

ML SPEAKS TO “WORLD OF ISLAM,” CLASS AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY’S SCHOOL OF FOREIGN SERVICE IN WASHINGTON, DC



On April 8, 2010, Muslim Lakhani, Chairman and CEO of ML Resources and ML Private Investments, LLC spoke before a diverse audience at the American University’s School of Foreign Service in Washington D.C. Mr. Lakhani discussed his Pakistani heritage and upbringing, business ethics, and personal dreams and how they were the collective drive behind his inspiration to create [Social Vision](#), the venture philanthropy arm of ML Resources, which is dedicated to the empowerment of communities through grants and support of innovative initiatives in both the United States and internationally.

Born and raised in Karachi, Pakistan in the 1950’s and 1960’s, Mr. Lakhani spoke of a time when religious tolerance and inter-cultural harmony were the norm. Attending school alongside Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and fellow Muslims, Mr. Lakhani painted a picture of a diverse and pluralistic Pakistan that helped mold his perspective on what it means to be a responsible global citizen. Though this diverse image seems to be at odds with contemporary characterizations of the nation, he remains committed to a vision of Pakistan that honors that legacy of tolerance and pluralism as values inherent not only in Islam, but in all the great traditions of the world.

Mr. Lakhani further shared with the class his experience in the world of business. He related that his “few large success” were built upon his “many past failures,” and were a combination of “luck and the good will and prayers of all the people,” who

benefitted from his philanthropy, job creation and local capacity building in the many international projects he was involved with. His successes, he emphasized, were tied directly to the successes of others, “It’s incredible—The more I gave, the more I got.”



The spirit of giving, tolerance and enterprise all form the foundation for ML Resources Social Vision, which takes an entrepreneurial approach to philanthropy, investing in social entrepreneurs, enterprises, and innovative organizations with high potential for growth and scale and giving back, a social return. When asked by a student how one could help without access to funds, Mr. Lakhani responded, “Just by asking that question you have already taken the first step...Never underestimate the difference one person can make; whether you have money, an idea, or an intent, the idea is to share it and follow through on it.”

He further emphasized the endless opportunities in the United States to get involved as students emerging into the real world, “This is a land of dreams; don’t let that dream die, because at the core of American dream lies the values of freedom, liberty and individual responsibility necessary to affect positive change in the world,” he concluded.

Mr. Lakhani’s lecture was the final talk in a series given by prominent scholars, public policy officials, and ambassadors as a part of “World of Islam,” a course at American University taught by renowned scholar of Islam and former Pakistani Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Dr. Akbar Ahmed.