

Report – January 2008

I participated in two events of note during January.

The first of these was the first "Alliance of Civilizations" conference in Madrid, January 14-16.

The Alliance of Civilizations (AoC) to promote Muslim-West dialogue and cooperation was initiated by Prime Ministers Zapatero (of Spain) and Erdogan (of Turkey) and then taken on as a project under the auspices of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon.

This conference represented a new stage for the AoC in promoting dialogue and in exploring the priorities for joint action. Officially hosted by Spain, Turkey and the UN, it was very much lead by the primary hosts, the Spanish.

Aside from the opening plenary, the conference consisted of workshops on different themes and I spoke at the first of these on **The Role of Religious Leaders and Communities in Promoting Shared Security**, together with former Spanish Minister Lopez Aguilar, Turkish Minister of Religious Affairs Mehmet Aydin, Ethiopian Patriarch Paulus, Nigerian Archbishop John Onaiyeken and Sheikh Tayseer Al Tammimi of the PA. (Coincidentally, other than Lopez Aguilar, all are friends and/or working partners of mine) The program and participants list may be viewed at :- <http://www.madridaocforum.org/>.

Most lamentably I was the only visible Israeli there (although there were about a dozen Jews from around the world whom I could identify) and even that is not indicated on the program as I naturally appear with my AJC title. The UN Secretary General's representative for the Alliance who chaired the proceedings, (former Portuguese President) Jorge Sampaio has promised to rectify this at next year's meeting in Istanbul.

The second event was the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos Switzerland. This year I spoke on a panel on "the Meaning of Greatness" and in a workshop on "the Relationship between Culture Economy and Politics in the Middle East". My main role for the WEF in most years has been as a member of the Executive Committee of the C-100 for advancing relations between the Muslim and Western societies. This year in cooperation with Georgetown University, we released a report on the state of this relationship, entitled " Islam and the West: Annual Report on the State of the Dialogue." Included in the Report are a number of short articles commissioned by the editors including one by me on Jewish-Muslim dialogue.

See

[http://www.weforum.org/en/media/Latest%20Press%20Releases/IslamWestPR ..](http://www.weforum.org/en/media/Latest%20Press%20Releases/IslamWestPR..)
Also http://gaia.world-television.com/wef/worldeconomicforum_annualmeeting2007/default.aspx?sn=18782