

GOVERNANCE, COMMUNITY AND RELIGION

Perspectives from Multicultural Societies



Center for
Research &
Security
Studies

Rule of Law - Security - Governance

Governance, Community and Religion

Perspectives from Multicultural Societies

by
Center for Research and Security Studies

in cooperation with

Heinrich Böll Stiftung

**Edited
by
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Center for Research and Security Studies, Islamabad

Governance, Community and Religion

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Executive Summary

As part of its counter-radicalization advocacy campaign for the promotion of secular governance and democratic values, the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) in partnership with Heinrich Böll Stiftung organized a Dialogue Forum series titled “**Governance, Community and Religion**” (GOCORE). This was a sequel to the series titled “**State, Religion and Democracy**”, launched in 2013, which was a similar advocacy campaign aimed at de-radicalization and promotion of secular governance through a series of discussions involving Muslim scholars from Turkey, Indonesia and Malaysia.

GOCORE, besides the Muslim scholars from Islamic countries such as Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia and Bangladesh, involved progressive Muslim scholars from multicultural societies in the Americas, Europe and Australia. The series of discussions were held at different universities across Pakistan, as well as with civil society groups, to underscore the need for democratizing the state conduct and politics rather than looking at them through the religious prism; and also to underpin the need for the separation of religion and politics into secular governance; and how the public and the private sectors are dealing with the attendant challenges in various countries.

The visiting Muslim scholars aimed to explain their respective countries' perspectives on the theme and the respective states' experiences of dealing with the religiously diverse societies, while ensuring religious freedom and the states' impartiality towards communities of different faiths. The scholars sensitized and reflected upon the fact that the state should not assume a role of pastor or some religious authority to adjudge sin or goodness, but instead it should only base itself on the Constitution to ensure social harmony and adjudicate the violation of the law of the land.

For these GOCORE dialogues, the CRSS organized three discussion series during 2014, inviting speakers from Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey and USA. There were two speakers in each of the three seminars, who interacted with university students and academia of various Pakistani universities. They highlighted their achievements in a mostly secular society (except Bangladesh) and

shed light on how they rose to positions of prominence in non-Muslim societies, while living life as Muslims, as part of their efforts to convey the need for keeping religion and politics separate as a means of ensuring social peace and harmony. They also interacted with civil society groups.

This is a report of these sessions, seeking to capture some of the flavour of the Dialogues. The Dialogues in themselves were not only an eye-opener for the visiting delegations, but also for the Pakistani interlocutors, who were able to establish some common ground amongst many points of divergence.

First Phase

The first phase of the Dialogue Forum was held during June 2-6, 2014, organized by the CRSS in collaboration with Heinrich Böll Stiftung Pakistan, titled “**Governance, Community and Religion (GOCORE)**”. Two speakers were invited: Dr. Shabana Mir from USA and Mr. Endy Bayuni from Indonesia.

During their trip to Pakistan, Dr. Shabana Mir and Mr. Endy Bayuni visited the following institutions:

1. Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Lahore
2. Forman Christian College University (FCCU), Lahore
3. University of Peshawar (UoP), Peshawar
4. Fatima Jinnah Women's University (FJWU), Rawalpindi
5. National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad
6. Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS), Islamabad

Their lectures on the theme **Governance, Community and Religion**, focused on the perspectives of the United States of America and Indonesia in maintaining a strict division between religion and politics.

In addition to their lectures at educational institutions, the scholars also participated in roundtable discussion forums at Forman Christian College University, Lahore and Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS), Islamabad with the representatives of civil society, human rights defenders, diplomats, economic development practitioners and the media. They were also interviewed by Pakistan Television.

In the well-attended interactions with students and faculty members at the respective universities, the visiting scholars made presentations on the role that religion plays in their daily lives as well as in politics, in both USA and Indonesia, and how evolving conditions in these countries as well as in the world have informed this relationship. They essentially underlined the need to democratize the state's conduct and politics, rather than looking at all the aspects of life through the prism of religion.

Both scholars held that the reason religion has such vitality in public life in both USA and Indonesia is because of its separation from the state. So once a state takes charge of religion, it discredits it by corrupt practices in the name of faith, which was done in Pakistan during General Zia ul Haq's regime, for instance, through his referendum. Both scholars also stressed the need for a pluralistic society through cultural and policy changes, and agreed that merely changing laws is not enough. A key change that is needed is the education of the citizens.

Second Phase

As part of the ongoing series, the CRSS organized the second Dialogue Forum, in collaboration with Heinrich Böll Stiftung Pakistan, during September 15-19, 2014, with two distinguished scholars: Dr. Behlul Ozkan, who shared the Turkish perspective and a former Ambassador of Pakistan to Indonesia, Mian Sanaullah, who shared experiences from the time he spent in Indonesia.

The two scholars participated in the following sessions:

1. Roundtable at Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS), Islamabad
2. Lectures at Quaid-e-Azam University (QAU), Islamabad
3. Lectures at Fatima Jinnah Women's University (FJWU), Rawalpindi
4. Lectures at University of Peshawar (UoP), Peshawar
5. Lectures at National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST), Islamabad
6. Lectures at Lawrence College, Murree

Dr. Behlul Ozkan, Assistant Professor at Marmara University, Turkey stated that the question of Islam and its impact on Turkish politics has been an important

subject for the last one hundred years. In the Turkish Constitution, it is a criminal offence to use religion for political propaganda and it is illegal to form political parties based on religion. In Turkey, the state controls the Islamic organizations through the institution of Religious Affairs and it does not give any space to private groups to interfere.

He described the increasing growth rate of the Turkish economy over the past two decades. This is the result of the implementation of liberal economic reform in Turkey. Almost all public enterprises were closed down and sold through privatization; subsidies to agriculture were lifted; and green spaces and historical sites in the cities were erased by construction companies and turned either into shopping centres or hotels.

Pakistan's former Ambassador to Indonesia, Mian Sanaullah highlighted how Indonesia has been able to de-radicalize some of its fundamentalist and terrorist groups. He stated that the Constitution of Indonesia is neither theocratic, nor does it have a religious or secular tone to it, and that there are six state-recognized religions. The Indonesian people have made it clear that they consider democracy as the only way forward to keep the integrity of the state intact, although various groups have attempted to change the Constitution and impose their own version of religion to dictate the country's politics in the past.

Both scholars emphasized that there is a need to keep governance separate from belief to avoid any interfaith conflicts. While individuals, especially in Indonesia, are free to follow their beliefs, the state must adjudicate the violation of the law of the land. "It must not assume the role of a "Mullah" but must act on its Constitution and the set of laws to ensure social harmony."

Third Phase

As part of the ongoing series, the CRSS organized the third Dialogue Forum, in collaboration with Heinrich Böll Stiftung Pakistan, during October 20-24, 2014, inviting Professor Dr. Anne Aly from Australia and Professor Shahab Enam Khan from Bangladesh.

Their schedule for this important discourse included:

1. Lectures at Quaid-e-Azam University (QAU), Islamabad
2. Lectures at University of Peshawar (UoP), Peshawar
3. Lectures at Forman Christian College University (FCCU), Lahore
4. Lectures at Beaconhouse National University (BNU), Lahore
5. Roundtable at Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS), Islamabad

Dr. Anne Aly, a visiting university professor and scholar from Australia, talked about secularism and democracy while highlighting her personal experiences as a Muslim woman living in the secular, but multi-faith and multi-cultural society of Australia.

She stated that secularism is about equality, individual responsibility, and human rights, including the right to believe and practise one's religion. This is freedom of belief and justice for all. It is also about the individual responsibility to uphold the law and participate in society.

She stressed that it would be impossible to have a society like that in Australia, where people from over 200 countries and over 80 different faiths reside, if that society is not secular. In very basic terms, secularism means two things: the first thing is separation of state from religion, and the second is the requirement of religious equality before the law. The fear of losing Islam and losing an Islamic identity is a challenge that secularism faces, as many people equate it to the loss of Islam, but in fact, secularism is a guarantee, a protection for the continuation of Islam as well as other religions, particularly minority religions. Secularism does not mean no religion; it means a separation of religion from the state guarded by law, policy and the Constitution.

Professor Shahab Enam Khan stated that Bangladeshi identity is deeply rooted in the society and it plays a stronger role than religion in determining our identity. The majority believes that identity and social values are important to construct any sort of relationship with the state. He further stated that a pluralistic approach is required, as well as counter-radicalization and counter-terrorism strategies, along with modernization of education, increasing science and technology education, and women's empowerment to inform social values and make institutions truly democratic.

Both scholars stated that dialogue is very important, not just between faiths and cultures, but also between people of the same religion, encouraging debate, equality of religions and interpretations of religion under the law. This also guarantees a range of human rights flowing from the protection of religion as well as its separation, and removing the state's ability to regulate religion.

GO CORE

Phase One Discussions

Profiles of the Scholars

Assistant Professor Dr. Shabana Mir, USA



Author and Winner of the Outstanding Book Award for her path-breaking ethnographic work titled “Muslim American Women on Campus: Undergraduate Social Life and Identity”, published by the University of North Carolina Press, Dr. Shabana Mir is Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Coordinator of Global Studies at Millikin University, USA. Dr. Mir earned her Ph.D. from Indiana University, Bloomington, in Education Policy Studies and Anthropology, focusing on International Education, and received the Outstanding Dissertation Award for her doctoral dissertation from the American Anthropological Association's Council on Anthropology and Education. She has lived, studied, and taught in USA, UK and Pakistan, and has worked as a curriculum designer, residence hall director, retreat leader, and consultant in a variety of settings. She also trains Pakistani women faculty in research methods and is an international public speaker on gender equality.

Mr. Endy Bayuni, Indonesia



Mr. Endy Bayuni is senior Editor at The Jakarta Post, and served as its Editor-in-Chief from 2004 to 2010. He now writes regular columns about Indonesian politics, the evolving political culture, Islam, democracy, foreign affairs, economic development, and the changing media landscape. He has written for foreign publications, including the New York Times, Foreign Policy magazine website, Washington Post/Newsweek Blog, and the Straits Times of Singapore. He also trains new journalists and conducts writing workshops for professionals. He began his reporting career in 1983, and his 31 years in journalism include a seven-year stint with Reuters and Agency France-Presse (AFP). He received several fellowships as well during the course of his career and is involved with various organizations, including the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) in

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Indonesia and the South-East Asia Press Alliance (SEAPA), based in Bangkok. In 2012, he helped found the International Association of Religious Journalists (IARJ) and currently serves as a member of the Executive Board.

Lectures at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS)

Dr. Shabana Mir, Assistant Professor and Coordinator, Global Studies/Anthropology at Millikin University, USA

So far as a US perspective of the Religion-State relationship is concerned, the Establishment Clause of the US Constitution prohibits the government from making any law with respect to the establishment of a religion. It also prohibits the government from any action that unduly favours one religion over another, and for unduly favouring religions over non-religions. The role of the state is considered completely neutral.



“I think that it is not possible for a state to remain hundred percent neutral. At an absolute minimum, the government cannot declare an official religion, but the wall that separates the church and the state is like a shifting porous wall. If you look at a variety of different legal cases over the years, you find that they produce different outcomes. So, they seem to contradict each other at times. For example, the US Supreme Court has permitted to open legislative sessions with a prayer. On the other hand, the Ten Commandments have been prohibited at courthouses. On the one hand, the government funds textbooks for private religious schools, while on the other, the Supreme Court has ruled against state funding for supplementing teachers' salaries at religious schools. All these things are going on at the same time.”

“This refers to the wall of separation between the church and the state which is not set in stone. If you read Yusuf al-Qaradawi, an Egyptian Islamic scholar, he says: “Islam is a unique religion that covers all aspects of the human life, whereas other religions do not cover all of the human life as they have a separation between worldly and religious aspects.” If you talk to the right-wing people in America, they will say: “what the hell are you talking about? Christianity does the same thing; we also would like to see religion cover the entirety of the human life”. So, it depends on whom you talk to in USA as well as in Pakistan. Hence, you will find different perspectives on the issue.”

“Different laws, such as the law against murder or stealing, have been derived from religious sources. So it is hard to say that it is like a water-tight compartment. The Establishment Clause tries to ensure that the predominant purpose of a law should not be religious, but should be secular and should relate to the welfare of the public.”

“One of the big issues arising in the American way of life in relation to the religion-state separation issue, is the prayer in public schools. There is a very strong lobby in the United States that is pushing to have prayer in public schools every day in the morning during the assembly. When you have prayers in public schools in any society, it is going to be the majority perspective and minorities are not going to be represented, by and large. In USA, being an immigrants' country, there is a major push towards religion-state separation.”

“The US society is diverse in nature; though it has a Christian majority, we cannot see it as a monolith. There are a number of different Christian sects and denominations in the United States just as we have a variety of Muslim sects and denominations, like Deobandis or Barelvis. So, when you say that “we are going to have a state religion”, then which one is it going to be and who is going to decide? Which translation or interpretation is going to be the central source of inspiration and who is going to pick or who gets to decide? Sometimes it is the majority, but usually the most strident or the most powerful and dramatic voice becomes the key religious perspective on that matter.”

“There is a myth that religion is separate from the state in the United States because Americans do not care about religion. This is not true, in fact the United States contains a huge variety of perspectives and religion is very important in public life. In fact, many scholars have argued that the reason religion has such vitality in America's public life is because of its separation from the state. So the argument is that once a state takes charge of religion it discredits it by corrupt practices in the name of faith, as has been done in Pakistan during General Zia-ul-Haq's referendum when he stated that 'if you want the Quran and Islam, that means you want me to stay in power'.”

“So, many scholars are of the view that the adoption of religion by the state discredits religion. When the state and religion become involved, then both are

polluted by each other. If you look at societies such as France, Britain, and the United States of America, all three are considered to be liberal, democratic and secular, but in different ways. For example, France is described as a secular society with a secular state, and the colour that secularism takes in France is anti-religion in the public life. Hence, the struggle for and against the hijab went on in France.”

“In Britain, the state has a religion, but yet the society is very secular. In the United States, intensity of religion is different in various parts of the country; however, it thrives in public life. In my book, 'Muslim-American Women on Campus: Undergraduate Social Life and Identity', my core argument is that the dominant majority religion really does infuse everyday life in many ways. And in order to be fully pluralistic, we are looking for a cultural change as well as policy change. Merely changing the laws is not enough. Education especially, is one of the key changes, which are needed in any society.”

Mr. Endy Bayuni, Editor, the Jakarta Post

“Indonesia is a predominantly Muslim majority country, but it is not an Islamic state. People of different faiths have equal rights. Everyone has the right to contest elections and hold public office. Our institutions guarantee freedom of religion. People have a right to practice any religion of their choice and the state will not interfere.”



“Indonesia consists of thousands of islands and Muslims dominate the western part of the country, whereas non-Muslims are in a majority in the eastern part. Non-Muslims include Hindus, Christians, and others. We have liberal democracy in Indonesia, which guarantees freedom of speech, religion, and respect for human rights. We are not secular, but we cannot discard religion completely because we have Islamic values to move forward and we have been successful as we have had political stability for the last 16 years and we have all those freedoms guaranteed. The economy is growing at a rate of 6.7 percent every year, making the country the 16th largest economy in the world. So, we have democracy and development going side by side. Some people believe that Islam and

democracy are not compatible, but we have proven that they can work together.”

“However, we do have problems in Indonesia. We have communal violence in the country; Muslims and the Christians had been at loggerheads, but we have resolved such issues through better judiciary and better law enforcement. We had terrorists and bomb blasts, but we controlled all such things through better law enforcement. However, rising intolerance in the Indonesian society is still a problem as attacks against Ahmadis, Shias, Hindus, Christians and other groups have not been halted. I hope this can also be overcome through the democratic process, development, and Islam.”

“We established the International Association of Religion Journalists (IARJ). The purpose of the association is not to spread any religion, but to promote gospels of good journalism. You can be an atheist or follower of any other faith, but when you are reporting on religion or any issue you need to be professional rather than the follower of a particular religion. You can look at the Islamophobia of the West and that is because of the media, which do not know what Islam is. They very easily equate Islam with terrorism. On the other hand, in countries with a predominantly Muslim population, the media is also part of the problem in disseminating information about other religions. The media is part of the problems in multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies and after realizing this problem, we decided to establish the IARJ so that the media persons can become part of the solution and not part of the problem.”

“Since 1998, we have been struggling to build the nation on the principles of democracy, human rights, and dignity. I am happy to say that we have been quite successful for the last 16 years. Indonesia has emerged as a democracy and an emerging market economy. Today, Jakarta has a deputy governor from the minorities and he hails from the Chinese ethnic group and by religion he is Christian. Conservative Muslims had become very concerned over his election as they did not want a Christian as a deputy governor or governor of Jakarta. But, the majority of the Muslims do not have any problem with a Christian governor or deputy governor. This man has proven that he is a capable leader and manager during the last one and half years. Now the day is not far-off when Indonesia will see a non-Muslim president.”

“Indonesia is a pluralistic country and is not an Islamic state, but has the largest Muslim population in the world. Indonesia has a population of 250 million, of which 88 percent are Muslims. The Constitution of Indonesia guarantees freedom of all religions and this has been the case since 1945.”

“Our founding fathers had declared independence just three days after the Hiroshima bombing. At that time there were strong voices to make the country an Islamic state as it had a predominant Muslim majority. A tiny minority was of the view that we should be a pluralist country. That tiny minority had hailed from eastern islands like Bali and was Hindu and Christian by religion. They could have declined to join Indonesia if the country was declared as an Islamic state. Hence, at the very beginning it had been decided that Indonesia would be a pluralistic country where everyone would be free to practice the faith of their choice.”

“We have Islamic parties and groups, which have yet not accepted that and they went underground. Since the first day of our independence, we have had rebellions in the name of Islam. We also had roots of terrorism; so this terrorism in the name of Islam is not something new for us. By and large, majority of the Indonesians are happy that we are not an Islamic state. There are politico-Islamic parties struggling for the enforcement of Islamic laws or Shariah. In 1955, an alliance of the Islamic parties had won 40 percent of the votes. In other elections, Islamic parties could only bag about 20 to 25 percent votes, which indicates that the majority of the Muslims of Indonesia are happy with its present status of being a non-Islamic state and law of the land should be secular and not the Islamic Shariah.”

“Liberal democracy is the only way forward for a stable, peaceful, and prosperous nation. And that's what we have been doing for the last several years. Liberal democracy ensures respect for human rights, credible judiciary, law enforcement, and transparent and accountable governments. This we are going to improve with every passing election. I am happy to say that now Indonesia is regarded as an emerging democracy, market economy, and we have a long period of political stability. Indonesia is considered as the third largest democracy in the world after India and the United States and the first largest democracy in the Muslim majority countries. Moreover, Indonesia has attained the status of 16th largest economy of the world with a growth rate of 20 to 25 percent.”

“We have proven that democracy and development in a Muslim majority country can go side by side and we have also proved Professor Samuel Huntington as wrong, who believed that Islam and democracy were incompatible. It does not mean that we have no problems. We do have problems. We have communal violence too, in which Muslims and Christians fight and kill one another. We tackled these issues by effective policing and law enforcement. However, rising intolerance towards minority groups will be a big challenge for the next government. Ahmadis and Christians are attacked by the Sunni majority fanatics.”

“Despite all these, the trajectory shows that Indonesia is moving in the right direction and such difficulties will be overcome through democratically elected effective governments.”

Q&A Session and Comments

Question

Is there any country in the world, which owns a religion or has a state religion but its Constitution does not allow anyone to choose a religion freely?

Dr. Shabana Mir

You cannot impose a religion on others because God does not like it. A person has to have liberty of their soul. Use of force to push somebody to pray is an insult to the Almighty. Secularism versus religion does not work as human life does not work that way.

Why do we ask the question about Islam or secularism? It is because of our obsessive focus on the state as a centre of power. We wish the nation-state to be the representative of everything we believe in. Do you want the state to pick up your religion and be polluted? In the pre-modern period in Muslim societies, there was a parallel system with a Fiqh code and where you have politics. Sometimes, this parallel system was in conflict with the state. So, it has to be independent from the conflict. Authenticity of a religion should be separated from the state. Judiciary, for example, is separate from the Executive so that it can be neutral. That is something I want to remind us; to be cautious of this desire to see the state representing everything that we care about.

Religion is like water having no shape. It takes the shape of whatever receptacle it is put into. Religion as well takes the shape of whatever culture it is in. So, Islam in Indonesia takes a somewhat different form than Islam in Pakistan or the United States of America. Our attempt to define all these things requires more studying of social sciences.



Mr. Endy Bayuni

The State cannot impose a religion on its subjects. We believe in Sunni teachings, but we also practice Shia rituals. Shias and Sunnis have a big divide. But, the state should not interpret one's faith. Islam has different interpretations and approaches. There are 1.6 billion Muslims in the world, which means there will be the same number of religious interpretations.

Comment by Prof. Junaid S. Ahmad, LUMS

I spent three weeks in Indonesia and observed a very indigenous culture, ecumenical, pluralism, inter-faith harmony and so on. The way the community has developed this type of ethos over the centuries was just fascinating for me. In other

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Muslim majority countries, I have never seen anything like it. You will see how Islam and individuals go side by side in a comfortable manner. A particular kind of Islam is now being exported to Indonesia, particularly from the Arab world. It does not mean that traditional Islam is being exported to these societies, rather it is something new. The indigenous ethos is now under attack from certain new ideologies of Islam. Pakistan has also been the victim of such ideology.

As far as the relationship between the state and the religion in USA is concerned, the US Constitution has affirmed the separation of religion from the state and protection of religious freedom and pluralism has been guaranteed. But, the global context is affecting all of this. The United States and Europe have been caught up in Islamophobia or Islamic paranoia. Due to rising Islamophobia, stringent immigration and security legislation, with particular reference to Muslims, is being enacted in such societies. Moreover, there is a great difference between what is written in the Constitution and what is going on practically.

Forman Christian College University (FCCU), Lahore

Q&A Session and Comments



Question

Why do some states manage religion better while others do not? When you look at Indonesia, they started moving on a democratic, liberal, and tolerant path after 1998. Is that a function of leadership, education, or societal change to lead a nation to this path? In USA, Jerry Falwell has held gays and lesbians responsible for 9/11 and termed the incident as God's wrath. Within a few weeks of issuing the statement he had to retract his claim. Is having prayer in US schools a substantial issue or a peripheral one where a state still gives space to pluralism? Is it the society, which is irreligious or the state you want to make religious? In Indonesia and the United States, the efforts are on the state not playing the role of making religion binding on others and that is the question we are struggling with, in Pakistan.

Mr. Endy Bayuni

Indonesia is a functioning democracy and no one can impose its will single-handedly on others as had been done under President Suharto. However, Islamic parties also have their vote bank in Indonesia, but they are not in a majority in the parliament. They want more religious education in schools. They also pushed the

anti-pornography law. They think that they will prevail, but the final verdict will be of the law, which is secular.

Question

How do you explain the separation of East Timor from Indonesia when you talk of liberalism in the country?

Mr. Endy Bayuni

East Timor was a Portuguese colony. The Cold War, regional changes, and overwhelming majority of the Catholic Church followers there, have played a pivotal role in the separation of East Timor.

Question

Is it secularism when a US President takes oath on the Bible? Islam is very different from Christianity but is it a difference of context or anything else?

Dr. Shabana Mir

Interpreting what you are saying is that Christianity unlike Islam does not call for religion-state relationship and it leaves open a lot of things. I think it depends on which Christians you talk to; as some of them say that Christianity also seeks to cover the entirety of human life. There are do's and don'ts in the Quran but there is no such thing as a State in the Quran. Education is the key in developing healthy state-religion relations.

Mr. Endy Bayuni

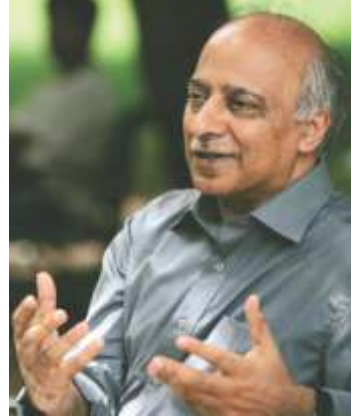
Hardliners do not believe in democracy and there are also radical elements in Indonesia. We don't question that final sovereignty is in the hands of God, but we want a system to transfer that sovereignty to the community or society. And the best way to transfer this sovereignty is through the democratic process.

We empowered our police to overcome terrorism in our country. The police was trained and equipped for this purpose.

Lectures at University of Peshawar (UoP), Peshawar

Mr. Imtiaz Gul, Executive Director, CRSS

The world is turning into a global village and social cohesion is stressed in the prevailing circumstances, which is not possible if the conduct of the state is not secular or democratic. The great Punjabi poet Bulleh Shah said: “By reading books you have assumed yourself as a judge, and by holding a sword you want to become a soldier. After visiting Makkah and Madina you presumed yourself as a Haji or pious man. O Bulleh Shah, you have attained nothing if you do not win the pleasure of God.” God's pleasure can only be achieved by taking care of human rights.



The 1973 Constitution of Pakistan also guarantees fundamental human rights. Article 8 of the Constitution states: “Laws inconsistent with, or in derogation of, fundamental rights are to be void,” whereas Article 9 deals with the security of a person and says that: “No person shall be deprived of life or liberty save in accordance with law.” Similarly, slavery, bonded and forced labour have been prohibited, whereas freedom of speech has been ensured.

Article 25 ensures equality of citizens and states: “All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law.” Article 20 deals with the freedom to profess religion and to manage religious institutions and states: “Every citizen shall have the right to profess, practise and propagate his religion.” Article 22 says: “No person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instruction, or take part in any religious ceremony, or attend religious worship, if such instruction, ceremony or worship relates to a religion other than his own.” An important point to be noted here is that the word used in the Constitution is “religion” and not Islam, so there is a need to go by the Constitution for social cohesion in the society.

Dr. Shabana Mir



US society is very touchy when it comes to religion, as it does not want any sect or religion to overwhelm others. That is why religious freedom has been ensured in the US Constitution. The state should be neutral in allowing people to choose a faith of their own choice. Public schools in the United States are not permitted to preach a particular religion to the students and any teacher found guilty of such a thing will be dismissed from service. Such provisions in the US Constitution serve to protect minority groups so that the majority cannot impose its will on others.

Mr. Endy Bayuni

After decades of dictatorship in Indonesia, the leaders of our country decided to go for establishing a liberal democracy in the country in which religious freedom would be ensured to every citizen. We have a strong civil society, including Islamic organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. They are very powerful and influential organizations, but they too have maintained a modern and tolerant Islam in Indonesia.



We have a free press to keep the Indonesian democracy on the right path. We have Islamic political parties, which campaign for the establishment of an Islamic state in Indonesia and want Shariah laws to replace the national secular laws. Although these parties have never won elections, they still receive a significant number of votes. We have freedom of speech, expression, religion, and association in Indonesia. All these things have contributed to the overall prosperity of the people. Our economic growth rate is about 6 to 7 percent every year, lifting up many

Indonesians from below the poverty line, which has resulted in a huge surge in the middle class. People go to Makkah, to perform the Haj pilgrimage every year and thousands of Indonesians go for Umrah every week. We have promoted development and democracy simultaneously.

Q&A Session and Comments

Question

How can sectarian violence be addressed in Pakistan?

Dr. Shabana Mir

The US Bill of Rights aims to provide protection to religious minorities. The physical safety of people of different faiths should be protected because attacks on minorities are not okay. I have criticized in my book that Muslims do not have complete religious freedom. That means problems also exist in the United States regarding religious freedom. People should not be afraid of disclosing their religion or place of worship.

Question

People in the US are more religious than the Europeans as they have not experienced wars on the basis of religion.

Dr. Shabana Mir

Church and state are also different in France as in the United States. However, state-religion relationship in France is very different from the United States. French people do not want to see religion in their public life and that is why you see the ban on wearing the hijab and other laws. But such things you will not find in the United States.

Question

Are some groups in Muslim majority countries using religion for their political ends?

Dr. Shabana Mir

I agree with you that such elements use religion for their own vested interests.

Mr. Endy Bayuni

It is correct that some religio-political parties use religion to grab more and more votes in elections.



Question

Certain laws in the United States have reinforced the idea that religion has been playing an important role in US politics and its policy abroad regarding the Muslim countries. Will you please shed light on the International Religious Freedom Act and grants through two consecutive orders by former President Bush?

Dr. Shabana Mir

The world is a very complex thing. During the George Bush Administration, religion had made inroads into the state. There were tirades of criticism against

these actions. Due to contradictions in the Bush Administration, the US public decided to vote for the Democrats in the next elections. This led to a serious debate in and outside the United States of America.

Question

How can Pakistan be made a secular state?

Dr. Shabana Mir

We all should contribute our thinking in this regard. No imported solution can be imposed in Pakistan and there should be local solutions for having a pluralistic society. We should keep in view our priorities, regional situation and other things before going for such options.

Prof. Dr. Rasul Jan, Vice-Chancellor, University of Peshawar



The founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had made it clear that Pakistan was not only meant for Muslims, but for followers of every religion, who would be protected in this country and would be free to practise whatever religion they wished to. We should come out of the illusion of an Islamic state.

There exists no country absolutely secular. Holidays of Saturday and Sunday also carry religious notions. For example, Saturday is a sacred day for Jews, whereas Christians give the same status to Sunday, but as a minority, Muslims are not allowed to attend Friday prayers, despite, repeated requests. A group of some 80 Muslims had organized a walk in the United States to create awareness among people that Muslims were persecuted after 9/11. This is happening, but it does not mean that we must follow what others are doing. Followers of any religion are Pakistani citizens. People have been deceived in this country in the name of Islam.

Perspectives from Multicultural Societies

There should be consistent elections in Pakistan for the sake of democracy, stability, and economic independence.

We still have Christmas and Easter holidays, which indicate Pakistani society's tolerance. We don't need to have a US or Indian model. We are a different country and we should evolve our own strategy instead of relying on others.

We should also respect the rights of women. Those who chant slogans of Islam are reluctant to give property rights to their daughters. Islam was not spread through the sword but through actions. If we don't put our own house in order then things will not improve.

Fatima Jinnah Women's University (FJWU), Rawalpindi

Q&A Session and Comments

Question

Can there be a Muslim president in the United States? Is the idea of an Islamic Caliphate not workable in modern times?

Dr. Shabana Mir



There is nothing in the US Constitution, which bars any Muslim from becoming the President of the United States. There is nothing to prevent any Muslim ruler or masses from practising Islam. We live in a very complicated society and we should live in the present rather than clinging on to the 7th century. A lot has changed. Public welfare is a fully Islamic thing that may be practised by any society or country.

Question

Community and governance cannot be separated from religion even if you take the example of the United States; they do involve religion in political affairs because they ensure that their leaders must be Christians. Now whatever their laws say is different from the normal practice as in Pakistan. Will there be chaos in the society if religion is separated from the state?

Mr. Endy Bayuni

It is impossible to separate people from their religious beliefs; however, every society draws up its laws and principles according to its own needs, to create more harmony among the people. The governments of multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies should promote



Perspectives from Multicultural Societies

tolerance in the country. Let the religious leaders decide which faith or religious interpretations are better than the others as it is not the state's job. The governments of multi-ethnic and multi-religious countries should take appropriate steps to promote tolerance in their respective societies.

Dr. Shabana Mir

I don't think that the culture of the United States can be promoted in Pakistan as both the countries have different moral values, history, geography, and demography. Every society has its own particular values to promote. You have to be very careful in coming to conclusions relevant to the text. You cannot impose any outside solution to your society in Pakistan.



Question

What do you say if religious instructors are banned from coming into public schools in Pakistan and students are also not allowed to attend any religious gathering for getting optional knowledge of religion?

Dr. Shabana Mir

I am raising my daughter in a non-Muslim society. Pork and ham are served during lunch in public schools, but children like my daughter are given different options to select food according to their faith and as this is so, then the neutrality comes in. Religious education should be given only at religious institutions, not in public schools.

Mr. Endy Bayuni

Schools are meant for knowledge and science and teaching, while religion or morality should be the job of parents at home.

Question

I have one question each for both the scholars. For Dr. Shabana Mir, the United States has issued a new policy for prayer timings and observing hijab in offices. Does the US government consult any religious scholar before adopting such a policy? For Endy Bayuni, is there any question for Muslims to accept Indonesia as an Islamic state? Have some Islamic parties ever used Islamic symbols for their election campaigns?

Mr. Endy Bayuni

There are people who want to see Indonesia as an Islamic state, but we have a reasonable number of minorities, including Hindus, Christians, and others who do not want Indonesia to become a Muslim state. However, Muslims fight for Islamic values and for teachings in legislation to be in a democratic manner. Yes, some Islamic parties used the emblem of the Kaaba as their election symbol, and they canvassed people during their election campaign that they would go to hell if they did not vote for the Kaaba. If you campaign on morality then you will have to set your own high standards of morality. Many leaders of Islamic parties are involved in womanizing and financial corruption. That is why people do not vote for Islamic parties in Indonesia. Our minister for Religious Affairs has been facing corruption charges in a Hajj scandal. Another leader of an Islamic party was caught with women in a hotel.

Dr. Shabana Mir

There is no overarching rule for such policies. These things are decided at an individual level. At some places there was no problem in offering prayers and observing hijab at workplaces or educational institutions; however, there may be some problems on other occasions. Women's faces being veiled while driving has caused problems with reference to the verification of their identity cards if their faces are not visible. However, there is a debate that the face being visible is not sufficient as one can change one's face through plastic surgery and other methods. Public discourse on important issues is very important for a vibrant society and democracy. Personally, I did not face any problem in practising Islam in the United States. Things can be solved individually.

National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad

Q&A Session and Comments



Question

My question is that in some societies, the state is considered part of their beliefs, as in Hinduism and then there is the term coined by various authors for the last one and a half century: “Political Islam.” So how do you take these thoughts?

Mr. Endy Bayuni



I am a Muslim so I would be happy to have a Madina kind of state in Indonesia, but we cannot impose this by force. We are a country of a diverse society with pockets of different religions. The choice in 1945 would have been either a smaller Islamic Republic of Indonesia or one which embraces everybody, but in this case we have to negotiate the kind of state we want to have, but it does not mean that we ignore the principles of Islam.

Muslims are in a majority and in any negotiations, we would be able to get a lot of decisions in the legislation. The principles of Islam are reflected in the Constitution of Indonesia without the name of Islam because the moment we call it an Islamic Constitution, the non-Muslims would be uncomfortable and they would say that we don't want to be a part of this republic.

By all means we can have that but when you are implementing it, you have to negotiate and build a consensus. Consensus is best for Islam as well, so we cannot say that if we do not follow the “Madina Charter” completely, we are not an Islamic state. We try to bring as much as we can but it is not one hundred percent. The main thing is the society's progress and every single member of the society, even with different faiths, is able to exercise it.

Dr. Shabana Mir

The dominance of radicalized religious forces is a destructive thing and India faces this right now. We have seen the election of Modi and a lot of Indians are very concerned about this, that they have politicians elected on the basis of hatred; they are unhappy about it but this is happening. One of the things we haven't succeeded in doing is establishing a level of civil discourse where all voices are actually heard. I feel it's extremely important to include all the elements in this discourse.



Some people say that we want to leave all the crazy people out and just create some type of a moderate and balanced Islamic discourse. But who decides what is balanced and what is moderate? Everyone has their own perspective and opinion. Voting is only a small part of the development of the democracy, whereas discourse is the ability to voice your opinion about the way things should be done, which is the most basic aspect of any democratic society.

I think once we have all the voices of all the parties involved, we will progress in this respect instead of people always looking towards the angriest voice and saying “lead me because you have something to say”. This often happens in the village politics that people just turn to the most conservative and angry voice because it

gives them some powerful kind of meaning and the ability to deal with this thing we are up against. I don't think it's a quick fix and as citizens we all need to be involved in this and none of us can afford to be silent.

I agree with what you are saying and this is an ongoing critique that's occurring within the United States among my academic colleagues and journalists and it is widely popular in the United States because people are sick and tired of the arrogance and the interference of the US state in many respects. My colleagues devoted their lives to research and writing and activism against it. We have agency for our own lives; and we have at a certain point looked to ourselves to change our own stage.

The models that we are looking at should not be sensitive to our context, but they have to be sensitive to the fact that we are now in 2014. Very often we have this romanticized idea that we can go back in a time machine and create a kind of homogenous small scale society. Times have changed and we have to adapt and figure out what to do in this society because now is when we have to make our decisions and plans. I am critically academic when I come to these issues and I am very opposed to colonialism. My whole professional life is dedicated to the opposition of cultural colonialism.

Question

I have an observation. Not only in the United States but also in Europe until 1870, the church played a predominant and decisive role in politics. The decision to go to war was not made unilaterally by political authorities. And the second thing, in Pakistan we neither know how to become good Muslims, nor a good democracy. Weak governance in Pakistan has itself provided an opportunity to the religious groups. Religious political parties are inciting people on the failure of this governance structure.

Question

My observation is that we take religion and governance separately but we can merge governance with Islam because the same religion provides human rights to all the communities in the society. Islam teaches us that if you get, you have to give,

and if you learn, you have to teach. But in Pakistan people think that because we study books that are coming from the west, we listen to the people who are from the west, so we blindly borrow western values, which is very dangerous because democracy is based on these western ideals and we have blindly implemented them in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. This is a dilemma. We have not developed the democratic culture in Pakistan.

Dr. Shabana Mir

Every time I visit Pakistan, my heart breaks, because there is so much ability and talent in this country but the fact is that we have not succeeded in developing our potential as we now have a very large young population and very high unemployment. That's something we have to deal with. A lot of people think that Shariah only means cutting off hands of thieves, but all the scholars agree that the underlining purpose of Shariah is public welfare. If we are not doing it then we are not doing anything Islamic at all. I think we are completely capable of democratic discourse and it is happening even as we speak and it is happening all the time. We need education and critical thinking, which is why I am here. We keep trying and we have all these challenges to face, but I really ask you not to give up and be too pessimistic.

Mr. Endy Bayuni

We rejected capitalism in Indonesia but we did not reject everything that is perceived as western. The West has developed liberal democracy but what we are trying to implement in Indonesia is not a western concept. You can find human rights, the fundamental rights of people, accountability of government and the judiciary in Islamic principles. We did not reject all western concepts because they are actually universal concepts and some of them originated from Islam. We should embrace and implement them. We have proved that democracy and Islam are compatible and the nation is now more prosperous.

Question

Since 1954, the Islamic parties have not got more than three-four percent (3-4%) of the votes in Pakistan, so don't you think that's a religious leadership crisis? Is

Islam practised with all its rules, regulations and values in Indonesia? Is Islam practised with all its rules, regulations and values in the United States? And what is the Muslim society doing to promote Islam in the United States?

Dr. Shabana Mir

We are kind of idealistic people and reject anything if our society doesn't look like Iqbal's verse, but it doesn't work that way. I get a little uncomfortable when we start to say that all people in Pakistani society are the same. People and culture are diverse, no culture is homogenous.

Dr. Shahid Hashmat, NUST



In fact what needs to be understood is the social responsibility of society and of the country. These are two different things. Unfortunately in Pakistan over a period of time, because of a variety of problems, this responsibility has been fulfilled neither by the society nor by the state, so we are in a very bad situation today. Since the state is not something static and stagnant but is an evolving organ or body, the individual keeps changing in various institutions of the state. Every successive regime in a state blames the previous one. There have been waves of extremism and it does not succeed beyond a few decades. Most of our complaints about Islam are actually because of misunderstanding and for not practising Islam. Everything breeds from social injustice and one of Iqbal's verses in Persian was that the total philosophy of Shariah is that no one should be dependent upon anyone. The critical thinking comes much later, after the basic requirements of jobs and healthcare.

Roundtable at Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS), Islamabad

Q&A Session and Comments



Mr. Imtiaz Gul, Executive Director, CRSS

Article 25 of the Constitution of Pakistan deals with equal citizenry, but no non-Muslim can become the President or the Prime Minister in this country, as it is also part of the Constitutional requirement to clinch these posts. The condition to be a Muslim for the slot of President and Prime Minister basically runs contrary to Article 25.

Mian Sanaullah, Former Ambassador to Indonesia

I have observed true liberal democracy in Indonesia. Rising fundamentalism and extremism is a trend limited to the areas where the religious minorities are very active. Actually, minorities are indulging in activities which prove provocative for the majority. This thing is not known outside Indonesia. Undoubtedly, Indonesia is a liberal democracy where everybody including tribes and ethnic minorities are allowed to practise their own religion.



Indonesia is a two-system country as a stricter form of Shariah is enforced in one of its provinces, Aceh, and there are horrendous cases of violation of human rights, but outside Aceh, it is not being enforced. On the other hand, I witnessed a number of temples in Bali. People are very liberal, but there are no places for burial on the island, which is discrimination.

There is a soft corner for Islamic practices in Indonesia. There are six recognized religions and more time is devoted to Muslim students at public schools. You can call it discrimination, but it can also be seen as a respect for the majority. Generally, Indonesia does not tilt towards any particular religion.

Lt. Gen. (R) Masood Aslam



When Mr. Endy Bayuni was talking about liberal democracy and what it allows and what it does not permit, I was looking at our Constitution as well. When I go through the Preamble, it is talking about exactly the same thing. It talks about principles of democratic freedom, equality and tolerance and social justice is the only word which is added, as enunciated in Islam. Articles 1, 2, 4, etc. are about fundamental human rights, including equality of status of opportunity before law; social, economic, and political justice; and freedom of expression, belief, faith, worship, association; and minorities in professing, practising, and developing their culture. Things have evolved according to the environment in which people were living. The forefathers or followers evolve the system for themselves. Pakistan is a very softly governed state where the rule of law has never been encouraged for the last 67 years.

The case in point; Geo tv, after 50 days, the government issued a decision through Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA). The same PEMRA laws could have been applied on the very first day, who was going to stop them? It means the government is not serious in applying these laws or the Constitution. So, I don't know the orchestrators of these laws. But, I do know that PM Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had amended the Constitution of 1973. He was forced, due to various

political requirements, but it is purely a genuine Constitution, which gives maximum freedom.

You talked about how the Ten Commandments will not do this or that. Look at the teachings of Islam. Everybody talks about Islam in Pakistan. Seventy five percent of Islamic teachings relate to human relationships and human dealings. We do not talk about your private practice or your faith, but we talk about other things. Religious people in Pakistan do not get more than 4 percent of votes in elections. But, there is a big difference between our values and theirs. The government has allowed them the vacuum in which they are operating. So, it is the system of governance that we need to improve, rather than trying to find things from abroad and incorporating them in our society. You see what is happening around us in our society. It is not the city; it is not the people sitting here; it is those who are living in the 70 percent of the population where the pulpit is still calling the shots five times a day.

Mr. Sultan Hali



I have two questions, one each to the distinguished guests. Shabana, you quoted Abdullah Ahmed An-Na'im that secularism is more consistent with Islamic history. Would you give some specific examples in this regard?

Endy, you said that democracy and development can be made achievable, and you gave an example of your own country, where it is probably a success. But, you also mentioned that extremism is on the rise in Indonesia and it is an impediment in the way of progress and development. How do you think it should be tackled?

Ms. Ammara Durrani

I have two questions for the speakers. For Mr. Bayuni, I especially enjoyed your talk because I have been studying Indonesia for some time now. I visited Indonesia in 2009 and I believe that the last terrorist attacks took place in Jakarta in



that year. Indonesia has tackled the problem of religion and rising extremism in a role model manner. Your counter-terrorism elite force is laudable. Q: How is the Indonesian government trying to address the issue of extremism?

Perhaps, we are overstating the case of liberal democracy and understating the case of very aggressive market capitalization of Indonesia. One is amazed to see Jakarta, a very rich and highly developed capital of the world. The 1990 injections of western capitals in Indonesia and how that transforms the social attitude whereby your Indonesian society is more concerned with their businesses, and with services ensuring that they only have 10% of poverty. Moreover, the country has gone through a wonderful economic growth due to the liberal outlay of the society rather than the political aspects.

For Dr. Shabana I fully agree with you that USA is a highly religious society and you beautifully laid out the legal and the constitutional frameworks. But, at the same time the United States is the country where political leadership plays a huge role in influencing the debate on such issues. For instance, the Republican President, George Bush Jr. had introduced faith-based initiatives as the State Department's official policy; while Barack Obama came in as the Democratic President and yet he resorts to religious references more than Bush did. His second acceptance speech had more religious references than his first acceptance speech. Now we are looking at the United States where they are preparing for their first ever woman candidate going in for a presidential election who doesn't really have a clear stance on religion. Since you have worked on issues of gender and religion, how do you see the role of a woman leader in the presidential office influencing the debate on religion in the United States?

Mr. Endy Bayuni

Extremism had always been there since 1945 in the name of religion. People were not happy with Indonesia for not becoming an Islamic state. They went underground and some of them tried to assassinate Presidents Sukarno and Suharto. Since 1998 we have democracy and development, and those organizations that initially had an



aspiration for the Islamic State had gone underground, but now they have resurfaced, and have formed political parties. They contest elections, however, they have not yet gotten a majority, but they have their representation in the parliament.

I think it is a way of defusing the potential of extremism because at least they have a political outlet. Now they make attempts to change the scene through a democratic way. Some groups, of course, are continuing their extremist ways, but terrorism has been dealt with accordingly. Now we are dealing with the radical groups, which are operating in the open and they are legitimate organizations. But, they resort to violence on special occasions like Ramadan. They come out, close down restaurants, bars, and places of entertainments. They do not tolerate them, even if the government has allowed them to open such outlets for a limited time during the holy month of Ramazan in Jakarta. It is a criminal act, which should be dealt with by the police, which remains a silent spectator seeing these radical groups closing bars and attacking restaurants in the name of Islam. The police do not take action as it would be accused of being anti-Islam.

This is happening more and more and these groups are also attacking religious minorities i.e. Ahmedis and Shias and the police is unable to prevent them. One tragedy happened in 2011 when Ahmedis had a small gathering of 10 people in a house in West Java. The radical group heard about this meeting and arrived outside the house with two hundred people. The police asked the Ahmedis to leave the place instead of dispersing the two hundred people gathered outside. The police were pulled out and the mob attacked the Ahmedis, killing three persons.

Somebody uploaded the video of the killed people on YouTube, which highlighted the issue a lot. Consequently, the law enforcement agencies had to arrest the perpetrators, but they also arrested the owner of the house. They were presented before a court where the perpetrators got six months in jail, not for killing the Ahmedis, but for causing trouble, and the owner of the house got nine months imprisonment. The question arises: where is justice? It is a tragedy. It is a travesty of justice. This is one of the problems we are dealing with.

The civil society in Indonesia is very strong and so the pressure on the government and the police is on the rise to do more to prevent such happenings. At the moment, the battle is still there. Radical groups are in a minority, but they are very vocal and

violent and now they seem to be getting away with murder many times. This is one problem that the next president and the next government will have to address. We all have given up on President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, because he seems to be failing in protecting the religious minorities. But, there is hope that we will get a new president and government in the coming elections.

With regard to your question about my understating the economic factors and overstating the political factors, I think, we have both. We cannot have one factor only. Political processes are important when we have political stability, without which there would be no development. In fact, on the economic front, what you see, when you come to Jakarta can be misleading. Of course, there is growth and development, but at the same time disparity between the rich and the poor is widening. People have high expectations naturally; when you have a motorcycle, you will want to have a car next year. If you have a house then you will desire a bigger one. Expectations are growing and this is part of the democratic process. People are just not satisfied. What is influencing Indonesia is the religious factor, the Islamic factor. That factor is missing in the western world. I am not saying it is a perfect thing, but religion is still an important factor in the way people run their lives and it actually puts some restraint against greed.

Dr. Shabana Mir

In response to the question about the need for more egalitarian and gender-related interpretations of Islam and the need for a dialogue, I agree that there is a great need for communicating such plurality. For example, we should have a variety of Muslim feminist scholars to discuss this issue. There is a need for development of civil discourse as law and policy are not enough. I think the imposition of law and policies relate to such egalitarian interpretations and there is a need for more gradual initiatives in that respect.



Tariq Ramadan, the Egyptian Muslim scholar, has been a great advocate for social and cultural integration of Muslims within the western society. When I last met him at the Centre for Study of Islam and Democracy, we were also discussing my

doctoral work. He said that very often the Muslims become entrenched with a very frozen view of Muslim identity in opposition to liberal democracy. At the same time he does not fear that you have to lose your religion in order to become integrated in other societies.

In relation to the United States being a religious society, I think you were particularly referring to Hilary Clinton, who is coming up as the next great hope but I don't know for which people. I am not sure about any political discourse in the United States. I don't know what kind of improvement she is going to offer. There is an ongoing civil discourse in the United States on the separation of the state and religion. Not everybody agrees with it. I have plenty of atheist, non-religious, and other friends, who disagree with such kinds of usage of religion in the public space, for example, "In God we trust" being inscribed on the US dollar bills. I think there is no harm in such kinds of public discourse. These things are actually helpful. These should be discussed by the people who are the stakeholders.

Ms. Tahira Abdullah

My first question is for Mr. Bayuni and the other for Dr. Shabana Mir. I waited in vain for any mention of the principles of Pancasila in Indonesia. I wonder whether you have shed them along the way towards economic prosperity and liberal democracy. I also looked in vain for any mention of their negative impact on the women of Indonesia, irrespective of their religious identity. For example, the so-called "Anti-Pornography Bill", is a vehicle for increasing gender inequality, misogyny, patriarchy, sexism.



Dr. Mir, thank you for saying that "we have saved the religion from the politicians". In fact, we in Pakistan still have religion in the stranglehold of the political mullahs. However, there appear to be a number of contradictions in your presentation about the role of religion and the religiosity of the people in USA, versus the US Supreme Court abiding staunchly by the First Amendment. The law versus the reality of life and society in USA is confusing. We are used to seeing US presidents putting their

hand on the Bible during their oath-taking ceremonies, which is a powerful religious symbolism. I differ with your point that “churches in USA are not discredited as they are not involved in politics.” I think they are involved, as they donate a lot of campaign money to the Republicans, especially to the far right neo-cons, Pat Robertson, etc. The clergy in USA are also discredited for various other reasons, e.g. child sexual abuse and financial scandals too.

Prof. Junaid S. Ahmad, LUMS



What is liberal democracy or very intense market capitalism? Are we talking about producing liberal pluralistic Indonesians or religious extremists? This is the case with many societies in this part of the world today whether it is the Boko Haram in Africa or other such groups. It is the intense predatory corporate type of capitalism that is taking place, which is producing dispossession in many societies that often lead to these types of militant groups emerging. So, I don't think this kind of an indigenous culture is producing this.

It is also interesting that someone like Tariq Ramadan, within the Muslim community, is a major voice calling for reforms in the Muslim countries, and developing a more pluralistic and liberalizing ethos. He has also increasingly focused on the rising Islamophobia in western society, which does not help the communities under siege as the progressive liberal, open-minded thinking indicates, particularly in Europe.

How can you expect anything else from Muslims in such a context in which they are facing all kind of discrimination? It is not merely theological discussions that one day a Muslim society wakes up and becomes extremist or radical. There is a socio-political context behind such kinds of changes. Pakistan is an example of this socio-political change but the news coming from Syria has amazed everyone. There was no history of fundamentalism, extremism or Wahabism in that country, but now it has been flooded with extremists, weapons and funds. It has probably had an impact on the society. The question arises: where did they come from?

Comment

I visited the United States (1987-88), and I saw banners carrying the slogan: “Equal rights for women.” Once I addressed one of the gatherings, and they turned to better rights for women instead of equal rights. We had a Hindu Chief Justice, J. Rana Bhagwan Das, which shows whoever you are, perform your best to achieve the goals for that particular situation. The only criterion is: how much have they contributed for the betterment of the country. Regarding the Constitutional amendments, it has been asked so many times as to what amendments are needed to improve the Constitution. I just say: please implement in letter and spirit whatever is there in our Constitution. We will bring a lot of prosperity to our country if we do it.

Prof. Rasheed Khalid, Quaid-e-Azam University



There is no need for protecting Islam from the politicians, but there is a need to protect it from the maulvis. A question for Mr. Bayuni: Is religion used for setting personal scores? I think Indonesian leaders respect Islam more than our leaders. Our prayer leaders engineered an incident of blasphemy to implicate a mentally challenged Christian girl by placing the pages of the Holy book into the garbage. There are a number of such incidents.

Mr. Murtaza Solangi

A question for Mr. Bayuni: Are there any external influences on increasing religiosity in Indonesian society and if there are, are they adding more intolerance and what are their origins? For Dr. Shabana Mir, how do you feel as a practising Muslim when you see that in a lot of Muslim countries, Muslims are not safe from other fellow Muslims? How do you feel when you see that in many countries where Muslims are living as a minority, they feel they are protected?



Dr. Shabana Mir

The tension or conflict is not within the structure of the US law or the Constitution but it is within the cultural practices of the United States. The cultural practices within a society are not a very clear reflection of law by and large. It is a model that I attempted to articulate and some of its approaches. I am not here to represent US law. I am with you on tension or conflict within the US law or the society in terms of its troubled relationship with religion and its attempt to generate some kind of pluralism. I talked about the serious gaps in American pluralism that we need to address in all contexts, not only through policy reforms but also through a cultural change. That critique is very welcome and very badly needed.

Regarding the US churches and their role in politics, I may have inadvertently, not fully represented what I was talking about. Churches are involved in some ways, though not technically, in other ways. For example, Ronald Reagan had come to power through the religious right. The religious right is a force for any presidential contender to be very aware of. Tension and conflict is inherent in human affairs, but it turns bad when it interferes with pluralism.

These matters are not simple and are not a singular domino effect. There is no single causality of theological issues causing militancy or gender inequality. We strongly need to engage the forces of militancy and misogyny on different levels.

About the personal question, as to how I feel as a practising Muslim in USA. Generally speaking, the United States is culturally, politically, and professionally a comfortable place for me as a Muslim. Yes, when I look at a Muslim context where other Muslims as well as minority groups are not safe, I find myself in a difficult situation. I am occasionally asked by Christians in USA why their fellow Christians are not safe in Pakistan and I don't have any answer to give them. This is not purely a religious matter. Muslims as US citizens are just people and there is a need to articulate such issues on all different levels.

Mr. Endy Bayuni

We have all kinds of organizations trying to hijack the political process or public opinion in Indonesia. We have two very powerful civil society organizations in Indonesia; one is Nahdlatul Ulama and the other is Muhammadiyah. They have a central role in keeping a moderate and tolerant kind of Islam in Indonesia. The

media in Indonesia also has a critical role in keeping the society moderate and tolerant.

As far as Pancasila is concerned, one of its five principles calls for belief in one God, which bars people from adopting the faith of their choice. People should have the choice to adopt any religion or faith. This is a very valuable instrument to keep Indonesia a moderate country.

As far as the Anti-Pornography Bill is concerned, it has not yet become the law. The original Bill, drafted by Islamic organizations, had very harsh and stringent clauses as it had also objected to the way people dressed. They also tried to eliminate all kinds of traditional dances of Indonesia because they fell under the clause of eroticism. The women and the Balinese population objected to the Bill because they deemed it as an infringement on women's and minorities' rights and traditions. There are many discriminatory laws against women. Actually, it is a battle that has to be fought in a democratic manner.

Someone mentioned personal scores, I am not aware of any particular incident of setting personal scores through the Blasphemy Law in Indonesia. We also have a Blasphemy Law. However, efforts are being made to repeal the Blasphemy Law to prevent its misuse against sectarian and religious minorities in Indonesia (e.g. Shias). As far as external influences regarding religion are concerned, Saudi money is pouring in to promote Wahabism in Indonesia. We have the influence of the Hizbul Tahrir and the Islamic Brotherhood in Indonesia as well. These organizations are trying to hijack the democratic process in our country.

Dr. Niaz Murtaza

Have you done any research to explain the relationship between the state and the religion within the Muslim countries?

Mr. Endy Bayuni

Each Muslim country went through different phases and every country has a different environment.



GO CORE

Phase Two Discussions

Profiles of the Scholars

Assistant Professor Dr. Behlul Ozkan, Turkey



Dr. Behlul Ozkan completed his Bachelors degree at the Bosphorus University Department of Political Sciences and International relations in Turkey, and went on to pursue his graduate studies and PhD in USA, from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. He is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of International Relations at Marmara University, Turkey. He is the author of “From the Abode of Islam to the Turkish Vatan: Making of a National Homeland in Turkey” (Yale University Press, 2012) and has several articles to his name. In the past he has also worked as an analyst at CNN Turk and AlJazeera.

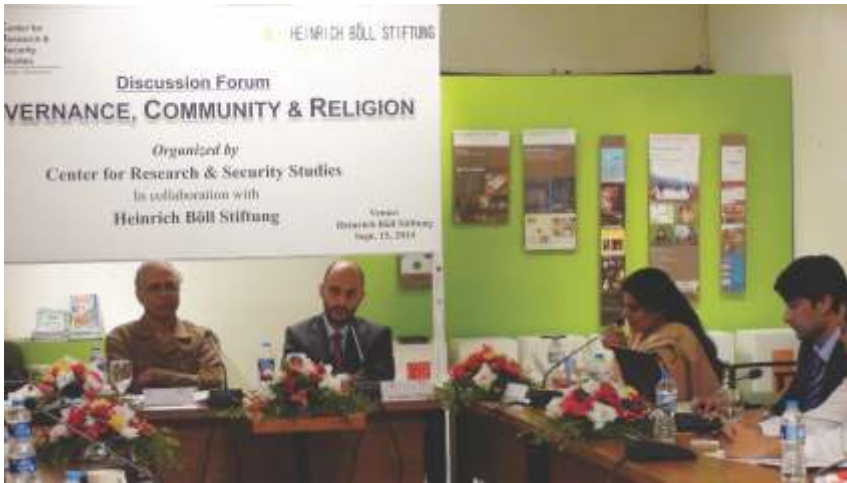
Ambassador Mian Sanaullah



Mian Sanaullah served for over 34 years in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, and also served as Pakistan's Ambassador to Indonesia from 2009 to 2013 and in Romania, Bulgaria and the Republic of Moldova (2006-2009). He was the Deputy Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (2000-2003) and served in different diplomatic capacities in India (twice), Belgium, China and Iran for three years each. He completed his Masters in Journalism from the University of Punjab in 1974 and went on to pursue another Masters in Industrial Location and Development from Belgium in 1991. He has taken several professional courses and has many publications to his name. He is well-known for his translation of English poems into Romanian and his recent book titled “Indonesia and Pakistan: Saga of Trusted Friendship in Changing East-Asia,” which was published in 2014.

Roundtable at Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Islamabad (HBS)

Welcome and Introduction by HBS and CRSS co-hosts



The Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS) has been present in Pakistan for the last 21 years and we have been working on the issue of democratization, focusing on women and the youth. We have also been working on ecology, climate change, energy, peace and security issues.

The Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), based in Islamabad, is an independent think tank which believes in an informed debate and advocacy on issues such as peace and security, the role of religion, rule of law, democracy and governance. The primary objective of CRSS is to trigger critical debate on major political insecurity issues i.e. militancy, radicalization and in sensitization of the stakeholders in the centrality of universally acknowledged and practised democratic values.

This dialogue comes under Peace and Security and is part of the phase two discussions on 'Governance, Community and Religion'. Today we have two guests, one from Turkey and one from Pakistan, but the latter guest is going to speak on Indonesia.

Perspectives from Multicultural Societies

This dialogue is part of a counter-radicalization advocacy for the promotion of secular governance to underpin the need for democratizing the state conduct and politics rather than looking at them through the religious presence and also to underscore the need for the separation of religion and politics as a means of ensuring social peace and harmony.

The distinguished speakers will be sharing the Turkish and Indonesian perspectives on the theme and explaining the respective states' experience of dealing with the religiously diverse society and ensuring religious freedom as well as state impartiality towards different religions, ethnic groups and communities of different faiths.

The presenters will be reflecting upon the fact that the state should not assume the role of a pastor or some religious authorities to judge a sin and goodness but instead they should ensure social harmony and adjudicate the violation of the law of the land.

We have invited Ms. Tahira Abdullah, a human rights and peace activist, as well as a researcher, author and development professional, based in Islamabad, to kindly moderate this seminar.

Ms. Tahira Abdullah, Session Moderator



The 100% gender imbalance in the panel today is a cause for concern, but I join HBS and CRSS in welcoming our two speakers and recognizing their professional expertise and experiences. We look forward to an informative lecture session, followed by a frank and open discussion and exchange, as usual.

Dr. Behlul Ozkan, Assistant Professor, Marmara University, Turkey

“I would like to thank the CRSS and HBS. The timing of the event could not be better, because there is a collision in the leadership of the United States of America

against radical groups in Syria and Iraq. Pakistan and Turkey have known each other since the past 90 years. We all know that most of the intellectual leaders of British India (both Muslim and Hindu) had a lot of influence on our nation's state building in Turkey and its leader Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.



Jinnah was influential in the secularization of Turkey. More recently, Islamization of politics in Pakistan and the war in Afghanistan also influenced Turkey's political leadership, especially in the 1970s, 80s and 90s. A lot of Turkish students came to Pakistan to study in madrassas and universities and then went back to Turkey, with some of them being at the higher levels of the ruling elite in Turkey.

The question of the role of Islam and its impact on Turkish politics has been an important subject for the last 100 years. I should first point out that the Turkish republic has 90 years of secular tradition behind it.

Turkey is the only country in the Middle East, West Asia, and North Africa including Israel, which has completely secularized its legal system. This is especially significant in the area of Personal Status Law, which regulates civil courts regarding marriage, divorce and inheritance; it recognizes gender equality, and outlaws polygamy.

Turkey has a very good record of education and career opportunities for women. There is a very high percentage of female participation in civil services, judiciary and academia in Turkey. Turkish women were granted the right to vote in 1930, many years before France, Greece, Canada, Switzerland and Belgium.

The institutionalization of secularism in Turkey is following a militant course similar to France. The changes made in the 1920s and 1930s were to establish state control over religion, rather than separating politics and religion. Let me give you the list of secular radical reforms:

- firstly, the abolition of the Caliphate, which had dated back since the death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH);

- secondly, the abolition of the Shahid-ul-Islam, the highest religious authority to issue Fatwas (religious edicts or orders);
- thirdly, the abolition of Madrassas and religious learning institutions, along with secularization of the whole education system in Turkey;
- fourthly, the abolition of religious courts and secularization of the legal system;
- fifthly, closing down of all religious brotherhoods and Tareeqats and their gatherings;
- sixthly, the change of the weekly holiday from Friday to Sunday;
- seventhly, the adoption of the Latin alphabet instead of the Arabic one; and
- lastly, the abolition of the Muslim Lunar calendar and adoption of the western Gregorian one.

This is the list of the reforms that started in the 1920s. According to the Turkish Constitution, it is a criminal offence to use religion for political propaganda. Many political parties were closed down for this reason and there is a specific Article right at the beginning of the Turkish Constitution that says Turkey is a secular republic and this Article cannot be changed. This clause is the Constitutional protection of secularism.

In Turkey, the state controls the organizations of Islam through the Institution of Religious Affairs. It has a budget of 2.5 billion dollars and has more than 150,000 employees. In 1950, Turkey had its first free elections and started the course of multi-party politics, while at that same time, some people started criticizing secularism in Turkey for the first time. We are talking about the 1950s and the Cold War started in 1945-46.

Since the 1920s, Turkish Islamists have been under pressure because of the radical secularism. For the first time, in 1950 they came to the surface and said that secularism of the republic brought about undesirable results, such as the rise of left wing movements in Turkey, and at that time these movements were immediately labelled as communists. As you know, Pakistan has a similar track record. We are experiencing a similar legacy in Turkey as well. Islamists say that these left-wing

groups are the enemies of Islam and they facilitated the rise of Communism with their secular reforms. Therefore, in order to defeat these Communist threats, the “fortress of Islam” should be reconstructed.

In the 1950s, the US and Islamic countries such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Turkey became the main American alliance against the Communist threat. Education became more and more religious in Turkey by opening up schools called Imaamats. There were only 26 imaamat schools in 1965 but the number increased to 72 by 1971, in just six years. By 1997, there were more than 600 religious schools. In the 1950s we saw the emergence of Naksh Bandi and other spiritual Tareeqats (schools) and their increasing religious activities.

We see in the 1970s, the formation of the first Islamist political party. At that time, while the left emphasized the class struggle, Erbakan thought in terms of religious association and his party attacked class consciousness, by arguing that it is the instrument of godless Communism to divide the Muslim community.

The Islamist political parties played an important role, not only as an antidote to the left, but they also discouraged political activism. I should underline that rather than being isolated by a secular Turkish state elite, Erbakan and his party were part of all government coalitions since the 1970s and they established themselves in an important manner.

Erbakan, similar to Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, emphasized the significance of model regeneration and restoration of old religious values. He promised to create an industrial and prosperous Turkey, no longer enslaved by the West. And again when the military regime came to power in September 1980, it did not hesitate to use Islam to legitimize its rule. Moreover, the military used religion in politics and education, especially to counter the rise of the left among young people.

From 1983 to 1993, he opened the door to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to finance Turkey. This stimulated the Islamist business class in the country and it became the foundation of the Islamist political movement in the 1990s. Thousands of Islamists entered the state bureaucracy and created new Islamist elites, not only in the State, but also in the private sector.

Since then we see the emergence of Islamist banks, Islamist trade centres and Islamist industry. These elites have established Islamist social networks to Islamize the society from below and also supported Erdogan to become an attraction in politics. Erdogan became the first Islamist Prime Minister of Turkey in 1996, which was a very significant success for political Islam, but in February 1997, the legal banning of Erdogan's party, envisaged a rise of political Islam in Turkey for another five years. In 2002, the Justice and Development party under the leadership of Erdogan came into power and formed a majority presence in the Parliament. It has been ruling Turkey for the last twelve years.

Apart from its religious aspect, Islam in the last four years in Turkey, represents an ideology which was used in political movements. Ali Shariati, a well-known Islamic political thinker in Iran described Islam as a political ideology, similar to other ideologies like Marxism. It embraces every dimension of human life and thought. Similarly in the past twelve years, Erdogan used Islam as a package for the implementation of capitalism and liberalism in Turkey.

We see an oxymoronic relationship here, as on the one hand, Islam is used as an ideology to legitimize political rule in Turkey, but on the other hand, Erdogan was keen on using Islam to implement capitalistic and new liberal reforms in Turkey to disguise the negative effects on the society. Indeed public enterprises were closed down as a result of large-scale privatization and subsidies for agriculture were lifted, while Erdogan supported the de-unionization of labour in order to decrease wages. Moreover, green spaces and historical sites in the cities were pounded by construction companies while mining and energy companies were free to prune Turkey's natural resources.

In May 2014, we saw the outcome of this wide liberal capitalism; when 301 people died in one of the worst mining incidents in Turkey's history, but we saw how Islam was used as a political tool and ideology rather than as a religion. The government, and the companies which owned these mines, were responsible for this incident, but rather than fining and punishing them, Erdogan announced that the workers who died in the mining incident were martyrs and the incident was destiny. Therefore we see that the ruling party doesn't hesitate to use religion in order to protect political and economic interests over the past five years.

If I move to foreign policy, I see very striking similarities between Pakistan in the 1970s and 1980s and Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East, especially after the Arab Spring. Gen. Zia-ul Haq realized he should raise the status of Pakistan as an Islamic country and become the leader of Islamic countries in the Middle East by using the war against Afghanistan, so that he may be able to establish an interest zone in this region.

With the rise of the Arab Spring, the Turkish government realized that Islamist parties can become the ruling parties in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Syria. It was the dream of Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, to form a network starting from Tunisia to Syria and making Turkey the leader of this network. However the problem of this dream is that it doesn't reflect the Middle Eastern realities.

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, all the communities and societies in the Middle East expected Turkey to become the leader of the region. The problem is that since 1918, they experienced Arab nationalism and social movements in the Middle East along with secularism, and therefore Turkey's objectives did not meet the ground realities. The ISIS kept 49 Turkish diplomats hostage for three months. Therefore, Turkish foreign policy, which was aimed to establish an Islamic network in the Middle East, became the hostage of a dream and the radical groups became a threat to the Turkish nation and security. According to a latest media report, there are more than 1000 ISIS fighters in Turkey who might attack Turkish cities and tourist centres.”

Mian Sanaullah, former Ambassador of Pakistan to Indonesia



“Indonesia cannot be a perfect model for Pakistan or any other country because it has its own share of contradictions. It is neither a theocratic government or country, nor an Islamic, nor a secular country. When you look at the Constitution of Indonesia, it has got Pancasila; the official philosophical foundation of the Indonesian state, with five principles in its Preamble, which forms the national ideology. There is one Article that believes in the one and only God. The Indonesian founding fathers debated whether they should retain the phrase “Allah” or if they should go for a secular and neutral phraseology.

The founding fathers of Indonesia including Soekarno, and others conferred in detail on the question regarding what to do with national ideology and on what they were going to form the basic principle for statehood in independent Indonesia.

They decided it could not be Islamic as there was a difference in whether they should use the word "Allah", meaning Islamic symbolism or whether they should go for a neutral deity. So they picked up the supreme concept of one God, which existed in early Hinduism in Indonesia, along with Christianity and Buddhism and Islam. It was very common and they avoided using only Islamic symbols as part of the first Article. At that time, the leaders of the Muslim province Aceh objected to it, and even threatened to have a separate country. But the general consensus was that we cannot impose Islam as the state religion, as the majority of the country preferred an ideological base. Bali, and Nusa Tangran in the east, could have gone the same route, asking for independence because they are Hindu-dominated and could not have seen Indonesia as it exists today.

There is no state religion in Indonesia, but I still say that it is not completely secular because there are recognized states with reference to Islam, Hinduism, Catholicism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Now there are contradictions; naturally if it is not a religious state, all the state-recognized religions should be treated at par, but when we look at the state schools, there are classes twice a week, with two hours for Islam and one hour for Christian (Catholicism and Protestant) religious teachings and there is no coaching for other religions.

Indonesia has 88.2 percent Muslims, but people believe there should be equality of time, especially when state expenditures and public funds are being spent. Now when you look at the state structure, unlike Pakistan, there is no condition that the President has to be a Muslim. Anybody can contest elections, and there are no restrictions that you must have religious-based political parties.

In fact, there are two major organizations; one is called 'Nahdlatul Ulama' (NU), which claims about 35 to 45 million registered members. This organization is rural based, and has its own schools and universities. But they used to propagate a concept of Islam which is based on Shariah, Sunnah and Quran, all mixed up with local spirits and thoughts, which they called 'Aqama Javanese', that are a cluster of

Hindu mysticism, mystic faith and the four guardians of the earth.

It is very colourful and liberal, but for certain people it is not pure Islam. In fact, the other Muslim organization, 'Muhammadiyah', which came into existence in 1912, was a reaction to this concept of NU to purify Islam. It is influenced by Rumi, Iqbal, Maudoodi and some Egyptian Muslim scholars. But both the organizations believe that the concept of faith in the one and only God makes Indonesia Muslim enough. They believe that there is no need to introduce Shariah into the main body of Indonesian statehood. But Indonesia is one country with two systems and we know China as the only other country with two systems.

The soul of Indonesia is not a conflict between religions, but between the Islamists (conservatives) against progressive, liberal people. There is a reflection of religion as a protest against western concepts like the Miss Universe beauty competition, which was to be held in Bandung, but they rejected it and then it was held in Bali, but with dress restrictions. There was a musical concert to be held in Jakarta, but people were against it and ultimately it was cancelled, because Shakira did not agree to dress "modestly".

However, Indonesia emerges as a liberal society, where people are not quarrelling and fighting with each other and religion is not a major issue for voters. It was reflected for the first time at a political level in 2012 when Jokowi, who is now being elected as President, fought for the governorship of Jakarta. For the first time, he brought in a Chinese-origin Christian Indonesian as his Deputy and he faced a lot of problems. People thought he would not succeed, but he was elected, based on his merit and performance.

So it was a change that we saw during Soekarno's 21 years in power. It is a new Indonesia, which is a functional democracy. However, even during the recent presidential elections, Jokowi was considered to have lost around 3 percent support because some people raised the question as to whether he was a good Muslim or not."

Q&A Session and Comments

Ms. Tahira Abdullah



I thank both the speakers for their fascinating insights. It is interesting to hear that there is a perception that Indonesia is not “Islamic enough”. I wonder at what point the over 1.2 billion Muslims around the world would agree on how much is “Islamic enough” and what “Islamic enough” actually means.

We know about Al-Qaeda and Taliban, but now the Taliban look like a Sunday school picnic in front of Daaish (or ISIS or IS). Are these movements emerging to give Islam a bad name? Or, in the eyes of the world, is religion going to be held responsible for the barbaric atrocities being committed in its name?

Ambassador Sanaullah, a question for you: could you please tell us about the Anti-Pornography law? It was supposedly against pornography, but was it actually an attempt to “Talibanize” Indonesia? When you talked about liberalism, you confined Indonesia’s perceptions of liberalism to “beauty pageants, bikinis and musical concerts”. Instead, we would like to hear about the national education curriculum: is it progressive, conservative or theocratic? Is it moving towards the Turkish model or the Pakistani or Saudi model of education? I would also like to know why a majority of Indonesian Muslim women are wearing the Hijab now.

Mr. Sultan Hali



For Prof. Ozkan: You talked about governance, community and religion and gave details of Turkey’s experience. How does your community actually react to these changes? What does the average Turkish person today think about the relationship between governance and religion?

Professor Behlul Ozkan

In the last local elections in Turkey; Erdogan's party got 43% of the votes, secular party CHB around 28%, while the Turkish nationalist party got around 18%, which means that Erdogan could not get even 50% of the votes. However the problem is the election system and when he came to power in 2002, he got only 24% of the votes, but he controls 66% of the parliament. This creates a huge legitimacy problem in Turkish politics, but he thinks in majoritarian terms, not in pluralistic terms.

Even if the Indonesian Muslims are 88% of the population, you cannot think in terms of a majoritarian perspective. You should also include all the others. Another problem is that because of his economic success in the last ten years, he increased his hegemony not only in politics, but in other institutions, like the media. 80% of the media is controlled by Erdogan's party and there is an emergence of crony capitalism in Turkey.

The business groups close to Erdogan are getting very profitable deals from the government and in return they buy the media outlets, so that they can control the society and manage a monopoly of perception and thought. We have lots of crucial problems in the Turkish society, economy and politics, but a big problem is that the average citizens on the street never noticed these problems because the media is controlled by the government.

Thus, the average person does not know what is happening in Turkish society. For example, the mining incident that killed 300 people, the government announced that it was an accident and the dead are martyrs and somehow tried to silence other voices regarding this case.

Ms. Naheed Aziz

When I visited Turkey, I saw that a lot of women were wearing Hijab, but they were also out on the streets and were working women. What has been the effect of this Islamization policy? Are women treated differently from men, especially younger women?



Mian Sanaullah

The term “Islamic enough” is the contention of the Aceh Muslims, vs. that of mainstream Indonesians. It is a relative term, but the Aceh people's perspective is on the basis of Shariah. It is like Saudi Arabia, where you have to show your relationship to women who are travelling in a car with you. If they are travelling as pillion passengers with men, they cannot be anyone other than a blood relation.

In the evenings you cannot get together in a bar because if you are then you would be held in police custody. It is a horrendous scene but you can still buy your freedom because corruption is endemic. It is a misperception abroad that a majority of Indonesian women wear the Hijab, but even in Java, which is predominantly Muslim, we do not see more than 25%. In Masjid-e-Istiqlal, which is similar to the Faisal Mosque of Islamabad, there are four imams and only one of them has a small beard, while the rest are clean-shaven. Islam is very liberal in Indonesia and there are shades within shades. They have a totally different culture.

As far as the Pornography Bill is concerned, it has now become a law. In Bali and some other provinces, there are resorts and islands similar to western countries; and there prostitution is common. Even in Jakarta, massage centres and beauty parlours are being tolerated. But nobody cares because it is part of their culture.

At the same time there are Islamists influenced by the Salafi movement, because Saudis are now the biggest contributors to Islamic education in Indonesia, even establishing universities and medical schools. They are being criticized even at a ministerial level, but not openly. Islamist elements (rightist extremists), are influenced by what happens in Philippines and Thailand against Muslims.

Earlier there were schools which would expel female students if they got pregnant, as it gave the school a bad name. Similarly, a virginity test was made compulsory at the time of entry into the school, for 13 to 16 year old girls. Some people rejected it while some agreed. There are plenty of single parent mothers. In Pakistan we do not accept unmarried women bringing up their son or daughter. In Indonesia I have seen many girls living as single parents and nobody objects to it.

Professor Behlul Ozkan

I talked about how political Islam was used, especially by the military and civilian governments until the 1990s. When the Turkish military realized that Islamists were coming into power in 1990, it created a backlash and then they suddenly banned women with headscarves to enter universities and public service. That is against secularism because the state cannot intervene in how women and men should dress. It creates a backlash in the society and Islamist parties use this as a tool to portray themselves as defining women's rights.

Since Erdogan came into power in 2002, and up to last year, he never allowed women with headscarves in the public service. Because of prominence, last year he passed a law, not because he wanted to bring women into the public service, but because he wanted to use this issue against the secularists, to create another political conflict. But fortunately the secular party and other parties did not play this game and they did not oppose it. But the problem is that Islamist parties in Turkey see women's role in the society as not participating in the economy and other sectors, but as caring for children at home. Even Erdogan said in his public speeches that we need three children in each family and therefore, women should stay at home and care for their children.

The Turkish education curriculum is becoming more and more conservative but he is playing games with the rules. From now on, there are not only going to be elective courses for studying the Holy Quran and the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), but also for studying English, or German or painting. Students can choose either religious courses or foreign languages. But later the students only have two options, either they choose the Quran or the Prophet's (PBUH) life because the other courses are either never available, or we do not have enough teachers.

We see other manipulations as well, for example, he increases the number of religious schools in Turkey and says that from now on they are going to have religious schools and secular schools, but then we realize that there are ten new religious schools and no new secular schools. Most Turk families don't have the financial ability to send their children on a minibus to a faraway school, therefore there is only one option, to send their children to religious institutions. Erdogan is very cleverly playing with the rules.

Ms. Heba Al-Adawy



My question is to Prof. Ozkan: regarding your mentioning the Fethullah Gülen movement in your presentation, and recently with Erdogan becoming more autocratic, we have seen the Gülen movement pitted against Erdogan's version of Islamism. So could you elaborate the nature of that movement and also whether there is something positive that can possibly come out of the counter-action between the two?

Professor Behlul Ozkan

Since the 1950s, we had two main branches in political Islam: one of them is Nur movement and Fethullah Gülen belongs to that movement. The founder of that movement is Said-e-Nursi and that movement is much more rational; kind of a protestant version of political Islam in Turkey. For example, they read religious texts in Turkish, not Arabic, and they run schools, and their schools are very successful not only in raising children under religious education, but also in engineering, literature, and other subjects.

The second Turkish branch in political Islam is Nakshi Bandeh and this branch was influenced by the translated works of Maulana Maudoodi, Syed Qutub and Hassan Al-Banna and they are very close to Muslim Brotherhood and your Jamaat-e-Islami. They read religious texts in Arabic and they just memorize it without understanding, therefore, they don't see a rational approach towards Islam.

Erbakan, Erdogan and most of the religious political parties belong to the Nakshi Bandeh. Noor Mohammad is much more rational and they are openly against Shariah-based Constitution. They think Turkish Islam is more civilized than the tribal Islam, or Wahabism, or current Middle Eastern Islam. The recent conflict between the Gulen movement and Erdogan is not coming from these essential differences, but there are much more pragmatic problems.

These two groups united with each other since 2002, and they were in power till last

year. They basically destroyed all their opponents by using the state institutions, especially judiciary and security services. The Gulen movement is very well organized in the judiciary and security services, because they had very good educational background. As has happened in any other political movements in the past, when you get more and more power and get free of your opponents, the next question emerges - which party is going to lead: Gulen or Erdogan? They started fighting against each other and I cannot predict the outcome of this conflict. But the corruption allegations from the Gulen movement against Erdogan are very powerful. It gave a very bad image of Erdogan in the eyes of the citizens and most of the conservative people, although they have continued to vote for him, know that he is not a clean leader.

Mr. Yasir

My question is regarding the current scenario in Pakistan and I want to know the perspective of Turkey on this. We saw that there was a military intervention in Turkey to cope with the political instability. In Pakistan, we cannot say a single word against the military, but we saw that although there is a very strong role of the military in Turkey, but still the democratic institutions are stronger than the military in Turkey. We saw that four military generals of Turkey were accused of using extremism against the government. The other question is that most of the time the younger generation is being ignored in policymaking, so we have social media as the only tool where we ensure freedom of expression. In Turkey, before elections, some social media tools were banned, which were known to be anti-government. What was the reason for banning social media tools? Similarly my other question to Mr. Sanaullah: is there some influence of Islamic religious extremism in irrational policies of Indonesia?

Professor Behlul Ozkan

One of the main reasons that Erdogan defends Palestinian rights is not to help the Palestinians but using their cause in the Turkish society to obtain support of the people. We all know that almost all authoritarian leaders in the Middle East use the Palestinian cause to legitimize their rule in the eyes of the society. That happened with Saddam in Iraq, Nasir in Egypt, Qaddafi in Libya and Assad in Syria. Erdogan is very successful in using this.

As for a comparison between Turkish military and civilian governments, the main difference between the Pakistani and Turkish military is that Pakistani military ruled over Pakistan for 34 years, but this never happened in Turkey. In Turkey, we had military rule only for five years and it wanted to rule the country behind the scenes rather than directly. However, the Turkish government for the last three or four years is becoming more and more authoritarian, most of the critical journalists have lost their jobs and Turkey's record in terms of press freedom is behind most of the European and North American countries. Journalists are jailed; individual rights and individual freedoms have been destroyed crucially in the last few years. As for the press, 80% of the media is controlled by Erdogan and the only outlet is Twitter for citizens to obtain free and fair information.

During the Gezi protest in 2013, but also when corruption cases started in December 2013, none of these newspapers informed the citizens about corruption allegations. Because there was huge pressure and the only outlet was Twitter, it was also banned by the government in order to suppress the information. However, later it was opened for Turkish citizens because there was immense pressure from the European Union and United States.

Ambassador Sanaullah

Regarding the Islamists' enhanced influence in Indonesia, yes the trend is there. Within the academic universities or in schools, the text doesn't make any difference but then the State only recognizes six religions and there is registration of religion in the ID card. There is no concept of atheism or agnosticism – they are considered crimes. Under another rule, an atheist was given seven years imprisonment, though the punishment for blasphemy is five years.

But there are contradictions, Aceh fought for forty-seven years for a Shariah-based government. In certain areas there are a lot of demands that Ahmadis should be declared officially as a separate faith. And they should be asked to convert back to Islam if they want to use Islamic symbols like it is obligatory here in Pakistan. But at government level there is no support for it, and there was a ministerial decree in 1987 where all such religious parties, along with the Ahmadis, agreed that they would convert themselves to mainstream Islam. But there has been no implementation.

As far as equal treatment of the Sikh religion is concerned, it is for everyone. There is no discrimination, as no mosque, no church, no gurdwara, no Hindu temple can be built without government permission and even Muslim mosques cannot be allowed to have the azaan recited on the loudspeakers unless clearly given permission for it. Unlike Turkey, there is no uniform 'Khutba,' they are free, but they are usually not allowed to talk about politics in Khutbas. There are many Hindu rituals which have become Islamized and they are being practised by both communities. Indonesian Islam is colourful; it is not wooden like Pakistani Islam.

Question

After getting a clear image on Turkish and Indonesian policies, I would like to ask, as we see there is a state of confusion in Pakistan, whether we are going towards the Indonesian or Turkish model? Why are we suffering from bad circumstances in terms of foreign policy?

Ambassador Sanaullah

As I mentioned, Indonesian Islam is totally different, but is not a bad form. It has mixed up local traditions, Islamic injunctions, Quran-based Shariah laws and traditions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). There is some confusion too because they are not living in isolation and external influence is also focused on them. It is affecting their way of life. Could that be a model for us here? Perhaps not. We can follow certain paths; we have seen the same trends during Suharto's 32-year rule. Salafi-based Islam vs. a balanced Indonesian Islam are two currents which have been going on and off, but where Pakistan goes is for Pakistanis to decide, not for others to direct us.

Question

My question is that violation of the Blasphemy law carries a sentence of five years jail in Indonesia. Is it only with regard to Islam or the other five official religions as well?

Ambassador Sanaullah

It is valid for all six recognized religions in Indonesia.

Mr. Malik Mustafa, Manager Programs, CRSS



Referring to the question that we are in a state of confusion and which way should Pakistan go, either the Indonesian way or the Turkish way, I would just like to clarify that the purpose of this seminar is not to advocate either the Turkish way or the Indonesian way but it is just to prompt us to think what Pakistan could learn from their experiences, not to replicate them.

Quaid-e-Azam University (QAU), Islamabad

Q&A Session and Comments



Question

It was said that the Indonesian Constitution is not religious, but in Pakistan the Constitution states that all sovereignty belongs to Allah and we are Muslims. But do you mean to say that there is no need of Articles 62 and 63 and no need of being good Muslims?

Ambassador Sanaullah



When I said that the Indonesian Constitution is non-religious, I was describing an official position, not stating my opinion that it should be like this or that. Basically when I was comparing, I said that in 1945, when Indonesia was waging its war of independence, six hundred Pakistani soldiers lost their lives in defending the Lashkar of

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Indonesia. In fact at one time, in Jakarta, the life of Soekarno was saved by Muslim soldiers, who were sent by the British from Singapore to fight against Indonesians, but when they heard the Indonesians saying “Allah-o-Akbar”, they got confused.

Quaid-e-Azam had exchanged letters with Soekarno, which are available in the Jinnah Papers. Those six hundred people who lost their lives were acknowledged and given medals. Quaid-e-Azam received the highest civilian medal from Soekarno.

They chose Pancasila because it provided a base to keep Indonesia intact. They didn't want the country to drift into three or four separate nation, while in the S. Asian sub-continent, religion provided the reason to seek statehood, so the conditions were totally different.

In Pakistan's Constitution, there are about 15 Articles related to Islam. The Prime Minister and President have to be Muslims and then there is the declaration of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the last prophet.

These things are not part of Indonesian politics, Constitution or law, but it is neither a theocratic state nor a secular state, because of the recognition of six religions.

There is a Blasphemy law as well, but it is soft and the punishment is five years, and one can get remission for good conduct in prison. There were people who falsely pretended to be prophets, but even they served only five years. When they came out, they were accepted as normal citizens. Perhaps 10 or 15 percent Indonesian Muslims observe Hijab, but there is no research data available on this.

But in Indonesia there is a clash between radical Islamists and others. The Islamists want Khilafat, and they call Pakistan a “stooge” of America.

Question

My first question is re. Indonesia: their Constitution is not totally secular; there are some laws which show the resilience of their Constitution. Do you think it would be appropriate to say Indonesia is in an evolutionary stage and eventually it is going to be a secular Constitution?

My second query is to Professor Ozkan: if Pakistan could ever follow the path towards secularism, what do you recommend? First, should the laws be amended to show the secular nature of the Constitution, or should the society and education system be changed from the grassroots level to inculcate secular values in the community at large?

Professor Behlul Ozkan



I am not in a position to recommend anything for Pakistan, because I don't know the details about your country. I can only talk about the Turkish experiment. I don't think any country can be a model for another. Each country has its own characteristics, cultural values and legacy. There are real problems in both Turkey and Pakistan, such as economic and social problems, and it has nothing to do with religion. The first mission of any government should be to solve these problems.

In Turkey, Erdogan publicly said he believes in secularism, and the party is not going to challenge it because it is unconstitutional to change that clause. But religion is being used to cover the government's problems and responsibilities. For example, in the mining disaster, over 300 people died. The government has to find those responsible and punish them. Instead, the government announced that those who were killed were martyrs and thus used religion to cover their own fault.

Ambassador Sanaullah

The Indonesian Constitution contains only one clause, the first Article of the Pancasila: the State system will be based on faith in the one and only God, second civil society, third the unity of Indonesia, fourth parliament, and fifth, social justice for all.

There are only two Muslim organizations, the Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. The second one is almost 150 years old and it has about 35 to 40 million registered members. They tried to contest elections at one time and form a political

party, like the JI (Jamaat-e-Islami). The JI used to be a religious party, preaching Islam and was not in politics, but then Maudoodi changed it. The same experiments were done in Indonesia, but then were discontinued. Now they allow their members to contest elections on the tickets or slots of any other political party. The sitting chairman cannot contest elections to the Parliament, Presidency or Vice-Presidency. This party, which is rural-based, believes that the concept of one God is Islamic enough and there is no need to change it or inject any further Islamic dose into it.

The Muhammadiyah organization was established in 1912 in order to purify Islam. The forefathers of these two organizations have worked for independence along with Soekarno. The organizations are entrenched in Indonesian society and they are a living monument of national contribution towards statehood. Nahdlatul Ulama was considered to be more conservative, its leaders don't speak English, and they speak with diplomats and others in Arabic and have beards.

The other group members are clean shaven urbanized people who want a more purified version of Islam. As far as Pancasila is concerned, for them, it is Islamic enough but let me remind you Indonesia has two systems. There was a lurking fear that provinces like Papua, Sulawesi and Bali would have been a different countries and split immediately if there was a change in the Constitution and Islam was accepted as a national ideology. Aceh was a Shariah-based province when it got independence, but the leaders of the province did not agree with Soekarno, so they fought from 1947 till 2005 and the lives of thousands of people were lost on both sides. Soekarno tried to negotiate.

That gained more Islamism than in Saudi Arabia; e.g. if people did not pray, the police would take them to mosques in Aceh and girls could not go out without Hijab. Young boys and girls may be karaoke and music lovers, they may be doing all kinds of things, unthinkable in Pakistan, but it doesn't mean that they are not good Muslims. We see few foreigners in Pakistan while over there people are coming in and going out. People talked about the Pornography Bill, but they don't realize that like in Pakistan, in Indonesia there are about forty TV channels and print media and they are as vocal if not more than in Pakistan.

Freedom of expression is there, but they want to protect the harmony of their

culture. Every society is evolving because the world is shrinking and coming together as a global village. But I do not see the deletion of this article. It is going to stay as it is because for the majority of Indonesians, it is the plank on which the ship of statehood is anchored. This is the fault-line; if you disturb the fault-line, then the structure can crash, and no one wants this.

Question

Turkey is said to be a secular country and secularism flourishes there, but would you agree that Indonesia is a secular country? In the case of Pakistan, religion is deep-rooted in our society; religion was even used for the freedom of our country. In 1970, there were 300 Madrassas, which rose to 12,000 by the 1980s. The state is sponsoring extremism and the military is sponsoring militarism, but is the state in Turkey sponsoring terrorism or extremism? Do you think that it would be a secular country, and how can we apply the models of Turkey and Indonesia to Pakistan?

Question

The majority of Pakistani people are Muslims, who accept that Islam is a complete code of life. So then why do we say that we should not put Islamic Articles in our Constitution and should not regulate the administrative system of the State through religion? Does the problem lie in the fact that we all interpret Islam differently? Should there be a platform where all sects can get consensus on fundamental points of Islam through which we can regulate the State system?

Question

During his era, Mr. Kemal Ataturk brought language reforms by changing the Turkish script from Arabic to Latin. Was it a move to make Turkey a modern secular state?

Question

Turkey and Indonesia are a fantasy for Pakistan, in terms of their secular and special Constitutions and values. What role does the youth play in solving Islamic disputes?

Question

In Indonesia, does a Constitutional court decide whether the elections were rigged or not or whether to hold new elections? Are there similarities between Pakistan and Indonesia in that context? What would happen if the election court says that elections were rigged in Indonesia?

Professor Behlul Ozkan

1. Turkish is a language completely different from Arabic and Persian, and it is very difficult to write and read Turkish in the Arabic alphabet. Changing from Arabic to Latin script was not Ataturk's own idea, as the discussion started in the Abdul Hameed period in the previous century, and then Ataturk decided to change it. The first objective was that it would be much easier for ordinary people to learn to read and write, and it was in fact very successful because the literacy rate increased dramatically in two to three decades. Secondly, he tried to distance Turkey from the Middle East by changing the alphabet. It was one of the most radical reforms that shaped our society deeply.

2. I have not seen any successful model using religion as an ideology of the state. There is no country successfully using religion as a political ideology, or like Pakistan using religion in the Constitution. There is the Iranian experience, Saudi Arabia, etc. and all of these countries are experiencing serious problems. Religion may be very important in our daily life, it can be very important for individual people, but if we have an electricity problem, we cannot solve it by going to the Holy Books. In all these countries, starting from Morocco going all the way to Indonesia, we are living in a global village, but unfortunately the Islamic world is falling behind. We have some serious problems and in order to solve these problems we should separate religion from politics.

Ambassador Sanaullah

1. We are not here to discuss religion as a faith and we are not here to find fault with Islam or any other religion. We are here to discuss the political systems and the parties forming governments, and whether they delivered the agenda that they promised to the voters. Do they ensure that all individuals, irrespective of their

status in the society or their success or failure, get access to justice and a source of income on merit, performance and commitment?

2. Indonesia is not all liberal, or all modern. Modernity coexists with the classic definition of Islam in each of the 27 provinces and the federally administered areas. There are people who claim Shariah-based rule, e.g. there is an elected Mayor of Bandung, which is the most liberal area, but he does not allow the church to be used as a preaching place by Christians, because they forgot to take permission. He is using the law to blockade it and says that it was built wrongly without permission and the permit was obtained through corruption, so it must be abolished. Even the President couldn't intervene.

3. In Indonesia, religion has a very neutral concept, i.e. faith in one and only God. The Ministry of Religious Affairs ensures the correct printing of the Quranic script. There are contradictions, but Constitution-wise they have managed to retain the collective decision of the founding fathers.

4. Placing the entire blame on Gen. Zia-ul Haq is unwarranted. In Pakistan the weakening started during the most modern, most liberal leader, PM Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. At that time, I was working as a journalist for Pakistan Times and I attended his last rallies where he said certain things that I cannot repeat here. He declared Ahmadis as non-Muslims without any commitment, only to appease the religious lobby, and then he introduced prohibition, but people started sending solid gold to India to get liquor from there. We have suffered over the years. Our politicians and governments should stand for their commitment and the rule of law. Being tolerant is the only solution that will keep those together who are differing in ideology. Islam is not a debate, it is an ideology, which brought us a new state, and we should be proud to be born as Muslims.

Professor Behlul Ozkan

There was a construction accident last week in Turkey and ten workers died. The construction company is close to the government. The elevator basically crushed the workers to death. There was a huge scandal and all the print and electronic media were asking questions about why the government did not handle it well. Suddenly the Prime Minister said that we have to offer prayers for them. It is not the

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job of the PM to tell us that we have to pray. His job is to find out who is responsible for this accident and punish them. This is how religion is used for political and economic interests in Turkey and I am against it.

Fatima Jinnah Women's University (FJWU), Rawalpindi

Q&A Session and Comments



Question

What curriculum is being taught in religious schools of Turkey and what are the criteria for selection of teachers? This is a much debated issue in our society and I want to know how this issue is being dealt with in Turkey. Secondly what about the condition of radicalism in Turkey, and the role of the military in curbing this issue? To what extent has the military been successful?

Professor Behlul Ozkan



Religious schools were opened in the 1960s, 70s and 80s to counter the rising leftist movements. All the public schools were funded by the State. During this period, the number of religious schools increased once again due to Erdogan's political party. We have state schools, some of them religious and some of them secular. If you want to choose

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one of the secular schools, you have to send your child twenty kilometres away and it is more expensive. It is better to choose a religious school if it is nearby. Therefore we see the Islamization of education in Turkey step by step.

About the role of the military, from the 1960s to 1980s, the military supported Islamic groups and their allies in the fight against the left wing movements. However in the 1990s, the military realized that religious groups are so powerful that they can be a threat to secularization. So they tried to ban their parties, which didn't work. They also tried to ban the headscarf in university education, which was a big mistake because the State should not interfere in how people dress. It caused a big clash but the ruling party has been using this issue very well in order to legitimize their rule.

On the question about radicalism, we have experienced this in Turkey, in terms of using religion for radical purposes. But unfortunately, ISIS and radical groups in Syria and Iraq started to convert people in rural areas of Turkey and send them to fight in Syria and Iraq. I think it is going to be a threat in the coming years for the Turkish nation.

A non-Muslim can be the Head of the State, there is no such religious clause in the Turkish Constitution and there are six or seven introductory clauses in it, which cannot be changed, and one of them is about protecting secularism.

Question

Can the Head of the State be a non-Muslim in Indonesia? What does the Constitution say about the rights of minorities? Can you shed some light on Article 2 that describes a just civilization and social justice; and Article 5 of the Indonesian Constitution?

Ambassador Sanaullah

Anyone can become the Head of the State in Indonesia. For your information, the newly elected President, Joko Widodo, is a Muslim from Java and earlier he was



governor of Jakarta for a few months. Before that he was Mayor of a small town. His integrity was acknowledged and he was given an award by a leading newspaper. His religiosity or Islamic association was very much under question, some people thought that he was a Chinese Christian, so they thought he is not Muslim enough. Though he was elected and his popularity went down by 2%, but still he got maximum votes in the second round and has been elected as President of Indonesia.

The Indonesian Constitution does not subscribe like the Pakistani Constitution that the higher posts must go only to Muslims. There is no concept of a minority in the Constitution because everybody has to be treated fairly. You talked about a just civilization, civil society and social justice. At maximum, they had provided social justice through the judiciary fairly and independently, but to be independent and corruption free, these are two different things. Judges are corrupt, especially at lower levels, but at a senior level there is no discrimination and the overseeing authority is the Constitutional Court. If there are doubts about fair elections, candidates can go to this court. The President and Vice-President can be impeached for corruption, bribery, immoral attitude or any other serious crimes. Even the incumbent President, who was elected the second time with 62% votes, was threatened with an impeachment for inefficiency.

University of Peshawar (UoP), Peshawar

Q&A Session and Comments



Question

This question is to Mian Sanaullah. Indonesia is a liberal and secular state with freedom and liberty but I don't think we can put aside or keep away religion from politics in Pakistan because religion has a much greater influence on our politics. Do you think such change is possible in our Constitution the way it is in the Indonesian system?

Ambassador Sanaullah



Exchanging information and enlightening each other about different practices is one thing, replicating them is a totally different dimension. Whatever national identity or ideology comes into being that is a sum total of our values and faith as well as our culture. But the reality is still that it is the sum total of values, principles and details which have to be worked out by Muslims. Islam does allow some grey areas for local values to prosper and we have seen it in the state of Madina, which Prophet

Muhammad (PBUH) established. No doubt we cannot replicate any of that here because the core need for one united country in Indonesia was different from the core need for a new country (Pakistan) in the subcontinent.

In Indonesia, the core need was unity of different faiths, disciplines and social values, stitching a crowd and uniting different ethnic groups into one nation. Here in the 1940s, we picked up one national Muslim Ummah and we just wanted to have one land where they could practice. We are very emotional and passionate about our religion.

Question

This question is to Prof. Ozkan. What is the secret behind declaring Turkey a secular state and providing Constitutional protection for its secular republicanism, while the Turkish people are more willing to be influenced by religious decrees for the sake of developing Turkey socially, politically and economically?

Professor Behlul Ozkan



According to recent polls, the majority of Turkish population supports secularism and even when Mr. Erdogan went to Egypt, he specifically said that Egypt should follow a secular path. In the Muslim world, secularism is generally understood as atheism, but it is not true, and there are positive sides of secularism. We see, in fact, the negative sides of using religion for political interests.

For example, in Turkey there is a conservative religious party, but there is also large scale corruption in that party and religion is used to cover it. There are allegations of large scale corruption against Erdogan, even videos of his taped conversations were on YouTube. But Erdogan used the Turkish religious authority and got a fatwa issued about it. The message was that a certain level of corruption is okay in Islam.

I cannot accept this because he is corrupting religion for his political interest! There

is a Turkish movie 'Taqwa' and it is about religious Tareeqats or brotherhoods, showing most of these brotherhoods investing in economy, finance and the industrial sector. They are not only interested in religion, but also in economic activities. This movie is about very religious devoted conservative men, who are doing regular business as well. I think we have to protect Islam and religion from the corruption of politics and daily life.

Question

Professor Behlul said that during the 1960s, 70s and 80s, the military and Islamist groups were in alliance. Mr. Erdogan's Justice and Development Party is also an Islamist party, so how come he was able to initiate so many judicial proceedings against the military and he pushed the military “back to the barracks” away from Turkish politics?

Secondly, despite all the corruption allegations, Mr. Erdogan has achieved some economic success for Turkey and he has won the elections for the third term. Does it mean that Turkish society is respecting his reforms? What are the major impediments for Turkish inclusion into the European Union? The popular perception is that if Turkey becomes an EU member, it would eventually overtake Germany. The second theory is that human rights violations in Turkey are preventing its membership in the EU because the EU has serious reservations about human rights in Turkey. Which is true?

Professor Behlul Ozkan

Erdogan has been in power for the last 12 years and his is a very powerful government. There was an initiative from the military during 2004-2006, and because of the economic success, Erdogan has the support of the population and put the military back into barracks. There were court cases against top generals, and it was a very good development for Turkey because as a democratic person I am against the intervention of military into politics.

Home and car ownership increased drastically in the last decade. This means that the basic dream of any family in the world is to own its home, car and other facilities and this is the reason for the success of America. Erdogan delivered this to the

Turkish society, but there are costs to success. The first is that he established a crony capitalism. Companies he is close to, own a huge portion of state enterprises, especially in health, education and energy sectors.

But there is a problem that people associated with mining, particularly labourers are in terrible condition. They work in mines in 45 degree temperatures, there is no check and no security system and they are working literally in 19th century conditions. I asked these miners why they agreed to work in such harsh conditions, and they said that they have houses and cars through bank loans and they have to work to pay back the loan money.

As far as the EU is concerned, I don't believe that Turkey is going to surpass Germany in the foreseeable future, because Germany has a huge investment in science and technology. Turkey may be a big and advanced country, but the system doesn't base itself on science and technology, it is mainly based on cheap Gulf and western money coming into the country. We are experiencing a construction boom in the Turkish economy, but in the coming years, we are going to experience serious negative effects and crises of this boom. There was a recent poll that showed that sixty percent of Turkish society wanted to become part of the EU, because it would increase the living standards of Turkish people and also the standards of democracy, press freedom and individual liberties.

Question

How is the concept of secularism written up in the Turkish Constitution, based on which you mentioned that certain religious activities cannot be allowed and these provisions cannot be removed from the constitution? For example religion cannot be used for setting up religious political parties. Is a two-thirds majority required to remove certain secular provisions from the Turkish Constitution or can they still not be removed?

Professor Behlul Ozkan

There are about seven introductory clauses in the Turkish Constitution, including one that Turkey is a secular republic, separating religion from the state affairs. The Constitution permits a conservative party, but the party cannot use religion for

political propaganda and interests; voting is not allowed in the name of religion. The Middle East, India, Turkey, Pakistan and other countries are facing some serious social and economic problems. The entire Middle East publishes less academic works per year than just the small country of Portugal. We should really question ourselves and I think we cannot put all the blame on religion, as we are lazy people, and we should work harder in order to advance our nations and solve our problems.

Question

If we look at the traditional followers of any religion, we observe elements of extremism. My question is: where does the problem lie? Is it the fault of the followers or does the problem lie in the religion or in its interpretation?

Ambassador Sanaullah

Basically we are not religious scholars, so do not expect scholarly statements from either of us. I would simply say there is nothing wrong or nothing militant about Islam. It is the interpretation; how you interpret and how you practise it. Pakistanis are very emotional about religion, because we got this land on the basis of Islam. Don't forget the NWFP (now Pakhtunkhwa) was ruled by the Congress. How did Quaid-e-Azam and his party get NWFP to vote for Pakistan in the referendum? It was put as a choice between the Geeta and the Quran. But if religion was the only powerful factor, then East Pakistan would have stayed with Pakistan.

Is religion divine? It has principles and some anecdotes to emphasize those principles. Within those principles we have to evolve the body of law, but without violating the principles of Divinity and Prophethood.

Professor Behlul Ozkan

I will give you an example from Turkey. Before the Erdogan government, there was unity among the conservative people. They supported his party, thinking that both the party and Erdogan were very conservative, very devout and without corruption. Then Erdogan came into power. After twelve years of his party's rule, the Turks realized that there is large scale corruption and people started to question how religion is being used by the party for its own political interests.

One of our conservative intellectuals – an academician – wrote a very striking column. He used to live in a very conservative region of Turkey, but he moved to Ankara and rented an apartment in a secular area. Before moving, he thought that secular people did not care about religion, and they don't pray and don't fast, but then he realized in Ramazan that they did fast, however, they don't want to announce to people that they are fasting or praying because for them the beauty of religion is that one cannot use religion to show off in front of other people. This was a very striking example for me.

Being secular doesn't mean that one is not religious or not obeying the rules of God. The point of fasting is to feel how poor people feel all months of the year, and to realize their problems. But Erdogan's party organizes lavish iftars in five star hotels. This has nothing to do with religion, it is just to show off in front of its supporters and it is very corrupting. To live a secular life doesn't mean that you are not religious; it means you don't let a political party interfere in your personal life.

Question

If secularism means that the state will not side with any ideology, e.g. capitalism, communism or any other, then why is organizing religious political parties banned in Turkey? Is it not contradictory to secularism? Secondly, is it not contrary to Turkey's democratic values to prevent anyone from establishing a party based on religion?

Professor Behlul Ozkan

The major objective of secularism in Turkey is to protect religion from political interference. It is not to protect politics from religion. What kind of outcome do we have when six parties talk in the name of one religion? You are already dividing the religious community into political parties and then they clash with each other. Who is going to say who is right and who is wrong? Secularism was established in Turkey not to talk about religion, but to solve the country's economic and social problems. Religious parties were banned in the past, but now there is no such ban on them. But according to the Constitution, it is still illegal to establish a party in the name of religion.

Question

How would you define political Islam and despite all the ills about Mr. Erdogan, he ruled Turkey twice as a PM and now he has become the President of Turkey, elected by the people?

Professor Behlul Ozkan

Erdogan is elected for the last three elections, not because he is more conservative or religious, but because he made the economy a miracle. This explains his political success, but in the last few years that economic model has been facing serious problems like the mining incident. You may know about protest that started last summer, in a park in the middle of Istanbul, which is the only green area in that part of Istanbul. Erdogan planned to turn that park into a shopping centre so as to create a two-billion dollar revenue, but when people protested against it, they were labelled as a group of religious people called “anti-capitalist Muslims”. They opposed Erdogan's policy, so they started a sit-in in the park and said that another shopping centre was not needed. Suddenly Erdogan started to use the religious discourse to delegitimize the protesters. He said these are the puppets of western governments, though these people had nothing to do with the west. Their aim was only to protect the small Green Park.

Question

In most Islamic countries, there is no political and economic development, the states are weak and depend upon other developed states. There is almost no rule of law. Is it due to interference of religion in politics or due to some other reasons?

Ambassador Sanaullah

Look at Indonesia, Malaysia and Turkey and you see that they are progressing. There are plenty of Christianity-based societies we think are equally bad if not worse than Islamist ones. When religion makes too much intervention in politics then it creates problems. It is happening in Israel too, which gets a lot of funds from USA.

National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad

Q&A Session and Comments



Question

This question is to both the panellists. Do you think the only panacea to the ills like extremism, religious intolerance and economic underdevelopment is democracy, because whenever Indonesia and Turkey experienced democracy, they actually became either religiously liberal or tolerant?

Ambassador Sanaullah

The words 'extremism' and 'radicalism' cannot be linked with economic development. We have to deal with them separately regarding whether democracy can ensure de-radicalization and at the same time economic development. In Indonesia, democracy has definitely led to economic prosperity, but there are a lot of questions pertaining to what kind of democracy is the perfect model.



There could be any form, but as long as the government remains embedded in the

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rule of law and equality of its citizens, in terms of access to distribution of the fruits of development; and as far as there is respect for the opinion of the representatives of the people in the Parliament, then definitely there will be less corruption and more prospects for development.

But I am not sure whether democracy really leads to de-radicalization of the society. At least in the case of Indonesia, it is the reverse. Indonesia is a culturally and socially diverse country, where many religions have coexisted and society used to be more harmonious, liberal and tolerant, e.g. during Gen. Soekarno's and Gen. Suharto's thirty-two years of military rule.

Democracy can ensure economic development, and at the same time it can suppress radicalism as well. The old school of thought was that we should not tamper with the Constitution, while the other wished to insert some Islamic content in it.

In Indonesia, democracy has given rise to freedom of expression, but a limited one. A conservative view is not always healthy for developing countries. In Europe there is personal freedom and a sense of privacy, but in our developing countries people want limitless freedom. In both Pakistan and Indonesia, the media question each and everything, even those issues which are already settled in the Constitution and journalists have a license to suggest anything without reading their Constitution and understanding their culture. We have to go for a Constitution-based government. Whenever religion is brought in, it has not been helpful as far as harmony of the society and economic development of the country is concerned.

Professor Behlul Ozkan

Democracy is not just about voting; it cannot survive without institutions, the rule of law and the separation of religion from politics, i.e. secularism, which is considered similar to atheism, but it is not. The problem is that first of all, if there are sixty-four years of free elections in a multi-party rule in Turkish democracy, but if we compare it with Europe, we are still behind by two hundred years.



Our democracy is not yet mature, our institutions are not very strong, and there are clever politicians who want to use religion to attract uneducated people, in order to maximize their political interests. Unfortunately, the major part of our society is not educated enough to differentiate whether anyone is truly religious or whether they are trying to cheat them. We have huge corruption allegations since 2013. There are videos on YouTube and millions of people watch and listen to them, but again, religion is used for political interests to cover up such corruption allegations. I personally believe that this is very destructive for religion. We should not protect politics from religion, but then again how are we going to protect religion from politics?

Question

Question for Professor Ozkan: Please comment on this. The New York Times claimed that Turkey is one of the biggest sources for ISIS. Secondly, seeing that Turkey has a border with both Syria and Iraq, and we know that Syria was once a secular state before the arrival of ISIS, do you think that after a decade, extremism can re-surface in Turkey?

Professor Behlul Ozkan

Unfortunately I don't think it will be ten or twenty years till we see the influence of extremism in Turkey, as we have already started seeing it. Turkey does not support ISIS, but the issue is more delicate than that. When the Arab Spring started in February 2011, and before that in Indonesia, Turkey had very good relations with all the Middle Eastern dictators and this policy was called: "Zero problems for neighbours". It was aimed to increase Turkey's economic influence in the Middle East.

This is not an ideological foreign policy; it is a foreign policy to support Islamist groups. Turkey should not support Islamist groups to rise to power because the Middle East is ruled by Arab nationalist parties and Turkey doesn't have influence. Turkey can establish hegemony in this region only through Islamist parties. But if we look at the reality of the Middle East, these parties are not very strong. They don't know how to rule countries like Egypt, Syria or Palestine, they don't have any experience and moreover, there are serious economic and social problems.

In the Syrian case, in 2011 it was predicted that the Asad regime is going to fall in a couple of months. Turkey fully supported the opposition in Syria and with the help of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, Turkey's plan was to destroy Asad's regime by using the opposition. But if there is a civil war and Turkey supports armed conflict in its neighbour's land, the perceivable result is that the opposition will become more and more radical.

Thus, we saw that radical groups like Al-Nusra from Ahraar Shaam and Al-Qaeda in Iraq used the opportunity in Syria and got rid of liberal parties and organizations in the opposition and now they are controlling the war against Asad. They are using Turkish territories, they have started recruiting fighters in Turkey and Turkey cannot control its 900-kilometre border. In addition to that, recently the Turkish consulate in Mosul was raided by ISIS and 49 diplomats were kept hostage.

Therefore, the theory about establishing an Islamic regime collapsed and Turkey is now facing serious threats. We don't know if Turkey will participate in the international coalition against ISIS. ISIS can retaliate, exploding bombs in Turkey's cities or Turkish economic centres which earn billions of dollars of revenue. This "fantasy" foreign policy doesn't reflect the realities of the security threat to Turkey.

Lawrence College, Murree

Q&A Session and Comments



Question

Despite the formation of secular Turkey under Kemal Attaturk, it has been observed that for over a decade, the role of Islam has become quite prominent there. Would you agree?

Professor Behlul Ozkan



Turkish Islamists in the last three years have realized the importance of secularism for Turkish democracy. Although the role of Islam has increased in the past decade, I don't think even the Islamist parties question the value of secularism in Turkish democracy and politics, but they do have a different attitude towards it. They say that secularism shouldn't be a regime of politics controlling religion but it should be a political regime that separates religion from

politics. It is a different view, but they also say that secularism has big value for democracy.

Question

It is said that the present government in Turkey is performing to the best of its ability to make the country a better place with regard to religion and the economy. Do you agree?

Professor Behlul Ozkan

Not only in Turkey, but all over the world, there are serious economic and social problems. Therefore, in order to solve our problems, we need better engineers, doctors, teachers, etc. in order to fulfil our objectives. We should consider religion as an important part of our personal life, but we have to concentrate on how to make our society, the nation and the state much more advanced.

Question

How can Turkey assist Pakistan in its development?

Professor Behlul Ozkan

No country can be a model for another because each country has its own qualities. One of the most valuable parts of the Turkish experience which might inspire other countries is that since 1923, we try to protect religion from politics, because there are political parties and leaders who are keen to use religion in order to maximize their political interests and once we let them use religion and corrupt it with their political objectives, then the sky is the limit. There are Islamist parties which use religion for their own interests. Religion plays an important role in our society, but our biggest problem is how to protect religion from politics.

Question

How do the majority of the Turkish people view keeping religion out of the state affairs and politics? In their personal lives, how do they create a balance between Islamic values and secularism?

Professor Behlul Ozkan

According to national surveys, less than 10% of the Turkish population wants to have Shariah law in Turkey, although Turkey is a conservative society, for example, people are religious in their private lives. But interestingly, in terms of the economy, Turkish society poses a big contrast, as our society realizes that religion and politics should be separated from each other so that we have an efficient political system. How to protect religion from corrupt political interests may be a very important issue.

Question

What has been the technological advancement in Turkey in the last two years? Would Turkey have its own nuclear bomb in the future?

Professor Behlul Ozkan

I think this is a very serious question about going nuclear. Though nuclear energy is very efficient in terms of costs, it is not affordable for many countries. Seeing that there have been so many nuclear industrial accidents in the last decade, I have serious doubts about nuclear energy. Being nuclear powers, I don't think Pakistan and India are very different. Turkey and Indonesia also have nuclear power, yet we are more peaceful. In the Middle East, there are different systems in the countries and some of them are really extreme, such as Saudi Arabia. I would prefer to invest in IT software and other advanced technologies rather than nuclear technology.

Question

Is there any religious extremism presently in Turkey?

Professor Behlul Ozkan

We have similar issues as Pakistan and Afghanistan did in the 1980s. There is a civil war in Syria and radical groups are present in Syria, like ISIS. These radical groups are very close to the Turkish border. They try to recruit and train people to fight on their behalf in Syria and Iraq. There are ISIS fighters in Turkey as well and it is

becoming a national security concern for the Turkish society. They are using Turkish territory, and they have started recruiting fighters inside Turkey. Turkey cannot control its nine hundred kilometre border. Recently, the Turkish Consulate in Mosul was raided by ISIS and 49 diplomats were made hostage. It was a big scandal for Turkish foreign policy and it can become a security threat to the Turkish nation.

Question

Is there any religious extremism existing in Indonesia, or is it emerging even in small groups?

Ambassador Sanaullah

The term 'global village' is not a new term. Because of the internet and information explosion, no country can be insulated from the international arena which includes terrorism, and radical Islamization, or Christian fundamentalism, and all these find their supporters in Indonesia, which is still liberal. But certainly there are radical groups, and there have also been acts of terrorism.



For instance, the Bali bombing killed four hundred people in 2004 and then there was a string of suicide bombings in Jakarta. But Indonesia has been successful in curbing these evils. The credit goes to the present regime as well as the security-related structure of General Suharto. The credit also goes to two Muslim organizations: the Nahdlatul-Ulama, a rural-based organization having 35 to 42 million people as registered members who pay a membership fee.

This organization has madrassas, schools, boarding schools, and they have medical and engineering universities, which are not necessarily Islamic. They even run hospitals. Students are brought under exchange programs, and its Head has regular meetings with ambassadors, especially from western countries. They have experimented with politics as well, and created a political wing, which functions as a party.

The second Muslim organization is the Muhammadiyah, which has 30 to 35 million members. It is an urban-based organization having the same operational system as the former. These two organizations have great faith in the one and only God. They are “Islamic enough” for the vast majority, and there is no need to add more Islamic content. It doesn't mean that there are no other religious parties or Muslim groups asking for Shariah-based laws and policies.

Indonesia is already one country with two systems. Aceh is a totally Shariah-based province. No woman can go out without a Hijab. In Aceh, women cannot rent the back seat of a motorbike, if the driver is male, and alcoholic trade is completely forbidden.

However, in mainstream Indonesia, it is part of the official policy to promote foreign investment and tourism. It doesn't mean that Indonesians in their personal lives are less Muslim than Muslims in Pakistan. They have turned their religion into a personal matter. Here in Pakistan there is even “honour” killing, but in Indonesia, women from Muslim families can marry Christians, Sikhs, Hindus or Buddhists; there is social acceptance and no boycott. They have no problem because they all follow their own culture, religion and ideology.

Question

What is the difference between the Pakistani education system and the Indonesian education system?

Ambassador Sanaullah

This is a tough question for me. Like Pakistan, they also have the A-level/O-level system as well as others. English is now being taught in all schools, but the emphasis now is on making Indonesia a hub for foreign universities, thus the new focus on English as a second language.

Indonesia has a much higher literacy rate than Pakistan - about 87 percent. Their examination system is similar to Pakistan. There is also copying and cheating, and there is a gift culture for teachers.

Question

How do the students and community help the Turkish society and what is the vision of educators and academics in your country?

Professor Behlul Ozkan

Unfortunately the level of education is going down in Turkey in terms of quality. There were liberal reforms in the 1960s and 1970s, and the state provided top quality education to the people. But the standard of education is going down because now there are a number of private schools and most of the excellent teachers in state schools transfer to private schools.

Question

Is there any plan for interaction between the Pakistani student community and the Turkish student community in different fields?

Professor Behlul Ozkan

As a professor at a Turkish University, I have established some contacts in Pakistan. Turkey has student exchange programmes with the European countries. The Turkish government has established a foundation providing financial aid to students of non-European countries who can study at Turkish universities and in my university, the language of education is English. For further information, there is a website of Higher Education of Turkey.

Brig. (R.) Mujahid Alam, Principal, Lawrence College, Murree

I am sure you have all benefited from this interesting and interactive discussion with our distinguished guests, Prof. Behlul Ozkan and Ambassador Sanallah. We have added to our knowledge and learned about the Turkish



and Indonesian experiences. The question-answer session was heartening, and I must compliment and appreciate the students for their knowledgeable questions.

In conclusion, it is very important for us to keep an open mind, listen to others, and learn from other experiences, other countries, other nations and other societies. They have had their own experiences and some of them have gone through much more difficult problems than we are going through right now. We must come out of ours too.

GO CORE

Phase Three Discussions

Profiles of the Scholars

Dr. Anne Aly



Dr. Anne Aly is one of Australia's foremost academics dealing with counter-terrorism. She is listed as one of Western Australia's most influential women and is an active supporter of the Bali Peace Park. She is a research fellow in the Department of Social Sciences and International Relations at Curtin University, Western Australia (WA). She was previously a senior policy officer and manager within the WA government and has represented it on committees and working groups on multi-culturalism, migrant and refugee settlement, and ethnic communities.

Dr. Aly is the author of “Terrorism and Global Security: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives” and has also authored over 40 books, book chapters, journal articles and conference proceedings in the areas of terrorism, counter-terrorism, countering violent extremism, Muslim identity and responses to terrorism. Her research focuses on Australian and international responses to terrorism, soft counter-terrorism approaches and countering violent extremism. In 2011, she was inducted into the inaugural WA Women's Hall of Fame in recognition of her work in national and international security.

Prof. Shahab Enam Khan



Prof. Shahab Enam Khan is Research Director at the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute, and Chair of the Department of International Relations, Jahangir Nagar University, Bangladesh. He is an eminent scholar and researcher in the fields of international relations, security studies, media, and public policy. He is a Chevening Fellow and is also a US Department of State scholar at the University of Delaware while being an Alumnus and Fellow of the NESACenter for Strategic Studies, Washington DC, USA. He

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received the Kodikara Award for Strategic Studies for excellence in the areas of security and public policy.

Prof. Khan is a member of the International Research Committee of the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo, Sri Lanka. He has published a number of internationally acclaimed books and academic articles focusing on security, politics and social concerns. Among his various academic writings, he is the author of a book titled "Problems in Understanding Religious Radicalization in South Asia: Perspectives on Islam and Hinduism", published by the RCSS. He drafted the National Broadcast Policy of Bangladesh.

Lectures at Quaid-e-Azam University (QAU), Islamabad

Introduction by Mr. Malik Mustafa, CRSS



The Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) is an Islamabad-based independent think-tank, working on issues such as rule of law, role of religion, peace and security, democracy and governance.

This dialogue today on “Governance, Community and Religion” (GOCORE), is part of our counter-radicalization advocacy campaign to underscore the need to embrace concepts such as secular governance, separation of religion and politics, co-habitation, tolerance for diversity and living in peaceful co-existence. For that, we have so far invited eminent scholars from Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia, UK and USA to make our future leaders like you, students of QAU, aware of the themes we are focusing on.

We have distinguished scholars here today, one each from Australia and Bangladesh. They would be sharing their respective perspectives on dealing with multi-cultural and multi-religious societies, and how states manage to deal with the diversity of citizens, keeping in view the rule of equality.

While advocating for secular governance, we are not advocating atheism, all we are saying is that the state should not assume the role of some religious authority to advocate religion or define what is sin and goodness. It should predominantly base itself on the Constitution and adjudicate the violation of the law of the land.

The first scholar speaking today is Dr. Anne Aly from Australia. The second scholar speaking today is Prof. Shahab Enam Khan from Bangladesh.

Dr. Anne Aly, Research Scholar, Curtin University, Western Australia



I would like to talk about secularism and democracy, by giving an example of what and how I work in Australia, which is a multi-faith population. I was born in Alexandria, Egypt, and my parents migrated to Australia when I was just two years old. When I was 18, I left Australia and went back to Egypt to get my first university degree.

Today my talk is about Islam and Secularism at the cross-roads. I will talk about my personal experiences as a Muslim woman living in a secular, multi-faith and multi-cultural society. When I talk about secularism and democracy what do I mean?

There are a lot of different viewpoints regarding secularism and democracy. A good example is France, which has put a ban on religious symbolism in public, so wearing a hijab by Muslim women, scarves by Christians and others, were banned because France is secular. The kinds of freedom that Muslims think they should have, may be considered social values by others. So they say democracy and secularism are representing a kind of lifestyle that may not be suitable for them. Sometimes it is interpreted as being a system or government of how people are organized and sometimes it is seen as a set of values or a set of beliefs.

Sometimes people think secularism advocates atheism, which is also a set of values and beliefs. First of all, there is a perception that democracy in particular is very individual, and it is the cause of the difference between western and eastern societies. Whereas in western societies, the individual is the centre for decision making, in our societies, we make decisions based on families. We think of democracy as a western way of life, we think it is all about voting and freedom; freedom to listen, to rock and roll, sometimes freedom to do things that we don't agree with, things that are perhaps un-Islamic and so we think of secularism as a lack of Islamic values or a loss of Islam, because we see countries that are secular and we assume that their cultures are also indicative of secularism.

But really secularism and democracy actually represent how we can apply them in ways that suit our societies and our religious values. In fact, secularism is none of these things and is something entirely different. Secularism is about equality, individual responsibility, human rights, including the right to believe and practise your religion the way you want to. It is the freedom of belief; it is about justice and welfare for all, not just for people from a certain religion, or group, or a certain part of society. It is also about individual responsibility to uphold the law, and political and economic participation in the society through voting.

It is about guaranteeing human rights, women's rights and minorities' rights. You cannot have a society like Australia with people from over 200 countries and over 80 different faiths; if that society doesn't have secularism, then Muslims would not be able to build mosques. And Muslim women would not be able to wear the hijab in public. Everybody has equal access to the law and every person is equal before the law regardless of their religion.

In very basic terms, secularism means two things; the first thing that we all know is separation of state from religion. But the second thing is religious equality before the law, which means that somebody from a minority religion should not be treated differently or worse, because of the law. However, just because we have the separation of religion from the state, it does not mean that religion cannot influence the state at all because people in the government will make decisions based on their own values. For example, in Australia there is an issue of abortion, the debate has been influenced by religion; the religious views of politicians and the people. Because politicians are answerable to people, they care about what people think. Even though secularism is an institutional and official separation of religion from state, we see that religion and cultural values can still have an influence on the government.

Often we speak of secularism and democracy together, but they are two different things. Secularism is the separation of religion and state but democracy has different parts. Secularism guarantees religious pluralism, while democracy guarantees political pluralism, the freedom of expression, the right to vote, eligibility to public office and to become a politician, free and fair elections and the right to support political parties and leaders. Even though these two things often go hand in hand, there are countries where there is democracy but no secularism and countries that are secular but without democracy.

So in Australia, secularism is written in our Constitution (section 116) and you can see what it means in Australia. It means that the government does not make laws about churches or mosques and does not impose any religious observance, so there is no way that the government in Australia can enforce religion on anyone because it is unconstitutional. At the same time, they cannot prohibit the exercise of religion because it is in the Constitution, which means secularism. So there is separation of religion from state in the Australian Constitution.

But there are some areas where there is a fuzzy line between private and public matters, for example, marriage. Some people say it is private, and some say it is public. Whether someone gets married in a Church or through a Muslim Sheikh, it is a private matter, but everyone has to register the marriage with the government, otherwise it is not valid under the law. So is marriage a private matter or a public matter?

What about divorce? Should divorce be considered a private matter, just between two people, or is divorce something for the government to control and make laws about? Now even in a secular country, I can go to the mosque and have a Shariah divorce, but I must also go to the Australian courts and get a divorce through the legal system. So it is also a public matter. On the one hand they are very private matters, but on the other hand they are also governed by the state.

Now is the state ruled by religion? If there were no separation between state and religion, how could the state make different rulings about marriage and divorce for different religions and for different traditions? Then we come to prayer and worship, should that be a private thing? In secularism it is a private matter. According to the Australian Constitution, where religion is separated from the state, prayer and the right to worship is a private matter. To cite an example, in 2009 in Western Australia, the court tried to cancel congregational Friday prayers in a Muslim community centre, so the Muslims in that community said that they would perform their prayers at a community home. But they couldn't do it because it is unconstitutional. The Constitution in Australia is secular and the government cannot prohibit the practice of religion, rather, it must protect it.

As a Muslim living in a secular state, there are conflicts and issues. So if the government thinks certain issues such as marriage need to be regulated, but

individuals or groups say that these should be private matters and not regulated by the government, there are bound to be conflicts but they can be resolved. For example, Shariah-regulated marriages and divorces have been ongoing issues in Australia for the Muslim community but have been resolved. If someone has a Shariah marriage performed by a Sheikh, then after the ceremony the marriage has to be registered under Australian law.

So the two systems are working side by side and the same is the case with divorce. The building of mosques can be a point of contention, particularly when the requirements for building mosques do not match the requirements of the council of the city. So sometimes the state will intervene, but it is not because of the religion, rather, it is because of the requirements of the building, parking and street codes. Halal (lawful) meat practices are provided certification by the council of Australia and there are several halal butchers around the country.

But how do Muslims negotiate conflicts about public and private matters, especially when we think something is private but the state thinks it is a public issue? I would like to use the term “common currency of political debate”, which means that you should talk about issues that are important to you, either because of your religious identity or because of your values. When you talk about them in a public or political system, you should use the language of politics. You do not talk about them as Shariah or Islamic issues, but rather, in terms of the right to practice religion. You talk about them in terms of secularism, democracy, and the guarantees and protections that they provide.

Australian Muslims have managed to ensure the protection of their rights to practice Islam within a multi-faith society where the majority of the population is not Muslim, because they have been able to draw on and use the common currency of political debate. At a very practical level, this is how secularism allows people of different faiths to participate in the political process equally. So what are the opportunities for multi-faith communities in secular democratic societies? The opportunities come through the principles of secularism and democracy that guarantee formal citizenship, e.g. you can get a passport, citizenship papers and be recognized as a citizen.

But this is not the kind of citizenship we are talking about. We need participatory citizenship, allowing us to participate in the social, economic and political life. In order for that to happen, the state must guarantee equal opportunities for everybody. In this way, citizens in the civil society actually have a role to play in the governance of the society and country. Freedom of thought and belief are protected through secularism and democracy. But freedom is never totally free, there is always a responsibility.

Prof. Shahab Enam Khan, Department of International Relations, Jahangir Nagar University, Bangladesh

Basically, my presentation has a question mark as to whether we have radicalization or not, and if we do, then is it important? Is it a current issue, past issue, or an issue for the future? Professor Anne Aly has explained secularism, so I am going to focus on the term “radicalization”.



My presentation will focus on Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. So how can we define radicalization? If you look at the Industrial revolution, French revolution, Russian revolution, Chinese revolution, Iranian revolution and many countries in Europe, as well as the recent Arab Spring, all these movements were absolutely radical.

Different components of radicalization include ideology, religion, economy, politics and freedom: freedom of human rights, freedom to talk and think, and freedom of association. Now when we look at the emerging ISIS, we see that we are struggling again, it is a cancer of the society, a terrorist group. But why is it not called a radical group? Go back to the revolutions I just mentioned, and then look at the so-called ISIS revolution. It is a terrorist group. They believe they have changed the system whether the public likes it or not. Their stereotyping, increasing violence and mass killing, all have a political objective not at par with the core teachings of Islam, which preach peace, harmony and of course democracy, which means that everything has to be consensus-based. Finally, radicalism undermines contemporary ideas, rejects freedom of choice, and hates the whole institution of democracy.

Regarding the structure of radicalization; I am talking from our perspective in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Radicalization is a dynamic process, varying for each individual and group, but sharing some underlying commonalities. What are these? These are intended to ensure rapid (e.g. the case of the Taliban) basic transformation of societies, states and class structures, based on code and religion intermixed with violence.

If you look at radical narratives, transformation is all about overthrowing the existing system, which means basic transformation of the society, state and class structure. If you see it from an economic point of view, based on religion and violence, I take religion as a key tool and I use violence as the method to transform the society. Secondly, it is a component of class-based societies, which evolve from the grassroots level, so now you have a lot of people coming in and joining the radical groups because they are at the bottom of this system. External factors are involved in this; and it involves the intermingling of political and religious ideologies, not at par with Islam, in the case of Bangladesh and Pakistan. Secularism is heavily reactivated in Indian politics and Constitution.

Misinterpretation and manipulation of public grievances as well as a lack of enlightenment within the society, meaning a lack education and culture, also play a part in this process. It operates in conjunction with multiple conflicts involving the state. When we talk about the state and the public, we are talking about a social contract through legal processes of the Constitution, guaranteed between the state and the public, which includes public institutions, structure of governance, democracy, autocracy and the military. When we talk about the government and the public, there is another level of social contract, law enforcement, religion, politics and public, which includes you and me.

Then there is the role of social capital, economy, culture and wellness, something we always forget about. Wellness is very important; we need to be well to take decisions. Religion is a private and public domain. Romanticism exists regarding true beliefs. These structures all involve a particular concern for the state and democracy.

Now if you look at statistics, one-fifth of the population in South Asia is between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four, therefore, the whole issue of employment

comes up. The only possibilities are civil service, labour or military. Some will go to university, but what will happen to them? When you don't have access to employment, essentially your access to the market is limited and you are not able to purchase. The moment you are not able to purchase, you are not able to contribute to either the economy or the process of decision-making. Pakistan's statistics in this regard are 37%, Bangladesh 39%, and India 32%, so unless you create a job market for them and an equitable structure to have access to the market to buy their basic commodities, they cannot exist in the market.

Starting from the Mughal era, look at the emperor Babar, a prince who came from abroad to rule India, so he was actually a foreigner. When you are young, you mishandle political decisions and cannot control corruption. When you ask somebody what is your identity, are you Muslim or Pakistani first? What is their response? According to the Gillani poll statistics, the majority of Pakistanis, 59%, identify themselves as Muslims first. What does this signify? It signifies that their identity is first constructed by the notions of religion, not nationalism.

Similarly, in Bangladesh, secularism was one of the fundamental principles of the Constitution, but it was removed in 1977 by the Fifth Constitutional Amendment (CA) and Islam was declared as the State religion. After 13 years, in 2010, the Supreme Court of Bangladesh declared the Fifth CA illegal and restored secularism as one of the basic tenets of the Constitution. So the term 'Islam' is not there anymore. Bangladeshi identity is deeply rooted in the society and plays a stronger role than religion in determining our identity. Therefore, Bengali nationalism rather than religion remains the principal ingredient in the existence of Bangladesh.

In India, Hinduism and Hindu nationalism are increasingly synonymous among the public, and this led to the removal of the Congress party and helped the BJP (popularly known as a Hindu nationalist party) to gain power. This is an interesting and powerful reflection of the challenge to the whole idea of secularism that the Indian Constitution enshrines. So the whole idea of secularism is being challenged by the voters, which gave a strong message that secularism is not working on the ground.

We have got identity, so let us construct the whole idea of social capital, because identity goes hand in hand with social capital. Once you have your identity you

start building your relationship with the State. In order to keep our social values, we need to improve our education system. Education levels are improving: looking at data from 2005, Bangladesh is 50.3 percent, India 74.8 percent, Maldives 99.2 percent, Nepal 63 percent and Pakistan 59.6 percent.

What does this mean? It means our education levels in terms of literacy have gone up, but has the quality gone up too? The education that we are receiving may not always be suitable for job markets or for creating entrepreneurs. When we look at Afghanistan, we see that women are not educated and USAID and other donor agencies are funding their education. Very interestingly if we look at the books they send for girl students, they date back to the 1980s and 1990s, so now something that is 30 to 40 years old is part of the current Afghan curriculum. What good will this do?

Then comes the job market and consumerism; these school leavers don't have access to the market, so you are creating a group of people who are alienated from the system, which further creates hatred and frustration. So freedom for fair elections, leadership, local leadership; who are the political leaders, what do they believe; what does the imam preach and what is he teaching – all these remain big issues.

Media and Information Communication Technology (ICT) are very important; we have seen a phenomenal growth of ICT in South Asia, but one thing we forget is that much more than 50% of the entire population doesn't have access to ICT. So this divide in the economy has become a fundamental factor in understanding the disempowerment of youth.

Then comes another problem; what we call radicalization. None of the South Asian countries have the capability to control, prevent or in fact perceive any of these online digital radicalizations that we are seeing. I have listed three basic problems. While of course there are many others, which we can't cover in this short session. Can there be any easy answers? It is a big No!

What should the state do? The state has to understand these basic norms: (i) deregulation does not mean 'no regulation', something that the government always struggles to balance; and (ii) depoliticization of the religion does not mean

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'no religion'; in fact it means that this is a way to pluralize the public, thus creating an atmosphere for “limited” secularism. In Bangladesh, we have 82% Muslims and 17% Hindus, so we have to look after both communities.

Equal access to education services and delivery of justice needs to be ensured for the minorities as well, and the state cannot discriminate between Ahmadis, Shias or Sunnis through the Constitution. Therefore, an identity can only be formed once there is collective belongingness. Delivery of an equitable job market, employment opportunities and enlightenment are also needed. The change will not come easily, even if appropriate policies and choices are made today. It takes time to implement and then that implementation will have a spill-over effect over a period of time. All this needs patience and it needs the creation of structures for accommodating different thoughts.

Online radicalization, hatred and hate speeches need to be countered. Bangladesh, India and Pakistan have similar issues which are different from the western setting. People need to be educated. Hard approaches are generally proven wrong. The military always believes in taking guns and killing terrorists, but essentially this is creating more terrorists. Holistic and pluralistic approaches and encompassing counter radicalization strategies are required.

Q&A Session and Comments

Dr. Aitezaz, Former Vice-Chancellor, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad



Let me tell you first of all, that there are four types of capital. One is physical capital which is in the form of assets, roads and factories etc. Then we have human capital in the form of stock of knowledge and skills, and the third type is social capital, which is in the form of interaction and values which we gather from social interaction and investment in society. The fourth one is religious capital. Religious capital is in the form of values gained from religion. Religious capital can be a source of integration, if we focus on one religion. If the whole society is

following one religion, then religion will integrate the society. But if religions are different, for example fifty percent are one religion and the others another religion, then integration depends upon how tolerant a society is towards the other religion.

Religious capital can either be a source of integration or a source of disintegration. If there is too much of a clash between religion and religious capital from one sector, it can be a source of disintegration of people. For example, when Shias have their congregations, they go into the streets to follow their rituals. Some Sunni extremists look at them from a negative perspective.

Likewise other religious activities can be a source of integration or disintegration. For example in India, there are a very large number of Hindus, but quite a large number of Muslims, Christians and Sikhs as well. So there is more tolerance in India although people are following different religions. On the other hand, in a society like Pakistan where 97% of the population is Muslim and 3% minorities, our religion is dominating, and the rights of minorities are more likely to make headlines and they might be subject to discrimination.

Within the 97% Muslims of Pakistan, there is a great divide between Shias, Sunnis, Barelvis, Deobandis, etc. I think such discussion forums are very important and productive and I would encourage more debate on the issue.

Prof. Rasheed Khalid, Chairperson, Dept. of DSS, QAU



I just want to clarify that in Pakistan, Muslim marriages are registered, but Hindu marriages are not yet registered and there are so many problems for them. Many Hindu girls are forcibly converted to Islam and married off to Muslims, even if they were already married, which is not allowed either in Hinduism or in Islam, but because of absence of registration they are facing this problem.

Question

In the Bangladesh Constitution, you removed religion from the state by the Fifth

Amendment, and you separated from Pakistan based on language and ethnic issues, so it was easy for you to separate religion from the state. But we Pakistanis base our state on Islam so how can we separate religion from the state?

Question

Considering Islam is the hub of equality and peace, as well as encouraging pluralism in society, how exactly can we base it on a new concept of a secular state in Pakistan?

Question

Question to Dr. Anne Aly: you talked about the relationship between democracy and secularism. In some cases we see that democracy becomes a challenge for secularism. It has created a lot of tension due to conflicting values and belief systems of different people in India after PM Modi got elected. So how can these issues be reconciled if we have both democracy and secularism?



Dr. Anne Aly

The first question was how to separate religion from the state given that Pakistan is an Islamic state and the majority are Muslims? The second question was how can

we take Islam out of the equation in a secular state? I see some relationship between these two questions. The answer is that we don't take Islam out of the equation. The separation of state from religion doesn't mean 'no religion', it means that decisions made by the government are made for all, not just on the basis of, or to the advantage of, one religious group over another.

If decisions are made for everybody in Pakistan on the basis of just one religion, which religion we are going to use? If it is to be Islam, then which sect of Islam? Are we going to use the Sunni or Shia interpretation? If Sunni, then which school of thought: Wahabi, Hanafi, Salafi or others? These are the questions that we need to ask and consider when bringing religion into governance of the state. As I said earlier, that doesn't mean that decisions made by the state are informed by Islam. Since Islam is the fabric of social and cultural values of society, family and individuals, we think that the values and principles of Islam will inform how decisions are made in any Muslim country.

The point of secularism is not that religion does not inform how decisions are made. The basis of secularism is that it allows for religious pluralism, equality of all religious thought, protection for the freedom of religious beliefs of all citizens, and the removal of discrimination against religious minorities. It does not prefer one group's interpretation of religion and it is not the basis of Islam. Debate and shura (consultation) are always part of Islam; and they are the basic principles of Islam.

On the second question, that democracy becomes a challenge to secularism because of conflicting values and beliefs, we reconcile these by framing religious issues through political language; through the language of citizenship and political citizenry, for example the building of a controversial mosque on Ground Zero. Such issues are reconciled when Muslims can speak a political language and can represent their needs in a language to appeal to a broader citizenship. Speaking about one's needs only in terms of Islam does not appeal to the broader citizenship in countries like the USA or Australia, but speaking about needs in terms of human rights, the right to protection and freedom of belief under a secular Constitution does.

Prof. Shahab Enam Khan

The point is whether we have eliminated the wrong word from the Constitution, which we have done in Bangladesh. We have not included Islam as the State religion. Rather, what we have done is, we have kept some components of Islam, because the Constitution cannot be individual or group-specific, it has to be about the State, which means it should include everyone.

Now in the case of Pakistan, perhaps the responsibility lies with two entities. One is a strong society to create a proper unique social structure with the state. The second is democracy. The more democracy you have, the more your voices will be heard and there will be a more reform agenda. As Prof. Aly said, the issue is that democracy will always be in power, but it doesn't really guarantee anything, as we have seen across the world, e.g. the Arab Spring, Australia and Bangladesh. But we don't have any alternative to democracy. So it lies with people like you, well-educated, to give back to the society and the state. What you will give to the state will be dependent on your own personal choices.

Question

Of the three democratic countries, Pakistan, India and USA, Pakistan is an Islamic country, and the other two call themselves secular. But the development we see in USA, we do not see in India. Don't you think that Karl Marx was right in his statement that "An economic system controls us and until we control that system, we can't have development"?

Question

Question for Dr. Anne Aly: I would like to know about the discourse of the extreme right wing in Australia regarding the Muslim immigrants.

Question

Question for Dr. Anne Aly: Our society and the system are marked with corruption, bad governance, and religious/sectarian divides, so there is a notion that probably religion is the one thing that will keep the members of our society together. Does religion too have an influence on governance and politics?

Question

Question to both speakers: If religion is separated from the state or the government, then how does democracy work in those states that are particularly based on religion, like Saudi Arabia?

Dr. Anne Aly

In terms of the economic system and controlling the economy, the Canadian group compiling the Economic Freedom Index relate the index to democracy, progress and modernization, as well as to terrorism, growing radicalization and extremism, and they are linked with economic freedom, which means the capacity of the citizens of the state to control their economic system, to have free enterprise and social mobility. We do need to consider economic factors, but we also look at the society, history and a whole range of factors.

The second question of extremism discourse in Australia is interesting. My own research looks at 'extremism in Australia', which is not just related to 'Islamic extremism' but there are also other forms of extremism, such as right-wing or anti-Islamic extremism. But predominantly, Islamic extremism has been the priority, particularly regarding the situation in Iraq and Syria. We are fortunate that we have had no significant terrorist attack on Australian soil, so terrorism is not something Australia has a history of, or something that Australia has to live with. The unfortunate side is that now we have an issue of growing extremism. We really do not have a civil society infrastructure to deal with it in a way that other countries do. Primarily, it is done by law enforcement and government and there are very few civil society organizations that actually have a specific focus on countering radicalization or extremism. We are still in the process of learning; and we have learnt a lot about international cooperation.

As for the third question, religion can be a unifier, but as your VC mentioned, religious capital can also be something that creates disharmony. Islam has always been a religion of different interpretations, and one can have different answers to the same question. Yes, religion has a master narrative level, and it has the capacity

to unify, but we should always be wary of its capacity to disintegrate as we move into deeper interpretations and how people apply religion to their everyday lives.

Finally, when it comes to democracy in Saudi Arabia, secularism doesn't have to be for democracy and democracy doesn't have to be for secularism, but they do assist each other. The principles of Islam by nature are very democratic. If you look at them in a pure form, the principles of Shura and Jihad rely on a consensus, which is why the nature of Islam is democratic and if we look at the example of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), he ruled very democratically as well. He used to listen to the people, and he cared about equality, women's and minority rights. The issue is that if it becomes politicized, it has the ability to turn into something that is detrimental to some people. If we could have an ideal form of governance, it would be democracy because it is run by the true principles of Islam.

Question

Most countries like Indonesia, Turkey and Bangladesh, to some extent, are secular, they have solved these problems and there is no ongoing radicalization. So it is not necessary that secularism or democracy is the only hope that people can solve their problems especially in countries like Pakistan. Our foundation is Islam and our founding fathers said that Pakistan will be a democratic country based on the principles of Islam. The problem is not with Islam, the problem is with the ruling elite who are not implementing the rules of Islam in their true sense. How can Islam give solutions to societal problems when they are not working in the light of Islamic principles? If Islam can be restored in Pakistan, then these problems can be solved because Islam itself means peace. Radicalization exists because every sect in Pakistan has its own interpretation of Islamic principles. We can solve this issue, not necessarily using secularism but by taking on board all the sects and the religious minorities to come up with a joint solution.

Professor Anne Aly

That is secularism, because secularism accommodates all of these different interpretations.

University of Peshawar (UoP), Peshawar

Q&A Session and Comments

Dr. Babar Shah, UoP



My question is to Prof. Khan: In an academic sense, we talk a lot, but it is a fact of our South Asian politics that religion is used for political purposes, so “Islamic Republic” was removed from the Constitution of Bangladesh. How did the religious political parties in Bangladesh react?

Prof. Shahab Enam Khan

We need to understand something about Bangladeshi politics and how much clout the religious parties really have. Essentially, we have two mainstream political parties, the BNP (centre–right) and the Awami League, which is centre-left and is the current government. The BNP has some alliance with the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami. But the Jamaat-e-Islami’s vote is essentially between four to five percent so it is not very significant. On the other hand, we have religious groups which are generally apolitical, but are pretty vocal, but in this case the reaction of the religious parties was not significant enough to revise the issue. Besides, it actually came from the Supreme Court so it is not a parliamentary decision. Therefore, the role of political parties will be at a minimum when it comes to an amendment of the Constitution. Thus, the reaction of the religious political parties was there but it was not significant.



Question

What do you expect from a country which got its independence in the name of

religion and having approximately 98 percent Muslim population[*] - and at the same time a poor literacy rate and no exposure to the terminologies of secularism and co-existence?

[*] Editor's note: this is an incorrect and controversial figure, given that Pakistan has not held a population census since 1998, and religious minorities are traditionally under-counted.

Dr. Anne Aly



You are rightly describing Pakistan, where the Muslims got independence through Islam, but the literacy rate is very low. One of the challenges for secularism in Pakistan is to change the general understanding of what secularism is. We can call it a communication campaign, but it is actually about getting the support of the masses. It will not work if the people don't support it, so a strong, persistent and long campaign of educating the masses and changing their perceptions and understanding of secularism is needed and this is not something that will happen overnight.

If it is to happen, it will probably take generations. Perhaps you can have a country that has a feel of secularism without being completely secular or you can also have a country which is completely secular but without the feel of secularism. I will give you an example of the United Kingdom. It has a kind of feel of secularism, there are rights that protect minority religions in UK, and there Muslims, who practise Islam quite freely, but the Queen is also the Head of the Church, so the UK is not officially or formally secular. So perhaps we can start from human rights spaces, and address issues such as equality and justice and then the formality can come later.

Question

How can a secular form of government handle a state threatened all the time by so many militant or terrorist groups and where the religious sentiments of the people are so high? What will be the future of its existence?



Prof. Shahab Enam Khan

Iraq is not a secular state but see what happened to it? It collapsed in an absolutely brutal manner. I went to the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. (USA) and when I was enthusiastically shown the Mesopotamian collection of artefacts, I said that these artefacts were brought to the United States of America in 2004 after the Iraq war, so USA actually looted them.

If we look at the state of Iraq we see that it has collapsed and Syria is also collapsing – all on the basis of religious extremism. So the more unity you have the more diversity you have, which means you have more enlightenment, more research and more intellectual thinking. American and Japanese universities are inventing something new every day, but then look at us in Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, where we are struggling to have the lights on. A secular state does not mean that everything is guaranteed but secular states do guarantee the freedom of expression therefore, if you have a secular or a pluralistic state, it would suppress or be able to curtail the threat of terrorism and radicalization, because everyone is part of the system. This is how secularism is being structured and delivered and this is what secularism is in turn giving back.

Dr. Anne Aly

There were studies conducted to find out where terrorism is most common and they found that terrorism is not common in unstable countries, and it is also not

common in stable countries whether that country is secular or religious or authoritarian, dictatorship or democracy. It is in fact most common in countries that are transitioning and getting new forms of governments, because people and different groups are vying for power. So secularism is not the answer to everything in Australia. We have extremists and radical groups and because they are in a secular state and a democracy, they are able to have conferences and express their views freely. So it is not the only answer, it is a form of governance that has the opportunities for countries to realize aspirations for human rights, equality, justice and pluralism, but is not the answer for everything.

Question

As far as the definition of secularism is concerned, it doesn't seem too bad but if you see the reality, many big governments and secular states are supporting specific religions in the background. Do you not think this is taking our situation from bad to worse?

Prof. Shahab Enam Khan

I repeat that our problem is our own problem and we should solve it ourselves. Secularism is not the guaranteed answer to every problem. We have the tendency to look at the western world, but we should let the west handle its own problems. You have to create your own discourse, and your own judgement. Look at the social capital you already have, preserve it in your own way; because a western prescription is not going to help you.

Dr. Anne Aly

Secularism is actually what you make it mean; don't look at the models that our countries have used, find the model that suits you and one that everybody needs and wants. We all want the same thing at some level. We want to be economically viable, we want to be able to work and have a family and raise our children and give them the opportunities; we all want to be treated equally and with respect. If we start from there, then we can start looking at what secularism and democracy mean for us and our everyday lives in the context of each country.

Question

Is it right to believe or follow religious matters that have been thoroughly discarded by modern science?

Prof. Shahab Enam Khan

Religion does have certain components that we rationally can't explain. At this point there is no time to get into that existential debate, but essentially yes, it is an alienate belief and sometimes we can't explain its rationality. Now here is the challenge: things in religion, or in the holy scriptures, may not have scientific properties, but there is a belief system. So it is not a problem as long as you understand where rationality ends and where belief starts. Religion does give you the authority to question. If you read the Quran, it starts with "Iqra" meaning "read", so the moment it says "read", it also gives us the liberty to question. You may not find an answer immediately, there may not always be an answer, but essentially this is the belief we have and we cannot impose it on others.

Dr. Anne Aly

I agree, I think it's a very complex question and a matter of personal choice for everyone as they go through their own journey of faith and choose to apply their faith to themselves.

Question

Democracy believes in a government which is elected by the majority of the people and in a secular state there is no role for religion, so if in a secular state there is a majority of the non-religious people ruling it, does Islam allow such a rule of non-Muslims over Muslims?

Prof. Shahab Enam Khan

Democracy does not bar you from practising religion and neither does secularism. These are two concepts and systems that actually guarantee your religious freedom because both by definition are freedom. Therefore, it is not true that democracy

does not have any room for religion to come in. What democracy is essentially saying is that politics should be seen from a political point of view and religion should be seen from a religious point of view, the moment you politicize religion, you are creating a fear of discrimination.

Supplementary Question

My question was: can an Islamic society be led by a non-Muslim? Where there are 70 percent Muslims, how can we practise secularism?

Prof. Shahab Enam Khan

Why not? A Sunni state being run by Shias; theoretically it is possible. My presentation was not all about secularism. As I was saying, secularism is one of the components. In a country that has 97 percent Muslims, you still have 3 percent non-Muslims. If there is a state, there is a system, so they cannot come to power naturally. But there are a lot of other problems, which collectively create the whole atmosphere of radicalization, fear and terrorism. So whether an Islamic country can be run by a non-Islamic entity, we need to go through world history again, but there are examples where Muslims have ruled countries where the non-Muslims were in a majority and the classic example is the Mughal rule in India, so if that is possible then so is the other way round. Theoretically we have to accept that it is a possibility.

Comment: Prof. Adnan Sarwar



If the popular vote is in favour of someone who is clearly an Islamist, that is acceptable according to democratic principles. But we have to go by the Constitution, and in this case Pakistan's Constitution is very clear that only Muslims can govern our country, but India doesn't have this condition, and India has had Muslim Presidents and others in high offices. I think a Muslim President or Prime Minister should develop a culture of peaceful co-existence and respect for followers of each and every religion in a Muslim

country.

Forman Christian College University (FCCU), Lahore

Q&A Session and Comments



Question

Do all the citizens of the state have equal rights? Why is it only possible in a secular state? How can state and religion be separated if the religion is a prominent part of the society?

Dr. Anne Aly

Let's look at Islam; you are talking about Islam being embedded in the psyche of the Pakistani people. Is Islam a religion of equality? Is Islam a religion of peace? Is Islam a religion of tolerance? If you say yes, then what is the problem? Islam is not a barrier in giving equality for all, look at the example of the Prophet (PBUH), how did he rule? He ruled with equality and justice, so this should not be a barrier. I think one of the biggest barriers for secularism in Pakistan is not Islam, but the misconception that secularism means no Islam or no religion. I think the first task is to change the misconception of people and emphasize that the principles of secularism are not against the principles of Islam, in fact they work very cohesively together.

Question

Would Muslim inter-family marriages in the West solve the problems of Jihadi radicalization and increasing divorce rates in the Muslim diaspora?

Prof. Shahab Enam Khan

At the moment I have personal reservations about the very term that we called 'Jihad', because jihad is a very fascinating topic, particularly if you go to the west, if you go to radicalize the extreme violent youth group, so that's the key point. I don't think inter-marriage is a solution to anything, inter-marriage is just a biological process, it really doesn't give you a solution to such difficult problems. Marriage is in the public as well as private domain, public when it comes to authentication and registration, and private when it is a matter between a man and a woman. So how they will formulate the reference to their religion is again a private matter. So if you can't solve your own problems, then you have religious and civil courts which are adjudicating between the man and woman. It is very important to create a stable society and demography, which we certainly need. Demography is not a threat to the secular system in India.

Beaconhouse National University (BNU), Lahore

Q&A Session and Comments



Participants' Comments

Pakistan is an Islamic state as per the Constitution. You can have a democratic state or you can have a religious state. In that sense Pakistan is not a democratic state, it is a religious state. There are Muslim countries and there is no democracy throughout the Middle East. Just see what is happening in the Middle East.

Pakistan has been an ally of the USA since 1948 and USA decided during the Cold War that Muslims all over the world will be their natural allies in order to check the spread of Communism. Their policy papers became public after 30 years. Because of this policy, they created certain institutions in Muslim countries, invited the youth of Muslim countries for education in the United States, and, most importantly, they wanted to include religion in politics.

However, when Pakistan was created, its founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, in his opening speech at the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, very clearly stated that religion will play no role in Pakistan's politics. To quote from his statement: "You are free, you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to

Perspectives from Multicultural Societies

your mosques, or any other place of worship, it has nothing to do with the business of the State.”

For political purposes, all citizens of Pakistan have equal rights. UK progressed when religion was separated from politics. Religion is a personal matter of faith for every individual. This is the definition of secularism. But for political purposes, all citizens of Pakistan will have equal rights.

Unfortunately, we have distorted our history and all our history books, from class four to graduation level, have a distorted version of the creation of Pakistan, stating that “it was created when Muhammad Bin Qasim invaded India”, or it was created “when the first Hindu converted to Islam”. All these distortions are part of our history. When we correct our history, then the problems of Pakistan can start to be solved.

Roundtable at Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS), Islamabad

Q&A Session and Comments



Ms. Ammara Durrani



I have two questions for Prof. Shahab and one for Dr. Aly. In Bangladesh, why does nationalism not trump Islamism, with a clear distinction between Islamism and radicalization? Second, could you elaborate on some of the historical reasons why Bangladesh as a State has no legislation regarding blasphemy?

Dr. Aly's fascinating account had some assumptions regarding Counter-Terrorism (CT). In Pakistan we have decades of strong civil society experience, and in trying to tackle CT, but you discounted the assumptions wonderfully. Have you come up with a new set of counter-assumptions, which could educate us in Pakistan also, because we are still lost in this area?

Prof. Shahab Enam Khan

Why did Bangladesh convert from nationalism to Islamism? I think there is no specific answer to that, but there are several components. If we look back to our

Constitutional development since 1972, the whole idea of the Constitution was Bengali nationalism, and it had no component of religion. It was designed in a manner that it had four basic principles: socialism, nationalism, economic pluralism and democracy. Religion was nowhere there. In 1977, Gen. Zia-ur-Rahman first introduced the whole notion of Islam as the State religion, and officially incorporated Islam as a component in our Constitutional and institutional framework of the State.



What is the whole concept of our nation about? The nation that separated from Pakistan in 1971 was essentially going back to the whole idea of Bengali nationalism. It was nationalism, nationalism and nationalism.

It was a melting pot of religions. But since 1997, the military dictator needed legitimacy and the easiest way at that time was through religion.

In 1980 with the Zia-ur-Rahman government gone, Gen. Irshad came and followed in the same footsteps of his predecessor. It was easy to bring religion in, because almost eighty percent of the population was illiterate. Also, with the migrant labour in the Gulf sending back petro-dollars, it was not only cash coming in, but it was also importing some other components, particularly religious ideology. When illiterate workers from rural backgrounds and a backward society go to Saudi Arabia or UAE, what they see in terms of Islam is the most retrogressive version of Islam, but they get converted to that version, and along with their money they also send back home the Arab culture and Salafi-Wahabi Islam too. So now we have created a hybrid nationhood and mixed cultures.

If you attend a wedding in Bangladesh, you have four rituals, which are at par with the Indian, Western and Gulf cultures, in our dress, customs, etc. The international media also has influence over us. There is huge economic disparity and huge poverty, therefore, the majority of the population does not have the capacity to purchase, but on the other hand, we have consumerism coming in, and that brings a conflict.

Therefore, we are not connecting with the system, access to markets, purchasing power, access to livelihoods and income generation. As long as all that is missing, then we are creating different groups, alienation, marginalization, and fear.

Regarding the question on blasphemy, one of the biggest strengths of Bangladesh is that whatever happens, we have an old and very vibrant civil society. Since 1947, and since the 1950s and 60s, all our movements essentially came from the enlightened intellectual community, e.g. Dhaka University, and that legacy has continued. We observe the National Martyrs Day, when the intellectuals were killed. Even in 1975 when Sheikh Mujeeb created a one-party government, it was heavily criticized and he had to pay for that. Also Gen. Zia-ur-Rahman had to pay for that in the 1980s.

It is the masses, the people who, from time to time, generated the strength. The blasphemy law will be resisted as long as Bangladeshi pluralism is there, as long as the societal peace and harmony is there, as long as the society is structurally equal to absorb religious modernity or post-modern religion.

Mr. Mosharraf Zaidi



The speakers referred to the rise and expansion of Salafi, Jihadi ideology, not only throughout the Middle East, but its diffusion also throughout Muslim majority countries, giving several reasons for the rise and expansion of such ideology. Some Pakistanis may say that we were such a great culture, characterized by social peace and harmony and then people went to Saudi Arabia, and came back and we got contaminated, thus locating external blame for the Saudiization of our society. Why can't we have any conversation about the internal

fractures and fissures which already existed in the Muslim countries, the elements of internal weaknesses that we need to address, and our internal mechanisms of resistance that should have been successfully adopted?

Dr. Ann Aly

Looking at what are those weaknesses and vulnerabilities that enabled and facilitated this spread of Salafi-Jihadi or Takfiri-Jihadi ideologies, to the point where there was a visible loss of cultural capital and that was overwritten by the cultural aspects of those exported ideologies. The Maldives is a classic example of that, as they have almost completely lost their island culture, which persisted thousands of years, even as a Muslim country, but in the past decade that has been almost completely lost.



I also think we could look at globalization in this respect. There needs to be introspection and I think people are craving this introspection as well. Ironically, a lot of introspection is being opposed and challenged by a consistent discourse that wants to remove culpability and to remove an examination of the internal factors of that discourse. The hegemonic discourses of the West have so much control, so I leave you with this introspection and perhaps there is a need for having discourses around secularism and around democracy, what that means for Pakistan, and what that means for the Pakistani people in their everyday lives. It is a way to start that counter-narrative.

Prof. Shahab Enam Khan

I think one of the issues probably Pakistan should look into right now, is that we should not keep on placating the Saudis and others, which happens when we are so much weaker. One of the issues is obviously to create a consensus, and the political parties also have a responsibility, they can't just ignore the whole thing. Look at India, currently, when the BJP gets elected, essentially what message do we get? The whole idea of the myth of secularism that Congress was preaching is gone, because the BJP, by default, and by philosophy, is a party that believes in hardcore Hindu nationalism. The Indian people have given a vote that looks for delivery of

justice and equal resource distribution, which is more important than these old ideas of secularism.

The same message is also clear in Bangladesh. The same rejection is very much there. Political parties have to understand the reality that depoliticization of religion is not excluding religion from the society, neither from the political philosophy. If you take the comparative political studies between Bangladesh and Pakistan, it has alienated or separated the political elements within the political and democratic institutions. However, whether or not they have become successful is a debatable issue, but at least the process is there.

The empowerment of the civil society is where the Bangladesh example comes in. We were working on a counter-terrorism strategy and the national broadcasting policy as well. I am now drafting the counter-radicalization policy. It is being done through consultation with many people, so my team meets and consults with different groups of people, including the political parties. So our presence must be there and it has to be on the basis of a social consensus, so that the new social contract that we are creating does not create another level of tension between the state and the people.

The third factor is counter-narratives, very important to take a human approach and ask: who interprets religion or scriptures? The fundamentalists and liberals have different interpretations of the same scriptures. This is the challenge to accommodate multiple versions and this must come from the civil society, not from the state, as the state is an organic entity which has its own interests.

Your state has certain military components as does Bangladesh. Can there be a political party without the blessings of the military? Yes, as Bangladesh is now going towards that. We have separated the components of the military from our system. When we are separating the military and the religion, essentially, we are creating new tensions. So what would happen in these vacuums?

We don't know, it is unknown territory but we are willing to take a risk. Whether it is a positive risk or a negative risk, is something yet to be seen, as it is too early for us, for social scientists or the regular public to predict. Despite having fractured democratic institutions we have been able to separate these two entities from the political system. I think our experiences would be valuable for Pakistan.

Mr. Sultan Hali



Pakistan has become a playground under the garb of the “War on Terror”. Both Saudi Arabia and Iran are using Pakistan as a playground for their proxy sectarian wars. Does Bangladesh also suffer from this? You mentioned the mosque being at the centre of action, but at a previous roundtable, we had a Turkish scholar who informed us that they have a central system of Friday Khutbas from the Ministry of Religious Affairs from where the written Friday sermon comes. This is something which is practised in Pakistan only within the armed forces. It is supposed to be counter-radicalization and balanced. Do you have any such system in Australia?

Dr. Anne Aly

The National Council of Imams (NCI) was established in Australia in 2006, and its purpose was to form a unified voice around what was being taught in mosques, through the Friday sermons, and also to give a counter-radicalization message. The issue is that there are a few large mosques and a number of small Masjids, particularly on university campuses, and anybody can give the Friday sermon. So we have a situation where in some Masjids or even in some of the Muslim Community Centres, we have had a few radicals and extremists giving lectures. Thus, establishing the NCI is an attempt to ensure that there is a unified, pluralist message conveyed.

As far as the focus on community engagement is concerned, we have this issue in Australia. The communities have leaders who are heads of the organizations representing them. They are Sheikhs, Imams and representatives of the National Council of Imams. But they are not opinion leaders; so there is a need for a recognition and differentiation between community leaders and opinion leaders. A lot of the young people who are becoming radicalized in Australia and other non-Muslim countries are not being radicalized by Sheikhs at their local mosques. Many are moderate sheikhs at the local mosques and the members of the NCI.

But there is radicalization through the internet, which has become a marketplace of ideals and a place of diffusion of religious authority. For young Muslims living in the West, very little spiritual guidance is behind the concept of halal and haraam, so they grow up as Muslims in Australia only understanding that that they have to pray five times a day, and they have to fast, and that this food is haraam and this is halal.

The natural questions arising in children's minds about life and relationships are not answered by the simple concepts of halal and haraam. So young people go to the internet and that's where a lot of them become exposed to the extremists, radicals, jihadis, and the violent interpretations. They ask questions that matter in everyday life, which cannot be answered simply through the rules of halal and haraam.

Prof. Shahab Enam Khan

One of the most important factors that we have been studying over the past two years is the role of women in counter-radicalization in Bangladesh. We all gave credit to Professor Younus for founding the Grameen Bank but do you know who was the first to go against the Grameen Bank? It was the Mullahs. When I interviewed the Nobel Prize-winner Prof. Younus, during the course of our discussion the whole idea of the Grameen Bank not giving money or land money to a male member of the family came up. The principal argument was that males are not trustworthy. In the rural areas, if men get money the first thing they will do is get married. So, women are essentially the owners of capital, land, the house and the kids. This actually helped in creating a rural structure; a government within the government, a society within the society and a network within the network, and that subsequently created a network of empowered women, which means that they were able to control certain important decisions of their lives and families.

Ms. Tahira Abdullah

For Prof. Shahab Enam Khan: You modestly did not mention how good Bangladesh is in its economic, social and human development indicators, especially in health and education. Also, you are perhaps the first visiting



Bangladeshi who did not bring up issues which are sensitive and painful but need to be discussed, such as the successive Bangladeshi governments' repeated demands for an official apology from Pakistan for what was done during 1970-71, along with threats to take the case to the International Court of Justice or the International Criminal Court. I belong to an extremely tiny fraction of the Pakistani population believing that relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan can never hope to achieve any kind of normalcy or warmth, or genuine friendship and respect, unless there is a public acknowledgement of what transpired between 1970 and 1971 in the former East Pakistan, now Bangladesh; a clear, unequivocal, public apology is made by the armed forces and the government of Pakistan, on behalf of the State of Pakistan; and a public declaration is made that financial reparations are not possible.

So it has to serve both as an apology and as reparation because the financial implications are huge and unimaginable. It is high time that we need to lay the ghost to rest, instead of concentrating only on business, commerce and trade relations, or exchange visits of, inter alia, government officials, judges, academia and parliamentarians, while we collectively continue to be in denial and rebuttal.

It's all very well for successive governments of Pakistan to go to the United Nations and raise the issue of Indian soldiers raping Kashmiri women as an instrument of war, but we refuse to acknowledge what we have done ourselves. Bangladesh needs to continue to raise this issue at the official bilateral level, not just leaving it to the civil society and human rights defenders in both countries. Your views please?

For Dr. Anne Aly: It was fascinating to hear an Egyptian-Australian Muslim woman. You have four strokes in your favour! But when you choose to focus on the internet alone as a reason for the radicalization of Muslim youth, I believe that may be an over-simplification of the matter, because even before 9/11/2001, relations were not great between the Muslim, Christian and secular populations of the West, or wherever there was a white Christian majority, e.g. Australia. When we are discussing radicalization, terrorism and extremism, there is a critical need to add another "ism" to it, i.e. racism and ultra-right-wing nationalism of the West, mostly violent and xenophobic. So there are multiple approaches, multiple factors and multiple reasons that we have this terrible situation today across the world. Would you agree?

Prof. Shahab Enam Khan

Bangladesh has several times officially and formally asked for an apology from Pakistan and so far has gotten no response. So apparently the state of Pakistan remains silent on that as well.

Regarding Jihadism and Islamism, there is a supply side as well as a demand side. The situation has become much more complicated than what it was in the 1970s, 80s and 90s. But that doesn't mean that Islamism is going to take control of our society because Bangladesh does have a vibrant civil society, much more vibrant than its bigger neighbours in South Asia. Our mortality indicators have gone down while our health indicators have gone up more than any other country. We don't have any "honour" killing, our dowry system has gone substantially down, and women's dignity has gone up even ahead of India. Only corruption is left now, which should be dealt with as a priority issue.

Dr. Niaz Murtaza

What can Pakistan learn from Bangladesh about the active policies for control and monitoring of madrassas and funds coming from the Gulf countries to some of the Islamist groups, and the flow of young people from Bangladesh to the Jihadist hot spots in the Middle East?



Prof. Shahab Enam Khan

We do have counter-terrorism and counter-radicalization policies. We have an efficient financial intelligence network and money laundering laws, which have been amended recently. So these are the mechanisms in place, but I didn't say that radicalization will not happen. I said that radicalization can be controlled and confined to a limited scale. It is very difficult to eliminate corruption, but extremism is a new issue that Bangladesh has to deal with, and we are still struggling with it.

Mr. Dilawar Khan



Regarding the registered and unregistered madrassas in Bangladesh, could you please share the numbers of how many are registered and unregistered, because that is the same issue we have in Pakistan. You spoke of four million people who gathered in civil activism, and succeeded in changing the government's decision. Do you see the street power of religious political parties or madrassas diminishing in Bangladesh, because that is the power that they use in Pakistan, but they don't have the electoral strength.

Prof. Shahab Enam Khan

Street power was always there in Bangladesh. We have seen that Pres. Gen. Irshad had to go because of street power. In 1996, PM Khalida Zia had to go because of street power. It was street power that again overthrew the government in 2008 so it is very active. The paradox is that on the one hand we have the secularist movement, which actually influenced the High Court to decide in favour of changing the law, so the Parliament changed it.

Regarding the number of madrassas, we really don't have accurate statistics, but it is roughly around five hundred thousand. In 2014, there was political turbulence, and we expected that the military will step in as they do every time. This time they didn't, so the elections took place. Now with the military gone, we have a functioning system, while religion is gradually becoming marginalized from politics. So the influence of the military is being controlled, and this is the success I think we are achieving after forty years in Bangladesh.

Dr. Anne Aly

Yes, I agree that there is racism in white-majority countries including Australia, and, in fact, it is increasing. But there is also a growing recognition of the problem, along with measures to counter it, in addition to counter-terrorism measures. They are sometimes in conflict but we need to deal with it.

CONCLUSION

This brings to a successful conclusion the GOCORE series of dialogues organized by the CRSS, in cooperation with the Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS), whose support CRSS appreciates and acknowledges.

Judging by the enthusiastic feedback we have received, and the repeated requests for continuing and, indeed, even expanding these series of dialogues, it appears that CRSS will have to bow to the Vox Populi ...

We do recognize that the current situation of governance, religion and politics in Pakistan requires continuing academic discussion and public debate, if we are to emerge with any kind of viable consensus, or even an amicable agreement to disagree, along with a covenant to live and let live – in peaceful co-existence of the varying ideologies, religions, sects, ethnicities, languages and political leanings found in Pakistan today.

Therefore, we at the CRSS are in the process of discussing the expressed needs, particularly of the participating university students, academicians and civil society activists, together with the possibilities, within the confines of practical support and cooperation.

The CRSS will continue its endeavours for the promotion of democratic values, through the universally acknowledged medium of human rights-based democratic, participatory and open discourse.

Our vision of a peaceful Pakistan demands no less from us.

About CRSS

The Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) is an independent, non-profit, and non-partisan advocacy, program implementation and research organization based in Islamabad. It seeks to promote an informed discourse on crucial socio-political, economic and security issues confronting Pakistan. It strives to realize its goals through a vast array of activities including widely disseminated analyses on national and regional security issues, counter-terrorism and counter-extremism advocacy and conflict monitoring.

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