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**CONDUCTING ELECTIONS IN THE
WORLD'S LARGEST PLURAL SOCIETY**

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Chief Election Commissioner of India

A Nand & Jeet Khemka Distinguished Lecture
and
Inaugural Address of the Comparing Elections and Electoral Systems in
North America and India Conference

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DR. RICHARD JOHNSTON: Welcome everyone to the welcome lecture from S. Y. Quraishi to the Comparing Elections and Electoral Systems in North America and India Conference. My name is Richard Johnston. By a vote of three to one, I was chosen as the person to do the introduction so I was not present at the time the vote was taken, but I am actually very pleased to be asked to do this. Just so you know, my current affiliation is the University of BC, but I am a former Penn person. It doesn't feel very former at the moment, I'll say, which is very pleasant. Anyway, my task is not to talk about me, but to introduce S. Y. Quraishi, the Chief Commissioner for Elections for India.

I can't underscore how big a deal it is for us to have Dr. Quraishi here. The position is recognized in the Constitution of India. It is an enormously important role. This is the largest election task in the world. Not only does the Elections Commission take care of the Parliamentary elections, Lok Sabha elections, but also Presidential and Vice-Presidential elections, and elections in several states. So Dr. Quraishi is responsible for organization of elections, certainly to a Canadian, on an unimaginable scale. He is the seventeenth Chief Commissioner. He has been so since the third of July last year and served on the Commission for four years before that.

But before that, he had a thirty-five year civil service history, which is incredibly impressive. His last pre-Election Commission position was as Secretary in the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. We were actually just talking about the fact that the advent

of the Commonwealth Games, a rather contested proposition last year, was already troubling him. Maybe that helped him move over to the Election Commission in 2006, but that's a big deal. I would be interested to see whether he is pleased NOT to be involved in the Ministry of Sports now that the Cricket World Cup is taking place in India. I'll tell you in our household once Canada is dismissed, we'll be barracking on India, if we know what is good for us.

Anyway, before Youth Affairs and Sport, he was Special Secretary for Health, Director General of the National AIDS Control Organization; earlier than that, Director General of National TV, and with the World Youth Development Agency. Also, he has been a state public servant in the state of Haryana. The themes that run through his career before Election Commission are gender, families, youth & adolescence, HIV/AIDS, so big social issues. Even before becoming a public servant, or I suppose somewhat overlapping, there is a scholarly story here. He has a Ph.D. I don't know if there is anyone here from Annenberg here just now but social marketing, social communications is the theme of the academic side. So we have here a man of hearts to say the least. And without further a due, I will give you S. Y. Quraishi. There is one bit of further a due. The talk will be about forty minutes, and then it's wide open for Q & A. We'll sort of run it from the table.

DR. S. Y. QURAISHI: Thank you ladies and gentlemen. My last posting before Election Commission, as he said, was Secretary of Sports and field sports and other sports, we also had adventure sports, but we didn't have as violent sport as we have in the Election

Commission. There is this suggestion thrown occasionally that in India we say fighting elections, and people live up to this expectation, and they literally fight. So whether we can use the term, “Let’s play elections,” or something of that kind. Anyway as a civil servant and we have a colleague of mine here from the Indian Administrative Service. We keep moving from one department to the other, which baffles many people from outside because they think it doesn’t give us any expertise, but we would like to believe that we are also experts of management. We are public administrators, whether it is agriculture or industry or sports, whichever department. Management issues are the same; therefore, instead of becoming a problem, it actually gives us a variety of experience. We never go stale. We never get bored, and we are always learning because in a new job you are a stranger. You have to learn to make your presence felt.

However, when I came to the Election Commission, it is almost a natural progression because all of us civil servants have conducted elections in various capacities all our lives. But I have the additional advantage of being a presiding officer of a single booth when I was under training. My trainer...there was four of us in the...district of Haryana. All of them are giving the—because we are senior officers from day one—we are given supervisory jobs. But he forced me to be the presiding officer of a booth. I was very upset. I was very angry with him. But he understood my displeasure, and he explained to me how it would come in handy, an experience which I would never have otherwise.

And there were comforting thoughts also going around, that there was a story of a presiding officer, it’s a very responsible job, the presiding officer for a booth, and we

have got a million of them. So the inventory of a presiding officer has about 170 items, and each one has to be present because if something is missing, even a pin is missing or a seal is missing, there will be a problem. And there was the story of a presiding officer who forgot to bring his stamp when he came back and when deposited his kit. It scared him so much. It frightened him so much that he literally ran twelve miles to go and retrieve the stamp and he came back. With that comforting thought when I was given this job of presiding officer, that is an experience I can never forget. And when I was appointed the Chief Election Commissioner of India in June, I looked for the gentlemen who was my trainer collector and located him. He was living a retired life, located him, thanked him for his foresight. He was of course very touched, very happy, just as I was. And that was the beginning of my term in the Election Commission.

It is quite a huge task as you will see. Given the large diversity of the country which we deal with, we became a republic in 1950, and '51-'52 was the first general election. Incidentally, Election Commission of India was born a day before India was born as a republic because the Constitution framers were very particular about the importance of the institution of elections in a democracy, and the kind of power they gave to the Election Commission, the independence and distance they created between the Election Commission and the Government has really come in very handy.

We got equal voting rights—men and women—at that time it was twenty-one years, all in one stroke. Whereas in the United States, it took 131 years for women to get enfranchised. Even in the mother of democracies—UK—it took one hundred years. And

other countries also have taken decades if not around a century. But at that time when India became a republic and a democracy, people frowned upon this adventure. They thought this was a grave adventure, with a country with 84 percent illiteracy. How will they cope with the responsibility of democracy? And it will fail. But history has proved otherwise. Now, I want to give you these figures.

Caste-based hierarchical structures, these are one of the diversities. I don't know how to explain the caste system to those who are not familiar with it, but for India it's a part of our total social, cultural life. There are caste levels of society. There are upper castes, lower castes, and sub-castes. They work almost in a clannish manner. And Election system is unfortunately perpetuating those divisions on caste lines and managing those divisions is one of our problems. We have conducted fifteen general elections to the Federal Parliament. And more than three hundred, to be exact about 328, elections to the State assemblies. There are thirty-five states in the country, states and union territories to be very technically correct. Then we have three million elected representatives at various levels, local rural communities, and municipal and onward. We don't deal with the local body elections. Only state assemblies—thirty-five state assemblies, two houses, Parliament, both houses, Vice-President, and President. We have never missed a deadline, not even by a day. Every election has been on time, and with credibility. And with the result that the change of power has always been very smooth and very cordial. In fact, after the last general election, Mr. Obama did comment on India's historic election as an example for all of us. In the Constitution Preamble, it talks of India being a sovereign, socialist, secular,

democratic republic. And there are provisions for safeguards of minorities. All of these words are important because to implement this Preamble the various provisions of the Constitution and the acts have been provided. Minorities are religious, linguistic. They have been provided with all kinds of provisions. Now there are tribes—you will come across this term “scheduled tribes” and “scheduled castes.” These are schedules in the Constitution of India. Listing a certain tribe specifically, and a certain caste, and they have been given a certain reservation that is 15 percent reservation of seats and even employment for those belonging to the scheduled castes. Some of you may be familiar with the word “untouchables,” that was the term used for some of these classes. And 7.5 percent reservation for scheduled tribes. Some of these tribes really live in primitive areas. We also had provision for Anglo-Indians.

The geographical diversity itself—we have areas, anytime of the year—forty degrees Celsius. How much will it rain for the tides? When it is forty degrees Celsius, there are areas which in summer that will have fifty-eight degrees Celsius. So we have a huge range, and we have to have a system in spite of these diversities. A huge area I already mentioned— we have mountains, plains, reserves, forest, islands, coastlines, and of course different seasons. The population of India is now about 1.2 billion. Even in the context of election management, we find lots of difference in managing the elections in specific areas. For instance in urban areas, there is voter apathy. They don't turn out big numbers. Given the house numbers are erratic, we have problems doing our electoral rolls. Then major religions—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsees. We have eighteen official languages and thousands of dialects. But eighteen official

languages is something we deal with because our electoral rolls have to be in the local language, besides English and Hindi. And in many places they have to be in three languages, even the ballot paper, we have to print it in three languages.

Then, to protect the pluralistic society, in fact, we are very proud of our pluralism. Everybody is equal. Our laws are very protective of a pluralistic society. In the context of election, there cannot be any appeal on the grounds of religion, caste, creed, community, or language. I have mentioned a section for those of you who may be interested in electoral laws of India. Then you can't promote feelings of hatred, ill-will, or enmity between different classes. You can't use religious institutions for electioneering. There is a punishment for interference in electoral rights of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. If these lower castes are prevented from coming out and voting, there are senior penal provisions in the acts, and the MCC, the moral code of conduct, this is one term I would like you to take note of. This is a unique instrument that we have a court developed by the political parties themselves, and is imposed so strictly, so rigorously that leaves the electoral system free from animosities, rivalries, fistfights. It keeps the campaign very healthy.

I mentioned reservations for scheduled castes scheduled tribes. Corrupt practices are punishable: bribery, division on the basis of caste, undue influence by using official machinery, threat inducement. This bullet also please take note of. This is one more area which gives us another power. Virtually, because of this, we almost, people say that we take over the government. Even the Federal Government cannot even pass a resolution,

cannot even put up a resolution in the Cabinet because that resolution may carry some inducement to the voters, some announcement of a new scheme. And since it cannot be kept secret, it will leak out. They will get the political advantage. This is a new use of official machinery, threat inducement. All these things come down heavily on any abuse of authority of power by the ruling party, which is why, in my own experience, that the ruling party always hates us, opposition parties love us, and when the roles reverse of course, their attitudes also change accordingly.

Since we are a totally inclusive society, we make provisions, although we have equality, but then positive discrimination is accepted in the Constitution. For women, we have separate queues at polling stations. In some areas, where the status of women is considered a little sensitive to the issue, we even have separate polling stations for women. And we report women officers at the polling stations so there are women who wear burqa veil, so they have to be identified so only a woman can see, so therefore a woman is posted, and we even use women police.

For the disabled, every single polling booth, we have about 832,000 at the last count, it will go up by 100,000 in the next two years, has a ramp for the disabled, and every single machine, we have 1.2 million, has the Braille system, even if the Braille literate/blind is very very few, but the facility is there. And we allow companions for the infirmed and disabled.

Now the ballot paper has besides the name of the candidate also has symbols. This is to

cater to the illiterate population so they can recognize the symbol, and they can press the button. Then, I already mentioned about using different languages for our rolls. Incidentally, we recently gave transgenders, they already had the right to vote, but there was a technical problem, that when our enumerators went to them and asked for their gender, and if he or she said woman and it sounded like a man— it was not accepted, vice versa. So this demand came to us and we took exactly thirty seconds to decide that one million transgenders cannot be excluded from the polling process, and we said alright they will be called “other gender,” O. Male, female, and O, was introduced. And it received great appreciation nationwide. Now, the new Census is taking place. They have adopted this from us because you cannot keep one million people out of democratic process. We have now recently also given voting rights to non-resident Indians, those who still have Indian passport. But since some of you are NRI, let me make it clear, it is on an experimental basis. You have to register yourself at the place of your permanent residence on your passport, and you have to be physically present there to vote—no postal ballot please for you.

How large is the largest? Everywhere you will hear about the largest large. “A” country larger than “B.” In this case, “A” is larger than “B” to “Z” and double “B” to double “Z.” As I will tell you in the next slide, we have about 832,000 polling stations, 1.2 million machines. In the last general elections, we used eleven million people for us to work and conduct the election because the Constitution gives us power to call on anybody to do election duty. If somebody says no, there is imprisonment. But nobody says no. And we, voluntarily they don’t say no, and we incidentally are probably the only country, one of

the few, who use only the civil servant, the government servant as election staff, not government service. And our logic is that a government servant is permanent. And we have them by the neck literally for thirty years. If somebody misbehaves we start action against him and there is no escape so we really control these people better than we would be able to control volunteers. If they misbehave, what can we do?

Then we have many registered parties, 1,043 three weeks ago. Now there are 1,200. That was the figure in the morning so I will have to update myself. We, in the Parliament, we have the house of the people, we have 543 constituencies. Ladakh in Kashmir is the largest. I can't even figure out how many square kilometers that makes it. Then we have the smallest constituency, Lakshadweep Islands. And we have state assemblies, about 4,100 state assembly constituencies. We have been using electronic voting machines since—it was introduced in 1982 on a pilot basis—it went into litigation, and '98 onward we have been using it. It has led to the saving of 8,500 metric tons of paper since we introduced the machines, besides lots of other benefits.

Now, how large? We have more voters than all fifty countries of Europe, and Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan put together. We still have a gap of fifty million if you would volunteer some more countries. We have more voters than fifty-four countries of Africa put together; North and South America, more than fifty-six countries put together, an entire Commonwealth put together, that is the size of India's electorate. This is the same thing graphically. But let me tell you, it is not a question of size alone. We have these numbers but it is the complexity, the enormity, the diversity, and

attention to detail, and how we have a voting booth with only one voter. There were two until last year. There was one in Kerala where this man normally would come after lunch at 2:00, but legally we are supposed to set up a booth at 7:00 in the morning in case he chooses to come. And even after he had cast his vote, we cannot close the shop because if somebody else turns up and says “He is not the real person; I was the real voter,” then there is a disputed vote there. So the shop has to be open until 5:00. Unfortunately, last year he died. There was a news item that said “Death of a Polling Booth.”

But we still have the tradition going. Even if there is a single voter in the Gir Forest of Gujarat, he is a temple priest. There was one daring journalist who went to talk to him, in Hindustan Time, and it was a very interesting report. He complained that no political party or candidate comes to him seeking his vote. But the only concession we make here, instead of sending a polling party of five, which is our standard configuration, we manage with three. We do not send paramilitary force also of course to take care of the booth security. This is the only concession because he refuses to go and we would not force him to go and we have to provide for him. We use of course because of the diversity all kinds of transport, anything you named it and we use that: elephant, camel, boats, bicycle, helicopters, trains, and when everything else fails, people walk. Literally, in Arunachal Pradesh near the China border and many hill areas, there is no other way besides to walk for three days and three nights carrying your kit on your shoulder, but it happens and there is no question of us not reaching them.

Then, we keep devising new things. Vulnerability mapping is a new device we have adopted. Every single booth's vulnerability to any trouble of any kind is identified beforehand. For instance, in the general election we identified about 350 people who could possibly make mischief so we took preventive action in our criminal procedural court. In the state of Bihar, there is one election, we did preventive arrests of six thousand people. Otherwise, they are the guys who would do booth capturing. Ten years ago in the same state of Bihar, around the poll time, there were eighty-eight poll-related murders; this time not the slightest of a scuffle. And it has been regarded as quite a historic election, totally peaceful, the most peaceful, not adjacent to Bihar but in the country. Then in tracking information from every polling station, we have insured that some form of communication is available from everywhere so that in ten minutes we will get to know if anything happens, which we must know. Suppose the polling booth is captured or the machine goes out of order and within half an hour, the electronic voting machine has to be replaced.

We are a creation of the Constitution. Election Commission is a constitutional authority. And we are three members. The senior most is the CEC, becomes the Chief, not by law but by convention. It used to be a single member commission until 1993. But at that time the person who was the Chief Election Commissioner became so powerful, dictatorial, even the Supreme Court had to intervene. That is the time they made it a multi-member, and I think it is working beautifully because three brains definitely contribute to good decision making.

The voting age was reduced to eighteen years by Rajiv Gandhi in 1989. But somehow youth are anti-establishment. The year after that, he lost the election. In any case, we had to try and get youth on board with their interest in election. It is still very low. Their enrollment on electoral rolls is just about 20 to 25 percent, but we have come up with a very revolutionary thing, maybe I will mention it to you later.

For this huge exercise, eleven million people work under us. They come under deputation to us. They are subject to discipline, transfer, posting by us. But to manage all of that on a permanent basis, we are just three hundred people in Delhi and about three hundred in thirty-five states, six hundred put together. For the election, we take people on board.

As I mentioned we are always improving. Photo electoral roll is an innovation we started about four years ago. Earlier, identification of the right person on the electoral rolls used to be an issue. There were cases of impersonation. Then photo identity card was introduced in the '90s. Already about 90 percent of Indians have got photo identity card. But we thought, still the last person has an identity card, we cannot insist that you bring your voter card. You may have lost it, or you may have not got it, so we allow thirteen alternative documents like passport or driving license, documents which are authentic. But after the introduction of this photo on the electoral roll itself, we feel that those identifications will become almost irrelevant. They will just allow entry to the photo-booth. After that you have picture on the roll will take care.

We have also introduced a system of booth level officer. Every booth has a person, normally a schoolteacher or a lower government functionary, who lives in the vicinity, you know him, he knows you, you can go check if your name is on the roll or not. If not, give the form, and so on. This is also a three to four year old innovation. We hear complaints from all political parties, all the time. And complaints by the political parties and complaints against the political parties, and we try to create a level playing field, which is what has given us credibility because we have really been very fair in our dealings with everyone. And suggestions are coming in all the time.

Now, scheduling the election. People incidentally, it is the Election Commission of India decides the dates of the election. Unlike in Britain, where the Prime Minister announces the date, no way. In fact, in India, the Prime Minister will probably be the last one to know what is the date. Why? Because by timing the election at the time of your choosing, you are actually misusing an authority. So that there is fairness for everybody, the decision is left to us. Six months before the last day of the Parliament, we have the option to do the election anytime in those six months. Or suppose the Parliament is dissolved separately, then six months after that, we have this flexibility.

But of course all this flexibility and all this power, ladies and gentleman, I would like to assure you, that we use very very judiciously. Even if we have unlimited power, the power of the people, their perception, is extremely important. If I do anything undesirable, it will take minutes for people to realize that something is amiss somewhere. So we try to be judicious in our discretionary powers also. We see the

weather conditions, the law and order situation of that state. We also engage central paramilitary forces, to maintain in law and order, particularly very difficult areas. Did you know that one third of the country has left-wing extremism? The Maoists, you must have heard of the Maoists. They are playing a very dangerous game. There are roads which are land-mined. They keep indulging in ambushes. Security forces are targets of attack. And in the last election, about 130,000 booths were in these Maoist areas. Normally, the struggle of the Maoists with the security forces goes on all the time and they use surprise attacks. But in our case even surprise is not available because the date of the poll is known, the timing of the poll is known, return time, the poll closes at 5:00, the party starts moving. They are virtually sitting ducks. We of course provide security and we also pray, and so far our prayers have been answered.

Then agricultural cycle, we try to avoid harvest season because that is the time of the sowing season. Farmers don't want to come out. There are so many festivals. Since we have so many religions, we have so many festivals: religious festivals, cultural festivals, also national and state festivals. Examination schedules, the month of March, for instance virtually holy cow, where all are polling stations are in schools. Most of our staff is teachers so we cannot disturb so March is always ruled out. Then public holidays, etc, etc.

We call upon anybody to duty for us. Then of course training this eleven million people is also, at different levels, every one, because it is not a question of a 50 percent success rate, or 70 percent success rate. Every booth is independent and every booth has to

deliver a first class election. So it has to be 100 percent success. Therefore, everyone has to have training. Then, we do all kinds of different training. And of course we make sure of people tainted or people suspected of being very close to a political party. In fact, we have changed, the Chief Secretary of a State, director general of police of a state, home secretary, at the drop of a hat, only on the basis of a complaint, the perception that a person is working very closely with a political party, that power which came not so much from the Constitution, but from a Supreme Court judgment actually has really given us something now that the officers down the line fear. Otherwise, getting them to act fairly would have been impossible.

Procurement of EVMs, we have to make sure they are all functioning. We have to undergo technical checks. And now there was some controversy about EVM, whether they were tampered with, so we made sure when these machines were tested before the poll, political parties are also invited to be physically present so they can see how the machines are being checked and they are being certified.

Vulnerability mapping, I already mentioned. We use videographers. We use digital cameras. And potentially vulnerable villages, persons, everything. Then of course we make security arrangements, including confidence building measures. For instance, we have five states going to poll next month. And one of which has a lot of trouble, including the Maoist kind. We have already sent about one hundred companies of paramilitary force, every company one hundred people, to just do flag marching through

the streets just for confidence building of the people. Once they know the security has arrived, they feel comfortable.

Communication for election tracking, I have already mentioned. At various levels, every single booth, whether they have landlines—two or three landlines—or two or three persons who have a mobile phone, if that doesn't work because there are scheduled areas and dense forests, police violence, even violent cannot function in some of these areas, then satellite phones, and where everything else fails, the person who will walk, we identify runners, young able-bodied people in their twenties who will run two to three kilometers to the nearest landline, or nearest communication point, and inform us that something has happened that requires attention. Apart from helping us run a smooth election, it has also proved to be a great deterrent against potential troublemakers. They know that these guys will get there in ten minutes, and help will arrive, and then they will be in trouble.

And of course we are using all kinds of technology: SMS-based information system, email, call centers, all that. Our approach is very clear that for voting process itself, our voting machine is a very simple seventeenth century calculator technology. Like an adding machine, you press a button, one vote gets captured. You press another, another vote gets added. Although I dare say we are a virtual IT superpower, but consciously we use very low technology because we don't want machine to be networked because they can be hacked. We don't want another Wikileaks, and they do not use an operating system because an operating system on your laptop, even a child can make a computer

game. You vote for X and your vote will go for Y. For every other thing, we use high-tech, but the voting process is very very simple.

We appoint observers. These are independent observers, senior officers of the same service, IAS officers, who are sent to another state from the one in which they are serving or to which they belong. So their neutrality is never questioned. And in the last general election about two thousand officers, or 40 percent of our IAS cartel in the country was deployed as observers. Voters love these observers. They are virtual demigods because once they are there, they are our eyes and ears and for them they are a symbol of neutrality. Any complaint, they go to the observer whose mobile phone is circulated, printed in the newspapers. He has to pick up the phone. Sometimes we do a desk check at 2:00 in the morning. We call up observer and if he doesn't pick up, he's in trouble because we want him to be totally available to hear complaints. EVM, we call it wonder machine of Indian democracy.

Moral court, I referred to it earlier. This is a great instrument of quality elections that we conduct which lay down minimum standards of behavior, how they will conduct public meeting. No public meeting can go beyond 10:00 p.m. because it will disturb people. There has been prosecution at ten past one because opposition is always alert the moment the time is over, they will start complaining. And very senior leaders have got into trouble for exceeding this limit so they are very scared. Then, the processions which they take out, they should not become a nuisance for the public. How many carts can be

there at one time, then how much they have to leave so that traffic can still flow, and so on.

There are checks on parties in power. They cannot, even a Chief Minister cannot go on an official tour. Even for that matter, the Prime Minister cannot go on an official tour and still do campaigning. If he is going for campaigning, he has to go only for that. If we find any leader using any government transport, or transport at government expense, he will be in trouble. There was this case—Madhya Pradesh anyone from Madhya Pradesh?—when we announced elections in Madhya Pradesh, and the Chief Minister who happened to be in Washington and instead of knowing that the election is pending, we announced the election and all the populous steam that he had in his pocket, very close to the election. He got pre-empted from doing so. He was very upset, angry. All kinds of political pressure came for changing our decision, which of course there was no question of changing our decision. He came with half of his Cabinet using a state plane, to meet us. And after that not only did we reject his request because it was unreasonable, we impose a fine of two million rupees on him because he has used government transport.

Recently I met him, and he said I'm willing to forgive you for not changing the election date, but the way you imposed that fine. But that is not out of the way. Actually, it was using government transport for a political purpose. That is not allowed. So these things send a message down the line. And with the result that—this is what he have heard from top leaders, leader of opposition mentioned in important public meeting last year in the

presence of the Prime Minister and the President: That the only people politicians are scared of is the Election Commission because of our power to come down heavily. When we send a notice to a political party or leader, with a complaint, that you have violated such and such things, please reply within twenty-four hours by 5:00 p.m. tomorrow why this action should not be taken. They are so scared that by 4:00 the next day, surely the reply will come. That kind of compliance doesn't happen anywhere else. So this moral court...but I would like to say that this is a creation of political parties themselves. It is fashionable to paint them all black. Without political parties, there is no democracy. All of them are not tainted. All of them are not undesirable. They have set good precedents also.

Counting of course also similarly is a huge process. Now we still have some issues of concern. It is not all hunky dory. There are problems. One of course is the use of money-power in elections. There is a ceiling provided by the Election Commission for Parliamentary elections and state elections, but feeling is that ten times, fifty times, one hundred times more money is being used, which of course means black money because they cannot—if they officially exceed the expenditure, the election will be questioned, and they will be unseated. So we have to deal with this.

Paid news is another major problem which has come up that some newspapers strike deals with political parties. They publish news items, which actually are sponsored—it is an advertisement in the garb of news. Audience is misled. Readers are misled. So that is another area of concern.

Then we have many people with criminal backgrounds, with serious charges, grave even murder, and they contest election. These are the guys that used to support candidates in the past. Then they realized that on the strength of their muscle power if others are winning elections, why don't they contest themselves? And about 20 percent, 25-30 percent, we have—people don't realize that we have no control over that because disqualification of person contesting for election is decided by Parliament by an act. But people believe that, that is where we are failing. And we have been writing to the government to bring up an act. Political parties have two standard replies, with some justification. One is that very often your rival candidate will file a false case against you, bogus cases against you. And on that basis if you get disqualified, it is a short cut to he defeating you. It is a valid point. Secondly, an existing law, everybody is innocent until convicted by a court of law, and unfortunately conviction in India takes twenty to thirty years. Meanwhile, a dacoit or a robber would have been a minister, whatever, and even if the decision comes, what do we do? So we came up with a formulation where—and not just we, we may be an interested party, but even the law commission, jurists—at least those cases which would lead to—heinous offenses where conviction will be at least five years or more, and where the cases have been filed five to six months before the election so you have time to undo the damage. And where a court of law, which is independent, has framed the charges. Now, jurists say that framing of the charges is without application of a judicial mind. Therefore on that basis alone they cannot be disqualified. It is a general dilemma, but right now this government is serious about electoral reform. Seven regional consultations were held recently. Second or third of April, there is a

national consultation. All political parties will be there. And they will make their stand clear.

Then we feel dependence on central police force is also not a very sustainable thing. We are not happy to do that. Why is it that people have no faith in the local police? By the same bureaucracy, which is considered inefficient, lazy, corrupt, or aligned to political party, once they come under Election Commission, they deliver first-rate election, which are basically competent. In fact our governor made this comment at the last general election, Look, same bureaucracy, delivers a perfect event under the command of the Election Commission, so we need to do something. Then our apathy, one suggestion is we should have compulsory voting. This is nothing doing. It has to be voter education.

Finally, you know the losers always look for excuses. Recent campaign, if somebody lost, oh it must be the electronic voting machine. I was very popular. Hundreds of thousands of people used to come to my meeting. Why did I lose? Oh, it must be the electronic voting machine which failed.

Criminals, money power, party fighting... Some of the suggestions which we now have, that in the last forty-eight hours, public meetings and rallies are banned, but door to door campaigning is allowed, we want that stopped also because in that one-to-one contact in forty-eight hours, the money can change hands. The liquor changes hands. So we feel that the forty-eight hours period should be total quiet period where voter can decide peacefully what he is going to do. We have already banned exit polls during the

election process. We also want opinion polls because like paid news, these are paid. They are sponsored polls so you can show anything that you want to here. Then we people say that we were already the strongest election commission in the world, but at the same time, my Indian friends will bear me out, we hear that Election Commission is a toothless tiger. They want more teeth given to us. Well, so be it. But we do feel that the complete equality of the three commissioners is important because they have equal voting right. I can be outvoted ten times a day by the other two. So under the pressure of the government, because the government has to appoint one of them as the chief after I go. And the removal, CEC cannot be removed, except for impeachment. The other two, there is no such safety. We want that equality.

Voter's education is something we are banking on more and more. Now national voters, they are at the end of this. Twenty-fifth of January is our Founders Day. We decided in a meeting of this kind in the state of Orissa somebody from the audience got up, and said eighteen years is a day to celebrate. It made me think, and within a couple of days we came up with a scheme which is like this. We started identifying those who will become eighteen on the first of January—that is the day. On the fifth of January across the country, electoral rolls were notified. On the twenty-fifth of January, seventy million voters got their voter identity cards, which would normally have taken them months or years. So this became, and these cards were given in 800,000 functions simultaneous across the country. In Delhi it was chaired by the president of India, where she gave voter cards to voters in the booth in her residential estate. And at 800,000 simultaneous functions, these guys got their cards which means because of youth empowerment

program at the function, this means the biggest decentralization program of any kind. And it came so effortlessly that government of India has now declared the twenty-fifth of January as National Voters day for all times.

We have also set up two new divisions. One is the voter education division. We realize that a lot more was desired on that side. And we have also set up expedition monitoring. As I've said, money power is a serious issue. To deal with it we needed more teeth, more equipment. We set up a new division. And income tax service officer is our director general. An entire income tax machinery was unleashed on the state of Bihar where we experimented and it worked wonders. On that basis we fine-tuned these guidelines, and the coming five states will try these out once again.

We of course are trying to use technology in everything as much as we can in everything. This is another thing. We are setting up a training institute called Indian Institute of Democracy and Election Management. It was originally conceived as our own training institution, but it has received so much enthusiasm worldwide. In fact one of the reasons I came, I spent three to four days in Washington. I had a meeting with the State Department. They want to have a partnership with us, but we made it clear that we keep distance even from our own government so an alliance with any government is out of the question. But there is a foundation called International Foundation for Electoral Services (IFES). They are operating in eighty countries, if you would like to have a partnership. We suggested to the U.S. government that they can finance the countries of Africa or Central Asia or Asia, who would like to send their trainees to this institute, and

Commonwealth Secretary General came to us, and he wants a partnership. UNDP is in touch with us. They want a partnership so that we are going to train people in other countries also who would like to share our experience. And in fact, Secretary Clinton spoke to our Foreign Minister as Egyptian development took place that India may be required to play an important role there. And the way things are maybe not just Egypt, but many more countries which may be going for elections, and we would be happy to share whatever experiences we have with anybody who may be interested.

These are some of the media reflections. V. Mitchell, *New York Times*, said “It is truly the greatest show on Earth, an ode to a diverse and democratic ethos...an inspiration to all the World.” These are some of the comments. The last one from the Independent of London: “India confirms its status as a democratic beacon...Yet for this chaotic nation—with its almost unfathomable religious, linguistic, and social diversity—not only to hold free and fair elections, but also to deliver stable government is a truly remarkable achievement.” In fact, it is a fact that it is only in India, in that part of the world, where the losing Prime Minister, with folded hands, offers the chair to the winner, no ill will at all.

Our vision is that we should be able to have elections completely free of crime, and abuse of money, based on a perfect electoral roll, and with full voter participation. Thank you ladies and gentlemen.

DR. RICHARD JOHNSTON: Well, I don't know about you. I was prepared to be overwhelmed by the scale of the elections, but I had no idea about all the other stuff that the Election Commission does. It is amazing. So we have, by my count about half hour; forty-five minutes for Q & A. The floor is completely open.

QUESTION: Thank you Dr. Quraishi for being here. I am an MBA Student at the Wharton School. I have two questions. I am starting a study on the UID, the universal ID, and I wanted to get your thoughts on how the voter ID plays a role, and how that interacts with the UID, and how eventually UID will replace or work in conjunction with that. My second question was a little more on the NRI voting. I am an NRI. And I would like to understand more, from your perspective, what are some of the challenges you see, and where that is going?

DR. S. Y. QURAISHI: Can I take a few questions and then answer in a bulk of four or five questions? Or what is the method?

DR. RICHARD JOHNSTON: I think we are making it up as we go.

DR. S. Y. QURAISHI: What is your preference?

DR. RICHARD JOHNSTON: I think we have two questions.

DR. S. Y. QURAISHI: Well, unique identity is something which has just started, whereas we have been in business longer. But we are working very closely together. In their governing party, one of our officers is there. We work in tandem. They are introducing a biometric system of the card. One thing which people don't realize is that UID authority is not producing any ID card. They will only generate a number, and that number will be shared with anybody who has a card. For instance, we have a card so we take that number and also superimpose it. Your driving license will also have that number. So there are not actually any ID issuing authority, but we are working closely together.

The NRI voting, there was a lot of debate on this. It is a very complex issue. I had a meeting with the ambassador in Washington one day. I had a meeting with High Commissioner in London. The common problem is that they mention is that they don't know how many Indians are here in America, and how many there are in UK. Second issue when we discussed it in Delhi, it may be all right in Washington when we invite you to come and register and you turn up twenty thousand number. So imagine if two hundred people come outside in Riyadh, the Embassy in Saudi Arabia. They are not used to those kinds of crowds so there will be chaos. What we are doing is that we have told our embassies they should publicize it as widely as they can to reach out to every possible NRI. And receive what we loosely call "expression of interest" so that at least we know what the problem is. The Embassies feel that the systems will crash if thousands come up, as they are dealing with passport implications, visa implications—it takes time—so we are still trying to grow.

Our urgency is that we have five states going to poll next month, and some of them have lots of NRIs. Kerala particularly was very keen that we introduce it before the election. We really are keeping our fingers crossed how we are going to do that, but legal position currently is that you can be enrolled now in our representation of people, and the provision is that you have to be ordinarily resident to be enrolled in a particular place, and we interpret it as six months. If you are living for more than six months outside, as a special dispensation, it is allowed, except you can register in the place of your permanent home as mentioned in your passport. Also, you have to be physically present to vote. I'm not going into other things like how we are going to check the bribing of voters. Suppose there are fake parties here or in Washington or Pennsylvania to woo you. We don't allow such parties to happen in the country. Those are issues which will happen much later.

QUESTION: Thank you. I'm Louis Massicot from Canada. Mine is a rather focused question. Your presentation reminded me of an unusual original provision of the Indian constitution that I understand empowers the President to appoint people to the Lok Sabha, and possibly to also state legislative assemblies persons from what is described as the Anglo-Indian community. Now, a number of questions spring to my mind from this. First, how often this provision been used? What exactly is the Anglo-Indian community? Have there been any problems arising from the coexistence within the legislatures of mostly elected, but also a few of them appointed members?

DR. S. Y. QURAIISHI: Nominated members, that provision is still there. The President can nominate up to twelve nominated members who are distinguished people from art, culture, science, who are not into politics at all, but who can enrich Parliament. And of course the nominations of the President are done by the government of the day, and the President signs them. Anglo-Indian community was a special provision for India because there were lots of people, there were lots of national marriages where the British married Indians, either way, husband British and wife Indian, vice versa, and their children were called Anglo-Indians. Their number was very small, but the Constitution framers felt that they must also have a voice. This problem is now gone. I don't think there is even one Anglo-Indian left. Of course, new generation has come, but two languages were appointed in every Parliament, but it has become now redundant.

QUESTION: Dr. Quraishi, my name is Satya Dosapati from "Save Indian Democracy." You know me very well. I know I caused aggravation to you, and I hope you recognize it is only for the passion of the country, and I have to tell I have been interacting with Dr. Quraishi, and I have nothing but praise for how he conducted himself, and I think the country is in good hands. I honestly believe that. You know very well I have been very closely working on this issue. I have a couple of questions for you. One is the thing about the EVM issue where there is a paper printed. And I was wondering why that paper printer is being discarded because in U.S. after a lot of experimentation they realized they need paper ballot. They also need efficiency, and they went to the paper ballot optical scanner system. Now India is trying to get its own version where you are having a machine plus a paper receipt, which is a good sign. Now, I was wondering why you are

discarding that? That is question number one. And the second question is there is a presentation going on; in the last three weeks it had one hundred thousand hits, and this presentation is talking about the plunder of India, the corruption, which is estimated anywhere from 1 to 1.4 trillion dollars and as you pointed out in your presentation how the money is used. How do we control it? And even if somebody is elected, somebody can pay ten million dollars. We have seen in 2008 there are allegations that a government was bought with ten million dollars. How can we safeguard the democracy in these threats?

DR. S. Y. QURAISHI: Let me introduce Mr. Dosapati to you. I met him for the first time and I received lots of hate mail from him. This was in the context of a controversy about the electronic voting machine. What is the name of your organization?—Save Indian Democracy—so we thought he was a competitor because we thought we were the people in charge of saving Indian democracy. They are questioning that our electronic voting machine can be tampered with, and therefore they want a paper trail. Mr. Dosapati, I would like to mention that with an existing machine, a paper trail is possible, but we use it not on the polling day. We use it before polling to see whether the machine is in order, or we use it on the order of the court. There was one case in the Kerala high court in an election petition where somebody said that nineteen voters were actually dead, but they voted. So the court called us and asked us whether we were able to identify those votes. You know secrecy of the ballot paper is paramount. Although when you come to us, we write your name in the order you have come. And the machine can actually tell you if

you are the fifth voter, the fifth voter had gone to whom. But after the results are declared, these machines are out of bounds even for us.

Only the court can get them opened. So on the court order, we opened the machine, we use that paper trail. There is a special decoder that we use, and it was able to tell us the secret, and we identified those nineteen voters. Sure enough, they were bogus voters. Then, the court said, “Can you write that these nineteen votes are cancelled, the rest of the result is fine.” So whatever that result was, was written down. So we have absolutely no problem with that even the UA agrees that those who were questioning the EVM, they didn’t say that our machines had been tampered with, or the results had actually been interfered with, they only feel that there is no transparency in the sense that when you press a button, the vote goes is going in some electronic component, and you can’t see it going. So whether there can be some visible proof that it is going to the place where you wanted it to go, that’s where there’s the suggestion of Voter Verifiable Paper Trail (VVPT).

We tried to argue with these people that our machine is absolutely reliable because besides the technology—and simplicity was the secret of success—there are fourteen seals on that machine, and each seal is signed by the candidates. So for instance the machine was finally, at the same time after this controversy, we introduced certain measures. For instance, our first level check of a machine. Before we deploy it in the election, it used to be done by our engineers, and we would get their certificate. Now we

made it clear after you people raised this issue that our first level check will also be attended by political parties where they will do **[inaudible]** using this printout.

They used to question our mock poll also. You know a chip can be devised in such a way that when you do a mock poll, the first fifty to sixty votes will go fine, but it will start malfunctioning later on. Every polling station, one million, everywhere before the poll, we have one hour of mock poll, where you poll ten, fifteen, twenty, one hundred votes; see the results. If the tally matches, the candidates certify yes we saw the mock poll, and the machine was working fine. Then the presiding officer presses the button clear. And reset. And the machine is started. Now we are started putting a paper seal over the machine also. We catered to some of these people who are questioning. Ok, here is the machine. That is how it will be in the polling station. Tamper with it. You are worried about hacking. Ok, hack the machine, sure. Now hacking requires working from a distance, but this is the machinery. It is not networked. The response was, "We are not a magician." When the machine is sealed, how will we tamper with it?

But in any case since we have to be fair, we have to appear to be fair, we called a meeting of all political parties, each one of them, and since they had heard about this controversy, they suggested that we try this paper trail; refer it to a technical committee of independent experts. There used to be three members by the way, since you know the details more than anybody else. So we have now made it five, one criticism against your teacher is that he is an old timer, that is why we have included two young members also, from the latest computer technology, so that all kinds of experience is available. On the

recommendation of all political parties, we have referred it to this independent committee of experts. They have called all the critics of the machine and all the political parties to give their suggestions, and we hired two companies to start manufacturing that machine, and see how it works.

Now, don't start another email campaign against me, but just let me explain, you know why our reservation is Mr. Dosapati, that anyone who has an engineering background will know, that electronic devices are less vulnerable to corruption, or getting out of order, than a mechanical device. To give an example, your calculator for the last five years has not malfunctioned, but your computer printer must have jammed three times yesterday. What will happen, is in the last general election, 1.2 million machines were used. There were four thousand machines which malfunctioned for some reason or the other. These are minor. Wrong button was pressed or the battery was loose, or something or other, we will replace those machines. But these four thousand were disruptions of the poll process, and they have very serious implications, law and order implications. When we introduce a printer, and if there are forty thousand disruptions of the poll process, and not 140,000 disruptions of the poll process, this can't save us. We are really worried about that. But we are very open to that, but that technology like I said was already available in our machine. They are developing some printout which will start.

And secondly as I mentioned—were you there for the beginning of this lecture?—not very beginning. So the very first point, we have the temperature of minus forty degrees,

and we have temperatures of fifty-six Celsius, and these machines function perfectly everywhere. The printer perhaps not. It has a mechanical device. So let's see how it works. But we are working on it very sincerely. And we appreciate your sentiment. Your sentiment was perfectly fine, which is why as soon as the ball came in my court, we took your decision. Who is more concerned about the fairness of the process than an institution that has been interested from the start? Right? So be assured we are working and if you have any other input, same people. By the way, I don't know how many of you read that they landed from USA an assistant professor from Michigan University and from the Netherlands...they were stopped at the airport. They were not allowed to enter, and immediately the controversy started that because they were opposing EVM. The facts were just the other way. We came to their rescue. I had landed from somewhere at 11:30 at night, and I got this message that this gentleman is stopped at the airport. I used my good office because we do have friends everywhere, to let them come in because we didn't want this to be linked up with the EVM.

They were stopped at the airport for a violation of visa. They came on a tourist visa and had attended conferences, so violation of law of the land. Every Ambassador is frisked every now and then because law of the land needs to be respected. But on our intervention those two gentlemen and Hari Prasad came and thanked me personally for letting them come in and we have no ill will against them, except when I ask Hari Prasad, look we are doing all that, will you guarantee that all these procedures which you are doing, after that you will stop saying that this is the wrong thing. He says, "No, I can't guarantee that." The new system is foolproof. There is no guarantee. What are we

going to do? Going back to ballot paper, it will be something unfortunate if it has to happen someday, but if it does so be it. We are not scared of that. Right? That's it.

DR. FRANCINE FRANKEL: You mentioned, you convinced all of us how well the process works. The question that I had in mind has to do with the Maoist areas, and it seems from your remarks that a very large number of polling booths now are affected by the Maoists. What does that tell you about the strength of the democratic process in India? How effective can the Election Commission be with all of this effort in areas where people are intimidated, and told not to vote, and how serious would you say that problem is now?

DR. S. Y. QURAISHI: You know the Maoist problem has its roots in economic deprivation, but we really have nothing to do with that. Our only concern is that nobody should be intimidated. The voting leaves the Maoist issue a five part call. Their standard threat is that the first voter's finger will be chopped off. Nobody will like to be the first voter. There is no way we can bring in the second voter first. But at the end of the day we take all precautions. We try to give security, and at the end of the day polls take place. Sometimes when we get complaints that the poll was not genuine, the polling party stopped short half a kilometer and did the process and came back. We order a re-poll. It happened in Chhattisgarh last time. Even then we had a suspicion that it was not a fair poll. It was just manufactured. So we ordered a re-poll of the re-poll, until we were satisfied and it was carried.

Our position is the Government of India's position. We have elections. If you want to capture power, contest elections and become the Chief Minister, become the Prime Minister. In fact, Punjab Chief Minister, I was mentioning him only yesterday. The current Punjab Chief Minister ten years ago in the guise of a truck driver, he was running around because he was wanted in criminal cases. They came back into the electoral fold. They contested elections. They are now a very powerful government, and they are living in reasonable comfort. So I think this is the best process, and that is the appeal to the Maoists. Come contest election if you are popular, Come. What probably has happened is that there is only a fraction—5 percent—that are ideologically driven by that philosophy. They are therefore the general guide. There are lots of thugs. Lots of cheats and frauds have jumped on the bandwagon, and they do extortion. They are trying to benefit from this kind of a situation, and the Government of India is trying in their strategy to wean such elements away. In fact, unfortunately one of the collectors—a collector is the head of a district—more powerful, our biggest tool for election is our district election officer...he was captured by the Maoists. Until this morning, he had not been released...Was he released? I am so happy to hear that because **[inaudible]** was the place last year which gave us two sleepless nights because the polling parties from there because we keep tracking their arrival back...it took us two days to locate the last few polling parties from the **[inaudible]** forest areas. There are still negotiations. There are mediators. And we hope that the problem will somehow be controlled. But election holds the key. Otherwise, you see what is happening in the entire Middle East. If that is the only way to change power, so people use that method.

QUESTION: Dr. Quraishi, thanks very much for your interesting remarks. I am a researcher from Princeton University and I work on election management issues. And Rishdan and I were just in India November and December of this past year. We were meeting with your colleagues at the Election Commission. My question is on the vulnerability mapping exercise, which was a new innovative solution to the 2009 general elections, and to a point that you made in your presentation, I'm curious that you used the term "preventive measures." I guess the first part of my question is if you could characterize what those preventive measures look like. And then second if you could perhaps talk a little about the legal aspect of those preventive measures, where you draw the basis for taking those measures that you do. Thank you.

DR. S. Y. QURAISHI: I explained to you, we used to get complaints that some particular segments of populations are not allowed to come out and vote. They were intimidated. There were threats. There used to be what was called informal curfew. If you are seen outside your house, we will break your legs, that sort of thing. They were scared. So we started identifying such booths. What kind of threat? Is it a communal threat, caste threat, is it money threat? So that we know exactly what the trouble is. Preventive measures are entirely legal. Under our criminal procedure court, vagabonds and mischievous characters who can create public disorder, they can be proceeded against. And the term used is "bound down." That somebody is found loitering around and we feel your intentions are bad, and we order you, a magistrate has ordered, that for the next six months-one year you will behave, and if you don't you, have to give us some kind of a security for which you will get forfeited. So the preventive measures that we

took were that we identify these people. We went through legal process, give them notices. Magistrates give them notices. And then bound them down for good behavior and good conduct. And for violation thereof penalty would have been, security for future, and other preventive measures were even preventive arrests. On this apprehension, they can be arrested. As I mentioned, sixty-six thousand people in Bihar were arrested. They were troublemakers with known history. Their entire antecedent is known in every police station, identifying them, and then under our normal criminal procedure court, this action was taken to make sure they did not raise trouble on the day of election. If there are any more, I will answer.

DR. RICHARD JOHNSTON: I've got a flurry of hands, and eight minutes to the hour. We'll take them one at a time, but make them quick.

QUESTION: I am Alastair McMillan from the University of Sheffield. You mentioned delimitation, and I know that the Election Commission does not have direct responsibility for the delimitation process, which is the apportionment of seats between constituencies but also across states as the population changes. Now, the initial provision of the Constitution was that that happened every ten years after the Census, but it hasn't happened across states since the 1970s. So I wanted to ask Dr. Quraishi if you thought that the Election Commission should have responsibility for the delimitation process, and secondly if you thought the principle of one person, one vote, one value needed to be reasserted in India?

DR. S. Y. QURAISHI: Delimitation of course is done by an independent commission, which is headed by a retired judge of the Supreme Court. Secondly, this information that our 1971 delimitation is not taking place is out of date. The Commission did delimitation only two years ago—not across states—except three or four states where there was some kind of a political trouble or resistance to delimitation. That decision will be taken again by Parliament. Whenever that happens, it will happen. In the delimitation process, Election Commission is otherwise closely involved. The entire [inaudible] is housed in the Election Commission. The staff is provided by us. One of us is a member of the delimitation commission. Thirdly, the general delimitation across the country, that is done by an independent commission. But for upper house—and we have seven states which have upper house—that implementation is done by us. For instance in Tamil Nadu, in Tamil Nadu we did delimitation. That power is already given to us. I think it is a process again which requires a lot of public faith and credibility. The system of judicial jury is a good idea, except that it should happen every ten years. Right now for instance in Jammu and Kashmir there is a demand. It has been frozen for about thirty years, and Jammu people feel that if there is delimitation they will end up getting more seats. Probably they have a point. But that is a call which is not with us. And the government has to take a decision.

QUESTION: Thank you for your comments. Milan Vasihnav from Columbia University. I just wanted to follow up on two things—the money power and the criminality. I'd like your thoughts on two aspects. One is it seems that you already have some tools that can be used to crack down on both of these things. You had mentioned that you team up

with the income tax authorities, and that has been widely reported in the press. Couldn't you in theory link up the assets that candidates declare with whether or not they pay taxes at all, and if so what income they state on their income tax forms, and make that information public to civil society, scholars, and so on. And the same could be done on the criminal side. Of course they have to declare whether a criminal case is proceeding against them, but police authorities keep records of whether or not someone is a known hardened criminal and they have various classifications and that information would be tremendously empowering if it could be released, and it seems that you already have the existing authorities to do that. Would you mind commenting on that?

DR. S. Y. QURAISHI: As it is, every candidate when he files his nomination, he has to give two affidavits to the returning officer. One of which is about his financial background, assets, liabilities, including all the family. The second affidavit is about the criminal affidavit. The returning officer is in no position to decide whether the affidavit is false because his action is time bound. He has to decide before the end of the day, which is 3:00 p.m. So all that he can do, he bases his affidavit on the notice board outside, and he is supposed to put it up on the website of the district election officer and the CO. And, in addition, what we do is we share these affidavits with civil society organizations. ADR is the most famous. Association of Democratic Reform, which is a creation of some professors of Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore. And it has become such a movement that 1,200 civil society organizations together have come, and they call themselves National Election Watch. They work very closely with us, our eyes and ears, just as Mr. Dosapati is. Because all anybody who was concerned about the

democratic process is our ally. So we share this information with them. They do their own analysis. They go to the media, and then show it to the people. That man who was a pauper yesterday is now bringing in millions and how did he acquire that? And it's up to the people's judgment to question their representatives how they acquired that kind of money. So we are working on a different front. But there is income tax machinery. To make the life difficult for these people who would give wrong affidavit, we also used to send these affidavits to income tax department (CTBT), to use this as raw material as information. If their income tax returns have different information than what they give to us, let the income tax authorities take care. But they were really not following up on those. But now that we have started getting after income tax machinery, virtually we have requisitioned their entire income tax department to work for us in the election process. We sent extra special observers who keep eyeing every activity. They go with video surveillance. Like for instance, your public meeting will be video recorded by us, and when the candidate come and says, "I only used one hundred dollars for this meeting." Our man will show him, and say we shot it, and this would have used twenty thousand dollars, so where is this gap. So you can't run away from it. We came across lots of innovative frauds. For instance, how expenditure ceiling was being violated. Our observers, one of them saw a big marriage party going on—four thousand people, lavish spread, and liquor. And somehow out of curiosity he went inside to see what was happening, and he found that there was no bridegroom, and there was no bride. It was not a marriage party. It was a bogus party only to entertain voters by way of bribe. Then we came across a very standard practice, only we were sleeping. Most marriages take

place during election period, most birthdays. And there is a...ceremony. Most NRIs celebrate those ceremonies here.

QUESTION: Dr. Quraishi, good evening. My name is Bridget Daniel, and I am a 2011 Eisenhower Fellow so I will be traveling to India later this year for about two months. My question is I am going to study technology and how they can affect low income populations here in Philadelphia, etc. So I wanted to ask you how the use of technology has maybe spawned—I know you mentioned in your presentation trying to empower youth and get youth to more actively vote, and how maybe using technology in that, and how maybe minority communities there and minority communities here could offer and share suggestions on how to mobilize our populations here in the United States, particularly in Philadelphia.

DR. S. Y. QURAIISHI: As I mentioned, we used technology of every considerable kind, for everything except the voting process. It is very simple. We are using DIS. We are using GPS. For instance, the polling party, which I mentioned, which we track them until they reach safety, so we monitor them, satellite images, all that. In fact, just before I came, we took a presentation, in particularly sensitive areas, West Bengal, Assam. We are doing this exercise. And we have also started from this year a National Databank of Voters, so that we can also identify duplicate voters. And also it will facilitate movement of migration if someone from one constituency to the next, your number, your voting will still be valid. Only you have to make a choice. Instead of your old place, you can register in the new place. We get to know these new practices. We ask young officers, the

collectors of the districts, to make their presentations on anything innovative they had done. And the best practices were also given a national award from the President. And any interesting thing we come across—for instance in a remote village in Arunachal Pradesh, near the China border, one young lady collector introduced webcasting from the polling station. That was the first time we heard the word webcasting. It worked so well. Sitting in Delhi in one polling station, we knew what was happening. In one case we saw a police constable in his uniform entering the polling booth, which is not allowed. Immediately we called up to find out. It was an innocent, silly mistake—no bad intention—but now this is how technology works, and if you have some more now or after your tour, please share with us because we do want to use high tech as much as possible, so long as my friend is fully convinced about it.

DR. RICHARD JOHNSTON: Well, on that note, we have overstayed our welcome. Since I have us, this is probably before coffee break for a day's work Dr. Quraishi puts in. Please join me in thanking him for a really incredible talk. We're adjourned.