

## **The Meeting With Muslim Intellectuals and Businessmen**

Doha, Qatar 11 November 2000

” Islam and Globalisation “

Globalisation, as it is formulated and presented today, is an invention of the North Atlantic countries, and we can take it for granted that it is intended to enrich them further and enhance their domination of the world. They already dominate the world of course. But they want to strengthen that domination to ensure they will not be successfully challenged either by the big East Asian countries or even the weak Muslim countries.

2. The peoples of Europe have always been an aggressive and acquisitive people. Before they were able to cross the oceans, they were continuously fighting each other and trying to occupy each other's land in Europe. In the past two millenniums not a year passed when they were not fighting each other.

3. Their whole culture and economy was based on wars of conquest. They were always thinking of and inventing more and better weapons to kill people. Even today we see them inventing newer infernal machines for killing people more efficiently. Whenever they can they would test these weapons in other countries causing death by the tens or even hundreds of thousands. Their excuse now is that they want to keep the world safe for peace.

4. After they learned how to navigate the oceans they turned their aggressive acquisitiveness against the rest of the world. By the beginning of last century almost every part of the world had come under their rule. Practically every European nation had some territory to call their colony. Asia, Africa and the Americas were not only subjected to their imperious and frequently brutal rule but had all their wealth and resources taken away to enrich the metropolitan countries. Europeans treated other races of the world as inferior and in many cases simply exterminated them. In Australia the aborigines were shot on sight like animals. The Tasman Man is now extinct because of this. Of course when they are doing this they did not talk about human rights. It would not serve their purpose.

5. After the end of World War II they began to give up their colonial territories. It was not because they had suddenly changed as they tried to make the world believe. It was simply because they feared defection by their colonial subjects to the other bloc as a result of their Cold War confrontation between the Western capitalists and the Eastern Socialists.

6. Even as they were freeing their colonies they were consolidating themselves in order to ensure their continued dominance over the world. They closed ranks and formed the European Economic Community which eventually became the European Union. They also set up the North Atlantic Treaty countries and finally when the cold War ended in the defeat of the Eastern Bloc they coalesced and have now become a solid European entity lead by the seven strongest countries among them.

7. Now they bared their capitalists fangs. No longer worried about the socialists they propounded the religion of free trade. Free trade is everything. It is going to enrich the whole world. It is going to lead to a worldly paradise. Many have forgotten that they had also promised worldly paradise when they preached Communism and absolute equality. Now they are back with the same promise and it looks like people are taken in by this old promise.

8. Free trade as enunciated by them means the removal of all trade barriers so that goods and services can move freely across borders. Free trade is described as leveling the playing field. The implication is that a level playing field would ensure fair competition. Nothing is said about the size of the players.

9. Such is their hype that many poor countries talked about level playing fields, forgetting that the poor own no giant corporations or banks or products to sell in the market. Clearly only those who have money and products who will corner the markets.

10. Insidiously free trade became sacrosanct through the GATT and the WTO. The World Bank, the IMF and the Western-controlled international media preached it. Anyone who dared to oppose free trade became heretics, infidels, non-believers who were trying to impoverish the poor.

11. The true meaning and implications of free trade did not become known until the free trade in currencies reached its peak during the East Asian financial crisis.

12. Suddenly rich emerging economies crumbled as their currencies were traded and devalued. The currency traders claimed that the economic system of these East Asian tigers were rotten, they were corrupt and practised cronyism. Because of that their currencies were unhappy and devalued themselves.

13. The fact of course is that the currency traders saw an opportunity to make huge profits by devaluing the currencies of these countries. They made billions of dollars simply by destroying the wealth which these countries had taken decades to build up. But more than that they impoverished millions of people, threw them on the streets, caused them to riot and kill and overthrow their Governments. To this day these once rich people are wallowing in poverty and instability.

14. Despite clear evidence that free trade has caused unprecedented misery it is still being touted as the solution to the economic problems of the poor. Worse still, it has been upgraded and given a new name, Globalisation, a world without borders. And again we are being told that globalisation will enrich us all.

15. Let us examine a little the contents of globalisation. They include doing away with borders, i.e. countries will lose their definitive territories, will become just a name for a certain area of the globe. Countries can therefore no longer barricade themselves behind their borders to stop the invading hordes from the rich countries from trampling all over their puny corporations, banks and industries.

16. Ahead of the invasion their propaganda machines are already saying that the monopoly of all economic activities by these foreign giants would improve efficiency, the quality of the products and the services that we get and the quality of our life.

17. Maybe the quality of our life will improve; maybe we will earn more pay. But we will all be servants of foreigners. What is worse is that these huge foreign-owned businesses will control our economy and eventually our Governments. We will become like the Banana Republics where the managers of foreign corporations are more powerful than our Presidents or Prime Ministers. Indeed they will determine who our Presidents and Prime Ministers will be.

18. At that stage can we honestly say we are still independent? Only the soft-brained among us will maintain that we are free countries in charge of our destinies. We have de facto become the colonies of the European nations again. We have come full circle.

19. At the beginning it was pointed out that when the Europeans came up with an idea, it is invariably intended to result in their domination over the world. Well globalisation is their idea, and we can see how it is going to lead to their rebuilding their World Empire. The developing countries of the world will pay a high cost if they swallow European ideas unthinkingly.

20. All Muslim countries are developing countries and they will all become a part of the empire of the North Atlantic countries if globalisation as presently conceived goes through. The picture is grim but it is not an exaggeration. The Muslim countries are weak. None of the Muslim countries have any influence over world affairs. For a century now they have suffered in silence while Muslims and Muslim countries are oppressed.

21. The situation in Palestine is typical. Children who threw stones are being shot dead with live bullets. Many have been killed. There is nothing that one billion Muslims in the world can do. We can send appeals to stop the carnage but all that we get is to be told to stop the children from throwing stones. No one tells the Israelis to stop shooting. It is as if the most natural thing for people to do when stones are thrown at them is to shoot the stone throwers dead. And yet these people who tolerate the killing of stone-throwing children talk endlessly about human rights, about justice and the rule of law.

22. I have painted the most gloomy picture of globalisation, how it can oppress us, how it can make us once again the colonies of the rich. But it is not necessary that globalisation will have this kind of result. Globalisation can be made to work for us.

23. The first thing that we have to do is to understand how globalisation as presently interpreted will work.

24. When Malaysia was being attacked by the currency traders we were shocked to find how little we knew about the international financial system; how currencies were traded; how money was moved without ever moving it.

25. Now we read about the hundreds of billions of dollars paid for companies by other companies wishing to grow by acquisition. We read about the mergers of the giants to become even bigger giants. We don't really know how they are doing this and where the money is coming from. They have found ways, or invented ways to put huge sums of money to work for them.

26. If we know enough about these wheelings and dealings we may be able to play the same games, by our own rules. We may even be able to enter as a virus into their systems to paralyse them or frustrate them. They are big but size alone will not guarantee failures will not occur. They can fail. They can lose trillions of dollars. And they can destroy themselves.

27. We know the story of the Long-Term Credit Management Fund (LTCM). It was huge. It dealt in billions. But suddenly it failed and but for the help of cronies in their Government, it could have dragged the whole financial system of the rich down with it. If the giant banks and the giant corporations are skilfully handled, they too can suffer the same fate as the LTCM. And as they come crashing down they will drag the powerful countries down with them.

28. There was a time when the Muslim countries dominated the world. Then there was a decline. The decline was because we were pre-occupied with bickering regarding the interpretations of our religion. Muslim Governments are forever being attacked by extremist Muslims. Busy with trying to defend their Islamic credentials the Muslims and their countries missed completely the Industrial revolution which was taking place in the European World. We took no part in it and as a result we retrogressed, unable to gain anything from it. We became poor not just in terms of wealth but also in industrial capacities, the invention, design and productions of the instruments of progress. We have become totally dependent on others even for our most simple needs, and the needs for our defence.

29. Now we are seeing the Information Age dawning upon the world. And it looks like we are going to miss this revolution too. We are still too busy with our endless squabbles over our religion and our politics.

30. It is sad because we do have the capacity to participate in the development of I.T. and its innumerable applications. Large numbers of highly skilled Muslims are now living in the countries of the Atlantic North. They are there because we have no place for them. And so they are contributing to the body of knowledge and Information Age skills being built up in these countries which may probably be used against us.

31. We can bring them back. We can tap their skills in order to build up our capacities in I.T. And with their skills and knowledge we may be able to counter some of the harmful effects of globalisation on us.

32. There are other ways we can work together to protect our economies and our countries. We can keep parts of our borders closed. We can stall everything until we are ready. We can change the interpretation of globalisation. We can for example interpret globalisation more completely by insisting on the rights of our poor people to cross into the rich countries.

33. That way we can reduce our poverty through the remittances of those of us who have gone abroad. It is important that Muslim communities abroad be big enough to maintain their religion and culture and possibly their influence in the countries of their adoption.

34. In a few decades the world's demography will change. There will be no country whose people are ethnically pure. If we are smart enough we can use this to our advantage.

35. Globalisation may result in the huge corporations taking over the countries in which they operate. But on the other hand the migrants from the poor countries will, if not take over, at least play some role in the governance of the countries of their adoption. They may even be able to reduce the oppression of the Muslims worldwide.

36. Will the Muslims lose in a global nation, free of nation states including the Muslim countries? They will lose of course if they insist on remaining spectators.

37. We are one billion strong. Every sixth person in this world is a Muslim. The real problem that we face in a globalised world is that we reject the brotherhood of Islam. While others are uniting and consolidating their strength we are drifting apart and fragmenting.

38. Muslims and Muslim countries are faced with a tremendous and frightening challenge. Globalisation in the form that it takes now is a threat against us and our religion. We should not vent our anger and frustration by mounting futile isolated violence. Instead we should plan and execute the development of our Ummah so as to be empowered by I.T. and be capable of handling the challenges of the Information Age. This is our real Jihad. I believe we have the talents and the capacity to ensure the success of this Jihad.

39. Allah does not help those who do not help themselves. Tie the camel and then leave it to Him. We have indeed to help ourselves, to tie our camels. We can quote the al-Quran and the Hadis and argue about their meaning but whatever may be the arguments we have to act to blunt the challenge of the Globalised world. We may even master it and bring back the Golden Age of Islam, Insha-Allah.