Just Who's Afraid of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad?

Commentary on speech by the President of Iran to the UN General Assembly

Introduction

On 25th September 2007, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of Iran, addressed the 62nd UN General Assembly in New York at a time when there was every expectation that Iran would be subject to an imminent tactical nuclear strike. Live coverage of his whole speech was provided on CNN. It followed a controversial, and widely publicized, question and answer session at Columbia University (Ahmadinejad speaks; outrage and controversy follow, CNN, 24 September 2007; Jesse Walker, Who's Afraid of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad? After all the trembling, the Iranian president got a bruising instead of a boost, Reason Magazine, 25 September 2007).

[Note The fact that the main title of the latter commentary was identical with that of earlier drafts of this commentary (on a different meeting) is purely coincidental, although it is obviously the similarity of the situations that evoked the choice, but with quite different intents. The title of this commentary was then distinguished by prefixing it with "Just", as a consequence of the manner in which a major search engine appeared suddenly to manipulate its relative rankings of the two commentaries -- possibly as a consequence of pressure regarding the contents of what follows. It is necessarily unclear to what pressures search engines are responsive -- especially on political issues which may affect their revenue stream]

Despite the content of his UN address, and speculation regarding such an attack, there was almost no media coverage immediately thereafter -- creating an impression of deliberate cover-up. Various websites subsequently carried versions of the full text (Global Security.org; Washington Post). At the time of writing there appears to be little commentary on the serious issues he raised -- other than to question his integrity and sanity (Iranian madman Mahmoud Ahmadinejad walks among us, Daily News, 24 September 2007).

Given the current dramatic state of an increasingly faith-based world, it is appropriate to compare the born again George Bush -- who would order the strike -- with the equally religious Mahmoud Ahmadinejad whose defence is argued below (Amil Imani, Who is Mahmoud Ahmadinejad? American Thinker, 3 October 2007). Both attest to a privileged communication with the divine. It is indeed that which concerns some American observers (Iran leader's U.N. finale reveals apocalyptic view; Iran prepares people for 'messiah miracles': Government broadcasts series on imminent appearance of apocalyptic Islamic 'Mahdi'; Iran leader's messianic end-times mission), just as others are concerned by undeclared faith-based agendas on the part of the country in possession of most nuclear weaponry. As noted, from an earlier interview with an Iranian editoralist, cited in the Christian Science Monitor:

"Bush said: 'God said to me, attack Afghanistan and attack Iraq.' The mentality of Mr. Bush and Mr. Ahmadinejad is the same here -- both think God tells them what to do," says Mr. Mohebian, noting that end-of-time beliefs have similar roots in Christian and Muslim theology. (Scott Peterson, Waiting for Rapture in Iran, 21 December 2005)

In what follows the official Iranian version of Ahmadinejad's speech is reproduced with a series of comments interspersed in italics (note also the official UN version, not initially available). The format of the text has been slightly modified to improve readability (notably by occasional use of bullet points; spelling and grammar are as in the original). The purpose of the exercise, in supplying the commentary, is to highlight issues raised by the leader of a country that may be shortly, and uniquely, subject to nuclear attack -- irrespective of how such an attack may be finally justified. As the commentary shows, this does not imply agreement with the points made in the address.

The following pointers to the well-structured contents of the address have been added for convenience.

Predicaments and challenges
1. Organized attempts to tear down the institution of family and to reduce the status of women
2. Widespread violations of human rights, terrorism and occupation
3. Aggressions against indigenous cultures and national values
4. Poverty, illiteracy, health deprivation and gap between the poor and the rich
5. Ignoring noble values and promotion of deception and lies
6. Violations of rules of international law and disrespect of commitments
7. Escalation of threats and arms race
8. Inefficacy of international mechanism to prevail over these challenges and to bring durable peace and security
I plan to touch upon and explain the roots and ways out of these predicaments and some of the principal challenges facing our world.

In the present tumultuous world and predominance of loud outcries, threats and tensions, and in the time:

I am pleased and grateful to the Almighty to have the opportunity once again to attend this important universal forum.

Address and commentary

Mr. Chairman, Honorable Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased and grateful to the Almighty to have the opportunity once again to attend this important universal forum.

**Comment:** Whilst any such preface might be cause for reservations in the primarily secular mode of discourse within the international community, it is striking to compare it with the fairly similar appeals made by the faith-based leadership of the Coalition of the Willing and most notably by American politicians. Indeed, just as in Islamic cultures, those in America consider it increasingly appropriate to make such references when interacting with their supporters. However, it is relevant to note that the language used to that end in Islamic cultures has far more poetic resonances than the simple binary form that is common in the West. It is also characteristic that the American version is primarily of the form "God Bless America" in contrast with the more generic Islamic phrasing.

**What is striking under the circumstances,** with the immediate threat of a nuclear strike, is the formal recognition in a UN arena of a universal transcendental context -- presumably in some measure common to faith-based cultures, whether potential attacker or probable victim thereof.

Given that the clashing Abrahamic cultures hold so profoundly to their respective understandings of this transcendental reality, how is it that immeasurably greater resources are devoted by each to the design and use of weaponry in defence of their particular understanding -- in comparison with the paucity of resources devoted to clarifying the mystery of why the mysterious nature of that reality should be so variously understood, notably by others?

**How different is the nature and origin of the misunderstanding** that has violently separated over centuries: Sunni from Shiite, Catholic from Protestant, Orthodox from non-Orthodox Jews -- as compared to that separating Islam from Christianity, and either from Judaism, also over centuries? References to an omniscient Almighty must surely hold these violence-engendering differences, in the Name of God, to arise from limitations of human misunderstanding, especially amongst the Abrahamic religions -- the "People of the Book" -- living as they do in expectation of an integrative fulfillment of divine prophecy.

It is appropriate to compare the unique invocation of the prophesied Imam Al-Mahdi, in a formal international arena, with analogous expectations associated with prophecies in the other Abrahamic religions, the Messiah of Judaism and the Messiah of Christianity. It would be a grave mistake to fail to recognize the determining influence of such expectations on governmental policies, notably on the leadership of the Coalition of the Willing in invading Iraq. It is however curious that believers in such prophecies should find no other basis for dialogue than the use of weapons, and especially nuclear weapons.

In the present tumultuous world and predominance of loud outcries, threats and tensions, and in the time:

- when the big powers are unable to solve the present problems, *(an unquestionable fact)*
- when mistrust in regional and international arenas is on the rise, *(an unquestionable fact)*
- when psychological security of societies is being targeted by an onslaught of political and propaganda designs, *(an assertion which many would consider reasonable, however "propaganda" is to be understood)*
- and disappointment prevails over efficacy of policies and actions of the international organizations in establishing of durable peace and security, *(an unquestionable fact, despite efforts to focus the media on "positive" achievements and vigorously to deny the accumulation over many years of evidence to the contrary)*
- and the protection of human rights is being weakened, *(an unquestionable fact)*

I plan to touch upon and explain the roots and ways out of these predicaments and some of the principal challenges facing our world.
worldwide to "we the peoples", through media such as CNN, makes physical presence at the UN "court" unnecessary? What behaviour in such a final court of appeal is to be considered a mark of uncivilization and backsliding to barbarism? Does this reflect the very same logic whereby a civilized democracy indulges in secret tribunals uncluttered by substantiated appeals from the defendants?

I will also speak to you about:

- the need for amending the present situation,
- prospects for brighter and more hopeful future,
- and about the reappearance of the sublime and beauty, kindness and dignity, justice and blossoming of all divine human talents and dominance of love of God and realization of the promise of God as stated by of all divine prophets and righteous men.

Comment: Again this points to the possibility of the kind of future to which most would aspire.

I will then put to your judgment the nuclear issue of Iran as a reality and testing ground for measurement of honesty, efficacy, steadfastness and victories. In the closing part of my address, I will offer my proposals.

Comment: This issue, with the immediate threat of nuclear attack, provides a degree of immediate urgency greater than most other issues currently the subject of debate and procrastination within the international community. The unforeseen consequences and possible multiplier effects of such an attack are dimensions of which historians are well aware -- World War I, as triggered by a simple targeted assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, is a classic example. More technically these have been recognized under various names (from the "butterfly effect" to the "Black Swan" effect)

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As you are all aware we are presently facing important, numerous and diverse challenges that I will refer to some of them.

1. Organized attempts to tear down the institution of family and to reduce the status of women

Family is the most sacred and valuable human institution that serves as the center of the purest mutual love and affection of mothers, fathers and children, and a safe environment for the upbringing and cultivating human generations, and a fertile ground for blossoming of sentiments and emotions. This institution has always been respected by all nationalities, religions of cultures.

Comment: This view, as implied, is just as strongly held by Christian fundamentalists who might well choose the same phrases to articulate their focus on family values. Indeed it is a view held by fundamentalists of other religious persuasion. Curiously however it would be the fundamentalists of two of the Abrahamic religions who would most strongly support any nuclear strike by the Coalition of the Willing on Iran -- with the predictable impact on thousands, if not millions, of family relationships. One might ask whether this reference was cynically given this importance as a skillful play -- and yet it remains a fact that all Abrahamic religions indeed hold family values to be of fundamental importance, whether or not there is any hypocrisy in that assertion by politicians.

Today we are witnessing an organized invasion by the enemies of humanity and plunderers to tear down this genuine institution. They target this noble institution by promoting lewdness, violence and breaking the boundaries of chastity and decency.

Comment: Again this is a view that it is held by many in all cultures. The debate is a vigorous one with both sides counting among their strongest advocates those with other undeclared agendas that might be considered far more suspect and worrying. "Family values" may indeed also be used as a form of "human shield" by those advancing far more dubious and destructive causes.

The argument also (deliberately) obscures the problematic current attitude of Islam to homosexuals, notably in Iran. How easy it is to fail to recall the degree to which this attitude is shared by fundamentalists of the other Abrahamic religions -- and most vociferously (and even violently) in the USA? And how much more easy is it to fail to recognize how widely this attitude has been held in "developed countries" until very recently?

Why is it expected that the development of every culture should be in lock step timing with the recent human rights "discoveries" of those who claim moral superiority -- following their complicity in the unique level of human slaughter in the first half of the 20th century? What allowance is made for the stage of socio-economic development of such cultures and for the processes and forces which have inhibited their development to a more enlightened level? Do countries and cultures have every right to indulge in the human rights practices appropriate to the degree of development at which they have been sustained, or to which they have been reduced? What practices could be reasonably expected of a country that had been "bombed back to the Stone Age"?

The intolerance of homosexuality by Islam is especially highlighted by the execution in Iran of those who offend against faith-based edicts. Curiously, in the media, it has been possible to dissociate such condemnation of homosexuals from the capital punishment to which they are then subjected -- a form of punishment widely practiced and defended in the USA, although abhorred in many civilized countries to a far higher degree than homosexuality.
The precious existence of women as the expression of divine beauty and peak of kindness, affection and purity has been the target of heavy exploitation over the past recent decades by the holders of powers and owners of media and wealth. In some societies, this beloved creature has been reduced to mere instruments of publicity and all boundaries and protective shields of chastity, purity and beauty have been trampled. This is a colossal betrayal of human society, of succeeding generations, and an irreparable blow on the social coherence.

Comment: As such, and allowing for cultural differences, this statement would be one which might easily be shared by feminist campaigners in the most advanced “developed” countries. It can of course be readily argued that it (deliberately) disguises the many issues relating to the particular institutionalized treatment of women within Islamic cultures, and in this case Iran. But before assuming an unwarranted degree of self-righteousness, it is important for critics to recognize the extent to which -- despite legislative measures -- equality between men and women is far from having been completely achieved in most “developed” societies, if only in terms of remuneration. All the Abrahamic religions continue to justify practices that restrict or constrain the role of women; this is notably the case in certain Christian and Jewish sects.

It is ironic to note, for example, the role of male-only clubs and secret societies (such as the freemasons) with respect to the leadership of countries that claim to be models of democracy. It is also appropriate to recognize the extent of harassment of women by men in such model societies. Whether the most appropriate technology or not, the use of the veil inhibits such harassment and reduces the need for women to arm themselves against violent attacks -- as in some of the most developed countries.

There are curious dynamics and contradictions in deliberately associating “freedom” in a democratic society with the right to physical self-exposure in public, however it is curtailed by ordinances regarding “public decency” or “appropriate clothing” -- as for participants in the UN General Assembly, for example. This “right” has now been extended into an obligation to expose the face at all times to ensure appropriate visibility to omnipresent security cameras -- as a means of protecting “freedom”. And yet in the missionary activity of all Abrahamic faiths, covering the body is a requirement -- until recently epitomized by efforts to ensure that traditionally uncovered indigenous women were obliged to wear brassieres (subsequently considered symbolic of a constraint on “freedom”).

Are there not strange symmetries that merit exploration before focusing narrowly on a particular case in a particular historical period -- before seeking to bomb women out of their burkhas and into bikinis, supposedly in their best interests? Again associating universal human rights with current fashions obscures issues regarding norms of supposedly “civilized” societies in decades past -- and the rights of societies to manage such controversial issues independently of the whims of the fashion industry of particular cultures that aggressively claim universality.

2. Widespread violations of human rights, terrorism and occupation

Unfortunately human rights are being extensively violated by certain powers, especially by those who pretend to be their exclusive advocates:

- setting up clandestine prisons, abductions, trials and secret punishments without any regard to due process,
- listening on telephone conversations,
- opening private letters and
- frequent summons to police and security centers

have become commonplace and prevalent.

Comment: These phenomena are all well-documented by international human rights organizations as well as those of developed countries

[Furthermore:]

- They prosecute scientists and historians for stating their opinions on important global issues.

  Comment: This assertion surely merits the most careful consideration by the international community. Given the problematic hyperdefensive attitude to whistleblowers, and the degree of cover-up regarding issues endangering communities on a smaller scale and humanity on a larger scale, is it the case that human society is operating at a much higher level of risk than is widely recognized? To what extent is the huge quantity of classified information an indication of the probable dimensions of this misunderstanding?

This point (deliberately) disguises the controversial questions raised regarding Iran's call for "further research" on the Holocaust. Curiously those objecting to any further research have not the slightest difficulty in accepting continuing research on the historical evidence for the origins of their own faith. At what point does "re-search" become a threat and why? If there is nothing new to be discovered why object to allocation of resources to the matter? Or is it the case that some matters are beyond question and must necessarily be accepted as an article of faith for all time? This would be curious given the quantity of research undertaken on the Holocaust by documentalists to present its horrors in a new light - - in the movies promoted by the so-called Holocaust industry.
They are using different alibis to occupy sovereign nations and cause chaos and divisions, and then use the prevailing situation as an excuse to continue their occupation.

Comment: Again is it not appropriate that more attention be given to the degree of subterfuge and game-playing associated with the dynamics of the international community? Given the credibility cultivated by frequent movie portrayals of rogue government agency initiatives, and the documented and anecdotal evidence of "false flag" operations, should such assertions not be considered with greater objectivity?

Striking examples are the emergence of evidence regarding systems of illegal rendition, secret prisons, state-sanctioned torture and covert electronic surveillance -- all with the complicity of permanent members of the UN Security Council -- and as debated by the European Parliament (but not by the United Nations). Who has the authority to challenge evidence presented by supposedly trustworthy authorities -- as was the case with presentations to the UN Security Council, by a permanent member, "confirming" the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq?

For more than sixty years, Palestine, as compensation of the loss they incurred in the war in Europe, has been under occupation of the illegal Zionist regime.

- Their people have been displaced or are under heavy military pressure, economic siege or are incarcerated under abhorrent conditions. *(an unquestionable fact?)*
- The occupiers are protected and praised, while innocent people of Palestine are subjected to political, military and propaganda onslaughts. *(an unquestionable fact?)*
- The people of Palestine are deprived of water, electricity and medicine for the sin of asking for freedom, and their government that has come from the votes of the people is targeted. *(an unquestionable fact?)*
- Terrorists are being organized to attack the lives and property of people, under auspices of politicians and military officials of the big powers. *(a questionable fact?)*
- The brutal Zionists carry out targeted assassinations of Palestinians in their homes and cities, and terrorists receive medals of peace and support from the big powers. *(a questionable fact?)*
- On the other hand they gather a number of deprived Jewish people with false propagation under pretext of providing them with welfare, job and food from different parts of the world and settle them in the occupied territories and exposed them to harshest restrictions, psychological pressures and constant threat. *(an unquestionable fact?)*
- They prevent these deprived people to return to their main lands and by use of force and false propagation make them show their hatred towards indigenous Palestinian people. *(a questionable fact?)*

Comment: Sadly the international community has discovered no means of debating such matters (preferably in the light of "further research") other than through a continuing pattern of simplistic binary assertion and denial -- appropriately matched by unending cycles of violence through which bullets continue to be pumped into human bodies.

Ironically whereas technological innovation with respect to destructive weaponry proceeds at great pace in support of such cycles, the capacity for innovative imaginative thinking with respect to dialogue and strategic options to break out of such cycles is virtually stagnant -- despite dubious claims to the contrary in which the UN has long been complicit.

The above statement of course (deliberately) avoids reference to Iran's position on the right of existence of the State of Israel. However it might be argued that it is the total lack of investment in imaginative thinking regarding resolution of this issue which should be the larger concern on the debating tables of the international community. Why is the focus so narrow at a time when, for example, arguments are urgently made for imaginative reflection on technical solutions to the challenges of climate change? Where is the catalogue of possibilities, speculative or otherwise, for creative exploration of the matter? How have most options been designed off the negotiating tables? In whose interest?

Is this another case where "further research" is framed as threatening to the status quo -- however many continue to suffer from it for the benefit of others?

Iraq was occupied under the pretext of overthrow of a dictator and existence of weapons of mass destruction. The Iraqi dictator who had been supported by the same occupiers was disposed of, and no weapons were discovered, but occupation continues under different excuses. No day passes without people being killed, wounded or displaced, and occupiers not only refuse to be accountable and ashamed, but speak in a report of a new market for their armaments as the result of their military venture. They even oppose the constitution, national assembly and the government arising from the votes of the people, while do not even have the courage to declare their defeat and exit Iraq.

Comment: Such points were emphatically denied immediately after 9/11, and were even considered to be treasonous on the part of those advancing them, although they are now a common feature of political debate -- even within the USA.

How was the critical capacity of supposedly intelligent, civilized peoples so successfully numbed in this way? Can the process be repeated?

Unfortunately we are witnessing this bitter truth that some powers do not put value on any nation or human beings, and the only things
that matters to them are themselves, their parties and groups. In their view, human rights are tantamount to profits for their companies and friends. The rights and the good name of American people are also being sacrificed for the selfish desires of those holding power.

Comment: These challenging points merit careful discussion. It is of course to be expected that such points would be made by the representative of a country under immediate threat of a nuclear attack and disruption to its whole society. How might it be appropriate to debate such issues to determine the degree or circumstances of their validity, if any? It is of course appropriate to note that such arguments have long been advanced as part of political discourse within western societies. They have also been advanced within the United Nations by developing countries, notably in support of those not yet independent or subsequently exploited.

How have such dissenting views been so successfully repressed and in whose interests? Why has the United Nations been complicit in this process?

3. Aggressions against indigenous cultures and national values

Culture is the expression of identity and the key to survival of nations and the foundation for their interaction with others. In an organized movement, indigenous cultures that are messengers of monotheism, love and fraternity are being subjected to broad and destructive aggressions. National customs and values are humiliated and self-esteem and character of nations are ridiculed and defamed.

Comment: These assertions are a dimension of the continuing tragedy of global society. Again how might it be appropriate to debate such issues to determine the degree or circumstances of their validity? What actions might be possible or appropriate to counter such tendencies? How might those actions be negatively framed by their opponents -- under the guise of enlightened promotion of democracy and freedom?

The statement introduces the primacy of monotheism without clarifying its scope -- but with the implication that it is uniquely, if not solely, characterized by the Abrahamic religions that have been so fundamental to bloody conflict down the centuries -- all in the name of love, fraternity and the fulfillment of divine will.

The statement unfortunately fails to address the extent to which the customs and values of cultures imbued by non-Abrahamic faiths have been humiliated, ridiculed and defamed by the agents of Abrahamic cultures. It is however extremely interesting as an implied proposal to unite the Abrahamic faiths in opposition to others framed as unbelievers in a particular monotheistic worldview. It is also unfortunate that it does not envisage that the integrative coherence of many such other faiths may be an understanding, through a different "way of knowing", of what the statement assumes is uniquely characteristic of monotheism. Why not envisage the need for "further research" to understand the coherence of any such other view in response to the complexity of human experience and the mystery of creation?

The purpose is to promote blind emulations, consumerism, skepticism toward God and human values, and plundering of their wealth by big powers.

Comment: Again these assertions are not unusual, but it is to be appreciated that they have been advanced for discussion in the arena of the United Nations General Assembly by a nation that is already under threat of attack and therefore is past the point of needing, like its peers, to be more circumspect in order to curry favour with those big powers. The degree of "straight-talking" in the address is unusual for an intergovernmental arena. Why?

What kind of debate might be possible if such pressures to conform to a dominant worldview were not so omnipresent?

4. Poverty, illiteracy, health deprivation and gap between the poor and the rich

While a major part of the natural environment in Asia, Africa and Latin America is being plundered by political and economic domination of certain powers.

Comment: These assertions have long been made with supporting documentation by respected political constituencies -- even in countries considered to be models of democracy.

The situation of poverty and deprivation is very alarming. These are some of numbers by the United Nations:

- Every day close to 800 million people go to bed hungry and about 980 million suffer from absolute poverty, with less than one dollar a day in purchasing power.
- People of 31 countries, equivalent to 9 percent of the world's population, have an average life expectancy equaling to 46 years, which is 32 years less than the average of some countries.
- Ratio between the rich and the poor in some parts of the world is 40 times.
- In some countries, majority of people are deprived of access to education and schooling.
- In many developing countries the maternal mortality rate during pregnancy is 450 per 100,000. This ratio is 7 in the richer nations and the ratio of mortality of new births is 59 for developing countries and 6 for the richer nations.
- One-third of mortality in the world, or 50,000 daily, results from poverty.

I believe these numbers clearly demonstrate the tragic situation prevailing over the global economy.
Comment: Why does the international community not focus more effectively on such concrete issues -- rather than on supporting questionably justified military intervention generating widespread social disruption, suffering and death?

To what extent would have the level of resources allocated to military intervention by the Coalition of the Willing achieved significant amelioration of the conditions described above? Or, given its token efforts to do so over decades, why does the international community not assess the reasons for its failure to achieve significant remedies in a situation which continues to deteriorate -- despite the dangerous optimism of "hope-mongers"?

Typically the statement fails to recognize the extent to which these problems, and the associated suffering and death, are primarily engendered by the doctrines of the Abrahamic faiths -- in support of ever increasing population. The possibility that fewer people would mean fewer problems has been deliberately designed out of any debate by processes in which the Abrahamic religions have been totally complicit.

5. Ignoring noble values and promotion of deception and lies.

Some powers sacrifice all human values including honesty, purity and trust for the advancement of their goals. They propagate skepticism and deception in the relations between states and peoples. They lie openly, level baseless charges against others, act contrary to legal norms and damage the climate of trust and friendship. They openly abandon morality and noble values in their relations with others, and substitute selfishness, supremacy, enmity and imposition for justice, respect for others, love, affection and honesty.

Comment: Again these challenging points merit careful discussion. By what arguments are these accusations to be defended and in what arena? Again it is of course to be expected that such points would be made by the representative of a country under immediate threat of a nuclear attack and disruption to its whole society. How might it be appropriate to debate such issues to determine the degree or circumstances of their validity? It is of course appropriate to note that such arguments have been advanced as part of political discourse within western societies.

With respect to lying, how is it that those at the very highest level, who have been proven to be liars on matters which have cost the lives of many thousands, continue to be valued by faith-based communities that claim to abhor lying and slaughter? How is that those rejected from leadership of their countries for this reason are then appointed to positions of confidence to mediate in complex situations which have suffered endlessly from lying on all sides?

But there would also be those who would reframe the address by a leader of Iran as an example of lying in its own right, irrespective of the merit of some of the points made. The "People of the Book" have all been warned about the silver-tongued skills of oratory of those who would lead them astray. In whom should they have faith? By what acts should they be judged?

Is repeated engagement in the slaughter of others one such criteria -- whilst claiming to abhor the necessity of it? But then have the Abrahamic religions not distinguished themselves by their enthusiasm for such slaughter down the centuries?

It would have been helpful had the speaker also made reference to the tendency of everyone to lie to themselves -- deceiving themselves in some measure regarding issues they have every right to believe are fundamental.

They sacrifice all the good things of life and the sublime for their own greed.

Comment: It is curious that, at the time of the address to the General Assembly, a recently-retired chairman of the board of governors of the US Federal Reserve should confirm that the intervention in Iraq was indeed "only about oil" -- as many had long argued.

6. Violations of rules of international law and disrespect of commitments

Some who were themselves the drafters of international law openly and easily violate them and apply discriminatory policies and double standards.

Comment: Is there not a case for the UN to document the existence of discriminatory policies and double standards, if such is the case? Why has it failed to do so?

They drafted disarmament regulations, but every day test and stockpile new generations of lethal weapons.

Comment: This is undisputed. But curiously the information seldom figures in international debate -- nor the manner in which the hypocrisy is justified.

They framed the Charter of the United Nations, but show disrespect to the right of self-determination and independence of sovereign nations. They conveniently abrogate their formal treaties, and do not yield to laws concerning protection of environment. Most of the violations of international obligations are done by few global powers.

Comment: Subsequent to the address, why were such assertions not the subject of immediate media coverage? Is it that they
are so ridiculous? Or is it that their degree of truth is such that widespread cover-up was encouraged by those with capacity to influence media coverage -- even amongst the quality newspapers? More surprising, but perhaps predictable and indicative, was the extent to which the speaker was framed by commentators as mentally deranged. Again it is the case that arguments in support of such points have been well-developed by respected and well-informed authorities.

7. Escalation of threats and arms race
Some powers, whenever their logic fails, simply use the language of threat.

Comment: This assertion is surely worthy of careful debate, whether or not it is true. However, if it is true in the case of individuals and of smaller groups, why should it not be true in the case of countries, cultures and civilizations? Whilst the language of threat is evident, how does failure of logic manifest? As fear of engaging in dialogue? Is this an early indicator of cultural collapse?

The heavy arms race cast the shadow of threat over the globe. The nations of Europe were the victims of two world wars and a number of other devastating conflicts and were subjected to the consequences of the Cold War for many decades. Today Europeans are living under the shadow of threat, and their interests, security and lands are endangered under shadow of the arms race imposed by certain big powers.

A bullying power allows itself the right to set up a missile system, makes the life of the peoples of a continent bitter and lays the ground for arms race.

Comment: This is surely fair comment. It has been made by countries within the region.

Some rulers who superficially appear to be powerful act as a child that has acquired a plastic water gun and feels powerful power and starts shooting impatiently at all things and at all times, threaten others and cast the shadow of insecurity over nations and regions.

Comment: The larger issue raised by this assertion is the real nature of power and why it is so readily associated with more and more sophisticated weaponry -- when history is marked by a long succession of collapsing cultures and civilizations distinguished by such overriding power.

The issue is made especially curious when such forms of power are championed by those in faith-based cultures who are supposedly convinced of their belief in a higher power. There is a certain irony to the implication that the strength of their belief in this higher power is thereby demonstrated to be inversely proportional to their apparent dependence on physical power -- in marked contrast to the beliefs of early Christian martyrs. Or is this dependence to be considered their real measure of the real weakness of the higher power that they so readily claim to be "almighty"?

8. Inefficacy of international mechanism to prevail over these challenges and to bring durable peace and security
International organizations and mechanisms clearly lack the capacity to overcome problems and challenges, to put in place fair and just relations and peace, fraternity and security. There is hardly any government or nation that places much hope on these mechanisms to secure its rights or defend its independence, territorial integrity and national interests.

Comment: Given the United Nations figures cited above, and given the numerous regional conflicts and large-scale massacres that have taken place since the creation of the United Nations, such lack of capacity is difficult to question. Given the failure of development capacity building over decades under the auspices of international institutions -- and most notably in Iraq at the present time -- on what basis do claims continue to be made regarding the efficacy of these bodies? Just as individuals rightly question the capacity of society to protect them against urban violence, what faith is it appropriate for a country to place in international security mechanisms?

Why do citizens of the country that believes itself to be the model of democracy in the world consider it necessary to be able to arm themselves for a degree of personal protection that their society cannot provide -- and to enshrine that right in a formal amendment to their country’s constitution? Is a measure of successfully "spreading democracy", the extent to which citizens feel it appropriate to bear arms, and to belong to militia, as provided by that constitutional amendment?

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The challenges are a lot more than the ones I enumerated and I know that you would have presented many more if you wanted to dwell on them, but I chose to confine myself to the ones I stated.

Now, the important and decisive question concerns the roots and causes of these challenges. A scientific and careful analysis shows that the root of the present situation lies in two fundamental factors.

Without doubt, the first factor lies in the relations arising from the consequences of World War the Second.
The victors of the war drew the roadmap for global domination and formulated their policies not on the basis of justice but for ensuring interests of victors over the vanquished nations. Therefore mechanisms arising from this approach and related policies have not been capable to find just solutions for global problems since 60 years ago. Some big powers still carry the conduct of the victors of a world war and regard other states and nations even those that had nothing to do with the war, as the vanquished, and humiliate other nations and demand extortion from the condescending position similar to feudal and peasants of the medieval age. They regard themselves superior to others and are not accountable to any government or international body.

Comment: Such points have been made by countries (other than the victorious Allies) that have emerged from that period and now recognize their right for a larger voice in the debates of the international community. This is especially the case when, like India for example, they are now expected to take a much larger responsibility for issues such as climate change.

Most curious is the right that the victors arrogate to themselves with respect to nuclear weapons and the assumptions they continue to make regarding their moral superiority as responsible "world citizens" protective of the interests of humanity as a whole -- and despite the bloody conflicts in which they have since engaged (in defence of their own interests) and the massacres they have tolerated (especially when it was not in their interest to intervene). The argument for their moral superiority is all the more questionable given the degree of lying with which they have been shown to be associated -- even to the extent of surreptitiously equipping other countries with nuclear weaponry, who in turn deny the possession thereof.

Given the logic associated with ensuring that ordinary citizens should be armed, in order to protect themselves in a model democratic society, one might ask whether nations (as members of the international community) should not have the right to equip themselves with advanced weaponry (including nuclear weaponry) capable of withstanding the types of aggression that have come to be characteristic of international bullying.

Why should it be considered a form of anathema for countries other than permanent members of the Security Council to possess nuclear weaponry -- and by what strange logic should nuclear weapons be used to prevent them from doing so (with all the risks attendant upon irresponsible and ill-considered use of such weaponry)?

Especially curious, in the light of the arguments made in the speech for a "monotheistic" alliance as a basis for faith-based world governance, is the current distribution of such weaponry between representatives of faiths amongst the permanent members of the Security Council. Of the five, three are considered primarily Christian societies with an additional one having recently "reactivated" its traditional Christian associations. The fifth is characteristically an "unbeliever" by monotheistic criteria. Of course more curious is that several of those associated with the Christian majority were involved in surreptitiously equipping a country representative of a second Abrahamic religion. Through its claims to moral superiority, it is this configuration that is proposing to undertake a nuclear strike on a country representative of the third Abrahamic faith -- that has not yet acquired such weaponry. Is this a prime example of "logical failure"?

Colleagues, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Among all the ineffective organizations, unfortunately, the UN Security Council ranks first. They have created circumstances in which some powers with exclusive and special right to veto in the Security Council act as prosecutor, judge and executioner, regardless of being a defendant or respondent. It is natural that countries that have been subjected to their infringements have no hope to get what they deserve from the Council.

Comment: Given the peace-keeping purpose for which it was specifically established, any objective evaluation of the performance of the Security Council in the light of the range of regional conflicts subsequent to its creation would surely question its effectiveness? But by what authority might it be replaced?

Would "further research" on this matter not be justified, or is the modus operandi of the Security Council also beyond question? Given the every increasing destructive power of the weapons developed by the permanent members of the Security Council, and indiscriminately sold by them for profit and national advantage, how is this to be judged as increasing the level of risk to humanity?

Unfortunately the humanity has witnessed that in all long wars, like the Korean and Vietnam wars, the war of the Zionists against Palestinians and Lebanon, war of Saddam against the people of Iran and ethnic wars of Europe and Africa, one of members the Security Council was one of the belligerents or supported one party against the other, usually the aggressor, or the conflict itself.

Look at Iraq, they first occupied them and then received authorization from the Security Council, the same Council in which the same occupiers have the right of veto.

Who should the people of Iraq complain about and to where should they take their complaints with hopes of securing their rights?

We saw in Lebanon that some powers delayed the decisions of the Security Council hoping for the victory of the Zionist regime. However, when they became disappointed in that usurper regime's victory, they approved of a ceasefire to take effect. But the duty of the Security Council is to prevent the expansion of conflicts, to put in place the ceasefire and promote peace and safety. Who should the people of Lebanon complain about and where should they take their complaints to?

Comment: Whatever the merits of the other side of any simplistic binary argument, these points certainly merit debate in
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The presence of some monopolist powers has prevented the Security Council from doing its main duties which are safeguarding peace and security based on justice. The credibility of the council has been tarnished and its efficacy in defending the rights of its members has been destroyed. Many nations have lost their confidence in the Council.

Some other mechanisms like the monetary and banking mechanisms are in the same undesirable situation and have been turned into tools for the imposition of the wishes of some powers on other nations.

It is evident that these mechanisms are not capable of responding to the current needs and solving the challenges and establishing fair and sustainable relations.

**Comment:** This appropriately introduces the "monopolistic" nature of certain powers -- as noted by others over decades. However it is introduced in a manner which highlights an unfortunate symmetry with the "monotheistic" faiths that are favourably positioned above and in what follows -- as part of the solution rather than as part of the problem. It might be argued that points critical of the "monotheistic" faiths could be made by analogy with those of the "monopolistic" powers, especially if they were to be united in a faith-based "World Security Council".

Of course, just as the dynamics between the "monopolistic" powers have arguably been less than fruitful in past decades, those between the "monotheistic" faiths have been less than fruitful over centuries. The question is what new thinking might be brought to any proposal of this nature. Or is the current problematic situation to be compounded by a security system based on monopolistic powers in combination with monotheistic faiths?

It should not be forgotten that many of the present challenges to the international community derive precisely from the initiatives of the most powerful monopolistic power whose policies are empowered by an electorate uniquely persuaded of its monotheistic legitimacy in terms of one Abrahamic religion. And, curiously, many of the challenges in the Middle East are perceived as resulting from the actions of another power whose electorate is also uniquely persuaded of its monotheistic legitimacy -- in terms of another Abrahamic religion.

A further curious implication of this proposed shift -- from the outmoded "monopolistic" powers to the "monotheistic" powers (suggested as being appropriate to the future) -- is the functional analogue to dependence of the monopolistic powers in the Security Council on their possession of nuclear weaponry and their self-righteous concern regarding "non-proliferation". There is an interesting implication that the "monotheistic" powers would then see their legitimacy as based on a form of "weaponry" whose powerful "nuclearity" was indeed essentially spiritual. There is every possibility that they would be as reluctant as the "monopolistic" powers to see any "proliferation" of it -- for fear that it might fall into irresponsible hands capable of endangering the spiritual future of humanity.

Of course the probability of the emergence of any such alliance of monotheistic powers is somewhat diminished by the manner in which the representatives of two of the Abrahamic powers were unwilling to listen in the UN General Assembly to the arguments of the speaker -- as a representative of the third Abrahamic power. Monotheistic powers are above all characterized -- perhaps following from that definition -- by their extremely limited ability to appreciate any point of view other than their own. It is unfortunate that, as the other representatives of monotheistic religions, they chose (by absenting themselves) not to respond in the light of their own perspectives, and their relevance to prophecies to which they subscribe.

Given the fundamental importance attached to family values by these religions "of the same family", it might be naively argued that they are in desperate need of "family therapy" -- if only because of the disruption to wider society associated with their "domestic violence". It is ironic that this should be one role that is expected of the entity that is the fulfillment of their seemingly common prophecy.

Dear Colleagues,

Again, there is no doubt that the **second and more important factor** is some big powers' disregard of morals, divine values, the teachings of prophets and directions specified by the all-knowing God as well as the rule of the sinful. How can the sinful that cannot even manage and control themselves, rule the humanity and arrange his affairs?

**Comment:** There is no question that the sacred writings of religions, monotheistic or otherwise, offer many wise injunctions on which more appropriate action could be based. The difficulty is that even amongst those adhering to the same faith, the interpretations of these injunctions varies sufficiently significantly to be a cause of unending violence down the centuries, as noted above. This situation is worse between faiths, even those of the monotheistic Abrahamic religions. Their highest representatives have proven to be notably constrained in articulating together imaginative solutions that respect the spiritual traditions by which they are respectively inspired. Does this not imply urgent need for "further research"?

Unfortunately the statement also fails to acknowledge that it tends to be just as much those who subscribe to a monotheistic faith that engage in inappropriate activity -- notably against members of that same faith -- as those who have other beliefs. There is unfortunately little evidence that those who purport to subscribe to respected values and teachings are any freer from inadequacies than those who do not.
Unfortunately they have put themselves in the position of God! They are in servitude of their own whims and desire to have everything for themselves. For them, the human dignity and the lives, properties, lands of others are no longer important.

Comment: This points to a basic challenge of leaders of countries primarily associated with particular religions -- monotheistic or otherwise. The country may easily be represented in some way as "God-given", or "Promised", with a manifest destiny before God. The privileged relationship of that country with God may be asserted and cultivated. Its denial may even be considered blasphemous. Actions by the leaders of such countries may be purportedly undertaken "in the Name of God" and therefore in no way subject to challenge or criticism (especially by unbelievers) -- even when they are in direct disobedience of a number of the "Ten Commandments":

-- "Thou shalt not murder" raising issues about targeted assassinations, suicide bombing and military action under faith-based leadership.
-- "Thou shalt not steal" raising issues regarding the kleptocratic behaviour of regimes sustained by faith-based leadership committed to the seizure of the cultural assets and natural resources of other countries.
-- "Thou shalt not bear false witness against your neighbour" raising issues about misleading statements made by faith-based leaders regarding weapons of mass destruction.
-- "Thou shalt not covet anything that belongs to your neighbour" raising issues regarding the coveting of Iraqi and Iranian oil reserves by the faith-based leadership of the Coalition of the Willing.

Sustainable way to the betterment of mankind

Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The only sustainable way to the betterment of mankind, is the return to the teachings of divine prophets, monotheism, respect for the dignity of humans and the flow of love and affections in all relationships, ties and regulations. Then the structures should be reformed based on these.

Comment: This is an unfortunate statement precisely because the wisest in all religions, monotheistic or otherwise, have been unable to demonstrate in practice how to manage human affairs according to such worthy principles. History is replete with examples of different groups aspiring to do so, claiming to do so, and then engaging in unfruitful dynamics with others who have an alternative view. And, as noted above, the monotheistic religions have exemplified the challenge and in the violent schisms they have each undergone -- "in the Name of God" -- and in their violent relations with each other.

The inadequacy of the statement lies therefore in the assumption that any faith, or cluster of faiths, could achieve agreement on how to act "for the betterment of mankind" and could implement such agreement in a sustainable enduring manner. This is not to say that the possibility does not merit "further research", rather it is to say that considerable resources need to be allocated to such research and the evaluation in practice of the options that emerge. Perhaps more interesting is why such research has not been undertaken in anything but a simplistic manner unworthy of the complexity and subtleties of belief systems -- and as such condemned in advance to failure.

The statement is also inadequate because it fails to address the challenges of new ways of thinking about those who disagree and do not fully subscribe to what some others consider to be the wisest and most appropriate interpretation of the best insights made evident to humanity. It is inadequate to fall into the binary trap of simply "excommunicating", "executing" or "assassinating" them.

With this trap is also associated the unmentioned challenge of the place of "non-monotheistic" faiths and those who claim or seek no association with "spiritual" belief, or who would articulate its profoundest insights through the experience of the most advanced forms of "science" -- as with the search for a "Theory of Everything" and its comprehension.

The unfruitful dialogue between religion and scientific ("unbelievers") might then be better framed in terms of comprehension. "Divinity" might then be understood, for science, to be a descriptor for that which is as yet far from understood -- but nevertheless may be appropriately assumed to ensure the integrity of the universe and life within it. However the present recognition by some sciences of the complex elegance of the integrating processes makes their frustration with superficial explanation by religions understandable -- since the essential experiential dimension of religion is meaningless to science. And yet "science" also has its schisms, heresies and pseudosciences whose place in the scheme of things remains to be understood.

As with schismatic or heretical discourse, within and between faiths, that over "intelligent design" may be saying more about the
and every member of it has to enjoy equal spiritual and legal support. Monotheism, justice and love for humans should dominate all the pillars of the UN and this organization has to be a reference for justice.

To fulfill this objective, I invite everybody to line up a front of fraternity, amity and sustainable peaces based on monotheism and justice under the name of "Coalition for Peace" to prevent incursions and arrogance and propagate the culture of affection and justice. I hereby announce that with the help of all independent, justice-seeking and peace-loving nations, the Islamic republic of Iran will be treading on this path.

Comment: This proposal by Iran is especially interesting given the circumstances under which it has been made. It may be seen as an imaginative complement to the destructive focus of the Coalition of the Willing as characterized by its intervention in Iraq. It should be noted however that a creative reframing and institutionalization of the latter has been deliberately articulated under the name "Concert of Democracies" (Forging a World of Liberty Under Law, US National Security in the 21st Century, 2006). However the thinking on which it is based is arguably of the same quality and origin as that which had previously failed to challenge the inadequacies of the Coalition of the Willing. The envisaged role of the USA as the "conductor" of such a "concert" is also problematic.

A unique feature of the proposed "Coalition for Peace" is the faith-based dimension -- completely absent from the "Concert of Democracies" but to which institutionalized efforts by religions to formulate a "Global Ethic" have pointed. However, once again, many coalitions specifically focused on "peace" have been proposed in the past century. The important question, for which "further research" is indeed appropriate, is why they have failed and how might inadequacies be corrected in a new endeavour.

It is possible that one factor undermining their viability is the "linear" metaphor associated with the speaker's proposal to "line up". This is consistent with a typical requirement of political initiatives where "alignment", as in the military, is an indicator of appropriate organization. In any research there is a need to explore other metaphors potentially more fruitful as the basis for a viable coalition. These might include "configuration" or "array", or possibly "ecosystem". Ironically the central architecture of religious faiths -- of which mosques are a powerful example -- suggests a variety of metaphors for configuring different spaces harmoniously together. Why should sacred architecture not exemplify a viable integrative configuration of distinct insights -- and one that is comprehensible to all?

Unfortunately, once again, it is not enough to gather together those who pay lip service to the highest human values -- under whatever pressure from those capable of exerting it. The challenge is how such a coalition could be enabled in practice -- beyond the limited achievements of initiatives of the past distinguished primarily by the promotional pretences of their supporters. Also problematic, and a possible implication of the above statement, are the potentially restrictive interpretations of "fraternity", "amity", "peace", and "monotheism" -- and the place of those who may thereby be excluded. Ironically these might be caricatured as "UN-believers".

Monotheism, justice and love for humans should dominate all the pillars of the UN and this organization has to be a reference for justice and every member of it has to enjoy equal spiritual and legal support.

Comment: This central feature of the proposal calls for careful exploration. Are their subtler and more comprehensive ways of understanding "monotheism" in the light of advances in the many sciences and the compatibility of their insights with deepest spiritual understanding? Again there is a case for careful clarification of this possibility.

Are there limitations to the articulation of humanity's deepest insights that thereby engender an array of mutually antagonistic belief systems, of which "science" may simply be another form? And yet are the complexities, to which science seeks to give comprehensible form, not also an expression of a larger mystery? What are the insights that can bridge across these differences to give profounder, richer and more appropriate expression to what the speaker characterized as "monotheism"?

As a topic of "further research" it might then be asked whether the schismatic tendency within religions was due to the pressures of emergent recognition of the insufficiency of a particular interpretation to encompass the more comprehensive understanding implied by "divinity". This would not be to deny the necessity of any particular interpretation for some -- possibly due to cultural background or epistemological preferences (preferred "ways of knowing"). Similarly the apparent differences between religions regarding the number of "divinities", however represented, might be fruitfully understood in terms of the capacity of human comprehension to relate separately (with greater significance) to more particular, explicit representations. These may be together understood, with a degree of humility, as implying an essentially incomprehensible, underlying, "monotheistic" unity.

In the case of Christianity, its "polytheism" is then evident in the Trinity, various arrays and levels of angelic powers, and the embodiments of aspects of "divinity" in distinct prophets and saints to which people variously relate -- as in Hinduism. In the
General Assembly as the representative of the international community shall be considered as the most important pillar of the UN in order, free from any pressure and threats of big powers, to take required measures for reforming the UN structures and especially change the present status of the Security Council and define new structures based on justice and democracy with the purpose to become responsive to the present requirements and be able to settle existing challenges leading to the establishment of sustainable stability and security.

Comment: Unfortunately any question of "reforming the United Nations" has long been associated with decade long-processes through which very little is achieved of practical value in response to the dynamics of the crises to which humanity is increasingly exposed. As a consequence many parallel structures have been created to avoid such difficulties. The web is one such example -- in which the UN has been a reluctant and tardy participant. It is possible that the envisaged coalition could benefit to a much higher degree from the possibilities and future potentials of the web -- rather than pursue the unfruitful path of formal treaties and institutions.

Excellencies,

The nuclear issue of Iran is a clear example of the performance of such mechanisms and their prevailing thoughts.

As you all know, Iran is an official member of the International Atomic Energy Agency and has always observed its rules and regulations and has had the most extensive cooperation with this Agency in all aspects. All our nuclear work has been completely peaceful and transparent.

According to the Statute of the IAEA, any member has a number of rights and commitments. Actually, any member has to move on the peaceful path and, under the supervision of the Agency, assist other members and is entitled to be supported by the Agency and have access to the fuel cycle with the help the Agency and its members.

So far, Iran has fulfilled all its obligations but has been deprived of other members' technical assistance and, even during some periods of time, of the Agency's support.

For about 5 years, some of the aforementioned powers tried to deny the Iranian nation of its rights by exerting pressures on IAEA. They derailed Iran's nuclear issue of its legal path and politicized the atmosphere to impose their wishes taking advantage of all their potentials.

Iran spared no effort to build confidence. However, nothing satisfied them except the complete halt of all nuclear activities even those related to research and university fields. They were only after depriving Iran of all its inalienable rights. Therefore, even those centers not involved in the fuel cycle or not in need of the supervision of the Agency were closed. After three years of negotiation and trying to build confidence, the Iranian nation came to the resolute conviction that the main concern of these powers is not the possible deviation of Iran from the rules and regulations of the Agency but its scientific progress. If this trend continues there will be no chance for Iran to enjoy its rights, not even in the next 20 years. Therefore, it has to be decided to follow up the issue on its right legal path that goes through the Agency away from illegitimate and political impositions by the arrogant powers. Of course, Iranian Nation has always been ready and now is prepared for constructive talks.

By abusing the Security Council, the arrogant powers have repeatedly accused Iran and even made military threats against it over the last two years. However, thanks to the faith in God and the national unity, Iran has moved forward step by step and now our country is recognized as a country with the capacity for industrial scale fuel cycle production for peaceful uses.

Fortunately, the Agency has recently tried to regain its legal role as supporter of the rights of its members and supervisor of nuclear activities. We see this as a right approach adopted by the Agency. Previously, they illegally wished to politicize Iranian Nation's nuclear case, but today, thanks to the resistance of the Iranian nation, the issue is back at the Agency and I officially announce that in our opinion the nuclear issue of Iran is now closed and has turned into an ordinary matter. Today many questions have been raised on Iranian nuclear activities within IAEA by certain powers which shall be examined properly. Of course Iran has always been prepared to have constructive talks with all parties.

I would like to thank all the nations and countries that, during this hard juncture, defended the legal rights of my nation and motherland and also appreciate the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, our other friends in the Security Council, IAEA's Board of Governors, the committed and law-abiding experts of the Agency and its Director General for their insistence on the law. I would also like to announce that unlike the monopolist powers, the Iranian nation is ready to offer to other members its experiences in form of educational programs and based on the obligations of the Agency's statute and under its supervision.
Comment: The issue here is that certain members of the Security Council attach little credibility to the assertions of Iran or the reports of the IAEA. As with Iraq, they "know" what is the truth and have "photographs" obtained in secret to prove it -- as they produced for the Security Council. This is a standard game of bluff. Unfortunately, any decision to bomb Iran will be made irrespective of such assertions -- as was the case with Iraq.

Now I would like to address those who beleaguered the Iranian nation for about five years, offended and accused my people who have contributed to the history and civilization of the world and advice them to learn from their recent actions. They mistreated the Iranian nation but they have to be careful not to do the same with other nations and not to sacrifice the integrity of international organizations for the sake of their unlawful wishes. Today the nations of the world are wide-awake, vigilant, and resistant. If you reform yourselves, the whole world will be reformed.

Comment: On the occasion of a CBS interview with the Iranian President just preceding his visit to the UN, a high degree of focus was given to the emotive accusation, in the name of the American people, that Iran had "American blood on its hands" -- in the light of information recently presented as factual regarding the supply of arms to militia in Iraq.

Framing dialogue between peoples in this way does not help to move matters forward. It might also be argued that America has "British blood on its hands" as a result of an unfortunate number of "friendly fire" incidents (for which any apologies have been grudging). It is not however disputed that the USA supplied weapons to Saddam Hussein in Iraq's war against Iran (1980-1988) -- the longest in the last century. In that sense America indeed has "Iranian blood on its hands" in much larger quantity (estimated at one million casualties).

Media coverage of the current Iraq war is normally careful never to mention from whom weaponry was obtained or to raise issues of the chain of responsibility of suppliers or manufacturers -- or the much disputed implications in the case of sale of arms to citizens within the USA. Is it the case that many of the Americans killed in Iraq are in fact killed by weapons made in America? Does America have "American blood on its hands"? Or, as another major arms manufacturer, is it Britain that has "American blood on its hands"? Or is it the permanent members of the Security Council that all have each others' "blood on their hands"?

Nations are inherently good and can co-exist peacefully. They'd better try to serve their own people, and be sure that others do not need them.

Comment: As the previous comment noted, the extent to which certain countries continue to indulge in arms manufacture for profit requires that this statement be carefully qualified -- however true it may be in principle. Historically the majority of the permanent members of the Security Council derived their wealth from slavery. They and others have indulged in genocidal practices in territories they have colonised -- and which they may continue to exploit after independence.

Curiously at the time of the address to the UN, extensive media coverage was given to the announcement that the USA would increase its sanctions against the repressive regime of Myanmar, and that the EU was considering similar measures. The significance of these steps lies in the fact that the regime has been in place and repressive for decades -- presumably with a degree of complicity on the part of those trading with it. What support has continued to be given, and by whom, throughout that period and with what justification -- in exchange for oil for example? How meaninglessly cynical is the declaration that sanctions would now be "increased"?

Is it not high time for these powers to return from the path of arrogance and obedience of Satan to the path of Godliness?

Comment: It is curious that the Abrahamic faiths at the forefront of the "clash of civilizations" should make such frequent solemn appeals to "God" and to so readily recognize the influence of "Satan". As an arena neither the UN General Assembly nor its Specialized Agencies is equipped to facilitate discourse with either set of referents. The challenge is rendered even more complex because the Abrahamic faiths readily perceive each other to be not only misguided, but also guided by Satan. How then to clarify such influences if there was to be any hope of a monotheistic alliance?

Reference to the "path of arrogance" is a pointer in a fruitful direction. How is arrogance to be recognized however amongst faiths that are above all characterized by self-righteousness -- having been directly mandated by God?

Unfortunately it is a characteristic of Satan that evidence for his existence is remarkably more easy to detect in the activities of others than amongst one's own group and in one's own behaviour.

The arrival of the speaker in New York was heralded by a front page newspaper headline "The Evil has Landed" (Daily News, 24 September 2007). Few asked the question raised in the UK by Anne Penketh (The Big Question: Is America Right to Demonise President Ahmadinejad of Iran? Independent, 26 September 2007)

Curiously however the number of deaths for which Iran is purportedly directly responsible in Iraq, as justification for that heading, is insignificant in comparison with the number for which the USA has been responsible there. Is it appropriate, or fruitful, to ask whether -- from some other perspective -- it was US "Evil that Landed" in Iraq in the first place?

It is so easy to detect Satan in others that calls for the assassination of those, considered to be so possessed, are readily made with increasing frequency, as with some demonstrators against the speaker's presence in New York. Similarly a former American presidential candidate and prominent televangelist, Pat Robertson, called for the assassination of the Venezuelan president,
Hugo Chavez. Dissent has now become a prime indicator of possession by Satan.

Do they not like to be cleansed of their impurities, submit to the will of God and believe in him? Faith in God means believing in honesty, purity, justice and loving others!

They can be sure that they will benefit from purity, honesty, justice, loving and respecting the human dignity. They can be sure that such attributes are considered to be more appropriate, valuable and beautiful by the nations of the world.

This is the invitation of all divine prophets from Adam to Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ and Mohammed, the Messenger of God (PBUH). If they answer to the invitation, they will be saved and if they don't, the same thing that befell the people of the past will befall them.

Comment: This statement of course specifically excludes other faiths with which millions of people are associated. It fails to address the reason for which others prefer such beliefs and the place that belief holds in the larger scheme of things. It also fails to address the place of secularism and the extent to which it is a rejection of the specific abuses that have been so characteristic of so many religions.

But as has long been a characteristic of the Abrahamic religions, does the statement imply that God could possibly be vigorously assisted in his efforts by eliminating those who do not respond to the invitation in the required form -- thereby demonstrating unequivocally their possession by Satan?

According to holy Koran:

"One who does not answer the divine call should not think that he has weakened God on earth; he has no companion but God and he is clearly engulfed by darkness".

They have nothing of their own and can not escape from the dominion of the rule of God and his will.

Comment: Is it appropriate to preclude a richer comprehension and intentionality, on the part of an omniscient deity in a larger scheme of things, beyond the modesty of current human comprehension, in favour of a possibly over-confident particular understanding of it in the light of one's own limited experience? This would in no way deny the above statement.

Given the schismatic tendencies of all religions, and their failure to fully accept each other's insights, surely it is wise to avoid premature assumptions regarding human comprehension of divine will? The speaker notably failed to make any reference to the fact that his much-awaited Imam Al-Mahdi is of the Shiite tradition, with all the challenges this raises for the future relationship with those of Sunni-dominated Iraq -- with whom Iran had a lengthy war.

In this important gathering, I have to remind them of the following words of the Almighty which has been mentioned in the Holy Quran:

"Do they not look at the powers and governments which came before them? If the people of the past had actually possessed something, they would have kept it and would not have let you the posses it now. God destroyed them because of their sins and nobody could protect them against the will of God".

They have to know that the ways and traditions based on oppression and injustice will be destroyed. Do they not see the signs of vigilance and resistance based on monotheism, philanthropy and the justice-seeking spirit of the nations of the world? Do they not notice the imminent fall of empires?

I hope that this invitation will have a practical answer.

Excellencies,

Nations and countries don't have to obey the injustice of certain powers. These powers, because of the reasons already mentioned, have lost the competence to lead the world because of their hideous acts.

Comment: This is a conclusion on which many reflect. The question is by what will this misleadership be replaced and how will it be brought about? The above statement offers some pointers but avoids issues with which many have unsuccessfully struggled in past decades.

I officially declare that the age of relations arising from the Second World War as well as materialistic thoughts based on arrogance and domination is well over now.

Humanity has passed a perilous precipice and the age of monotheism, purity, affinity, respecting others, justice and true peace loving has commenced.

Comment: For this statement to be true there must be some capacity to agree on its meaning and to recognize the role of a variety of apparently incompatible interpretations that enable its larger truth to be encompassed and effectively grounded in reality.
It is the divine promise that the truth will be victorious and earth will be inherited by the righteous. You, who are free, believers and the people of the world, put your trust in God. You, who crave for the high values, wherever you are, try to prepare the grounds for the fulfillment of this great divine promise by serving the people and seeking justice.

The age of darkness will end, the prisoners will come back home, the occupied lands will be freed, Palestine and Iraq will be liberated from the domination of the occupiers and the people of Europe will be free of the pressures exerted by the Zionists. The tender-hearted and humanity-loving governments will replace the aggressive and domineering ones. The human dignity will be regained. The pleasing aroma of justice will permeate the world and people will live together in a brotherly and affectionate manner.

Striving in this way to give the rule to the righteous and the Promised One is actually the final cure for the wounds of humanity, the solution of all problems, and the establishment of love, beauty, justice and happiness all over the world. This belief and endeavor is the key to unity and the constructive interactions among nations, countries, the people of the world and all the true justice seekers.

Without any doubt, the Promised One who is the final Savior and the last heavenly message will come. In the company of all believers, justice-seekers and benefactors, he will establish the bright future and fill the world with justice and beauty. This is the promise of God, therefore it will be fulfilled.

Comment: All such prophecies may indeed have meaningful resonances that inspire hope for the future -- a greater hope than is otherwise offered by the secular world (of "UN-believers"). However the issue within the monotheistic religions, and between them, is why their unfruitful dynamics inhibit understanding of the larger and deeper truths to which they claim to point as well as exacerbating the violence between those who hold to partial truths, condemning that of which they have only partial understanding.

Let's have a role in the fulfillment of all this glory and beauty.

I wish for the bright future for all human beings and the dawn of the liberation and freedom for all humans and the rule of love and affections all around the world as well as elimination of oppression, hatred and violence. The wish which I think will be realized in the near future.

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| The statement by the President of Iran followed achievement of a unique historical consens within Islam leading to a letter addressed to Pope Benedict XVI and other Christian leaders by 138 prominent Muslim scholars from every sect of Islam "to come together with us on the common essentials of our two religions". Entitled A Common Word Between Us and You, it argued in 29 pages that: "If Muslims and Christians are not at peace, the world cannot be at peace...The very survival of the world is perhaps at stake." The letter was addressed following the 14th General Conference of Jordan's Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in September 2007 (see World's future hinges on peace between faiths, Islamic scholars tell Pope, Guardian, 12 October 2007).

The communication followed a process described as follows:

This amounts to a historical, universal and unanimous religious and political consensus (ijma\') of the ummah (nation) of Islam in our day, and a consolidation of traditional, orthodox Islam. The significance of this is: (1) that it is the first time in over a thousand years that the ummah has formally and specifically come to such a pluralistic mutual inter-recognition; and (2) that such a recognition is religiously legally binding on Muslims since the Prophet (may peace and blessings be upon him) said: My ummah will not agree upon an error (Ibn Majah, Sunan, Kitab al-Fitan, Hadith no. 4085).

It notably includes the statement:

In the Holy Qur'an, God Most High enjoins Muslims to issue the following call to Christians (and Jews -- the People of the Scripture):

Say: O People of the Scripture! Come to a common word between us and you: that we shall worship none but God, and that we shall ascribe no partner unto Him, and that none of us shall take others for lords beside God. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are they who have surrendered (unto Him). (Aal 'Imran 3:64)

Comment: Although every respect is due to such an initiative, and every hope could be placed in it by the optimistic, history suggests that there is also a case for exploring in parallel the possibility of more complex forms of viable rapprochement that are as respectful of disagreement between faiths as they are of any agreement (see: Using Disagreements for Superordinate Frame Configuration, 1992, prepared in anticipation of the Parliament of the World's Religions).

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*Are tigers only to be allowed in the new world if they have had their pussy innoculation?*

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