Religious Militancy, Civil Society and Interfaith Dialogue: An Islamic Perspective

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“One difference between religion and other forms of thought is that religion has more power. So fundamental is its power that one cannot examine individual conduct or desires without reference to it. In that sense religion cuts into human personality in a way which ordinary ideological thought rarely does.”


“The most fanatical, the cruelest political struggles are those that have been coloured, inspired and legitimized by religion.”


Introduction
The world scenario following the end to the Cold War has been witnessing a steady and ubiquitous spread of what has been termed rightism; and a parallel fall-out of which is
an apparently extreme politicization and militarization of this phenomenon with dangerous ramifications. The entire scenario is more complex than what normally meets the eye. Rightism as is commonly understood and religious militancy as is generally perceived may not be what are logically obtained in the real scenario. Alongside an imperative for an in-depth probing of the scenario there appears to be a need for considering some recent pro and reactive endeavors to meet the challenge arising out of the scenario. The considered need is to weigh the salience of Tracks II and III interventions in coping with the challenge of religious militancy; and herein comes the role of civil society in spawning, promoting and sustaining interfaith dialogue (IFD). It may be mentioned that IFD is one of the meaningful confidence building measures (CBMs) to ease religiously motivated conflicts with an overarching goal of building a better and livable habitat on this planet earth.

This is a conceptual exercise with empirical inputs that intertwines the three themes: religious militancy, civil society and interfaith dialogue. The intent is to provide an Islamic perspective on these three themes. While the phrase 'religious militancy' is challenged in both etymological and epistemological senses, the oft-quoted theme that no religion per se, not even Islam, has divinely ordained prescription for militancy as a modus operandi is emphasized. The civil society process is introduced in the discussion as a possible facilitator for creating an environment of inter-religious tolerance. South Asia being a conflict prone sub-region of various originations does merit such CBMs.

This exercise also puts across two underlying themes. First, a socio-psychological explanation as to why despite absence of any prescription for militancy some Muslims and/or Muslim groups across the globe are found to be militant. Second, the so-called secular and modernist tendency of dismissing anything religious has resulted in
religions becoming sole properties of motivated abusers with ominous results we now confront. The core message that gets across is that, the world gains nothing by the contributions of either abusers or detractors of religion; and thus, the imperative is proper understanding of religion.

State of Religion in the Contemporary World

Despite an upping of apparent rightism, religiosity in the real sense is conspicuous by its absence in the contemporary world. Juxtaposed with this is the role of religion detractors and denigrators; and which appears to be one of the potent causes for religion being a property of peddlers and abusers across South Asia; and also in the present-day world. In other words, religion has become a common victim of both the camps, albeit in two different ways. The abusers of religion are a misunderstanding camp; while the detractors belong to a non-understanding one. This generalization, however, mostly applies to the elite segment of the society anywhere in the world. The common people are found to stick to religion and rituals in their simplistic ways as simple believers. But these simple believers in religion have been found to be vulnerable to mischief making of religion abusers. So an apparent rise in religiosity has an underside as well.

In the absence of any specific information on the extent and percentage of religiosity in South Asia, (although there are ample signs) a generalized statement can be made by referring to the state of religion in America, a country which is circumstantially found to be in the lead position to combat religious, especially Islamic religious militancy. In a poll conducted in early 2004 by the Pew Research Center for the people and the Press, 81 percent of Americans said that prayer was an important part of their lives and that they believed in the eventuality of a judgment day in which they will have to atone for their sins; 87 percent also said they never doubted God’s existence.¹
But that this substantive percentage of religious people is not, in reality, indicative of a proper comprehension of what religion is all about is borne out by the very insignificant coverage that religion gets in the US media. "If it isn't piggybacking on a larger story", as Gal Beckerman writes, "religion has almost no shot at all of making it into the news."\(^2\) Even if some news on religion gets slots the news-writers are found to have little or no knowledge of the theme they are writing about. Christian Smith, a Professor of Sociology at the University of North Carolina and author of *Christian America? What Evangelicals Really Want* claims religion-writers do not even know the proper names of the denominations they cover, let alone have a basic sense of their tenets.\(^3\)

This lack of empathy and literacy are also general attributes of those who denigrate and trivialize religion. Much of the anti-religion rhetoric is based on either the observed aberrations of religion or on the pathetic lack of knowledge of religion *per se*. Unfortunately, however, these are the people who are found to be vociferous and passionately intense in trying to checkmate religious militancy. While the intent is good and desirable, these people are handicapped by an illegitimacy arising out of their knowledge *gap vis-à-vis* religion. No one has to be a believer to understand believers; but one is expected to be sufficiently knowledgeable about what he speaks or writes on. To counter the religious obscurantists and militants is an agenda that is backed by a universal consensus; but to do so one has to know religion properly for arguing that no religion countenances obscurantism or militancy. Grounding in religion or religions would certainly embolden one good-willed secular or religious person to put to an obscurantist or militant the question as Peter Shaffer asks, "Tell me, what cause remains noble once you start hacking off limbs in its name?"\(^4\) Unless the knowledge *gap vis-à-vis* religion is bridged the cold or hot war on religious militancy would not yield any tangible result.
Religious Militancy: The Discourse, Socio-Psychological Interpretation and Islamic Perspective

Etymologically, militancy is the quality or state of being militant; and a militant is the one who is engaged in warfare or combat. Militancy is a kind of predisposition for being aggressive.

Militancy is not unique to the religiously oriented or motivated people; non-religious militancy is more widely seen in politics, especially in the Third World including South Asia. Militancy also occurs in the society out of divergent or confrontational interests of its members.

As this exercise is exclusively concerned with religious militancy, it would be pertinent to investigate why and under what circumstances an apparently religious person translates his religious ethos into religious militancy. This exercise, however, while attempting such a socio-psychological explanation would avoid the Muslim-specific explanation as a reaction to the many years of mischief done by the West. But that does not mean a trivialization of this explanation; it simply means adding new dimensions to the discourse.

The two socio-psychological explanations presented here answer whys and hows of religious militancy and both pertain to patterns of apparently religious behavior.

Recent social science investigations have confirmed distinctions between two distinct categories of religious behavior: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic practice is God-oriented and based on beliefs which transcend the person’s own existence. Hadith says, “Innamal Amanu Bin-nyat” (Bukhari) – belief depends on intentions; that is, Islam emphasizes an intrinsic religious behavior. This is also the type of Islam practised and preached by the Sufi order. Research shows this form of religious practice individually and societally beneficial. Extrinsic practice is self-oriented and characterized by outward observance, not internalized
as a guide to behavior or attitudes. This type of religious behavior is exhibitionist. The evidence suggests that this form of religious practice is actually more harmful than no religion. Religion directed toward some end other than God, or the transcendent, typically degenerates into a rationalization for the pursuit of other ends such as status, personal security, self-justification, or sociability.

William James, Professor of Psychology at Harvard University in the early 1900s and a pioneer in the psychological study of religious behavior, was the first to make the social science distinction between the two forms of religious behavior. Gordon Allport, his successor at Harvard in the late 1960s, concluded, “I feel equally sure that mental health is facilitated by an intrinsic, but not an extrinsic, religious orientation”. The two orientations lead to two very different sets of psychological effects. For instance, intrinsics have a greater sense of responsibility and greater internal control; they are self-motivated, and do better individually and societally. By contrast, extrinsics are more likely to be dogmatic, authoritarian, and less responsible, to have less internal control, to be less self-directed, and to do less well individually and societally. Intrinsics are more concerned with morality, conscientiousness, discipline, responsibility, and consistency than are extrinsically religious people. They also are more sensitive to others and more open to their own emotions. By contrast, extrinsics are more self-indulgent, indolent, and likely to lack dependability. From a purely social science standpoint, the intrinsic form of religion is good and desirable, and the extrinsic form is harmful. The extrinsic and exhibitionist type of religiosity is harmful. This extrinsic and exhibitionist type of religiosity is generally found to be the characteristic of religious militant people. It is also to be observed that these people practice religion that is devoid of essence of any religion.
To understand the origins of religious militancy and in some ways of violence of every kind, it is necessary to understand the ways in which the religious militants think and feel vis-à-vis God, life and the world they live in. Since religious militancy justifies its violent actions based on alleged religious principles and prescriptions, it is important to know how wrong thinking in relation to these principles and prescriptions, and why those who engage in militant activities might believe their God is asking this of them. How and under what circumstances does a purportedly religious militant come to such a psychological decision?

One investigative report suggests, “Beneath all violent actions taken as a result of rage, there is a feeling of intolerable helplessness. Profound helplessness is what fuels rage and gives it its power over the individual. There are three ways to be helpless in the world and only one of them is constructive, leading to healing and growth”. First, there is the way of despair which can lead to withdrawal, depression, lethargy, separation, indifference, and ultimately to the conviction that suicide is a better alternative than living in and with a situation that cannot be changed. Second, there is the way of anger which in its extreme form becomes rage, and which creates militancy. Rage and militancy serve as an antidote to helplessness. It replaces feelings of powerlessness with a sense of power. It replaces the feeling that ‘nothing can be done’ with the feeling that one can and will do’ whatever it takes’ to fix things. It replaces the desperation with the determination to seize control and thereby address what is wrong. In fact, both despair and consequent rage have been found to coexist as powerful motives within individuals and groups, prompting violent behavior. The third way accepts life, including its situations, which create feelings of helplessness. In maintaining this stance people redeem their helplessness by taking an active spiritual stance. This stance leaves ultimate justice and retribution in God’s
hands while one does whatever he can in a way that does not harm others.

This brief investigation of the making of a religious militant clearly shows that this type of individuals or groups are anything but religious people; they could at best be religious delinquents, and even to some extent psychopaths. Moreover, those who travel down the path of religiously-based violence can never be doing so as a result of listening to God’s voice.

At this stage the question that needs be asked and answered is, does Islam prescribe and legitimate the kind of militancy that has been witnessed over some years? To answer this question a close, discerning and penetrating look at the Quran, hadith, and the life and activities of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SA) is necessary.

This exercise is to be prefaced with two cautionary notes. First, Islam and Muslim are not synonymous. A Muslim may not be following Islam either in its pristine purity or in a realistic perspective, but simply using Islam for legitimating his mundane activities. Second, as Bernard Lewis suggests, the claim that Islam is responsible for terrorism is just as incorrect as the assertion that Christianity produced the Nazis.\(^{10}\)

The post-9/11 statement that religious militancy is synonymous with Islamic militancy is a trite one and in which is missed out the above two distinctions. Moreover, violence legitimated on distorted religious prescriptions and grounds is not unique to Islam; all the major religions share the same heritage and record. Can Christianity as a religion be condemned for colonization and plunder of the resources of much of the Third World and massacre of unarmed civilians during the 19\(^{th}\) and 20\(^{th}\) centuries? And, the Cross did play a supportive role when the flag was being unfurled at many spots across the globe. As we cannot do this we cannot certainly hold religion responsible for all the violence and killings across the world including in
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Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Kashmir, Mumbai, Assam, Gujarat, Myanmar, Bosnia and Sri Lanka. But we do have weighty logic to lump together in a functional sense the fanatics of the Sangha Parivar, Bajrang Dal, Viswa Hindu Parishad, Hindu Mahasabha, the Jewish settlers in Palestine, the Serbian Orthodox Christians of Milosevic and Karadzic in Serbia, Bosnia and Kosovo and the Muslim fanatics of various denominations and followings including those of al-Qaeda.

But the essence of the Quran and thereby of Islam is represented and reflected clearly in such moral imperatives as rahmah (mercy), adl (justice), ihsan (kindness) and ma'ruf (goodness). Islam, however, as a reforming agenda covers all aspects of human life; and it does not even neglect general rules of military engagement. But even in such rules a caveat is added – 'was-sulhu khayr- and peace is better. Moreover, the stance of Islam vis-à-vis violence and militancy is made clear in the following randomly selected verses of the Quran out of many.

- "If they leave you alone and offer to make peace with you, God does not allow you to harm them". (4:90);
- "Allah forbids you not with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them. For Allah loves those who are just". (60:8);
- "If your enemy inclines towards peace, then you should seek peace and trust in God for He is the one that hears and knows (all things)". (8:61))
- "Warfare is an awesome evil" (2:217)

But in the case of a hostile adversary not reciprocating peace overtures he may be fought with as required, but certainly without any transgression. The Quran has an explicit prescription under such circumstances: "Truly God defends those who have faith. Truly God does not love the
treacherous rejecter. Permission (for warfare) is given to those who are attacked and definitely wronged. And truly God is capable of helping them; those-who have been expelled from their houses without justice, for no reason except their saying Our Nourisher is God" (22:38-41). These verses if accepted and believed in, can never be prescriptions for Islamic violence or militancy.

But the Quran, like any scripture, does contain some violent circumstances-specific verses. If read out of such contexts in a cherry-picking fashion, and to the exclusion of the above quoted verses Islam would certainly appear to be what al-Qaeda would have the world believe. Most favourite reference verses are 2:190-4; and also 9:29. One of the early commentators of the Quran, Abu al-Aliya, states that the verse 2:190 – “And fight (qatelu) in the way of Allah those who fight you” – was the first revelation whereby the members of the nascent Muslim community in Madina were allowed to fight the Makkah non-Muslims (the mushrikin). The verse is also quite emphatic in its instruction that Muslims were not to begin the fight, but only to retaliate (see e.g. 2:194, 42:40, 16:126). In the verses 2:192-3, they were also commanded to cease if their enemies stopped fighting. It is, therefore, no wonder that the prophet had to go to all the defensive wars with the Makkah non-Muslims around Madina.

The discourse on Islamic militancy makes frequent references to two other much-touted terminologies: jihad and Crusade. Islamophobes often invoke Sir Hamilton Gibb for the definition of the Arabic word jihad; and they define it as holy war. In fact, the Arabic equivalent of holy war is al harb al-muqaddasah is nowhere to be found in the Quran. On the other hand, jihad is an arabic word, derived from the root ‘juhd’, which means to strive or struggle. In the Islamic context this striving and exertion is understood to be in the path of Allah; and this is corroborated in the Quran wherein it is declared: “Those who believe, and have
left their homes and striven with their wealth and their lives in Allah's way, are of much greater worth in Allah's sight. These are they who are triumphant: (9:20). This interpretation of the concept of *jihad* is reciprocated by such Western scholars as Karen Armstrong when she says .... [The] primary meaning of the word *jihad* is not 'holy war' but 'struggle' or 'effort'. It may be mentioned that the term 'holy war' got into this discourse from the time of the crusades (1096-1202) and originated in Europe as a rallying cry against Muslims in Jerusalem. To quote Karen Armstrong again, "Far from being addicted to warfare, Islam insists on the importance of peace. The message of the *Quran* is a plural vision; it respects and values other traditions".12 The *Quran* has defined, and with which Muslim scholars agree, that the essence of *jihad* is defense, and not offence. In this context a relevant concept is that of lesser *jihad*, which is also in self-defense; but waged under certain conditions. In classical Sunni theory, based on the existence of an Islamic state, it is the sovereign in consultation with *ulama* (religious scholars) who could declare *jihad* in the juridical and theological sense. In shi'ism lesser *jihad*, except for defense, is *haram* (unlawful).13

The following few citations from the *Hadith* would explain the underlying tenor and spirit of *Jihad*:

- "The *Mujahid* is he who wages war against his soul in Allah's way"; (*Bahr al-Fava'id*)

- "One's endeavour to educate a lad is superior to *jihad* the path of Allah"; (Abdullah ibn Mubarak)

- "The best *Jihad* is to speak just before a tyrannical ruler"; (Prophet (SA)).

- Abdullah ibn Umar (RA) was asked, "what do you say about *jihad*?" He replied, "Begin with your soul and fight against it; begin with your soul and wage war on it". (*Bahr al-Fava'id*).
An objective and revisionist historiography would lay bare the truth that, despite ascription of religious overtone the Crusades were, in reality, a clash of geo-economics and geo-politics. Indeed, the Crusades were not at all fought in the name of religion from either side; and there was nothing Christian or Islamic about the series of violent encounters between the Cross and the Crescent. The history of the Crusades, like many other aspects of world history, needs reinvestigation and evidential rewriting.

In the context of the foregoing analysis of religious and/or Islamic militancy we may at this stage seek a reexamination of the phrase 'religious militancy' in the specific context of Islam. No religion, not even the presently much maligned Islam, has any prescription for the kind of militancy we are experiencing, and which are purportedly legitimated on distorted religious grounds. But the perpetrators of such militancy are those people whose religiosity is questionable. In this context, it appears that the phrase 'religious militancy' is a misnomer as well as something like an oxymoron. This is a misnomer in that religion and militancy cannot be entwined; and it is an oxymoron in the sense that religious ethos and the spirit of militancy are phenomena contrary to each other.

The suggested alternative terminology may be fanaticism or obscurantism, but without any such preceding adjective as religious. Another alternative may be religious delinquency. The fanatics and obscurantist do not qualify to be representatives of any religion. By adding the adjective 'religious' to their professional identity or misdeeds an uncalled honor is done to them. Again, they could at best be religious delinquents in the sense that their religion-legitimated aberrations have no back-up substance. Whatever might be their identity the fanatics, obscurantists and religious delinquents are certainly holding human security a hostage in ways more than one. Indeed, the whole fabric of egalitarian religion and human civilization
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are facing unprecedented challenges from the rise and spread of this phenomenon of various denominations.

Civil Society Role in Meeting the Challenge

In the contemporary world the discourse on conflict resolution and peace-building recognizes the salience of civil society role in both II and III Tracks. Although not yet fully blown civil societies in South Asia abound. But a cursory glance at their agenda of activities and action-plans does not confirm that they are at all aware of a realistic and substantive roadmap for coping with this speedily growing threat of religious delinquency or militancy. The situational and circumstantial challenges demand that they be adequately concerned and active with requisite agenda of action. Mere rhetorical ebullitions decrying fanaticism; and in the same breath trivializing of religion would not do; it may even be counter-productive. What is needed is adequate understanding of religions by the civil society actors/organizations and coping with challenges of religious delinquents with substantive religious agenda. The weapon of irreligion has to be countered by the more powerful one of religion. Civil society actors and organizations have to groom savants of religions who would act at both Tracks II and III level for denying religious delinquents any space in the society. But the overreaching agenda of action under the present turbulent and charged circumstances should be to retrieve religions in their pristine purities, and save them from the onslaughts of illiterate and half-literate religious delinquents.

One South Asia watcher has come up with a very perceptive generalized three-pronged civil society intervention strategy for conflict resolution, which can be taken into consideration in this discussion. First, the Band-aid strategy is concerned with the immediate need of the victims of religious militancy. Second, the Reformist strategy attempts to reform the existing scenario by advocating a peace-building across religions. Third, the
Structural Change strategy would be a long term one for bringing about a fundamental change in the thinking about religion.

By way of instancing how civil society actors are relevant in fighting religious terror a reference can be made to the small but very significant effort made by an unknown American Greg Mortenson. In the remote mountainous region of Northern Pakistan (Jafarabad), a hotbed of extremists and one of the world's most volatile zones, Mortenson has built over two dozen schools to educate girls. His Central Asia Institute (CAI) observes that the cheapest way to deal with religious extremism is to reduce ignorance and poverty through spreading right type of education. As Mortenson emphasizes, "if we truly want a legacy of peace for our children, we need to understand that this is a war that will ultimately be won with books, not with bombs."  

It would be quite interesting to note that there was a concept of civil society of sorts in classical Islamic philosophy. Al-Ijtimâ‘ al-madani, roughly translated as civil society was a vision of polity of virtue guided by belief-in God and based upon values rooted in the divine values such as justice, equality, freedom, compassion and dignity. The philosopher who contributed most to the development of this idea at the theoretical level was Al-Farabi (870-950). He constructed a typology of societies with civilized values as the criteria. Ibn Miskawayh (936-1030) and the illustrious Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) were two other philosophers who also reflected upon the concept of civil society. Structurally and conceptually, this Islamic concept of civil society may be different from that of the contemporary Western one, but the goals are common.

Interfaith Dialogue: Why, How and With What Objectives

One of the major agenda of action by civil society would be the promotion of interfaith dialogue (IFD). IFD may be
defined as a discussion between people of different religions on particular or general issues with an intention to establish common good. Dialogue is not mutual imitation, it is a mutual good example, mutual witnessing of life. It is also a readiness for mutual understanding; it is a mutual appreciation of each other's religiosity without making any comparison. As Reinhard Pummer makes the point more pertinent by suggesting albeit in a comparative religion perspective that dialogue "aims at representing all religious faiths in such a way that respective members find themselves in its description..... no value or truth judgments are made from a point outside a given religion. It becomes immediately evident that such an approach can correct many misconcepts that were common at a time when apologetic aims widely determined the views of other mind's faith".17

The rationale for IFD comes out eloquently in the following words of Marmaduke Pickthall: "If Europe had known as much of Islam, as Muslims knew of Christendom in those days those mad, adventurous, occasionally chivalrous and heroic, but utterly fanatical outbreaks known as the Crusades could not have taken place, for they were based on a complete misapprehension."18

It should be realized that doctrinal complexities aside, all religions work on almost the same basic principles and lay down almost the same ethical and moral code. The common identifiable questions setting agenda for IFD may be the following:

- What is the origin of the concepts, standards and patterns of behavior that nowadays are taken for granted?
- Which forces of history have given us our present shape?
- Does our religious tradition still agree with what the founders have thought and shown by their examples?
Have we perhaps been alienated from the spirit and content of the original teachings?

Would it make sense for us today to take traditions caused by past situations far more important than the roots of our religions as such?

Would it make sense to imitate our ancestors uncritically, as it has been criticized in the Quran many times over?

Should we not rather, learning from our past experience at the same time build a bridge from the roots to the present and the future?

The Arabic term for this endeavor, Ijtihad, is derived from the verb jahada which means to make an effort, to struggle.

Finally, should we not learn from each other in mutual exchange, finding our real common cause and building on it not a uniform but an organic unity in diversity?

Before answers to these questions are to be thrashed out, the mindset of believers’ needs little bit of psychological engineering; because this mindset based as it is on wrong reading of the religious spirit is the main hindering factor. Every man committed to his faith is prone to believe that his is the best. A Muslim believes that Islam is the best of religions and a complete code of life. A Jew believes that Judaism is the true way to reach God. A Hindu believes, his version of Sanatan Dharma is the chosen way of Parameshwar (supreme being). Similarly, a Christian believes that Jesus is the only saviour of mankind. But the universal truth is that each soul’s inner experience of God is possible and available; and there is no need to compete for the supremacy of one’s own doctrines or beliefs and no need to reject anyone else’s. Each soul can have access to God’s being from the inside and outer conflicts can diminish.

The Islamic perspective of IFD is suggested in the following verses of the Quran:
“O people of the book! Come to a word equal between us and you, that we worship none but Allah and that we associate no partner with him, and that some of us take not others for lords beside Allah. But if they turn away, then say, bear witness that we have submitted to God”. (3:65).

“All of them [Muslims] believe in Allah and His Angels and in His books and in His Messengers saying, we make no distinction between any of his Messengers”. (2:286)

“Surely, those who believe and the Jews and the Christians and Sabians (other faiths) whichever party from among these truly believe in Allah and the last Day and does good deeds shall have their reward with their Lord and no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve”. (2:63)

“I believe in whatever Scripture God has revealed, and I am commanded to be just among you. God is our Sustainer and your Sustainer. We are responsible for our actions and you for yours. There is no argument between you and us. God will bring us together, and to Him is the final return”. (42:14-16)

“O Humanity! We created you from a single of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other)”. (49:13)

“mankind was one single nation”. (2:213)

These kinds of statements occur in every religion. With specific reference to Christianity, for example, the Vatican Council II “Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions” recognizes the equality of all human beings, and states, “All men form but one community.19

The main task of IFD at the Track II level would be to craft a moral and ethical code drawing upon all religions. Such a code is expected to command the UN Charter like acceptance. But it is the common people at the Track III level who are to be freed from false and prejudicial notions vis-à-vis religions. Thus, IFD is also expected to craft an
action-plan to bring about inter-religious harmony at the people's level. It is also expected that the on-going and proposed IFDs be not mere intellectual pastimes by some pundits who may be prone to merchandise their punditry.

Concluding Observations

It is not religion per se that is a security threat either in South Asia or across much of the present day turbulent world. It is the delinquent religion which and/or fanatics who have made religion a fearful phenomenon. If human security is conceived in terms of two freedoms - from fear and want, then this fearful religion demands immediate intervention to ensure people's freedom and security from fear. This is a delicate job not to be left at the governmental Track I level, but could better be done at the level of Tracks II and III with civil society intervention. Again, for this purpose IFD may be a potent CBM in a volatile South Asia. Finally, we have to heed the advice that David Fraser, Secretary General of the Inter-Religious and International Federation for World Peace (IIWP), tendered: World peace will never be achieved without inter-religious dialogue and harmony. “The goal of religion”, he explained, “is to make us think of others before ourselves and to let us become people of love.”

Notes and References:

2. Ibid
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5. This order emphasizes spiritualism.


13. For details see Ibid.


