

Toward the Realization of *Ummah*: The Relevance of the Philippine *Dar al-Harb*

by
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I

The domain of Islam embraces some one billion people, 20 percent of the world's population, distributed across the globe in virtually every political unit and geographical context. Ideologically, the Muslim world senses a profound communion in the deeply embedded Islamic concept of a territorially dispersed but spiritually unified global Islamic commonwealth — *ummah*. Oswald Spengler, in his monumental *Decline of the West*, reminds us that the Islamic community “embraces the *whole* of the world-cavern, here and beyond, the orthodox and the good angels and spirits, and within the community the State only formed a *smaller unit of the visible side*, a unit, therefore, of which the operations were governed by the major whole.” This relationship between the modern nation-state and the *ummah*, now suppressed by the force of modern nationalism, continues to exist as a powerful primordial sentiment of transcendent importance. That its dimensions, contours, and strength cannot be assessed by empirical social science analysis does not make it less real as a critical component of the Muslim psyche. This impulse towards Islamic unity, charged with emotion, religious fervor, and ideology, canonically sustained by the concept of *ummah*, is also nurtured by a vivid memory of Islamic imperial grandeur and by a vibrant dynamic of missionary zeal. The latter, carrying out the Qur’anic proclamation of the universality of Islam and the command for global dispensation of the Qur’anic message, has lost little of its original impetus. The force of *ummah* is the tacit dimension, the psychic indwelling nature of Islam. Nor can this compelling centrifugal thrust be lightly dismissed as the transitory phase of a historical process.

No other religion has quite so powerful an impetus for global expansion — neither Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism nor Christianity.

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The concept of global Christian unity, once a powerful force, has been eroded by sectarianism, schism, nationalism, and secularism. The ecumenical impulse which seems to lead to a recovery of unity, so trivializes and neutralizes the pristinity and clarity of doctrine that the zeal for conversion disappears. Agitation in the Church of England in 1984 over the consecration as Bishop of Durham of a theologian who expressed disbelief in the Virgin Birth — a central doctrine of Christianity — dramatizes the dilemma of non-Orthodox Christendom in conserving a pristine doctrine. In non-Catholic Christianity, the doctrine of Biblical “inerrancy” continues to compete with widely spread notions which limit scriptural significance to non-literal or metaphorical interpretation. Roman Catholicism’s difficulties in inducing acceptance of Church teaching on such issues as liberation theology, abortion, nuclear armaments, economic social order, and the ordination of women are similarly illustrative.

Comparable doctrinal heresy in Islam would be denial of the divine origin and nature of the Holy *Qur’an*, or the proclamation of a successor to the Holy Prophet. Indeed, even the suggestion of the latter through the somewhat ambivalent claims of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and the Ahmadiyya movement in Pakistan resulted in a declaration that the Ahmadiyyas are non-Muslim. The differing modalities in Islam — e.g. Salafiya, Sufism, Shia, Sunni — do not depart from the quintessentials of the faith which have been unchanged for more than 1,400 years. Until now, Islam has maintained a doctrinal cohesion of remarkable strength and vigor in contrast to Christianity.

There is little attraction to convert to a doctrine which becomes all things to all men. Christianity has lost much of its moral and virtually all of its political dynamism. Islam is in a different stage of development. Its renewed sense of identity, unleashed by the creation of independent states free of colonial rule, has given it a new effervescence. Even now that force activates its concern for Muslim minorities living under non-Muslim regimes. Hence its attention to Muslims in such diverse locales as Eritrea, Thailand, India, China, the Soviet Union, the United States, and the Philippines has fostered overt efforts to enhance the prospects for such minorities aspiring to an Islamic way of life.

The separation of Muslims into distinct often mutually antagonistic nations is an arrangement which does not fit comfortably in the Islamic perception of order. Hence there is a ceaseless dialectic between maintaining national boundaries and transcending them. There is ample evidence to suggest that the structure of *ummah* is gaining in strength despite fragmenting tendencies occurring concomitantly. Indeed, an orthodox Muslim theologian would dwell on the paramountcy of *ummah*, almost to the point of denying that social, ethnic, and political differences do exist in the Islamic world. While it is not here suggested that a unified global political entity will supersede nation-states of varying degrees of proclaimed Islamicity, it is clear that beneath the

shifting cleavages that emerge in the Islamic world, there is coming into being a global structure of considerable sophistication. There is a reciprocal relationship between this structure which arises in consequence of sentiment, and the deepening of sentiment given institutional support. This new institutional order of global Islam — *ummah* — is perennially disrupted in part by its own intra-Islamic rivalries, but in part also by non-Islamic forces experienced in techniques derivative from a doctrine of *divide et impera* as well as from Byzantium and Machiavelli. Such external disruption flows directly from the injustice dealt the Palestinians and the intransigence of an Israel bent on curbing Arab strength by every means, including that of the preemptive strike. A peaceful and just solution to the Palestinian question would reduce the intra-Islamic frictions to manageable dimensions. A global structure of Islamic nations united in an institutional form embracing both the Islamic states and the minorities is the greatest hope for the preservation and propagation of the faith.

Muslims of this global diaspora can be classified in several ways: by ethnicity — Arab, non-Arab; by sect — Shiites, Sunnis; by politics — radical, moderate; by regime — monarchist, republican; by developmental perspective — traditionalist, modernist. A basic typology, emerging from early Islam, and certainly pertinent to the Philippines, is that of *dar al-Islam* (domain of peace) and *dar al-harb* (domain of war). The former refers to Muslims living in an avowedly Islamic state whose Islamic nature is proclaimed in its constitution or is implicit by virtue of its overwhelming Muslim majority. Using membership in the Organization of the Islamic Conference as a criterion, some forty-five countries (including Afghanistan whose membership has been suspended, and Egypt whose membership was reinstated in January 1984) can be categorized as Islamic states in *dar al-Islam*. It is worthy of note that Brunei, attaining independence in 1984, proclaimed itself as the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam. In so doing, it becomes the first Muslim state to declare its identity as part of the *ummah* in its official name. Among the states in *dar al-Islam* there are varying degrees of constitutional espousal of Islamicity as well as differences in the degree to which Islamic values and law (*shar'ia*) have penetrated the interstices of the social fabric. Thus we find Saudi Arabia and Iran whose policies are proclaimed as completely Islamic, though Sunnī and Shiite respectively, at one end of the spectrum. Near the same end can be found Pakistan, recovering from two centuries of British domination and influence, reasserting Islamic values in all realms of society in accord with the concept of *Nizam-i-Mustafa*. So vigorous has this trend been in refurbishing what its supporters aver to be the state's original reason for establishment in 1947, that contemporary Pakistan is regarded by many as the most Islamic polity after that of Saudi Arabia. It is perhaps not irrelevant that a Pakistani, Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, was elected Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic

Conference in December 1984. At the other end of the spectrum is Turkey, the only major Muslim country (excluding Albania) which drastically broke its ties with Islamic culture. The substitution of Turkish for Arabic in sermons and *Qur'anic* recitation, abolition of the Caliphate, abandonment of *shar'ia* and its replacement by western legal codes, suppression of religious orders, secularization of mosques, and substitution of a modified Roman alphabet for Arabic script —these were the most revolutionary of the reforms of Kemal Ataturk beginning in 1920. The abandonment of the Caliphate and of Arabic had the greatest religious significance. The latter broke the relationship with Arabic literature and challenged the sacral character of the *Qur'an* and the equally sacral nature of the Arabic in which it had been transmitted. Yet even after more than sixty years, Islam has not been extirpated; indeed there is evidence of a modest resurgence of Islamic identity in contemporary Turkey. Nonetheless, with respect to the degree to which Islamicity shapes actions and behavior of the Turkish polity, it must be placed in juxtaposition to Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

The forty-five states existing in *dar al-Islam* are fortified in their international transactions by several structures both political and economic. Foremost among these is the Organization of the Islamic Conference, established under the aegis of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia in 1969. This important political and diplomatic entity is paralleled by the *Rabitat Al-Alam Al-Islami* (Muslim World League) which concentrates on religious, cultural, youth, and welfare activities. Since the appointment of Dr. Abdullah Naseef, former president of King Abdul Aziz University, the international activities of the *Rabitat* have increased in scope and vigor. Unless there is further fragmentation of the Muslim world induced either by Israeli actions (as in Egypt, Lebanon and Iraq) or by intro-Islamic conflict, or by the collapse of the galvanic impulse of Saudi Arabia, we may witness in another quarter of a century a significant consolidation of Muslim unity in a reinvigorated *ummah* of Muslim states.

II

But, the *ummah* embraces more than Muslim states. It includes also one-third of the world's Muslim population living as minorities in non-Muslim states. Although relevant data are conflicting, imprecise, and subject to a broad range of interpretation, some approximations may be ventured. The largest of these concentrations living in *dar al-harb* is the 100 million Muslim minority in India, constituting 12 percent of the total population. Next is the Soviet Union with 44 million or 15 percent of the population and China with 40 million or 4 percent of the population. The smallest Muslim minority is that of Japan where 0.9 percent of the population follows Islam. The condition of Muslims in the Philippines, where Muslims constitute nearly 6 percent of the total population of 53 million, is clearly that of *dar al-harb*.

In many states, Muslim minorities are geographically dispersed; in others such as China and the Soviet Union, they are concentrated in a geographical area determined largely by historical forces. In such instances, they more often than not constitute a majority in that specified territory (province or state) even though they are a minority in the nation as a whole. In this condition they are not unlike similar concentrations in the United States such as Mormons in Utah, Jews in sections of New York City, Cubans in East Miami, and Hispanics in the Southwest.

Only recently has much systematic attention been given to the condition of Muslim minorities. A landmark was the establishment of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs at King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah in 1976. In 1978, the first International Seminar on the Muslim Community in non-Muslim States was held in London, sponsored by the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Islamic Council in Europe and the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs. A significant outcome of that meeting was the creation of a monitoring entity known as the International Commission on Muslim Minorities.

Another intellectual landmark was the international seminar on the economic status of Muslim minorities held at Sherbrooke, Canada in December 1981 and January 1982. This meeting, sponsored by the Institute of King Abdul Aziz University, issued the Sherbrooke Declaration which was, in effect, an agenda for global research in Muslim minority affairs. Since the text of that Declaration has received little attention, it appears important to reproduce its recommendations for research. The Sherbrooke Declaration recommended that King Abdul Aziz University and other universities:—

- Sponsor studies in national, regional and international context on such topics as demographic, educational and occupational patterns; employment and income; labor; role in agriculture, industry, and business; Muslim entrepreneurs; Muslim educational, cultural and religious institutions; administration of *auqaf*; governmental policies on minorities; psychological constraints; patterns of Islamicization; propagation and defence of Islam, especially in Africa and Latin America.
- Promote interdisciplinary research which would generate models and hypotheses for the maintenance of the Islamic identity of Muslim minorities in a non-Muslim environment, and their socioeconomic development in accordance with Islamic principles, including exchanges of publications and scholars.
- Compile and publish directories of minorities' research institutes/organizations; who's who of Muslim minorities; national legislation affecting Muslim minorities; bibliography of studies concerning the socioeconomic and political status of Muslim minorities.

- Set up a socioeconomic data bank on Muslim minorities, including a register of ongoing research to be updated at regular intervals to identify research gaps.
- Carry out special and regional studies on the progress of Muslim minorities in various aspects of their national life.
- Promote the establishment of institutions relating to credit, finance, trade, business, industry, housing, real estate, and cooperatives, with a view to ameliorating the economic and social well-being of the Muslim minorities.
- Create scientific, vocational and technical institutions to improve technical skills of Muslim minorities, with emphasis on female education.
- Encourage Islamic education through graded text books in Muslim Sunday Schools; expand facilities available in Islamic schools by adding scientific and technical subjects in their curricula.
- Organize biannual/annual international seminars to coordinate and monitor research on Muslim minorities.
- Publish in various national languages translations of the Holy Qur'an, collections of Hadith and Islamic literature for adults and children in Muslim minority communities.
- Provide, on a regular basis, funds for supporting research, scholarships, bursaries, and all such assistance to Muslim students and scholars in non-Muslim countries for furthering the objectives set out above.
- Set up coordinating committees based on regional and functional representation to assist the seminar coordinator, Dr. Syed Z. Abedin, with a view to institutionalizing cooperation and communication among experts in the field of Muslim minority affairs.
- Establish an international educational and research foundation for supporting these activities.

In the last five years, the vigor of research being carried on has markedly improved. This is suggested by the high quality of articles in the *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* first published in 1979. Seven issues have appeared, all of uncommon research utility. The convening of regional conferences focusing attention on Muslim communities in specific areas is also important. The Organization of the Islamic Conference held such a seminar in Perth, Australia in September 1984 dealing with Islamic communities in Southeast, Asia.

The effect of this published research and activity will be noticeable in a decade or less. First, we are now beginning to get inventories and census data for Muslim minorities, heretofore unobtainable or nonexistent. Secondly, a comparative paradigm is slowly emerging as the circumstances and configurative context of each Muslim minority are

contrasted with others. Third, an international body of specialists in Muslim minority problems has emerged with formidable communication links and respectable publishing outlets. As with so many other developments in Islam, Saudi Arabia is one of the catalytic impulses and, often, the source of financial support. These developments are bound to strengthen Muslim identity within each minority and ultimately will affect the manner in which such minorities are treated by the regimes under which they live. Whether or not new Muslim states will ultimately be established by secession movements, encouraged by such attention to minorities, remains to be seen.

III

The plight of the Muslim community in the Philippines merits special attention as a contemporary instance of a Muslim minority whose experience may be a harbinger of political change in other parts of *dar al-harb*. The uniqueness of the Philippine case is suggested by several factors. There has been sustained dissonance by the Philippine Muslims over a period of many years. From this a political structure in the form of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) has emerged and with it a program of action. Participation of the MNLF at the foreign ministers conferences of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the most recent being the 15th Conference held in Sanaa early in 1985, gives legitimacy to the cause and provides moral, if not financial, support from that 45-member organization. The fragility of the Marcos regime provides a context of uncertainty and possible destabilization which a regional dissident movement might find advantageous. The final factor is the unusual geographical location of the Philippine Muslims. None of these factors is applicable to the Muslim minorities of China, Nigeria, the Soviet Union or Yugoslavia, where there is some concentration within a given territory, or to other countries such as India where there is wide dispersion.

In the Philippines, Muslims are concentrated almost totally in the southern island of Mindanao, the western island of Palawan, and in the Sulu archipelago. Here their position is unique among other Muslim minorities of the *dar al-harb*. Their physical detachment from the main body of the Philippine archipelago gives the illusion of territorial insularity. This does not mean that they have no contact with inhabitants of the north — the main island of Luzon. On the contrary, contact by water has been and continues to be easier and more extensive than by land. On Mindanao and Sulu in recent years some Christians and Muslims have lived in mixed communities and many towns and villages are almost evenly divided between the two groups. This has been one of the principal complaints of the Moro National Liberation Front which contends that this is a deliberate policy aimed at destroying the distinctive Muslim character and relative homogeneity of those islands.

The Philippine South also has an ethnic, linguistic, and religious affinity with the Indonesian islands of the Celebes and Moluccas to the south and the Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak and the sovereign Sultanate of Brunei to the southwest. The southernmost islands of the Sulu group are less than 50 miles from Borneo. As bridges for transmitting culture, these islands and their proximity are important; it is by this route that Hindu influence penetrated the Philippines even before the arrival of Islam.

In the 1960's ambiguity regarding certain claims in the former British-held territories of northern Borneo, gave rise to both conflict and an abortive attempt to establish a confederation in the area. The Philippines' claim to north Borneo (Sabah) was based on an agreement of 1879 between the Sultan of Sulu and the British North Borneo Company which did not make clear whether north Broneo was leased or ceded. The Philippine claim, which the British finally took seriously enough to hold talks in London in 1963, became intertwined with the establishment of Malaysia that same year. Singapore was separated from Malaya and became an independent state. Sabah and Sarawak on the island of Borneo went to newly federated Malaysia after a United Nations survey revealed that such was the desire of the inhabitants of those territories. The Philippines asked for a delay in the establishment of Malaysia, hoping that its claim to North Borneo might be favorably negotiated. To pursue this possibility, the heads of state of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines met in Manila and in June 1963 agreed to a loose cooperative confederation to be called "Maphilindo" (an acronym derived from the first letters of Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia). The association was never more than a name and has now been almost forgotten. It ended when both Manila and Jakarta broke relations with Malaysia and Indonesia embarked on a short-lived guerilla warfare (*Konfrontation*) in Malaysia. The impetus for "Maphilindo" was not primarily religious; rather it was based almost exclusively on territorial claims. It does, however, suggest the web of ethnicity, colonial legacies and territorial proximity which linked the three nations. At the time both Malaysia and the Philippines were reluctant to associate too closely with the pro-communist regime then in control of Indonesia. If such a confederation had been established it might have been significant for Islam, for in such a group the proportion of Muslims would have changed from a mere 6 percent in the Philippines to a majority in the confederation. The overpowering force of nationalism in the three affected states have dampened if not put out completely the political expression of such a union. If such a realignment of territorial entities should once more emerge — an unlikely possibility — the impetus might come from Malaysia, the most Islamic of the three nations, from Indonesia, the most populous or possibly from Mindanao, the area with the most persistent Muslim "liberation" movement.

The global context of Islam is not the same in the 1980's as it was in the 1960's. In the earlier period, it was quiescent, almost moribund. It now

has an effervescent dynamism difficult to contain. This new dynamism, combined with destabilization in any one of the three nations — especially the Philippines — could present new opportunities for territorial rearrangements generated by an Islamic impulse to fit the sentiment of *ummah*.

Islam of the southern Philippines is confronted by a Philippine regime and majority population which is quintessentially Roman Catholic with strong Spanish colonial overtones. The very term “Moros,” unknown in other Muslim areas, is derivative from “Moors” used in Spain during Arab rule and in turn derivative from the name of Mauritania, the northwest African state with which the early Arab conquerors in Andalusia were associated. Deep in this colonial legacy is a Spanish perception of the conquering “Moor” compounded by the unique fervor and militancy of Spanish Catholicism. This complex colonial legacy is in contradistinction to a peculiarly empathetic relationship between the Vatican and contemporary Islam, derivative in part from Rome’s recognition of and association with certain Syrian Orthodox and Maronite Catholic rites, many using Arabic in their liturgies. Thus a link of ecclesiastical respect is established with Arab entities and *mutatis mutandi* with Islam. It derives also from the Vatican’s deep concern, consistently made manifest, for the injustice suffered by the Palestinians, expelled from their homeland by an irredentist Israel which contorted the Balfour Declaration’s intent to establish a homeland for Jews without prejudice to the national rights of the indigenous Arab majority. While the militancy of Spanish-Filipino Catholicism has been tempered somewhat by the Catholic understanding of Islam, it has not completely erased the image of the Moorish infidel. The larger entity ethnically known as Malays embraces the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia, the latter two countries being predominantly Muslim. The introduction of Catholicism in the Philippines is, in a sense, a post-Islamic minority intrusion in an otherwise overwhelmingly Muslim-Malay population. It is not here suggested that this intrusion is illicit; the global diffusion of ideas involves constant intrusions on existing cultures, including, of course, an earlier Muslim intrusion in the Philippines and elsewhere. It is clear that Islam is both the predominant faith in the Malay area of which the Philippines is a part, and that it was in the Philippines centuries before Catholic Christianity. Islam was prevalent as far north as Manila which was ruled by Muslims when the Spanish arrived.

Ironically, Protestant Christianity has become a mediating force — almost a protector of Islam against the failure of Manila to comprehend and respect the Islamic epistemology which governs Muslim attitudes and behavior in the southern Philippines. It is not accidental, therefore, that the Dansalan Research Center, established at Marawi City, is the result of Protestant missionary efforts and that its *Quarterly*, first published in 1979, is a principal source of information about Muslims in

the south, and the only source emerging from the cultural context of Filipino Islam. The Institute of Islamic Studies of the University of the Philippines, formerly headed by the distinguished scholar and doyen of Philippine Muslim studies, Cesar Adib Majul, a Filipino Muslim, has long done distinguished work. Its physical location away from Mindanao — operating as an island of Islamic studies in a sea of Manila-Spanish-Catholic-secularism—gives it a quality reflecting its physical detachment from the arena of conflict.

The final question which the Philippine Muslim issue poses is one of international law and morality. It focuses on the extent to which a foreign power can intervene in the politics of another state on behalf of co-religionists who are citizens of that state. That intervention can take various diplomatic forms aimed at improving the lot of the minority. At its most extreme, it can either covertly or overtly aid insurrection aimed at secession and the establishment of a separate state. We have no proof that other Muslim states are engaged in the more extreme behavior. Libya has reportedly supplied money and arms to the MNLF, but was host at Tripoli to the 1976 conference resulting in the circumspect and moderate Tripoli Declaration. The concern of Muslims the world over in the plight of Philippine Muslims has been made manifest at foreign ministers' and summit meetings of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Diplomatic missions have negotiated with Manila for peaceful reconciliation of Muslim-Manila tensions, always within the bounds of respect for the sovereignty of the Philippine Republic.

Since 1972, the Moro National Liberation Front has been waging an insurgency with secession as its objective. During the last few years, the fighting has become less intense, but casualties continue to occur. Muslim grievances are many and are traceable to the Spanish conquest of more than 300 years ago. A common Moro complaint is that villagers are relocated outside the insurgency areas and their property, usually not registered in accordance with Philippine law, but tenable on the basis of customary, Islamic practice, is then taken by Christians from the north who are resettled in Mindanao. This perpetuated and expanded the long established practice of breaking up the homogeneity of Mindanao by interspersing Christian villages among Muslim villages. The writ of *habeas corpus* has been suspended in at least two regions of the south. Manila has made efforts to meet Muslim demands, short of complete autonomy or secession. In 1981 a ministry of Muslim affairs was established in the central government. Financial support was given to ten *madrasahs* (Muslim schools) and eight Islamic centers in the south. In 1982 an institute was established for the training of Muslim legal and religious leaders in Muslim jurisprudence and court procedure. Two autonomous regions were established in the south in 1979 and elections to regional assemblies were held in 1982. A plebiscite in 1982 called for the merger of two regional executive councils but its implementation was delayed for administrative reasons. The central

government also appointed a Muslim to its influential Executive Committee.

The Ministry of Muslim Minority Affairs was abolished by Executive Order No. 967 effective June 30, 1984. Its activities were merged into a new Office of Muslim Affairs and Cultural Communities (OMACC) directly under the President's Office. The head of the new office is designated Director-General, though the position has the rank of Cabinet Minister. The position of Deputy Minister is a career civil service post. The position of Presidential Assistant for National Minorities was also abolished and absorbed in OMACC. Many Muslim Filipinos regard this reorganization as a backward step which diminishes the perception of Muslims as a separate and distinctive community. The new structure merges their interests with such diverse groups as the tribes, such as the Igorots, of Northern Luzon. They assert that this is a return to the structure of the Office of Non-Christian Tribes which had been established by earlier administrations.

These actions by Manila are deemed superficial and insufficient by the Moro National Liberation Front which, contrary to the official stand of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, insists on secession and the establishment of an independent Muslim nation.

At the 14th meeting of the foreign ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Dhaka in December 1983, a resolution, confirmed later by the Casablanca OIC Summit meeting of January 1984, called upon the Philippine government to implement the letter and spirit of the Tripoli Agreement of 1976 which advocated limited autonomy for the Muslim South within the framework of the Philippine Republic. The resolution also called on Manila to initiate negotiations with the Moro National Liberation Front and urged the MNLF to adopt a unified position so that the Tripoli Agreement could be implemented. The foreign ministers voted for continued negotiation despite the Moro National Liberation Front's stand that, negotiations having been a failure, only complete secession of Mindanao is the answer to Muslim grievances.

Deteriorating political conditions in the Philippines in 1984 and 1985 have given the MNLF new hope and it has launched what is labeled as a second phase of a "revolution for a separate and independent homeland" — Bangsamoro — which covers one third of the land area of the Philippine Republic. The MNLF was especially encouraged by the attitude of the 15th Conference of foreign ministers of the Organization of the Islamic Conference meeting in Sanaa in 1985 which reaffirmed the Tripoli Resolution. The widespread antagonism to the Marcos regime has resulted in the pullout of some armed forces in the south. Other opposition parties such as the communist National Democratic Front and the Democratic Socialist Party have, according to Nir Misuari, chairman of the MNLF central committee, recognized the legitimacy of the MNLF cause. The second phase of the MNLF

revolution will prepare for a general offensive and establishment of a provisional Bangsamoro government as soon as an armed struggle in Manila presents the opportunity.

A more radical view is taken by another Muslim group in the Philippines — Bangsa MINSUPALA (Mindanao, Sulu, Palawan) Islamic Liberation Organization, headed by Dr. Yusoth A. Lucman. This group advocates the return to Islam of the entire Philippine Republic. Here the assumption is not that Christian Filipinos should be converted to Islam, but rather that they should be allowed to revert to the religion they had before conversion to Christianity by Spain. This “reversionism” is not unlike a comparable stirring among African-Americans who, especially after publication of Alex Haley’s *Roots*, advocated a reversion to the Islam which allegedly was their religion in Africa.

IV

The deep-seated ideological impetus of an expanding *dar-al-Islam* may lead to more foreign intervention in consequence of the international attention given Islam in the Philippines. If it does, it will certainly not be unique in contemporary international affairs. A partial catalog of similar interventions — some clearly advocating secession, others — both covert and overt — designed to destabilize regimes perceived as anathema — is illustrative. Heading the list is the half-century record of penetration and protective custody of the Soviet Union, most recently in Afghanistan. There follows the equally blatant intervention of its surrogate, Cuba, in Africa and the Caribbean. We must then list Irish-American support of the IRA in Ulster, Israeli support for world Jewry and specifically for Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union and Ethiopia, Libyan backing of various activities in Chad and other countries, American and international intervention in the internal structure of power in South Africa, Israeli intervention in Baghdad, and invasion of Lebanon, American intervention in Chile and El Salvador, India’s concern for Indians — especially Hindus — residing in Britain, and African states, Turkish and Greek intervention in Cyprus, Gaullist intervention in Quebec, Indian help to Bengalis leading to secession of East Pakistan and to establishment of Bangladesh, Egyptian intervention in North Yemen. This partial list suggests that the principle of international law codified in the United Nations Charter which proscribes interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states by other states is scarcely given universal acquiescence. The contemporary pattern of international transactions violates the sanctity of sovereignty perhaps as extensively though certainly more subtly than territorial aggrandizement of imperialism. The epitome of this pattern of violation of sovereignty is the practice of the preemptive strike — an attack against a perceived enemy for an imagined attack presumed to be

carried out in the future. Such was the basis of some of the examples given above.

The concern of the Islamic world for Muslims of the Philippines is not without precedent or without parallel in the present. This concern, whatever form it may take, perhaps has greater legitimacy than comparable interventions by other states. It is based on religious canonical doctrine — *ummah, dar al-harb, dar al-Islam* — fourteen hundred years old. It is not based on ethnicity (as is the Irish example) or on sheer power politics seeking to export a particular form of democracy in a bi-polar world (as are the American examples). Further, such intervention can justly claim to be based on consistent discrimination against Islam and gross injustices meted out against Muslims in the Philippines and elsewhere.

Finally, of all the Muslim minorities living in *dar al-harb*, only the Muslims of the southern Philippines have sustained consistent dissonance with the Philippine majority for a period of many years. Muslims of China, the Soviet Union and other states have, for whatever reasons, not been troublesome to their regimes. Sporadic resistance and violence occurs between Muslims and the regime in India, but it has not taken the form of a cohesive all-India-Muslim movement with outstanding leadership and a program of action. Only in the Philippines has this occurred, and only in that country has the record of oppression and prejudice been clearly exposed.

An end of the Marcos regime in the Philippines may produce widespread destabilization. It is not improbable to imagine that the Muslims of the south may seek redress of their real and imagined grievances in the context of such political turmoil. The consequence may be regional autonomy, reintegration in the total polity by force, or even secession. That the latter is not beyond probability is suggested by the Manifesto of October 7, 1983 signed by eleven distinguished Muslims. These included three former senators, the president of the Philippine branch of the World Muslim Congress and others holding high positions of Muslim leadership. After calling for the "complete, sincere, and final implementation of the 1976 Tripoli Agreement," the last paragraph of the *Manifesto of the Muslims of the Philippines Supporting the Call for National Reconciliation and Unity* declared "We hereby give notice to our fellow countrymen that unless national reconciliation with justice for all is speedily effected, we may be constrained to reassert the historic identity of the Moro nation, take the necessary steps in furtherance thereof, and demand the restoration of the *status quo ante bellum* of the Spanish American War of 1898, when the Bangsa Moro people, by the grace of Allah Almighty, were the complete masters of their own destiny."

The Bengali secession from Pakistan in 1971, the Turkish Cypriot secession from Cyprus in 1983, both in an Islamic cultural configuration, are precedents, alarming to some, satisfying to others. But the Filipino

action, whatever it may be, will be the only one in which Islam — and the concept of *dar al-harb*—figures as the paramount issue. It is for this reason that Islam in the Philippines is, for the whole Islamic world, one of the most critical issues in contemporary international affairs.

V

Philippine Muslim grievances and the strategies for their redress by Manila do not reveal the essence of the problem which is epistemological, cultural and psychological. It is the same problem that faces Islamic societies throughout the world — and especially Muslim minorities in *dar al-harb*, namely the failure to accord to Muslims that respect and parity of esteem which their culture deserves. Warped by centuries of colonial influence, that culture is only now sloughing off some of these distortions and recovering its own identity. So all-encompassing is the Muslim value system that it cannot exist to its fullest extent except under political conditions of near autonomy or in a context of a respectful and tolerant majority polity. Its own values appear increasingly dissonant from those of the West. Western liberalism is equated by the most extreme fundamentalists as in Iran and, increasingly, elsewhere with the forces of Satan. Islamic politics and behavior must be perceived as parts of a total epistemology, hence must be assessed by their own internally generated criteria — not by the terms of a western liberalism which has lost its moorings. Thus every great issue of human existence: liberty, justice, welfare, security, dignity, respect, enlightenment, rectitude, death, affection, divine will and the divine message, is clearly defined, and has its own internal logic and its divine inspiration. Islam, compatible theologically in many ways with Judaism and Christianity, to whose followers it accords the special status of *ahl-kitab* (people of the book) finds itself increasingly at variance with non-Muslim determinations of the specific meanings of those hypergeneral values. This theological incompatibility is at the core of the Muslim problem in the Philippines and elsewhere. Only a comprehension of its depth by the non-Islamic world can lead to a constructive, mutually respectful integration of the Muslim world in the global arena.