Executive Summary

On June 10th, 2015 the University of Notre Dame invited Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to give a keynote address on the promotion of peace, prosperity, justice, and democracy—the four pillars of his Vision for Change—during the two terms of his presidency of Indonesia (2004-2014). Following the keynote address a panel discussion centered on the relations between the United States and Indonesia ensued. The following are the key observations that emerged from this address and discussion.

US - Indonesia relations today is different from its somewhat distant relationship in the past. It is now a 21st century partnership which means it has to address the various challenges of today.

Indonesia welcomes US rebalance to Asia, so long as it contributes to regional stability and progress. Indonesia expects US rebalance to project more soft power than hard power. They do not wish to see a heightened US - China rivalry. The US can and has exhibited soft power through their model of democracy and education.

U.S. and Indonesia should look to expand its economic ties. Indonesia has a rapidly burgeoning middle class and a growing economy and stronger economic ties could strengthen both countries.

Indonesia can be a valuable contributor in the evolving geopolitical and geoeconomic landscape in the Asia Pacific. In times of seismic power shifts, Indonesia can help to ensure equilibrium and a new balance of power sets in the region without creating new strategic tensions. Indonesia can help promote economic growth in the region. Lastly, Indonesia can help ensure that the rise of China as an emerging superpower takes place not only peacefully but also in ways which benefits all countries in the region.

In Indonesia Islam, religious freedom, democracy, modernity and women's rights are compatible and go together hand in hand. Indonesia ended up with the right mix for democratic development; a military eagerly withdrawing from politics, a strong civil society, and moderate Islamic political parties who supported democracy.

Even though Indonesia is predominantly a Muslim nation they have maintained their cultural roots and culture. This has been accomplished due to a history of understanding, tolerance and acceptance.

1 The entire transcript of the address can be viewed in appendix A.
Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s Visit to the University of Notre Dame White Paper:  
Keynote Address and Panel Discussion Report

On June 10th, 2015, the Honorable Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono addressed invited guests on the promotion of peace, prosperity, justice, and democracy—the four pillars of his Vision for Change—during the two terms of his presidency of Indonesia (2004-2014). Following the keynote address entitled "Indonesian Islam: A Force for Democracy and Peace”, a moderated panel featuring current and former ambassadors discussed relations between the United States and Indonesia. The event was sponsored by the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies. Panelists for this event included: Honorable Cameron R. Hume, Former Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia; Honorable Timothy J. Roemer, Former Ambassador to India and former Member of the United States House of Representatives for Indiana's 3rd District; Lieutenant General (Ret.) Agus Widjojo, Former Vice-Chairman of the People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR) of the Republic of Indonesia; Mr. Muhammad Lutfi, former Minister of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia and moderated by Professor Michael C. Desch, Chair of the University of Notre Dame Department of Political Science and Director of the Notre Dame International Security Program.

US – Indonesia Relations

Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono pointed out in his address that the relationship between the United States of America and Indonesia is now seen as a partnership. Together they need to address the various challenges of today including: climate change, green growth and sustainable development, food, energy and water security, good governance, human rights and rules of law, counter-terrorism and dialogue among civilizations, and others. It has to be based on equal partnership and of mutual benefit. It has to be opportunity driven and it also has to have a regional and global dimension. There are plenty of opportunities to expand US - Indonesia relations in the years ahead including interfaith cooperation and more exchanges and collaboration between the youth and innovation.

US should use Soft Power in the Asia Region

Because Indonesia does not want to see a heightened US – China rivalry, they expect US rebalance projects in Asia to be more soft power than hard power. One way of doing this is by remaining a good model of democracy. Widjojo pointed out in the roundtable discussion that the US was a beacon of democracy after World War II and helped shaped not only democracy in Indonesia but also newly independent countries.

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2 This white paper was written by Christopher M. Doll, Liu Institute Specialist at the University of Notre Dame.

3 An example of this was Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s appointment to the Chair of the Council of the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI). GGGI is an international organization dedicated to supporting and promoting strong, inclusive and sustainable economic growth in developing countries and emerging economies. Established in 2012, at the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, GGGI is accelerating the transition toward a new model of economic growth – green growth – founded on principles of social inclusivity and environmental sustainability. More on GGGI and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s appointment can be viewed on the GGGI homepage http://gggi.org/.

4 During the roundtable discussion Lutfi explained how Indonesia needs to carefully protect its rainforest yet still create enough prosperity in order to save it.
Education also plays a crucial role in exemplifying the success of soft power in the region. Widjojo went on to point out that most, if not all of the post-independence leaders of Indonesia were educated in the US. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono himself was educated in the US. That's why he placed education as one of the top priorities in US – Indonesia bilateral relations. Roemer explained that the US should promote faculty and student exchanges and also promote more vocational education.

**Expanding Economic Ties**

During the roundtable discussion Lutfi pointed out that US businesses don’t have a sense of urgency to enter the Indonesian market because they are not an aging society. They are constantly seeing migration from Latin America. Japan and other “dying societies” such as Korea are experiencing a significant decline in population. As a result, Japanese and Korean businesses are actively engaging in the Indonesia market. This is because as Roemer pointed out, Indonesia is experiencing a middle class migration. 146 million Indonesians are considered to be middle class. Lufti points out that this is three times the size of the Philippines, four times the size of Thailand, and almost six times the size of Vietnam and Malaysia. There is a lot of opportunity for growth in Indonesia. One such area in which the US and Indonesia can build stronger economic ties is through energy. Energy cooperation will have a strategic benefit, especially with the US lead on the revolutionary shale gas technology which Indonesia does not have at the present time.

**Indonesia as a Contributor in the Asian Geopolitical and Geoeconomic Landscape**

Indonesia has proven itself to be a valuable contributor in the evolving geopolitical and geoeconomic landscape in the Asia Pacific. They are an asset due to Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono’s 4 pillars of nationhood: peace, prosperity, justice and democracy.

- Indonesia promoted peace by resolving a 30 year conflict in the province of Aceh\(^5\) by resolving inter-ethnic conflict in Maluku and Poso and by creating better political conditions in Papua.\(^6\)
- Indonesia promoted prosperity by increasing the GDP per capita by 400% within a decade. Indonesia reduced poverty, slashed the unemployment rate, established a new National Health Care system, increased the education budget to 20% of the national budget and built extensive infrastructures.
- Indonesia promoted justice by combating corruption and strictly enforced the rule of law.
- Indonesia promoted democracy by assuring direct and democratic elections at local and national levels and by safeguarding freedom of the press.

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\(^5\) During the roundtable discussion Widjojo explained that the peaceful resolution can be attributed to democracy. In the past the military was always used as the first resort. However, under the new democracy the military is now used as the last resort.

Indonesia is directly affected by various strategic designs in the area such as the US "rebalance", India's "act East" policy and China's "maritime silk road." Because there is no single security architecture for all of Asia, this quagmire will take time to sort out. As a result, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has proposed an Indo-Pacific Treaty for the region. This Treaty would be based on the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation that has been signed by ASEAN nations and subsequently agreed upon by its dialogue partners including the United States.

Indonesia as a Middle Power can do a lot to help shape regional order during a volatile time. In times of seismic power shifts Indonesia can help to ensure a dynamic equilibrium and a new balance of power sets in the region without creating new strategic tensions. Indonesia can help promote economic growth in the region and can help ensure that the rise of China as an emerging superpower is peaceful and benefits all countries in the region.

Democracy in Islamic Indonesia

Discourse between Islam and democracy is relatively new, it is a 20th century phenomenon. Democratic ideas do exist in Islamic teaching and it is found in many parts of the Holy Qur'an which promotes an egalitarian and participatory society and just rulers. Yet for many centuries most countries or political entities that were predominantly Muslims were ruled by autocrats, many lasting well into the 20th century and some even to the 21st century. There were no Islamic democracies until the 19th century -- at least not in the sense as we know it today. This is why there is a stereotype that Islam and democracy were not compatible. The latter part of the 20th century witnessed the "third wave" of democratic expansion which included Indonesia as the last country to democratize at the end of the 20th century.

In Indonesia for many decades Islamic political parties were limited. By law Indonesia in the 1980's could only have 3 political parties and among the three only 1 was of Islamic nature. When Indonesia embarked on democratization in 1998 political and electoral constraints were removed. Once the law restricting political parties was removed, Islamic political parties rose from only 1 (one) in 1997 to 19 (nineteen) in 1999. The new Islamic parties did not call for an Islamic state; they contested the elections fairly and openly accepted the constitutional framework of a unitary state based on religious freedom. In fact the Islamic parties became strong supporters of democracy. There are at least two reasons explaining this: First, it is only within a democratic system that the Islamic parties could be free and grow as a political force. And secondly, the notion of an Islamic state would not win votes in Indonesia as Indonesians have already decided that they want to live in a country which respected diversity and religious freedom. Apart from Islamic political parties Indonesia also witnessed new political parties based on religious attributes including Catholic and Protestant.

Indonesia’s history was built on trade and as a result, today's modern Indonesian Muslims live side by side with Christians, Catholics, Hindus, Buddhists and Confucians in a Republic which recognizes all religions as state religions and guarantees religious freedom. Indonesian Muslims see no contradiction between their faith to Allah and their civic duties in democracy.

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Another factor on why Islam and democracy was compatible was due to the strength of civil society in Indonesia. In Indonesia civil society has grown for decades and includes the role of Nahdatul Ulama\(^8\) and Muhammadiyah\(^9\), two of the largest and strongest Islamic social organizations in the world each with a membership of some 40 million people. Both the Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah reject the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia and they both strongly espouse religious freedom, diversity and tolerance. The two organizations do not partake in practical politics.

One last significant factor for Indonesia’s democratic development is that the Indonesian military -- or TNI\(^10\) -- voluntarily gave up power in Indonesia. One of the reasons why democratization faltered in other countries was because the military gave up power half-heartedly and often gave in to temptation to grab new political power whenever they had the chance which was not the case in Indonesia.

**Maintaining Cultural Roots**

During his address, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono explained that Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago\(^11\) located in the crossroad between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. It is also known as the spice island and Columbus supposedly found America because he was trying to find a shortcut to Indonesia. In any case, Islam came to Indonesian shores not by force but by way of trade and by persuasion. Islam therefore had to peacefully adapt and had to become tolerant and respectful of other faiths in the archipelago – Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity. After centuries of practice this moderate, tolerant and open brand of Islam became the character of mainstream Islam in Indonesia. During the roundtable discussion, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono further pointed out that 95% of Indonesians are Muslims and 50% of these Muslims come from Java Island. Most Indonesians follow Muslim teaching, but they don’t necessarily follow Arabic culture with Middle Eastern values. On the one hand Indonesians are Muslim, but on the other hand they still follow their ancestors’ values and culture.

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\(^8\) According to the *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, Nahdatul Ulama was established on January 31, 1926 and is one of the two largest Muslim social organizations in contemporary Indonesia. A new generation of NU leadership is concerned with transforming the NU into a massive social movement for a more democratic, prosperous, and religiously harmonious Indonesia.

\(^9\) According to the *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, the Javanese Islamic reformist movement known as Muhammadiyah has become one of the most important religious, educational, and social movements throughout the islands of Indonesia as well as the most powerful reformist movement in Muslim Southeast Asia.

\(^10\) National Army of Indonesia (Tentara Nasional Indonesia; TNI).

\(^11\) During the roundtable discussion Lutfi pointed out that Indonesia consists of over 17,000 islands and extends 3,200 miles, which is further than the distance between San Diego, California and Jacksonville, Florida.
Bismillahirrahmanirrahim. Peace be upon us all. President of the University of Notre Dame Rev. John I. Jenkins CSC, ambassadors, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. First of all I wish to express my sincere thanks to Notre Dame for organizing this important conference. I thank all those who have worked so hard to gather an impressive list of people for our discussions today. I also wish to say how pleased I am to finally visit Notre Dame, one of the finest educational institutions in the United States. I know that many American leaders and world leaders have been educated and trained here and I hope more Indonesians will come to study in Notre Dame, perhaps even play in the basketball team. And I also encourage Notre Dame to establish links with Universities in Indonesia.

I always believe that education is the best investment America can make in the world. The money you invested in educating and opening up people's mind will pay in comparison to the life-long impacts that will be generated by those persons. I am speaking from experience. I was educated in the US several times including attended Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth Kansas and Webster University Missouri. And in both places I gained valuable perspective, knowledge and experience that made me a better leader to lead the world's fourth largest country.

That's why when I sought to elevate US - Indonesia relations during my first term I placed education as one of the top priorities in bilateral relations. The US is still the country of choice to many Indonesians who want to study abroad but it is no longer the top choice. According to our statistics the top three countries of destination for education are China, Australia and Malaysia. America certainly needs to work harder to regain the top spot!

In any case, US - Indonesia relations today is different from our somewhat distant relationship in the past. It is now a 21st century partnership, which means it has to address the various challenges of today: climate change, green growth and sustainable development, food, energy and water security, good governance, human rights and rules of law, counter-terrorism and dialogue among civilizations and others. It has to be based on equal partnership and of mutual benefit. It has to be opportunity driven and it also has to have regional and global dimension. Indonesia welcomes US rebalance to Asia so long as it contributes to regional stability and progress. We expect US rebalance to project more soft power than hard power. We do not wish to see heightened US - China rivalry.

There are plenty of opportunities to expand US - Indonesia relations in the years ahead. Inter-faith cooperation has always been one of my favorites. Energy cooperation will also have strategic benefit especially with the US lead on the revolutionary shale gas technology which we do not have in Indonesia. I would also like to see more exchanges and collaboration between our youth and innovation.

It is therefore always a pleasure for me to return to the United States where my oldest son Major Agus Yudhoyono is now studying, also at US Army CGSC, Fort Leavenworth.
I see you are gearing up for an exciting elections next year. In Indonesia we just finished one milestone elections last year where I happily ended a decade in office as my country's sixth President. It was in fact the first time an Indonesian President completed a FULL term -- and indeed 2 full terms -- in office since 1997 the year when President Soeharto stepped down. That decade was a great journey for me.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Indonesia at the beginning of the 21st century was a troublesome place. We had every problem you could imagine under the sun. Financial crisis where the economy contracted by 13 %, political instability, ethnic conflict, separatism, terrorism, corruption, low self-esteem. New York Times columnist Tom Friedman even called Indonesia, along with Russia, "a messy state." And because Indonesia was the largest and most populated country in Southeast Asia if Indonesia imploded the rest of the region would be affected by it. So when I came to power in 2004 my first order of business was to heal Indonesia not just through reforms but by a rigorous transformation. "Transformasi", which is more than "reformasi", became our new message. We tried to transform Indonesia through 4 pillars of nationhood: peace, prosperity, justice and democracy.

We promoted peace by resolving a 30 year conflict in the province of Aceh by resolving inter-ethnic conflict in Maluku and Poso and by creating better political conditions in Papua.

We promoted prosperity by increasing our GDP per capita 400% within a decade. We reduced poverty. We slashed unemployment rate and established a new National Health Care system. We increased the education budget to 20 % of our national budget. And we built extensive infrastructures.

We promoted justice by combating corruption and strictly enforced the rule of law.

We promoted democracy by assuring direct and democratic election at local and national levels and by safeguarding freedom of the press.

We are not there yet. Transformation is a never ending process but we have made much gains to the point that the World Economic Forum called the last 10 years as "Indonesia's golden decade." Indonesia in the 21st century has become a different nation than the one who came out of the ashes of World War 2. We remain as ever a very pluralistic society but we have also become the world's third largest democracy. We still have poverty and have to build more infrastructures but we are now known as an emerging economy and a G-20 country. We are now the 15th largest economy in the world and predicted to be in the top 5 by 2050. We are the largest economy in Southeast Asia with the largest and fastest growing middle class. And we are seen as the anchor of Southeast Asia's regional organization – ASEAN. Those are the real achievements that we made. However, we realize that we must work hard to achieve more things in the decades to come to further improve the welfare of the people.

Ladies and Gentlemen, with these assets Indonesia can be a valuable contributor in the evolving geopolitical and geoeconomic landscape in the Asia Pacific. The strategic designs of many powers -- whether it is the US "rebalance" or India "act East" policy or China's "maritime silk road" -- all of them one way or another will bring them into direct contact with Indonesia. I have
been concerned to see the downturn of major powers relations in recent years. I am also anxious to see a deficit of strategic trust in many of the powers relations in the region. This is particularly acute in Northeast Asia where the combination of historical issues and geostrategic competition sustain mutual suspicions. But to a different degree this is also true in others part of the region -- in South Asia Southeast Asia and especially in the Middle-East. Because there is no security architecture for Asia all this quagmire will take time to sort out.

This is why I have proposed an Indo-Pacific Treaty for the region. This Treaty would be based on the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation that have been signed by ASEAN nations and subsequently acceded to by its dialogue partners including the United States. The Treaty is significant because it promotes confidence building based on agreed norms among its signatories. Many nations -- including major and emerging powers -- have signed on to it but it is still not region-wide yet. It may not happen overnight but I believe the concept of Indo-Pacific Treaty still has oxygen and I still hope that someday it will see the light of the day.

I do believe that Indonesia as a Middle Power can do much to help shape regional order during a volatile time. In times of seismic power shifts Indonesia can help to ensure a dynamic equilibrium and a new balance of power sets in naturally in the region without creating new strategic tensions. Indonesia can help promote economic growth in the region and Indonesia can help ensure that the rise of China as an emerging superpower takes place not only peacefully but also in ways bring benefits to all countries in the region.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me now turn to a topic that the organizers have asked me to speak about: "Indonesian Islam: a force for peace and democracy." Being a former President of the country with the largest Muslim population in the world this is certainly a subject that is dear to my heart and something that I have thought about deeply in my military career and subsequently in my political career. So yes, I do believe that Indonesian Islam is a force for peace and democracy and not just internally within Indonesia but also externally in the Islamic world and beyond.

Let me begin with an acknowledgement that the discourse between Islam and democracy is relatively new. It is a 20th century phenomenon. Democratic ideas do exist in Islamic teaching and it is found in many parts of the Holy Qur'an, which promotes an egalitarian and participatory society and just rulers. Yet we also know as a matter of fact that for many centuries most countries or political entities that were predominantly Muslims were ruled by autocrat, many lasting well into the 20th century and some even to the 21st century. There were no Islamic democracy until the 19th century -- at least not in the sense as we know it today. This is why there is a stereotype that Islam and democracy were so wide apart, that they were not compatible. It goes without saying of course Western Judeo-Christian democracies were not so perfect either.

In any case this gave rise to a very important question in the latter part of the 20th century when we witnessed what was known as the "third wave" of democratic expansion which included Indonesia as the last country to democratize at the end of the 20th century. The question was: can Islam and democracy be compatible? If so, where? And how can that be? In Indonesia the answer is a resolute yes! And we would happily add more elements into the mix: Islam, religious
freedom, democracy, modernity and women's rights are compatible and go together hand in hand.

This “yes” answer I must admit was not so obvious when we began our democratic experiment in 1997. In Indonesia for many decades Islamic political parties were limited. By law Indonesia in the 1980's could only have 3 political parties and among the three only 1 was of Islamic nature. When we embarked on our democratization in 1998 there were some who feared that the removal of political and electoral constraints would lead to the proliferation of Islamic political parties and would possibly lead to an Islamic state. Well they were not necessarily true. Once the law restricting political parties were removed, Islamic political parties did rise from only 1 (one) in 1997 to 19 (nineteen) in 1999 when we had our first free and fair elections in the "reformasi" era. They came in all shapes and size. But what is interesting is that these new Islamic parties did not call for Islamic state. They contested the elections fairly and openly accepted the constitutional framework of a unitary state based on religious freedom. In fact, the Islamic parties became strong supporters of democracy. There are at least two reasons explaining this: First, it is only within a democratic system that the Islamic parties could be free and grow as a political force. And secondly, the notion of an Islamic state would not win votes in Indonesia as Indonesians have already decided that they want to live a country which respected diversity and religious freedom. Thus Islamic political parties openly supported the democratic system and have no intention of to alter it. Furthermore in our experience the growth of Islamic parties turned out to be compatible with democratic development. Apart from Islamic political parties of course we also witnessed new political parties based on religious attributes including Catholics and Protestant.

What is unique about Indonesia is that such easy blend between Islam and democracy took place relatively without soul searching debates or bloodshed. It proceeded relatively easily even flawlessly and took place in a rather short time. We held our first elections in 1999, then had brief political instability but by around 2002 things had become stable again. One necessary element in why Islam and democracy worked was due to the character of Islam as practiced in Indonesia itself. Indonesia, as you know, is the world's largest archipelago located in the crossroad between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. It is also known as the spice island and Columbus supposedly found America because he was trying to find a shortcut to our archipelago. In any case, Islam came to Indonesian shores not by force but by way of trade and by persuasion. Islam therefore had to peacefully adapt and had to become tolerant and respectful of other faiths in the archipelago – Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity. After centuries of practice this moderate, tolerant and open brand of Islam became the character of mainstream Islam in Indonesia.

This is what happened for centuries and this is what happens today. In today's modern Indonesia Muslims live side by side peacefully with Christians, Catholics, Hindus, Buddhists and Confucianists in a Republic which recognizes all their religions as state religions and guarantees religious freedom. Indonesian Muslims see no contradiction between their faith to Allah and their civic duties in our democracy. Indonesian indeed they have become very demanding: on the one hand they will not vote for politicians if all they do is waving their religious identity. But on the other hand, Indonesian voters also prefer to vote on the basis of platform or integrity and other reasons.
There is another factor why Islam and democracy was compatible: the strength of civil society in Indonesia. I suppose this is the reason why the Arab Spring has had a difficult experience -- because lack of civil society. In Indonesia civil society have grown for decades, even during the New Order era under President Suharto, who ruled for 30 years. This includes the role of Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, two of the largest and strongest Islamic social organizations in the world, each with a membership of some 40 million people. Both the Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah reject the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia and they both strongly espouse religious freedom, diversity and tolerance. The two organizations do not partake in practical politics.

Another significant factor for our democratic development is that the Indonesian military -- or TNI -- voluntarily gave up power in Indonesia. As you know, in the era of President Soeharto TNI involved and at the same time influenced our national politics. However, since 1998 the TNI came under civilian rule and since then leaving the executive and the parliament. They never looked back. They resisted temptations to return to politics. Again this is critical because one of the reasons why democratization faltered in other countries was because the military gave up power half-heartedly and often gave in to temptations to grab new political power whenever they had the chance. So in Indonesia we ended up with the right mix for democratic development: a military eagerly withdrawing from politics, a strong civil society and moderate Islamic political parties who supported democracy.

In Indonesia I dare say that democracy has achieved a point of no return. It is irreversible. A military coup is unthinkable in Indonesia. So for those who are looking for a happy direction for Arab spring I think they can try to look for an Indonesian summer.

Ladies and Gentlemen, when I became President of Indonesia I was fully conscious of the need to improve relations between Islam and the west as a necessary fixture of the international system. I was very much aware that many Muslims were concerned to see growing Islamophobia in parts of the western world and conversely many in the west were anxious of the anti-western as well as anti-American sentiments within the Islamic world. I felt that Indonesia could play a constructive bridging role because in Indonesia both the western and Islamic civilizations have been part of our modern nationhood. As we have seen on numerous occasions the clash between Islam and the west could be explosive. There are unhelpful stereotypes on both sides that could be trimmed and leaders need to take the lead to set the right tone in the discourse. When the cartoon crisis surfaced in Denmark I wrote an op-ed in The International Herald Tribune denouncing the cartoon but also appealing to the Islamic world for calm and to refrain from violence. It was politically risky given the severe anger in the Muslim world but it was the right thing to say. But these tensions remain and I fear that they will resurface again and again. What happened to Charlie Hebdo in Paris was symptomatic of this. How do we prevent future attacks?

The problem is there is a diametrically opposed views between the western concept of freedom of speech and Muslims' demand for respect for their religion. We need to build a new chapter of our life where both freedom of speech and demand for respect for the religion can be accommodated in peace and harmony. This would be a great recipe for the better civilizations. I have fought for freedom for many years. I have also fought against extremism, radicalism and terrorism very seriously. But in my view freedom anywhere is not absolute. The exercise of
freedom has limitation as clearly stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I also oppose the use of violence in the name of religions. I agree to the full extent that barbarism should have no place in today’s society for whatever reasons, especially in the name of God. A fundamentalist attitude to freedom of speech will widen the gap between Islam and the West with all the consequences. What we need is reason. We need compassion, not provocation but persuasion. We need to build bridges, not burn them.

I was also touched when Pope Francis visited Bosnia and delivered a message of peace and reconciliation. We need more of this positive example. We need to continually erase the faultline and reach out. We need to stand up when the other is provoked. That is how we build better relations between Islam and the West. Relations based on respect and harmony.

I thank you.