The Alliance of Civilizations, Global Governance, and Daisaku Ikeda's Philosophy of Peace

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Introduction

On the occasion of the first forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, held in Madrid, Spain on 15 January 2008, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the following:

> Never in our lifetime has there been a more desperate need for constructive and committed dialogue, among individuals, among communities, among cultures, among and between nations. (...) We all know the terrible toll intolerance is taking in our world—attacks, killings and even mass atrocities committed in the name of religion. (...) Fostering dialogue will not produce change overnight. It is not the fast way. But it is the sure way. It is the enduring way. The careful plans of the Alliance—of you, our partners—will deliver in the long run (UNAOC 2008a).

Events in the Middle-East, South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere, at the beginning of 2009, have unfortunately validated Ban Ki-moon's words when he mentioned "attacks, killings and even mass atrocities," and these tragedies can indeed be linked to religious divides. However, it is important to recognize that religion is most often used as a smokescreen hiding less lofty endeavors such as territorial gain, political domination or control of natural resources.

It is highly significant that the Soka University Peace Research Institute has organized this symposium just before the second forum of the Alliance of Civilizations that will take place in Istanbul, Turkey on 6-7 April 2009.

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) was established in 2005, based on an initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey. In this paper, some

principles of the Alliance are examined, and their links to the broader concept of dialogue of civilizations are explored. The Alliance is then placed in the context of global governance, with some examples pertaining to the Asia-Pacific region. Finally a model for improving world society based on Daisaku Ikeda's philosophy of peace will be proposed, and its potential contributions to the elaboration of an ethical and institutional framework that can support the Alliance and its goals will be introduced.

The Mission of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

The opening sentence of the UNAOC mission statement reads:

> The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) is an initiative of the UN Secretary-General which aims to improve understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions, and to help counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism (UNAOC 2008b).

Here I would like to focus on two aspects, first "nations and peoples," and second, "polarization and extremism." This project relies not only on international and intergovernmental relations, but also on the links between peoples, and I would add, between people. It is important to include NGOs, transnational organizations, and the power of ordinary people in the process, if such a project is to succeed. Secondly, concerning a possible cure against "polarization and extremism," I would like to again emphasize the power of ordinary people. When human beings treat each other as people, and not as abstractions, polarization and extremism are less likely to take place. I argue for a strong emphasis on the utmost importance of each human being, in order to ensure the success of projects beyond intergovernmental achievements, and also as a cure against extremism.

The overall context of the Alliance of Civilizations is the proclamation by the UN of 2001 as the year of "Dialogue among Civilizations." As we all know, the events of September 11 provided a brutal wake-up call in this context: this dialogue will not be easy. Actually an incident that took place shortly before 9/11 was already symptomatic of the magnitude of the challenges to come. The World Conference against Racism (WCAR) was held in Durban, South Africa, under UN auspices, from 31 August to 8 September 2001. The delegations of two countries withdrew from the conference, failing to agree on the content of a common text with other countries. The representatives of these two nation-states felt that the conference had been hijacked by a disreputable lobby, and had therefore become "racist." A major conference against racism therefore failed because representatives of several countries accused some of the participants of racism, and vice-versa.

This very significant incident should have attracted worldwide attention, but it went virtually unnoticed because of the major tragedy that would soon gain planetary prominence. The attacks of 9/11 occurred just three days after that conference. What happened during the WCAR can be analyzed using the two points from the UNAOC mission statement highlighted above. First the delegations that stormed out did not represent ordinary people, but the national interests of two nation-states. Second, the accusations of racism on both sides can be labeled as symptoms of "polarization and extremism." One can always imagine what would have happened if those two points, the importance of ordinary people and the caution against extremism, had been kept in mind at all times during the WCAR conference. Perhaps there would have been no need for the delegates of the two countries to storm out. We will never know the answer to the following question: would 9/11 have happened if the conference had been successful?

In this short description of some of the major events of the year 2001, one can see a symbol of the ultimate struggle of the human spirit against its own weaknesses. First the UN, the world body, declared 2001 to be the year of Dialogue of Civilizations. Then a conference against racism was organized, but because of harsh criticism, the representatives of two countries stormed out, and this lack of sustained dialogue effectively destroyed the credibility of the whole event. Three days later, the murderous attacks of 9/11 occurred, followed by military retaliation against Afghanistan a few weeks afterwards. We know the rest of this story, including the invasion and occupation of Iraq, as well as numerous terrorist attacks throughout the world.

These tragic events seemed to confirm Samuel Huntington's warning that the world was heading towards a "clash of civilizations," the main theme of his now famous 1993 article in *Foreign Affairs* and of his 1996 book. However, Huntington's analysis was not entirely powerless to shape foreign policies and events, and instead of a warning, it could be called a prophecy, more exactly a self-fulfilling prophecy. Scholars of international relations and political science, among many others, bear a tremendous responsibility in shaping foreign policies and international climates through their research results and statements.

In this context, it is argued that the response of the UN, opposing the concept of a perpetual "clash of civilizations" with that of a "dialogue among civilizations," was very appropriate. It is to be noted that five years before the UN proclamation, and two years before the November 1998 decision of the General Assembly to address this issue, the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, established by Japanese peace thinker and activist Daisaku Ikeda, had chosen "Dialogue of Civilizations for World Citizenship" as its motto. This was one of the earliest institutional responses to Huntington's warning. In 2008 one word of the motto was

modified and it became "Dialogue of Civilizations for *Global* Citizenship," in order to better reflect the inevitable challenges to peace and understanding presented by globalization.

The mission statement of the UNAOC also provides certain recommendations, for instance that the Alliance become:

> A **bridge builder and convener**, connecting people and organizations devoted to promoting trust and understanding between diverse communities, particularly—but not exclusively—between Muslim and Western societies; (...) (UNAOC 2008b).

How does this recommendation apply to the countries of the Asia-Pacific Region? The definitions of its geographical boundaries vary, but it always includes at least China and Japan, as well as Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, and all the countries in between. These are both Koreas, the 10 countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN: Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines), for a total of more than 17 countries, but this number varies depending on the political map one uses. Concerning the relations between Muslim and Western societies mentioned in the recommendation, without going into details, there are both intra-national issues such as in the Philippines, and international ones such as the relationships between Indonesia and Australia, for instance.

Because of the pervading influence of globalization, and due to the overall interdependence characterizing our 21st century societies, the institutional mechanisms and ethical foundations which need to be put in place to allow for the development of an Asia-Pacific alliance will not fail to have an impact on the whole world. On the other hand, the global system will have a strong influence on the development of any attempts to establish more trust and understanding between the nations, peoples, and people of the Asia-Pacific region. As a result, it is necessary to examine what kind of global governance is available in the world nowadays, and to see how an Asia-Pacific alliance would interact with the whole framework.

Global Governance Today: a Brief Overview

Here I would like to introduce the UN-centered model presented by David Held and Anthony McGrew in their book entitled *Globalization/Anti-Globalization*," first published in 2002, recently updated in 2007. At the core of this model are the five permanent organs of the United Nations (UN), namely the Secretariat, ECOSOC, the General Assembly (UNGA), the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and the Security

Council (UNSC). If we look at these five institutions as the elements of as a world government in the making, the legislative power is held by UNGA, the judiciary by the ICJ and the executive by the UNSC. In a first ring around these organs we find UN agencies such as UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP and UNEP. A second ring is made of UN specialized agencies such as IAEA, IMF, WHO and UNESCO. Finally outside of the ring we find Greenpeace, WTO, Oxfam, Amnesty International and the International Criminal Court (ICC), among many other organizations.

As mentioned above, this scheme depicts an ideal UN-centered model of the world, but it does not represent the reality of how hard power is distributed on our planet. A more accurate description of how global governance looked like between 2001 and 2009, is rather unfortunately, a world organized around the most militarily, economically and politically dominant nation-states, with the US in the center, the UK next to it, and everybody else trying to either keep up, or revolt, or adapt, with some countries being invaded and occupied in the process. On a more positive note, with the new US administration that took office at the beginning of 2009, everything is possible, and billions of people throughout the world are hoping that positive changes will soon become visible.

Only two global governance models have been presented here, one with the UN in the center, the other one based on US hegemony, but there are many other ones. There is therefore an array of world models competing to influence the organization and distribution of power in the world and what is called "global governance" is far from a well-organized or coherent affair.

One of the most promising concepts in post-cold war global governance thinking is that of "cosmopolitan democracy," as described by David Held, Mary Kaldor, Richard Falk, Daniele Archibugi and others. This concept is the topic of vigorous debates, and it is constantly being developed and refined.

For instance in the book entitled *Democratizing Global Governance*, published in 2002 in collaboration with the Toda Institute, Joseph Camilleri expressed reservations about the global legal framework defined by David Held in 1995, and he cautioned that it "would be one in which the duties and functions traditionally centered on the state would be shared across different political levels-local, nation, regional and international. Such a framework would require an overarching system of laws and institutions capable of sustaining the complex forms of interdependence in the era of globalization" (Camilleri 2002: 256, paraphrasing Held 1995). Camilleri then suggested a more flexible scheme: "A more feasible but also more desirable process would be one which encourages the democratic ethic simultaneously in all tiers of governance, remembering that democratic practice within and between tiers will always be subject to renegotiation and renewal" (Camilleri 2002: 256).

Here I would like to mention Huntington's book *The Clash of Civilization and Remaking of World Order* again, because one passage from this work illustrates the direct links between contemporary global governance and the potential achievements of the UNAOC in Asia-Pacific. At the end of his book, Huntington describes a nightmarish scenario leading to a cataclysmic Third World War. He presents an imagined future sequence of events occurring in rapid succession, triggered by a giant geopolitical domino effect inevitably leading to global catastrophe.

Now I would like to highlight the first domino to fall in Huntington's example, because it is none other than the reunification of both Koreas. This small passage in his book becomes highly significant when it is placed in the context of the current relationships between North Korea, South Korea, their neighbors and the US. Two questions can be asked: firstly, what is the impact on public opinion in general and on US foreign policy in particular, of one of the major books on international relations stating that the reunification of both Koreas would lead to WW3? Secondly, what does this tell us about the general climate and pre-existing assumptions prevailing in our contemporary global governance circles?

There are many other examples in other works, but I would like to suggest that if we want to think deeply about the best ways to build an Alliance of Civilizations in the Asia-Pacific region, we need to simultaneously take into consideration constraining external factors. While designing the best integrative mechanisms at the regional level, we also need to find out what kind of global ethical and institutional framework would enable this specific Alliance to flourish. Moreover, ideally, such a global framework would need to enable countless other alliances of civilizations to develop throughout the world. Numerous regional and global plans for peace have been proposed by such figures as Erasmus, Emeric Cruc, William Penn, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, William Ladd, Baroness Suttner, Immanuel Kant, Victor Hugo and many others, and in the next section some elements of Daisaku Ikeda's Philosophy of Peace will be presented. It is argued that it contains recommendations that can be useful in our search for a more humane and effective global governance system.

Daisaku Ikeda's Philosophy of Peace: Self-Transformation, Dialogue, and Global Civilization

During two years, from 2006 to 2008, I had the opportunity of doing research about Daisaku Ikeda's philosophy of peace, trying to systematize the non-religious, secular works directly related to the development of world peace. There was therefore a deliberate focus on three types of writings, namely the annual Peace Proposals, the approximately fifty volumes of dialogues in book form, and the two

serial novels *The Human Revolution* and the *New Human Revolution*. The material available in English totals more than 10,000 pages, and what follows is the result of a textual analysis of that body of work.

To put it in its simplest form, Ikeda's philosophy of peace is a three-step approach that consists of Self-Transformation, Dialogue and Global Civilization. It offers useful suggestions for the development of an Asia-Pacific community, for local and global alliances of civilizations, and also for global governance, because it is the result of Ikeda's more than half a century long, strenuous and consistent efforts towards the implementation of universal and humanist principles that go beyond specific religions or cultures. Whereas Ikeda is first and foremost a religious leader, as well as a man of action who travelled the world to hold dialogues with people from all backgrounds, what I call "Daisaku Ikeda's Philosophy of Peace" (DIPP) is only the theoretical architecture behind those numerous actions.

The first element, Self-Transformation, implies that any journey towards peace starts within the individual. More specifically, when making daily decisions, each human being can choose between greed, hatred and foolishness on the one hand, and the qualities of courage, wisdom and compassion on the other. These three were not chosen at random, and they can be found in the writings of diverse philosophers, religious thinkers and psychologists. Ikeda mentioned these three qualities in a speech at Columbia University in 1996, entitled "Education for Global Citizenship:"

> I think I can state with confidence that the following are essential elements of global citizenship[:]
>
> - The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living.
> - The courage not to fear or deny difference; but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures, and to grow from encounters with them.
> - The compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one's immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places.
>
> The all-encompassing interrelatedness that forms the core of the Buddhist worldview can provide a basis, I feel, for the concrete realization of these qualities of wisdom, courage and compassion (Ikeda, 1996).

These three qualities are also mentioned in Ikeda's 2002 Peace Proposal, which was one of his responses to the events of September 11, 2001, and to the ensuing invasion of Afghanistan. In this text Ikeda highlights "dehumanization" as the main source of the destructive cycle of violence that was engulfing the world and then

recommends "the ideal way of life, one characterized by great compassion, courage and wisdom" (Ikeda 2002: 10) as the best antidote.

These three qualities are considered essential by many different religions, spiritual practices, philosophies and ways of life, as one of the founders of positive psychology, Martin Seligman, and his research team have found out:

> (...) we read Aristotle and Plato, Aquinas and Augustine, the Old Testament and the Talmud, Confucius, Buddha, Lao-Tze, Bushido (the samurai code), the Koran, Benjamin Franklin, and the Upanishads-some two hundred virtue catalogues in all. To our surprise, almost every single one of these traditions flung across three thousand years and the entire face of the earth endorsed six virtues:
>
> - Wisdom and Knowledge
> - Courage
> - Love and Humanity
> - Justice
> - Temperance
> - Spirituality and transcendence (Seligman, 2002: 132-133)

It is easy to see the link between the first three of them and the three qualities of courage, wisdom and compassion highlighted here. The starting point of Ikeda's philosophy of peace is thus the capacity of each person to generate these qualities through a voluntary choice. This desire for constant self-improvement is at the core of what Carl Rogers calls the "actualizing tendency" (Rogers [1980] 1995: 118). This is the natural longing towards growth and self-development at the core of each human being, according to Rogers. Even more precisely, Victor Frankl has described the way people can voluntarily choose the best options, whatever may happen, in his book *Man's Search for Meaning,* an account of his struggles for survival in extermination camps during WW2. The following passage embodies very well what Ikeda means by the capacity for Self-Transformation:

> (...) "Saying yes to life in spite of everything," (...) presupposes that life is potentially meaningful under any conditions, even those which are most miserable. And this in turn presupposes the human capacity to creatively turn life's negative aspects into something positive or constructive. In other words, what matters is to make the best of any given situation (Frankl [1959] 2006: 137).

However, even the loftiest self-transformation would not be very useful for world peace if it were not communicated. The second step in Ikeda's philosophy of peace is

therefore dialogue. German philosopher Jurgen Habermas comes very close to Ikeda's theory of dialogue with his concept of "communicative rationality." Simplified to the utmost, Habermas's concept can be described as a desire to meet people, to get to know them and to acknowledge their humanity using language and communication. The reverse is called "purposive (or instrumental) rationality," when we use words to manipulate, influence or otherwise make people fulfill our own needs.

A word of caution might be necessary here, since it might be impossible to survive by exclusively using communicative rationality. Indeed, to take a down-to-earth example, if one goes shopping for food, with an exclusive emphasis on communicative rationality through exchanges recognizing the humanity of the shopkeepers, one will end up bringing nothing home. Some amount of purposive rationality is necessary in our daily interactions if we want to accomplish anything. What matters, nevertheless, is to be aware of the difference between the two uses of language, and to try to always include some communicative rationality in one's exchanges. Martin Buber described the same dichotomy when he distinguished between "I-It" and "I-Thou" relationships (Buber 1996). It is worth noting that both Habermas and Buber appear in Ikeda's writings.

In *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1984) Habermas wrote in favor of "a wider concept of rationality connected with ancient conceptions of the logos. This concept of communicative rationality carries with it connotations based ultimately on the central experience of the unconstrained, unifying, consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech" (Habermas 1984: 10).

He further recommends the "consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech" in the same work, believing that the main motivation behind dialogue should always be a "cooperative search for the truth" (emphasis added):

> Participants in argumentation have to presuppose in general that the structure of their communication (...) excludes all force (...) except the force of the better argument (and thus that it also excludes, on their part, all motives except that of a *cooperative search for the truth*). From this perspective argumentation can be conceived as a reflective continuation, with different means, of action oriented to reaching understanding (Habermas 1984: 25).

Remarkably, former Iranian President Mohammad Khatami has formulated a similar vision in his speech delivered at Florence University on 10 March 1999:

> Seeing is done through the "I", and the "universe and mankind" arise from seeing and the subject of seeing. However, "speaking" and "listening" are a

two-dimensional -- or multidimensional -- effort aimed at coming closer to the truth and arriving at understanding.

It is for this reason that "dialogue" pertains neither to skeptics, nor does it belong to those who believe the truth to lie solely within their own claws and under their own domination. Rather, understanding reveals its beautiful, albeit veiled countenance, only to the wayfarers of the path whose followers travel hand in hand, and in step with each other (The Iranian 1999).

To sum up the account of Ikeda's philosophy offered so far, the journey towards peace starts with personal Self-Transformation sustained by efforts to generate courage, wisdom and compassion, then expands through Dialogue, characterized by genuine attempts to bring out the best in self and others, and as these dialogues spread throughout society, they can constitute the basis of a more humane global governance. To mention Habermas again, he clarified the concept of "deliberative democracy" which explains the articulation between localized dialogues and the development of better governance. It is essential to discuss, to deliberate and to have dialogues if one is to establish a political system where the voices of all people can be heard. In a dictatorship, there is no need for deliberative democracy.

For Ikeda, the third step, the construction of a humane Global Civilization, is based on the ideal of a flexible system with the UN at its center, that allows individuals, organizations, peoples, NGOs, state and non-state actors, and all other types of groups at all levels of governance to have a voice in the political process. In his 2009 Peace Proposal, Ikeda suggested the creation of a "Department of Global Visioning," and also of the post of "under-secretary general for relations between NGOs and the UN" (Ikeda 2009).

I would like to argue even further that besides the legislative, judiciary and executive powers, a fourth power should be added, namely the "consultative power," that could be institutionally represented by such a "department of global visioning," a concerted effort to collect the opinions of NGOs, non-state organizations, transnational bodies, and all actors of society. The closest description of this ideal Global Civilization I have found in Western writings is that provided by Daniele Archibugi who argues in favor of the concept of "Cosmopolitan Democracy." Here we must be careful not to confuse matters, because the 2001-2009 US administration has given a very bad name to the word "democracy" during the eight years that they were given by US voters. To put it graphically, countless Iraqi children, women and men, people like you and I, have been slaughtered since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, all this, according to official discourse, for the sake of *democracy* and freedom. The same words have been used to justify the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan and its subsequent occupation. I would like to argue that this is an inaccurate use of very

important words, and that what was actually meant was complete *domination and hegemony*, not *democracy*. It is therefore crucial to clarify what we mean by democracy.

Here I will use Archibugi's definition in his recent work entitled *The Global Commonwealth of Citizens: Toward Cosmopolitan Democracy*. For him democracy is characterized by three main features, nonviolence, popular control and political equality. Taking the liberty to simplify these three concepts, I would say they can be explained in the following way. *Nonviolence* means that in order to change our governments, we debate and we vote, but we do not hurt or kill each other. *Popular control* is linked to transparency, and it means that once our political representatives have been elected, we have the power to check what they are doing and we can make sure they fulfill their duties. Third, *political equality* means that every adult has the right to vote, without any discrimination based on gender, social status, ethnic background or other characteristics. Of course these three attributes are ideal, and even in the most prosperous democracies, political debates can turn verbally violent, elected politicians can betray the public's trust without being caught, and some people are denied the right to vote. In particular, one must ask why children and adolescents should not have any voice in the political process. It is perhaps more realistic to talk about different degrees of democracy, with the three ideals of nonviolence, popular control and political equality as points of reference.

To illustrate, let us take a look at the decisional and political processes leading to the invasion of Iraq. This constitutes a good example of what Archibugi calls "democratic schizophrenia," when a country applies one set of principles domestically, but acts in just the opposite way when it comes to its foreign policy.

In contrast, both Archibugi and Ikeda call for a strengthening and reform of the UN that would allow it to play its role of facilitator of a truly democratic, peaceful and harmonious global community. As public opinion was entertaining legitimate doubts concerning the capacity of the UN to fulfill its mission, due to failures in the former Yugoslavia, in Rwanda and elsewhere, Ikeda reaffirmed his enthusiasm for the world body in his 2004 Peace Proposal:

> There are, in certain quarters, persistent questions about the effectiveness or even necessity of the UN. Some aspects of the organization as it stands may indeed be incompatible with the realities of today's world. But with 191 member states, there is no organization more universal than the UN; it is the only body that can truly serve as a foundation for and give legitimacy to international cooperation. In the absence of a realistic alternative, the best course is to strengthen it and make it more effective (2004 PP: 30).

In the same spirit, Archibugi expresses his conviction that the UN deserves our support:

> An examination has been made [in this book] of the prospect of reforming the UN, an issue that has been on the agenda for all the sixty years of the organization's life without any significant change being introduced yet. However, the UN, the most ambitious and wide-ranging international organization, must be the pivot of a new multilateralism that is able more decisively to incorporate the basic principles of democracy that are encapsulated in the values of nonviolence, public control and political equality. Many actions can be undertaken to allow the UN and its specialized agencies to govern globalization in a more effective, participatory and transparent fashion (Archibugi 2008: 281).

To summarize, Ikeda's philosophy of peace can be described as a three-step approach that starts with the Self-Transformation of an individual (close to Roger's humanistic psychology, and Frankl's existential psychology), spreads through Dialogue (understood as a means to bring out the best in oneself and others, as described by Habermas and Buber), and is reflected in the development of a Global Civilization characterized by the type of cosmopolitan democracy Archibugi recommends as most conducive to peace.

Can this model be useful for the Alliance of Civilizations, in Asia-Pacific and beyond? Let us go back to an item described in the Alliance's mission statement, which was a recommendation to become: "A **bridge builder and convener**, (...) particularly - but not exclusively - between Muslim and Western societies; (...)." Let us take the examples of the EU, a typically Western construction, and Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world. From data readily available, it appears that in both those political entities,

- People strive for self-transformation, bringing out courage, wisdom and compassion every day through their respective spiritual or philosophical traditions,
- People attempt to hold dialogues in order to bring out the best in themselves and others,
- The political system is geared towards creating as much well-being for its citizens as possible, and to take Archibugi's description, it is striving towards a maximum of nonviolence, popular control and political equality. Moreover both the EU countries and Indonesia has been active members and supporters of the UN, favoring a model of global governance very similar to Ikeda's concept of Global Civilization.

It seems that in the case of the EU and Indonesia, DIPP provides a humanistic framework that can be accepted by both. It would be interesting to research how this normative framework can be applied in the case of China, African countries, the Middle-East, and other parts of the world. It is argued that most elements of DIPP have universal validity and that it can constitute a useful and positive consensus-building theoretical framework.

Conclusion

The Report of the High-level Group of the Alliance of Civilizations of 13 November 2006 (HLG Report 2006) contains many useful suggestions, guiding principles and recommendations, as well as a contribution by Andre Azoulay (senior advisor to King Mohammed VI of Morocco) and Hubert Vedrine (French foreign minister 1997-2002) concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

A brief textual analysis of this report shows that the members of the AOC are fully aware of the challenges brought by globalization, as well as of the crucial importance of a more effective and humane global governance in attempting to counter its most negative effects. It also reveals that the three steps of Daisaku Ikeda's philosophy of peace can be found throughout the proposals of the 2006 Report and do constitute a highly compatible framework.

The challenges brought by globalization are outlined in article 3.2:

> In social, political and economic terms, the West is both driving globalization and yet seemingly threatened by some of its trends. Western powers maintain overwhelming political, economic, and military power in the world, including disproportionate influence in multilateral political and economic bodies. Porous borders, mounting population flows from poor to rich countries, un-integrated immigrant communities and cross-border spillovers of economic, environmental, health and even physical security factors have highlighted both the interdependence of societies and widening gaps between them.

The report emphasizes the necessity of improving global governance, in ways that point to the Global Civilization envisioned by Ikeda. For instance, article 2.2 says that "An increasingly interdependent and globalized world can be regulated only through the rule of law and an effective multilateral system with the United Nations system at its core." Moreover article 2.7 states the following:

> Democratic governance that is representative of citizens and responsive to their needs and aspirations provides the most effective means for individuals to achieve their full potential. To be successful, democratic systems must emerge organically from within each society's culture, reflecting its shared values and adapted to the needs and interests of its citizens. This is only possible when people are free and feel in control of their destiny.

Article 5.11 mentions the necessity to strengthen and reform the UN system:

> As noted throughout this report, many of the problems facing the international community can only be addressed effectively within a multilateral framework. It is therefore incumbent upon states to reinforce multilateral institutions—particularly the United Nations—and to support reform efforts that will strengthen the capacity and performance of these institutions.

As can be expected, the word "dialogue" appears frequently, as for instance in these key passages: "Establishing coherent integration strategies requires regular dialogue among representatives of government and immigrant communities, civil society representatives, religious organizations and employers, engaging at local, regional, national and international levels" (6.22). The following passage affirms the centrality of dialogue in the work of the UNAOC: "(...) the need to build bridges between societies, to promote dialogue and understanding and to forge the collective political will to address the world's imbalances has never been greater. This urgent task constitutes the raison d'etre of the Alliance of Civilizations" (1.4).

Of the three qualities recommended by Ikeda as essential for self-transformation (courage, wisdom and compassion), two appear in the report, namely compassion and courage. The first one can be found in the two following passages (emphasis added): "It is imperative to recognize that none of the world religions condones or approves the killing of innocents. All promote the ideals of *compassion*, justice and respect for the dignity of life (3.11)." Also "Not only citizens and religious leaders but the whole society needs a basic understanding of religious traditions other than their own and the core teachings of *compassion* that are common to all religions (6.8)."

Courage appears in the specific context of the protracted conflict in the Middle-East (emphasis added): "Achieving a just and sustainable solution to this conflict requires *courage* and a bold vision of the future on the part of Israelis, Palestinians and all countries capable of influencing the situation" (5.4).

The third quality, wisdom, does not appear as such, but its opposite, "ignorance," is denounced as one of the major factors preventing genuine dialogue, in article 6.1 (emphasis added):

(...) we recognize that mutual fear, suspicion, and *ignorance* across cultures has spread beyond the level of political leadership into the hearts and minds of populations-so much so that the notion that there are essential and irreconcilable differences between cultures and religions now arises regularly as an explanation for a range of cultural and political conflicts. This disturbing phenomenon must be addressed pragmatically.

This passage also confirms the importance of the first step in DIPP, namely Self-Transformation. If such destructive elements as "mutual fear, suspicion, and ignorance" have entered into "the hearts and minds of populations," that is to say in the deepest psychological recesses of countless ordinary people, it is only through personal self-reformation that those negative tendencies can be challenged and that courage, wisdom and compassion can prevail.

In this paper, I have tried to argue that any attempt to create a meaningful Alliance of Civilizations in Asia-Pacific will have to take into account the overall context of global governance. I have also attempted to show that Daisaku Ikeda's philosophy of peace offered a framework that can be appealing to people in all cultures and civilizations, and that it is highly compatible with the methods and goals of the UNAOC. It should be noted that Ikeda has promoted friendship and collaboration in a major part of the Asia-Pacific region, namely East Asia, at least since 1968 when he gave his famous declaration in favor of the inclusion of China in the UN, and for the normalization of the ties between China and Japan. As he mentioned in his 2008 Peace Proposal:

It has been four decades since I first called for the normalization of Sino-Japanese relations, and I welcome with deep gratification the significant steps that China and Japan have taken toward building a solid partnership for the peace, security and development of Asia and the world. (...) It is my conviction that if China, South Korea and Japan, together with ASEAN, continue to make tenacious efforts toward cooperation and coordination, it will be possible to consolidate the enduring infrastructures for peace in East Asia (2008 PP: 35-36).

In order to find effective solutions to the global issues that threaten the survival of humanity and of most of the biosphere today, I believe it is time for us to pool the great wisdom found in all civilizations, and to agree on a universal program towards the construction of a peaceful and harmonious global civilization. This would enable us to move towards a world where the Alliance of Civilizations, as well as the alliance and harmonious cooperation and mutual support between nations, between peoples, between people, and between humans and all other inhabitants of the Earth, will allow life on our planet to flourish.

Notes

Capital Letters

The three concepts of Self-Transformation, Dialogue and Global Civilization are capitalized when they refer to Ikeda's three main ideas at the basis of his three-step approach.

List of Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
HLG	High Level Group
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IMF	International Monetary Fund
UN	United Nations (also in all the following abbreviations)
UNAOC	UN Alliance of Civilizations
UNDP	UN Development Program
UNEP	UN Environmental Program
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

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