



RADICAL ISLAM & DEMOCRACY
INDIAN AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN
EXPERIENCES

CONFERENCE REPORT

EDITED BY

MAJ GEN DIPANKAR BANERJEE

D. SUBA CHANDRAN

SONALI HURIA

ORGANIZED BY

IPCS & KAS



INSTITUTE OF PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES (IPCS)

B 7/3 Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi 110029 INDIA

Phone: (91-11) 41652556-59; Fax: (91-11) 41652560

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KONRAD-ADENAUER-STIFTUNG (KAS)

German House, 1st Floor, 2, Nyaya Marg,

Chanakyaपुरi

New Delhi - 11 00 21 INDIA

Tel: 91-11- 26113520 , 24104008; Fax: 91-11- 26113536

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INTRODUCTION

MR. JORG WOLFF

The idea of working on this subject emanated three and a half years back when a delegation of the members of the European Parliament visited India on the invitation of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. At a meeting, the then Foreign Minister of India recommended the delegation to take a closer look at the Indian model of religious co-existence in order to find out what lessons might be drawn with regard to the increasing Muslim population in Europe.

To respond to this interesting observation and in line with our Foundation policies of fostering dialogues with the Muslim world, the KAS commissioned a study to IPCS requesting what lessons might or might not be drawn from the Indian experiences of integration its vast Muslim minority. This study was completed very successfully in 2007 by a group of experts, including the current Vice President of India, a Muslim himself.

Is there an Indian multi religious model? India is considered to be an experiment of an overall peaceful confluence of civilisations and religions at a time when many countries in Asia and beyond are plagued by internal conflicts, in the national terrorism and disturbances

between their religious groups. Within a framework of a liberal and secular democracy and its open and tolerant society, India has been able to deal astonishingly well with the complex heterogeneity of its multi ethnic, multi lingual and multi religious diversity. In this way, India presents itself as unity in diversity as a confluence of civilisations and India is a country of living religions, the most important being Hinduism and Islam. They shape the society, their virtues, values, norms, identities and at the same time the part of the state ethics of the powers that be. The individual and the state alike are enabled to choose the right way. To choose the right path however is not always easy in our current times. Religious doctrines tend to become instruments of conflicts or are exploited in the interest of politics.

In the globalising world there are many disturbing signs of frictions between religions, growing religious intolerance, religious fundamentalism and religion based terrorism. However, the true function of a religion is to unite and not to divide. Countries in South Asia, Southeast Asia and Europe, have much in common in terms of secular, pluralistic and democratic ideas and religious freedoms. Common challenges can be identified and regions can learn from each other.

MAJOR GEN DIPANKAR BANERJEE

The Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, supported by the KAS, carried out a study Radical Islam and International Terrorism in 2006. The idea of this project emerged with a statement that Ambassador Lalit Mansingh had made to the US President. He observed, at the global level, the members of Al Qaeda are found from all Muslim majority and minority countries in the world but not from India. No Indian Muslim had till recently been a member of what came to be defined as international jihad. There had been terrorist activities led by different sections of Indian population not restricted to religion alone because of inherent grievances within the political and social structures in India and sometimes these have led to a violent expression of these grievances. Yet the context of international terrorism had been lacking in India.

Initially, the Institute commissioned papers from leading scholars who have worked on both in Islam and in secular democracy. These papers were discussed by a small group of experts, who formed the core group that included the current Vice President of India. This core group

unfortunately was restricted mainly to Delhi. The result of this process was published as a monograph titled Radical Islam and International Terrorism: Indian Democracy as a Moderating Influence.

The major findings of the study include the following. First, Indian democracy has played a moderating factor, with its inclusiveness, tolerance, accommodation and safeguarding minority rights through different constitutional provisions. Despite all its flaws, Indian democracy has provided a framework where grievances of the minority communities are absorbed and accommodated. Second, the nature of Islam as it emerged within India, from the initial years was very distinct. It has certain distinct characteristics, for example the influence of Sufism. The nature of Islam in India provides a certain tolerance and a certain capability of addressing nuances, difficulties and dissonances in a more effective manner.

Third, India over the centuries developed a very composite culture. There is no one single culture that prevails over the whole of the nation. Each part of the nation, each section of the population has a different perception of their culture and therefore there is a great diversity of this cultural experiences and this composite nature of culture once again allows the expression of different views and includes many of the aspirations and expectations of minorities and others. The sense of majoritarianism is substantially absent in the Indian perception and especially in the modern culture. Finally, India's foreign policy has also played a role in addressing the minority sentiments in India. Wherever there have been international oppressions in a sense against

Indian democracy has played a moderating factor, with its inclusiveness, tolerance, accommodation and safeguarding minority rights through different constitutional provisions. Despite all its flaws, Indian democracy has provided a framework where grievances of the minority communities are absorbed and accommodated.

Secularism and democracy are pragmatic requirements for India. Democracy is the only way of governance which offers a space for managing diversity. If India has to manage its multi ethnic, multi religious, multi lingual, multi cultural society, secularism offers the only plausible solution to handle minorities.

certain sections of the people, India has sided or attempted to side with what was right and not necessarily with the great powers. Besides, India has always had excellent relations towards the Muslim countries, right from independence. Non alignment policy, pursued by India in the 1950's and 60's were a great asset. However, the study is also cautious. Towards the end, it warns that things might change.

SESSION II

SECULAR AND DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTION: ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN A HETEROGENEOUS SOCIETY

AMBASSADOR LALIT MANSINGH

While discussing the subject – radical Islam and international terrorism, one should start with the truth that only few facts are known and there are many hypothesis but few conclusions. There is an explosion of anger amongst Muslims throughout the world and this was manifested in 9/11 and many more events have taken place after that.

The question is: What is making the Muslims angry? Attention on India came up after 9/11, when the debate started in the United States on 9/11 - why has it happened, why do people hate them, what is the Muslim mind. Thomas Friedman made numerous visits to India and concluded in the New York Times that India was an amazing country with 150 million Muslims, but none of them involved in international terrorism. The reasons, according to him were that the Indian Muslim community was the largest of Muslims to be enjoying democracy; and when the repressive regimes in other countries do not allow Muslims to express their grievances, they tend to go



underground giving birth to the beginning of radical Islam.

However there should be a cautionary note. While India has 150 million Muslims and they are not part of any international terrorist movement, there are terrorist organisations in India in which Muslims are involved. The fact that Indian Muslims have not joined an international terrorist movement does not give any guarantee that they will not join it in the future.

PROF PR CHARI

What is the role of a secular and democratic Constitution and its significance in a heterogeneous society? Four hypothesis needs to be discussed. First, the roots of Indian Secularism are traceable to a long tradition of religious tolerance. India is the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. Though Christianity came to India later, Christians today constitute about 2 percent of the Indian population. Muslims constitute 13 to 14 percent of the Indian population and are the largest minority and the second largest Muslim population in the world.

Second, secularism and democracy are pragmatic requirements for India.

Democracy is the only way of governance which offers a space for managing diversity. If India has to manage its multi ethnic, multi religious, multi lingual, multi cultural society, secularism offers the only plausible solution to handle minorities. For instance, the Sikhs in India constitute 20 million, half of them perhaps are in Punjab and the rest outside for they are very enterprising people and several of them abroad. If one has to manage and incorporate the diversity of Sikhism and the Sikhs in the Indian society, it is necessary to have secularism as a guiding principle.

Third, Indian history is replete with contrary impulses. There have been references to Buddhists being persecuted by Hindu rulers. It is a historical truth that Buddhism disappeared from the country of its birth and the great Mahayana texts re-entered India through Tibet. Hindus were persecuted by Muslim rulers. However, bigotry co existed with secular traditions. If there was an intolerant Aurangzeb, then there was also an enlightened Akbar. Aurangzeb's own brother - Dara Shikoh was a Sufi and he consorted with Hindus and was interested in Hindu philosophy.

The British, it is well known, instigated communal Hindu Muslim riots. They established community based electoral constituencies, and encouraged what was known as the pentangular cricket matches where there were Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and so on who formed different teams. The objective was to divide communities even among themselves through the medium of cricket. On the other hand, the British also ensured strict application of the law against rioters and riotous situation. They were very

Legal interpretations by the courts in India have been extremely expansive and they have not tried to interpret the words “socialist” and “secular” narrowly.

Dissent in a democracy must not only be tolerated but should be encouraged. Democracy is the only way to manage the immense diversity of India. State and the governing elite must practice secularism and impartiality must constantly be displayed.

necessary for them to control law and order situation at the same time. Civil servants were personally expected to observe secular practices like inter dining, maintaining good relations with community notables and take part in festivals etc.

What are the provisions in the Indian Constitution, addressing the concerns of minority communities in India? The Indian Constitution, like any other constitution represents the basic law of the land. It represents the hopes and aspirations of the people and is the touchstone for interpreting both - earlier and subsequent laws. It is a live document responding to changes in the socio economic circumstances and has been continuously amended.

Phrases of “socialist” and “secular” were later added by the 42nd Amendment in 1976 which has a sad history. It was brought in after the emergency declared by Indira Gandhi in June of 1975. The basic intention was not to bring in really the addition of socialist and secular, but to amend Article 352 of the Constitution relating to proclamation of emergency.

Legal interpretations by the courts in India

have been extremely expansive and they have not tried to interpret these words narrowly. Later rulings of the Supreme Court have ruled that the Preamble of Indian Constitution encapsulates - the basic structure of the Constitution. This means democracy and secularism among other things mentioned in the Preamble are today inalienable parts of the constitution and they can be invoked to interpret all other provisions of the Constitution including the Fundamental Rights of the citizens and the Directive Principles of State Policy.

There are specific provisions in the Indian Constitution which pertain to or embrace secularism. Article 14, equality before law, Article 15 and 16, no discrimination on grounds of religion, Article 19, freedom of speech and expression, assembly, association, movement, practice of any profession or occupation; Articles 25 to 28, freedom of conscience, free profession, practice and propagation of religion, maintaining institutions and managing religious affairs, no compulsion to pay taxes for such institutions, no religious instruction in state educational institutions. Article 44 which is a Directive Principle, state must endeavour to secure a uniform civil code for all citizens. Article 51A which is not generally noticed relates to the fundamental duties of the citizen. One of the fundamental duties of the citizens is to promote harmony transcending religious diversities.

So, what is the essence of Indian Secularism? Dr Radhakrishnan arguing with the principle of Hindu Logic said that Secularism does not reject “an unseen spirit” or “the relevance of religion” or

“exalt irreligion” or “make secularism a positive religion” or let the state “assume divine prerogatives”. But what it approves is, religious impartiality or comprehension and forbearance in national and international life. This is the essence of Indian secularism, religious impartiality, comprehension, forbearance in national and international life.

On democracy, the question that also needs to be asked is: is democracy restricted only to the regular holding of elections? This is where the defects arise. In India, there is no right of recall and therefore most legislators do not feel responsible towards the electorate once they are elected. Second, there is no internal democracy within the political parties; they avoid holding organisational elections. Third, there is a practice of dynastic succession in India, which dilutes the principles of democracy.

What conclusions be arrived at on the practice of democracy and secularism in India? Dissent therefore in a democracy must not only be tolerated but should be encouraged. Democracy is the only way to manage the immense diversity of India.

After independence, the Parliament of Singapore approved administration of the Muslim Law Act which covers limited autonomy for Muslims, especially in matters relating to family, religious laws for example divorce, marriage and inheritance laws.

State and the governing elite must practice secularism and impartiality must constantly be displayed.

MOHAMED IMRAN TAIB

The general sentiment of most of the Muslims in Singapore is: It is not that there is need to secularise the state in order to be modern, but one needs a secular state to be better Muslims. How does the secular state in Singapore functions and how does it respond to the religious politics, meaning the interaction between the different religious groups? Muslims in Singapore constitute about 14.9 percent of the total population of 4 million of which 3.2 million are local born. Muslims are generally Sunni, practicing the Shafi school of thought. Historically, they are part of bigger Malay until freed from the British control in 1963 and gaining independence in 1965.

What is the government policy towards religion in Singapore? The government has always maintained a secular position while not denying a role for the religious groups in offering public opinion, feed back and advice. For example on building a casino in Singapore, the government asked the advice of various religious groups as well as on their position on maintaining article 377A which is the law of the homosexuality in Singapore. By secularism, the government means a non-partisan approach, although definitely not a non interventionist approach towards managing the various religious communities in Singapore. Article 15 of the Singapore Constitution acknowledges religious freedom as a fundamental liberty for all Singaporeans.

With regard to Muslims in Singapore, the

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government practices what could be called limited legal pluralism. Partly this was a legacy of the British system carried forward from the ordinance of the Mohammedan law act. After independence, the Parliament approved administration of Muslim Law Act which covers limited autonomy for Muslims, especially in matters relating to family, religious laws for example divorce, marriage and inheritance laws. There is Shariah which administers the above; there is also a Presidential Council for Minority Right, which ensures that minority rights are not discriminated. The Council also plays a key role in appointing different religious leaders to the Presidential Council for Religious Harmony. This Presidential Council for Religious Harmony advises the government on matters relating to maintenance of religious harmony in Singapore. It also makes recommendations on restraining orders for any group or individual that may incite or instigate or encourage any enmity or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill will among the various religious communities in Singapore.

More importantly, the Religious Harmony Act, passed in 1985 is a clear commitment to secularism. The intent of this act was clear and three fold: first to keep the religion and politics separate; second to ensure moderation and toleration; and third

to keep the religious leaders in line because the Singapore Government understood that religion can be used as a great rallying sentiment whenever there are certain grievances in society.

How has the government of Singapore dealt with religious diversity? Two phases can be observed in government's approach on this question. The early phase, particularly post independence, under the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew, the former Prime Minister, was characterised by fear and control, where overt religious expressions were generally kept out of the public sphere. For example, the use of loud speakers for Muslim azan was banned. Various mechanisms were introduced and contacts between different religious groups were only kept to ceremonies.

Much of this over arching fear and feeling of vulnerability on the state's part had to do with the historical baggage where religious potential as a powerful rallying point causing public disturbances, riots and anti state movement. Also, especially in the 1970's and 80's, with the rise of global religious resurgence, particularly the rise of Christian Right and Neo conservatism movement overseas, it had an impact on Singapore. Suddenly there was an increasing number of people converting to this charismatic, evangelical mega churches movement and then promoting an exclusivist and antagonistic views towards other religions. Similarly, amongst the Muslims, there was the emergence of the Daulah movement in the 70's and 80's, which carries a certain fundamentalist ideology such as the establishment of the Islamic State and calls for the Islamisation

of the society. The above factors have created a reaction among the government's part in wanting to keep all the religious groups separate and minimal contact between each other.

However, post-September 11, there is a major shift in government's approach towards interactions between different religious groups in the public sphere. The government today is more willing to discuss difficult issues publicly and adopt more consultative approach with various religious groups as well as promoting healthy engagement between the different religious groups. For example, the inter-racial confidence circle in 2002 at the grass root level, and the unveiling of the declaration of religious harmony in 2003, in which the civil society groups pledge their allegiance to maintain Singapore as a secular state. The setting of inter religious harmony circle encourages different religious leaders to come together and dialogue. The Community Engagement Programme in 2006 released grants for any civil society group to conduct inter faith dialogue in public sphere.

Despite this nuanced approach towards managing religious politics in Singapore, the government's hallmark of close scrutiny, interventionist surveillance and ultra sensitivity to internal security consensus has not loosened. In fact one can argue, that post 9/11, this surveillance is more pronounced.

What are the Muslims reactions within this framework of a secular state? Firstly, accepting secularism as the basis of nationhood in Singapore is a non issue for all Muslims. This is because Muslims are a minority and have accepted the reality from independence from Malaysia in 1965. Those Muslims who remained in Singapore have accepted the reality that they have to live in a non majority secular state governed by a dominant Chinese group.

Secondly, most Singaporeans have seen how the system has worked to their advantage. In other words, it is wrong to assume that being a minority; Muslims do not have the bargaining power in a secular state. In fact, Singapore government has been accommodative; for example, the booming halal food sector in Singapore, because the government wants to give Muslims more choices in having food.

There is a third category - a small insignificant minority which completely rejects secularism and wants to establish and not accept specifically the current social order. They have organised themselves under Jamia Islamia and want to establish some kind of an Islamic state.

It is also interesting to note that that the assets of the Muslims in Singapore, through the development of the Waqf institution, numbers in billions annually. This has been used to administer various aspects of Muslim life successfully and the Muslims in Singapore have also seen the government's willingness to climb down on anti Muslim elements in society. So this has given confidence among the Muslims in Singapore

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that the secular state works for them.

However, there is a small, but significant minority who accept secularism partially. They harbour a utopian view of Islam that it is the be end and solution to all problems. Two conclusions can be made about this group. Firstly they are leaders, who in the early 70's and 80's, were swept by the rising tide of Islamic resurgence movement which carries the fundamentalist ideas. Secondly, their anti secularism attitude and stance could be termed as textual fundamentalism; they just merely repeat clichés and slogans about Islam being an alternative to secularism. The real side of them is that they still want to participate in secular system; many of them are working with the government in various matters particularly in counselling terrorists under the Jamati Islamia detainees and these people are also working with the government in promoting inter religious dialogues.

There is a third category - a small insignificant minority which completely rejects secularism who wants to establish and not accept specifically the current social order. They have organised themselves under Jamia Islamia and want to establish

some kind of an Islamic state. The government's approach to the above groups is interesting. For those who reject secularism in total, particularly the Jamia Islamia, it is clear that the government just use the instruments of law to detain them and to just keep them out of public. At the same time, the government use the second group in a sense of buying them over to counsel the JI detainees and making them work with the state in enfranchising them further in Singapore.

Democracy is a separate issue that requires a separate treatment because the problems of democracy is not a problem of religious politics or other issues including the loosening of some of the state's over bearing presence on all aspects of the society, generating more space for civil society groups and not using State instruments to curtain or decimate political opponents etc. With regard to the State's treatment of minority Muslims in Singapore, it has been largely fair and well.

DR.YUDI LATIF

We have to stop questioning the compatibility of Islam and democracy. Countries, which have a big Muslim population, have been practicing some form of democracy, for example, Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, India and Turkey. It is a historical fact that Islam is compatible with democracy. The real question is not whether Islam is compatible with democracy, but what kind of democracy will serve better for the prosperity and welfare of the people? I think someone may still be in doubt about the authenticity of Muslim professing democracy if it is related to the

position of Muslim minority like in India and may be in Singapore. May be they profess democracy because of the pragmatic consideration. Democracy benefits the minority; Indonesian case is important in showing that even in the majority position, Muslim population can be fitted with the culture of democracy.

Islam has been continuously inter linked, integrated in the development of religion and politics of Indonesia. In the time when a corporate life, a la western Europeans did not exist in Indonesia, the religious community provided the sole agents in responding to the challenges of colonialism. So the magnitude of the religious community was strong; simultaneously, thanks to the introduction of western type of colonial education, most of the Indonesian elite began to expose the western culture of democracy. The idea of foundation of Indonesia, Islam in one space is based on Tauheed which oblige human beings to pursue human solidarity. The doctrine of Tauheed imply that the equality of human being before God, as a consequence there is equality among human beings.

The belief that democracy should be implemented in Indonesia reverts back to the 1930s when Cokroaminoto, the grand leader of Islamic Union, stated that

democracy should be applied in the modern Indonesia. He said that if Muslim understand and are determined to uphold Islamic teaching, they should live as true democrat and true socialist. Second, Sukarno the first Indonesian President, also used to underline that for Islam to be true, Islam nation state stood as guardians of all. He said Islam is Rahamatullah, that nation state stood as guardians of all. Mohammed Atta also underlined the quality of democracy and how Indonesia could develop a social people and he believed that Islamic ethics, Islamic values was quite comfortable with the value of egalitarianism, the value of liberty and equality and fraternity of the democracy. Finally, Mohammed Nasir, leader of the Islamic Party, said Islam is democratic and anti anarchy and mob, anti absolutism, anti authoritarianism and totalitarianism. It is interesting that Mohammed Nasir also strongly opposed the so called Daru Islam movement using violence as a means to establish the so-called Islamic State in Indonesia.

The Indonesian Constitution of 1945 defines the panchashila the five principles of Indonesia. The first principle is the belief in one god; surely this is a compromise arrangement for those who struggled for the nation state in the early independence of Indonesia and for those who struggled for the secular state of Indonesia. The synthesis is giving the Muslims a compensation by emphasizing the first principle of Indonesian philosophy.

Islam was strong in appealing to the masses but thankfully, the powerful existence of the intelligentsia in the early independence of

During the Suharto regime - from 1966 until 1998, democracy was completely devastated in Indonesia. It was during this phase that Nurcholish Madjid emerged as an outstanding scholar of Islam.

The issue is not really whether secularism and Islam, democracy and Islam are compatible or not. Rather it is the connection between religion and politics in the age of globalisation.

Indonesia helped in making Islam not as the basis of state. Thus Indonesia assumed a moderate position. Indonesia is not secular state but also not religious state, not Islamic state. Indonesia still believes in the value of religions as the ethical basis of the state, meaning there is no such clear separation between religion and state. Because the first principle of state is the belief in god.

During the Suharto regime - from 1966 until 1998, democracy was completely devastated. It was during this phase Nurcholish Madjid emerged as an outstanding scholar of Islam. He distanced himself from the old Muslim politicians who struggled for Islamic party or Islamic state. He began to promote the doctrine of Islam. The concern is Islamic values rather than Islamic party emphasising the value of public stability rather than Islamic political party.

In the contemporary Indonesia, if one tries to explain through Robert Dahl, democracy include elected government, frequent and fair election, freedom of expression and free access to information. All the above have been found in Indonesia however, the challenge of implementation of democracy is a reflection of various problems. First, the government is the guardian of constitution and moderating force - has increasingly

become a symbol of brinkmanship between forces. Because of the political pragmatism, sometimes the government begins to play games with the radical elements of the society in such a way that the government is not the guardian of the constitution.

Second, democratic institutions are still weak and need further development. So the transformation from the authoritarian to the post authoritarian state in Indonesia is the transformation from the state of authoritarianism to the state of authority. In the state of weak authority there is a room for anarchy and fundamentalism.

To conclude, the drawback of Indonesian democracy is the weak state. When the state is weak there is room to manoeuvre for the identity politics and radical groups to express themselves in the public sphere. History saw the function of intelligentsia in bringing the value of harmony, value of tolerance and value of inter culture dialogue. Cross culture fertilization is important in making the diversity of Indonesia can remain under the value of harmony and tolerance.

ADIL MEHDI

One can compare the principles of constitution theoretically but what is important is how the constitution applies to unique social, political, historical, demographic situations. In some places, Muslims are in minority and in other places as in the case of Indonesia, they are in majority. Comparing the constitutions then will be like comparing chalk and cheese.

While the principles of Indian Constitution

are similar to those in Europe and North America, the important question that needs to be raised is: how come there is a problem of radical Islam there? Each country, even within the country, demographical distribution of population has a unique situation when it comes to radical Islam or terrorism. While suggesting that Indian Constitution is modern and secular and guarantees rights of people, which is also seen in other constitutions around the world, one has to be careful.

Muslims in Singapore is a unique case because of its successful attempt at social engineering; its attempt to mix the three - Chinese, Indian and Muslims populations together in schools and in neighbourhoods. Therefore, it acts on different principles, so the constitution there although is secular, also come with a carefully controlled social engineering.

DR. CANAN ATILGAN

Growing radicalism is linked to increasing injustice and changing perceptions under the conditions of globalisation. The issue is not really whether secularism and Islam, democracy and Islam are compatible or not. Rather it is the connection between religion and politics in the age of globalisation.

There is a growing power of faith in people's lives; as a consequence, it also

reflect in their political preferences all over the world and not only among the Muslims. A survey conducted in India among Hindus highlighted that 30 percent of them told, they had become more religious. It is a position of people; may be they feel they are losing in process of globalisation and in desperation supplanted religion. Thus, it is a reaction challenging the existing notions of secularism and democracy.

Another survey conducted by Pew Institute Global Attitudes survey concluded that at the global level, the majority support secularism as a system but the intensity of this support is declining. This is a challenge. No system can be presented as a model a secular system to all Muslims. Muslims in different countries are experiencing different secularisms or different range of secularisms.

Why are the Muslims angry? It is a political emotion, and an expression of feeling desperate. The UNSC is very fast in issuing resolutions for Iraq, but very slow when it comes to the Palestinian question or other problems which concern the Muslim or the Muslim world. They are also angry because in their perception the Islamic religious identity is being eroded by globalisation which in their perception is nothing but western dominated modernisation.

The War on Terror has given the impression that Islam is under attack around the world. The conflict in Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine is seen as a part of this attack against the Muslims at the global level. The Muslims are concerned as their sense of belonging to a global Muslim community may be higher than for a

Radicalism, understood as response of powerless people, questioning the dominant order, underlines that it cannot be eliminated soon.

Islamic Radicalism does not take place in a political and social vacuum. Hence, structural factors need to be looked into. Issues such as western imperialism and Hindutva terrorism should also be contextualized.

Christian to a global Christian community. So there might be a stronger feeling of solidarity.

Organised Islamism is representing an alternative political discourse which is national but at the same time global promising the people what cultural or political liberation from the so called western hegemony, promising them a social justice in the world and to the relief of humiliation. This Islamist movement to an extent has captured the populace.

Now to the other major question – who speaks for the Muslims? There have been secular movements, some reformist, and some fundamentalist. There is a parallel struggle, which is also a result of globalisation.

The solution for Islamic radicalism can not be promoting a different version of Islam or a special version of Islam which would be compatible with some defined values of that specific national identity. Radicalism understood as response of powerless people, questioning the dominant order underlines that it can not be eliminated soon.

LALIT MANSINGH

What is imperative today is to find out why Muslims are angry. They are angry, but is this anger related to the causes of anger and two, is this anger helping their cause. Today, the Muslim anger is resulting in more Muslims being killed by Muslims than non Muslims. So what is this anger doing to Muslims? It is hurting themselves, because strong countries can look after their interests.

There cannot be another 9/11 in the United States. So what is happening is Muslims are killing Muslims every day in Iraq and Afghanistan. And Shias and Sunnis are killing each other. This is the situation today within the Islamic world. What is the rationale behind this kind of expression of anger? Is it possible to find a model in which this anger can be channelised so that Muslims can better their position?

DISCUSSION

- There are political and structural factors behind the sense of helplessness which is then often translated into very violent reactions. Islamic Radicalism do not take place in a political and social vacuum, hence these structural factors need to be looked into. Issues such as western imperialism and Hindutva terrorism should also be contextualized while answering the above question.

- The Indian Constitution may say many consist many good aspects in theory but in actual practice the situation is entirely different. From a Muslim perspective, while talking about the lofty principles of the Indian Constitution, one should bring the

empirical reality into discussions.

- Why the United Nations and Security Council are not so prompt as far as the Palestinians problems are concerned, their rights are concerned, why they are not working against the persecution of the Palestinians? To answer this question, one should understand the conflict between the superpower and the most democratic countries within Islamic societies. Second, when the West talks about democracy, why are not they giving lessons of democracy to the sheikhdoms and the kingdoms within Islamic societies?

- When there is a Naxal problem it is identified due to of economic disparities; however, whenever there is a problem in Kashmir or Punjab, they are called as Sikh militancy and Muslim terrorism. This should not be the approach.

- The structural deficit of Indian democracy and secularism could be shared by many others which is what led Galbraith to call Indian democracy as a functional anarchy. There are undoubtedly numerous loopholes. If, theoretically, one is to plug all the loopholes one would at best replicate a western liberal democratic model as apart from a post colonial democratic model of

India. And phrase the same question which the western democracy is facing, they are also spawning terrorism. It is paradoxical, that these structural deficits of Indian democracy and secularism as compared with the western model which enables Indian democracy and secularism to make adjustments with popular sentiments of social groups in a way.

- There is no incompatibility or contradiction between Islam and democracy but the question is incompatibility between radical Islam and democracy. Radical Islamists say they do not believe that democracy is Islamic. The mainstream notion of democracy has two important problems - holding of elections and the people who will exercise power will come through the verdict of the ballot box. There is no contradiction between Islam and this form of democracy.

- However the question arise when it comes to governing; the society has to be governed by the rule of law. Law will be made by the people who have got the majority's vote, where the contradiction arises. It is not the question of who rules, it is whether the rules made by the democratically elected people are in a contradiction or conflict with some higher rules.

- The secular character of the Indian Constitution is not a gift or a consequence of independence struggle. It is over centuries of co existence between different communities in India. Starting much before the Arab and Muslim invasion from the Northwest started, the communities lived together. The Indian history did not impose

The fundamental question to be raised is: what are the processes and how, over the last 50 years, have the Muslims of India come to accept secularism as a working principle, as a principle of peaceful co-existence with other groups?

India's democracy is unique in the sense that it is a democracy of dialogue. Many may consider vote bank politics as essentially bad. But perhaps, it provides space for caste, communal and regional groups to work within the system.

any version of the secularism on its masses and therefore all social groups have been free to interpret secularism in a manner that it suits.

- Therefore, the fundamental question to be raised is: what are the processes and how over the last 50 years, the Muslims of India have come to accept secularism as a working principle, as a principle of peaceful co-existence with the other groups? What are these processes?

- In Indonesia, there are two processes - the Jamaa Islamia and the Lashkar Jihad process. There is no problem with the Jamaa Islamia; the state can handle that. Community can handle. However the problem is with the Lashkar Jihad phenomenon which vitiates the entire Indonesian society.

- Radical violence in different provinces highlights the lack of institutional performances. Military was selling guns in Malepu and other provinces and the same goes for the police. The institutions need to be strengthened in these regions. Traditional institutions in Indonesia is equally strong, diverse and plural, as in the case if India, but the state, political and

administrative institutions actually make the difference. Maybe India and Indonesia can work on these institutions and decentralizations.

- There is an obsession of linking radical Islam or Islamism with 9/11, as if the world didn't exist before 9/11. World's encounter with Muslim anger, radical Islam and Islamism dates much back. Second, it is terribly wrong to say that all Muslims are terrorists or to attach this tag of radical Islam to any and every Muslim. But at the same time, one has to recognize that there is a problem over here. So, when ULFA kills people or when Maoists kill people they are doing it from an ideation perspective, they think it is right to do this because they believe in a particular ideology. So, when Islamists give vent to their anger that is also ideology to them. It just so happens is that their ideology is linked to their interpretation of Islam. So, one cannot de-link Islam from their practice of terror.

- The biggest difference between the Indian Constitution and other liberal constitutions of the West is – Indian constitution is extremely elastic. There have been abuses; but the Indian society, its institutions and even the constitution responded positively to these abuses.

- India's democracy is also unique in the sense, it is a democracy of dialogue. Many may consider vote bank politics as essentially bad. Perhaps, it gives the space for the caste, communal and regional groups to work within the system. Perhaps, it's a strength and need not necessarily be seen in a negative way.

- Undoubtedly, Muslims are angry. So are many social groups at the global level. What is important in answering this questions, how do these angry groups respond? Whether that response is acceptable to the rest of humanity? One has every right to be angry; however, it does not give anyone a right to respond in a particular fashion causing colossal human and material damages.

- There is anger - not only amongst the Muslims but also amongst people who are concerned about international politics about what is happening around. However, the political institution, legal processes do not come into the picture immediately. Social and cultural aspect is extremely significant and cannot be constructed over a short span of time. Diversity of values constitute oneself and give a sense of belonging.

SESSION III

SAFEGUARDING MINORITY RIGHTS: JUDICIARY & THE RULE OF LAW

DHIRENDRA SINGH

The monograph prepared by IPCS and KAF is just the beginning of a dialogue which is sure to become richer as we progress. We now come to the question of safeguarding minority rights through the process of the institutional mechanism of the judiciary and the rule of law. The Indian Constitution which has been characterized as a social document has provisions which relate to fundamental rights and directive principles which go beyond many of these concepts of individual rights and transform them into what is best and good for society at large. But there has to be some institutional mechanism which would ensure that the state performs its tasks well and that society moves in the right direction and the institutional mechanism that we devise for ourselves is to hand over this guardianship to the higher judiciary.

The participants will include eminent Indians who have deliberated on these issues and ten other distinguished guests from Southeast Asia. Initial remarks will be made by Indian presenters about the Indian case, followed by a detailed discussion.

One of the major exercises undertaken during the making of the constitution was on minority rights, which were regarded as important because of a diverse, multi-cultural Indian society. In fact, the constituent assembly had an advisory committee, chaired by Sardar Vallabhai Patel, which looked at both fundamental rights and rights of minorities. These rights,

It is the absence of any possibility of a 'permanent' minority and majority in India, across time and space that has been among the several reasons why democracy and secularism have survived in India.

whether concerned with religion, education, culture, language, script, etcetera, have all been provided for in the constitution. This session will evaluate the role of the judiciary in upholding minority rights and how the processes of the rule of law have looked at these provisions.

PROF. ASHWINI RAY

I agree with the basic proposition of the IPCS-KAF monograph and that is an analysis of the Supreme Court judgments since independence, which indicate that the judicial system has upheld the constitutional vision of a secular India. Ours was a secular state with a secular constitution; but this secularism and democracy, modelled along the European liberal democratic tradition had its own nuances. While it was structured to be a post-colonial democracy where institutions of governance would be based on liberal democratic ideals, they did not function the same way as in their place of origin. This was due to the fact that historically, we were different from them and therefore, required a different set of democratic and secular institutions.

While the constitution and many of the constitutional judgments, particularly at the apex level, have provided for minority

rights; we have to be extremely cautious about India because whatever generalizations one may draw with regard to India, the contrary is also true. We have produced the largest number of billionaires and resolved our food security, yet 25 per cent of our population goes to bed hungry. While most of the apex level judgements have generally conformed to the requirements of a secular state, the concept of the 'secular' state itself remains as ambivalent as the concept of 'minorities'. However, at a very basic level, a secular state can be said to be characterized by moderation, accommodation and tolerance of diversities.

The concept of minorities however, remains completely ambiguous. The Supreme Court, in one of its judgements, has spoken of 'minorities' as they have been defined by the International Court of Justice and that is, that a minority is one whose members differ from the rest of the population on three counts – race, language and religion. In the Kerala Education Bill of 1957, Chief Justice S.R. Das defined a minority as less than 50 per cent of the population, based on three criteria – linguistic, religious and cultural. The Best Bakery case, and the Bilkis and Shah Bano cases, are all instances in which broadly, this version of a secular state has been underscored and underwritten at the highest level.

We do however, have our democratic deficits. In the fourteen general elections so far, for instance, we have never been able to elect a representative majority with representatives with popular votes. What we have had instead, are governments by majority of seats, not majority of electoral

votes. An electoral system based on the parliamentary Westminster model, applied in a multi-party system, has created these deficits; yet the basic components of democracy - periodic elections (howsoever inadequate), freedom of speech, independence of the judiciary, citizens' rights, and relatively free and fair elections, have all been part of Indian democracy.

On the issue of enforcing minority rights, Articles 28 and 29 come into play because in the Indian political context, minorities mean religious minorities. However, in today's democratic politics, the situation is far more complex. In the midst of the Babri Masjid episode, VP Singh unleashed the Mandal Commission and the whole politics shifted from a Hindu-Muslim polarization to caste polarization among the Hindus. Indian politics can be manipulated in various directions, in which case it becomes crucial to understand the concept of minorities to understand the Indian democratic polity.

It is the absence of any possibility of a 'permanent' minority and majority in India, across time and space that has been among the several reasons why democracy and secularism have survived in India. In the Indian situation, it is not always possible to enforce the fundamental aspect of democracy of a minimum set of rights

encompassing all individuals, since in India, minority and majority vary and differ across time and space, due to the multitude ascriptive identities each one of us has. The fact that at particular points of time and in certain circumstances, everyone is a potential minority, and potential majority, has enabled Indian democracy to avoid the pitfall of the structural problems of democracy, which is that majority rule often degenerates into majoritarian rule. In India, this has provided space for political negotiations for democratic decision-making, rather than adhering to the strict principles of liberal democracy, based on the rights of the individual.

While the state in the Nehruvian era, remained equidistant from most religions; in Mrs. Gandhi's time, this version of secularism underwent a transformation, and the state became equally close to all religions, evidenced by the subsidy given to the Haj pilgrims, provisions made for Allahabad's Kumbh Mela, among others. Also, at the time that Islamic radicalism was becoming a globally important factor; Indian politics conjunctionally, faced the problem of coalition politics, weak governments, political parties breaking down and all political parties based on one or the other of India's many ascriptive identities of religion – whether the TDP, Ganaparishad Assam, the Bahujan Samaj party (caste-based), Lalu Yadav's caste-based RJD, and the Shiv Sena – caste and language based.

Therefore, one cannot either underscore or overstate the exceptionalism and uniqueness of Indian democracy or the independence of the Indian judiciary; these remain

In the case of India, its dysfunctionality and weak institutions leave enough scope to politically negotiate situations, depending on not only what the law states, but also the cultural sensitivities of people.

The ethnic conflict in Mindanao has been seen by many outside Philippines as a conflict between Christians and Muslims. However, the conflict is not so much a Christian-Muslim conflict, as it is a conflict of nations versus the state.

suspect. In fact, in many cases, the judiciary has been submissive to the executive when the executive was strong. Beyond a point, a triumphalist portrayal of the judiciary or our democracy can become an exaggerated version of reality. In the case of India, its dysfunctionality and weak institutions leave enough scope for political negotiations of various conflicting situations without necessarily the fine prints of a liberal democratic structure. It makes it possible to politically negotiate situations depending on not only what the law states, but also the cultural sensitivities of people.

On the question of what lessons might the Indian experience have to offer to others; the research group should compare two or three variables, for instance, western, eastern, and perhaps Southeast Asian liberal democratic structures, which could possibly provide policy options. My attempt has been only to guard against stereotypical temptations to generalize. There are two or three important perceptions which have now gained political currency in the country: (a) democratic institutions are in a state of decay and civil society therefore, must step in and new social movements emerge to compel public institutions to do things

which institutionally they may not always be inclined to.

It is therefore, imperative that a reform of the system be undertaken. Our criminal procedure code, police code, civil service code – are all products of the colonial rule and attempts to change these, haven't accomplished much. If anything, we've only witnessed a degeneration of these institutions. Therefore, there is no way we can avoid reforms if the fundamental rights of the citizens have to be protected.

DR. AMINA RASUL

When the law that has already been written violates peoples' rights, it becomes a major issue for those of us who question what the state is doing in the name of state security. Therefore, theoretically, the rule of law is crucial to upholding minority rights. States must ensure that authority is exercised not to marginalize minorities, but empower them by respecting their rights. In the Philippines, the most well-known case of minority rights violations relates to the Muslim tribes or the Bangsamoro.

There are several ethnic minority groups in the Philippines, with at least thirteen of these being predominantly Muslim, with scores of other indigenous people who are Animeese, Roman Catholic etc. The ethnic conflict in Mindanao has been seen by many outside Philippines as a conflict between Christians and Muslims. However, the conflict is not so much a Christian-Muslim conflict, as it is a conflict of nations versus the state.

To understand what is going on in the minority communities of Muslim Mindanao, we must go 600 years back and look at the autonomous sovereign Muslim states that were in the Philippines before the Spaniards came. If the Spaniards had not come in 1521, we, alongside Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia would be Muslim dominant. Unfortunately, the entry of the Spaniards changed the situation in the Philippines. With the encroachment of the Spanish colonizers, they were able to capture most of what is now known as Philippines and in places where the Muslim tribes had a stronghold (in Mindanao and the Mindanao communities), the Spaniards could not gain entry. Subsequently, the Spaniards formalized treaties with the Muslim sovereign states, or Islamic sultanates. This was carried forward by the Americans when they colonized the Philippines islands. The fact that they entered into treaties and agreements with the Sultanates, proves the present contention of Muslim communities that they were sovereign states to begin with, independent of the Philippines.

When the Americans came and decided to grant independence to the Philippines, it included all of these autonomous sovereign

Islamic sultanates and this has been the basis of the fight of the two liberation fronts – the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) of Misuari and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) of Salamat Hashim. ‘Sovereignty’ therefore, is the major reason for the conflict between the Moro nations and the state. Assuming that the Moro nations are now part of the Philippines, we have gone from being a sovereign nation to being politically dominated through what is known as ‘inferiorization’ – being treated as second class citizens in our own homeland.

The acute hopelessness that we feel under the present majority government is the reason why the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) of Misuari and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front of the late Salamat Hashim have been able to mobilize the support of many Muslim clans and recruited thousands of young Muslims to join in the war against the Philippines state. The MNLF, during the time of Marcos, was the only liberation front that organized the Muslims to fight against the state. With the knowledge that they could no longer gain independence; under Misuari, they concluded two peace agreements, with their sight firmly set on the ultimate goal of autonomy.

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Before Marcos enforced the martial law in the 1970s, Muslim provinces like my province of Sulu had better access to electricity than for instance the province of the current President Macapagal Arroyo; yet since those in Sulu were a minority, they were subjected to neglect by the government. The reason Sulu had better access to electricity and water as compared

India provides for the maximum constitutional guarantees for safeguarding minority rights. A feature unique to the Indian Constitution is that of the 'personal law'.

to other provinces was that it was the number one exporter of sea weeds and abaca or hemp, had international trading relations with Sabah and sometimes also with Singapore. Therefore, we were prosperous and it did not matter that we were a minority because we relied on our own resources. Martial law altered all that. The state started bombarding the Muslim provinces and used the military to govern our communities. With the bombardment of our provinces in cities, three things happened – the loss of physical infrastructure, capital flight, and brain drain. We are yet to recover from the devastating effect of these three factors. Therefore, it is not surprising that the situation in Muslim Mindanao has deteriorated over the last few decades.

Having realized that the 1996 peace agreement has been a failure, the MILF is now trying to negotiate a peace agreement with the government. Misuari who had been jailed by the government is now free on bail. It is a matter of great wonder that a person who had been charged with rebellion and has been held captive since 2001 without bail, has suddenly been released after seven years. The timing of his release is peculiar because it has coincided with the period when MILF negotiations with the government are in serious trouble. The GRP, the Government and the MILF peace

processes are being facilitated by the Malaysians, who have done a very good job in ensuring that the ceasefire agreements hold.

Autonomy and independence, even though at the heart of our struggle, seems almost impossible to achieve. Therefore, the option that is now being investigated is federalism. There is a feeling that there must be a loosening of control by the central government.

The reason why there is no effective autonomy in Muslim Mindanao is because the central government, although it has granted political autonomy, continues to control what is now known as the autonomous region of Muslim Mindanao. For instance, the mayors, governors and other elected government leaders of Muslim Mindanao are required to go to Manila to the palace every month to try and get their budget releases, even though this is supposed to be given automatically. This has corrupted the governance processes in the autonomous region. What is happening now is that in order to be able to get your share of the budget, you will do whatever the palace wants, and if the palace wants you to provide the votes so that its candidates win, since you are in an area of conflict with very little transparency, this is easy to do. Many of the political leaders therefore, think that if we move towards a federalist option, the states of the Bangsamoro are unlikely to either be able to become a federal state or leverage its powers to have greater control over its resources and consequently greater control over its autonomy. These are some of the debates and concerns currently being

discussed with regard to the protection of the ethnic communities and minority rights in Philippines.

DR QAMAR AGHA

While Prof. Ray's presentation dealt with the history of the democratic movement in India, the civil rights movement and also the democracy deficit in the country; Dr. Rasul's paper gave us an excellent first hand account of the conflict between the Moros and the Philippines state. But I would like to add a little on the minorities in India. Our country provides for the maximum constitutional guarantees for safeguarding minority rights. A feature, unique to the Indian Constitution is that of the personal law. We have an Islamic law which one wouldn't find even in the Islamic world, governed by only one set of Islamic laws. The other minorities living in these countries are facing problems on this count.

The debate on the issue of minority rights started during the national movement itself when Gandhi and Nehru and the other leaders of the Indian National Congress decided to establish India as a democratic

and secular state. In fact, way back in 1928, Motilal Nehru brought out the first minority report, in which he spoke of the need for the protection of minorities. Again, in 1945, Sir Teg Bahadur Sapru's report on minorities talked of establishing a Minority Commission at that time. Besides this there were several statements issued by the Congress party and other national leaders, at a time when the movement for Pakistan was gaining momentum. The promises made by national leaders regarding minority rights during this period were very significant and one of the important reasons why a large number of Muslims did not migrate to Pakistan. The Indian constitution recognizes the multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-lingual character of the country and provides safeguards and protection of the rights of minorities.

Despite this however, there continue to remain problems. One of these is lack of political will to ensure the protection of minority rights. The other major problem we face today is the rise of Islamic or religious fundamentalism not only in India, but in the entire region. Other problems commonly faced by minorities include unemployment and other economic problems. Despite this, one can safely conclude that the overall situation in India is much better than in many other countries.

An important issue that has largely been neglected and needs attention is the safeguarding of the aspirations, rights and beliefs of minorities within a minority, for instance, the Nirankaris within the Sikh community.

DISCUSSION

- An important issue that has largely been neglected and needs attention is the safeguarding of the aspirations, rights and beliefs of minorities within a minority, for instance, the Nirankaris within the Sikh community and the Ahmedias, among

Indian history is replete with instances where factors other than religion have served in a divisive manner. The creation of the Bangladesh Republic in 1971 is a quintessential example of this.

several others. The state, at least in India, is so sensitive to the feelings of minority communities that it is unlikely to give much consideration to minorities within a minority and instead, go along with the wishes of the majority within that minority community.

- It seems that we are overdoing the protection of minorities in our country. Today, everybody is only talking about minorities; especially as the elections draw nearer. As for minorities within a minority; I am not too sure whether the state can go down to such sub-levels. Secondly, it can be nobody's case that we do not need reforms in our system, especially in the police. Having said that however, it is important to remember that reforms cannot be imposed, but have to evolve over time. Lastly, I'd like to suggest to our colleagues from Southeast Asia that their countries must not follow the Indian judicial model, which unfortunately seems to have become very arrogant and interfering in the last few years.

- While it is important that minority rights be guaranteed and protected, it is just as important for minority communities to believe and be convinced that their rights are in fact being protected. A major drawback of our system has been a lack of accountability, that is, when things go

blatantly wrong, there seems no way of fixing accountability. Not only is this frustrating for the people, but they also begin to believe that this is in fact how things 'normally' work. This also negates the good that may be happening within the system and largely leads to often heard generalizations such as, there's blatant violation of laws (especially with regard to the police), the bureaucracy is inefficient, etcetera. Therefore, it is vital that there be far greater transparency within the system.

- The very idea of a secular state is how to restrict the transformation of the culture of the majority into the political culture. In Indonesia for instance, there are several public holidays for every religion. We have public holidays for Christians, Hindus, Buddhists and also for the Chinese minority. What is the policy of Indian state in this regard? Indonesia is in a peculiar situation. So far, the state has had no problems with regard to its religious minorities. In terms of inter-religious relations, the Indonesian state does not discriminate against the Christians or Hindus or Buddhists. In Indonesia the problem the state faces is in dealing with the splinter groups within the Islamic community – differences between the mainstream and splinter groups like the Ahmedias.

- A minority does not always mean religious minority. The problem with this rather narrow perception of who is a minority is that we tend to think only about religious minorities and particularly only the Muslims, and this is problematic. Minorities may be a majority in many parts of the country. For example, while Muslims are a

minority in India, they are a majority in Kashmir; likewise, Sikhs may be a minority in India, but they are a majority in Punjab; and Christians are a majority in Mizoram, Nagaland, and Meghalaya. The same is also true of linguistic minorities. Therefore, we need a much broader understanding of who a minority may be.

- Irrespective of the problems with the Indian judiciary, no one can deny the phenomenal role played by the Supreme Court and the National Human Rights Commission, in cases related to the Gujarat pogrom, which helped repose the faith of the minorities in the Indian judicial system.
- If we are concerned that minorities within minorities may be discriminated against or persecuted; we must ensure justice and better overall treatment of minorities to ensure better treatment of minorities within minorities. This can be seen in the case of Akalis in Punjab, whose political empowerment has led to a decline in the discrimination against the Nirankaris in Punjab.
- An important issue is identifying a

minority. In a particular context in India, at a particular point in time, religion may become the major dividing line. However, it may not be the dominant identity or fault line at all times in India's electoral democratic politics. Indian history is replete with instances where factors other than religion have served in a divisive manner. The creation of the Bangladesh Republic in 1971 is a quintessential example of this, wherein the Bengalis fought against the Punjabis, leading to the formation of the theocratic state in India's neighbourhood. It is difficult to identify one single identity as minority and majority in the Indian context. Therefore, it is vital that Indian citizens, in whichever part of the country they may live, must have a set of inviolable rights, irrespective of their ascriptive identities.

- Today we face a whole range of complex problems which are unlikely to be effectively resolved from the standpoint of a liberal democratic model of the west. The system therefore, needs immediate reforms because it is becoming increasingly unworkable. There is no reason why for instance, the 1857 Police Act, meant to fight the Sepoy Mutiny, should continue into the present day. But it is also important that the initiative for reform must come from within various communities and additionally, must be politically negotiated.

Even though normatively, there is a need for a uniform civil code; as long as the perception exists among large sections of minorities that such a code will be another imposition of majoritarian values and beliefs, it would do us well to be cautious on this count.

- While Hindu laws have been reformed, Muslim laws have not been touched. The state must intervene to take charge of society and serve the best interests of the largest number of people. To that extent, a common civil code serves the best interests of the largest number of people.

It is vital for any democratic society to have an active civil society, free media, and the liberty to express freely.

- Governments, particularly when they require various forms of coalitional support in a coalition situation, will be faced with situations that will require them to do things which are not in strict conformity with liberal democratic concerns. This however, is still more acceptable than leading minority communities to believe that they are being victimized and push them into directions which unfortunately other liberal states have done, by such things as banning the use of the turban, the hijab etc. Even though normatively, there is a need for a uniform civil code; as long as the perception exists among large sections of minorities that such a code will be another imposition of majoritarian values and beliefs, it would do us well to be cautious on this count.

- In the Philippines, the system stopped working when martial law destroyed the state's political structures. How can minority groups expect any rationality from the present political system if it does not work even for the majority? The New People's Army, which is the armed group of the Communists, is fighting the same bitter fight against the state as we are. They are not fighting for Muslim minorities, but peasants, who are by and large, the majority among all the different class structures in the country. We in the Muslim communities are looking at this dysfunctional state system and saying that there has got to be something better for us

– a political system that could safeguard our rights while still keeping us within the state. And since independence has more or less been ruled out (since it will not be allowed for by the present system), the next feasible alternative for us is federalism. Recently, the Senate passed a resolution (which has the support of 16 out of 24 Senators), calling for a national government by 2010 during the national elections – to convert the Congress into a constituent assembly, to facilitate a shift towards federalism. This is going to be a huge debate in the Philippines and the Muslim minority communities and other indigenous people must be given the opportunity to participate in the debate so that we can ensure that our rights are protected. The fear that we have is that the majority, which rules the congress, should not tinker with our constitution to deny us whatever small opportunities and rights that have been granted to us by the present constitution.

SESSION IV
PLURALISM,
EQUALITY, CIVIL
SOCIETY AND THE
MEDIA

THOMAS KNIRSCH

An article in the New Strait Times, one of the mainstream media organs in Malaysia, closely linked, if not part of UMNO – the ruling party, recently carried a report about how the Prime Minister’s Office in Malaysia had banned certain books on Islam, which included one of our publications – on Islam and pluralism. Despite attempts to find out reasons for the ban, we did not receive any reply. In addition, and quite surprisingly, there was hardly any media reaction to this blatant infringement of the right to freedom of expression. While the media and civil society should have spearheaded a movement against this, there was a deafening silence. It is vital for any democratic society to have an active civil

In terms of almost all social, economic and educational parameters, the Indian Muslims in general are one of the most vulnerable and marginalized communities in the country, large sections of which face various forms of discrimination by the wider society as well as elements within the state apparatus itself.

society, free media, and the liberty to express freely. The first presentation will address these issues and help us understand if there are downsides or lessons to be learnt from India, not only for Malaysia, but other Southeastern states as well.

DR. YOGENDRA SIKAND

It would be pertinent to offer a reading and critique of the IPCS-KAF report. The report is disappointing as it is replete with factual errors, and seems tendentious and one-sided. I say this on the basis of more than two decades of working on and writing about and doing field work among Muslims across India.

There are many other reasons for being disappointed with the report. Firstly, the issue of ‘radical Islam’ has been presented without examining the phenomenon in its wider social and political setting. Consequently, it is made to appear as if radicalism is inherent to Islam and Muslims, and therefore, the Indian Muslims (who they report quite correctly stresses are not involved in such things) are an exception to what is presumed to be an otherwise general rule. This assertion however, is not merited by the facts of the case. Secondly, there is no mention in the report of western imperialism - military, economic, political and cultural; America’s imperialistic offensives in many Muslim countries; Israeli occupation and brutalities; or in our own country – the menacing rise of an aggressively anti-Muslim Hindutva lobby as well as the phenomenon of state terrorism.

The phenomenon of Muslim radicalism

The Muslim-owned media, limited as it is and mainly in Urdu, has been increasingly ghettoized and for its part makes little or no effort to reach out to others.

must be seen at least in part, although of course not entirely so, as a response to these and other similar forms of oppression. However, unfortunately, the report takes no notice of these factors, as if these were also not forms of terrorism and as if only violence engaged in by Muslims can be termed as terrorism. The report makes a wonderful case of a very well functioning Indian democracy simply because the Constitution of India provides equal rights to all, we have a National Minorities Commission, some civil society groups have protested when Muslims have been slaughtered in anti-Muslim pogroms and because there are Muslims in Bollywood and in the Indian cricket team. The actual situation however, is vastly different and far more complicated than that.

The fact, as has also been so forcefully admitted by the government-appointed Sachar Committee, is that in terms of almost all social, economic and educational parameters, the Indian Muslims in general are one of the most vulnerable and marginalized communities in the country, large sections of which face various forms of discrimination by the wider society as well as elements within the state apparatus itself. There are literally tens of thousands of perfectly innocent and hapless Muslims, who have been slaughtered in cold blood by mobsters, by Hindutva groups often in

connivance with or at the instigation of top political leaders, police officers and bureaucrats from 1947 down to today. There are thousands of families of these hapless people who have received no justice at all and culprits behind these massacres have gone unpunished, some of them even having been rewarded by the state with senior posts etc. What we must ask in this context is what the judiciary has done to address this. These are several of the issues the report does not address.

The report's claim that India's foreign policy has been allegedly pro-Muslim and pro-Arab is misplaced, especially given today's context, with India's admission to American hegemony and its close links with Israel. There are other glaring factual errors in the report as well. The report's claim that the Indian Deobandis were heavily influenced by Saudi Wahabis is erroneous, since Wahabism and Deobandism are quite different and in many respects mutually opposed to each other. Deoband is described in the report as intolerant, but there is no mention of the fact that numerous Deobandi Ulema were in the forefront of the Indian freedom struggle, issuing fatwas for boycotting the British well before the Congress did; that they championed the cause of a united India and Hindu-Muslim relations and fiercely opposed the demands for partitioning India even when people like Gandhi had finally relented and agreed to the proposal. Equally erroneous is a statement in the report that Darseem Islami syllabus in the madarasas is a set of Sufi and polemical sectarian texts, penned by Ahmed Raza Khan Bareilvi.

On the question of Muslims, civil society

and pluralism, a few brief comments are in order. Firstly, in large sections of the so-called 'Indian' media (almost entirely owned and controlled by so-called upper class Hindus) and in the dominant western media, Muslims are talked about only in the context of some negative or sensational event or story, real or imaginary. Additionally, there are very few Muslims, as indeed other marginalized communities in India such as the dalits and the adivasis, who are part of the dominant, 'mainstream' Indian media. Muslim organisations have few if any links with this section of the media and often, their efforts to put across their views to this section of the media are deliberately ignored. The Muslim-owned media, limited as it is and mainly in Urdu, has been increasingly ghettoized and for its part makes little or no effort to reach out to others.

The same situation prevails in the Muslim publishing industry where issues related to religious identity, religion and communal controversies dominate the Muslim media, whereas issues such as social, economic, educational issues of the community are quite marginalised in the Muslim media itself. Only a few non-Muslim civil society groups have taken up issues specific to Muslims and the number of non-Muslim or secular NGOs working with Muslims is also

extremely limited. There are some inter-religious dialogue groups in India, but their work is very limited, mostly run by Christian missionaries or foreign-funded Catholic groups and their focus is more on the level of theological exchange and discussion, and it has not really emerged as a mass movement that takes up social, economic, educational, political issues.

Some of these civil society groups as well as bold non-Muslim media persons and a few such judges have rendered valuable service in highlighting the brutal violence unleashed on Muslims and have even demanded that the state take necessary action. While this is laudable, one needs to recognize that such efforts on the part of these civil society groups are often met with stiff opposition from Hindutva forces, from some elements within the state apparatus, as well as the general apathy and indifference from the state. Additionally, the various commissions that the state has appointed over the years on the problems of the Muslims, have been consigned to oblivion and the same seems to be happening with the Sachar Commission report, with the state consistently refusing to act on its recommendations.

As for pluralism, I agree with the report that there are in some senses more democratic spaces in India than in many Muslim countries. However, this does not take away from the fact that India's Muslims, in different parts of the country, suffer from multiple forms of discrimination from the wider society, from the state apparatus itself. It is undoubtedly important to recognize the positives of the Indian experiment with democracy, but one must also recognize

Democracy and pluralism in India are not finished products and that too unblemished. Rather, they are projects and processes that are still in the infancy, faced with innumerable challenges and threats.

The conflict has severely damaged social relations between the Thai Muslims and the Thai Buddhists who have been living as neighbours for centuries in southern Thailand.

that the dark side of the picture sometimes overwhelms the positives, at least as far as the experience of marginalised communities such as Muslims, dalits and adivasis are concerned.

Democracy and pluralism in India are not, contrary to what the report seems to suggest, finished products and that too almost unbelievably unblemished. Rather, they are projects and processes that are still in the infancy, faced with innumerable challenges and threats. There are struggles involving numerous contradictions and even violence – physical, symbolic, and structural – facing tremendous opposition from ruling elite at home and hegemonic powers abroad.

DR JARAN MALULEEM

This presentation will throw light on the problems in the southern part of Thailand and the experience of Muslims in a country where a majority are Buddhists. On the question of the media in Thailand, we found that with regard to Thailand's Muslim community, it has tended to focus on Southern Thailand and the violence that was propagated by a small group of Muslims in the area. However, there has been far less representation of the majority views of Muslims in the south and the protests that

have emanated from the country on the question of developing a more pluralistic and equitable civil society, respectful of cultural and religious differences.

Thailand is a religiously pluralistic country with a Buddhist majority of 94 per cent, about 5 per cent Muslims, and roughly 1 per cent of Christians and other religious minorities. Despite a Buddhist majority, the Thai constitution does not declare Buddhism as the official religion of the state. It is a constitutional monarchy, a secular Buddhist polity with a semi-democratic political system. Thai Muslims, having lived within this democratic environment, possess a moderate outlook towards religion and society and also favour friendly relations with other traditions and cultures. While Thai Muslims so far, have followed a moderate form of Islam, the 'War on Terror' has led to a growth of anti-western sentiment in Thailand.

In the 1960s as many as 30000 southern Thailand Muslims live in Saudi Arabia and several others pursued Islamic education in neighbouring countries, as well as in Pakistan, India, and the Middle East. Southern Thai Muslims have traditionally travelled to Malaysia and Indonesia to study and preachers from these countries have taught in Southern Thailand. Additionally, we have something known as 'Darwa' – the influences brought by Muslims studying abroad in the form of writings of modern Muslim thinkers such as Sayyed Qutub, Mohammed Iqbal, Abul Alam Moudidi and even from Iran – Ali Shariyati, Mohammed Asad and Hassan Al Turabi.

The escalation of the conflict in Southern

Thailand, particularly in Sinchan during 2004 has brought Muslims throughout Thailand closer. Additionally, the government, on its part, has started to facilitate travel arrangements for Thai pilgrims to the annual Haj in Saudi Arabia, granted official holidays in the south for the celebration of Islamic festivals, and has supported the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand and Council on Muslim Affairs in managing Muslim affairs at the national level. Thailand also allows for the application of Muslim personal law and Islamic law is applied in High Courts. Thai Muslims, in other provinces of the country, apply the Muslim personal law either privately or through their provincial Islamic community.

However, there is a crisis in the South, despite the overall good social relations between Buddhists and Muslims throughout the rest of the country. In the South, the ongoing unrest has been marked by mistrust, suspicion and tension on both sides. The state does not place restrictions on Muslim religious practice or cultural activities. The Thai Muslims residing in the upper south, central north, and north eastern part of Thailand identify themselves

as Thai Muslims. While recognizing themselves as Malay, they see no contradiction in their identity as a Muslim and Thai citizen.

The Muslims in southern Thailand present a unique case and the ongoing conflict would therefore, demonstrate the need for a better understanding of how the Malay-Muslims perceive their identity in ethnic and religious terms. Malay-Muslims place strong emphasis on the ethnic influence on their religious identity. Ethnicity is the defining characteristic of the group's identity which sets it apart from the others. The combination of ethnicity and religion however, tends to result in an explosive conflict in the political arena for which, at least at present, there seem to be no viable solutions. The conflict has severely damaged social relations between the Thai Muslims and the Thai Buddhists who have been living as neighbours for centuries in southern Thailand. Muslims and Buddhists have experienced great losses in the killings that continued unabated and which have targeted even Buddhist monks and Muslims Imams. At present, Muslim-Buddhist relations in that area are at the lowest, with both communities living with feelings of distrust and alienation.

While a majority of Muslims throughout the country agree that the Thai state offers enough religious freedom for the practice of Islam; a resolution of the issue requires more effective political measures geared towards recognizing the cultural diversity within the country.

Thai Muslims throughout the rest of the country view the conflict in the south as the outcome of the unique history relating to the ethnic Malay-Muslim community. Those who live in the regions outside the south sympathize with the suffering of the southerners, but do not view the conflict as jihad or religiously-justified. According to them, the situation in the south does not fulfil the pre-condition for jihad according

The narrow portrayal of Islam is a manifestation of an elitist view of the incompatibility of Islamic values with the ideas of pluralism, equality, freedom and democracy.

to the Quran and Islamic law. The conflict in the south and escalation of violence in the Muslim south in 2004, has perplexed the government and analysts alike. No group has come forward to claim responsibility for the attacks and no specific demands have been made. Militant international Islamic separatists, mishandling of the situation by security forces, criminality, and economic backwardness are being seen as factors responsible for the crisis. In the eyes of the Muslims however, the key factor responsible for the present problem has been their government's resolve to employ harsh security measures to end the violence. The attack on 4 January 2004 was followed by the introduction of martial law and reports of the 'disappearance' of Muslim leaders.

A government commission found that killing at the historic mosque in 2004 had involved the disproportionate use of force. Such incidents contradict the former conciliatory military doctrine that was used successfully against the communists in 1920s and 1980s, and have shaken Muslim trust in the government, strengthened sympathy for militant sentiment, and entrenched a vicious circle of violence. The challenge for the government and Muslims alike, is to break this circle. The establishment in March 2005 of a 48-member National Reconciliation Commission, headed by Anand

Panyarachun, a former prime minister, provided some hope.

The conflict in the South is a political issue which needs a political solution. While a majority of Muslims throughout the country agree that the Thai state offers enough religious freedom for the practice of Islam; a resolution of the issue requires more effective political measures geared towards recognizing the cultural diversity within the country. An effort must also be made to implement the recommendations made by the National Reconciliation Committee. While Thai Muslims have co-existed with Thai Buddhists for centuries, this relationship has been put to test several times. The problem in southern Thailand is a result of decades of economic neglect, lack of employment opportunities for the local Muslims in both public and private sector and cultural insensitivity of the bureaucracy. A just solution will require greater effort to recognize, respond to and deliver on the demands of the local Malay-Muslim population, which in turn, will contribute to bringing in peace and stability into Thailand.

DR COLIN DUERKOP

To secure the peaceful co-existence of people of all faiths in India, Southeast Asia and elsewhere in the world, Muslims and non-Muslims must be united under a common civic framework for society, based on the values of pluralism, freedom, and equality. It appears that efforts towards these goals are increasingly being met with many obstacles, which threaten to sideline moderate Muslims, while the views and actions of radical Muslims receive worldwide attention and result in a one-

sided portrayal of Islam, which in turn, creates a distorted image of the religion and what it stands for. It has the potential to divide Muslims and non-Muslims at the international level just as it can rip through the societal fabric of our increasingly heterogeneous societies in our respective countries. Also, the narrow portrayal of Islam helps to manifest an elitist view of the incompatibility of Islamic values with the ideas of pluralism, equality, freedom and democracy. This sort of criticism of Islam in the western world, has ironically, further alienated Muslims from the western values of democracy and liberalism.

The example of India's large Muslim population shows that Islam and democracy can indeed be happily reconciled with each other. The example of Thailand at the same time, shows that although there exists a positive situation vis-à-vis the state and the Thai Muslim population, a lot has to be done to convince the Muslims that in Thailand and other parts of Asia that their religion is not under threat from democratic processes. There are undoubtedly, fundamental issues that enlightened Muslims and non-Muslims need to tackle jointly, to destroy the breeding ground for extremist ideas. We have heard about the economic disparities and discrimination, political inequality, and also other issues at

the international level that confront Muslims across the globe. However, as we have learnt also from the Indian example, it is best if these efforts are based on a solid democratic foundation.

In this context, the initiatives undertaken by KAF's regional office in Singapore become important. We have embarked on a project to engage with the Muslim world, through dialogue, seeking to strengthen the voice of the forward-looking or reform-oriented Muslims in Southeast Asia. Our aim is to bring together the efforts of enlightened Muslims across Southeast Asia in the format of a sustainable regional network. In doing so, we do not aim to impose our ideas or values on our partners. Instead, we aim to provide support to their initiatives to enable them to constructively engage with the Muslim communities and the clergy in the region on the issues of democratic rights and freedom. All our partners in this emerging network have agreed on a set of core values which form the basis of future cooperation, including a commitment to pluralism, religious freedom, democracy and to the rule of law.

The Indian example has shown that an independent judiciary that protects the rights of the majority and of the minorities is an important tool in securing the harmonious co-existence of different religious groups in a democratic state. The same goes for a free, responsible and professional press that reflects the plurality of views in a society.

In Gujarat, when the minority Muslim community was affected, the judiciary stepped in and played a very proactive role. But in the case of the Kashmiri Pandits who are a minority in J&K, the judiciary has remained stunningly silent.

KANCHAN GUPTA

Organisations that claim to speak on behalf of all the Muslims of India and which are typically dominated by the Ulema, have been reluctant to take up issues related to Muslim women and the so-called lower caste Muslims.

I don't think the judiciary is a blind witness, at least not in India. In fact, it is at times, needlessly proactive, which has its own consequences. One also has to be mindful of the fact that the definition of minority and majority is relative and keeps changing. In Gujarat, when the minority Muslim community was affected, the judiciary stepped in and played a very proactive role. But in the case of the Kashmiri Pandits who are a minority in J&K, the judiciary has remained stunningly silent. In the case of J&K, the Supreme Court has refused to intervene, arguing that the state's problems have to be dealt with administratively. This perceived imbalance, in the way the judiciary deals with this issue, can create its own backlash. It must be remembered that grievances are harboured not only by the minority Muslim community in India, but also by the majority Hindu community.

The question should not be which of the two terms – 'political Islam' or 'radical Islam' should be used, or the question of western imperialism or American foreign policy. It does not quite work that way because the concept of political Islam as we understand it now, pre-dates any American intervention in Iraq or 9/11.

On the question of the media – it is very flippant to say that most mainstream newspapers in India are owned by Hindus.

That is the reality and it cannot be changed. It just so happens that the overwhelming majority of the country happens to be Hindu. If you look at the way the Indian media deals with the concept of Islam and democracy, you'd find a very narrow focus on this and perhaps also a very limited interest in it. The reason for this seems to be that partly the newspapers are not interested in it and partly because the reader is also not interested.

If you invite a Muslim to write for your paper, it invariably turns out to be a washer man's list of grievances. It was pointed out that social, economic and community issues are not taken up by the media. I continuously invite people from AMU to write and they never offer to write on any of these issues. They invariably insist on writing mostly about the denial of human rights etc. If one expects the media to engage Muslims on constructive issues, it would have to be a two-way process.

Lastly, policies should not be compartmentalized. There has been much talk about the Sachar committee report on Muslim discrimination. That means you are quantifying poverty, discrimination, and marginalization in terms of who is a Muslim and who is a Hindu. If you take the statistics given in the Sachar Committee Report and if you were to compare it with general statistics, you would find that in terms of absolute poverty, more Hindus are worse off than Muslims in absolute terms because numerically, Hindus are much more than Muslims. So if you were to take Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, more Hindu families exist below the poverty line than Muslim families. Therefore, one cannot

compartmentalize policies to cater to the Muslim families alone or set aside funds for development for Muslims alone.

It is time we got down to defining the ideational motivation behind political Islam, what rides it and then address those issues rather than just look at it in a very general manner in terms of Muslim issues.

DISCUSSION

- An important point brought up during the discussions has been that of minorities within minorities. So issues such as those related to Muslim women or the so-called lower castes within the Muslim community can be addressed when we begin to think in these terms. Organisations that claim to speak on behalf of all the Muslims of India and which are typically dominated by the Ulema, have been reluctant to take up issues related to Muslim women and the so-called lower caste Muslims (who are actually the numerical majority). When one talks about democracy, one also has to talk about the rights of these people. Very often when you talk about the rights of minorities within minorities or minorities within the Muslim minority, efforts to raise their concerns and voices are denounced by the Muslim leadership as a

conspiracy.

- Islam stands for pluralism and the best possible embodiment of that is the Medina which was basically initiated, crafted and effectively implemented by the Prophet after the Chin Madina. As far as democracy and Islam are concerned, there is no contradiction or conflict between the two.

- The word jihad must be used far more cautiously. As for Bollywood, we certainly don't accept the argument that its films are 'Indian' and represent the composite culture of India. Also particularly unfortunate are the remarks made by the discussant that Muslim grievances are a washer man's list of problems.

- In Philippines, we recognize that we need to influence several audiences. One are the policy makers, but equally if not more important, is the Muslim community. But the problem is that they are not easily accessible. There is very little link between Muslim minorities and programme-developers, private sector people and policy makers. We need to build a bridge between the Muslims and those who have the power to influence their lives. With Moro Times, for instance, we were aware that we needed to bring out the truth behind what was happening in the Muslim community, but at the same time, we were mindful of the fact that we ought to do so without making the majority fearful of Muslims. Therefore, one of the initiatives that this forum can undertake is to find ways of strengthening the bridging mechanism by Muslims within the media and Muslims in civil society. While there is an increasing realization that Muslim civil society and Muslim media are

While there is an increasing realization that Muslim civil society and Muslim media are important, the support that goes into developing the capacities of both, is not very strong.

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important, the support that goes into developing the capacities of both, is not very strong.

- Perceptions are very important in shaping our varied world views. As for the conflict in southern Thailand – the impression one gets when one travels to Thailand is that the root cause of the conflict is Islamic terrorism. When one reads the reports in the media, it is hard to find any background information about the so-called insurgency in the southern provinces. The media continues to report only about attacks or bombings or shootings without giving any historical reasons for the conflict. Speaking to Thai officials, one gets the impression that some criminals with links to the mafia are responsible. This is an example of how important perceptions can be in shaping reality.

- I beg to differ with some of the objections raised regarding the IPCS-KAF report. About the Deoband – many Muslims believe that it is as an extremist organisation and we have seen what is happening in Pakistan, what the deobandis are doing in Afghanistan.

- The comments made by Mr. Sikand are fundamentally flawed in several respects. Firstly, of course, the nature of the study.

This is not an empirical study. It was meant initially to be a detailed research effort. We proceeded along those lines initially and commissioned three papers, one by a distinguished Islam scholar, one by left wing Hindu scholar and another by a senior Muslim practitioner and the papers did not come up to our requirements at all. Then we changed the modalities and decided that the issue that we were discussing was limited in its context and was policy-oriented. We were interested and concerned with the security impact of the radicalization of some sections of the Islamic population around the world and the likely consequences that could have arisen in India. In that context we decided that we would formulate the study, based on a wide range of discussions. This study was restricted essentially to why Indian Muslims are not a part of international terrorism. This exercise is a quest for knowledge to understand for ourselves this phenomenon.

On the question of foreign policy, we are absolutely clear that our foreign policy has never been pro-Islam. If it is pro anything, it is pro-India. In that context I think our foreign policy had been very balanced and therefore, has acted as a contributory factor in addressing this fundamental question. There have been numerous acts of terrorism inside India and perhaps more than anywhere else in the world in the last two years – many of these have been Muslim-led. These are repercussions of other developments which in future must be prevented. The findings of the monograph reflect the perception of a whole community that we have tried to reflect as faithfully as possible.

- Any nation-state is predicated on the powerful idea of nationalism, which is imbued with a certain degree of suppression of diversity. In the case of Indonesia for example, the use of Chinese names was banned, there was an emphasis on promoting the Indonesian language, which is not the entire country's language. Malay and other languages are suppressed there. People have now started to realise that this project of nation-building has its own problems – the suppression of diversity being among the gravest. In Thailand, in the Philippines and in several other countries, the intermingling of two powerful ideas of nationalism and pluralism are causing several problems.

- People take for granted the idea of equality. India, the biggest democracy in the world today, is where inequality is amongst the most institutionalized in the world. Therefore, there is also the contradiction between equality and democracy that needs attention.

- The way the civil society reacted to the pogrom in Gujarat, both within the state and outside was indeed remarkable. The criticism that came from outside Gujarat whether from think tanks, research institutions, or NGOs and the reports that

they produced, reveal that civil society is very active and it does not take things for granted. Secondly, it is a little hard to understand the sarcasm about bollywood and cricket. The point the report tries to make is that bollywood and cricket are India's two greatest entertainers. And when the audience sees someone acting on screen or playing on the field, they don't stop to think if the actor or player is a Muslim or a Hindu.

- It is a fact that all religions have different phases of radicalism. Hinduism in its Vandemataram phase and Buddhism in Vietnam are just two of a multitude of such examples. In the contemporary world, even if one were to leave aside 9/11; the perception of a clash of civilizations involving particularly radical Islam is somewhat of a fact, and if not that, at least conventional wisdom. What is being argued and explored in this exercise, although inadequately, is to test whether this exists elsewhere and the reasons for it – relative absence of Indian Muslims in international jihad. One can contest the causes which cannot be explained through a monocausal explanation of such a phenomenon. Today, in India the civil society is receptive to a range of normative concerns conducive to democracy and is trying to play the role which our institutions are increasingly unable to play and this is a source of immense hope. Let's not forget the reaction in India after Gujarat – the judiciary was forced to endorse the decision in the Bommai case; all the dismissals of the government were held absolutely justified because BJP was considered communal. This is a remarkable accomplishment for our democracy.

The question is how do you get the Muslim society which has for historical and other reasons become largely insular, to take part in the flow of the benefits of a fast-growing and developing society that India is today?

Studies after studies have demonstrated and have identified at least the factor of material deprivation as one of the issues for the process of radicalization of the Muslim community.

- Should we accuse government of India for discriminating against the Muslims, or does the problem lie with the community itself? In Ladakh, the scheduled tribes who constitute nearly 99 per cent of the population, have progressed a lot in the last 30 years because of positive intervention by the State and Central Governments. But within Ladakh there are closed segments and communities and the fruits of the development have not reached that part of the Ladakhi society. The question is how do you make the Muslim society which has for historical and other reasons become largely insular? How do you make them take part in the flow of the benefits of a fast-growing and developing society that India is today. Should the initiative come from the Muslim leadership or the Indian state?

- Pluralism is one of the very important strengths of Indian society and there is a long tradition of pluralism continuing for the last 900 years or so. In that context, the reference to Hindi films is very important and significant. One can actually look even beyond Bollywood. Before Hindi films, we had the strong influence of Indian classical music which was the linchpin of Indian pluralism.

- In 1947, the Pakistan civil society

was far more liberal than the Indian civil society. The Pakistani civil society however, failed to assert itself at critical moments over the next 30-40 years and you find Pakistan in the state in which it is today. Therefore, for the civil society it is very critical to assert itself at critical junctures. Our civil society has asserted itself and I think we should be happy about it.

- Radical Islam should be separated from militant Islam. Radical Islam is an entire movement to live according to the rules of an ideal Islamic society; while militant Islam is predicated on the use of terror. Fortunately, the civil society that lives by the beliefs of moderate Islam is starting to organize itself in trying to be heard. The use of Bahasa Indonesia, a Malay language, was a very noble and a very wise decision of Sukarno who could have easily made Chavanesse, the language of Indonesia. This was a fantastic example of the protection of the rights of minorities.

- Studies after studies have demonstrated and have identified at least the factor of material deprivation as one of the issues for the process of radicalization of the Muslim community. There is a book by Hafi Sayyad titled "Why Muslim Rebels" in which an empirical study of almost ten Muslim majority countries (mostly the Arab world and the Southeast Asian countries) identifies the access of participatory democracy as one of the reasons why a section of Muslims become radical or violent.

- What is striking after listening to all these questions and comments, is how we are shaped in a very fundamental

sense by our own social, political, religious, class, caste, and location. Some of the points raised are routinely made and articulated by Hindutva ideologues. There was a remark about the needless proactivism of the judiciary. This just reflects the painful insensitivity to the really harsh problems of large sections of marginalised communities, not only Muslims in India, also but dalits and adivasis.

SESSION V

NATURE OF ISLAM – STRENGTHENING THE MODERATES AND RESISTING THE RADICALS

AMB. VINOD GROVER

In statistical terms, 85 per cent of the world's Muslims are non-Arabs and over 70 per cent live in Asian countries. The Muslims of South Asia – in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, constitute nearly 40 per cent of the world's total Muslim population. Even within the greater Middle East, the largest concentration of Muslims is in Iran and Turkey rather than in the Arab world. Yet, Islamic terrorism is identified as an 'Arab' or 'Osama Bin Laden-phenomenon'. Even the most populous Muslim country, Indonesia, since its independence, has had a secular tradition, despite the non-democratic regime under Suharto. The Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) is the world's largest Muslim body. Unfortunately it is dominated by theocratic and authoritarian states, not moderate, democratic countries. Therefore, while a majority of Muslims live in democratic countries, the majority of countries in the Muslim world are not democracies.

The experience of religion varies in multiple ways from one society to another, across time and space.

The number of people joining extremist movements has been increasing. One of the reasons for this is that, particularly in the

One way to deal with the so-called 'radical' movements is to consciously allow them to participate in the state's political processes and make them stake holders in the state's opportunity structures.

Arab world, the gap between the rulers and the ruled is widening. While the rulers are all pro-West, particularly pro-US, the local Shias and Sunnis are anti-US and anti-Israel. This is creating unrest and dissatisfaction and causing more and more people to become part of international jihad. It is in this context that the issue of strengthening the moderates gains importance.

The reason US policies have not been successful is that any kind of reform or democracy cannot be imposed on the Islamic world; it has to come from within – from the bottom-up. The failure of American policy of regime change in Afghanistan is a case in point. We now see the re-emergence of the Taliban. Large tracks of Pakistan are beyond the control of the Pakistani government where the Taliban is gaining ground. It is unfortunate that radical Islam is gaining in influence and we have been unable to find a solution within the Islamic world.

On the issue of strengthening the moderates; Muslim scholars who come from democratically governed countries of the world must work towards greater dialogue and interaction with Muslim scholars living under authoritarian and theocratic regimes. Additionally, the role of

women within Islamic societies needs to be increased. Women need to take on much greater roles because they can play a very useful role in moderating radical Islam.

PROF. ANWAR ALAM

Iranian women probably enjoy far more rights today than they ever did under the secular monarchy. They have accomplished this through a series of negotiations and political participation. Therefore, one of the problems while discussing issues such as radical and moderate Islam is the problem inherent in the structure of modernity itself. The term 'radical Islam', is hugely problematic since one tends to view the entire religion in a very negative and pejorative sense, despite the fact that like any other religious tradition, Islamic traditions also have multiple liberal spaces. Therefore, the problem essentially begins with this kind of categorisation.

The experience of religion varies in multiple ways from one society to another, across time and space. When speaking of radicalism, it's important to remember that it denotes only a particular phase of the religion. In one particular phase for example, the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1940s/1950s in Egypt had a separate apparatus within the organisation which was committed to war, but that is not the case today.

There is a problem even when we speak of 'moderates'. Inherent in such a definition is the need for it to conform to a particular understanding of western liberal democratic values, pluralism, human rights, and also a

western understanding of the way a democracy can be imagined, and unless the moderates reflect these concerns, they are not considered 'moderate'. There are many other problems as well. For instance, how does one categorize the German movements, the Barelis, and the Jamia Millia Islamia?

When we speak of the process of radicalisation of Islam and look at Islam as an ideological category, we essentially also increase the awareness between the 'self' and 'others', and the moment this divide becomes pronounced, it tends towards militancy. To that extent there is a connection between radicalism and militancy because it is essentially rooted in the process of radicalisation of the thought process. Even a movement like Tabliq-e-Jamaat, considered non-political and non-violent; nonetheless has a remarkable vision of Islamisation, which itself is a political project. Political homogenisation also leads to militancy.

The other thing one has to look into is what are the constituencies of so-called radical Islam – it is not the poor people, not the working class, but a group of people or class which is otherwise highly mobile, bilingual, knows both the worlds – the West and the Islamic world; it is the doctors and the engineers and others like them who are

involved in such a movement. For them it is essentially an ideological project.

The other thing to remember is that one must not base one's understanding of Islam or moderates or radicals on religious texts alone. Both, textual and contextual understandings can be very absolutist. Therefore, one has to take into consideration the time and relationship between the text and the context, depending on the multiple kinds of the situations. Then it becomes easier to understand that while a movement, an organisation or an individual, in a particular context or situation are moderate; they can become radical in a different context or situation.

Despite this, it is difficult to offer prescriptions on the means through which we can strengthen moderate voices and restrain the radicals. There can however, be little disagreement that one of the main reasons for the development of this kind of a movement is the incredible degree of marginalisation of certain sections of Muslim populations within state and opportunity structures. In Algeria for instance, while students with a French background are entitled to take courses in physics, chemistry and mathematics; students of an Arabic background are denied this right. This has become a very serious question for these students who perceive this as a deliberate denial of equal opportunities. It is in such situations that the entire movement of urbanisation and Islamisation then starts to take shape.

The paradox is that the problem of pluralism or resistance to pluralism stems from the lack of appreciation of diversity of opinion among the Muslims themselves.

One way to deal with the so-called 'radical' movements is to consciously allow them to participate in the state's political processes

The ideas provided by Arabi and the role of the Sufi movement in India in providing a framework for the practice of pluralism can serve as valuable starting points.

and make them stake holders in the state's opportunity structures.

Islamic movements, instead of being dismissed, have to be taken seriously. While they may not be secular; in several countries with authoritarian regimes, it is these movements which are fighting for a more democratic and egalitarian state. It is not the secular middle class which is fighting at the forefront for bringing about democratic reforms (since they are the beneficiaries of and therefore, have a stake in maintaining authoritarian regimes), but these 'Islamic movements'. Therefore, another reason for the popular appeal and support they enjoy among local populations does not have to do with ideological rhetoric alone (which is a rather narrow understanding of the issue); it also has to do with the kind of social services that they provide to the people in an age when the state is increasingly giving up its role and responsibility as the provider of public goods and social and economic parity. To their credit, these movements have provided clinics, hospitals, opportunities for education etc., especially for those who have been denied these avenues by the state.

Also problematic is the kind of solutions being proffered by the West on the ways to deal with such radicalisation. They are essentially demanding that there be a single

Islamic organisation that will control, regulate and over time, institutionalise the practice of Islam. What European governments are really looking for is the coming together of the 'moderates' who can 'control' the rise of radical Islam. Their understanding is that if a religion has to occupy a particular place in society, it is the state that should determine what the contours of that space should be or what role religion should be allowed to play.

The reason why radicalisation has not happened in India as yet is that Indian political processes are such that they do not delineate in any rigid manner the private and public spheres. The other remarkable feature is the manner in which the Indian political process has combined and allowed for the co-existence of individual and collective identities. Lastly, in addition to the state, there is public recognition of these collective identities, which has really strengthened the legitimacy of the Indian political process in the eyes of its people.

DR KHALID JAAFAR

Different people have different beliefs and different conceptions of truth and when expressing their views, especially on the question of religion, they tend to do so in absolute terms. However, the fact is that they are only expressing what has been shaped by their experiences and individual world views, be it a Sunni, Shiite, Salafi or Wahabi. This is the crux of the issues confronting Muslims today. The paradox is that the problem of pluralism or resistance to pluralism stems from the lack of appreciation of diversity of opinion among the Muslims themselves. There is for

instance, a raging debate about pluralism in Malaysia. There, pluralism is regarded un-Islamic because the idea is seen to have originated in the West.

In Indonesia, there is a group called the Liberal Islamic Network, which is trying to promote pluralism within Indonesian society. However, most of these attempts have failed to achieve their objectives. Advocates of pluralism have never been persuasive in the Islamic world, in large part, because they constantly look for sources of pluralism outside Islamic theology – according to them Islam does not expound plurality, which is a grossly misplaced belief. There are clear examples of Arabi and Junaid who were fervent proponents of pluralism within Islam.

In fact, it is this very element that is missing in the War against Terror. We need to ask which ideas within Islamic civilization and history can help promote moderation, pluralism, and democracy and should therefore, be developed. The views and works of Arabi provide the fundamental ideas for the reconstruction and legitimization of pluralism within Islamic society.

If we are to address the question of how to strengthen the moderates and resist the

radicals, in any serious manner, we need to begin with exploring ideas within Islam that will prove useful in contesting the radicals. The ideas provided by Arabi and the role of the Sufi movement in India in providing a framework for the practice of pluralism can serve as valuable starting points.

For there to be a marked difference within Islam, one would have to look at the issue of inclusive salvation, an idea addressed by Ibn Arabi. We need to familiarize ourselves with this and several other ideas if we wish to contest radical Islam.

MR WINFRIED WECK

Radical Islam has nothing to do with militant Islam. Yet, from the perspective of the West and to a certain extent even Indonesia, what makes radicalisation of Islam dangerous, is the non-acceptance of other religions, a tightening of control over the liberties of individuals (especially women), and a certain kind of Arabization or dominance of Middle Eastern culture.

In Indonesia it was the autocratic system that guaranteed the freedom of religion, not democracy. After years of inter-religious conflicts which began in Maluku in Indonesia, we are now faced with an increased radicalisation. Initially, no one made much of these conflicts, including the Muslim society. The media at the time reflected two broad sentiments. While one exhorted the people to wake up and take note of the changes underway in the Indonesian society and warned that if the people didn't stand up, they would lose their liberties, Javanese culture and all that makes

Islam stands for diversity and democracy. It calls for dialogue and communication (known as Darul), not compulsion.

There has been a great deal of talk about how Madrasas have been producing conservative Muslims and that they have even produced terrorists. There is a need to see how these can be reformed.

the moderate Indonesian way of Islam so special. The other view was that Islam was not as dangerous as was being made out.

The other thing that happened and is still continuing is the creation of regulations at the local level. This right has been handed down to the local authorities during the decentralisation process over the last two years. Presently, there are about 45 local regulations, formulated within a religious context. In some local areas women are not allowed to have their photographs on ID cards, irrespective of the religion they belong to. In other communities, women are forbidden to remain outside their homes after 8 pm.

The Indonesian constitution however, clearly establishes that the only authority which is allowed to deal with religion is the state; not the province and neither the locals – only the centre, specifically the Ministry of Religion. I also beg to disagree with the view expressed earlier that Indonesia is a secular State. The only Islamic state which is truly secular is Turkey. Indonesia is in a sense a modern state which accepts five main religions - Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Catholicism and Protestantism.

The central state so far, has done nothing

against these regulations and the people are left feeling helpless. Now organisations such as the Nahdlatul Ulema with approximately 40 million members is coming to realise the urgent need to deal with the radicalisation of society and the need to preserve the long democratic traditions of the country.

In Indonesia, KAS has been actively engaged in pursuing inter-religious dialogue with the Orthodox churches and Jewish organisations. There's growing fear that such radicalisation of Indonesian society may lead to the radicalisation of other religions in the country as well. In 1945 Sukarno presented the panchashila, the five pillars of Indonesian state which has played a significant role in keeping a hugely diverse country like Indonesia together.

PROF. AKHRATUL WASEY

Islam stands for diversity and democracy. It calls for dialogue and communication (known as Darul), not compulsion. Even the Koran states that Mohammed is a messenger of Allah, not an inspector. Secondly, as far as the acceptance of other religions is concerned, the proposition that Islam only accepts semantic religious traditions is erroneous. Islam not only accepts other religious traditions, but also gives them space and freedom.

Till such time as injustice is meted out to the Palestinians and there's foreign military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan, the so-called radicals or militants will continue to be emboldened and the moderates will remain weak. On the domestic front, the events of the Gujarat pogrom are enough to

marginalise the moderates within the community. The other thing which is heartening and needs recognition is that the reason Muslims in India have not taken recourse to militancy is that social activists like Medha Patkar, the late Nirmala Deshpande, and Swami Agnivesh, among others, have prevented the Muslim community from losing faith.

Another problem is that the state apparatus is seen to have strengthened the hands of these so-called radicals and patronized them. However, once these hardliners become a liability, the entire blame goes to the entire community for choosing such leaders. For example, the former Mujahideen, fighting with the Russians in Afghanistan were glorified, funded and given arms and ammunition. Today however, they've been labelled terrorists and the Muslim community is blamed for that. Osama Bin Laden was never been elected or chosen by the community. He was helped by the imperialist forces for a certain cause and now the community is blamed for the same.

Muslims in South and Southeast Asia and all

Centres of learning can also help in strengthening moderates. Jamia Milia Islamia, Aligarh Muslim University and now Jawaharlal Nehru University have already opened their gates to admit Madrasa graduates to their BA and MA programmes. This is a positive step towards bringing those on the margins into the mainstream.

other like-minded people must come together to work towards creating better understanding and an atmosphere which will be reflective of universal Islamic virtues that prize plurality - whether cultural, linguistic, or religious.

DISCUSSION

- In Indonesia pluralism exists because of the reform of the education system in the EAIN – the State Islamic Institute – and that has to do with the work of theology and Darul Sufia. We also need to reform the Muslim education system. There has been a great deal of talk about how Madrasas have been producing conservative Muslims and that they have even produced terrorists. There is a need to see how these can be reformed.

- Taking on from the point made earlier about the contestation of ideas; we can probably also reflect on the fact that the more you engage in a particular idea the more legitimacy it gains. The conservatives effectively silenced all alternative discourses and developed and in many ways imposed a monolithic idea of what Islam is. The way forward for the moderates now is to marginalise these extremist ideas and promote a more inclusivist view of Islam.

- It is important to ask who speaks for Muslims - both radical and moderate in conferences such as these? It is the people from outside who do not exactly represent the voices of the people. One of the reasons for rising radicalism is also a complete denial of representative voices and discrediting the genuine concerns of the

A homogenous view of Sufism is rather incorrect. Sufism has many different strands and not all Sufis were of a pacifist inclination.

people.

- We, in the Philippines, have embarked on a project to translate the power of ideas into practical means of assessing our problems. Muslims comprise about 8 to 10 per cent of the population and the discrimination against the community and human rights violations are increasing. But instead of allowing this to negatively affect the relationship between the minorities and the majority, our group, over the last 4-5 years, has been exploring the various means by which discrimination can be neutralized and the growing radicalization of our communities stemmed. To be able to sell the idea of inclusivity in our communities, there are two institutions that need to play a role in influencing our own people - the Mosque under the Ulema and the Madrasa. All donors look to strengthen Madrasas, but only in the areas of science, technology and spoken English. If however, one wants the practice of Islam to remain progressive and inclusive, one will also have to look at teaching of Islam. It is the progressive Ulema, who should be teaching in these Madarsas. It is clear that Muslim society has become radicalised in response to what the West, primarily the United States has and is doing - whether in Abu Gharib, Afghanistan or Iraq.

- Centres of learning can also help in strengthening moderates. Jamia Milia Islamia, Aligarh Muslim University and now Jawaharlal Nehru University have already opened their gates to admit Madrasa graduates to their BA and MA programmes. This is a positive step towards bringing those on the margins into the mainstream.

- Islam, like all major religions of the world is centuries old and in every religion over the centuries new practices emerge and there is also an urge to go back to the roots or what is called purity of religion. In Hinduism, after the Arya Samaj Movement started, there was a call for going back to the Vedic times, to its purer form. The same is happening within Islam and that should not be a matter of alarm. What should be a matter of concern is what direction this change takes and how this can be managed. In Pakistan, the religious leadership which was traditionally rooted in Punjab shifted towards the North West Frontier Province. This shift coincided with the rise of militancy. The changes that are taking place in Indonesia - are these changes a precursor to the development of something along the same lines? Lastly, what about Saudi Arabia? Where is all this funding coming from, and who are the people who have been supporting Saudi Arabia all these years? What right do they have to shout from the rooftops about Islamic fundamentalism, or militancy in Islam?

- There is a definite international context to the emergence of the radical Islam, its spread and nature. During the Cold War period, the West had no problems with the Islamists, they were even co-opted, funded and given all kinds of assistance to

fight communism. After the Cold War, America started a new game vis-à-vis Asia to gain control over the region's resources, and for that it resorted to the strategy of regime control and this radicalised the entire process. Another crucial step to take to moderate the radicals is to democratize international relations and undo the injustice which has been done to the Palestinians and now the Iraqis. This strategy will be the most powerful to allow the moderates strengthen themselves vis-à-vis the radicals.

- Minorities and minorities within minorities should be allowed to speak for themselves because we cannot judge from our positions what their conditions are.

- The term 'radical' must be used very cautiously because radicalism involves a creative reinterpretation of classics to fit in with the demands of a contemporary period in the sense in which Martin Luther did - it has nothing to do with militancy or pacifism or the militant re-emergence of Islam.

- A general comment on this whole issue of moderates versus radical - the question is, that given the fact that Ibn Arabi and his understanding of Maudidi has been so heavily critiqued by the Ulema and Islamist movements, how in practical terms, can one go about this project. Secondly, a homogenous view of Sufism is rather

incorrect. Sufism has many different strands and not all Sufis were of a pacifist inclination. And here, I do not mean the Ghazi traditional Sufism or the Naxbandis who were very powerful in resisting Central Asia; the Sufis in West and North Africa also took up arms against oppression. Now, to come to the question of "strengthening moderates and marginalizing radicals". This is precisely the title of a report published by the CIA-funded Rand Corporation which is written by a group of people headed by a woman called Sheryl Bernard who is the wife of Zalmay Khalilzad who is very close to Mr. George W. Bush and he was the American Ambassador to Afghanistan and is now the American Ambassador to the UAE.

This report however, locates the entire problem within rather than looking at the other wider structural causes. It is as if radical Islam is an autonomous phenomenon that emerges from the Muslim community automatically without looking at the other structural/political causes. The report seems to suggest that there is no need for America to change its policies. This is the sort of cultivated ignorance which actually exacerbates the problem rather than solving it.

'Good Muslim, Bad Muslim' by Mahmood Mamdani is a book that addresses precisely this whole question of who is a good Muslim and who is a bad Muslim and who defines a good or bad Muslim. He talks about the political economy and how for the West, for America in particular, a good Muslim or a moderate Muslim is basically somebody who plays along with US interests. Therefore, while at one point of

While at one point of time the Mujahideen were painted as good Muslims, today's definition of good Muslims is those who are pro-America and anti-Islamist.

The criterion of democracy has two essential components: free, fair, transparent electoral procedure that elects a majority; and rights of citizens both individual and groups, so that majority rule does not degenerate.

time the Mujahideen were painted as good Muslims, today's definition of good Muslims is those who are pro-America and anti-Islamist. It's amazing how much funding is going into this project of liberal Islam. The whole politics behind the funding and the issues taken up by these groups is rather interesting. At the same time, the West is engaged in subverting democracy in these countries.

- Neither Islam nor liberal Islam is going to solve the problem. There is a need to separate religion from politics. Islamic organizations, especially the militant Islamic organizations, whether it is the FIS in Algeria, the Taliban, the Lashkars – none of them have delivered. They have only brought a bad name to Islam and we need to confront their rise. India's success can be attributed in large measure to its policy of separating religion and politics.

- The ideas of the conservatives need to be contested, otherwise there will be no way for the moderates to find the space and platform to voice their views. There are certain ideas in the Ibn Arabi tradition, which support pluralism and objectivism and these can therefore, prove useful in strengthening moderate voices. There are certain ideas available in the works of Ibn

Arabi which have their own practical implications for the predicament faced by Muslims today.

- Why is it that we often speak of Islam and Muslims as synonymous, interchangeable terms? While Islam is a religious tradition, 'Muslim' is a social category, subject to many kinds of social, economic and political situations. It is therefore, disconcerting when a group of Muslims protesting environmental decay, is termed an 'Islamic' protest.

- Hindutva ideologues have often tried to misinterpret the Koran and show that it contains verses which are anti-democracy and even anti-humanity, which are blatant lies.

FINAL SESSION: LESSONS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: THE ROAD AHEAD

- There is a general acceptance of the problem; there has been a discussion on how to identify the problem and to conceptualize it. Despite the disagreements, there is an implicit consensus.
- There are problems which influence militant Islam or radical Islam which lies within some of the Islamic countries, and their politics which differ from country to country. They are country specific problems for people and what they are - needs to be still identified. There are other aspects which affect or lead to some form of militancy in Islam.
- Clearly there are three aspects in dealing with the problem. One, within the Muslim societies. Second, in the wider structure of international relations – including Iran, Iraq and Palestine; more problems are created by attempting to resolve them. In other words, democracy among states about which there is a

considerable degree of enthusiasm both in American foreign policy and some of the western funding agencies is not adequately reflected in their concern for democracy among states. While they are interested in talking of democracy within states there is very little concern about how to promote democracy among the states – global, international order. Third, the content of democracy - both within the nation-state system as well as in the international order.

- Is democracy merely transformation of a repressive military regime to a civilian regime? There is an incremental improvement from a military regime to a civilian regime because it provides more space. But is it enough of a democracy, or democracy involves a set of reasonably identifiable criteria? There is general acceptance in the global system, though it has not been given adequate attention - that periodic election – free and fair – and freedom and fairness of the election also depends upon how transparent the elections are. As a part of this discourse on democracy, one should also focus on the rights of citizens – whether as a part of human rights or human security. Rights of citizens are now an important component of human development and it not just about a written document, but also its operational structure. When they are violated, there should be enough civil society and institutional corrective mechanism against the violation of those rights. For example in Pakistan, when a woman accusing of gang rape has to go all the way to the American Senate to complain, or when a Dalit in India country goes to complain there – they represent the drawbacks in the systems there.

While in India there is a rich history of Sufi traditions; in Muslim countries like Afghanistan and the United Arab Emirates , Sufism is not regarded as genuine Islam.

There is a general feeling that Islam is persecuted, under siege and there is conspiracy. However, there is not much discussion on the great advances that have been made and the great contributions to the fields of science, technology, art and literature.

- The criterion of democracy has two essential components: free, fair, transparent electoral procedure that elects a majority; and rights of citizens both individual and groups, so that majority rule does not degenerate.

- The message of militant Islam is very clear when Osama bin Laden makes a statement. But one does not know what is the message of moderate Islam, because one hardly see it in the open. There is a need for an exercise where one could contrast the message of militant Islam with moderate Islam on some of the key issues which are relevant today.

- The following are vital to expand the discussion further. First on democracy - is there a universal concept of democracy which the world accepts, or is there an exception for Muslims? Should there be an Islamic democracy which is different based on different kinds of values? Second, on gender equality, where do militant Muslims and moderate Muslims stand? Third, on the issue of terrorism, there is a universal definition of terrorism, which is also shared by the government of India. The UN has defined that there is no justification for

terrorism in whatever form. But militant Islam has been repeatedly saying what they are doing is not terrorism. Do the moderates differ with the interpretation of terrorism or not?

- What is the status of non-Muslims? Is Allah - the Allah of all people of the university or is Allah the God of Muslims only, in which case what is the status of non-Muslims? Or they covered by Allah's mercy or not? It's a theological issue, but it is important to understand the attitude of Muslims towards non-Muslims?

- On the status of Sufism, in India there is a rich history of Sufi traditions. But in Muslim countries like Afghanistan and the United Arab Emirates , Sufism is not regarded as genuine Islam. In certain countries, for example the UAE, not only Sufism, there is even abhorrence towards the Shia community. One should be clear on what is militant Islam say about this, what the moderates say about this? We would like to understand?

- There is so much discussion on international conspiracies, whenever there is any debate on Islamic issues which include American imperialism, Western interests, Globalization etc Is this a real distinction? Are globalization, modernisation, industrialization essentially an international conspiracy against Islam?

- Should the Muslim societies be progressive, prosperous in secular terms? Should one regard every western influence as a kind of attack on Islam?

- There is so much focus on - injustice to Muslims. It is true, but should every one be outraged by what happens? Is enough concern expressed about injustice done to other people, within Islam? Why Muslim leaders have not come out against the injustice which was perpetrated in Rwanda and Burundi? When it affects our interests, we are very vocal about it, when millions of people die or slaughtered, injustice done in some corner of the world we don't think that concerns us. What do they think of Dalits, when is injustice done to them? Do they see it only in terms of Islamic terms? What do they think about the struggle in Tibet? Is there any sympathy for what the Tibetans are going through? The IPCS and Konrad Foundation should engage scholars on the above questions.
- Ideas must be translated somewhere in action whether they are constitutional provisions, whether they are in statutes or whether they are in administrative action. Some of these ideas must flow forward so that if there are any deficiencies in the system, it needs to be rectified by practical action.
- The Muslim community is subject to missile war both from outside and from within. It is assuming large negative energy and little of positive energy. There is a

general feeling that Islam is persecuted, under seize and there is conspiracy. However, there is not much discussion on the great advances that have been made and the great contribution to the science, technology, art and literature. The Muslims community has made a big contribution to the world peace, world knowledge, in various ways.

- One major challenge is how to negate this negative energy? How to convert this into a positive energy which will make them solve this problem? For any release of positive energy of a community or nation, one has to take this responsibility on themselves. One has to take control even if one is under heavy distress. Once it does, it will find all other supportive forces also start catalyzing them and a new dynamics will start by which from self-complaining, from self-degradation it will be looking things at the positive side.
- On Palestine, is militancy the response? Does it solve the problem, if not, what is the solution? Is it that Islamic countries the OIC they have to form a cartel on their own or they have to spread around and include other states and create a consensus to undo what has been done?
- It is important to identify the actors, who are a part of the conflict. Just getting scholars to go to the field work may at times be misleading, as people at the ground level are smart and can actually mislead the observers. People at the ground level are not ignorant peasants; they are sophisticated intellectuals in their own style.

There should not only be an inter-religious dialogue, but an intra-religious dialogue within the Muslim community about the whole range of issues concerning them.

There is a need to take a much broader view of terrorism — not just Muslim radicalism, but also Hindu radicalism, Zionist radicalism, Christian radicalism and state terrorism.

- There is a certain disjuncture in the issues that have been discussed. One side there is a claim that Islam is not a problem, and that the root of the problem include other factors like the American foreign policy. However, there is always a conclusion that the burden lies on the Muslims to address it. Secondly, if the militants have an ideology, every one who have been discussing the same also come from a ideology or position of interest. One need to take into consideration this reality, as while one talk about a particular interest or opinion, there is always an attempt to silent what is not our interest.

- One could understand the concern, anxiety and anguish and the suggestions that the Muslim community has a greater role to formulate, articulate, present and to act in a fashion where people should also understand their problems in a right perspective. The Muslims are not blaming anybody; they are not against America or Europe, and they are very much with them. The real problem is the political establishment.

- Finally, there should not only be an inter-religious dialogue but an intra-religious

dialogue within Muslim community about the whole range of issues raised in the workshop.

- One cannot impose any particular model to the rest, especially when it comes to democracy. Neither the western model nor the Indian model can be imposed to every Muslim society. While talking about democracy and constitution, one should also look into other issues. For example, one reason why radicalism has not happened amongst the Indian Muslims - the reasons may be not within Muslims, but probably within larger Indian society. The Hindus and others, are multiple, heterogeneous and fluid identities.

- While discussing about Madrasa and ideology, one should also remember, same ideology and same books are taught in Afghanistan, Pakistan and North Frontier province where they have become absolutely radical. Local actors are important

- There is need for a dialogue not only between Sunni and Shia, but even among Sunnis. There is also a need for a regional networking to amplify the voices so that messages are heard. There is a very strong message coming from all the extremist groups mainly because no such message is heard from the moderate. It does not matter what the message is. Media has a huge role to play on this issue. If media doesn't cooperate, it will not happen and the Muslims especially those who have access to media, need to talk to each other to find out how to get the moderate messages across.

- In historical perspective complacency has been a great tragedy of the Indian nation. The SIMI episode, the Sachar Committee Report are too serious and important matters to take lightly.
- While proudly talking about the great Indian tradition, open society, great democracy, sense of inclusiveness, lot of space in political and religious terms – there is a need to spread this news around. To start with immediate neighbourhood Pakistan, Bangladesh and spread it further in concentric circles - from South Asia to south East Asia.
- There is no need to think of political Islam, because essentially the problem is sought to be used for political purposes, to meet political ends. So as long as it remains in the realm of theology or religion, whether it is fundamentalist Islam or moderate Islam - it is really of no concern for those who are not directly impacted by the practice of that particular brand of Islam.
- In Egypt, Islam co-exists with various belief systems within Islam and within the social structures that exist. But problem arises, when the Muslim brotherhood tries to use Islam as an instrument of political mobilization. And they do it with the slogan which could be a universal slogan for Islamism
- If you wish to communicate the ideas beyond a community, one needs to engage mainstream media. This interaction should not be merely a reactive one, but a proactive one. It is not true that only negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims surface in mainstream media. Examples of Gudia and Imrana episodes in India did teach the mainstream media and contributed in a major way in demonizing the community. The community needs to take a look and revisit the issue.
- The problem is not only with Muslims, it is universal. Whether in the democratic states where the Muslims are either in a minority, or non-democratic states, Islam needs to get much more strength than it gets today. This can only happen if there is a better understanding of the Muslims and be treated as equals.
- Terminology is important. Instead of using the term - Islamic world it would be better to use Muslim world. Among all other countries, there is none, which is genuinely Islamic. Islam and terrorism have nothing to do, hence both needs to be de-linked.

There is a great realization among the Muslim people in Europe that Islamic militancy cannot continue and that they need moderate and secular democratic set up.

- There is a need to take a much broader view of terrorism and all kinds of terrorism, not just Muslim radicalism, Hindu radicalism, Zionist radicalism, Christian radicalism and state terrorism.

- The problem is within the Islam.

We are responsible for what is happening in. It is mainly because there are big dependent states ruled by either the Islamic dictators or secular dictators in the Arab Islamic countries and that is the immediate root cause of all the problems. Absence of democracy is giving rise to Islamic militancy and if it is not stopped then possibility is there will be a civil war.

- There is a great realization among the Muslim people in Europe that Islamic militancy cannot continue and that they need moderate and secular democratic set up.
- Besides organizing conferences and workshops, there should be an attempt to evolve an action plan which will strengthen the moderates. What one can actually do on the ground to, to reduce the effect the power which is held by the more extremist elements?



PARTICIPANTS FROM INDIA

AGHA, QAMAR

Qamar Agha, besides working as an independent journalist, is presently a Visiting Professor at the Center for West Asian Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia. He edited "Arab Concept", a quarterly journal published by the League of Arab States Mission, New Delhi from 1980 to '89. He has written a monograph on "War against Terror – US-Iraq Conflict", and is presently working on a book dealing with the Iran-US standoff.

ALAM, ANWAR

Dr Anwar Alam is currently a professor and Deputy Director at the Centre for West Asian Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI). He has authored two books, Religion and State: A Comparative Study of Contemporary Egypt, Iran and Saudi Arabia (1998) and India and West Asia in the Era of Globalization (2008) and has contributed chapters in many edited books, and several articles in national and international refereed journals. His areas of interest include religion and politics, political Islam / Islamic movements, globalization and Muslim societies.

BANERJEE, MAJ. GEN. DIPANKAR

Maj Gen Banerjee is the Director and Head of the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi. He was also the Executive Director of the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS), a South Asian think tank located in Colombo. He has held various operational and planning assignments as a combat officer of the

Indian Army followed by research on national and international security issues as the Deputy Director of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi.

BLOERIA, S S

Dr SS Bloeria, a former IAS officer, retired as the Chief Secretary of the government of Jammu and Kashmir.

CHANDRAN, D. SUBA

Dr. Chandran is the Assistant Director of the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi. He is the author and editor of several books and articles on South Asian security. Chandran earned his Ph.D. at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and his M.A. and M.Phil. at the Madras Christian College, Chennai. His research interests include Kashmir, Pakistan, Indo-Pak relations, armed conflict, and suicide terrorism.

CHARI, P R

P.R. Chari is a former member of the Indian Administrative Service, who has been the Director of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses; Research Professor at the Centre for Policy Research; and is currently a Research Professor at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi.

DOVAL, A K

After topping the Agra University in M. A. Economics in 1967, Mr. Doval briefly worked as a Lecturer and Research Scholar till he joined the Indian Police Service in 1968. He held various senior positions

within the country and abroad which included the Northeast, Sikkim, Punjab, J & K, Pakistan, UK, etc. He was the founder Chairman of the Multi-Agency Centre and Joint Task Force on Intelligence. He retired as the Director of the Intelligence Bureau in 2005. Mr. Doval is the recipient of the Kirti Chakra, one of the highest military decorations for gallantry.

GROVER, V K

Mr. Grover has served as India's Ambassador to Netherlands and Turkey; the High Commissioner to Nairobi and Permanent Representative to UNEP and Habitat. Between 1961 and 1996, he served in the Indian Foreign Service. He presently holds several positions including, Honorary Adviser, Indo-German Chamber of Commerce; Member, Policy Advisory Group to Ministry of External Affairs; and Member of the Kashmir Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. Ram Jethmalani, former Union Law Minister and Union Urban Development Minister. Amb Grover completed his Master's in Economics and History from the University of Cambridge, UK

GUPTA, KANCHAN

Kanchan Gupta is an Associate Editor of The Pioneer, an Indian English language daily. He writes on Islamic affairs, West Asian issues, South Asian politics and international relations. In December 1995 he gave up full-time journalism and began to assist Mr Advani and Mr Vajpayee in their parliamentary work. As an official in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), he worked in close association with the National Security Adviser on foreign affairs and security issues. He was the PMO's

representative on the National Security Advisory Board. He also served as the Director of the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture in Cairo.

HURIA, SONALI

Sonali Huria is a research officer at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS) New Delhi.

KHERA, PAWAN

Mr Khera is the Political Secretary and Officer on Special Duty to the Chief Minister of Delhi and an active member of the Indian National Congress (INC). Prior to this he worked as a Senior Development Consultant with Sanket Information and Research Agency, Delhi. Mr Khera completed his Master's in History at the University of Delhi, India

MANSINGH, LALIT

Amb. Mansingh, belonging to the 1963 batch of the Indian Foreign Service, is considered among the most distinguished Indian diplomats. He has the unique distinction of having served as the Foreign Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs as well as the High Commissioner of India to UK and the Ambassador of India to the United States. He has also served as the High Commissioner of India to Nigeria. Earlier, he served as the Joint Secretary (Estt), Director General of the ICCR and Dean of the Foreign Service Institute of the MEA. Amb. Mansingh, a topper of his batch, is known for his varied experience, erudition, cultural sensibilities and enviable oratory skills. Since his retirement from active service, he has been sharing his experiences with the Foreign Service

Institute as the Honorary Professor Emeritus and also with various foreign Institutes, including the Brookings Institution in the US.

MEHDI, ADIL

Adil Mehdi teaches English literature at the Department of English and Modern European Languages, Jamia Millia Islamia University. He has been a visiting Assistant Professor at University of California, Berkeley, and a fellow at the Oxford Centre of Islamic Studies, Oxford. In addition to his research on literature, he has also worked on the issue of madrassas in India and Indian Muslims.

MAZHARI, WARIS

Mr Mazari is the editor of Tarjuman-e Dar ul-Ulum, a monthly magazine of the Old Boys' Association of the Dar ul-Ulum, Deoband, India. He has worked extensively on madrasa reforms and inter-faith relations and Islamic Jurisprudence.

RAMAKRISHNAN, A K

Dr. A. K. Ramakrishnan teaches at the School of International Relations and Politics, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala. He was Distinguished International Scholar at Bucknell University, Pennsylvania, USA. His areas of teaching and research include West Asian Studies, International Relations theories, Gender and Post-colonialism. He has published widely in English and Malayalam. His recent book is entitled US Perceptions of Iran: Approaches and Policies.

RAY, ASWINI

Prof. Ray is a political scientist and was a Professor of International Relations and Comparative Politics at the Jawaharlal Nehru University from 1974-2003. He completed his Master's from Calcutta University and Ph.D. from Heidelberg University with Magna-cum-laude teaching and research affiliation. His overseas academic visiting tenures include Heidelberg, London School of Economics and Politics, Sorbonne, Uppsala, Illinois (Urbana-Champaign), Colima (Mexico), IDE (Tokyo), and Southampton. He was the UGC National Lecturer in International Relations (1990); Fulbright Professorial Fellow (1992); Ford Fellow (1992); nominee of the Secretary General, UNESCO for the formulation of university syllabi on International Relations, and a Member of the International Editorial Advisory committee, Cambridge Review of International Affairs.

SHEKHAR, VIBHANSHU

Dr. Shekhar is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies and heads the Southeast Asia Research Programme. He has completed his Ph.D. on "Internal conflicts and radical Islam in Indonesia" from the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

SIKAND, YOGINDER

Mr. Sikand is currently a Professor at the Centre for Jawaharlal Nehru Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Prior to this, he was a Reader at the Department of Islamic Studies, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi and also taught Islamic History at the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies, Hyderabad. In addition, Prof. Sikand has

worked on projects for Oxfam and WISCOMP on issues of religion and communal harmony. He was a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow at the Royal Holloway, University of London and subsequently at the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World, Leiden, The Netherlands. He also edits a webzine, Qalandar.

SINGH, DHIRENDRA

Mr. Singh obtained his post-graduate degree from the University of Allahabad and has a Master's Diploma in Public Administration. He joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1968 and served in various capacities in the Government of the State of Karnataka and the Government of India. Post-Kargil, he served on the Task Force on Higher Defence Management. He was the Secretary, Ministry of Disinvestment during 2003-04 and spearheaded the IPOs of a number of PSUs including that of the ONGC which till date is the largest IPO in India. He was the Union Home Secretary during 2004-2005, a position from which he retired from the Civil Service in March 2005. He is a life-member of the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) and the United Services Institution of India (USI) and a resource person in the Council for Security Cooperation in Asia and Pacific (CSCAP).

SOHRAB, MOHAMMAD

Mohd. Sohrab is an Associate Professor of West Asian Studies at the Academy of Third World Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia. His areas of research interest include among others, the dynamics of development, modernization, social change, social transformation in West Asia, and the

dynamics of the Indo-West Asia relationship. .

TRIPATHI, RAHUL

Dr. Tripathi is a Lecturer in International Relations at the Department of Political Science, Goa University. He has a doctorate from the South Asian Studies Division at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. He also earned his M. Phil Degree from JNU. He was a member of the JNU Research Team on 'Intra-regional Investment Opportunities in SAARC' which was prepared for the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Dr. Tripathi has been a Visiting Faculty at the College of International Relations, Nihon University, Mishima, Japan, where he initiated the Indian Studies Program. He is a recipient of the Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship for a visit to an Asian country. He is also the Project Director of South Asia Together, International Centre, Goa.

WASEY, AKHTARUL

Professor Wasey the Head, Department of Islamic Studies and the Hony. Director, Zakir Husain Institute of Islamic Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. He has also served as Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Languages, Jamia Millia Islamia. Professor Wasey is the Editor of four scholarly journals, Islam and the Modern Age (English Quarterly), Islam aur Asr-e-Jadeed (Urdu Quarterly), Jamia (Monthly) and Islam Aur Adhunik Yug (Hindi) published by Zakir Husain Institute of Islamic Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. He has written and published eight books, six works of translations and has edited eleven books. His recent book is titled Islamic

Responses to Contemporary Challenges .

WOLFF, JÖRG

Mr Wolff is the Resident Representative of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) for India since 2003. Before that, he was Resident Representative of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung for China during 1996-2003. He had also been the Resident Representative of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung for Thailand (1984-1988) and Sri Lanka (1981-1983)

PARTICIPANTS FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA

ATILGAN, CANAN

Dr. Atilgan is presently serving as the Resident Representative to Thailand, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS). Prior to this she was the European Policy Coordinator for the KAS in Berlin. Between 2002 and 2005 she acted as the Resident Representative to the Palestinian Autonomous Territories and Jordan, and from 2001 to 2002 as the Desk Officer for the Middle East and North Africa at the KAS Headquarters. From 1994 until 1999 he was a Consultant to the Deputy Chairman of the Defense Committee, Thomas Kossendey – an MP in the German Parliament. Dr. Atilgan obtained his Doctoral degree in Politic Science from the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Germany; and her Master's degree from the Albertus-Magnus-University, Cologne, Germany.

DUERKOP, COLIN

Colin Dürkop is the Regional Representative for Konrad-Adenauer-

Stiftung (KAS) in Asia. Before his posting here, he served at the Foundation's headquarters in Sankt Augustin Germany as the Director of the Asia Department. Earlier, Dr. Dürkop did stints as KAS Country Representative in Thailand and was Section Chief for various regions, including Southeast Asia. Prior to joining KAS, Dr. Dürkop headed up the World Bank project in Bangkok, Thailand for the Ministry of Agriculture. He went on to consult the World Bank project in Ankara, Turkey as part of the German Bilateral Aid Consultancy Projects. He started his career as an Economist for Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations in Rome, Italy. Dr. Dürkop received his PhD in Economic and Social Sciences from the University of Innsbruck, Austria.

JAAFAR, KHALID

Khalid Jaafar is the Executive Director of the Institute for Policy Research (IKD) in Kuala Lumpur. He graduated from the School of Mass Communication, Mara Institute of Technology in 1981 and worked as journalist until 1988. He served as Anwar Ibrahim's press secretary from 1988 to 1998 during the former's tenure as Education Minister, Finance Minister, and Deputy Prime Minister. Khalid is a founding member of the People's Justice Party and served as the Editor of the party organ and as its Information Chief until 2004. He is now one of its supreme council members. In 2002, he was the Editor and Publisher of Siasah, a monthly magazine on current affairs. In 2003, his articles and essays were collected and published in a volume titled *Tumit Achilles (Achilles' Heel)*. He is an alumnus of the International Writing Program of the Iowa University and is currently working on his second book.

KNIRSCH, THOMAS S

Dr. Knirsch is presently the Resident Representative of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) for Malaysia. Prior to that he officiated as the Head of Human Resource International, KAS, Berlin; served as the Resident Representative for South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, and temporarily for Zimbabwe from 2001–2004; and as the Resident Representative for Uganda between 1997 and 2001. He was the Managing Editor of a quarterly magazine on developmental and foreign policy from '95 to '97 and was engaged in teaching and research in Political Science at the University of Bonn, from where he incidentally also earned his Doctoral and Master's degrees. Dr. Knirsch is also a member of the Team Europe of the European Union Commission.

LATIF, YUDI

Dr Latif is currently the Executive Director of The Nabil (Nation Building) Foundation, for the protection of minority rights, He is also the Editor-in-Chief, "Biografi Politik", a magazine for promoting democratic political leaders. Besides, he is also the Chairman, of the Center for Islam and State Studies, Paramadina University, for promoting religious pluralism and democratic culture and the Executive Director of Reform Institute, for the reform of public Institutions and policies.

MALULEEM, JARAN

Dr Maluleem is a Lecturer on Middle East, South Asian, and Muslim affairs at the Department of International Affairs, Thammasat University, Bangkok. He also

holds several other positions including, Member, Board of Directors of the Islamic Bank of Thailand; Advisor to the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand; and Researcher at the Thailand Research Fund. He has also served as an Advisor to the Prime Minister of Thailand from 2002 – 2005; Advisor on Foreign Affairs in the National Security Council of Thailand; Advisor on Foreign Affairs in the House of the Senate, Thailand; and the Chairman of Islamic Affairs, Government House. Additionally, Dr Maluleem is an active journalist. He is a columnist on current international affairs and Muslim perspectives with the 'Manager Newspaper' and the 'Bangkok Business Newspaper'; Director of the Al-Hidayah (Islamic Guidance Post); director and host of the television programme "Ramadan Night"; host of the radio programme "999" (on international affairs and Muslim perspectives); and a columnist with the Matichon Weekly.

RASUL, AMINA

Ms. Rasul is the Lead Convener of the Philippine Council for Islam and Democracy. She was declared the 'Muslim Democrat of Year' in April 2007 by the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy (CSID). She was a Senior Research Fellow with the Asian Institute of Management Policy Center as well as a Visiting Professorial Lecturer at the Pontifical University of Santo Tomas, Manila. She served the Philippine government as Presidential Advisor on Youth Affairs with Cabinet rank during the administration of former President Fidel V. Ramos. She is the editor of 'The Moro Times', and writes a column for 'The Manila Times'. She has also authored Broken

Peace: Analyzing the Implementation of the 1996 GRP-MNLF Final Peace Agreement, and edited *The Road to Peace and Reconciliation: Muslim Perspectives on the Mindanao Conflict*. She has also served as consultant of the World Bank, Arthur-Andersen - Philippines, International Labor Organization (ILO), among others.

TAIB, MOHAMED IMRAN MOHAMED

Taib is presently pursuing his Master's at the Department of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore. He was employed as a teacher with the Ministry of Education from 1998 to 2006. He is now engaged in policy development work at the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis). He is also the Publications Manager for a research and consultancy group, Leftwrite Center. In 2000, he was elected a Council member of The Muslim Converts' Association of Singapore (MCAS) and appointed the Vice-President of Da'wah Division in the same organization between 2004 and 2006. In 2006, he co-edited and published a book titled *Islam, Religion and Progress: Critical Perspectives*, followed by *Moral Vision and Social Critique: Selected Essays of Syed Hussein Alatas*. Presently, he is the General Editor of an upcoming Malay journal, *Tafkir: Jurnal Pemikiran Kritis Keagamaan dan Transformasi Sosial*

WECK, WINFRED H

Mr. Weck is the Representative to Indonesia and East-Timor of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) in Jakarta. Additionally, he has served as the Director, National Programmes on International Cooperation, KAS, Germany, and as its representative to Peru. He was also the Head of the

Department of Foreign Politics of the Democratic Party CDU, Bonn, Germany. Mr. Weck completed his Master's in Islamic Science, Political Science and Political Economy from the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität, Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany. Presently, he is a member of the Christlich-Sozialen Union (CSU) and also the Transatlantische Gesellschaft. He has served as the President of the Schüler Union Bayern and the Vice-Chairman of the Democrat Youth Community of Europe (DEMYC).