



*INTERACTION
COUNCIL*

A Statement from
The InterAction Council Meeting of
Political and Religious Leaders

“Bridging the Divide”

11-12 March 2003

Habibie Center, Jakarta Indonesia

Since its foundation, the InterAction Council has been concerned about moral values and ethical standards, particularly in political and business leadership.

In 1987 the Council convened a Consultative Meeting with Spiritual Leaders on Peace, Development, Population and the Environment in Rome. At its meeting in Vienna in 1996 the Council focused on a search of global ethical standards, acceptable to all religions. As a consequence it drafted the proposed Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities which, if accepted, in the view of the Council, would strongly reinforce the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In 1999 in Cairo the Council addressed the religious implications of the Middle East conflict.

Since the horrendous and tragic attacks on New York and Washington, the Council has been concerned that the “War on Terror” could generate conditions for a wider conflict between religions.

The reaction to the further terrorist attacks in Kenya, Russia, India and Indonesia, has reinforced these concerns.

Therefore, it is important to bear in mind the following considerations:

1. The current world situation, in particular, the “War on Terror” and further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, could lead to even greater instability and to the break down of order throughout the world.
2. While some terrorists may be motivated by hate and envy alone, others have quite specific objectives and purposes which are local and not universal in their implications.
3. One unhappy reality is that some of the policies of certain Western countries are perceived as causes for terrorism. Such attitudes can be caused by the perception of partiality in critical regions, by growing inequality between rich and poor, which include the fact that many people in many countries fall further behind because they do not have the resources to participate in this globalised world. The spirit and imperatives behind the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations directed to mobilizing world financial, political, moral and institutional resources to guaranteeing decent living standards for all people, need to be translated into action.
4. Strategic and economic justice and equilibrium between the nations of the world should be a continuing objective which can only be achieved through cooperation, understanding and the creation of trust. Policy should be directed to such ends.
5. The United Nations’ outlawing of war, unless in direct self-defense or authorized under Chapter VII by the Security Council as a threat to international peace and security, is a major advance in promoting peace. If states now accept the doctrine of unilateral pre-emption, the work of the last 50 years in promoting international law will be undone.

Therefore:

- I We call on all religious leaders to expressly reject any religious legitimization of violence and terrorism.
- II We urge world leaders to take positive steps to cross divides between people of different religions and ethnicity; to establish a more cooperative world where discussion and consensus will determine outcomes and to work for justice between the nations of the world.
- III We call on all states, great and small, to work with and through the United Nations, and especially the Security Council, as the most appropriate means of achieving justice, equilibrium and peace. We urge all nations to support the vital work of the United Nations and to seek to strengthen its role in solving international conflict.
- IV We call on all states to recognise universal human values and fundamental ethical standards, which are shared by all religions and humanist philosophies, and to develop a culture of non-violence and respect for life, of solidarity and a just economic order, of tolerance and a life of truthfulness, and of equal rights and partnership between men and women.
- V We call on all states and religions to recognise that extremism can be found in religious and political ideology of all kinds, and that wherever it is found, even within their own borders, it must be condemned and opposed.
- VI We therefore call on political, religious and public opinion leaders to exercise restraint and understanding, to avoid extremism in all their actions and to recognize those common values, standards and attitudes, without which a civilised humane society cannot prevail.
- VII And so we call for all states to work to cross the divides within their own borders and beyond and to oppose arbitrariness, double standards and unjust discrimination wherever they may be found.

We emphasize that these objectives and values are universal and transcend state boundaries. Now is the time to implement the spirit of the “Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities.” What are sought now are the wisdom and concrete actions for co-existence, co-operation and economic justice for mankind, recalling once again the fundamental principles of a global ethic: the principle of humanity “Every human being must be treated humanely” and the Golden Rule: “What you do not wish to be done to yourself, do not do to others.”

List of Participants

IAC Members

1. H. E. Prime Minister Malcolm **Fraser**, Australia
2. H. E. Prime Minister Andreas **van Agt**, the Netherlands
3. H. E. President Bacharuddin Jusuf **Habibie**, Indonesia
4. H. E. President Jamil **Mahuad**, Ecuador

Religious Leaders

5. Rev. Swami **Agnivesh**, India (Hindu)
6. Dr. Kamel **Al-Sharif**, Secretary-General International Islamic Council (Muslim)
7. Dr. A. T. **Ariyaratne**, President, Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, Sri Lanka (Buddhist)
8. Archbishop. Francis P. **Carroll**, President, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn, Australia (Catholic)
9. Rev Tim **Costello**, Baptist Church, Australia (Protestant)
10. Mr. James **Jordan**, Member of Archdiocesan Council, Australia (Greek Orthodox)
11. Prof. **Lee** Seung-hwan, Professor of Philosophy, Korea University, Korea (Confucian)
12. Prof. Dr. A. Syafii **Maarif**, the Chairman of Muhammadiyah, Indonesia (Muslim)
13. Mr. Rozy **Munir**, Chairman, Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesia (Muslim)
14. KH Hasyim **Muzadi**, General Chairman, Nahdlatul Ulama, Indonesia (Muslim)
15. Rev. Dr. Konrad **Raiser**, Secretary General, World Council of Churches, Switzerland (Protestant)
16. Dr. David **Rosen**, International Director of Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee, U. S. A. (Jewish)
17. Drs. **Rusli**, SH. MM, Indonesian Buddhist Community Association, Indonesia (Buddhist)
18. Dr. Natan **Setiabudi**, Chairman, The Communion of Church in Indonesia, Indonesia (Protestant)
19. Rev. I. N. **Suwandha** SH, Chairman, the Indonesian Hindus Community Association, Indonesia (Hindu)
20. Prof. Dr. Din **Syamsudin**, Secretary General, The Indonesian Council of Ulamas, Indonesia (Muslim)
21. Pastor Alex **Widjojo** SJ, Roman Catholic Church of Jakarta, Indonesia (Catholic)

Others

22. Ms. Katherine **Marshall**, Director, Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics, World Bank, U. S. A.
23. Dr. SM Farid **Mirbagheri**, the Director of Research, the Centre for World Dialogue, Cyprus
24. Mr. Seiken **Sugiura**, Member of the House of Representative, Japan
25. Mr. **Zhang** Yi-jun, Vice Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the 9th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, China

Academic Advisors

26. Prof. Thomas **Axworthy**, Executive Director, Historica Foundation, Canada
27. Prof. Nagao **Hyodo**, Professor, Tokyo Keizai University, Japan (Deputy Secretary-General of IAC)
28. Prof. Amin **Saikal**, Director, Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies, the Middle East and Central Asia, Australian National University, Australia