



## ***INTERNATIONAL PROGRESS ORGANIZATION***

### ***The Baku Declaration on Global Dialogue and Peaceful Co-Existence Among Nations and the Threats Posed by International Terrorism***

#### *Preamble*

*Since its establishment nearly three decades ago, the International Progress Organization has consistently emphasized the basic elements of peaceful co-existence among nations. In spite of the appearance of a paradigm shift in international relations since the end of the Cold War, the essential conditions of international peace and security have not changed from the times of the ideological East-West conflict up to the present era of civilizational conflict (which results, to a considerable extent, from the unipolar world order of “globalization”). Peaceful co-existence continues to be based on the mutual recognition of each other’s value system – which is at the roots of each civilization’s religious, political, social and economic way of life – as *conditio sine qua non* of civilized behaviour among states, nations, and peoples. On the level of inter-state relations, this attitude is expressed in the principle of non-intervention, one of the basic norms of the United Nations Charter and of general international law.*

*Reaffirming the resolution adopted by the participants of the International Progress Organization’s conference on “The Cultural Self-comprehension of Nations” (Innsbruck / Austria, 29 July 1974),*

*Reaffirming the conclusions reached by the I.P.O.’s international meetings of experts on “The Concept of Monotheism in Islam and Christianity” (Rome, 19 November*

1981) and on “Civilizations – Conflict or Dialogue?” (Innsbruck / Austria, 8 June 1998),

Stressing the basic historical facts of Islamic-Christian relations as outlined in the keynote address of the President of the I.P.O. on “Muslim-Christian Ties in Europe: Past, Present and Future” (Kuala Lumpur / Malaysia, 2 September 1996),

Reaffirming the elements of inter-cultural dialogue as outlined by the President of the I.P.O. in his keynote addresses on “Cultural-philosophical Aspects of International Co-operation” (Amman / Jordan, 3 March 1974) and on “The Philosophical Foundations of Civilizational Dialogue” (Kuala Lumpur / Malaysia, 15 September 1997),

Recalling the resolutions adopted by the International Progress Organization’s international conferences on “The Legal Aspects of the Palestine Problem with Special Regard to the Question of Jerusalem” (Vienna, 7 November 1980) and on “Israel as Occupying Power” (Vienna, 3 May 1984),

Emphasizing the basic elements of a solution to the Palestine problem as outlined in the keynote address of the President of the I.P.O. on “The Palestinian People’s Right of Self-determination: Basis of Peace in the Middle East” (Gaza City, 14 December 1997) and in the statement by the President of the I.P.O. at the solemn meeting held by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People at the United Nations Office in Vienna (29 November 2000),

Recalling the proposals for a definition of the concept of “terrorism” by the International Progress Organization’s conference on “The Question of Terrorism” (“Geneva Declaration on Terrorism,” 21 March 1987),

Emphasizing the evaluation of the comprehensive sanctions policy of the United Nations Security Council vis-à-vis Iraq as a violation of the basic principles of human rights, in the statement by the delegate of the I.P.O. to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva (13 August 1991), and in the I.P.O. research publication on “Ethical Aspects of Sanctions in International Law” (Studies in International Relations, XX, 1994),

Stressing the importance of economic justice and an even distribution of the world’s resources as outlined in the communiqué of the international meeting of experts

on “*The New International Economic Order – Philosophical and Socio-cultural Implications*” (Vienna, 3 April 1979) and in the communiqué of the international roundtable on “*The Challenges of Globalization*” (Munich, 20 March 1999),

*Considering the analyses and recommendations presented in consultations undertaken by the President of the I.P.O. in the course of his recent information visits to the Central Asian Republic of Uzbekistan (14-20 September 2001) and to the Republic of Azerbaijan (8-9 November 2001),*

*Stressing the special relevance of the principles of global dialogue and peaceful co-existence among nations (as outlined in the above-mentioned resolutions and documents of the International Progress Organization) to an improved comprehension of the global constellation resulting from the tragic events in New York City, Washington DC and Pennsylvania on 11 September 2001,*

***The International Progress Organization emphasizes the following elements of global dialogue and peaceful co-existence among nations in regard to the threats posed by international terrorism:***

- The phenomenon of international terrorism will only disappear if the root causes – namely social injustice, inequality, oppression, gross violations of human rights, foreign occupation and the subjugation of entire nations – are eradicated. The international community will inevitably fail in any collective effort to fight terrorism if it merely addresses the symptoms and ignores the causes of the phenomenon.
- Apart from a condemnation of the terrorist acts as such, the tragic events of 11 September 2001 should lead to a collective self-reflexion and analysis in the Western world of its persistent attitudes and policies vis-à-vis the Muslim world from the era of the crusades to the times of the “Holy Alliance’s” imperial rule in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the subsequent colonization of Muslim countries by European powers.

- The power-dominated and often violent encounters of the Western-Christian world with Islam have to be reevaluated in light of the tragic and colossal events unfolding at the dawn of a self-proclaimed and forcefully imposed Western “New World Order.” Such an effort implies that Western powers, first and foremost the United States, should terminate their hegemonial policies and, in particular, end their military presence in the Muslim world. So-called “strategic interests” related to the energy supply of the United States and Europe do in no way justify the permanent subjugation and de facto re-colonization of the Arab world. The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states is part of *jus cogens* of general international law and must also be respected in regard to the West’s dealings with the Muslim and Arab world.
- The problem of Palestine and Jerusalem has to be settled in such a way that the right of national self-determination of the Arab people of Palestine is fully respected. This measure requires the evacuation of all Jewish settlements in occupied Palestine without exception and the recognition of the Palestinians’ right of return. The international community has to realize that the Oslo accords cannot be the basis of lasting peace in Palestine because they exclude the basic issue of Palestinian sovereignty.
- Whether it is for the sake of the Israeli occupying power in Palestine or for Western oil interests, the Muslim and Arab world will not accept a “pacification” of the region by subjugation. The United States’ bias in favour of the occupying power makes it unfit for any kind of mediation efforts in Palestine. In the absence of decisive action by regional organizations such as the League of Arab States and/or the Islamic Conference Organization – intergovernmental entities that have proven to be incapable of acting on the Palestinian issue because of conflicting interests and alliances of member states – or by the United Nations Organization – which has been unable to act on the Israeli occupation of Palestine because of the veto rule of Art. 27 of the Charter –, the people of Palestine have the inherent right to defend themselves

against occupation, colonization, and the annexation of their land. Acts in the exercise of this right cannot be termed “terrorist,” but are based on the right of national self-determination, which is part of *jus cogens* of modern international law.

- The United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 181 of 1947, undoubtedly violated the Palestinian people’s right of self-determination by partitioning the land of Palestine against the will of its population. This historical injustice was followed by additional acts of occupation and annexation of Palestinian and other Arab lands, culminating in the annexation of Jerusalem. It is understandable that the Muslim and Arab world accept no more a policy of double standards on the part of a self-declared “international community” and that they do not take seriously mere lip service paid to the Palestinian cause. As long as the policies of occupation and annexation are continued – and de facto accepted by the Western world –, no person of good will can expect the acts of resistance against occupation to end.
- The comprehensive economic sanctions imposed on the people of Iraq by the United Nations Security Council for more than 10 years are another decisive factor in the increasing alienation between the Muslim world and the West. In legal terms, this policy of collective punishment – which has led to the death of over a million Iraqis – constitutes a “crime against humanity” as defined by the respective international covenants. The indefinite continuation of this sanctions policy – against the will of the majority of UN member states – constitutes an abuse of the United Nations Organization for the purposes of brute power politics and jeopardizes the legitimacy and moral credibility of the world organization. The sanctions imposed on the people of Iraq have to be lifted immediately and unconditionally. The policy of victimizing the people of Iraq for the sake of Western (and in particular US) political interests has been one of the main causes of the Muslim world’s increasing alienation from and confrontation with the West.

- The all-out war presently being waged by the United States against Afghanistan is not legitimized by the United Nations Organization. Neither Security Council resolution 1368 (2001), adopted on 12 September 2001, nor resolution 1373 (2001), adopted on 28 September 2001, can be construed as justification for the aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan. It has to be stated that up to the present moment no evidence has been presented in a court of law – or in public – linking the terrorist acts of 11 September 2001 to Afghanistan. This war and its methods (including the use of banned weapons) will not eradicate terrorism but may further increase the level of international violence. There is absolutely no excuse for the humanitarian tragedy befalling hundreds of thousands of innocent Afghans at the onset of winter. The deliberate attacks on the civilian infrastructure of Afghanistan place the full moral and legal responsibility for their consequences on those who have launched this aggression. Responsible leaders in the Muslim and Christian worlds should unite to stop this tragedy. If the war continues, the credibility of the Western world will not only suffer further, but a long civilizational conflict may ensue that destabilizes the entire international system as it has been established since the last World War.
- The United Nations Organization should urgently convene an international conference with the aim of establishing a precise and legally sound definition of terrorism. Unless this effort at codification is undertaken, the term “terrorism” will continue to serve only as a tool to justify brute power politics and to obfuscate the superpower policy of double standards. The International Progress Organization has undertaken such a codification effort since as early as 1987, in the course of its Geneva Conference on the Question of Terrorism, the conclusions and recommendations of which it submitted to the Legal Counsel of the United Nations. First and foremost, a clear conceptual distinction has to be made between acts of terrorism (whether committed by non-state actors or by states) and forms of resistance against aggression or foreign occupation. The generally recognized principles of international humanitarian law may serve as a guideline for any such codification efforts.

Violent acts by states against non-combatants will undoubtedly have to be included in this definition. If and when such a definition has been established by the member states of the United Nations, the problem of international terrorism should be dealt with within the framework of collective security as outlined in the United Nations Charter. In order to implement measures against terrorism (including state terrorism) in a universal manner, the veto privilege of the five permanent members of the Security Council will have to be abolished. Until such time, the maxim of “might makes right” will determine United Nations practice, making the world organization’s eventual actions on international terrorism inconsistent and finally irrelevant.

- The global confrontation unfolding before our eyes since 11 September 2001 may lead – or already has led to a certain extent – to a new division of the globe along civilizational (religious) lines. The East-West conflict of the Cold War era was phased out with the events of 1989, but the paradigm of a “clash of civilizations” has rapidly taken hold since then as part of the remaining superpower’s efforts to create a new enemy stereotype. As a result of the terrorist acts of 11 September 2001 and of the collective reaction to these acts in the political and media establishments of both the Western and Muslim worlds, mankind is now facing the danger of this paradigm becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. In a situation in which rational analysis and a self-critical attitude are becoming increasingly difficult to achieve on both sides of the confrontation line, it has to be stated that the principles of peaceful co-existence that prevented all-out war – in particular nuclear war – between rival political systems during the Cold War have equally to be applied to the present international constellation of confrontation between the Muslim world and the Western-Christian world.
- There should be no illusions about the perception of the present confrontation in Central Asia by the international public: The war being waged by the leading Western power and its allies against Afghanistan is perceived by many in the Muslim world as part of a scenario of a “clash of civilizations,” a concept proclaimed by Western intellectuals since the end of the Cold War.

No one in the Muslim world will be convinced by Western political leaders' paying lip service to the Islamic faith or arrogating to themselves the right to interpret the Holy Q'uran and its basic social and moral principles.

- The only measure able to restore confidence – indeed the only responsible strategy – will be to stop all acts of aggression against the Muslim world and to confirm on a mutual basis the validity of the principle of non-interference. Co-operation and partnership between civilizations may be lofty, idealistic goals in the current context; the only achievable reality in the present situation is co-existence on the basis of non-interference (the alternative of which would be prolonged confrontation including armed conflict). The acceptance of the principle of co-existence requires that each side respect the other's right to live according to its specific value system, without trying to impose its own. This is in contradistinction to the historic “missionary arrogance” of the Western-Christian world, which since the era of 19<sup>th</sup>-century imperialism and colonialism has been one of the root causes of war and conflict among nations and civilizations.
- In this era of globalization – when entire nations are being marginalized for the sake of economic gain and when traditional civilizations and ways of life are being threatened by the pressure to subordinate to a uniform model of the economy and society; when economically-inspired secularization is being imposed upon entire peoples and indigenous communities; and when the gap between rich and poor is widening, without any chance for the economically weaker countries to compete with the economically powerful actors on the basis of fairness and partnership – social injustice on a global scale cannot be ignored any further as one of the root causes of international violence. Only a just international economic order will ensure peace and stability for all. It is the special responsibility of religious communities, particularly in the Christian world, and of their leaders, to emphasize the need for social justice vis-à-vis the holders of power, be they governmental authorities or economic entities.

- The unfolding confrontation between the Islamic world and the West is not an “accident” that happened because of sudden and unforeseen acts of terrorism; it is the result of an international power equation that has been determined more and more by the Western-industrialized world in favour of its privileged use of the world’s resources and in the service of its quest for global power, accompanied by the claim of political, economic and civilizational superiority in the name of “globalization,” the keyword of the West’s secularized religion. The Western world has to accept the reality that international violence and acts of terrorism cannot be eradicated by declaring nations or movements as “enemies of civilization” or by waging large-scale wars that actually victimize the civilian populations of the so-called “enemy countries.” The West has to come to grips with the truth that no one can live in peace unless he accepts the other’s right to live his own life, on the basis of equality and mutual respect. The violent encounter of the West with the Muslim world over the centuries is just one example of the urgent need for this “dialectic” of peaceful co-existence, which is based on the fact that a nation can expect to be recognized as an equal partner only if it grants the sovereign status it claims for itself to all other nations on the globe.

*There is no indispensable nation, but an indispensable need to recognize the inherent right to self-determination of each and every nation and civilization. Whereas the denial of this normative truth may lead to a state of permanent war, its acceptance may open an avenue to the gradual establishment of what Immanuel Kant described as the ideal state of “eternal peace.”*

Baku / Azerbaijan, 9 November 2001