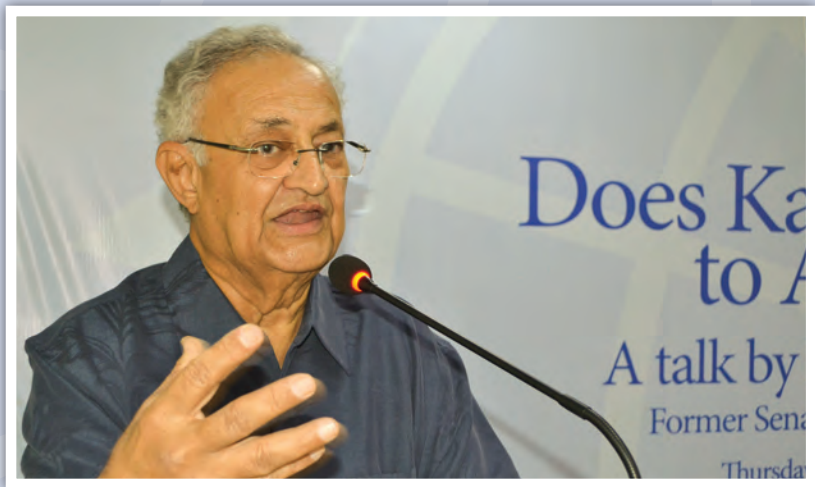


Does Karachi Belong to Anyone?

A talk by Nisar A. Memon

Thursday, 11 July, 2019 - Karachi



**SOCIETY FOR
GLOBAL MODERATION**

Strengthening Tolerance, Interfaith Harmony and Democracy



Founded in 2003 under section 42 of the Companies Ordinance, 1984 as a 'not for profit' organization

Chairman's Note

Society for Global Moderation (SGM) was set up as a think tank to promote tolerance, interfaith harmony and democracy in society. The idea came to me in the aftermath of 9/11 and I floated it to a few like-minded friends.

They agreed that there was a need to form a body which should counter the narrative of extremism and intolerance being spread by the West.



*Syed Jawaid Iqbal
Founding Chairman*

The Society for Global Moderation (previously known as The Moderates) was established in 2003. It promotes Pakistani society – and people around the world – as generally peace-loving and tolerant.

SGM is not against any religion, custom or creed and supports a society based on moderation. To further its viewpoint, it has been inviting prominent scholars and thinkers from around the world to speak on subjects that are in conformity with its ideals.

Among these are: **Walter Russell Mead**, US foreign policy expert, who has served as the Henry A. Kissinger Senior Fellow for U.S. Foreign Policy at the Council on Foreign Relations. Subject: *'India, Pakistan and Afghanistan.'* **Marguerite H. Sullivan**, US Public Affairs and Communications Specialist and Director of the Center on International Media Assistance. Subject: *'Media Freedom and Sustainable Democracy.'* **Jacqueline Novogratz**, founder and CEO of Acumen Fund. Subject: *'Philanthropy and Leadership.'* **Vishakha Desai**, President Asia Society. Subject: *'Pakistan's Perception among the U.S. Populace.'* **Dr. Zaheerul Islam**, Islamic scholar. Subject: *'Islam in a Modern State.'*

Najmuddin Shaikh, Pakistan foreign secretary. Subject: *'Foreign Policy Challenges and the New Government'*, **Senator Raza Rabbani**, former Chairman, Pakistan Senate. Subject: *'18th Amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan.'* **Sen (r) Javed Jabbar**, former minister. Subject: *'Pakistan-India Relations – Future, Known and Unknown'* and **Dr. Moonis Ahmar**, former Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Karachi University. Subject: *'Post-Indian Elections Scenario: Challenges and Options for Pakistan.'*

Since the SGM Board of Directors was intensely aware that the city of Karachi is turning into a veritable disaster because of inherent mismanagement, it was decided to invite Sen. (r) Nisar Memon, former minister, to share his thoughts on the subject, 'Does Karachi Belong to Anyone?' Sen. Memon brought out the serious woes that Karachi is faced with.

Highlights of the Talk, along with the audience's questions, answers and comments are included in this brochure.

Speaker's Profile

Mr. Nisar Memon is a born Karachiite. He attended the Aalo Mul Teckum Das Primary School and N.J.V. School, both in Karachi. Graduated from D.J. Science College, after which he did his Masters in chemistry from Karachi University.



Nisar Memon

After completing his education, he initially taught at the Adamjee Science College for about 2-3 years. Mr. Memon was then involved with information technology for about 30 years. He worked with IBM in Pakistan, Europe and the Middle East and served as Country Head of IBM Pakistan for almost 10 years. He was also Chairman of Engro and Director of Pakistan State Oil. Mr. Nisar Memon has served as President of the American Business Council (ABC) and the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI).

He was President of "The Reformers" - a Think Tank that he founded in 1997. In 2003, Mr. Memon was elected to the Senate for six years. He chaired the Parliamentary Committee on Water Resources and the Senate Standing Committee on Defence and Defence Production. He served as federal minister for Information & Broadcasting in 1993, 2002 and 2007. Mr. Memon represented Pakistan at the O.I.C. Foreign Ministers Conference in Khartoum and attended the World Economic Forum as member of Pakistan Prime Minister's delegation. Currently, he is Chairman of the Water Environment Forum (WEF) and is engaged in climate change awareness, dialogue and policy. He is a member of the Board of Governors of FAST since 1997, the US-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies and Mehran University, Jamshoro since 2017.

‘Today Karachi had become a governance nightmare.’

Syed Jawaid Iqbal, the founding Chairman of the Society of Global Moderation (SGM), thanked Mr. Nisar Memon for accepting the invitation to address the members of the Society and other distinguished guests on the topic of ‘Does Karachi Belong to Anyone?’. He was of the view that though the subject is very common, it is also very important to talk about.



Mr. Nisar Memon expressed his gratitude on being invited to a forum where distinguished speakers like Javed Jabbar, whom he admired a lot, had spoken. In his view, Karachi and its problems needed ownership as the city cannot be left to survive on its own.

Though, Nisar Memon said, his areas of interest were water, environment, energy and food, he emphasised on why the particular subject of Karachi was chosen. He remembered Karachi as the city of cities, also known as Pearl of the Arabian Sea. He said there was a time when Karachi was known as the cleanest city of Asia, most commonly the city of lights and also the largest Muslim city in the world. With all of these qualities and distinctions, the one thing that made it to stand out was that it was a historic city where originally the Greeks, Portuguese and the British had ruled. He said their influence could still be witnessed in the language that was spoken in the city and in the architecture and art that had lived on.

He said today Karachi had become a governance nightmare as neither the city government nor the provincial government were willing to take ownership of Pakistan's largest metropolis. He emphasised that there was a question of ownership as the city had lost its way. He said if the city was to be given its glory back, the citizens would have rise up.

He said Karachi had a tradition of philanthropy given to it in the form of educational institutions and this was one of the important aspects of the city. It had teachers like Professor D'Souza and Sir Benjamin. Whether it were

The situation has become very precarious as various parts of the city are owned by different departments and bodies and the city's management is not centralized

Christians, Parsis or Jews, apart from the Muslims and Hindus, they all lived in the city together. The city also had the best health facilities and the best in national and international opportunities. He said the fact he went to IBM was only because he was living in Karachi as opportunities like these were not available in Hyderabad or other cities.

Nisar Memon said Karachi also had monumental architectural importance in the form of the KPT Building, the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry Building which was now the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI), the State Bank of Pakistan, the Hindu Gymkhana, etc.

Concerning Karachi's problems and the city's future, Nisar Memon said that the situation has become very precarious as various parts of the city are owned by different departments and bodies and the city's management is not centralized. He said Karachi was divided into five districts besides having the Defence Housing Authority (DHA), 6 cantonments, the Karachi Development Authority (KDA), the Malir Development Authority (MDA), the Lyari Development Authority (LDA), Gadap Town, Bin Qasim, etc. as well as the kacchi abadis (slum areas).

Discussing the poor conditions that Karachi – one of the world's largest city – had been driven into, Nisar Memon said that for the past many years, the city has been left rudderless and it is amazing that a city with a population of over 2 million is even surviving. He remembered that Karachi used to be the capital of the country until 1960 and continued to be Pakistan's commercial and industrial capital. That is why it has grown at a very fast pace and its problems have also multiplied.

He said that while people had benefited from this city, they had not repaid their debt. It were the young people, he said, who must stand up and take ownership of the city. The city had water resources but these resources had not been planned according to the growing population and the same was the case with public transport and other areas. A lot of people from the interior of Sindh came to live in the city to govern it but none of them had any sense of belonging. They were supposed to have as much at stake as they had in Nawabshah, Khairpur, Larkana or even Lahore and Islamabad. People who don't have their homes in Karachi but still came to the city, should have stake there since they had jobs and businesses in the city.

The city has been left rudderless and it is amazing that a city with a population of over 2 million is even surviving.

The event



in pictures



Q&A and Comments



Nazim Haji

Nazim Haji: The census is always lacking because of political reasons and we can never properly plan for the requirements of the citizens of Karachi because while we are planning for 17 million people, there are actually 20 - 22 million which obviously creates problems. What's the solution for fixing these problems?

Answer: We all should indeed follow the recent population survey i.e. 17 million but we should also not forget that the population is increasing every month which automatically comes to 21 million. Water and sewerage control is only provided to the city of Karachi whereas the other controls are providing to cantonment boards. The responsibilities are not fulfilled and advantages taken from one area are given to another area. There needs to be a clear demarcation of boundaries and there should be major coordination within the government of Sindh where Karachi is concerned. People should know what are the supplies coming and who's distributing them. We only cater for today. What we need to do is to plan for tomorrow and once we start doing this, things will change for the better.



Gul Jafri

Gul Jafri: Don't you agree that the provincial government has the major responsibility and the power and authority? Candidates bring their mandates from rural Sindh, and sit at major positions in agencies, departments or ministries. I think a colony should be made by Malik Riaz for the PMs and ministers along with providing them all the resources but their origin should be their villages from where they came from. Late Parveen Rehman was also from a kachi abadi. We are continuously being neglected for the past three terms and we need to politicise the matter. We can't just hope that the city will recover. Do you agree with that?

Answer: No matter wherever we are, political or non-political, we need to work and solve issues. If you're in the political area, take a political stance and the same goes for the non-political areas. But I agree with you. The paradigm must shift because if this goes on, then the future will be very bleak.

Qadir Jafar: As you have spent quite a bit of time in the Senate, I would like you to wake up the members of the parliament and the federal government. They are responsible for the budgets we get. They must see to it that budgets are utilized because don't you think that implementation is the most important thing?

Answer: There's a report of the Senate of Pakistan titled 'Report on Standing



Qadir Jafar

Committee on Defence' which talks about the pollution in Karachi harbour and areas around Pakistan Air Force bases in Karachi. The report went up to the Prime Minister and to all the agencies involved. I was present when the prime minister approved the plan and the first implementation made its way. There was also another report of the stakeholders Action Committee which was on behalf of the senator's office that I used to have in Clifton. Whatever problems we face today, we have to fight them collectively.



Mahmood
Shaam

Comments:

Mahmood Shaam: Though citizens are bothered by the everyday hustle, no one is raising their voices. People living in Karachi say that they don't own the city. Even during the tough days of Zia-ul-Haq in 1986, Karachi industrialists were mobilized but now we don't have any business leadership. Today, we have people who only have pending files and cases in their kitty.



Ruby Haider

Ruby Haider: Karachi belongs to me and my love for this city is unconditional. You may love Lahore and Islamabad for the various things they provide you in comparison to which Karachi doesn't provide as much. But, for me, if love is there, we can have the will as a people to change our city for the better. Also, I think it is the most resilient city in the world as no other city has been mishandled consistently and has risen again and again. One example that I can share with you is that when, after a massive rain, I was stuck in traffic, I saw an old man with a push-cart with a big steel container on it with 'Shahanshah Haleem Palace' written. Now, that's what represents the spirit of the people of Karachi.

My late mamu, Mr Mehdi Masood, a distinguished diplomat and scholar, used to quote from a poem,

*Humney paya hai Karachi ko bohat kuch kho kar
Apni qurbanion or esaar ka phal hai ye shehar
Hum ghareebo k liye ranj qasheeno ke liye
Hind ke 500 shehron ka badal hai ye shehar*



Commander
Raza

Commander Raza: I agree with what Mr. Memon had said that we need to be collective to solve this grave issue. People need to understand that we must do something and plan accordingly. We all should get together and do something solid.



Naveed Khan

Naveed Khan: In my view, we are the ones responsible for making Karachi the way it is now. In the past, we used to speak up if we had any problems but now people only sit in their drawing rooms and comment on the changing situation while watching television. In many areas of Karachi, there's no water and people are buying water everyday to fulfil their needs and no one is speaking up. This needs to change and we need to speak up because if we will not, the problems will remain.



Parvez Ghias

Parvez Ghias: Of course, the government is responsible for a lot of things but it has failed in every aspect. In the United States, people go for meaningful causes and a portion of their efforts also support the poor and pressure groups and when the money goes in that direction, people naturally speak for the cause. We should also contribute towards such causes by making our voices heard.



Mumtaz Memon

Mumtaz Memon: In plain, simple words, Karachi does not belong to anyone and similarly the government has done nothing on its part and neither will it further do anything.



*Syed Mohibullah
Shah*

Syed Mohibullah Shah: Karachi is like any other part of Pakistan and it belongs to the people who live here. Three agencies are responsible for the management and well-being of the city, the federal government, provincial government and the local government. As I see over the years, the structure of the government is directly or indirectly captured by various mafias. The point is that each year so much money is invested but still we are complaining about not getting even basic necessities like water, transport, law and order, etc. So where does all this money go? The mafias have taken over the power of taking decisions for the people. Some mafias have infiltrated the government - like ministers, secretaries, chairmen of various parties and even have secret agents. We have to figure out how to put the genie (mafia) back into the bottle as the government will not do anything.



**“ A people that
elect corrupt
politicians,
imposters, thieves
and traitors are
not victims... but
accomplices ”**

– George Orwell



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