

The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World
2011 U.S.-Islamic World Forum Papers

The Roles of Muslim-Majority and Muslim-Minority Communities in a Global Context

CONVENED AND AUTHORED BY:
Imam Mohamed Magid
Humera Khan



at BROOKINGS

AUGUST 2011



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For the first time in its eight-year history, the 2011 U.S.-Islamic World Forum was held in Washington, DC. The Forum, co-convened annually by the Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World and the State of Qatar, once again served as the premier convening body for key leaders from government, civil society, academia, business, religious communities, and the media. For three days, Forum participants gathered to discuss some of the most pressing issues facing the relationship between the United States and global Muslim communities.

This year, the Forum featured a variety of different platforms for thoughtful discussion and constructive engagement, including televised plenary sessions with prominent international figures on broad thematic issues of global importance; smaller roundtable discussions led by experts and policymakers on a particular theme or set of countries; and working groups which brought together practitioners in a given field several times during the course of the Forum to develop practical partnerships and policy recommendations. For detailed proceedings of the Forum, including photographs, video coverage, and transcripts, please visit our website at <http://www.usislamicworldforum.org>.

Each of the five working groups focused on a different thematic issue, highlighting the multiple ways in which the United States and global Muslim communities interact with each other. This year's working groups included: "America and the Muslim World: The Tale of Two Media," "The Roles of Muslim-Majority and Muslim-Minority Communities in a Global Context," "Higher Education Reform in the Arab World," "The Role of Entrepreneurship and Job Creation in U.S.-Muslim Relations," and "Developing Leadership and Capacity in the Muslim Nonprofit Sector as a Building Block for Sustaining Partnerships and Change."

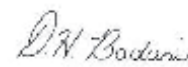
We are pleased to share with you the second of our five working group papers, "The Roles of Muslim-Majority and Muslim-Minority Communities in a Global Context." Please note that the opinions reflected in the paper and any recommendations contained herein are solely the views of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the participants of the working groups or the Brookings Institution. All of the working group papers will also be available on our website.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the State of Qatar for its partnership and vision in convening the Forum in partnership with us. In particular, we thank the Emir of Qatar, HRH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani; the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Qatar, HE Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani; the Assistant Foreign Minister for Follow-up Affairs, HE Mohammad Abdullah Mutib Al-Rumaihi; and the entire staff of the Permanent Committee for Organizing Conferences at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their support and dedication in organizing the Forum.

Sincerely,



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THE ROLES OF MUSLIM-MAJORITY AND MUSLIM-MINORITY COMMUNITIES IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

In an increasingly interconnected world, the relationship between majority and minority communities, both in the United States and abroad, must be better understood. What is the role of not only the Muslim-minority population in the United States, but also of the majority population toward American Muslim communities? Muslim minorities, especially in the West, are increasingly becoming ambassadors and advocates of social justice and freedom in their societies, yet they continue to face a number of challenges. Similarly, what are the roles and responsibilities of Muslim majorities toward minorities, and what can Muslims, both in the West and in Muslim-majority countries, learn from each other's experiences?

This working group, convened at the 2011 U.S.-Islamic World Forum in Washington, DC, brought together theologians, clergy, academics, activists, and politicians from across the United States and the Muslim world to discuss the roles and responsibilities of minority and majority communities toward each other and in a global context. The working group discussed these questions in the context of five major issues: integration and identity, the impact of media and politics, security and counterterrorism, the treatment of marginalized communities, and interfaith relations. The group's participants also came up with a number of recommendations, summarized at the end of this paper.

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INTRODUCTION

The first step toward understanding the role of Muslim communities around the globe is to define the concept “minority.” Whereas the word literally means “a number, part, or amount forming less than half of the whole,”¹ it is often used as shorthand for marginalized communities.² The correlation between numerical minorities (and majorities) and political and economic power is not always clear-cut.³ Disenfranchised communities (whether minority or majority) are often marginalized based on the following criteria (each of which results in different challenges and dynamics within societies⁴ and, when combined, can create even more tension):

- Religion (interfaith) and sect (intrafaith)
- Gender
- Ethnicity and race
- Political power
- Economic status

With a population of 1.62 billion (23 percent of the world’s population), Muslims live in every country of the world. They are a majority in approximately fifty countries and territories, and live as minorities everywhere else.⁵ In today’s interconnected world, Muslim minorities, especially in the West, are increasingly taking on roles as advocates of justice and freedom, and as ambassadors to Muslim-majority countries. Muslims in Muslim-majority communities are also asserting their roles as global citizens, as is evident in the recent Arab upheavals taking place. Today’s globalized world also means that the actions of other faiths’ adherents have direct implications on the treatment and role of minorities across the globe. The recent Qur’an burning by a fringe pastor in the United States is an example of the possible extreme consequences. As a response to the Qur’an burning, violent protests in Afghanistan resulted in the brutal deaths and the beheading of UN staff of other faiths.⁶

¹ *Dictionary.com*, s.v. “minority,” accessed July 14, 2011, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/minority>.

² The term “minority” in this report refers to the numerical meaning and not to indicate marginalized communities.

³ One such example is Bahrain, where the numerical majority, the Shia population, is a marginalized minority in terms of political power.

⁴ For example, indigenous communities may face different issues than migrant or diaspora communities. In the case of the Philippines, the indigenous Muslim community in the south is involved in an independence struggle while the diaspora community in the north is facing integration and identity issues.

⁵ “The Future of the Global Muslim Population: Projections for 2010-2030,” The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, January 27, 2011, <http://pewforum.org/The-Future-of-the-Global-Muslim-Population.aspx>.

⁶ Harry Sanna, “UN Staff Beheaded in Afghan Attack Sparked by US Pastor’s Qur’an Burning,” *Global Post*, April 1, 2011, <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/asia-pacific/afghanistan/110401/un-afghanistan-quran-beheading-kabul>.



ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR MAJORITY AND MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Similar issues, albeit with slight variations based on local contexts, arise across the globe, in both majority and minority communities. These major areas of consideration include the following:

- Integration and identity
- The impact of media and politics on public perceptions of Muslims
- Security and counterterrorism
- Treatment of marginalized communities in Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority countries
- Interfaith relations

INTEGRATION AND IDENTITY

Muslim minorities play a significant role in western perceptions of Islam and Muslims. The Muslim-minority presence in western societies continues to increase due to the flow of immigrants, asylum seekers from war-torn areas, and communities displaced by natural disasters, as well as the increasing number of recent converts to Islam.

Questions persist about the role of culture versus religion in shaping identity, as well as about the

assumed tension between western and Muslim identities. Can Muslims be fully western and still live as Muslims? Some individuals and groups in the West are uncomfortable with the social expressions of Islam, generating much debate about whether Muslim communities can be part of western society. Discussions about the difference between integration and assimilation abound.

Muslim communities in the United States and Europe face similar challenges, despite the fact that the responses from each government and each society have been different. In the case of the United States, the government has not imposed policies requiring complete assimilation into society. In contrast, there have been policy bans on mosque minarets in Switzerland,⁷ on face veils in France⁸ and Belgium,⁹ and European Muslims have struggled to establish their place in society.¹⁰ These policy bans have emboldened neighboring governments to introduce restrictive policies in their own countries.¹¹ Are these government policies detrimental to integration efforts, and will they be perceived as promoting assimilation and the dilution of religious identities? European countries like France, Germany, and Denmark are case studies that should be further examined.

⁷ "Swiss Vote to Ban Minaret Construction," *CNN World*, November 29, 2009, http://articles.cnn.com/2009-11-29/world/switzerland.minaret referendum_1_minarets-swiss-people-s-party-ban?_s=PM:WORLD.

⁸ "Belgian Lawmakers Pass Burka Ban," *BBC News*, April 30, 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10611398>.

⁹ "French MPs Vote to Ban Islamic Full Veil in Public," *BBC News*, July 13, 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8652861.stm>.

¹⁰ Robert Marquand, "Why 'Islamophobia' Is Less Thinly Veiled in Europe," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 5, 2010, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2010/0905/Why-Islamophobia-is-less-thinly-veiled-in-Europe>.

¹¹ Associated Press, "Spain to Debate the Burqa Ban," *Al Arabiya News*, July 19, 2010, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2010/07/19/114243.html>.

MEDIA AND POLITICS

In the United States, a major challenge for Muslim minorities is the negative public perception of Islam and Muslims. Because of the increase in global incidents of terrorism between 2005 and 2009,¹² including homegrown threats,¹³ the fear of Islam and Muslims has, for some, become socially and politically acceptable. Hate rhetoric and fear tactics are on the rise, resulting in an increased number of hate crimes and a backlash against Muslims and Islamic institutions.¹⁴

A report by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life shows that, as of August 2010, 38 percent of Americans had an unfavorable view of Islam and more than 50 percent were against the building of the Park 51/Cordoba House, a multi-faith community center to be built a few blocks away from Ground Zero.¹⁵ A poll conducted by the *Washington Post* indicates that approximately 49 percent of Americans hold unfavorable views of Islam.¹⁶ Indeed, another Pew poll in August 2010 shows that nearly 20 percent of the American population wrongly considers President Obama to be Muslim, with the strongest perceptions among people who disapprove of the job he is doing.¹⁷ It is important

to understand and address the impact of political agendas and policies on the dynamics of integration and identity, as well as the role of the media in propagating stereotypes. Further, the impact of policy and politics on the presence and integration of Muslims into society needs to be better researched.

SECURITY AND COUNTERTERRORISM

Another major challenge Muslim communities face in the West pertains to issues of security, violent extremism, and the radicalization of American and European Muslims. With high levels of distrust on both sides,¹⁸ debates are ongoing about the critical balance between ensuring security while preserving civil rights and liberties. For example, a growing concern among Muslim Americans is that their relationship with the U.S. government is solely focused on security, and many would instead like to see the relationship move toward normalization on all issues.

These challenges, however, cannot downplay the role that Muslim communities have in preventing radicalization and violent extremism in their countries.¹⁹ The United States and European governments need the help of local Muslim communities in their efforts against violent extremism. Irrespective

¹² Excluding Iraq, the number of terrorist attacks rose from 7,585 in 2005 to 8,541 in 2009; deaths caused by terrorist attacks almost doubled from 6,294 in 2005 to 11,317 in 2009. See National Counterterrorism Center, “2009 NCTC Report on Terrorism” (Washington, DC: National Counterterrorism Center, April 30, 2010), 28, http://www.nctc.gov/witsbanner/docs/2009_report_on_terrorism.pdf.

¹³ There have been forty-three homegrown terrorist attacks in the United States between September 11, 2001 and November 2010, twenty-two of which occurred between May 2009 and November 2010. See Jerome P. Bjelopera and Mark A. Randol, “American Jihadist Terrorism: Combating a Complex Threat” (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, December 7, 2010), <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41416.pdf>.

¹⁴ Muslims are less than 1 percent of the population of the United States, yet they comprise 14 percent of all discrimination cases against religious institutions. Fifty percent of all U.S. Department of Justice mosque cases have been opened since May 2010. Muslims also comprise approximately 25 percent of all employment discrimination. See *Protecting the Civil Rights of American Muslims: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights of the Senate Comm. on the Judiciary*, 112th Cong. (2011), <http://judiciary.senate.gov/hearings/hearing.cfm?id=e655f9e2809e5476862f735da169475f>.

¹⁵ Pew Research Center, “Public Remains Conflicted over Islam” (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, August 24, 2010), <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1706/poll-americans-views-of-muslims-object-to-new-york-islamic-center-islam-violence>.

¹⁶ Jon Cohen and Kyle Dropp, “Most Americans Object to Planned Islamic Center near Ground Zero, Poll Finds,” *Washington Post*, September 9, 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/09/08/AR2010090806231.html>.

¹⁷ Pew Research Center, “Growing Number of Americans Say Obama Is a Muslim: Religion, Politics, and the President” (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, August 19, 2010), <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1701/poll-obama-muslim-christian-church-out-of-politics-political-leaders-religious>.

¹⁸ For example, “Prevent,” a government program in the United Kingdom, targeted the Muslim population, but was in reality intended to ensure national security. The outrage over some of the funding directly attributed to the environment of fear and distrust, resulting in further marginalization of the Muslim population instead of the reduction of security threats.

¹⁹ A two-year study conducted by researchers at Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice, found that the American Muslim community and its self-policing has been the reason that the threat of violent extremism has been limited. See David Schanzer, Charles Kurzman, and Ebrahim Moosa, “Anti-Terror Lessons of Muslim-Americans” (January 6, 2010), <http://sanford.duke.edu/centers/tcths/documents/Anti-TerrorLessonsfinal.pdf>.

of government policies that might encroach on civil liberties issues and the fear mongering promoted by some, Muslim communities are best suited to lead the way toward a solution to this global problem. Understanding the motivations and drivers of violent extremists and working toward a metanarrative that drowns out the voice of fringe hate-preachers is an essential first step. As a prerequisite to any effort by law enforcement, society must ensure that youth—to make them immune to vitriol and less susceptible to recruitment by terrorist affiliates—know about the human values preached by all faiths.

TREATMENT OF MINORITIES AND MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

Another important factor is how the treatment of Muslims in western countries affects the way the rest of the world views the West. Consequently, minorities in Muslim-majority countries are also affected as the negative sentiment against them rises. This interconnectedness in today's world should not be ignored by the American government and its policymakers. As General David Petraeus recently pointed out, acts by fringe elements in the United States that denigrate Islam endanger American troops and civilians.²⁰

At the same time, it is also important to address the treatment of other faith communities in Muslim-majority countries. What are some basic standards that Muslims should use to ensure the rights of marginalized and minority communities? Should faith communities adopt common positions that promote religious freedom and tolerance, and self-monitor to ensure that they are being enforced through their congregations? Can the example of Jordan, where the protection of Christian minorities

is considered to be part of its heritage, be replicated in other countries and, if so, how?

INTERFAITH RELATIONS

Despite misconceptions and fear, the myriad interfaith initiatives that have emerged in these difficult times represent a more hopeful scenario. Partnerships and alliances to support marginalized Muslim communities are being forged as faith communities are standing up for the values of religious freedom and tolerance common to all. Human dignity and the right to not be discriminated against based on identity are core values that bind faith communities together to stand up for the rights of all marginalized communities. An example is the “Shoulder-to-Shoulder” interfaith coalition in the United States that seeks to “combat the recent increase in anti-Muslim rhetoric, hate crimes, and Islamophobia.”²¹ There are also numerous interfaith efforts aimed at improving the relationship between the Muslim and Jewish communities in the United States. Collaboration between mosques and synagogues has increased multifold, and interfaith efforts have been incorporated into many organizations' efforts. These interfaith coalitions are crucial for Muslim Americans as they fight radicalization within their own communities, while facing intolerance by some segments of society.

Interfaith initiatives have provided an opportunity for all communities to learn from the works of other faiths in dealing with and overcoming issues such as anti-Semitism, and in improving perceptions of Islam and Muslims. Best practices in interfaith cooperation that successfully work toward peace need to be encouraged and adopted for a better common future, leading to a peace agenda for every faith community.

²⁰ Associated Press, “Petraeus and Karzai Talk about Church's Planned Burning of Koran,” *Fox News Network*, September 8, 2010, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2010/09/08/petraeus-karzai-talk-churchs-planned-burning-koran>.

²¹ Shoulder-to-Shoulder's Facebook page, accessed July 14, 2011, <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Shoulder-to-Shoulder/158946257501141?v=info>.



ROLES OF MUSLIM-MINORITY AND MUSLIM-MAJORITY COMMUNITIES

In any analysis of the role of both majority and minority Muslim communities, it is essential that the broader context also be examined. The rights of one are the responsibilities of the other, and this interconnectedness based on shared human and faith values is what binds communities together.

The Qur'an states:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other. Indeed the most honored of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. (49:13)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MINORITIES AND MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES TOWARD THE MAJORITY COMMUNITY

- **Integration and Identity**
The assumed tension of being Muslim and living in western countries, as imagined by Sayyid Qutb and Samuel Huntington,²² is part of a mental paradigm that needs to change, both within Muslim communities and society at large. This belief inherently encourages the view that the only available

options are assimilation or isolation. Integration as a third option is considered to be an unwelcome compromise by naysayers on both sides, as it requires shifts for both the minority and majority populations.

Nevertheless, Muslim minority communities have the responsibility to integrate into the civic and social fabrics of the societies they live in, and not just live in isolated enclaves based on ethnicity and/or religion. Understanding and fully engaging in the social systems around them—not as outsiders, but as active stakeholders—is part of the shift. This sense of belonging also needs to be taught to future generations. Living and participating as full citizens within society is a necessary step toward building cohesive, new identities that are not just dysfunctional amalgamations of existing fractured ones.

Just as Muslim minorities have both rights and responsibilities as citizens of non-Muslim-majority countries, the same expectations apply to minority and marginalized communities living in Muslim-majority countries. An additional consideration is that allegiances can sometimes be usurped (in reality or based on perceptions) for political

²² See, for example, Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 2008), and Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

ends. All minorities must remind majority populations that they are full citizens with the same rights as anyone else, and should not be marginalized along religious, ethnic, racial, sectarian, gender, or political lines.

- **Media and Politics**

The current reality in an interconnected world is that, despite the fact that most people in the West will never personally know a Muslim, there is no such thing as “local.” Everything becomes a global issue, everyone becomes a stakeholder, and knowledge is often gained by proxy through the media.

Media channels—with what they choose to focus on and with their tone—evoke many emotions that have global repercussions. Two recent examples are the aforementioned Qur’an-burning incident with Pastor Terry Jones and the hearings held by Congressman Peter King,²³ where the Muslim community was singled out for investigation regarding radicalization and violent extremism.

In situations such as these, Muslim communities need to stand up for justice by telling their own stories through new media initiatives. Interfaith partnerships and coalitions are important to ensure that the demand for justice is widespread. At the same time, Muslim-minority communities should not fuel the flames further and give greater legitimacy to fringe elements. Muslim communities need to be measured, deliberate, and controlled in their words and actions, and always stay within the norms of civic engagement.

Just as “two wrongs do not make a right,” increasing the sense of isolation through an emphasis on “us versus them” and on victimization is not conducive to a healthy society.

In the same way, minorities in Muslim-majority countries should publicly hold societies and governments accountable for their deeds. This is best achieved through the media—both local and international—as they are able to exert pressure in places where marginalized communities often do not have access. In the same way that oppression and poor treatment should be highlighted, so too should successes be lauded. This will reinforce good standards in those countries, but also indirectly put pressure on other societies and governments to improve their treatment of marginalized communities.

- **Security and Counterterrorism**

Islam teaches that a person is not a Muslim until his neighbor feels safe around him; therefore, Muslims must contribute toward the safety of everyone in the societies in which they live.²⁴ Open dialogue and cooperation with law enforcement is needed to ensure national security and to protect individual civil rights. Additionally, if Muslims see something suspicious, they should report it to law enforcement as part of their religious obligation, where standing up for justice is more important than blind loyalty.²⁵

As the first line of defense in community-oriented policing, Muslim communities can ensure that their members do not become

²³ See *The Extent of Radicalization in the American Muslim Community and That Community’s Response: Hearing Before the House Comm. on Homeland Security*, 112th Cong. (2011), <http://homeland.house.gov/hearing/hearing-%E2%80%9Cextent-radicalization-american-muslim-community-and-communitys-response%E2%80%9D>, and *The Threat of Muslim-American Radicalization in U.S. Prisons: Hearing Before the House Comm. on Homeland Security*, 112th Cong. (2011), <http://homeland.house.gov/hearing/threat-muslim-american-radicalization-us-prisons>.

²⁴ In the *Al-Bukhari* and *Muslim* hadith collections, Abu Hurairah reported “The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ‘By Allah, he is not a believer! By Allah, he is not a believer! By Allah, he is not a believer.’ It was asked, ‘Who is that, O Messenger of Allah?’ He said, ‘One whose neighbor does not feel safe from his evil.’” Also, in the *Muslim* hadith collection, the Prophet Mohammed also said, “He will not enter paradise whose neighbor is not secure from his wrongful conduct.”

²⁵ Qur’an 4:135 states: “O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor; for God can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you swerve; and if you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily God is well-acquainted with all that you do.”

radicalized and turn to violent extremism. This area of prevention is one that governments are unable to undertake themselves as they are not the custodians of religion; instead, their authority is restricted to becoming involved only after a law has been broken. All citizens have a role to play in their nation's security. In many Muslim-majority countries, minority communities are the targets of violent attacks. The minority population should therefore raise awareness within civil society of the shared threat and the need for protection. Interfaith coalitions and partnerships should be used to reinforce the shared needs of society.

- **Treatment of Minorities and Marginalized Communities**

Muslim minorities should stand up for their rights as citizens of the country where they live and champion the rights of all minorities and marginalized communities both within and outside of their societies. This support for all marginalized communities (whether a minority or a majority) and for justice is not only an aspect of civic engagement, but also a religious mandate.²⁶ Indeed, Muslim communities in the West are suitable champions for human rights in other countries, and therefore should stand up for justice everywhere and denounce the poor treatment of marginalized communities in Muslim-majority countries.

Communities should demand their rights and also stand up for the rights of other marginalized groups within the population. It is essential that different groups come together to work for the rights of all. In some Muslim-majority countries, the treatment of minorities is linked to their socioeconomic status. There are also huge disparities between the marginalization of one community as compared to another. In these cases, coalitions and partnerships should represent shared

values of justice and freedom, rather than simply be driven by income parity.

- **Interfaith Relations**

Muslim communities need to engage with and respect people of all faiths and practices and embrace pluralism. Many faith communities come together to stand shoulder to shoulder during times of crisis, but the relationship building that happens beforehand is even more important. Opportunities where congregations come together for meaningful projects are created through openness and acceptance. In the same vein, Muslim minorities and marginalized communities need to stand up to support other faith traditions in their times of need.

Faith communities in Muslim-majority countries should be the leaders in setting interfaith standards for the treatment of marginalized communities across the globe. Interfaith relations—both international and intranational—will play crucial roles in determining baseline best practices and in pressuring their communities (and their partner communities) to follow through. For example, Christians in Saudi Arabia can work with Muslim communities in America and Europe to push Saudi Arabia to allow for the building of churches, just as they should stand up against the outlawing of veils in France.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MAJORITY COMMUNITY TOWARD MINORITIES AND MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

- **Integration and Identity**

The majority population should not assume that assimilation and isolation are the only available options for marginalized communities. Assimilation under the banner of multi-culturalism, and isolation fostered and reinforced through the existence of ethnic

²⁶ Qur'an 5:8 states: "O you who believe! Stand firmly for God, as witnesses to justice. And do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just, that is next to piety; and fear God, for God is well-acquainted with all that you do."

ghettos, are not sustainable solutions for healthy societies. Integration—the formation of a new cohesive identity (not merely for political reasons)—requires the majority population to shift and adjust as well. Both sides need to be open to changes and realize that there is not one correct way that will be predetermined by the majority population. In fact, the discussion and reconciliation of identities and integration must initially take place internally within marginalized communities, before it can be expanded to include the rest of society. Promoting and encouraging minorities and marginalized communities to be part of the fabric of society, and reducing barriers like racism and bigotry are all necessary steps for a healthy society. An “us versus them” rhetoric is counterproductive to integration efforts. Marginalized community members are citizens and are therefore due their full rights, irrespective of race, color, creed, or gender.

Muslim-majority communities also need to fully embrace pluralism and diversity. They must welcome all communities and ensure that they are not treated as outcasts because of their faiths. It is unacceptable to have hostile environments where people are unwilling to declare their affiliations (sectarian or otherwise) for fear of retribution. This is especially true in light of the religious responsibilities that are due to neighbors.

- **Media and Politics**

The mass media and the political arena are able to shape perceptions of minorities, yet there should be impartiality in reporting. It is imperative for communities to stand up for the rights of all, and not promote hate speech, even if it is legal. The examples of Terry Jones and the Peter King hearings highlight the impact that the media and politicians have on perceptions of Muslim minorities. Jones

became well-known because his hate speech was loudly broadcast throughout the world.

Actions taken against Muslim minorities and violations of minority and human rights by Muslims are both played up by media outlets. This directly affects the global image of Muslims and only serves to perpetuate fear and stereotypes. Burning of churches, attacks on synagogues, assassinations of minorities, and oppression are not only religiously wrong, but they further feed the media frenzy on both sides. Muslim majorities need to set the highest standards of justice and non-oppressive behavior, and should encourage good actions by all.

- **Security and Counterterrorism**

Although national security is a necessity, framing the issue as security versus civil rights muddies the water. Both security and civil rights for all citizens must be protected, and undue attention on a religious minority based on profiling is unacceptable. Guilt by association and the condemnation of a population based on the actions of a few are the sorts of bigotry that must be prevented. In this charged environment, the first necessary step is a relationship based on mutual trust, involving actions by both the minority and the majority communities. Deputy National Security Advisor Denis McDonough recently stated:

We must resolve that, in our determination to protect our nation, we will not stigmatize or demonize entire communities because of the actions of a few. In the United States of America, we don't practice guilt by association. And let's remember that just as violence and extremism are not unique to any one faith, the responsibility to oppose ignorance and violence rests with us all.²⁷

²⁷ Remarks by Denis McDonough, Deputy National Security Advisor to the President, at the All Dulles Area Muslim Society Center in Sterling, Virginia, March 6, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/06/remarks-denis-mcdonough-deputy-national-security-advisor-president-prepa>.

Protection of life and assets is a basic human right and one of the primary objectives of *shariah* (Islamic law). In this context, it is essential that Muslim majorities work toward the safety of all. In today's political context, it is unfortunate that many of the most unstable and unsafe countries of the world have Muslim-majority populations. Countries like Pakistan and Egypt are not only unable to provide security for their people, but are also unable to protect minorities. Attacks on churches in Egypt and Pakistan and the recent assassination of a Christian federal minister in Pakistan highlight these failures.

- **Treatment of Minorities and Marginalized Communities**

Just as providing safety and security for all is a responsibility, so too is the protection of minorities. Mistreating and oppressing minorities—whether of a different sect, a different faith, or any of the previously described criteria—is unacceptable under any circumstance. The current repression of marginalized communities in places such as Bahrain, the inability of other faiths to openly practice their religions in Saudi Arabia, and the blasphemy law in Pakistan are some of the most pressing issues to be addressed. The rights of marginalized communities have to be defended from both human and religious rights perspectives.²⁸

Majority populations must protect the rights of marginalized communities, as they are citizens that are due their full rights, irrespective of race, color, creed, or gender. Marginalization and discriminatory attitudes must not be tolerated. These attitudes create unhealthy isolation between communities and have an impact on the way diaspora communities are treated. In some cases, emotions run higher in other countries, and the impact is felt globally and not just locally.²⁹

- **Interfaith Relations**

A common value shared by all faiths is standing up for fellow humans in times of need. There is an urgency to do so today and to work toward building mutual respect and not merely tolerance. Embracing pluralism and setting an example for other countries to follow becomes imperative. The cooperation of people of different faiths toward good deeds and especially in hard times carries a message beyond traditional dialogue. Muslim majorities must reach out to minorities of other faiths and stand up for them and their rights. Just as there is no compulsion in religion and every faith must be given the freedom to worship freely, it is imperative that standing together with other faiths be the norm. In many Muslim-majority countries, religious minorities live in dense social clusters that are not integrated into the rest of society, neighborhoods are segregated, and ghettos and shantytowns exist.

As Martin Niemöller said:

*First they came for the communists,
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a
communist.*

*Then they came for the trade unionists,
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't a
trade unionist.*

*Then they came for the Jews,
and I didn't speak out because I wasn't
a Jew.*

*Then they came for me
and there was no one left to speak out
for me.*

²⁸ The Qur'an states, "There shall be no compulsion in religion" (2:256) and "For you is your religion, and for me is my religion (109:6).

²⁹ An example is the ban of the face veil in France. When the bill was introduced, there were more protests in the streets of Asia, including statements from terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda and its affiliates. French Muslim organizations did not protest the ban within the country, although they have protested since the law went into effect in April 2011.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In an interconnected world, the need to stand up for one's own rights, but increasingly for the rights of all others (minority, majority, or marginalized communities), has become increasingly important. Actions in one part of the world have repercussions throughout the globe, and there is a need to acknowledge and take responsibility for the consequences of one's actions. Interfaith coalitions are appropriate platforms for such engagements but require moving beyond relationship building to working on common value-based missions. Restoring the rights of minorities around the globe is one such issue and creating practical universal standards should be the first step in this direction.

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other. Indeed the most honored of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. (49:13)

WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

- The term “integration” has no fixed meaning and is often used as a political tactic. Therefore, there needs to be an in-depth study of the processes of integration and assimilation, within multiple contexts. This would enable a deeper and common understanding between governments, think tanks, and communities.
- Politics, foreign policy, and consequent grievances can potentially exacerbate marginalization, which has an effect on identity transformation and the persecution of single groups of people. These factors cannot be ignored when addressing integration even if they cannot be changed. Governments need to disengage from directing and controlling religion to advance their own purposes and allow for independent religious institutions that meet the needs of their populations.
- Religious scholars need to address the concepts of citizenship and nation-states from a jurisprudence perspective in a 21st century context. Communities need to be educated on these updated and relevant perspectives rather than relying on opinions from several centuries ago. Muslim communities need to deal with issues of identity through religious paradigms such as *Fiqh al Aqalliyat* (jurisprudence of minorities) to address the issue of balancing one's religious identity with his or her national identity and sense of belonging.
- Community education and practical engagement and knowledge should not solely be based on religious frameworks. Developing peace curriculums, teaching nonviolent means of conflict resolution, and revising school curricula should be encouraged.

Initiatives like *A Common Word*³⁰ need to be supported and disseminated across the globe into both rural and urban centers. The role of women is an important element and should be incorporated into local and regional strategies.

- Interfaith (and intrafaith) partnerships are essential for improving the treatment of minorities and marginalized communities. To that end, dialogue between clergy is essential but insufficient and can be greatly enhanced by communities learning through shared experiences. Reciprocity comes through mutual and voluntary actions and can be encouraged through healthy role models. These actions range from sharing holiday celebrations to jointly serving society through charity projects. Transition from a model of interfaith dialogue to one of interfaith works would play a valuable role in helping all communities integrate toward a cohesive society.
- Global standards for the treatment of minorities and marginalized communities need to

be clearly identified. These standards should be designed within communities through guidance from their religious leaders and also reconciled to co-create universal standards for implementation through all nations. An annual comprehensive report is then needed to evaluate the treatment of these communities around the globe. Such an endeavor, including the research, creation of standards, implementation, and monitoring would be best initiated and brought to fruition through the convening power of a neutral organization.

- Each minority community must tell its own story and use social media to convey it, while proactively and preemptively engaging and educating the media industry. Minorities should not overreact to events and media reports of events. The media should work toward normalizing the portrayal of minorities, rather than demonizing them.

³⁰ A Common Word's homepage, accessed July 14, 2011, <http://www.acommonword.com/index.php?lang=en&page=newcontent>.

About the Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World

The Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World is a major research program housed within the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. The project conducts high-quality public policy research, and convenes policy makers and opinion leaders on the major issues surrounding the relationship between the United States and the Muslim world. The Project seeks to engage and inform policymakers, practitioners, and the broader public on developments in Muslim countries and communities, and the nature of their relationship with the United States. Together with the affiliated Brookings Doha Center in Qatar, it sponsors a range of events, initiatives, research projects, and publications designed to educate, encourage frank dialogue, and build positive partnerships between the United States and the Muslim world. The Project has several interlocking components:

- The U.S.-Islamic World Forum, which brings together key leaders in the fields of politics, business, media, academia, and civil society from across the Muslim world and the United States, for much needed discussion and dialogue;
- A Visiting Fellows program, for scholars and journalists from the Muslim world to spend time researching and writing at Brookings in order to inform U.S. policy makers on key issues facing Muslim states and communities;
- A series of Brookings Analysis Papers and Monographs that provide needed analysis of the vital issues of joint concern between the U.S. and the Muslim world;
- An Arts and Culture Initiative, which seeks to develop a better understanding of how arts and cultural leaders and organizations can increase understanding between the United States and the global Muslim community;

- A Science and Technology Initiative, which examines the role cooperative science and technology programs involving the U.S. and Muslim world can play in responding to regional development and education needs, as well as fostering positive relations;
- A Faith Leaders Initiative which brings together representatives of the major Abrahamic faiths from the United States and the Muslim world to discuss actionable programs for bridging the religious divide;
- A Brookings Institution Press Book Series, which aims to synthesize the project's findings for public dissemination.

The underlying goal of the Project is to continue the Brookings Institution's original mandate to serve as a bridge between scholarship and public policy. It seeks to bring new knowledge to the attention of decision-makers and opinion-leaders, as well as afford scholars, analysts, and the public a better insight into policy issues. The Project is supported through the generosity of a range of sponsors including the Government of the State of Qatar, The Ford Foundation, The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and the Carnegie Corporation.

The Project Conveners are Martin Indyk, Vice President and Director of Foreign Policy Studies; Kenneth Pollack, Senior Fellow and Director, Saban Center; Bruce Riedel, Senior Fellow in the Saban Center; Stephen R. Grand, Fellow and Director of the Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World; Shibley Telhami, Nonresident Senior Fellow and Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland; and Salman Shaikh, Director of the Brookings Doha Center.

About the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings

THE SABAN CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY was established on May 13, 2002 with an inaugural address by His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan. The creation of the Saban Center reflects the Brookings Institution's commitment to expand dramatically its research and analysis of Middle East policy issues at a time when the region has come to dominate the U.S. foreign policy agenda.

The Saban Center provides Washington policymakers with balanced, objective, in-depth and timely research and policy analysis from experienced and knowledgeable scholars who can bring fresh perspectives to bear on the critical problems of the Middle East. The center upholds the Brookings tradition of being open to a broad range of views. The Saban Center's central objective is to advance understanding of developments in the Middle East through policy-relevant scholarship and debate.

The center's foundation was made possible by a generous grant from Haim and Cheryl Saban of Los Angeles. Ambassador Martin S. Indyk, Vice President of Foreign Policy at Brookings, was the founding Director of the Saban Center. Kenneth M. Pollack is the center's Director. Within the Saban Center is a core group of Middle East experts who conduct original research and develop innovative programs to promote a better understanding of the policy choices facing American decision makers. They

include Bruce Riedel, a specialist on counterterrorism, who served as a senior advisor to four presidents on the Middle East and South Asia at the National Security Council and during a twenty-nine year career in the CIA; Suzanne Maloney, a former senior State Department official who focuses on Iran and economic development; Daniel Byman, a Middle East terrorism expert from Georgetown University; Stephen R. Grand, Fellow and Director of the Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World; Salman Shaikh, Fellow and Director of the Brookings Doha Center; Ibrahim Sharqieh, Fellow and Deputy Director of the Brookings Doha Center; Shadi Hamid, Fellow and Director of Research of the Brookings Doha Center; and Shibley Telhami, who holds the Sadat Chair at the University of Maryland. The center is located in the Foreign Policy Studies Program at Brookings.

The Saban Center is undertaking path breaking research in five areas: the implications of regime change in Iraq, including post-war nation-building and Gulf security; the dynamics of Iranian domestic politics and the threat of nuclear proliferation; mechanisms and requirements for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; policy for the war against terrorism, including the continuing challenge of state sponsorship of terrorism; and political and economic change in the Arab world, and the methods required to promote democratization.

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