

## Egypt's Mubarak On Common Heritage Of Man

*Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak addressed the Formentor Forum in Spain, on Nov. 2, making proposals for a Middle East peace, and for a dialogue of civilizations. Speaking on the tenth anniversary of the Madrid peace conference, in the context of the European-Mediterranean dialogue, Mubarak made clear that peace could be achieved, if the Mitchell Commission Report recommendations were implemented. He then spoke, in this excerpt, on the common commitment of the great religions to the intellectual and scientific advancement of human kind, and on the positive role of Islamic-Arab culture in European civilization. Subheads have been added.*

### **Islamic Culture And European Civilization**

Undoubtedly, the rich historic background of each and every one of us reveals a mutual belief in the unity of values and cultures among people, and refutes claims of inter-civilization conflict or clash. Such concepts emanate from erratic perceptions and a false sense by others of the superiority of this or that civilization. Together with ungrounded theories and concepts of the overriding superiority of a specific race over others, [such concepts] are obsolete and outdated.

We should not allow them to make distinctions between one human being and another. Nor should we let them take us back to the Dark Ages, where human beings were torn between a strong urge to achieve progress, on one hand, and attempts by some to yield to backward theories that have no basis in science, religion, or rational thinking, on the other. These concepts, rather, stem from calls based on ignorance and rejection of the other simply on grounds of difference in belief or means of achieving progress.

It may be quite opportune these days to recall to memory those bright eras of flourishing civilizations where man could soar to higher levels of intellectual and scientific advancement.

Man had then realized that human civilization was one and the same, no matter how different its sources and components were. Man also grasped the historical fact, which proved for us all that whatever advances and progress man scored in a specific region, would add up to human heritage that is composed of interwoven and cumulative layers, eventually making up this firm-grounded structure of culture and civilization.

Our understanding of such relations between civilizations stems from the basic principles of Islam, that considers belief in former Divine Messages as a prerequisite for sound faith

in Islam. . . . The Holy Qur'an also confirms that religion can never serve as grounds for clash by saying, "There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is henceforth distinct from error." This also shows that relationships among civilizations and nations are one of dialogue rather than one of conflict, as shown by the following verses, "O mankind Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another." And, "Argue ye not [with the People of the Scripture] except in the better ways." Thus, from a proper Islamic perspective, Muslims' belief in the universality of Islam does not imply the exclusive singularity of Islamic civilization in the world nor its supremacy over other civilizations.

It rather means interaction with these civilizations and emphasis that plurality of civilizations and diversity of cultures are the normal state of affairs.

This Islamic concept of universality is based on the fact that plurality, diversity, and variance are the rule and the law and that interaction with other civilizations is the proper median position between isolation and subordination.

The experience of history confirms this vision that we much cherish, in identifying relations between civilizations. The Arab Islamic civilization rose not to supersede, but rather to complement and advance oriental heritage.

### **Islam And Greek Philosophical Thought**

In this context, Islam was influenced by the Greek philosophical thought. The center of gravity for civilization had started to turn toward Europe during the Middle Ages only after the Greek heritage had moved there through exactly Arab intermediation.

Probably, the most important factor that had made such influence possible was that Arab Islamic civilization did not only preserve Greek heritage, but also, through blending Greek philosophical thought with principles of Islamic religion, did give Greek heritage such forms that made it easily acceptable to Christian Europe.

This resulted in the reactivation of European philosophy on grounds of advanced Greek thought, making cultural and intellectual advancement possible. The influence of Arab Islamic civilization was not exclusively confined to this philosophical aspect, but rather extended to other branches of Western civilization—in mathematics, physics, and medicine.

This made the age of European Renaissance reflect, in turn, Arab Islamic influences already recorded and documented by many scholars of civilization and historians.

It is a source of our great pleasure in this context that Muslims had not been solely the upholders of advancement in our Arab Islamic civilization; as Christians and Jews, who had lived under the umbrella of such civilization, made significant contributions to it.

This asserts the sublime essence of Arab Islamic civilization, far away from the concept of inter-civilization or inter-



*President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt spoke to a Madrid conference marking eight years of the Mideast “peace process,” and called for deeper understanding of the ecumenical roots of the great monotheistic religions.*

religion clash. Therefore, the current European civilization, from an historical perspective, was not solely an outcrop of European innovation alone, but also a complementary addition to oriental cultural and civilization heritage running down for thousands of years.

In the same logic, ongoing pursuit by Arabs and Muslims to bridge the huge gap that keeps them apart from scientific and technological achievements of current European civilization, should deeply grasp elements of progress entailed in European civilization, as well as the spirit of creativity and innovation, the ability to harness nature in the interest of man, and the substantial contributions in many spheres to humanity at large.

Thus, the cycles of civilizations’ continuum are completed and the right significance of relationships between civilizations over ages is entrenched. This would undoubtedly create an air of optimism among us all as regards both Arab-European relations, in general, and future prospects of Euro-Mediterranean partnership, in particular. The Mediterranean countries have always been at the heart of creative cultural interactions witnessed in East-West relations.

Hence, it is no exaggeration to say that inter-civilization dialogue has been a common practice by Mediterranean countries throughout their different historic epochs. . . .

## ‘LaRouche Is *The* Star In The Arab Countries’

by Hussein Al-Nadeem

This pungent phrase from an Arab diplomat in Europe summed up the extraordinary discussion and debate among intellectual and political circles in the Middle East, increasingly reflected in the region’s press, over the ideas of Lyndon LaRouche about the present crisis. Since Sept. 11 in particular, U.S. Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche has emerged in the eyes of leading Arab and Muslim commentators, analysts, and the mass media as “America’s voice of reason.” However, as the crisis has gotten deeper and the horrifying military retaliation was being prepared, other features have been recognized in LaRouche: courage and truthfulness, two features which Arabs see as missing even in leading Arab and Muslim politicians, not to speak of Americans and Europeans.

This has even prompted some Arab journalists, among the many following LaRouche’s activity, to express concern for his personal security, due to what Qatar-based Al-Jazeera Satellite news channel called “his daring statements, which undoubtedly are annoying people in powerful positions in the United States.”

### **Widespread And Growing Coverage**

The views of LaRouche, regarding the significance of the Sept. 11 events, as well as broader strategic and economic perspectives, have been increasingly covered in leading media in the Arab world. Internet searches now show dozens of articles, reports, and discussion groups’ debates on LaRouche’s ideas, in many Arab countries, since the Iranian Persian daily *Keyhan* and Syrian television on Sept. 16 reported that “the famous American economist and former Presidential candidate had pointed to the domestic security and intelligence agencies of the [American] state” as responsible for the Sept. 11 attacks.

On Nov. 4, the Egyptian national TV Channel 2 and the international Egyptian Satellite Channel, both state owned, broadcast an interview with LaRouche on the “Red Shadow” program, hosted by the chairwoman of the Egyptian television Sanaa Mansour, a *grande dame* of Egyptian journalism. She presented LaRouche as “the American politician who foresaw the terror attacks in the United States,” and a Democratic Presidential pre-candidate in the next elections. He was asked about his forecasts of the terrorist attacks, and his explanation of them. Regarding prospects for the war in Afghanistan, and capturing Osama bin Laden, LaRouche said, this