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Often storm of debates take place, particularly when political leaders in positions of authority visit other countries, whether the country's national interest has been upheld or sacrificed during the leader's visit, in talks with the host political leaders and agreements signed with the host country. Such debates used to take place in developing countries with weak institutions where the government could be destabilized or overthrown by extra-constitutional forces.

But these days' debates on safeguarding the national interest are also taking place in developed economies with old democracies in which a section of the people feel threatened that their identity is being lost by large scale immigration of people from other countries.

Analyzing the emergence of identity crisis in the nation states of Europe and North America John Rex (University of Warwick) observed "Faced with increasing immigration of culturally relatively alien minorities and with absorption into a larger European entity, French social scientists asked two questions: 'Do the new identities presented by immigrants challenge French national identity?' and 'Will the new immigrants, through their trans-national organizations, seek to deal directly with supra-national organizations, undermining the sovereignty of the French state?'"

The recent Presidential elections held in France ultra-right candidate Marine le Penn asked for a ban on immigration from basically Muslim countries who, she argued, was diluting French identity though Muslims over 18 years old represent 6% of the population and voting population would be far less. Luckily for the French, Europe and the world Marine le Pen lost the elections to Emmanuel Macron who is pro-Europe and believes that immigration is good for France.

In the United Kingdom Brexit has become a fact of life though pending the negotiations with EU the actual results of the divorce from the European Union remain to be seen. Though Scotland and Northern Ireland had voted to remain with the EU England largely voted to opt out because they felt that the English are losing their jobs to the immigrants and culturally, the Muslims in particular, were vastly different from the mainstream Britons.

In Holland anti-immigration party lost out to Prime Minister Mark Rutte who is pro-Europe and Centre-Right in his policies while in Germany Chancellor Angela Merkel is expected to win the coming elections. Yet only a few years back Angela Merkel like Giscard D'Estaing of France and Berlusconi of Italy had lost hope in multiculturalism because of the refusal of the immigrants to be totally assimilated with the mainstream population of the host country.

Little attention was given to the legitimate grievances of the immigrants of discrimination faced by them in every sphere of life. The majority population had forgotten that the immigrants were invited by the host country to help rebuild the war ravaged economies of Europe and that the second and third generation immigrants had rarely visited the country their forefathers had come from. These generations of immigrants were born and brought up in their "host" countries which legally and effectively were their own country. This sense of deprivation has been used by the recruiters of ISIS, al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. One, however, must be clear in his mind that no argument of deprivation can justify the brutalities perpetrated by the terrorists the most recent being the massacre at Manchester where 22 people, mostly teenagers and children were killed by the suicide bomber who allegedly was a recruit of ISIS.

The question that arises is whether sense of deprivation alone can lead a suicide bomber to kill so many innocent people who have nothing to do with the "deprivation"? Or can one look for another reason, for example, the perceived threat to the terrorists' religion by the dominant religion and consequent loss of identity. But then this fear of losing identity and to try to take a people to the sixth century is a denial of modernism and progress that defines the improvement of living conditions through scientific innovations coupled with establishment of law and order in the society.

The developed West not only beat the East in developing science and technology but also in establishing law and order that ensured freedom for all people in a particular defined area. One, however, should not gloss over the period of colonization by the West through force of arms and consequent transfer of riches from the colonies to the metropolis. History of colonization has been brutal exploitation by the West of the colonies defies description. Slave trade from Africa to North America has been one of the facets of colonialism.

The colonized world for generations was reduced to search for their identity because the soft power of the West, after the period of colonization was over, and even now many of the colonies have split personality. Some in the developing world still try to ape the Western way of life leaving their own culture and tradition ignorant of centuries old wisdom handed down to them. It is not being suggested that everything western is to be avoided. Far from it the developing world has benefitted immensely by the innovations and technological

progress of the developed economies. These days to the western academic institutions droves of students go every year for higher education.

China, for example, is reported to have the largest number of Chinese students nearly a quarter million in the American universities. There is the constant argument of brain drain from developing to the developed world. But this appears to be a tenuous argument for preventing bright boys and girls from going to the western institutions of learning.

So we are faced with a disconnect between those who would like to go to the western schools and colleges for higher studies and a small group of people who in the name of maintaining “purity of religion” would become terrorists and commit unspeakable atrocities. The downside of brutality practiced by ISIS and al-Qaeda variety of terrorists has produced influential intellectuals like Samuel Huntington, Bernard Lewis, Christopher Caldwell, to name a few, who have injected in the minds of powerful people and ordinary westerners the vitriolic propaganda that “danger is Islam, the villains are Muslim immigrants, the terrain is the West, and the outcome is certain defeat for European culture—unless the tide of Muslim immigration, which threatens to become a tsunami, can be stemmed” as Bruce Lawrence of Duke University has written in his critique of Caldwell’s book *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam, and the West*.

It has now dawned to people including President Donald Trump that military solution cannot solve the great divide between the developed and developing countries as the divide will not disappear within different social strata in the same country. Very recently Donald Trump speaking to the assembly of Muslim leaders on his first visit to Saudi Arabia as President urged them to destroy “violent extremism” from their midst and indeed from the face of the earth. Eric Trager in an opinion column in *Daily News* on 21 May pointed out that President Trump did not link violent extremism to “colonialism that denied rights and opportunities to many Muslims,” or to the “Cold War in which Muslim-majority countries were too often treated as proxies,” or to “modernity and globalization” that “led many Muslims to view the West as hostile to the traditions of Islam,” as Obama did in his 2009 Cairo address. Nor did Trump link terrorism to the absence of democracy or freedom within the Muslim world, as former President George W. Bush did repeatedly in the years that followed 9/11.

Indeed, Trump’s speech did not include the words “freedom” or “democracy” anywhere. Such reticence was logical as the venue of his speech was in an autocratic kingdom where women still are denied many of their fundamental rights and rulers are not democratically chosen but are the sons of King Abdul Aziz, the founder of al-Saud dynasty. Besides there is democracy regression in many Muslim countries.

But of the 57 members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation majority of the Muslims live under some kind of democratic rule. But the Muslims are put in the dock again and again for the terrorism committed by a handful of renegades who have declared war in the name of Islam on the rest of the world including the Islamic countries who they think have been weaned away from the “true spirit” of Islam. Consequently more Muslims have been killed by these terrorists than non-Muslims.

The point being made is not a comparative value of the life of a Muslim with that of a non-Muslim because any life lost to terrorism is far too many. And hence ISIS, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram or any terrorist have to be eliminated. But the war against terrorism will not be won even if the terrorist strongholds are eliminated. Because the suicide bomber who killed dozens of people in Manchester was British born of Libyan origin. It is quite possible that when ISIS and the others lose control of their territory their adherents may return to their countries with training and expertise to create havoc in their host countries which are mostly in the West. To deny them such opportunities they have to be denied entry into their countries of birth. Whether such denial of entry based on suspicion will be legal remains to be seen.

Donald Trump tried to ban entry of Muslims through executive orders but failed to convince the American courts of the legality of the executive orders. Intelligence and law enforcing agencies have to be more intrusive into the suspected circles of terrorists so that acts of terrorism can be unearthed before such acts are committed. One, however, has to be cautious that in the zeal to fight Islamist Extremism the Muslim Diaspora in the West do not feel further alienation and marginalized in their countries of birth.

Contrary to common belief fundamentalism does lie in Islam alone. Walter Russell Mead of the US Council of Foreign Relations (God's country—Foreign Affairs—September/October 2006) has described the US, the only super power in the world today, as a nation where religion shapes its character, helps form America's ideas about the world, and influences ways Americans respond to events beyond its shores. Russell Meade is not far off from the observation of Alexis de Tocqville who was struck by the religious aspect of the country on his arrival in the United States in the 19th century. Contrary to his experience in France Tocqville found in America spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom marching together in unison and not in conflict. He wrote in Democracy in America "Religion in America ... must be regarded as the foremost of the political institutions of that country; for if it does not impart a taste for freedom, it facilitates the use of it".

The first amendment to the US Constitution prohibited the government from making of any law respecting an establishment of religion, impeding the free exercise of religion, abridging the freedom of speech, infringing on the freedom of the press, interfering with the right to peaceably assemble or prohibiting the petitioning for a governmental redress of grievances.

As Western societies developed and became more tolerant of the views of others the separation of the church and the state became more pronounced. German philosopher Jorgen Habbermas thinks that the current state of the world as passing to a post-secular state, a period in which modernity is perceived as failing and at times morally unsuccessful leading to a state of peaceful coexistence between spheres of faith and reason. In Europe and in the US to a lesser degree (before the election of Donald Trump) religion is now playing an important role in politics and immigration is now being used as a popular tool by the legislators.

In the Indian subcontinent religion is the raison d'être in Pakistan while in India Muslim community feel persecuted and discriminated against. For India where the Muslim population is estimated to be 170 million and Christian population is about 28 million (2011 figures) governmental rules disfavoring infraction of Hindu rites (accounting for 80% of the population) in the social life of followers of other religions

may be politically sound for the Hindu belt but in the long run may give rise to feeling of subordination in the minds of followers of other religions.

Unfortunately it has become increasingly undeniable that religion now plays a significant role in the socio-economic and political life of the people of the world. Aberrant groups like ISIS and al-Qaeda and inter-sectarian Shia and Sunni conflicts among Muslims have found breeding grounds due to inter-faith intolerance in many parts of the world. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the political leaders holding positions of power to encourage their followers and detractors alike to consider religion as a personal matter and not to let religion dictate peoples' day to day life. At the same time global war against ISIS and terrorists of al-Qaeda variety should be fought on all fronts till they are totally eliminated.

The writer is a former Secretary and Ambassador of Bangladesh.

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