



2020_01_24_Western Humanism, Christian Democracy and Humanitarian Islam: An Alliance for the 21st Century

World's largest political network seeks to preserve, and strengthen, a rules-based international order founded upon universal ethics and humanitarian values

Results of the CDI Executive Committee Meeting and Eurasia Forum Held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia (22 – 25 January 2020)

YOGYAKARTA, Indonesia: From 22 – 25 January 2020, political leaders from across the world's cultural, geographic and religious divides gathered to address the profound ethical and strategic implications of a long-term shift in the global economic and geopolitical center of gravity away from the North Atlantic and towards Eurasia. Hosted by Indonesia's largest Islamic political party (PKB), the world's most extensive political network—Centrist Democrat International, or CDI—held its Executive Committee meeting in Asia for the first time in 15 years.

Members of the CDI Executive Committee unanimously adopted a two-page document submitted by PKB, titled [*Resolution on promoting a rules-based international order founded upon universal ethics and humanitarian values*](#), which reads, in part:

- Considering the emergence of authoritarian, civilizationist states that do not accept the rules-based post-WWII order, whether in terms of human rights, rule of law, democracy or respect for international borders and the sovereignty of other nations;
- Realizing that the chaos on display in much of the Middle East, Africa and other regions—including discrimination, persecution and outright violence perpetrated against religious and ethnic minorities—constitutes a profound threat not only to those directly affected, but also to the future of humanity, and civilization, itself;
- Recognizing that disdain for the rule of law and denial of the inherent value and dignity of human life threatens the post-WWII international order, which has long served as the framework for international relations, including the greatest expansion of economic well-being in the history of humanity...

The CDI states the following:

- As the world's economic center of gravity shifts towards Eurasia—and geopolitical competition threatens to undermine peace and security throughout this vast landmass—widespread acknowledgment of, and adherence to, universal ethics and humanitarian values may help ensure that this transition can be navigated more peacefully;
- CDI and its member parties are in a unique position to facilitate this process, for they embrace a common set of humane and universal values, rooted in their respective religious and cultural traditions;

- These traditions—which include but are not limited to Western humanism, Christian democracy and Humanitarian Islam—may serve as the foundation for a 21st century alliance to promote a rules-based international order founded upon universal ethics and humanitarian values;
- Centrist Democrat International invites people of good will of every faith and nation, as well as political parties and governments worldwide, to join in this alliance to safeguard human dignity and foster the emergence of a truly just and harmonious world order, founded upon the equal rights and dignity of every human being.

Yogyakarta (Indonesia), January 23, 2020

In a widely-disseminated article titled “[Drawing Battle Lines: Center-Right Parties Take on Civilizationalism](#),” geopolitical analyst Dr. James Dorsey of the Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at Singapore’s Nanyang Technological University described the PKB/CDI resolution as:

an attempt to counter the rise of civilizationalist states and leaders [through] the creation of an alliance of nations, political parties and faith groups, that would seek to ensure that politics and international relations remain grounded in humanitarian values at a time of increasingly unimpeded violations of international law and human rights abuse.

The call takes on added significance because it was issued by a group that traces its roots to European and Latin American Christian democracy at a meeting in Indonesia, the world’s third largest democracy and its most populous majority Muslim country, hosted by the largest Indonesian Islamic political party, the National Awakening Party (PKB).

PKB, founded by Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the world’s largest Muslim organization, joined CDI little over a year ago as part of the International’s effort to expand its reach beyond Christian democracy and NU’s advocacy of a humanitarian interpretation of Islam that encourages cooperation across political, ethnic and religious divides on the basis of a shared respect for human rights and international law.

CDI Eurasia Forum

Following the Executive Committee meeting, PKB and CDI hosted a 2-day forum—attended by senior Indonesian government officials, religious leaders and public intellectuals—to socialize the humanitarian vision and geopolitical strategy that lie at the heart of three distinct PKB resolutions unanimously adopted by CDI’s Executive Committee on April 10, 2019 in [Brussels](#); October 11, 2019 in [Rome](#); and January 23, 2020 in [Yogyakarta](#).

The first session of the CDI Eurasia Forum—held on the afternoon of Thursday, January 23—was titled, “[Western Humanism, Christian Democracy and Humanitarian Islam: An Alliance for the 21st Century.](#)”

CDI Vice President Elmar Brok of Germany's governing Christian Democratic Union delivered a penetrating analysis of the rationale that inspired Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman, Jean Monnet and others to found the European Community amidst the ashes of World War II. Zsolt Németh, Chairman of the Hungarian Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, drew upon David Goodhart's seminal work *The Road to Somewhere: The Populist Revolt and the Future of Politics*, to examine the far-reaching implications of a new faultline in global politics between "people from somewhere," who have a strongly rooted sense of national and cultural identity, and "people from anywhere," who frequently do not.

The second session of the forum—titled "Eurasia: the emerging fulcrum of 21st century geopolitics and economics"—featured top political leaders from the European Union, India and Indonesia, who joined academic experts to consider the profound ethical and strategic ramifications of the world's shifting balance of power.

Indonesian Vice President Kyai Haji Ma'ruf Amin—who served as Chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama Supreme Council prior to his election in 2019—delivered a keynote address in which he thanked CDI for working with PKB to promote democracy and defend human rights, while expressing his belief that "CDI is the right partner to build a bridge towards mutual understanding, moderation and inclusivity, so as to foster world peace."

PKB Chairman H. Muhaimin Iskandar opened the second session of the CDI Eurasia Forum with a speech titled [*Indonesia's Contribution to the Future of Civilization*](#), in which he quoted former Indonesian president, NU Chairman and PKB co-founder H.E. KH. Abdurrahman Wahid, who in 2005 warned in the [*Wall Street Journal*](#):

"The entire edifice of modern civilization is built on economic and technological foundations that terrorists hope to collapse like so many fishing huts in the wake of a tsunami. Just two small, well-placed bombs devastated Bali's tourist economy in 2002 and sent much of its population back to the rice fields and out to sea, to fill their empty bellies. What would be the effect of a global economic crisis in the wake of attacks far more devastating than those of Bali and 9/11?"

"It is time for people of goodwill from every faith and nation to recognize that a terrible danger threatens humanity. We cannot afford to continue 'business as usual' in the face of this existential threat. Rather, we must set aside our international and partisan bickering, and join together to confront the danger that lies before us.

Mr. Iskandar continued:

Our founding fathers developed, and offered to the world, a set of universal principles that can illuminate the path out of darkness and prevent civilizational collapse. These principles are:

First, to treat others justly and as equals—without regard to ethnicity or religion; without enmity or hatred; and without seeking to marginalize or eliminate others;

Second, to accept and respect the sovereign nation state as a political system that binds the people of each and every nation, without propagating or pursuing a supremacist agenda vis-à-vis other nations;

Third, to accept and respect a nation's laws as binding upon all its inhabitants, which provides no space for anyone to cite religion as justification for violating the

law, much less for inciting and/or participating in a rebellion against the duly constituted authority of the nation state; and

Fourth, to preserve and strengthen a rules-based international order founded upon justice, freedom and enduring peace.

If the governments, religions and people of the world are prepared to accept these four principles as the common ground for our life together, then we will be able to find a peaceful solution to whatever differences we may have, without violence or destruction.

What we need now is a genuine, sincere and concrete effort to offer these principles to the world, and invite people of every faith and nation to accept these principles as the cornerstone of a truly global civilization that fosters cooperation, mutual respect and the blossoming of human creativity throughout the world.

Allow me to take this opportunity to say that the National Awakening Party is determined to ensure that Indonesia plays its full part in this effort, and that PKB will carry the banner of Indonesia's contribution, for the future of humanity and global civilization.

The formal agenda of the CDI event concluded on Friday evening, January 24th, with a visit to Pondok Pesantren Sunan Pandanaran—a prominent Islamic boarding school within a network of over 14,000 NU-affiliated *madrassahs* scattered throughout Indonesia.

Nearly 4,000 young Muslim students and several hundred members of Ansor's militia, Banser, sang *Welcome* (from the Disney film *Moana*); *Heal the World*; the *PKB Hymn*; *Hubul Waton Minal Iman* (*Love of Nation is Integral to Religious Faith*) and other songs expressing their determination to safeguard the Republic of Indonesia as a multi-religious and pluralistic nation state, founded upon a humane and compassionate understanding of Islam that encourages respect for the equal rights and dignity of every human being.

Nahdlatul Ulama participants (above and below) joined in singing the *Banser March* and *Hubul Waton*, whose lyrics—composed in 1916 by NU co-founder Kyai Haji Wahab Chasbullah—reject all forms of political, cultural and religious imperialism (including Islamist supremacism imported from the Middle East): “This land and culture are a priceless heritage [bequeathed by our noble ancestors]. Love for you is integral to my religious faith. Awaken, O my people! Do not shirk your destiny! Indonesia, my homeland, banner of [human] dignity. Whoever comes to threaten you shall perish beneath your thorns.”

As CDI/EPP Secretary General Antonio López-Istúriz White told a cheering audience: “Most important is what you are living here today: humanitarian Islam. Humanist Islam, [which is] tolerant. Friendly... Please come to visit us. Please come to Brussels. Europeans must see you. They must *feel* you [to understand the Islam you have here in Indonesia].”

Upon leaving the *madrassah*, CDI Vice President and former Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša remarked: “If I hadn't witnessed this [incredible event] with my own eyes, I would never have believed it.” His view was shared by a senior advisor to Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who said: “Our view of Islam has shifted 180 degrees as a result of this visit to Indonesia.”