

Muslims live peacefully in India: Ted Cruz counters Donald Trump

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Washington: As Republican presidential candidates engaged in fiery debate on the threat posed by radical Islam, top party aspirant Ted Cruz cited the example of India and said millions of Muslims live in peace there without any such problem, as he differed with front-runner Donald Trump's idea of banning Muslim immigrants.

"There are millions of peaceful Muslims across the world, in countries like India, where there is not the problems we are seeing in nations that are controlled by al-Qaeda or ISIS, and we should direct at the problem, focus on the problem, and defeat radical Islamic terrorism," 44-year-old Cruz said.

Participating in the fifth Republican presidential debate in Las Vegas - the last this year - Cruz said it is not a war on a faith; it's a war on a political and theocratic ideology that seeks to murder Americans.

A Senator from Texas, Cruz's popularity in recent week has gained ground but is still far behind Trump, who during the debate reiterated his position of a temporary ban on Muslims entering the United States.

"We're not talking about religion. We're talking about security. Our country is out of control. People are pouring across the southern border. I will build a wall. It will be a great wall. People will not come in unless they come in legally. Drugs will not pour through that wall," Trump said.

"As far as other people like in the migration, where they're going, tens of thousands of people having cell phones with ISIS flags on them? I don't think so. They're not coming to this country. And if I'm president and if Obama has brought some to this country, they are leaving. They're going. They're gone," 69-year-old Trump asserted.

"America is at war. Our enemy is not violent extremism. It is not some unnamed malevolent force. It is radical Islamic terrorist. We have a president who is unwilling to utter its name," Cruz said.

"The war that we are fighting now against radical Islamist jihadists is one that we must win. Our very existence is dependent upon that," said Ben Carson, one of the leading Republican presidential candidates.

Jeb Bush, the former Florida governor who is struggling in the polls, argued that a large number of Muslims in the Middle East are fighting for the US.

"We need to destroy ISIS in the caliphate. That should be our objective. The refugee issue will be solved if we destroy ISIS there, which means we need to have a no-fly zone, safe zones there for refugees and to build a military force," he said.

"We need to embed our troops inside the Iraqi military. We need to arm directly the Kurds. And all of that has to be done in concert with the Arab nations. And if we're going to ban all Muslims, how are we going to get them to be part of a coalition to destroy ISIS?" he asked.

"The Kurds are the greatest fighting force and our strongest allies. They're Muslim. Look, this is not a serious proposal. In fact, it will push the Muslim world, the Arab world away from us at a time when we need to reengage with them to be able to create a strategy to destroy ISIS," he said.

Trump disagreed arguing that his policy is to make US safe and secure.

"I don't want our country to be taken away from us, and that's what's happening. The policies that we've suffered under other presidents have been a disaster for our country. We want to make America great again. And Jeb, in all fairness, he doesn't believe that," he said.

Senator Marco Rubio said ISIS, a radical Sunni group, cannot just be defeated through air strikes.

"Air strikes are a key component of defeating them, but they must be defeated on the ground by a ground force. And that ground force must be primarily made up of Sunni Arabs themselves, Sunni Arabs that reject them ideologically and confront them militarily," he said.

"We must win the information war against ISIS. Every war we have ever been involved in has had a propaganda informational aspect to it. ISIS is winning the propaganda war. They are recruiting people, including Americans, to join them, with the promise that they are joining this great apocalyptic movement that is going to defeat the West.

"We have to show what life is really like in ISIS territory, and we have to show them why ISIS is not invincible, by going out and conducting these attacks and publicizing them to those who they recruit," he said.

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