



7th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations
Baku, Azerbaijan, 25-27 April, 2016

Breakout Session “Constructing Peace, Deconstructing Terror”
(co-organized by UNAOC and Strategic Foresight Group)

Background

From 2003 to 2006, Strategic Foresight Group had hosted a number of roundtables on Constructing Peace, Deconstructing Terror for Western and Islamic leaders to develop common approaches and understanding for mitigating violent extremism. These meetings were organized in cooperation with the League of Arab States and the European Parliament. They resulted in a publication in 2007, “An Inclusive World: In Which the West, Islam and the Rest have a Stake”.

The roundtables and the research-based publication demonstrated that violent extremism was a result of the confluence of development deficit, governance deficit and dignity deficit. Organised vested interests used religion and ideology to recruit young people affected by the triple deficit to serve their political objectives. While many efforts are made to promote inter-faith understanding, it is necessary to build bridges between leaders and political thinkers from different cultures, particularly from Western and Islamic countries to develop common understanding and approaches to deconstruct terror.

Ten years after the last roundtable at the European Parliament and the publication of “An Inclusive World”, Strategic Foresight Group is being urged by several friends to revive the dialogue process, as extremism has continued unabated and evolved more lethal forms. It is therefore proposed to hold a panel of leaders and political thinkers at the UNAOC Forum in Baku.

Points of Discussion

- Can an inclusive and semi-permanent dialogue process be introduced for the key state actors in the Middle East and other parts of the world to counter violent extremism?
- Can a new global social contract for regions destroyed by internal and interstate conflicts help reduce attraction towards extremist thinking?
- What should be done to restore a sense of dignity among people feeling disempowered?
- How can the narrative be changed from religious and sectarian to political and strategic dimensions of violent extremism?