

**Chapter 1 : Muslims in Liberal Democracies: Why the West Fears Islam - [www.nxgvision.com](http://www.nxgvision.com)**

*Symposium on the State of West-Islamic Dialogue: Session 1 - Religion and Values October 16, Georgetown University hosted an all-day symposium that brought together international thought leaders and public figures to address West-Islamic dialogue in its religious, political, and social dimensions.*

Women, Islam, and the Twenty-first Century Written by leading scholars, the Focus On essays are designed to stimulate thought and enhance understanding of vital aspects of the Islamic world. New essays on specific themes, with links to related content within the site for further reading, are published throughout the course of the year. All visitors to Oxford Islamic Studies Online can access these essays, but related content links in Previous Features are available to subscribers only. If you have a question related to the topic explored in a Focus On article, please email your inquiry to the editor of Oxford Islamic Studies Online.

Islam and the West: John of Damascus, to the Crusaders, the Andalusian convivencia coexistence, or the fascination of American transcendentalists with things Islamic in the manner of their German master Goethe, the two worlds of Islam and the West have for the last fourteen centuries negotiated various modes of sharing world history. It is a history filled with clashes and confrontation, competition and challenge, admiration and hatred, acceptance and rejection, and a host of other conflicting feelings, attitudes, and experiences. No matter how one defines the terms "Islam" and "the West" or whether one chooses to do away with them altogether the self-perceptions and identity claims of those who live in Muslim and Western societies have been shaped by these checkered histories. That is one reason among many that relations between Islam and the West never seem to lose their relevance for the state of our world from politics and international relations to interfaith relations and discussions of pluralism. A brief overview of this long history reveals three main areas of interaction: As a monotheistic religion, Islam defines itself as the last of the three great Abrahamic faith traditions. The two sources contain numerous references to Jewish and Christian themes, calling upon Jews and Christians to unite in a robust monotheism against Meccan polytheism and its profligacy. Born into a multireligious and multicultural environment, early Muslims were in contact with the various Jewish and Christian communities of the East in the eighth and ninth centuries. The polemical works of Byzantine theologians were as much theological in nature as cultural and political. The medieval Christian theologians interpreted the themes common to Islam and the Biblical tradition not as a matter of "creative borrowing," as nineteenth-century Orientalists would call it, but as a sign of outright heresy. The refusal to speak to Muslims on their own terms continued throughout the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment. There were, however, attempts at what we call today interfaith dialogue. Following the tradition of St. Bernard of Clairvaux d. He thus proposed a most unexpected meeting, a *contraferentia*, as he called it, of Christian and Muslim scholars to discuss theology. Today, Muslim-Christian relations are an important part of Islam-West relations. Numerous interfaith initiatives and dialogue programs are taking place at different levels and between different communities. The most recent and prominent meeting took place November 4-6, 2001, at the Vatican when a delegation of Muslim scholars attended a meeting with Catholic scholars and met Pope Benedict XVI. Numerous other interreligious initiatives are under way between Muslims, and Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox Christians, as well as with Jewish communities in Muslim-majority countries and in Europe and the United States. Culture is another contested area in the history of Islam-West relations. The influence of Islamic culture and civilization on medieval Europe was decisive and largely irresistible. Medieval Europeans hated Islam as a religion but admired it as a culture and civilization. The works of Muslim philosophers, theologians, scientists, belletrists, poets, storytellers, artists, and mystics penetrated the European cultural landscape from the ninth to the sixteenth century. As early as the ninth century, a Spaniard named Alvaros was voicing a heightened sense of cultural insecurity: My fellow Christians delight in the poems and romances of the Arabs; they study the works of Mohammedan theologians and philosophers, not in order to refute them, but to acquire a correct and elegant Arabic style. Where today can one find a layman who reads the Latin commentaries on Holy Scriptures? Who is there that studies the Gospels, the Prophets, the Apostles? The young Christians who are most conspicuous for their talents have no knowledge of any literature or language

save the Arabic; they read and study with avidity Arabic books; they amass whole libraries of them at a vast cost, and they everywhere sing the praises of Arab lore. Despite such warnings, medieval Europe maintained its love-hate relationship with Islamic culture. The cultural relations between Islam and the West took a drastically new turn when Europe arose as the dominant and unchallenged force of the modern era. From politics and education to science and art, modern European culture changed Islam-West relations once and for all. Combining a Judeo-Christian past with a secular present, Western culture has created a rift between Westernized elites and traditional communities in the Muslim world. The Muslim world has, over the last two centuries, adopted four major positions with regard to the rise of Western modernity. The first is a total adaptation of Western culture as the culmination and common heritage of human history. The second position is outright rejection and denouncement of Western culture as cultural imperialism. But it is equally a statement of identity politics which sees the West as a selfish and materialistic culture. The third position is critical engagement with Western cultural values and institutions advocated by reformist Muslim thinkers. Their assumption was based on a clear distinction between an objective material civilization, which was represented by the modern West, and spiritual values, which the Muslim world did not need to borrow from the West. While this view is still widely held in the Muslim world, extreme modernization and globalization have made such distinctions impossible. As his *Islam Between East and West* seeks to show, even though the Muslim sense of time and space differs from that of the West, the Islamic and Western worlds can to a certain extent be brought together. In his *Traditional Islam in the Modern World*, Seyyed Hossein Nasr argues that while the Western and Muslim worlds have different historical experiences and cultural traditions, they can trace their religious history to a shared spirituality. But all of these call for a reformulation of contemporary Islamic thought which has been shaped by its encounter with the modern secular West. The Muslim world is confronted today with the steady invasion of Western culture and shares with the rest of the world a sense of cultural loss and disempowerment. The World of Politics. Like religion and culture, the political and military histories of the Islamic and Western worlds are deeply intertwined. It was no secret that the first Muslim community clearly favored the Byzantine Empire over its arch rival the Sassanid Empire because the former was Christian and its Christian king Heraclius was held in high esteem in early Islamic scholarship. If the Islamic conquests of the eighth and ninth centuries had a decisive impact on the formation of Europe, one cannot study the history of the Mediterranean, the Balkans, the Baltic regions, and Western Europe without studying the northward and westward expansion of various Muslim empires. In , only five years after the fall of Constantinople one of the forsaken jewels of medieval Christendom , Pope Pius II extended an unprecedented invitation to the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II Fatih to convert to Christianity in order to bring all Christendom under his rule. From the battle of Lepanto to the second siege of Vienna , Ottoman military power weakened and gave way to European powers as the new forces of global dominance. The rapid expansion of the European colonial system shook the Muslim world from West Africa to the Philippines. By the middle of the nineteenth century, large parts of the Muslim world were under direct European control. In contrast to the loss of the "peripheries" of the Muslim world, the heartland of Islam was now under French occupation. The legacy of colonialism continues to make a profound impact on Islam-West relations today. Many Muslim countries fought wars of liberation against European powers but after independence found themselves dependent upon their former colonizers. The current distribution of global power, once wielded by Europe and now by the United States, fuels a sense of alienation, frustration, and mistrust in the Muslim world. The events of September 11th and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq have further increased tensions between various Muslim and Western groups. Many in Europe and the U. Many in the Muslim world see the "war on terror" as a war on Islam and Muslims. As Esposito and Mogahed show in *Who Speaks for Islam* , the overwhelming majority of Muslims subscribe to the universal principles of human rights, rule of law, and democracy, which are also Western values. But they also want the West to respect Islamic culture, religion, and tradition. This entails a more reasoned and balanced discussion of Islam-West relations than equating Islam and Muslims stereotypically with terrorism, violence, irrationalism, oppression, or cultural backwardness. In this regard, Islamophobia, the unfounded fear of Islam and Muslims, and the hatred arising from that fear are a major source of tension. Relations between Islam and the West are constantly changing. A

new element in this long and varied history is the rise of Muslim communities living in the West. While seeking to be active participants in their societies, the Muslim communities of the West are also struggling with issues of integration, discrimination, and minority rights. As their negotiation of a space within Western societies is a process that concerns both worlds, their potential to play the role of bridge-builders is increasing. Future relations between Muslim and Western societies will be shaped by three differing views. The first view is held by those who see Islam and the West as locked on an unalterable collision course with the two holding irreconcilable worldviews and political theologies. They see clash and confrontation as the only path between the two, and there is no shortage of either on the Western or the Muslim side. The second view, held by Westernized elites and governments, considers the current tensions as useless and based on old-fashioned theologies. It holds that the remedy for the Muslim world is more modernization and more secularization, by which Muslim societies, it is assumed, will enter the international community of "civilized" nations. The third view, held by scores of scholars, intellectuals, and community activists in both Muslim and Western worlds, argues for critical engagement and eventual reconciliation between the worlds of Islam and the West. From international politics and religion to media and education, there is a vibrant process under way to renegotiate the legacy of Western modernity and chart a new way for future relations. Both grassroots movements and high-level leadership engagements such as the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations seek to bridge the religious, cultural and political gap between Muslim and Western communities. Such critical engagement and a possible move toward historical reconciliation will involve revisiting the current self-perceptions of the Islamic and Western worlds and their views of one another. This is a daunting task but one that is essential for global peace. Arab Rediscovery of Europe. Princeton University Press, Postmodern Representations of Islam from Foucault to Baudrillard. London and New York: Islam, Christianity, and the West. Ansari, Zafar Ishaq, and John Esposito, eds. Muslims and the West: Islamabad and Washington D. Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Victorian Images of Islam. The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization. Columbia University Press, Moorish Culture in Spain. Translated from the German by Alisa Jaffa. The Making of an Image. Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs. Harvard University Press, Who Speaks for Islam?

**Chapter 2 : Islam and American Politics: Deepening the Dialogue**

*Islam and American Politics: Deepening the Dialogue (Part 1) April 4, Georgetown University and the World Economic Forum (WEF) jointly hosted a roundtable on Capitol Hill on deepening the dialogue between Islam and American politics.*

However, only in the last ten years has it specifically evolved into a question of civic integration closely related to religious identity. In the s and s, the socio-economic integration of immigrants with a Muslim background was the primary focus of academic literature, but with the emergence of the second and third generations, the interest has shifted to political mobilization. Beginning with the Rushdie affair in the United Kingdom and the hijab affair in France from to present, the spotlight has moved to the legitimacy of Islamic signs in public space, such as dress code, minarets, and halal foods. As a consequence, controversies surrounding the visibility of these signs have steadily grown. Controversy is not merely a disagreement about divergent points of view; but it is about fundamental differences or at least perceived as such about the principles and norms that regulate the common life of individuals sharing the same time period. Such fundamental divergences that lead to exclusive or binary positions cannot coexist in the same public space. Islam and the perceived rejection of democracy Consequently, headscarves, mosques, and minarets are increasingly seen as a rejection of western democratic values, or even worse, as a direct threat to the West. The legitimacy of Islamic signs in public space: Walter Wobmann, president of the committee "Yes for a ban of Minarets", in Egerkingen, Switzerland During the campaign to ban minarets in Switzerland, posters from the Egerkingen Committee displayed a woman in a burqa standing next to minarets that were rising from a Swiss flag and pointing to the sky like missiles see picture. Islamic signs are not only ostracized in public discourse, but are also controlled and restricted through multiple legal and administrative procedures in an attempt to "civilize" or adjust the signs to fit western political cultures. In April , the French government enforced the ban on wearing the niqab or burqa, which was overwhelmingly approved in by the French legislature. Other countries like Belgium and The Netherlands have followed the French path in and The most recent addition to the long list of outcast Islamic signs is circumcision. In June , a judge in Cologne, Germany, outlawed circumcision on the grounds that it causes "illegal bodily harm". Cultural struggle within Islam This cultural struggle is also fought on the Muslim side. Salafism, a specific interpretation of Islam in stark opposition to western values and cultures, advocates many practices such as gender segregation and rejection of political and civic engagement that are deemed as efforts to fight the impurity of the West. This particular brand of Islam is one of the most visible, widespread, and accessible interpretations, and thus gives the illusion to both Muslims and non-Muslims that Salafism is the true Islam. Fatal "either or" approach: On one hand, for most westerners, the burqa symbolizes total denial of freedom and of gender equality. Such stark oppositions are of course extreme, but at the same time, reflect the "either or" approach, in which most of the discourse on Islam is currently trapped. The German President, Joachim Gauck involuntarily illustrated the milder version of this binary opposition, when he said that Muslims can live in Germany but that, unlike his predecessor Christian Wulf , he does not think that Muslims can be part of Germany. Polarized mindset One major consequence of such a polarized mindset is to mask the sociological reality of Muslims. In fact, a striking gap exists between the image of Islam as it is constructed in binary public discourse and the multifaceted reality of Muslims across countries and localities. The first systematic and comparative review of the existing knowledge about Muslim political behaviours and religious practices in western Europe and in the US: In this regard, it is the first systematic and comparative review of the existing knowledge about Muslim political behaviours and religious practices in western Europe and in the United States. The major conclusion is that although Muslims are challenged by their secular environment, they do not experience the incompatibility so intensely debated by western politicians and Salafi preachers alike. Then why is Islam depicted as an obstacle in political discourse and the media? Taking up this intriguing gap, I have attempted to make sense of this disjuncture between what Muslims do and the political construct of the "Muslim problem". During this exploration, liberalism and secularism have appeared as the two major idioms used to make sense of the

Muslim presence. Contextualizing Liberalism The "Islamic Problem" in Europe is a consequence of immigrant settlement that in the last two decades has been phrased in cultural and religious terms. The fact that Muslims stand at the core of three major social "problems" – immigration; class and economic integration; ethnicity and multiculturalism – has increased the concern about Islamic religion, increasingly seen as the major reason for all problems. I show in my book that in the United States this culturalization of all political issues related to Muslims is more recent and primarily related to security concerns. Therefore, categories of "immigrant" and "Muslim" overlap in Western Europe, unlike in the United States where immigration debates centre on economic and social concerns such as wages, assimilation, and language. The outcome of these social shifts is visible in the apocalyptic turn of the public rhetoric on Islam in Europe. Extreme right political figures like Geert Wilders speak of "the lights going out over Europe" or of "the sheer survival of the West". It would be misleading to think that the conflict between Islam and the West is waged only on the margins of European societies, Cesari says. In fact, numerous opinion surveys as well as political discourses show that the perception of Islam as a danger to Western core political values is shared across political allegiances and nations. The Alliance of Liberalism and Feminism In fact, this existential war can be defined as a values-centred liberalism which pitches itself against the recognition of religious and cultural diversity. Based on the principle of toleration, the liberal State is traditionally expected to grant equality to citizens of all religious and cultural backgrounds. Hence, it advocates a strong cultural integration of newcomers. As a consequence it has created very significant policy shifts in countries usually characterized by multiculturalism like the Netherlands or the United Kingdom. For example, the multicultural project of recognition of "cultural diversity in a context of mutual tolerance" of Labour Home Secretary Roy Jenkins is now strongly criticized. In fact, the new political consensus is to prioritize strong cultural assimilation to British values over minority rights. The markers of European identity This "new integrationist" discourse is widely shared across European countries and, interestingly, promoted by former left-wing activists. Gender equality and rejection of religious authority, which were primary left-wing topics of struggle in the 1970s have become in the present decade the legitimate markers of European identity. In these conditions, all groups and individuals are required to demonstrate conformity to these liberal values in order to become legitimate members of national communities. The "Moderate Muslims" label serves this purpose. It creates a distinction that is supposedly not based on Islam as such but on the adherence of Muslims to liberal values. Some feminist figures have been particularly vehement against group rights and especially against any Islamic principles that could undermine gender equality. Curiously, this feminist discourse silences the Muslim women that it purports to defend. As a consequence, Muslim women are transformed into subalterns in a way that is similar to the colonial and postcolonial vision of the Muslim subject. For example, state-led production of Muslim subjects with the correct moral identity is reflected in various policies: All these policies can be summed up as an attempt to civilize the "enemy". Interestingly, most Muslims we interviewed reveal that they are already "civilized" and are trying to find commonality with the dominant group. Most of the time, however, they are silenced or reduced to the reification of their bodies, dress, or minarets. Being Muslim and a citizen One of our most striking findings is the non-contentious nature of being a Muslim and a citizen, while it is this exact dichotomy that puts Muslims at odds with the social expectations of most Europeans. Our surveys show that Muslims do not see incompatibility between being a Muslim and being a citizen. At the core of the European shift is the blind spot of the social legitimacy of religion that has been completely eliminated from most of national discourse and values. In sum, the symbolic integration of Muslims within national communities would require a dramatic change in the current liberal and secularist narratives. It is a daunting task, but it can be done. On March 10, 2011, the hearings of the Congress Commission on Radicalization of American Muslims provided a platform for at least two individuals to weave Muslims into the American narrative. This can be seen as empty feel-good talk, but it can also be the prefiguration of how historical references can be used to achieve symbolic integration and counter the dominant narrative that tends to present Islam as an alien religion.

*relationships between Islam and the West and Islam and modernity. The alternative 'dialogue' vision also has deep roots in the Muslim world, as it does in the West.*

Attending an academic gathering has always been a pleasant and enjoyable exercise for me. For in such gatherings, the proceedings most often revolve around three functions: Understanding results from talking and listening, and the two functions of talking and listening,, combined with looking, constitute the most important physical, psychological and spiritual activity of a human being. But talking and listening combine to make up a bipartite-sometimes multipartite-effort to approach the truth and to reach a mutual understanding. That is why dialogue has nothing to do with the skeptics and is not a property of those who think they are the sole proprietors of Truth. It rather reveals its beautiful but covered face only to those wayfarers who are bound on their journey of discovery hand in hand with other human beings. The phrase, dialogue among civilizations and cultures, which should be interpreted as conversing with other civilizations and cultures, is based upon such a definition of truth, and this definition is not necessarily at odds with the well-known definitions of truth that one finds in philosophical texts. Dialogue among civilizations requires listening to and hearing from other civilizations and cultures, and the importance of listening to others is by no means less than talking to others. It may be in fact more important. Talking and listening create a conversation; one side addresses the other side, and speech is exchanged. Under what circumstances is man addressed? But the world of art and the world of religion are the world of addressing. We are addressed by a work of art, and in religion, words of God address man. That is why the languages of mysticism and religion are linked together by genuine and profound ties, and why the earliest specimens of art that have been created by man are also specimens of Sacred Art. The differences arise from religious laws and codes of conduct that govern the social and judicial life of human beings. Now we must ask ourselves who is this person that is being addressed. From the earliest times, philosophers have devoted a major part of their time and energy to answering this question. They have tried to explain how, and in what manner we may get to know man, to know him inside out, in absolute terms. The question of how one can get to know him or her; and reach the goal of self-knowledge, constitutes a major part of this philosophical quest. Recounting the fascinating story of philosophical anthropology, and the episodes dealing with self-knowledge and self-discovery, would take several long nights in the thousand and One Nights of the history of philosophy. Some of these tales were first told in the East and some originated in the West. Denying the existence of any part of his essence would impair our understanding of the significance of his being. In our effort to grasp the meaning of the person, we should watch out not to fall into the trap of individualism, or into that of collectivism. Even though the views expressed by Christian thinkers have helped the modern concept of the individual to crystallize, this should not be taken to mean that there exists a natural link between the two views. Just as the profound attention focused on the meaning of the person as the recipient of the Divine Word should not be credited, in my view, to the influence of personalism. Of course, it has been said by everyone that in modern society, it is individual human beings who are the criterion and the yardstick for all institutions, laws and social relations, and that civil rights and human rights are in fact nothing other than the rights of this same individual. For this reason we consider, from. The concept of the person can be easily explained in terms of Islamic mysticism. The Islamic mystics consider man to be a world unto him, a microcosm. His originality is solely due to the fact that it is him, and him alone, who are addressed by the Divine Call. Anyone who examines even briefly the meandering course of philosophy from its beginnings to the present will clearly notice The continuous swing of the philosophers, from one extreme to the other. The last swing, the last link in the chain, is modernity. This word, which seemingly is the latest term to be derived from the Latin modernus, was apparently first used in the nineteenth century. But the Latin word itself has been in use for more than fifteen centuries, and it was only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that modernity was applied to a wide range of concepts in such diverse fields as philosophy, art, science, history and ethics. It was a cataclysm that pushed man and the world into a new orbit. Italy played a decisive role in the birth of the Renaissance. Although many books and essays have been written to describe and explain this

great milestone, there is still a definite need for philosophers, historians and scientists to think and talk about it. The sole aim of the Renaissance was not to revive classical Greek culture. Its principal aim was—as already pointed out by a number of thinkers—to revitalize religion by giving it a new language and fresh ideas. The Renaissance defined the man of religion not as someone who would contemptuously turn his back on the world in order to repress it, but as somebody who would face the world. The Renaissance man of religion turns to the world just as the world awaits him with open arms, and this reciprocal openness and opening up of the world and man constitutes the most fundamental point about the Renaissance, and inherently it is a religious event aimed at conserving, reforming and propagating religion, and not opposed to it or against it. But this great event ended up, in due course, somewhere diametrically opposed to the original intention. The opening of the world was transformed into violent conquest and subjugation. This violent conquest did not remain limited to mastering nature. Its fires soon spread to human communities. What came to be known in the socio-political history of Europe, as colonialism is the result of extending the domineering attitude of man towards nature and the natural sciences, to men Modernity without adopting a humanitarian and ethical approach. The critique of modernity that I propose is undertaken from a vantage point and angle which is profoundly different from the position of its well-known critics, especially in the domain of philosophy. Someone who sets out to prune a tree should not cut the very branch he is standing on. That is exactly how some of the philosophers of our time are behaving in their critique of modernity. By denying Reason any dialectical authority, they turn it either into a weapon that destroys everyone and everything, itself included, or transform it into a blunt and rusted sword that can only become a museum piece. One cannot use Reason as a critical weapon without accepting its authority and without recognizing its limits. The critique of pure reason, which opened a new chapter in Western philosophy and may be taken to mean the critique of everything and all concepts including pure reason itself, only becomes possible if reason is endowed with authority. Without the authority of reason—which should be discussed at length and with precision in some other venue and at a more appropriate time, without forgetting to discuss its relationship to domination and power—it will not be possible to have a clear picture and concept of such vital political issues as human rights, peace, justice and freedom. And without this clear concept, our efforts for the establishment of these ideals will not succeed. But this should not be interpreted as a call to rationality and European style logo centrism that proceeded post-modernism. Because of the fact that Europe has given birth to modern rationality, it should feel a stronger responsibility for criticizing it and finding a solution to prevent its destructive consequences. Europe has itself fallen prey to its over-reliance on rationality, and is today engaged, through its thinkers and philosophers, in totally discrediting its own rationality. The Orient, which etymologically speaking has given rise to a number of words pertaining to order and a sense of direction, can undertake in, the course of a historical dialogue with the West aimed at reaching a mutual understanding, to call on Europe and America to exercise more equilibrium, serenity, and contemplation in their conduct, thus contributing to the establishment of peace, security and justice in the world. This sense of equilibrium and serenity, if it is taken in the Oriental Age of Enlightenment was an Apollonian era, while Romanticism was the movement of the pendulum in the opposite direction. The next century should be a century for turning to the kind of spirituality that Oriental man has pursued for several thousands of years. The exuberance and vitality of European culture stems from its critical approach towards everything, it included. But the time has come for Europe to take another step forward and view itself differently, as others see it. This should not be taken to mean that Europe should forget its great cultural heritage or that it should turn to a new type of obscurantism. It is rather an encouragement to European culture and civilization to embark on new experiences to gain a more precise knowledge of global cultural geography. For a real dialogue among civilizations to take place, it is imperative that the East should become a real participant in the discussions and not just remain an object of study. Of course this is not a one-way invitation. We too, as Iranians, as Muslims and as Asians, need to take major steps towards gaining a true knowledge of the West, as it really is. This knowledge will help us to improve our economic and social way of life. Taking such bold steps by us and by Europeans would require a character trait that was first recognized and promoted in Europe by the Italians. Renaissance historians have written that as a result of the continuous contacts of the Italians with Byzantium and the, Islamic world, the people of Italy developed a

sense of tolerance. The Italians had been familiar with Islamic civilization since the time of the Crusades, and they admired it. This knowledge and familiarity with a foreign culture, and the sense of wonder that accompanied it, was the biggest factor in developing this sense of tolerance among the Italian people. It is ironic that this concept of tolerance that was adopted from the Muslims and is a result of the contacts made by Europeans with them, is now, in our time, being offered by Europeans to Muslims as an ethical and political piece of advice. But the influence of Muslim thought and culture on Italian and European culture is not limited to the question of tolerance. No nation has the right to confiscate the contributions of others to its own civilization, and to deny the share of any civilization in the history of human culture. Apart from the influence of Muslim philosophy, theology and art on Europeans, something that has been very instrumental in refreshing and purifying the temper of Europeans is Islamic literature, in all its diversity and richness. As an example, one can cite the influence of Ibn al-Arabi upon Dante, but here fortunately much has been said and written by well-known European scholars. Speaking of the historical past without any reference to the future would be an idle academic exercise, whereas it is imperative upon us, for the sake of helping human communities and improving the state of the world, to find out how the relations of Asian countries, and especially those of the Muslim countries, with Europe stand today. Because Muslims and Europeans are next-door neighbors, and nations, unlike individuals, cannot choose their neighbors. Therefore, apart from moral, cultural and humanitarian reasons, Islam and Europe must, by force of historic and geographical circumstance, get to know one another better, and then move on to improve their political, economic and cultural relations. Our futures are inseparable because our pasts have been inseparable. If the great civilizations of Asia view themselves today in a Western mirror and get to know one another through the West, it was Islam that served in the not-too-distant past as a mirror to the West; it was a mirror in which the West could see its own past and its own philosophical and cultural heritage. If dialogue is not a simple choice but a necessity for our two cultures, then this dialogue should be; conducted with the true representatives of Islamic culture and thought. This would not be a dialogue; it would not even amount to a monologue. A profound, thoughtful and precise dialogue with Islamic civilization would be helpful in finding fair and practical solutions to some of the grave problems that beset the world today. The crisis of the family, the crisis in the relationship of man and nature, the ethical crisis that has developed in scientific research, and many more problems of this nature should be among the items on the agenda of an Islamic European dialogue. Dialogue is such a desirable thing, because it is based on freedom and free will. In a dialogue, no idea can be imposed on the other side. In a dialogue, one should respect the independent identity of the other side and his or her independent ideological and cultural integrity. Only in such a case, can dialogue be a preliminary step leading to peace, security and justice. In the meanwhile, conducting a dialogue with Iran has its own advantages. Iran is a door-to-door neighbor with Europe on one side, and with Asia on the other. The Persian heart and the Persian mind are brimful with a sense of balance, affection and tolerance, and for this reason, Iranians are the advocates of dialogue and adherents to justice and peace.

*Islam and the West: Muslim Voices of Dialogue. and sometimes implementing new concepts and paradigms in domestic and international politics. In particular, reacting against the 'clash/jihadists.*

More on This Story: The Aspen Institute The Aspen Institute has long brought together people from different backgrounds and urged them to speak frankly and freely about controversial subjects. Right now the Institute is exploring the great political and cultural collisions of the 21st century. Bill Moyers moderated a discussion on America and the Islamic world. Lyn Corbett Fitzgerald, Senior VP of Communications for the Aspen Institute answered our questions about the history and programs of this unique organization. Tell us about the founding of the Institute. What was the impetus in the postwar world that spurred Walter Paepcke to found a place for civil dialogue? Chicago businessman Walter Paepcke, chairman of the Container Corporation of America, dreamed of transforming the abandoned mining town of Aspen, Colorado, into a center for dialogue, a place for "lifting us out of our usual selves. His idea was "a place where the human spirit can flourish. The mission of the Aspen Institute is to foster enlightened, responsible leadership. Our focus is on leaders because the human condition depends so profoundly on how well they perform their roles and obligations. In what has become an increasingly complex and interdependent world, the Institute helps leaders deepen their knowledge, broaden their perspective, and enhance their capacity to think more creatively. They are constantly envisioning a better organization, a better society, a better world. We do this by providing a safe haven for leaders that encourages candid and civil discourse, building mutual trust and understanding. We focus on values that underlie the issues morally responsible leaders face to help identify common ground. Finally, we promote thought leading to action because leaders emerge from their Aspen Institute experience inspired to make wiser, more informed decisions that result in a more just, peaceful, and flourishing society. An international conference on "Technology: These five major conferences, attended by both Nelson Mandela and then-President F. The Congressional Program established the annual American-Vietnamese Dialogue to facilitate discussion between the US and Vietnam at the highest levels of government and the private sector, paving the way for normalization of relations between the former adversaries. What are the different programs of the Institute? Aspen Institute seminars are designed to inspire those who build, lead, and transform organizations. We start where traditional leadership programs leave off, bringing together diverse groups of experienced leaders to learn from each other and from the greatest thinkers and leaders of all time. In an environment conducive to reflection and dialogue, participants wrestle with fundamental questions about the nature of values-based leadership. Skilled moderators lead small groups in roundtable discussions. Through the seminar experience, participants come to a new awareness of the organizations they head, and the values they find important. They bring this newfound energy and commitment back to their organizations. Other Aspen Institute seminar offerings include: Leading Change, which explores the management approaches of successful leaders and how change can be created within an organization; Leadership and Character, which focuses on the element of character as an essential component of leadership, examining the reasons why integrity is a linchpin for effective leadership. Challenges of Global Capitalism, which investigates the growing political and cultural opportunities and challenges posed by globalization as well as the public role of the private sector in the global arena. Justice and Society, which provides the opportunity for leaders to return to first principles in an examination of what is meant by a just society. The Aspen Institute policy programs seek to advance public and private sector policy on significant societal issues. Each program frames a critical topic and convenes leaders and experts from relevant fields to reach together for constructive solutions. While unique in substance and approach, Aspen Institute policy programs share a common mission and methodology. They serve as an impartial forum, bringing a diversity of perspectives together in informed dialogue, research and action towards a solution to critical issues such as education, poverty, environmental preservation, and global interdependence. By fostering innovative thinking and initiatives, the Aspen Institute policy programs help leaders address complex policy issues in new ways. Another program of the Institute, called Great Collisions, was established in What makes the Great Collisions series different from other Aspen

programs? Great Collisions is a high-profile program series of the Aspen Institute that brings the power of dialogue to bear on critical issues that currently divide leaders and the public alike. Often adversarial camps are dominated by powerful special interests that focus on single issues, resulting in a proliferation of misinformation and false assumptions. Great Collisions combats this tendency by seeking common ground on the most contentious issues of our day. The Institute has for more than 50 years convened leaders from diverse perspectives to engage in informed dialogue and civil discourse about the most critical and oftentimes divisive issues confronting our nation and the world. Outstanding leaders are encouraged to listen to views that are different from their own, to identify shared goals and concerns among their fellow participants, and to reach together for solutions that may emerge out of this process of mutual listening and understanding. Fostering informed and civil dialogue empowers leaders to leverage their respective spheres of influence and, in so doing, improves the likelihood of wise policy making and leadership. Great Collisions convenes top leaders, experts, policymakers, and journalists holding widely diverse viewpoints on a given issue to be guided in thoughtful discussion by a distinguished moderator. The participants are among the foremost experts and thought leaders on each selected topic area. They engage in rigorous and civil discourse concerning the arguments for and against their respective positions. Each is challenged to look for common ground. In so doing, the dialogue deepens and broadens informed debate and raises the standard by which issues are both considered and addressed. The purpose of the Great Collisions program series is to: Topics to be addressed in Great Collisions are timely, high on the public agenda, and characterized by a balanced and fair representation of diverse opinion. Great Collisions seeks to construct a framework for advancing a better understanding and interpretation of complex and sometimes perplexing issues. Wisdom is the ultimate goal of this program series, dialogue its fundamental tool. Having Bill Moyers serve as moderator and using this important dialogue for broadcast to a national audience will have a positive impact on a profoundly critical global issue. Virtually all of the programs of the Institute responded to the challenge of September. Notable among them are the efforts of the Justice and Society Program in creating a new program on post-conflict human rights in Afghanistan. The Congressional Program immediately responded by launching more than 30 breakfast briefings and a special conference for members of Congress to educate them on the Islamic world in order to help them act effectively as policymakers. Several of our programs, the Global Interdependence Initiative and the Aspen Strategy Group among them, are making great contributions toward this end. The Aspen Institute has never been in a stronger position to make a difference in the world. Some of these issues are: US and global poverty, preserving our environment, promoting a vibrant and effective non-profit sector and civil society, and working with leaders from all sectors to help them clarify and strengthen their personal convictions in responding to the challenges they face in their workplaces, in their communities, and in the world. For more information visit the Aspen Institute Web site.

**Chapter 5 : Focus On - Oxford Islamic Studies Online**

*That is one reason among many that relations between Islam and the West never seem to lose their relevance for the state of our worldâ€”from politics and international relations to interfaith relations and discussions of pluralism.*

This principle perhaps best applies to the current geopolitical situation of the Middle East. Lately, there are signs that even this bloodiest and most intractable of conflicts may be drawing to a close. Oman stunned people around the world last week by releasing images of a beaming Netanyahu holding hand with Sultan Qaboos. The world is also aware of this fact. Maybe it is time for Israel to be treated the same as others states and also bear the same obligations. In fact, it was Bahrain that first reached out to Israel and is said to enjoy informal ties with Tel Aviv. Yet, without a doubt, the Middle East is undergoing a great churn and a realignment of forces like never before. Whenever it came up in the context of the Mideast conflict, it understandably evoked strong emotions. After all, Oman, which unlike other Arab states has maintained good relations with Iran, had played a crucial role in opening channels of communication between Tehran and Washington under Barack Obama. These parleys eventually led to the Iran nuclear accord with the West. The relentless media blitz by Israel and its powerful friends in the US has managed to paint Iran as the clear and present danger to world peace as well as to the safety and security of the Middle East. Tehran finds itself totally isolated in the neighbourhood. The new punitive sanctions by the Trump administration could force many buyers of Iranian oil to beat a hasty retreat. Of course, Iran is not blameless. Its hegemonic ambitions too have divided the whole region. Notwithstanding its genocidal war on the Palestinians and occupation of Arab lands, from Egypt to Lebanon and Jordan to Syria, and notwithstanding its deadly pile of nukes pointed at Arab capitals, Israel is telling the Arabs that it is their best friend and that Iran is their worst and common enemy. If you think that is a cruel joke and paradox â€” well, it probably is. The Palestinians continue to get killed and persecuted in their own land while the blessed international community with its fine institutions stands and stares. God knows enough blood has been spilt in the Holy Land. But can peace be brought about through coercion and use of force without Israel ending its subjugation of Palestinians and ceding a single inch of their land? How long will such peace last if the historic injustices at the heart of this conflict remain unaddressed? If Israel and its powerful friends indeed want peace, the Arab peace plan remains the best solution yet. The Arab League endorsed the Saudi initiative at its and summits. But Israel has never been interested in finding peace or sincerely resolving this conflict. That would mean giving up the Palestinian and Arab land that it stole in successive wars. Aijaz Zaka Syed is an award-winning journalist and editor. Several of the Palestinian leaders are Christians. There is a rising support for the Palestinians in Europe, especially in European universities, because such grave injustice being visited upon a people does not sit well with many Western liberals. Hadith-quoting ex-Muslims gladly join Trump and the Crown Prince in this malicious propaganda.

## Chapter 6 : The Politics of Islam in Mali: Separating Myth from Reality | Crisis Group

*13 Islam and the West: Clash-Dialogue Perceptions and Policy Divide Hassan, Gubara Said (Ph.D.) Researcher at the Department of Political Sciences.*

Gringo what is an an unindicted co-conspirator in a terrorism case doing in Georgetown? I am speaking of CAIR. Steve I agree, what a joke to have Brotherhood thug Awad there. Pull the other one. You mean the terrorist front group? Maybe the reason Americans associate Islam with Terrorism is that the Terrorists tend to associate themselves with Islam. Awad, when you unequivocally condemn Hamas and Hezbollah as terrorists, then MAYBE you will have earned the right to speak on the subject. Until then, you have no credibility whatsoever. Is your daddy not treating you nice? Syd 'Then, how come they roam freely in the US without being arrested? Steve With the US presidential election campaign in full swing, Muslim voters and issues are having a greater impact than at any other point in US history. If that is true, why is no candidate seeking the Muslim vote? The candidates are running their campaigns oblivious to Muslim voters. To say that Muslims are having a big impact on this campaign is a delusion of grandeur, plain and simple. Ian Oh, there you are, Setof. Serena left a post for you. You ought to read it before you scurry back under the hand. Steve Me thinks thou dost protest too much Syed. Calling Islamophobia and lies when the truth is presented is the worn out taqqiya tool of the Islamist. You say one think, your belligerent attitude says another SydUSA steve: Ivan Erickson Extract from:

## Chapter 7 : Symposium on the State of West-Islamic Dialogue

*between Islam and Christianity that could be the basis for an enlightened dialogue between the two civilisations in the theological, cultural and political fields.*

## Chapter 8 : Islam and American Politics: Deepening the Dialogue - OnFaith

*Ultimately, the discussion is an attempt to tear down the notion that Islam and the West are two civilizations locked in a bitter struggle for supremacy and to reconsider them as the two shores of the Mediterranean—two halves of the same geographical, religious, and cultural sphere.*

## Chapter 9 : Politics | www.nxgvision.com - Dialogue with the Islamic World

*THE APPEAL OF ISLAMIC POLITICS: Ritual and Dialogue in a Poor District of Turkey Cihan Z. Tu al\* University of California, Berkeley (g the West from the East.*