

- to establish networking and cooperation among leaders, scholars and practitioners in the field of leadership and management;
- to seek better solutions (and actual resolutions) by engaging with current leadership issues;
- to propose substantial opinions for a healthier leadership practice for future generations;
- and to provide future directions for research and publications in the disciplines that pertain to Islamic leadership.

More specifically, the conference addressed the impact of the current Middle-East and Northern African crises (i.e. the ‘Arab Spring’) and possible lessons for ASEAN countries, the emergence of Islamic leadership within ASEAN as well as its trends, challenges and issues, Islamic leadership within the context of the global environment, the role of women contemporary leadership, the impact of science and technology on leadership, and prospects for enhancing Islamic leadership in today’s globalized world

The event, which featured lively discussions as to how to interpret the current changes in the Middle East, was attended by academics, researchers, policy-makers, senior government officers, administrators, managers, professionals and leaders from various disciplines and sectors such as politics, corporate, government and non-government organisations, featured presentations by scholars from various Muslim countries, as well as from Malaysia. The Keynote Dinner Address was made by Malaysia’s former Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed.

Forum on ‘Peace and Security: Islamic Perspectives’ (4 October 2011, Kuala Lumpur)

Karim D. Crow, IAIS Malaysia

This one-day event highlighted Islamic teachings on ‘Peace and Security’. It was convened jointly by IAIS Malaysia and the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR) in Kuala Lumpur. Seven speakers addressed theoretical and pragmatic issues on how Islam conceives of peaceful relations within society and harmonious relations between nations. The opening and closing keynote addresses were made by Tun Abdullah Badawi, the former Prime Minister of Malaysia and Patron of IAIS, and Tan Sri Mohd Radzi Abdul Rahman, the Secretary General of Malaysia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The two sessions were presided over by HE Ambassador Dato’ Ku Jaafar Ku Shaari (Director General, IDFR) and Professor Mohammad Hashim Kamali (Founding Chairman and CEO, IAIS). The morning session on “Peace Making: An Islamic

Imperative” offered well-researched overviews by leading scholars: Professor Kamali spoke on “Peace as a Universal Islamic Value,” while this writer dealt with “Roots of ‘Security’ and ‘Peace’ in Islam.” Professor Muddathir Abdel-Rahim (International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), International Islamic University Malaysia, IIUM) spoke on “Islamic Diplomacy: The Prophet’s Peaceful Strategy.” The afternoon session treated “Muslim Practice of Peace: National, Regional, and Global Perspectives.” Professor Chandra Muzaffar (Universiti Sains Malaysia and JUST) addressed “Peace Building: Roles of Government and Civil Society,” while Professor Osman Bakar (Deputy CEO, IAIS) spoke on “Challenges of Peace-Building for Muslim Nations.” Professor Muhammad Abu Bakar (University of Malaya) and Mr Zakri Jaafar (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) reviewed the performance of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The intent of this combined effort was to show the conviction that Muslims may uncover, renovate and innovate peace-making practices which realistically embody Islamic ideals people commonly acknowledge, yet too frequently ignore in their actual conduct of life. It provided food for thought for promoting humane and peaceable conditions in Muslim societies and for nation healing. The Forum sought a realistic appraisal of Islam’s relevance for human wellbeing and security, by exploring the higher objectives of peace and security in Islam. As the first public event in the ‘Peace-Security and Islam’ programme, the event affirmed Malaysia’s concern to promote engagement with ‘Islamic Peace and Security’ issues. Among the results of the event will be a published monograph and a working list of policy-related goals applicable in a range of Muslim societies.

Malaysia and the Vatican Establish Diplomatic Relations

Christoph Marcinkowski, IAIS Malaysia

In July 2011, Malaysia and the Vatican agreed to establish formal diplomatic relations to promote bonds of mutual friendship and strengthen cooperation following the meeting between Prime Minister Dato’ Seri Najib Tun Razak and Pope Benedict XVI at the papal summer residence in Castel Gandolfo, outside Rome. In the meeting, Najib put forth his concept for a ‘Global Movement of Moderates’ initiative to counter extremism of all forms, adding that as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, Malaysia had drawn on the values of moderation to ensure continued harmony, stability and prosperity.¹ Najib is already the second Malaysian Prime Minister to meet a Pope after Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad met the late John Paul II at the Vatican in 2002.

Prime Minister Najib said that Malaysia’s goal is to promote harmony as the world is currently at a crossroad. In the past, Malaysia was one of the fewer than 20 countries in the world that did not have diplomatic ties with the Vatican. News reports