

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



December 27, 2017

## Changing for the Better

A political setup is a dynamic phenomenon; there have to be changes within the system so as to compensate for the ever-changing nature of human society. From the very earlier states, the nature of political systems was not the same as they are today. Throughout the history of statehood, human beings have experienced different sorts of systems and setups. From monarchy to today's modern democracy, there have been myriads of political systems and political practices. The only common thing among them is that they keep on changing. Though some may take a longer time to change but, ultimately, they have to change as they do not have any other option.

There may be various reasons of changes within a political system. One of the basic reasons is that the human societies evolve, giving birth to new changes which give rise to new challenges. To overcome those changes the systems have to introduce changes.

The need for changes may also arise when the system is not on the track to stability and fails to address the basic problems of the people. In other words, it can be said that the perceived dissatisfaction from a system is directly proportional to the demands in change. The great political and social changes in the history of mankind have their roots in the same phenomenon. It can also be said that the standard of living of the subjects and their perceived satisfaction of socio-political scenario is one of the best ways of gauging the effectiveness of a political system.

There are two ways of introducing changes within a system. The first one is through amendments, i.e. bringing about necessary changes within the present system while keeping the basic nature of the system intact. Most of the changes within democratic systems take place through the same process. One of the qualities of democratic systems is that they keep on inviting changes. Moreover, the democratic system proceeds in such a way that the changes become inevitable. The example of elections within a democracy is one of the most important processes in this regard. The elections guarantee government change after every specific period of time. If elections are held regularly the system keeps on moving ahead.

On the other hand, there can be changes within the overall system that actually tend to change the basic nature of the system. Such a change is basically referred to as a 'system change' and is brought about by a revolution or a military coup. The change in system becomes inevitable when all the possibilities of changes within a system are lost. The people start suffocating so much that they start demanding for a change in the entire system. Meanwhile, it should be mentioned that most of the revolutions are not very much peaceful and they involve blood-shed.

Amendments within a system are very much normal and there should not be a very strict stand on these sort of changes within a system because it would bring a society to a halt and would hamper its natural growth. Moreover, a democratic system is always a dynamic system and keeps on checking the possibilities of positive changes. It is the characteristic of a dictatorial government that dislikes changes and strives to maintain the status quo. The dictatorial systems are also characterized by being personality centered.

The changes within the system are highly dependent on the personality of the ruler. Moreover, as there is no concept of regular elections in most of the dictatorial systems they do not guarantee frequent changes and the rule of the leader may last for many years. The great democracies in the world have acquired their mature systems after many years of evolution. Changing from very immature and preliminary stages they have reached to today's position where they have been able to address most of the problems of their people. Their example is great guidance for the authorities in our country if they are really interested in establishing a strong political system.

Currently, Afghan political setup does not seem to be compensating for the growing demands of time and has basic problems that do not let the system represent all the people within the Afghan society appropriately, especially the poor masses. At the same time, the current setup does not let the people out of troubles that they face. No doubt, we cannot expect Afghanistan to have a well-developed system as the democratic history in Afghanistan is very short, yet it must never be forgotten that in order to have a better system, changes have to be brought continuously as per the demands.

There are many concerns about the political development in Afghanistan; the most important among them is the development of political institutions. Afghanistan, in this regard, has been suffering much. The Afghan society is basically a very diverse society; people from different ethnic backgrounds live here. A democratic system, truly representing people is best suited for the country; however, the development of political institutions is pivotal in this regard. In great modern democracies, it is the well-established democracies that run the state, establish order and provide the people their basic requirements. Afghan politicians, political parties and civil society members can all work together to guide the country towards the same sort of democracy; all they require is commitment and dedication.



## Teachers should be Prepared and Organized

By Zahir Akbari

Teaching is one of the most complicated, challenging, stressful, time-consuming careers a person can choose to pursue. It demands broad knowledge of subject matter, enthusiasm, a caring attitude, and a love of learning, skills of discipline and classroom management techniques and a desire to make a difference in the lives of young people. Kindness, compassion, and overwhelming dedication to the children keep them coming back despite challenges. Usually, his time is filled with long hours, preparations; weekends spent grading papers, few breaks, Low salaries, fewer facilities. It is a calling, a passion, a life's work to be a teacher. In the other words, Teaching is a tough, important, purposeful and honorable journey to nurture and lead young generation. With all these qualities required, it's no wonder that it's hard to find great teachers.

Great teachers have clear, written-out objectives. They have lesson plans that give students a clear idea of what they will be learning, what the assignments are and what the grading policy is. Assignments have learning goals and give students ample opportunity to practice new skills. The teacher is consistent in grading and returns work in a timely manner. Great teachers are prepared and organized. They are in their classrooms early and ready to teach. They present lessons in a clear and structured way. Their classrooms are organized in such a way as to minimize distractions. Great teachers engage students and get them to look at issues in a variety of ways. Effective teachers use facts as a starting point, not an end point; they ask "why" questions, look at all sides and encourage students to predict what will happen next. They ask questions frequently to make sure students are following along. They try to engage the whole class, and they don't allow a few students to dominate the class. They keep students motivated with varied, lively approaches.

Great teachers form strong relationships with their students and show that they care about them as people. Great teachers are warm, accessible, enthusiastic and caring. Teachers with these qualities are known to stay after school and make themselves available to students and parents who need them and they demonstrate a commitment to the school. Great teachers are masters of their subject matter. They exhibit expertise in the subjects they are teaching and spend time continuing to gain new knowledge in their field. They present material in an enthusiastic manner and instill a hunger in their students to learn more on their own. Great teachers communicate frequently with parents. They reach parents through conferences and frequent written reports home. They don't hesitate to pick up the telephone to call a parent if they are concerned about a student.

Unlike traditional teacher, great teachers involve students into the teaching process by questioning and by interacting with them is a verity of methods. Once the students are in-

involved mentally, physically and socially then it helps in better retention. It is aptly said, "People remember 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, 50% of what they hear and see and 80% of what they hear, see and do". While teaching, the teacher's oral language should be supported by the usage of blackboard or power point presentations, or cue cards. There has to be effective coordination between these two for effective teaching. It makes the students to concentrate effectively. If students fail to understand the oral language then the black board writing material will come to their rescue for better understanding and retention. The teacher while using the black board should not spend too much time towards black board as it loses the touch with the students. There has to be a fine balance between these two elements.

In most country, teachers must have certain degree in elementary school and pass a rigorous test in core curriculum areas. Middle and high school teachers must demonstrate competency in the subject area they teach by passing a test or by completing an academic major, graduate degree or comparable course work. These requirements already apply to all new hires. Schools are required to tell parents about the qualifications of all teachers, and they must notify parents if their child is taught for more than four weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified. The role of teacher in modern educational system is not only passing on merely knowledge to students but also, as a real architect of new generation, responsible to build personality of future citizens. They do not just impart knowledge but also acts as a friend, philosopher, guide, parent and facilitator. He is a continuous learner and an excellent listener. The more he listens the more he learns and the more he learns then the more he teaches. That is why it is said that the teachers are lifelong learners and their learning is the real meaning of learning from cradle to grave. In fact, Teaching is comprised of theoretical and artistic components: The theoretical parts should be studied, researched and understood but the artistic part must be cultivated by teaching experience. Anybody and everybody can cultivate this skill but human upbringing needs enthusiasm, hard work and also national investments. Teachers are the most responsible and important members of society because their professional efforts affect the fate of a nation. Beside building the talent of students, they have to motivate and inspire the students by being a role model to build their personality. Teachers need to know what motivates the students and what are their aspirations and expectations from the teachers. Great teachers are not born in the minds of the students but they are born in the hearts of the students; a teacher who is attempting to teach without inspiring the pupil with a desire to learn is hammering on cold iron. Finally great teachers are like a candle that consumes itself to light the way for others.

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## Into the Brexit Abyss

By Dominique Moisi

I have a British friend who never travels without his Irish passport, at least not since June 2016, when the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. "Just in case," he likes to say. "You never know what may happen." Ever since Brexit, the Irish passport has become something of an insurance policy against irrationality, and represents, for my friend at least, the possibility of retaining his European identity. If things turn out badly in London, he reasons, there is always Dublin.

Hedging has become a favored approach of those seeking to make sense of the British divorce from the EU. The agreement reached this month between UK and EU negotiators has only heightened the unease. On the one hand, that "breakthrough" set the stage for talks on the post-Brexit relationship trade to commence, seemingly making separation inevitable. On the other hand, there is a belief that nothing is set in stone, and that finality will come only after many thorny issues are resolved.

The physical boundary between Northern Ireland, which is part of the UK, and Ireland, which will remain in the EU, remains among the most complex problems. That issue risks becoming the twenty-first-century equivalent of what the Schleswig-Holstein question was for European diplomats in the nineteenth century - a recurring nightmare.

But the Irish border is not the only challenge that Brexit talks face. Numerous issues, from trade to foreign policy, will also test negotiations. My friend is clearly divided between hope and fear. Paradoxically, his optimism stems from a conviction that the threat of chaos will push the British to reconsider their choice, as John Bull's pragmatism ultimately returns and prevails. A second referendum, he and others believe, might even be in order.

Beyond placing hope in the revisionist power of chaos, the "Remain" camp is betting that "Leave" supporters will ultimately realize the folly of a "soft" Brexit, and retreat. Anything short of complete separation from the EU would be akin to the situation in which France found itself after withdrawing from NATO's military command in 1966. Until France reversed that decision in 2009, it remained more or less bound by the constraints of other NATO members, but lacked any say in political or military decisions.

Today, Britain appears to be following a similar trajectory. A "soft" Brexit will not necessarily ease the economic pain of divorce, but will undoubtedly be politically frustrating for both supporters and opponents. And, after having been asked to express their preference, voters could conclude that

anything but a "hard" Brexit would be illegitimate and leave the UK stuck between two stools.

The Brexit debate reveals one of the major dilemmas of democracy. What is to be done when a country is deeply divided on a key, even existential, question?

Authoritarian regimes do not face this quandary, at least not outwardly. The leadership decides. However rash a policy might seem to those with representative governments, the "people" in an illiberal order either bend to authority, or mobilize to break it. In Britain, a small majority voted in favor of Brexit, plunging the country into a state of confusion, which is bound to continue, regardless of what happens in negotiations with the EU. Earlier this month, a study published by YouGov found that British citizens remain as divided on Brexit as they were when they voted last year. It is as if the debate has simply become frozen.

This is partly because views on European integration are tied to education, social status, age, and geographic location. No matter how talented UK and EU negotiators are, there is no compromise that will close these gaps completely. The objective, therefore, should not be to find the best solutions, but the least bad ones. What these will look like remains to be seen; but, at the very least, the "Leave" camp must feel that their votes were respected, while "Remain" supporters need to be convinced that the worst has been avoided.

For now, Britain seems to have accepted that the EU's demands are not irrational or unacceptable. The UK will pay a premium - some £40 billion (\$53 billion) - for its divorce from Europe. In return, the UK will have two years to untangle the numerous threads that tie Britain to the continent. For those who place their faith in chaos, it is hard to see how that will help. A party of "Bregretters" - those who regret Brexit and could push for its reversal - does not exist. Nor has a strong political figure emerged to lead such a coalition. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair might have pulled this off earlier in his career; after his disastrous decision to support the Iraq war, however, his image is in tatters.

So, despite recent progress and commitments to move Brexit talks forward, nothing about the process is certain, except, perhaps, that it will become more, not less, chaotic as the two-year clock ticks down. That could be bad news for Britain, for Europe, and for democracy. Then again, as my friend with the Irish passport likes to say, you never know what may happen. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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