



الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية ماليزيا
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DIPLOMACY
THERORY AND PRACTICE IN ISLAM

BY

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INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
MALAYSIA

2006

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirement for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy of Islamic Civilization

International Institute of Islamic Thought and
Civilization
International Islamic University Malaysia

JULY, 2006

ABSTRACT

This study tries to elaborate on Islamic theories of diplomacy according to the practices and patterns set by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his Companions. The theories include: the universal characteristics of Islam, the meaning and principles of Islamic diplomacy, its objectives, categories, and rulings, etc., which are related to the topic of diplomacy in Islam. A special attention is given to *jihad* and the peaceful relations towards others. Moreover, the dissertation discusses some important issues, such as the necessary characteristics of diplomats and their functions during peaceful duration as well as war time; it elaborates applying diplomatic mediums and means, providing privileges and immunities, conducting negotiations and concluding treaties in the field of international relations. Finally, the dissertation deals with some important traditional concepts, like *dhimmah* and *aman*, etc. However, the researcher has studied, clarified these concepts as well as has done his best to bring them into light by discussing the arguments of Muslim jurists and professionals of the international relations compared with the legal injunctions of the Islamic *Shari'ah*, which those Muslim scholars have applied for defending their arguments. Due to the nature of the topic, the researcher has relied on four major methods through his study, i.e.: the deductive method for moving the mind from some issues of diplomacy to other issues, which are the results; the inductive method for referring to the issues of diplomacy through collecting the opinions of Muslim jurists from the different schools of the Islamic jurisprudence; the analytical and comparative methods for analyzing the classical texts related to the topic, discussing and comparing the opinions of Muslim jurists, then giving preference in accordance with the rules of *tarjih* (preference). The researcher through his study has reached some academic findings and the most important of which is that Islamic diplomacy, which has been founded on the light of the Holy Qur`an and the Noble Sunnah, is an art of conducting the external relations and preserving the objectives of the Islamic State vis-à-vis other states, or international organizations, by applying the wisdom, the intelligence and the best manners. With regard to the original attitude of the Islamic State towards others, it is confirmed that the central theme in the Islamic external relations is **peace**. Accordingly, we find that whatever is related to the diplomatic principles and privileges, which the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations declared in 1961, have already been practiced by the Islamic State throughout history. There are other results, which the researcher has reached in the conclusion of this humble dissertation.

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APPROVAL PAGE

The thesis of Wang Yong Bao Ahmed Musa has been examined and approved by the following:

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Wang Yong Bao Ahmed Musa

Signature:

Date:

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

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Date

This humble dissertation is dedicated to

Muslim leaders

Those who work for the path of Allah Exalted

Those who seek the Truth

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

There are a multitude of people without whom this dissertation might not be in its present written form. I will endeavor to thank the most prominent persons. With sincere thanks and gratitude, I would like to acknowledge the effort of my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Ahmad Kazemi Moussavi, for his knowledge, guidance, and patience, I am truly thankful. A special note of appreciation goes to my co-supervisor, Prof. Dr. El-Fatih Abdullahi A/Salam who has patiently corrected as well as refined the dissertation with his profound knowledge, and those who have examined this dissertation and committee members for offering the researcher an opportunity to complete the dissertation. Without their support and guidance, perhaps this dissertation would not be as it is today.

The researcher acknowledges the invaluable input of the following individuals and organizations, in particular those who provided materials and other support during the development of the dissertation. To the friendly Dato Ahmad Nurudin, Prof. Dr. Sidek Baba, Prof. Dr. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, Prof. Dr. Wan Mohd. Nor Wan Daud, Siti Mariyah Chu Bt. Abdullah, Mustafa Ma Qi and Marlina Wong and many others, I would like to put on record my heartfelt gratitude for encouraging me to be a knowledgeable Muslim with vision and mission. To all staffs of ISTAC and CPS of IIUM who made my stay in Malaysia a memorable event, thank you for your support and understanding and I do thank you from the bottom of my heart.

To two special persons whom I owe everything, my beloved wife who has encouraged and supported my study and my daughter Radiyah whom I have left since her birth when she was ten months, what is my life without your love ... and the precious time stolen from you to complete this dissertation. To my parents who spent their limited money for my study, to my brothers, and friends for the love and the understanding. To my brother in Islam Hasan Ma Xiao Yi who has financially supported me to photostat this dissertation. Last but not least, to all my colleagues, this dissertation is dedicated to you.

LIST OF TRANSLITERATION

ARABIC LETTERS	TRANSLITERATION
	‘
	b
	t
	th
	j
	h
	kh
	d
	dh
	r
	z
	s
	sh
	s
	d
	t
	z
	‘
	gh
	f
	q
	k
	l
	m
	n
	w
	h
	y

DIACRITICAL SIGNS

A. SHORT VOWELS:

fathah (-)a

tanwin fathah (-) an

dammah (-) u

tanwin dammah (-) un

kasrah (-) i

tanwin kasrah (-) in

B. LONG VOWELS:

alif mamdudah (̣) & *alif maqsurah* (ٴ) a

waw sakin preceded by *dammah* (-) u

ya' sakin preceded by *kasrah* (-) i

C. DIPHTHONGS:

Doubling a certain letter is used for any *tashdid* (-), for example:

waw mushaddad preceded by *dammah* (-) *uww*

waw mushaddad preceded by *fathah* (-) *aww*

waw sakin preceded by *fathah* (-) *aw*

ya' mushaddad preceded by *fathah* (-) *ayy*

ya' mushaddad preceded by *kasrah* (-) *iyy*

ya' sakin preceded by *fathah* (-) *ay*

D. GENERAL REMARKS:

- i. The Arabic letter *hamzah* represented in English by an apostrophe ('), when it occurs at the beginning of a word, is not transliterated. An inverted apostrophe (ˆ) is used to depict the letter 'ayn, as in *ka'bah*.
- ii. *ta marbutah* is depicted by 'h'.
- iii. The Arabic plurals and not those of English, e.g.: 'alim, 'ulama' and not 'alims or *hadith, ahadith* and not *hadiths*, are used.
- iv. All instances of the definite article are transcribed 'al' without regard to the case of the noun they modify or their assimilation with the so-called *shamsi* (sun) letters (i.e.: *t, th, d, dh, r, z, s, sh, s, d, t, z, l, n*) and is always written with a small 'a' unless it comes at the beginning of a sentence.

- v. The definite article ‘al’ which is disregarded completely in matters of alphabetical ordering, is connected by a hyphen to the following word.
- vi. Particles ending with short vowels (i.e.: ‘*wa*’, ‘*bi*’, etc.) are not jointed to the definite articles ‘*al*’ (e.g.: *bi al-mal or al-shams wa al-qamar*). Rather their separate status in almost all instances is maintained like those particles that end with long vowels, (e.g.: ‘*‘ala*’, ‘*ila*’, ‘*fi*’, etc.).
- vii. The use of certain Arabic words rather than their English counterparts have been retained. For example, ‘*Makkah*’ but not ‘*Mecca*’ or ‘*salah*’.
- viii. Some variances from these rules are to be found proper names where the common usage or the personal preference of the individual in question is retained.
- ix. Last but not least, the difference between the 354 or 355 days lunar year and the astronomical solar year of 365 days accounts for the difficulty of converting days from the Islamic (*hijrah* or *hijri*) calendar to the Gregorian calendar and vice versa. One method of conversion is to use the following equation or the basis that every 32 Gregorian solar years are approximately equal to 33 *hijri* lunar years.

A. D. (*Anno Domini*) = Gregorian year.

A. H. (*Anno Hejirae*) = *Hijri* year.

A. D. = 622 + (32/33 × A. H.)

A. H. = 33/32 × (A. D. – 622)

It should be remembered that these formulas give only the year in which the corresponding year began. For instance, A. H. 1398 began on December 12, 1977 A. D. but most of 1298 fell in 1978 A. D. some other guides for approximate conversions are: a Gregorian century equals 103 *Hijrah* years or 100 *Hijri* years equal 97 Gregorian years.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds, who says in His Holy Book: (O Prophet Verily! We have sent you as a witness, and a bearer of glad tidings, and a warner. And as one who invites to Allah by His Leave, and as a lamp spreading light. And announce to the believers the glad tidings that they will have from Allah a Great Bounty.)¹(Al-Qur'an, 33: 45-47); and peace be upon His Messenger Muhammad, and all his Companions and Followers.

Islam as a religion, a guide, as well as a comprehensive way of human life, has been opened to all mankind; and because of its universal characteristics, the believers have created the most splendid and richest civilization in the human history. Indeed, since Islam has appeared, it never claims any distinction between religion and the state; or in other words, when we talk about Islam, we cannot separate it from the state; because once the Islamic State is established, all of its affairs should be conducted according to Islam and practiced fully in the way which Islam directs. However, many branches of modern Western knowledge have unfortunately influenced the Muslim world for the last two centuries. As soon as Colonialism disintegrated, the Islamic State has been split, and the New World Order has emerged, the authorities of many Muslim nations have adopted the Western secular political systems and applied them to handle their nations' affairs. Due to secularization of Muslim countries, and as a result of their ignorance of the Islamic values, merits and especially the Islamic vision and mission,

¹ Note: what is between these special brackets (...) in this dissertation is only an English translation of the meaning of the Holy Qur'an and is not the Qur'an itself, which is in Arabic.

the brilliant image of Islam has been damaged, and Muslim countries have encountered more and more sufferings in the world¹. This situation is exactly mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān: (Verily! Allah will not change the (good) condition of a people as long as they do not change their state (of goodness) themselves (by committing sins and being ungrateful and disobedient to Allah).) (Al-Qur'ān, 13: 11).

Applying Western secular thoughts and the ignorance towards the Islamic values in their external relations, actually: “represents a danger to the Islamic culture and its spiritual, moral and human values”².

Diplomacy is one of the most practical and dynamic topics of international relations; therefore, Islam since its beginning, has recognized diplomacy as one of the most important ways for conducting international affairs through ambassadors and envoys who use peaceful means. Notwithstanding that Islam emphasizes the observance of principles, but it did not lay down any definite procedure for conducting external affairs and at no stage of history of politics were Muslims bound hands and feet by prescribed dictates of a detailed nature. Although the absence of details of diplomatic issues in the Qur'ān and *hadith* (the practical traditions of the Prophet Muhammad – peace be upon him³), has offered Muslims opportunities - at different times - to work out the details of diplomatic conducts and solve their political problems in their own ways. However one must keep in mind that all details of diplomatic conducts in response to the needs of their particular situations should be in the light of those principles laid down by the Islamic *Shari'ah* (the Islamic Law). Evidently, no body can deny that the first exponent of the principle of diplomacy was none other than

¹ To understand clearly secularism, the reader can refer to the book written by Al-Attās, Seyd Muhammad Naquib, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: Art Printing Works Sdn. Bhd., 1993).

² Badri, Malik, *Contemplation: an Islamic Psychospiritual Study*, trans. Abdul-Wahid Lu'lu'a (Kuala Lumpur: Shelbourne Enterprise Sdn. Bhd., 2000), p. ix.

³ Whenever the name of the Prophet has appeared through the dissertation, the four alphabets (PBUH) are used to represent the sentence of “peace be upon him”.

the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who personally used to negotiate with others and by sending envoys in the matters pertinent to the Islamic State. After the demise of the Prophet (PBUH), his practice of conducting diplomatic affairs remained as a constitutional principle of diplomatic activities following the commitment to the fulfillment of the Islamic *Shari'ah*, and was demonstrated by early Caliphs and Muslims, i.e.: *al-Sahābah* (the Companions of the Prophet), *al-Tābi'un* (the generations who followed the Companions) and *al-Tābi'utābi'in* (the generations who followed the *Tābi'un*).

However, we find that the coming generations after them, especially the contemporary generations, have been influenced by Western values, and blindly applied them as models to face new situations. Nevertheless, it should be noted that neither the blind applications, nor the application of alien models to solve the political problems of Muslim countries could produce the desired results. Because, despite the fact that Muslims' faith in Islam has lost its pristine warmth and freshness, it still gives birth to a factor of passive resistance against any political and social system, which is not in consonance with the ideology of Islam. Muslims, at least theoretically, believe that any system which is not based on Islam is illegal and improper. In addition, though their faith does not take a concrete shape at the practical stage, yet it creates a sort of passive resistance, which implicitly cripples all the activities that other systems carry out to offer any so-called "solution", to their problems, whatever they may be. Moreover, the Muslims' strong attachment to their belief can be shown by the fact that in all movements of renaissance, the appeal is always made to the Islamic belief and its fundamental principles.

Although many Muslim countries have tried to revive their states by the different ways in the last few decades, their diplomatic conducts have still closely

adhered to the modern, secular political systems and have compromised the conditions of modern life in general.

An urgent signal has reminded us that to practice the Islamic principles of conducting the diplomatic affairs is the only way to settle the international problems which face the present-day Muslim world. This is the task lying ahead of Muslim thinkers and intellectuals, who need long experimentation with examining the alien concepts, and to come out with acceptable solutions, which emanate from the Islamic values. This task will inject fresh blood into the principles of Islamic polity through offering authentic interpretations in order to adapt them to current needs.

Hence, I have selected “**Diplomacy: Theory and Practice in Islam**” to be the topic of my dissertation, and the purpose of this dissertation is to study, as systematically as the subject matter allows, the issue of the compatibility of Islamic diplomacy with modern international political system.

1. 1: QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY:

The researcher will try to answer the following questions through his study:

- a. What is the Islamic concept of diplomacy, which emerges from the Holy Qur’ān and the practice of the Prophet (PBUH)?
- b. What are the characteristics and principles of diplomacy in the Islamic *Shari‘ah* and how can they be practiced in the international field?
- c. What are the most important contemporary issues in the international relations, which the Islamic diplomacy is confronting, what are the solutions and what are the recommendations and suggestions in practicing the principles of Islamic diplomacy in future?

1. 2: OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

This study will conduct a comprehensive survey and analysis on the theories and practices, which are based on the principles of Islamic diplomacy. Therefore, the objectives of this study are to:

- a. Supplement part of academic inadequacy in this field;
- b. Analyze the various situations, which the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) confronted during his lifetime and his Companions after his demise;
- c. Manifest the universal characters of Islam;
- d. Define the concept of diplomacy in Islam;
- e. Clarify the responsibilities of envoys of Muslim nations;
- f. Establish a comprehensive work of the Islamic diplomacy;
- g. Assist Muslim political institutions in practicing the principle of Islamic diplomacy based on the *Shari'ah*.

These objectives can be achieved through a reassessment of previous assumptions and the conceptualization of the political phenomenon. The primary reason for this is not that such ideas were erroneous at the time of their formulation, but rather that they have lagged far behind the changes witnessed in the last hundred years, and are therefore, unable to provide relevant, realistic, and practical solutions to issues which did not exist when they were originally conceived.

Thus, the proposed study represents, as far as I can ascertain, an attempt to look at the possibilities of conceptualizing, implementing and institutionalizing the Islamic diplomacy - which lies at the base of the Islamic international structure - in the modern age, and an attempt towards a balanced understanding of the present Muslim world.

1. 3: IMPORTANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

The importance of this study and its significance can be explained as follows:

- a. Diplomacy is the most important way of conducting international affairs;
- b. The practice of diplomacy according to the Islamic *Shari'ah* is one of the best ways to show the Islamic values, merits and advantages in conducting international affairs with non-Muslims;
- c. It is essential to explain diplomacy and its principles in Islam;
- d. It can guide some Muslim scholars who rely solely on the Western concept of diplomacy;
- e. It can be a warning to the Muslim *Ummah* (the Muslim Community) on the pitfalls of the Western theories, and at the same time it could provide them with a comprehensive concept of diplomacy that Islam offers to mankind;

1. 4: REASONS OF SELECTING THE TOPIC:

The reasons of selecting this topic can be traced back to the following points:

- a. Nobody has studied this subject as an independent topic;
- b. The diplomatic issues are very dynamic and are considered as the most important instrument for Muslim nations in conducting their external relations with others and facing the variable international affairs with suitable solutions;
- c. People are urgently required to understand diplomacy in Islam in a comprehensive way as an instrument embodying the concept of justice in Islam;
- d. My interest for researching this topic provides a good opportunity to read, benefit and learn, because this topic is inseparably related to the Holy Qur'ān, the Noble Sunnah, and *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence), etc.;

- e. Manifesting the Islamic values for non-Muslims through the dissertation, which is aimed at attracting them to understand Islam properly and invite them to accept the true Religion and follow its values.

1. 5: RELEVANCE OF THE PRESENT INQUIRY:

The need for this study is felt to be not merely an academic necessity, but a practical one as well. The overwhelming problems, which the contemporary Muslims have become entangled in, are very much relevant to the structure of their governments and their conducts of international affairs. In the Muslim world, which extends geographically from the shores of the Atlantic in the West to the confines of China in the East, there are over one billion believers of Islam. Far from being a dying faith, this Religion is still expanding without recourse to military power, political backing, or organized propaganda. A large number of these Muslims are the citizens of independent Muslim nations, where Islam is the directing principle of life and whose societies are recognized as Muslim. However, there is no single country in the Muslim world today that we can be proud of as an Islamic State, which is ruled by the *Shari'ah*. Then what do we aim? Why do we today speak in the past tense, as if that was an ideal proposed by our ancestors? The reason seems to be that we have yet no concrete vision and mission in Muslim governments and institutions that would give the State a distinctive Islamic character and at the same time would fully correspond to exigencies of the present age. At present, the prevailing conditions in the Muslim world have not been conducive to effective participation in international affairs. This is partly due to political fragmentation, internal conflicts, and insufficient technological knowledge, etc. all these problems and others have resulted from ignorance of the Islamic values. Therefore, the study is crucial, vital and urgent concern to the Muslim intellectuals. The

present study is an investigation of traditional Islamic thought and its dynamic capacity to face modern rapid changes and grim challenges in the field of international relations.

1. 6: SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

In concluding this introductory chapter, it is important to state the limits of the investigation. This dissertation takes into consideration only the Sunni theory of diplomacy in Islam. Another major sect, such as Shi'ah, is mentioned only in passing, and where needed. Although the study has been limited only to the use of selected written material and although much of what is based on selected examples rather than on full evidence, both literature and examples have been chosen in each case for being representative or indicative of the point being made. Nevertheless, the study on diplomacy will also venture through some philosophical aspects of external relations, as a prelude to the kernel part of study.

Definitely, this study is a long road and the best that can be expected to achieve is to point out the most obvious milestones along the way. It is assumed that further researches will corroborate the findings of this study, yet it must be clear from the foregoing that these findings remain mere hypotheses without conclusive evidence, and as such are subject to affirmation, correction, or disproof as further data come to light. As for the study, definitive conclusions without doubt would be by very hard work and by many hands in collecting the necessary materials.

Furthermore, my purpose will be amply served if this study should stimulate others to make a reappraisal of the old dogmatic belief about the Islamic diplomacy relating to the needs of modern age to break newer grounds in search of new material in this vast if not virgin field.

1. 7: REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE:

The researcher – as his ability allows – has engaged in reviewing the literature related to the topic through the libraries and has come out with those studies, which are considered as good works that have been done in the field of Islamic diplomacy both by Muslim and non-Muslim scholars in many languages, including Arabic and English. These works can be divided into the following categories:

- a. The Works of *Fiqh* and *Siyāsah Shar‘iyyah* (Islamic Legal Politics).

The classical Arabic literature had generally covered many issues of international affairs by discussing such as: *al-jihād* (struggle for the sake of Allah’s Pleasure); *al-dhimmah* (constitutional agreement with non-Muslim minorities); *al-jizyah* (financial duty paid by non-Muslims to the Islamic State); *al-‘ahd* (pledge) and *al-amān* (safe conduct or pledge of security), etc.

In respect to this, the related literature are: *Al-Mudawwanah*¹; *Al-Kharāj*²; *Al-Umm*³; *Ikhtilāf Fuqḥā’ al-Amsār*⁴; *Al-Ahkām al-Sultāniyyah wa al-Wilāyat al-Dīniyyah*⁵; *Sharḥ al-Siyar al-Kabir*⁶; *Al-Tibr al-Masbūk fī Nasīḥah al-Mulūk*⁷; *Al-Mughni*⁸; *Al-Siyāsah al-Shar‘iyyah fī Islāh al-Rā’i wa al-Ra‘iyyah*⁹; *Ahkām Ahl al-*

¹ Mālik, Ibn Anas al-Asbuhi (d. 179 A. H.), *Al-Mudawwanah al-Kubra* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr li al-Tiba‘ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi‘, 1419 / 1998), vol. 2, pp. 711-725.

² Abū Yūsuf, Ya‘qūb bin Ibrāhīm (d. 183 A. H.), *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, 5th ed. (Cairo: al-Matba‘ah al-Salafiyyah, 1396 A. H.).

³ Al-Shāfi‘i, Abū ‘Abdullah Muhammad bin Idris (d. 204 A. H.), *Al-Umm* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1413 / 1993), vol. 4, pp. 218-416.

⁴ Al-Tabari, Abū Ja‘far Muhammad bin Jarir (d. 310 / 923), *Ikhtilāf Fuqḥā’ al-Amsār: Kitāb al-Jihād wa al-Jizyah wa Ahkām al-Muhāribin*, ed. Yousuf Shakht, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1993).

⁵ Al-Māwardī, Abū al-Hasan ‘Alī bin Muhammad bin Habib al-Basri al-Baghdadi (d. 450 / 1057), *Al-Ahkām al-Sultāniyyah wa al-Wilāyat al-Dīniyyah* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1405 / 1985), pp. 161-217.

⁶ Al-Sarakhsi, Muhammad bin Ahmad (d. 483 A. H.), *Sharḥ al-Siyar al-Kabir* (Hyderabad: Dar al-Ma‘arif al-Nizamiyyah, 1335 A. H.). Notice that the Kitāb (book) belongs to al-Shaybānī, while the Sharḥ (commentary) belongs to al-Sarakhsi.

⁷ Al-Ghazālī, Abū Hāmid Muhammad (d. 505 / 1111), *Al-Tibr al-Masbūk fī Nasīḥah al-Mulūk* (Cairo: Dār al-Ihya’, 1926), pp. 18-116.

⁸ Ibn Qudāmah, Abū Muhammad ‘Abdullah bin Ahmad (d. 620 / 1223), *Al-Mughni* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyyah, 1403 / 1983), vol. 9, pp. 198-362.

⁹ Ibn Taymiyyah, Taqī al-Din Ahmad bin ‘Abd al-Halim (d. 728 / 1328), *Al-Siyāsah al-Shar‘iyyah fī Islāh al-Rā’i wa al-Ra‘iyyah* (Cairo: Dar al-Sha‘b, 1971).