatami, the former President of Iran (1997-2005) and pioneer of the “Dialogue of Civilizations.” His address “Dialogue Among Civilizations: The Dos and Don’ts of Theory and Practice” held at La Trobe University was the only public address given by Khatami in Melbourne. Over 1,800 people attended, with another 1,200 people turned away after the venue was filled.

Drawing on his experience as a leader of the reform movement in Iran and as a leading religious scholar, Khatami discussed the role of dialogue among cultures and civilizations in international relations. He emphasised the importance of digital media and the way it might facilitate dialogue between different elements of society around the world, thereby circumventing governments as an intermediary.

During question time Khatami expressed his disapproval of all forms of extremism and terrorism, arguing that they are based on a “fundamentally warped logic which refuses to acknowledge the basic rights of the pluralism of world cultures.” He also spoke in depth about Iran’s nuclear programme arguing that Iran’s nuclear fuel cycle was established in order to improve energy security in the face of sanctions by the West. While conceding that nuclear proliferation had destabilised the Middle East, he reiterated the view that Iran did not have any desire to acquire nuclear

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H.E. Seyed Mohammad Khatami, Former President of Iran (1997-2005), speaking at La Trobe University’s Centre for Dialogue.

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Malaysia-Australia Dialogue: Asian Futures

The Malaysia-Australia Dialogue on Asian Futures was held in Penang on 12-16 August 2009. Attending scholars scrutinised the economic, social, environmental and security challenges for the Asia Pacific. It is hoped that this initiative can contribute positively to the future development of the region. The following excerpts are taken from the joint statement which resulted from the dialogue session.

Illegal immigration, human smuggling and human trafficking are major development and national security concerns for both Malaysia and Australia. Most often poverty is a major cause of this rise in migration which is exacerbated by weak legislation, lax border controls, corrupt control systems and the power of organised crime. Innovative approaches are needed to address this issue in a more humane way in the Asian region. Making it easier for legal migration, increasing the number of work visas for specialised categories of workers and good governance will help manage this challenge.

Science, technology and innovation are important drivers in economic and social development. This is why more technologically advanced countries are usually more economically advanced. In the Asia-Pacific it is important that such advances are compatible with indigenous knowledge systems that have enabled local communities to live close to nature in relative harmony and in sustainable fashion. Past development paradigms have revealed that science and technology application without values can lead to crass materialism, resource depletion and exploitation. There is a strong need to embrace a pattern of resource use that meets human

needs while preserving the environment for future generations.

The need to reduce carbon emissions has revitalised interest in nuclear power. However, inherent in nuclear power is the threat of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. As a result there may be a need for an agreed international protocol over and above the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) on nuclear weapons to facilitate the adoption of nuclear energy for peaceful reasons. The review conference of the NPT in 2010 is likely to be of critical importance both for the survival of the treaty itself and for the overall future of the Asia Pacific. Malaysia and Australia share important interests in working actively with like-minded Asian countries to bring forward constructive proposals in the lead-up to the Review Conference.

The Dialogue which began in Penang, will continue in Melbourne in 2010. This initiative is jointly organised by Centre for Policy Research and International Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and the Centre for Dialogue, La Trobe University, it is sponsored by both universities.



Participants of the Malaysia-Australia Dialogue on Asian Futures in Penang.



Prof Joseph Camilleri, Director; The Hon Steve Bracks, Chair CfD; H.E Seyed Mohammad Khatami (left to right).

...Khatami at La Trobe University

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weapons. Khatami was critical of the US Administration, arguing that like terrorism, the War on Terror was based on the logic of extremism, a logic that leads to the killing of innocent people and the abuse of religious based values.

During his Australia visit, Khatami met with prominent personalities and organisations. His itinerary included: the Board of Imams, the Australian Institute for International Affairs, the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies Australia, The Hon Steven Bracks, The Most Reverend Dr Philip Freer, Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne, The Hon Harry Jenkins, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ms Maria Vamvakinou, MP, and The Hon Malcolm Fraser, Former Prime Minister of Australia.

Middle East Trip

Between 12 April and 8 May 2009, a delegation of the Centre for Dialogue visited the Middle East. The delegation comprised of the Centre's Director, Professor Joseph A. Camilleri, and Research Fellows Dr Michális S. Michael and Dr Luca Anceschi. The Centre's delegation visited seven countries: United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority (with Dr Michael also visiting Cyprus to facilitate a consultation, hosted by the Australian High Commissioner Evan Williams, amongst Greek and Turkish Cypriot academics). The visit was part of a larger project (Building an Arab-Australian Intercultural Dialogue) funded by the Council for Arab-Australian Relations at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The main objective of the visit was to explore possibilities for establishing on-going collaborative projects and relations between the Centre for Dialogue and different institutions in the region. The Centre's delegation held more than 35 meetings during the four-week trip. Highlights of the visit included a reception at the Australian Embassy to Kuwait – at which Professor Camilleri delivered a lecture on the relevance of intercultural dialogue for international politics – a meeting with the Syrian Minister for Higher Education Dr Ghais Barakat, a roundtable on Middle Eastern Security at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a colloquium with Shaikh Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar al-Sharif in Cairo.



Centre for Dialogue delegation to the Middle East meets with Dr. Ahmad Badr Al-Din Hassoun, The Grand Mufti of the Syrian Arab Republic.

A number of Middle Eastern institutions agreed in principle to explore future avenues of cooperation with the Centre for Dialogue. The Centre staff are currently developing a number of projects involving cooperation with institutions in the Middle East. To begin with, the Centre is in the preliminary stages of organising a Joint International Workshop on Arab-Iranian relations. Secondly, projects aimed at establishing bilateral dialogues with Syrian, Egyptian, and Saudi counterparts are currently in preparation. Preliminary arrangements are also being made to organise a National Consultation of Arab students in Australia.

Finally, the Centre is currently exploring the possibility of establishing an ambitious research project which will culminate in the joint organisation of an international symposium, preliminary titled "Obama's Comprehensive Peace Plan for the Middle East: Empty Rhetoric or Practical Possibility?"

Sri Lankan Diaspora Dialogue

In December 2008 participants of the Sri Lanka Community Dialogue unanimously agreed to issue a joint public statement. Facilitated by the Centre for Dialogue at La Trobe University, the Sri Lanka dialogue was a year-long process, which started with extensive community consultations followed by six intensive dialogue sessions.

The Sri Lanka Community Dialogue was convened by the Centre in the midst of fierce fighting in Sri Lanka. The conflict is estimated to have killed 100,000 people and displaced up to 250,000. The dialogue represented the major currents of opinion among the Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim communities resident in Victoria. It was a complex, difficult, at times painful, yet constructive experience. It revealed a genuine desire for a just and peaceful settlement to the conflict on the part

of the participants. The dialogue enabled the participants to discuss the hard issues and open new channels of communication.

The joint statement agreed to by all the participants symbolises the new possibilities for dialogue and practical cooperation between the Sri Lankan communities in Australia, which we hope will bear fruit in the coming year.

The Sri Lanka Community Dialogue is part of the Centre's Dialogue Diaspora programme headed by Dr Michális S. Michael, which aims to bring together ethnic and religious diasporic communities in Australia whose homelands are in conflict. This project is funded by the William Buckland Foundation; supported by the Victorian Multicultural Commission.



Dialogue and Personhood

By Prof Lawrence Splitter
Visiting Reserach Fellow at the Centre for Dialogue
Professor, Hong Kong Institute of Education

Being – or becoming – a person is possible only within some kind of dialogical framework (for example, a classroom community of inquiry). Dialogue is conversation, fuelled by something puzzling or unsettling; aware of itself (reflective); driven by a mutually agreed-upon logic; “self-correcting”; and is egalitarian and accessible. Dialogue is threatened by the polarising extremes of absolute certainty, on the one hand, and indifference, on the other. It follows that the prospects for dialogue within a strong faith-based framework – in which certain beliefs or values are held as beyond question – are uncertain at best. However, given the link between dialogue and personhood, to opt out of dialogue is to opt out of being a member of the community of persons.

In a presentation entitled “On Dialogue and Personhood: Can we have one without the other?” at the Centre for Dialogue, I pointed to a conceptual link between these two concepts. I challenged the idea that our personal identities are defined by our association with, and

commitment to, specific groups such as religions, nations, cultures, genders, sexualities, and ethnicities. Around the world today, it is easy to find examples of conflict, brought about largely by groups of individuals caught up in the struggle to “find their identities” through these associations. There is something profoundly confusing about defining oneself in this way. It is important to bear in mind that each of us has many such associations (I am Australian, Jewish, male, gay, left-handed, etc.) and, as such, can find some points of connection with each and every other person.

Regarding ethics and moral education, personhood is the fundamental moral category, a point both tacitly and insidiously conceded by those who first locate the basis of their morality in one specific category (e.g. their own religion), but then seek to universalise their values or beliefs and impose them on everyone.

I am proposing to establish my own institution, the “Asia Pacific Centre for Dialogue”, and will continue to look to the Centre for Dialogue at La Trobe University for inspiration, collegiality and support.

NEW BOOK: RESOLVING THE CYPRUS CONFLICT

Resolving the Cyprus Conflict: Negotiating History, Palgrave MacMillan

Michális S. Michael



“In his vivid account of the Cyprus conflict, Michális Stavrou Michael provides us with the most articulate researched analysis of the Cyprus peace process during the last decades. Resolving the Cyprus Conflict is a reference for politicians, policy-makers, academics, journalists, NGOs, and students involved with the Cyprus problem.”

Boutros Boutros-Ghali, United Nations Secretary-General (1992-1997)

While there is no shortage of views on the Cyprus conflict, this book offers the best summary of the protracted negotiations. It comes at a critical time for the partitioned island-state of Cyprus, and for those associated with the conflict and attempts to resolve it. By placing the conflict in its historical, ideological, ethno-political and geostrategic context, Dr Michael extends beyond conventional realist approaches and lays bare those less visible dimensions that are often ignored by analysts and policy-makers alike. The book is of considerable interest not only to experts and students but to all those engaged in the practice of conflict resolution.

The book will be launched by the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Senator Kim Carr, on Monday 7 December 2009 at the Australian Institute of International Affairs Victoria.

For details contact Christine Siokou at dialogue@latrobe.edu.au , 9479 1893

Ordering details are available online: <http://us.macmillan.com/resolvingthecyprusconflict#> ISBN: 978-0-230-62002-5

SPECIAL ISSUE: *INTERNATIONAL POLITICS*

The Islamic World Between Europe and the United States, Volume 46, Issue 5 (September 2009)

Guest Editors: Luca Anceschi, Joseph Camilleri and Fabio Petito



The complex relationship between Islam and the West has come to occupy centre stage in the analysis of contemporary international relations. However, little attention has been paid to the juxtaposition of Europe and the United States in relation to Islam, and what this tells us about the current political and cultural trajectory of the West. This is precisely the focus of this Special Issue.

The diverse contributions explore the complex interplay of three sets of variables: culture, politics and security; the state, regional institutions and civil society; and the two poles that constitute the transatlantic community. How these variables interact in the coming years will largely shape the relationship between the West and the Islamic World, and will influence the prospects for social and political stability in Europe, the capacity of state and civil society to interconnect in mutually beneficial ways, and for the transatlantic relationship to develop in new directions that are conducive to regional and global security.

Contributions by: Bertrand Badie, Mustapha Kamal Pasha, Najibullah Lafraie, Stephen Zunes, Michael Smith, François Burgat and Dennis J. D. Sandole.

Ordering details are available online at: <http://www.palgrave-journals.com/ip/journal/v46/n5/index.html>

NEW BOOK: CIVILIZATIONAL DIALOGUE AND WORLD ORDER

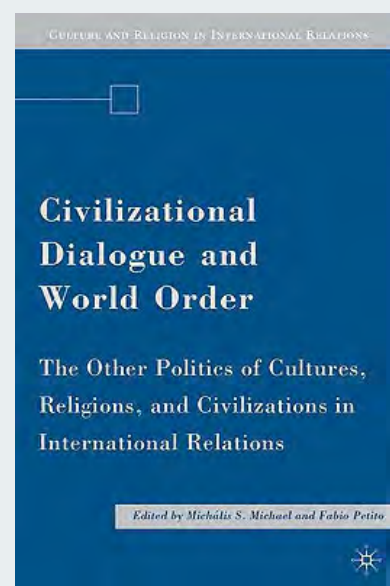
Civilizational Dialogue World Order: The Other Politics of Cultures, Religions and Civilizations in International Relations, Palgrave MacMillan

Edited by Michális S. Michael and Fabio Petito.

Since September 11, the idea of a civilizational dialogue has been the subject of numerous conferences and international meetings, but has received little attention by international relations and political theorists despite being frequently used as a rhetorical antithesis to the popularised thesis of the clash of civilizations.

By bringing together leading scholars from diverse disciplinary, political and civilizational perspectives, this volume responds to this lack of scholarly attention. It comes at a very critical moment in the debate on civilization to show how a different politics of identity, a politics of dialogue, can contribute to a more peaceful and just world order.

Contributions by: Fred R. Dallmayr, Ashis Nandy, Richard Shapcott, Phillip Darby, Toh Swee-Hin, Raffaele Marchetti, Manfred B. Steger, Chandra Muzaffar, Armando Salvatore, Michael T. Seigel, Zhang Longxi and Fabio Petito.



The book was launched by Professor Ghassan Hage, Future Generation Professor of Anthropology and Social Theory, Melbourne University at the Australian Institute of International Affairs Victoria on 25 August 2009.

Ordering details are available online:

<http://us.macmillan.com/civilizationaldialogueandworldorder> ISBN: 978-0-230-60820-7

Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders

By Larry Marshall
Convensor of the Young Muslim Leadership Programme
Centre for Dialogue

This year has seen an expansion of the Leadership Training Programme for Young Muslims. With support from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade the Centre for Dialogue was able to bring eight young Muslims from the Southeast Asian region to join sixteen locals from Melbourne on this journey of intellectual growth, community networking and personal empowerment.

These impressive young leaders gave presentations about the political, cultural and religious issues which confront their societies. This regional aspect added value to what was already established as a very successful and vibrant programme of workshops, meetings and field visits in Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney.

One of the aims of this programme is to promote understanding of the opinions and values held by different ethnicities and belief systems. Effective dialogue will improve empathy for the 'other', and

curb the severity of intercultural, interreligious and international conflicts that hinder peaceful relations. The group met with imams, rabbis, priests and nuns; they quizzed business leaders, academics, community leaders, politicians and activists; learned tips from youth leaders, researchers, artists, performers, journalists, but mostly from each other.

The Centre hopes to keep building on the strong base established over the past three years. In 2007 twenty young Muslims from Melbourne made this journey. Many of them now sit on various boards and committees, are active in journalism and politics, and are busy taking their place as citizens and future leaders of the Australian community.

Inter-faith discussions have been a highlight of this programme. This year the programme included a three day conference on "Prospects for Peace in the Middle East". Christians and Jewish presenters and participants joined the young Muslims to debate, discuss and dialogue about issues as controversial as the war in Iraq, the situation in Lebanon and Iran, and the central issue of Israel and Palestine.



Participants with Prof Jude Butcher, Imam Afroz Ali and ACU National Gallery Coordinator Lachlan Warner.



Participant of the 2009 YML programme at Sydney Harbour.

UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL DIFFERENCE THROUGH DIALOGUE - A RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS

In April the Centre for Dialogue revealed the results of a two year project to design and produce dialogue specific teaching materials for use in secondary schools. The teaching 'pack', entitled "Understanding Cultural Difference Through Dialogue", consists of ten activities with lesson plans, designed to help educators introduce middle years students to an array of questions and ideas concerning identity, culture, and social cohesion. In doing so it draws on the techniques of Active Listening, the dialogic method, and Socratic Circles.

The pack represents a flexible tool that we hope will complement efforts in schools to engender more reflective and empathetic approaches to identity and cultural difference. The unit is a product of the Centre's collaboration with secondary and primary school teachers, principals, and leaders in curriculum development, notably Tom Hurle, Hannah O'Keefe, Joseph Chetty, and Doug Macrae.

For a free copy of the resource visit <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/dialogue/projects/education-dialogue.html>
For hard copies contact Larry Marshall 9479 1688, l.marshall@latrobe.edu.au

Reflections on Australia

By Dr Namrata Goswami
Visiting Reserach Fellow at the Centre for Dialogue

My four-month visiting research fellowship at the Centre for Dialogue was enriching- both professionally and personally.

On a professional level I learnt substantially from my interactions with my colleagues and friends. My research project at the Centre for Dialogue aimed at understanding the Naga community efforts at peace after nearly six decades of violent conflict in North-East India through the notion of dialogue at a conceptual level. My stint at the Centre will be immensely critical for my work back in India as an Associate Fellow at New Delhi's Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, in the field of conflict prevention, management and resolution.

On a personal level, I was able to give attention to the political, social and economic details of life in Australia through my interactions with people from Australia and the world. I was thrust into the centre of a debate on "race and racism" in Australia following a sudden surge in violence against Indian students in Melbourne. While many in the Indian media described the attacks as racist

and Australia as a racist country, I was rather wary of such overt uninformed generalisations. To me, the attacks were largely due to a rather obvious systemic failure on the part of the Victorian Government to improve their law-enforcement mechanisms and an unwillingness to accept the consequences of an unregulated private education sector committed to minting as much money as it can from the international student population.

Visiting the Northern Territory was one of my most memorable travels in Australia. Despite the numbing commercialisation of Aboriginal arts in towns like Alice Springs, I did manage to get a glimpse of the life Australia's Aboriginal population led on a daily basis; it was both hopeful and desperate. The notion of "self" and the "other" were blatantly obvious in the relationships between these indigenous communities and Australia's later immigrants.

That said, I learnt to appreciate Melbourne's multicultural character and truly enjoyed the beauty of harmonial living practiced by a multicplicity of communities residing in this city of art, culture and warmth.

NEW BOOK: CONFLICT, RELIGION AND CULTURE

Conflict, Religion and Culture: Domestic and International Implications for Southeast Asia and Australia
Ateneo de Manila University Press

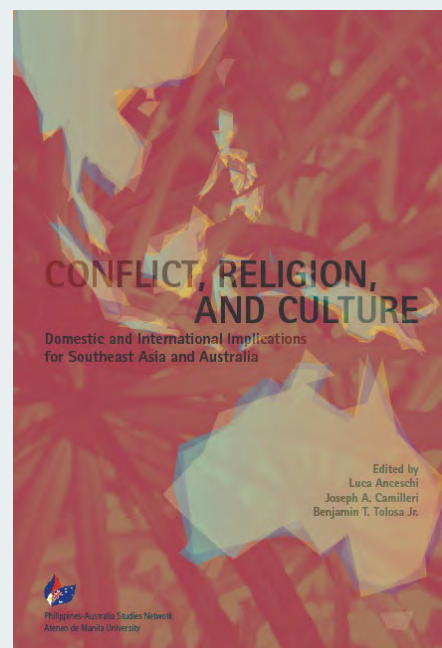
Edited by Luca Anceschi, Joseph A. Camilleri and Benjamin T. Tolosa Jr.

Since September 11 much has been written about US and European responses to terrorism and tensions between Islam and the West. Countries in the Asia Pacific have attracted much less attention yet their responses reveal much, not only about their respective foreign politics, but also about their internal electoral politics, the tensions of plural societies, the sway of ethnic-cultural stereotypes, the perceived sociopolitical roles that religions play, the conditioning of the mass media, and the international implications of internal armed conflicts.

The Centre for Dialogue is pleased to present a collection of selected papers which examine contemporary developments in four multiethnic, multifaith societies: Malaysia, Philippines and Australia.

Contributions by: Maria Elisa Jayme Lao, Jennifer Santiago Oreta, Alber A. Husin, Michális S. Michael, Elina Noor, George Myconos, Jajat Burhanudin, Dadi Darmadi and Zainudin S. Malang.

The book was launched by Laurie Ferguson, Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs on 24 July 2009 at La Trobe University. This book is an important milestone in the development of the Philippines-Australia Studies Network and the continuing collaboration between Ateneo de Manila University and La Trobe University. This book is the first publication of a major ARC project by the same name.





Interfaith and Intercultural Networking in Melbourne's Northern Suburbs

By Steph Matti
Community Liaison and Education Officer
Centre for Dialogue

With Melbourne's reputation as a destination for international students under question and issue of asylum seekers in the headlines, there is a real need to break down the barriers between cultures and faiths. The Centre for Dialogue, along with five municipal councils and eight partner organisations, is working to establish the Northern Interfaith and Intercultural Network (NIIN) in the northern suburbs of Melbourne.

The first regional interfaith/intercultural network of its kind in Australia, the Network is working alongside pre-existing interfaith and intercultural groups to promote dialogue and co-operation. The NIIN is exploring ways to foster interaction and understanding through activities and celebrations, training schemes and developing advocacy opportunities.

After two years of intense preparation, which included extensive grassroots involvement, 2009 has seen a number of significant developments in the formation of the NIIN.

Partner Councils:
Cities of Banyule, Darebin, Hume,
Moreland and Whittlesea



Nelum Buddhadasa and other participants at the release of the Northern Interfaith/Intercultural Network Initial Report.



Members of the Interim Steering Committee meeting at the Moreland City Council Chambers, September 2009.

The initial report "An Interfaith and Intercultural Network in Melbourne's Northern Suburbs" was released during a community consultation on 23 June 2009 at Darebin City Hall. The consultation was well attended by 80 faith and cultural community activists and leaders. It was clear from the consultation that there was strong community support and a high level of enthusiasm for the formation of the network.

An interim steering committee, representing a microcosm of the faiths and cultures in the region, held its inaugural meeting on 18 August 2009. This dedicated and enthusiastic group has pushed the network forward with working groups established to focus on the three key issues: international students, climate change and education.

On Wednesday 28 October, the NIIN hosted its first public event, a public forum with visiting Islamic scholar and Malay human rights activist Professor Farish Noor in conversation with a panel of young Muslims from the region. Together Professor Noor and the panel examined dialogue about Islam and dialogue within Islam, and its impact on young people.

Please send comments or queries regarding *Connections: Newsletter of the Centre for Dialogue* to Steph Matti at Dialogue@latrobe.edu.au

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