

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind

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**Intra-Afghan Talks Requires Us to Act as a Unified Nation**

At the international level, in September 2018, appointment of the United States former ambassador to Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, as special advisor on Afghanistan to lead State Department efforts on Afghanistan reconciliation gave some new blood onboard to bring a fresh start to how end the 17 year conflict in. As of March 2019, Khalilzad had held at least five formal rounds of meetings Afghanistan with Taliban officials. These took place in the context of the Taliban refusing to meet directly with the Afghan government and its demand for a two-step peace process: first, talks with the United States to address international aspects of the conflict (such as the withdrawal of American troops); and, second, talks with the Afghan side on internal affairs (such as the future government and the constitution). According to Khalilzad, peace requires agreement on four issues: counter-terrorism assurances, troop withdrawal, intra-Afghan dialogue, and a comprehensive ceasefire. Khalilzad and Taliban negotiators in January talks agreed in principle on these four elements and agreed in draft on the first two.

For its part, the Afghan government has maintained that peace talks must be Afghan-led and that no entity other than the elected, sovereign government has the right to discuss new governance formulas or structures.

**Urgency of Making Progress on Intra-Afghan Dialogue**

Zalmay Khalilzad on Monday arrived in Afghan capital Kabul and met Afghan officials to meet with Afghan government representatives with responsibility for the peace process, including the President's Chief of Staff (Abdul Salam) Rahimi and secretary (Omar) Daudzai and have discussed the urgency of making progress on intra-Afghan dialogue.

**How to Maintain the Meaningful Political and Social Gains**

Afghanistan and international community have achieved a lot. As a result Afghanistan and international community must do whatever they can to preserve these gains. For Afghans, democracies, freedom of expression, freedom of media, human rights and women's and girl's rights are the main achievements that need to be preserved. To realize this, it is necessary to create a single source for peace negotiations to centralize peace talks and represent the voices of the Afghans in a unified manner. The way Afghans in general and Afghan politicians in specific, act to support and maintain such a single source shapes the fate of the country determines not to return to the dark days of the past.

Afghan government has already taken some initiatives to form such a unified source. Meeting of President Ashraf Ghani on Saturday with a number of political figures and former jihadi leaders and discussed the peace process, an official has been one of the main steps toward this end. President Ghani held talks with ex-president Hamid Karzai, Ustad Abdul Rab Rassoul Sayyaf, second vice-president Sarwar Danish, High Peace Council (PHC) chief Karim Khalili, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr. Abdullah Abdullah to receive their views regarding the ongoing peace negotiations and they stressed with one voice on lasting peace in the country.

Afghan peace talks have entered a crucial phase. International community and Afghanistan government and people, men and women have worked hard and have gained a lot, especially the women. These achievements should not be stepped on in the Intra-Afghan talks. We shall prevent a peace at the price of re-influence of terrorism supporters in Afghanistan. In such case, the main losers will be the Afghan people and the international community.

**The Outcomes of the War, in the Favor of none of the Parties**

By: M. Hashimi

Wars have always played a dominant role in human societies, if not positive all the times. There are many people in the world who consider that wars are necessary, though wars bring a lot of miseries with them. They even go to the extreme by calling them as a precondition to peace. But, on the other hand, there are many people who believe that wars are destructive and they destroy human civilization and annihilate human race. Therefore, human beings must not pursue wars; rather they have to run after the opportunities that can lead them towards peace and tranquility. However, such thinking is considered very much ideal; the desire that wars should not happen is a dream, while the fact that wars happen is very much a reality. Therefore, it is necessary to understand wars, their objectives, reasons and their effects, so as to have a proper understanding of politics and human societies.

Wars are basically launched to coerce wills. The Prussian military general and theoretician Carl Von Clausewitz defined war as follows: "War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will." Thus, wars are basically launched when wills are not attained or they are not agreed upon by the opposing party. Most of the times, wars are followed by failed political or diplomatic endeavors. Finding no compromise or agreement, the parties jump in the war and try to solve the issues through force.

War is not a new concept in human societies; rather they have been parts of different phases of history. But in the modern world of ours it has become more lethal. Earlier human societies were not very complex and even their interactions were not very much often. Today human societies are very much complex and they have very frequent interactions; further, unlike past, today the resources are getting scarce with each passing day while the number of people living on earth are increasing. Moreover, with the development in science and technology, there has been advancement in the field of modern weaponry, making wars more possible and more lethal. There are possibilities that the modern wars can well end in nuclear wars which if not controlled properly can really lead to the extinction of human race.

The reasons and motivations for wars are different. It should be noted that the motivation for war may be different for those ordering the war than for those undertaking the war. The people ordering the war form leadership, while the people undertaking the war form the military and even the people. It is quite possible that the leadership may be pursuing the war with the motivation of exerting its dominance over the enemy, while the soldiers forming the military may be fighting the war just because they are more motivated towards the money they are getting for the war. Nonetheless, it is necessary for a state to have the will of its leadership, its military and its people behind a war otherwise it may result into a failure (that is what happening in the war against terrorism). The

motivations may differ, but there should be motivation. War uses force and force requires energy, which is provided by leadership, military and people, once that energy ends, the war cannot coerce its objectives.

The reasons of the war may differ on different occasions. According to Jewish Talmud, described in the BeReshit Rabbah, there are three universal reasons for wars; 1). Economic, 2). Ideological/religious and 3). Power/pride/love (personal). The reasons described by him are really one of the basic reasons but not the only reasons. Today with the development of the states and the growing importance of politics in them, political reason is one of the most dominant reasons. And it should be mentioned as well that it is not necessary that a particular war should have only a single reason. There can be different reasons for a single war and because of a single reason there can be various wars. John G. Stoessinger, in his Why Nations Go to War says that the parties who go for the war claim that morality justifies their fight. He further mentions that the rationale for beginning a war depends on an overly optimistic assessment of the outcome of hostilities (casualties and costs), and on misperceptions of the enemy's intentions. In short, there are different theories describing different reasons for war. These theories include psychological theories, economic theory, demographic theory and many others. They talk about the different reasons of war but none can be considered as a universal theory.

As there is no constant and universal reason for war, in the same way the strategic and tactical aspects of war keep on changing with the changing nature of human societies. According to Carl Von Clausewitz, "Every age had its own kind of war, its own limiting conditions, and its own peculiar preconceptions." The single factor that has always been constant is war's employment of organized violence and the resultant destruction of property and lives. The conducts of wars have changed with the changing societies as well. In the words of Ralph Peters, "The nature of warfare never changes, only its superficial manifestations. Joshua and David, Hector and Achilles would recognize the combats that our soldiers and marines have waged in Somalia and Iraq. The uniforms evolve, bronze gives way to titanium, arrows may be replaced by laser-guided bombs, but the heart of the matter is still killing your enemies until any survivors surrender and do your will."

The effect of the wars is the most tragic aspect of war and it can be measured by the amount of losses incurred by the involved parties. The losses of the war can be in the form of property and valuable human life. The result of the war can be measured by the outcomes of the war. The difference between the conditions before the war and after the war basically constitutes the outcomes. Sometimes the outcomes are in the favor of a particular party in the war, but on most of the occasions the outcomes are in the favor of none of the parties.

**Springtime for Nationalism?**

By: Bill Emmott

Is populism still on the rise? That question will be looming over elections in Israel, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Spain, and the European Union over the next two months. Yet it will be misplaced, for the real contest is between nationalism and internationalism.

To be sure, the nationalist-internationalist division is being prized open by populists themselves, particularly US President Donald Trump, whose instinctive disdain for international laws and institutions has long been clear. But it is also being exploited by more mainstream politicians, including some in that most multilateral of institutions, the European Union, which is experiencing a profound change in its internal political dynamics.

The term populism merely describes a campaigning technique used by insurgent politicians of all stripes. Hence, its power as a political epithet has diminished with use, especially in the years since the Brexit referendum and Trump's election. Once in power, populists still have to govern to voters' liking, or else risk defeat at the next election.

Consider the Five Star Movement (M5S), which came to power in June 2018 as the senior partner in Italy's governing coalition, but has since lost a string of regional elections, halving its vote from a year earlier. That decline does not reflect voters' disillusionment with M5S's populist policy proposals; after all, it has succeeded in implementing its promised basic income for jobseekers. Rather, M5S's participation in the coalition has been overshadowed by the strong nationalist rhetoric of its governing partner, the right-wing League party.

Now, consider Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, and that consummate survivor, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. Unlike M5S, all three campaigned as populists but have governed as tough-guy nationalists. In elections on April 9 (Israel), April 11-May 19 (India), and May 13 (Philippines), it is that nationalist approach that will be tested.

Modi, Duterte, and Netanyahu have each used fear - of terrorist attacks from Pakistan, drug cartels, and Hamas rockets, respectively - and appeals to national pride. Their stated goal is to strengthen the nation-state against threats foreign and domestic, through both economic and political means. They have little regard for international institutions or laws, and if they consider the international context at all, it is usually through the scope of bi-

lateral relations with the United States and/or China, rather than multilateralism.

Similar issues are in play in the run-up to Indonesia's April 17 presidential election, where the incumbent, President Joko Widodo ("Jokowi"), and his rival, Prabowo Subianto, can both be described as "populists." The difference is that while Jokowi is running on his five-year record of leadership in both Indonesia and Southeast Asia generally, Prabowo is positioning himself more as a Duterte-style nationalist, as he did in 2014.

In Europe, the politics are different, but the key divisions are strikingly similar. The terms populist and Euroskeptical do not truly capture the rise of far-right parties such as Vox in Spain, the Freedom Party of Austria, and the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) in Germany; nor are they sufficient for understanding the policies of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Poland's ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party.

To be sure, these parties are all nationalist, conservative, and generally opposed to immigration. But with constant reference to "law and order," they are exploiting cultural rather than military or geo-strategic fears. Hence, should the far-right make significant gains in Spain's general election this April, and then in the European Parliament elections in May, the right way to think about it will not be as an anti-EU phenomenon.

A rebalancing of power toward the nationalist right would represent a changing view of the EU, but not an outright Brexit-style rejection of it. It would augur a further shift away from integration, and toward a more ad hoc intergovernmental approach for tackling issues related to immigration and the rule of law. The scope for top-down policies issued from Brussels would be significantly narrowed. And as individual EU member states began to pursue their own policies toward Russia, Libya, and other third countries, there would be a broad retreat from efforts to negotiate common foreign and security policies.

So, forget populism. The real contest in elections this year, as well as in the US presidential election in 2020, will be between nationalism and internationalism. Amid rising geopolitical tensions, increased migration flows, and the lingering stresses of past financial crises, the question is whether appeals to a rules-based international order can still win voters' hearts and calm their fears. In the absence of US leadership to lend that idea credibility, the answer is anyone's guess. *Bill Emmott, a former editor in chief of The Economist, is the author of The Fate of the West.*

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